File No. 9110001

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER THOMAS FITZPATRICK

Interview Date: October 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: We can begin by stating your name and your rank.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Tom Fitzpatrick, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, assigned to the Commissioner's office.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Just for the record, it's Monday, October 1, 2:40 p.m., conference room 8N6 at headquarters.

MR. FITZPATRICK: On the morning of the event I was in my office and I was alerted by Commissioner Feehan and one of the secretaries outside that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. I looked out the window, saw a slice in the side of the north tower, and then Bill came down the hall and said let's go. So we responded from headquarters. I had previously had a meeting with Tom McDonald, so he came with us, along with Ray Goldbach. I think that was it in the car.

En route to the alarm, we could see the smoke from the north tower. I tried to get an idea of how many floors and it looked like the upper third of the building was involved. We got across the Brooklyn Bridge, went down Broadway and stopped the car, I think it was at Broadway and Dey. We

out of the car and ran down the street. As we got to the intersection of Broadway and Dey or just a little bit down Dey, the second plane hit the south tower. And we continued down the street. By the time we got to the plaza, a lot of debris was coming down.

Q. Did you witness the second plane hitting?

A. I heard it but I didn't look up. The noise from the plane was enough to make you not want to look up. I thought the plane was actually going to land in the street to be honest with you. The noise was outrageous. When it hit the building it was even worse. I figured, as long as we didn't get hit by the plane, we were ahead of the game. The next thing I was worried about was getting hit by the parts. Various pieces of the plane were falling on the street. As we went down the street you could see parts of aircraft with stencil numbers on it and things like that. There was a wheel, or like a wheel housing or something else there in the street.

There were lot of bodies coming down but I didn't pay much attention to it. For some reason I was more focused on the airplane parts until somebody started pointing out the body parts. I was

particularly concerned at that point with getting hit by something falling out of the building, so we ran under the canopy of 5 World Trade Center, to make our way towards the building, the north tower. We were under the canopy as far as we could go and cut through. There is a space between 5 and 6. When we got under the end of 5 we would have had to run across the plaza. We didn't believe that was a good idea, so we went through the space between 5 and 6 and went up an escalator on the side of 6. It was on the street side, on the Vesey Street side. There was a Port Authority cop telling us not to come up and we went up anyway. He directed us to an escalator which went down to the plaza to the concourse level so we could make our way to the command post at the northwest corner of the north tower.

When we got there, I saw --

Q. So that was West Street near the pedestrian bridge?

A. Yes, yes. I got there and saw Richie Sehirer had just come into the lobby, Chief Hayden, Chief Callan, a whole host of security people and people from the Port Authority. Bill Feehan and myself and then Tom Von Essen. That's all I can recall right now.

There are a lot of other people, but they were the only ones I focused on.

Q. Did you mention Chief Ganci?

A. I didn't see Chief Ganci in the lobby at that time.

Q. Can you tell us Commissioner, what the demeanor of the citizens or lay people were there in the lobby, or in the concourse?

A. With respect to the security guards, they seemed to be fairly composed. They were going about their business, making a lot of phone calls. The only civilians we saw were coming out as we went through the lobby of 5. The Port Authority police were directing groups of people out of the towers, out on to the street. Seemed like they were mostly going - they may have been going across the walkway at that time. I didn't really see where they were going, but they were directing them out of the building, quite a few people.

We were in the lobby, it could have been 15 minutes. We were getting reports. People were calling the security desk with reports of people trapped upstairs. We were trying to get an idea of what was going on with our own people upstairs. We -- somebody

told us in the lobby that they had information that the Pentagon had just been hit, so in addition to the second plane, the idea of terrorism was confirmed by the Pentagon. We were looking to, because the command post was so crowded, we were looking for a place to set up a second command post, essentially for communications because we couldn't get any out from behind the desk. It's a big marble desk. It looks like the security station there is a marble counter with a wall in front of it and you had to go around it every time to get to a phone, so we figured it wasn't going to work out in the long run.

Q. The command center was actually inside number 6?

A. No, inside of the north tower.

Q. It wasn't in number 5, it was in the north tower?

A. Yes, we used 5 for cover and we ran through 6 to get into the north tower.

Q. So the north tower is the command post?

A. Yes, that's at the level of West Street, but you've got to go down one level. We were there about 15 minutes looking for the secondary command post. We started briefly talking about who was going where. We

were trying to figure out, if somebody was going to go to OEM or somebody was going to stay on the scene. I think the Commissioner had been told that the Mayor wanted to meet him. I'm not sure where the Mayor was but the Mayor wanted to meet the Commissioner and some of his staff just north of the tower.

I looked in the concourse level where the shops are. It was too congested, too deep in the building for the units coming out in the street to see anybody. So we went back out to the lobby and dropped back to a position right outside that had 6 escalators going up to the walkway. I thought there might be an opportunity to have people staged there before they came into the main lobby.

Q. Those are the escalators that lead to the pedestrian bridge that takes you from one World Trade Center to the Financial Center?

A. Yes, it is. I looked around. There was no communication. We didn't think that was a good spot. The longer we stayed in the lobby we realized that with the second building and with the command post getting as crowded as it was, we were not going to be able to manage anything from that point, so we decided to move, Bill Feehan, myself, and I believe Commissioner Tierney

at that point. I met her in the walkway or I might have met her before, but she was there anyway. I decided to look for a second place to go. I believe the Commissioner left to go north and Bill Feehan and myself, went up to the walkway to go across West Street.

Q. You mean the bridge there?

A. Yes, we went across the north bridge into the Winter Garden. When we got into the Winter Garden, just as soon as we stepped through the door I looked and said to myself this is a perfect command post, because they looked like they were having some type of an event. There were tables set up and there was a big - around the tables were two rows of tables across the front of the Hudson River side of the Winter Garden. That would be perfect because if you had a phone at each position, you have an emergency command post, an OEM type set up going right away.

There were two security guards, one of which I met later on, but there were two security guards who asked us if we needed anything. We told them we needed communications set up in that lobby. Because we figured that would be the command post. We could come out and do staging at West Street. He told us he would

try to get it set up there. It was not a standard part of the lobby set up, but he would try to get us some communications. It appeared at that time that the whole building had been evacuated. It was empty except for security.

While he was doing that, we made our way back out to West Street into the driveway of 2 World Financial Center. There were two garage doors behind us. When we got out there we noticed that the apparatus were coming in and starting to fill up West Street. Ambulances were responding, and it seemed like they were coming from two different directions on West Street. So we didn't think that would be a good idea for the long term if we were going to have an event this big. We had to stage the ambulances down from Canal Street south, so that we could bring the ambulances down, pick up patients and either go through the battery into Brooklyn or Queens or back up the west side into Manhattan or whereever else we were attempting.

It was evident that we weren't going to be able to get to people above the fire. Based on the number of jumpers, we could only assume that hundreds of people were trapped.

We were there for, seems to me 10 minutes maybe. Time was all out of whack for me. I don't know. We were all - with all the running around and the time we spent in each place, it's kind of compressed.

Q. Are we still in the time period from when you saw the second plane hit from east of the World Trade Center?

A. Yes.

Q. You made your way over here. You told us your story about where you went to the Winter Garden back out on the street?

A. Right.

Q. Both of the World Trade Centers are still standing at this point?

A. Both still standing, both heavily involved, but both still standing.

Q. You then followed the driveway into Two Financial Center?

A. Yes, Tom McDonald was there and they asked him to go north and start to control the ambulances and the trucks that seemed to be stopping right at that point. What we wanted to do is get them to the side of the road to keep the street open. One of the things

that was in the driveway -- while we were talking, we noticed there was groups of people with stretchers and EMS equipment running south on the sidewalk. At the same time there was a group of people with EMS equipment running north. And I thought it was at that point that we needed to coordinate which direction they were going in. If we were going to have a triage area in one set, which we presumed would be south and the ambulances were moving north, that the triage area should all be south.

Chief Gombo was in the driveway at that point. I asked him to take some people and set up a triage area whereever they thought it would be best to set it up. I believe they left the driveway and went south towards Albany.

Right after that there was a camera crew there from somewhere. I remember Frank Gribbon saying to me is there any chance this building would fall down. I don't think I gave him a real good answer, but he did tell the camera crew to step back because we were concerned about falling glass. We assumed from the last explosion that there were big big chunks of glass coming down from somewhere. So he told them to get back against the building.

At some point I believe Bill asked me to call somebody. But I can't for the life of me remember who or what. I was looking for a phone and the security guard who was in the driveway, there is a little stone wall with a railing or something on top of it, that you could climb up on it right at the end of the driveway, so Bill said to make a call. I jumped up on the wall and ran in right off the street. There was an office there, a security office, and the guy directed me to an office that was 5 feet away to use the phone. I made a phone call and came back out in the driveway.

Q. Is the driveway now on the west side of West Street, so it leads to the World Financial Center or does it lead to the World Trade Center?

A. No, the driveway goes right into 2 World Financial Center on the west side. There were two double doors there.

Q. Just to clarify, Commissioner, this is where the command post was set up?

A. Yes, yes, they were setting up the magnetic board and stuff. Came back out. Met Bill and I - forget who else was in the driveway at that point. Came back out and stood somewhere near Bill in the driveway. We were right at the raised driveway, which

went down to the street, came up and went down to the garage. It was sort of raised in the center. We basically stood on the raised portion. I started to look up the building.

Q. Was Chief Ganci present in that area at that time?

A. I didn't see him. I don't remember seeing him. I came back out. I remember seeing Bill, but I don't remember. I don't remember clearly who else was there, but I know there were about - I would guess between 40 and 50 people in the driveway.

Q. All Fire Department personnel?

A. No, I think aside from Fire Department personnel, there were some other civilian people. I seem to remember somebody in a T-shirt. The only reason I remember that is because -- I think I remember that because I ran into him later on at the back of the garage. We looked up at the building straight up, we were that close. All we saw was a puff of smoke coming from about 2 thirds of the way up. Some people thought it was an explosion. I don't think I remember that. I remember seeing, it looked like sparkling around one specific layer of the building. I assume now that that was either windows starting to collapse like tinsel or

something. Then the building started to come down. My initial reaction was that this was exactly the way it looks when they show you those implosions on TV. I would have to say for three or four seconds anyway, maybe longer. I was just watching. It was interesting to watch, but the thing that woke everybody up was the cloud of black material. It reminded me of the 10 commandments when the green clouds come down on the street. The black cloud was coming down faster than the building, so whatever was coming down was going to hit the street and it was pretty far out. You knew it wasn't coming right down. Judging from where people were jumping before that, this cloud was out much further.

Somebody yelled we've got to take cover or get out of the way or something like that and the only place to go, because we were in that driveway area, was into the garage. I didn't, at that point, expect the building to come down, I guess, but I knew you wanted to be out of the way of this black cloud. I ran into the garage and I would say ten or 15 feet into the garage, the building hit the street. It wasn't very loud but it was big. A big noise, it wasn't like a crash, like a car accident, more like a big thud. And

a blast of air and debris came through the garage. I think the thing that is unusual about going in was when I ran in the garage there was a railing, where the driveway of the northern most part of the garage went in and split. It split with a yellow railing and as I was going in, two people fell back. I fell over them. To keep my balance, I reached out and put my hand on the railing. The people there were scrambling to get up.

When I got up, I just kept running straight ahead but I realized that I was on the other side of the railing. Not the driveway side, but what looked like a walkway. In this garage, that would be where you pay your ticket to get your car out. So I kept going straight with the railing. Some people ran down the driveway. I don't know to this point, still don't know if the driveway's southern most point was parallel to this or if it went down another level. I really don't.

Anyway, I ran into four or five people straight ahead with the railing on the left. Eventually, I ran into a corridor, a long corridor with a door on the end of a long corridor to get out of the debris that was coming through the door. We just kept

going down the corridor, assuming it was going to come out through the side or the lobby or a hallway. Unfortunately it turned into a dead end, like a locker room, like an electrical closet or where they put lockers in. There were really no doors to the place. We just kept going to the end and at the opening where you assume it's going to open up into another lobby, it opened up into a room about this size. It had lockers in it. That was it.

So by this time we couldn't see anything, the noise was over. It was very quiet, but this plaster was in the air so you couldn't breathe normally without inhaling a mouth full of something.

Q. Were there lights or any lighting?

A. There were lights, but the stuff was dark. With all the stuff floating around, it was almost darkness, like a white out or a gray out. It seemed like the guy in the T-shirt was the guy - I thought he was a construction worker. He may have been a maintenance guy. But we got down to the end and he was saying is there a way out? Is there a way out? I couldn't find any. All I could see were lockers, after getting close to them, and conduits on the wall. There was no way out of that room, so we started to go back

to where we came out and I think we ended up past the way we came in.

Q. How many people were with you, Commissioner?

A. I think there were about 5 or 6.

Q. Anybody that you know personally?

A. No.

Q. Did you have a Fire Department radio with you at that time?

A. I had no radio, no. I just had my turnout coat. Unfortunately, my helmet was in the car. Richie said he was going to go to - I think the Commissioner wanted Bill Feehan to go across the street to OEM and he said to tell Bill to give me his helmet, because I didn't have one. So we came back out of the hallway and somebody said there is a door. There is a door. Let's go out this way. I couldn't see it. So whoever said it stayed at the door, see, and kept yelling this way, this way, this way. You couldn't orient yourself. With the dust you didn't know which direction it was.

Q. Did you pass any people on the way back out?

A. I don't think I passed anybody who was walking around, because we were all together. I think there was only one guy I worked with next to me. But there were people behind him, so when we turned around

to go back out, they were in front of us. I saw there was a door, I remember going and feeling my way around. There were a couple of door knobs. One of them said it was a locksmith shop. I saw an electrical closet and something else. It was a typical maintenance door. But I remember the locksmith one. It was stupid, I know. I assumed that the building had fallen on the other building. I couldn't get out of the garage. I keep remembering thinking that the locksmith would always have the keys to the doors and they were probably in the locksmith's closet. But who knows if he ever got out.

We came out and went into this door. I think we went up one landing into a store which seemed like a bagel shop or something. I seem to remember cameras or something, on the right side. That led around through the store into the lobby of the Winter Garden.

Q. How was the visibility at that time?

A. It was all -- it was still - the cement - you know the cement they put in, as you got further in towards the Winter Garden it cleared up. By the time you actually get into the lobby of the Financial Center, it was a little bit of stuff, but not nearly as bad as what it was before. I went to the lobby. We

went across.

Q. Was there anybody in the lobby that you recognized?

A. I don't remember.

Q. Were there people in the Winter Garden?

A. No. I don't remember seeing anyone over there. There may have been people there, I just may not have been paying attention to that.

Q. Did you hear a lot of people yelling or screaming?

A. There was some people yelling, but I don't know exactly where they were. I didn't look to see. I didn't look back to see what had happened. But I knew that down to the right was the entrance - was Vesey Street. So we went down that way. Passed a - it was like a restaurant in the courtyard there. I think there is one on either side. I went down and I saw out on Vesey Street, I saw Tom McDonald, who we had just sent to move the rigs. So as soon as I saw him I knew he was alive. I went down there and I think he was looking for Tom Curti, might have been with Tom McDonald going down the street.

At that time I saw Tom McDonald, who looked more like a snow man than me, but it seemed like he had

a real mouthful of stuff. So I went back in and grabbed a couple of bottles of water from the diner that we had just passed or the restaurant or something. I grabbed a couple of bottles of water and gave them to him. I then proceeded down Vesey Street to West Street, figuring that now I could come around to the right and back towards tower one and towards the driveway.

Q. Heading east on Vesey Street?

A. Yes, but you couldn't go that way. Between the dust and everything else you couldn't see much, but I think the walkway was still up. I also knew that the second tower was up. But Tom McDonald said what had actually happened. So I went out and looked and I could see the north tower, but I couldn't see the south tower, but sometime when you are down there if you are in the right position, it only looks like one building to begin with. So I walked a little bit down further and saw that all you could see was the radio tower sticking up through the smoke. But you couldn't really see anything else. But based on where the sun was shining through, where there was a shadow before, I said to Tom, the whole building is gone. I came back to him and thought more about the guys who went in the

garage but they didn't come up the way I came up. I assumed that the garage at 2 World Financial went down and came back out and there had to be a driveway. I knew there was a driveway in the back of the building, so I went around the back of the building.

Q. Back by Vesey towards the water?

A. Yes. (inaudible). Back around behind 4 World Financial Center. I had actually come out of 3. I went back around behind 3 looking for the garage exit that should be coming out of 2.

Q. You went between 3 and 4 and you walked behind 3?

A. Yes, south and west.

Q. Behind the Winter Garden?

A. Behind the Winter Garden.

Q. So you were back near the boat pier?

A. Yes. As I got back here, I met the same security guard that was in the lobby. He had a ponytail. He told me he was retired secret service. Something official. I think he mentioned retired secret service. I thought that was pretty reliable. So I asked him if there was an entrance to the garage from this side, if the garage went through. He said he didn't know. He wasn't sure. There was somebody else

that said it doesn't go through, it's a separate - because there's a wall between garages. So I started to go south behind Merrill Lynch near the park. So we came around and come around to that little bridge area where they took the families down. As I got around there, it just started to come down towards the building and all of a sudden a whole bunch of people started running. The second one --

Q. Towards you?

A. Yes, now they are all running towards me. I said the second one is coming down. This is getting to be a little bit too much. So we started to run straight out towards the water. Right near Liberty Street and then real close to 2 Financial Center. Ran out to the water where the marina is, and then ran north on the World Financial plaza till we came to the water. By then the second building went down. The cloud from that debris had already blown out through the street, but the people who were in that area were sort of protected because they didn't get the direct brunt of the second cloud because the building took the brunt of the hit. The cloud seemed to be, the Financial Center seemed to, you know, clear a path. The cloud went on both ends but didn't come straight at

you, so you were a little bit better off there.

I went out to the water and tried to figure out what was going on. There were people out there in boats, starting to pull up to the pier.

Q. You noticed a lot of people out on the pier?

A. Yes, there were a lot of people out against the fence. I think some people had gone out there and stopped to watch what was going on after the first building came down, because it looked like if they had gotten that far and the buildings came down they should have kept running. It seems like they may have run out there with the first building and decided to stop and watch the second building. And then the second building came down, and they had no place to go except into the water, over the railing. As you got further north, you could see that they were getting hit by the cloud. Some people were trying to get into boats.

Q. Was there anybody in the water that you noticed?

A. I didn't see anybody in the water. I saw some people going on the boats. Some of the boats were having difficulty with gates that dropped down to let people on, but they couldn't get them down because of the railings. So we tried to figure out a way to get

people up over the railings on to the boats. Some firemen were helping some civilians. Then I met a Chief out there, Raynis, I think his name was, who started to take a head count. I told him to get -- there was another Chief further down. It looked like he was doing the same thing. I told him to get together, to get everybody and send somebody down and get all the firemen on the pier, to try to get them together in one group. At least get a preliminary head count and we were going to take them out to meet -- the only thing I could see was the big arch in front of BMCC.

Q. That's up by like North Moore? Chambers and West?

A. Yeah, I told them take all the guys you can get and meet in front of the arch, and when we got there, we would figure out what to do next. By then -- the school, the high school started to let kids out, Stuyvesant High School. There was a lot of kids. The firemen were stretched along the pier there. So we went down this way and it looked like the kids were starting to come out of school, I'm thinking in my mind. So we made our way across towards BMCC to regroup. We came back down West Street, and I don't

know what the time frame is, but I ended up running into a Battalion Chief and I asked him if he had anybody with him. It seemed like he had a group of a lot of different people. So I asked him if he had anybody with him. He didn't. I had gone, come down West Street and tried to get down as far as I could in front of 3. After the smoke cleared you could see that 3 was clear, but the bridge had come down and I thought maybe the guys were in the driveway of 1 North. I was hoping they were on this side of the bridge. I looked as much as I could in front of 3 World Financial Center. It was just six inches of debris. If there was someone laying there, it would be hard to distinguish them from the mounds of paper. I didn't see anybody, so I got Shaun Reen. I said get some guys. Get some companies. I think Bill Feehan is right here. I assumed that they were between the north bridge, laying in the street, and Vesey Street. You could see right away that if they were on the other side of that, forget about trying to climb over it or get through or past it. About the only way to do a rescue was from around the other side, the south side, which I hadn't seen. So he came down and told me he had about a dozen guys. Searched everywhere and

couldn't find anybody. And then we started to - then people started to drift in.

Q. So just prior to the first collapse, you were at the driveway of Two Financial?

A. Right.

Q. Was Commissioner Feehan with you at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Then he was out there also, but you weren't sure if Chief Ganci was there?

A. I didn't remember seeing Pete, but again that was after I had just come out of the building, making a phone call. When I came out, if you jumped off that wall there. I walked past - you might not have noticed anybody who was closer to that wall. If they were closer to the wall or if there were more people in front of him when I jumped off, I didn't see him. It's hard to tell. The only thing I could figure is that when we ran backwards, either they ran into the other driveway, which was separate, and made their way out, somehow got out. The debris had fallen and they couldn't get across the first one or if it was on a different level, they would have been at the second entrance. They must have came up next to that little

wall to get out.

Because later on when I got back there, it looked like the little wall had been shielded from the direct hit of debris, because the building deflected it. I assumed they came back up next to that wall and made their way out to the street where the magnetic board was previously and must have got hit by the second building. But I never saw either of them after that.

Q. Did you ever see Tom McDonald?

A. Tom McDonald, when I came back the second time I found Tom McDonald on West Street. Because he was limping. He was sitting on a car. He was worse than he was the first time. He was sitting on a car or bumper or something like that. He had torn a muscle in his leg. He was having trouble walking. I think then he told me he found Tom Curti. So that was one less guy to look for. That's about it. The rest of it is a blur.

Q. When you went out between the first and second collapse and as you made your way back to West Street, that north bridge was down?

A. Right, I don't know if --

Q. It was down after the first collapse?

A. Was it? I didn't know. I really couldn't see. You could see the debris, but with the cloud, you couldn't, from where I was -- I was standing at the corner of 3 World Financial and looking up Vesey and West. All you could see was the top and the street. You couldn't see anything. It was like a snow storm. But you could see through the sun, every once in a while, you could see the north tower and the antenna sticking up. The reason I knew the second building was gone because the smoke drifted for a second, and the sunlight came through and I knew it wasn't an optical illusion, it was just gone. So that's all I know about the second one.

I don't know if the bridge was down or partially down. It could have been in the street. I didn't spend a long time looking.

Q. Commissioner, when you came back out after the first collapse, from the rear or the inside of Two World Financial, did you ever see Dr. Kelly down near that bridge area?

A. No, not by the north bridge. I didn't see her. I met David Prezant. He was in the driveway. The first one. As a matter of fact he was there when we came out. We were on the driveway the first time.

Either before or after I came out he was there. Because I think he went with Gombo or someone from EMS. They went together to build a triage area. But no, I didn't see Dr. Kelly. For some reason, it's real blurry. I can't remember why I went to make that phone call. I went to find out something. I ran in that building and made a phone call. I can't remember what it was. That's all.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. I called Sandy from the lobby when I went back in to get the water, because my sister lives in Battery Park City. Tom McDonald was sitting outside, I was going to get him some water. I went back in to steal the water. There was a phone right next to the counter, so I called Sandy. I told her to call my wife and find out where my sister was, because I didn't know if the building had fallen on her building. I couldn't tell. Find out how my sister was - call my wife, find out how my sister was and call my father, because he's in Florida. Just let them know that I'm still alive. And then I went on with the day.

Q. You mentioned earlier that you had a conversation with Commissioner Von Essen about a helmet.

A. Yeah.

Q. Did Commissioner Feehan give you his helmet?

A. No, no. He kept it. We never had a chance to make that. That would have been a difficult swap. I don't think he would have given it up so quick. I don't think he would have been so willing to go to OEM either. I'm glad he did, but that was the plan - it was going to be that. Once you started talking to Richie Schirer about recall, which we knew was going to be a mess, somewhere in the conversation Richie says to me "We'll do recall". I said to him "Make it quick, Yankee Stadium or Shea Stadium." Commissioner Von Essen said "I want you to go with the boss and I want Bill to go to OEM." He was going with the Mayor. But obviously that didn't work out. That was the last conversation between the three of us that day. Then Richie was at staging. I think he was on the phone, actually calling OEM, trying to get Shea Stadium or Yankee Stadium opened up. That's the last time I saw him. I guess he went off towards where the Mayor was going or back to his office.

Some people, I think when we went up across the walkway, I think some people were contemplating running out through the glass windows on West Street.

But they were having second thoughts because of the jumpers. If you got hit by a jumper, you'd be out of business. So we went up through the walkway to get out, but I don't know who might have gone out through the windows.

Q. Do you recall ever seeing Father Judge down there?

A. I didn't see him.

Q. When you were at the command post on West Street, across from the south tower, was it?

A. The north tower.

Q. North tower, could you see firefighters on either side of that tower?

A. I didn't notice. I know there were rigs. I could not actually see any people, but I could see the rigs there. When we were in the north tower, just before we left, there was a report of a third plane coming in from the Port Authority. I don't know if anybody knew whether to take that seriously or if it was true or not. But I heard Chief Callan telling guys to come down, to get out of the building.

Q. You heard him, or it on the radio?

A. No, I heard him say it. I was standing right there next to him. He told people to come down, to get

out of the building. He wanted all personnel out of the building. I don't know if he was communicating that to the second tower or to both or to the people in the building, but I did hear him say that.

Q. This is when the command post was still in the north tower?

A. Still in the north tower. A lot of the marble in the lobby was falling off the walls, big slabs of marble were falling down. From the impact, I guess. The lobby didn't look too good. The integrity of the elevators - I started to think about the elevators. They had either blown out, cut off or could possibly have the cars coming down. The lobby was becoming an untenable place, especially if we wanted to continue operations.

Q. Elevators (inaudible)?

A. I didn't see anybody coming down the stairs in the lobby. I don't think there is an exit in the lobby.

Q. So you saw no civilian personnel coming out from the lobby?

A. No, when went I down and when I went back. We were in the lobby by the command station. You go east in the lobby. There are a couple of doors there

that lead to the concourse. Three little doors. Those doors lead into the concourse where there are shops and stores. But as soon as I went through those doors, I figured that would be a crazy place to set up a command post, because who would find you. Where's the phones. There's nothing useful in there, so I came back out.

Q. So the first command post in the north tower was in the area of where the airline ticket booths are?

A. The first was at the street level in the northwest corner of the building.

Q. So it wasn't where the ticket booths are?

A. Right, there was nothing in the lobby that was commercial and the command post was a big marble desk which had a console behind it, but you couldn't see over it. About a five foot wall and there was all Port Authority cops and security people behind it. I went back there because somebody had given me a report. One of the cops behind there said we have people trapped on the 22nd floor. Some company was calling down to the lobby. They were trapped. Debris had come down in front of their door and they were looking for companies or firemen to remove the debris so they could get out. I gave that to Chief Hayden.

I said I don't know what we can do at this

point, but just put it on the list. A list of places that we had to search or get to, because everybody was calling us up. And the 22nd, I thought at that point seemed like a relatively safe place to be. The 22nd would probably be the best.

Last thing we saw, as opposed to (inaudible).

Q. I just have one last question.

A. (Not recorded).

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: If no one has any further questions, Commissioner, I thank you and we will end this interview at this time.

File No. 9110002

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL LOUIS GARCIA

Interview Date: October 2, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from Administration. It is October 2nd at 11:06 a.m. We're with Chief Garcia in his office. I am joined by --

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: Fire Marshal Campbell.

MR. GILBERT: Steve Gilbert.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Fire Marshal Starace.

CHIEF GARCIA: And Louis Garcia, Chief Fire Marshal.

MR. McALLISTER: We're going to direct Chief Garcia's attention to the morning of September the 11th, 2001, and we're going to ask Chief Garcia to tell us about the events of that morning from his perspective.

CHIEF GARCIA: Okay. That morning I was due to play in the charity golf tournament at Douglaston Golf Course. I probably got there somewhere about 7:30 I got to the golf course. I was in a foursome with Supervising Fire Marshal James Kelty, Captain Gene Kelty, who was the captain of 10 Engine located near the World Trade Center, and also Captain James Johnson, who works over in the Training Academy.

From the first tee of Douglaston Golf Course,

ironically, you have a view of the World Trade Center. In fact, those are the two buildings you can see from Douglaston Golf Course. Douglaston Golf Course is in Douglaston, Queens. It's approximately between 15 and 20 miles from Manhattan. From the first tee you see the World Trade Center.

We teed off. I was on the second hole when I was notified through my alphanumeric beeper that a plane had gone into the World Trade Center. I got on my cell phone, called EOC and said, in my exact words, is this a fucking joke? And they said no, it's a confirmed hit of a plane; it's confirmed the plane has hit the World Trade Center.

At that point I turned around, James Kelty was in my cart with me, we turned around, went up to the first tee. I was going to go back. When we got to the first tee, a police lieutenant -- and I don't know his last name but his first name is Don. I can get his last name. He's on the Mayor's detail. He's a lieutenant on the Mayor's security detail of the City Hall street detail. And right from that vantage point you could see that the tower, the World Trade Center tower, the north tower had been hit. There was smoke billowing out from the tower and it was an unbelievable

sight, and Don was on the phone with City Hall. I remember saying to Kelty get me over to my car. So we were taking the golf cart down to the parking lot of the golf course.

On the way down to the parking lot of the golf course, we heard a rumble. We looked around. We thought it was right near us. And we looked up and Don, who was still on the tee box, the first tee, said two planes hit and put up two fingers.

On my way down to the parking lot I told James Kelty, I said I hope this is not a terrorist attack. When we were notified of the second plane hitting, I knew it was a terrorist attack and I said I've got to go to the site.

So I left him there, got in my car. I'm on the way to the city, Manhattan. I stopped at my house, which is right on the way. I don't live too far from the golf course. I changed my clothing, got on the Cross Island Parkway and then onto the Long Island Expressway. At that time other emergency vehicles were heading into the city and we kind of made a caravan along the Long Island Expressway on our way into the city.

Q. Were you in radio contact at that point?

A. Yes. I could hear them doing two fifth alarms. There were two fifth alarms being called in. I was calling Hooper Street on my cell phone to ask if Chief Richard McCahey had gone. They said he was on his way. I got on the radio and I could hear fire marshals responding from Manhattan, from Manhattan base, also McCahey responding. He was trying to get through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. And I also called Hooper Street and I said the fire marshal of Hooper Street, they should respond also. At that point Bobby Byrnes was responding with fire marshals from SIU. I didn't know if other fire marshals were needed, so I didn't bother to call other bases to get Brooklyn, Bronx or Queens to respond.

As I was responding, as you're going down the expressway, of course, you get closer, you could see the World Trade Center, both towers are burning.

Q. You're still on the Queens side of the tunnel?

A. I'm still on the Queens side, yes. I'm going over that hill right before you go through the tunnel and you could see the skyline of the city.

Q. So you're west of the BQE at that point?

A. I'm probably -- no. The BQE? I'm past the

BQE.

Q. So you're west?

A. I'm west of the BQE, yes.

I went through the tunnel with my caravan of cars. They turned to go south down Second Avenue. I went down Second Avenue south but I turned down 34th Street. Let me see. Let me get this straight. In fact, let me take that back. I don't know if I turned down 34th Street or Houston Street. But I went south for a while. It was either 34th Street or Houston Street. But I wanted to go down the West Street side. I was headed toward West Street because I wanted to go down West Street and approach it from that side. I thought I would have a better chance of getting closer because West Street is a large street and I'd have better chance of getting by the apparatus because it would be parked on the side.

I went down West Street, went past Chambers on West. Of course, you can see the towers burning all that time. Every time you saw them.

Q. Both towers were still standing at that point?

A. Yes, both towers were still standing. I went down to West Street. I went past Chambers and I

probably parked a block and a half up from Vesey. I parked right behind a rig. I don't remember whose rig it was. I parked behind a rig, got out of the rig. I remember there was a chaplain there. He called himself a chaplain. I think he's a rabbi who works in counseling. But he calls himself a chaplain. He had his badge out and I know that this rabbi works in counseling and the counseling unit will be able to help you identify him. He helped me on with my coat and I got my helmet, I got my turnout coat and started walking down the street.

In front of me I could see the two buildings were burning. I'm walking down West Street. I'm passing rigs. There were a lot of other rigs parked there. I don't know the numbers. I didn't look at the numbers of the rigs. I was on the west side of West Street, walking on the west side of West Street. I walked underneath the north bridge. I was trying to find a command post.

On the way down there, I could hear McCahey establishing a command post on the south side of the World Trade Center, and after looking at the buildings, I found that I probably had more space on the north side, so I really wanted them to come to the north

side. I was trying to contact them by radio in the car to get them to go north. Well, first in the car I was in radio contact and I was asking them exactly where he was and he was trying to describe to me where he was on West Street. I knew it was south from the position I was at. But I hadn't assessed it yet until I got out of the car.

So I get out of the car. I'm walking towards him, going south on West Street. I go underneath the north bridge and at that point I come across Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan and Chief Downey and they're standing across the street south of the north bridge looking up at the buildings and they're talking about what they're going to do.

Q. Were they on the west side of West Street?

A. They were on the west side of West Street. They were on the sidewalk on the west side of West Street. There were other firefighters around them. I could see them. There were firefighters across the street, but I didn't take note of who they were.

Q. And this would be on the west side near the north bridge outside the World Financial Center?

A. South of the north bridge nearest the World Financial Center on the west side of West Street on the

sidewalk. I could see there was grass behind them, like a hill, like a hilly grass behind them. And they were talking about we're going to move command posts. They were really involved in trying to decide what they were going to do here, so I didn't really disturb them too much. My concern was moving my command post to where I thought it would be safe.

Q. Both of the buildings are standing at this point?

A. Both buildings are standing. And I did not take my radio out of my radio charger in the car and I couldn't see McCahey. I was looking south. I couldn't see McCahey. I was trying to use my cell phone. My cell phone didn't work. I was trying to call Hooper Street or headquarters so that they can get on the radio and tell McCahey to meet me north.

Before I got out of the car, by the way, let me backtrack, before I got out of the car, I was telling McCahey I'm north of the bridge. I'll meet you down there. By the time I got down to Ganci, I felt that being north of the World Trade Center was better than being south. So now I wanted to get a landline.

I remember at one point -- and I don't know if it was the first time I encountered them or the

second time -- people were talking about moving their Fire Department command post north. So I felt that the fire marshals' command post should be north. I guess it may have been the first time I saw them because for some reason I started moving north on West Street again.

I went back underneath the bridge, walked north on West Street. I couldn't use my cell phone. I was trying to use my cell phone. Then I thought maybe I should get a landline so I could at least call headquarters, call Chris Tempro and have them radio Richie McCahey and the rest of the marshals to meet me up north.

Q. Can I ask you one follow-up to something you mentioned before? You saw Chief Downey, Chief Ganci and Bill Feehan outside the World Financial Center. During the time you were there, did you ever see Tom Fitzpatrick with those three?

A. No, I did not see Tom Fitzpatrick.

Q. Okay.

A. I walked north. Now I'm north of the bridge and there's some firefighters around me, there's firefighters walking down past me south and there's some firefighters milling around. I don't know exactly

what they were doing. I turned around, I heard something, and I thought the facade and just the facade of the south tower was coming down, and one of the firefighters near me was saying holy shit, and I think he felt the building was going to collapse. I wasn't convinced of that at first. I thought maybe it was just some facade falling. All of a sudden there was a rumble and you see the building starting to collapse. At that point I ran north on West Street as fast as I could possibly run.

Q. At the point where you noticed the building was falling, were you south of Vesey?

A. I was south of Vesey. I was probably midway between Vesey and the north bridge, that north overpass. I was probably midway there. And the building started falling and I started running and a lot of people started running. Whoever was around me started running.

Q. Northbound?

A. Northbound. We were running northbound up West Street. At one point I could turn around. I turned around over my shoulder and I just saw this cloud. I mean, the building collapsed. There was a cloud coming at you. You knew you couldn't outrun the

cloud. You just kept on running trying to get away from it, but you're not going to outrun it, so you kind of resign yourself to the fact that you're going to be overcome by the cloud. You don't know what's in the cloud. You saw a lot of papers flying around in the cloud, but you didn't know what solid material was in the cloud, what structural members or facade was in the cloud that could be coming at you, so that you just kept on going. You're overcome by the cloud. You heard things hitting around you and you say to yourself I hope nothing hits me. What can you say?

Q. At that point, or just prior to that point, did you know any of the people around you? Did you see anybody you recognized?

A. No, I did not. I remember before the cloud got to me there was a fireman near me running with me, but when the cloud overtook us, you can't see anything. You had zero visibility. What I did was I ran into some fire trucks. You ran into them. All of a sudden you saw a light in front of you flashing where the flashing lights were on and you just kept walking. You couldn't breathe. You can't breathe. You had a very tough time breathing and you're just saying to yourself I hope I get out of here. Your mouth is full

of dust, concrete dust, whatever other kind of material there was in the dust and smoke. Your mouth and your nose is full of all that and you're just choking and you're trying to breathe. There comes a point in time when that dust cloud settles or the wind takes it away from you and it becomes easier and easier to breathe and all of a sudden it's clear.

Q. Any concept of how much time passed before that happened?

A. I mean, it seemed like a long time, but it could have been only two or three minutes. It seems like a long time when you're in the middle of it. At that time you looked at yourself, you're just full of this dust from head to toe, your helmet, your coat, everything. And I turned around and started walking back to see what was happening. The second building, the north tower was still standing, smoke coming out of it. I'm walking back to see if I could find Ganci and Feehan and the rest of them and see what we're doing here now. I still didn't have communication with the rest of my troops. I don't know where the rest of my troops were. I don't know how this collapse affected them. So I'm walking back towards where I last saw the command post.

Now, at this point I'm north of Vesey. I'm probably a block north of Vesey. I probably walked to a block north of Vesey. So I turned around and started walking south, got to around Vesey Street or past Vesey Street and I saw some Chiefs there, I saw a lot of people were there full of dust and trying to clean themselves off, spitting, getting it out of your mouth.

Q. Nobody you recognized in that group?

A. No, not yet.

Q. Okay.

A. And at one point someone comes along with a water bottle and gives me a water bottle to wash my face off and wash my mouth out with. And I'm walking now -- here is where my memory might be off. At one point I thought I saw Ganci and Feehan and I'm not sure if I really did. I'm very hazy. But I do remember seeing a Chief and it may have been Ganci, but there was a Chief there that said we're moving the command post two blocks north, which is the last thing, when I heard Ganci and Feehan the last time, they were considering moving the command post north. Now we're moving it two blocks north and people are walking north now.

Q. The second building is still standing?

A. The second building is still standing. People are starting to move towards me north and everybody is full of this dust and ash or whatever you want to call it. And the reason I'm saying I thought I saw Ganci, it may have been someone saying Chief Ganci is ordering.

Q. So you moved north on West Street, you were moving toward --

A. No. I'm moving south on West Street now. I've turned around and I'm moving south. So now I'm up to Vesey Street. I moved back towards Vesey Street where I'm encountering people moving north and these people are saying either Chief Ganci ordered it or I saw Chief Ganci, either one, or I might have seen Steve Mosiello. I'm not sure. But they said the command post is being moved two blocks north and Ganci's name is being mentioned. At that point I encountered Jerry Sheehan. During that time, during the time period before Jerry Sheehan, I might have seen Chief Pete Hayden over there. I believe Hayden was over there around by Vesey Street.

Jerry Sheehan is the lieutenant in charge of the NYPD Bomb Squad. He's an old friend of mine. I've known him for 20 years. And Jerry and I were trying to

use our cell phones. At this point I want to get ahold of the marshals and just tell all marshals to stay away from the building and Jerry wants to get ahold of his Bomb Squad people. Neither of us had radios and neither of us had cell phones that were working.

So I walked one half block west on Vesey Street, on the north side of Vesey Street, one half block west of the West Side Highway, of West Street. There was a building and there was a parking lot in front of the building with cars in it and on the bottom floor was a bagel shop, like a bagel coffee shop type place, and Jerry and I went in there and we started using landlines. So Jerry made his phone calls and I made my phone calls and I was on the phone with Chris Tempro at headquarters.

A VOICE: That's the Embassy Suites?

CHIEF GARCIA: I don't know what the building is but there's that shop. It's the north side of Vesey.

A VOICE: Is it all the way down towards --

MR. McALLISTER: The movie theater; is that the one you're talking about?

A VOICE: Yes. The movie theater is on the corner there.

CHIEF GARCIA: Well, there was no movie theater in front of us. There was a parking lot there. The movie theater might be in the building on the upper floor.

A VOICE: Yes.

CHIEF GARCIA: And I got on the phone with Chris Tempro and I was going to tell him just get on the radio tell all fire marshals to retreat from the building, anybody south go south, two blocks south, anybody north go two blocks north of the building. I also had encountered James Devery, Jim Devery, Supervising Fire marshal. I encountered him on the street, on West Street, and I saw Fire marshal Sal Rignola. This is while I was walking down on West Street before I went on Vesey. Fire marshal Sal Rignola was there and he had a radio and he couldn't raise anybody, which made me worried about what was happening. He couldn't raise anybody on his radio. But I later found out that McCahey lost his radio when the building collapsed. I told him I was going to go down to the shop.

So Jerry and I went down to the shop. I was getting on the phone. I got Chris Tempro on the phone when the second building suddenly collapsed and we

could see the second building collapsing through the windows of this coffee shop. We were half a block from West Street and the collapse was just on the other side of West Street and we saw it collapse. To me it was a faster collapse than the first collapse.

Q. That was the south tower?

A. The first collapse was the south tower. The second collapse was the north tower.

Q. Okay.

A. The north tower was now collapsing, but to me it was a more violent collapse. I don't know why. I think because the first collapse, to me, I thought at first, before it collapsed, it was just the facade going. This seemed to all of a sudden go down. To me it was more violent. It may not have been in reality, but to me it was more violent.

We got away from the windows. I dropped the phone and we told everybody that was in the coffee shop -- because the people who worked there were in there -- to get away and there were some firefighters or EMS workers there and they were giving us a bottle of water. We got away from the front windows because we thought they were in danger of blowing into the establishment. We went around into a kitchen area.

There was a door right in through a kitchen area right by the phones and we were looking around the corner to see what was happening.

The collapse occurred. This cloud again. Once again, we've got this cloud, this dark cloud of dust and smoke and whatever else is there. We get that coming towards the windows. The windows did not break inward.

The collapse was subsided, so we came out. I got on the phone with Tempro. I told him the second building just collapsed.

Q. Was it dark outside the window?

A. Yes. You can't see anything. It was zero visibility. The building had just collapsed. I said get the marshals on the radio. See who you can get on the radio, number one, if you get anybody on the radio, and, number two, tell them to get away from these buildings.

We went to the front door of the coffee shop and myself and Jerry Sheehan started calling to people. So we were right outside of the door of the coffee shop. We started calling to people to see if people would come to us because we wanted people to get into the coffee shop. And some people did hear us. We

could hear them out there and we were calling to them, calling to them. We got them into the coffee shop to get some water on them, on their faces. The people who owned the establishment were trying to help out with the victims.

When it started clearing a little bit, I saw Chief Brian O'Flaherty. Chief O'Flaherty said to me don't touch my arm. He was injured. Obviously, he was injured. His face was cut up. He looked like he had a broken nose because he was bleeding heavily from his nose, and he was holding his arm, so I knew he had a broken arm or something seriously wrong with his arm. I sat him down in a chair and I started talking to him. I know Brian for over 20 years, probably 25 years, and we got an ambulance. There were ambulances west of us. On the water there were ambulances. There was a triage station set up. So we were trying to direct Brian off the chair after we washed off his face to go to the triage. We were going to get him to the triage station and get him an ambulance.

Also coming in from West Street down Vesey Street was Pete Hayden being carried by two firefighters or two officers. He could hardly walk. He really needed help walking. We were trying to get

him an ambulance also. We got him into the bagel shop and we did some treatment. We gave him some first aid, very little first aid, but just washing their faces off and helping them try to get their breath back. At that point I got some EMTs that had some of those gurneys or whatever.

Q. Back boards?

A. Not even back boards but gurneys, the ones that roll along the ground, and they were starting to take people back to the ambulances.

Q. About how many people came into the coffee shop?

A. It could have been as many as ten, twelve. You know, they were coming in and out. If they were able to leave, they would leave. They would wash off and get themselves composed and leave.

Q. Uniformed and civilian people?

A. Mostly uniformed people. EMS people, too. Mostly EMS people and firefighters. I do remember one woman being carried was a civilian.

When I went back out, now it's cleared, Brian O'Flaherty has been taken care of, Pete Hayden, Chief Hayden has been taken care of. Myself and Sheehan walked back towards West Street. West Street, of

course, is a mess. The bridge is now collapsed. The north bridge is now collapsed. I see Fire marshal Rignola and he has a radio with him still and I said to him can you get somebody on the radio? He did get somebody on the radio. I forget who it was. But they were south of the World Trade Center. They were south on West Street, way south.

He told me that he jumped into a tower ladder when the second building collapsed and that a piece of metal went right through his tower ladder, his front windshield. He was down on the floor and it just missed him. So he survived because he had gotten himself down on the floor in his tower ladder. But I saw the tower ladder. The cab was like demolished.

Q. So the tower ladder was stationary at the time; nobody was operating it?

A. No, nobody was operating it. It was just stationary. It was just parked there by West and Vesey. He just jumped in there to get away from the collapse and this piece of building went right through the front windshield. Luckily he had gone down. He was on the floor.

At that time Chief Fellini -- and I can't tell you how long after. Everybody was kind of

wandering around on West Street wondering what they were going to do. Some of the fire Chiefs were saying we're moving north, we're moving north. That seemed to be the theme for a while, moving north, moving north, you know, before the second collapse, and then after the second collapse it was the same thing, let's move north. At one point I saw Chief Fellini finally arrived. He was there for some reason and he started taking some charge of the situation and he told everybody we're moving north.

I think everybody's concern at this point was, of course, who was trapped. There was no order here at all. They were taking about where Chief Nigro was and someone said Chief Nigro is in the command post south; he's all right. People started realizing Chief Ganci wasn't around. And this is just general talk.

Q. Can you describe what you saw as you looked down West Street?

A. Down West Street, well, what I saw was two buildings down, smoke coming from two buildings. The cars that were in the parking lot, there was a fire in the parking lot in front of that bagel shop I was in. It was like a big, open, empty lot with cars in it. There was a fire that started there and it was

spreading to other cars and once in awhile you'd have some explosions there and the fire actually after a period of time got pretty big because it was multiple cars. Several cars were going at once. So some debris from the building was burning and must have landed there and started these cars on fire. So you had this black smoke coming from these cars that were on fire, which no one paid attention to. We all said so what; let them burn themselves out. And you also heard what I thought were gunshots.

Later on, in a conversation with Jerry Sheehan, he told me those were real gunshots. Police officers that were trapped were shooting their guns off to try to draw attention to where they were trapped. I found out later on that Commissioner Dunne was trapped in a car in the first collapse and before the second collapse had happened the Bomb Squad had brought a car down because Dunne couldn't walk. He has a bad knee. If you noticed, he's been on crutches for a while.

Q. Right.

A. So a Bomb Squad car had gone down and gotten Commissioner Dunne right before the second collapse occurred. Commissioner Dunne had been north of Vesey Street when the second collapse had occurred because he

was taken out by car. He had been first trapped in a car in the first collapse. These are stories I've heard afterwards. And when Fellini got there things started to come into order.

My concern, of course, was the fire marshals. So I was concentrating on trying to reach fire marshals. At one point I found out that Rignola, McCahey and a bunch of marshals were south of the World Trade Center and they had moved towards Battery Park. And I knew I had fire marshals down there.

What I didn't know was that Supervising Fire Marshal James Kelty had left the golf course and was in 10 Engine when the collapses occurred with his brother, captain of 10 Engine. He described to me what happened there. When he got there, there were people injured coming out of the buildings and they were trying to treat people and bring them into 10 Engine and try to treat them, and what they thought was a third plane hitting was really at that point the first building collapsing.

Q. 10 Engine is on West Street?

A. No. 10 Engine is on Liberty Street, on Liberty Street just east of the plaza. Why they didn't get touched, I don't know. I mean, the firehouse is a

little beat up, but it was still standing. It's right on Liberty. Here's Liberty.

A VOICE: Right here?

CHIEF GARCIA: Yes. Where is the Trade Center?

A VOICE: This is 2 World Trade right here.

A. Yes. They're right here.

Q. Okay. Got it. It's directly south of 2 World Trade?

A. Yes, 2 World Trade Center.

Q. Got it.

A. And they were treating people and everybody was just trying to get to radios to see how they were. As time passed, I was able to determine where the rest of my marshals were. Chief McCahey came around to meet me north of the World Trade Center because I insisted on everybody coming north, but he said they were safe down south, but he also told me Chief Nigro was in a command trailer by Battery Park, that he was okay, that Chief Cassano was okay, but no one had seen Ganci or Feehan. The word was circulated that Ganci and Feehan were trapped or had been involved in the collapse. There was no talk about Ray Downey. But Ganci and Feehan definitely. I saw Steve Mosiello.

After that they were just trying to organize parties to go in there and try to get people out, and I saw my marshals. Basically what we were going to do at that point was stand by to see what we could help out with the digging and we would later decide how we were going to conduct an investigation and what kind of investigation was going to be conducted.

Q. Did there come a time then when you did set up a command post north of the site?

A. Not really. What we did was we used the site south. I had more marshals south than north. But there was no real formal command post ever set up. I hung around. I was near the command post they were setting up north of Vesey. I was near that command post. And the concentration at that time, it's not investigation, but everyone is thinking about how to get people out, and people were trying to break up into crews, it seemed like they were trying to break up into crews, but there was a lot of confusion. There was a lot of confusion.

Q. Any idea approximately what time it was now, at this point in time?

A. This has got to be I'm going to say about a half an hour after the second collapse. Before then

really everybody was in a daze. Everybody was just trying to assess the situation, and it was a tough situation to assess.

Q. Sure.

A. I don't think anybody had ever seen anything like this.

MR. McALLISTER: Are there any follow-up questions? It's pretty clear to me.

Q. Chief do you have anything else that you'd like to add, any other observations that you may have had on that day?

A. Not really. My observations are that, I mean, we've never had a situation like this. From an operational point of view, even though I'm not a Chief in operation, a fire Chief, I was a firefighter at Rescue 1, I was a lieutenant in the South Bronx fighting fires, and I had never seen so much fire in a high-rise building. Never. Even when I was in Rescue 1 as a fireman in rescue in Manhattan. I have never seen more than one floor going and an entire floor. You're talking about multiple floors and the entire floor from west to east, north to south, an entire floor burning. That's a lot of fire. I don't think we were capable of putting out that much fire in a

building.

My other observation is that the airliners crashing into the building may have weakened the building, but that is not what caused the collapse. What caused the collapse was the intense fire from the jet fuel that continued burning along with combustible materials on multiple floors and the fact that the building was built with a core construction. The floors were supported by the core and also by the skin of the building, the steel outer skin of the building. That's how those floors were supported. So here you have an airliner coming in, one airliner came in straight and hit on an upper floor, that was in the north tower, and it hit probably in the 90s, the floors it hit. The upper 90s it hit. The second plane, which caused the first collapse, as it came into building banked, it banked, so the wings, if you saw the film, the wings hit multiple floors now. Now the amount of floors that were hit were greater because the wings had banked. So then you have the wings going into floors above and below the main fuselage of the plane, and it also hit near the corner and it hit on a lower floor, probably 20 floors below, somewhere in the 80s, in the low 80s, 83rd floor, somewhere along there, 83rd floor,

81st floor. That's where the second plane hit. Now, that's in the south tower and that's the first tower that collapsed. So you have that plane hitting.

Now you have all this intense heat, you have heat probably up even close to 2,000 degrees burning here. Steel joists and steel I-beams, at 1,200 degrees of heat they'll expand nine inches per hundred foot of steel. So per hundred foot of steel, steel will expand nine inches. So you have this expansion going on because they've been subjected between 45 minutes to an hour and a half to heat now. The second tower to collapse was the first one hit. That was an hour and a half after it was hit.

Q. What do you estimate the temperature was at that time?

A. Reaching 2,000 degrees in those towers. So now we're going to have these this steel expanding and also it starts warping and twisting. So once it was weakened to that point, the steel, besides the crash, it was weakened by the fire, which really caused it to collapse, one floor started collapsing into another floor, and that's what caused the collapse. So it was really the fire more than the plane crashing into the building that caused the collapse.

How do we operationally treat that in the future? I don't think we can. I think we restrict our efforts to try to get people out of the building, but we don't have enough water or enough manpower to get up in that building and put out a fire that's that extensive in one of these buildings.

Q. In the period of time?

A. In any period of time. It will burn itself out before. Either the building is going to collapse or it's going to burn itself out. In the Empire State Building, the Empire State Building would not have collapsed. It's different types of construction. It's not core construction. It's masonry, it's columns, it's heavier built. But then, of course, you don't have these big, open spaces. In the Empire State Building it's more compartmentalized.

Q. Right.

A. So a building like the Empire State Building would not have collapsed. You would have had a huge fire there, you would have had a lot of floors burnt out, you would have never put out the fire, it probably would have burnt itself out also, but the building would have stood. This type of construction, I don't think we'd ever be able to put out a fire like this.

We restrict our actions to evacuation rather than trying to put the fire out, and that's the only observation I could make.

MR. McALLISTER: Does anybody else have anything? Okay. It's now 11:48 a.m. on October 2nd, 2001. This concludes the interview with Chief Garcia of the Bureau of Fire Investigation. Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110003

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF MARK STEFFENS

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: I'm McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. We're interviewing Chief Mark Steffens of Division 1, formerly the commanding officer at the Office of Medical Affairs. The date of the interview is October 2nd, 2001. It is now 2:47 p.m. This conversation is taking place in conference room 8E13 at Fire Department headquarters.

I'm also joined by --

MR. CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, fire marshal.

MR. STERACE: Fire Marshal Michael Sterace.

MR. McALLISTER: And Chief Mark Steffens.

Q. Chief Steffens, I'd like to draw your attention to the date of September the 11th, 2001, and I'd like for you, in your own words, to describe your experiences from that day.

A. I normally start work at 9:00, so 8:50 I was still home showering, getting ready for work. I saw what happened on the television going on. I heard what happened. I saw

initially the first tower on fire.

I got dressed as fast as I could. I got into my department vehicle, and I proceeded all the way to the Kosciusko Bridge down the BQE. My next recollection is being on the FDR Drive. I don't remember how I got from the BQE to the FDR Drive.

My next recollection is I'm coming down the FDR Drive. I get down to about the Staten Island ferry terminal, and I couldn't get any further. Civilians were running everywhere. There was smoke in the air, and the white powder was in the air. I think only the first tower had dropped at that point.

Q. Had dropped?

A. The people who were running, they said the first tower had dropped already. So I would imagine this is probably like about -- I'd say somewhere between 9:15 and 9:30, thereabouts, by the time I got into Manhattan.

I abandoned my vehicle at about the Staten Island ferry terminal. I pulled over there, by where they have the chopper pads on the East River. I abandoned my vehicle. I put a

mayday on the radio that I was abandoning my vehicle because I did not have a portable radio with a charged battery at that time.

So I got out. I was on foot. I was heading up South Street to Division 1 on foot. That was as far as I got. Coming down South Street was Jerry Bacchus, who was the ALS coordinator for the EMS command. He picked me up.

Q. He was in a vehicle?

A. He was in a suburban. He had the suburban stocked with medical supplies. He picked me up, because I was on foot at that time. I got in the suburban with Jerry Bacchus. We went down the drive, under the hole, out onto West Street. We got up to about the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

When we got to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, about that point on West Street, there was a Port Authority cop standing there. They were shouting, "The tower's going to come down. The tower's coming down. You've got to get out of here."

Q. What were you able to observe at that

time around there?

A. Black smoke. Black smoke and people running everywhere. A lot of fire apparatus on both sides of West Street. I didn't see any guys, just apparatus. I saw some stretched lines and things like that.

So we continued to drive into the smoke cloud. We got to maybe one block north of where the Battery Tunnel exits onto West Street there, and then, boom, a massive explosion. Right in front of us we saw what looked like a fireball and smoke. It was rolling this way.

I said, "Jerry, we've got to get out of this fucking car." I'm afraid --

Q. That's okay.

A. I'm afraid -- so we bailed out of the truck.

Q. This is your recollection.

A. We bailed out of the suburban. We went underneath it. The thing blew over us. I had my turnout coat on. I put my face in my helmet. The thing blew over us. I felt heat. I felt all kinds of debris and stuff hitting my body.

When I opened my eyes, it was

pitch-black. I closed my eyes again. I was praying. When I opened my eyes a second time -- and it feels like each one of these instances was a long period of time, but I don't know how long it was.

When I opened my eyes a second time, it was like skiing in a blizzard. It was just white, a sea of white, and everything blowing all around. So I felt okay. "Jerry, we've got to get out of here."

We got out from under the vehicle. We got back in the vehicle. We jumped over the divider and started driving back down West Street to the battery. We got to battery -- we put the vehicle up against where that old fortress is right by the Holocaust memorial. There's an old fortress right where the Statue of Liberty ferry terminal is.

Q. Sure.

A. We put the vehicle up against that wall, and each one of us climbed into one of those cubbyholes.

Then there was another it sounded like an explosion and heavy white powder, papers,

flying everywhere. We sat put there for a few minutes. It kind of dissipated. We pulled the vehicle out, right down to the battery. We turned on the emergency lights, and it became a casualty collection point.

Q. Had you been in radio contact from the time you were on West Street?

A. The last radio contact was when I maydayed when I bailed out of the vehicle. No other radio contact after that point.

Q. There wasn't a radio in the suburban?

A. There was a radio in the suburban, but I don't recall that we were using it. We were running at that point. We were coming down West Street. One of the EMS guys was running. He was just dressed in blue, covered in soot, bleeding from under the face like this. We grabbed him. We threw him in the back of the suburban. We pulled down to West Street.

When the smoke and all of that dissipated, we turned on the lights. It became a casualty collection point there. All the EMS people were running down West Street. They collected by our vehicle.

All kinds of vessels, barges, little small pleasure craft, everything was just pulling up to the dock, and we were putting civilians -- there was one police lieutenant -- I don't know his name. He did a fantastic job. And we just evacuated as many civilians onto these boats and sent them to Jersey.

My guys established that casualty collection point. We were doing eye washes and boo-boos and giving out whatever masks we had to civilians and to cops like that. We were there for what seemed like a couple of hours at the battery until the point there was nobody left, just the emergency service people.

At that point I became aware of an EMS operation that was going on in the Staten Island ferry terminal. So I gathered up my guys, and we walked on foot to the Staten Island ferry terminal, where I was reunited with the other folks that established the casualty collection point at the Staten Island ferry terminal there.

I was there for a couple of hours, and then we were all directed to report to the command post which was at Chambers and West.

That was early afternoon. We regrouped and were given various assignments. I was sent to command the Chelsea operation.

Q. So you think that when you were on the drive the smoke you saw was probably from one of the aircraft and not from a building?

A. No, because it wasn't heavy smoke. You could smell fire. I know the smell of fire, and I have been around long enough. So I recognized the smell of fire. But there wasn't all of that debris or anything flying around in the air. There was just people, people everywhere, people running.

I got to the point where I couldn't go any further with my vehicle because there were people in the streets, on the drive. So that's when I decided to bail out of the vehicle, figuring I could make better time on foot.

Q. Sure.

A. My thought was let me go to Division 1, group whatever I could so we could go to the incident site.

Q. When you were on West Street approaching the World Trade Center site, do you

think that's when the first tower that came down?

A. I think it was the second tower came down, although I don't know for sure.

Q. Was there a lot of debris while you were still going on West Street?

A. No.

Q. Powder?

A. No. A lot of fire apparatus, a lot of engine companies like that.

Q. The street was clean?

A. It seemed wet. There were stretched lines. I didn't see my guys. This seemed weird to me, all this apparatus but no guys. There were lines stretched on the ground but no guys.

Q. So it was clear while you were going up West Street?

A. Yes. That's when we heard this massive explosion and I saw this thing rolling towards us. It looked like a fireball and then thick, thick black smoke.

Q. Is it possible the second one occurred while you were in the battery?

A. The second one had to have occurred while we were at the battery, because that's when

all this white stuff started flying around.

Q. That sounds right.

A. But the time line -- I don't know when these things actually occurred in real time. I was home at 8:50. I had to be in the car before 9:00. I was just about dressed. I was shaving, putting on the finishing touches, when I saw the thing on the news. I ran to the car. You can look at my unit history in the CAD system, see what time I logged on and proceeded down there. It took me a while to get down the BQE.

Q. It seems like there was about a 45-minute period, between about 9:45 a.m. and 10:30.

A. 8:45.

Q. No, I'm talking about where the both the buildings came down. I'm not entirely accurate on that, but that's what it seems like to me, at the time.

A. It seemed like the time frame between what we saw on West Street and what occurred when we were at the battery, it seemed like they happened close together. But when I think about the things that occurred during that period of

time, it couldn't have been close together because too many things happened. But it seemed like they happened very close to one another.

The whole thing seemed like it happened very quickly from getting no further with the vehicle so let me just pull this car over and bail out, what I can do on foot. I didn't get more than a block or two -- you know where the fire station is on South Street?

Q. Yes.

A. That's where I was. Jerry picked me up right there. We went right into the hole, came around up onto West Street. I didn't know what the hell -- when the Port Authority cop tried to stop us -- he waved and said, "No, the building's going to come down."

At that point I wasn't listening to any cop. My thought was I've got to go there. My guys are there. Then boom and the cloud. I didn't want to stay in the vehicle. I was afraid that the windows were going to blow out. My reflex action was to get underneath it.

Q. How did the vehicle survive when you got out from under the vehicle?

A. Just covered with soot. It didn't blowout any windows or anything like that. I guess we weren't close enough. So the vehicle survived. It had a lot of powder and stuff on the windshield like that. At that point I was just grateful to be able to get in and get the hell out of there.

Q. Is there any follow-ups? I want to know, did you see anybody on the way that was present that you knew besides the guy that picked you up, Bacchus? Anybody else? Did you see anybody else from the Fire Department?

A. No. No, I grabbed the one EMS guy. I never saw him before. I remember his name is Badillo, Benjamin Badillo, an EMT in the Bronx. He just came out of the cloud, poor kid, covered, bleeding down the face. I grabbed him and said get in this truck, and the three of us bailed out to the battery.

Q. Any follow-ups?

Do you have any other observations, Mark?

A. When I went back to recover my vehicle, I recovered my vehicle and caught up with Chief

Basile and Chief Villani. We were going to go look for their vehicles. We drove out onto West Street. I came from the Statue of Liberty ferry terminal. My car was on the east side, so it was fine, it was okay.

We drove back down again. We weren't able to go down the hole. We went onto West Street. When we pulled onto West Street, it was just like nothing I've ever seen in my life. All the apparatus, the fire trucks, everything all blown out, the windows were all blown out, body parts lying on the street, mud, soot, people walking around dazed.

I saw one proby -- he had a proby on the helmet -- by himself, walking by himself. I tried to get him to come with us. He said, "No, no, I've got to go back. I've got to go back." We washed his eyes. I gave him something to clean his face. Then he turned around and went back into the cloud. I never saw him again.

There were lines stretched --

Q. Do you recall his name?

A. No. Young, young guy. He had a proby on the front of the helmet.

Q. Any numbers on there?

A. I can't remember. I can't remember at all. I didn't want him to go back, and he wouldn't listen to me. I wasn't going to hold him back. He walked off.

Q. That was after the second or after the first collapse?

A. After the second. He just walked back into that big, black cloud.

That's as much as I recall.

Q. I appreciate your time today. Thank you very much. Thanks, Chief.

A. I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help.

MR. McALLISTER: It's 3:01 p.m., and the interview is now concluded.

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File No. 9110004

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MANUEL DELGADO

Interview Date: October 2, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McALISTER: This is Kevin McAlister from the Bureau of Administration. It is October 2nd at 2:03 p.m. We're in conference room 8E13 at Fire Department Headquarters, and in a moment we will begin interviewing Paramedic Manuel Delgado. I'm here today with...

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

MR. McALISTER: Now we'll start with Paramedic Manuel Delgado. He's assigned to the Office of Medical Affairs.

Q. Drawing your attention to September the 11th, could you describe where you were working that day and when you became aware of the World Trade Center incident?

A. It must have been about five to 9:00. I got a call from Joe Farrell, who is a DOH rep from the Bureau of Emergency Services, the Department of Health, calling me saying what's going on at the World Trade Center? I had no knowledge of it. I looked immediately to the CAD, the computer-aided dispatch system, in the computer. I noticed that there was a

1040, a plane into the World Trade Center. I called him back and advised him of such.

At this point, one of the doctors that was here, Dr. Cherson, I advised him of the fact that there was a 1040 going on and maybe, you know, it's part of our response matrix.

Q. What's a 1040?

A. An airplane into a building.

So I called Commissioner Clair, who at that time was up in Albany in a CMAC meeting, let him know what was going on, and I told him I would get back to him as soon as I got to the scene. Myself, Dr. Cherson, and we met up with Dr. Guttenberg, who is the EMS fellow in the office downstairs, us three proceeded to get in Dr. Cherson's car and drove across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Obviously, when we were driving across the Brooklyn Bridge, it was very obvious that there was something serious going on at the World Trade Center. There was a gaping black hole. It seemed like the upper floors, and I don't know exactly -- now I know through press reports what floor more or less was hit, but it looked to me like the top ten floors were fully engulfed in smoke at this time.

Q. How many of the towers were burning; one or two?

A. One. Only one at this time.

So we went across the Brooklyn Bridge, had a little trouble navigating through the traffic, and finally arrived at the corner of I believe it's West Broadway. Let me look on this map real quick. West Broadway and Vesey.

As soon as we arrived, 84, a massive explosion goes off, and at this point we didn't know what it was. We thought it was a secondary explosion. We didn't know that it was a second plane. In fact, I didn't know there was a second plane until much later in the evening.

An explosion goes off. I immediately tell everyone to get out of the car and hide somewhere, go underneath something. It's interesting because, as we were there, there was a police car, I guess, on Vesey, on the corner there, and some debris comes down from whatever this explosion was, at the time we really didn't know, and it just crushes it, I mean, crushes the top front of the police car, which really scared me at that point.

Q. Could you tell if it was airplane parts?

A. It looked like an airplane part afterward, yes, it did. It looked like part of an engine. It was pretty big. It was probably the size of the hood because it kind of hit it, bounced, and then rolled off.

So then at that point we were approached by a police officer holding one of his cops with a massive evulsion of the forehead. I need the car, I need the car.

Q. What does that mean in layman's terms?

A. An evulsion is the scalp sort of like was peeled back. So there was some heavy bleeding. It was worse actually than the injury. She still had her consciousness. He says, I need the car, I need the car.

So Dr. Cherson proceeded to West Street to the temporary command center at that time. Me, the cop and the cop who was injured and Dr. Guttenberg got into the car and drove this cop that was injured down to Beekman. We drove the cop to Beekman, dropped her off. At that point people were being mobilized at the hospital itself.

Dr. Guttenberg and myself then jumped back in the car and went back to the site.

Q. When you say you went back to the site, where exactly did you go at that point?

A. Well, we couldn't get back to where we were on Vesey and West Broadway, so we ended up on -- now, let me look on the map here. Up further. Broadway itself, Broadway between, I would say, Fulton and Ann Street, I guess it is. Fulton and Ann, yes. We kind of left the car there in the middle of the street and proceeded to walk down to the West Street command, which was a command post at this time.

When I got back to the command post, I was able to secure -- because everyone's cell phones seemed to be dead at that point. Luckily, one of the lieutenants there handed me a cell phone. I was able to call Commissioner Clair, who was still in Albany, telling him at this point we had a very, very serious incident going on, and that I don't know how he and the other physicians who were up there could get themselves down here as quickly as possible because this was a major terrorist attack. So he told me that basically the state police were securing a chopper for him and the other two physicians to fly them down. That was my last communication with him.

So we were at West command for a while.

Dr. Cherson moved forward to I believe it was in another command post. I don't know what building this was. At this point it becomes really crazy.

Q. Can I ask you a detail question before you get there?

A. Yes.

Q. The West command, I see it located here on the map roughly at the corner of -- what is that, Vesey and West?

A. Yes. That looks look Vesey and West, I guess?

Q. Yes. That's the north bridge, I think?

A. Right. We were just in front of the north bridge.

Q. Could you describe, were you on the east side of West Street, the west side?

A. We were on the west -- well, no. I would say the east side of West Street. I guess, on the middle, there's like a barrier here, sort of like a potted, planted barrier before you get to the financial district area. So we were all standing there. The vehicles or the staging, which is the area where the ambulance was set up, was back here on West Street.

Q. Who was with you at that point in time?

A. At that point, Dr. Cherson was with me. I saw Commissioner Drury showed up at the scene. He was with us there for a little while. He was looking for Commissioner Gregory. Captain Jace Pinkus from Communications was there and an assorted amount of EMS Lieutenants and Fire Operations people were around. I remember at one point seeing the Mayor. I saw Commissioner Von Essen. Really, at that point, I really lose sight of what was going on because there was an horrific site. I mean, people were starting to jump or fall from the top.

Q. You were able to observe that?

A. Yes, definitely. We saw them jumping from here down and that was really horrific. There was nothing you could do for them. We wanted to go in after them and they basically told us don't because it's very dangerous at this point.

Somewhere along the line Dr. Cherson was told that -- and I don't know who relayed this information to him. I guess it's Vesey command, but actually it was on Church between -- I was closer to Cortlandt and I don't know what street this is. Dey Street?

Q. Dey Street.

A. Actually, that's where the command post was,

a triage command, and we were told that they were getting hammered. So what happened was that myself --

Q. That was a staging point for medics and EMTs?

A. Yes, right. Exactly. That's where mainly all the medics and EMTs were starting to treat people as they were exiting the building. So myself -- well, first, before that, Dr. Cherson tells Dr. Guttenberg to go back to the car and get the weapons of mass destruction kit, which is basically the TUPAM, the atropine and the narcotics that we carry in case of a biological incident. That's what immediately we started thinking. So Dr. Guttenberg goes back to the car.

At this point, also, at the north bridge, we ran into Dr. Asaeda, who got down there on his own response. So Dr. Asaeda was going to set up a command over in the lobby of OEM. What building is that, 7? Tower 7?

Q. 7 World Trade Center.

A. 7 World Trade Center. So Dr. Guttenberg and Dr. Asaeda were to set up their command -- there were already some medics and EMTs in the lobby of 7 World Trade Center. So they were going to set up their own triage and command center there. Dr. Cherson and

myself then walked back to the Vesey command. But at this point it wasn't right on Fulton. I remember Cortlandt more than I do Fulton, although it might have been. I don't know. I remember the opening of the building and seeing the north tower right in front of me. That I remember very clearly.

We were getting hammered with patients. At one point we wanted to move forward and again we were told do not. Dr. Cherson made it very clear, don't go any more forward because of the bodies and everything else that's coming down.

Q. So now, just stopping you at that point, both of the towers are still standing?

A. Both of the towers are still standing, yes.

Q. You're looking basically straight at the north tower?

A. Right.

Q. You're looking across the plaza of the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, right, and people are exiting this way in droves. I mean, there was just a stream of people running, running, running, and basically at this point our triage was, if you're walking, keep walking, and if people are being carried or people were falling, we

would move forward, and we moved forward as much as in between towers I believe this was 4 and 5, buildings 4 and 5.

Q. That's right.

A. I know we went in there and helped some people come out, some lady, who she ended up in the pictures, in a red dress, who was extremely burnt. There was another guy who had to have second and third degrees over about 80 percent of his body, and he was carried out halfway and I guess collapsed or someone dropped him and just ran. We picked him up and started bringing him out.

At this point we were getting an influx of equipment, LSU unit, like the logistical support units who carry the oxygen and all that stuff. They were coming into the area to give us oxygen, to give us blankets, and then units were also coming in. But we were getting inundated with patients. We had more patients than we had ambulances. We were stuffing four and five people in an ambulance at this point. I mean, it was just to get people out of there with minimal treatment. There was nothing you could do.

Q. At that point in time, did you see anybody you knew either from the fire or the EMS side working

the ambulances?

A. Yes.

Q. Who did you see?

A. Quite a few people. There was Carlos Lillo, who I later found out he's deceased.

Q. Where did you last see Carlos?

A. Carlos was with me and it's interesting because Carlos always had a smile on his face, and Carlos has been around for a while, and I remember at one point on Church we had like four or five critically, critically ill people who were laid out and there were people still streaming out, and this is after, where we're moving back and forth trying to get people in and out, I remember turning and seeing Carlos with his helmet and tears pouring down his eyes, and at first I thought maybe this guy is overwhelmed, maybe he needs to get out of here, you know? I go to him, Carlos, what's the matter? What's going on? He says, my wife's in there. I said, listen, man. This is God's will. You've got to help me with the people. Snap out of it. We've got a lot of patients. You've got to help me here. So he does and he begins to do what he has to do, which is to help me treat people and start sorting who is bad and who isn't.

Now, time, I have no idea, time factor here. I don't know what is five minutes, what is two minutes, what took ten minutes. I know that a Lieutenant showed up with the LSU unit, again, and says, I need help getting oxygen out of the back of this vehicle. I remember seeing oxygen tanks in a milk crate.

By the way, the other people who were here were Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck, who is from the EMS operations, Captain Janice Olszewski. I remember seeing -- Dr. Cherson was there with me. I lose track of who was there really. I mean, I remember Lillo because it sort of stuck out in my mind that this man was crying so hard and like it kind of -- he was out of place because I was wondering for a slight moment, I said, what's he doing here? He's a Queens unit. But at this point I figured everyone was being brought in and who knows what the heck is going on.

Q. Did you lose track of him then or did you see him?

A. Well, it's interesting because I didn't lose track of him because I was concerned. I was concerned of the fact that he was overwhelmed, I think, by the fact that his wife was in the building.

Oh, you know who else I saw there? Gabe

Depena.

Q. Delapena?

A. Delapena, yes. I saw him also there because at one point he goes, Manny, Manny, what's going on? He's another one that was searching for his wife because I believe his wife was in the tower.

Q. I think that's right.

A. Yes. But I tried to keep my eye on Carlos as much as I can. I'm dealing with the people that are coming out. There's some other people there that I don't really know their name. I know their faces. A black gentleman that works down for operations also. In fact, there's a picture of them both treating that lady that I'm talking about with the red dress in one of the Time magazines that I forgot his name. It will come to me in a minute. But anyway, we're treating.

I remember at one point or another this Lieutenant coming in and asking for help to get the oxygen out of the vehicle. I go to help him, and at that point I remember not seeing Carlos, and I don't know if he was there or not there. But immediately once I put the oxygen down, I hear the rumble, and I heard a rumble that we thought was another plane. That's what immediately everyone said, there's a plane

coming, there's another plane coming.

So we all looked up and what we saw was tower, I guess, 2, the south tower, begin to do this. The top kind of did this and there was a horrendous rumble.

Q. Now, your hand is showing that it's kind of tilted in one direction. What direction did it tilt?

A. It was tilting towards us, so it had been to be tilting eastward.

Q. East?

A. Maybe southeast. I'm not sure because at this point it's total pandemonium. At that point we hear the rumble and, you know, this is it. I figure I'm dead. I thought this tower was going to topple. So I start to run. I remember running -- I don't know which way I ran. I don't even know what street I ended up on to be very honest with you. I ran -- it must have been either this or Fulton. One of these two.

Q. Dey Street or Fulton Street?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know if there was a church next to you?

A. I don't know. I know there were stores up the block. So I start to run --

Q. So you definitely headed east; you're just not sure down what street?

A. Yes. I didn't want to go west. I figured let me go east. There's a subway station somewhere here, so it may have been Fulton maybe?

Q. Yes, it was. It's a major station there.

A. I remember seeing that and I remember saying I'm not going down there because I don't want to be suffocated, I don't want to be suffocated. But as I ran, I got knocked down by it seemed like even someone punched me in the back, like a blast it seemed. It just kind of picked me up and knocked me down. I scraped my elbow, I twisted my ankle, my pants got all ripped, my glasses got blown off and the helmet came off. I get up quickly and all I can see now is just -- it had to be on Fulton -- the blast, this dark cloud coming at us, at me anyway, because I don't even know who's around me at this point. You kind of lose all -- I lost all track of time. I lost basically all body movements and I was going on, and then we're engulfed in the smoke, which was horrendous.

One thing I remember, it was hot. The smoke was hot and that scared me. I've treated in 18 years many, many people with smoke inhalation, and I know the

consequences of inhaling heat. So I got really scared. I tried to put my T-shirt over me. That didn't work. I couldn't see because my glasses were shot. I couldn't see because my eyes were irritated. Like one guy said, it was like breathing cotton balls, that's what it felt like, because your mouth was just full of this shit and your nose, everywhere. I'm running -- not running because I'm walking now. I'm afraid. I'm thinking in my mind I'm going to die of suffocation or somebody's going to run me over, because you couldn't see your hand in front of you. That's how dark it got. I walked into one or two poles.

Then out of -- I don't know. It was God's miracle, basically. I don't even know how I ended up there. I was on the corner and, as I was telling them just before you walked in, I heard a banging and I walked towards the banging and there was, as later I found out, it was a Fire Marshal and a cop, a detective in plainclothes, who were banging, trying to break the door down in one of these computer stores on the corner there.

Q. Do you know the marshal's name?

A. No. He did take our names down, so he should have a record of it. I haven't been able to find out

who he is. So they're banging on the door, and I remember telling the cop, you know, you have a fucking gun, you have a fucking gun, use it, use it, we're [redacted]

Q. Sure.

A. That's exactly what he does. In between his coughing, he takes out his gun and the first bullet doesn't break it. Second one, the glass comes down. It must have been a thick glass. We were able to get inside.

Q. So he fired off two shots?

A. Two shots, yes. Then inside there's, I guess, like a gate, sort of like the gate that we have downstairs in that store, an inside gate. So we see that and we're like, oh, shit. So, finally, us three, we hold it up and we let the civilians get underneath. I think there were one or two of them. There weren't a whole lot of them. Or maybe three. I'm not even sure at this point. They go under and we hold it for each other and we go under and we go into the store. We walk up some escalators to the second floor, which looked to be like a computer store. We started looking for water or anything to wet ourselves to clean off our

faces because we're all coughing and hacking. We find a water fountain and we all basically drink from that and wait for the smoke to clear a bit.

Q. Is the smoke in the building, though?

A. Yes. And the smoke alarms are going off and who knows what else is going off. There's smoke but it's not that bad, though, so you could see. It's a haze. It's sort of like when you're in a club and you see the haze, you know, it's hazy, it's not necessarily black, pitch, acrid smoke that was outside. I would say about five or six, seven minutes go by while we're inside. It seemed like an eternity, you know what I mean? So we told the civilians, look, just head towards the water. Leave. Get out of the store. Go towards the water and keep walking. Just keep walking. Don't go this way.

The three of us proceed -- and I don't even know what street it is. I think it was Fulton. It might have been Dey Street. I don't even know what street it was. We start heading back. I believe the store was probably on Broadway. I think I made it that far up. I'm not even sure, though. It had to be because it couldn't have been on Church.

Q. It wasn't J & R was it?

A. No. I know where J & R is over by City Hall. No, I wasn't that far. It had to be around Broadway. So I remember we go outside and I lose track of where they went and I start heading down I guess it's Fulton Street and I heard the rumble again. So now it's the second tower coming down.

Q. Now, just prior to that, had the air cleared outside?

A. Yes. It had cleared to the point where you could see. It was still smoky. There was still a heavy smoke condition in the area and dust, I mean, and papers and debris and God knows what else was in the air. But it looks even like snow sometimes because that's kind of coming down from everywhere.

Q. Were there any people out on the street at that point?

A. There were people walking around, yes, in a daze. It looked like a moon landscape really. The lights were on, cars were driving by, and then more dust would be kicked up. I remember walking down and then I heard the second rumble, and I don't even know where it was now. I'm not even sure if I went back to Church or what. But we heard the second rumble, turned right around and started running again and went -- and

I remember just going -- I don't even know what street. Now that I look at this map, I don't know what street I was at to be honest with you. I don't know if I got back to Broadway or -- I know I ran backwards, not backwards, but I turned around and started running back up again and went into there was this liquor store -- not a liquor store. It was a clothing store and there were some people in there already, and I got in there, and there was also, I believe, another Fire Marshal in that store. I don't who he was. I think he was a Fire Marshal. I'm not sure because he wasn't a cop. We were able to use the phone in there to try to call out, but whoever I was calling, I was trying to call some of my people but their cell phones weren't working. That was it.

Then, at that point, five, fifteen minutes went by, I guess, before the smoke cleared again. There were very few people in the street at this point. I ended up on I guess it must be Fulton over by Beekman Hospital. There's a little triangular square. It's not even a park. It's like a little square. I ended up there and I ended up running into Dr. Cherson. That's the first time I saw him since the incident went down. Then we ran into Bruce Medjuck,

Lieutenant Medjuck, and Bruce had a radio, because Alan's radio was blown off of his pocket or whatever and I don't know where it went, and he told us that we were assembling down at the ferry. That was going to be the main place to try to get people treated there because we weren't going to get around to West Street or to Chambers Street where they were trying to set up another command post because both buildings at this point were down.

So that's what we did. We walked -- I don't know where we walked, but we walked downtown all the way to the ferry terminal, and at that point Chief Basile was there with his aide and some other people were there and we started to get ready for mass casualties to see how many people were coming and who we could try to help. But there were no patients. Nobody was coming.

Q. Not a single patient came to the ferry terminal?

A. A few scratches, bumps, bruises, people who had already left the building way before, some people with some difficulty breathing, one guy with a broken ankle, another one with some trauma to the chest, but nothing life threatening, that was the big thing.

Nothing gory. I mean, they were walking wounded for the most part, and that's all we treated.

So a bunch of physicians came from surrounding hospitals, nurses. We got all our resources together, established a critical and a noncritical area, and that was it.

Q. How long was that area set up?

A. Well, from the time we got there, they had already started to move the benches to cordon off the area, and I guess within 20 to 30 minutes the site was set up to accept critical and noncritical. Then our resources started coming in more rapidly, so we were able to get a lot more stuff like extra equipment, blankets, cots. So we had about 20 or 30 critical areas to treat and Dr. Cherson at that point was the Chief medical officer there and started assigning physicians and nurses who were there and medics to certain areas. Then at the street level we had a staging area where the ambulances were being mustered and somebody was taking care of that area. I don't know who he was, some Lieutenant. But nothing ever came.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. We stayed there until about, I guess, 4:00

o'clock, and later on I found out this happened about 10:00, I guess, when this thing collapsed. It must have been about 10:00.

Q. Roughly, yes.

A. So it must have been about 4:00 o'clock. What we did is we found out that they were setting up a command post on Chambers and West. So we said let's go back and try to find Dr. Cherson's car, see if it's still viable, which we did. We went back to Broadway where it was between Fulton and Dey. Is that Dey Street or whatever it is? There it was in the middle of the street. Amongst all the dirt and everything else that was there, the car was there. It was full of dust on the inside. We ended up driving to Battalion 8 first to wash it off and try to clean off some of the dirt and dust that was all caked onto the vehicle, and then we went to Chambers and West, where the command post was set up, stood there for a little while, and then building 7 collapsed.

We were very far and at this point I remember being there and they said it's collapsing and I didn't even give a shit anymore because, first of all, I was far enough away from it that I kind of knew it's not going to freaking hurt me and, really, I don't know if

I was just in a mood that I just didn't give a shit or I felt kind of safe. People started running back and I was just...

At this point my leg started to hurt me, which is interesting. All through the day it didn't hurt me. But I started feeling a tinge in my ankle.

So building 7 came down, the OEM building, and then they moved back forward and the command post was set up and we started hearing of the casualties. That was sad. That was sad because a lot of my friends are dead. A lot of them. On both sides. And that's a shame. That's a shame. But basically that was it.

I'd say about 9:30 at night, I hitched a ride with some vehicle that was coming to Brooklyn and they dropped me off on Tillary and Flatbush and I hobbled in here. They gave me clothes and stuff and told me to take a shower and that was it. I came back to work the next day, still not understanding, still not really -- which was interesting because, when I got home that night, I got to see the incident. I lived it, but I had never seen it, because I had never seen the planes hit or anything. We thought they were bombs going off. We didn't know. We were being told later on that the Sears Tower was hit and the Pentagon, and you hear

all this shit, but you don't know. Actually, when I got home that night, that's when I got to see the actual footage of the plane hitting. It was horrendous. More so when this thing collapsed. That noise? I can never forget it. And the people jumping, the people hitting. I mean, 18 years I've been a medic in this city. I've been through two plane crashes. I have never seen the destruction.

Another thing I've got to tell you is, when we first got there, when we were walking down Vesey towards West, there was a ton of -- or I could say a lot of body parts and like baggage, clothes and stuff, along Vesey.

Q. From one of the airplanes.

A. Yes, from one of the airplanes. I don't know if it was the first or the second because this was after the second one had hit. So it could have been from either one. But I remember walking --

Q. Where was it, though? On Vesey?

A. Right in front of the OEM, because on the OEM building side there was a scaffolding and I remember I was walking underneath there. We kind of felt that there was some protection underneath the scaffolding. I remember as we were walking down, after we had

dropped that person off, when we were walking down Vesey, I remember probably between -- what's this?

Q. Church?

A. No. Probably between Broadway and West, I remember seeing body parts.

Q. That's West Broadway.

A. Yes, West Broadway and West on Vesey. I remember seeing body parts and I remember saying to myself where the hell did these freaking body parts come from? Where are these coming from? There was a few. I mean, some recognizable, some that didn't look -- like they were probably charred, and also like luggage stuff, like we saw a lot of shoes, even some luggage, airplane parts, engine. There was an engine on the left here. If you remember, building 7, there used to be that overpass over by building 7. Just in front of it.

Q. The concourse.

A. Just up before that, there was like a little plaza?

Q. Right.

A. Right there, there was like a big engine part. It seemed like a whole engine was right there, lying right there in the middle of the street.

Q. Covered like the way the jet looks?

A. Yes. In fact, you could see the fan. I remember that because I could see -- now, it wasn't the whole engine because the engine is big, but I know the front part of it, it looked like the whole engine because I could see the fan, and that's what stood out in my mind. There was an airplane tire also there and then these bodies and luggage from the thing because there were shoes everywhere also. Some shoes had what looked like blood in it, other shoes didn't, other shoes were burnt, and this was just a first impression.

I guess the severity of this whole incident kind of struck me as I was walking to West Street. I knew that this was a serious, very serious event going on, because in my lifetime I have never seen that much destruction, that much carnage. Never. Never in my life have I seen something like that. Everything from bombings that I've been to, to airplane crashes at LaGuardia, I've never seen something to this magnitude, and it kind of woke you up to say the least.

Then over here people, you know, the guys were going into the building. I mean, it was horrible. It really was. It really was. And that was

it. I'm here today because I think the grace of God. [redacted]. I had a few patients who I wish I could have carried away, but you didn't have time. You didn't have time to think. I don't know where Lillo went. I don't know if he went this way or he went that way. Where did he go? I don't know. It's interesting because, of the seven or eight people who were there at this location, none of us ended up in the same place. It's sort of like roaches and you turn the light on, you know what I mean? Everyone scattered. Wherever you saw or you thought there was an opening, that's where you went. Obviously, no one went towards the building, but we all scattered in different directions.

We eventually ended up meeting after the second explosion, three of us met up here, but I didn't see a lot of the people that were with me until two, three days later. I got word that they were okay. For instance, Dr. Guttenberg and Dr. Asaeda, who were at 7 World Trade Center, they got trapped in there and had to like climb in and out and get out because that building also became very damaged supposedly and they were there. We thought they were dead. I guess he was in an area where Commissioner Tierney might have been,

I believe. I think she was in 7 also.

So it's just the grace of God. I mean, there was a tremendous loss, but I think that more people survived than really should have to be honest with you with the destruction that occurred there. I mean, you guys have been to collapses. You know what I'm talking about. You have a three-story building collapse, you know the destruction that occurs there. Magnitude that now by a hundred freaking stories coming down on your head.

Q. And by two.

A. Yes. And two of them. So it was the grace of God that any of us that are alive are here, truly it is, because it just should not have been. Luckily and unluckily, I guess, the building pancaked. But if that building toppled, there ain't no way. It took less than ten seconds for that blast of air to knock me down because I remember saying to myself, I got ten seconds to hide, thinking that I may have that long. I don't know why it came into my mind, ten seconds, but I figured I got ten seconds, and I could only maybe have run 50, 60 yards in that time period, and it just knocked me over.

Q. Just the force of the air?

A. Yes. It just knocked me over and just threw me, and that was it. I thought that something had hit me. I thought like a piece of metal or something had hit me, and there was no metal, because when I turned around, I saw the blast of black air coming at us, at me anyway, and that was it. That's it. That's the story.

MR. McALISTER: Do you guys have any follow-ups?

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: No.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: No follow-up for me either.

MR. McALISTER: I appreciate your time.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

MR. McALISTER: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: No problem. Thank you.

MR. McALISTER: It's now 2:35 p.m. and we're going to conclude the interview.

File No. 911005

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DR. MICHAEL GUTTENBERG

Interview Date: October 2, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. MC ALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 2, 2001, at 1510 hours. We are here with Dr. Michael Guttenberg from the Office of Medical Affairs.

Also with me are --

MR. CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal.

MR. STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

Q. Dr. Guttenberg, we'd like to draw your attention to September 11, and in your words, we'd like you to describe what you experienced on that day.

A. Okay. Actually, I was just coming in to the office and was on line waiting for breakfast when the pager went off for the assignment for the World Trade Center.

I picked up the cell phone and got in touch with Dr. Shearson and Manny Delgado from the office, who were also leaving to respond, as well. I met them in the parking at MetroTech, and we proceeded to respond. I don't recall the exact street, but we went over the Brooklyn Bridge, and as we were about one block away from the assignment, there was an extraordinary loud explosion.

There were people starting to evacuate from the area, and then we noticed the tower that was burning -- and as we were one block away from the assignment, we heard an extraordinarily loud explosion, and with that, many more people went running in the opposite direction, at which point there was, I guess, a few seconds of radio silence, and then somebody came over the air and said, "A second plane just hit the other tower." At that point --

Q. Can I talk for a second? I apologize.

As you were coming over the Brooklyn Bridge, do you recall approximately what time it was?

A. 48 -- I'm going to say it was approximately -- the second plane hit at what, 9 -- I don't recall the exact time.

Q. Roughly 9:10, I believe.

A. It was 9:10? So we were coming over the Brooklyn Bridge. Had to be about just a couple of minutes after nine, five after nine.

Q. What were you able to observe at that point on the Brooklyn Bridge?

A. From the Brooklyn Bridge and actually from Flatbush Avenue and Tillary, as we were going towards the Brooklyn Bridge, we noticed the tower that had been

hit, and the upper floors were -- well, we could see flames and a large amount of smoke billowing from that one tower, and that's all that we observed from a distance.

Couldn't see much else, and at that point, actually, it was picking up the cell phone and attempting to start making some, you know, notifications and just that this was a real assignment.

Q. And what did you notice from the time you were on the Brooklyn Bridge until the moment you alluded to a few seconds ago, about the second plane hitting?

Could you describe what you observed from the streets?

A. I was actually -- I was in the back seat of the car, so I didn't see anything above me per se without having my head out the window, which it wasn't.

What we noticed was actually a lot of people of various assortments. Most people in suits, people on their way to work, being -- and in a somewhat orderly fashion, being evacuated.

Everybody was sort of between the traffic

department and the police was trying to pull everybody away from the -- away from that area. The buildings were evacuating and people -- the streets were packed with people, all -- most of which were attempting to move in the opposite direction from the towers.

Like I said, I don't recall the exact street. Manny was driving, and we were coming down that one block. I wasn't looking up, and just out of nowhere was this tremendously loud explosion.

The truth of the matter was, we didn't see the other plane coming in. I thought it was a second explosion from the first plane, and then it was some radio silence for just a couple of seconds. I guess people were kind of floored by what they just saw, and then there was somebody keyed up on the radio, from the EMS citywide radio, that said that was a second airplane, and then at that point we were within a block.

As we were actually coming down -- and I'm going to presume, but don't hold me to this, it was possibly -- it was actually one of the side streets, and I just don't recall.

At that point, we were getting ready to actually park the car a couple of blocks away, and we

got out of the car, and we were approached actually by a couple of police officers who were in plainclothes, one of which was holding her partner up, was holding her partner, and she was bleeding from the forehead and had some other assorted injuries, but was walking and was just screaming, "Just take me to the hospital."

So Allen, Dr. Shearson, got out of the car, started to proceed up to what was at that point the designated command post, and myself, and Manny and this other -- and the two police officers, we threw them in the back of the car and brought them over to New York downtown, and then we proceeded back to the incident site.

Q. Do you recall the injured officer's name?

A. No, we didn't even get that far. It was about a one to two-minute ride. I was holding direct pressure, talking to her. It was a female officer, who had a laceration across the forehead. We pulled up to New York downtown. There were people already outside some of the -- and we assisted her in, and we just left.

Q. Did she say how she received that injury?

A. From something flying, flying off, you know, off the building, and Manny was probably better off at

this. I'm not totally familiar with this area, but Manny proceeded back to the incident location.

Once again, at that point, there was a greater urgency on the part of the police to move everybody out of the area, and --

Q. Were both buildings still standing at this point?

A. At this point, yes, both buildings were very much standing. We parked the car, and I don't recall what street it was on. Myself and Manny proceeded up to the command post, and at this point actually we walked -- we probably -- that is what I was going to say. We probably parked on Church, because we walked -- I remember we walked down Vesey past Building No. 7 and some other buildings and went to the initial EMS command post, myself and Manny Delgado.

We met up again with Dr. Shearson, and Dr. Asaeda at this point was also meeting us on the scene, and the rest of the EMS operations were commencing from there. I, at that point then went back to the car and grabbed the poison antidote kit out of the car, not knowing what to expect or what was next, came back to the site, and at that point, you know, the decision was made we were going to split up a little bit, and there

were going to be some forward triage and treatment areas.

Q. Before you go forward, could I backtrack for one second?

A. Yes.

Q. When you went back to the car to get the kit, could you describe what the conditions were like during the walk both to the car and back, anything you may have observed?

A. It was actually -- the streets were, at least the walk down Vesey Street, the street was remarkably empty. The only people that were out there were some firefighters, police, FBI-type agents.

There were some fire trucks, which were unattended by and large, and some hose line, and there was some meager attempts at putting up some police tape. The other thing that I noticed, like I said, and it was very few -- they were, like, few to no civilians at this point, and it was really an effort to move people forward.

The other thing that was actually evident, though, is what appeared to be some plane parts, like some circular pieces of a plane, and lots of shoes. I don't know if that was women jumping out of their --

jumping out of their heels to run, but there were -- just impressed me there were no -- you know, there were no injuries on the street at that point, but there was lots of shoes all over the place and plane parts. It was the same thing in both directions.

At that point, like I said, I went back to the command post.

Q. Just one other follow-up. I'm sorry.

Did you see any of the unit designation numbers on the engines that may have parked out there? Do you recall any of the numbers?

A. No, no. The only thing that was kind of bizarre actually -- and I don't recall if it was -- which direction I was walking at the time, but actually I think Chief Nigro was walking down Vesey Street at this point, too, and he was actually by himself, but he was walking down the street somewhere.

The -- went back to the command post, and at that point we decided to split up a little bit. Allen, Dr. Shearson, and Manny went off somewhere, and myself and Dr. Asaeda proceeded to the loading lock of World Trade Center No. 7, which would be pre-

Q. No. 7 is on -- this is No. 7, here, I believe. Where is the loading dock?

A. It was on the Vesey street side. On the Vesey Street side, and we were in the process of setting up. Not anticipating the buildings were going to come down in such a fashion, we proceeded to set up a triage treatment area in the loading dock. Myself, Dr. Asaeda -- there was one or two EMS bosses there. I don't recall who they were, and lots of personnel. Most of the EMS personnel that were there were actually from the voluntary hospitals, some Lenox Hill paramedics there, and from some other voluntary hospitals, and there were some FBI agents down there, as well, some people from the Office of Emergency Management, who were actually upstairs and supposedly brought some supplies down to us.

There was only one patient in there at that point, and that was an elderly gentleman who was really there more for exhaustion, not claiming any injury, but anticipation was obviously our patients were going to come down.

While we were there, we started to hear this rumbling sound, and this was probably five, ten minutes after we got into the loading dock. We heard this rumbling sound and, you know, the rumors were there of additional planes missing, and actually, my initial

thought was this was actually another plane, and there was the loading dock, and then it was like the top of the dock, the garage, and then the loading dock.

Just off to the right, there was a door with a fairly long, narrow hallway, and at this point, there was probably between police, and FBI and EMS people, was probably about 20 plus people in this loading dock area.

Q. Do you know anybody there?

A. All of us -- Dr. Asaeda, and just by face some of the EMS providers. We all stuffed ourselves into this hallway, pulled the door shut, and the noise just got very loud and the room filled with dust. The noise stopped, and we opened up the door, and everything was pitch black.

The way we got into the loading dock was not the way we were getting out. It was obstructed.

Q. The door was blocked?

A. Yeah, and we found our way -- we walked across the loading dock area, and we found there was another door. We went in that door, and from there we were directed to -- I really guess it was like a basement area of the building, but we were directed to an opposite door.

Q. What looked like was blocking the original entrance?

A. You know, there was a couple of people who actually pulled some of the -- that pulled the actual garage doors down. I think that and some debris. It was too dark at that point.

We walked our way through the loading dock by feel. We got to the opposite side. We found our way out of one of the back doors of No. 7 and came outside, and actually the truth of the matter I still hadn't realized that it was the tower that came down. I thought it was another airplane, and I looked up, and it was after, you know, everything was sort of pitch black, and there was dust flying everywhere, and I looked up, and it didn't strike me at first, but when I looked up, all I saw was -- I saw the tower with the antenna, and I remember when we went in, that was -- it seemed to be the more distant tower when we started, and you know, there was -- and now, that's what struck me.

It wasn't making sense just yet. We found some patients, who were just walking around in a daze or experienced some inhalation type of injuries. There were a few ambulances there. We basically threw them

in the back of the ambulances. We told the providers who were there, just go far, go to another borough, take them somewhere else, and with that, the rumble started again and the second tower came down.

Q. Let me stop you there.

A. Yes.

Q. When you came out of No. 7, do you recall what side of the building you exited on?

A. We -- I ultimately ended up back on West Street, so I'm going to think -- and it was some packing lots and stuff like that. So I actually -- I think I came out by Barclay, and proceeded back down -- ultimately proceeded back down to West.

There were some parking lots in the area. There were other some buildings around, and just by where I ultimately ended up and continued to run, I was on West Street.

Q. So that's where you were treating patients prior to the second building coming down?

A. We were treating patients, yeah. We were treating patients around here, and from there we proceeded up to -- and then the second building came down, and not really knowing what was going on, we ran a few more blocks.

At that point, we settled the street just past -- just after Chambers. We passed the school. We saw Stuyvesant. Just right around Stuyvesant, Chambers, in that area, within one to two-block radius above and below.

We tried to re-establish ourselves one more time in some sort of triage treatment area, not knowing what was happening. We were just tracking down who was around, trying to get some ambulances into that area to stage in that area. It seemed at that point that we were a safe distance away, and then all of a sudden everybody started running again and saying there's a gas leak under West Street, and literally, fire engines, police, whoever was left standing at that point, everybody just started running north on west towards the piers, and --

Q. Did you know anybody there at that point in time?

A. On West Street?

Q. Either at the time you were treating the patients before the second tower came down or in the time you were heading north toward --

A. Yeah, Dr. Asaeda from this office. Joe Cahill, who is one of the ALS coordinators who works

out of MetroTech. He was actually on a -- I guess on a train on his way in to work, and so he came on his own, but he was assisting us there.

I just -- a lot of faces that I knew from the voluntary hospitals who were there, and I guess those were the people who stand out most.

Another person was actually one of the nurses who works at the hospital where I work, and mostly by face, not really by name.

Q. So what happened after you heard of the possible gas leak?

A. Started running. Everybody sort of picked up and ran. There was a passing police van with very few passengers. As they were driving, I opened up the side door and dove in and got away a few more blocks, got out and started to, you know, I guess attempt to regroup.

At that point, the decision was over the radios that everybody was -- the attempt was to get everybody to stage up at Chelsea Piers and regroup up there and define what resources we were going to need, so that's where I -- at that point, I went up to Chelsea Piers and up to the EMS command post.

Q. Any idea what time it was at that point?

A. At that point, it was probably getting close to eleven o'clock in the morning, and that's where I spent a good chunk of the rest of my day.

Q. A long two hours.

A. A horrible two hours. I mean, there was a lot of running more than anything, and, you know, by and large, it was bizarre only because I really -- I actually felt more numb than anything throughout. I didn't know what to feel or what to expect, and I think a lot of it was just bizarre that way, not knowing what was next.

Q. Did you have a radio on?

A. Actually, I didn't.

Q. Transmissions throughout?

A. Actually, you know, I didn't. I'm sort of low man on the totem pole here of the fellows, so I actually didn't acquire a radio, which they needed up at that point at Chelsea Piers.

Whatever radio stuff I heard was when standing next to other people. I didn't have a radio in my possession for several hours.

Q. I think we need to -- transmissions or anything that's going on that you might have -- that stuck in your head?

A. From that whole day, actually, the two things -- well, initially, I don't know what happened as the buildings fell. There was nobody close enough with an EMS radio at that point when the buildings came down, but I guess initially it was a relative calm on the radio.

As much as this was not a routine thing, a plane into the World Trade Center, this was sort of something that the resources were available that were being sent. Everybody was sort of following instruction and doing and operating in a normal fashion. It was what you would expect at an MCI.

The part that was really bizarre is actually -- what seemed bizarre is there was the second explosion, you know, the second plane explosion, and then it was -- at least on the EMS radio, there was absolute silence for probably 10 or 15 seconds, you know, which to me, it seemed like 10 to 15 seconds, but it was absolute radio silence for a few seconds. I don't know if everybody was just sort of --

Q. We were told that the air was so thick with debris that radio waves weren't able to travel.

A. That was after the towers came down.

Q. After the collapses, immediately in the

immediate aftermath?

A. I wasn't really -- you know, at that point, I was running, and I wasn't close enough to anybody with radio in hand. It was frustrating as hell, I can tell you, when the cell sites went down, which was right -- really as soon as this incident began. All I wanted to do after I got out and a safe distance away was actually just call my folks and say, you know, I'm alive, and that was the worst thing.

I mean, it took hours and hours for the cell sites to come back up, at least at Sprint. That was really for me the worst part of this whole thing, was not being able to make a phone call.

In a bizarre way, the best person on the street there that day was some little old Spanish lady who says I live a couple of blocks from here. She had a pad and a pen, took down a list of names, a list of phone numbers -- took down a list of names and phone numbers and called, and she got ahold of my parents about two hours before I did, and -- so.

Sorry I couldn't offer you more.

Q. No, that's great. I appreciate your time, doctor?

A. No problem.

MR. MC ALLISTER: Thank you very much. It's now 1530 hours on October 2, 2001, and we are going to conclude the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110006

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JAMES MURPHY

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 3, 2001, 1224 hours. We are in room 8E13 at headquarters and we are speaking with Paramedic James Murphy from the office of medical affairs. I am joined by --

MR. DANIEL: Patrick Daniel, Fire Marshal.

MR. STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: And James Murphy is with us.

MR. MURPHY: James Murphy, Paramedic.

BY MR. MC ALLISTER:

Q. Mr. Murphy, we are going to draw your attention to September 11, 2001, and I would like to get your recollections of the event of that day.

A. I was here in the office and someone came down the hall. I think they got one of the group pages that there was a job at the World Trade Center and we looked in the computer in the CAD system and saw that there was one, an aircraft incident at the World Trade Center, and then we heard yelling from the office of public information, so we all ran down

there. Because we knew the televisions were there. And we saw that something had happened to the World Trade Center. A couple of people from the office, two of the doctors and one of the medics, took off right away and the rest of us sort of stayed around getting ready to do whatever. And we ended up preparing to go get an ambulance.

We left here, went to Cumberland, got equipment that belonged to one of the guys that worked here who couldn't go out and then went to Woodhull Hospital and got a ambulance and responded from Woodhull Hospital with the ambulance.

When we went across the bridge, it was the last time we saw the towers. We went across the Manhattan Bridge and they were both still standing. We went across, I think, Canal Street.

Q. Were both of the towers burning at that time?

A. Both towers were burning at that time. We didn't leave until after the second plane hit. By the time we got through traffic to Woodhull to get the ambulance, I'm not -- the timing on that I'm not sure. The only timing I really know is that we arrived between the time the first tower fell and

the time the second tower fell somewhere on Broadway, around City Hall and I don't remember whether it was at the junction of Park Row and Broadway or higher. I know Warren Street is there somewhere. Whether that was the first place we stopped or whether that was where we actually ended up stopping, I don't know.

We went across Canal Street and then I went and turned and went down Broadway. We were heading into the staging area, which I believe was like on Church Street, somewhere around there, and --

Q. Do you have any idea what time it was at that point?

A. No. We had the radios on in the ambulance, but we didn't hear anything about the buildings collapsing because the siren was on. The truck was not the newest or the quietest thing in the fleet, so we couldn't really hear the radios that well.

We turned down Broadway and as we got down in the City Hall area, there were people running everywhere and a lot of smoke and dust. We really weren't sure what it was. Which sort of surprised us, because the last thing we saw was the

smoke was really up high.

We saw, then, an EMS Captain, Janis Olszewski, standing in the middle of the street covered with dust waving at us. That's where I'm not sure where we stopped with her.

Q. Somewhere on Broadway?

A. Somewhere on Broadway, around City Hall. And whether it was up by Warren Street or farther down, I'm not really sure. I just know that Warren street was involved in our stopping at one point.

We started treating some people at that point as they were running by. It was mostly like eye injuries from the flying debris. People were covered and they were having trouble breathing. Then We did hear a report that the second tower was starting to collapse and the Captain who was with us said, "Let's get out of here." Because she had heard the rumble then. It had reached us and we turned and started running and then I realized that I could drive a lot faster than I could run, so we grabbed the truck and I grabbed everybody else that I was with.

That's when I'm not sure where the stop came. Whether I stopped first at Warren and then we went

on, but the Captain just kept going, kept going. I know we didn't stop running until Canal Street.

Q. What did you observe at that point while you were running and what was the state of the street, if you recall?

A. More people running, lots of people. The dust cloudy saw sort of in the mirror, the second one, as it was coming down. But I was too busy trying to avoid hitting the people that were running in the street.

When we finally stopped to start treating people, we decided -- the Captain felt safe and we decided we would go as far as she was, because she was obviously under the first one when it came down. She was a little, you know, a little, I guess, stressed. I don't know a better way to put it. When she finally felt comfortable, we stopped and started setting up.

We ran into two EMT's and I'm not sure whether it was before we left or after, who had been at the staging area and had to run from their ambulances that had patients in them. Which was not good for them. It wasn't good for us to hear it either. But they started helping us to treat people at the

scene. Again, it was very minor stuff, because nobody got to us that was pretty badly hurt.

Q. The other EMT's you ran into left ambulances with patients in the back near the collapse?

A. Yes. I'm not sure where those ambulances were. They ended up going a different way than us afterwards. Oh, because we had the Captain. They told her to report to the command post, so those EMT's stayed with ambulances that were staging somewhere else and we responded to the command post with that Captain. [redacted]

Q. Which Chief?

A. Mittleman [redacted] and then went back to the command post and ended up at Chelsea staging.

Q. Where was the command post that you are referring to?

A. It was -- I don't even remember where we went. It was on West Street somewhere. It was on West Street somewhere.

Q. Was it north of Chambers?

A. Yes. At that point we didn't get anywhere back down there until -- I didn't get back down that way until the next day. We stayed up at the Chelsea -- the Chelsea Piers, and the three of us got assigned to do various things there: Assist the doctor who was there in setting up the hospital, in arranging which doctors and nurses were going to work in which areas. Because they set up a whole hospital in the Chelsea Piers and we had various tasks of organizing the medical assistance and stuff like that.

That was it until I went back the next day with the doctor. We actually started walking around the site and looking at what was going on. Telling people that they should put their masks on and that kind of stuff. That filled up the whole next week pretty much.

Q. Any other recollections about the date of the incident? Anything you might have seen that you recall? Any people you might have run into that you recall?

A. I know by the end of the first night -- well, by 10:00 o'clock the first night we had heard

that all of the people from our office were safe, but that some of them, like the doctors, had lost things like their glasses. Dr. Cherson was working at the ferry terminal without his glasses and he can't see. He's like me. I have contacts on. He had lost his glasses so we don't know how he was working, but he was. But everybody from our office was okay and then we had heard that there were hundreds of firefighters trapped and it was just -- everybody was -- you know, and then you started seeing people from the outer areas. We wondered how they got there so fast. You know, some of these guys were covered in dust and going back in again.

The first hour went so fast for us. It didn't seem, because we had to get from here to the place and then back again. We didn't realize that it had taken so long. It was just like moments, it felt, from the time we left here to the time we were running from the second building coming down. We didn't even know the first one came down. We had no idea when we pulled up that that's what that was.

Q. So it was still burning when you were in Brooklyn?

A. When we came over the Manhattan Bridge,

you could clearly see both towers standing there burning.

Q. Anything else? Radio transmissions that you recall?

A. No. We took -- we had radios from here with pretty bad batteries. That was on our portables. But the truck radio, we got a truck from -- the actual vehicle radio wasn't very loud and the truck was really loud, and the siren, so I didn't hear. I'm sure there was a transmission about the first building coming down, but we never heard it. And there were three of us in the truck listening to the radio and none of us ever heard it. The first we knew was when Captain Olszewski told us that one of the towers had fallen. That was the first we heard.

Then just before the second tower came down we heard a radio transmission about the second tower is falling. And then the Captain heard the rumbling. We all heard it, but she recognized it for what it was and told us, "Let's get the hell out of here." Because she heard the first one coming down. We never heard that one come down.

Q. Was it a distant rumble or was it really

loud?

A. It started off distant and got loud and then as we started running the sound sort of disappeared in the background with all the other stuff that I was doing and the sound of the ambulance Engine as I started driving.

Q. Did the cloud of debris ever catch up with you or were you far enough?

A. No. Never caught us. That's why I'm thinking that maybe we never got any farther than Warren Street. Tracey and Dee -- we don't know -- we were talking about it and we couldn't figure out whether we stopped farther down or whether we stopped at Warren Street. We are just not sure whether we got any farther down.

The one thing I do remember is after we stopped running, people were actually -- one guy passed us. Everybody was offering us food, drink. We were sitting treating people and some guy ran past us with three knapsacks. One on his back, one on his chest and one on his hand and he stopped and handed everybody a bottle of water in the ambulance and continued on. We could see the dust cloud and he just ran in with bottles of water.

Q. A civilian or --

A. A civilian. Other people who were walking away said, he said, "I brought my lunch for work but obviously I'm not going to be working today. Would you like it?" People were offering us stuff all over the place.

A city sheriff came over to us and said, "Do you guys need water to treat people?" We said yes, because we only had the little bottled water in the truck and we knew that wasn't going to last very long. The next thing we know, there is a city sheriff and two other guys with 5-gallon jugs, probably from -- it said "Poland Spring" on it so it must have been a Poland Spring truck. I guess the guy just opened the doors and started giving it out to people. We had huge bottles of water in the truck to rinse people off.

Then people wanted to rinse their mouth out. You can't keep having them all put their mouth on the same thing. Then I went to a little -- a little tiny, hole-in-the-wall deli and asked the guy for a couple of cups and the guy comes out and gives me a whole case of cups. It's gotta cut huge into his profit margin, but he didn't care. He just gave me

a whole bunch. So then we started giving sleeves of cups to the ambulances that were sitting there. Then we moved on. That's actually before we moved to the command post.

Captain Olszewski had to actually go into a store and use a phone, because all of our cell phones were dead. I guess there was just so much going on on the radio that she decided not to use the radio, just to call somebody. I'm not sure who she called, but then she said, "You gotta take me to the command post."

Q. Any other recollections?

A. No.

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: Thank you very much.

Interview concluded at 1237 hours on October 3, 2001.

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File No. 9110007

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DULCE McCORVEY

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: This is Lieutenant McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's 1252 hours on October 3rd, 2001. We're in Room 8E13 at Fire Department headquarters, and we're about to interview EMT Dulce McCorvey. I am joined by --

MR. CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, fire marshal.

MR. STERACE: Michael Sterace, fire marshal.

MR. McALLISTER: And.

EMT McCORVEY: Dulce McCorvey.

Q. I would just like to draw your attention to September 11th, 2001. Give your recollections from the events of that day.

A. The times are a little blurry. I don't remember -- I know we had gone downstairs. It was like around 8:00, and I went downstairs with someone to get coffee. As we were coming up, everyone was running out of the buildings, the elevators. I almost got run over by a lot of white shirts and a lot of gold.

We came upstairs. Everyone was

running. We walked by OPI. We saw on the TV screen that a plane had already hit the building, the first building. I pulled the job up on the CAD screen, and that's what it said, it was a cargo plane (inaudible).

So at that time I went over to my supervisor. One of the docs and one of the paramedics was going out already. She told us to hang back and wait and see what happened. I don't know exactly what she said.

By the time the second plane hit, I had already gone downstairs, gotten my equipment out of my car that was parked outside on Flatbush Avenue. You could see the smoke coming from the buildings, because you could see the buildings from the back of this building. I could see the smoke coming back -- in the back of the building.

I came upstairs. She said, "We've got to go find an ambulance." There was myself, Jim Murphy and Tracey Mulqueen. We tried calling the different stations. Cumberland down the block, they said to come down and get an ambulance.

We got in my car, all the equipment and the three of us, and drove to Cumberland. They

couldn't give us an ambulance. The captain said they didn't have any available at the moment. We went down to Woodhull. We went through a lot of traffic. We finally got an ambulance. It wasn't stocked or anything. So that delayed us a bit.

We got in the ambulance, and we drove down to the Brooklyn Bridge or the Manhattan Bridge. I don't remember which bridge we took.

Q. Did you have a radio with you?

A. We had a radio. We had a portable radio. The battery died, so we couldn't get any communications out. The KDT in the ambulance was broken, so we couldn't log on. So we were getting -- I don't remember hearing what they were saying, because I was sitting in the back of the ambulance, and Tracey and Jimmy were sitting in the front. I couldn't really hear what they were saying.

We were listening to citywide, and there was a lot of communication. I couldn't tell what it was. We had the siren on, and there was a lot of confusion trying to get around traffic, people trying to get on the bridge, people blocking us.

It was the Manhattan Bridge. We got off the Manhattan Bridge, because I remember getting off at Canal.

Q. There was a lot of non-emergency traffic on the bridge?

A. Yeah. Well, no, they were blocking off the bridge.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. They were diverting them, so it was hard getting onto the bridge. When we finally did get on the bridge, the bridge was here. So it was the Manhattan Bridge.

I don't know what road we went down, because I couldn't see too clearly. We ended up on Broadway. We were speeding down Broadway following -- there were traffic cops directing everybody go down that way. So we followed them.

We were going down Broadway. I don't know exactly at what point we stopped on Broadway. We saw a captain that I knew her from the academy, and she was full of dust. We didn't know where we were going. We were looking for the incident command center. We really didn't know. We were just going towards the building.

When we saw her, we pulled over to help her. She was saying an explosion -- she didn't say the building went down; she said she was under the building when the plane went down. That's what I remember. We tried to calm her down, because she was upset.

Then we heard this loud noise like another plane. That's what we thought it was, another plane. It was a real loud rumbling. I can hear a lot of people screaming. We didn't know what it was, and we turned around and saw people running the opposite way on Broadway, running north on Broadway. We could see this big, black cloud of smoke coming up. I said, "Oh, shit."

We turned around, and Janice says, "Run!" So we ran. We started running. We turned around and ran. Janice ran, and Tracey was running, and Jimmy was right behind us. I didn't see where Jimmy was. I stopped and screamed, "Jimmy!" I didn't see him. He had gone back and gotten the ambulance and turned around.

He pulled us into the ambulance. We

ran into the ambulance. All I could see is behind, because I was in the back of the bus. All I could see is this big cloud of smoke coming and people just coming out from inside this cloud of smoke. You could see from the side streets, like you could see smoke coming down the side streets, swelling up the road.

So we just kept on going. At one point we slowed down and we stopped in front of 26 Federal Plaza. I said, "We can't stop here. We've got to keep on going." So we kept on going, and we went up close to Canal Street. I don't know what street we stopped on. We stopped there.

Q. During that time when you were on Broadway and heading north on Broadway, did you notice any fire apparatus?

A. I saw no fire apparatus. I saw no firemen at all.

Q. Any other EMS vehicles?

A. I saw two other EMS vehicles. Where we had finally stopped, there were two other EMS vehicles. Two guys came out. They were running. They came out without the ambulance. They work

in Manhattan, I'm pretty sure. They said they weren't in shock. One of them was crying. I can't remember his last name.

He said there were two patients in the back of his bus. They were strapped to a long board. He had to run, and the building fell on the ambulance. So I don't remember (inaudible). I know the guy -- I can't remember his name. They were pretty upset.

Everybody coming out was cops. There were a lot of cops coming out, all full of that white dust. There were a lot of people screaming, crying, hurt, a lot of cuts and bruises.

We stayed there for a while. I don't know how long.

Q. That's near Canal Street on Broadway?

A. Yeah, because I could see Canal up the block, and we were on Broadway.

I don't know the times, really. Now it's like a blur, like a million years ago.

We treated people as they needed to be treated, and we tried to help where we could. Somebody brought us water, a big jug of water.

Just a lot of cops were coming up. I don't know what precinct they were from.

From then Janice said she's got to find a command center, so we started going toward the west side and went towards West Street.

Q. Janice is the captain?

A. Yeah.

Q. Olszewski; right?

A. Olszewski, right.

So we went up to West Street. On West Street there was a lot of commotion. There was a lot of units. I saw firemen walking, a lot of firemen walking. They were walking up, all covered in soot. There were trucks going down. I couldn't tell you what the companies were.

I saw an EMS captain and an EMS chief. We went up to them, and we saw one of our medical directors. I saw units from Bellevue.

Q. Do you know any of their names?

A. The medic unit was Artie Gonzalez and Al Siegel. They're a medic unit from Bellevue. I saw Dr. Richmond. I saw him. I saw Chief Mittleman and Captain -- I can't think of his name.

Q. Where did you see them?

A. West Street at West Street.

Q. West Street and --

A. West Street and -- I have no idea. West Street. It was below Chelsea Piers, way below Chelsea Piers.

Q. Was it south of Canal, do you think?

A. It was south of Canal.

Q. On West south of Canal?

A. Yeah. But I don't know names.

Q. How close to the site?

A. All I could see is a lot of smoke, so I really don't know how close I was to the site. Maybe Barclay Street? Maybe that far down, Barclay Street?

Q. Did they tell you they were coming from the site?

A. No, they didn't say that. We just went up to the chief and told them that Janice was under the building when the plane hit [redacted]. Then he said, "Well," to the captain, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]We couldn't get out of the city, so we ended up at NYU[redacted]

Q. [redacted]?

A. Yeah.

[redacted] We saw a couple of cops in the hospital. Actually we saw a lot of cops with injuries in the hospital, minor, not serious.

We went to Bellevue to gas up, and as we're gassing up we hear that loud rumble again. The three of us knew already to hide under the ambulance or go into the garage, because we didn't know what it was. We thought another building was going to come down or another jet was coming. But the fighter jets were flying over Manhattan. We're like, are they ours?

After that we went back. We had seen Dr. Richmond, and Dr. Richmond said, "Come back here." We ended up here. We went back to Chelsea Piers, and we ended up in Chelsea Piers. We were trying to find Dr. Richmond. We didn't see him right away, but we saw a lot of ambulances.

The people I saw I know from Manhattan. Most of the people I know were Manhattan ambulances. I didn't see any fire trucks. Police cars, I just saw police cars blocking the entrance going down that way towards the Piers.

While we were at the pier, they were setting up the hospital. We were in there for a while. Then we finally caught up with Dr. Richmond. He said to help out with the volunteers. There were a lot of volunteers coming up that wanted to help.

So we set up with the medical volunteers and tried to set them up and tried to get their names down and see if they could come, they could stay. We didn't know what the situation was.

Around I think it was maybe 4 or 5:00,

one of the cops said that the buildings were collapsing still and there were people still in need. They were pulling out anybody from the area. So we just told the docs to hang out, the volunteers to hang out and wait and see what happens.

We just helped set up blood donations. People wanted to come and donate blood. People wanted to come and help and do anything they could. So we just helped set that up a little bit.

Q. Did you treat anybody?

A. Not there, not at the Chelsea Piers we didn't treat anybody. Later at night, maybe 11:00, we had like a bus load of cops that came in from ground zero. They were treated in the hospital. Maybe about 10, 15. Then after that we started getting a couple bus loads. We saw some firefighters come in. I don't know where they were from. It seemed like everybody was from all over the place.

I stayed there until about 1:00 and then hitched a ride with an ambulance. I was going back to the academy, and then I went home.

That's pretty much it. I really didn't see any firemen. I saw fire trucks. I remember seeing fire trucks coming down that way from West Street to Chelsea Piers.

Q. Any other recollections, things that you may have observed that were odd or unusual or just things that you recall that you can tell us about?

A. Unusual in what sense? The whole day was unusual. I don't know.

The things that stick out in my mind is the fire in the towers when we were going down. In my car we were going down towards the station, and we could see the fire in the towers. The cloud of smoke coming towards us.

Just standing at Chelsea Piers and not seeing the towers. A lot of police, a lot of Secret Service, a lot of ambulances. People from every voluntary hospital that you could think of was down there, from all over. Fire trucks from volunteer fire departments were down there, ones that I know, from all over, as well as from God knows where, towns I never heard of before. A lot of people coming down. If you needed water,

you asked for water, they gave you water. You ask for a bottle of water, and you got a jug of water.

MR. McALLISTER: I'm going to conclude the interview. It is now 1306 hours, and we are going to conclude the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110008

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER STEPHEN GREGORY

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 3rd, 2001, 1540 hours. I'm with Jim Drury from the Bureau of Investigations and Trials and with Commissioner Stephen Gregory of the Bureau of Communications. We're in Commissioner Gregory's office and we are now commencing the interview.

COMMISSIONER GREGORY: On Tuesday, September 11th, I was sitting in my office, it was just shortly before 9:00 o'clock, having a cup of coffee, and I heard on the scanner in my office on the PD SOD frequency police units frantically screaming about a plane that had just crashed into the World Trade Center. At first I didn't realize what had happened and then it dawned on me. I immediately got up and left my office, went around the corner.

At that point in time I saw Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, a couple of the other chiefs coming out of their office talking about a plane that had struck the World Trade Center. At that time I had no idea what type of plane. I assumed, and it was only an assumption on my part, that it was a small plane that had strayed and winded into the Trade Center.

I proceeded back to my office. I gathered up

my driver and I took two EMS captains with me because I figured a situation like this would probably need medical assistance at the scene. We proceeded to my vehicle.

We left headquarters, went over the Brooklyn Bridge, around by City Hall. We went down I believe it was Barclay Street, all the way down to West Street, made a left turn. As we were going over the bridge, we could visually see the upper floors of the World Trade Center with emanating heavy smoke and fire, at least 1 World Trade Center I should say.

When we got to West Street, we made a left turn and we went back down I believe it's one block to Vesey Street. At that point in time the driver stopped the car and debris was falling from the building. I told him to turn the car around and to park it on the other side of West Street, which we did. We went on the west side of West Street, up a slight incline, which I think is Vesey Street, parked the car, proceeded to put on my turnout coat, my helmet, and we walked back down to West Street.

At that point in time I proceeded with Captain Frank D'Amato from Emergency Medical Dispatch. We started to walk down West Street. Probably 25 to 50

feet into our walk we encountered several what appeared to be bodies or human remains in the street. We proceeded past that and headed down looking up at the building. There was a lot of debris falling down. There was very heavy fire on the upper floors of the building. We worked our way down going south on West Street to ultimately arriving close to Liberty Street, where I encountered Assistant Chief Jerry Barbara.

I spoke with Chief Barbara and he informed me that he was the incident commander of 2 World Trade Center and he asked me if I would give him a hand running the command board. I indicated that I would, at which point in time we stopped at Liberty Street. Jerry was sizing the building up. I proceeded to get on the radio.

I called the Manhattan Central Office on the radio. I asked them to give me the rundown of units that were assigned to 2 World Trade Center. The Manhattan dispatcher came back giving me the rundown, I jotted all the companies down, and we proceeded to wait. After a few minutes we weren't receiving any companies. Chief Barbara asked again where are the companies? It appeared that the companies that were responding were coming from north to south and that

they were being all grabbed at 1 World Trade Center, the furthermost north building.

I suggested to Chief Barbara at that time that we possibly transmit a second alarm for a tunnel box and bring Brooklyn companies through the tunnel. He agreed with my recommendation and I requested a second alarm assignment to be brought in from Brooklyn through the Battery Tunnel. The companies in a short period of time started to arrive. I went out into the street. I flagged the companies down. We started to have them come in and report in to our command post.

At that point in time Chief Art Lakiotes showed up. At that point Chief Barbara, Chief Lakiotes, Chief Barbara's aide, Gary, I don't know Gary's last name, and myself were at the command board. The command board was roughly on the corner of Liberty and West Street, but then at that point in time, looking at the building, we observed people jumping from the building, we observed debris falling from both buildings. This is after, naturally, the second plane had hit 2 World Trade Center, which happened while we were there. We observed people jumping.

So Chief Barbara suggested that we move

further south. He said let's head down towards Albany Street. We actually went down somewhere between Liberty and Albany Street to a point that we were actually right in front of the World Financial Center, which is just a little bit south of Liberty Street and just south of that south bridge that goes across West Street. We set up the command post at that location. So we were between Liberty and Albany, about halfway down. We set up the command post there. The companies started to come in.

At that point in time Chief Barbara said that he was going to head into 2 World Trade Center. He told me that as soon as a battalion came in with an aide that I felt comfortable with I should tell Gary to meet him in the lobby. Chief Barbara turned, started walking towards 2 World Trade Center, looked up at the building, sized it up, and that's the last that I saw Chief Barbara.

My time estimation of how long he was gone before the building came down? I would venture to say it wasn't any more than maybe four minutes, five minutes, somewhere in there, but time was a little hard to figure out. But I would say it was somewhere around four to five minutes.

At that point in time we heard a rumble, we heard a noise, and then the building came down. All we saw was dust and everything just started to get very chaotic. At that point in time all of us at the command post, firefighters, chiefs, myself, we turned around, we started to run south, down West Street towards Albany. Looking back over my shoulder, I realized that I wasn't able to outrun whatever was coming because it looked like a giant wave behind us, so I went up against a chain-link fence, I got down on one knee, I put my hands over my head to hold my helmet on so I wouldn't get hit in the head with anything, and we just proceeded to get clobbered with all kinds of debris.

It got very black. It got very quiet. It was very peacefully quiet; so peaceful that I thought I was dead.

Q. Were you on the west side of the street or the east side?

A. I was on the west side of West Street up against a fence in front of the World Financial Center. There's like a chain-link fence. It's about a six-foot fence that separates their property from -- actually, right over here. This is exactly where we

were, right here.

Q. He's denoting a space in front of 1 World Financial Center, which on our map is denoted as the home of Dow Jones.

A. Originally we were right here. This was the number one location that we were at. We wound up to be at number two location over here, number one location being immediately south of the south bridge across the West Side Highway, number two being the location in front of 1 World Financial Center.

The air got very thick, very dirty. It was very difficult to breathe. I was choking. I proceeded to at some point in time -- again, I lost track of time -- to give an urgent or a Mayday message on the radio, which I subsequently listened to myself and I have a cassette of that, indicating that something had happened. I asked a dispatcher if they were aware of it because during the time that it got very black and very quiet, my radio cut out completely. Apparently the dust in the air cut the radio signal out. The radio just hummed for maybe about 30 seconds and then it came back on again.

At that point in time I called Manhattan. I was answered. I asked them if they were aware of an

explosion at the World Trade Center. I told them basically what I thought had happened and they came back and they answered me, and then subsequent to that I gave them a radio transmission indicating a major collapse of the World Trade Center. There were some conversations going back and forth.

At that point in time the atmosphere started to clear slightly. It started to lift. It went from total blackness to gray. I could now see vehicles, I could see lights on vehicles, I could see some people moving around, I could see some people laying in the street, laying on the sidewalk. I got up. I was with another firefighter. I have no idea who it was. We went around. We had picked some people up, people who were bleeding. We tried to administer to them whatever we could, but everybody was covered with this white powdery substance.

We found a firefighter that was injured and we took him down further south on West Street to Albany and we went up Albany Street. We went west on Albany Street towards the water. At that point in time we took the firefighter into a garage. There's a parking garage, a little street on the south side of Albany just a little bit west of West Street. It's a parking

garage that has something to do with the building. We took the firefighter in there. He had a groin injury and he was bleeding from the back of his head.

At that point in time Dr. Kelly appeared. She looked at the individual. She said we had to transport him, get him out of there. We had him on a back board. We picked him up and started taking him out when all of a sudden -- later on we found out that 1 Trade Center collapsed. So we went back inside, put him down, tried to secure him as best we could because the whole scenario started all over again. It got black, the dirt was flying, there was debris all over the place. We tried to stay out of the way because things were flying all over. How long we were in there? I don't know. A couple of minutes. It started to lift again.

We went over and administered again to the firefighter. Dr. Kelly was still there. We picked him up. We brought him outside. There was an ambulance outside, which we took. We put him in the back of the ambulance and we drove him down Albany Street to the water, where he was subsequently put on some type of police launch or something.

At that point in time I was at Albany Street

and the Hudson River on I guess the promenade over there. There's a sidewalk promenade. I saw a fireboat. A marine company was out in the water. They were standing offshore. I flagged the marine company down. I told them to come in. They came in and they came up alongside the seawall.

I spoke to the pilot. I asked him where his officer was. He said he didn't have an officer; he didn't know where he was. I told the pilot to tie the boat up. He said do you want me to take people off? I said no, I want you to tie the boat up and I want you to stretch two lines from the boat onto Albany Street, because they had a water problem down at West Street. So I felt that, since there was nobody else around to do anything, stretching the lines would be the best thing.

At that point in time fire officers started to appear. They came up. They wanted to know what they could do. They had rigs with them. We wound up ultimately stretching two lines from the boat supplying pumpers. The pumpers also stretched lines to the West Side Highway where they supplied the manifold. After that we were basically tending to injured firefighters and injured civilians along the water. Subsequently, I

worked my way back down to West Street.

After that, I don't know. Everything is a blur. Somehow I wound up on the other side of the bridge, which we couldn't get by. We had to go through a building to get around. I don't even know what building I went through, but somehow we got around and I wound up back up on Vesey and West or the other side of the incident, and then subsequently I wound up back up onto I guess Chambers, somewhere around Chambers where the command post was, and from there I worked my way east and we wound up at City Hall Park where I met up with one of my guys from the Field Com Unit.

When we left City Hall Park, we walked down I believe it was Barclay Street, Barclay and Church, I think. There's a church on the corner, right? Yes. St. Peter's Church.

As we were passing St. Peter's Church, the captain of Ladder 102 and the lieutenant from Ladder 102 were coming out of the church and they informed me that they had Father Judge's body inside the church. They had brought it from wherever they recovered it into St. Peter's Church.

At that point in time Tom McGonigle from the Field Com and myself went into the church. We went up

to the altar. They had Father Judge on the altar. He was wrapped in sheets, some type of white sheeting, and they had him laying on the altar. We knelt down. We said a prayer.

We left the church at that point in time and proceeded down Barclay Street and again somehow worked our way around back to West and Vesey -- how I did that I have no idea -- where I met up with Father Delendick and another chaplain who I know him but I can't recall his name, and I informed them about Father Judge and where he was, and at that point in time they said they were going up to the church to see what they could do for him.

After that I just wandered around the site for a while, I really don't recall what I did, ultimately winding up in a McDonald's finding a telephone, and that's about it. I met Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Commissioner Drury, and Commissioner Fitzpatrick and I ultimately came back to headquarters to try and get things together back at headquarters since everybody else was at the site, and that's basically it in a nutshell.

Q. Do you recall at any time, particularly when you were on West Street, any companies whose vehicles

may have been parked near where you were?

A. No. I know I was with an officer from Ladder 146, a Lieutenant Evangelista, who ultimately called me up a couple of days later just to find out how I was. We both for whatever reason -- again, I don't know how valid this is with everything that was going on at that particular point in time, but for some reason I thought that when I looked in the direction of the Trade Center before it came down, before No. 2 came down, that I saw low-level flashes. In my conversation with Lieutenant Evangelista, never mentioning this to him, he questioned me and asked me if I saw low-level flashes in front of the building, and I agreed with him because I thought -- at that time I didn't know what it was. I mean, it could have been as a result of the building collapsing, things exploding, but I saw a flash flash flash and then it looked like the building came down.

Q. Was that on the lower level of the building or up where the fire was?

A. No, the lower level of the building. You know like when they demolish a building, how when they blow up a building, when it falls down? That's what I thought I saw. And I didn't broach the topic to him, but he asked me. He said I don't know if I'm crazy,

but I just wanted to ask you because you were standing right next to me. He said did you see anything by the building? And I said what do you mean by see anything? He said did you see any flashes? I said, yes, well, I thought it was just me. He said no, I saw them, too.

I don't know if that means anything. I mean, I equate it to the building coming down and pushing things down, it could have been electrical explosions, it could have been whatever. But it's just strange that two people sort of say the same thing and neither one of us talked to each other about it. I mean, I don't know this guy from a hole in the wall. I was just standing next to him. I never met the man before in my life. He knew who I was I guess by my name on my coat and he called me up, you know, how are you doing? How's everything? And, oh, by the way did you... It was just a little strange.

Q. On the television pictures it appeared as well, before the first collapse, that there was an explosion up on the upper floors.

A. I know about the explosion on the upper floors. This was like eye level. I didn't have to go like this. Because I was looking this way. I'm not

going to say it was on the first floor or the second floor, but somewhere in that area I saw to me what appeared to be flashes. I don't know how far down this was already. I mean, we had heard the noise but, you know, I don't know.

Q. You talk about your drivers. Who were they?

A. EMS personnel. I had Sam Harris, who works up here, I had Captain Frank D'Amato and Captain Jason Pinkus. Four of us were in the car together. Captain Pinkus and Sam Harris went in one direction and Captain D'Amato and I went in the other direction. So, when the collapse happened, we didn't know where the other people were. We were sort of separated in the middle. And then ultimately I lost Captain D'Amato even in my section. I didn't know what happened to him. When it started to come down, I ran south and he ran sort of west into a building and that was the last we saw of each other.

Q. What about Chief Artie Lakiotes; did you ever see him again?

A. I saw Artie Lakiotes a couple of times after that. We were in the same area. I guess we ran in the same direction. I saw him after the collapse. We both went over and hugged each other and realized that we

were both still there, and I saw Artie a couple of times after that.

Q. Where did you last see Dr. Kelly?

A. Dr. Kelly I saw last when we put that firefighter in the ambulance and after that I didn't see Dr. Kelly. I didn't know where she went.

Q. And you mentioned a Tom McGonigle?

A. Tom McGonigle was assigned to the Field Com Unit. I met him at City Hall. I think Tom was either coming in to support the Field Com Unit, he may have been coming in from home, but I met him on I guess that's Broadway that runs down from City Hall. I met him on Broadway and then Tom was with me for a while and then I think he went to the mobile command vehicle to work over there and I lost track of him after a while.

Q. Where did you park the car initially when you arrived at the scene?

A. Sam parked the car initially right here. This was spot number one. And the stuff was falling down and I said get the car out of here. We turned the car around and we parked the car over here.

Q. Just for the record, you parked it on Vesey Street near West?

A. Vesey --

Q. West of west?

A. Initially we parked it on the southeast corner of Vesey and West Street, ultimately moving it immediately to Vesey Street about two, three hundred feet west of West Street. My car was wiped out over there, too. All the windows were blown out and shrapnel and damage and everything. But that's where Sam parked the car, over here, and once we parked the car there, we came down here. I walked down West Street, I guess by the first tower, and then right about here we started to encounter people laying in the street, and then we continued on to here and I met Chief Barbara over here. We set up the initial command post over here, which is near Liberty.

Q. Which is the south bridge?

A. Right. And then we ultimately moved it in front of this World Financial Center building, No. 1, which is Dow Jones.

MR. McALLISTER: 1 World Financial Center.

Q. Now, as you proceeded down West Street, did you see a Fire Department command post set up on West Street?

A. No. I didn't see any command post. In fact,

I didn't see anybody. That's the part that really it was like a ghost street. There was nobody there. I didn't see people. You know, I saw nobody coming out of the building. I guess, after a while, thinking about it, I assumed all the people went out through the promenade and came out this way, but I didn't see anybody here. I didn't see any people here. I saw parts of the plane laying here. I saw, again, bodies laying here, pieces of bodies, and then coming down here I met Chief Barbara, and then there were people down here, a lot of civilians down here.

MR. McALLISTER: Again, referring to West Street in the proximity of World Trade 1?

COMMISSIONER GREGORY: Yes, exactly.

Q. Now, you mentioned Chief Barbara's driver or aide, Gary?

A. Gary. I don't know Gary's last name.

Q. Did you see him after the collapse?

A. No, I didn't see Gary after the collapse. I spoke to Gary the other day. Gary came here to see me and Gary said that he was blown down, ultimately got up, and then somehow worked his way down, after helping some people, worked his way down, and then he wound up in a hospital somewhere, whether it be in Staten Island

or Jersey or wherever, but he wound up in a hospital, I know that.

Q. The airplane parts that you referred to, they were on West Street or on Vesey Street?

A. I saw airplane parts on West Street.

Q. How did you know they were airplane parts?

A. It looked like pieces of a plane, skin of a plane. I mean, they weren't really discernible. I couldn't say this was this part of a plane or that was that part. Just knowing a plane had hit the building and I looked and I saw it looked like the skin off a wing or a fuselage or wherever it came from.

Q. Clearly not building material?

A. No. The building material was sort of gray and you could see it, you know, how it differed from the plane. I was listening to the tape this morning of the people calling up and they were describing the plane that hit the building. Actually, so many people saw it. They actually described the plane as it came in. They said it was a military-type plane and it was green and it was this. I mean, I never saw the color of the plane.

Q. Where were you when the second plane hit?

A. We were down at the command post between

Liberty and Albany on the west side of West Street. And after the second plane hit, somebody said they heard rumors that a third plane was coming in. Where they got that from, I don't know. But somebody said the cops said there's a third plane coming in. We didn't know anything about that.

Q. Did you see or hear the second plane before it hit the World Trade Center?

A. I never actually saw the plane, but I heard it. You could hear it coming in and then we heard the explosion and you could hear the roar of the plane coming in. At first I didn't realize it was a plane. I thought it was like the roar of fire, like something had just incinerated, like a gas tank or an oil tank. It sounded like a tremendous roar and then you heard boom and then there was a big fire, a lot of fire, a big fireball. I never actually saw a plane hit the building. I never saw that. I saw it on television, but I never saw it while I was standing there.

Q. I guess just one follow-up. You said West Street was empty. Empty as far as people being on the street or was there fire apparatus parked there?

A. There was fire apparatus parked there. But I guess I had expected to see like droves of people

evacuating the building and we would have to get the people out of there, but there were no people. When I say no people, I mean relatively no people. There were a few stragglers here and there, but other than that, there was no volume of people. Again, later on, in looking and thinking about it, I would have assumed everybody probably went out through the promenade onto the Church Street side of the building. But I was surprised that there weren't more people in the street over there.

I never did see Commissioner Feehan. I never saw Chief Ganci. I never saw Chief Burns. The only person I really came in contact with was Jerry Barbara. And I never saw a command post because maybe at that time they may have been inside 1 World Trade Center when we passed by and then maybe when we passed by they came outside. But I never saw them. They were probably in the building. So I can't actually say that I ever saw anybody. I mean, I saw chauffeurs hooking pumpers up and stuff like that, but I never really saw any of those individuals.

That's unusual because usually -- and, again, I still to this day don't know why I went down to No. 2. I mean, normally, in the normal course of

operation, I would go to the command post, wherever Commissioner Feehan was with Ganci. For whatever reason, that day, I'm still racking my brain why I did it, I just walked right past the building and went down, further down, all the way to the other side. Why did I do it? I don't know. No idea.

MR. McALLISTER: Any follow-ups?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: No. But I would just ask the Commissioner to put his name on the map and we'll add it as an exhibit to our file. So let the record reflect he's doing that now. Today's date is October 3rd, 2001.

MR. McALLISTER: And just before we conclude, we'll offer the Commissioner an opportunity to give us any further recollections or observations before we conclude the interview, if he has any.

COMMISSIONER GREGORY: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

MR. McALLISTER: Thank you, Commissioner.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Thanks, Commissioner.

MR. McALLISTER: It is now 1610 hours, October 3rd, 2001, and we're going to conclude the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110009

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT MURRAY MURAD

Interview Date: October 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CAMPBELL: Today is October 4th at 10:30 in the morning. We're in conference room 4E21 at headquarters. My name is Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal, here to conduct an interview with Murray Murad about the occurrence of September 11th.

Also present in the room is --

MR. STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Murray Murad, Lieutenant Investigator with Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. Okay, Murray, we're just coming here and trying to do a fact-finding mission of what you saw on September 11th in the morning of the plane crash and the incident that happened at the World Trade Center. Just tell us what you saw and did that day.

A. Well, I was conducting business down on Greenwich and Liberty at Engine 10, Truck 10, on that day. I happened to walk through the quarters around 8:35 and I asked to speak to the officer in charge of the truck -- I think that was Captain Mallery; I think it's

M-A-L-L-E-R-Y -- I needed to speak to one of the firemen. It so happens who I was looking for, the firefighter was there.

So we went upstairs and we started to prepare the paperwork. I was conducting a confidential investigation at the fire house. It was about 8:41 that we heard a plane hovering over the fire house. It sounded like the plane was right on top of us. At that time the captain was upstairs. He was taking a shower in the office and I was conducting the work with the firefighter.

The captain came out and said: "What's going on? This is a no-fly zone. There should be no planes over here unless this is a military plane, a plane in trouble." Other than that, there was really no clue.

So about two or three minutes after hearing it, you heard something like revving. We took a look, and, boom, the north tower is hit. So what happened was everyone left the house except for the captain, because he already had his relief. What I'm assuming is that he's going to man the house. His relief was there.

They all took off. The engine and the truck took off I guess they both were responding to a pre-arranged staging location when the World Trade Center is involved in some kind of major incident. And they all took off.

So what happened was people were running out of the building. We got a couple of injuries. We were treating them.

Q. Out of the building, out of the Trade Center?

A. Out of the Trade Center, yeah. I don't know which Trade Center building they came out of, but it was either the north or the south building.

It was very minimal, like five, six patients. They came with very, very minor injuries. There was a police officer in the fire house. I asked him: Listen, can you get an ambulance here, we have a couple minor injuries. We need an ambulance at the staging location here.

The ambulance comes in. The first EMT that walks in, he sprained his ankle. So he was not much of a help, but he tried to get these

people as comfortable as possible.

Let me go back. Let me go back one second before this. After the first plane hit, we went downstairs after everyone took off. I was there downstairs for maybe seven, eight minutes.

I went back upstairs because I wanted to get something out of my bag. Maybe about 10 to 12-minutes after that first plane, I heard another plane. Then I said to myself, we're being attacked.

I ran downstairs. No sooner did I run downstairs and look up, that I saw the second plane strike the south tower. It was such a vicious hit and such a precision hit, it was unbelievable.

Still we didn't have that many more people coming into the fire house, just regular civilians hanging around. They were looking at everything else like that. So pretty much everything was pretty much stabilized in the fire house. The captain was still the only one there.

At that point there were two fire marshals that came to the house. They wanted to

borrow some equipment. I can't identify who they were. I forget what they looked like. They got some gear from the house and then they took off. So I only saw them for a second. I only determined they were fire marshals because they had their jackets on.

So at this point what I did was I went around the corner to Liberty and Greenwich to tell the people listen, just keep walking, just keep walking as far as you can, just stay away from the buildings.

I got to the American Stock Exchange building. A guy came out and asked me what do you think we should do? I said listen, if it was me, I tell you in one word, R-U-N, run, just leave. Oh, we have a protocol, for this and that. Listen, you've to get your people to safety. I don't think being in the building is that safe. But this is the American Stock Exchange. I said listen, you do what you have to do. We have a couple of retired cops on the job here. So one of them called me over. I told him the same story. I said listen, you guys need to get out of here, just for safety reasons. Again,

he told me that they have their protocol that they do.

So I continued on my little excursion here trying to get people out of the stores, out of the buildings. I went to all of the shops right behind the fire house. I said listen, just leave your building, just leave.

Q. This is on Greenwich Street?

A. Yeah, right on Greenwich and Liberty, right behind the fire house, right on -- is it Cider or Cedar?

Q. Cedar?

A. Cedar. They have all the little coffee shops there, bagel stores, gourmet shops there with all the foods. I told them just leave, just -- don't even close your business, just walk out and leave. They're telling me they're okay, they're okay. Now it's getting a little frustrating because I said listen, you should really leave. Don't lock your door, but let your employees go. That didn't seem to work.

So I went back into the fire house to see what I could do. The EMS unit was trying to treat a couple of people. We had a guy with a

broken leg, possibly, and maybe one patient with second degree burns but nothing life-threatening. All the injuries in the fire house were minor. There were really no life-threatening injuries.

So in a matter of 15, 20 minutes, the captain yelled out and you heard this roar. All he said was run to the back, it's coming down. And we all started running to the back of the fire house.

I know the design of Engine 10, Truck 10. It's on the corner, pretty wide. Then as you go into the house it narrows into the hallway. It has a phone. It has a TV room. Then it has a bathroom and a kitchen, which I totally forgot about, the kitchen during the collapse.

Everyone's running down to the basement or upstairs. One of the firefighters, who must have come in when they were calling all these guys in, I don't know who they were, said go upstairs, go upstairs. A lot of people didn't want to go upstairs because they were afraid. The building is coming down upstairs.

So as we were running, we were picking

up the injured people. They would fall, we would stop, two people pick them up.

Q. Still in the house?

A. Still in the house. Then it came down. From the implosion, we all got thrown and all that stuff came in the house, all that debris, all that concrete and all that fiberglass. Name it, it was in there. It was incredible. Then it started getting dark, darker. You couldn't even see in front of you.

Q. Inside?

A. Inside the fire house. You couldn't even see. I couldn't even see in front of my face. Then it became very, very black. We were trying to get out the door. The back entrance was blocked with all the rubble. Somehow they were able to get the door open. Again I think most of us forgot about the kitchen. We were all trying to go out through the back. So everyone I think got out.

So what happened was I got out and I went to see what was going on. It was a nightmare. Cars were tossed. I mean, all that stuff was in the air, on the street.

So I walked up to Trinity Place. It just so happens I needed a mask, you know. I happened to see Matty James who was in a Jeep. I said Matty, you got a mask? He said: "I have a couple of Scott packs." I didn't want to take one because they had a couple of fire trucks that were hanging out right in front of him. I don't know what fire trucks they were, but they looked kind of beaten up from the explosion.

Q. This was on where?

A. On Trinity Place.

Q. On Trinity?

A. And Cedar.

Q. Cedar.

A. Right, right up there.

Q. They were parked there, and they were smashed?

A. I don't know if they were really smashed, but there was a lot of debris on them. I only saw one or two. I can't really identify them because there was so much debris in the air and on the ground. The pictures that you see, that's what was going on.

So he said to me: "Hop in my car, I'll

give you a ride, because there's a cop, he's giving out masks on the corner." Meanwhile I can't see, my eyes are so red and irritated and I'm coughing up all the soot and everything. So I got a mask from the cop.

Then there was like a little cappuccino store right there. I knocked on the door and was let in. Listen, can I use your facilities here? He said oh, yeah, come on in, wash up. I just wanted to wash my face and get all that stuff out of my eyes. He said hey, have some water. He gave me a bottle of water. I was there about 15 minutes. Then I started walking out.

I walked about two, three minutes, and all of a sudden I heard a plane. Now, I'm like the only one walking on this block. I said oh, my God, we're being attacked again. Someone said it could have been a B15, a U.S. plane up in the air. Actually, what I think it was, was simultaneously the plane and the north tower coming down. So that's what the sounds were. I heard that rumble.

So I started going back to the area where Liberty Street was. I went up to Liberty

Street. Everything's destroyed, everything, all the buildings around it. The only thing standing was the fire house.

I re-entered the fire house. I spotted a chief. I think it was Philip Burns only because someone called his name. A couple of firemen were in there. There was Firefighter Peter D'Ancona. He was there. He was assigned there. I saw him. He was looking for gear. There was no gear to be found for these guys, no turn-out coats, no nothing. Everything was gone.

Guys were coming in. A couple of companies were coming in just trying to assist. It was still dark out.

What happened was everybody got out of the house safely. I asked the captain where is everybody? He said everyone's out, everyone's fine, everyone's good. There was nothing else to do. Then I spotted the two EMTs that were assigned to the location. I said listen, I have a car --

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. No, I don't. The ambulance was destroyed in the collapse. I don't know if it

was totaled, but there was a lot of damage to the vehicle.

Q. Where was that vehicle?

A. It was parked right inside the 10 and 10 house.

Q. On the side?

A. Right inside.

Q. Oh, inside?

A. Inside, right. They backed it up. I don't know if they were going to do triage or going to transport.

Q. How did the ambulance get damaged?

A. All the debris from the collapse of --

Q. So it was outside?

A. It was inside. From the implosion, everything just came inside.

Q. The doors were open?

A. The doors were open.

Q. Oh, the doors were open?

A. Yeah. They should have been closed, but I don't think -- no one expected within an hour the collapse. It was an awful thing.

Q. Where did you park?

A. I parked down on Greenwich between -- I

think it's Carlisle and Rector. That's where I was parked.

Q. So you were down a little further?

A. Yeah. Because what happened was when I got to the house it was almost changing shifts and I didn't want to take a parking spot up, because they double park there and everywhere right around the corner. It was still early. I said you know what, let me just park up further. I found a spot, I pulled the car in, and then I just walked up to the fire house.

Q. You never made it to the towers? You never went near the towers?

A. No, that was just from my location of being right at 10 and 10. That was the closest I was.

Q. Philip Burns was in there during that whole time?

A. I only saw him when I came back after the second tower collapsed. I'm only saying it was Philip Burns because someone said that was Chief Burns.

Q. That was after the second?

A. After the second collapse.

Q. When the first one was hit, you were outside?

A. No, I was almost in front of the house at the front doors. The doors were open.

Q. Which is actually right across the street?

A. Right across the street. It was on Liberty and Greenwich.

Q. You looked up and you saw the --

A. I didn't look up. What happened was the captain just -- we heard a roar, and he just yelled out it's coming down, just run to the back of the fire house.

Q. Oh, no, when it hit -- did you see it -- were you outside when it hit?

A. No.

Q. You were inside?

A. Yeah. We just heard all the rumble and all -- the collapse.

Q. I'm saying you were in the house when the first plane hit?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you go out at all right after it?

A. When the first plane hit? I did. I

went outside.

Q. What did you see then?

A. I just saw the fire -- the smoke coming out from the top from the north tower.

Q. Was there any debris?

A. Not at that time.

Q. No debris at all?

A. No. Stuff was coming down, but nothing real major. After the second plane hit even more stuff came down.

Q. I'm sorry, when the second plane hit.

A. When the second plane hit, it was just a lot of fire, a lot of black smoke.

Q. Coming out?

A. Right. What happened was that we looked up and then within a couple of minutes one guy jumped -- an individual came out. It wasn't like a jump, because they came out backwards. Evidently from the explosion up on those floors they got blown out. Someone else came down and they were coming out. I only saw two people come out.

Now we had more people congregating in the fire house. We would just evaluate them, if

they were injured. No, we're not injured. We need a phone.

Of course the cell phones were not working. The only cell phone that worked I think was Nextel. It's a two-way portable radio, practically, and you can have contact. You don't even have to worry about dialing. That's the only phones that were working.

Everyone's cell phones were just not working. My cell phone was dead. The beepers were dead. Everything in the fire house was dead. There was no communication whatsoever. So we just relied on whatever information we were able to get, which was actually really nothing.

Q. Were there a lot of plane parts or anything when the second one hit?

A. Not that I saw, no.

Q. You said there were firemen around you. Did you hear any transmissions going on?

A. No. It was all verbal among the firemen just discussing. The radio communication was fairly -- I didn't hear anything.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do you have anything else, Mike?

Q. Anybody else you actually recognized?

A. I recognized the captain. I recognized one of the firefighters. I recognized a lieutenant that was from BHS. I don't know his last name. His first name is John. He was good friends with Geoff Guja. Actually they went down together. Geoff unfortunately didn't make it.

Q. You don't remember the fireman's name?

A. No, that was with him? I don't remember.

Q. Captain Mallery, he stayed in the fire house the whole time?

A. I believe so.

Q. Anything else? Is there anything else you want to add? You can say anything about how you felt or whatever.

A. It was something that if you were there, to describe it, it was horrible. It was a horrific act against us. It was something that you would never, ever think would ever, ever happen to this country.

When those towers came down, it was like a sign of something. When all these people -- I mean, war is war. They talk about

Pearl Harbor. Bottom line is Pearl Harbor was a military base, installation. It was peace time.

But here what happened was we got two planes, our own planes, going into two towers and killing almost 5,000 people. It was just an awful day. It was day I'll never forget, just the sounds of everything and the planes hitting. The awful sound of hearing that plane over the fire house. It was like it was sitting right on top of the fire house. That's how close it was. And then revving up the engine and then hitting the north tower.

Q. You had said earlier people in the fire house were alarmed when they heard the plane. They felt something was wrong?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Before it even --

A. I was upstairs. There was only the captain and the firefighter. It was George Bachmann who was up there with me. George Bachmann was in Vietnam -- served in Vietnam. So he knows certain sounds. Like we said, this is a no-fly zone here. What's a plane doing here?

So as soon as that plane hit, they all

took off. The only one left was the captain at the time. Anybody else coming back, coming into the house was either called in or off-duty guys coming in, grabbing equipment. I saw the two fire marshals. They were grabbing equipment. They asked the captain: "We need some gear."

But again, no one ever expected it to collapse like that. Just thankfully a pancake rather than toppling over. That would have been a nightmare. But in an hour the intensity of that heat must have been incredible.

Q. Did any of the guys from 10 and 10 come back after --

A. They were out. I understand that a lot of them didn't come back.

Q. So none of them came back after, while you were around?

A. No, no. They, I think, just went to the location where they were supposed to go and whatever assignment they were given. The problem was when the south tower went down, I guess there was no communication and people just went into the north tower. That's what they were saying.

When the south tower came down, that

was where the communication was. While the north tower is still up, burning, guys were just told go into the building. There was no radio communication. That's what --

Q. You were by the south tower?

A. Right.

Q. After that got hit, were there any firefighters going into Two World Trade from Liberty Street or anything?

A. No, they just -- everyone just got in and they went to --

Q. No, I'm saying when the second one hit when they were responding when they made the other alarm for the second tower.

A. Right.

Q. Units were assigned to the second tower or the south tower. Did you see any of them go in?

A. No, no. Actually I didn't see any units from where I was. They must have all gone to Vesey or they were parked on Church right up on the street. I saw some fire apparatus up on, I think it was, Church or Trinity or right up there on Liberty Street.

Q. Did you see any numbers or anything?

A. No.

MR. CAMPBELL: All right. This concludes the interview. It's 10:52. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110010

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC TRACEY MULQUEEN

Interview Date: October 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 4th, 2001. We're at Fire Department headquarters in 8E13, and we're about to begin an interview with Tracey Mulqueen, who's a paramedic assigned to the office of medical affairs.

I'm joined by --

MR. CASTORINA: Ron Castorina, Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MR. TAMBASCO: Mike Tambasco, Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MR. McALLISTER: Tracey Mulqueen as well.

Q. We're just going to draw your attention to September the 11th and ask you for your recollections about the events of that day.

A. I guess to start with, the first time I started hearing -- I was actually in the pantry making breakfast. I started to hear people screaming. The first thought was that there was a bird in reception, like a bird had flown in or something. I don't know where that came from.

I went out to see what was going on,

and I went to the eighth floor reception and I could see the flames and the smoke coming out of the first tower in the Trade Center. It was surreal. It's like you're seeing it but you're not really processing it.

I was watching for a few minutes, and the second plane came in. Basically the next thing I remember after that was we had all of our office's medical equipment on a chair and we were running out the building.

They had somehow worked out for us to get an ambulance at one of the battalions in Brooklyn. So we ran to somebody's personal car, because we didn't even try to get a pool car. We figured all the pool cars were probably gone at that point, which I wouldn't be surprised if they were.

So we're driving through Brooklyn, and three of us -- it was myself, James Murphy, who's another paramedic, and Dulce McCorvey, who is an EMT in the office. So we go into her personal car with all the equipment, and we're driving and we're hoping we don't get lost.

Again, we're in a personal vehicle.

I'm basically stopping at the red lights. I'm jumping out of the car, stopping traffic so we can drive through, because we just needed to get there. I probably shouldn't be telling this to the BITS people, but anyway.

Q. We've heard this story before.

A. I know.

Just trying to stop. People looked at us like what's going on. I guess people didn't know yet. We were listening to the radio, the regular AM radio -- I forget what station it was -- and starting to hear the reports about what's going on.

So we get an ambulance, we throw our stuff in it, and we start heading over to Manhattan. We were driving and we come over -- I think we came over the Manhattan Bridge and went around City Hall. We were driving down Broadway, and there was no AM/FM radio in the ambulance, so we had no idea what was going on at this point.

Q. What were you able to observe as you came over the bridge and after you entered Manhattan?

A. Just there was a lot of cops. There

was a lot of activity. I really wasn't seeing people, like the hordes of people like you see on the news. I think we were more concerned about going the right way and not getting lost. I was in the passenger seat of the ambulance, so I was kind of copiloting at that point.

We started to come down Broadway, and we could start to see people coming up at us, just all types of pedestrians, walking only in one direction. Like I said, we didn't have a radio in our ambulance, and nothing had come over the regular FD radio. So we didn't even know the first tower had collapsed at that point, and we were driving straight in. We had no clue.

One of the captains from operations, Janice Olszewski, if she hadn't stopped us, we probably would have been right underneath the tower when it came down. We had no idea what was going on.

We were coming down Broadway, and I'm not sure exactly where we ended up but I believe we were probably at Broadway and Vesey. We were probably right about here. She had flagged us down. We got out of the ambulance. We started

talking to her. You could see that she had that look in her eye. She told us that the tower had come down.

Literally within like maybe a minute or two of being on the scene, you could start to hear the rumble again. Everybody just said, "Get out of here!" Everybody just took off running.

Q. That was the rumble from the second tower?

A. It was, definitely, because you could start to see the dust cloud was starting to come at us and everything. We were running up Broadway, and I don't know how he did this, because all I thought was just get the hell out of here. I had Captain Olszewski in my sight, and I had Dulce McCorvey in my sight, and we were together. I had no idea where Jimmy Murphy went.

The next thing you know, the ambulance comes up Broadway. "Get in!" Cool. So we all jumped in, and we just all sat in the back. You could see the dust clouds coming at us and going down the side streets.

Q. You were moving, you were driving?

A. Oh, yeah. So we actually beat out that

cloud, because there's no way you could have driven through that. We were driving, and we stopped at one point and we looked and saw that we were outside the federal building. We ain't stopping here. So we went a few more blocks up.

I remember Janice Olszewski just sitting there screaming, "Keep going. We're not far enough. We're not far enough. Just keep going." We just were all sitting in the back of the ambulance, what the hell just happened. I don't think it really even sunk in.

We knew something had happened. I don't think we realized like the whole thing had come down, because we didn't even know -- she had said that something had collapsed, there was some kind of explosion, I don't know. We just got out, we stopped, and all of a sudden people just started coming out, all covered in the ash.

Q. Where did you stop?

A. I know we were outside of 385 Broadway at one point, because there was a lingerie shop there and the guy was so nice. He let us come in, let us use the bathroom, let us use the phones. I know the deli next had asked people

for quarters to use the phones, which I could not believe. This guy was like, "Whatever you need. What can I do?" He was just amazing. I'm going to make a point to go back there and thank him, because he was absolutely wonderful.

I think we all sat down on the back of the bumper. We were trying to get dust masks, and we gave out all of our masks within a couple of minutes, because everybody was coming up. You could smell it. It's not a regular smoke smell. It's acrid concrete, whatever. We gave out dust masks.

Then within I guess a couple minutes, people started coming out, making their way out of that cloud. There were some injuries. A lot of just completely petrified, shell-shocked -- I guess when you see pictures of people from other parts of the world after bombings and stuff, that shell-shocked look.

When you see people in New York in business suits coming out covered in ash, looking like that, the whole thing -- surreal is definitely the only word that describes a lot of what went on that day, and afterwards too.

I know after a few minutes some guy came up, and he must have just run to the first deli he could find and bought all the water he could fit in his backpack and just came by and just started giving out water to people, which was -- I guess that was the beginning of people coming together and trying to do the right thing. People came by and bought sandwiches in a store and just tried to give us stuff. Somebody finally came by and was giving out like bottles of water, like the five gallon ones.

Actually, this is interesting, just to go back. When we were driving up Broadway before we actually got there, there was a sheriff's car, and my husband is a deputy sheriff in the New York City sheriff's office. As we were driving by, I yelled at them, "Tell Paul Mulqueen that his wife is here."

Because afterwards, maybe about half an hour, all I could think of is I know my husband works in Manhattan, I know he was there. I'm trying to focus on what I need to do, and people coming up cut and having trouble breathing. We had a few different oxygen bags and regulators

and stuff. You go into auto pilot and you try to do what you have to do, and all I could think about was where's Paul, where's Paul. Nobody could get through on the cell phones.

I guess probably about 12-ish I saw another sheriff, and I said, "Could you please just try and raise him on the radio." He called him. Finally all I heard back, "What?" I thought, okay, he's okay, which I thought was very funny. The guy was like, "Lord, there was a family member looking for you." You could hear like the relief in his voice, and he was like, "Okay." But it was like "What?"

I found out later he was helping to evacuate the fire. There was a picture. He was in like Time magazine and Newsweek magazine evacuating some of the victims out. I understand where that "what" came from at that point, but it was the happiest word I heard.

I don't know how long we were there, but we were there for a while trying to just catch people as they were coming out, people were being carried out, limping up. Everybody was pretty banged up, although not as banged up as I

expected. I think a lot of us really expected worse injuries. It seemed like people were mostly either walking wounded or they didn't get out. It's unfortunate.

Q. What street were you getting these injuries at?

A. We were still in front of 385 Broadway.

Q. On Broadway?

A. Yeah, which I think is just south of Canal Street.

It's funny, because the whole time too you don't realize how often you use the twin towers as your reference point, because for the next couple days I would look and I had no idea where I was. I would go to look up to see where the towers were. I guess that's something I'll have to get used to, but it was very strange.

I know once --

Q. Were there other units there at that time?

A. There was one other ambulance there. I think it was from the academy, because I know like Marlena Coffey was there and Jenna, she's from the academy. She was with a couple of other

people and some other EMTs that were closer that didn't get out of the cloud had come up. I know one guy's name was Kevin. He was covered in ash.

I think after once we kind of got control of the scene there, everybody was just to the phone to try and call people, to just let them know that we're okay. I know when I got in touch with my aunt, she was hysterical, which started me off, the last thing you want.

We were told to 85 with one of the deputy medical directors, so we met up with him at wherever that first treatment sector was on the West Side Highway there. There was all the ambulances, and all other people started coming in. I saw ambulances from New Jersey. My friend lives on North Shore. This funky big ambulance thing. I never saw a truck like it.

We met up with Dr. Richmond, which apparently he and Commissioner Clair and Dario Gonzalez, the two physicians and the commissioner, were flown in from the state police from Albany, which was good.

At that point Captain Olszewski was who we kept with. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]T. MULQUEEN[redacted]

[redacted]

I remember what struck me most is when we were on the east side and stuck in all that traffic, people were just going about their day. People were sitting at cafes eating. I know life goes on and stuff, but to see people -- it was almost like how could you just be going about your business? Don't you know what just happened?

[redacted]

I saw her I don't know when, a couple days later. I had slept here a couple nights, and I ran into her one night. It was good to see

people. I never hugged so many people that I worked with in the space of a couple of days, ever.

From the hospital we went to Bellevue to restock, because our bus was trashed. They had everything set up outside for restock. We had no oxygen, we had no masks, we had no water left for doing people's eyes and stuff. We were flushing them out. We had no gas. It was like everything you could run out of, we ran out of.

We were standing at Bellevue. All of a sudden we hear this rumble of like a plane really low, and I started to freak out. Jimmy Murphy said, "It's okay. It's an F-15." I've never heard an F-15 before. I don't go to air shows or anything.

But that plane and the rumble, especially because you hadn't heard a plane since; maybe a helicopter or two. But that sound, that was -- and just to see all these fighter jets over New York City was very, very strange.

So then we restocked, and we were sent to Chelsea Piers. We pretty much spent the rest

of our night there. Actually how did I get to Chelsea Piers? Honestly I don't know where we went after Bellevue. All I know is at some point I got hooked up with Dr. Richmond and we ended up at Chelsea Piers. I don't know how I got there. Okay. That's pretty interesting.

Q. It's common that people have gaps, because a lot of people don't recall big chunks of time from that day.

A. I have no idea what I did. The next thing I know, it was nighttime and we were at Chelsea Piers and we were helping -- we got the morgue set up, which actually they never used, on the ice rink, which I thought it was actually a good idea.

Yeah, just getting everything set up, all the hospitals, getting all the people -- everyone was just rushing in. Everybody knows about how many people we had volunteering their time, and just stuff, equipment.

I remember at one point an unmarked truck pulls outside Chelsea Piers, and they start unloading it. You see just big brown boxes. I'm like, "Guys, I know I'm Miss Panic here, but did

anybody check those boxes? Where is this stuff from? It could be terrorist stuff." The FEMA guy standing next to me says, "Oh, maybe we should check the truck out." I was like oh, my God, you know. Who knew at that point? He was like, "Wow, that's a good idea."

At some point that night, we went to go check out some of the -- I went with Dr. Richmond to ground zero from Chelsea, and I got to see a little bit of it. Words can't describe. You can see all the pictures and all the footage. I don't know if you guys were there or not, but it just looks like the gates of hell opened up. I've heard that from other people too. You can't describe that.

Then we went back up, and we were finishing coordinating. I actually got home the first night, because my husband came and picked me up. That was good. That was very good. I was very, very thankful, very thankful. We're both the same type of people, we're there.

I know my parents were in Walt Disney World, and they shut the whole park and wouldn't tell people why they started shutting people out.

A guy had a radio and told my parents, and my mom just flipped, because she knows where I work. She knows that when big things happen, we're out the door first.

The only reason why I wasn't out the door with Dr. Cherson and Manny Delgado was because I was making my frigging bacon in the pantry. Who knows what would have happened had I been there.

You hear all these stories. There were so many people that were just lucky because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time or the right place at the right time. That's two things: I had my bacon saved me, hopefully, and then Janice Olszewski stopping us in the middle of Broadway before we drove right into the thing. I'm very lucky and very happy.

I came back the next morning, and I had met up with Dr. Cherson at that point. I spent the next couple of days with him. That's a very big blur. All I know is that by the end of the day I could barely walk, my feet hurt so much. My big toes are still numb now, because we were just on our feet for so many hours. The next

couple days I ended up just sleeping up here in one of the doc's offices.

Oh, wait, no, I forgot this one. The next day we were -- after we were helping the setup -- they were setting up the northwest triage and treatment sector in the American Express building all of a sudden you started to hear that rumble again. Everybody just took off.

Q. This is on the 12th?

A. Yes. Apparently in the back some of the facade had been falling down, but you didn't know that. All you know is you heard that rumble again. We were all running. All of a sudden we're like "we're not far enough," which we heard a lot of them.

All of sudden I see one of our EMTs coming up towards West Street, and he's starting to go in the building. I started screaming, "Get out of there!" One of the cops turned around and said, "Why are you screaming?" "Because you know what, I just ran for my frigging life again. If I'm a little high-strung right now, then you're going to have to understand that."

This guy was going back in the

building. He's like, "Oh, okay. All right." Why are you screaming? Because he's walking towards a building that might be collapsing? I don't know, you know. It was just funny.

We moved back, and then they checked it out. You see the back corner had collapsed a little bit. But they checked it out. Apparently the building was -- they used it for a triage and then the morgue. I think it's still being used, actually. I think the DMAT teams are in there now.

I don't know what else you're looking for.

Q. That's great.

A. Kind of a rambling story.

Q. That's what we're looking for. We're looking for your recollections, a narrative from you as to what you observed. We appreciate that.

A. I'm just meeting people. I met one guy, one of my old partners, and he was off. He said his whole fire company's gone, the whole company. Just running into people like that. When you look at people that you're not going to see again, it's hard. It's very difficult.

Thank you.

Q. Thank you very much for your recollections.

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister again. It is 12:12 on October 4th, 2001, and we're going to conclude the interview now. The interview started at 11:52 hours.

File No. 9110011

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF SALVATORE CASSANO

Interview Date: October 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: This is the interview of - I'm here with Salvatore Cassano. We are in his office on the 7th floor at 9 Metrotech. My name is Mike Tambasco. I'm the investigator assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. Present in the room with me is Assistant Commissioner James Drury, Fire Marshal Michael Starace, Peter Campbell, Fire Marshal.

Chief, if you would - we are going to be starting this interview at 1350 hours. Just take your time.

Q. I'm going to ask you some questions, Chief. Could you start from when you initially heard about a plane crash on September 11, 2001?

A. Okay, fine. We were in the command center. I was in the command center at the time the first plane hit. We were sitting around the table and at the table was Chief of the Department Pete Ganci, Citywide Tour Commander Donald Burns, Citywide Tour Commander Jerry Barbara and Citywide Tour Commander Joe Callan. There may have been some other people there. I don't remember, but I know at least we were there.

Q. Where was this command center, Chief?

A. The command center was in the back. It was

the citywide tour command center. It's right behind the fire operations center. There is a room back there where we have our offices.

Q. On the 7th floor?

A. Right, on the 7th floor. We were just talking about the day's events, the previous day's events, when on the Department radio, there was a message blurted out that - something to the effect that the outside of the World Trade Center was on fire. So that sort of perked up our ears, and not knowing what was going on, everybody naturally did what they do. They got up and started to move out, and I stayed there a little longer just to see what the transmission was, and I remember hearing something about a plane hitting the World Trade Center, so now I really got my gear and my motor in gear.

I came out of the office, came down to look for Chief Ganci. Pete was already on the road. I looked out the window and in the office with me was Mike Canty, Battalion Chief. We looked out the window and we saw that the plane had hit the tower. We actually saw a lot of smoke coming from the World Trade Center. I said wow. With that I turned around and I left. I went down to my car. My aide was actually

driving Donald Burns the day before. So he had to stay with Donald Burns and had driven Donald Burns, so I drove myself.

I got in my car, drove out of the building and was naturally listening to the reports and all the reports we heard, you know, including a transmittal of a fifth alarm. I came out and over the Brooklyn Bridge. All I could see - being that I was driving, I really couldn't get a good look, but I did see a heavy column of smoke in the sky. I drove over the Brooklyn Bridge.

I went down and actually had 2 EMTs in my car. One was a black man. I don't know who the other fellow was. They asked me for a ride over to the Trade Center. I took Brad with me and Brad could tell you who the other fellow was, because I don't remember. And they were in the back seat. That's what I was doing. And we drove down, we came actually onto West Broadway. I parked right by - I was trying to park by 7 World Trade Center, so I ended up on West Broadway and Vesey, right on the corner, right adjacent to the Federal Office Building.

Then as we were getting out of the car, the second plane hit the south tower, just as we were

stepping out of the car. We had some debris come flying down on us. Brad and the other fellow took off. I ran into a garage, waited till everything cleared up and then when it calmed down, I got back into my car and we went --

Q. You were going to go pick up your car?

A. We went down. I got back in the car after the smoke and all had cleared from the second hit and I ended up going down, possibly Murray Street to West Street. I parked my car on West Street, probably somewhere near Barclay, probably a little further north of that. I got my bunker gear out of the car. I suited up and I looked up and I could see the heavy smoke condition.

I started to walk down West Street and I got in front of tower two and saw where the command post was set up. It was set up on West Street. I looked up and I knew this was not the right place for the command post, so I told the field communications unit, I said this is too close to the building. We have to move this out of here and get it back.

So they took the command post and moved it further across the street, further west. I'm not exactly sure where the garage is, but it's probably in

front of the Millennium. Not the Millennium. Sorry. It's probably in front of the Two World Financial Center and Winter Garden. There is a garage down there where we set up. You will know, if you have been down there. You will see it. It was there.

So what we did was we set up the command post there across the street, further away from the building. At the command post we had Chief of Department Ganci, myself, field communications and numerous companies. I don't remember. I remember seeing the 101 truck, 202 engine, I think it was 105; companies like that.

Then Chief Galvin reported into that command post, and he had been given an assignment to go to work with either Chief Burns in the south tower or go to the Millennium. Again, I'm not exactly sure what the instructions were that he was given by Chief of Department Ganci and before Tom went to the command post, he was getting all the channels right. He said one was going to be the tactical and either 5 was going to be the command in the south tower or 6 was going to be the command for the north tower and he was trying to get everything down pat before he left. With that he took off and he went on his way.

After looking over the command board and helping communications with the command board, talking to Chief Ganci, he asked me to go in there and rendezvous with Chief Galvin to see what was going on. So from the command post I walked across the street. I went into the Millennium, into the lobby, where I saw Chief Galvin, who was kind of overwhelmed. He was the only one there. His aide had gone someplace and he was very busy.

But inside the lobby of the Millennium it was very quiet. Very few civilians. In fact, I didn't see a civilian. All I saw were building employees. They were very calm. So I went into the lobby of the hotel. We saw 13 truck with Captain Walter Hynes, who I knew, and Captain Dave Wooley, who is usually with engine 54. I saw 11 truck in the lobby. Actually they were up on the mezzanine.

I saw 23 engine and I assigned 23 engine to be the command post company for the Millennium to help out Chief Galvin. We were getting overwhelmed with phone numbers and elevators and all that and keeping a record of the companies. So I gave 23 engine that assignment. Stay in the lobby and be the command post company for Chief Galvin. You are his aide.

After conversing with Chief Galvin for a while, taking his numbers on the desk, security desk, so we could converse with them if we needed to get in touch with them, I took the phone number. I took the companies that were in the lobby and went towards the restaurant. There is a restaurant, Tall Ships, in that building. Went in there, went to the bathroom. Came out. There were some people in the restaurant. They looked kind of confused. I told them stay here, it's safe right now. There's people jumping and stuff like that. I was afraid of them walking across the street and getting hurt by falling debris.

I left the lobby. I left the restaurant by way of Liberty. I came out that exit, started to walk up Liberty to West, where I met Commissioner Feehan and Commissioner Tierney. I talked to them. I actually showed them where the command post was. I told them to walk away from the building because there were jumpers and get close to a fence. There was like a chain link fence across the street. We walked along the chain link fence and walked close to the building. When we got to the building, I brought them to the command post.

We stayed at the command post for a while,

helping out Chief Ganci, and then the south tower collapsed. When the south tower collapsed, what we did was we either ran, got blown or fell down that garage, into that garage. That's where we all went. And after the dust and smoke cleared, someone showed us an exit. I went up an exit stairway and came out the lobby of the building. Some people, I guess, just stayed there until it really cleared and came up out of the garage, the ramp itself.

So they had told us there was an exit out the rear of that building to - actually further towards the water. So we started telling people to go back into that building, go out the rear exit and go towards the water. Chief Ganci told me to set up a command post further north towards Chambers Street. And that's what I started to do. I started to walk north to try to get people to set up a command post further north and I believe that's when Pete and I got separated. Pete started to go further south.

At the corner of West and Vesey, I met Chief Turi. He had a bull horn. He had full bunker gear on and he wanted people to get further north. I told him I was setting up a command post on Chambers and let's move north, get out of here.

Then I met Chief Pete Hayden and Chief Joe Pfeifer. Deputy Hayden, DC Pfeifer. They were in the lobby of the north tower. And they got from - when the south tower collapsed, the lobby got pretty crappy. They came out of there and they were all full of dust and all that and I saw Pete Hayden and I looked at Pete and said where were you? He said I was in the lobby of two and he said Father Judge is dead. I had just been with Father Judge. I had seen Father Judge on Church - sorry - West Street. I realized - I said Pete we have people up there, the building is loaded with our guys. We got to get them out of there.

I tried to call Chief Ganci on the handy talky. I was calling car 3. For some reason we couldn't touch base. So I told Pete Hayden and Joe Pfeifer, we got to move the command post further north, start moving north. Get them out of here. I'm going to go look for Pete and tell him what we got. They started to move, I turned around and started walking down West Street to find Chief Ganci.

Q. Going south?

A. I was going south. I was trying to find him, to let him know we still got a lot of people in the north building. We got to get them out of there and

that's when tower one came down, so I was on West Street. I looked up. There was a jet plane. It sounded - I mean it sounded like another plane coming over and I said holy god, I hope it's one of ours. I looked up. It wasn't ours. There was a building coming down.

I turned around and started running north on West and I looked up. I knew I wasn't going to make it any further. There was a rig on the corner of West and Vesey. I dove under the rig and waited out there. I got hit in the back with some concrete or something like that. As soon as everything cleared up - I don't know where it came from, but coming down - I met Pete Hayden again after that. He had gone up Rector. I met him. He gave me a hug and said are you all right? I'm fine, I thought, I was all right. I couldn't walk. I had gotten hit in the back.

A couple of EMTs with their stretcher put me on it and wheeled me up into a building. I guess there was a triage center there in the building on - right by the water. From there they took me to St. Vincent's Hospital. I got out of there about 3. I came back here and I started working here. That's pretty much what happened.

Q. Let me start with a couple of questions, Chief. Going back to the command center on West Street, you said when the south tower came down, you ran down the driveway?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Did you see Chief Ganci at that point --

A. I saw him afterwards. We all took off, but I met him back on the apron afterwards. That's when he told me, he said, we got to get people up north. We are going to set up another command post. Send everybody up north. That's when I talked to Pete and that's what I was in the process of doing. Pete turned around and went south. I think he heard that we had people trapped and that's when he went south. I did see him after the first collapse. We were talking. He had given me instructions, and I was trying to carry them out.

Q. What about Commissioner Feehan, did you see him running to the collapse?

A. I can't recollect, but I believe I saw him afterwards. I believe I saw him afterwards with Pete. I believe everybody that was on that apron made it into the garage, because when we came back out we looked around. There was rubble, but nothing where we

couldn't see somebody if they were trapped under there.

Q. Now you said when you came around and you saw Chief Turi with a bull horn, you started heading south again, because you wanted to talk to Chief Ganci about possibly -- our guys in the north tower.

A. North tower, yes.

Q. How far down did you get in relation to where the command post on West Street was when the north tower started coming down?

A. I really don't know. I thought I got -- I didn't get down too far, but I think I got down further than I thought I did because I -- people that were on the corner that were with me made it all the way around on Vesey. I couldn't. I made it just to the corner of West and Vesey. So I don't really know. I got down a little further than I thought.

Q. Okay. Then you said they had the command center outside the north tower early on and then you said it's too close, we got to move it?

A. Right.

Q. Where had it been in relation to the north tower when you decided it had to be moved?

A. It was right in the middle of West Street. They might have had it on the island. On West Street

there is an island. They might have had it right on the island. Much too close. We moved it across the street and right against the building in that driveway, yes.

Q. You say you parked your car originally at West Broadway and Vesey?

A. Right by 7 World Trade Center.

Q. Is there any particular reason you moved it again after that?

A. No, I wanted to get closer -- I knew that that was too far away. So I wanted to get closer to where I thought the command post would be or get into the north tower and I didn't want to walk all the way around to there, so I drove my car, parked it on West Street with the intention of not being caught in all the other stuff that was there, get it out of the way.

Q. Other than the ladder companies or engine companies you already delineated inside of the Millennium Hotel, other than the workers, how many civilians did you see in that restaurant?

A. I would say probably six or seven civilians in the restaurant.

Q. On Vesey Street when you first arrived there, what was the scene like? That was where the first

plane that hit. Was there any debris on that street?

A. No, there was no debris on that street at all from the first plane. I drove right up there and then like I said, I had just opened my door and the second -- I thought it was the secondary explosion. I didn't know it was another plane in the south tower, because when I heard it, I looked up and I saw debris. It had to be debris flying over from the south tower. Not much, but there was enough coming down in the street where I took off and I ducked into a garage until it cleared up.

After the secondary explosion in the north tower, I didn't know what the hell - I didn't know it was another plane that had hit until I got around to the command post.

Q. Do you know now that rig you dived under?

A. Yes, I believe it was Rescue's collapse rig. I remember seeing rescue - they told me -- on that corner, it was Rescue's collapse rig.

Q. It withstood the blast?

A. Yes, thank god.

Q. Was it the high rise unit?

A. No, not the high rise unit. I think they told me the windows were blown out or something like

that, but nothing heavy fell on me.

Q. What time do you think it was that you actually left this building that day, that morning?

A. Probably 5 to 9. I ran right out. I was a little behind everybody else.

Q. And the last time you saw Chief Burns was?

A. Last time I saw Chief Burns was at the command center and when he left the command center, I never saw him at the scene.

Q. Did you hear him on the radio at all?

A. No, in fact I was asking where they were working, because they told me that Chief Barbara had set up outside and I couldn't find him. I was looking for him too. I couldn't find him. That's where I met Commissioner Feehan and Commissioner Tierney and they asked me where was the command post. I said probably you just got to walk around the outside and get out of the way of anything that's coming out of the building.

Q. Did you ever hear later on that the initial command post was inside one of the towers?

A. No. I knew that there had to be a lobby command post, but we set up outside with Chief Ganci. He was the incident commander at that time and I knew exactly where he was going to stage, so that's where I

staged.

Q. When you left the restaurant in the Millennium, did you see Chief Galvin still inside the lobby there?

A. Yes.

Q. What block did you come down when you met Commissioner Feehan and Commissioner Tierney?

A. I came out on Liberty and I met them right there, in fact, where the south walkway still is. I met them right around there, in that vicinity, and they wanted to know where, so I walked them that way across and came down on West Street.

Q. On what street, West and Liberty?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. You actually walked north with them to bring them up to the command post?

A. Absolutely right.

Q. West across and then up?

A. I don't know where. I think Lynn went into the lobby somewhere. I don't know. I don't know. I think they told me she was in the lobby and then Bill went to the lobby too. I stayed at the command board with Pete Ganci. I stayed there.

Q. You mentioned jumpers before. Did you see

them?

A. Yes.

Q. Both towers?

A. I didn't see jumpers from the south tower. I saw jumpers from the north tower and it sounded like concrete falling, hitting the pavement. That's what I was concerned with, those people in the restaurant, to get them out and getting hit with either the jumpers or something falling, windows. I was worried about glass.

Q. You mentioned Father Judge. Where did you last see him?

A. I saw Father Judge as I was walking to the Millennium. He was on West Street. And I saw him come out and I walked up to him, gave him a smile. I told him Father Judge, we are going to need a lot of help here. You better get some more chaplains. He smiled and said something. I forget what he said. I don't remember what he said. That was the last time I saw him.

Q. Anything else?

A. No.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Chief, thank you very much. Mike, you can conclude it.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview is now concluded at 1410 hours. Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110012

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FELIPE TORRE

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 9, 2001. The time now is 714 hours a.m. This is Lieutenant Monte Feiler with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command?

A. Felipe Torre, EMT, Battalion 50.

Q. At Battalion 50, New York City Fire Department, EMS command, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

EMT Torre, if you can just begin and give me a scenario of where you were during the time frame of September 11 in the morning.

A. That morning I started to do a second tour of overtime. We were coming out of New York Hospital Queens. We had just taken a patient there and we were redeployed to the World Trade Center incident. We gave the dispatcher an update when we got there and we made it to Broadway and Murray Street and that is as far as you could go, because we were stopped by numerous police personnel and civilians because a lot of people that were hurt and needed assistance. We radioed in and I notified the dispatcher, the Citywide dispatcher, that we were not able to make it to the staging area.

My partner and I, we got out, took our equipment, and you know, we separated. He attended to some patients and I attended to another. In the process of helping other people, over the radio we also heard that the second tower was hit. A lot of pandemonium, a lot of people were really scared. So was I. We were trying to help as much and control as much people as we can.

Then the first -- one of the towers fell down.

Q. Did you see that?

A. Yes. We were trying to help a couple of people into the ambulance and we got caught up in all that debris, you know.

Q. Did you at any point go into any of the buildings?

A. I was tending to some people at the CitiBank on Broadway and Murray.

Q. They were being brought to you?

A. They, the police stopped us. I think a couple of bank managers also were out and they hailed us. I believe I was helping some young lady that was cut, I believe it was on the leg. She was bleeding, then there was other people that were complaining of

chest pain and they had respiratory distress and we were trying to see if we could get some other units to help us.

Q. Were you parked on Broadway southbound?

A. Yes.

Q. North of Murray?

A. Yes, and --

Q. You were flagged for injured people, you never actually got to whatever staging area you were told to go to?

A. Right. We never made it there. All hell broke loose, because it came over my radio, people yelling to get out, they were bombing New York. So we never really finished providing care for these people, because they all panicked and they all stampede out. We followed out, because everybody was wanting to get out. The walls shook and then we felt it when a rumbling and some people were yelling earthquake.

Q. Was your partner with you the whole time?

A. We separated because there was so many people that wanted help. People, when we got to Manhattan, there was people already on their way out and people had fallen, people had shortness of breath, so he went one way and I went another. When the tower did fall, I

didn't know where he was. He didn't know where I was. I personally got caught up in that big cloud of debris and the only thing I could think of was getting to the ambulance, which was parked. We had parked it, we left it right there. I know that we got caught up with a couple of the police officers and couple of civilians and all I can think of was just putting them in there and just easing the ambulance out and that's how we got out.

Q. You drove of it out?

A. We drove out of it yes, and we were advised to --

Q. You found your partner, your partner came back out?

A. Yes, he came back out. We also helped out Captain Olszewski, she, she came out of that rubble. We were all covered in that dust, but she was, I guess she was -- we were all choking, but she was really bad and I got her into the ambulance. I was trying to get as many people out and she had I guess stepped out, because I didn't know where she had went.

Q. What was your unit number that day?

A. I was 50 Adam.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. David Cira.

Q. David?

A. C-I-R-A.

Q. Were you told a specific staging area to go to over the radio?

A. Yes, they -- but they had changed it. I believe it was Vesey and West. I know it was Vesey Street, Vesey and I think the West Side Highway, as far as I can remember, but we never made it there.

Q. Where did you say you were?

A. We were at Broadway and Murray.

Q. You were a few blocks away?

A. Right.

Q. What time do you think you got there, approximately?

A. It was before the second plane hit I guess.

Q. I guess 9:15. Anywhere around --

A. We got there before the second plane hit, so we got there after the first plane. Everybody was speculating that it was a possibility that it was a news helicopter that had lost control and slammed into the tower.

Q. Where did you get that information from?

A. It came through the KDT. It was something

about an aircraft that I believe that I read, that it was a possibility that lost control.

Q. You were on the scene for how long would you say before the second plane hit approximately?

A. It seems like it happened so fast, but we were there when the second plane hit and we were there when the first tower collapsed. So I don't know, I guess you could say, what, 40 minutes.

Q. You said at some point you had some civilians on board when you left that Broadway and Murray location?

A. Yes, we never left, we, my partner and I, we separated. He went and helped out some people. I was helping out some people and the second plane hit and of course over my radio there was just a lot of people were yelling and they were talking about terrorists and they were talking about bombing, so everybody heard it and everybody panicked. It seemed like we were right there because the whole building shook and then the ambulance was right parked at the street.

Q. Did you see any other apparatus go by, fire engines or EMS units?

A. Yes, yes, I believe there was a Booth, a New York Hospital Queens unit. There was like two other

units, but we all went separate ways because there were so many people that needed help. Then I guess, I don't know which tower fell down, but that caught us. All of a sudden, bright sunny day became pitch dark and we were all choking and we couldn't see and all I remember was get to the ambulance. I think I took about 6 police officers that they also were caught up in there and I just told them get in the ambulance. I think I took like 2 or 3 civilians. I had no idea.

I was afraid also because some of the people said look, there is a guy from EMS that is laying on the floor. They had told me. I said I didn't know if it was my partner or not. But you couldn't see anything. So I didn't know where that might be. We couldn't see anything. What I did was I did a U turn and edged my way out of that location, then my partner showed up like a block away. I stepped to the back and he took us out of there. They told us whatever patient we get, take them out of Manhattan, so we just notified, we asked for a stand by at New York Hospital Queens. I believe it was like 6 officers, about 3 civilians that we brought in. That was it. I came back.

Q. Did you see any other EMS personnel besides

those going by, anyone in the street, any officers, EMS officers?

A. Like I said we were helping out Captain Olszewski. She wasn't doing too good, but then she stepped out. We washed her face.

Q. Do you know where she went?

A. No, I, you know, I told her to stay, she wasn't doing too good, but came back to Queens and we started seeing -- she had walked out, so I don't know where she had gone. But that, I do remember that. I saw a lot of other people, EMS people, but I don't recognize them. They could have been Manhattan units. Everybody was doing something.

Q. You met your partner one block away, where would that be?

A. You know, we were on Murray and Broadway. I made a U turn, so I'm not sure if it was on Broadway that we were on or on Murray, but -- I don't know, I really couldn't tell you a precise, but thank god when I saw him I was relieved, because everybody told me that he was hurt.

Q. He had patients with him at that time?

A. No, no. Because I had the ambulance. He had came out and whoever we were helping, everybody was

just going crazy. Then after that it was trying to help your own selves.

Q. And you transported to a hospital?

A. New York Hospital, Queens, the old Booth Memorial.

Q. You weren't there when the second building collapsed?

A. I don't think so. I don't know which one had collapsed, but we were there when.

Q. The first one came down?

A. Yes, one of them came down. I took police officers from the -- the Bronx, the 49 precinct.

Q. Did you get their names, were you ever able to get their names?

A. Oh, yes, we did ACR's on them. Yes, we did ACR's. I'm not sure. I think it was like 6 officers and about 3 civilians. We tried our best. I know that one of them suffered, one of the civilians, an older lady, she suffered an MI, and I think one of the officers had an asthma attack. We all, they were all, I was trying to give everybody time on the oxygen, because there was two on board and the two on the portable bags that we had and I had like 6 cops and 3 civilians, something like that, so we were trying to

help each other, as well as myself. We took them to the hospital and that's all I know. They told me to come back here.

Q. You came back to the Battalion?

A. Yes.

Q. You never responded back?

A. No, no. I never went back there. Besides, the ambulance wasn't fit to go back. It was just filled with all that dust and a lot of the people had either vomited or spit it all over.

Q. When the first building collapsed, you and your partner were separated, you were by yourself tending to patients?

A. Well, when we got there we never made it to the staging, because a lot of the police officers just flagged us down and I recall that they flagged us down at Broadway and Murray. We were in front of the, I believe it was CitiBank. The employees of the banks said look, we got a lot of people that are hurt. There was a young lady that had a laceration, I believe. I don't know if it was to the foot or leg. That's when a short time later, that's when the second plane hit, so I never got a chance to finish trying to control bleeding.

There was also people that were complaining of chest pains and stuff like that. So I never got a chance to see all these people because once the second plane hit, it came over the radio that terrorists and bombing, so of course, everybody all panicked, got out and just started running and the lady with the cut, I don't know where she went. We all ended up outside. That's when one of the towers fell.

Q. Where were you at that point when the first tower fell?

A. At that location, Broadway and Murray.

Q. In the street or in the CitiBank?

A. We had came out because we didn't know what was going on. First they said they were bombing New York. A lot of people were talking about earthquakes and everybody just scattered. Somebody had told me that my partner was hurt and then all you could see is that big cloud. We can hear the rumbling, you could hear. We just saw that cloud, we turned around and it all caught us. I was with the -- I can't remember her name, but it was a police officer, female police officer.

She grabbed on to me. She got scared. I was scared, because we heard all that rumbling and we could

only imagine that parts of the tower was falling down. My concern was if we stay there we were going to get hit. But like I said, day turned to night and all I could think of was get to the ambulance, because I knew we had oxygen there and at least we can at least inch our way out. But when they heard the radio, a lot of people just made like a Cuban chain. She clinged on to me and then they clinged on to her and I said look, let's get in the ambulance, get some oxygen, we had water. We were able to wash our faces out.

So like I said, there was about I think 6 officers. They brought I think about 3 civilians came in. As much as I could get in and I turned around and we inched our way out and then thank god my partner showed up and we notified them that we were taking them to the old Booth.

Q. You were working off a radio, do you remember what channel you were on?

A. Citywide.

Q. Did you always stay on that channel, were you initially on that channel or did you ever change to it and did you change any other frequency after that?

A. No, afterwards they told us to stay on Citywide. We were --

Q. You were initially on Queens?

A. We were on Queens, right. We were on Queens, then they told us to switch to Citywide. A lot of people were calling for help. I was calling for help. We just notified them that we were going to go to the Queens Hospital.

Q. Okay. Was there any persons from people that you can identify being on the scene, any other uniformed workers that you know by name, any paramedics or EMTs that you know that you saw while you were operating on the scene until you left the scene that you saw present there?

A. You know, I saw a few people, but I don't know their names. The only one that I can recall was Captain Olszewski. I saw Hunter units that were also there. Metro Care units.

Q. EMS officers, other than the Captain, that's the only one you saw?

A. I saw other officers, but like I said I don't know them by name.

Q. Were they running away from the building, were they running into another building?

A. When we first got there, there were two units pulled up. We got there and like I said a lot of

people stopped us, so we never made it to the staging or to the triage. Then they pulled up, I believe it was New York Hospital Queens paramedic ambulance. They also tended to other people saying that they was having chest pains. I think Saint Vincent's Catholic Medical Center paramedic ambulance was also there.

Q. But you can't identify who the individuals were?

A. I can remember their faces, because they work here in Queens, but I don't know their names offhand.

Q. You saw them again afterwards that same day or --

A. No, I haven't seen them recently that I recall. If they show me pictures or something, I bet I can recall them.

Q. Okay. Any fire officers did you see that you know, that you would know who they are?

A. By me, no.

MR. FEILER: At this time I would like to ask the other interviewers to state their name, rank and command.

MS. ROM: Lieutenant Pat Rom, from the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MS. MAGGI: EMT Diana Maggi from

Investigations and Trials.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we conclude the interview that you think is important?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: At this time we will conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time in assisting us with this. The time now is 7:35 a.m. This will conclude the interview.

File No. 9110013

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ANTHONY BARTOLOMEY

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 9th, 2001. The time is 0916 hours. This is Christine Bastedenbeck of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm with Christopher Eccleston. We're conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title, and your assigned command of the Fire Department regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. My name is Anthony Bartolomey, an EMT assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

Q. What unit were you working on September 11?

A. 02 Bravo Tour I.

Q. Who were you working with on that day?

A. Pasquale Felitti.

Q. On that morning, were you assigned to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes.

Q. Approximately what time?

A. At approximately 8:55 a.m.

Q. At approximately what time did you arrive?

A. At about 8:58.

Q. On your way there, were you able to see anything that was happening?

A. Debris floating in the air from the towers,

people running away from the towers and vehicles left abandoned in the street. We were approaching from Broadway coming westbound on Cortlandt Street. There were two taxicabs and a soda truck left abandoned by their drivers. My partner actually got out of the vehicle and pulled the vehicles over to the side so we could get the ambulance through. We made a right turn onto Church Street, parked on Church and Fulton in front of the Millenium Hotel on the southeast corner.

Q. When you arrived there, did any civilians report anything to you?

A. Yes. Numerous civilians were telling me that a plane had hit the building. There were discrepancies as to the type of plane. Some were saying it was a Cessna or Leer jet type, a small jet plane. Some said it was a large passenger plane. One person actually said that it was like a military style plane that actually shot missiles into the building.

Q. Who did you report to when you first got there?

A. When we got there, there were no supervisors on the scene. We reported to a paramedic unit from New York Downtown, I believe it was 1 Victor. They're paramedics based out of Beekman Downtown Hospital.

They had had their vehicle on the corner of Vesey and Church, on the southwest corner, in front of 5 World Trade by Borders Bookstore. They already had three patients in their vehicle. There were more patients approaching as we had gotten there. So we grabbed our equipment out of our vehicle and walked up a block to them. It was them and a crew from 1 Adam was there also treating some patients. Nobody had established staging at that time yet, or, if they had, it hadn't come up over the radio. So pretty much we stayed where we were and started to treat patients there.

Q. That was where; at the corner of --

A. The corner of Vesey and Church Street.

Q. Okay. Then just tell me the events that you remember happening.

A. Then as we were starting to treat some more patients, we heard rumbling. We thought maybe it was debris falling from the tower. You look up and you see the flame of the plane hitting the second building. When you see the footage on TV, you see it fly in one side and the fireball shot out through the other side. We actually saw the fireball shot out from the north side of that building.

Everybody got behind the vehicle to brace

themselves against any debris that was coming down. Debris came down. There was glass and metal hitting the ground around us. That's when we decided to get out of that area because we didn't know what else was going to come down on us. So we got the people that were able to walk from there, we got them to walk, got ourselves out of there.

I'm not sure where my partner went after that. I went towards the subway station on Church Street in front of that cemetery. It's by the Trinity Church annex. Because people were standing there just like deer in the headlights kind of thing, just staring.

Q. Did you walk at that point?

A. I ran, actually.

Q. You ran. Okay.

A. It was only across the street because we were on the west side of the street. The subway station is on the east side. There's a double entrance. Two stairways converge into one. They go down into the mezzanine level. People were just standing there. I was telling them get down, get underground, because they're sitting there while stuff is still falling on them. So I get them down there.

That's where I started finding patients and apparently somebody was there with -- I guess he must have been treated and the crew that was there ran and he got left behind because he had a cervical collar and he had a triage tag around his neck. So I had a couple of civilians help me carry him down the stairs to the bottom, to the mezzanine level, where the token clerk is, put him there, and then they had another patient who was a female. She had fallen and hit her head. She had a lump about the size of a golf ball on her forehead. She was going in and out of consciousness. We put her down next to the other guy. Then there was an elderly female who felt weak in the legs and was unable to walk. So now I had three patients there in front of the token booth.

So I go back upstairs, come up on the radio, let them know, you know, I'm half crew. I don't know where my partner is. I've got three patients not able to walk. I need somebody to get them out of there because at that point I had no equipment on me either. Slowly but surely the police started coming down with some equipment to help carry the patients out. We got the third one out of there. I forget exactly what time. It was right before the towers fell, which that

was about between 9:55 and 10:00, approximately. Because we had gotten back upstairs with the last patient and there was nobody around. There were police officers there saying the tower was in danger of collapse and so they were evacuating the immediate area.

So we went up one block to Barclay Street. We were still on Church walking northbound. We got to St. Peter's Church, and I'm not sure who these people were, I'm not sure if they were federal or plainclothes police officers also, told us start setting up a triage over in front of St. Peter's Church because at this point nobody really was sure where everybody was going. So anybody who could walk was walking, getting out of the immediate area.

So we still had this one guy on a long board with a collar on him, and they brought one other person over who was in a stair chair. I forget exactly what his injuries were. I believe he had hurt his ankle or something like that. That's when we heard the rumbling of the tower starting to collapse and we started to get people inside the church because you saw the cloud of the smoke and the soot that was kicked up when the tower fell. At the rate of speed it was coming up the

street, we weren't going to be able to outrun it, so we decided the best bet would be to get back in inside. We got who we could inside. I got caught outside of the church when the dust cloud overcame me and then I felt my way back in. There were some other officers and people inside the church, and we waited there until the dust subsided a little bit so we could get out.

At that point I lost track of time. I couldn't tell you exactly what time everything happened after that. We get outside I was complaining my throat was burning from breathing in -- I don't think how long I was outside breathing in all the soot and everything. There was a unit from Booth Memorial Hospital, another ambulance unit. They already had patients in their vehicle. They took me and told me to go with them, and then they brought me up to Roosevelt Hospital.

Q. And you became a patient there?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. I'm not sure because, like I said, I lost track of time. So I'm not sure if I was still in the church when the second tower came down because we were

in there for quite a while before you could see outside enough to step out because the soot and the dust, the black in the sky to the point where it looked like it was nighttime outside.

Q. You said you ended up going to the hospital with a Booth Memorial unit?

A. Yes.

Q. In the time that you were down at the scene of the Trade Center, did you run into any EMTs or paramedics that you knew?

A. I ran into one, but I didn't know him. He said he was from Brooklyn.

Q. Was he on duty or off duty, in a uniform?

A. He had the uniform shirt, but he was wearing jeans, so I'm assuming he was off duty at the time.

Q. But you didn't know his name?

A. I didn't know who he was. He just said he worked out of Brooklyn.

Q. The only place you went prior to the collapse was into the subway station?

A. Yes.

Q. And that was --

A. The E train. It's the World Trade Center station of the E train.

Q. From which street did you enter into that?

A. From Church Street in between I believe it's Cortlandt -- no. Fulton and Vesey. Right here in front of St. Paul's cemetery.

Q. You never went into the Trade Center buildings themselves?

A. No. The closest I got was in the front, right here, where Borders Bookstore was, which is right over here. That was as close as I got. I never actually went inside the building, no.

Q. So for the first collapse you had gone to St. Peter's Church?

A. Yes.

Q. As the building came down and the cloud of smoke approached you, you felt your way into the church?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you came outside and you're not even aware of when the second tower came down?

A. No.

Q. Do you know approximately what time you became a patient?

A. That would probably be around between 10:30 and 11:00. I have the paperwork from the hospital. I

don't have it with me. But it would tell you what time I got to the hospital and the time I was released.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you'd like to include in the interview, anything you want to say?

A. No, that's about it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Then this concludes the interview with EMT Anthony Bartolomey. The time now is 9:28 on October 9, 2001.

File No. 9110014

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMTD CHRISTOPHER KAGENAAR

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today is September 9th, 2001. The time is 1533 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and title.

A. EMTD Christopher John Kagenaar.

Q. Your assigned command?

A. My assigned command is Battalion 31.

Q. Of the Fire Department, City of New York?

A. That is correct.

Q. We are at EMS Battalion 31. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

All yours. This is not so much by the questions but what you recall.

A. Pretty much coming out of the station, because the station is always overlooking the World Trade Center, that as we got the signal over the KDT and we were pulling out of the station, I thought it was like a little fire, and then we come out and there's like people from Cumberland Hospital looking up at it and there was like black, thick smoke coming out of the World Trade Center Tower 1 and we're like, wow, this is real, because you really didn't know how bad it was until we got over the Brooklyn Bridge, when we got

near the Brooklyn Bridge. It looked like a war zone. Cops, firemen, vehicles, all the lights heading over the bridge. It was crazy. It was like it was a movie.

Then as soon as we got over there, as soon as we got off of the Brooklyn Bridge, the people were running like it was a Godzilla movie, and we had to stop there for a while. People were overcome, were shaken, were scared, minor cuts and bruises, and we had to stop and do that, and there was a Lieutenant that showed up and said, look, you guys have to get over to the scene. You guys can't stay here. So finally when PD got control of the area, we moved over to I think it was Church. I think it was Church area.

What happened was then the second plane hit the tower, and it was a loud noise, I mean, it hit, and at first I was like this can't be happening. It's like lightning doesn't strike twice. Then the second plane hit the tower, so now we know, oh, my God, what's really going on here now?

So it was just a lot of confusion, everybody started running again, and then we set up and we started treating people, I mean, minor cuts and scrapes, and some people had serious damage.

MR. TAMBASCO: Do you recall where you were when this was happening? I don't know if the map would help you at all.

Q. When you first came off the bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge, do you remember where you were?

A. We were over here on Church. Because he was Haz-Tac, so I had to set up like 200 feet away and stuff.

Q. So on Church Street somewhere?

A. Right.

Q. Somewhere on Church. You were down by the towers?

A. Yes, I was down by the towers.

Q. Okay.

A. Then, when the second tower came down, everybody started running, big cloud of smoke. I left the truck open because I couldn't find Harris and I dove down a train station. Then I came back up on Reade and I got back in there and came back to the scene and I see my ambulance. It was still there, but it was like full of dust and soot. Because in case Harris could have made it to the truck, he could have dove in the truck to save himself. There was just total devastation. I've never seen anything like it

before in my life. So Russell had --

Q. Your partner, Russell?

A. Right. Russell Harris.

Q. He hadn't left you while you were there; you were still with the ambulance?

A. Right. I had to be with the ambulance while he went in to go Haz-Tac, to suit up.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. So he was suiting up with the Haz-Tac stuff?

A. Right.

Q. Then you lost sight of him?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where the train station was that you went in?

A. No. I didn't even look. I just dove down the train station. Then I walked for like a little bit and I came back out when all the dust and soot cleared and everything.

Q. Where did you go from there?

A. I went right back to the truck.

Q. Right back to the truck?

A. Right back to the truck because I thought maybe he could have made it to the truck.

Q. Then you stayed there?

A. I stayed there. I met up with somebody whose name is Morrison. He was off duty and he showed up.

Q. An EMS guy?

A. Yes, an EMS guy. He showed up with shorts and Timberland boots and he just wanted to help out. So I was like, that's it, you're with me, we're going to stick together, and we went over to the staging. But we also had to run when the first tower came down. It was like the first time you thought it was impossible and then the second time it happened, too.

Q. So Russell was still with you when the first one came down or he was gone? In other words, you got there, set up, and he went and set up?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. I was mostly doing like treating patients and then a Citywide ambulance would come up and something like that, you know, hey, take this patient.

Q. So when the first tower came down, that's when you went down into the subway, or the second one?

A. The first tower.

Q. The first one. Then you stayed there?

A. Yes. Then the second tower, when the second tower was coming down, we grabbed as much people and

personnel as we could, threw them in the back of the ambulance, and we went two blocks and we went down this way so we had the building protecting us as the -- it was nasty because there was such a thick, brown smoke, it was like everything was gone, and it was like that for a while.

Q. So you were heading uptown?

A. Yes.

Q. I got you.

A. Trying to keep the vehicle, one, intact, and also to try to get -- because I had loaded the back of the ambulance with people just to get them out of the area, cops, firemen, ATF agents, whatever.

Q. Anybody who got in.

A. Yes. Pretty much get in, get in, let's go. Morrison drove and we turned up this way and we just stood there and we waited until that big dust thing blew on everything. It was like a blizzard.

Q. But you had the other building --

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what street you wound up on?

A. No. I wasn't even looking.

Q. Someplace north.

A. Then they told all the units to start heading

over to Chelsea Piers, and we went over there and we just stood there. Then they told us, okay, now you're going to go over to Reade and Greenwich. We went to Reade and Greenwich. We stood there. Then the 911 calls kept coming in, but it was like the calls that came in at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and we were backlogged. They started coming back in and like 7 World Trade Center --

Q. You were hearing all this over the radio?

A. Yes. So every time we tried to like -- we'd see a unit go out of staging and it would go back in, we're like hoping they won't come back. But they came back. So it was getting real depressing. Then finally they moved us over by the Staten Island Ferry and we just sat there until we got released. Pretty much we just stood there like hoping for something to do. We didn't see anything.

Q. Just one other question. When you were talking about that Lieutenant before, when you first got there, was that an EMS Lieutenant?

A. Yes, it was EMS.

Q. It was. Okay. You don't know who it was?

A. No. Pretty much I remember there was a Chief Vilani who was in charge of the Staten Island Ferry and

he was like keeping us going and stuff. He was like, you know, we lost a lot of people, we don't know who, but we've got to keep going. So it was kind of nice to hear him talk like that. He was very like, you know, keep us going, like got us food and they set up phones for us and everything.

Q. That was Vilani?

A. Yes, Vilani.

Q. EMT Morrison, do you know him or do you know where he works?

A. He works in the 57.

Q. Battalion 57?

A. Right.

Q. Did you see any other EMS people that you remember?

A. Well, I was glad to see everybody from my station was okay because there was a couple that we still didn't know about until the end of the night because we got spread out all over the place.

Q. When did you finally wind up catching up with Russell?

A. Actually, I have a Nextel and he finally got ahold of me when he was in the hospital. He told me I'm in Brooklyn Hospital.

Q. He was able to get you by phone.

A. Yes. Radios, they were saying no unauthorized transmissions, only supervisors and officers got to use the radio and everything.

Q. I guess that's about it, unless you have anything else you want to say.

A. Well...

Q. Feel free.

A. I mean, everything went well. You thought it would have been chaos with everybody running around, not knowing what to do, but pretty much it was something, it was a disaster, but there was like order. There was still a chain of command.

Q. Very good. Thanks.

A. No problem.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1542. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110015

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RUSSELL HARRIS

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 9th. My name is Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're doing an interview today regarding the events of September 11th at the Trade Center. In the room with me is Investigator...

MR. RADENBERG: Paul Radenberg.

MR. TAMBASCO: The subject of the interview is...

EMT HARRIS: Russell Harris, Battalion 31, Unit 31 Henry Tour 2.

Q. Russ, if you can, just start right from the beginning and just tell me everything that you saw, you felt, you did, to the best of your memory.

A. That particular morning, my unit that I was relieving, which was 31 Henry Tour 1, came in a little late. Ironically, they parked it at the top of the hill, which they never do. They always park down here at the garage. So by the time that we signed for our equipment and we were going out to the unit, my partner, who was Mr. Kagenaar, he happened to look over out the gate and saw that the World Trade was on fire. When he initially told me that, I thought it was a joke. I was opening up the side door and placing my equipment in because I was teching that day. I looked

over as well and saw that it was on fire.

Subsequently to that the dispatcher called me maybe 30 seconds, 45 seconds later, and stated they wanted us to respond to a job. But the funny part was the job wasn't to the World Trade Center. It was at 350 Fifth Avenue, which is the Empire State Building. So my partner was driving and he clearly stated to me he didn't know Manhattan that well. So during the course of going over the bridge, he really didn't know which direction to go to. So we got off going towards Park Row, which is right in front of City Hall.

Well, by the time we passed City Hall, there was a melee of traffic and my partner had to tie on brakes for people who were running madly coming down Park Row in front of J & R. So we actually got caught and had to make that left turn and got stuck right there. As we did that, a few unmarked RMPs also were stuck. One of them was a police officer I had known. His name is Claude. He's a detective. So as I'm sitting there talking to Claude trying to figure out where he was responding and what was going on, we happened to look back at the Trade and we saw the second plane hit, bam.

At the same time, about three city buses were

coming past. So we stopped the city buses and we cleared out all of the passengers and we asked the buses --

Q. They were going downtown?

A. They were going towards the Brooklyn Bridge. We asked the buses to sit at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge so in the event that there were any walking wounded, we could throw them on the buses and send them over the bridge. Well, as we were doing that, a Fire Lieutenant came and approached me and he asked what unit I was, and I told him, and he said all the Hazmat units are staging down at West and Vesey and he needed me to suit up.

So I explained to him that my partner wasn't Hazmat certified and I was unable to suit up. He said, don't worry. You go down there and somebody can help you suit up. I want you to go in the building. We've got a team there. We want to go in and we're doing search and rescue. So I said, well, I still can't do it. He said, look. After you do this, you don't really have a lot of patients because they're walking wounded. They're okay. I want you to just gather up, and he told me to go down to West and Vesey.

Well, at the same time, like I said, there

was a melee of people running. Smoke and debris was going everywhere. So my partner once again jumped behind the wheel, we got in, put on the lights and siren, and we were able to make it down to Church and Park. At Church and Park, the FBI told us, this is our staging, this was where we had to stop, we couldn't cross their barriers. They were setting up barriers. At that time I saw everybody coming, Housing police, DEP, Corrections, court officers.

Q. Private.

A. Court officers. I looked back at the building and I saw all this black smoke and everything. Well, as soon as I stopped, my partner and myself, we opened the door, I got out my Hazmat equipment and I was starting to put it on the hood of the thing, of the vehicle. We had a walking wounded come and he was cut severely to his left arm and his left upper thigh.

Q. Civilian?

A. Civilian. He was lacerated bad. So we put him right in the bus. My partner started wrapping him up, you know, stabilizing the bleeding, took his pressure and everything, and at that time, FBI and a police Captain came and they asked me could I move my

vehicle up another block and that we had a temporary triage down at St. Peter's Church, which is at Church and Barclay. So I said all right. The patient was stable, vital signs were normal. We packed him up. So I told my partner, put him in the chair. Since I have the Hazmat mask and my helmet, I'll go down there and drop him off at the church in the chair and I'll come back. So I took the patient down to the church. Once again, a Fire Lieutenant came up to me. He saw me dropping off the patient and he advised me --

Q. If I can interrupt you one second, who was at the triage center over there?

A. There was an FBI agent. That's the only one I saw outside. I never actually made it in the building. As I'm dropping off the patient, the FBI agent comes up to me and he says, oh, man, I just heard there's a third plane coming in. So I look at the patient, I'm at the church, and I said, well, look, there's nothing else I could do for you right now. You're here and you can hop upstairs and you can go in the church and that's where you could be safe.

As I said that and he turned around, all this black smoke started filling and I looked at the building and it started vibrating. So I was almost

next to the cemetery at that time. I was on the side of the church. I looked and all this debris just started exploding everywhere, and I turned around to run and I didn't see the patient anymore, and myself and the FBI guy just started going down that block.

Q. Were you going north?

A. Going north over towards Broadway.

Q. Right.

A. So I think that was Vesey I turned down at the time because I was on the side of the church. I went up Vesey. When I got maybe halfway the block, I got knocked to the ground. My helmet got cracked. A piece of debris had hit my helmet. So I quickly got up, put the helmet back on, and I was still running. There was black smoke everywhere. I couldn't see anything. By the time I got to Broadway, I looked around the corner. Because debris was flying, I wanted to make sure I just didn't get knock unconscious, and I looked and I just saw parts of things just flying past me. So I stopped and took a deep breath and just ran across and I made a left on Broadway. By that time I made it to City Hall.

When I got to City Hall, people were -- they were just in chaos trying to climb the gates and the

fences and get in. Somebody noticed I was in the Fire Department EMS uniform, so they brought this lady up to me and I was out of breath. They said this lady is having chest pains. I said, well, I don't have an ambulance. I have a radio, but I can't communicate because we were having communication problems. I said, but if she wants, she can gladly follow me because I'm going to go where you can get some help. So I guess they understood that at that time everything was all chaotic and there was nothing I could do, and everybody just started following me and I told them stay away from the larger buildings and really going into City Hall wasn't a great thing. So we all started moving downward going towards the Supreme Court.

So by the time I got to the Municipal Building and I turned around to look to see if debris had stopped falling, the second building started coming down. By that time everybody took off again. So I looked to see and I had noticed at that time I didn't know where my partner was and the radio was chaotic. I couldn't go over the radio. My partner and myself just happen to have Nextel radios, but we couldn't communicate because the satellite went down. So I said, well, as soon as I get over here, down past the

courts, I'll probably be able to get a signal and I'll keep trying him.

At that time I ran into a young man named Mr. Medina. He works for Long Island College Hospital, but that day he was working up at Beth Israel. When I reflected back after speaking to him, because he came up to me, he was out of breath, he had a working cell phone and I had the working part of a radio, and he had told me he lost his partner. I said you know what? While I was standing there, I noticed a Beth Israel bus and it got crushed, so maybe you should just keep coming with me. Then I noticed I was hopping and my leg was swelling up.

Q. The Beth Israel bus was where?

A. The Beth Israel bus was right back at the World Trade Center.

Q. About where you were parked?

A. Right around the corner. But they were closer in front of the building. So he decided he would stay with me. We kept trying to communicate. We called Citywide. They referred us to RCC. We called RCC and we gave them both of our shield numbers and told them we were all right and that I was trying to get into Brooklyn to get to the hospital because my leg

was just swelling up. He kept calling on his cell phone to try to update them to where we were so there wouldn't be a problem, and then he was telling them that we'd lost our partners.

By the time I got down to -- there's a park over there around Bowery, maybe a block over from the Manhattan Bridge. We sat down for a moment and debris was still coming down. It made it all the way down to that park. That's a little past Canal Street. We were able to catch our breath and get through and let them know I was fine, and he told me, if I'd be all right, he'd like to head back because he wanted to find his partner. So I told him, you go ahead, and he said, no, I can't leave you until I know you're all right.

So he walked me back towards the Manhattan Bridge and we noticed all these people going over the bridge and they were stopping the trucks and cars, and he saw private green sanitation truck and he went up to the guy and said can you take my partner in to Brooklyn so he can go to the hospital, and as he said that, some of the people overheard him and they came and they grabbed me and lifted me up and they put me in the back of the dumper in the back of the sanitation truck.

So as I'm coming over, I hear my partner come

over Citywide and he says my partner is in the building. Because he heard them advise me to get dressed and go in the building, he assumed when I went to drop off the patient they took me in the building, so I was in the building. I heard him and they told him unauthorized transmission, only Chiefs and above can be on Citywide at this time. So I went back over the radio and told him I'm not crushed in the building. I'm going over the bridge. So I'm all right and I'll talk to you later.

When I got halfway over the bridge, people started looking back because this thing starts smoking again. They thought something else was going to happen. They stopped all the traffic in the middle of the bridge. So I had decided I would get off this garbage truck and keep hopping until I got into Brooklyn. Once I got off, though, I noticed there was a firefighter coming across the bridge and he was holding his radio, and he was covered in soot and he was talking on his radio but he didn't have a battery on the radio.

So we both made it about the same time to Tillary Street and this lady was driving past and she stopped and she picked me up and she brought me to the

station here. I don't even know what happened to the firefighter. But once I got here, I made it the best way I could to the hospital because we didn't have any vehicles or anything. Actually, the battalion was closed off. They had it barricaded. So once they saw me coming in full of soot and everything, they opened the gate for me and let me in, and then I hobbled down here and I was advised I had to get to the hospital, and I did. By then I had noticed I had a lot of beeps and a lot of phone calls because people found out, I guess, that I was all right from the World Trade.

When I got to the hospital, everything was fine. They diagnosed me, told me I had actually tore a hamstring. But they had looked at it and they said, you know what? It's not that bad. In light of what was going on, I figured the same thing. So I returned back to work. I didn't stay out at all because I knew there were a lot more people that were worse off than myself.

So I came back to work, and by the time I got back there, I noticed both of my partners who were on vacation came in because they called in and they told them I was lost at the World Trade. One came from Long Island and one came from Bay Ridge and they both came

in and worked. They were sitting at the bridge in hopes that they saw me coming over the bridge, I guess.

I guess the biggest thing that I noticed was the lack of knowing what was going on, because I don't know what you could say would be worse, to actually stand there and see this? The first thing came in my mind was the movie Armageddon, and this was reality, with the black smoke 30 floors high, debris falling everywhere. Being on this side, not knowing what was going on that side, because there were people, when I was coming back over the bridge, going on motorcycles walking, people coming back this way trying to go to Manhattan, and I'm thinking to myself they must be crazy. But then there were people here that were more stressed because they couldn't get on the other side of the bridge.

So I didn't feel bad knowing that I had made it. A lot of people had guilt that I spoke to afterwards or they were just so devastated. Because I have never seen anything like that in 21 years of emergency work. But like I said, the biggest thing was to know that certain people had made it out, because everybody didn't have to make it, and that we were able

to just stand up and go through all of this and still come back the next day. So I guess the biggest thing I learned was, not the salaries, not the titles, because there were no bosses anymore at the scene. We were very chaotic and I guess from M training and just love of humanitarianship, which we all have, we all were able to bring together and make it through.

Q. Anything else you want to say, Russ?

A. No.

Q. I guess you said it all.

A. Other than I'm just happy I'm here and the first thing I did was let the kids know I was all right. I was worried about debriefing everybody here, EMS and the Fire Department and the police, and we subsequently had a debriefing set up a few weeks later up at Cumberland Clinic.

Q. Thanks, Russ.

A. Thank you.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview will conclude at 1443 hours. If it wasn't mentioned, it was begun at 1423 hours.

File No. 9110016

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG MONAHAN

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 9th, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina. I'm at Engine 24, Ladder 5.

FIREFIGHTER MONAHAN: Craig Monahan, firefighter first grade, Ladder 5.

MR. CASTORINA: Present is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

Q. Firefighter Monahan, can you tell us on September 11th the events that took place that day, where you were working and going through all the details?

A. I was off duty. When I saw the second plane hit, I drove in to work from Staten Island. I had two other firefighters with me, Steven Altini and Joe Ray. Joe Ray and I both had our bunker gear with us because our last set of tours we had been detailed to other companies. We just so happened to have gone home with our bunker gear. Altini didn't have his.

So I rushed in, and I got here pretty quick. I parked in front of 90 West. I came through the tunnel, Battery Tunnel, parked in front of 90 West. Joe Ray and I geared up, put our gear on. We started heading north towards

the towers. Altini, we left him at the rig. He started heading towards -- the command center at first. I think he ended up going back to 10 and 10 to get gear.

Anyhow, as we were walking through the streets, the West Side Highway was littered with body parts. You could identify a hand, small pieces, but obviously body parts. It had that odor. I've been through this before.

Q. What time is this now, approximately?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Both towers were still up?

A. The two towers were both standing, and they were roaring.

Q. Both planes had hit at this point when you were there?

A. Right. I left Staten Island at -- it wasn't my house; it was somewhere else. But I was on the south shore of Staten Island. I went into somebody's house, because they said that a plane hit the tower, and they were showing me on their TV.

As we turned it on and looked at it, the second plane hit. I knew right then that we

were losing companies and mine was probably going to be one of them. So I was going in, and the other two guys came with me.

We got there really fast. I drove on the shoulder or however it took to get here. I parked in front of 90 West, left the keys in my truck in case anybody needed to move it. The highway was kind of clear as far as vehicles. There was no traffic going through. It really wasn't congested with rigs at that spot.

I saw an ambulance. Dr. Kelly was getting on the ambulance with I don't know who. They were putting someone on the ambulance. That was before we got to the south pedestrian bridge, before Liberty Street. You could see airplane parts just littered across the street, across the highway.

Joe and I walked north. My goal was to find Ladder 5, my company's rig, and try to retrace their steps and find them and help them. As we were walking past the towers, it was just unbelievable. You had to watch where you were walking. You didn't want to step on a scalp or a knee joint or something like that. There was

just stuff everywhere.

We kept going north. We were just on the edge of the sidewalk. We got in front of One World Trade Center, and I looked in. It looked like it was dark in there. I had to find 5's rig. As we were going, I'm looking to see the rigs. I know we normally come down West Street. I want to find my rig, get tools, and then maybe I can trace my way in from there.

It turns out we found Squad 18 under the north pedestrian or somewhere around there, and we got masks. We took masks off of there. We were looking for tools. All we got was a couple of masks.

Just north of that pedestrian bridge before Vesey, we found Ladder 5. It was parked in the middle of the highway, right up against the divider.

Q. Can you mark that on the map, where it was parked?

A. 5 Truck was right here.

Q. Just write "5 Truck."

A. That's where it was when we got there. The tormenters weren't down.

Q. Put "05" or something like that right next to it.

A. It was just parked. It was running. But the tormenters weren't down. It wasn't close enough to ladder the building.

As we're looking through the rig to try to get a Halligan or some tools, some construction workers or I dont' know if they were civilians. They were employees I think somewhere down there, and they came running over to us saying there's a chief that needs to get down. There was a chief up on the mezzanine area right on the corner of Vesey and West.

I got in the truck. I pulled the tiller wheel in position so that all Joe had to do was sit up there and hold that wheel. I was going to back Ladder 5 close enough to this mezzanine area so that we could put up the aerial ladder to get him down and whoever else he had up there.

We did that. We backed it up. We got it close enough. We laddered the building. We put the aerial up, and that's it. Basically that's it.

Q. Who was the chief there?

A. I didn't get his name.

Q. When you got there he was still there?

A. He was still up there. I don't know if he came down our aerial or what. That was right about when the first building came down. We put the aerial up.

Q. Could you put on there where you moved it to? Was it pretty close to where it was originally?

A. We moved it this way, right there.

Q. So basically just as you got it in place, that's when the building started coming down?

A. We got it in place, and then we got off the turntable. We were looking for tools again. Then all of a sudden you heard something, and it sounded like a harrier jet was landing right over top of us. Sure enough that second tower was just coming straight down.

It was sick. I didn't think I was going to survive. It was really a sick sight and a really sick sound.

Q. What did you do?

A. I said, "Let's go, Joe. We're going to dive under this engine there." There was an engine, I think it was at Vesey and West, I think it was right on the corner by the median, and we ran to it and we dove underneath it. We ran to it, ran around it and dove underneath it, because we figured we were going to get covered and that's our best chance.

Although debris fell around us, the main structure felt as if -- we were lucky. When it sounded like the explosion stopped, the steel hitting, when it all seemed to stop, this just like a fire storm of wind and material, a sandstorm kind of, just came and wailed by, really flew past us quick.

We huddled and stayed in place, and we threw our masks on. I knew which way was north, so we started walking north to try to get out of that storm. Eventually it cleared. It was probably 20 minutes. It's hard to say, because it seems like to me that all of the time frames, how many minutes it took me to get there, I couldn't tell you. It's just like everything is just one. Your mind is playing games.

Q. Most people have the same problem.

A. I would like to ask you guys questions, you know, the times of what happened, piece my life together.

Together Joe and I walked north on West Street, and we found an engine company, hooked it up to a hydrant, and we fired the stag to try to knock down some of the smoke just so that we could see. We did that for a short time.

Q. Was there a lot of burning debris around or anything?

A. Not that we were able to hit. But there was a parking lot I think on the corner of Vesey. I'm not sure. I think it was the corner of Vesey and West. I'm pretty sure, yeah. On the southwest corner of Vesey and West, there was a parking lot that was just roaring. Every car was transmitting to the next car. This was between the two collapses, I think.

I went over there. I took a saw off of some fire truck, some ladder company -- I don't know -- and took a metal-cutting blade. There were two fences between the highway and this parking lot. I cut the fences and, with an

engine company, advanced the line and started knocking down those fires.

Once that line was in place, that engine was in control, they didn't need me. So that's when I started making my way back down to try to get inside the rubble.

Q. Did you get any direction from anybody at all or were you kind of like working on your own? Did you meet with any chiefs or lieutenants?

A. I saw chiefs. Yeah, I ran into chiefs, and they were all telling me to get lost: "You ought to just go north." But I didn't really want to do that because I know my guys are in there.

I left the saw there. I left that engine company. I figured they don't need me to put these cars out. I started walking back towards the towers. Then, bam, the next one started coming down. I just couldn't believe it.

Q. Where were you when the next one started coming down? How far away were you?

A. I think I was north of Vesey. I might have been closer to -- between Vesey and Barclay

on West Street.

Q. You were by yourself at this point?

A. I had Joe with me. We had lost each other and then got back together, I think. Your mind plays games with you when you see this kind of shit. I know we were together when the second one fell also. After that one came down, we walked north again.

We met up with an engine company. They were just staying by a hydrant and spraying the water, trying to knock the smoke down. They were just going to stay there. We hung out with them for a minute.

Then, I don't know, that's when I lost Joe, after the two towers were down. I knew he wasn't in the collapse. Somehow in the dark we lost each other. I headed back down -- well, that's it. That's all you want to know, the two towers.

Q. Well, you can go on a little bit.

A. I came back down, and I went to five, and it was crushed with steel and all kinds of crap. I didn't see anybody in it or under it or around it. So I started making my way towards

the pedestrian bridge, and I saw that the bridge had come down substantially. But there was about four feet -- there was a void underneath the pedestrian bridge where you could see the street. So I climbed under. I went under and went into the pile and started looking for guys and everything. There was just nothing to find. Everything was the same color.

That's all you guys want to know; right?

Q. You covered it all. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time is 12:50. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110017

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GREGG HANSSON

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: This is Ron Castorina, working with Thomas McCourt. We are at Engine 24. The time now is 11:10. The date is October 9th, 2001.

Your name, sir?

LIEUTENANT HANSSON: Lieutenant Gregg Hansson.

MR. CASTORINA: Where are you assigned?

LIEUTENANT HANSSON: Engine 24.

Q. Can you tell us what happened on September 11th?

A. Sure. I believe the call came in somewhere around 8:47, when the tower was first hit. I hopped on the rig. We had an extra man with us. It was myself, Firefighter Ottrando. John Ottrando was the chauffeur. We had a probationary trainee Firefighter Byrne, probationary Firefighter Sterling, Firefighter Claes, and Firefighter Billy.

I believe we were responding on second alarm, which was the initial second alarm. I'm not sure what due we were. We responded down Varick Street, which turns into West Broadway. We came down into Vesey, made a right onto Vesey

and made a left onto West Street. We parked at the corner of West and Vesey, where my chauffeur was going to hook up to a standpipe.

Obviously we noticed smoke coming up from the north tower. Me and my four men proceeded with our rollups, the standpipe kit, up the stairs into the lobby of the One World Trade Center, which was the north tower building.

Q. Is that standard procedure or were you given direction by anybody there?

A. No, there were no directions at that time to do that. That seemed like standard procedure to me in a high-rise building.

At the time I did not know what had transpired, whether that was a plane or some type of explosion.

Upon entering the Trade Center, we went through the revolving doors but noticed that all the glass was out. So we could have gone right through the building.

At the northwest corner I believe is the Port Authority command post. Deputy Chief Hayden was there already with his aide. There were several other units on the scene. It was

understood that all the elevators were out at that time.

We waited for direction, at which time a battalion chief did come over. I don't know which battalion chief it was. He was speaking with Lieutenant Fischer Ladder 20. I was standing next to Lieutenant Fischer, and he asked what staircase he was going to use. I'm not sure what Lieutenant Fischer said, but I was then assigned to go up with Ladder 20 as a team.

I believe we followed a Port Authority police officer. We went past the elevator banks. You could see that they were all blown out. We went over to stairway A, which was the southeast corner area. There were many civilians self-evacuating at the time. We got the evacuees into a single file to come down, and we single-filed our way up.

We made our way up somewhere between the 15th and 20th floor, at which time we saw one woman, a black woman, with burns along her arms. In the same vicinity we were met with a woman who was having severe respiratory distress, which was likely caused by an asthma condition. She was

with a civilian who stated he was from the 90th floor, and he had a large gash to his forehead.

We took her off the stairway and into the hall. I tried to call for an urgent, but at that time I realized that quite a number of maydays and urgents had already been given for many civilians and also for firefighters who were having trouble breathing already or having chest pains.

Q. What floor are you on at this time when you pulled her off?

A. I believe we were around 20.

Q. 20?

A. Somewhere in the vicinity of 20.

At that time we had her lying down. She was breathing but having some trouble. We didn't have any oxygen with us, and there wasn't much we could do. I realized we weren't going to get any help, so we just monitored the situation.

I questioned the guy from the 90th floor, who said it was a plane. That's when I first realized that we had a plane up there. He said there was a fireball on the 90th floor and a lot of smoke on the 90th floor.

He got to a room where there was about eight people, and he said the eight people did eventually get out. He stated to me that he believed everyone from the 90th floor had gotten out.

She started to feel better, and she said she was ready to descend again.

Q. What were the conditions in the stairway?

A. The conditions in the stairway were absolutely clear. There was no smoke whatsoever. Occasionally on the hallways you could see a light haze, but that wasn't on every -- some were totally clear. Some had a very light haze. But the stairways were totally clear. All the civilians looked fine except for the ones I just indicated.

So we left that civilian from the 90th floor, that gentleman, he assisted the woman down. We continued our way up. I believe Ladder 20 had gotten off with us on that floor and were taking a rest.

We continued up until I believe the 27th floor. My men started to become pretty

exhausted at that point. Again we took another rest at the 27th floor with Ladder 20. There was a couple civilians with a woman in a wheelchair.

At that time I ordered Firefighter Billy to stay with her and if he got any assistance from any units on the way up that he could descend with her. But at that point I said for him to just stand fast.

I don't know how long we were there for, maybe five minutes. Then we continued our way up again, eventually reaching the 35th floor. Again, we were still with Ladder 20. On the 35th floor I spotted Engine 33, and I spotted Ladder 5. There was also a battalion chief, which I'm not positive but one of my members has indicated he believed he was the battalion chief from Battalion 11.

We also had a couple EMS workers up there. I did see one firefighter lying in the hallway in the elevator area, lying on his back. He was being administered oxygen. Everybody else that I did speak to indicated that they were doing okay.

Basically we were taking water, ice tea

or whatever, and the battalion was setting up a staging area at that point. So again we were taking another break.

I then spoke with the Engine 33 officer, which was Lieutenant Pfeifer. We were trying to formulate a plan with the battalion chief as to how we were going to get up somewhere around the 90th floor, being that we were already exhausted at this point.

I don't know if that's important or not, but our idea was to take only four rollups out of the eight men we had instead of the eight rollups. My estimate is that we might have been on that floor between five and ten minutes. I would say at least five minutes.

I was in the vicinity of the battalion chief, who was on the command channel, when I heard a mayday given over the command channel to evacuate the building. He started to tell everyone to evacuate, as I did also. I saw all the units get up. Everybody got their gear. Everybody started for the staircases to evacuate.

Ladder 5 I know for a fact had been going down stairway B, which was in the elevator

bank in the middle of the building. Engine 33 -- I'm not positive but I believe they went to stairway C, which I believe was the southwest corner. I went back to my men with Ladder 20 to stairway A.

Still in the hallway, we heard a big shake in the building. It's my belief that was the tower two coming down. I'm not positive, but you could definitely feel an incredible shake.

Q. Did you hear any explosion or anything from the first?

A. I didn't. Some people stated to me that there was at that time, but I can't recall actually hearing.

Q. You were at the 35th floor --

A. We were at the 35th floor.

Q. -- when you decided to evacuate and got the mayday.

A. Right.

Some people have indicated that that was the 37th floor, but I believe it was the 35th.

Q. Do you know what time?

A. I have no idea what time frame that

was. But if in fact that was the tower coming down, it was 10:06.

At this point I do not know that the second tower was hit by a plane, nor do I know that that's the second tower being hit. I did hear on my way up transmissions from Ladder 3, which was Captain Brown. I did hear him communicating with somebody. I assume it was with the command post or some chief. I have no idea.

Q. Where was Captain Brown?

A. I'm not sure where Captain Brown was. I had assumed he was in the first building, because they were from Ladder 3, and I assume they would have been coming down on the initial alarm to the first. I'm sure you will find out in your interviews. I've heard and I thought he might have been as high as in the 60s, but I don't think that's correct. I did hear after that that he might have been in the 40s of tower one.

I thought he gave a mayday, and I thought he stated that there was an interior collapse. But again I'm not positive of that.

On the way down I could hear them calling for Ladder 3. Then they would call specifically for Pat Brown. There was no response from Ladder 3 whatsoever from that point.

The chief had directed us, after this big loud shaking, to get in the stairways. At that time I was with Lieutenant Fischer and my men. I believe two of his men had gone up, before this shake, had gone up. He was obviously upset at them for going up. He was screaming at them for them to get back down. Then he went up to go get them. At that time I ordered my men, "Let's get out." So we started to get out.

I lost contact with Firefighter Claes at that time. I thought he was ahead of me. I found out later that he had gotten out of the building much sooner than we did.

We got down to 27, where I went to pick up Firefighter Billy that I had left off there.

Q. He was still there?

A. He was still there with the woman in the wheelchair.

At that time Firefighter Byrne had

indicated to me that he left his mask up on the 35th floor. So I ordered him to leave the building, to stop for no one, being that he had no mask.

So now I was with Firefighter Sterling and Firefighter Billy. A couple people, civilians, indicated to me that there was an elevator that was working at this time. But I had already gotten transmissions over the air that some elevators had already crashed down to the first floor. I told them no one is getting in an elevator.

There was another officer there. Firefighter Billy indicated to me that he might have been the captain of Engine 21. We discussed how to remove the woman, and I believe he said to me that he's going to take her down with his company. They went to stairway B. I said, "Okay, Rich, come with me and let's continue on down stairway A." We went down stairway A.

We got down to the third floor, and the third floor was partially blocked by some sheetrock. We started to move that when a firefighter from Squad 18 -- I believe his name

is Kelly. He is alive. I've seen him since. He said to me that you can't get down that staircase, there's no exit that way, and he needed help with a civilian.

There was on that floor now -- on this particular floor all the lights were out. We had a rather large gentleman, I would say maybe 300 pounds or so, a civilian, who was for some reason incapable of walking. He was on the ground. We assisted him in trying to remove this guy. We made our way to stairway C, I believe.

We were having quite a difficult time trying to remove this guy. There were a couple Port Authority police officers. They might have been ESU. I have no idea. We finally managed with great difficulty to get this guy down to the first floor, and we were directed by Port Authority police officers to the lobby area of the north side of the Trade Center, which was a couple of doors right in the middle.

We had two officers there who said, "Hold up. There's people jumping out of the building and there's a lot of debris coming down." They were actually looking up outside the

building when we were still in the lobby. They said it was okay to go, and we started to bring this guy across.

At that time we were with I believe the officer of Engine 15, which was Lieutenant Foder. I believe he had at least two men with him. It was myself, my two men, the Squad 18 guy, and I believe I saw a guy from Rescue 5. I think his name was Firefighter Spade, who made it also. There were at least four police officers.

We started to go across. There was a little overhang there for the Customs building. We made it across to that, under that overhang. The civilian just kept on tripping over debris. There was debris everywhere.

Q. What was the condition? It was still heavy smoke?

A. You had a visibility of about 10 to 15 feet, I figure. To me it looked like a whiteout. There was a lot of debris on the ground. It seems to me it might have been the sheeting of the Trade Center. A lot of that you saw. This guy kept on tripping over it.

I went ahead of I believe Lieutenant

Foder and Firefighter Kelly from Squad 18. At that point we're assisting the civilian, trying to hold him up. At that point I got rid of my mask. We were outside the building. We were all pretty exhausted by that point too. I went ahead of them to remove debris. We were at this point right here. I don't know if you can see that.

Q. Okay.

A. That's basically where we were. Then a large explosion took place. In my estimation that was the tower coming down, but at that time I did not know what that was. I thought some type of bomb had gone off.

I was, I believe, ahead of the rest of the firefighters and officers there. I made it to the corner, and I took about four running steps this way when you could feel the rush of the wind coming at you. I believed that that was a huge fireball coming at the time.

I then hit the deck into the side of the building and basically waited it out. We were all hit with debris. At that point it was a total blackout. You couldn't see anything. All this glass already had been taken out.

I found out that those guys there that were behind me had jumped into World Trade Center six when this came down. I was in the courtyard over here. I got hit by a lot of debris at that point, but I guess within seconds or a minute it was over.

I was still okay. I got myself up. I had no mask at the time. All I had was my flashlight. There was dead silence. You couldn't hear anybody. No transmissions over the radio. There were craters all over the place. You were in the middle of this cloud that was fairly suffocating, so I had no idea how much longer I was going to be able to stay in there.

I wound up crawling for a ways, and I finally saw a flashlight. I don't know if there's a staircase in here, but I saw a flashlight and I saw someone calling, "This is the way out. This is the way out." I made my way to that staircase, got myself out, and I don't know where I came out. I think I might have come out this way and over to Church Street.

At that point I saw Firefighter Byrne when I got out into the street. There was nobody

else around for blocks. I could hear Firefighter Billy calling a mayday at that point. I tried to respond to him over the radio and tried to direct him out. He didn't respond again to me.

I then looked for help to get a mask, to get a search rope of some sort to try to go back in there. There was nobody around. We went several blocks, I don't know how far, when I finally found Ladder 164's rig.

All my maydays went unanswered. I got on Ladder 164's rig. I called the dispatcher, gave the dispatcher the mayday, told them that both myself and Byrne were out of the building and I was missing the rest of my company. I said I don't know where the command post is, but there is nobody around.

Q. Byrne was with you the whole time?

A. From that point. On the 27th floor I had told Byrne to leave.

Q. Right. You hooked up with --

A. I hooked up with him again at this point.

Q. Who was the one with the flashlight that you saw think you saw leading you out?

A. That was a police officer. It could have been the Port Authority or it could have been ESU.

Q. When you were outside you were by yourself?

A. On the initial collapse?

Q. When you were outside. When you came around.

A. I was by myself at that point.

Q. And then you picked up Byrne?

A. On the street somewhere.

We walked several blocks, but then we found an ambulance and we saw Safety Chief King in the ambulance. I started to ask him what happened. That's when he told me both towers are down. I didn't even know that had happened, but that's what it was.

Eventually we made our over to Engine 7, Ladder 1's quarters. A triage area had just started to be set up. There was a doctor there, and she took a look at me. She said, "Your throat's extremely red. We have to get you to a hospital."

I called the dispatcher again from the

department phone there, indicated again where I was. They provided no other information to me.

Soon after that then an ambulance came, they picked me up and they transported me to Forest Hills, where I stayed until about 4:00, when I finally got a ride back to the city.

I made my way back to quarters here. Sometime around midnight I went back down.

Byrne stayed at Engine 7. We all eventually --

Q. Byrne didn't go to the hospital?

A. What?

Q. Byrne didn't go to the hospital?

A. Byrne didn't go to the hospital at that time.

Q. You decided respiratory difficulties, no injuries?

A. Yeah, as it turned out. I mean, other than minor scrapes and stuff, I was all right.

That's pretty much the most I can remember.

Q. The rest of the company, what --

A. The rest of my company turned out to be okay. You can speak to Marcel in a few minutes.

From what he told me, he had gotten out all the way to the rig, Engine 24's rig again, and he operated all day from there. He did receive burns to his back area when he had taken off his coat. Then all this stuff started to happen.

Ottrando was the chauffeur. All he stated to me was that when they started coming down, the big cloud, he just started running north, and I believe he operated most of the day.

Firefighter Billy and Sterling got themselves out also from the area that I also had been in, and Billy was eventually taken to Downtown Hospital. Somewhere around 4 p.m. I started to find out that they were okay, but that was -- I'm sure you guys know there wasn't much information. There was nobody around.

Q. Yeah, right.

A. The only other thing I can remember that I might have left out is on the 35th floor there were a couple civilians. I believe there was a civilian in a wheelchair on the 35th floor at that staging area. When we started to evacuate, I believe she was going down the B staircase where Ladder 5 was. It's speculation

at this point, but I believe they were assisting her.

We did find most of those members from Ladder 5 two days later in a staircase with two civilians.

I did leave another thing out. After the 27th floor, we were coming down. I got stopped again around 17. At the 17th floor, a firefighter came into the staircase and said, "I need some help with a room full of civilians."

As it turned out, I came out of the A staircase, I went down to that room. I left my men there. I went down there. There was it looked to me, about 15 firefighters and about maybe 10 civilians in this room on the --

Q. 17th floor.

A. Southwest side. I kind of stated generally that we have to evacuate the building, "Let's go." I was approached by someone -- and I saw Pfeifer there from 33 Engine. I also saw someone from Rescue 3. I'm not sure if he was the officer or not. I thought he was the officer, but he might not have been.

He took me aside. He took out a window

on that floor, showed me West Street, and that's when I saw the damage done on West Street. I could still see several rigs, but you could see all the debris also.

I again said, "I think we've got to get ourselves out." He said, "I'm not sure we can get out." I said, "We've got to try." I again generally said, "Let's go, everyone, let's get out." I did see some people go to the C staircase. I went back and got my men at the A staircase and descended down. Then eventually I hit the third floor, where I teamed up with that guy from Squad 18.

I think that was it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 11:37. This concludes the interview of Lieutenant Hansson at Engine 24.

File No. 9110018

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARCEL CLAES

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. CASTORINA: The date is October 9, 2001. The time is 11:47. I'm Ron Castorina. I'm at Engine 24, interviewing -- your name, sir?

FIREFIGHTER CLAES: Marcel Claes, firefighter 1st Grade, Engine 24.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name.

MR. MC COURT: Also present is Tom McCourt.

Q. And on September 11, 2001, can you tell he what your assignment was that day?

A. My original assignment was in Ladder 5. I had a mutual with Paul Keating, but the engine was short that day, so they -- it was common practice to go back into the engine, being I'm an engine man.

So the call came in, and we got on the rig. We responded going south on Varick Street, and I said to the nozzle man when I saw the damage, "That's got to be an explosion," not realizing that it was hit by a plane.

We pulled up to -- I believe we went down Canal Street and went along West Street south, and we ended up parked on West and Vesey Street. There was a sprinkler system, a siamese for the sprinkler right there.

We went to the lobby of 1 World Trade, and

when we got in there, we saw a lot of damage in the lobby around the elevator banks, and we found -- I found out that it was hit by a plane, thinking it was an accident.

So we proceeded up with other engine companies and truck companies in Stairwell A. After a dozen floors or so, we started to take breaks every four floors. We didn't realize it was hit by -- we didn't realize 2 World Trade was hit by an airplane, so we kept going up. It was single file, civilians going down and firemen going up.

The civilians were orderly and blessing us and helping the injured down. I checked the standpipe a few times on the way up. We made it up to the -- I believe the 35th story. We were taking a breather. I was on my knees, catching my breath, and we were discussing -- we were going to hook up with another engine company to make it up there -- easier to get up there. We were going to have some guys just take cylinders and the other guys take hoses, but we felt this rumble and this noise, like a train was going through your living room. Felt like an earthquake.

A few minutes later, a chief -- someone told me he believed it was 11 battalion -- said to drop

everything and get out, get out. He didn't say why. He just said, "Drop everything and get out." Probably said it a couple of times.

So basically, that's what guys did. I went back and got my coat, my cylinder and my standpipe kit, and I was the last one to go down from my company, but they ended up -- we got separated because I found out later that one of our -- Richard Billy was on the 27th story in the hallway with a woman in, I believe, a wheelchair, and the rest of the company went in to get him.

I continued down, not realizing that they stopped at the 27th Floor. I made my way down to around the 10th Floor. Someone said go to Stairway B, so I went down. I went to B. I saw Faust with Battalion 8. I asked him did he see anybody from 24 engine. He said no. I continued down.

I made it to the lobby. I did see a woman walking real slow. I walked behind them. She was being helped. I don't remember if it was a fireman or EMT. I got -- I just wanted to get some fresh air, so I went around them. I made it to the lobby.

I saw building employees running around. There was a lot of debris in the lobby. I went out the

same way I came in. That was on the northwest corner of tower -- 1 World Trade.

Q. On the map on there?

A. I went out a window that was taken out, because I knew my engine was parked on that side. I made it out to the -- I saw a man in the courtyard. He was waving me out, like come on out, get out of there. I didn't look up. I just went out to the street.

When I got out to the street, I looked up, not believing what I was looking at. I saw three people jump out of the building, and it started to collapse, and I took off north on West Street. I made it behind an engine. I was only carrying my coat. I had time to put it over my head. I was at the back step with another fireman. I don't know who it was.

Finally when the dust cleared, I started walking north on West Street for a couple of blocks. I didn't see the rest of my company. I saw some members from Ladder 8, and I decided to go back to the engine, because it was still running when I went out the first time, so when I went back to Engine 24, which was parked on the Vesey and West, it was still running, but the supply line was severed and there was a lot of dust and debris on the ground.

It was -- I believe Engine 239 was a couple of blocks north on West Street, who were originally supplying 24 engine. They --

Q. Can you mark on the map where you believe Engine 239 was?

A. I'm only guessing that they were up the block.

Q. Where was the chauffeur from 24? He was still at the rig or he --

A. I didn't see the chauffeur. I don't know what happened to anybody. That's why I went back to the engine, hoping that I'd find somebody from my company.

I got no response on the radio. I found out later they went to the hospital, and I didn't -- I didn't know where the chauffeur was, so I went back to 24 engine. I went back to the engine. It was still running, still hooked up to the Siamese.

Firemen were taking hand lines off, so I had to boost the tank. They were looking for people, and they needed precautionary lines. Actually, it was over here, 24 engine. I stayed with the engine, 239. I believe -- yeah, it was an officer, I think, from 239, and his men that were -- he supplied me -- it took

awhile, but we found the first lengths. At one point, we were putting out ground fire with the first lengths.

There wasn't much pressure, because when I did get resupplied finally, I hooked up to a tower ladder, I believe 12, that was parked or maybe they moved it, Ladder 12. They operated up Vesey Street because a lot of rubble over there and ground fire, you know, going over here.

It was like ground fire and rubble that was on fire, so I just stayed right at the engine hoping somebody would show up from the company, at least they'd find me, but I just felt I had to do something, so I -- you know, I made sure that those hand lines and -- you know, I was -- I felt I was being useful just by manning the pumps.

At one point, a rescue company came by, and they walked into the -- you know, this is after the collapses. I they walked in. I guess they did their thing. I guess they were -- actually I don't know what they were doing. They must have got off. You know, they were off that day and went back to the company to gear up and made it there on their own.

Q. How was your breathing with all the dust and

the debris?

A. Oh, at the -- after the collapse, I was gagging behind the engine, and there was -- my throat was caked up with this stuff. I almost threw up. Couldn't see the hand in front of my face.

Eventually the dust cleared. That's -- and after that, I picked up my cylinder and my coat and went up West Street, north on West Street, but then I came back after my eyes were all itchy.

Q. Smoke got cleared a little bit when you went back?

A. Yeah. After the dust cleared, I went back and operated the engine. I wasn't in any condition to climb through the rubble, but I felt, you know, I was being useful at manning the engine.

Q. Right.

A. Because of the ground fire. They ended up taking a multiversile tower ladder and two hand lines. I believe the hand lines were mostly because there was guys operating, searching over the terrace.

Let me see. There is like a terrace there and then the building. This building ended up -- there was a lot of rubble over here, of course. I guess that's between 8 World Trade and 1 World Trade that was

on fire. This building -- I was watching the fire, started in this corner.

Q. Which building was that?

A. 8 World Trade, U.S. Customs building, and I guess about six stories, and it was on the 5th Floor, and then it just went from south to north in the course of the day. All morning I was watching 7 World Trade burn, which we couldn't do anything about because it was so much chaos looking for missing members.

Q. Did you end up going to the hospital or were you injured in any way or --

A. Yeah. When I was running, some hot stuff went down by back, because I didn't have time to put my coat back on, and I had some -- well, I guess between first and second degree burns on my back, ended up in the crack of my ass, and that's where the worst -- the worst ones turned out to be, because I was covering myself, and I couldn't -- it finally settled.

Q. Went down to your back?

A. Yeah, in my bunker pants.

Q. Did you get any first-aid?

A. I did. About four o'clock -- no, actually, I got some first-aid by some EMTs that were parked, I think on Vesey -- yeah, at the intersection of Vesey

and West I got some first-aid.

Q. This was how much after?

A. A few hours afterwards. A few hours afterwards, because I was going to get to some water. I ran out of cigarettes. I was hoping to grub a cigarette.

Q. I'm with you.

A. All right. So I did get some first-aid earlier in the day, but finally after 3:30, quarter to four, I was feeling nauseous, and I wasn't sure why.

I thought maybe the burns were affecting me somehow, so I ended up going to the triage at Stuyvesant High School, and I found -- I was looking for the command post, and there were a lot of firemen, I guess who came after the fact.

I got to triage. They put some cream on my burns and flushed out my eyes for the first time, and I -- like my eyes -- I mean, I had great glasses to read, but I used to be able to read the paper with good light, but I couldn't even do that for a couple of weeks. They finally got better.

And then I sat around. I found out the rest of the guys were okay. They went to the hospital. I saw the chauffeur there. That was at Stuyvesant High

School. Well, actually it was on West Street right outside Stuyvesant High School. They thought -- they were relieved, because they thought I was missing.

I did see members that came after the fact that were -- you know, but they weren't from the company. They came from home, but I guess they stayed looking for members that were missing and never went back to where the triage was by Stuyvesant High School.

What else? So by six o'clock I decided let me go home. I called my wife finally, because the phones weren't working around ground zero, so I found someone with a phone at four o'clock. I called home, and she was relieved, and I sat around there to rest, and I walked to the firehouse, and I made it to Canal Street, and I saw another fireman, a messenger I believe he was, and he drove me to the firehouse, and I took a shower and talked to the guys for awhile, and I was hoping they would find guys from Ladder 8 -- Ladder 5, rather, and that's that.

The next day I came back just to see what was going on. I was in no condition to go back there. And I worked Thursday. I was -- it was 24 on, 24 off. So I came in Thursday morning, and we didn't even have a

fire truck until earlier that afternoon.

The shops did a great job fixing it up. It was missing gauges, the gauges on the pump, and the windshield was broken, and cabinet doors were bent. It was missing a lot of hose and tools. So we got it back that afternoon. We cleaned it up Thursday afternoon.

I believe they took it to the Sanitation Department, and they power washed it, and we got it back here. We had to hose the inside out, and we stocked it with whatever we had in the tool shed, and we went back in service around six o'clock that night.

We didn't have many runs, but I think that was the only operating engine covering lower Manhattan, except for the one that was operating within the collapse zone, the ground zero.

We did go back Thursday night. Was it Thursday? I think yeah, we did go back. It was our turn to good back to ground zero, and all I did was fill buckets with dust and debris. It rained that night, so we went back to the -- after a number of hours, we went back to the firehouse.

I was up all night, and Friday morning I went to the medical office, and they gave me a prescription for antibiotics, told me to keep -- it was starting to

get infected, my burns, so they told me -- they put me light duty.

So Saturday I came back to the firehouse, and I was due to work at my light-duty position at Rac 5 Sunday morning. I went home -- when I got home Monday morning, we started with wakes and funerals all that week, because they did recover guys from Ladder 5, so we were off.

Basically, I didn't come back to the firehouse until the following week. The following week after Greg Sausito's memorial Mass, and then we were on -- when I was scheduled to come back to work. They went back to the regular schedule.

And that's about it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time concludes this interview is 12:05.

File No. 9110019

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT BRIAN BECKER

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. MURAD: The date is October 9, 2001. The time is 12 o'clock, 1200 hours, and this is Murray Murad the New York City Fire Department.

MR. CUNDARI: George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: I'm conducting an interview with the following lieutenant.

THE WITNESS: Brian Becker, Engine 28, Group 22.

MR. MURAD: The New York City Fire Department. We are currently at Engine 28, Ladder --

THE WITNESS: 11.

MR. MURAD: -- 11, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Presently there is no one else in the interview room, and we will be conducting the interview with Lieutenant Becker.

Q. Lieutenant, would you like to give the story of what -- your accounts of what took place on that tragic day.

A. Okay.

Q. And your role.

A. I had relieved the lieutenant from the night tour. He had left -- I was in the kitchen with the

other firemen. I was standing up with a cup of coffee, and I heard a loud explosion. It sounded like it was coming from the back of the firehouse. I thought it was north of the firehouse.

I put down my coffee, and I said to the guys, "I think we're going to work. That was an explosion." So walking out to the apparatus, we heard the voice alarm came over and said there was an explosion in the World Trade Center. So we were putting on our boots, getting ready. The engine was dispatched on the box. The time was 8:48.

I knew right away. I felt right away it was -- I remembered thinking they got us this time, because I heard the explosion, so I knew it was a large explosion, and the World Trade Center, so I figured we were on route to a big disaster.

There was never a doubt in my mind, as I recall, that it was anything other than a terrorist attack.

We went east on Houston Street to the FDR, down the FDR Drive, and by the time we were approaching the Brooklyn Bridge, we could see the tower. We could see fire lapping out of the tower. Seemed like all four sides.

I guess we could see two or three sides from the FDR Drive and could see fire lapping out of multiple floors from about three quarters of the way up the building.

We made our way around the Battery, plowing through traffic, and made our way up West Street past the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We saw -- on arrival, we saw a lot of debris in the street on West Street. I could see what seemed to be -- coming down the FDR, I could see both towers, but I could see -- I only saw the fire in the north tower. The other one hadn't been struck. I'm sure of that.

We saw a lot of debris in the street as we came up, and I was concerned. I could see what seemed to be remains of bodies in the street. I told the chauffeur to stay as far to the left as he could, because I didn't want to get hit with a body in the cab and die right there. I remember thinking that.

We drove just past One World Trade Center, and we stopped under the pedestrian overpass, just north of the -- we got in a sheltered spot. We dismounted the apparatus. I'd say that was right here. We stopped.

Q. This is where the apparatus was, on West

Street?

A. Right, I would say we stopped just about underneath there. Underneath -- if that's a pedestrian walk --

Q. Right.

A. -- we stopped the apparatus under there just to stay out of shelter, because I figured there were jumpers, and I figured it was a very dangerous place to stop, so we stopped under the overpass.

We got off the rig. I asked the chauffeur, "Where are you headed?" He said -- whatever he said, he ended up hooking up on Barclay and West Broadway. That's just north of 7 World Trade Center, which it all interconnected, we think. You know, I'm pretty sure. Or maybe he was on Vesey. I'm not --

Q. Between Barclay and Vesey he parked?

A. Okay.

Q. He parked there.

A. As we were heading into the building, one of the guys said -- we were very excited and very pumped up, and it was a terrible situation. It was like a battlefield. It wasn't -- we kept it together, but we were -- as we were heading in, one of the guys, I forget who, said, "I forgot my mask." So we were

delayed. I said, "well, you got to get your mask. We'll wait for you here under the overpass."

So we probably waited about 30 seconds or a minute or so. I would say 30 seconds to a minute while he ran to the rig, which was still, I guess, blocked by traffic and pulled his mask off, so we stayed as a unit. That delayed us for a few seconds.

All these things contributed, I think, to our survival. That's why I mentioned that, because, you know, every little -- every second made a difference.

Q. At that time, the rig was still on West Street and --

A. Well, I guess it was like a few -- a few -- maybe -- you know, there was traffic and a lot of -- you know, it was rush hour still, so he hadn't made the corner. He hadn't -- anything like that, so I would say 30 seconds to a minute.

So I grouped with the other firefighters under the overpass, and we gave him riding positions, and I gave the senior man the nozzle and things, and then when the other guy came back, we said, "Okay, let's make it a direct route right into the -- let's move fast."

So we moved into 1 World Trade Center from

that northern pedestrian overpass, from underneath that, so we took the shortest route, and I think we just went in a window. I think the glass was blown out there.

I remember getting the impression that the elevators were blown out, and I kind of can verify that, because a chief grabbed me by the shoulder, and he said, "Engine 28, you're teaming up with Engine 4 and just take four roll-ups and head up."

I don't know who the chief was. There was no command. It was chaos in the lobby.

Q. Can I just interrupt?

Was there any communication at that point from the time you got off the rig and you waited for the other firefighter to get his gear and the 30 seconds?

Was there any radio transmissions or was there any direction?

A. Nothing that I recall. Honestly, nothing directed to us for certain, and we didn't direct anything. I didn't speak with them, because I knew I bounced the first division for years, and I responded to the World Trade Center several times, so I knew the procedure, you know.

Even though this wasn't typical at all, I was still going on that I knew I was going to report into the lobby command post. I knew where it was.

So we got into the -- like I was saying, when the chief grabbed me by the shoulders, he said, "Take four roll-ups only between the two companies. Team up with Engine 4 and start your way up," and I remember specifically asking him how are we going up, and I remember thinking that it was a stupid question, because I knew the elevators were blown out, but I just asked it anyway, just in case he knew something I didn't know, and he said, "You're walking."

I have an impression of smoke around the elevators, and bent doors, and it was pretty -- the lobby was pretty devastated. I don't remember who that chief was.

So we teamed up with Engine 4. I knew the officer, Joe Farrelly, so we were talking, making small talk and making our way up, and about two or three levels up, there were a lot of civilians coming down, and it was very -- pushing through them, so heavy traffic against us, and I saw a building personnel person, and I said, "Is there a better staircase?" And he goes, "Yes, there is. I'll take you to another

one." He took us up maybe one or two more levels, either to the 3rd or 4th Floor, and I think we switched either from C to B or B to C. I don't really remember the letters any more.

We made our way down the hallway on the 3rd or 4th Floor, both units, and by then I think there was a chief with us, and as I recall, he had an 11 on his helmet, so I presume since then it was not the division so I presume it was chief from the 11th Battalion, and so we pretty much then traveled up as a unit, 4 Engine, Engine 28 and this chief.

There was also -- I remember a fireman or two from Ladder 8, and about the 10th Floor or so, the chief made a decision to -- the new stairway we were in had a lot of people coming down, and the chief made a decision that we were going to pause and get these people to another stairway and direct them to another stairway to try to vacate that stairway as best we could for us to go up and use it as an attack stairway.

So I would guess we were something like on the 10th Floor or something. So we probably spent a couple of minutes directing civilians to another stairway. They were all very cooperative, and there

was no panic to speak of, and I remember reassuring of the civilians saying, "You're all right now. Just continue now. You are safe now."

I asked people occasionally has anybody been coming from a fire, you know, a floor where they have seen fire or smoke, just trying to determine how far up we had to go. So I had the impression we were heading for Floor No. 60, but it actually would have been higher.

So the firemen were getting pretty tired by then, and they wanted to take little breaks every few floors, so our progress was pretty slow. We weren't aware of any -- of the other plane. We heard rumors that another plane was on route, and one of the guys, Lieu, "Did you hear that? There's another plane on route, another one."

So we kind of knew somehow that a plane had hit. We knew it was a terrorist attack. Just -- I don't know -- accumulated knowledge along the way, I guess, from civilians talking or a little handy-talkie chatter, but by then, I presume, it was already 9:30 or something.

Q. You never heard the second plane?

A. We never heard the second plane.

Q. Just to verify, you were in the first tower that was struck, which was in the north tower?

A. Yes.

Q. And you had --

A. World Trade Center No. 1.

Q. And you had --

A. So I would say within -- we were probably in there like at probably 9:04, 9:05 or something like that, so I would say just as we were in the stairway heading up, the other plane probably hit the other tower. I would say -- but we weren't aware of that. We had very poor handy-talkie communications. We didn't hear much of anything. There must have been Maydays galore out in the street. We didn't hear any of them. I didn't. The chief didn't apparently either.

I remember it took a long time. A couple of the firemen were having a tough time keep going. We stayed as a unit, all of us still, all -- both companies, the chief, and by the time -- I remember we got -- had to go in to Floor No. 28. I said, "Come on, guys, we are at 28. Come on, next stop is 28th Floor." So that's accurate in my mind.

After that, I think we made another push

after that, but that is not as accurate in my mind, that I'd say we were in the 30th or 31st, 32nd Floor, or something like that, and a few of the guys were lying wiped out on the floor, you know, taking a break with their masks off and lying in the hallway when there was a very loud roaring sound and a very loud explosion, and the -- it felt like there was an explosion above us, and I had a momentary concern that our building was collapsing.

Looking up, guys were diving into the stairway, and then it was like -- everybody was very scared by then. I'm talking the firemen, and then we were very worried about what was going on. We didn't know, but apparently that was the other building falling. I think we were that far along.

So we regrouped in the stairway for a couple of minutes, and I told the guys, "All right, hang on. Let's see what's going on." I still wanted to go up and fight the fire. The chief was very good. He said, "All right, everybody calm down."

A couple of firemen said, "Did you feel that rush of air?" and things like that, and how it was going on. It really felt like our building was coming down, and then the chief, who was out of sight for a

few minutes, then came running up the stairs, and that's my impression, and he was saying -- "All right--" everybody was very adamant and loud, and he said, "Everybody, we are -- all Fire Department personnel are out of the building. We are getting out. Leave all your equipment," he was yelling, "Leave your equipment, and just get up and go, go, go," like that.

So I presume that he got the word that the other building had fallen.

Q. What floor were you guys on?

A. I would say 30th or 31st, something like that.

Q. That's when the chief --

A. That's when we were notified. I think this was the 11th Battalion. I think his body was recovered yesterday.

Q. Oh, boy.

A. But I'm not sure, because I thought that the 11th battalion also was with Ladder 6 when they were -- so I'm not clear on all this.

So we made -- we started to make our way back down, and there were no civilians to speak of in our stairway. There were a couple of stragglers being

helped by somebody or other. We did tell them keep going down, and there were -- we might have seen a couple of firemen, but everybody was in the process. Everybody was heading down. Nobody was heading up any more, and it was pretty clear that we were getting out.

Q. Did you have an idea what time you guys started to descend down?

A. I would say it was like one minute after the first building collapsed, the first collapse of the other building.

Q. So five after ten then?

A. Right. It took us a long time to get up there.

Q. There were firefighters above you?

A. Not that I know of, no. I mean, we didn't see anybody going up ahead of us. We just saw civilians coming down, and by the time we were heading down, there were really no civilians any more, and we had a clear track to the -- and to the lobby.

When we got to the lobby, there was total devastation then. When we went in, it was blasted apart, and there was broken glass everywhere. All the windows were out, but when we got down, just my

impression was that it was like being outside. You know, you weren't even in the building any more. It was devastation, but we were in the northwest corner of the building, so we were diagonally separated a hundred percent from the first collapsed building. We were on the opposite corner -- we were the most sheltered part.

We got to the lobby, and we saw things. We saw an arrest being made of some Arab-looking type guy. I think he had a blue uniform type World Trade Center type maintenance type person. It was my impression. It didn't seem important to me. It seemed like he was being arrested by a Port Authority type policeman. That's my impression. I remember them putting cuffs on him, and I remember one of the firemen saying, "Look, they're arresting the guy," and I said, "Never mind that. Never mind that."

You know, it was not our concern. There was chaos in the lobby. It was random people running around. There was no structure. There were no crowds. There was no -- no operation of any kind going on, nothing. There was no evacuation. It was just people running around, a few Port Authority police, and I think Engine 4 made it down.

I was talking to guys this morning. You know, we were with them. I remember on one or two floors above, Joe Farrelly, the captain, saying, "Oh, Brian, how you doing? I thought you were behind me," you know, but I ended up ahead of him the last flight. We were checking floors intermittently on the way down occasionally, make sure there were no firemen and stuff. We were trying to do a dignified retreat.

We didn't really realize the extent of what was ahead or what had already happened, and we got to the -- then we got to the lobby.

I have no more recollection of Engine 4. We gathered Engine 28, me and the four firefighters. We gathered by the edge of the lobby, the northwest corner of the lobby by the broken glass, and I made a move towards going out, and then I was worried that we were going to be hit by bodies or falling debris, and then I said -- "I don't know, you know, what --" this is the truth, this is what happened actually in that moment.

I said, "I don't know. Maybe we should stay here for -- maybe we are safer here at the edge of the lobby." And one of the senior guys said, "Let's get the F out of here." So we said, "Okay, let's go, let's -- Ready, here we go. Let's head for our

overpass."

So we just ran as a unit to the overpass again, and we took a look up, and it was like one -- it was like, holy shit. It was like -- because it was like -- I guess the building was kind of -- I don't remember specifically, but I remember it was, like, we got to get out of here. So I think that the building was really kind of starting to melt. We were -- like, the melt down was beginning. The collapse hadn't begun, but it was not a fire any more up there. It was like -- it was like that -- like smoke explosion on a tremendous scale going on up there.

I said to the guys -- I said, "We are in the collapse zone." I mean, that sounds like a joke, but I said, "We got to -- we can't stay here." So we started running up West Street, and I'd say within 50 yards or so the building was collapsing behind us, and then it was like everybody was, like, oh shit, you know. This is it. Every man for himself, running up West Street.

Q. So what members of the Company 28 were with you that day? Do you recall?

A. With me?

Q. Yes.

A. Chelsen, Ippolito, Campagna -- he's an

eight-week guy -- and Kehoe. He's the famous photographed firefighter of Engine 28 on the steps.

Q. Did you happen to remove any injuries or civilians or any of your own members following any collapse?

A. After the -- after the collapse, we were about 50 to a hundred yards north of the pedestrian walkway, and the collapse was occurring, and the firemen were all ahead of me, but my four firemen were ahead of me running up West Street, and then the black cloud just came roaring at us, and then we got separated for an hour or so, and I made -- I was torn between -- after like, you know, five or ten minutes, I guess, if I kept trying to get it together. Everybody -- you know, it was chaos. You know, it was pure chaos, and after maybe ten minutes or so, trying to figure out what had happened, and where we were, and letting the dust settle a little so we could see where we were, I kind of figured my four guys were safe.

I thought my chauffeur was dead for sure, because he was parked somewhere near the building. I made a little effort to -- I headed back. I figured I have to head back and try to see about my chauffeur, and I started back on my own, but we were confronted,

like, with a huge pile of burning building, and the -- not even getting near the overpass where we were, and there were other buildings burning, like towering right to the side, and I was by myself, and I just talked to myself, Well, geez, I just almost got killed, and I'm not going to tempt fate any more. Didn't seem like there was anywhere to go.

We were kind of blocked. All the rubble was on West Street, so we would have had to go all the way around by the river to get around to the other side, so --

Q. Just going back to the handy-talkies, the communication.

A. Right.

Q. While operating prior to the first collapse, and following the first collapse, were there any communications?

A. We didn't hear anything. I didn't hear anything.

Q. Also during the second collapse --

A. After the second collapse, it was pure pandemonium on the handy-talkies.

Q. Is there a certain channel that you guys operate on?

A. We stayed on the primary technical Channel 1. We never switched.

Q. You never switched.

Just going back, given the current status of any member missing or deceased member, did you see them or did you --

A. No, I never saw a firefighter die. I never saw -- turns out our chauffeur made it. He was pulled into a building. He had experienced both collapses on the street, and he had been somehow pulled in on the second one that would have destroyed our apparatus totally. He was pulled into a building by a policeman or something into a federal building or something.

MR. MURAD: George, any questions?

BY MR. CUNDARI:

Q. What did you hear when the building starting collapsing the second time? Did you feel -- just started coming down? You didn't hear anything, feel anything?

A. We felt -- our whole building that we were in, when World Trade Center 2 collapsed, that was the first one to collapse. We were in World Trade Center 1. It was a tremendous explosion and tremendous shaking of our building. We thought it was our

building maybe collapsed, there was a collapse above us occurring.

It was tremendous shaking and like everybody dove into this stairwell and waited for, I guess, 20, 30 seconds until it settled, and that was our experience of the other building collapsing.

MR. MURAD: Lieutenant Becker, I would like to thank you for allowing me to do this interview with you.

The time now is 1220 hours, and I'd like to state this concludes the interview.

Thank you very much.

File No. 9110020

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN MURRAY

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. MURAD/CUNDARI: Today is October 9, 2001. The time is 1240 hours and my name is Murray Murad/George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

A. Firefighter, Third Grade, Kevin Murray, assigned to ladder 18 that day of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I am currently at Ladder 11 and Engine 28 regarding the events on September 11, 2001. Firefighter Murray, do you want to give your account of the tragic day?

A. Okay. I'll start from the beginning. I came to Ladder 11. I was -- I knew I was being detailed to 18 Truck and I thought I was riding for somebody on 11 Truck when the first plane hit. The second alarm was given, 28 Engine was turned out and I had somebody relieve me on 11 Truck so I could get over to 18 Truck in case they went on the box. I got over to 18 Truck. I was assigned by Lieutenant Borega, I was assigned the can and shortly after that the fifth alarm was given for the first tower and we went to -- 18 Truck was assigned. That's just about the same time that the second plane had

hit, because we still saw kind of the explosion when we got onto the FDR, because they're pretty close.

On the FDR, there is a lot of traffic on the FDR and we saw -- I don't know which tower it was, but I think it was Tower 2, what looked like a hole where the fire was. That looked like a plane had gone through it.

Q. So that would probably be the south tower?

A. Probably the south tower, right, because we were coming from the FDR. So the south tower is closer. So probably the south tower. We saw -- I couldn't believe what I was looking at. We got under the bridge that goes from the FDR into West Street and there was -- it was unbelievable. There was jumpers everywhere, there was bodies everywhere, pieces of plane everywhere. It didn't seem like a lot of firemen everywhere. There was rigs parked in a couple of different areas, but you didn't see a lot of firemen, at all.

Q. Would you happen to know basically or to the best of your knowledge, where you saw those rigs?

A. There was a couple of rigs parked in front of the north tower and a couple of rigs parked --

there was a bridge that comes across where Liberty Street is and there was a van fire right next to that. I remember seeing that when I came in. And I saw a couple of rigs parked on Liberty Street. Where we parked, our rig was on -- we parked our rig under the bridge, the pedestrian bridge of -- that comes from 1 World Trade across the street to the Financial Center, the pedestrian bridge. That's where we parked our rig under.

Q. Were you able to identify any of the other apparatus or units that were there?

A. That were there?

Q. If you recall.

A. The rigs that we saw?

Q. Right.

A. No. Not to my knowledge. There was a company that was pulled in right next to us. I'm not sure what that company was.

Q. Okay.

A. Now we're all just looking up. The first thing the Lieutenant said is "We're staying together on this." I said, "Lieu, I'm grabbing a search rope." I grabbed a search rope, we all grabbed an extra cylinder and we started heading across under

the bridge towards the first tower, Tower 1, the north tower. So we had walked alongside of 6 World Trade. We're parked under here. 18 Truck was parked on this side of the street, right there. We walked under the bridge and then pretty much walked into 1 World Trade right on this corner. Tower 1, that's how I went into the building (indicating).

There was a bunch of glass broken and we didn't go in through a doorway. There was all glass broken, there was glass everywhere and there was bodies everywhere. Everywhere that you looked there was a body or mush, you know. We got into -- the command center was somewhere in here or there was a bunch of chiefs somewhere in here (indicating). When we got in there, there was a lot of people not knowing what to do. Van Essen was there. Van Essen came over to 18 Truck.

Q. This is the north tower; correct?

A. North tower. Van Essen came over to the 18 Truck as soon as we got into the building or shortly thereafter and said, "Forget about the fire. Just get the people out." That's what they actually told us and these people -- we're waiting to get a sign basically.

So we stood over here on the northern most wall, the exposure 4 wall -- the exposure 2 wall and waited to get a sign. 21 Engine was doing the same thing, standing there with us and we were waiting to get a sign. I actually helped Father Judge into the building, because he went under one of those -- where the glass was, they had these metal bars going across and he had to bend over and walk under it. So I helped him into the building and then they said, we're going to be sent to the third floor and above. To start working our way up to start doing the search.

Now my father works in the building and I'm looking for a directory to see where he worked and we went to -- the first floor we went to was the third floor and all these people were coming down in the rear of the tower back here. They have these escalators that were shut off and all these people were coming down.

The elevators looked like they were on fire in the lobby. There wasn't smoke coming out of them, but it looked like they all bubbled up and everything and there was a fire in there. Basically we took the B stairwell, which is in between the

elevators. I'm sorry. We forced an elevator door first and we got an lady out of an elevator. The elevator in the B stair, next to the B stairwell, closest to the B stairwell. We helped a lady out of there and we started walking up to the third floor. That third floor was clear. There was no damage, nothing. We got up to the fifth floor and there was severe damage. The ceilings had come down, the some walls had caved in. Major sprinkler damage, because there wasn't just a sprinkler. It was just like 2 and a half inch hose hitting you in the face when you were walking up there. So we were walking. We figured this is a good place to start looking for people and we were in some sort of -- we didn't see a company name or anything. Like we were in some sort of corporate area with cubicles or anything. It was almost like we were in like a locker room or something. We had made our way to like where the janitors worked or something. We had checked all the locker rooms and everything else. We were forcing some doors. We were there for a while.

Then we went to the sixth floor and did the same thing. Same sort of damage up there. When we were on the sixth floor, it was the sixth floor or

the fifth floor, we were helping the people get down the B stairwell. And what I found out later to be was the first tower had collapsed.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower had collapsed. Now, it shook us and knocked a couple of guys down. Everybody ran to the stairwell. All the lights went off, all the shit came up the stairwell. It was filled with dust. There was a report that a third plane had hit the building and then we got another report that the 65 floor in the north tower had collapsed. That's what the rumbling was. We had no idea that the south tower had gone.

So at that point we --

Q. Did you get a report from the radio? Any communications? How was the communications at that point?

A. Communications were all over the place. I had the can so I didn't have a radio, but I was with the irons man and I kinds of heard a lot, but a lot of people were trying to talk at the same time. It was just static, a lot. What you did hear was -- what I did hear at one point, which I thought was Ladder 11, but it wound up being Battalion 11,

because I was listening for them, was on the 30th floor. But it wasn't Ladder 11. It was Battalion 11.

We basically did an evacuation at that point and we started trying to get the people to keep going down the stairs, to calm down. What happened was that we didn't see it, but a portion of the lobby had gotten knocked out when that tower came down, so we couldn't evacuate people down that stairwell anymore. So we started funneling everybody that was on the stairwell through the 5th floor, across the 5th floor through the locker room, to another stairwell. I think it's the C stairwell. I'm not sure. And we started sending people down that.

Eventually someone -- and we were basically set up on a relay where it would be a couple of us every 15, 20 feet with flashlights showing people where to walk and we sent the people down that stairwell. Whatever was blocking the B stairwell must have got freed up, because then we were able to -- we were able to start sending them back down that stairwell. Because people, it was taking forever to get these people through the 5th floor.

Q. And were all you guys still together at the same time or were you separated?

A. We were spread out on the 5th floor, but we were all together. We were all there.

Q. Okay were you also on channel 1?

A. Yes. We were always on channel 1.

Q. At any time did they advise you to switch to another channel?

A. I heard something about somebody being in a different tower or something, switch to channel 3. But I didn't have a radio, so I didn't really think about that.

Q. When you were in the second collapse, of the north tower, do you recall the individuals or the companies that were with you?

A. 28 Engine was with us when we left the building. They weren't with us on the floor when we came down. After that, after we got everybody out, it was all firemen in the stairwells, in the B stairwell and I saw a guy from 16 Engine that I knew on the stairwell. We kind of waved to each other. I saw a guy from 15 Engine in the stairwell.

Q. Do you recall any of their names by chance?

A. Yes. Jimmy Hynes from 15 Engine, I saw him in the stairwell. He's okay. Pete Fallucca from 16 Engine, I saw him. He's okay. And this is all in the stairwell coming down. We went down to the lobby. Because once the firemen were all evacuating, we decided to evacuate with them. We went down to the lobby, this is the first time I got to see the lobby. We were missing Charlie Maloney from 18 Truck. We didn't know where he was. I think he was the irons with me that day. Because he had gone down to the front of the stairwell to guide civilians out the stairwell. When we got to the lobby and saw so the lobby was devastated, we thought maybe he got killed in that. But he wound up being okay later on.

What happened was we got down to the lobby and a guy from Rescue 1, I don't know his name, came over to 18 Truck and said, "You gotta help us if you got any steam left." He was all bloodied up. He goes, "My company is trapped upstairs and we got more companies trapped upstairs." He goes, "If you got anything left, come with me."

We run up the stairs. We started going back up. Now all these firemen are evacuating the

building, we start going back up the B stairwell. We made it to the 5th floor and then there was a report of major gas, a gas leak on the 5th floor. So now I'm heading back up the stairs to the 20 something floor and there was some sort of gas leak on the 5th floor. I smelled it, but I couldn't tell if it was a gas leak or anything, but you definitely smelled something that wasn't there when we were doing the evacuation.

Q. Was there any conversation when you guys were going back up and there were firefighters descending down? Was there any conversation between the two groups?

A. More so through Lieutenants, but, you know, just basically. "Be safe." No one said anything about the tower having gone down. I don't think a lot of people knew that it had gone down. We didn't know.

So when we got up to the 5th floor and we smelled that gas and we saw these guys evacuating, we said, "We better get out of here." So we started heading down again. The guy from Rescue kept going up. He didn't stay with us. I don't know his name. A short, stocky guy.

Q. Was the stairwell lit?

A. We removed an injured civilian at the beginning and a couple of hundred civilians through. You know, getting them through that stairwell. But other than that, we didn't carry anybody out. The civilians were kind of -- once the collapse happened, they were shot. But they weren't panicking, running or anything like that. They were kind of staying calm.

Q. Given the current known status of the missing, the injured, deceased members, who did you see and where did you see them and what were they doing at the time? Was there any verbal interaction? Like I asked before when you guys were up and down the staircase. Did you last see someone?

A. When we came down to the lobby, we saw 28 Engine. We also saw 4 Engine. 4 Engine was in the lobby with us. There was another company that was back -- I don't know what company it was. It was back by the escalators, walking towards the front of the lobby. I think it was an Engine Company. I'm not sure.

We had a guy from 28 Engine, Roy Chelsen, had

said, We saw all these jumpers coming down, a lot of glass was coming down, said we should run. Lieutenant Becker and Roy, who is a senior man said, "Let's run." They ran out Tower 1, alongside World Trade 6 and we had said -- 18 Truck conferred too and said, "We should go too." But the thing we were scared about was that the jumpers were coming down and all the glass was coming down. There was a lot more jumpers coming down at that time. And there was a guy under the bridge screaming, "Come on. Come on. Come on." You know. We ran. A couple of jumpers just missed me and the roof man.

We got under the bridge and we stopped, because my hook got caught in Harry's suspenders and his radio. It took me forever to get my hook out of his thing. We thought we were safe at that point. We saw a guy, I think big Port Authority Police or somebody had a guy locked up in handcuffs right in front of us and there was a guy, a rig right there.

Q. You can use the diagram to show us.

A. There was a rig right here. Actually, even closer. It was right as soon you got onto the street. There was a rig and a couple of guys sitting on the back of the rig.

Q. At West and Vesey?

A. Yeah. Right in front of World Trade, right under the bridge. And they were all messed up. You know, like exhausted and they were sitting there. We walked -- now we're walking. This guy, they were locking up this guy a little bit from Vesey, right here. A little bit south of Vesey Street on west. We started walking when the second tower --

Q. They are describing it as the north tower.

A. The north tower came down.

Q. Where did you exit out of?

A. The same place --

Q. The same way you went in? Okay. You went north on West Street?

A. We went north on West Street. We decided not to go to our rig, because we saw a lot of people up here, so we started going towards them. When the tower started -- there was a big explosion that I heard and someone screamed that it was coming down and I looked away and I saw all the windows domino -- you know, dominoeing up and then come down. We were right in front of 6, so we started running and how are you going to outrun the World

Trade Center? So we threw our tools and I dove under a rig. The chauffeur Hughey from 18 Truck dove with me. The rest of 18 Truck dove under something else. Not the same rig as us, and then it came down. I don't even think we made it to Vesey Street. We might have been right on the corner of Vesey Street.

Q. And were the guys from 18 safe and accounted for?

A. Well, not at that point, but eventually through the day we found Charlie Maloney who we thought was killed in the lobby. He had made it out himself across to the Financial Center, across the street, and the roof man, Ralph from 18 Truck had gotten hurt and he was found at 7 Engine and 1 Truck later on. About seven hours later.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. MURAD/CUNDARI: Okay. So basically this concludes our interview. I would like to thank you, Firefighter Kevin Murray, for this interview which you just gave us.

The time now is 1300 hours and at this time I would like to conclude this

interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110021

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MATTHEW LONG

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. MURAD: The date is October 9, 2001. The time is 1425 hours and this is Murray Murad and --

MR. CUNDARI: George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following firefighter:

A. Matthew Long. Firefighter first rank, Ladder 43.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at Ladder 43 and this is regarding the tragic events on September 11, 2001.

BY MR. MURAD:

Q. If you would please give your accounts of that day, on that tragic day what happened at the World Trade Center regarding your ladder company and personally yourself.

A. Okay. We were at a box. That's when the seconds plane hit and then we took in the Trade Center incident. We came in on West Street and to the best of my knowledge I could see both towers on fire, a lot of smoke. I witnessed people jumping as we were driving down the West Street highway.

Q. If you could draw on the diagram of where your resting place was.

A. I believe we stopped somewhere on Murray Street, almost two blocks from the 6 World Trade and another block from the first tower. At that moment we got off the rig, we got all our equipment together and I started walking towards the command post. We took a minute. Our lieutenant, Glenn Rohan, took a minute, stopped us all and basically gave us a little pep talk. We didn't know what we were getting into here. It was obviously some kind of an attack and that we should conserve energy, get rid of some tools and stay together most of all.

So we started back down West Street towards the Trade Center and I would say we got to between Barclay and Vesey when the first tower came down and it was chaos. It was crazy.

Q. Were all you guys from the truck together at the time that collapse came?

A. We were all together at the time with one extra roof man.

Q. That was the south tower that you're talking about?

A. I believe, yes. I believe it was the

first tower. I believe when we were coming down the West Side Highway the both towers were still standing and burning and there was no chaos going on at that point.

So we retreated a little bit I guess, right to about Barclay and we ducked in, possibly, I don't remember, but we possibly ducked in 125 Barclay. We ducked in like an entranceway and just lay on the floor while most of the stuff was blowing by us. And when it seemed to have -- when the cloud of gray and black crap and things going by just seemed to slow down, we tied off a rope and started walking in to go back towards where everything used to be.

Q. You came down West Street from there?

A. Yes. We came down this way, like that (indicating).

Q. Just circle this here and identify this as 125 Barclay. That's where you waited until the debris and everything cleared?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there any communications by radio or was there still command post communications post --

A. At this point it was just -- there was just people running past us and so much chaos. We

masked up and we started walking in with a rope. We had a search rope on and at that point I didn't know where we were headed.

Q. Were any other firefighters running you way or did you intercept anybody?

A. There were some cops running our way. There were -- there could have been firemen running, but there were fire trucks everywhere and when we got in further, there was just fire, a lot of rigs on fire.

Q. Were you able to identify the rigs that were on fire, by any chance?

A. No, I didn't recall which rigs were there at that point. But at that point we stretched in. We started climbing over the rubble and the boss said --

Q. What boss was that?

A. Lieutenant Rohan, Glenn Rohan, 43. He was just telling us to get -- he took three guys and said, "Grab a line off that rig and start putting out some of these car fires and rig fires." As he tried to look to see if there was still a command post. So that's what we did. So he split us up into two teams. And that's what we did probably for

a while and I don't even remember the second tower coming down. We just kept working and climbing over stuff. I don't remember it coming down. I don't know if it came my direction or it went in the other direction, because it was just black. It had to be -- visibility was horrible for at least 45, 50, 60 minutes. I don't remember the time at that point.

So that's what we kept doing. We kept stretching hose lines. There was a ladder to -- there was a portable ladder up on 6 World Trade, so we were in this area right here just climbing over all sorts of debris. It was crush -- I think Rescue 1 was right about here.

Q. You are identifying the West Side Highway, right off Vesey; right?

A. It was in near Vesey. It was inside of -- it was between 6 and 1 and that's where the foot bridge I believe is.

Q. So that's the pedestrian bridge?

A. That's the pedestrian bridge. So it was right in front of 6.

Q. Okay. So that was Rescue 1.

A. Rescue 1 was right around here. I

remember that. And this was down. So this is where we operated from the most, for the first hour, right here. Vesey and West Street. There were rigs everywhere. Rigs were all over here, they were burning. Between Barclay and Vesey there had to be a dozen rigs burning.

Q. At any point did you remove any civilians or a member of the service following any of the collapses? If so, were there any injuries or did you see any firefighters that were injured?

A. No. I didn't encounter any injured firefighters. I didn't leave anyone alone. If I saw them alone, I checked to make sure they were all right. If they weren't, I was looking for their company or looking for their boss.

Q. Were people still running towards you or running away at that point?

A. No. At this point now when we were putting out fires everyone was, you know, was pretty much just scrambling for hose line and doing stuff like that. Then, like I said, the boss went up a ladder that was to the scaffold of 6 World Trade here, where the U.S. Customs building is. He yelled down he needed two stokes, because they had a down

fireman up here.

So we went and grabbed two baskets, tied them up and they carried him up the land. At that point is when they were looking for 6 Truck. 6 Truck and 39 Engine, they were saying were missing over the radios?

Q. I don't remember.

A. 6 Truck and 39 were together and they were trapped and they were calling for help on the radio. That's the last radio transmission I heard on channel 1. My boss and Jerry Suden and Todd Frederickson, two firefighters, and Johnny Colon, he was the chauffeur that day. The four of them went through this building and into the rubble of the both towers.

Q. The both towers were down at that point?

A. Yes. Both towers were definitely down at that point. So they went in there and that's the last I heard from them. They switched to channel 5. I didn't hear it given over the radio, for the 43 truck to switch to 5, so I operated with Frank Macchia. He was the second roof man and we teamed up in 6 World Trade with the 40th battalion. And we searched this building top to bottom. That's the 6

World Trade, U.S. Customs building.

Q. Right.

A. So we searched that building top to bottom and just constantly getting dead ends.

Q. At what point do you think you guys hooked up all together as a company? Was that at any point or not at all?

A. I didn't hook back up with the rest of my company until 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock at night. So I operated alone a lot.

Q. Okay. Anything to add?

A. The 7 came down at 4:30, I believe?

Q. Yeah, around that time.

A. Okay. Then I'm wrong. If 7 came down between 4:30 and 5:00, I hooked up with my company. Frank Macchia and I went under this foot bridge and started climbing on top of the rubble. At that point there was like a chain gang of guys and we were trying to get one of the Chiefs that was trapped, they were trying to get closer to him.

Q. Let's highlight that area.

A. Okay. We came under the foot bridge this way and we probably would be on top or in this little courtyard between 1 and 2.

Q. Okay. And this is where --

A. 1 and 2 here. And there was a rubble here. There was like a big 40, 50-foot drop you had to walk down and then back up and we had a little bit of a chain gang trying to pass stuff out and they were supposedly in communication with one Chief and I was probably midway up with Frank Macchia and my boss and Jerry and whoever else was up on top of that rubble. So I waited there and that's when we finally got reunited. And at that point they were worried that 7 was coming down so they were calling for everyone to back out.

So I waited for -- we waited for the boss, Lieutenant Rohan, in the middle of the rubble and we all walked out together back to the West Side Highway and crossed the highway and pretty much hung out by the marina when 7 came down.

Q. Where were you during the first collapse?

A. Walking down West Street. We were walking to the command center.

Q. And then you heard the second collapse, you said; right?

A. I don't remember the second collapse at all. I guess it was just stuff going through my

head and whatever else. I'm almost 100% positive -- actually I had a camera on the rig when we were driving on the West Side Highway, I took pictures, but they didn't come out and I can remember both towers burning and we could see people jumping. From then on our minds were just like you didn't know what was going on. Unimaginable.

Q. A lot of talk on the radios or --

A. A tremendous amount of talk on the radios.

Q. Were you able to understand?

A. I mean there was a lot of people yelling. "We're trapped here." "We need tools here." "We need tools here." And nothing was getting answered because rigs were -- there were rig fires and police vehicle fires. They said the ESU units were on fire and they had explosives and weapons. So that was the concern. The amount of stuff that was flying in the air. It wasn't even like smoke. It was like dust or whatever it was. It was just lingering and it stayed there for such a long time. Which led me to believe that the second building collapsed and, you know, they just kept it going.

I mean that's my story pretty much. I mean it was a long time. I was by myself a long time. I

didn't try to call them for a while because there was other stuff on the radio and I was all right.

Q. You had nobody with you?

A. I was with one other firefighter, Frank Macchia. The two of us worked.

Q. You were together the whole time?

A. We stayed together after we left the 48th battalion. We worked in that building for a while and the building was totally evacuated. We didn't see anybody and there was some pockets of fire, you know, big holes in it, but we were -- we eventually left him to try to reunite ourselves with our guys.

Q. And you finally found them over where?

A. We found them through this foot bridge, probably right in this area here of the rubble, the center of the rubble. We went through the foot bridge and came up and there were some I beams and there was a big wall. You kind of climbed down a bit and then came back up, and that is where our boss was operating up there, on top of that where they said they possibly had communications with a chief that was trapped. I'm assuming he was one that they left there. Because they were just adamant about 7 coming down immediately. I think we

probably got out of that rubble and 18 minutes later is when 7 came down. So I watched -- we watched. There was a command station right here on Vesey. We were here with a whole group of guys. We watched 7 come down and then we went through, I guess this is the morgue now, Merrill Lynch, we went through that building there and there was an atrium we came through to go back on the other side and try to get back in to help.

Q. So you came from North End street then?

A. Yes. We came right through. This is the marina. We went right through -- there is an atrium here and we came through here and there was another command post on this side and we were trying to get back in to see what they were doing. Lieutenant Nigro from 58 Engine was missing and apparently they knew where he was. We were trying to help out there, but by then it was -- by darkness we were all just spent. We were just hanging out.

MR. MURAD: Firefighter Matthew Long, I would like to thank you for sitting down with us for this interview. The time now is 1440 hours and this concludes this portion of the interview.

File No. 9110022

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRST GRADE FIREFIGHTER GERARD SUDEN

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today is October 9, 2001. The time is 1445 hours. I'm Murray Murad.

MR. CUNDARI: I'm George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter?

A. I'm Gerard Suden, Ladder 43.

Q. Rank and command?

A. First grade Firefighter.

Q. Your assigned command?

A. I'm assigned to 43 Truck.

Q. Okay.

A. Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm currently at Ladder 43, Engine 53 and this is regarding the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001. Gerard, would you like to give an account of that day that you were working or assigned to Ladder 43 on September 11?

A. Sure. To the best of my knowledge I wasn't too familiar with that area before it happened, but from looking at this map, I will try and give you the best account I can.

MR. CUNDARI: Start from like when you came into work that morning or where you got the call,

where you were.

A. Like I was telling you guys, it was my first tour back to 43 Truck after a 90 day detail to 2 truck. As you know those guys are gone. That whole truck was wiped out. It was good to be back. I was cleaning the tools on the rig and the next thing I know, guys are yelling from the kitchen and I went in and we were watching it on TV.

It was kind of hard to believe, but what happened was the Engine, 53 Engine got sent down there pretty early on, like before the second plane hit they were en route and I believe from talking to them, they witnessed the plane hit. They were down there. I knew it was bad.

We wished them well when they went down and I think me and the other members of the truck, just the nature of the job, we were chomping at the bit to get down there ourselves. We wanted to help out. They were kind of pulling most of the companies from the area and we were getting the feeling that we weren't going to get to go because they pulled the company north of us and the company south of us.

We wound up getting at some point in the middle of -- wound up getting an EMS run on 42nd Street

which is way out of our district, but being that the city was so undermanned, they sent us all the way down there and as we were en route you could see the smoke and people watching it on the streets, executives smoking cigarettes and everybody was looking. We wanted to get there like I said.

We went to assist -- the EMS run was for a guy who had his foot stuck in a revolving door. I remember being a little annoyed, like I want to be down there. We got finished with that and we were pretty much asking the dispatcher to send us, let us help out, we are closer to the area. We weren't getting a response and shortly after we were en route back north towards here, home, we did wind up getting sent. We made way, headed down there --

Q. What was the radio communication at that time after you finished the EMS job, what was the transmissions going over the air?

A. From the back I couldn't hear too much of what was going on in the cab and I recall being at a light on the way north again and we knew, by now you figured out it was a terrorist attack. You see the two planes, and I remember scooters -- motors, one of the guys, a delivery messenger guy listening to a head

phone told us they just flew a plane into the Pentagon and that was kind of unbelievable. It was all real pretty surrealistic, but I remember confirming that with another driver, somebody driving a car was listening to his radio so then we were kind of -- believed it.

The radio communication, I'm going to tell you when we got down there I wasn't really clued into the fact that the first building was down and I found out later that that's what the situation was. When we got down there the first building had been down. When I found out later on that there was like 20 something minutes between the collapses, it's a pretty long time not to go with that information, but there was no communication. Not from the air anyway. I think -- we were 10-8. We had less ability to find this out. People that were watching it on TV knew, like I said, at home, but we were just on the air and trying to get down there.

Q. You can draw on that, by the way.

A. That's fine. I will just tell you.

MR. CUNDARI: Mark where you were.

Q. You went south on West Street?

A. We are coming down the West Side Highway and

some point, pretty good distance north we jumped out with a good view of the tower and I guess the south towers was down. It was buffered by the north tower, so we really couldn't tell. We just seen the smoke from behind it. We figured the building was there just burning, but looking at the north tower, walking down the block you could see the gaping hole and we were all pretty in awe of it.

We commandeered a bus, kind of stopped a bus because we were a good distance. We were a few blocks. I couldn't even tell you which street, maybe Warren or even further north from what I remember. We wanted to get there even quicker so we jumped on the bus and they dropped us somewhere -- I remember this pedestrian bridge, I remember walking south of that and I can't tell you how close we were but we ran back past that because as we were walking down, the building came down.

Q. That was the north building?

A. That was the north building, which for a while I was arguing with the guy that I wasn't convinced that the other building was down. Like I said I thought that was the first one. I thought somewhere in the midst of that whole noise maybe the

second one came down and I couldn't pinpoint when it was, but that was the case. That was the second one coming down.

Q. So you said you heard when you got there that the building came down but you weren't sure, someone said that the building --

A. No, I didn't really -- I wasn't sure at all. After talking about it later on, one of the guys -- a Lieutenant, said that they were debating it on the way in, saying to each other that I think that building is down. We were all talking to each other and talking about we are going to stick together. We knew it was a bad situation we were going into. We were going to be working a long time. I remember the Lieutenant telling us to take an extra minute also. Make sure you don't have any heavy clothing on under your bunker gear, we are going to be here a while.

We stripped down a little bit, so between the guy with his foot stuck in a revolving door and the Lieutenant giving us a good heads up on the way in, who is to say what kept us being there a minute sooner, but we were at a distance when the building came down. We were fortunate. I thought we were going to be sand blasted off the street by the looks of it. We all ran,

we were trying to break into a gate. We ran back north, we were trying to break into a gate and get further off the street.

When it passed us, the dust and debris, we were at a decent distance but the visibility was zero so we masked up. You couldn't see. We were starting to get back down the street. We knew people were going to need help. We masked up for a time.

I remember also, we used a rope for a little bit. That became pretty burdensome, you couldn't get far and you have to run back and untie it, but that's how low the visibility was. It started to lighten up. We went down, I guess, to right outside the north building and as we were walking down, all the cars were on fire on West Street, so I remember my Lieutenant telling me and another guy -- well, we all started working on this pumper. It was a Brooklyn pumper, it was a Brooklyn Engine, parked somewhere a little north, maybe to Vesey, maybe the corner of Vesey, but we pulled the line off of that and I remember him telling me stay on this line, me and another guy I was with, Mike Regan, that was working with us that day, we stayed together on the line and he took the rest of the crew. I can't tell you exactly what he did in the time

that we were putting out the car fires, but I remember -- the visibility -- putting out the car fires, it wasn't exactly what I am normally doing, working in a truck company, but all bets were off. He told us to stay with that line. It needed to be done.

We put out I believe it was Rescue 1. Some of the rigs, I mean there was rigs also. I can't even tell you how many car fires there was, but we are putting them out and you realize the visibility was getting somewhat better. I mean it needed to be done.

Q. You worked your way south on West Street?

A. Worked our way south putting out fires. We even went further south of tower one putting them out and coming back and we had a lot of help along from other guys, stretching the line and the debris in the street was just tough going over.

Q. People still running by you at that point?

A. Yes, stretchers are being carried out. Guys are on top of -- there was some scaffolding there on what building. I'm not sure. Maybe it was 6 World Trade Center. I thought it was just west of the tower. Maybe it was the lower portion. Like I said I wasn't that familiar with the area to begin with. There was stretchers coming out.

After putting out the car fires I was trying to find the Lieutenant again. The original plan was stick together. They weren't all put out either but just there was enough Engine companies there. I wanted to group back up with the Lieutenant. I wound up finding him and he had -- I helped carry a couple of stretchers. I learned later that one of the stretchers I carried was a friend of mine actually. I didn't know at the time.

Q. It was a Firefighter?

A. It was Lieutenant Desperito from Engine 1, where I used to be assigned. I was telling one of the guys in 22 Engine and they took it hard, a company south of us, I was telling him about it, because he was there and I remembered seeing him and I was telling him hey, I saw you and he said oh, yes, that was Lieutenant. I found out later that --

Q. Was that after coming out of the north tower or was that from the south tower, where was it basically?

A. He was being taken down, I believe he was in the north tower and they were taking him out. I just gave a hand. So after doing that, time was, I couldn't believe when everything was done later in the day. You

lose kind of track of time with the adrenaline going and all. It seemed like it went faster than it did and then looking back on it sometimes it seems slow. But at the time, I don't know how much time was in between.

But when I hooked up with the Lieutenant again, I heard later they had been helping people out also, helping bring out victims, but he had gotten an assignment. He had commandeered a Chief and said I need an assignment. He got us an assignment and it was to follow a Mayday that was coming from Chief Picciotto from the 11th Battalion. They were trapped inside the north tower, 1 World Trade Center. I didn't mention also when we were on the way down, like I said I was pretty clueless of the building being down and some of the things I do remember were the Maydays, one of the guys was saying he was in the rig, I don't know how much longer I am going to be able to breathe. You heard a lot of commotion on the radio.

Q. I'm in the rig, he said that. He was in the rig?

A. Yes, one of the guys was saying he was in the rig. I think he even gave the company and where he was. I don't remember all the information. I just

remember, there was a lot of screaming and a lot of -- you knew it was bad.

So now at this time, I hooked back up with the Lieutenant. It was the original crew, Matt Long, Frank Macchia, me and Mike Regan, who were originally on the line, we are crewed back up with these guys and there was also -- it was a little confusing because by now, the recall, there was guys from our company that weren't working that day but they were also with us. They somehow -- we found each other, you know.

Now we have our guys, even more guys, and we have Chief Ferran from the 12th Battalion, is a Chief that my Lieutenant, who is Rohan, Lieutenant Rohan, from 43, a regular assignment Lieutenant, they were leading the rescue to follow the Mayday. Ferran had led us -- I don't know the buildings but he led us through a building that I believe wasn't 1 World Trade Center. Thinking the next day I thought maybe it was part of the outskirts but it couldn't have been from the way the pancaking and being back there.

So we are from another building, we went down and they knew where the one Trade was at. I wasn't familiar with it but we went down an escalator and came to a shopping mall area, like a concourse or whatever,

and I remember passing these stores and I remember walking and thinking there is a wall -- we saw some more escalators that went down and up after we crossed this long hallway, as best as I can recall.

I remember at first thinking well, there is a wall running into it. But after looking at it I realized it was a big section of the ceiling that just like leaned to and collapsed. Like it only collapsed down and it was resting right on the bottom of the escalators, so there was this big slap of concrete and you couldn't just walk. You had to go under this slab from the ceiling to get into the escalator stairs and we were looking at each of them, looking for victims and also the main objective, was like I said, Ferran had radio contact with Picciotto, who was trapped somewhere in the north tower and that's what we were en route to.

Some guys got separated. We found some injured guys. I don't remember everything that went on. I remember my big objective was just to stay with the Lieutenant at this point. So I was pretty much sticking with him and some guys I guess, they brought out some more people so we got a little separated. Some rescues were going on. But Ferran and Rohan and

me, we were going out on to the rubble and who else followed, Picciotto had a bull horn, he had a siren, so not only was he making radio contact but he would say okay, I'm going to hit this siren now. Maybe you can hear abouts where I am.

It had to be hundreds of yards away but by the time we got up and climbed up a little bit and knew which way one tower was, we did start to hear the siren, but it was such an open area that we weren't sure if it was coming -- it seemed like it was coming from the left or straight ahead. We weren't sure, and to the right of us whatever building it was, I'm not sure, there was a really good fire going.

Visibility was really low. I remember we kept saying to each other wow, look at the (inaudible).

Q. Building 7?

A. I would think so. I would think that would probably be it before it fell. I remember it was bad and I'm going to get to a point where we came back that way on the way up. We couldn't even go that way, that's how bad the fire was, but by the time I was coming back it was rolling, more than a couple of floors, just fully involved, rolling.

Anyway, we hear this bull horn and some guys

got separated, so by now it's Ferran and some of our guys are still there but ultimately what happened was me, Lieutenant Rohan, Jimmy Lanza, Tommy Corrigan, that's the 4 of our guys. Rohan, me, Tommy Corrigan and Jimmy Lanza, were the 4 guys that continued on. I remember we had radio contact so I remember I really -- I was chomping at the bit to get to this guy, feeling like you are going to do something good now. We are going to go.

I remember Ferran asking us to stick tight and I was getting somewhat insubordinate but I didn't want to get cut off from going and making the push, so I remember walking ahead and like kind of just keep my back turned to him, because I knew Rohan and the guys, we wanted to go, but I think it probably would have been deemed too dangerous to do, but like I said, you hear your brother calling.

So at one point, Ferran I think was going to cut it off, but I walked far enough ahead and got through one of the big pieces of steel that were still resembling a Trade Center. There was very little that resembled anything any more, but one of those big pieces of steel with like an hourglass shape on the bottom, I got through that and I guess that's at the

point where Ferran said let some of us go and continue through.

We all got together and kept going. I lost track of time. I don't know how long that took either. That had to be a good little while, maybe an hour of hiking and following this bull horn still. It was all craters and beams and what not. Not that we lost, but we separated from the original amount of guys. So now it's us 4 and we are walking towards it and I remember it would have at one point been an easier path to go towards our right, but being building 7 -- that must have been building 7 I'm guessing with that fire, we decided to stay away from that because things were just crackling, falling and what not.

So we decided to go straight and which kind of made us like go down craters and up. After climbing beams for a while as we got closer, he was saying he sees light and we are trying to figure out he where he is still. He says he sees light and things are starting to clear up a little bit. He was seeing daylight. He had started to mention he was seeing daylight. I was going ahead a little more and at one point we asked him do you see anything that resembles anything.

We asked him -- there was another wall ahead that resembled I guess, like I said the hourglass, there was another piece of steel there and we said do you see that. He said yes it's right in front of me, so we knew he was on the other side of that looking at it towards us. We were there. So we said we are almost there. I guess it was comforting, like, he knew we were coming and so we had an idea, the bull horn was coming in clearer now.

So I went ahead, when I got through that steel and up a little further, I saw through and the smoke was moving like clouds, so one second you would see a little better and I remember yelling back and saying I see them. The first person I saw was a civilian and where they were was at the highest point in the rubble of what was left of the stairwell they were in. I think he said it was the C stairwell. I'm not sure. That was the highest point of the rubble and the only thing that -- the only void above the top of the pile and that's where they were; Picciotto, the Chief, was in, like, under the ceiling, under the very top of that, which was just rubble on top of pancaked stair slabs, the landings of the stairwell.

You could see straight through the stairs but

like I said, the first thing, I didn't even see them. The first thing I saw with the clouds and through the smoke was this civilian and I remember saying -- I thought it was a fireman. One of the guys (inaudible). He was sitting on top of the pile with a pole or probably what was the stand pipe coming out at an angle. He was kind of holding on to that ready to slide off the top of that.

I remember yelling from 30 yards away, hey, I see you. I have a personal rope in my pocket. Don't worry. I will give it to you. You can -- you will be able to slide down. Then I started to see Picciotto and those guys. I am like hey. Then as I get closer I realize, I'm talking to Charley and I realize that that guy is a civilian so I'm not going to be able to give him a rope. He is not going to be able -- he doesn't have a harness like we wear or whatever. I told him to sit tight, we will whatever, something will come, a ladder or a rope.

Picciotto, in the meantime, they were shook up. There was him and a few other guys standing there, so later on we learned how many people and who was who and there was a couple of civilians in there too. But Picciotto passed me a rope. There was a big crater in

front of them. They were on the stairwell. It became almost like a balcony for them because the wall was blown out on the front side while I was looking at them. There was a big hole there, so they were reluctant to start moving out of there by themselves and you couldn't see.

Things were starting to get a little better when we got -- so he passes me a rope and I'm spotting him and they are coming out over that hole. By this time, my Lieutenant and the other guys come up and my Lieutenant told me that these guys that were able to walk, lead them out. Bring them back to where we were.

As it turns out there was an injured civilian, a remember the black lady, I remember seeing her, and I remember Picciotto saying that I have contact with the Second Battalion. He's hurt bad. That was important to him. He was saying he had been speaking to the Chief, whose name was Prunty from the Second Battalion in floors below who later on died, he didn't make it out.

I remember him saying that, but as it turns out, there was a Port Authority cop who I thought was an ESU cop at the time. Not important, but he was able

to climb and walk, Picciotto was able to climb and walk. I remember them asking me how is the walk? I said it's rough climbing, but we can do it. We are going to get out of here. I know the way back out. My Lieutenant asked me to go back out that way.

So I started a little bit of a conga line and there was a couple of guys from 6 truck I remember, so I start going out with Picciotto and I think the guy's name was Dave Lynn, the Port Authority cop. They were the closest to me and we are making a line and I'm ahead and I'm going back out, showing them the way out that I came in.

So as I'm going back, that fire that was on my right is now on my left. I'm backtracking and that fire is really going and on the hike towards there, we put down our masks, which at this point I started to realize maybe it would have been a good thing if we had this mask on the way back, but then again, between the fire and about halfway when I was on the way back, I got a radio call from the guys that we left and it was Johnny Colon, the chauffeur of 43, who was effecting a different rescue. He was carrying somebody out.

He had called me and said hey, Jerry, don't try and get back out the way you went in, which was a

big heads up move, because he said that building was rolling on top of the building that we were passing. That building was on fire and likely to collapse more too.

Between Picciotto asking me are you sure we can get out this way because it really didn't look good with that fire and my guy telling me that you better not because of the area where we crawled in was unattainable now too. I said to Picciotto finally, who was questioning the whole time, I said yes, I guess you are right. We are going to find a different way. So we started going back the other way.

Q. Would that be towards West Street?

A. That would have been back towards what I know is the Winter Garden, because I will tell you in a minute.

Q. Here's the Winter Garden over here. On the other side of West Street?

A. So instead of going back, like backtracking the way we came in, I kind of was trying to the best I think I went as the crow flies, the opposite direction, straight out the other way back past the stairwell where they originally came out, maybe not to touch it, but to the right of it I believe it was and out that

way and it was a good while going back that way before we really knew what was even there. What we were going to see if we were going to get out, what was there.

So after going past the stairwell and we realized that that was a better way out. We went down, I remember another crater. However many yards. It was hundreds of yards all together, but down to the crater. When I finally reached a certain point, I saw when I came back up a hill, it's all beams. I saw guys, I saw firefighters and it was clear enough to see that we are going to get out this way now.

There was guys with hose lines but they were still hundreds of yards down. No one was really at this point. I know there was Chiefs down there, I learned later, that were telling the guys not to go too far into the rubble, trying to -- some guys eventually did. It was funny that the first guys I saw on the way out were guys from our company, from the Engine Company.

Anyway, so when I yelled back to Picciotto, I said Chief, we are going to get out this way. Relax them and Dave and the guys. I remember thinking at that point I need a drink. I want to get back to my Lieutenant, who told me he is going to stay with the

injured civilian, who was a black lady. However much I'm skipping.

The gist of it is from there Picciotto was good, those guys were good, we knew we were getting out. Picciotto said go and I went and I tried to get a drink. The first thing I did was as I got down more yards, got down a ways, they were trying to move in with a line and I took a drink out of the nozzle thinking I could get refreshed enough that way to go back and do some good with my Lieutenant again. I knew we were going to be working on the Second Battalion and whoever else might be in there.

I remember trying to call him and I couldn't reach him. I guess because what they were doing -- what I found out later what they were doing was going down lower through confined spaces under that stairwell to find guys who were down there, to find the Second Battalion Chief. So I couldn't reach him.

The saltwater I drank out of the nozzle did me worse than good, so I wound up walking out until I could finally get something to drink and in that Winter Garden, I just grabbed the spritzer, hit number 1, took a drink of what I guess was 7 Up and when I was walking on my way back in now after drinking about a gallon of

7 Up, when I was walking on the way back in I started getting a radio transmission from one of the guys that we left who was originally on the rig, had I believe the irons position, Todd, from my company, Todd Frederickson.

He is calling me, saying Jerry where are you. I said listen. I didn't go out the way I came in. I went straight out. As soon as I spoke to Todd, I guess he was with Ferran, who originally started the push to follow the Mayday for Picciotto. So Ferran must have took his radio right away. I guess they had been trying to reach me for a while, anybody of us, the original five, so Ferran took it and starts talking to me and says where are you? I said well, I didn't go out the way I went in. I went straight the opposite direction. He said well, where are you? I want to lead a rescue team to get in there, because I told him about the injured civilian, my Lieutenant staying there, the Second Battalion Chief probably being in trouble from what Picciotto said.

I guess I was just saying a lot of things. What I forgot was I should have just told him was that as I walked out more past these people, I had told rescue companies, I remember seeing the Captain of

Rescue 2 even and him grilling me when I told him, him grilling me even further, where, there, I said yes. That stairwell. You see a beam coming out on an angle, so you got to get your guys up there.

There is a guy, I remember I was describing and I was joking, I said you got a civilian on the top of that pile hanging on a flag pole just being dramatic. Describing it, that's really what it seemed like. That guy, I would love to meet him some day. I said you got an injured civilian in the stairway. You got my Lieutenant's back down there. Supposedly the Second Battalion is in, so I told rescue guys and I told everybody I was trying to gather guys to go back. That's where you got to go. It seemed like nobody was really making it that far. But actually I remember seeing Kevin Joos and Kevin Toorey and Al Schickler, I think they were like the first guys, as far as towards that stairwell, and they are from 53 Engine, and I told them where to go too.

What I could have told Ferran looking back -- everyone made mistakes and everyone wished we could have done more, but I should have told him I already put some guys on the trip to where to go. I could have said the Captain of Rescue 2, but he was being really

demanding and I was trying to describe where I was. He kept asking, well, where are you, what do you see. I said I went straight past where I went and I'm thinking to myself, there is no street signs around here and I'm trying not to be insubordinate, but I think at the last transmission I made I had offered to go out past,, because what I did to get a drink, I followed the line out to what you thought would be a street eventually, but I dead stopped in this bar in the Winter Garden, grabbed a board and went back out.

I went back out past that bar and told them I see a marina. If you want me to wait here, you know, I remember saying that. I see boats. I remember him saying boats, where are boats. Eventually I wound up telling him, I don't know where the fuck I am. I'm going to back to (inaudible).

I waited about as long as I could. I said guys are on it. I have been trying to gather guys up. I tried to describe it as best as I could. I walked back. I remember when I got back to where the Captain of Rescue 2 was and I was going to go back in, I remember the Captain telling me we don't need more guys up there that we are going to possibly have to get out, so don't go.

I hesitated about a second and turned my back on him and I'm going to go, like I said, and stick with the Lieutenant. I was a little upset we got separated a couple of times. I went back, I made it a little side step, went back down. Rolled back up to them. By the time I got up there they had the black lady on a Stokes. They were rescue guys. They had the guy down. Some of the rescue guys that got there later had effected getting that guy down with a rope.

The stairwell was filled with a couple of rescue guys and my Lieutenant. I went back to this stairwell, then you had to go around it to the other side to get back in it through that hole. Anyway, they were down.

Q. What point are we at now?

A. After Picciotto is out and the Port Authority cop and the guys from 6 Truck, the guys that were able to walk out at first, what I found out later was that my Lieutenant helped get -- there was guys from 39 Engine and 16 Truck and I don't know all the names, and eventually we will all talk with each other I guess, but they were trapped down low and Rohan had breached a wall to help them get out of the confined space below and stairwells.

At this point that was done. Those guys walked out, they followed the conga line, whatever, there was enough guys there to lead everybody out. When I got back the only thing that was being done now was unfortunately, Chief Prunty of the Second Battalion was dead now. We hadn't had a pulse on him from what I learned from the guys for a while. We were trying to effectively get him out of a confined space.

I found out later that Mark Carpiniello had went down a couple of confined spaces to find this guy. When we found him, my Lieutenant -- when I went back my Lieutenant, Mark Carpiniello, Jimmy Lanza. Mark Carpiniello is from 53 Engine. He is the guy that was there on his own time. He is also one of the first guys that came up. Jimmy Lanza, a guy from rescue 4, I think his name was Dave, real nice guy. The guy from Rescue 4, I guess, set up a high angle thing and was trying to move this guy now, so everyone that was alive and ambulatory -- and even that was not able to walk, but that was alive. They got the one lady out on a stretcher.

One of the guys from 6 Truck too, when we first started walking out, the reason Prunty asked me how is the climbing is this guy from 6 Truck Prunty

even knew, he has got a concussion. He got hit in the head bad, but they were able to hold him and walk him out and he was following behind. That was what was left to do.

I went down there. I was asking, give me a shot. Maybe I can lift this guy up, we had the rope. We were trying to get him out of this confined space, but the thing is even after we got him out of that space, we knew there was two more really tight spots to get through down the hallway and then back up. We actually crawled up a slab of stairs that was actually on an angle. That was the slab that was down a floor or two from the original stairwell that Prunty walked out of. It was below grade what was there, the pile, where the stand pipe was. There was a few really tight areas to get this guy out that we went through. We had to climb high to get between two door jams and I think the door jams were about the only thing holding that place up where Prunty was. We would have had to get him out of that spot and then lift him high enough to get him between those doors and then another hole and we would have been happy to do all that, but we were being told for a while after I was back, and I think they were telling me even before I got back we got to

get out of here, because it's still shifting and it's smoky and things are still clanging, falling around.

Q. Did 7 collapse yet?

A. 7 hasn't collapsed yet. We were being told by -- I guess everybody was being a little insubordinate that day. Everyone wanted to do as much as they could, but we were told 5 minutes, I don't know how many times. It was a long while before we gave up and we finally came to the conclusion and the rescue guy agreed, we all agreed, it's irretrievable. It's not a rescue. I regret to say we left him there knowing that we would get him eventually and I heard that they got him out a couple of days later. Thanks to the information, we told him where he was.

Q. Okay, pretty much everything?

(TAPE ENDS)

File No. 9110024

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SORAYA O'DONNELL

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

SORAYA O'DONNELL

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time now is 808 hours and this is Lieutenant Monte Feller of the New York City Fire Department Investigations and Trials. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assignment.

A. EMT Soraya O'Donnell.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We are conducting the interview of Battalion 52 in Flushing regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Also for the record, can you please state your name.

MR. QUEVEDO: Investigator Quevedo of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. Basically what we need you to do is just give us a scenario of the events on the morning of September 11, as it relates to the World Trade Center incident.

A. I come in at 9:00 o'clock. I was on my way in. I was driving up to the battalion. My partner ran to my car and told me that the World Trade Center was hit by a plane and I parked the car

and then he told me that tour 1, who was sitting at the garage, got the job. So I ran upstairs. I got my equipment and we usually take their late job. We jumped on and we went 63. We never logged off tour one, because they were already 63. So you can't log off. So we went as tour 1. We called -- we tried to call RCC Queens to let them know where we were from, but it was too busy.

So we called to let the lieutenant know that we were tour 2 going to the World Trade Center.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Richard Erdy.

Q. Did you know who the EMT's were that you were --

A. That we took the job for? It was Rebecca Bird and Brian Harin. He is a new guy.

Q. Do you know if they responded to the call?

A. No, they didn't. They went home.

Q. You said that you called. How did you call?

A. We called on the cell phone. We called RCC and we called the Queens dispatcher while we were 63. The dispatcher told us to respond to -- to go to citywide. She told us to respond to the

59th Street bridge and once we were there she would tell us where to go. So I took the LIE. There was a lot of traffic. I took the Grand Central to the last exit, got off at 21st Street, took that to the 59th Street bridge. I told the dispatcher I was there. From there I could see already the smoke and traffic was beginning to build up. She told me to respond to Vesey and West.

So I took the FDR drive. I was still in a little bit of traffic. You know, it was sporadic. Like sometimes there would be traffic and then the cops would have something closed and then it would move. It was just like a caravan of ambulances in front of me and in back of me there was a whole bunch of ambulances.

I got off, I just followed them all the way there. I don't really know where I was, but then again we came to a stop. We were like a few blocks away from the World Trade Center. We came to a stop and it was slowing down, the caravan. Then I heard on the radio someone say there is a fireman down, there is a fireman down on this and this street and I'm looking around to see where I am and I see a fireman turn the corner and he's waving his hands.

So I look behind me. There is buses behind me, there is buses in front of me that could easily get to him, but they're not moving so I started like maneuvering myself and made kind of like a, what do you call it? A K-turn. And I went over there. We took out the stretcher and they had a fireman, they was doing CPR.

Q. Do you know where you were at that time, the street location?

A. I think I was on West Street, a few blocks -- I was heading north, you know, as you come off the FDR drive, the tunnel. So I think I was heading north and I was a couple of blocks south of the --

Q. Both buildings were still standing at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Had both buildings been hit at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see the airplanes hit the buildings?

A. No, no. When I left the battalion, when I was 63, we heard someone say over the radio, we heard a bomb went off in the other building. We're

not sure if it's a bomb and they were trying to confirm it's another building -- it's another airplane.

Q. Do you know approximately what time you arrived at that location where you met up with the firefighter?

A. No. But in my unit history I went 82 to the hospital at 1001, I believe, and that was because the KDT was backing up also. Nothing was going through. So I remember I kept hitting the button, hitting the button on the way to the hospital. Anyway, so we went and they were doing CPR on the fireman. We put the long board and everything on the stretcher. We went over there and we continued to do CPR. We put him on the bus. Dr. Kelly was there. She came over and a paramedic came over. I don't know who he was.

Q. EMS? The Fire Department?

A. The paramedic? I don't know.

Q. Do you know who he is?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. They tried to intubate him. They couldn't get a tube in. So they left because they saw really

he wasn't gonna be viable, and we transported him to the hospital with two of the firemen from his company.

Q. Which hospital did you go to?

A. We went to Bellevue. I asked P.D. for an escort and a highway and a motorcycle cop gave me an escort to the hospital.

Q. The firefighter that you did CPR on, do you know his name?

A. Yes.

Q. What was his name?

A. Brian Suhr. Was it Brian? Engine Company 216 from Brooklyn.

Q. The firefighters that accompanied you, were they from the same --

A. I don't remember their names. The other one I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. Anyway, we went to Bellevue. Once I got to Bellevue we took him out and they told me you gotta move the bus. You can't leave it there. And I had a lot of BBP in the back. So I said, where do I go? So I said, let me go to the battalion, to Bellevue station to clean up.

I went over there, I grabbed a few of the things that belonged to the firemen. I brought it to the hospital, to the Emergency Room. I told one of the maintenance guys at Bellevue what I needed and I gave my partner the ACR.

I went back, I started cleaning up. The maintenance guy was helping me clean up. He cleaned up the ambulance and I restocked. I went back to meet up with my partner and he couldn't get any information from the firemen, because they were refusing to give us any name or anything, because they didn't want the media to get a hold of anything. Which we understood. So we said fine.

We finished the paperwork, we went back into the ambulance. While we were finishing up, restocking, a -- I think it was an EMT nun asked if she could come back with us. She wanted to volunteer. We said okay. Another doctor from the ER wanted to come also. He was a paramedic and a PA student.

Q. The EMT? She worked for the Fire Department?

A. No. She worked for Bellevue.

Q. As an EMT?

A. No. It was a nun. She was a nun.

Q. Oh, a nun. I'm sorry. I thought you said EMT.

A. A nun. So they came in the back with us. We went back to the World Trade Center. We told the dispatcher we were out of Bellevue, where does she want us. I forget what she told us. I think it was Battery Park she wanted us to go to, triage.

When we were heading there my partner said, "Someone told me that one of the towers collapsed." I'm like "Yeah, yeah." We were like it's a joke. There were probably people exaggerating. So what happened was we were heading back and we see just a cloud of smoke. We don't see the towers anymore.

Q. How did you head back there?

A. We took the same way, the FDR drive.

Q. Southbound?

A. Yes. And we didn't see the towers. So that's when we realized that the towers had collapsed.

Q. Both of them?

A. Both of them. It was just a lot of smoke. And we kept hearing transmissions on the radio. You know, stuff that was going on. People saying they

were trapped. We headed back. When we got back there it was a whole totally different scene. We didn't see people around like we did before. We couldn't find any ambulances. We were just driving around. Of course we couldn't believe what was going on. We drove around for a little while. We saw an EMT, one of our guys, coming out of this cloud of smoke. He was holding his EMT bag and helmet. We asked him, "Where is your partner?" He goes, "I left him. I'm looking for my father. He was in the World Trade Center."

Q. Do you know his name?

A. And he had been crying. No, we didn't get anything. So we said, "well, why don't you get in the back with us?" We had a nun in the back. We figured she could talk to him.

Q. Right.

A. He got in the back. We went around -- I don't know. I think it was Battery Park, by the water. They were ferrying everyone away. We pulled over over there, because we saw a lot of buses and we said, let's go see if that's where we are supposed to be, what's going on.

We went over there and I think there was only

one more unit there.

Q. Do you know which unit that was?

A. No.

Q. Fire Department?

A. It was volunteer. It was a volunteer. They said that nothing was going on. They were just ferrying people. So when we went back to the ambulance the kid was gone. The EMT left. So we didn't know where he went, we didn't get a name, nothing.

Q. When you say you were at Battery Park, that was south of the Battery Tunnel where the fort is or where Marine Company 1 is?

A. Do you have a map?

Q. Yes, I do. If you can just mark the first time you arrived where you were and the second time.

A. I think -- I don't know. I can't. This looks confusing to me. Which is the north tower?

Q. This would be north. Here is the West Side Highway, here is West Street and here are the towers.

A. I think it was somewhere around here.

Q. At Battery Park City?

A. Yes.

Q. By the buildings?

A. No, it wasn't here. I don't know. I'm not gonna say. Then we drove around a little more and we found a fireman who was hurt. His eyes were bloodshot. We irrigated him. He wanted to go back but he couldn't see, so we took him back to Bellevue.

Q. Do you know his name?

A. No, I don't know it, but I got it. He gave us his name. We got an ACR.

Q. Do you know what company he was it from?

A. No, no. We took him to Bellevue, we came back.

Q. You were able to get through to the dispatcher?

A. I couldn't get any signals, no and the radio was so busy I couldn't tell her anything. So I just came and went.

Q. What frequency were you on at that time?

A. Manhattan south.

Q. You were told to switch over to south?

A. We were told to switch over. Only certain people were allowed to stay on citywide. Then we came back. The same thing. We couldn't find

anyone. We told the dispatcher we just came out of Bellevue. She told us to go to, I don't know, I think it was Chelsea Piers. But we were already here. So as we didn't know, I didn't know how to get to Chelsea Piers so I kept asking all the cops and they didn't know.

Then I ran into an off-duty EMT or paramedic and he told me, "They're setting up a triage center at the Staten Island Ferry." So I said, "Okay." No, no. Before I even ran into him there was an old man leaning against a fence having difficulty breathing. We pulled over, we put him on the stretcher and his wife and we gave them oxygen. That's when I ran into the guy. So we headed over there to bring the old couple over there.

Q. The person that directed you to the Staten Island Ferry, do you know who that was?

A. A paramedic.

Q. Do you know from what agency?

A. No, no. I know he worked for the Fire Department.

Q. The Fire Department?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he come with you to the Staten Island

Ferry?

A. No, but I saw him later. Later on I saw him there. This is the name of the other fireman. We gave it to the hospital.

Q. Can you just read it?

A. Tony Sansobino.

Q. And he came with the firefighter who was in arrest?

A. Yes -- To the hospital.

Q. Did you bring him back to the scene or they stayed at the scene?

A. They stayed at the hospital.

Q. They stayed at the hospital?

A. Yes.

Q. About what time was that, do you think?

A. Around 11:30. We went back. So then I found the Staten Island Ferry and there was a Lieutenant there. My partner knows his name. I forgot. Anyway, he told us, park the vehicle here, grab your O2 and all your water and bring it upstairs. Upstairs they were setting the up the triage. We helped out with the triage. We were just basically waiting, waiting for patients to come. No one was coming. We were getting antsy and

we said, "Do we go outside and pick up patients?" They said, "No. You gotta stay here." So we just waited. We tried to call our families while we were over there.

I don't know about what time Chief Brown, Bobby Brown, came in and he had been underneath the rubble. He came in. He was all dirty. He used to be our Captain here. So I'm looking at him and I said, "oh, my God. That's Bobby Brown. Oh, my God." So I went over to him and his eyes, we irrigated his eyes. We gave him O-2, we took his vitals and he needed to go to the hospital. So someone asked him what hospital. He said Peninsula General, that's where his wife works. So my partner and I took him to the hospital.

Q. Who was the supervisor at that triage? You don't know? Male? Female?

A. I don't even know. There were a couple of supervisors there.

Q. When you left and when you were turning back to the scene after somebody told that you the building had collapsed, both buildings had collapsed at that time?

A. Both buildings had collapsed.

Q. But you didn't see them collapse?

A. No, no. I just saw a lot of smoke.

Q. Do you know what time that was about?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A. No.

Q. You never had an opportunity to go in?

A. No.

Q. Was there anybody else that you saw that you recognized that you could name? The EMS people? The Fire Department people?

A. I saw -- his name will come. He works for St. John -- he works for the privates -- St. John's, and he was working for St. Vinny's. What's his name? I saw him when I was driving around and we didn't know where to go. We looked at the ambulances and I saw that ambulance. So we pulled up next to each other and we said, "Where is everybody?" And they said, "we don't know."

Q. St. Vincent's ambulance?

A. St. Vinny's ambulance.

Q. Do you remember the unit number?

A. His name will come back. I'll take my time. Anyway.

Q. Okay.

A. So he was in the same place where I was. He didn't know where everybody was. So we took Bobby Brown to Peninsula General in Rockaway. My partner came with me and another girl that I thought was his aide, but she wasn't. She is from Division 4. She's in sick, limited. She came with us. I think she just wanted a ride back to Queens or something.

Q. She wasn't injured?

A. She wasn't injured.

Q. Your partner, what is his name?

A. Richard Erdy.

Q. He stayed with you the entire time?

A. Yes.

Q. You never separated?

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A. We separated at Bellevue when we brought in the firefighter and I went to BBP.

Q. Other than that --

A. That was the only time.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important?

A. Yes. The fireman that was in cardiac arrest, we were trying to find out who he was,

because we felt like, wow, If we didn't get flagged for this guy, we would have been there when they collapsed. So we kept reading articles and found the reason he went into cardiac arrest was because a body landed on him. His Engine Company pulled him -- they were doing construction on the building, they pulled him over the scaffolding. So that's where we found him. We found his name, we found where he was from. My partner spoke to another fireman who knows. We found out the company he was from. We called the company and we went over there one day, the second Thursday after the World Trade Center and we spoke to one of the guys that came to the hospital with us and he told us basically what happened. That when we left to go to the hospital we closed the doors and we left and that's when the building came down.

The other two guys that stayed from his company thought that the ambulance got crushed. So they thought that the three guys were dead basically and we were dead. Because they said as soon as we took off the building came down. When we got to the hospital and they were there for a while, that's when they found out the towers collapsed. They

thought that the two guys they left were dead, because they left them there. They were on their way back to the building.

So they ended up meeting up and they couldn't believe each other were alive. The other two guys that we left at the scene said that they went back to get their equipment so they could go back into the building. That's when the towers collapsed. They went back underneath the scaffolding and they ran into the building.

Q. This is the first building that collapsed or the second? Do you know?

A. The first building.

Q. So you were right at the perimeter of the building?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether you were northeast, south or West?

A. I have no idea. I think I was north.

Q. Where was the firefighter exactly?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Where did you find him?

A. We found him -- this is the corner. I think I was on West Street and he turned the corner.

I saw him, I made a maneuver, I came -- so it was on West Street. And there was a Church and there was like a scaffolding here. That's where we put him on the stretcher and everything. And that's it.

Q. Anything else?

A. That's it. And we couldn't transmit. The radios were so busy. We couldn't give signals and we couldn't give -- the KDT was down.

In our log, in our history, we couldn't get anything.

Q. You were originally on Queens east?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were asked to switch over to --

A. Citywide.

Q. And then --

A. And then Manhattan south I think it was they sent us to. North -- I think it was south.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We will conclude the interview and I want to thank you for your time helping us with this endeavor and it is now 8:28 a.m. and this will conclude the interview.

File No. 9110025

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

RICHARD ERDEY

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10th, 2001. The time now is 0835 hours. This is Lieutenant Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York, Investigations and Trials. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. Richard L. Erdey, EMTD, Shield No. 1569.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 52, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is:

MS. QUEVEDO: Investigator Fabiola Quevedo of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. What I need you to do, sir, is just give me a scenario of how you first became involved in the events of September 11th, where you were and how you responded.

A. I was standing there at the battalion and they were calling a series of people to the job. The night tour was about to get off. They called 52 Boy. So I said, if Soraya don't come here in one minute, you guys are going out today, and this was only when the first tower was hit. I said you'll spend at least 24 hours there easy, so that's a few hundred dollars, no problem.

So Solano pulled up. I said the World Trade Center was hit by a plane. She jumped in, got everything real quick, jumped in the vehicle and we went.

Q. Did you partner with Solano?

A. No, no.

Q. And the two people that you relieved, do you know their names?

A. Rebecca Bird and Jim Horan.

Q. Did they respond, as far as you know?

A. No.

Q. You were driving or teching?

A. Teching.

Q. How did you get there?

A. By ambulance No. 377.

Q. What route did you take?

A. [redacted]

Q. About what time was this?

A. 8:59.

Q. So the first plane had just hit?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were originally assigned to the call, was this on -- which frequency was it?

A. Queens 2.

Q. That's east?

A. Queens east.

Q. Did they give you any direction?

A. No.

Q. They just told you to go down to the World Trade Center?

A. That's right.

Q. You don't recall what route you took?

A. No, I don't.

Q. When you were entering Manhattan, did you see the skyline?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you see?

A. We saw the Twin Towers. I couldn't tell both towers were hit because the way the wind was blowing. But as we got closer, I saw both towers were hit and I said this is definitely no accident. But I didn't know another plane hit the other tower.

Q. You saw both buildings were still standing at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember, were you still in Queens or in Manhattan when you saw that?

A. No.

Q. Then what happened?

A. We continued to drive down there. There was a New York Presbyterian bus in front of us. As we were going down there, he came out a few times because it was stop-and-go traffic because the other two lanes were blocked with civilian cars. So we were discussing the best route to go to. I memorized his number, this way I'd know who he was.

Q. Which was that?

A. Right now I don't have it in my head. I tried to sweep most of the stuff away.

Q. Okay.

A. We rode down there. Then I had the idea, because I see cars were trying to jump in between us, so I got on the PA and I told people stay in your lane, this is for emergency vehicles only, because nobody else seemed to be doing that. Everybody was headed towards one focus.

Q. Were you on a highway at that point?

A. We definitely were on a highway.

Q. You were still on the Queens frequency?

A. No. I think it changed to Citywide. I don't know when they told us to change to Manhattan south,

but we were on Citywide.

Q. How long do you think it took you to get down to the World Trade Center?

A. No concept of time.

Q. When you arrived down at the general vicinity, do you know where you stopped initially, what street you were at or proximity to the buildings?

A. I was told by Engine 216 we were at the tower.

Q. Tower 1 or Tower 2? The south tower or the north tower?

A. I believe the first tower that fell because they said that we were one minute away when the tower fell.

Q. Okay.

A. Wherever Daniel Suhr was hit by that body, that's where we were.

Q. Who was that?

A. That was the fireman from Engine 216, probably the first casualty, the first known casualty, because Dr. Kelly was in that ambulance and a medic was in the ambulance with us.

Q. Do you know who the medic was?

A. I have no idea.

Q. On-duty FDNY medic or --

A. I have no idea.

Q. How did you come into contact with that firefighter? Do you remember the events surrounding that?

A. I'm sitting there and I was amazed with this vehicle that was half there and half disintegrated and, you know, you're in amazement. I didn't see the body parts. Somehow my mind blocked that out. But my partner said she saw body parts. So we hear over the air that a fireman is in cardiac arrest. You hear it. You don't know where. I'm not a big traveler in Manhattan. So I looked around and I'm not seeing a fireman in arrest. So I ran around -- and you've got to understand now, even though it's sunny, there's black at the bottom. So I had no clue we were at the tower.

So this fireman turns around, yo, yo, and he's waving. The ambulance behind us could have pulled out and went over to him. I guess they're so intent on going straight. So I had to back up, go over, go up and over the divide. Then we got to this yellow barrier. I said go through. She went through. We went under the scaffolding. So whatever tower had

scaffolding, unless both of them did.

This photographer is there. I'll tell you one photographer probably didn't make it because that one definitely would have made the news because he was right in the guy's face. Firemen are very quick to not let you treat, just run. So they're running ahead of us with us going, and we finally get in the ambulance and we're doing all that we can. Dr. Kelly came in, who I didn't know it was Dr. Kelly at the time, but I knew she was from BHS. She looked familiar. But I'm not going to say, hey, you look familiar, not at a time like that. A medic walked in, so I just did compressions. They were trying to get an airway. All of a sudden they looked at each other, couldn't get an airway, and she said transport.

Now, I know the way they looked at each other he wasn't going to make it. He didn't make it. He's dead. His neck was snapped. Anybody hit with a body from 70 stories up. So you're not going to tell a bunch of firemen, this guy is dead, we're not transporting him. So we transported him.

Q. Did anybody accompany you?

A. Two firemen.

Q. Do you know who they were, their names or

what company?

A. No. Solano wrote one name down. They're both from Engine 216.

Q. Okay.

A. They kept yelling, Danny, Danny, Danny. I said suction. I think it was brains coming out of his nose I'm pretty sure. You could tell his neck was snapped because every time you hit a bump, a head don't have that type of movement.

Q. Right.

A. So the kid was staring at us. Now, I know from watching my father die and even during -- my father died right after I got this job, the day after I got the job. Images burn in my head. Sometimes they play with my head. So the way they were staring into him, I said, look. I'm saying should I tell them? Should I not tell them? How can I tell them tactfully? So I said, look, we're doing the CPR for that small glimmer of hope, but I'll tell you what they're going to do. They're going to call it at the hospital. Please stop staring at him. You're going to burn this image in your head. I want you to remember a better image. At first they didn't want to believe -- not that they argued, but you could tell.

Q. Right.

A. Then they started saying he has a daughter of two. I just said continue CPR, continue suction. The other guy took over compressions for me. I mean, even though it was a short ride, it felt like the longest ride. We got to the hospital. A priest looked at me. I said give him last rights. They gave him last rights and they called it.

Now, I told the firemen on the ride there that, if they happen to call it while they're still there, don't start staring, though it's tempting. You're going to burn that image in your head, too, and that's now how you want to remember Danny. So after he called last rights, I turned and I saw the two firemen standing there. I turned around and kind of pushed them out.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. I believe it's Bellevue.

Q. What did you do after that?

A. My partner had to take the truck because they didn't want any trucks there at triage. So now I was cut off from Solano. So I got the two firemen out of there. I wanted to make sure they were mentally okay because I don't know if they're going back or what's

going on. Their brother just died. I know if my partner just died, I'd be mentally all whatever.

Q. Right?

A. So I made sure they got out of there and I said, doc, make sure that they don't -- because the dude was messed up. He got hit with a body. So I went back out, I walked around, reporters are shooting with their cameras, and I said to this Metro Care ambulance, you seen my partner, a little Hispanic girl? Oh, she left. I thought, oh, no. I thought they chased her out of the whole place. So I saw another FDNY ambulance, they brought people out, and I says, I think my partner left. I'm going with you guys because I want to go back in, there's more help to do. Just as I was waiting for them, my partner grabbed me. She was around the other side cleaning because the thing was full of blood now. We're not going to pick up more patients when we're full of blood and the suction is full and all.

Q. Now, the EMTs that you ran into at that point, do you know who they were? Fire Department EMS?

A. They were Fire Department EMS.

Q. You went back to the scene after that?

A. We went back. As we're driving up into the

gray, I saw the black. Well, as we were driving back, I'm looking -- oh, let me bring it back. As we were there, whatever battalion is at Bellevue said you're taking a volunteer with you. I said I have no problem taking a volunteer. I just want you to know this could be their last ride. We're not going to go pussyfooting around. We're going back in.

Because I already made a joke to my partner because I have military training, I was a peace officer for York College, and even though it was a rent-a-cop type of outfit, they had very highly -- police and other people, people at the Olympics where they had the bombing. They told us there's always secondary devices. When we were coming to this area, I said to my partner, we'll never feel it. The underground will blow up from us and we'll be dead. Because nobody's counting on a secondary device, and whatever bonehead had us lined up around the World Trade Center, after hindsight, 20/20, that ain't too bright either because there's usually a secondary device. The Olympics showed that in Atlanta. Most bombings show that. There's always something for the people and then, when everybody comes rushing in, there's a little something extra. But we didn't expect that the building was

going to be the something extra. So I was realistic.

So it happened to be the volunteer happened to be a nun, who was older, and I said to her, look. You understand, ma'am, we might not come back from this. Oh, I understand. I said, no, I'm serious. We could die. I said, and you're a volunteer. At least my wife gets a little cash, goes back to Brazil, makes a hundred grand because she now knows English. I said, but you've got to understand that there could be something lost.

I don't know if we picked up another volunteer on the first time going in or the second time because we went in twice. It was a white dude, he was young, he could have had children but he said no, and I told him the same thing. Any volunteers I picked up, I told them this could be their last ride. Now, from that point we cleaned up, we went back, we took our volunteers.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. Nope. Names to me weren't important. I was just -- I call it the zone. When I'm doing work, it's the zone. If I had five patients, I'm in the zone for five patients. If you want to come behind me and take a potshot, you could very well do it, and most times

you couldn't. I'm in the zone for those five patients and I do my work. So when I'm in the zone, too, all right, I'm going to pick up casualties, that's all I'm going to do. So there could be a hundred people on my bus, they could all be celebrities, that doesn't mean jack to me at that point.

Q. When you returned back to the scene, where did you go? Where were you directed to?

A. Well, you know, they were giving us direction, but it was so damn gray and dark and you had to ride over this and that and ride around this because cars stopped in the middle, and [redacted] So, you know, she did her best. I'm very honest with you. I mean, I look at this now, it's very big and nice. But those little maps, especially when it's bumpy, I don't even try and, you know, I'm full of amazement, like wow. In my mind, I'm dreaming and this didn't happen.

So we rode down there and there was a big black area. I said, whatever you do, don't drive into the black area because if we get a flat tire we're useless to everyone. We could barely see where we are now. She agreed that was a smart move. So we rode as close as we can when things are gray but clear, and

then out of the black comes this EMT from the Fire Department. I wish I knew his name because he's alive, and I remember his face, and there's only two EMTs that died. He came out with his orange helmet, eyes were red, and I said, dude, what are you doing here? I saw private ambulances. I didn't see a Fire Department ambulance. He said, I'm looking for my father. I said, where's your father? He said, in the World Trade Center.

So I told him to get in the ambulance because he was still susceptible to orders. He wasn't in a denial/agitation stage. So I had him back there and I figured the nun -- I said to him there's a nun back here who's an EMT would talk to him. She talks to people for her life day in and day out. So our survivor is back there and we're picking up old people and stragglers, people that couldn't breathe, people that couldn't make it to the ferry. Because a block or two away was the ferry, and if you got to the ferry, you could see the water, sky blue and everything was beautiful. It was on the corner. I forgot which ferry it was. Solano would know. I got on the PA and I said -- because walking around was senseless because people had shields, you don't know who was a patient, who was

a cop. I said, anybody that needs medical attention, come this way.

Then I went to a grocery store and they opened the doors because the power was out and I said, I need water, because I had and old cup. I grabbed a jug of water and I said, I'm not buying it, I'm taking it. No, I understand. Because it was for a patient. It wasn't for me. So I gave her water. I came back in there and I said where's the EMT? Gone. I was furious because now he went back in there. I wish I knew his name.

Q. Do you know where he was from, what battalion? What was the status of the buildings at that point?

A. They're gone.

Q. Did you see them collapse?

A. No. Somebody said a tower collapsed while we were cleaning up. I'm thinking, what's he talking about? On our ride back down there, I'm looking and I said, wow, it's really on fire now. I'm looking and I said, not for nothing, but I think the World Trade Center is down. I said, I'll tell you when I get up to the New York Telephone building. I looked again and I says it's down because my eyes watered up and I turned

back to the window and I said, sister, if you look to your left, that's where the World Trade Center used to be, and she says you're kidding me.

Q. Did it look like one had collapsed or both of them?

A. They were both gone. Both of them.

Q. Do you know what time about that was?

A. We didn't even know that we were one minute from the tower collapsing if it wasn't for that engine company telling us. We went to the engine company to get closure, to 216. It's funny how people need closure. I especially need closure. We needed closure and we went down there and we brought flowers to Quinn, to them, and to 49 for Carlos, and one of the guys was there and he said, I recognize your voice. The other guy was there and he goes, you know, we talked about you guys for four days. So they talked about us and we talked about them. So we said, what happened? Well, he got hit with a body, which we already knew, and he said, he saved us. I spoke to Ken Fried, who was not there, but I was speaking to him on-line and I asked to make sure all my brothers who went to the Fire side were alive. I said I picked up the guy who got hit with the body, and he said, oh, that's Danny Suhr. So

that's how I found out his name.

Q. Who is Ken?

A. Ken Fried. He's a fireman. He was not there at that time, but he's on the Fire side. I had five or six people who I was partners with that went to be firemen.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. So I wanted to know if they all lived, so every time I saw a name on-line, are you there? You know, it could be their father or their mother. So that's how I found out the fireman's name. I also found out that Ken's father came from Engine 216, so that's how they knew the fireman. He told us that he didn't save just you, he saved the battalion, that fire engine company. I was like wow. So when we went down there, that same day the picture of him was in the Post. I said, that was him. They saw us, we spoke, we found out from Engine 216, from those two young guys, we were one minute away from, I believe that tower, and he saved that company because they all followed us, which I didn't know. The cop who escorted us knows. I don't know if you were there, but that was some caravan that was in the way.

Before that you asked me about the New York

Presbyterian ambulance and the number. I don't have the number. I have it written down at home. But I called up New York Presbyterian. I said tell me what happened to number so-and-so. I can't think of the number. They said, I can't tell you what happened to the people, because I asked what happened to the people. I told them who I was. I said, I'm EMT Erdey from the Fire Department. I was memorizing their number in case I met up with them. They came out to talk to us. Please tell me about those people. I can't tell you about those people. All right. So I said, then listen to what I'm saying. Don't tell me about the people; tell me about the ambulance itself. How is ambulance such-and-such number? It was three numbers. She said, I can't tell you about the people. I said, no, listen to what I'm saying. Tell me about the ambulance. She said the ambulance disintegrated. [redacted] I saw a New York Presbyterian ambulance. Now I have to know about it. If you want the number, you leave me your number and I'll call you. Okay. But I said what happened to this number? Oh, well, those two

people, one put on his helmet, crashed through the window, broke both his legs, and the other one ran over him to get inside. They both lived. I gave that dude my number to give to that dude who was driving because that's the dude that came out, and I said, please have that dude call me. Well, I never got a phone call from that dude. Otherwise I'd have the name for you. But those two guys lived. Those two guys you might want to speak to because both his legs got broke. He was there and stayed there. But he hasn't called me.

I'm kind of pissed I didn't get that guy's name, who came out of that smoke. If there's one image that's burned through my head, it's Danny with his teeth loose and that kid coming out of the black smoke.

Q. Is there anything else that you recall?

A. No.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Okay. We'll conclude the interview. I want to thank you for the time and your participation in this event. It's really, really important. The time now is 0857 hours and we'll conclude the interview.

File No. 9110026

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ERIC HANSEN

Interview Date: October 10, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time now is 1013 hours. I am Lieutenant Monte Feiler with the New York City Fire Department Investigations and Trials. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. My name is Eric K. Hansen, badge number 1258 at 22 Battalion, Fifth Division.

Q. EMT?

A. EMT.

Q. We're conducting the interview at interview room A at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, 9 Metrotech, New York, Brooklyn.

What I need from you, sir, is a scenario of what occurred on the morning of September 11th in response to the World Trade Center incident.

A. Approximately 8:50, 8:55 I was ordered by Captain Olsen of the 22 Battalion to respond with LSU5, which I normally drive, to World Trade Center Tower 1 due to a plane crash accident. I got onto the Verrazano, went into the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, came out of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and

I was on West Street, headed up towards Liberty. Upon there, I saw Chief McCracken of the department running southwards and I saw the Fire Commissioner also running southwards. I saw Chief Gombo directing me to go down a block towards Barclay Street, because there was debris coming down at that time. This was approximately 9:15 or so, a.m.

I proceeded down towards Barclay Street due to the fact Chief Gombo stated there was debris falling out of the windows. It wasn't debris. It was bodies coming down, being pushed out -- coming out of the World Trade Center Tower 1. At that time, I proceeded down towards Barclay Street. There was a traffic tie-up at Barclay Street. I was then directed by police to move my LSU5 out of the way of traffic and to move down towards Murray Street.

I proceeded down, I turned left onto Murray Street to where I stayed there until I got further orders from another EMS or Fire Department personnel. I stayed down there on Murray Street and I was directed to go down towards North End Avenue. I was on the corner of Murray Street and North End Avenue where I parked my rig. At that time, I heard what had sounded like a train, a freight train

coming through the streets, and it was one of the building caving down.

At that time, I did not know there was a second plain that hit the second World Trade Center. I was really confused at the sound and the situation until I saw the blevy of dust and smoke coming towards -- up the street and I stayed in the ambulance where I saw Chief Fran Pascale, Chief Fran Pascale asked me to direct all the ambulances out of the area and to move up towards some place like Warren Street.

Q. Where were you at that time when you saw Chief Pascale?

A. I saw Chief Pascale at north -- excuse me. I saw Chief Pascale at North End Avenue and she was -- everybody was running for their lives literally. I left my ambulance parked at the corner of Murray and North End Avenue and I directed all the ambulances to go down towards North End Avenue and Warren to where it would be a little more safer.

We got here at Warren Street to where -- I couldn't find Chief Pascale and I couldn't find the people. There was an ambulance backup because we just couldn't get out of the area. Everything was tied down.

At that time, there was a second freight train. It sounded like a second freight train running through the street. That was Tower 2 collapsing at that time. We were all down a one-way Street, I believe it was on Warren Street, and we ducked both into lobbies of buildings to protect ourselves from the second wave of smoke and dust and gases that were coming out of the World Trade Center. At that time, there was speculations that the World Trade Center had collapsed, but still over the radio communications was very mixed up. Nobody knew where they were going. I wound up at River Terrace, which was right off of Warren Street and I was directed by Captain Abdo, he works in the Division, he just made captain. He used to work here, on the seventh floor.

I was directed by Captain Abdo about a good 45 minutes to an hour later, he stated that there was a possible chance of a gas main leak in the area. People started to scurry. I stayed and remained with the Captain until further orders that he gave me, assisting moving the traffic along. Captain Abdo, then I was directed by Captain Abdo to go to 23rd Street and Chelsea Pier to where I made my way.

It took some time to make my way. I made my way on down there. I was down there approximately 11, 1130.

Q. You took the LSU truck with you?

A. I took the LSU truck with me. It was covered with dust and debris and all that stuff. I took it down there to where doctors and nurses wanted the supplies from my LSU. I said, I cannot give them out until I had permission from the sector commander at that time. I had to wait a good hour until a sector commander gave me permission to offload all my equipment, except for the weapons-of-war kits, the atropine. The atropine, which did I not offload and I kept them on my rig until someone gave me off orders to offload that. Because I carry quite a few bags of those on the LSU.

Q. What kind of equipment were you giving out?

A. I was giving out backboards, I was giving out long boards, I was giving out regulators, splints, traction splints, water, saline. Everything that an ambulance carried, I carried: Suction, portable suctions. I gave out the

multilaetor, two of them, and I set up the M tank for an asthma section. That they had already prepared by the pier, which I set up for them so they had an asthma table.

I was told as soon as I finished there, I was directed to go to station 11 to pick up more equipment and supplies and to go to Bellevue and pick up more equipment and supplies and to bring it down to 23rd Street, Chelsea Pier.

Q. When you originally received the call, what frequency did you get it on?

A. I was told by my Captain go to Richmond frequency. I stayed on Richmond frequency until I got onto -- because I was not told by Richmond frequency to switch over to citywide, stay on Richmond frequency.

Q. Who directed you? Which Captain at the battalion?

A. Captain Olsen. I stayed on the Richmond frequency until I hit Vesey Street, Vesey Street and West Street, and I had to call up Richmond and they turned around and said, "your location that you're supposed to be at" -- this was about 9:30. I stayed there until I was ordered by Chief -- this is after

Chief Gombo. I just wanted to find out where my new dropoff zone was supposed to be set up.

Q. When you were coming over the Verrazano Bridge, you were by yourself?

A. Yes. I'm a single-man unit.

Q. What did you see?

A. I saw -- the only thing I saw was World Trade Center 1 with smoke coming out of the top of the tower.

Q. Was that the south building or the north building?

A. I have no idea which one it was. I believe it was the north building first.

Q. So when you were coming over the bridge one building was struck?

A. Yes.

Q. Not the second?

A. No, sir.

Q. Were you present when the second building was struck?

A. Definitely.

Q. Did you see the plane hit it?

A. No, sir, I couldn't, because I was down at Ground Zero, which is now Ground Zero, getting

directions where to drop off my supplies. My supplies, -- I was getting directions to move further on down, down to Barclay Street to where I was at that time was a shower of debris of human bodies coming down off the building. You.

Q. You said you ran into Chief McCracken. Did you have a conversation with Chief McCracken?

A. I did not have a conversation. I just saw him running south from where I was, off of Vesey Street, and west and I saw the Commissioner running south also, but they were on the Hudson River side of the street and they were running southwards when they turned around and said there was debris coming down from the buildings.

Q. You're talking about Commissioner Von Essen?

A. Von Essen.

Q. You had a conversation with Chief Gombo?

A. Chief Gombo, I said, "Chief, where do you want my LSU?" That's LSU5 from Staten Island. He turned around and said, "Get the rig and get it out of here. There is debris coming down." It was a quick -- that was the extent of the conversation.

Q. Did you have contact with other EMS or

firefighters?

A. I had contact with some -- it looked like it was a Battalion Chief who told me to take my rig and get it out of here, get it out of harm's way, because stuff is coming down.

Q. Do you know who he was?

A. No idea. No idea.

Q. Then you got up to, I think you said Barclay?

A. Yes. When I got up to Barclay, I was told to move down towards Murray Street.

Q. Who told you that?

A. Well, the Chief said, "Get it out of here and get it out of harm's way." The Battalion Chief that was standing there right at the engines, and I moved it up towards Murray Street and I was down at Murray and west and then I was told to move up to Murray and -- Murray and North End Avenue. I parked it on the corner and like I said, at that time everything was calm until the freight train rumbled in the streets and it was still not knowing what really took place or what happened.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A. Never entered any of the buildings -- any

of the World Trade Center proper, no.

Q. Other than the chiefs that you mentioned, did you run across any other EMS people that you recognized?

A. I ran across Valerie Longo of the 22 Battalion, who had a rig out there.

Q. Where did you see her?

A. She was parked on Murray Street.

Q. Murray and what?

A. Murray and -- between North End Avenue and West Side.

Q. She was taking care of patients?

A. No. They were standing by or parked on a 45-degree angle as we were told to do. There were a whole bunch of ambulances from New Jersey, Hatzolah and a few other places. The Fire Department ambulances, they were parked at a 45-degree angle. I took my LSU knowing that if I had to get out and -- to set up a triage area some place, I had to be ready to go at any moment.

Q. Just for the record, can you just tell me what LSU stands for?

A. Logistics support unit. And that handles supplies for mass casualty incident to a certain

number of people.

Q. Did there come a time where you ever did switch over to citywide?

A. There came a time when I switched over to Citywide after I spoke to Chief Abdo -- I mean Captain Abdo of the 5th Division.

Q. Any contact with any other EMS personnel?

A. The only contact I had with other EMS personnel were from other boroughs and I did not know them at that time.

Q. Any voluntaries?

A. I saw voluntary ambulances, Jersey ambulances, and I saw Hatzolah ambulances down there, but I did not recognize anybody.

Q. How about firefighters? Anybody you recognized?

A. There was no firefighters that I did recognize, at all. I mean but there was fire companies down there.

Q. So after you were directed to go up to Chelsea by Chief Pascale, you stayed at the Chelsea Pier area in the triage?

A. Right. Until 8:30 that night.

Q. Did you witness the buildings collapse or

you heard it?

A. I did not witness the buildings collapse due to the fact that the other buildings were shadowing the structures from where I was. I was, you know, too close, too far in and right next to the buildings to where you couldn't see anything. But it was just a plume of smoke and dust and debris coming down. My LSU was covered with soot and debris. I had to clear that off and I stood there or my LSU stood, it bears marks, baptized under fire.

Q. Was anybody with you? Did you pick up any personnel?

A. I didn't pick up anybody at all. I just needed my orders to drop my supply load that I had in the back here or where to set up a triage area. When I got my orders to go down to 23rd Street, I was told to set up my triage area at 23rd Street.

Q. By Chief Pascale?

A. By Chief Pascale and Captain Abdo.

Q. When you got to Chelsea Pier, who was in charge there from EMS?

A. I could not recognize anybody from -- I did not recognize anybody. Just because I probably

had -- I don't know. I was stunned by the whole situation. Stunned or upset by the whole situation, but I know he was a EMS Captain that told me to drop off --

Q. Male? Female?

A. It was a male. He told me to drop off my supplies there and to help set up 23rd Street as a triage point area.

Q. Did you have any further radio communications with anyone?

A. The only time I had -- my next radio communications were approximately around 5:00 o'clock, when they were trying to take roll call of ambulances in the area. It might have been just a little earlier. I'm not quite sure.

Q. Is there anything else that is important between the time frame that we were talking about that you would like to add?

A. No, not at this time. But it was -- I did dive into buildings and there was one doorman that was -- a doorman that was going to lock the lobby or this door. I don't even know the building because it was like it happened and a Police Officer said, don't lock it, because other people were still

coming from the plume of debris and smoke and everybody made a mad dash.

Q. That was before the buildings collapsed?

A. No. This was on the second building that collapsed. The second collapse. I do not know what transpired. I did not know there was a second plane hit. I did not know with that bowl of thunder and the noise, I did not know that the World Trade Center caved in. I was totally unaware until someone said, the World Trade Center collapsed. It was too unbelievable to believe that such a thing could happen.

Q. We are going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time. Thank you for participating in this. It's very important.

A. No problem. No problem.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We conclude the interview at 1034 hours.

File No. 9110027

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JUSTIN LIM

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 8:57 a.m. hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Justin Lim, Shield 5016, EMT, Battalion 20.

Q. Justin, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Enroute to the alarm, can you tell me what you saw?

A. Enroute to the alarm we saw both of the buildings giving up with a lot of smoke and we actually saw a little fire from the West Side Highway.

Q. When you arrived on the scene, where did you park your ambulance?

A. West and Vesey.

Q. Can you indicate on the map with a number

1 where you parked your vehicle.

A. (Complied with request.)

Q. Whom did you first report to when you arrived there?

A. At the time there was no officers, but there were two medics on scene, also from Battalion 20, which told us that we were supposed to park our buses in the opposite direction of the World Trade Center in order for immediate egress.

Q. Were you given a specific assignment by them after you turned your vehicles around?

A. At the time we turned our vehicles around, we started to gather our equipment and we had treated actually several ESU and firefighters for minor injuries before we could actually make it to the Trade Center.

Q. This was on Vesey and West where you treated them in?

A. Yes.

Q. After you treated these injured people, did you transport them anywhere?

A. At the time they didn't really want to leave the scene and we just got a lot of the dust and dirt out of their eyes and we were trying to

evaluate them to see how serious their injuries were and at the time there wasn't any major injuries. It was just a lot of dust, minor abrasions, so we let them go on their way because they refused to be transported anywhere.

Q. After they left you, what did you do next?

A. We started gathering our equipment, which consisted of our helmet, our turn out coat and first aid bag, AED and oxygen bag.

Q. And where did you respond?

A. We started walking towards the World Trade Center and at that time that's when the collapse happened.

Q. That's when the first building collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do when the first building collapsed?

A. When the first building collapsed, we both started -- my partner and I both started walking back to the vehicle and we opened up one of the compartment doors where we put all our equipment in and as it was coming down, we started seeing a mob of people start running towards us. So we opened up our back doors and we put in as many people as we

could and then my partner was kind of motioning to the civilians and the ESU workers, that whoever wanted to get a ride, they just hop in and we would take them.

And this whole time the building was still coming down. It was only halfway down. I proceeded to get into the driver's seat and there were like several people running up to the bus saying, "get out of here." And we actually ended up driving with several people on the hood and people were hanging off the sides of the mirrors, off the back step of the ambulance, and I'd say we probably got about like 30 -- maybe 30 people out of there before it actually came completely down and the smoke came.

Q. Where did you respond to when you had all these people? Where did you drive them to?

A. We started going, I believe it was -- I guess it was Barclay or Murray. One of those two block. It was just before that school or the college. At that time everybody got off and I guess a couple of privates and I believe two FDNY ambulances were there and I guess we started staging around that area.

Q. Can you indicate on the map where you

believe the staging area was set up?

A. Between Warren and Murray.

Q. Between Warren and Murray on West?

A. Yes.

Q. You stayed there for how long?

A. We stayed there probably the duration. What happened was there was no officers and I started taking down the people's units. There was like the Jewish hospitals, the private hospitals, a voluntary ambulance there, there was two city FDNY units in there. On a napkin I wrote down all their units and I gave it back to Manhattan South, telling them I had about ten units that were being staged. So that's pretty much where we were.

Q. And you were at this location when the second tower came down also?

A. Actually, when the second tower came down we were probably at Barclay and Murray and then we went to Warren and Murray. We dropped off people here before the second one came. Because that's when they started coming out and they wanted to go back and get their friend or whatever.

Q. So you dropped off people at West and Barclay?

A. Yes, West and Barclay.

Q. And then you proceeded to West and Murray?

A. At this time we were going to try to turn around, I believe it was, and then when we started turning around the second building came down. So we then turned around, and that's how we ended up there.

Q. So when the second building came down, you're indicating you were at Barclay and West?

A. Yes.

Q. Or West between Barclay and Vesey?

A. Right. After that then we were treating some minor aided again. It was all debris and dirt and when the second building came down we, again, took as many people as we could and then we moved here.

Q. You moved to Murray and West?

A. Correct.

Q. Correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Do you remember unit designations from these units that were with you or the names of people who were with you?

A. I know that --

Q. To the best of your memory.

A. I know there was one guy from a Queens hospital. I was in the academy with him and he was there, I believe, with a voluntary ambulance.

Q. Do you remember what his name was?

A. I believe his name was James Mahoney.

Q. James Mahoney?

A. Yes. And then there was another Jewish hospitals there. I think Hatzolah I think it was and then there was another guy that had a gold shield on and he had --

Q. The pais? The curls?

A. Yeah, the curls and he was trying to direct everybody but, you know, but he was still caught in the chaos. He wasn't really doing much. He was yelling at everybody. So he started trying to take people on his own and transport people that haven't even been triaged. So he wasn't any help. And by that time, before they yelled for a gas leak for another evacuation, there were a few lieutenants there and they kind of gave direction, and there were staging areas all over the place.

Q. How long do you believe you remained at Murray and West?

A. I'd probably say maybe 40 minutes. That's actually before -- a couple of minutes before they started assigning the units to the Chelsea Pier. So we treated who we could and we asked everybody if they wanted to be transported and most of them said no, and then they reassigned us to Chelsea Pier.

Q. So from Murray and West you responded to the Chelsea Pier; is that correct?

A. They started assigning people there. We were kind of blocked in and then we -- they said everybody started running towards us and then a few minutes later we heard there was a gas leak. So that's when they wanted us to evacuate. So at that time we took -- I believe we took two firefighters and we went back to Chelsea Pier and we dropped them off half way, because they wanted to get out.

Q. Do you have any idea approximately what time this was?

A. No.

Q. You can use the time line, I don't know if this will help had you at all. The north tower went down at 10:30, 10:29.

A. (No response.)

Q. Was it after 12? Was it before 12? Noon?

A. It was probably around noonish.

Q. Around noonish?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this, to the events that happened prior to 12:00 noon?

A. As far as criticism?

Q. Anything you want to tell me. Anything you saw, anything you heard, any emotions you felt, any feelings.

A. In the beginning when we first staged by West and Vesey, I had a lot of firefighters that are friends from my department that walked over to the building about ten minutes before we started to and that was the time the building collapsed. They probably just got to the front door. We treated firefighters, lieutenants, captains. Actually the biggest downfall to this whole thing was probably the communications with the private hospitals, because some of them didn't have unit designations, just vehicle ID numbers. They had no clue what to do. [redacted] they

basically didn't want to listen. Initially they didn't want to give information. You know, it took me a while to convince them, you know, we have to stage here, because there were a lot of wounded. We were actually trying to stage there and get them treating patients so that we could turn back and see if we could get anybody else. That's when they called the gas leak and everybody had to turn and run.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. That's it.

MR. ECCLESTON: This concludes our interview. The time is 9:09. I thank you very much for your corporation. The counter on the tape is 212.

File No. 9110028

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KEVIN KELLEHER

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 833 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Kevin Kelleher, paramedic, assigned to Battalion 20.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present in the room is --

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: Paramedic Felix Marquez, assigned to Battalion 20, shield number 1379.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Responding to the call, can you tell me what you saw?

A. I was responding down the Sheridan Expressway out of the Bronx. We were able to see smoke from both towers. We got on the FDR. As we are heading down the FDR, we started noticing people coming towards us. There was a -- once we got south of the Manhattan

Bridge, we couldn't see any -- we could only see one tower in the cloud of smoke.

As we got to the end of the FDR, we tried to get to the west side. We got down to the tunnel at the end and three quarters of that had been closed down. We thought it had collapsed. So we turned around and tried heading east towards the World Trade Center. We responded to the staging area, it was supposed to be Church and Vesey. We were heading west on Maiden Lane, when over the air we started hearing people screaming that the second tower was coming down.

At that time, everything just went black. We got covered in a cloud of dust and debris. We made a quick left-hand turn on Liberty and Trinity Place, I believe it is, right on Liberty south and left on Broadway. We started heading south on Broadway. We got flagged down at Exchange Place and Broadway, where a Police Lieutenant complaining of difficulty breathing. So we stopped the vehicle there and began treatment on him.

Q. What were the extent of his injuries?

A. He was complaining of shortness of breath basically. We had a physician and an EMT with us at the time.

Q. Who were the physician and the EMT, do you recall their names?

A. The EMT was Juan Vega. I don't know who the physician was. I'm not really sure who the physician was. I know he was a pediatrician from Jacobi Hospital.

Q. You brought him with you?

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't recall. Do you know the name of the EMT?

A. The EMT is Juan Vega.

Q. You picked up this police officer and then you proceeded where with him?

A. We proceeded south on Broadway. We were trying to clear the area because we didn't know what else was in danger of coming down. We wanted to get to a safe area. We proceeded down Broadway to Staten Island Ferry Terminal at South Ferry.

Q. When you got down there, what did you do?

A. We got there, we were met by about a thousand civilians. No other public safety personnel. We gathered all the civilians up, got them out of the dust and debris, got them inside the building. After about 15 minutes or so, two more ambulances arrived. Some

police arrived.

The police had found a load of busses that were lined up by the Staten Island Ferry, so they moved everybody that was not injured out of the area on the busses.

Q. Do you know where they took those people?

A. North.

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: They took them north down the FDR, I believe it was, and they were trying to load up ferries to get people out of Manhattan, into Jersey, and also to Staten Island.

A. They wanted to get everybody out of the area. After we secured the area, anybody that was injured for -- we set up a staging area and a treatment area at the Staten Island Ferry terminal, on the second floor we set the treatment area. Busses were staged outside. That's about it. We stayed there for most of the rest of the day.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map I provided for you the number 1 where you picked up that injured police officer first?

A. Sure.

Q. You picked up the injured police officer on Exchange and Broadway?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you proceeded to where?

A. We proceeded to the Staten Island Ferry terminal. It's not shown on the map. It's south on Broadway.

Q. What vehicle were you in?

A. We were in vehicle 110.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this?

A. Just that when we were down there, we didn't know if we were cut off from the north. That's why we secured the Staten Island Ferry terminal. If we had patients, the only way we figured we were getting them out of there was on the ferry. So we wanted a secure area so we could treat them and get them out. It was rather eerie not hearing anything on the radio after the second tower came down. The radio was dead. For a long time we didn't know if we were the only people left down there.

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: It was amazing how responding before the second tower fell and all the commotion in the street. Once the ball, it looked like a ball, was rolling towards us, this smoke and debris. Once it hit us, everything just

became silent. You could see people screaming and yelling but you couldn't hear anybody. Just quiet.

A. (inaudible).

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: Everything just became dark, pitch black and quiet. You saw people screaming, yelling and running, but you couldn't hear anything. Just silence, just complete silence. You couldn't hear.

MR. ECCLESTON: I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. The interview is concluded at 840. The setting on the tape counter is 143.

File No. 9110029

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC FELIX MARQUEZ

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 819 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank title and assigned command area regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Felix Marquez, paramedic assigned to Battalion 20.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also in the room is?

PARAMEDIC KELLEHER: Paramedic Kevin Kelleher, shield 5044, assigned to Battalion 20.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was assigned to 03 x-ray. We were dispatched to the World Trade Center.

Q. En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. En route to the alarm as we was on the Sheridan Expressway, we was able to see the towers on fire. We went down to the World Trade Center, down the FDR, down the east side.

Q. When you arrived at the World Trade Center, where did you park your vehicle and what vehicle was

it?

A. It was vehicle 110, I was the driver of the vehicle. We exited off the FDR around Battery Park. We was headed westbound down Maiden Lane when tower two collapsed. When tower two collapsed, we made a left on to Liberty back on to Broadway, trying to make our way away from the tower. It was very hard to see due to all the rubble and the dust. I remember on our radio was people screaming, asking for back up, telling that the tower was collapsing.

We were trying to make our way to help to get people out, but we was unable to so we headed down, south down Broadway where we picked up a police Lieutenant, who was in distress. We put him into the back of the ambulance, me and Kevin, and we proceeded south bound down Broadway.

Q. After you picked up this police officer, where did you respond with him?

A. We headed -- we just kept driving until we got to a safe distance away because we was unable to see due to all the dust and the debris and all the stuff that was falling. We just kept driving down, southbound down Broadway, until you couldn't go more no more. We ended up at South Ferry.

Q. What happened with this police officer, did you --

A. This police officer was at the tower, and he was able to get away. He was complaining of severe respiratory distress, so we got him in the back and we started treating him. As I was driving down, my partner, an EMT named, Juan Vega, was treating the patient. We stopped at South Ferry to proceed with our treatment and care for this police officer.

Q. Did you turn over care and treatment to somebody else? Did you stay with him or did you go back up to the site?

A. No, we stayed with the police officer and since we made South Ferry we realized this was a pretty safe distance away from the tower, a good place to reset staging. So me and my partner, Kevin Kelleher, got on the air and we said staging at South Ferry.

Q. This was basically the first time you parked your vehicle. Can you indicate on the map I provided to you approximately where you stopped and parked your vehicle?

A. Our first stop when we picked up the police officer was about Liberty and -- Exchange, sorry. We came down Maiden Lane down Broadway. We got flagged

down around Exchange and Broadway to pick up the police Lieutenant. That was our first stop, when we picked him up.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1. Okay. Then the next stop where you stopped your vehicle?

A. It's not on this map. It's at the South Ferry, where the ferry goes to Staten Island.

Q. When you stopped at South Ferry you set up a triage?

A. Yes, we set up staging.

Q. How long did you stay there for?

A. I stayed there for approximately 12 hours. I was there for approximately 12 hours. There was a lot of patients over there complaining of distress. City workers, me and my partner parked the ambulance and started treating patients.

Q. You remained in that staging area, you didn't go back up to Ground Zero to the site?

A. Not until later on that evening.

Q. Not until later on that evening. Okay. Who was the officer running that staging area, do you recall?

A. Yes, after approximately an hour, hour, 45

minutes, an hour, Chief Basile came to the scene.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. We was by Maiden Lane and Broadway, in that area.

Q. What were you doing there when the tower collapsed?

A. We were responding to a unit in distress screaming for medics.

Q. You were still driving?

A. We were still driving, yes. We was trying to make our way to the corner of Church and Broadway.

Q. Did you make any radio communications that might be important to us?

A. Yes, we let the dispatcher know that that unit that was in distress, and screaming for paramedics, we told him that we would respond to that location. Dispatcher acknowledged it and we proceeded 63 en route to Church and -- I believe it was Church and Broadway. Church and Vesey, sorry. Church and Vesey.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this, any other information you might have, any feelings or emotions, anything you need to add?

A. It was a hectic day. Other than that, we did the best we could do. That's pretty much it.

MR. ECCLESTON: Thank you very much for your time. The time is now 826. This concludes our interview. The setting on the tape recorder is 124.

File No. 9110030

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT PATRICK SCARINGELLO

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 6:16 a.m. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command area of the Fire Department regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Lieutenant Patrick Scaringello, assigned to Battalion 49, Bureau of EMS.

Q. You were assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. I was told to stage at 21 Street and the 59 Street Bridge. Three of my units were already being dispatched across the bridge to respond to the World Trade Center, which would have been 49 Victor, 45 Adam and 49 Henry.

Time frame, as far as I put the time frame, I can't remember exactly. I don't believe they had completely cleared over the bridge when I was told to respond with the units from the staging area, which was 49 Charlie, 46 William, I believe it was William, and

49 x-ray, I believe. I'm not too sure right now what they were.

I was mid span at the 59 Street Bridge when I looked to my left and I saw the both towers were involved midway up. We then proceeded off the bridge and I opted against going down the FDR Drive because I figured that was going to be backed up with traffic. We took the city streets down, local streets, mainly on Broadway. Then I believe it was Second Avenue, we switched back and forth and I was following two unmarked cars. Unmarked law enforcement vehicles.

We got down to Broadway, where originally we were told to stage at Vesey and Church. I couldn't get any of my vehicles down Vesey and Church because there were numerous vehicles parked there. So I parked them on Broadway, I continued down, parked my command car on Cortlandt between Broadway and Church. I then reported to the triage area at Church and Fulton, where I was advised to try to get the units, trying to get things as close as we could to that area.

Then I went back up. I went back up to Broadway and advised the units to follow me down to Fulton, where I staged at Fulton and Broadway and reported down to the triage unit. As I reported back

to the triage area, Captain Olszewski had requested that I find some more triage tags, to help in triage. In doing so I was also helping to evacuate people from buildings and they were coming across the street and out of the subway.

I got back to my truck. I got triage tags. I went back down to Fulton and Church, whereupon I found the Captain. Lt. Davila, Lt. Medjuck were elsewhere treating patients. I started to treat patients on my own when I heard the explosion from up above. I looked up, I saw smoke and flame and then I saw the top tower tilt, start to twist and lean.

With that, there was a massive influx of humanity rushing past me. Most of the people had made it through the triage area. Some had stumbled and fallen. I grabbed them, helped them underneath, and behind a police van, whereupon I put my body over them, about 4 people that I can remember. We rode out the first tower in that location. Once it had lightened up, because the smoke and ash had darkened everything down, once it had lightened up, I instructed all four people to hold my hand. We crossed over on Fulton against the wall from Saint Pauls cemetery and I instructed them to follow me up to Broadway against, on

the sidewalk against the wall.

Halfway up, someone met us there, I believe from the Police Department, I handed them off to them and returned back into Fulton and Church. I was assisting in pulling more people out from debris, when I heard the second tower explode. When I tried to evacuate the area, by running up Fulton, got halfway up. I couldn't get into any doorway, where I found a window that was partially broken, I broke the rest of the glass and went through and into the building.

Found myself in a lobby of sorts, I believe it was the Thompson's Financial Building. I entered into the lobby. I found approximately 50 people. I announced who I was, asked if there was any police officers or firemen in the building or in the lobby. I had one fireman I identified complaining of a laceration to the back of his left leg. There was a Port Authority police officer, myself and the police officer tried to bandage the fireman's leg as best we could, with whatever we could find. I then instructed all the people there that -- once the outside cleared from the smoke and debris from the second tower, I walked them out the door, again holding hands across the street.

When we got across Broadway, I told them to make a left and head north on Broadway. Once all the police had evacuated that building, I went back down Fulton and again continued to try to find people in the rubble.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map exactly where you parked your vehicle or to the best of your knowledge when you arrived on the scene?

A. When I first arrived on the scene, I was halfway down Cortlandt Street, reported to the triage area, which was in front of the Millennium Hotel. I ran down Cortlandt to Church and up Church to the Millennium, where they advised me to restage my vehicles on Broadway. I went back to my vehicle. Made a u-turn on Cortlandt, came up to Broadway, and parked it on the corner of Fulton and Broadway and then reported back down to the triage area.

Q. Can you just put a number 1 where you first parked your vehicle and number 2 where you moved your vehicle to? Do you happen to remember which vehicle number this was?

A. 840.

Q. 840. Did you ever enter any of the World Trade Center buildings prior to their collapse?

A. No, never got a chance to. I was involved in patient care at the triage area.

Q. Did you remove any civilians to hospitals or just away from the scene?

A. Just away from the scene. Most of the civilians that I did see, did have contact with were walking wounded. They were very ambulatory. Most who had any sort of injury did not affect them moving away from the scene.

Q. You had told me when you were traveling there you had several units with you. Can you tell me the personnel there were on those units, to the best of your recollection?

A. Two of the units were voluntary units. I think it was 49 x-ray or 49 William. The other one was 46, either a 46 William, one was a William, one was a (inaudible).

Q. Do you know the names of the people that were on that unit?

A. No.

Q. How about any Fire Department units?

A. 49 Charlie was behind me. That was Brendon Mulroy and I think his partner was Mario, I'm not sure now. I think it was Mario Ramirez.

Q. That was the only Fire Department unit you had with you?

A. That was 49 Charlie, yes. The other three already went over the bridge. That was 9 Victor, 5 Adam and 9 Henry. They were already ahead of us.

Q. Okay. Was there any important radio communications that you made?

A. None other than advising Citywide where we were staged and what I had there and them telling me to respond. We responded I believe right after the second tower was hit. I think Citywide just pulled the pin.

No, I don't even think it was Citywide. I think we were still on Queens. Queens just said respond in, send everything in.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. What else do you need?

Q. Anything else you would like to add, any feelings, emotions, anything?

A. I did stay in the area. In fact I worked my way up because there was nobody else around, no EMS personnel, I worked my way up eventually to Church -- to Chambers and West, where they had a command post.

Q. What kind of command post is that?

A. A haphazard one. Everybody was looking for some sort of direction to go in, but they were trying to regroup at the time.

Q. Do you remember who was in charge of the command post there?

A. Pick a Chief. Pick a Chief. They were all there and everybody had something to say. I inquired 4 or 5 times where my partner was.

Q. Can you tell me which Chiefs were there that you remember seeing?

A. J.P. Martin, Perrugia, Carassquillo. That's about all I can remember right now. But I was able to work my way back down West Street and I did find my partner, Lieutenant Yioras.

Q. Do you know about what time this was that you got to this command post?

A. It was well after tower one fell, which was the second tower.

Q. Well after meaning an hour, two hours, three hours?

A. No, I don't think it was an hour. It may have been maybe 40 minutes at most. I did find my partner. We then worked our way up West Street or down West Street toward the center again, where we came upon

a Captain, Captain McFarland. She instructed us that she was looking for some of our people that were there and she had instructed Lieutenant Yioras and I to work our way back up toward Church to see if anybody was there. We did go past -- we went up Church, we went up Vesey, past 7 Trade, which at the time didn't look like it was involved, but we found later on that it was. We crossed over. Then we wound up on Barclay. No, we wound up -- came up Vesey.

There was a -- they started setting up a medical triage treatment area in a building, an office building, lobby of an office building there. Chief Wells was there. Lieutenant Race, Chief Wells instructed me to set up transport and staging, which I did on Vesey. About that time is when Lieutenant Yioras advised me that he started getting chest pains.

We had it checked out. I then set up -- I brought a unit up, and was ready to have him transported along with EMT Adams, Paul Adams, who was also complaining of more pain. They were placed in an ambulance and they were dispatched to hospital 71. This is the part that steams me. Somewhere between where we sent them out from that section to hospital 71, the ambulance was stopped by one of our

Lieutenants. Told both of them to step out of the ambulance, that it wasn't an emergency, commandeered the ambulance and they were later on placed in another ambulance and then brought to hospital 71. Okay.

At that time, after they were gone, I worked my way back down with the voluntary units, I don't remember which ones they were, where I set up the voluntary units in the staging. I worked my way down to the corner of Church and Vesey, where I was told they brought a patient into the Church, which later I found out to be Father Judge.

They worked on Father Judge in the church where he expired. We then had a unit standing by. We put his body in an ambulance and dispatched that ambulance out. We then were told by PD that the area was possibly in a collapse zone because of tower 7. We evacuated the church. As I was leaving the church there was a small man sitting on one of the pews. I ran back in the Church. I found it to be one of the Fathers, a priest, saying his rosary. I went in and I excused myself for interrupting him in the middle of his rosary. I advised him we were in a collapse zone and we had to leave, which we did. Just before we left the church he advised me that the sacrament was still

in the tabernacle. I told him that I would try to find somebody to remove it. I then escorted him down the stairs. I handed him off to another person, to another set of EMTs, who walked him up the street.

Went back in the Church. I went up to the altar. I was looking, yelling for somebody who was there. No response. I quickly left the building because of the possibility of being in a collapse zone.

I then stayed down in that corner helping to evacuate people that came out of any of the other buildings.

Q. Do you know about what time we are talking now, time frame?

A. I would say probably about 45 minutes to an hour before 7 dropped, because when tower 7 dropped, I was on Vesey and Church.

Q. This was before tower 7 dropped?

A. This is just before tower 7 dropped.

Q. Tower 7 fell at approximately 5:25.

A. Like I said, I spent the majority of my time with the exception of the time that I went up to Chambers, all my time was spent on the east side of 7, because that's where my first three units came in on

the west side. The three units I brought in were on the east side. I tried to make sure those people were accounted for.

I got halfway up to the corner of Church and Vesey when tower 7 dropped, which basically the concussion just blew me across the street and I came up again besides, past Saint Pauls and it was already late at night and it was dark. The smoke didn't help it any, the dust and everything else. I was hit in the back of the head with something that came out of one of the buildings, which later I found out to be a water pitcher.

They had evacuated that medical zone earlier, which I was involved in making sure my vehicles were out of there, again, just making sure that nobody was in the area. They told me that they were relocating to Pace. I had started to come up, I tried to find my command car, which I knew where I left. Unfortunately it wasn't there. I came walking back. I went as far as Cortlandt and all the way back down to Barclay. I kept saying I knew where I left my command car, that's when I realized somebody had stolen my command car.

Q. Did you ever retrieve your command car?

A. From what I understood the next day somebody

said that they had called here asking if that was ours, they found it on 14 Street and Irving Avenue.

Q. We are going to try to concern with anything that happened before noon. That's what we are trying to concentrate on, not the later part of the day. Is there anything you need to add to this on anything that happened before 12 noon?

A. You know, I tell you the God's honest truth, Chris, once you got there I didn't even notice the time. Couldn't even tell time. Once the first tower came down, there was no such thing as a watch. My main function was looking for people, pulling people out and making sure they were safe. We never got into any building. The only thing I dealt with was from Cortlandt to Barclay, from Broadway to I guess West. That area was my main concentration, with the exception of the way I worked my way around to Chambers.

There was -- after both towers, I was still looking for people, I did run into Lieutenant Davila and another -- I'm sorry, not Davila, Lieutenant Medjuck and one of our telemetry doctors, I believe, they were telling me I had to go to -- they had to report to the Battery. When they started walking north and I kept telling them, no, you're going the wrong

way. They in turn walked back. We did go down to -- we did walk down to Beekman Downtown.

I went into the ER to check to see if any of our people were there. I came back out. They were gone. So I worked my way back into this area to get to try to reestablish something and find out who was there. I never again saw Captain Olszewski. I don't know what ever happened to her or where she went. I seemed to be the only one in this area. Everyone else I would imagine was gathered on the south, they were all around here.

Q. Along the west side?

A. Along the west side, because I think that's where the main body of people were advised to report to.

Q. Is there anything else you feel you need to add to this?

A. No, just that this was the big one everybody trains for.

MR. ECCLESTON: It certainly was. I thank you very much for the interview. The time is 6:41. The counter on the tape player is 375.

File No. 9110031

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BILLY

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CASTORINA: Today's date is October 10, 2001. My name is Ron Castorina. I'm at Engine 24. Accompanied with me is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

Q. We are here to interview --

A. Firefighter Richard Billy, Engine Company 24.

Q. Firefighter Billy, on September 11, can you tell us about that day, where you were and what happened?

A. We got a call for an explosion in the World Trade Center number 1, roughly about a quarter to nine, around there. Got there a few minutes later. I think we parked the rig on West and Vesey.

MR. CASTORINA: Excuse me one second. The time is 1123. Sorry. Go ahead.

A. Okay. Then we entered the north tower on the map there for 1 World Trade Center. We were in the lobby for a minute or two. We followed, our company followed Ladder 20. I believe it was Ladder 20. I don't remember this stairwell, but I believe we followed Ladder 20. We basically were going up with our rollups and our equipment. We took a breather on floor number 29 and with Ladder 20 also.

After a while, we were there for a couple of

minutes and then taking a breather. Lieutenant Hansson of my -- of Engine Company 24 told me there was a civilian, a handicapped person with a friend of his on the 29th floor. He told me to stay with him because we were riding heavy. We had an extra guy. I had a radio. He told me to stay with him. They went up to a couple of more floors to the staging area, I believe they went to 35, I'm not sure. I was with them for a few minutes.

What happens is a couple of other people came by, they wanted to look at their office, I don't know why, but for some reason. About that time, I don't know exactly what time, I don't have the times down, but there was a collapse. At this time, I never knew that number 2 World Trade Center was ever hit at this point. I'm thinking it's the top of our floor, our building, number 1. That's what I'm thinking.

At that moment, of the collapse, there was a Captain from the 21 Engine named William Burke. I happened to know him because he used to be a fireman at 24. He shows up at that time. I'm with this handicapped person alone. William Burke, Captain William Burke and his men show him up and I told him I have this handicapped. I'm with him alone. He took

over for me at that moment. He was to go with the handicapped person and his friend.

At about that moment, Lieutenant Hansson came down and the other men from 24 came down and said Rich, let's go. We started proceeding down from the 29th floor.

Q. Were you getting any radio transmissions, because you said you had a radio?

A. I had a radio but I really can't recall hearing anything. He just told me we had to leave. Got to about the second or third floor and there was a fireman from Squad 18 named Pat Kelly. He said he needed help. There was another person who couldn't walk. I think he had broken legs, I'm not sure. What we did was we split up. Me and Lieutenant Hansson and Firefighter Sterling went with Pat Kelly. The other two I think continued down that stairwell, wherever that was.

We went through the building into -- with Firefighter Kelly from 18, to help with this other handicapped. I don't think he was handicapped. I think he had broken legs. I'm not sure. He couldn't walk.

Q. Was he a heavy set male?

A. Yes, very heavy, and we had Port Authority cops with us too, so we got him down another flight of stairs I guess in to some kind of lobby. We dragged him across, got to the entrance or the exit, building number 1.

Q. Do you want to mark it off.

A. Somewhere around here. Whatever the exit is here. We ran across to building number 6. Us, three from 24 Engine, Lieutenant Hansson, me and Sterling, Pat Kelly, another fireman and a couple of PA cops ran. At that point they had enough men between the PA and they had enough men to take care of him. We had way too many men. We started to leave, 24.

At that moment the collapse came. As I found out, that would be in our building. We went across, we ran across over here. It started collapsing. After that, we couldn't see anything. It was all very dark and brown. Couldn't see anything. We are just waiting. I'm thinking we are trapped. I was giving a Mayday, I believe. I think the only response --

Q. Did you take cover somewhere?

A. We went back into the building. After we came down, the building overhang, because the building had an overhang.

Q. As it was coming down where were you?

A. I was about here.

Q. You had an overhang over here?

A. There was an overhang, kind of like an overhang. That's it. We survived. I found Sterling but I couldn't find Hansson. I thought he was dead. I went back in here a little bit and came back out. I thought we were trapped, so I gave Maydays out. I don't think I heard -- somebody responded, what ended up being Hansson I think. I thought he was there. I thought it was somebody else from 24. I don't think we were trapped. After a while it lifted. We saw some light here.

Q. Did you get injured in any way, anybody get injured?

A. No, only abrasions of the eyes. So I ran over here, and there is sort of like a 30 foot drop so I didn't want to jump.

Q. What street is that?

A. Vesey, like a 30 foot drop. If I had to I would have jumped. But I waited a little bit more. We found stairs over here. There were stairs here that led to the street around here, somewhere around here there is stairs, outside stairs. Went down, then I

came out. Actually I came out with Pat Kelly and some other fireman. I found out later I think Sterling must have jumped over here. I'm not sure. Hansson I thought was missing. When I came out of here --

Q. Once you came out where did you end up?

A. I saw some kind of command post outside, somewhere, maybe around here. I'm not sure.

Q. You worked your way over there?

A. Yes. Then I'm like in a daze, so I kept walking around, then I found some other guys from 24 that came in on their own.

Q. Then you started meeting up with people?

A. Then I was taken to the hospital. Because I couldn't --

Q. Eyes --

A. My eyes were killing me.

Q. How was your breathing?

A. My breathing was all right.

Q. So you were treated and released?

A. Yes.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. The NYU downtown, right by Pace University.

Q. Anything else you remember or want to add? You have pretty much covered everything. If there is

anything else you want to add. How was the lighting in the stairs and the smoke conditions initially when you were in the building?

A. There was no smoke. You mean going up?

Q. Yes, when you were going up. When you were on the 20th floor helping --

A. 29th.

Q. 29th. How was that floor? Was there any smoke or anything?

A. No.

Q. Everything looked normal?

A. Everything looked normal. Never knew the other tower was hit.

Q. When the building started collapsing you heard the rumble and --

A. Which building, the other one?

Q. Yes.

A. I heard that, I never --

Q. Where were you at that point?

A. On the 29 floor.

Q. On the 29 floor. In other words, when you got the signal from Lieutenant Hansson let's go, you were up in the 29th?

A. Yes, with the handicapped person. That was

taken over by Captain Burke and his men.

Q. Okay. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time now is 11:33 a.m.

File No. 9110033

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD SARACELLI

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. MURAD: The time is 1000 hours and I am Murray Murad with Richard Dunn of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant --

A. Richard Saracelli, Ladder 49, Bronx. I have 32 years on the job.

MR. MURAD: The location of the interview is being conducted at Engine 68, located at 1160 Ogden Avenue in the borough of the Bronx. This is regarding the tragic event on September 11, 2001.

Q. Lieutenant, give us your perspective on what happened that day and your involvement with your unit that responded.

A. As I understand it, you're looking for a historical perspective on the incidents of September 11th. I came in for the recall. I was off duty that morning. I came for the recall and that evening we went down and acted as Ladder 1 for the next four days.

My interest in the historical perspective of this goes back to the mid 60s when that building was commissioned, designed, and built. I want to know what the building industry is doing building

buildings 110 stories tall with no way for us to effectively fight a fire on an upper floor and no way for people in those buildings to evacuate in a serious fire incident.

A lot of what is going to come down to rest here is why were those buildings built so far beyond the human scale? Why did the City of New York allow them to be built not under New York City building code. Why do people build buildings that people cannot evacuate from and that the Fire Department cannot fight fires in on an upper floor. It just makes no sense.

When I watched those buildings being constructed and since their construction, I've been up in them, I've looked at them and they were always dangerous looking to me. I would never, ever have worked in a building like that. It's just common sense that those things cannot be evacuated in a serious incident. This has to be looked into. We cannot allow the building industry to keep putting buildings up like that where we can't deal with it. Where it's so far beyond human scale that humans cannot deal with a tragedy when it takes place.

That's all I'm going to say.

MR. MURAD: This concludes the interview. The time now is 1003 hours. I would like to thank the lieutenant for this interview and this now concludes the interview at Engine 68 and Ladder 49.

File No. 9110034

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOHN ZANAT

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. MURAD: Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 0940 hours and my name is Murray Murad with Richard Dun of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant --

A. My name is Lieutenant John Zanat and I'm covering Engine 68.

MR. MURAD: The location of the interview is at 1160 Ogden Avenue in the borough of the Bronx.

Q. Lieutenant, can you give a scenario of what took place and the actions involved with Engine 68 were on that day?

A. We were assigned on the fifth alarm, special call on the fifth alarm. We reported first to Engine 35 in Manhattan. A number of engine companies from the Bronx were assigned there. When all of us arrived there, the dispatcher sent us down to the World Trade Center, to report to the command center on West End Avenue and Vesey Street.

Q. There is a map here. Just highlight the area where, if you recall, the apparatus -- where you actually responded to.

A. Okay. This is -- let's see. This is

where we were told, West and Vesey, to report. This is where we were told the command center was.

Q. That was the command center?

A. Right. That's where we were told to report to. That's where I believe the command center was. Our apparatus was parked way back here, past Chambers Street. As we were coming down West End Avenue, I could see the first plane had hit. It must have been -- it looked like, to me, it looked like 4 or 5 stories.

Q. You are describing the north tower?

A. The north tower. There were flames coming out, smoke, everything. At that time I didn't even know that the south tower had come down already. It had come down previous to us even getting that close.

Q. What time do you estimate you arrived on the scene?

A. Between 10:00 and 10:30 sometime.

Q. Because I think the south tower went down at like 10:00.

A. We were on our way down when it came down. We were coming from Engine 35, which is 125th and Third Avenue. So we were on our way down when that

tower probably came down. We didn't know it at the time. When we arrived on West End Avenue, we were coming south towards it, you could see the north tower, but not the south tower. I just thought it was obscured from the north tower being there and all the smoke and flames.

As far as anything being in the street, we didn't notice anything on West End. We parked way back here past Chambers Street and we were just walking up to the command post, because all the other apparatus were ahead of us. And we probably were right about somewhere between Murray and Vesey Street when we heard the rumbling of the north tower.

Once we heard that rumble, it was like, it's coming down. And everybody just turned around and hightailed it. We got probably up to about Chambers Street when the dust pile finally caught up to us and some like us went into a building right on the corner of Chambers Street and some just kept running straight.

Q. Was there any radio contact or were you told to switch to a certain channel?

A. Not at that time and if there was, I

really wasn't paying attention. At this time, we thought we were running for our lives. We didn't know how close we were. We didn't know if anything from the tower, any debris from the tower it was going to be coming down hitting us.

Q. This is where you heard where the -- you guys were Engine 68?

A. No.

Q. I'm making an arrow just to --

A. All right. I was more concerned about my guys and what was happening when I was running as opposed to what was happening on the radio.

Q. After the second tower came down, what did you guys do?

A. I was regrouping. Actually, I had -- one of my men got separated. I was looking for him.

Q. Did you account for everybody?

A. Eventually -- Yes. I accounted for everybody. And then we were together. I got my guys together and told Chief Daly and he was telling us, "Okay. You guys were here during the first --

Actually, I thought it was the first collapse. I didn't know that the first building had come down. So I told them we were here for the first collapse.

He said, "Okay. Go sit on the side." Everybody was telling me, "Go sit on the side." They wouldn't let us do anything.

At the time a couple of my guys were kind of shaken up and probably wouldn't have been too good as far as doing any work anyway. At this time, when we were turning, I just told him we were turning around and running. It was feeling like we were running for our lives actually.

Q. I was there that day too. I was at 10/10 house. I heard the plane first coming over the firehouse.

A. Actually, I saw that on tape when the second plane hit. I seen it on tape here at the firehouse. I wasn't that excited over it. I didn't realize the magnitude of it.

Q. So the second tower came down. You guys had a safe location and -- do you remember the Chief's name at all or --

A. Everybody was running. Nobody knew what was going on.

MR. MURAD: I would like to thank Lieutenant Zanat for the interview. It is now 0945 hours and this concludes this

portion of the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110035

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC DANIEL RIVERA

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 10th, 2001. The time is 1520 hours. My name is Chris Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, your rank, your title, where you're assigned.

PARAMEDIC RIVERA: Daniel Rivera, paramedic. I'm assigned to Battalion 31, Station 36 in Brooklyn.

Q. I'd just like you to give me the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. Okay. I basically started my -- we were gassing up at Tillary and Gold Street, which is two blocks away from the Brooklyn Bridge, when we heard the commotion over the PD radio that a plane just hit one of the towers.

We got on the bridge, because we were, again, two blocks away from there, and called the dispatcher over the radio -- actually over the phone cause the radio was really bad, and let them know that we were on our way to that call. She said 10-4, and she assigned us the job. That

was two minutes after the first plane hit.

Q. The dispatcher that you spoke to was the Brooklyn dispatcher?

A. Yes, Brooklyn.

So it took us about four minutes to get to the scene, because we were really, really close. We parked in front of the south tower right in front of the building.

Q. When you say "Right in front of the building" --

A. Right here. Actually in front of Four World Trade Center and in back of the south tower building.

Q. Okay. So somewhere right in the complex?

A. Right in the front right here. Maybe about one yard away from the south tower building.

Q. So that was when you first arrived?

A. Right.

There was a lot of people running just every direction, and several people were hurt. At that time I was treating one patient who was on the ground with a laceration to his forehead,

and actually I think it was a total of three patients, one asthmatic and I don't remember the other patient.

As I was treating the patient with the laceration and the asthmatic patient, that's when the second plane hit. All I heard was just a thunderous noise. As I looked up, I saw a ball of flames coming down. So everyone ran, the patients and everyone.

I ran not too far, a couple steps behind me, next to this doughnut cart, and hid under there until everything was clear and we went right back. Basically that's when I realized it was a terrorist attack.

Basically there were too many patients at the time, and you really couldn't triage anyone. It was just too dangerous. The scene wasn't safe. So we were just basically helping -- at that point I don't know what I'm talking about. Everyone pretty much split up.

Then I went and I started directing people from the building, from the south tower, to get out, because as they were coming out of the building, they were getting on their phones

and talking and blocking the entrance. So we just said, "Let's go. You've got to go."

Q. Did you go into the building actually?

A. Yes, I went into the south tower building, but came right out right by the doors. I was trying to figure out why there wasn't too many people coming out. Like I said, there was a lot of people on their cell phones. I guess when they got to the lobby they thought it was safe and they decided to just get on their cell phones and talk and block the entrances. I was making sure that the entrances were clear so everyone can pass.

Q. The south tower, do you know if you were out on Liberty Street?

A. I don't remember.

Q. You don't remember. Okay.

A. I don't remember. You know what, I could have been on this side. I don't remember that.

Basically once I did that, I got together with my partner, and he moved the vehicle two blocks behind, somewhere around here somewhere, behind Four World Trade Center, I

think.

Q. Like by Trinity?

A. Yeah, around here, somewhere around -- yeah, Liberty and around here somewhere, Trinity and Liberty around here, I think.

Once we saw all that happening, we needed to move the bus.

Q. Okay.

A. So what else happened?

Q. When you moved out the bus out to there, did you see anybody? Any EMS supervisors or firemen supervisors?

A. There was a supervisor, but he was pretty much overwhelmed, but don't I remember his name. He was pretty much overwhelmed. It wasn't textbook. It was basically everyone for themselves after the second explosion.

I saw Manny Delgado. I saw some other people. Like I said, it was crazy, really crazy.

Everything pretty much calmed down. Once the second plane hit, it wasn't too bad. People still running out of the building. Body parts, I think that was the worst. Every three seconds I was counting -- I counted about 26

bodies when I was there. Every three seconds somebody was jumping.

At that point we were triage -- we were what they call front line medics. There was a captain there -- I don't know his name -- from EMS. He was setting everyone up, saying the medics were going to go in first, the EMTs were going in behind us.

They didn't let us go in because it was dangerous. We were right in front of the building still. We had no idea the buildings were going to collapse. That was dangerous where we were anyway.

I think it took about 30 minutes or 40 minutes after the second collapse. After the second plane hit the south tower building, and then the building collapsed.

Q. When the building collapsed where were you?

A. I was right in front of the building, right in front.

Q. You were still --

A. Right, because what happened was that --

Q. -- up near Trinity and Liberty?

A. No, we moved the bus to Trinity, but we went back to right in front of south tower, because triage -- I'm not too sure if it was over here. I think it was over here somewhere. Triage was still right in front of the south tower building.

Q. So you parked your vehicle?

A. My partner parked the vehicle, so I'm not too sure exactly where he parked it. I know he parked it two blocks up.

Q. And then you both went back into the complex?

A. I think it was around here somewhere. Around here somewhere we had triage. I know it was either this building or this building. I think it was over here we were triaging or over here. I'm not too sure. This is the south tower; right? This is the first one that collapsed. Yeah.

So we were pretty much -- most of the workers were inside this building. Like I said, I don't know if it's Five World Trade Center or Four World Trade Center. Most of them were in

the building because the chief or the captain said if you want you can stay inside that building. But I didn't feel safe, because I knew it was a terrorist attack, so I was scared. Every time you hear a plane, everyone would run. So I pretty much stood around here somewhere. I would see triage, but I was pretty much in between the two buildings.

Then that's when -- I kept on walking close to the south tower, and that's when that building collapsed.

Q. How did you know that it was coming down?

A. That noise. It was a noise.

Q. What did you hear? What did you see?

A. It was a frigging noise. At first I thought it was -- do you ever see professional demolition where they set the charges on certain floors and then you hear "Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop"? That's exactly what -- because I thought it was that. When I heard that frigging noise, that's when I saw the building coming down.

Q. What did you do?

A. Run. Most of the people ran into the

building, but I was just too far from the building to run into this triage building. I basically just ran up this way, right up here. I don't know if I was here or I was here. But I ran up -- I was really close. I thought I was dead because it was just too close to the building. It was just too close. I said, this is I don't know how many stories.

I ran as fast as I could maybe half a block and then hid between a building that had some kind of indention like this, just hid like that. Actually I found a stretcher. I covered myself with a stretcher. That's when everything came down.

It was very dark for a few minutes. I think at that time my partner went under the fire truck, he was telling me. Everyone pretty much went on their own.

So once that cleared, I went right back and started pulling out people. Basically everyone was dead at that time with the first collapse.

Q. When that dust cleared and you went back, where did you go back to?

A. Right back to the triage, to triage.

Q. So in front of this building again?

A. Right, right here.

Q. In front of the World Trade Center, the northeast corner?

A. But there was nobody in there. Apparently everyone ran and came out through here. So I ran in here. There was basically no one around just a few firefighters in shock. Then the next thing you know, the next building collapsed. I was right in front of that building.

Q. So you were still over there when the second building collapsed?

A. Right, because I ran back. Not too bright of me, of course. I ran right back in, and I was right -- I could actually touch the building when it collapsed, the second time when it collapsed.

But again, I was prepared because I heard that same noise. It was like a waterfall noise. That's when I ran. As I ran in here, I didn't run too far. Again, it was like a little indention in the building where the same thing

again. That's when I jumped, because it was just too close. That one got me pretty good.

Q. So you were outside. You never ran inside a building when either one of the towers collapsed?

A. No. The first, south tower -- after the second plane hit, just to clear the doorway, and then I came running back out. I didn't stay there too long.

Q. As the collapses were going on, you never --

A. No, I was thinking about going into a building, because as I saw the first building collapse, I noticed that the first three or four floors, they were still pretty good. That was on my mind, wow, they were still pretty good. So when the second building collapsed, I was thinking of standing between the doors of the second collapse. Something told me no, just ran back.

Again, I ran up against one of the buildings there. Once everything settled again, it was dark again. Deja vu, you know. But I was really lucky because that building had damage on

top of me. Everything around me was destroyed. The fire truck in front of me was destroyed. Everything. I had to touch myself to see if I was alive.

Then I ran right back, because there wasn't much too run, and that's when you hear on the radio EMS people down, fire down. I ran there, and then I ran back over here, because I think they started another triage point around here somewhere, triage center. I ran back in there.

Then they said there was a lot of people trapped inside. That's when I right back in, after both buildings collapsed. There were several firefighters down there and battalion chiefs. I didn't know they were battalion chiefs, but they were when we pulled them out.

Q. So after the second building collapsed, you ended up over here by Trinity Street?

A. I was over here, right, and then I ran back over here somewhere. Because after the first collapse they pretty much set another triage center around here somewhere. I'm not too sure if it's over here. Then when the second

building collapsed, I couldn't run far because it was right there. Then once everything settled I ran right back to the triage area.

Q. And the triage was, you think --

A. Somewhere, right.

Q. -- somewhere by Trinity, about midway through the --

A. Right, I'm not too -- right.

Then that's when we found out -- basically I was looking for my partner. I couldn't find my partner. When I went back in there, he was there. He needed some oxygen because he had stuff all over his face. Then that's when the radio call came in that we had EMS and fire trapped. I ran back in here, somewhere over there.

There was just no one around. It was very, very bad. You couldn't breathe too good. That's when I saw several firefighters who were out. So we pulled out about three firefighters that were covered in rubble.

Q. What happened to them; do you know?

A. One guy -- I can't forget him because he was pretty heavy. I'll probably get in

trouble. He weighed 400 pounds. The worst part about this, when this building collapsed, it was very difficult to walk through all this.

Q. When the south tower came down?

A. The south tower, right. So when this building collapsed, pretty much everything here you couldn't recognize it anymore. So it took a while before you could actually walk from this point here all the way back here. This is where we had several trapped firefighters here.

Q. Over by --

A. Firefighters, right. There were lots of firefighters here. There was --

Q. By the customs building?

A. Right, but more -- right, right. Right around in between and Five World Trade Center. This tower here, you saw about 20 ESU guys on the second floor. Don't ask me how they got there. They were climbing down. So it looks like they were there when it collapsed. There was a ladder here. They were repelling down.

I was shocked because I tried to figure out how they made it, because they went from I think second or third floor and they were

repelling.

Q. This is where you ended up staying the rest of the day?

A. No, this is crazy. You couldn't stay here, because you had -- everything was destroyed pretty much around here. Again, don't ask me why I went back in. It was really bad. I pretty much went back to this original spot here at Church and Trinity, I think. Then they directed us somewhere else around here.

Q. Who directed you? A supervisor?

A. Right, some supervisor.

Q. Do you know where you ended up?

A. By the water somewhere around here.

Q. By Battery Park?

A. Right, somewhere around here somewhere. Then they said that there was a gas leak and that was too dangerous, so we walked from -- we were here somewhere. Then they took us all the way to -- not Chambers. What's that place on the west side. Pier 94.

Q. That's where you ended up after all that stuff?

A. After all that.

Q. So you ended up at Pier 94.

A. Right.

Q. I forgot what I was going to ask you.

What happened to your vehicle?

A. We moved the vehicle. It had several holes. We had no idea it had several holes.

Q. So it ended up staying there and got damaged?

A. Staying there and then moving it, right. Basically every time it would collapse, my partner would go in the vehicle and move it. So that's why our vehicle was the only one pretty much that made it. There was another vehicle I think too.

One of the news channels -- I saw I think it was the south building somebody with a camera running out of the south tower building. You actually could see my vehicle right in front of the tower, right in front. But that's before the second collapse -- the second airplane hit. So we pretty much moved everything.

Q. You said at the end of the day you and your partner were together with your vehicle?

A. Yes. We picked up another ALS unit who

lost their vehicle. So we had two ALS unit in one vehicle. We went to triage at that point at Pier 95 I think.

Q. Anything else you want to add to this?

A. I'm looking at the times here. It felt more like five minutes, the whole thing.

Q. That's the kind of stuff I want you to say, how you perceived everything.

A. Like I say, once I saw the second plane, then I knew, that's it. It wasn't by accident. Then I started thinking about the World Trade Center, how everyone lined up, the ambulances and the fire trucks and I thought, the terrorists know exactly how we lined up last time, and we're doing it again. We pretty much did, line up exactly the same way as the last time. That was my wording.

At that point honestly there was no one to rescue at the two buildings. The worst part was when a surgeon came up to me as we were traveling and he's like, "Guys, listen, medics, we've got four surgeons, 18 doctors, and they were setting up a triage point." I told him that's nice but I don't think anyone's going to

come.

Because I was one of the few units that came out of there, and when we saw what happened -- that's why I left, because basically there was no one alive. We just pulled out several firefighters and that's it. We went back. There was nothing else to do. We were crazy to stay there, because you still had this thing about airplanes going to hit other buildings, and the other buildings around you weren't safe, because the building I was hiding next to, that one was leaning and I heard that one collapsed too.

It was bad. That's pretty much it.

Q. All right. You have nothing else you want to add; right?

A. No. I hope you can understand what I say because I talk kind of fast.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes the interview with paramedic --

PARAMEDIC RIVERA: Daniel Rivera.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: -- Daniel Rivera. The time now is 1539 hours.

File No. 9110036

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P ANDRE CHERRINGTON

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

A. CHERRINGTON

A. CHERRINGTON

CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 1712 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck, I work with the New York City Fire Department. Today I'm conducting and interview with the following individual,

ANDRE CHERRINGTON: Paramedic Andre Cherrington, from battalion 31, unit 31 Victor, tour 2

Q: Okay, I'm just gonna ask you to tell me about the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001

A: Okay.

Q: In your words.

A: Alright, what happened was, I logged on. I started work at 8:30, and I was working with a gentleman who was doing overtime, so we were on our way to get some breakfast, and we looked to our left as we were pulling out of the garage, and we saw like a blast. But it didn't seem like anything major. But then we saw the World Trade Center like, catch on fire. So I turned on 1010 W.I.N.S. to see if there was any news and they said that a plane hit. So we were thinking maybe a small plane ran out of gas and hit the building. So we were like okay, let's call the dispatcher. The dispatcher had already started sending units. So we said well listen, 31 Victor, we are able to go. Can you send us? So they sent us over there. So we went on the Brooklyn Bridge, I was driving, we went on the Brooklyn bridge and I'm seeing people already coming across. So we got across over there, I'd say by city hall park and I saw a Lieutenant, Brynes from Battalion 57. And I was talking to him, he stopped us and people were coming to the ambulance. Nothing major, just people with minor cuts and scrapes. He had another unit there, so we triaged a couple of patients, then I requested to go more towards where it seemed more people would be hurt. I said to the Lieutenant, well I'm a paramedic, they probably might need me more in there. So he released us, said okay, find someone closer to the area, another lieutenant. So we went down Broadway, and as I'm driving down Broadway, everyone's stopping the ambulance and coming up to us and saying so-and-so is hurt, and so-and-so is having a heart attack. So we stopped by each patient and pulled out the triage tags. Everyone was

basically a green tag, so we just kept triaging people en route to the World Trade Center. When we got there, we got there, I guess 9:00, 9:05, whatever, and I seen Phil Ashby there and he was doing triage from inside the building. We started triaging right away. I was taking care of a patient who was having a hard time breathing and my Partner was taking care of another patient. That patient jumped on, Metropolitan actually took that patient to the hospital. While Metropolitan took that person to the hospital, somebody came to my partner and said we have another person who's burnt up in the building.

Q: At this point, had the second plane crashed into the second building?

A: In all honesty, everything happened so fast, and it was so hectic that I wasn't really paying attention to it. It seemed like, you know, all the ashes were falling, it was just a big mess. Everybody was screaming, so I don't really know. I just know what was going on as far as me and my partner were concerned. So, when we went to the second building, I think it was the second building, and we seen a guy burnt up, downstairs in the lobby. So we carried him, and we brought him on our stretcher, it was parked by the ambulance. We put him in the stretcher, while we're taking care of him we're seeing everybody running out of the second building and it was just like everybody running, everybody trying to just get outta there. So it's like, okay, fine, we're taking care of this guy. We had to just cool down his wounds. He was burnt up, he had like 90% burns over his body. Like first, second degree burns. A couple third degree burns also. So we took care of him, got an IV in him, and were ready to transport him. The Lieutenant on the scene said don't take him yet cause there's more patients coming down. I waited for a few minutes, maybe five minutes. And it was like a cluster, so -- I just decided, you know, let me take this guy, cause he started having shortness of breath. I couldn't call for anything to stabilize him, cause there was a mess there, you know, before I intubated him. So I said, let me take him to the hospital. So as I was pulling off, I'd say about half a block away, we heard a big boom, and we seen a whole bunch of ashes, everything just started coming towards us. So I actually stopped the ambulance for thirty seconds and I looked. My partner was in the back he said stop the ambulance. So I stopped and I looked, and I

seen all the debris coming. So I said close the bus. Cause at this point everyone started running towards the ambulance, I mean, you know, we had one critical patient there, so I said let me just get this guy to the hospital. So he closed the ambulance. And as I'm driving, people are running and debris is coming down. Debris is coming down and hitting the bus. I'm just driving, driving, I drove up a one-way, I think it was Second Avenue. One of those major avenues. And I drove halfway up to Cornell, and then I got on the right way, and I drove the rest of the way up to Cornell. When we got to Cornell, I think I gave a notification, when I got to Cornell, they immediately took the patient in and they intubated the patient. As I was leaving they said the second building fell. When the second building fell, I said well, we gotta get back there. So we went back there, where they told us to go to Battery Park triage. So we went to Battery Park. When we went there now, they said that there was a gas leak. So I had the ambulance parked, and I was actually on the other side of the street, they said that there's a gas leak, get outta there. I didn't have enough time to jump into the ambulance, so I just started going towards--with the crowd, running more or less until there was a bus that me and my partner jumped in and we went to Pier 94. When we got to Pier 94, it seemed like it was a false alarm.

Q: Do you know whos vehicle it was you jumped into?

A: My partner knew who it was, but I think they were from Manhattan. I'd never seen the guy before.

Q: Was it a Fire Department vehicle?

A: It was EMS, yeah, EMS vehicle.

Q: Who was your partner that day?

A: Suarez, he's a new paramedic. And we jumped in that ambulance, and whoever the guy was drove all the way to Pier 94. All three of us were in the front. When we got there, we found out that it was more or less a false alarm, so I walked back towards my vehicle, but they wouldn't let us over there. By the time I got over there the vehicle was already gone. So I said, oh well, you know. So I jumped in with 31 Young, who is Paramedic Smiley and Paramedic Rivera. And basically I stayed with them all day, and

what we did is we went back towards City Hall Park to see if anyone was needing triage, if anybody needed us. But by then they already had a major triage center set up, so nobody needed us. We were trying to go where we were needed. Cause you know, we didn't really have anybody really telling us what to do over the airway so, we finally wound up on the backside of BMCC where we set up a triage center, us and a couple BLS. Finally some lieutenants came over and they said okay, you guys stay over here, just in case, cause one of the buildings was on fire. The last building to fall was on fire. He said it might drop. So we waited there to see if anything was going to happen. The only thing that happened was that the building dropped. We waited to see if anybody was hurt, but everybody seemed to be evacuated, everything was fine. So from there, we stayed there for a few hours. You know, just triaging, waiting. And after that, it seemed like it was okay. So another lieutenant came there and said well, they might need some paramedics at Ground Zero. They were saying something about there were amputated patients there who, once they get them out of the rubble, they're gonna need us to start lines, whatever and get them to the nearest hospital. So we went back to Ground Zero. There we reported to another Lieutenant who I really, I really didn't keep any names. But I know that it was really hectic over there. So we reported there, all four paramedics, and we were like, okay, we're here and we're ready to help if anybody needs any help from us. And we basically just stood there, and what we did there was, if anybody got cut it was minor triage more or less. The seemed to have everything under control there. So basically, we just stayed there waiting, just on stand-by. We pulled our ambulance into their little bay, into their bay, and we just waited there. But around 2:30, you know, I realized there's nothing we can really do here. There's nothing going on here, it was more like a BLS thing, you know, minor cuts, abrasions, whatever. By then, my partner already worked over 30 hours so he was really tired. So I talked to the lieutenant, I said, you know, we're really not needed here. I've been here since 8:30 this morning, you know, can you release us? So basically

Q: This is 2:30 in the morning?

A: 2:30 in the morning, yeah. So basically after that, we seen that there's nothing that we could do, so he released us and we came back to Brooklyn. That was it. So you know, that day I thank my lucky stars. Cause you know, I think that if I would have actually waited around for more patients, I think instead of seeing the rubble coming towards me and I'm booking, I think the rubble would've actually hit the bus with the guy in there. I think it would have been a very bad situation. So for some reason I said, you know, I'm not staying, I'm leaving. It was kind of like a free-for-all, because, you know, what happened was, when we got there, we thought everything was okay, everything is calm. Maybe the little plane hit and it's causing all this. But I guess when the second plane hit, that's when all hell broke loose. And that's when everybody realized, you know, nothing's calm. Everything just went crazy after that. I mean, I did what I had to do, I took one patient, we took care of it and got him to the hospital. And you know, I did say, well I saved one person. I know I did save one person, and that's all that matters. I was there for X Amount of hours and I did one good thing. And my partner too.

Q: Everything you did was good.

A: Well, yeah. I mean, you know, everything I did was good. But I feel good that I did get that guy to the hospital. As a matter of fact, I looked at the ACR and the guy lived not far from where I lived. So I think that two days later I went over to the address and I thought his wife was there, but it was his mother. And his mother happens to be a nurse at Methodist Hospital. I approached here. Because I heard on the news that they said, well we don't know what's going on. A lot of family members, they don't know what's going on with the people in the building. So I said, let me go over there and let her know where her son is, where her husband is (I thought it was his wife.) When I got there, it was the mother. I told her, this is where your son is, this is the condition that he was in. And she was very happy about it, you know she was real happy. And I felt good too, you know, I felt good. Everything worked out. He was pretty bad though, he was real bad. But you know, I never really contacted them again. Maybe one day when everything calms down, hopefully I'll hear that he's still alive and that he's coming out of the hospital, you

know? But it was a situation, and at the time, you know, you're not really thinking about it, you know you're just like okay, let me just do what I have to do. And you know, I'm pretty much like, I was in the Army, so I pretty much know how to keep my cool. And the triage also helped a lot. Cause I think if I didn't know that, I probably would have had everybody on my bus. Because everybody had the M.I. or seizures, but it was just, everyone was in shock. They couldn't believe it, you know? So it's like, let me just triage this one, triage, this one, you have an M.I.? Have you had a history before? You take any medicine? No, okay, you get a green tag. And that's all it was. But as we started getting more towards it, it started getting more serious. Then when we got that guy, that guy saved my life too. That's the main thing I tell everybody. I might have saved his life, but he definitely saved me and my partners' life. That's what me and my partner say. It was just a blessing, you know? You know, that's it. That's all I got to say. Yeah, that's it.

A: This concludes my interview with Paramedic Andre Cherrington. The time now is 1725 hours.

File No. 9110037

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JUAN RIOS

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

JUAN RIOS

CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 1430 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview at Battalion 31, EMS with the following individual

JUAN RIOS: EMT Juan Rios.

Q: Please state your rank and where you're assigned.

A: EMT, I'm assigned to Battalion 31, Unit 31 David, tour two.

Q: Okay, Mr. Rios, just give us your account of the events of September 11th. You were working that day?

A: Yeah, I was working with my partner, David Blacksburn. We drove up, you know, every morning we go under the Brooklyn bridge and we, you know, we read our newspaper. In front of us, there was a medic unit from Long Island College, so, you know, they look and they saw a plane going into the World Trade Center. On the north side I think it was. Then they make a U-turn, they tell me and my partner, you know, a plane just went inside the World Trade Center, come on, let's go. So we were on the radio, and we're telling them, you know, we're going over there. So we went, we went on the Brooklyn Bridge. We saw, you know, the fire, smoke and everywhere people screaming. So we park on the South Side, on Liberty.

Q: You parked your vehicle at ?

A: At Liberty.

Q: Liberty and what intersection?

A: I think it was West End and Washington.

Q: Okay.

A: And then, when the second plane hit, debris started to fall down, so

Q: Okay, when you got there and stopped at Washington and Liberty, what was happening around you?

A: People screaming, people just, it was total chaos. People were screaming, debris was falling, I looked up and I saw people just throwing themselves out of the

buildings. They were landing on roofs. I heard they were landing on people, and it was just total chaos.

Q: Okay, did you, when you got there, did you report to any supervisor or ?

A: There was a Lieutenant, but I didn't it was total chaos that everyone was just almost doing their own thing. But, I just saw one Lieutenant there.

Q: Okay, did he approach you, or did you approach him?

A: He approached us and we had a patient in back, and um

Q: Where did you get the patient from?

A: She ran into us. She was having like, an anxiety attack.

Q: Okay.

A: So we gave her, you know, oxygen and shit.

Q: That was from the World Trade Center?

A: Yeah. So she, she just calmed down. She was on the bus, in the ambulance. Then when the second plane hit, the Lieutenant told us to go to Washington and Albany, which is around the corner. We parked with at least 20 ambulances. So we just went there, we were waiting for people to come so we could take them to the hospital, but nobody was coming.

Q: Okay, what happened to the original patient that you had?

A: When the second one hit, you know, we heard like a loud explosion and debris was coming down. Everyone was like get out, get out and she got scared, she ran out of the bus, and I don't know where she went. We moved the bus, and they told us to park them in two lines, at least ten ambulances in each line. I was in the back waiting, you know, so we could wait for patients and I was hooking up the regulator to the O-2, when I hear people screaming and a loud explosion, and I heard like "sssssssss " the dust like "sssssssss " So I come out of the bus, and I look and I see a big cloud of dust and debris coming from the glass through the condominium, the other building, and like, glass falling. So I just started to run, everybody ran, so I just ran. Our bus, it got totaled.

JUAN RIOS

Yeah, like broken windows, the back was full with debris and dust, other peoples' equipment, they wouldn't even know. So, I just ran to Battery Park with everybody. It was me, my partner, and another voluntary medic, and three or two cops.

Q: Do you know any of their names?

A: No, I don't know any of their names.

Q: Just, the only person you knew was your partner?

A: Yeah. So, we just ran, ran as far you know, when the second one we heard it, and more dust came. Not debris, just smoke. All we heard was "Sssssssss " like a "Sssss" sound. We ran, we ran at least a mile away from the ferry. But there was two chiefs, I don't know their names?

Q: Were they EMS chiefs?

A: EMS chiefs.

Q: Okay.

A: Out of nowhere I seen an ambulance coming. A guy driving with two people in the back. The chief got on the radio asking for boats to come so we could take the people to Jersey City. Whoever had to be treated we treated on the ambulance. Another, I think it was like a, not an ambulance, but another like, van with supplies came over. They brought you know, oxygen, and a whole bunch of stuff.

Q: Okay, was that a fire department vehicle?

A: Yeah, a fire department vehicle.

Q: Was it in like an LSU or something?

A: No, just EMS.

Q: Okay, you don't know? Just a van with all kinds of equipment?

A: Yeah, right, it came with a Lieutenant. Like two Lieutenants and

Q: And where was that?

JUAN RIOS

A: Battery Park. You know, we treated many people just with asthma. We gave them Albuterol, and we just put them on the boat to Jersey City. After we cleared that up, they had another sector in the ferry, there were a whole bunch of people there.

Q: So basically you ended up at like a triage area in Battery Park?

A: We made our own triage area in Battery Park. After we finished everything, we went to the ferry.

Q: Okay, did you sustain any injuries that day?

A: No, no.

Q: Other than being totally covered in

A: Covered with um, dirt and

Q: Okay, you don't have asthma or anything?

A: No, I don't have asthma.

Q: Okay, so you ended up treating patients and ?

A: There were a whole bunch of people who had, you know, the carts. They had water, ice cream, so they were generous enough to give us, they offered that we could take whatever we wanted to take. There were giving people water, soda, ice cream, pretzels, potato chips. They said, whatever you need just take from here.

Q: At any time did you get separated from your partner?

A: No.

Q: Okay, anything else you want to add to your story?

A: It was I'm never gonna forget the experience, you know? I still think about it, cause I went back on Friday to do overtime.

Q: This past Friday?

A: Yeah, and I was in the same spot I was in when it happened. I saw the windows of the condominium, they were all damaged, you know. Say I just stood there, you never know what could have happened. You know I could just, you know, I could've died. So it just, it brought a lot of memories back, you know? You know, just the bus, in

the back got totaled, other people's equipment in there covered with dust and all the broken glass. Cause I was debating should I stay in the back or just run? I saw everybody run, so I ran. I just started. You know, I started at the academy in December of 2000, I just came into the field in February. To have eight months on the job and to see this

Q: Yeah, something that you never want to see again, I'm sure. Okay Juan, thank you very much. This concludes the interview with EMT Juan Rios, the time now is 1439 hours.

File No. 9110038

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DANIEL WHITMAN

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

D. WHITMAN

PAUL RADENBERG: The time is 1441 hours, and this is Paul Radenberg with the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with

DANIEL WHITMAN: Dan Whitman, Battalion 31, shield number 5300, EMS FDNY.

Q: Okay, Mr. Whitman is an Emergency Medical Technician. We are conducting this interview regarding the events of September 11,2001 at EMS Battalion 51.

A: 31.

Q: Correction, 31. Okay, start basically, with, you know, making your way down to the Trade Center. You were off duty?

A: I was off duty, I made my way down to Ground Zero. I was directed by Police Officers and Traffic Officers to stop by the Battalion station, cause they wouldn't let me walk all the way down to Ground Zero originally. And I was down at the battalion station, I think it was on Warren Street. One of those cross streets by Ground Zero. They just had a plethora of people there. People from all over the Eastern Seaboard. They had medics from Connecticut and tons of people down there, there was lots of people there. I was directed to go to South Ferry. There at South Ferry, it had even more people with very little patience. I was down there for a significant amount of time. Then I was directed down to Ground Zero to treat people. There were firefighters right on site with saline and Visene for our eyes. And, I don't know, I spent about 15 hours there.

D. WHITMAN

Q: Okay, the first station that you stopped at, that was a temporary aid station?

A: Yes.

Q: When you were on your way down there, and that was somewhere around Warren Street, right?

A: Warren Street, right. Warren Street if I recall.

Q: Okay, do you remember who sent you from Warren Street to South Ferry?

A: I couldn't tell you, all I know is that they outranked me.

Q: Was it a fire officer, EMS?

A: It was EMS. He was wearing a blue jacket, it looked like an EMS coat. So I guess it was EMS.

Q: Okay, and then, when you got down to South Ferry, who sent you up from South Ferry?

A: It's not that I was sent up, I couldn't go home anyway, so I got released there, and that's where I spent the majority of my time, at South Ferry. I signed off that I was leaving. I was going through, I got to Ground Zero, and there I was directed to treat the patients with Visene and saline, just to clear their eyes, the firefighters.

Q: Who gave you that direction? Do you remember?

A: Um, I think it was a doctor down there. There was a doctor down there,

cause the firefighters were just coming up with the same thing, stuff in their eyes. So they just said we should have people down there, I talked to the medics down there, the army guys, I went down with them. The chief medical officer on scene told us all to go back. I don't know who he was. He was in a firefighter outfit. So after that I was on about my 15th hour, I was getting tired. I walked all the way down from the Bronx to get there. That's about when I went home.

Q: Do you remember seeing any EMS personnel that you recognized that had come in from home in civilian clothes, rather than in uniform?

A: None that I can recall like that. The only one that I did see was Gary Smiley, that I know by name and face. He had a bunch of people in his ambulance with him who I could tell you who they were by face, but by name I couldn't really help you out. But Gary Smiley's the one I really know by name and face.

Q: Okay, did, while you were down there, what point in the job do you remember getting down there? Were you down there between the plane impact and the towers coming down?

A: As the tower was coming down, the second tower.

Q: As the second tower came down?

A: Yes, that's when I got down there.

Q: Do you remember where you were down there when the second tower came down?

D. WHITMAN

A: I was a couple of blocks away. I was close enough for the cloud of smoke to come over me, but, I didn't really feel the direct debris. So three blocks maybe.

Q: So, still north of the trade center?

A: I think so.

Q: Okay, and, you did say before when we were talking that you made your way down with a marine?

A: Yes. From there was an armory. And I heard over 1010 WINS that all military personnel report to the nearest armory. I'm in the military, so I went over there. And when I got there, that's when the second plane hit. I was released from there because it was a National Guard Unit, and I'm a Reserve Unit. So the Marine and I, we know each other, we decided to go down to Ground Zero, make our way down there.

Q: You don't remember his name by chance?

A: Uh, no. I can tell you what he looks like. Hahaha.

Q: Okay, in your travel from the first aid station up on Warren Street, down to South Ferry, how did you make that trip? That was on foot or ?

A: On foot, yeah.

Q: It was walking?

A: Yeah, actually walking, and maybe 3 or 4 blocks we got picked up by Long Island College, they have this ambulance they call the "Beast." It's just a really big ambulance and awkward looking. They picked us up for a couple

blocks. Me, the Marine, a doctor, and 2 nurses. They picked us all up, cause we were all travelling down together. Then they took them down to South Ferry, and we got dropped off at the aid station on Warren. Around that area. So it's about two or three blocks.

Q: Okay, so really other than Gary Smiley, no other EMS names that you recognize?

A: The faces I recognize, not the names

Q: Okay, any other thoughts or impressions on the job? Anything that makes it stand out?

A: Well, an event that kind of stands out, it was weird to me for the Chief Medical Officer to tell me and the other people treating the firefighters on site when they were just walking up to get their eyes washed out, it's just a simple saline solution to wash their eyes out to continue working, for them to get sent all the way up there when you could have people on site. I don't know, he was under a lot of stress, I'm not knocking what he did, but that didn't make sense to me. It was a little chaotic, but we weren't prepared for a situation like this, there's nothing you can really say, but that would be my only thing.

Q: Okay, just to clarify it a little bit, you were at the Warren Street station when the second tower came down?

A: No, I was on my way to Warren Street.

D. WHITMAN

Q: You were on your way? Still on your way?

A: Yeah, I was only a few blocks away and the smoke cloud came through. First I saw people running, and then I saw the cloud behind them. And that's when I started running.

Q: Everybody was running

A: But it was, I don't know .oh, another thing that I found odd about this, it's a sad comparison but it was like a video game. Cause every once in a while you'd walk a couple blocks, and on the corner, covered in debris and soot, if you didn't walk into it, there was supplies. Like you know, there was supplies, different stations, different areas, just sitting there. No one knew what they were. Like, pallets of water, but nobody knew they were there. You know? Nobody knew. You had to like, kick off the dirt, or pick up stuff. That's the only thing I found weird, that was kind of weird. Other than that, that's it I guess.

A: Okay, the time is now 1450 hours, interview is concluded.

File No. 9110039

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC GARY SMILEY

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 10. The time is 1435 hours. My name is Mike Tambasco. I'm an investigator assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 31, conducting an interview with Paramedic Gary Smiley into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center.

Q. Gary, do me a favor. Give me your name, rank and the unit that you were on and then feel free.

A. Gary Smiley, Paramedic, Battalion 31. That day I was working 31 Young Tour 2, 7 o'clock to 3:00. I heard the initial reports over the radio and we were assigned to the job. We were at Engine 207 at the time getting gas on over on Tillary Street. We started to respond. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge. From the Brooklyn Bridge you could already see the tower burning. It hit you in your mind that this was going to be bad.

We initially responded in to lower Manhattan and ended up responding to Church Street in front of 5 World Trade Center. The only reason I think that is because in 1993 when I responded to that bombing, that's where the initial staging was.

When we pulled up there were two other

ambulances there that arrived simultaneously. I took command of those two and informed them to set up triage area across the street on the far side of Church, which from the map would be by St. Pauls cemetery. We got our equipment out. I started to give them direction. The helmets, coats and to get their equipment out. My partner Danny Rivera proceeded on the sidewalk towards the front of 5 World Trade Center because there were people coming out of the building that were hurt and they seemed to be milling around the front doors, so he was giving them instructions to get out of the building and to come off of the plaza and come across Church Street.

Several people came out and they stumbled. He grabbed a couple. As I was coming across the street, across Church Street, is when the second plane hit the south tower, at that point we ran across the street going towards St. Pauls and there was a fire engine on the corner of that corner of Vesey. We hid behind the fire engine and we got hit with a lot of debris.

It took I don't know how long for that to stop. I know it was hot because we all were -- I remember Danny looking at me and saying you are like

red as a beet, because we probably got flash burns from the fireball.

At that point there was everybody was running around crazy. A lot of people were coming up to us screaming and I didn't see that many people injured at that time. There was a lot of bodies, bodies came out of the sky at that point. In fact we were hit with debris, which turned out to be human remains.

I remember a gentleman coming up to us with a leg screaming to help him. It wasn't his leg. It was somebody else's leg. We got back in the vehicles and we moved them up Vesey going towards Broadway. I pulled up on the sidewalk. There was like a Cabrini unit there and another EMS unit.

At that point we started to get a lot of hysterical people, a lot of patients. I remember one patient going by us that was already dead that they had on the scoop, that the EMTs had stopped us and asked us and we had said that they were already dead. The guy was basically decapitated.

At that point I made a decision. I told Danny I said, I think the best bet would be to go to West and Vesey, because that's where -- that was the main staging area or the last one. So we thought that

would be a good idea, so we took the two units that were with us and came around Broadway down Vesey past 5 and 6.

There was a lot of debris in the street. There was a lot of burning debris in the street. I didn't see many people at that point. There wasn't anybody to stop and help. There was just a lot of emergency vehicles apparently coming down that way. We ended up -- we pulled into Vesey and West. There seemed to be a lot of fire engines already staged there. We met up with Captain Pincus and Chief Goldfarb.

We parked the truck. We were the second vehicle in off of West and Vesey. There was a Citywide ambulance that was the first one, catty corner to the second. Equipment was taken out and they had staged us in the front of 3 World Financial Center on the upper steps of it. There was other units on the lower steps, which was directly in front of 6 and off at the angle of the north tower.

At that point a lot of people were just standing around, I remember Manny Delgado was there, Dr. Cherson, a number of volunteers came up to us asking if they could help. About six or seven EMTs.

They told me to start taking down names and numbers so I started taking down their names and their EMT numbers just to keep track of them. At that point nobody knew what was going on.

There was about -- I think there was 3 ALS units and 7 BLS units. Captain Pincus asked for a BLS and ALS unit that he could designate as fast units to go into the lobby. Me and Danny volunteered. Another BLS crew volunteered. They were just waiting for a final preparation to know when we were going to make it across the street.

At that point, I met up with a couple of other guys from our Battalion who also came down to stage there. EMT Felton, Sean Cunniffe. I remember Felton because we started to notice people coming off the building, coming off the north tower and at first we didn't know what was going on, and then you could see that they were jumping. In fact I had to actually hold Felton because he wanted to run across the street and catch them. He wanted -- he was hysterical and he just wanted to catch them. I told him that he couldn't do that. They were hitting the ground, of course, exploding. It was horrible. We must have -- we probably saw about a dozen people jump.

At that point they took everybody's -- several people coming around taking everybody's name and badge numbers and what units they were, so they knew who was there. There were a slew of vehicles coming in that had already arrived on West Street, private ambulances, our units, proprietary units.

Then we went back. We had gone down to the bottom steps and they went back up the top steps. We were standing by the stretcher. In fact, I think because they were getting ready to send me and Danny in to the forward triage area when the first tower, which would be the south tower, somebody yelled it was collapsing.

We ran up the steps and into the AMEX building, which would be 3 World Financial Center. All the equipment was left, we just dropped everything and we ran. Debris came down, but from that tower, the lobby held, at least the windows held. We were covered with debris but we were in the lobby. Then we heard pounding on the glass for some of the guys that didn't make it in the lobby, so we broke out the windows to the front of 3, American Express building. We got those guys into the lobby.

Chief Carrasquillo was there too. He ended

up -- he started taking a head count and he told me to take a head count. There was a lot of people running around that had really -- they were losing it. It was very understandable.

I grabbed as much equipment as I could from the outside and a couple of the other guys and we set up in the back part of the lobby, BLS on one side and ALS on the other side, figuring that we would be getting a lot of patients. The air was not too bad in there, and that's what we basically did. We figured we would get a large influx of people coming in at that point. Nobody started coming in.

At that point Chief Goldfarb said that he smelled gas. Nobody smelled gas except Chief Goldfarb. Chief Goldfarb smelling gas saved about 40 people, because we moved through the back lobby and out the side entrance on to the farther end of Vesey Street going towards North End Avenue.

That's when we started to hear the radio transmissions of Maydays. On our radios we heard EMS Mayday. I knew over Chief Carrasquillo's radio I was hearing FD Maydays. This went on for 5 minutes straight. We heard the units calling, we heard our units, we heard 1 Mary, 6 Mary, 6 Adam.

We asked Captain Pincus about after 5 minutes, we said what are we going to do here. He said I can't force you to go. We said well, we want to go. So me, Danny and another medic who works for us but he was working for New York Hospital that day. I don't know his last name. He works at New York, Carlos.

Q. Do you remember, his first name is Carlos?

A. Yes. He said if you want to go find these guys, we can. It didn't seem like at that point there was really, besides our group, there was nobody else there, at least that was alive. So we took trauma bags and started off and our scoop stretchers off and started off walking back down Vesey and we made the turn on to West Street. We passed the building with the 3, American Express building.

I remember seeing in front of the collapse unit for Rescue 3 there were 3 Battalion Chiefs that were there and I asked the Battalion Chief, did you see any of the guys. I said we can't see anybody. We don't know where they are calling for help for. That was the only firemen I saw. I didn't see anybody else. I don't know how far down, we didn't get too much farther down West Street luckily.

Q. Going south?

A. South, going towards the north pedestrian bridge, when you heard a rumble. That's when you looked up and you saw the second tower coming down. There was no communication at that point. It was -- I just remember turning and running. I know Danny, we eventually found out where everybody ran to, the 3 of us. But I never saw the two other Battalion Chiefs again. I know my partner ended up dragging the one that was alive out.

I ended up running back up the steps towards 3. I made it right to the corner and got knocked down by the blast. I guess it was the gush of wind. I got hit in the back with some cement and I had just made it around the first ambulance and I dove under my truck, which was vehicle 305. That's what a little voice in my head told me to do. I crawled underneath the ambulance and that's where I was for about the next 15 minutes. I remember a lot of debris hitting the truck and I couldn't breathe and I couldn't see.

I don't know how long that went on for. When it sounded as if the debris stopped, I couldn't -- the sides were already covered as if it had snowed, so I started to dig and I cleared enough away that I could see a glow, which I knew was not -- which was fire,

because there was fires burning around the vehicles. So I decided it was better to get out and try and make it than burn to death.

So I crawled out from under there and you couldn't see still. I just remembered the same side of the truck I came out of, so I figured if I point myself in the direction I will be going away from the towers. So I just started crawling and I got up and I started walking. You still couldn't see. It was as if you had your head in a sack. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't see.

I tried calling for Danny. Every time I took a deep breath it was just worse. At that point I had dropped the lantern I had. The equipment was gone. I wasn't concerned too much about that. I didn't notice at the time that I had injuries to my leg and stuff like that. I just tried -- my only thought at that point was to get out of there.

I ended up walking across Vesey into a construction area that is in between North End Avenue and the West Side Highway. I found a chain link fence that I bumped into that I decided let me follow the fence and see where it goes. At least I can hold on to something. I was going to climb over the fence and

decided just go alongside it. I went alongside the fence for a while. It seemed like forever.

Then I encountered a fireman who was also disoriented. I don't know who he is. I don't remember his name. I don't remember what company. We walked together along the fence. We still couldn't see. We made it around the side of the fence, then we started hearing voices calling, anybody out there. We started -- we just followed the natural turn of the fence and we ended up from what they tell me somewhere near North End Avenue there was a salad bar that was across from 4 Merrill Lynch -- the Merrill Lynch building and there was about seven or eight cops in there, Port Authority guys, a couple of firemen.

The owner and his daughter or his wife, they dragged us in there. Everybody -- the cloud was clearing a little, but there was a lot of fire around there. The parked cars that had been parked there were all on fire and which wasn't on fire was exploding. We didn't know at that point. I know that one of the police officers said that he thought that they were bombs and maybe they rigged them to blow up. Just secondary explosions. We didn't know what to do.

We went towards the back of the restaurant,

there was a couple of firemen got in there. One fireman yelling let's get the gas off. So he went into the kitchen area and they killed the gas. They had a couple of hoses that had these big industrial sinks, so we started hosing each other off because the stuff was burning you. I guess it was just because the ash was so hot.

Stayed in there for about 20 minutes. The explosions outside were too much, so we decided to get out of there and we ended up coming out of there and we ended up on North End Avenue. They had set up a field hospital in I don't know what building. They dragged us in there for a while. Then there was a report of a gas leak in there so I decided it would be better if I exit. There were people that were getting treated. They could walk, basically ran out of there. Everybody ran out of there.

It must have been about 50 of us at that point. People started saying let's get some of the vehicles, you know. We had thought at that point that we need something to get out of there. So Emergency Services, I know there was about six or seven ESU cops and they basically told us that they are going to stay in front of us and I don't know what they thought. I

think they kind of thought that there were ground troops coming in to kill us next. At least that seemed to be -- they were going to keep us from whatever was coming. It was crazy, people thought that there was -- they were going to bomb everything.

People were running around. FBI people saying that there were bombs in different parks and just running from one area to the next. I remember seeing Captain Rivera there from Manhattan -- from the Bronx. He is now in Queens, who I remember we got to the point where we were actually running out of places to go. We were going to go into the water. I said maybe we should take off our stuff and go into the ocean. We didn't know where else to go.

Because there was, every building was apparently -- the police said there was gas leaks and they said they were going to blow up and we had no place else to go. Somebody actually -- a couple of guys ran back down Vesey and got into some of the vehicles, because mine had pulled up. We had about seven or eight ambulances at that point and a couple of Emergency Services cars.

Basically we didn't do much for a little while. There was not much to do. We were kind of

trapped back there. We couldn't get out. I don't remember how we actually got out of there and who directed us to get out of there. We ended up -- I don't know how we ended up -- we ended up on Greenwich Street I guess, like an hour later. About 7 units ended up on Greenwich and Duane and I remember meeting Captain, no, Chief Wells there. He asked me was the Lieutenant with us. I said no, he told me I was a senior guy and he was going to take over that area so we set up on Greenwich Street.

They had about 5 or 6 doctors and they had about 6 ambulances. We spent the better part of I think 6 or 7 hours there doing absolutely nothing until 7 collapsed. We still did nothing because there was no patients. Everybody is still -- there is a lot of trouble breathing. You just kind of ignored it. I knew my leg was bleeding, I had some pretty big cuts on my leg, but I really didn't -- I just bandaged it up. I don't think -- you kind of knew that there was -- you were going to be needed. They said that a lot of people were dead so we didn't even know how many were left.

From there we were asked to respond to the Millennium Hotel later on in the nighttime by

Lieutenant Jack Sullivan. One of the volunteers said that they had reports of patients that they found in the Millennium. So we volunteered to go there, so we took the truck around to the Millennium. I remember were driving through the streets, seeing Chief Gombo walking with Russ Terranova and we continued going down towards the Millennium. Ended up not finding anybody at the Millennium.

We brought our trucks around to One Liberty Plaza. We worked there for the next 5 or 6 hours until we were relieved at about 2:00 in the morning. We worked inside that field hospital just taking care of what was coming in.

Throughout the night you couldn't see. You had to wash your eyes out every 5 to 10 minutes. It was pretty blinding. I guess the adrenaline kept going through the whole time, because even at Liberty Plaza there were several times when you just saw the whole block start running. Everybody -- we must have ran up and down that street 5 or 6 times because stuff was coming off the buildings and there were more collapses.

It wasn't till I got released and starting coming back, I guess when we started to like settle

down a little bit. By the time I got back to Brooklyn, I couldn't breathe at all. That's when they took me over to Long Island College Hospital. I was admitted for severe respiratory distress, severe smoke inhalation. I had developed (inaudible). They said not so much from being trapped but from the severe dehydration from the dust. I guess from the heat, because it was so hot and you didn't take your turnout coat off and your helmet didn't come off your head, because you were afraid you were going to get hit with something.

I was admitted there and I spent up until Friday in the hospital. I was released. That's about it. I went back down Friday night on my own time to dig with some guys from New York Hospital, because I just felt that I needed to pitch in and see what there was. That about covers the events the way it was.

Q. Gary, unless there is anything else you can think of or want to add to it --

A. Just looking at the questions and stuff, I don't think anybody was intentionally put in any harm's way. There was a lot of volunteers coming up to you, some that I never saw again. I hope to God they didn't get killed, but it seems as if there was a tremendous

amount of EMTs that were coming out of nowhere. Not our people, just volunteer EMTs. I don't know what happened to them.

There was no warning when the buildings came down. Even after the first collapse you really didn't even have an inclination that the second tower was going to come down. I don't think anybody was aware. The immediate people that I was with during the collapse, you know, I met up with Danny about half an hour, 45 minutes later. More like an hour later.

Danny had hid in the corner of the AMEX building and wedged himself in by one of the window ledges and he flattened himself out and he found some stretchers and put them on top of himself. That's what cushioned the debris from killing him.

That was it. I know the other medic that was with us got out as well. He ended up running into the lobby and continued in the lobby, because the lobby was crushed. That's what I said before about Goldfarb and the smell of gas. Because from what I have seen of the building, we wouldn't fare too well staying in that lobby. We probably would have all been crushed.

I didn't see anybody that was missing, that are still missing. I guess that about covers it for

now. I'm sure if you ask me tomorrow I would have about 500 more things to say. I'm sure you don't want to have a dissertation on my state of mind. I won't give it to you.

Q. All right, if there is anything else that you want to add later on, that's not a problem. We will get it in there.

A. You know, it was just the thing that struck us as strange when we first pulled up was the small amount of people that were coming out of the building. Remember in '93 when we pulled up into the same spot there was a thousand people coming out of that building. When we pulled out there was maybe 100. They were milling in the lobby. I remember we had to scream at them to get out of the lobby and to come across the street.

There were a lot of people who finally listened to us. Thank God, because I'm sure they are still alive today because of that. That was one of the things that really stood out. Where are they? Then of course, after the first one collapsed, it was basically nobody was around. You know, I think everybody you know that was in my immediate group, everybody really stuck together and I got to give them a lot of credit.

I give Goldfarb, Carrasquillo, and Jace Pincus, Captain Pincus, a lot of credit. They kept their heads pretty well. Nothing on their part endangered us at all. Everything that we did we volunteered to do.

I'm sure they were -- you know, they were acting in good faith. Timing was very good for them. It was basically the only thing that stood in the way of us getting killed. Just a couple of minutes.

So that was about it.

MR. TAMBASCO: I thank you. The interview is concluding at 1503 hours. Thanks again.

File No. 9110040

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALAN COOKE

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 10, 2001. My name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview of the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. We are interviewing EMT Alan Cooke of Battalion 31 of the EMS. The starting time for this interview is 1737 hours.

Q. Mr. Cooke, I will just ask you to give me your rank and your assignment on that day and feel free to go right ahead.

A. My name is Alan Cooke, EMT D. I was working 32 Adam Tour 2. Initially what I remember or how it started is when I first came into work I saw the smoke when I was walking into the station. I really didn't pay any mind as to what it may have been. Somebody told me a plane crashed into the World Trade Center, so I thought it was a small engine plane. When I get to the parking lot and I saw the first tower burning.

Then while I was standing in the parking lot, that's when I saw the plane crash into the second tower. So my partner and I, Victor Camile, we got our equipment together, got the bus checked out and we were assigned to 333 Rector Street for an asthmatic. That's how we ended up going into Manhattan.

Went into Manhattan. We encountered heavy traffic, which really delayed our response time getting to Rector Street.

Q. How did you go, over the bridge?

A. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge, which was closed off at that time. We got flagged down by a fire Lieutenant so that he could get over the bridge with us. We stopped. He got on. We took him over the bridge. We dropped him off at the foot of the bridge and then went down by Water Street because that's the only way I know to get to the west side. We didn't know exactly what was going on at that time.

Like I said it was heavy traffic. I think we left on that job about 9:30, had to be. We were fighting traffic and by the time we got down there I had no idea what time it was. I asked one of the officers where Rector Street was. She directed us past Rector Street because, you know, she was sending us to the staging. I guess by that time that's when they had all the injuries from the second.

We must have made it to as far as maybe Cedar.

Q. Coming up from the south?

A. Yes, coming from the south, heading north on

the West Side Highway. At that time, we stopped and that's when I heard the rumble. I a heard a rumble. Both of us looked up and we saw a part of the building. I saw a part of the building coming down. I had thought it was just one piece of the building coming down. I didn't in my imagination didn't think it was the entire building coming down. And my partner, I guess she realized it before I did. She told me to drive, kept yelling drive, drive. I just yelled back drive where, because I couldn't go forward. That's where everything is happening. Couldn't go back because of the congestion from the crowd.

So somehow I made a U turn. I don't know how. I made the U turn. I drove down the west side and I went to go under the overpass. There is a little underpass.

Q. The tunnel underpass that goes around?

A. Right. I figured if we stopped there we would be all right. But then I said well, I don't know what's happening. We might get trapped in there. Anyway, on the way in that direction going back south, I looked in my rearview mirror and that's when you saw everything coming down. All you saw were people

running.

I remember this one cop, she stands out in my mind. One dark little heavy cop running, but you know how you just saw the ball of flame and dirt and everything. It just engulfed everybody. So we drove. I kept telling my partner we got to go back, because I knew there had to be people hurt.

We got to the beginning of the FDR Drive, by the ferry, and I guess because of the way the streets channel everything, one of the fire balls or whatever, had to have made it as far as the South Street Seaport, because what happened at that time, it seemed like an explosion was coming from there. I thought an explosion was coming from there. That's when everybody started running towards us from the Seaport.

Now we had everybody running us from the Seaport and running to us from the west side, so we couldn't go either way. That's when all the ash and everything started coming. We had a couple of people stop us because they were complaining of chest pain.

Q. At that point you were like what, down by where the ferry is?

A. We were down by the ferry at that time. We had a couple of people stop us complaining about chest

pain, asthma, couple of pregnant people, mostly about 2 or 3 couples were throwing their kids at us, they wanted to get the kids inside. Nobody could breathe and everybody was trying to climb up on to the wall of the FDR Drive.

This guy fell off the wall and hit the back of his head, so they were calling me for that, so we are trying to treat one woman with chest pain and one woman, she was saying her stomach hurt and she is pregnant and then I would have to go immobilize the guy off the wall, who fell off the wall, and the thing I remember most is when it got dark, when everything just clouded.

I knew at that time there weren't supposed to be any planes flying, but I heard planes flying and at that point I thought I was going to die. I really did. I thought what happened was that there was an explosion at the World Trade Center. Then I thought there was another one at the Seaport. I thought that was a secondary and herding everybody towards the Brooklyn Bridge, because everybody was asking me where should we go, where should we go. I just told them to get on the highway and head north or towards Brooklyn.

Now I'm thinking maybe everybody is heading

towards the bridge and now here comes even another plane or a rocket or something to take out the bridge.

Luckily it didn't happen. We treated as many people as we could. Like I said, I immobilized the guy who fell off the wall. We got him to Beekman. I have no idea what time it was.

Q. You were able to transport him in your bus?

A. Yes, we transported about 5 adults and 3 kids. I don't know how we had them situated, but we got everybody to Beekman and as soon as I pulled up to Beekman, going the route that I took, is when I noticed the other, that's when the second tower collapsed. Everything was coming at us as we were trying to get to Beekman.

Q. You were going up, I guess Water Street there?

A. Yes. So we finally made it. We got to Beekman and that's when the cloud and everything was coming towards Beekman. By the time we got all of our patients out we just stopped and helped get everybody in that all the ambulances were pulling up. Beekman needed somebody with a head injury transported to Bellevue, so we transported that gentleman to Bellevue. He didn't make it.

Q. That wasn't the same patient that you --

A. No, it wasn't -- I don't know whatever happened to him. We took the head injury to Bellevue. We were BBP, so what we did was we went to the old Bellevue station, just exchanged equipment and went back up to Ground Zero.

There we encountered a few more people, took them back to Beekman, then we went back up to Ground Zero.

Q. Over, where on the west side now when you went back?

A. Yes. It was like just driving you are going to find somebody. We went back up and that's basically when things were more or less in order. Like I said, I had no frame. I had no idea what time it was during all this. That's when they set up the triage at the terminal, the ferry terminal.

Q. Down by the Staten Island Ferry?

A. Right, and they wanted the ambulance staged in a certain way. I'm going to say I didn't like where they wanted us staged, because it was like an alley, so if one vehicle went down you couldn't get the other vehicles out, so we staged on the corner.

During that time we went back up to Ground

Zero to see if we could help out there. All you saw was, you know, what was left of the vehicles and quiet. It was like a snow storm. There was nothing we could do at that time. We were released from the scene. We came back. Oh, wait, while we were down there staging, you ran into a lot of co-workers.

I mean it was just unbelievable the way we all greeted each other like we knew how lucky we was.

Q. Happy to see each other?

A. Yes, I didn't -- we went to the front and saw like two or three ambulances were completely demolished. I ran into one of my co-workers who had got out just in time. You know, at the end of the day --

Q. Who was it?

A. Jackson. Chris Jackson, I think his name is. Then I saw I can't remember the people's name, Marla, she was there.

Q. Marla?

A. Marla, what is her name. I can't think of her name. I can't think of her name. She works 32 Boy. They were covered. She just looked like a big snowman. So I mean it was fast moving and slowest moving -- slow moving at the same time.

We weren't there when the initial impact, but we got there right before the first tower collapsed. That's about it. We were released from the scene. Came in and luckily they allowed us to go home because we were so covered with everything, you know, fiberglass and whatever else was in there.

That's about the end of my story.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you want to add to it, any feelings, anything at all? Up to you.

A. Well, as far as feelings are concerned I appreciate the way the whole company handled the personnel. I just think a lot of people don't realize what we, EMS, went through. I'm quite sure you have heard that a lot. You know, fire, we might have a lot of people, the Fire Department lost a lot of people, Port Authority lost, but, you know, as far as EMS, I don't think we were recognized as far as our presence on the scene, you know. Besides that, nothing.

I wasn't too happy with the fact that the vehicles were staged around the World Trade Center, especially after the second plane hit.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right Alan, thank you for your interview and the information, and I just -- we will conclude this interview at 1749 hours.

File No. 9110041

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JARJEAN FELTON

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

J. FELTON

PAUL RADENBERG: The date is October 10, 2001. The time is 1611 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Jarjean Felton, EMT at Battalion 31. EMS Battalion 31. The Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at EMS battalion 31. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Why don't you start with when you were assigned to the job.

JARJEAN FELTON: It all started, I mean, me and my partner, we was getting breakfast.

Q: Who were you working with?

A: Sean Cuniffe, 48 David, tour two. Me and Cuniffe, we was getting breakfast right here on Fulton Street, Fulton and Flatbush and I'm not sure if there was already a unit down there when the first plane hit, I'm not sure. We just heard them arguing, or saying help, a plane hit this and that, the World Trade tower. So we asked him to put us on that job cause we heard them calling I guess 31 Adam from our same battalion on the job. So we told them, we told the dispatcher to put 48 David on. We asked to be put on the job, I would say like, we was one of the first 5 units put on the job. Cause if you go over the MR you see 48 David tour 2. We was one of the first units put on the job. This was after the first plane hit, so we're going across the Brooklyn Bridge. We see the fire, we see the hole in there. We're just thinking holy, man, what happened? You know what I'm saying? So we get down there…

Q: When you came over the bridge…

A: We came over the bridge, they had everything blocked off. It was like a motorcade, we just followed all the, I don't know, they was unmarked cars. So I assume the Fire Department, the Feds. We just followed them onto the Brooklyn Bridge and down there. We came down, I think we came down Chambers. No, not Chambers. We came down one of these streets, I would say Fulton. Came down, we went up Vesey Street. I would say Berkley Street on the Westside Highway. They had a triage right in front, I guess on Church Street. I had wanted to go there, but Sean was like "no, no, lets go behind like where they assigned us to", cause it was 2 units there. It was a medic and 31 David. I'm not sure of the medic, but it was 31 David. They're another unit assigned to our station. So I had wanted to go down there, because I knew the guys, so I wanted to give them some support. But he was like, come on, let's go to the back. We went to the back, Vesey Street and Westside Highway. That's exactly where our triage was at. We parked our vehicle right here on Vesey Street. It was a Lieutenant right here taking our keys.

Q: Did you recognize that Lieutenant?

A: No, cause I've only been here like a year. So I don't know all the Lieutenants.

Q: Right.

A: My partner said he knew him. We gave the Lieutenant our keys like we normally do when you go to set up triage, I guess all the ambulance parked right here. It

was ambulances, it was fire trucks, it was everything right here on Westside Highway. It was voluntaries-- I seen Fire Patrol. That's where I seen Von Essen, right there on Westside Highway and Vesey Street, right there. We was right here on the Westside, by the American Express Building where they got the make-shift morgue now, he was right under here. This foot bridge.

Q: The pedestrian overpass?

A: The pedestrian overpass. This was probably like, 9. Cause I looked at that MR, the first unit was there at like 8:55. So I would say this was like 9, 10 I would say. I'm not sure the time.

Q: Okay.

A: Give or take a couple minutes, I'm not sure the time. We was there, I would say at least 15 or 10 minutes. There was people jumping, we observed firefighters going in, we observed ESU getting on their Scott Packs, going into buildings and all that. I would say right around that time while we were right under here, under the Westside Highway and pedestrian bridge, I seen a second plane coming. I'm thinking isn't that plane too low? I'm like…then I noticed, I seen it turn. It turned and went right in the building. But we're behind, like this is the building, it went in, and you see the explosion in the front…

Q: On the other side than you?

A: Yeah we see…and I said oh my god, I just sat there with my mouth open like Oh My god, Oh My God. I'm sitting there like Oh My God, and everyone's just

running. But I'm like, why are we running it's on the Church side that all that debris and stuff was from, we was on the Westside Highway so, after that they told us to get along this, it was like this little, like a little sidewalk with grass and all that. They told us to move all of our equipment. We had unloaded our bus, we had long board, we had our stretcher, we had our de-fib. We had all our stuff out. We had our jackets and our helmets on. So they told us to move right here along the sidewalk. So after that, after the second plane they told us to move up, cause we was originally in the street. The told us to move after the second plane. Then, five minutes later…

Q: You had to move back towards the water?

A: No, they had us move like, towards the building more.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause we was in the street, we was in the street, then they told us to move towards the building more. Then eventually we ended up in the building lobby.

Q: In the American Express Building?

A: In the American Express Building. We ended up in the lobby. We're in the lobby, they gave us orders to go into the lobby, take all our equipment, whatever into the lobby because the second plane had just hit. There's people jumping, I at least counted more than...I didn't count, but at least, a minimum of 50 people jumping. I seen a minimum of 50 people jump, couples holding hands. But I was just so like, Oh My God. I've never seen nothing like that, cause I've only been here a year. I've never seen nothing like that. So we're in the building, we're in the American Express Building right

here, we're in there, so we got all our equipment, all the EMS personnel. There's a lot of people in there.

Q: Right.

A: The Lieutenant told us to take all our equipment and go in there. So I go in there, I try to use my cell phone to let my family and friends know what's going on, tell them if they're coming to the city, no, don't come to the city. Let my fiancé know that I'm alright. So I'm on the phone, then I just hear a commotion of people screaming like "Ahhhhhhhhhh…" My girlfriends like what's going on? What's going on? I'm like, I don't know, I gotta go. So I just dropped the phone and as…this building is like glass, made of glass.

Q: Right.

A: So, that time I just dropped the phone and I run, I see tower number 2 coming down. I jumped over the fence in that building.

Q: Yeah.

A: I jumped over a fence coming down. The glass…there was another fence that I couldn't jump over cause it had spikes. I mean, it had the gate with spikes. I was like, man, I'm not hurting myself. So I went around, and as I went around I'm sitting and watching the building come down. I'm watching the building coming down, and I'm standing there right in front of these guys, but I'm not really, I'm just shocked like, I guess, me and my partner we're in this building. We're in there with 31 Adam, a couple of units from our station. The building's coming down, and I see it, I just stop. I'm just

sitting there watching it come down. Sitting in front of all of these guys. Then I just hear somebody call my name "Felton, Felton, come on!" So I just wake up, like out of my trance, like, oh no, and I just start running. We ran right out the door. It's like. PD, a lot of civilians was there too. So PD, they propped the door open, we run out the back of the American Express Building. So we're like right here, the building's coming down, so it's the smoke that's chasing you now. So we ran up this way , we ran up Vesey to the north end. Then they told us to park our vehicles here, on the North end and set up another triage. I notice there's like one or two vehicles left here, 407 was left here cause it wouldn't start. We had EMT Jackson with us, he's 31A. He's the person who just called me and woke me up. So we had him on our bus, drove it right here to the North End, right behind Vesey and North End. So we're right here. The Merv is right here, all of EMS. A lot of ---Fire Department. A lot of department vehicles, ESU, but it was still vehicles like haz-tac units, I seen the haz-tac units, I seen the guys with like the tinfoil suits. I seen a lot of fire trucks left there when the second building came down. The smoke, all the rubble, everything, we have on the masks now. Me, like me and my partner, we just jumped in, we parked right there. So I went down, I went back down. I don't know what made me go right down. I go back down, I'm like, oh man, oh damn, it's like…I still see some people there, but at that time I don't know what possessed me to go back down. I go back down it's like stuff, debris is all over the place. So I go back down to take a look then I just come back up like Yo, it's crazy. We were right here, I'm not really sure what time it is. I'm really not sure what time it is, cause I'm not worried

about that. I wasn't worried about the time. I looked for my partner, they was like "Make sure you have your partner, you two stay together." Cause they was stressing that. "Make sure your partner is with you at all times." So, we were together. After that I don't know what happened. I really don't know what's going on. Really, I'm not really sure what's going on. By that time it was, one was still on fire, that was the last one hit, but that was the first one to come down. I would say like, right when I got back to Vesey and North, that's when one came down. At that time, I just left my vehicle and everybody's just running up North End Avenue. Whatever avenue it is, everyone is running up. I remember seeing we're all running, running like -----There's a little park here, we're running alongside there. I seen firemen, I seen everybody. I seen all types of equipment laying down on the ground, I seen Scott Packs making that noise.

Q: The alarm?

A: Yeah, the alarm for like say, somebody got knocked out and they're laying motionless. That alarm is going off. I just heard that, you just seen a whole bunch of equipment all over the place. Everybody just ran, everybody was just running like, yo… so we're along this, we're in the park, we're over here. The first building came down, everybody's like yo. Me and my partner's running together. Then I just turned back and looked like, Oh man. I'm not sure where the hell we went, but I know we was covered with dust after the first one came down. Everyone was like, Oh man. I seen firefighters ----there's still people in there. It's total chaos at this point, total chaos cause nobody

would have expected those buildings to come down. It's total chaos, and I noticed that when tower one comes down, that's when the glass in the American Express building breaks. So we're all over here, somehow I go back to get my vehicle. I don't know what possessed me, cause it's right here. I went back, got my vehicle, picked up my partner. We're just like driving around. He's calling his family letting them know that he's alright. Somehow we made it to Chambers, to the high school. The high school that they just took over.

Q: Right, Stuyvesant?

A: Stuyvesant High School, they just took over. That's where we got separated. Cause we had a patient there. We had a patient. He was the driver, I was the tech. We had a patient, we had 2 patients basically. We had an ESU guy who said he just made it out the building. He was alright, he wasn't really worried about his injuries. He was just like, I gotta go back in there, I gotta go get my guys. He was just worried about going to get his guys. He said yo, I lost my guys and this and that. I don't remember his name, but I remember him, because he was on the news like a day or two later saying that he just made it out. ESU, I'm not sure, maybe he's a sargent, I'm not sure. But I remember seeing him on the news saying that. I was like, wow, that was one of my patients. It was him and another civilian contractor. He was having an MI, but he didn't know. So a medic jumped on, hooked him up to an EKG. Like yo, you having an MI. So I took off my jacket, I had my helmet still with me. My partner was like, we're gonna take him to the hospital. I was like you got a medic here, so I'm alright, I'm

alright. I'll just go back to the command and just chill out there at Stuyvesant High School. At that time, there was people just raping our bus, just taking all our stuff, like oxygen, taking everything they can get their hands on. Like, we're just gonna take your bus and just, there's a lot of patients and you ain't gonna need all this. It's a restocking station at Bellvue, so just re-stock then come back. So that's basically, I mean, I stayed there the whole time. I was really---cause I didn't know what to think. When I got to Stuyvesant High School, I was like dang, I know there's still people in that building. Cause I seen a lot of people running in the building the time we showed up. Getting in Scott Packs and running in the building. So I know there's people in there, I know there's like, man, nobody would have ever thought them buildings would come down. I'm just sitting there in amazement , the New York City skyline is just depleted now with these two buildings gone. I basically stayed on Chambers. I mean, the only thing that really had me frustrated was they wasn't really trying to let us go back down there.

Q: After the collapse of the second building?

A: Yeah, the second building. They wasn't trying to let us go down there. They had a lot of EMS personnel. I know there was still people around Ground Zero. There had to be some people trapped under trucks, I know that. But they wasn't trying to let us go down. That's the only thing, I really wanted to know why. I understand after it was un-safe. Cause I guess after that 7 came down. Well 7 didn't come down until like 4, 5 o'clock. So I was just wondering, they just kept us cooped up in there for a long

time. They would occasionally let us go back out. I went back out, and walked around. It was messed up. Everybody talking about ---around that time--- there's another plane coming. I mean, we didn't know because we didn't have a TV and we didn't have a radio. We was just going our way. We heard it from the FBI agents or agents down there. We see people just running. I mean, I feel really bad for the people that was on the Church side, cause they really took the brunt of the debris on that side. I heard that an ambulance just got crushed on that side. That's why I really thank my partner for being like, let's go to the Vesey side. Cause there was another triage set up on the Church side, and I guess they was hit hard when the buildings collapsed and when that second airplane hit. I really thank him for that. Other than that, we was just cooped up in Stuyvesant High School for the whole time. Occasionally they let people go back down to the American Express Building. Later that night after 7 came down, they had it as a make-shift morgue too. It was a morgue after that. I was down there, I went down there to do morgue duty later on. I was just happy when I seen members from my Battalion come up. I was happy to see members from EMS period. They had city busses for the EMS workers and all that. I was happy to see them. I was just happy to see familiar faces that I know. That was basically all. I'm sorry for not knowing the times.

Q: No, not a problem.

A: I wasn't worried about knowing the times. I was just trying to get up outta there.

Q: Right, right.

J. FELTON

A: That's just the best of my knowledge. I just know that I spent the night down there, that's all I know.

Q: You said in the beginning that when you were starting, you and Sean were getting breakfast on Fulton Street, okay, and you heard 31 Adam. 31 Adam was already in Manhattan?

A: No, as a matter of fact, 31 David was already in Manhattan. 31 David. That was the unit that was already in Manhattan. They was calling 31 Adam.

Q: Oh, to give them the job?

A: To give them the job. So we heard them and we was like, put us on the back too.

Q: Right.

A: Cause we was like, on Fulton and Flatbush. We was right there by the Manhattan or the Brooklyn Bridge. So we was like, give us the job. We made it there before 31 Adam. When we pulled up on Vesey Street, we came down Vesey Street.

Q: Right.

A: Now I really remember. We came down Vesey Street, probably hit Fulton, came down Vesey, and then he made us park right here. So we went up the end of the block, made a U-turn, came back around and parked. That's exactly how I remember it now. We came down Vesey, went up, did a U-turn,

parked right here. I would say by the Merryl Lynch Building. Like in between that. We parked right between the American Express Building and the Merryl Lynch. What's that, 4?

Q: Yeah, 4 World Financial. Okay, what was your vehicle number?

A: Um, 94.

Q: 94?

A: Yeah. 94. We was parked right there…

Q: And then you moved it again after the second plane went in they had to move it…

A: No, no. After the second plane came in, they had us move into the American Express Building. It wasn't until after the second building came down that they told us to move right there.

Q: And that's North End Avenue and Murray Street?

A: Yeah. I would say around there.

Q: And you said that vehicle 407 was also that, was that assigned here?

A: Yes, it remained here because it was dead.

Q: That was EMT Jackson's vehicle?

A: Yeah, Jackson, 31 Adam. And EMT Wright. Yeah, Jackson and Wright.

Q: Okay.

A: It remained there the whole, even until the night time. Cause when I came back later on to do more duty, it was still there. It was cleaned out, but it was still there though.

Q: Okay, so when you first got here to the American Express Building, you had no patients?

A: No patients at that point.

Q: So your first patient was when you were up at the high school?

A: Yeah, basically. We had no patients from this side because, well the brunt of the work was being done on the Church side. This was behind, I would say it was Hotzollah, a few MetroCare, a lot of private, and we were there too, right there where we was at. Our EMS Lieutenant took control of their units too.

Q: Do you remember any other EMS personnel from the department that was in the American Express Building?

A: I remember my partner, Jackson, Wright, that's basically it. There was probably like 2 or 3 FDNY, and the rest was private. Along this street, they told us just to wait right there. That's another thing that had me pissed off too. Not pissed off, just kinda upset because we're on this job, we're just sitting here, not doing nothing. I mean, there's patients but we gotta just sit in here. I mean, I guess they did it for a certain reason. I wasn't there to dispute, that's not my job. I just did what they told me to do. They told me to wait right here, wait for patients. But I knew that all of the brunt of the

work was on the Church side. That's why I wanted to go there in the first place. Cause I've never seen nothing like this, I'm probably a trauma buff, or something like that. I don't know. We went there, that was our first patient when we got to Stuyvesant High School. I would say 1300 or 1400 hours, I'm not really sure what time it was.

Q: And when you're at the high school, you and your partner split up, right?

A: Before yeah. Right when we got the patient, that's when we split up. Cause he was driving and the medic jumped in the back, and I was like, I mean, I know there's nothing really for me to do except sit here and ride. There's a medic, so I just stayed.

Q: So Sean drove with the medic?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was the medic from the city?

A: He was from the department, yeah. FDNY, yeah. I didn't know him. I mean, I did see a few medics that I knew right before we got the patient. They was like, oh, we just got outta here. We took a patient that was burnt 90% to Cornell. This and that. But when we got our patient, I didn't know the medic. I gave him oxygen, I wiped his face off. He was just shaken up. He's like, I just got outta there with this guy too. I guess him and the ESU guy was on the same floor. He said that he was on the second floor and they had just got him out.

Q: And the ESU cop, do you remember him saying what tower he was in?

A: I'm about to say tower 2. Yeah, tower 2.

Q: He was in Tower 2?

A: Yes. He was in Tower 2.

Q: Okay, and you were treating him after tower one came down, or in between?

A: No this was way after. Way after both buildings came down. I'm not really sure of the time. But this was after both of them came down. This was when they was like, it's unsafe to go down there, everybody come back. That's when all of the buildings in the surrounding area was on fire. That's when they was worried about 7 coming down. This was after they had moved, they had a triage point at Stuyvesant, had a little make-shift hospital there. One of the main triages was at Chelsea Piers.

Q: When you were at the American Express Building, you only saw the one EMS lieutenant?

A: There was a few EMS lieutenants. But he was the one that was directing traffic. It was EMS lieutenants right there at Vesey and Westside Highway. I was mainly right there among the firefighters and all the ESU cops. I specifically seen Von Essen right there at Westside Highway and Vesey. I remember because I was leaning against one of the trucks. I remember somebody saying they was a such-and-such Commissioner of the Fire Department, asking one of the fire patrols for a scout pack. I seen at least 50, 60 guys run in the building. Then it came down. I guess the second plane just caught everybody by surprise, cause everybody just thought it was the first

tower, then the second plane hit in a matter of 5 minutes or less. The second tower come down first. Seeing those people jump, cause nobody wanted to burn. Seeing those people jump, it was just horrific, really. Not only seeing them jump, but seeing them land too. It was horrific. I know a lot of those who jumped, at least 50, probably 100 that they can't find. Cause all that rubble is on top of them. That's a high number, I mean, nothing else. Just seeing everybody running, leaving their equipment, leaving their bus, everything. Then going back down there later on that night and just seeing fire trucks in half. The main thing was fire trucks and ESU vehicles. Cause they was right under the pedestrian bridge. Actually, we was right under the pedestrian bridge when the second plane hit. We was right under it, cause they told us to just set up triage. So we had all of our equipment right there, and we walked down. I dunno, I guess they was trying to feel the vibe, or just trying to see what was going on. They was trying to get a better view of what was going on. It was me and my partner being nosey, but we walked down together though. After that, I never seen so many people take off running when the second plane hit. Everybody running, ran in the building, ran out the building, ran into another building. It was late in the day when 7 came down. It was like 3:00 or 4:00 when 7 came down. Still seen a lot of people leave. When we was at Stuyvesant high school, we still seen people running from the smoke, all the way at Chambers Street, and that was far away. That's basically it that I remember about the day. Basically it.

Q: Alright thank you. The time is now 1646, interview is concluded.

File No. 9110042

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

JACE PINKUS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. ROM: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time now is 837 hours, and this is Lieutenant Pat Rom, the Fire Department City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and title.

A. Captain JACE PINKUS, P-I-N-K-U-S.

Q. And your assigned command area, the Fire Department of the City?

A. MetroTech communications, emergency medical dispatch.

Q. Okay. We're here to discuss the --

MS. ROM: Also present for the interview is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, EMT, investigations and trials.

Q. Okay. We're here to discuss regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

If you could describe to us where -- how you first became involved and any details of what transpired for that day.

A. Early Tuesday morning, I was on the 7th Floor in my cubicle, and there were individuals stating that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center.

Within a few moments, it was confirmed that there was a plane in one of the towers.

At that point, Commissioner Gregory directed myself, EMT Sam Harris and Captain D'Amato to join him, and we were going to respond to the scene. At that point, we left the 7th Floor, received our equipment and proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. What vehicle were you using?

A. Commissioner Gregory's. Sam Harris was driving, and we responded into Manhattan using the bridge.

Q. Brooklyn Bridge? Manhattan Bridge?

A. Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Were you responding to any specific location at that point?

A. As we were driving over the bridge, we -- it was confirmed that there was a fire in the north tower. We continued into Manhattan, and we got off at Park Row, made a left-hand turn onto Chambers, and made a left onto West Street, and parked on the corner of Vesey and West Street on the corner of -- I guess that would be the east side.

Q. Parked on Vesey or on West?

A. Right on the corner of Vesey.

Q. So you parked on Vesey?

A. Correct.

We attempted to get our stuff out of the vehicle, and as we looked up, we saw a plane hit the second building, and we noticed that there was a large ball of flame coming from the second building. It was at this point that Commissioner Gregory directed EMT Harris to move the vehicle because there was debris, fire basically covering us on Vesey Street.

EMT Harris moved the vehicle, I believe to the west side of Vesey, and I proceeded along with Commissioner Gregory and Captain D'Amato onto West Street, and I was in the middle of West Street in front of the American Express Building.

At that point, I met up with Lieutenant Davila. There were a couple of units on the corner of -- actually, in the middle of the street on Vesey and West. Within moments --

Q. Two or three would you imagine?

A. I saw at least three or four, and then there was a lot of chaos.

Q. On West?

A. Correct.

There's a median on West Street, West Side

Highway, that would be north of the pedestrian bridge, and at that point we noticed vehicles started to come in numerous directions.

Within moments, I saw Chief Ganci. Commissioner Gregory proceeded on West, south --

Q. Commissioner?

A. Gregory and Captain D'Amato.

Q. You went which way?

A. South on West Street. I saw Chief Nigro. Within a couple of more minutes, Lieutenant Howie Hahn arrived, Dr. Asceda, Dr. Cherson, and then there was another doctor. I forget his name.

Q. Male, female?

A. Male doctor. I think he's one of the fellows.

Q. Where did you see Chief Nigro and --

A. Both of them were walking south on West. We were -- I was a few feet south on West.

Q. Both of them meaning who?

A. Chief Ganci and Chief Nigro.

At that point -- again, must have been another -- a few more moments, Chief Goldfarb I was in contact with. At this point, we attempted -- as units were coming into the scene, and I believe they had

started to set up, also there was Lieutenant Brad Mann, Lieutenant John Nevins. The two of them ended up in the intersection of Vesey and West and for better terms they assumed sort of a staging officer.

Q. The two of them?

A. Correct.

There were a couple of Hatzolah ambulances coming into the scene.

Q. One, two, three?

A. I'd say at least two, and there was a large amount of vehicle movement north on West Street as vehicles were coming. To identify them, I couldn't at that point.

As units were parking their vehicles, I believe along Vesey, along West, they were directed by -- making assumption that Lieutenant Mann and Lieutenant Nevins were sending vehicles parking along Vesey, parking them along West, and units started to walk up with their stretchers and equipment.

Within a few minutes, I had a conversation with Chief Goldfarb that if needed we would be going to -- we identified American Express to be an area of triage. Time frame maybe ten minutes, fifteen minutes from the time I arrived.

Q. That you talked to Chief Goldfarb?

A. Correct. I had a conversation with the one doctor I had mentioned earlier. He had asked me should he get the antidote kit. I said to him yes.

I believe he left to go to Dr. Asceda's car to get it. It must have been about another few more minutes went by, and we started to move the units with their stretchers along. I guess it would be in front of American Express Building, which is Three World Financial Center, and again within a period of time the -- I would say maybe about 30 units -- might have been two or three, per stretcher, but municipal voluntary and volunteers.

We noticed as we were standing in the street -- we looked up. We did notice that there were people jumping from the buildings. I personally saw about 20. There was a lot of chaos going on along the building. The M.C.C., which is the local command center for communications, arrived. It was traveling south on West. I believe there was a P.D.T.H.V. also that came.

Q. What is that?

A. The police temporary headquarters vehicle.

I believe there was another three or four

Fire Department apparatus, again traveling south on West.

Q. So the M.C.C. and the P.D. Temp were all traveling south on West; is that my understanding?

A. Correct.

Q. And fire apparatus?

A. Correct.

Q. Approximately --

A. I believe I saw at least two.

Q. Could you identify them in any way?

A. No.

Q. Engine, ladder or anything?

A. No. I would say one was a ladder.

So at this point, it was all the chaos and the debris falling in front of the American Express Building, all on West.

We moved closer to the building. It was at that point that the decision was made between myself and along with Chief Goldfarb that if things went sour, that the units were to take cover into the building, and I started to walk along the line along with Howie Hahn, Lieutenant Hahn.

We took a roll call, writing down units as they arrived. I would say there was about 30 at one

point, give or take. Might have been more. The task was given to him to specifically identify what units were there.

Q. Lieutenant Hahn?

A. Correct.

I identified a paramedic unit, and a B.L.S. unit. I called it a fast unit, that if we needed, they would be the first to go, and I kept them right in front of the building. I guess that would be going north on West, but not really on West, but more on the side street of the American Express Building.

We started to line the units up along the building, and at one point the line went west on Vesey, the units that were lined up with their stretchers.

Again maybe 10, 15 minutes goes by. I gave directions that if things were to go sour, that they were to take cover. It was at that point when I personally heard a loud rumbling noise. I thought it was another plane hitting the tower, and that's when the entire street filled with smoke, debris, became totally black, and we ran into the American Express Building.

At some point, I had been told that one of the medics was missing. I found out later that it was

Carlos Lillo that was missing. I saw his partner Abrieu -- that's A-B-R-I-E-U.

Then there was other scuffle that there were other people missing, unable to confirm. It was Chief Peruggia that we heard was missing. Chief McCracken, it was reported that he was missing.

This is when we believed that it was a second -- like I said it was the first building that collapsed. We ran into the American Express Building. We took cover. We started to break -- myself, a couple of custodians within the building started to break windows.

A couple of minutes goes by. Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Goldfarb, and I believe there was another chief. I don't recall who it was. Things just became havoc inside the building, people running all over the place, all units that -- pretty much that were all lined up, everybody just ran in between patient care and just -- I don't want to use the word panicking, but, like I said, really got nasty at that point.

We went west of the American Express Building, maybe two exits. There was an exit onto Vesey, and then was a corridor which left out the back,

and according to the map, that would be the Merrill Lynch Building.

We attempted to recoup, getting things together. We set up a little triage area in the rear of the American Express Building. There were other people walking around saying their partners were missing. Directions were given to Lieutenant Hahn by myself to try to -- there was a couple of paramedics. There was Paramedic Smiley I had contact with, and as I saw people, I attempted to find out if they knew where their partners were, and that was a combination of -- I'm sorry. Were you going to say something?

We set up a little small triage area within American Express Building. Within a few minutes, we couldn't even stay in the building. We couldn't breathe. That's the reason why the windows were being broken.

I ran out the west side onto Vesey. I heard people screaming that there was a Mayday. We heard a lot of screaming, a lot of yelling. The entire street was like the middle of winter. I noticed people running to their ambulances with their equipment.

I noticed at least two firefighters had ducked underneath the fire apparatus. There was at

least five or six. I believe there was two engine companies that were on Vesey, and there was some firefighters ducking on Vesey.

Q. Can you identify them?

A. By number? I believe it was an engine, and I also noticed that there was a -- a suburban, a chief's vehicle.

The ambulances were parked diagonally or they were backed straight in to Vesey. The entire street was just full of smoke and debris, and you really couldn't see in front of you.

Again, I ran back in trying to find out where all my people were. That was one of my main objectives.

Q. And at that point -- who was with you at that time?

A. Lieutenant Hahn, Paramedic Smiley, a couple of paramedics from Metro Care, others I couldn't identify. At one point, I -- there must have been about 20 individuals start to regroup.

Q. Initially, the initial A.L.S. and B.L.S. you had lead, do you know who they were?

A. By name, no. By unit, no, I couldn't identify them.

Q. Okay. And Chief Nigro and Chief Ganci?

A. I had seen them for a few minutes, few minutes at the beginning. I hadn't seen them since.

Q. Okay. That was that first time you saw them walking towards --

A. Chief Ganci asked me something regarding -- he said,"Captain." I don't recall exactly what he said, but it was a moment, not long. Like I said, they all went south onto West.

I believe Chief Martin at one point might even have even showed up in the building, in the American Express Building. They had also set up refreshments and water in the building. As people were running around, people running in, grabbing the water and running out, so I couldn't even identify who they were. They were running.

Like I said, there was a Mayday called. You really couldn't see too much in front of you while we were on Vesey Street. At some point, I started to run into the back of the building, because I was looking for somebody, and then I heard another noise, and that is when I took cover. I was by myself laying on the ground, covered my head, did a lot of praying.

After I felt it was safe, I got back up

again. Again, we tried to set up another triage area, but it just didn't -- there was such havoc going on, that there was no control. People were just running, civilians and emergency workers, et cetera. I went over to a fireman I could not identify and gave him some water.

Back on Vesey, and at some point I walked down -- I believe this is North End Avenue to the front of the Embassy Hotel, which would be on North End between Vesey and Murray. I noticed that the Merv was in front of it, a couple of police vehicles, emergency service vehicles. I was talking to one of the cops trying to get another mask. Inside the -- backtrack a little bit. Chief Gombo I had seen earlier.

Q. Was that the one time you saw him?

A. Yeah. No, but I saw him later on. When I got back to the hotel, that's what made me recall seeing him, and Lieutenant Terranova.

I also attempted to call the center a few times, the communications center via cell phone a couple of times. I was able to get through. A couple of times I couldn't get through.

Ended up in the Embassy Hotel. There was Chief Goldfarb, Lieutenant Terranova, Chief Gombo,

Chief Pascal, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Basile. I saw Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Yioras, Y-I-O-R-A-S. I noticed that he started to not feel well, so I went over to him, myself and EMT Harris, took off his coat. Looked like he was exhausted. We sat him down.

Within sometime after that, we were given directions to go along with chief -- myself, EMT Harris, and Chief Pascal were given directions that we were going to Chelsea Piers.

Prior to that, I walked down Vesey again, and I believe at that time the second building collapsed, because again the entire street filled up with smoke, and debris, and again we couldn't see in front of us what was going on. I heard a lot of alarms going off. We didn't know for sure if it was the building, and we heard a pass alarm, which is part of the self-contained breathing apparatus. I heard that from somebody. People just running up and down Vesey Street.

At that point, myself, Chief Pascal and EMT Harris walked down North End Avenue. That would be north. We continued walking down North End. We saw lieutenant -- I don't recall who it was, but there was a trailer. I believe it was on Park Place. We continued walking down to Chambers Street, and at that

point, we met up with, again, another lieutenant. I don't recall who it was. Myself, EMT Harris and Chief Pascal got into the rear of a vehicle, an ambulance. We ended up on Westside Highway.

Q. Do you know which ambulance you were in?

A. I don't know.

Q. Or what vehicle?

A. It was a municipal ambulance, but I don't recall who.

Q. Okay. You're in the back of the ambulance?

A. Back of the ambulance. There was no equipment in the back of the ambulance, and as we headed to Chelsea Piers, we were flagged down on maybe 6th Street and Westside Highway. There was a pedestrian struck.

The three of us got out of the vehicle, provided some patient care. Turned out to be the patient was not a pedestrian struck, but was on the 80th Floor of the first building. Spoke to him, talked to him, trying to find out what was going on, comfort him, put him in the back of the ambulance. We strapped him in the captain's chair.

The first vehicle that we were in, and Chief Pascal flagged down another ambulance, turned out to

be -- I guess it was a logistics unit, another ambulance full of long boards. That was it. There was an antidote kit laying on the floor in the back. Myself, EMT Harris got into the rear of the vehicle. Chief Pascal got into the passenger side of the cab, and we continued north on Westside Highway until we got to Chelsea Piers, and at that point we met up with Chief Kowalzyk, and the directions that were given to me, me -- and Kevin Mahon was up there also.

We attempted to identify what units were there, and I walked from -- I guess that would be 11th Street up to, say, maybe 24th Street where I met up with Lieutenant Bearman.

Our objective was to move the ambulances south to sort of organize the number of ambulances. That had to be at least 60, if not more, ambulances that were all the way up the Westside Highway.

Q. Okay. So you placed the second building collapsing at what stage?

A. I would say at the point I ran out of the building, out of the American Express Building. Time frame? I couldn't tell you. I would say maybe 20 minutes, a half an hour.

Q. After you arrived?

A. After I arrived. At least, if not more. Time frame itself, specific time frame, I couldn't tell you, but I would say it was at the point I had seen Chief Martin.

Q. At that point, if we could reference it when we were going to Chelsea Piers, was how long before that?

A. I can't tell you. I know I was on the American Express for sometime. It was definitely some time that I had been there. There was a lot of activity going on in the building and along Vesey. There were some other individuals. Dr. Richmond I believe I saw also.

Q. Where would you have seen Dr. Richmond?

A. Well, I know for sure I saw him later on in the evening, but I believe I saw him, you know, I stand corrected. I saw him later on in the day, later in the evening.

Q. We are really focusing on up until the second World Trade Center collapse, what events transpired during that time frame.

At any time were you ever in those buildings?

A. Which buildings?

Q. In the World Trade Center.

A. No.

Q. Your overall impression of what was going on, how --

A. It was something that I definitely never experienced before. I know I had an objective. It changed multiple times. When we first got there, we just thought we had a really bad fire, you know, the first building, and as we got out of the car we saw the second one, and it turned out to -- you know, we first thought that we were going to be waiting for patients to come to you, and that point when the first building collapsed, it all changed.

My main objective was to know where my people were at. But at one point I got scared that I had lost more than, you know -- I was lucky how everything turned out, except for one, you know. At one point, I think I had two or three people there. I had 60 to 70 people, so that was my first objective was to patients who were going to come to me, or my resources were going to go to the patients. It all changed. It was a definite experience that I -- even to this day, you know, still talk about. It was scary, especially when I -- the building -- I heard that noise. I thought for sure there was another building and --

Q. On the reports of Paramedic Lillo, did you ever see him or that's something just told to you?

A. I might have seen him earlier. I mean I know Carlos, I know him for a long time. I might have seen him earlier, but I definitely do recall seeing his partner saying that he was missing.

Q. And you saw his partner at what point?

A. It was in the first 20 minutes maybe I had seen him.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to include as part of this interview?

A. There was a lot of talk going on, because there was -- there was a period of time at the beginning before any real activity was going on with us about the people that were coming in the buildings. There was a lot of comments about that.

MS. ROM: Okay. All right. We would like to thank you for, you know, being a part of this interview with us, and I'm going to say that this concludes our interview. It's now 903 hours, and this concludes our interview.

File No. 9110043

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CAPTAIN FRANK D'AMATO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time now is 829 hours, this is Lieutenant Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. Frank D'Amato, EMS Captain, Bureau of Communications.

MR. FEILER: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are conducting this interview in the Investigations and Trials hearing room, fourth floor at 9 Metrotech, New York City Fire Department headquarters. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is Investigator Velez.

Q. Please state your name, title and command.

A. My name is George Velez, EMT, also an investigator for the Bureau of Trials and Investigations.

Q. Captain D'Amato, if we can just get a scenario of what occurred that morning of September 11.

A. Well, I started my morning here at headquarters on the 7th floor, communications. I'm

going to say I don't know about the first plane hit, but after the first plane hit, I'm guessing 8:30, quarter to nine, we saw a lot of the Citywide tour commanders and their aides running past my desk. I asked them what's going on. They said a plane just hit the Trade Center.

At that time, we all went to the window and we saw flames coming out. At that point I thought actually it was like a small plane, like a sea plane or something. I had no time to think. Then we saw the magnitude of what was going on as far as the flames and Commissioner Gregory asked myself, Captain Pincus and EMT Sam Harris, to get our gear together. We were going down to the scene.

We all got into Commissioner Gregory's car. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge. I'm not really sure which route we took after the bridge, but we came south on West Street and we pulled into Vesey Street facing opposite the water. I guess that's east.

Q. I have a map here.

A. Let me see that. We came down Barclay Street and we made a left on to West and then we made another left on to Vesey, so we stopped the car at the corner of West and Vesey. I guess that's 6 World Trade

Center.

When we got out of the vehicle, we opened the trunk, we put our helmets on and our jackets. At that time we heard another explosion which I thought was a secondary explosion, but which I later found it out was a second plane that hit. At that point, Commissioner Gregory instructed Sam Harris to move the car a little bit away from where we had parked it. I believe he parked it on Vesey on the west side of West Street.

At that point I tell you, I don't remember what happened with Sam Harris, or Jace Pincus. All I knew is that me and Commissioner Gregory proceeded south on West Street crossing in front of 1 World Trade Center, making our way to the corner of West and Liberty. There is a barrier that separates the two sides of West Street. We were on the side closer to the twin towers and while we were walking we were getting hit with small fragments of glass. We observed two bodies on the floor, partial bodies. I'm guessing they were jumpers.

As we made our way down West Street to Liberty, there was more and more debris falling. At that point I told Commissioner Gregory I think we should jump over the barrier and walk on the opposite

side of West, because we were getting in too close, I was getting really nervous.

Once we got to the corner of West and Liberty, we met up with Chief Barbara, Chief Barbara. They were setting up a command post at the corner. I was there for about 10 minutes or so and what I noticed is we were getting a lot of ambulances starting to pile up on Liberty Street between West and South End Avenue I believe that is. There was no supervision there, so I told Commissioner Gregory I was going to start organizing the vehicles that got there, there had to be almost, about a dozen at the time.

I start setting staging up for some ambulances on the corner of South End and Liberty Street. After about 15 minutes, Chief Kowalczyk pulled up and he whispered to me to just think terrorism. Actually, he said, you know, be alert, just think terrorism. Then I think he might have made his way over to the command post. So again I start setting up the vehicles, I set up a little triage area right at the corner of Liberty and South End.

After about 5 minutes after that, Chief McCracken and Chief Grant came to the location where I was. They took control of the scene. Chief Grant and

Chief McCracken instructed the staging to line up on South End off of Liberty so that we were one block west, parallel with the West Side Highway and we set up staging there. They felt it was more safer.

We were setting up. We weren't seeing many patients at this time. The whole area was kind of quiet. I was surprised that we weren't seeing anybody funneling out of the buildings, but I learned later on a lot of people were funneling out like on Church Street and West Broadway because there wasn't many people coming out at all on the West Side Highway from the different towers.

Whatever time it was when that first building started to come down, all we heard was just like a loud thunder that didn't stop. When you looked up you saw the debris starting to fall from the top, and a cloud of smoke on top and it was hard to judge where the debris was going to fall, because it were so high. Your depth perspective.

Everybody started running. Everybody in my area started running down the South End south. A lot of people running into little store fronts on that street. I was afraid to run into the store front because I thought that like the building was going to

collapse, like a domino, and I didn't want to be crushed underneath the collapse. Thinking about it now, I don't think I was going to outrun a 110 story building, but I proceeded down South End and I made a right turn on Albany Street and as I turned on Albany I looked over my shoulder and I saw the big cloud of dust that was already on the ground like just making its way down the block, just like a movie.

I continued running down Albany Street and within seconds I was just in total darkness, the dust engulfed me. I had to stop running, I couldn't see where I was and I didn't know what was in front of me, what was around me. Everything was very quiet. Every breath I took in, my mouth was getting filled with debris, dust particles and cement particles. It was turning into like a pasty texture that you could almost chew. I kept spitting it out.

I was having trouble breathing. My eyes were shut. We didn't have any breathing apparatus or anything. I was just leaning up against the building that I was next to and I tried walking, but I kept banging into things in front of me. Again, I couldn't see 2 inches in front of my face. I really said to myself this is how I'm going to die. I can't believe

this is how I'm going to die.

I started walking, I'm sure for a very short period of time, I mean seconds, but it felt like it was forever I was standing there. I thought, you know, the dust, it was so dark still. Again I don't know how long it stood pitch black for but it just seemed like it was forever and I just started panicking and I started screaming help, and I heard somebody answer me back. Like they started saying, keep coming, keep coming. Their voice was echoing and I couldn't figure out what was going on.

I started walking a little more just by feel with my right hand against the side of the building. I got to what I thought was the corner of the block, because the building had ended and turned in. It was a step. I stepped up on the step and some guy grabbed my hand and we started walking down and what it was was a parking lot attendant who pulled me into an underground parking garage.

At that point, he had hosed me down, I was full of dust. My eyes, my head, my face, he hosed me down. He put me into a car that he had started up, had an air conditioner running, I guess trying to just get me back to some kind of sense. I mean I was out of it

for a little while.

After about 10 minutes, he had -- there was like a little parking lot attendant office there. I went into the office, there was a phone there. I couldn't remember the number to the dispatcher, I was just so out of it. My brother happens to work at 1 Metrotech, where he dispatches for Bear Stearns. So I had called my brother and I told him where I was. I knew where I was because there was a little receipt ticket with the phone number and I said go downstairs to the dispatcher, just tell them where I am, because at this point, I really thought that I was like trapped underneath this garage, because I didn't know that the building just pancaked down. I thought it was just all over the place.

I told him where I was. I gave him the phone number. After about another 5 minutes of sitting down, just catching my breath, I went out a back door of the parking garage. It was visible outside. It was almost like a tannish dust coating. Everything was just covered with dust, 4 or 5 inches deep. It really looked like a war zone. People were just totally covered. It looked almost like sawdust. It was just was just all over there.

I finished walking Albany and now I was on -- like a little pier along the water. I don't know even know what it was. Esplanade. I'm looking at this map. But it was a little pier or boardwalk that runs along the water. All I kept hearing was the firefighters, I guess their alarms when they separate from people, just going off and that keeps sticking in my head.

The police that were there, everybody was walking south. They were directing everybody south. We started walking south. I must have been walking maybe about two minutes and I heard the rumble again. Again, it was the same noise, that thunder that didn't stop. It was the second tower coming down. It was the same scenario. Here comes a big cloud of smoke. Everybody starts running south on this little boardwalk. The people weren't knocking each other over, but I think there were spots where there was a lot of people, people were tripping and falling. I remember seeing like parents holding children in their hand, like covering their mouth and trying to run with them. One or two people fell that were helped up, not by me, but by people next to them. Civilians, police officers, and the smoke hit us again.

It wasn't as dense as the first building, but it was still very difficult to breathe. I'm looking at the map. I wound up running into a little lobby of -- I don't know if it was an office building or a high rise, somewhere around I'm going to say Rector Place, looking at this map, or maybe one more block south and once I was in there they provided us with bathrooms. We were rinsing our eyes and rinsing our face. Again took about 10 minutes to get your composure back after going through this again.

When I came out it was like a big area. I'm going to say it was maybe this Rector Place area. There is a lot of grass. That's where I met back up with Chief McCracken and Chief Grant. At that point there was police boats, fire boats, tug boats. We started loading people on to the boat, who were civilians from that area on to the boats. The boats were taking people I believe to Liberty Island, Liberty State Park and Staten Island.

It took us about 20 minutes to clear that area. The people, they didn't want to get on the boats. They thought those locations weren't convenient or whatever. After we cleared that area, I was also with Lieutenant -- her name will come to me. She's

from operations at the time. After we cleared the area an EMT, I don't know his name, pulled up in like a golf cart. Pauline Cronin. She was with us.

At that time, Chief McCracken, Chief Grant, Lieutenant Cronin and myself, we jumped into the golf cart after the area was cleared of civilians. We went to the Staten Island Ferry terminal. That's where we had a triage set up. Once I got there, I was actually treated for about 45 minutes with oxygen and my eyes were irrigated. That's pretty much where I stood up until about 8:30 at night.

Chief McCracken and Chief Grant had left that area. They had to attend a meeting, operations meeting on the scene. I don't know where that meeting was. They had left and Chief Villani was then there. I don't know what time he showed up. Chief Steffens came into the area where I was. I know Chief Brown came there. He was treated and transported. Again most of the patients we saw there were firefighters. Most of it was just eye irrigation. There was a lot of employees from the Department on duty and off duty at this location. A lot of doctors were coming down from the surrounding emergency rooms. We had an overabundance of people.

I stayed there until about 8:30. Chief Villani sent me down to One Liberty Plaza about 8:30, there was some operation going on over there. Again we weren't seeing much patients. They sent me back to be more useful over there. I went over to One Liberty Plaza. I was driven there by -- I don't know -- some vehicle, some pick up or SUV. They had a big staging going on, a treatment center over there. There were reports that they might have to be cutting limbs off, people that were trapped and they had a whole big triage center there. I'm not sure who the supervisors were there. I'm not familiar with them, but everything was running fine there.

My eyes, from being right next to Ground Zero, the Trade Centers, now again, were getting irritated. I couldn't see, my eyes were burning. So I wound up transporting a patient with another BLS unit to Bellevue Hospital at around about midnight. This unit was -- I don't know -- if they were Midwood ambulance company, because they were going back into Brooklyn after we dropped the patient off. They provided me a ride after we went to Bellevue. They provided me a ride to Metrotech.

Because again I went down with Commissioner

Gregory to get the ride down there. They dropped me back off at Metrotech. I got back to Metrotech about 12:30. That's where I met back up with Commissioner Gregory. At that time he told me that Sam and himself, Sam Harris, Jace Pincus had made their way north. I believe they were in Chelsea. That is where we had got separated. When I went south, they had went north.

That was my experience for the day. I must have went home about one o'clock that morning.

Q. I just want to retrace a few things. At the very beginning you say when you first found out about it, were you able to see the building burning from headquarters here or how did you get that information?

A. The Citywide tour commander aides said that you can see it. I remember him saying you can see it from Chief Ganci's office. Chief Ganci is around the corridor from me. I went over to Commissioner Gregory's office. I couldn't see what was going on. I really didn't see what was going on until we were on the Brooklyn Bridge going into Manhattan. It was just an amazing sight.

Q. Were you directed to any specific area by communications or you went on the direction of Commissioner Gregory?

A. I went on the direction of Commissioner Gregory. I was assuming we were going to help out anyway we could. We don't have radio designations, myself, Captain Pincus, Sam Harris. I guess we were going to be more of an aide to Commissioner Gregory, who is the commissioner liaison and help out in any way we could. We were not directed in anyway by operations or had any task assigned to us at the scene.

Q. When you met up with Chief McCracken and Chief Grant, after they directed you to take, you had already set up staging?

A. I had initialized staging till there was another officer on the scene.

Q. Do you know who that officer was?

A. There was no other officer on the scene. That's why I started. I don't know how those ambulances were sent to that location.

Q. Right.

A. But when I saw there was no supervision, I told Commissioner Gregory I was going to take control of what was going on here, because there was just no direction. I started organizing and then once Chief Grant got there, I believe he may have gotten there a little before Lieutenant Cronin and Chief McCracken.

He advised me that he was taking control of the scene. He directed me to have all the ambulances move a little further down and all on one side of the street. This way they have egress.

Q. Did the Chiefs remain there with you?

A. The Chiefs remained there with me. I got separated from them when we all started running when the first building started to come down.

Q. Was Lieutenant Cronin was present with you there too?

A. Lieutenant Cronin was present there also.

Q. What about the crews from the ambulances?

A. There was a lot of Hatzolah ambulances, Hatzolah also had what looked like a MERV there at this location. There were numerous vehicles -- Long Island College Hospital, lot of municipal FDNY vehicles. I had written the units down on paper. I don't know where that paper is. I must have dropped it while I was running. I don't know. I don't want to start rambling off units that I'm not sure. There was, even the people there, the faces I recognize, but I couldn't put a name to them. I can't give you names.

Q. At any time, did you have an opportunity to enter any of the buildings?

A. World Trade Center buildings?

Q. Yes.

A. No, the only buildings I ever ran into was the underground parking garage and then later on during the second collapse I was able to get into another lobby of again, I don't know if it was an office or if it was like an apartment building.

Q. Did you have a handy talky on you?

A. I had a handy talky, the UHF, EMS radio. I didn't need to make any radio communications while I was setting staging up. There was a lot of stuff going on again, Chief Kowalcyzk knew where I was. I didn't make any radio communications because again I wasn't in control of that sector very long once the Chiefs had gotten there. So no, I didn't make any radio communications.

Q. Other than the people that you told me about, the Chiefs, Lieutenant Cronin, were there any other EMTs, fire officers, anybody from our service that you can specifically recognize and put a location to them?

A. The last -- I -- again I said earlier, when me and Commissioner Gregory got to the corner of Liberty Street and West Street, Chief Barbara was at that location. They had started setting up a command

post at that location.

I remember seeing when I first exited the car that we parked on Vesey and West while we were walking down the west side, I remember seeing Steve -- Chief Ganci's aide. Steve Mosiello. He was getting stuff out of his vehicle. I didn't see Chief Ganci but I saw Steve.

Q. Where was that?

A. That was on West Street between Vesey and Liberty. His car was parked more towards Vesey. Looking at the map, I guess on the west side of West Street.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to include before we conclude?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I am going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time in assisting us in this endeavor. The time now is 852 hours. We are concluding the interview now.

File No. 9110044

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PASQUALE FELITTI

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

P. FELITTI

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 9:57. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting and interview with the following individual. Please state your name, title, rank, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

PASQUALE FELITTI: My name is Pasquale Felitti, I'm an EMT assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: En route to this call, what did you see?

A: You could see the North Tower with a big hole in the side of it. It was kind of chaotic, people running away from it.

Q: When you arrived on the scene, where did you park your vehicle?

A: Parked in between Fulton and Dey street on Church Street.

Q: Can you indicate on the map we provided for you with a 1, the location where you were? Okay? And what vehicle were you in?

A: Vehicle 108.

Q: Vehicle 108, okay. When you arrived there, did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No, they just kind pointed us over to another EMS crew where there was people hurt.

Q: Whom did you first report to when you arrived?

A: When we first got there, we didn't report to anybody, there was no one there. It was us, a New York Downtown unit, 4 Henry was on the scene, and 1 Adam. We went over to medic unit, the Downtown unit, and we helped out over there. When the second plane hit, me and my partner were separated. I wound up going with Lt. Melarango towards the South tower to get people out. We didn't go into it but towards there. My partner went with a cop who led him over to a church. There were patients over there. We got separated until the following day.

Q: Okay, what time approximately did you arrive on the scene?

A: We were coming out of New York downtown hospital when the first plane hit. I think we were actually 98.

Q: So the first plane crashed in at 9:06. So it was shortly after that?

A: Yeah, right away. Right after the first plane hit.

Q: 8:48, so you arrived shortly after that? Okay, I'm sorry. What did you do between the time the first plane hit and the second plane hit?

A: We were treating the ambulatory patients. Whoever was left in the area after walking wounded, we just picked up, put them in a bus and got them out of there.

P. FELITTI

Q: Then you said after the second plane hit you went somewhere with Lieutenant…?

A: Melarango

Q: Where did you go?

A: Towards the south tower, which was just hit. We came in between building 5 and building 4. Cause people were coming out. We were just directing traffic. Telling them "walk that way", up towards Church Street, Dey Street, over there.

Q: What did you do once you got over there?

A: Just directed traffic and stuff. That was after the second plane hit. Then they sent me back to go find my partner. When I came back, me and (inaudible) were separated, so I wound up moving the vehicle around to the staging area, which was Vesey and West Street.

Q: Okay, so just indicate on the map with a number 2, where you moved the vehicle to?

A: Okay, I never actually got to Vesey street. I was blocked by fire apparatus on the Westside Highway.

Q: So you never entered any of the World Trade Center buildings?

A: No, we didn't go into them.

Q: What happened after you got over to Vesey and West?

P. FELITTI

A: I was at the first triage center, which is on the corner of West and Vesey Street. I was with Mike D'Angelo, who is one of the communications guys that was there. I was triaging over there, when the first tower started to collapse. When the South Tower collapsed, we evacuated up Vesey Street towards Fulton. Yeah, when the first tower went down, we were right on Vesey Street.

Q: And what did you do in between the time when the first tower collapsed and the second tower?

A: Just re-grouped, there was a lot of dust, you know, a lot of people walking around. They started to set up a triage in a second building in between Vesey and Murray Street, around that area. A fireman was complaining of back pain. He said he was hit by debris and stuff that was falling from the first one. So as we started to triage him, it was awhile after the first building fell, they were like an hour apart, so I guess it was about 15 or 20 minutes after the first one fell that he made his way out to us. As we were assesing him, he said the second building was starting to fall. So me and, I forget the guys name, me and a MetroCare paramedic, we put him into a St. Luke's ambulance that was running, and we transported him to St. Vincent's Hospital. That was after the second building collapsed. His injuries were--he had broken ribs. We think it was a punctured lung because he had no lung sounds on the right side. So we transported him to 21 after the second building collapsed.

Q: You weren't with the St. Luke's crew?

P. FELITTI

A: No, the St. Luke's Crew wasn't there, they left the bus running. Cause what happened when the first building collapsed, the Lieutenants and stuff along the side on Vesey Street said take any ambulance that's running and move it. So people moving them. We got the patient. There was a St. Lukes bus there. It was running. So we just loaded him up and took off.

Q: Who is the person you were with?

A: It was myself. I was driving, and the paramedic from MetroCare. Paul, I think his name was.

Q: Okay. Do you know approximately what time this was? This was after the Second Tower?

A: After the Second Collapse.

Q: Okay, the Second Tower collapsed at 10:29.

A: Between 10:30 and 10:40 is when we left. Cause there was still dust everywhere. You couldn't see where you were going.

Q: Okay, and you brought this patient to hospital…?

A: 21, St. Vincent's.

Q: Okay, and from St. Vincent's?

A: From St. Vincent's we went back down to the Chelsea Pier's staging. That's where they had all the ambulances staging.

Q: Do you know about what time you got back to Chelsea Piers?

A: Probably between 10:45 and 11:00, give or take.

P. FELITTI

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, around that time.

Q: Okay, and what did you do after you got to the Chelsea station?

A: I reported to the Lieutenant there, I forget who it was. I told him I was half crew. We wound up taking a group of doctors from there to South Street, the ferry where they had set up another triage area. So me and a guy from the Bronx, who was just one of the vehicle movers or something like that. Me and him took the doctors over to the ferry. They sent--they left me over there. That's where I spent the remainder of the day from there from about 11:00 to 4 or 5 in the afternoon.

Q: And what did you see over at the triage area?

A: At the triage they did—walking wounded. I think they brought in a couple of firemen and police officers. Stuff like that. Not much came through there. Yeah firefighters and some police.

Q: Do you remember what any of their names were?

A: No, I don't remember.

Q: Okay, that's fine. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the events that happened up until approximately 12 noon on this day?

A: Not much, I mean, I think we did triage a little too close to the actual MCI. I mean, nobody knew the building was gonna fall like that, but, I mean, I think the engineers or somebody should have gotten there faster keep the firemen out. Like they

said on the news about the jet fuel, it burns at 3,000 degrees or something. I mean, no one ever expected something like this, so you can't say the Fire Department got caught without their pants.

Q: Did you make any radio communications during this time that would be important for us to know about?

A: Just that we were transporting one to St. Vincent's.

Q: Okay, anything else that you would like to add?

A: No.

Q: Okay, I thank you very much for having this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 10:06 AM. The counter on the cassette player is 169.

File No. 9110045

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM MELARANGO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time is 10:20. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

LIEUTENANT MELARANGO: Lieutenant William Melarango shield number 407 assigned to Battalion 4 on September 11th.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. In route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. I saw the north tower, smoke coming from the north tower.

Q. Upon arrival where did you park your vehicle?

A. I parked my command car on Broadway and Fulton, facing westbound.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a

1 where you had parked your vehicle.

A. I did.

Q. On arrival did any civilians report anything to you?

A. No, not directly towards me. Civilians were running away from the scene.

Q. Did you report to anybody when you first arrived there?

A. I saw a treatment area that was established in front of the Millennium Hotel on Church and Fulton Street.

Q. You went to this triage area?

A. I went to the treatment area and saw Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski and Lieutenant Davila.

Q. What did you do at this point?

A. Just assisted with patient care details. There was a supply truck that pulled up with some additional oxygen tanks and back boards, which I helped off-load. Trying to get personnel established, make sure everybody had helmets on, safety considerations.

Q. About what time did you arrive on the scene?

A. I heard the explosion. I didn't see the second plane hit. I'm looking at your schedule here. So it had to be 9:05, 9:06 a.m. when I got to the building.

Q. What did you do next?

A. We assisted with patient care. We assisted trying to get patients treated and triaged and transported. Also citywide came on, asking to respond up to Park Row. There was a unit there that was involved in an MVA. I walked up there. I determined the MVA was minor. I told the unit, "Just go back to your staging area and the paperwork will be taken care of afterwards and I reported back down to the treatment area."

Q. Okay. What happened next?

A. Patients were coming in. I was mainly concerned about falling debris. There were bodies and body parts falling, but there was also parts of the building that were coming down. We were starting to think about moving the triage area to a safer location, to the lobby of the hotel.

At some point we heard the rumble, and

the building came down and everybody scrambled.

Q. You were in front of what building?

A. The Millennium Hotel.

Q. The Millennium Hotel.

At any time did you go into any of the World Trade Center buildings prior to their collapse?

A. I tried getting into Five World Trade Center to see if there was a triage area established in there initially. I couldn't get in. There were too many people coming out. So I really couldn't get in there.

Q. What did you do after the first collapse?

A. After the first collapse I had gone back down to Church Street because I was concerned about two of my crew members that were there. They had pulled up in an ambulance, vehicle 219. When I got back down to Church Street, the vehicle was on fire. I didn't see anybody in the truck. I was concerned about the oxygen tanks exploding, so I backed off.

A couple minutes after that a couple firemen brought an ESU cop whose arm was badly

injured. I saw a van and ambulance up on Vesey and Church. We brought him over there, and I started to dress up his arm.

At that time a fireman brought a DOA over to the ambulance, which I believe was Father Doyle.

Q. Father Judge?

A. Judge, I'm sorry, Father Judge.

I was treating the police officer's arm. We were wrapping it up when we heard the rumble from the second building and it start to collapse. We scrambled again.

Q. Then the second building came down.

A. The second building came down. I didn't go back down to -- I didn't go back down to Church Street after that. I went up to Broadway by City Hall Park. There was a couple of municipal ambulances there which set up a temporary treatment area. There were a lot of firemen coming to us with debris in their eyes.

Q. What was this location?

A. It was right across the street from City Hall Park on Broadway by the Duane Reade store. I'm not sure what the street is.

There were two ambulances there, two municipal ambulances there. We set up like a little mini treatment area. We had several firemen come up to us, several police officers. We flushed their eyes out, put them on oxygen if they were having some trouble breathing.

After I think maybe about 30, 45 minutes EMS citywide came up on the air and requested a supervisor, if there were any supervisors on the air. They made the request several times. Nobody answered. I came up on the air and told them I was available.

They asked me to report to -- establish a staging area at West Broadway and Chambers, which I did. I went up to Broadway and Chambers. When I got there, there was approximately maybe 20, 25 ambulances there mixed: municipal, voluntary, volunteer ambulances. We started establishing a treatment area there.

A few minutes after that a police officer came up to me and told me that the facade in front of Seven World Trade Center was gone and they thought there was an imminent collapse of Seven World Trade Center. I felt the location we

were at was too close to Seven World Trade Center.

So we advised citywide we were moving the staging area to North End and Greenwich Street.

Q. Okay.

A. At North End and Greenwich Street we established -- myself and Lieutenant Eppinger from Battalion 08.

Q. Approximately what time was this that you moved?

A. Probably around 11, 11:30. We reestablished at North End and Greenwich Street. We had a new staging area set up over there.

During the course of the day, assets just started showing up at the location. We didn't request them; they just started showing up. I had two bus loads of doctors and PAs. I think they might have just been driving by. I don't know. Or else citywide assigned them over there. But they came. They came with some medical equipment.

We set up a triage and treatment area in front one of the office plazas. We had set up

a hazmat sector, a morgue sector. It just became a larger operation as time went on. At any given time I probably had about 40 ambulances. We were ready to do even minor surgery at the location.

A camera crew came up to me, one of the production crews from some film company. We established and had lights set up in case we were going to be operating at night, which was a possibility. We also set up some sky lights for night.

We treated approximately maybe 20 patients, all secondary to the event. They were all respiratory. We had some cardiac patients. Not directly related to the event. They were transported, treated and transported.

About 10 or 11:00 I went back down to the command center at Chambers and West and said I thought the assets were not being utilized and recommended that they downsize that operation and close it down. They agreed.

Q. What time was this?

A. About 10 or 11:00 that night. Like I said, we treated 20 patients, but that was in the first couple of hours that we were there. As

time went on, we weren't getting any patients at our sector.

So I went down to Chambers and West and spoke to Chief Kowalczyk, and I recommended they close it down. He concurred. We released the ambulances back up to the Chelsea Piers. I also had MERV 3 at that location, Queens north. Myself and Lieutenant Eppinger and one physician and a couple of EMTs were responding to Battery Park City at the south end. We stayed there and we established -- there was a treatment area established.

Captain Parra was there. We stayed there. I was finally relieved around 3:00 in the morning.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this in regard to the events that happened from the time the first plane went in to approximately 12 noon?

A. Well, it was just a very large event. The EMS assets were just initially overwhelmed with patients, so there really wasn't time to get a regular ICS going. There were several sectors that were established.

There was very little command and control, I felt, in the initial first hour. There was no clear incident commander or chain of command. I thought there was a lot of free-lancing going on, especially there was a lot of free-lancing going on with voluntaries that belonged to hospitals, private hospitals. A lot of these people are not familiar with EMAP and the ICS system. So they weren't really reporting to anybody. They were just grabbing people to and going.

I think had the incident -- had the buildings not come down, the incident would have been allowed to work itself out. I think the EMAP and ICS would have eventually kicked in. There wasn't any time.

As far as any incidents like this again, the preplan staging was that we were supposed to stage inside the building and establish a forward triage area. It was just a very large incident. There just wasn't any time to get the ICS and EMAP.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

Q. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is going to be concluded at 10:32. The counter on the tape player is 190.

File No. 9110046

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BRIAN CIRILLO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today is October 11, 2001. The time is 9:22 AM. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

BRIAN CIRILLO: Brian Cirillo, EMT, Battalion 4, 5523.

Q: Brian, did you respond to the World Trade disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes I did.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: En route to the alarm, I saw the first building had been hit by a plane and smoke was coming out of the top of the building. So I turned my vehicle around and went towards it.

Q: So you were on your way home?

A: Yes, correct.

Q: Correct? So you were in your personal vehicle and you parked your vehicle and began to respond on foot?

A: Correct.

Q: Okay. Where did you park your car?

A: I parked my car underneath, right outside the Battery Tunnel exit on the Manhattan side.

Q: On arrival at the World Trade Center, did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No civilians. A firefighter actually approached me and told me they were setting up triage across the street while I was in front of the building. And they told me they were sitting up triage across the street, so I went over there.

Q: So whom did you report to when you arrived?

A: When I went across the street, there was no real commander over there. There was a female Lieutenant over there, I never even got the name. She had a command board. We would just wait for anyone to come out. Anyone who needed any help.

Q: Were you given a specific assignment?

A: Not a specific assignment. We were to hold still and wait for the people to come out.

Q: Were you asked to assist any specific units?

A: No.

Q: What was the exact location, to the best of your memory, of this staging area?

A: In front of the American Express Building. Westside Highway, more towards the divider of the Westside Highway in front of that building?

Q: Did you ever enter any of the buildings prior to their collapse?

A: No, I got in front of the building and a firefighter had told me that they were setting up triage across the street, so I went over there.

Q: Okay. Can you tell me what happened next? You were at this staging area, what happened after that?

A: What happened next was we were waiting for people to come out, just trying to do whatever we could, just witnessing everything that was going on. People trying to get out of the buildings and people actually jumping out of the buildings. After maybe 20 minutes, 30 minutes that we were there, one of the buildings came down.

Q: Where were you when the first building came down?

A: Same spot. Right in front of the AMEX building.

Q: And who were you with?

A: I was with a group of EMTs and paramedics just waiting. No one really got anyone's name. We just kind of waited, kind of shocked, not really talking that much.

Q: What happened after the first building came down?

A: The first building came down, we basically ran up Vesey street towards the water. I had to duck behind a car to protect myself from anything falling. Once the smoked cleared out a little bit, we got up and started looking for people. We found a few people and we set up another triage, I guess on North End. I forget what building, it wasn't the Merril Lynch Building, it was the one on the opposite side. We were bringing people there, inside the building. It was still running, there was water there, there was a big open space that we could feel protected in.

Q: Okay.

A: We were just going back and forth to the front of the building, trying to take anyone who needed any kind of help, bring them over there.

Q: Okay. And you continued doing this…

A: We continued doing that until I actually, what happened was, I started walking back. I got to pretty much the same spot I was before when we heard the other crash and the other building started coming down. And we had to do the same thing we did the first time, just take off. I wound up diving into the front of the AMEX building, which wasn't great cover cause all the windows had blown out. But it was the first place we found.

Q: Okay. Who were you with? At this point do you know who you were with?

A: I believe around this time, the only man I remember being there, the only name I got was Chief Wells. I didn't get anyone else.

Q: Okay. Did you remove any injured civilians or members of the service?

A: Yeah, after about 20 or 30 minutes of doing what we were doing, we had commandeered an ambulance that was sitting there. It was pretty much the only one still intact, and the keys happened to still be in it. We found two firemen and another civilian who suffered I guess, smoke inhalation and couldn't breathe very well. We put them in there and tried to head uptown to the hospital.

Q: And this was about what time? You said after the second tower went down?

A: After the second tower went down. After the second tower went down, we continued looking, digging through whatever we could dig through. We looked in the AMEX building to see if anyone was left in there, went over to the front of the World Trade Building, pretty much all that was around us was firefighters. There still was a lot

of smoke. Across the street happened to be a parking lot. The parking lot seemed to be pretty much on fire. Every car in there just looked like it was on fire. There was black smoke covering everything. So I couldn't stay that long with no breathing devise. Looking for whoever we could find. We happened to find 2, 3. I think three.

Q: So then you loaded them in an ambulance. Did you have a partner at that time?

A: No, I didn't have a partner. The chief who happened to be there with me said take them uptown, to the furthest hospital. Cause what was around was basically jam-packed. I did that. I dropped them off. At that time I asked them to flush my eyes out with saline solution, and I went back.

Q: Okay. Did you know what time you got back…approximately?

A: Approximately 2:00.

Q: About two o'clock?

A: Yeah. Give or take, you know..

Q: Okay, is there anything you would like to add to this, to the events that happened prior to 12 noon.

A Prior to12 noon? That was after the towers collapsed, no?

Q: Correct. Well, the North Tower collapsed, which was the second tower at 10:29. And then you said about 20 minutes later, so that would be a little bit before 11, you transported two patients.

A: Yeah. Give or take, it might have been longer. Well, personally, it was just horrible. I felt helpless unfortunately, people who really needed the help were upstairs

and we couldn't get to them. It was a bad situation all around, I couldn't do anything for anyone really.

Q: Okay, thank you for doing this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 9:31 hours. The counter on the recorder is at 163.

File No. 9110047

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALLEN CRUZ

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

A. CRUZ

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 10:23 and I am Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area, shield number of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

ALLEN CRUZ: Hi, my name is Allen Cruz. My shield number is 3361 and I work for the New York City Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services and my title is LSU and de-con specialist.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: Well, I got there after the first crash, just before the second crash. I went down Fulton Street, and I parked my vehicle on Fulton at the corner of Church street.

Q: Can you indicate on the map where you parked your vehicle with a number "1?"

A: Sure. A number 1? Right here.

Q: Okay. Upon arrival did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No, not at all. Everyone was there screaming and running for their lives.

Q: Whom did you first report to when you arrived there?

A: I reported to no one.

Q: To no one?

A: Right.

Q: What did you do when you arrived there?

A: When I got there, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I got to the corner of Fulton and Church, I saw a couple of my vehicles parked on Church Street, right in front of the World Trade Center. As I exited my vehicle, I saw this huge fire up on the building you know? Numerous people running out and running up the block towards me, towards my vehicle screaming and hollering in panic.

Q: What did you do next?

A: I did…again, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I was in shock and what I did was I helped some of the people get up off the floor, cause they were falling and tripping all over themselves, and I kept telling them to keep on running. A lot of people, they thought they were safe. They ran out of the building, across the street and like myself, they thought it was just the average fire. They proceeded to just stand there and look up, and again, they thought they were safe because they had crossed the street by my vehicle. As myself, I thought I was safe, and we just stood there in awe, just looking up. Again, while I was there looking up, there were still people running and falling and I proceeded to run to them, pick them up and shove them and tell them keep running, please,

keep moving, keep moving. Just stood there like everybody else, just watching this unfold.

Q: Okay, how long did you do this for approximately?

A: I did that up until the second plane hit.

Q: When the second plane hit, what did you do?

A: Well, I was standing, again, helping these people get up, looking up, watching these people jump out of the windows. Really, I was in shock. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Or maybe I didn't want to believe what I was seeing. As I was standing, there was a bunch of people hiding behind and around my vehicle. As we were standing there, this one lady to my left grabbed me really really tight, my forearm, my left forearm, and we were both looking up at this fire. We both hear this rumble, and I felt a vibration, we looked slightly to the left, all of us, there's a whole bunch of us right next to my vehicle, and here comes this plane, a huge plane. The lady next to me says Oh my God, it's gonna hit the building. I didn't want to give her false information so I said Gee, I don't think so, well I hope not. I mean we're looking at it sort of in three dimensions, so I'm thinking it's gonna go behind the building. From where we're standing, it's gonna go right behind it, but it was too big and far too low. At that moment I said it's gonna hit, it's actually gonna hit. And it hit. She screamed, she said oh my god. At which point I said everybody just run, and there were some curse words. I told everybody you gotta run, run, run. They proceeded to run. I in turn, jumped into my vehicle and a whole bunch of debris just came crashing down on top of my vehicle at which point I said no, I exited my vehicle, and I too

ran behind my vehicle. Unbeknownst to me, there were still people hiding not only behind, but underneath my vehicle. A few seconds, a few minutes maybe went by and we gathered our thoughts and I came out from behind my vehicle and I told everyone who was behind my vehicle and in the streets to run, to keep running. At which time, I ran towards the building, to Church Street. Some of the EMS people were there, and I said, everybody drop what you're doing and just get the hell out of here. Run, run, just leave everything, just go, run, run. At the same time, there was a lot of debris coming down, and they did. They dropped what they were doing, and they just scattered all over the place. Again, people were just falling and stumbling, and I kept picking them up and pushing them to run. Then I started picking up all the equipment that the guys left behind. I started gathering stuff off the street, I started putting it by my vehicle, on the street corner. I wanted to compile everything in one neat little corner. Maybe it's a habit. That's what I do, that's my job. I retrieve equipment. I didn't want to abandon everything, so I started moving all the equipment out of the street, towards my side of the street, when the building collapsed.

Q: This is when the first building collapsed?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. What did you do after the first building collapsed?

A: I ran like hell. I left everything there and I ran like hell. I ran to my vehicle, and I jumped inside. Just as I was about to go into gear, I noticed that there were feet underneath my vehicle. So I left it in park, jumped out, and there were people still hiding underneath it. At which time I said you people gotta go,

you cannot stay here, you gotta go. The rumbling's coming down. They got up out, I dragged the lady out from underneath, there were still people around and behind it, I told them you all gotta run, and they did. At which time the thing came down, a big wall of smoke came and I hid behind my vehicle. I just took a big breath and just waited for it to pass.

Q: You stayed there? What happened next?

A: I don't know how much time elapsed, but it got really dark and I couldn't breath. I was covered in soot. Again, I don't know how long it lasted.

Q: Were you there when the second tower collapsed?

A: Not in that location, no.

Q: Okay, where did you go between from when the first tower collapsed to the second tower?

A: I got back in my vehicle when I thought it was safe. Again, I was facing Church street. So what I did was, I made a right onto Church, stunned. I was stunned, I still could not believe what was happening.

Q: I'm sure.

A: I made a left on Vesey. Vesey and Vestry always get me confused.

Q: You came up, you turned onto Church…

A: Vestry? Vesey. I came down here, I made a left on Vesey. And I proceeded to go between number five World Trade and number seven World Trade.

Q: Approximately right here?

A: I came across here, right. Crossing West Street. Somewhere around here, I don't recall. They say I parked somewhere alongside on the right side of this street here. There were ambulances all parked on the left, and I parked on the right.

Q: So you parked approximately right here?

A: Right about, I believe so.

Q: Which is in front of 7 World Trade Center, is that correct?

A: No. We passed 7.

Q: Here's 7.

A: Oh, 7. Ok, West street. Sorry, forgive me. Here's West.

Q: This is Vesey.

A: No, we passed this. Somewhere along this street, before West Side Highway.

Q: Okay, so by the telephone company building?

A: Yeah, I would have to assume.

Q: So you were on Vesey Street, just before West. Is that correct?

A: Just before West.

Q: So you were approximately right here?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. The map is gonna indicate a 2 where the LSU is moved to next. Correct?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, after you got there…

A: Would this be North End Street here, the West Side Highway?

Q: This would be the West Side Highway.

A: Okay.

Q: North End is over here

A: Okay, I got it. Right about there.

Q: So after you parked there, the first tower has already come down. The second tower has not come down yet, is that correct?

A: Right, that is correct.

Q: You parked here, what did you do next?

A: Here, again, I don't recall.

Q: Do your best.

A: Again, there was a bunch of guys there. There was a bunch of guys there. All of the ambulances, like seven of them parked on one side of the street and I was on the other side. Again, I was the only vehicle parked there. We came out, we couldn't believe what was happening. We started to treat people, they were treating people here. I recall that. Then somebody said run, the other building's gonna fall. Again, I don't know. I don't recall if the other building fell at this point, or as we left. There's a moment there where I don't remember.

Q: To the best of your memory, I don't want to pressure you.

A: I think they said to move cause there's a threat of the building falling, or a threat of another plane. They said another plane was gonna hit, so run. So we proceeded, everyone got into their vehicles and we proceeded to go up to West End Street. The Lieutenant was standing there facing the units.

Everyone got into their vehicles and we abandoned that area. There was a threat of the building falling, or another plane was gonna hit. We proceeded towards North End Street.

Q: North End, okay, this is North End Street.

A: As we approached the Lieutenant, he had all the vehicles. He was telling them all to go to the left, go to the left. He told me to go to the right, which is towards North End I guess, by the marina. There's a marina there somewhere.

Q: The marina would be right here.

A: Okay, so we came up here, this street. Everybody went this way, and I went that way. Right over here somewhere, cause I remember there's a building in front of us.

Q: So right here on North End, just south of Vesey is where you parked your vehicle next?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, the map is gonna indicate with a number 3 where your LSU was parked next. Okay, so now you parked over here, has the second tower come down yet? Or you're not sure? If you're not sure that's fine.

A: A building came down, only I don't know if it was number 7 or number 2.

Q: Okay, number 7 didn't come down till much later.

A: So then it was number 2 that came down.

Q: So then number 2 came down…

A: Yeah. Well, it didn't come down that time. The guys were setting up triage at some hotel over here, and we were treating people here. We were treating an awful lot of people here.

Q: On North End, just south of Vesey, you were treating people?

A: As we were doing that, somebody said, there's another plane. That's it, another plane is coming, another plane is gonna crash. We heard this rumble, that's when the building came down. We all thought it was a plane. Everybody just, firefighters, myself, we were treating people, everybody just threw themselves down to the floor, and they hid all around my vehicle. You know, anything they could find, they just threw themselves down. We actually thought it was another plane. That's right. That's when the other building came down. Because we heard the rumble (BOOM). Just crashing down, I thought it was another plane. Yeah, exactly, that's what happened.

Q: Tower two came down, then what happened next? What did you do? What did you see?

A: Tower 2 came down, everybody evacuated the hotel area where they had the temporary triage center. Everybody got in their vehicle. Actually, they didn't get in their vehicles, they ran. Everybody just evacuated. They said run, clear, and everybody just took off. I again, stood. I stood there. I went to the hotel, it was empty. See, I wouldn't leave the vehicle cause I have to stay with that vehicle at all times. I have all the extra equipment in case the guys need something. Plus, my portable radio was going dead. If they needed me, I needed to be on the air, so what I kept doing was going into my vehicle and monitoring

the radio in my vehicle, instead of my portable, so I kept switching back and forth. The building came down, everyone took off, I hid behind my vehicle. I hid outside my vehicle, I was looking up this street here.

Q: Up Vesey Street?

A: Vesey. I just saw this huge ball of smoke coming at me. So I was trying to time it. I was trying to wait for it and time it. I escaped the first one, so I figured, okay, no sweat. I took a deep breath, get down, and just wait for it to pass. But unbeknownst to me, I'm looking up the street her, I hear this rumbling sound coming from behind me. As I'm crouched down, and as I turned around, I see this huge ball of smoke coming. I didn't expect it to come from behind me. It came around the building, and it came from behind me, so it kind of caught me off guard. So I just laid myself down on the floor, by the tire, I took a deep breath and I just waited. It blew past me, and I waited a few seconds. I found my door, I couldn't see anything. I found my door, and I jumped into my vehicle. While doing so, I bumped my head up against the steering wheel. So I crouched myself underneath my steering wheel, by the pedals, and I just crouched and waited. I don't know how long, but I just waited there until I was able to see light. Then I got out of my vehicle, there was people still scurrying around, but it was somewhat deserted, very dismal. I walked over to the temporary triage center, and there was absolutely nobody, not even anybody in the hotel, in the lobby. A moment ago there was people there, but now there was nobody. There was like, seven vehicles parked in front, and no body. So everybody ran towards Chambers Street.

Q: So they ran North on North End Street, towards Chambers?

A: Right, then at this point, I noticed that some of the vehicles had their ignition keys still in the ignition. So I jumped in the vehicle, I turned it on, and I drove it to where everybody was staging at Chambers Street. Then I walked all the way back, got another vehicle, and took it over there and parked it. Came back, the third vehicle wouldn't start, it had the keys in it and it was dead. So I walked back to my truck, my LSU and I went straight over to where that vehicle was, took out my cables, and I jumped it, jump started it. I legally parked my vehicle, to this day it bothers me, cause the street was deserted. Instead of just leaving my vehicle there once I got that vehicle started, I actually got into my vehicle and legally parked it. I proceeded to move that vehicle, I jumped it. I moved two, I jumped two. Then all the other people were here.

Q: Other people were on Chambers and North End?

A: Yeah. Then one of the fellows that was here said that he had left his vehicle in front of mine, vehicle 240. I remember seeing it in front of me. So I said okay, give me your keys and I'll go and get your vehicle. He said please don't got there, don't go, it's dangerous. I said look, you need the vehicle, I'll go get it for you. I can walk faster than you it's no big deal, it's no problem, I will handle it. He gave me the keys and I walked all the way back and I got his vehicle. Actually, I didn't get his vehicle. When I got to his vehicle, he had given me the wrong key. That pissed me off. I had to walk all the way back to him, that was his vehicle. I said look, you gave me the wrong damn key, at which point he said I'm going with you. I said okay, fine. So we both walked all the

way back, he got into his vehicle, I got into mine, and I waited for him to start his vehicle up in case he needed my help, in case he needed my jump. He got it started, the lights came on, he made a U-turn, he pulled out, and I pulled out with him. We all met at Chambers Street.

Q: Do you know about what time this was that you finally got up there?

A: Honestly, no sir. I could not tell you. The time I couldn't tell you.

Q: I'm sure it was all a blur.

A: Yeah, I was lost for time. I didn't think of looking at my watch or nothing.

Q: After you got to Chambers and North End, what did you do up there?

A: At which time I proceeded down Chambers Street and I parked my vehicle on the corner of Chambers and West.

Q: Okay. Right here?

A: Chambers and West Street, right on this side of the street. Actually, I parked it right in front of I think it was the BMCC College.

Q: Okay, so the number 4 indicates where your vehicle was parked next, on West and Chambers. When you got there, what happened next?

A: I stood there with my vehicle, I stood there and I started watching this whole operation unfold. Units started coming, vehicles started coming, bosses started coming, Police Department, Fire Department, people started coming. They just all convened on that one corner. I just stood there and

watched that whole operation unfold. Every time when my EMS people came-- the command truck came and the chiefs came, I reported to them, I said look, I'm parked over here. I said if you need anything, I got the LSU parked on this corner. They said okay, what I need from you Allen (that was my chief) is I need the table that we have that they can write stuff, I have that table.

Q: Like, the command board?

A: Exactly. I went to my vehicle, I got it, I gave it to him. For the next thirty- something hours, I just stood with my truck right there in that corner. I was there until Wednesday, the next day.

Q: Wow, that's a long time. Is there anything else you would like to add to this, anything else you would like to tell me about the events that happened up until about noon that day?

A: Nothing that you haven't already heard or seen, or felt for yourself. I mean there was nothing to really say to describe this whole catastrophe. It's really hard to describe to be perfectly honest,, I mean to see this happening, it's really hard to describe. No, I can honestly tell you, eighteen years plus on this job, and I've seen the worst the city has to offer. But nothing to this magnitude. The feeling was so overwhelming. It was an incredible thing, I'm really lost for words at this time. I really am, forgive me.

Q: No, please, no forgiveness necessary. I thank you very much for allowing me to conduct this interview.

A: You're very welcome.

Q: The time is 11:44, the counter on the tape player is at 322.

File No. 9110048

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PATRICIA ONDROVIC

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

P. ONDROVIC

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 6:48 AM, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

PATRICIA ONDROVIC: Patricia Ondrovic, shield 1634, EMTD, assigned to Battalion 8.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: I saw the two towers burning.

Q: On arrival, did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No.

Q: Where did you park your vehicle when you arrived?

A: In the middle of Vesey Street between West and whatever is East of Vesey.

Q: On this map, can you indicate with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Um…it was on Vesey between West and the West Side Highway so, it was, I'm not sure if it was this block or that block.

Q: Okay, just approximate and put a number 1.

A: I guess it was over here.

Q: Okay, and what vehicle were you in?

A: Vehicle 90.

Q: Vehicle 90. Whom did you first report to and where?

A: On Vesey and West, in the middle of the block, there was an EMS captain. I never got his name, I don't know who he was. I said I was 07 Charlie, he said park it over there. That was the last I saw of him.

Q: Were you given a specific assignment?

A: No. Stand by. Take the equipment out of the vehicle and stand by.

Q: Were you asked to assist any specific units?

A: No.

Q: Can you tell me what you did when you arrived at that location?

A: We took the stretcher and all the crash equipment out of the bus and we formed up alongside one of the buildings on Vesey. I don't remember which number it was. We were in a line of several other ambulances. Next to us was a St. Claire's ambulance and a Cabrini Ambulance. I think there was only one other EMS ambulance on that block at the time I was there. That was vehicle 350, 08 David. I didn't know a lot of the people there, I didn't know the EMS captain that was there. There were no patients that we could see at that point. I think they were trying to set up a triage in front of the building that the ambulances were all parked at. I guess we were supposed to be

the first on the wave to take patients out, and there was a Tex-Mex restaurant across the street. I went in to use the bathroom, that's where the Police were using their command center. I saw a police captain that I knew, and he came out to me. He looked absolutely terrified, he was shaking, he was pale, he was sweating. I looked at him, I said what's wrong? He said there's another plane headed our way, and they just blew up the Pentagon. I said, another plane? What are you talking about? I hadn't realized that planes had hit this, I thought they just set bombs off. I didn't realize when I got there that planes hit it. I said, what do you mean another plane? He said two planes hit the World Trade Center. So I'm thinking a little Cessena. How can a little Cessena do all that damage? He said no, 757s. I said big things? See I was there for about 25 minutes before I knew that planes had crashed into this. We just got assigned to do stand-by. We didn't know what the stand-by was. I mean, who thinks something like that? You just think they hit it again. So I said, what do you mean there's another one headed this way? He said, it's on the TV, there's a TV in there and it said that the Pentagon has been hit. Then we all went outside cause they had on the police radio that there was another plane headed in our direction, we all went outside and started looking up in the sky. Then the EMS captain said everyone grab your equipment, get to your vehicles and stay with your vehicles. My partner and I grabbed our stretcher, went to put it in the back of our vehicle, and at that time, I think it was the lobby of the building behind us blew out. Everybody started running, I didn't see him again that day. He got thrown one way, I got

thrown the other way. I started running towards the West Side Highway, and there was another building on the corner, I guess it was a federal building, cause it was all the green and gray uniforms with the Smokey the Bear hats, the cops in there. I went to run in the lobby cause all of a sudden you couldn't see anything. There was smoke, there was debris, there was everything flying around. I ran into the lobby cause I had no idea what had happened and the cops that were in there were telling everybody get out, get out, get out. Where are you gonna go? Stuff's blowing up. So I ran back out and I started running west again. At that point, there was a car on the corner of I think I was here at that point, on the West Side Highway.

Q: West Side Highway and Vesey?

A: And Vesey, yeah. I was still on Vesey, cause the building that blew up on me was on Vesey, it was on the corner next to the West Side Highway. Cause I know I was running west, I didn't run that way. Thank God, I would have been dead had I run the other way. But I ran towards the West Side Highway, and I kept running up Vesey. As I was running up Vesey, the first car blew up on me on the corner of Vessey and the West Side Highway. That set my turnout coat on fire, that set my hair on fire, and that set my feet on fire. I kept running. I got news for you, those turn out coats need to be called burn out coats, cause this thing caught up in flames. They cut two inches off my hair in less that two minutes, my coat was completely engulfed, and that was the only way I could see where I was running at that point, because I had a glow from my coat.

There's hundreds of cops all running up there, and I ended up running through this park, and I couldn't even see where I was running anymore. I kept running North.

Q: Through North Park?

A: I guess that's North Park. It's a big green, grassy area, and there's nothing there. As I was running up here, two or three more cars exploded on me. They weren't near any buildings at that point, they were just parked on the street. The traffic guys hadn't gotten a chance to tow anything yet, cause this was all during the first hour I guess of this thing happening. So there were still cars parked on the street that were completely independent of that. Three cars blew up on me, stuff was being thrown. I went home all bruised that day. Thank God it was only bruises. I just ran into this park along with a bunch of other people, and stuff was still blowing up, I don't think I looked back, but you couldn't see anything, everything was just black. I was running and I was falling over people, cause people were crawling on the ground cause they couldn't see anymore. I just kept on running north. I could smell water, so I just kept on running towards the water, cause I knew that my coat was on fire, and I figured well, if I can see a boat over the water, I'm just gonna jump onto the boat and take that thing to Jersey, cause no one wants to blow up Jersey. Stuff is still blowing up behind me, as I'm running. I can hear stuff exploding. I could hear rumbling, the street under me was moving like I was in an earthquake. I've been in those, so I know what they feel like. It felt like an earthquake. There was no where safe to go. As I was running north in this park, and then I could start seeing again a little bit, and I just kept looking in the sky. Cause the captain was saying

there's another plane heading in our direction, I was looking for another plane. I saw something in the sky, it was a plane, but it was way out. It looked like it was over Jersey or something, then it wasn't there anymore. I saw a small fireball, and it was gone. I saw two other planes. One came in one way, and the other came in the other way, and there was a plane in the middle that was way far off in the distance. Then the plane in the middle just disappeared into a little fire ball. It looked like the size of a golf ball from where I could see it. And the other two planes veered off into opposite directions. I just kept on running north. About fifteen blocks later, I had no idea that that was just the first tower that had come down. I had no idea at that time that that's what that was, and the other buildings were being affected, of course, by that building falling. I found another ambulance, I believe it was the 08 Adam, because it was Valdivia and Jose Perez. Joseph Valdivia used to be my partner on tour 3, and when I finally caught up to them, I told them what was happening. I told them whatever you do, don't go back that way cause they just blew up triage. I thought that they blew up our triage sector, cause that's where the command was and everything. That was the only thing that I had to go by, everybody that was there was gone. Cause a couple of the police officers that are now missing are guys that I had known, and that's where they were. The paramedic from Cabrini, that's where he was. I was just talking to him 20 minutes before everything blew up. I don't know where he ran, I don't know if he ran the wrong way, cause I know I ran the right way. If you ran the opposite way, you were dead. As I got like 15, 20 blocks away, now I'm on the West Side Highway cause I came out of this park and I found the other

ambulance. I saw my ex-partner, and I said get in this thing and drive it to Westchester. I told him get the hell out of the city. Get everyone was can get in this, I said shit's still blowing up down there. Whatever you do, don't go in that direction, start driving north. He was like, looking at me like I was insane. Cause I don't know if anyone saw what had happened. All you could see was black smoke and that's all I can see at that point. Now I'm in an area where all the reporters are coming up to me and asking what had happened, and I said I don't thinking I'm allowed to talk about it. Cause I don't know what happened, and I wasn't gonna tell anybody. You know, it was surreal, like it wasn't really happening. So then an EMS Lieutenant comes over, he sees me standing with 8 Adam, and he says okay, you guys are gonna go three blocks south. I looked at him, and I said are you out of your mind? I found another guy from 8 David, Charles Gschlecht and we found each other as we were running. He couldn't find his partner, and I couldn't find mine, so we kind of synched up together, cause at least we knew each other and it's like, okay, we're okay. He said I can't find my partner. I said I can't find mine either, I think he got blown the wrong way. This guy was telling me that his partner went back in to help somebody, and that was the last we saw of either of them for awhile. That was the last I saw my partner for six whole days, cause I didn't come back to work after that.

Q: Who was the lieutenant you saw, do you know?

A: Yeah, Bobby Deleon. Bobby Deleon comes up to me, and I know him cause he used to be a union rep up in the Bronx when I worked up there a million years

ago, he tells us to take the vehicle, put me and Charles in the back of the vehicle and go three blocks south. Charles told him, are you out of your mind? We're not safe where we are, let alone three blocks south. Yeah, yeah , yeah, I know, I know. Get in the ambulance and go three blocks south. At that point I got really upset. I said, do you realize they just blew up our triage sector? Everybody back there is dead, everybody back there is gone. There is no reason for us to go back there, we don't have the proper protective equipment, we don't have the proper vehicles. There's no way I'm going back there, there's no reason to go back. Yeah , yeah, yeah, I know, don't be hysterical, just go back three blocks south. I'm not going three blocks south, he's not going three blocks south, this ambulance is not going three blocks south. Sean started telling him we're not safe where we are now, and we were fifteen blocks away. It was certainly not safe there. He was the whole time saying…cause at that point I was screaming at him, cause he wasn't in there. We were telling him what we saw, and he just wouldn't listen. Yeah, yeah, I know. [redacted] I still hadn't realized that the first tower had fallen. [redacted] After I found out what actually

happened, cause I found that out about a week ago, that that's what I ran from. So then, I think it was an EMS chief, I'm not sure who it was. Now more people were starting to come to this location, and he says okay, here's what we're gonna do…everybody's gonna go back down that way on the West Side Highway, and it's okay cause we have a police escort.

Q: Back south?

A: Back south on the West Side Highway, it's be okay cause we have a police escort. I don't want any free-lancing, we're all gonna go back in a nice orderly fashion. At that point my chest started to hurt, I couldn't breathe cause all I was breathing in was this black crap, I started coughing up all this black crap, all this stuff that looked like goo, and if I had to run another 15 blocks, I would have been dead. There was no way I could do it. I saw Lieutenant Hanlon, who is a lieutenant out of this station at that point, and I sat in the back of the ambulance. I started getting really scared, and really upset, cause people were telling me to go back in and die. There was nothing else they were telling me to do at that point, cause that was all that was gonna happen. So I sat in the back of the ambulance, I was coughing up, I was coughing up. Everyone kept asking me do you want oxygen? I was like no, I don't want it to get pushed down, I want to bring it up. I took some cold water, I put it on my face, I tried to cough up into it, and my chest really started hurting. Then my left arm started hurting, then the whole left side of my body started hurting, and I was like no, there's no way this is gonna happen. Lieutenant Hanlon came over to me and said are you okay? I said no, and I don't

know where my partner is. At that point I was crying cause I had no idea where my partner was, I thought I was having a goddamn heart attack, and these people are telling me to go back in. So then when this EMS chief said what we're gonna do I said no, I have chest pain, I want to go to the hospital. So 8 Adam took me to the hospital, they took me to St. Vincent's. At the time we were setting up, getting ready to take me out, they took my blood pressure, which was a little high at the time, it's never been before in my life, but I think that's a good time for it to be high.

Q: Did you take something?

A: They put me on oxygen, put me in the stretcher. As they put me in the stretcher, somebody came over the EMS radio, said that the North Tower is leaning. As we started driving off, we saw the second tower fall. As we're driving away, debris is hitting the back of the ambulance. We were now about 20 blocks away, debris was hitting the back of the ambulance as we were watching this thing come down, it was just this huge cloud. It was me and Jose Perez in the back of the bus saying, I can't believe we're seeing this. When we saw the towers start coming, I took the oxygen off my face, me and Jose are yelling up to the front to Joe just drive. Put your foot on the floor and drive, drive as fast as you can out of here, it's coming down. Joe was like, I know I see it, and he had his foot on the floor, which meant we were going 30 miles an hour. Stuff was still hitting the back of the ambulance. All I kept thinking of is if this much crap is hitting the back of the bus and we're 20 blocks away, this lieutenant wanted us to go 3 blocks south, and I'm thinking what happened to everybody who listened to this chief

and went back? I don't even know if they got a chance to go back. You know? Also, after I was running, I remember running, and I remember somebody yelling on the radio May Day, May Day, I'm trapped! Over the EMS radio. I was thinking May Day? That's not a term we use, you know 10-13 or 85 forthwith, but somebody's yelling May Day, I'm trapped. Then you heard this loud buzz, and you didn't hear anymore transmissions after that until I would venture to guess it was 20 minutes to a half our later, and the first thing I remember hearing was somebody saying the North Tower is leaning. Within five minutes of that statement, the second tower came down. I spent the rest of my day at St. Vincent's hospital.

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add to this?

A: I don't know if it matters, but I took the next three days off after that. I didn't go on [redacted]. [redacted] I was okay with it until the lieutenant wouldn't listen to me, and would not understand that it was dangerous to go back in. He wouldn't accept that from me or the other guy that was with me. So I took the next three days off sick. During that time I went to see two counselors, one that was set-up by the union. Cause needless to say, like everyone else in the city, I did not sleep, I was having nightmares, I think the first full meal I ate was about last week. [redacted]. Then I went to go see an internist cause I started walking down the street

and all of a sudden, I couldn't breathe. I was trying to get back in the swing of things, [redacted]. His statements to two of my co-workers, as well as a lieutenant was, it's part of the job. If I can't handle the job, I shouldn't have it. I don't think what any of us responded to that day was part of anyone's job, let alone ours. That was a military operation. Of course, what are you gonna do? It could have been my day off. I could have been shopping at Border's Books. [redacted]. I don't think anyone's ever been exposed to something like this before here. Of course not, but we all know EMS has a high rate of suicide. Not saying that that's gonna be my case cause no, I refuse, I wouldn't let anybody push me to that corner.

Q: I'm glad to hear that.

A: But, this is what happens. This is one of the reasons that I pushed up my resignation date a lot quicker. Cause I was trying to hold out for another 8 months, as soon I can get another job I'm the hell outta here. It's not because of this event, cause other events like this will happen whether I'm on duty or off, it's the way I've been treated since.

Q: I thank you very much for speaking to me, the time is 7:08 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110049

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN COUTSOUROS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11th, 2001, the time now is 1250 hours, and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank and command.

FIREFIGHTER COUTSOUROS: Dean Coutsouros, Firefighter 2nd Grade, Engine 220.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the Lieutenant's office of Engine 220. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Go ahead.

A. Okay. We arrived, we came over the Brooklyn Bridge and we wound up on the West Side Highway just north of building 7, World Trade Center No. 7. We proceeded to grab cylinders and all our gear and we marched down the West Side Highway to Liberty Street where the pedestrian walkway is. Under the pedestrian walkway we met up with a Chief. The Chief gave my Captain orders for us to go into 2 World Trade Center.

We went to the parking lot directly across from the World Trade Center. There was whole bunch of debris coming down on Liberty Street, which prevented

us from walking down Liberty, and we got in front of 90 West Street, we held up there for a few minutes underneath the scaffolding to reassess the situation, how we were going to get into the building. There was all kinds of human debris. The landing gear of the aircraft was in that parking lot there. It was right near us. There was all kind of stuff all over the floor. Other companies near us, I think, were 205 and there was a truck company there, but I'm not really sure who it was. It might have been 117.

The Captain took us, we went through 90 West Street, we went through the front door, we came out the back door. The Captain was Stephen Grabher. He was a covering Captain that day. Him and Owen Carlock made it behind the Bankers Trust building. I was directly in the middle of the street on Washington Street, and there were two guys, three guys behind me, and I was right in the middle of the street and that's when the tower started to come. I happened to be looking up at it, and from the fire floor down, it was just like a really loud crackling noise, it sounded like a million firecrackers, and just a wave, right from the fire floor down, just a wave that started to come down.

Q. Do you know who the two firefighters were

that were with you?

A. Right. Mike Schroeck, George Marsh and Eddie Plunkett. I happened to run straight ahead and I went east and I got behind the Bankers Trust building, which has a little overhang and there's steel columns holding up the overhang. We tucked in behind that overhang there. George Marsh and Eddie Plunkett and Mike Schroeck actually stayed behind 90 West because by that time it was already coming down. They had no chance to cross the street, Washington Street. We tucked in behind this building and in seconds it was nighttime. The dirt was over my head. I was chewing it trying to get some air. We didn't know what really was going on. I saw the building come down, but I think I was the only one who actually saw it come down.

As soon as everything collapsed, that loud rumble, everything collapsed, Owen Carlock handed me an ax. The Captain screamed we've got to get inside this building. I took an ax and I smashed the window, but it was just a dummy panel. It was wall behind it. I smashed the next window, no luck. I threw my helmet off, I put my face piece on, which was filled with debris, shook it out, put my face piece on. We went west. We went back to Washington Street, searched this

wall left for a door, and over here there is a service entrance and we wound up getting in the door here. We all got in there.

Q. Did you hook up back with the other firefighters?

A. Not as of yet.

Q. Okay.

A. Me, Owen and the Captain wound up getting in here, plus a couple other guys, there was like a truck unit, guys I don't even know who they were, and we wound up getting in there. Then like once the dirt settled, there was still a lot of dust, but once the dirt settled, like a few minutes, we wound up hooking up back with the other three guys. We met them in it's like a little courtyard right there on the side of this building.

We regrouped, we got our stuff together, and we went back out to the West Side Highway, right about here, and we were starting to walk. We wanted to get north of the towers. We were trying to get back up around here, and right about here, on Albany and Washington, is when the first building came down, and the debris cloud started coming. So we started going south on the West Side Highway and we got into this

building right here, which I think is the Millenium Hilton or something like that. This building has revolving doors.

Q. Between Albany and Carlisle?

A. Right. That building right there. As the debris cloud came down, we got covered in it, but I knew I was facing east.

Q. That's the one in the hotel?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a revolving door and I saw the light through it and we wound up all getting in there, except for Mike Schroeck. He went running down this way. He just took off down the West Side Highway. There was all people in there. We got some water. Some guy had -- I don't know where it came from, Red Cross maybe or something like that. There was just a barrel of water on ice out of nowhere. We helped people get down out of this building after it all settled and all. The Captain went and searched for Mike Schroeck. He didn't know where he was. We lost him at that point. We were helping people come this way and getting them south towards the Battery Tunnel.

After that we regrouped once again, we all

got everybody, we got Mike Schroeck back together, we all stayed as a unit and we crossed the West Side Highway. We went around whatever that street is that crosses over. We crossed the West Side Highway and there were a couple of car fires and some paper and debris there, and we left George Marsh there. He's NPO. We left him there to pump water for I think it was 210 I think was the engine and he pumped water for them. We left him and we went around to -- let's see exactly. Where is this notch here?

Q. That's the harbor.

A. Right. This is where we wound up.

Q. Then you had to go down East End Avenue.

A. Right. We went around here. We came down East End. Actually, we put a fire out in a building that's right there. We went through here. There was a fire building. We started stretching all the lengths that the fireboat had through I guess it's the Merrill Lynch Building. The Winter Garden was -- that half dome was collapsed over here. We started stretching lines, everything the fireboat had, through this Merrill Lynch Building. We got like halfway, but this whole side of the building was collapsed. It was a little scary. We started stretching lines and hooking

up hose, and then all of a sudden a company came walking over with a firefighter in a Stokes basket and his head was crushed pretty bad. So we took the Stokes basket and we went down -- there's a ramp here.

Q. You loaded him on the boat?

A. We loaded him on the fireboat and the fireboat took off. Now our line is dead. Over here there was a gas leak. The Police Department was telling everybody to get out of the area, blah blah blah.

Q. Can you just verbalize the street corner there?

A. Okay. We went over -- I guess 4 World Financial, Merrill Lynch, is Vesey and North End, that corner building. We went down this street, which isn't marked here, whatever it is. The Captain told Owen Carlock and Eddie Plunkett to go get our rig, which is right here at this time. We were going to bring our rig back here and pump water. That was the last I saw of them. They're alive and everything, but we didn't see them the rest of the day.

We came back over here, right by Gateway Plaza, right on this corner of Liberty, I don't know the building there, but it's a residential building.

We were sitting there taking a blow, washing our eyes out because our eyes were bleeding, and as we're sitting there with our coats off, I look up and black smoke starts billowing out of the 9th floor window. So the Captain goes, all right, get your gear on.

So it's now just me, Captain Steve Grabher, Mike Schroeck and myself, the three of us, there was like a loaner rig, one of those rigs from the rock or whatever it was, a 5 something, 515 rig, we tested the hydrant and there was no water, this guy John Orloff, Buffalo, from 201, he's a Lieutenant. The Captain says, all right, come on, guys. We grabbed two cans off that rig and we walked up to the 9th floor to that apartment. There was someone there already forced the door. We went in with the cans to try to see what we could do. It was already vented, so it was just a lot of flame, not too much smoke, not too bad. We went in with the cans. It did nothing.

We went back down to the 8th floor and Buffalo, Fireman Orloff, was pulling up. He dropped a Clorox bottle. He was pulling up two lengths of two and a half to hook to the standpipe. A guy in front of me grabbed a nozzle. I had a knife. I was cutting the rope off the nozzle. We went up to the 9th floor. We

got there and I figured I'd back this guy up and he just handed me the nozzle. Now I realized he didn't have a mask. So I masked up, I got the nozzle, I went in. They hooked up one length from like the standpipe on that floor. They broke it one length and that was it. It was right there. The apartment was right next to the standpipe.

I went in, knocked down two rooms of fire, had absolutely no pressure. There was a couch next to me that was burning like directly by my shoulder, but every time I turned the nozzle, I was cutting off my water. I had absolutely no pressure. So I pushed the couch out of the way, knocked down the two rooms. I stood up, I got a little past it and turned around and hit the couch. Just as I finished hitting that area right there, I turned around, a little corner flared up again, and then I ran out of water. There was no water because the gravity tank must have took a hit or whatever or just that was it. I wound up shaking the hose to put the rest of the fire out. Once there was no more flame, we shut down, came back out. The Captain was searching all the apartments on that floor and Mike Schroeck. We came back out, we regrouped, and we started heading down the stairs.

Q. The firefighter that you backed up, do you know who that was?

A. No, he backed me up. I have no idea who he was.

Q. Was he on duty or off duty?

A. I don't know. He had a mask so... It's hard to tell because masks were being traded. God knows. I didn't even know what company he was from. He might have been from 201 because there was a bunch of 201 guys up there, but I really don't know who he was or whatever happened. We were just trying to put this fire out, which we did.

Coming down the stairs, the floor, with all the soot and gook on our feet and stuff, it was really slippery. I fell like a half landing on my back. We got two floors down, me and the Captain, and Mike Schroeck, we heard him fall down a whole flight of stairs. We just heard bing bang.

We got back down in front of the building. At that point we were pretty much spent. This is, you know, it's late in the afternoon now. This isn't all happening all at once.

Q. I know.

A. The time, you know. We went over to the end

of Liberty, like over here. Well, actually --

Q. Was this towards late afternoon or early evening?

A. This has got to be like 3:00, 3:30, around there.

Q. Okay.

A. Around 3:00ish. Because I remember making a phone call at 2:30, before that. I'm not sure.

Q. It's not important.

A. We went down by the water and that was it for the end of us. My back was hurt, my shoulder. All of us were hurting and we just like actually laid there. I wound up meeting up with this guy, Dave Koyles from Ladder 122, who had just been in a collapse in the Marriott. He was in the Vista, in that lobby. We wound up getting a ride from a civilian in a suburban because we wanted to get triaged. We couldn't do any more. That's it. We gave our masks up to another company and me and Dave Koyles wound up getting a ride from a civilian down where all the boats are. We got triaged somewhere over here. They wanted to take us to Ellis Island or New Jersey, which we said we're never going to get home.

From there we wound up getting up from there,

walking away, some guy with a golf cart took us down to like Battery Park. From there two detectives threw us in the back of their car and they took us to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal.

Q. Back to Staten Island?

A. They got us in an ambulance to go to Methodist Hospital. We both wound up in Methodist Hospital that day and that's the end of my story.

Q. When you first arrived en route to the scene, do you know if you were given any specific locations to go to?

A. I don't know about that. I know that it was about ten after 9:00 we were crossing the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. So the first building was hit by that time?

A. Both buildings were hit at that time. When the first building was hit, I actually took a picture from the roof of the firehouse. Then the second plane went in and that's when we got called in. On the fifth alarm we went.

Q. Just to put things a bit, where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. When the second building collapsed, which was Tower 1, I was in the middle of the West Side Highway.

I was on the southbound side of the West Side Highway, maybe one block away, Albany Street.

Q. Did you have a radio with you?

A. No. Nozzle man does not have a radio. But I really -- I took pictures. I always keep a disposable camera in my pocket. I took pictures coming over the bridge, and just before I came over the bridge, I took a picture of the crowd and it happened to catch a clock just by the Brooklyn Bridge and it said almost -- it was like maybe eight, ten after 9:00. I got a picture of our rig going over the bridge. When we first pulled up, I took a picture right where we parked the rig. I took a picture right under this scaffolding of 90 West Street, and that was about it. I took pictures of the guys later on and stuff like that and the debris.

Q. Initially you said that a Chief directed you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what Chief that was?

A. I do not know, no. It was really chaos and mayhem and we were just -- we didn't even bring roll-ups or anything because we figured so many companies were in, we were just going up and relieve a company on the line to put this fire out. Never thought it was going to come down.

Q. Right.

A. We were trying -- what the Captain said, he wanted to take us around. We wanted to attack on a diagonal to get into the building, because this way and this way, everything was -- just so many jumpers and debris falling, all kinds of shit. So there was no way to go down Liberty Street. There was stuff all -- and we just heard that a jumper landed on somebody right here. So we weren't going this way. We wound up choosing a wider route, and we didn't even get to -- you know, as soon as we started out, the building came down.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you think is important that you'd like to add at this time?

A. That's about it.

MR. FEILER: We're going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you on behalf of the Department for participating in this. The time now is 1305 hours and we'll conclude the interview.

File No. 9110050

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT STEPHEN JEZYCKI

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time now is 12:32 hours, and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, title and assigned command.

LIEUTENANT JEZYCKI Lieutenant Steve Jezycki, Battalion 57.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting the interview in the lieutenant's office in the quarters of Engine 220. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you relate your information, lieutenant.

MR. FEILER: I'm sorry, also present is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm sorry, go ahead.

A. On the morning of September 11th, from right across the harbor on Staten Island, I saw

one of the towers on fire. I proceeded home to my mother's house to get in touch with my sister, who we know works in Manhattan. She worked at One Liberty Plaza.

So I went home to find my brother there, who is an off-duty lieutenant, Michael Jezycki. When we went in to get in touch with my sister, my mother informed us that my sister had called at 9:00 and said that she was at a meeting in the south tower on the 105 floor, that she was okay.

At that point me and my brother grabbed our gear. Knowing that the bridges were shut down, we headed for the Staten Island ferry, which is five minutes away. We got on the ferry boat with a bunch of other off-duty firemen. We met up with Lieutenant Bob Perretta, Lieutenant Tom Pigott, and Firefighter Kevin Kelly.

On the way over we made ourselves a five-man team. We were going to proceed to the 90th floor, because that's where my sister called from. On the way over, we grabbed some ropes off the ferry boat. I had a couple of hand tools.

As the ferry was pulling up to dock on

the Manhattan side, we saw the second collapse of the second tower come down. I thought that was the tower my sister was in. It ended up being the other way around.

As soon as we get off the ferry, we jumped on a big black, pickup truck Jeep, with a bunch of other guys. It drove us right up the West side. We pulled up maybe ten minutes after the second collapse, I would say, thereabouts.

I ran into Battalion Chief Artie Lakiotes, safety chief, who was trying to get a little organization of the guys on West Street there. He told us to take a manifold down towards the water. We were going to pump from a boat.

We were taking this manifold towards the west side, and we heard that there was a fireman trapped. Then they called for the manifold back on West Street. So we started to bring the manifold back. We placed it down on West Street.

We went in the direction of where the fireman was trapped. It turned out being a chauffeur from 65 Engine who was buried beneath

the walkway going over West Street on the World Trade Center side.

Q. By Liberty Street?

A. Yes, Liberty and West.

There must have been -- I don't know -- 15 guys. We made a line. We were digging. There were three car fires right next to where they were digging. The heat was sort of hampering our digging efforts.

We ended up finding an operating engine three-quarter line on another pile. We passed it over. Myself, my brother Michael and Kevin Kelly ended up getting a line right in between where we were digging and the car fires. We put kind of a water curtain up. In about five or ten minutes, the guys that were digging, we were able to get the chauffeur from 65 out.

At that point we realized we were kind of close to some falling debris, and we kind of backed out. I just remember there was a battalion chief there, a senior battalion chief who I thought maybe was kind of having a heart attack or something because he was holding his chest and he was going down.

On West Street there was about three feet of water. I just remember grabbing the chief and helped him across. We waded through the water, onto the other side of the street. At that point we just proceeded north on West.

We were sort of digging through the debris for the next 10 or 12 hours. That was my day on Tuesday.

Q. The chauffeur you mentioned --

A. From 65.

Q. Was his condition?

A. I tell you what, I had my back to him at that point, because we had the line going. I just remember glancing over. The guys kind of carried him out, passed him out, and carried him away. At that point I shut the line, and that's when I saw that chief. I thought he was having a heart attack. We ended up sitting him down. He said that he was fine.

We moved north on West Street after that.

Q. The chauffeur's name, were you able to obtain the chauffeur's name?

A. I never got his name, but he was a

chauffeur from 65. And I believe he was calling saying where he was. That's how guys knew somebody else with a radio, and that's how they honed in on him. He was either calling on a radio or they said they heard him calling.

Q. What about the chief, do you know his name?

A. I didn't get his name either, no.

Q. Did you have any radio equipment with you?

A. No, we had no radio equipment. Just, like I said, hand tools. I had a maul that I grabbed from home, an old Halligan that I had at home, and I grabbed those hand tools. We cut ropes off the ferry boat. Bobby Perretta had a Scott mask.

On our way up West Street where the Jeep dropped us off, we were walking up West and we were taking whatever we could off of --

Q. Other vehicles?

A. -- other department vehicles that were parked along West. We ended up grabbing a rabbit tool and a couple other hand tools.

Q. Do you remember what companies you saw

there?

A. No, I can't recall their numbers, because I guess the frame of mind I was in. There were engine companies along there, not ladder companies. That's what I remember, seeing pumpers, not ladder trucks.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings? When you got there, I think you said both of them collapsed.

A. Yeah, when I got there, the second one already came down. There was really not many buildings to enter other than the surrounding ones, which we were concentrating our efforts where the Trade Center stood, in that pile of debris there.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important, any recollections of any firefighters that you may have seen, EMS people, civilians that you may have helped?

A. At that point, like I said, we were in that area. We did make our way around towards the water and came up on -- I don't know if it's Chambers, Vesey -- a few blocks north. We were starting to gather over there, and we heard that

there was a building in danger of collapse.

This was a couple hours later, maybe, and that huge building -- it was on that block. When that came down, we all ran down to the west side when that other building came down, and we went back to where the Trade Center was. We just said let's go back over there. We were kind of looking, digging, hoping maybe.

Q. You stayed with the four people that you mentioned?

A. We were pretty much together most of the day. I was there till around midnight. At that point it was just me and my brother. We split up from the other three guys sometime during the day.

Q. You said he's on the job too?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where does he work?

A. He's assigned to the 8th Division, covering lieutenant.

Q. If there's nothing else, I want to thank you for your time.

MR. FEILER: We'll conclude at the interview at 1242 hours.

File No. 9110051

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL SCHROECK

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time now is 1313 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER SCHROECK: Firefighter Michael Schroeck, Engine 220, 5th Grade.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're interviewing at the quarters of Engine 220 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is...

MR. DUN: Richard Dun.

MR. FEILER: And...

LIEUTENANT JEZYCKI: Lieutenant Jezycki.

Q. If you can just give me a scenario of what occurred that morning.

A. Okay. I can recall sitting in house watch and seeing the first plane hit. That's where Truck Company 122 was heading out the door responding to their staging area by the Battery Tunnel. Moments later the second plane hit and we were dispatched over there.

Taking the Brooklyn Bridge, you could see the smoke, flames, from that view, I would say a lot of chaos, people running, the bridges were packed. We're continuing through. We parked around I guess that's the West Side Highway, west of Vesey there, and I guess that's where we parked, grabbed our gear and headed towards Liberty looking for I guess the staging area where I guess we were supposed to get our orders.

Q. Did you meet an officer at Liberty or did your Captain speak to an officer?

A. Yes. The Captain spoke to I guess -- I really don't recall, to be honest, just I guess caught up in the whole thing, seeing what we saw, and I guess I was just following him.

Q. You said you were on house watch that morning?

A. Yes. I was in the house watch. I don't recall if I had house watch that morning, but I was in the house watch at that time.

Q. When the first plane hit, you said you saw it or you heard it?

A. Yes. Somebody called out to put on I guess Channel 5, Fox, where it was being shown, and that's where I was viewing it for the first time.

Q. Do you recall getting any phone calls or radio transmissions?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Okay. You responded before the second plane struck or afterwards?

A. I believe it was when the second plane struck.

Q. That's when your unit, your engine was called out?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember who was on the engine with you?

A. We had Geo Marsh, we had a covering Captain, Captain Grabher, we had Dean Coutsouros, we had Owen, who was from 122, we had Plunkett, Edward Plunkett, Edmund Plunkett, one more member.

Q. Were they on-duty personnel?

A. Well, it was in between the tour change and so...

Q. On the way down there, did you pick up any other firefighters, any civilians?

A. Yes. There was an ex-member who joined us while we were down there. We didn't pick anyone until we got there. I mean who came with us when we were on

the scene. We didn't pick up anybody en route there. The gentleman's name, I'm not sure. I think his first name was Joe.

Q. From these quarters?

A. No. I think he used to work out of 122.

Q. He was off duty or on duty?

A. He was off duty. He didn't have bunker gear or anything like that.

Q. Okay. How about civilians? Did you have to treat anybody or anybody approach the Engine Company for that?

A. I think that was John Germain.

Q. John Germain.

A. I believe his first name, yes, John Germain, yes, and he did have bunker gear, but when I first saw him, I don't think he was wearing it on or whatever.

Q. Okay. So you got to Liberty and West. Did you get instructions to go into any of the buildings?

A. What I can recall was when we were coming down, I guess heading south, I guess past the staging area here, I believe it was located right around here.

Q. Liberty and West.

A. I can remember going underneath the walkway there.

Q. That's Liberty and West Street, the pedestrian walkway.

A. Continuing I guess going up Liberty here, I know there was like a little parking lot area there.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know if it's the Marriott parking lot or it was a private parking lot.

Q. That's a private parking lot over here.

A. Oh, this is it here?

Q. Yes.

A. Right. So I can remember coming up this street here.

Q. Chambers Street.

A. Right. We were standing right around here when, obviously, jumpers were coming down and I guess we were concerned about that. I don't know at that point where we were heading or what, but I can remember that the Captain gave us some orders to I guess come around somehow and then led us toward I think Washington here, I believe, and I guess I was standing right around here, so right around Washington and maybe Albany, Cedar, Cedar to Albany. I don't know. I can remember we were backing out of this area here. We were around here somewhere when it started collapsing.

We hear the roaring and we all just pretty much --

Q. Was that the collapse of Tower 1, the south tower?

A. Tower 1, the first collapse.

Q. Okay. The first, the south tower.

A. I guess we backed up, coming down Washington, Albany area here. I remember guys saying to me stick with us, stick with us, and that was before the collapse starting and before we even knew there was going to be a collapse.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. Dean. Dean actually told me to stick with him, make sure I stick with him and stuff like that, and that was prior to going en route and all that. He was, of course, making me be aware, if anything, stick around, stick with the members. But when the collapse came down, I don't know what happened, but I found myself away from everybody.

Q. Just you or were you with anybody?

A. Me? I was alone.

Q. You were by yourself?

A. Yes. I can't speak where -- talking to the guys afterwards, I found out where they went. I think it was like right in this building here, this Trust

Plaza here, I believe, and I shot over here, this building here, I believe in this corner right in here, there was like a little doorway here where I was able to get some protection there from falling debris.

Q. That was on the southwest corner of Washington and Albany?

A. Yes, I believe. Looking at this map, it looks like that's where I was. I could be mistaken, but I think it's like in right here, if I'm not mistaken, right on this corner here. I was there for it felt forever, you know, as it was coming down, a lot of emotions, a lot of things going through the mind. As far as life goes, I didn't think there was much left.

Q. What were the conditions? What did you see?

A. You couldn't really see much, I mean, at that point anyway. I pretty much had my face tucked into the building there, my body tucked into the building, and I guess with the falling debris, the building collapse, you couldn't see much, you couldn't hear much but the roaring and, you know, obviously, you weren't going to hear anything over that. I didn't think I was going to make it in, if that's where we were trying to get to. I don't know. But I found myself just sitting

there.

Q. Okay. So once the debris settled, then what did you do?

A. Pretty much I backed out looking for the rest of the members because you could hear all pass alarms going off, people screaming, companies calling. The first thing I heard was 220, 220, and I continued -- I backed out, climbing over a couple of little -- you know, debris was in the way and stuff like that.

Q. Did you hook up with your unit at that point?

A. Yes. I winded up hooking up with my guys shortly after that, a couple minutes after that, and then I think at that point we were started to retreat, I don't know, trying to find out -- trying to figure out where exactly were we. I think by the time we gathered, I don't know if we kind of shot down more Washington or maybe we went back towards Liberty here when the second collapsed. It took a couple of minutes by the time everybody gathered up and got together and all the members were together and stuff.

Q. Okay. Now the second building came down.

A. Yes. I think we were more so on -- I guess we shot back up this way here because I can remember

being on the west side. Exactly where on the west side I don't know, but when the second one collapsed, I was a little bit further away than the first one. I must have been around -- I don't know if I was this far here. I must have been around -- this is where I was for the first one. Maybe about here somewhere. I can remember being in a building there where --

Q. The hotel?

A. I don't know if it was the hotel or what.

Q. There was a revolving door?

A. It might have been the hotel.

Q. Okay. That was the hotel?

A. There were people in here. We were trying to get people out, telling them to run down this way here, further south. There was some water there, which we all needed.

Q. Okay. That was in the hotel.

A. Yes.

Q. So the second building collapsed. You recovered. Then what did you do after that? Did you regroup? Did you go anywhere else?

A. Once again I lost my guys and I guess, again, when the dust started to settle, we started making our way back. I can remember there was a girl, I believe

an EMS girl, she was like all dazed up there, and I kind of assisted her south. I think I walked her maybe a block or so.

Q. Did you get her name?

A. No, I did not get her name. I did not get her name. She was a little dazed up, I can remember that, and obviously hysterical crying, confused. Whether she was hurt or whatever, I couldn't tell at that point. I assisted her a little further down to where I guess I led her, you know, walk south here.

Q. Now, at that point did you go back up?

A. Yes. At that point I went back up this way, where I met my guys again.

Q. Okay.

A. Then we pretty much scattered. I can remember putting out -- I remember the debris crushing through windows and I guess it was apartment fires everywhere here. I think it might have even been one of these two buildings.

Q. Did you go stretch the hose --

A. Oh, yes.

Q. -- from the marine?

A. Yes. I think at that point, yes, actually, at that point we did come down here. Yes. They had

the boat here and we were trying to --

Q. (Inaudible).

A. Is that here?

Q. Yes.

A. Right around here the boat was, right. It was right against the Winter Garden. We tried to stretch -- get a line in place into the Winter Garden there. But I think they were talking about I guess an odor, a gas odor, a possible collapse and stuff like that, and we were using caution and stuff like that. But I think we got it in place and they brought an injured member here, head trauma, and he winded up going on the boat. They escorted him where they needed to.

Q. That's when you lost the line.

A. Yes, that line was pretty much done with. I can remember going back this way, or at least I think the chauffeur and another member went around somewhere, I guess to find a rig and get the rig in place somewhere else. We were bouncing back here for a couple of minutes, and then I guess we went back over here somewhere where -- oh, yes. Gateway Plaza. Here. We found ourselves in front here for a little while where there were a couple other members from

different companies. I don't recall what companies. I don't recall what members.

Q. What did you do at that location?

A. I can remember regrouping. There was more fluid there for us. Until I think on the 10th floor there was fire. We wound up going up. There was no hydrant pressure. We went up with a couple of cans here, the Captain, Dean, and I don't know who else was there. I don't think initially there was anyone with us. We went up. Whether there were a couple other units who went up prior, I don't remember, but I know when we got there, there were more members there when we went up to put it out. I remember seeing Buffalo. He used to work at this house here. He was pulling up hose. We hooked up to the standpipe, we went up and...

Q. Then after you got the fire out, what did you do?

A. We came back down. I was pretty much shot then, a little left. I can remember falling. I can remember falling. We came back down here, and I think we regrouped again. A couple of members were injured and somebody transported us to another place where I think they went to a hospital.

Q. How did you get home that evening?

A. After that point, I went with the Captain. A couple of the guys, like I said, left, I guess, to get medical attention.

Q. (Inaudible).

A. Yes. They jumped in a Blazer or something like that, which took them to I guess the boat or wherever, and I found myself with the Captain here and we went back.

Q. To the truck?

A. We went back I believe to this point here where --

Q. Vesey and West?

A. Yes. I believe it was this point here, where it was tons and tons of vehicles and members. That was pretty much it. I know we sat here for a little while. I remember doing what we needed to do. Then I can remember, I would say late evening, I don't really recall the time, maybe around 6:00, I don't know, that's when we were transported, the Captain and myself, over to I believe Bellvue.

Q. Oh, okay. So you did go to the hospital?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to add that you think is important?

A. No, not that I recall at this time.

MR. FEILER: We want to thank you for cooperating and participating in this. It's very important that we get this information. With that in mind, we'll conclude the interview. This concludes the interview at 1328 hours.

File No. 9110052

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARTHUR MYERS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today is October 11th, 2001. The time is 12:10 hours. This is George Cundari with Murray Murad, Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER MYERS: My name is Alfred Myers, Sr., a first grade fireman. I'm in Engine 39.

MR. CUNDARI: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're at Engine 39. This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Arthur, can you tell us what happened that day from your perspective?

A. That morning I was at the watch and I got someone to relieve me. I went upstairs to take a shave and change my shirt. While I was going to shave, Jimmy Long came running past me. I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "A plane just hit the World Trade Center. It's on Channel 5."

Him and I both went and turned the TV on. We saw where the plane hit. At that time we said we're a high-rise unit, I know we're getting ready to go. So I changed my shirt. Sure enough it came in as a second alarm, and we were responding. 39 responded at that time.

Being that I'm the chauffeur, I went to the rig, started the rig up, hit the bells, got the guys ready, and we took off to go down there. En route down there, it went straight to a fifth alarm. It didn't go -- normally they say, "In the borough of Manhattan, a third alarm has been transmitted or fourth alarm." They didn't do that. It went from a second straight to the fifth alarm.

I took Second Avenue down to Houston Street, went across Houston over to West Street, with which we turned. By the time I got to Houston, it went to a second fifth alarm. That's when the second plane hit.

We proceeded down there --

Q. Did you hear the second plane hit?

A. We heard the second plane hit from the radio transmit. I didn't see, but we heard it.

Q. You heard it, the bang?

A. The bang. Then it went straight to a second faith alarm. It didn't go second, third, fourth, fifth. They just skipped all that and went straight to a fifth. I said, a second fifth alarm? Both towers are hit now.

I got over to West Street. I was at Houston and West Street. When I turned onto West Street, I said, "Oh, shit, look at this." Both buildings were fully involved. A big blast of fire was just blowing out windows.

We proceeded down West Street down to the towers. High-rise is following rig. Like I said, we're a high-rise unit. They follow us in, driven by Jeff Coniglio. When I got there, they told us pull up right behind 3 Engine, which is what I did. High-rise pulled up right beside me but right across from me.

At that time the guys got out. They started donning masks and everything. I was telling them, "Be careful. Put your gloves on, put your hood on, turn your oxygen on and just be careful."

Q. What was that location you parked?

A. We parked right on West Street, right up from the north tower. I was further away from the north tower, a block from it.

Q. So you were past Vesey.

A. Past Vesey.

Q. Past the pedestrian overpass.

A. Past Vesey but right in this section here because this is the north tower here, I can see the front entrance to the north tower. So I must be somewhere down in here.

Now the guys are gone. I'm looking. I see what I just couldn't believe. I thought it was a big doll baby, but these were burnt people falling. Right after that then you see live people jumping. This is the first time I've ever seen people jump like this in my whole career.

Q. 20 years.

A. In 20 years, this is the first time I've ever witnessed this, and it was just blowing my mind.

The chauffeur from 3 Engine, he was telling me, listen, don't look, just don't -- I said, "How can I not look? I've never seen this before." Just any time you thought that would be

it, then you'd see more waves of people coming. It was like raining people. You could hear when they hit the ground, bang, bang, and the body parts just dismantling all over the place.

At that time it just got to me. I turned around to look away from it, and I'm saying to myself these are people. Man, there are people dying here. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

When I turned around, someone -- they said the chief ordered them to move 39 Engine, my rig wasn't there. I said, "Where the hell is 39?" It's like somebody stealing your car. What they did was they took our rig and put it right in front of the north tower.

I said, "Wait a minute. They're full of shit. They're not going to leave the rig there." Now you see the bodies just falling down.

So at that time a proby came over to me. He said, "Look, I'm a proby. I'm off duty. I want to help." I said, "Whatever you do, don't go in that building. You're off duty. If something happens to you, they won't pay your

family nothing. You just stay with me. Whatever you do, don't go in the building," because at that point debris was coming down plus the bodies.

Rigs are coming in. Guys are on top of the rigs just going full blast into this. Now, him and I ran over. I get the rig. The chief orders me to hook up to the Siamese. I said, "Bullshit. I'm not hooking up here." Some of the guys get in the rig, which he did. I got in the rig. The chief was telling me, "Hook up to the Siamese. Leave this rig here." I said, "Bullshit. Get out of the way."

Q. Where was this Siamese?

A. The Siamese right -- this is the front of the north tower? Right by the entrance, right to the right of the entrance before you go in. The Siamese was right there.

Q. That's where your truck is right now, right in front of the tower?

A. Yeah, somebody had brought the truck over there. Originally we were over this way.

Q. You were more north?

A. More north, away from it.

Q. By the pedestrian bridge?

A. Away from it, yes.

Q. The pedestrian bridge?

A. Exactly.

But me they brought our rig right in front of the building. I said, "Bullshit." We're not going to" --

(Interruption.)

A. So the chief was telling me, "Leave this rig here and supply this."

(Interruption.)

A. I was in the rig. The chief was ordering me to hook up to the Siamese. I said, "Bullshit. I'm getting out of here." He kept ordering me. I pulled out and put our rig right back where it was originally.

At that time getting out of the rig -- I told the proby, "You stay here. Don't go over there." Now there's more people jumping, more chaos. But you start hearing this cracking noise and thundering noise.

At that time I witnessed Mayor Giuliani and his entourage coming down.

Q. From the south end?

A. No, from this end over here, coming down.

Q. They were coming down West Side Highway?

A. West Side Highway.

Q. South?

A. He gets out of his car. There's about ten of them. They're right where my rig is.

At that time you hear all this crackling and thundering noise. We look up, and you see the first building, the south tower, coming down. I said, "Oh, shit. It's falling."

At that time, Giuliani, his crew and myself, we were running. We were running neck and neck out of there. I just ran as far north as I could, looking back, seeing a massive cloud of smoke and debris just coming my way. I went to one or another street, ran up to that street. Went to another street, ran up that -- I just kept running.

At this time I ran over to where the water was.

Q. Was proby with you, the one that was in the truck?

A. No, he wasn't with me. I don't know what happened to him. At that point I just ran. He may have started with me and we got lost in the run. I don't know what happened to him. But I just ran. We all just ran. I just started running until I got over to where the water was. I said, well, if push comes to shove, I'll just go into the water.

Q. So you ran north and then you ran west?

A. Right, because you're running back this way and zigzagging to where -- this must be the water here. All the way over here.

Q. You went to Vesey and North End Street?

A. Right, right. I remember Vesey.

And there was a school here right by the water, and they were saying that they had a report of a gas leak, some sort of gas leak and to get out of there, evacuate. So I had to run again back over this way.

Now I'm saying to myself, my guys are in there. So I'm on the radio, "39 chauffeur to 39, 39," calling the officer.

Q. Channel 1 you were on?

A. Channel 1. I get no response, no

response at all. But I'm hearing radio contacts. I'm hearing maydays. But he's not responding to me. I said, "Oh, shit. The good guys in that building, they're dead." That's the only thing I could say, these guys are dead.

I said let me get closer. Now I'm working my way back to where my rig is, and I'm on the radio calling, "39 chauffeur to 39. 39 chauffeur to 39 control." Then it got to the point I said, "39 chauffeur to 39 anybody. Anybody 39 respond, respond. Let me hear from you." No one is saying anything.

I'm walking back to the rig. Say my rig is right here, in this area here. When I get about within a block range of it, now you hear this cracking again, this thunder again. You know from the first one, hey, this thing is coming down.

You look up,and now it's coming and coming at a rapid -- it's just falling. Now I start running again, but this time, being that I'm closer to the north tower, it's coming down with such a force. Debris and everything is coming.

There's another fireman to the right of me. Him and I are running. I'm right by PS 89. I remember the school, PS 89. There was a cop waving us in, "Come on in here. Come on in here." I'm saying to myself I'm not going to make it because I have on my full gear. I have full gear on. I seen this wave coming, I'm heading this way, and it's coming like a tidal wave just coming. I said, shit, I'm not going to make this.

There are a couple police cars and a police emergency van, and I just said, "Please, God, let this door be open." When I pulled the door, it opened. I looked like George jumping in the air and closing the door behind me. When I closed this door, it gets covered. It just covers it.

Q. The dust cloud?

A. The dust cloud. It got so black --

Q. You're still on the West Side Highway; right?

A. Still on the West Side Highway.

Q. North of the pedestrian bridge, by Murray, you think?

A. Wherever PS 89 is. I was right alongside PS 89, that street. That may be somewhere in this vicinity right here.

Q. Vesey?

A. Vesey. Wherever the school is. The school was PS 89. The police vehicles were lined up along there.

It got so black, I'm saying, either two things, either I'm dead or it's the end of the world. I've never seen it that black in my whole -- I'm 51 years old. I've never seen it that black in my whole life. I'm saying, well, I don't think I'm dead.

Now I'm worried about being able to breathe. I was okay inside. I was able to breathe. There was no debris coming in or anything.

Q. You heard all that stuff hitting the truck?

A. It was just like a [sound] and it just covered.

At that time maybe about 15, 20 minutes or so, I hear the police, "Hey, is anybody in there?" "I'm in here. I'm in here." They

started working the doors and pushed and got the door open, and I got out. They said, "Are you all right?"

Q. You were trapped inside the ESU truck?

A. The ESU truck.

Q. You couldn't get out?

A. I'm not going to say I couldn't get out, but they helped me get out. At the time I didn't really try to get out. I was just waiting to see if everything clears up.

They came and said, "Is there anybody else you have in here?" They got the door open and got me out. At that time they said, "Are you all right? Do you want to go to the hospital or something? Do you want to get checked out?" I said, "No, I'm all right."

I said, "But there was another fireman with me. How did he do?" They said, "Well, we don't know about the other guy. We don't think he made it." I got his helmet. He was from 1 Engine, and his helmet was 845.

Now I'm calling the guys. I'm frantic, panicking. I'm calling the guys, "39 chauffeur to 39, anybody." Now I know these guys are dead

now, because the second one came down, the north tower. No one was responding. As usual the maydays were going all over the place. It was just major chaos.

This goes on for about a couple hours. I'm walking around, just trying to find my guys, calling, calling, no one responding. I saw other guys looking for their guys. You hear major, major chaos, major maydays, everything. It's just a ball of confusion.

About two hours go by. I ran into John Drumm, who was in the engine that day. I said, "Drumm, where's" -- I'm hugging him. I said, "Where are the guys? What happened? Where are the guys? Where are the guys?" He said, "Man, they were behind me." I said, "There's nobody here but you." He said, "Well, those guys were behind me. I don't think they made it." I said, "Oh, man."

He wanted to go back in. I said, "No, you stay out here. You stay out here with me." So him and I walked, and we ran into a member of 16.

Q. What was that person's name?

A. Then I ran into Rattazzi from Ladder 16, from 16 Truck. I said, "Rattazzi, where are the guys at?" He said, "I don't know where the guys are at." He got separated from his guys.

So the three of us together -- he was suffering with eye injuries. So we made it away from -- we walked up from it, and some EMS guys came over and washed his eyes out and they washed mine out, the same with Drumm.

Drumm kept insisting on going back over. "Can I look for the guys?" I said, "No, you're not going to look for the guys. Let's go over here and get ourselves together." He was all dirty, the debris and everything on him.

We called on the radio. Now Drumm has a radio also. He mentioned that some guys were on Channel 7. I said, "All right. I'll keep it on 1. You turn to 7. Let's call, see if we can hear something." To no avail.

Then they said some guys were on Channel 3. So we switched it from 7 to 3. I stayed on 1, and he switched from 3 to 7 or vice versa. Anyhow, now it's like five hours go by, and I just accepted the fact that these guys are

gone. That's just my account on it.

I ran into Joe Graziano from 13 Truck. He's looking for his guys. I run into Lieutenant Jones from 7 Truck, and he's looking for his guys. I said, well, let me just walk back down there.

I'm where the chief ordered 6 Truck to go after 39, looking for 39, go after them. I said, good, let me stay with 6 Truck and see if I find them maybe I'll hear something. I made it back down there. "6 Truck," I'm calling, "6 Truck." They're not responding back to me.

Finally one of the officers from 6 Truck responds back to me, "Did you see anybody from 39? Negative. I haven't seen anyone yet." About maybe a half an hour this is going on. Now his unit is told to come out of there.

So I'm calling him. He doesn't respond. But the officer from 16 Truck, Lieutenant Williams -- he said, "Arthur" -- I said, "Lou, anybody from 39? Did anybody see anybody from 39?" No one knew. As soon as we hear something, we'll get back to you.

Now I see Chief Schildhorn from the

10th Battalion. I go over there. "Chief, any word on 39?" He said, "No, Arthur, no word." "Did you hear from anybody? Did any of the guys call?" He said, "No, we haven't heard anything." All right. Now I'm just saying these guys are dead. We all came down together. I'm crying.

The sweetest voice that ever came in my life I heard, Jeff Coniglio and Jimmy Efthimiades. I hear, "Arthur. Arthur." I'm looking at these guys in amazement. They're all covered up and everything. I said, "Get over here, you mother fuckers." I was running over, and the three of us were standing right by the command post hugging and crying. I was just so glad to see these guys.

Right behind them was Jimmy Bacon. He was right behind. I said, "Get over here, man. How are you feeling? Didn't you fucking hear me calling you?" It was like seeing my own kids being lost and then I found them.

We were just standing there crying. I said, "Where is McGlynn, man? Where is McGlynn, the officer? Where is Lieutenant McGlynn?" They said, "He's inside helping with the evacuation."

I said, "What the fuck are you doing in there, man?"

So I called him on the radio. He didn't respond right away. I said, "I thought you said he was all right?" "No, Arthur, he's all right." I said, "You guys all right?" They were complaining about eye injuries.

So we made it over where EMS was. They were telling everybody to go over that way, get away from the main body of debris. EMS guys took the post and everything. Jeffrey and Jimmy Efthimiades, they both went to the hospital.

I said, "Look, I'm going to call and let the families know you guys are all right." What I did was I made it back to PS 89 and I called back here to the firehouse. I said, "Listen, there should be a captain there, Savarese. The lieutenant made captain, Savarese." I said, "Captain, listen, just let the guys' families know everybody from 39 is all right."

I knew Lieutenant Williams from 16 Truck was all right. I heard Oscar, who was the chauffeur from 16 Truck named Steve Wright, who

was the roof man, if I'm not mistaken, and Rattazzi. Those guys I knew were all right.

The other guys, Bobby Dana and Kenny Rogers, I didn't know if those guys were all right. So I didn't want to say, well, everybody from 16; I said everybody from 39 is all right. Let the family members know.

At that point we made it back over to -- I left Jeffrey and Jimmy, and I came back over to some staging area they had by either Stuyvesant school -- one of the schools, and saw some of the other guys.

They said, "Listen, go over there and tell them where you were at and give account of what happened," which is what I did. They were seeing who was accounted for. They said, "You have to write down your engine company and your name." They were trying to get who was still here. That's what I did.

Then I saw the rest of my guys from 39, Lieutenant (inaudible). I said, "Where are the guys?" He said, "Over here." I said, "Where is Lieutenant McGlynn?" They said, "McGlynn is over there."

So I just made it over there, got him, hugged him and everything.

It was a hell of an experience. I never want to go through that again, never. Nothing I ever saw before in my life. Just seeing the people jumping was just in itself -- the tower coming down was one thing. Seeing these people jump to their death was so all by itself.

That was it for me. We all came back. I came back with 16 Truck.

Q. You were there until late that night?

A. Late that night. We didn't leave out of there until around 8:00. We got there around 9:30, 25 to 10. We left after the first plane hit. No later than 20 to 10, we were down there. As soon as I got up, we went down and over to Second Avenue and just shot straight down there. When I got over to Houston, I was on the ongoing side traffic. I said I've got to get over to the west side quick and down to the site.

Q. I would like to thank you for participating in this interview, Arthur.

MR. CUNDARI: This concludes the tape,

and the time is 12:35.

File No. 9110054

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DECOSTA WRIGHT

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 1531 hours. I'm Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with EMT DeCosta Wright at Battalion 31.

Q. He will introduce himself now.

A. I am DeCosta Wright, EMT Wright, at Battalion 31.

Q. What unit and Battalion, are you assigned to Battalion 31, what unit?

A. I was working on 31 Adam.

Q. Tell me what you remember about the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Basically I was working in a unit. It was about 8:50 when we got the call. It came over the computer as a fire at the World Trade Center. So at first we got the call, we rushed to it and I didn't believe it at first until we got on the bridge. Then I saw it in flames. I said oh, my god. I couldn't believe it. It was unreal. Everything was so unreal.

So we just tried our best to get through traffic to get there. When we finally got there, we staged on the West Side Highway right in front of the first tower, and the building was in flames, the first

building was in flames. Basically we took all our equipment out and ready to see how many patients there were, you know, that was on the scene. We seen all the firemen run into the building.

Q. Did you report to a Lieutenant? Do you know who it was when you first got there?

A. No, I'm not sure which Lieutenant.

Q. But you reported to a Lieutenant?

A. Yes, it was just -- basically, we were just so much in awe about the whole thing. The building continued burning. All of a sudden I seen a couple of people jumping out. But before that, some debris came down, was coming down. Large pieces of metal just flying down. If that thing would have hit anybody, that would have decapitated somebody, but it floated all the way towards us and then it went into the building next to us and broke the windows.

That was one part that I remember. After that, that's when we started seeing people starting to jump out. It was total -- that was unreal, I tell you, to see people jump from the top floor. A few minutes later, we had seen the second plane just come in, go right through the second building.

So we couldn't believe it, because we thought

the first one was an accident. So then right after that we knew it was terrorism. So after that, after the second plane hit, it was just raining people, people were just jumping. When the first one hit, they were just jumping periodically. You would see one man jump out. I was in -- in our position, we could actually see when they hit the ground and I seen body parts just going everywhere when they hit the ground, so when one guy hit, all you hear was boom, then you see his arms and legs, just flew right off.

Then right after that I see a woman, she was just spinning in the air. After that, when the second plane hit, that's when my partner was like -- he couldn't believe my reaction, because all I was saying, all these people that was jumping out. I was just saying oh, my god, oh, my god. I couldn't believe -- I was like oh, my god. I couldn't believe. It was so unreal.

Then a few minutes later, we hear all this rumbling, sounded like an earthquake. Somebody said the building is coming down. So everybody is just screaming. We ran into the --

Q. On the map.

A. Right next to us, the Merrill Lynch

building. Yes, we ran into the Merrill Lynch building. That building was shaking. Everybody was just screaming, and I thought that building was coming down too, because of the way it was just -- the shaking and everybody just -- so everybody thought they were going to die. Everybody actually -- I thought that was it. I thought that was the end.

So we ran into the basement of that building, everybody. Then after we -- after the rumbling stopped, we came out the building.

Q. Do you remember who ran into the building with you, who was with you when you ran into the building?

A. There was a lot of people, so many people, that's when everybody split up. I didn't see my partner. That was then. I didn't see my partner nowhere. So I walked outside and was engulfed in smoke and a lot of asbestos and stuff. I walked around, I couldn't see nothing. I wanted to see what happened. The building collapsed. So I walked to that site and it was like totally deserted. I was by myself at that time. I don't know where anybody was. It was so unreal. I walked and basically you couldn't see your hand in front of you.

As I got closer to that site, all I heard was moaning and some people that were lying down near the site, near the rubble. They were bleeding. I seen a lot of people bleeding from the mouth, the nose, they was calling on me, help me, help me. I had no equipment, my bus is gone. My bus is covered. They was just screaming help me. There is nothing I could do for them, except for those firemen that was out there that was just walking around, I mean just in total awe and like, god, man, they didn't know where they were. They had blood everywhere but you know, they were walking wounded.

It's crazy how they were just walking around, like they didn't know where they were. I was basically at that time I was grabbing them and bringing them to safety and --

Q. Where did you bring them to?

A. There was a building. There was another staging area. We were bringing sick people, people that was injured. There was a paramedic that was under a vehicle in the rubble. I went back to the site. We got a stretcher. We ran and got him. He was alive. He wasn't injured.

Q. Do you know who he was?

A. I forgot his name. It will come back to me.

Q. Does he work at this station?

A. Yes, he is at this station. Anyway, he was coughing. He really couldn't get his breath. He was totally covered in soot and all, and he totally breathed it in, so when we brought him to that triage area --

Q. Do you know where that triage area was?

A. I'm not sure. It was right around the corner.

Q. If you looked on the map would that help you or not really?

A. It was right there. It was this building. I think it was this building.

Q. You brought him into a building where there was triage?

A. This building.

Q. Was it the American Express building on the corner of Vesey?

A. I think it was by the water. I think it was the American Express building. Yes, it had to be.

Q. That's where you brought him?

A. Brought him in there. Then he was basically coughing. He was vomiting and after he started getting

better, you know, he wanted to get up and he was -- so I gave him some water, oxygen, you know, he didn't want -- he just wanted to go back out there.

So after I seen that he was all right by himself, I went back out there. So the same scenario, those guys, firemen walking around the scene. You seen Lieutenants, all this big brass walking around, everybody, just in la-la land. So basically I was there, just still doing the same thing. Trying to get then to safety.

Then all of a sudden, that earthquake sound again and I knew what it was, you know. The second building was coming down. Since I heard that sound, I knew, so I started running. That's one of the things -- one of the reasons that I couldn't sleep, because there were still people there alive. I don't know if they were buried in the second one. There was people that are screaming to me. Help me, patients that was there that we couldn't do anything about.

Then we heard that second rumble and I just started running, you know. That cloud just was chasing me. Of course I got cornered. After that cleared, as a matter of fact, I ran into the same building, where we was triaging.

After that I didn't go back there. I couldn't go back.

Q. Did you stay in the American Express building?

A. Stayed there, then I went to, as a matter of fact, the Lieutenants there, they wouldn't let anybody go back. They sent me with some patients to the hospitals. Like I said, I was split up. I didn't have a partner at that time. I didn't know how I was going to get home, you know, back to my station.

At that time that was basically it. After I went to the hospital, came back to -- there was another staging area, it was on -- it was way up on the West Side Highway. There was like a thousand ambulances.

Q. Was it the Chelsea Pier?

A. Yes.

Q. Or Pier 94?

A. Yes.

Q. Which one?

A. I'm not sure.

Q. You don't remember?

A. (inaudible).

Q. Okay.

A. There was a lot of ambulances there. I met

up with a couple of guys from my station.

Q. Who were they? Do you remember their names?

A. There was Andre.

Q. Cherrington?

A. Cherrington, and his partner. That was the one that was in the rubble. He came back.

Q. Andre's partner that day?

A. Yes, what's him name?

Q. Suarez?

A. No.

Q. Smiley?

A. Smiley. It was me, Andre, Smiley, and who else did we have there? I don't remember who else. It was me, Andre and Smiley.

Q. Did you ever find your partner that day?

A. No.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. Jackson. Then after that, as a matter of fact, that was about 4 hours later we met up. Then we went back, me and Jackson went back. We didn't have our ambulance, that was what it was. Our ambulance was still in the rubble, so we didn't have no ambulance, so we had to split up while we were still together.

Then we went back to the site. We was on --

we went to a different staging area. We was by -- let me see that map. We were right in front of -- what was the last building that collapsed?

Q. 7?

A. We was right there. That was building 7.

Q. You were at a triage area there or --

A. We made our own triage area. There was a couple of more ambulances, like 4 ambulances.

Q. You were in another vehicle then when you went over there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what vehicle number it was?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. So that was basically -- we watched that one come down. It was on fire first. I think the fourth floor was on fire. They said -- we were like, are you guys going to put that fire out? I was like, you know, they are going to wait for it to burn down and it collapsed. So that's when I knew high rise buildings, you know, (inaudible).

Q. Were you there when building 7 came down in the afternoon?

A. Yes.

Q. You were still there?

A. Yes, so basically they measured out how far the building was going to come, so we knew exactly where we could stand.

Q. So they just put you in a safe area, safe enough for when that building came down?

A. 5 blocks. 5 blocks away. We still could see. Exactly right on point, the cloud just stopped right there. Then when that building was coming down, the same thing, that same rumbling. That's why I like, for a couple of weeks, every little sound that I heard. It was unreal.

Q. What time did you finally get off that day?

A. Got off, left at 11 o'clock.

Q. At night from over there?

A. Yes.

Q. And came back here?

A. 11 o'clock.

Q. Anything else you want to add or --

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes my interview with DeCosta Wright. The time is now 1550 hours.

File No. 9110055

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF THOMAS McCARTHY

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 11th at 1504 hours. We're at headquarters in the Commissioner's conference room. I'm joined by --

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Assistant Commissioner James Drury.

MR. McALLISTER: And we're here with Chief Thomas McCarthy.

Q. Chief McCarthy, we'd like to draw your attention to September 11, 2001, and get your recollections of that day.

A. Okay. After finding out about the plane crash at the building, I got in touch with headquarters. Eddie Moriarty answered and told me to go to shops, get the list of the spare rigs and where they're located.

Q. Chief, were you working that day or were you off?

A. I was off.

Q. So you found out about the plane crash at home?

A. At home, yes. My wife had told me about it. She saw it on TV.

So then I headed over to shops, got the list,

couldn't get through, the phone lines were down, so I just faxed it over and that went through. One of the buildings collapsed when I was at the shops. So I got in the car and took off. I got my fire gear, headed into the city, because it was on the way home going from the shops through Queens, got my gear and went to the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge. I got a ride over the bridge and headed to Vesey and Broadway.

Chief Haring was just starting to set up a command post. He made me Battalion 99. I had one handie-talkie, and as guys filtered in from different companies, all volunteers, I had about twelve guys, three of them officers. So I teamed guys up with officers so I didn't lose them.

As we went down Vesey Street, we came across ESU trucks and police vehicles that were on fire and in some of them, the bullets were starting to go off. We went over to the vehicles and took whatever tools we could because we had no tools. Originally our assignment was Al Fuentes who was trapped in his car and we were supposed to head to the West Side Highway and look for him. We took some battery powered saws, some flashlights, repelling ropes and any hand tools we could get.

When we got to the next corner, another ESU vehicle was parked there. Some gentleman was dead in the street. We checked his pulse, left him there and took a mask, an ESU mask that was there.

Q. This was at the corner of Vesey and West now?

A. No, not West. I'm trying to think. The next block down.

Q. Church?

A. The next block was at Church.

Q. Were either of the towers standing at that point?

A. Actually, when I was in transit, the second one went down. So they're both down. When I got to the scene, it was just a cloud of cement dust and just black. As you got to the scene, it was black, car fires, a couple of small stores had fires in the front, just sporadic fires around, papers floating around, and as you got to the command post and looked further down Broadway, it was just completely black.

Q. Chief, what time did you get there about?

A. I'm guessing quarter of 11:00 or so.

Q. And the command post had been set up at that point at Park Row and Broadway?

A. Yes.

Q. Right near St. Paul's Chapel?

A. Right. Chief Haring was just there with I think Chris Wall. No, it couldn't have been Chris. It might have been Chris. I'm not sure. I thought I saw him there. They just had gotten there and they had nothing. They were trying to put a command post together. He did a great job.

Q. What did the streets look like at that point?

A. Paper everywhere. Probably up to your ankles in cement dust everywhere. Just paper floating around covering the street and that blackness was over there, cloud, just as much as you could see, everything was black where the World Trade Center was.

I lost a lot of guys. Guys would stop and help pull load lines. They were just filling in wherever they could, putting out some car fires, working on a couple of people who were dead, trying to get them out. I went further down.

Q. Are these civilians or firefighters?

A. Civilians. All civilians.

We got further down to the overpass that connects 5 and 6 World Trade to 7 World Trade. We went up the stairs there, across that area. I had another firefighter with me at that point and there was a

civilian up there. He gave me his name, John D'Russo or John Russo. He was laying face down under 6 World Trade. So we helped him across the I-beams.

Q. Did you know him?

A. No. We heard a guy calling out. I talked to him because we put our arms around him on either side. He was a big guy, so it took two of us to get him out. We tried to dance him across the beams and take him down. Some EMS personnel were coming and some other guys, so we left him there and went back up.

There were three masks there. We shut off the pass alarms so no one went up there to search for them. That area between the two buildings was just all glass, pieces of building, fire, and everything was raining down still, glass was coming down, pieces of fire. So we didn't go that way.

I think at that point I went around to Church Street. There were no chiefs there and I just wanted to keep the guys away. They had tried to set up a stang but they had no water pressure and no reach, so I just kept everyone on the other side of Church Street, on the safe side. I sent some guys into the Millennium to search the hotel and some guys into Century's to search the store.

211 rig showed up. Brian Corcoran from 50 engine, and he's real sharp. He tried to hook up to the standpipe system of the Millennium to get a water supply because we had no water supply. A rig on the corner was just there, was hooked up, but it had no water, and that started to burn. We were trying to put that out.

Q. Do you know which company that rig belonged to?

A. No. I didn't see a number. I just saw the back end of it. Then at that point we had reports of people on the Path train and they needed help down there. I had sent guys around to different rigs to just gather up all the tools they could so we had a supply right there. So I sent some guys to grab tools, hand tools, and head down there. I'm trying to think what happened at that point.

Q. Were they able to get into the Path tunnel?

A. The units that were down there were calling for help. The guys I sent, I don't know if they got there. I think they got there in time to help, but they saw they were pretty much far along with the rescue and they either got somebody out, I don't know if they were dead or alive, but I called down there and

they said they didn't need any more help. So I don't know what the outcome was.

At that point I had everyone pretty much on the safe side of the buildings. Another chief came. So at that point I went around to the plaza area. That had collapsed. When I got back there, the bridge to 7 World Trade had collapsed in front of it, that front area right in the plaza. So we went through 5 because guys were telling me they heard pass alarms in the hall in the plaza on the other side of 5. So I didn't think anyone was there, but I just wanted to make sure I got these guys out because guys were trying to do crazy stuff.

So we went over there and you could see the 1 World Trade facade was there and I thought that thing might come down, so I just said let's get out of here. There were no pass alarms. It was just the guys who wanted to do so much that a lot of it was more good intentions than good sense. We got those guys out of there.

At one point I was working with ESU guys. We had four ESU guys who joined us. Before I got to Church Street, as we came down from the plaza, we went into the concourse and -- I'm sorry. After that

collapsed, I had ESU guys with me and probably about six guys. We tried to go underneath into the concourse level to see if we had access. You couldn't. It was just all concrete, slabs of concrete. And then we searched the Port Authority. The Port Authority police had a substation there. So we searched that, made sure all those guys were out. We went back out to the street and ESU guys thanked us and they were going to look for their guys and we were going to head around Liberty.

At that point I ran into a bunch of guys who wanted to get back --

Q. Were you east of the site or west of the site at that time?

A. I was right in front of 5 then.

Q. Got it.

A. And then a bunch of guys wanted to find the entrance to the plaza from that side. So I took them around. Bobby Higgins was there then. So we went out into that rubble between the two buildings and went around. It was pointless. There was no reason to be there. The floors in 5 had cracked and they were pitched and at that point I'm losing confidence in the building. So we came out.

I think Bobby and myself and another guy went -- he thought people were on the second floor, so we went up and searched a couple floors in 5. He was looking for his brother. So then I went with him. A couple of chiefs were already on Church Street. So I went with him around Liberty and that was just massive rubble in front of 10 and 10. So we went on the side street and went around to West Street.

At that point I was exhausted. I ran into a friend of mine from OEM and just sat down with him and tried to catch my breath. Bobby kept going. I'm trying to remember what happened at that point. They were sending some guys in. Chief Hayden was sending some guys in and he just told me to stay outside.

I left then. I walked around the building to go back to the command post and that's when they were waiting for 7 World Trade to come down. I didn't know they were waiting at that time. I called in. They had three floors of fire on three separate floors, probably 10, 11 and 15 it looked like, just burning merrily. It was pretty amazing, you know, it's the afternoon in lower Manhattan, a major high-rise is burning, and they said we know. I think they said they had seven to ten floors that were freestanding and they weren't going to

send anyone in.

I went around to the command post.

Q. So this is late afternoon at this point?

A. Yes. It's probably around 6:00 o'clock.

So when I get to the command post, they just had a flood of guys standing there. They were just waiting for 7 to come down. So I went over to Pace, got my eyes washed, and I went back, just standing around.

So I didn't want to stand around. I went back to headquarters, walked over. I started to walk over the bridge and I hooked a ride on a bus and went back to headquarters and started helping out here with logistics.

Q. When you say you went to Pace to get your eyes washed out, you mean Pace University?

A. Yes. They had a triage center there.

Q. Right. You said you made it down to West Street. Did you ever see the area near or around the World Financial Center where the FDNY command post had been before the collapse?

A. No. I made it down Vesey Street to just in front of the overpass of 7 World Trade. People were saying don't stand under there, it's going to come

down. And then by the time I made it back around, I went to the front on Church Street and came back around. The area we took that civilian out of had all collapsed. That wasn't there anymore.

So at that point we were a little leery about how the bridge was tied in, so no one was really going onto it, and then they were also saying 7 was going to come down. They chased everyone off the block.

Q. You said before, Chief, that you heard bullets going off. Approximately how many did you hear?

A. Oh, it was like it was just constant. Constant. Whatever, I guess there were packages or something, and as they heated up, they were just pop pop pop pop pop pop pop. They were going off like at a steady rate.

Q. And that's when you were near 5 World Trade Center?

A. That was on Vesey Street west of Broadway. That's where ESU had parked a number of vehicles. Right outside the church.

Q. And you wound up back at headquarters?

A. Yes. I went back here just so I could do something.

Q. At some point in time were you informed that First Deputy Commissioner Feehan and Chief of Department Ganci were among the missing?

A. I had heard that. I don't know at what point I heard that. But when I left Pace, I heard one radio transmission that said Feehan was in an ambulance, so I thought he was okay at that point, but they must have -- I don't know. I don't know how that transmission came over, but I heard he was in an ambulance, so I thought he was okay, he was in an ambulance, at least alive. That's probably the first I knew of Feehan, and I didn't really know anything about Ganci now that I'm thinking back on it. I probably wouldn't have known anything about it. I don't know if I heard anything. No one really knew anything. Guys were just wandering.

It was terrible because guys wanted to do something, they didn't know what. They would just come up to me because they saw the white helmet and say I want to do this, I want to do that, you know, we'll get some guys, we'll do this, you know, it was sad because everyone knew our guys were in there.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Thanks, Chief. I don't have anything more.

MR. McALLISTER: I guess before we conclude the interview, if you have any other observations or if you recall any people you might have seen that day, we'd ask you if you do, and if not, we'll conclude the interview.

CHIEF McCARTHY: Offhand, no. I think that's all that comes to mind right now.

MR. McALLISTER: Thank you very much, Chief.

CHIEF McCARTHY: Okay.

MR. McALLISTER: It's Kevin McAllister here again. It's 15 hours 19 minutes. We're going to conclude the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110056

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC GEORGE BURBANO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 11. The time is 1449 hours. My name is Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm here conducting an interview with Paramedic George Burbano in regards to the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center.

Q. Mr. Burbano, I just ask you to give me your name, rank and then tell me your story.

A. My name is George Burbano. I'm a Paramedic, Battalion 22 on Staten Island.

Q. Just feel free to tell me what happened from the beginning to the end.

A. That morning I left BHS, I left headquarters at sometime around 8:20, 8:30 in the morning. I was going into Manhattan.

Q. You weren't on duty, right?

A. I wasn't on duty initially, no. I was going into Manhattan to meet a friend of mine at the World Trade Center. We were going into midtown. I hopped on the 2 train some time around quarter to nine and within minutes after that, we went one stop to Chambers Street and they stopped the train and they asked everybody to get out of the train and we left at Chambers Street. We walked out and when I came out at Chambers Street, I

saw the one building on fire. Actually we saw mostly just smoke.

Then within -- we are watching it and I started walking down towards the Center, and then within minutes after that, I heard a second explosion. At that point I literally ran down to the Center and when I got to -- I came down Chambers Street. I came down Church.

Q. Church?

A. Yes, I came down this way, I came down Barclay Street. I came across West, came by the two buildings down Vesey Street and went in front of the Trade Center. When I came down here there was a lot of debris all around this area.

Q. That's all along Vesey Street?

A. That's right, all along Vesey Street. There was a lot of debris. There was a lot of people that were injured. There were a lot of people running away from the buildings. I went past most of those people and I went to the front of the World Trade Center.

Q. That would be on West Street?

A. That's right. I was on West Street and at the front of the World Trade Center I saw numerous fire trucks and there was already a few ambulances there. I

found somewhere around Vesey Street and West Street I ran into Joe Cahill. I told Joe, I said, do you guys need help. I said you know I'm here. I was dressed in regular clothes. I didn't have anything on me. Joe Cahill gave me his sweat shirt that said Cahill on it, which to this day is plowed.

He said, you know, he said I need you to grab some of these guys that are coming in and see if you can set up a triage unit somewhere nearby. He said there are units set up all over the place. We have tons of patients. So myself and about 4 or 5 EMTs, I don't know any of these guys --

Q. Were they Fire Department EMTs?

A. They were no, they were our unit, EMS EMTs. There was numerous trucks parked all along this -- like from below the pedestrians street all the way up. This way they had parked the ambulances on the left side.

Q. On West Street?

A. That's right. And then he told me to take that ambulance with a few EMTs and if I can go around to the front of the building, to the front of the Trade Center, which would probably -- he led me to believe from the map that it would have been like by 5 World Trade Center, where there were patients all along

here.

I grabbed a couple of them. I put them in the ambulance, on to vehicle 307, which was there. I took one of them -- the guy in front of me with me in the front was -- I believe it was a new EMT. He was only on the job a few months and as soon as we pulled away, we heard a large fall of something. It looked to me like it was just like a large chunk of the Center from this side fell on top of this area.

At that point I was going to turn the vehicle around, but there was like a huge cloud of dirt and debris that was just coming to us, and I pulled away. I went up West Street with a few of the EMTs in there. As we went up West Street there was numerous EMS personnel. Of course we were all running up the street now.

When we got like somewhere around Murray Street, I ran into a supervisor there who I used to work with, actually, a couple of years ago, Marty Miller and a couple of other supervisors. There was a Chief also there, but I don't remember his name.

At that point I opened up the back of the truck. A lot of that cloud of dust had settled in and they had pulled out a police officer who was with a

Scott packing and everything. He couldn't breathe and we put him in the back of the ambulance right there on that corner.

We met up with some St. Vincent's ambulances there also. One of the girl -- I know her by first name. I don't know her last name. Her name is Ernestine. She is a medic out of St. Vinny's. She used to work here on Staten Island with us as BLS out of St. Vincent Staten Island. Now she is a medic in Manhattan. I ran into her there and we took that cop and carried him over to the ambulance. We put him in the back of the ambulance. I started him on a treatment. The BLS crew was there.

Then within sometime after that, there was more debris that was falling. There was like another cloud, so we moved up further. We went up further with the ambulance. That police officer -- we actually got into a little bit of a verbal thing, because he wanted to go back and we told him you should not go back. He couldn't breathe. We had to literally carry him up to begin with. He started running back and then soon after that, he -- I was -- the radio -- the ambulance was open and all we heard on the radio was that the building was collapsing. The building was collapsing.

Q. You didn't happen to get a name on the police officer, did you?

A. I didn't get his name. He was one of the ESU guys. He was in his 40s. You know, we started him on a treatment and then he took off out of the ambulance and he started running down West Street and we actually followed him. I actually grabbed him. I tried to put him back in the truck and we couldn't do that. The guy couldn't breathe. Actually I saw that. That was -- they actually caught that on videotape. It was on the one of the news shows when I was there. We saw that on video.

We started sort of making our way back because a lot of that dust settled.

Q. Going back south?

A. Going back south towards the Center. There was patients that were in that area that were covered in smoke and dust and all that other stuff that was on them. There was another ambulance that was left there and it was left wide open, so I hopped on that vehicle and moved that vehicle on forward.

Q. Went north with that.

A. That's right. Went north with that, and met with them somewhere around, I guess like Warren Street,

where there is that -- a parking lot outside. Then as soon as that happened, we saw the second building go down.

At that point when the second building went down, we moved further, everybody hopped in the ambulances and we moved further -- there was a police chief who was actually running towards the Center and we actually almost tackled this guy, because he was running towards the building when that second building collapsed and we grabbed him and we put him in the ambulance with us and we ended up down by Canal Street, so we went all the way up north to Canal Street.

After the two buildings were down, we -- I took those EMTs that were with me initially. I hopped in the back of the ambulance along with a whole bunch of others. We had about 12 people in the ambulance at that point, and cut across the east side, trying to get down Church. We couldn't get down Church, so we just kept -- crossed behind City Hall over to the east side because we were told to report to the ferry terminal at that point.

We came down to the ferry terminal. At the ferry terminal I ran into some people that I knew from actually, you know, Staten Island, Mark Cohen and

Katherine Zarr, who was having trouble breathing and we started treating her at the ferry terminal. Her partner was initially missing, Mark Harris. We didn't know where he was because apparently they were like somewhere near the building when the first building started coming down. We started treating her and then for the rest of the day we just started treating people that were coming down to the ferry. That was it.

But as far as the time line goes, I know that I got on the subway sometime like around 25 to 9, somewhere around that time, and it was just a few minutes. I mean I figured I waited for the subway for a few minutes, then I got on the 2 train and then went one stop and they kicked us out.

By the time I ran down, it was when -- pretty much when I got -- I must have been a few blocks away, so I was probably like somewhere around Barclay Street when the second building got hit. I didn't see the building get hit. We just heard the building got hit. Then I came across this way and I came to -- towards the front of the World Trade Center.

I mean I saw -- when I got in front there was tons of fire units, EMS personnel, a lot of voluntary personnel were there. There was a couple of

Metropolitan ambulances that I noticed as I walked by. The EMS ambulances were parked basically from the front of the World Trade Center here all the way under the pedestrian bridge that way.

Q. So from the north tower basically going north on West Street?

A. Yes. They were all parked from the north tower right in front, because I ended up going behind what's 6 World Trade Center, which I never knew what number that was, but I ended up going behind the 6 World Trade Center, came in front of the building here where the old hotel was and that's where they had set up a lot of those command centers right there.

When that first wall collapsed, I just pulled away from there. I mean I just pulled away from there when that wall collapsed, and at that point, one of the EMTs who was with me in the front who was very upset, you know, he said, you know, should we go back, should we go back. I said we can't go back at this point. We didn't know what the damage was, but we knew that a lot of those people were probably injured or at least (inaudible), but that's basically it.

After that we made our way to the ferry terminal. I don't remember what time after that to be

honest with you. I lost complete track of time after that until 1:30, 2:00, I think it was, when I finally through to my wife. [redacted], but that's basically it.

Q. Okay, George. Is there anything else you might want to add to this?

A. No, that's basically it.

MR. TAMBASCO: I thank you for your interview and the interview will be concluded at 1459 hours.

File No. 9110057

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MARK HARRIS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 11, 2001. The time is 1509 hours. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. Conducting an interview with Paramedic Mark Harris of Battalion 22. We are in the conference room at Division 5. This interview is in reference to the events that were witnessed by Paramedic Harris on September 11, 2001.

Q. Mark, if you could, tell me your story.

A. We got sent, I don't remember the exact time when we got sent, but as we got into the tunnel, we were told -- we heard the fact that the -- there was a confirmed plane had gone into tower one and that there were people coming out of the windows and rubble and everything. As we got out of the tunnel --

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Kathy Zarr. As we got out of the tunnel, we looked -- got out -- pulled out of the tunnel and the second plane hit as we pulled out of the tunnel.

Q. You saw it hit?

A. I didn't see it, but we heard the explosion. We heard the explosion and looked up. We then were directed to -- this is North -- South End street. We were directed on down Liberty Street to South End

Street and we parked right in Gateway Plaza right behind the World Financial Center at Au Bon Pain. Our vehicle was the second to last vehicle in the line of about 10, in the line of about 10, with the Hatzolah MERV in the corner.

Q. In like the little alcove?

A. In like the little alcove, right. Like a little alcove. There was a bank of phones right on the other side of Liberty Street that will come into play afterwards. We were advised by Chief Grant to set up a triage, a primary or secondary triage center, since we were told there was going to be one inside the Trade Center and then once that came out, the patients would be brought to us.

We were told we would be moved up to approximately the West Side Highway. We set up our equipment, we set up -- actually, we used wrought iron tables at Au Bon Pain as like a makeshift stretch of beds.

I then -- we were there about 10, 15 minutes, maybe a little more, talking. We then moved the ambulances about 10 feet further down to allow for more ambulances, since they initially parked parallel to the West Side Highway -- perpendicular to the West Side

Highway, we made them parallel, so we could go access out North End Streets down towards any of the hospitals.

We then -- there was no patients as of yet in our sector. I, along with one or two other police officers, walked over to the West Side Highway and we were standing on the planter part of the West Side Highway -- you know there was like a planter.

Q. Like a divide?

A. The divide, right, or planter. We were watching people come down. We were watching people come down. I myself witnessed about 15 or 18 people hit the ground. I saw two firemen -- I'm going to use the word explode, but a body fell on them and they exploded along with the body. They were walking into the Trade Center. I don't know who they were, but I just know that one of them was cut in half and the other one exploded.

We took a step back, because there were parts of the building was falling, which I saw a Port Authority policeman, a few civilians killed by falling debris and also another few firemen as they were going into the building. I don't remember the names or the exact numbers, but I just remember that there was at

least two to five people I saw actually get hit by bodies as they came down.

I then proceeded to walk back to tell Chief Grant that I think that we should, you know, that that -- what was happening over here. Chief McCracken was with them, because we were about to set up a triage center right in front of the building. I wanted to relay to them because I didn't know what was going on, but I just saw that, so I walked back and as we walked back, we were sitting there talking and we heard a sound that sounded like a plane -- like you were in the middle of a plane engine.

Everybody looked up and you said oh, no, a third one. That's how loud it was. Then we turned our eyes toward the Trade Center and we saw the top building come down. Unfortunately for me I was in the street at the time with no cover. The only coverage I had was the first ambulance. So I ran. I had my vest on, my bullet resistant vest. I ran. I dove under that ambulance and it started to get buried with rubble.

I dug myself out from underneath the ambulance and I started running towards the back of Au Bon Pain, which at least was a building between us. As

my vest can prove, the straps across my back cut, my vest was cut into shreds in the back. It was three different places, there's rips about 4 or 5 inches from where glass went across my body in the back.

We got hit with the glass, debris, and I got knocked over and I then made my way to the side of the building, which luckily was lined up with about 100 bottles of water. I thought I was about to die, because I couldn't breathe. Debris was raining on top of me. I went under one of those wrought iron tables that we had lined, put a stretcher mat over, and I was using that as shelter. I couldn't see anybody or anything around me. I thought I was starting to suffocate because you couldn't breathe because of what was in my mouth, so I started washing my mouth out.

I then -- I had contact lenses in. I figured that there was going to be a heat blast, so I ripped my contacts out. Unfortunately underneath the contacts was cement and I cut my corneas in half. 85 percent in half. It cut my corneas almost completely in half.

The debris stopped shortly afterwards and I ran into Au Bon Pain and started pulling people out that were buried under glass. There was, I think, one or two people that were dead in there. I don't

remember exactly. The police officer that I walked up to that he was just telling me about his vacation that he was going on in two days, he was killed.

The Hatzolah MERV was destroyed. The ambulance in front of the one in front of mine that I was on, the ambulance that I was under was damaged. The ambulance in front of that one was destroyed. I don't know whose it was. I think it may have been a Midwood ambulance was destroyed. The Hatzolah MERV was destroyed.

I then ran to try and get people out from under the debris. There was a bunch of Hatzolah people that we pulled out. I started running towards the building, pulling people out as we went. I couldn't see. We had no equipment. We had no nothing.

So the next thing we did is somebody remembered that there was down here, a couple of blocks down, was a little pier, not Liberty Park Pier, but a tiny little pier. There were buildings over here. Two blocks down.

Q. Right. Down like around Rector Street and all?

A. Right. There is a little tiny pier over here with a park. We started evacuating people down the

street from the buildings in Battery Park City and we set up an evacuation point on to tug boats. There was an EMS Captain, I'm not going to mention names, ran away and cowered and as people will tell you, I assumed command and I said I wanted everybody's EMS name, every EMS person that was there, I wanted to set up two sectors.

We did that, we started -- we evacuated approximately 5,000 people and I even went on the Richmond frequency and -- probably still on there. I will get in trouble. I tried to tell the Citywide dispatcher. We kept on getting cut off, cut off, cut off. I went on the Richmond frequency and Moshe was the dispatcher. I told him, I said 22 Victor with a priority, 22 Victor, go ahead. I told him, we have an evacuation point set up here. We have injured personnel but we are evacuating to -- evacuating to wherever they evacuated it to. I had no idea where it was. Please advise that there is no officer here, that we just were evacuating people out of the buildings.

I then realized that all our equipment was still at the World Financial Center.

Q. Up by Au Bon Pain?

A. Right. So I got into vehicle 145 and I drove

up the street to get the equipment. We got up there and I saw John Rothmund up there. He went to his vehicle one way. I put the equipment in my vehicle and approximately then there were about 10 firemen and policemen milling around.

Q. This was all by right by Au Bon Pain over there?

A. Right, right. Milling around. There were people buried at the phone that we pulled their bodies off the phone. That was right across the street. We pulled them out. We didn't pronounce them because it was -- then we heard that wall again, that creak again. We looked up and we saw that the radio tower started to waiver on the second building.

A fireman broke the window to 145 and they piled into the back of that vehicle and this is like the Keystone cops. Five of them, six of them in the back. Two on the bumper, one on the windshield wipers, one holding on to the mirror. We're going back down South End Street towards the only safety we knew, which was the pier.

As we are driving down here everybody in the vehicle, everybody is screaming, fucking drive, drive, drive, because behind us was the black cloud of the

building collapsing.

Q. The second building.

A. Second building collapsing. We drove down and we had just gotten emptied out. Everybody emptied out when it hit and it knocked all of us down. I mean we were covered. I couldn't see at this time. I couldn't see at all. I had basically vision of shapes. I found my partner. She evacuated on a boat to somewhere. I then went and I drove in vehicle 145 driving around, pulling people out of from under things, I drove along.

Q. Were you going up this --

A. No, Albany. No, it was on this side.

Q. Right.

A. I went up Albany. There is a little parking garage right over here. Right over here is a parking garage with a taxi in it. I remember the cab. There is a taxi in it, or maybe one of these. We are driving up and we're pulling people out from under the highway, we're pulling firemen out, and they in turn were pulling other people out.

There was one car that was sort of blocking the door to somebody, so a bunch of us pushed the car out of the way. Then on one of these streets I saw an

ESU Sergeant, John Engel from ESU in Brooklyn. He pulled me under a hydrant and washed me off because I was covered. I was out of it and covered and I had no idea where anybody else was. Everybody else had evacuated.

So I'm driving along the West Side Highway pulling people out, and then we made the turn. I got only as far as approximate -- about Albany Street and I walked up towards --

Q. Towards the Trade Center buildings?

A. Towards the Trade Center building and there were people in our -- I don't know if it was ambulances or if it was -- I think they were ambulances and we pulled them out. We broke a couple of windows on the ambulances. We pulled people out. We pulled people out from -- there was two unmarked people in a sedan that we pulled out. There was a lady in a wheelchair that I pulled out. I don't remember. Then I know there was a couple of other people with me but I wasn't sure who -- I know one was a fireman and one was a cop, but I don't know who exactly they were.

I then -- I was there, I would say -- I got to tell you it seemed like eternity, but I know it was only about an hour, pulling people out. I got as close

to the building as I could to pull people out. We were then looking for Chief Grant, his aides was panicking. We sort of took her under our wing. Chief Grant we couldn't find. Chief McCracken we couldn't find. We couldn't find anybody. I had no idea where any officers were.

I got as close to the building as I could. There was just body parts and bodies all over the place. There was just -- at least 50 to 100 bodies that I saw. I mean not full bodies, I should say, but pieces of bodies. I then drove down the West Side Highway towards --

Q. Towards the ferry?

A. The ferry, and as I made the turn I saw a vehicle with a Battalion Chief and two people in there. I grabbed Ian Swords and George Orlando, because they were my partners, and we just started walking up to see if we could help people. There was nobody that could be helped at the time because everybody was buried. Everything was on fire and you just couldn't get close enough.

We then went down to the staging area. I mean they told me what I looked like the next day and they said that they got scared because I was walking

along dazed, I couldn't find anybody. I couldn't find anybody. I had no idea where anybody was. It was like a ghost town. You are walking and there is this fog there. You are walking under this fog and you are seeing people and you are going are you okay, and they say yes and you just walking on to the next one. You are going, are you okay, yes, and I remember two people I asked are you okay. They weren't okay because they were dead.

I just remember going to the pier and staying there. They tried to send me home three times. I left at 1:30 in the morning. By that time I couldn't see. I had to have -- I was driven home by -- what's his name. I was seen at St. Vincents, where they gave me some medicine in the eyes and they said -- they diagnosed the next day at the ophthalmologist. They were 85 percent cut. Sliced through and 85 to 90 percent scratched.

Marc Cohen was there also. He was inside the ferry terminal. All I remember is not being able to see and he was going through a whole bottle of Tylenol. Probably wasn't a good idea but I went home at 1:30 in the morning. I got taken back to the hospital at 12:30, 1 o'clock in the morning, after not

-- finally I couldn't stand the pain any more.

That's basically as far as I can remember.

Q. Did I understand you to say something that you actually saw Chief Ganci at some point?

A. Yes. In between the first and second collapse when I went back to get the equipment, we walked around and again, I can -- do you want to know the exact time.

Q. No.

A. I'm sorry, sir. I remember specifically seeing the Fire Department command center -- or command post. I remember -- again I don't want to swear to it, but from every recollection I have I remember Chief Ganci being there and him being knocked down and was (inaudible). As far as I remember. It could have been another fireman but I remember somebody saying my god, that was Ganci. I don't want to swear by it, but I know I was there.

Q. I guess on the west side over here somewhere?

A. As far as I can recall, I saw John Peruggia was talking to him and then Peruggia walked away and a couple of minutes after Peruggia walked away, I had come down. I don't remember exactly where it was, but again I don't want to swear by it, but I'm just going

by what I saw and what somebody said to me. It was at a Fire Department, what was left of the Fire Department command post and it was a white helmet and I was told by one of the firemen, my god, that was Ganci.

Along with him, I was told that the Chaplain was also killed a few minutes before that. I didn't see him being carried or anything like that, but that (inaudible).

Q. It was debris that basically hit him?

A. I don't know. The Chaplain or Ganci?

Q. Ganci.

A. I don't know. I know something hit him. One of the people that I was with said a body hit him. One of the people said -- all I know is that when something hit him. I don't want to swear it was a body. I don't want to swear it was debris, but something hit him. So --

Q. How is your vision now?

A. [redacted]

[redacted]

Q. Mark, is there anything else that you would like to add to that. Any feelings, anything that you want?

A. Nice guy, I would imagine not. You know that feeling when you are falling and you wake up right before you fall, when you are sleeping.

Q. Yes.

A. I get that every night. [redacted] I mean I don't even know where to get my

(inaudible) vest repaired. My vest from the glass going across my back, the back of the vest is all cut in four or five places. And the cover. I had -- I cleaned out my trunk yesterday. This belt still has white stuff from the Trade Center. But that's about it.

MR. TAMBASCO: Mark, listen, I thank you for the information and for the story. We will conclude the interview at 1531 hours. Once again, thank you.

File No. 9110058

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MARC COHEN

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time is 1505 hours and this is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

MR. COHEN: Paramedic Marc Cohen, Shield 2093, Battalion 22, EMS command.

MR. RADENBERG: -- of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at Seaview Hospital, Battalion 22. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you'd start with where you were at the time of the first impact, the first plane.

A. My partner and I, Kenny Davis, who is also a paramedic here at EMS Battalion 22, we were in the city, probably about 7:00 o'clock. That was the primary election day and we were planning to work for Mark Green, his campaign. We were on the 59th Street bridge when out of the corner of our eye we saw the first plane hit the World Trade Center. Looking south from the 59th Street bridge, we noticed the smoke.

We immediately went to Mark Green's headquarters, which was on 42nd Street. We made a telephone call to find out what we should do. We were directed at that point to go to Metropolitan Hospital

and secure a vehicle, which we did. We got there. We saw Lieutenant Craig Wing at the desk. He handed us keys to a vehicle, and with about five additional off-duty EMS members, I don't know their names, they were working also at the local union that day, we got on the FDR southbound. I was driving. My partner Kenny was in the front with me and we had about four or five other EMTs, paramedics, in the back. Like I said, I don't know all of their names.

The FDR was basically shut down already. There were no cars on it, so we made pretty good time. When we came over the limited sight area like right about by the Brooklyn Bridge, from what we were talking about after, we believe that both buildings were still standing, but as we passed, Tower 1 had collapsed at that point, basically while we were on the FDR, like directly in front of the building. So that kind of gives us a sense of time. Everything was kind of moving pretty fast.

We were directed by Manhattan South dispatch to go to the South Ferry terminal. We got to the South Ferry terminal prior to Building 2 collapsing. I know that because I looked up and I saw one of the Trade Center buildings was gone, but the other one was still

standing. Supplies were starting to arrive. They were starting to organize what was going on, and I was told by a Lieutenant in uniform with a Suburban, I don't recall who it was or even what he looks like or what his command was, but they were starting to set up and that we were going to expect a lot of patients because the building had just collapsed, one building had just collapsed.

So while they were throwing stuff out, I decided that I needed to start maybe heading and setting up a forward triage area because we weren't seeing patients. We were all kind of wondering why there was nobody that we were treating. So, by myself. I ran to the corner of Battery Park City, which is kind of like where the parking area is where you would pull in to the ferry terminal if you had a car, and then I made my way around walking down towards, I guess a little bit south of where the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel is. I was figuring that there would be just patients all laid out all over the place and everybody was running. There really weren't any patients and stuff.

Then, while I was looking around, then the second World Trade Center collapsed basically while I

was looking at it. But the wind was at my back because I was facing north, so everything was kind of just blowing the other way. I mean, stuff was all over the place, but it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. Then, of course, I started cursing and screaming and then I just ran back to the ferry terminal because I thought that patients were coming around kind of like flanking us, because the way the building collapsed, I mean, there was no way anybody could get through. There was like a huge pile of debris now on the West Side Highway.

I got there and then more EMS resources started to arrive, people that were closer to the buildings, like Dr. Cherson, Chief McCracken, Captain Frank D'Amato, Lieutenant Medjuck. We started to just organize incoming units that were there and started pulling stuff off the ambulances, back boards and fluids and IVs. Basically, a sense of time line at that point would be -- I guess it would have to be probably 11:00 o'clock by now. I mean, it was just one long -- we saw a couple of patients there, you know, critical, some with a pelvic fracture or long bone fractures and stuff, but I guess at this point -- I mean, I know at this point both of the Trade Center

towers were down, so I guess it's about -- it would have to be probably about 11:00 o'clock now, 11:00 o'clock or 11:30.

I stayed there. I was there until 5:00 o'clock the next morning. I stayed there the whole time.

Q. Did you recognize, when you were at South Ferry, when you first got there, aside from the lieutenant, recognize anybody else that was staging down in that area at that point?

A. No. There were just so many people piling through the terminal, walking on the FDR Drive, coming -- I guess somehow they got onto the FDR Drive by the Brooklyn Bridge, the ramps, and then they came southbound on the FDR Drive. It was just hundreds, thousands. I mean, I couldn't even place a number on it. But the police started to tell them to head north, just to go, if you could walk, start walking, go north, however you can get out of here, just start walking north, and there were people starting to walk over the Brooklyn Bridge and I think a ferry took people out. Oh, yes. There were people getting on private boats also. I don't even know where these boats -- like fishing boats or private vessels and stuff from over

there. I don't know how they were doing it, but I saw a lot of private boats with just a lot of people on it. But as far as EMS personnel, the only people that I recognized when I got there -- well, I didn't recognize him. I mean, I recognized him as an EMS lieutenant in uniform. I don't know...

No, I don't know his name. But he was the only person I recognized until I came back after the second building collapsed, after the second Trade Center collapsed, people that were coming that were close from the collapses, that I guess were closer because they were covered in debris, and even though I was relatively close, I guess, the wind being at my back, I didn't get like covered with stuff, but the first people that I recognized seeing and talking to other than the people I came with in the ambulance from Metropolitan Hospital were Chief McCracken, Dr. Cherson from OMA, Captain Frank D'Amato and Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck and...

Let me just think about it, who else was there. Nobody else, other than the people I came with, my partner, Kenny Davis.

Q. Do you remember what the vehicle number was that you got, that you picked up at Metropolitan?

A. It was a three-digit number starting with 2. I don't want to say 227 because I think 227 is a vehicle here and that's why it's popping into my mind. But it was an older --

Q. It's a 2300.

A. Yes. It was a three-digit number beginning with 2 and I'm sure -- I'm almost positive Lieutenant Wing made a notation in his lieutenant's log which vehicle we took because we know each other on a personal basis. Not personal. He knows my name and I know his name and stuff. So I'm sure he made a notation in his lieutenant logbook of which vehicle he gave us.

Q. Any other thoughts that you would like to add or oddities that stand out, a little strange event or sight? Not that the whole thing wasn't.

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1516 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110059

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VALERIE LONGO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: This is Mike Tambasco with the Trade Center task force conducting an interview with EMT Valerie Longo. We are in the conference room at Division 5 in Staten Island. The start time for the interview is 1430 hours.

Q. Ms. Longo, please go right ahead and just tell us your story.

A. After the first plane hit the World Trade Center we were assigned from Staten Island to go to -- actually to go to the VZ Bridge and wait. So that's what we did. It was about ten to 9. I'm not sure exactly of the time.

Q. Who were you working with?

A. I was working with Steve Hess.

We started heading towards the bridge, and we were told to just keep going. If I'm not mistaken, they said go over the bridge and start heading towards the city.

We started heading towards the city. We were on the Gowanus. We were heading to the Battery Tunnel, and I think the second plane had already hit World Trade Center number two.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower.

As we came out of the Battery Tunnel we drove along West Street. Do you want to know gory details.

Q. I want to know as much as you can tell me.

A. We had to avoid hitting body parts and plane parts, because that second plane that hit or the first plane that hit left all kinds of debris. So we were driving along West Street, and they were flagging us. They told us just to go to West and Vesey.

So we finally made it up to West and Vesey, and we were told to park in front because we were 23 Henry. We parked right on Vesey and West. We were about the third ambulance up.

At that time they said for us not to do anything. There were people who were already injured. They were in a little triage center in the back of the American Express building, which is --

Q. The west side towards the river?

A. Towards the west side towards the river, there was a little triage center there,

and they were treating a couple people. There were some doctors and nurses and EMTs.

Around, I don't know, maybe 15 minutes or 20 minutes after we got there, 15 minutes, we heard a rumbling. It sounded like a freight train coming at you. All they did was say to run. So we ran down Vesey Street and ended up on North End, which is about a long block up. The first tower, whatever tower that was, number --

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower had fallen, and we didn't know what was going on.

They gathered us all up after we caught our breath, whatever we did, and they said go get your buses. So we had to come back down. My partner came back down, got the bus, and the other guys got the buses, and met up on North End and Vesey.

They said to set up a triage in a building in that area; then they said not to. So we took our equipment back. By the time we started getting our equipment back, the north tower started to rumble and the north tower started falling. They said get your buses and

get the hell out of here.

So that's what we did. We got in the buses, and we flew up to Murray and came around to River Terrace, which is a dead end. We were stuck in front of River Terrace close to Vesey at the end, by the water. We were at Vesey by the water.

We were helping out people that were running down that way, and we waited. We didn't know what to do. We were by ourselves with our ambulance with only one other personnel; I think it was -- who was it?

Q. EMS person?

A. Yeah. He was with the LSU.

Q. I believe Hanson, maybe, Eric Hanson?

A. Yeah, Eric Hanson followed us. So it was us and Eric Hanson. We were handing out masks and water, and we just got ravaged. Everybody took everything. We were just helping people.

We stayed there for, I don't know. I can't give you time frame because we were in quite a bit of shock because we actually -- yeah, we were in quite a bit of shock.

A lieutenant found us. I'm sorry, he was a captain, Abdo.

Q. Nahmod.

A. Captain Nahmod came, and he said, "I want you to get your stuff and get up towards 23rd and the piers. He said, no matter what you do, just go uptown.

So Eric followed in the LSU, and we got in the bus and made our way uptown. We were still in very much shock. When we got up there, we stayed up there.

Q. Set up an area of staging up there?

A. No, no. What they do is they had us sit in the bus with 500 other buses, after they ravaged our ambulance, and just wait. We waited for hours. About 3:00 in the afternoon after we heard all the rescues going on, they actually released us. They told us there were 400 jobs holding in Manhattan.

Meanwhile we had debris in the ambulance. We had no equipment, and they were going to give us a job in Manhattan. [redacted]

[redacted]I said, "We have no equipment in there." Everybody took everything. It's full of debris. It was ravaged.

So we ended up making our way home. We found our way home. We finally made it back to the station, and that's where we stayed. That was the end of our day. We got the crap scared out of us, and we left. As I might about a lot of other people.

It was frightening. It was absolutely the most frightening thing that I've ever experienced in my whole life. Me and my partner, I think we were white, we were so scared. I couldn't run. He had to practically grab me by my belt and carry me, because either I was too scared -- I have a bad ankle. That was it.

So that was the end of our harrowing experience. We didn't get hurt. We didn't get injured. We tried to help people, but they sent us uptown. That was the end of our day.

Q. Okay.

A. That's my story.

Q. Anything else you can think of you would like to add to it?

A. Yeah. The next time something like this happens, tell people not to stand in front of the goddamn building. Okay? First of all, they were getting killed by debris. A plane hits a building, and where do you stand? Where do you park your vehicles? Underneath it? I don't think so. That was wrong from the get-go.

Do I have the right to say that?

Q. You can say whatever you want.

A. Well, wrong, wrong, wrong. I'm serious. I'm serious. If they had thought to even try to park half a block away or a block away or somewhere where you can walk to get access or something. A lot of these people probably wouldn't have gotten killed if they -- they were hit by flying debris. You don't park under something that's burning.

Q. This is the kind of stuff you were seeing?

A. Oh, yeah, yeah. You look up, and it's

two towers of flames. Now, we had a hard time seeing people jumping out because we were on that one side. We didn't see this building here.

Q. The south building. Right.

A. We saw the top of it but not the bottom half. We saw this one, because we were right here.

Q. Right.

A. So we saw the top half.

Q. You saw the top of the north tower.

A. Yeah. We actually saw it from an angle as we were looking up. Then the rumbling just took us for a loop, and then we ran. That's when everybody got covered with soot and debris and dust and everything else, not able to breathe.

But I credit the lieutenant or the captain that was there -- god knows I can't remember his name; I have no idea who he was -- when he told us to run that way, towards the water. I credit him, because that was the way to go. I don't know who he was, and they just said run that way. Instead of running east or west, we ran south, if I'm not mistaken.

Q. I guess actually west instead of south

or north.

A. Yes. Wherever the water was, that's where he made us run to. Instead of running this way or this way, which was --

Q. That's north. Instead of running north or south, they sent you west towards the water?

A. They sent us towards the water, which was a godsend. Whoever it is, I credit them. I have no idea. I have no idea. But I'm glad they did.

That's it.

Q. Okay. Well, I thank you for your story.

A. Quick and to the point.

Q. That's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview will conclude at 1439 hours.

File No. 9110060

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT STEPHEN HESS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 1433 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Stephen Hess. Shield 5612 EMT, assigned to 23 Henry.

Q. We are currently at Seaview Hospital, Battalion 52, EMS. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Start with when you were assigned.

A. All right. We first heard the first call after the first incident occurred, and our initial response was to that it was a small plane, a Cessna, lost power and hit the tower. Then they said it was a commercial airline. That happened at 848. We were assigned to the job at approximately 8:50. We were told initially to go to the Verrazano Bridge and stage there. Then it was to 92 Street in Brooklyn. Then to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and in the process they just kept saying, finally just said go to -- through the tunnel to Vesey and West Street.

We got there I would say approximately 20 minutes after we got the job. We came after the second

tower was hit, because we came over the Gowanus and we could see them both burning just before the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. I know we were following lots of PD, fire apparatus, came through the tunnel, and our initial response was seeing body parts and airplane parts all over the west side. Just traumatic to see.

We got to approximately West and Vesey, where Lieutenant Brad Mann took our unit designation and since we were HAZTAC, he staged us pretty close to the corner of West and Vesey. I think there was maybe two or three ambulances closer to West than us. We were helping the triage, we were instructed we wouldn't be transporting because of us being HAZTAC. They wanted us to remain there.

We were helping out and then approximately, according to the time sheet, 9:55 we heard this loud rumbling noise, looked up and saw the building coming down. Everyone started yelling, run, run, run, so we started running up Vesey towards the Hudson River. I knew I was running fast and the thing that caused me some problems was turning around and seeing my partner saying please don't leave me.

So basically, I grabbed her by the belt and picked her up is what she tells me. I don't remember.

But we basically ran down the street. Got to North End Avenue, ducked around the corner and saw the cloud of dust coming around. You know, saying this can't be really happening.

Just after the first tower came down, we were standing there and I don't recall his name but some Captain from EMS said we need to get the ambulances. So I turned to my partner who was standing there and told her you stay right here. Don't move, because I ran back to get our bus and was able to get on it, I was covered in some debris and dust, but I knew we needed our -- the equipment we have, the decon and stuff like that.

We were treating some patients who came around the corner. Irrigating their eyes, trying to get the dust off as best as we could, when all of a sudden we heard later on the noise of the second tower going. We jumped in the bus and started driving away. We wound up near the Hudson River, near the park over here. We kind of got trapped in a loop because there was so much debris and vehicles that we couldn't get out of there. Our thoughts are like where do we go from here. We were like, we are going in the water if we have to. They started bringing the boats and then

the debris cleared up and we were able to get out and they restaged us at Chelsea Piers.

I'm guessing that was somewhere around 11 o'clock. To be honest I'm not exactly sure when. Yes, because we were stuck down, it was 10:29, the north tower went down and we were stuck in that street for a good half an hour, 45 minutes, it might have been even later.

We came out of -- down Murray Street, I remember that, and we looked back and just saw this blank hole in the sky with what used to be the World Trade Center with smoke billowing up and people covered in dust and debris. Like I said, the next thing we restaged up there and we were treating some patients up there, but we didn't do any transports.

After that, I think it was around 3:00 we were released from the scene. We came back to Battalion 22 in Staten Island. As far as seeing people, like I said, I knew Lieutenant Mann, because he was in my old station. The Captain I really never caught his name because he was telling us what to do. I saw some medics that I knew, like Darnowski, a couple of other people that I knew. Ray Viscutti, he used to work for EMS, but now he works for a volunteer.

People running for their lives. Running just trying to get away. I saw another guy from our station, Eric Hansen. We wound up on River Terrace with him. Caught in that loop. Beyond that, that's about what I remember.

The thing that stuck with me was turning around and seeing my partner.

Q. Right.

A. [redacted] but I was not going to leave her by herself. She told me I came back, that I picked her up and basically ran with her like a football to get out of there, you know. Something I will never forget. Something that really bothered me -- getting all the beeps on your pager from your parents, your wife. You can't even call them.

I still think about it. Sometimes it's difficult to deal with but it's getting better.

Q. When you were over here on the first --

A. West and Vesey.

Q. West and Vesey. When you were over there, the patients that you were treating were all at that point were all coming up on their own?

A. We walked into a staging area on West and

Vesey and there was about 30 people already there.

Q. Patients?

A. Yes. We were kind of kept to the side because of being HAZTAC, they wanted us available near our unit.

Q. Right, right.

A. Then it became so overwhelming that we moved over a little to help people, do what we could. We got some burn victims that you could see and people with respiratory problems. That's about the point when the building came down and my back was to it. I heard the noise. I turned around and it looked like I was looking at a movie. It was like surrealistic.

I can still vividly see the debris coming down and starting running. The noise is -- I thought it was another plane actually, because the noise was so deafening loud, from everything coming down. That's what we covered and encountered that day.

Q. You said Darnowski and Canton were there?

A. No, Viscutti. He was in my academy class but he left and he works for Lenox Hill I believe.

Q. Okay.

A. But I remember Darnowski because they are twins. There is Jimmy and Kevin and I saw both of

them, but I don't remember which is which at this point.

Q. Okay.

A. The one that I saw initially was saying that he just dropped his girl off and she was up in the towers. Then I remember like I said, helping with triage and then the building coming down, and just running as fast as I could because we didn't know if they were toppling over or coming straight down. I figured if they are toppling over, it's all over.

Q. Do you remember once you came out of the Battery Tunnel, which way you came up to?

A. We came out of the Battery Tunnel. We came out on to the west side and came up straight up the West Side Highway, coming between the World Trade Center and the financial district. Like I said we turned the corner on Vesey and Lieutenant Mann told us -- ask us our designation and we told him 23 Henry. He says full HAZTAC? We said yes. He staged us right on the corner of West and Vesey.

Like I said, maybe two and three ambulances up from the corner to be available. He said try to assist with some triage and patient care, but don't transport because we need you.

Q. Do you remember any other, aside from Lieutenant Mann and the Captain, any other EMS officers that you remember being there?

A. Just later on. Not at that point, I saw Lieutenant Mann and the Captain -- for the life of me I can't remember his name, you know. But I remember what he looks like. I remember that. I will never forget.

Q. Did you ever run into him before?

A. Never seen him before. I don't know him, wouldn't know wouldn't have known him from Adam that day, except for the fact that he had his shirt on, with two bars. He was -- him and Lieutenant Mann were the ones setting up staging, positioning the busses. Turned out not to be the best spot afterwards, but who knew these buildings were going to come down. No one expected that.

Q. Right, right. Darnowski, that's who you saw there initially, he was off duty?

A. Yes, I'm assuming he was. He was in uniform. He might have been going to work or coming home. But he said he dropped his girl off at work.

Q. He wasn't part of a crew that you know of?

A. No, not that I can recall.

Q. Okay.

A. You know, I just, like I said the only reason I remember him is because we knew each other. I saw a lot of people that I had never seen before in my life, might not ever seen again. Hopefully they all got out of there, you know. That's about the best as I can remember what was going on.

Q. Do you remember any vehicle numbers that were parked; EMS vehicle numbers that were parked around you at that point or --

A. You know what.

Q. Did you recognize people from other stations maybe?

A. No. Like I said, we are from Staten Island. They don't get too much contact with people in Manhattan. Initially most of the units were Manhattan units. I mean a few of the faces I kind of recollect seeing at the Academy at some point in time, but as to the names, vehicle numbers, I wasn't even looking.

Q. Okay. No problem. Different people remember different things.

A[redacted]

[redacted].

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No, nothing.

Q. Thoughts or opinions?

A. I would just like to know how a plane can disappear from the radar for 40 minutes, and no one does anything. I don't think it would have prevented anything, but it might have prevented -- I mean, what time did the Pentagon get hit? I think that was later. Someone might have been alerted to something that was going on but, you know, too little too late I guess.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1447. Interview is concluded.

File No. 9110061

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ABDO NAHMOD

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. TAMBASCO: It is October 11. The time is 12:37. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11, at the World Trade Center. Today I'll be interviewing --

CAPTAIN NAHMOD: Captain ABDO NAHMOD.

BY MR. TAMBASCO:

Q. Where were you assigned that day, Captain?

A. Operations.

Q. If you'd be good enough to just try to tell us what you saw, what you did. Go right ahead.

A. On that given morning, I was assigned to the office of operations, and I was spending some time with Lieutenant Mann, who was taking over the medical data base for operations, and we were on the 7th Floor when somebody up there said that the World Trade Center was just hit by a plane.

At this point, we went to the window. We looked and, sure enough, we saw visible flames coming from the top of the World Trade Center.

Many people began to respond in different vehicles, and at one point, I responded with EMT Richard Zarrillo, the special events coordinator, with Mr. Drury from BITS in his vehicle to get down to the

World Trade Center.

At this point, I communicated with Chief Peruggia via the land line, and we were directed to report to 7 World Trade to set up OEM. Both myself and EMT Zarrillo went to the 23rd Floor of 7 World Trade and began to log onto the terminals, as well as inform the citywide dispatch supervisor that we were activating OEM at this time, and operations were to begin.

Moments thereafter, we were advised by the staff at OEM that we were to vacate the building, that they believed there was another possible plane on its way, and proceeded down the stairwell of 7 World Trade all the way down to the ground floor.

Upon getting outside to 7 World Trade, I saw Chief Peruggia and Captain Stone, and I believe one of the EMTs from the Division 1 command outside.

At this point, we were trying to establish a command center, as well as treatment and transport sector. I believe Chief Peruggia was trying to establish communication, and I was directed to move down to the garage area of the 7 World Trade where there were four bays, one having a truck in it and three that were open, and at that point, I believe

there were some EMTs and one medic unit in front of 7 World Trade building.

At this point, we tried to gather all our equipment, gather some equipment from 7 World Trade, set up a treatment area at the bottom, and we were met by one of the doctors from OMA. I don't recall his name at this point.

Q. Did you happen to recognize any of the guys that were in the ambulances, either the medics or the EMTs?

A. No, I never worked Manhattan, and I really don't know. I know a few were from St. Clare's, and one was from New York Hospital, and a few were municipal units, but I didn't recognize any of the folks there.

I'd say within 20 minutes to a half an hour of being down there or trying to set everything up, all of a sudden a loud noise, rubble, and sand, and dust -- everything just started toppling down.

We did have one patient there that walked in for an eye injury, an older gentleman. He was sitting by the loading dock, and I was right next to him. Also, when this started happening, everybody started going to the main lobby.

At this point, I tried to cover this gentleman up with myself and then remained in the loading dock curled up in the corner.

Time passed. Couldn't tell you if it was five minutes or 50 minutes, but everything seemed dark, everything seemed black, and there were lots of sand, and rubble, and grit, and dirt and debris on top of myself and this gentleman.

When everything cleared, I believe I saw Commissioner Tierney walking out of 7 after that, and everybody that we saw was accounted for that was there initially, as far as the providers. We tried to assist this gentleman onto a stretcher of the St. Clare's unit. We put him on the stretcher and started wheeling him northbound. I believe we were originally on Vesey, probably turned up West, and we went with this gentleman up West.

Q. North on West?

A. North on West, and I believe their ambulance was a block or two blocks away. I assume they put him in the ambulance and went on from there.

Shortly after that, I was proceeding north on West Street, and then I heard another loud noise and looked behind, and, sure enough, it looked like the

building was coming down. By then I managed to get to Stuyvesant High School and huddled in the doorway with a number of ESU cops and firefighters, and once again, the dust, and the debris and everything else came down, and shortly thereafter we started to look around for anybody that was hurt.

We started going back towards the collapse site. We did manage to see a FDNY EMS command car with the windows broken, but the radio still working and running, I believe on West and Chambers. There I believe I saw, once again, Chief Peruggia and Chief Butler, and a number of other people starting to gather.

We started to try to establish some kind of communication, but the radios weren't functioning all that well. We stayed at that point until we managed to set up a treatment sector, and so on and so forth, but in the interim, I remember seeing Chief Carasquillo up by River Street and Chambers. I did wander that way and then made it back towards West and Chambers. I think West and Chambers might have happened after I saw Chief Carasquillo.

I did see Eric Hanson with the LSU by the river and Chambers, as well a number of other units

there.

From there, resources started to come in. Radios started to work. We managed to locate the MERV driver who was on Chambers Street and West Street -- and River Street and managed to pull the MERV down. Then we began to set up different sectors, so on and so forth.

I spent a good portion of the afternoon with the MERV, the latter part of that evening with the communications sector, and went home, I think, two days later or a day and a half later, and then came back on something like Thursday.

That's it.

Q. Anything else you want to do add into it? Any feelings about it? Anything at all?

A. The only thing is I'm lucky to be alive. That's really the bottom line.

If the building went the other way, I was standing across the street, you know. You don't know the outcome, so that's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: In that case, thank you for the interview. This is interview will be concluded at 1246 hours.

File No. 9110062

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DR. GLENN ASAEDA

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McALLISTER from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 11th, 2001. We're in the south conference room at Fire Department Headquarters. It is 1536 hours and I am joined by...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Assistant Commissioner Jim Drury.

MR. McALLISTER: And...

DR. ASAEDA: Glenn Asaeda, M.D., Deputy Medical Director with the Fire Department Medical Affairs.

Q. DR. ASAEDA, I'd like to draw your attention to September the 11th, 2001, and get your recollections of that day, if we could.

A. Yes. I was actually one of the physicians for the Office of Medical Affairs that was coming on duty as the on-call medical director for the system and was actually headed to Manhattan for an unrelated sexual assault task force meeting. I was actually on the Long Island Expressway going towards the Midtown Tunnel when I happened to look over to my left and actually did see one of the towers, what appeared to look like one of the top floors kind of smoking, but from my angle, there were four smokestacks, I guess on

the Brooklyn side or the Manhattan side, just in front of the towers, to a point where it looked like it was actually smoke from the smokestacks, and I thought at that point, wow, that's interesting, it really makes the tower look like it's on fire.

I had just taken a bioterrorism course that the Fire Department had offered, I think a month or two months before downstairs, and at that time the instructor from the federal government had said, do you know how to tell if it's a good day for bioterrorism? We had not known and they had explained to us that by looking at the smoke from the smokestack you can tell. If it rises straight into the air and dissipates, it's a bad day for bioterrorism, good for the people because what happens is anything released would go into the air, we wouldn't breathe it in. A good day for bioterrorism but bad for citizens would be a day where the smoke seems to kind of hover, even come to the ground, anything released could actually be inhaled. So, as I looked at that, I thought, oh, potentially this is a good day for bioterrorism. I was just thinking that off the top of my head.

Then, as I was in traffic, I saw the car next to me honking, flashing its lights, and often in a

marked car I get that. Can you tell me how to get to Bellevue Hospital? Can you tell me where the corner of this and that is? So I didn't think much of it. I rolled down the window only to hear the driver say, did you see the plane hit the World Trade Center? At that point I realized it was a real situation, looked back at the tower and thought, oh, my God, and for some reason I felt why is the Citywide radio so quiet? I didn't come to realize that, when I actually stopped for coffee initially, I had forgotten to put the Citywide back on. On my car it just doesn't automatically go on.

Almost afraid to push the Citywide button, I pressed it, got the radio to go on and it came to life, and I hear the first thing, confirmed aircraft into the World Trade Center tower, send me everything you've got, and this is hard hat operation. As soon as I heard that, I actually got on the cell phone with Commissioner Claire.

Q. Do you think that was the first or the second plane that had hit?

A. That was the first plane.

Q. Okay.

A. At that point, realizing that Commissioner

Claire was actually in Albany for a state EMS meeting, I actually dug into my bag, got his cell phone number, just to let him know, called him on the cell phone, and at that point I was told, I'm watching it, I'm seeing it on TV right now. Do me a favor and when you get in on scene, give me another report. So I said okay, I acknowledged that and started to roll in. At that point, also, as I'm rolling, I called my wife just to let her know that the plane had hit the tower, I'm going to go in, just watch it on the news.

Probably about three minutes from the tunnel, I ducked into the tunnel with traffic with the lights and siren, and at that point didn't realize until later that communications was lost for me. I didn't know about the second aircraft. I think I had 1010 WINS on trying to hear the news. In the tunnel, I didn't hear any of that as well. I just remember, when I popped out of the tunnel, that my adrenaline was so pumped, I thought to myself, you've got to calm down, you've got to relax a little bit and just concentrate on doing what you have to do.

As I popped out of the tunnel, emergency vehicles, marked and unmarked, from every aspect, just in front of me, to the side of me, behind me, and I

realized that this is something I need to really be careful as to how I'm driving because we're not usually accustomed to so many vehicles going in one place.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Excuse me. Doctor, you said the tunnel. Which tunnel?

DR. ASAEDA: The Midtown Tunnel.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Okay.

A. At this point almost a convoy of emergency vehicles were going towards the World Trade Center. Since I was on the east side, I continued all the way down. As soon as I got towards the Brooklyn Bridge, I could see more closely the smoke and just thousands of people were just kind of running, walking towards the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Were both of the buildings standing at that point in time?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Okay.

A. Again, still I had not realized about the second plane hitting the tower. Also, because of the bioterrorism course and just the threats, I'm thinking to myself, I had just imagined that it was a single engine Cessna type of plane, not knowing it was a commercial airlines by any means. I kept thinking also

to myself, be careful, it still could be terrorism, it could be bioterrorism, they could have had some kind of chemicals and biological agents on board. I kept thinking don't go downwind, don't go downwind. But because of the flow of people, the direction that I was hoping to take ended up putting me further south, which actually put me directly downwind, and I remember thinking to myself, oh, my God, this is where I don't want to be. I turned off the air-conditioner, holding my breath, as if that would work, thinking do you know what? You're in the worst place.

As I rounded the corner, more emergency vehicles now on the West Side Highway trying to get north towards the towers, the next car that I saw coming next to me was Chief Downey's vehicle.

Q. So you drove all the way south down the east side and looped around --

A. Correct.

Q. -- at the Battery and headed up West Street?

A. Correct. Because there were too many people coming directly east. I knew that I couldn't go that way. So as I rounded the bend by the ferry, got back onto the west side, the next unmarked car that I saw was Chief Downey. Now, I don't think he was driving

because I don't think I could have seen him that clearly, but I remember that he looked in towards the window of my vehicle, he smiled and actually waved, and I actually remember saying verbally, hey, chief, knowing that he couldn't hear me. But I particularly remember Chief Downey because I've had the opportunity of going on FEMA deployments with him to the Dominican Republic and joining him when the Japanese firefighters had come by, they wanted to speak to the S.O.C. chief and whatnot. So he was I remember physically one of the last people that I had known recognizing going to the scene.

As the first convoy had gone in front of me, I actually diverted my vehicle to two ambulances that I had seen right under the south walkway bridge. I saw two ambulances, Fire Department ambulances, pulled up next to them and said--

Q. That's the south bridge that crosses the West Side Highway?

A. Correct. The one that's still intact.

Q. Right?

A. Or was still intact. At that point, I pulled up next to the ambulances. I asked them, is this the command post? They said no, it wasn't. I said, who

set you up here? I believe they were EMTs. I don't think they were medics. They had said, there's so many people running this way, we felt this was a good area to be in. I said, it sounds good, just make sure to let a lieutenant know where you are so he can account for everyone, and I asked them, do you happen to know where the command post is? They directed me to in front of 1 World Trade Center on the West Side Highway.

Also, at this point I noticed just women's shoes all over. I guess they had taken them off to run. I guess they couldn't run in the heels and whatnot.

Q. That was on West Street?

A. That was on West Street and even previously, coming around from the east side to the west side, just shoes all over, it was just interesting to see that, along with the debris.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: If I may interrupt.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: You were directed to the command center on West Street across from 1 World Trade?

DR. ASAEDA: Correct.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you in fact reach that command post?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, I did.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Was that in front of the World Financial Center?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, it was.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Okay.

A. So as I pulled my vehicle, I realized that the West Side Highway had a lot of emergency vehicles. I couldn't actually get onto that. I went up the service road the wrong way with just the lights on, no siren at this point, saw the people gathering, I would say, 30 to 40 feet in front of the stairs of the World Financial Center. I think they call it the American -- I don't know if that's the same as the American Express Building or whatnot.

Q. No. 3 World Financial?

A. I would guess it would be 2, but I'm not sure of the number.

Q. The American Express Building?

A. Yes, the World Financial. I remember parking my car on Vesey and West on the corner, it was the northwest corner. There were emergency vehicles there

as well. I was on the end double-parked and I thought to myself, I don't want to block anyone. Again, not realizing the magnitude of what was about to happen, I thought to myself, I still have a meeting to go to in about half an hour, so once I figure out what's going on here and everything settles, I still need to be able to pull my vehicle to go to the meeting. So I parked my vehicle, remembered that it was a hard hat operation, grabbed my helmet, grabbed my jacket and proceeded to the command post.

While I was en route to the site, I actually remember hearing the other physician's vehicle designation arrive on scene, so I knew that he was on seen probably about five to seven minutes before I had arrived.

Q. Who was that?

A. That was Dr. Cherson.

Q. Okay.

A. So I made it a point to, once reporting to the command post just to find out what was going on, to see if I could find the other physician as well. Since he was the previous physician on call and first on the scene, I figured I would let him take the lead and let him direct me as to where he wanted me to go.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: At what time was it now, do you know, doctor, approximately?

DR. ASAEDA: This must have been, I would say -- it turns out it was after the second aircraft had crashed but before the first building. I don't remember the exact time of the second plane, but 9:10, 9:15, somewhere in that time frame.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Yes.

A. But even at this point, I still didn't realize that a plane had hit. Again, being so close and looking up, I couldn't even see the other building really from where I was standing. I walked over to the command post. At that point I remember seeing a piece of debris fall from the north tower, literally past us, and hit the World Financial Center behind us and come down, and the only reason I saw that is everyone was kind of looking up going, whoa! I kind of looked up and I thought, wow, this is very close.

By the same token, I had looked up at the same time and noticed what I thought was debris turning out to be people, and at first I just couldn't imagine it would be people, but as they landed I was pretty sure it was people. I thought, well, they must be unconscious or falling out. Upon looking closer, there

were some people that seemed to be on fire coming down, some that looked like rag dolls coming down, but at least 70 percent of them actually flailed until they hit the ground and one, I mean, they looked like ants from the distance we were at, but actually looking like he or she wanted to get to the next window.

I remember thinking under my breath and saying out loud that I could hear myself, I go, oh, my God, please, no, no, no, no, and they were jumping. I've seen people, you know, I've worked as a paramedic in the past in California, so I've seen people jump as high as 25 stories, but that was very different in that in that it was just kind of, oh, my gosh, and they hit. Here, with four times the height, it was kind of an oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God, until they finally hit.

At that point I had met Dr. Cherson and the paramedic aide that was with him, Paramedic Delgado from our office as well.

Q. Is this at the command post?

A. This is at the command post, initially across the street from World Trade Center.

Q. Who else was at the command post at this time?

A. I remember seeing Chief Ganci. I also remember Chief Downey speaking to Commissioner Von Essen walking in front of me. Also, at about this time Mayor Giuliani and his entourage had actually walked behind us, and then a couple of fire chiefs that I had seen from the training or whatnot, but I couldn't recall their names, some of the Dominican Republic staff as well that had been sent.

Q. Was Commissioner Feehan there?

A. I had briefly seen him, but I can't remember exactly where I had seen him.

Q. Okay.

A. At this point, as I was standing in front of the command post looking to try to take in what was going on, Dr. Cherson came back to me and said that they were going to move the command post into the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. So at that time he said to me he was going to go in there with Paramedic Delgado, Manny Delgado, and he wanted me to take the EMS fellow who was with us and go to 7 World Trade, where they had set up one of the first treatment areas.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Now, was this going to be the EMS command post or the Fire Department command post?

DR. ASAEDA: This was going to be an EMS treatment area.

A. So I agreed to it, and one of the -- I can't remember who it was but he actually brought over one of the antidote kits from one of our vehicles. I almost chuckled at that time thinking, even if it were, one kit is not enough for all the potential patients, but we brought it with us. We went into the loading dock of 7 World Trade, which was right adjacent to the telephone company building, I believe, on Vesey.

Q. Right.

A. I remember as we were walking there was smoke coming from the World Trade Center and what seemed to be in front parts of -- in retrospect, I guess it was parts of the plane or whatnot, debris from the plane, debris from the building, and I had also heard that there were people around, but I didn't get a close enough look to see what kind of status they were in.

We walked into the loading dock where Captain Abdo of the Fire Department, EMS, had already established a treatment area, and we were using the START system, which is the simple triage and rapid transport, where we color code our victims into red for immediate, yellow for injury but not immediate, green

for walking wounded and black for dead at this point, and he had set up the loading dock into these separate areas and there were a few patients there as well. I remember, again, walking towards the treatment area thinking this is awfully close, we need to work on getting it a little bit further out, and I started seeing a few patients that were there.

The first gentleman for some reason I remember particularly. He was a gentleman in his seventies. He had said that he was on the 59th floor of the first tower that got struck. He was actually ordering some kind of food at that cafeteria, I think it's at the 59th floor, I'm pretty sure, and thought that, when he heard the explosion, that it was the kitchen oven. He heard that other people said they don't know what it is but it's time to evacuate, so he actually came down the staircase, and he was just sitting there because he was tired he was in the. So green category of a walking wounded. I remember thinking to myself, if he was able to make it out, then it sounds like most people are going to be able to get out, and I was relieved to hear that.

As I went to another patient, I remember a Secret Service or security from 7 World Trade Center

person saying to me, did you hear that the Pentagon just got hit by another plane? Again, not knowing about the second plane still at this point, I thought, oh, my God. Then he said, and there's another plane missing. So at that point was the first point that I realized that this was a terrorist -- an intentional act, again, not knowing that the second plane had already hit.

So I thought we really need to move this out because I had a feeling they were going to come back for us. Just as soon as I had thought that, I heard what I thought was a jet engine plane. In retrospect, it turns out that it was the first tower coming down. We grabbed whatever patients we could, and what I did was I turned to my left and ducked into the little -- there was, I guess, a little connection between the lobby of 7 and the loading dock. The loading dock, I do remember thinking that it looked very secure, thick concrete and whatnot, and we all crammed, probably about 30 of us, into this little alcove between the lobby and the loading dock.

[redacted]

[redacted]. [redacted] and the next thing I noticed, that jet engine sound and then a loud crash and then pitch black. Then --

Q. Just prior to that, were there electrical lights where you were?

A. Yes, there were.

Q. Did they stay on?

A. No, they did not.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember thinking that this was it for me. I really thought that this was another plane coming and I thought this was it. I remember putting the visor of my helmet down, grabbing the chin strap and just kind of squatting where I was at. After I realized that we actually made it through this initial whatever it was,

it was so dark that I actually thought they had closed the loading bay doors as a security measure for us, but it turns out it was just the debris and the smoke and whatnot that made it pitch black.

Q. The doors were still open?

A. They were still open.

Q. Okay.

A. I've heard in the past that, you know, these disasters are so dark that people put their hands in front of their face and couldn't see anything. I used to laugh at them and think how dark can that be? But really, it was so dark, you couldn't see the hand in front of your face. At that point we realized that the building we were in was still up, we needed to get out, but just didn't know where to go, a little disoriented. Any lighting equipment, which I actually didn't have, but any of the EMTs, I would say there were about eight of us, eight EMTs and medics, as well as the Captain and myself, EMS, we realized that we needed to get out, but none of us -- they hadn't brought their flashlights to the area we just dove into. We didn't know which way to go. People were yelling, I can't breathe, I can't breathe, and I remember from the bioterrorism course thinking, again,

it could be bioterrorism, that they had said that even if you didn't have a mask, just take your tie and put it on your face, that seems to eliminate 80 percent of what may be around you. I remember thinking, they said this would work, they said this would work, and tried to breathe through this, but still everything in my mouth and whatnot.

Now, trying to make the escape out, I didn't know which way to go. Someone yelled, I think it's this way, and somebody had a camera, whether it was a photographer or whatnot, and I remember the person was flashing his camera towards us saying come towards the flash. So we made it to the flash, still pitch black, by chance met up with Captain Abdo from EMS, and I said, are all of our EMS people accounted for? He said, yes, they are. I said, then we need to get out of here. Then I said, oh, and we've got to get the patients, because at this point it was kind of, you know, we've got to get the patients as well, grabbed whoever we could. Luckily, they were for the most part all walking wounded, and even the ones that were lying were at this point up and had ducked with us.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Let me stop you there, Doctor.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: You said there were about 30 people you crammed into this little alcove or pathway from the loading area to the lobby of 7 World Trade.

DR. ASAEDA: Correct.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you know any of those other people?

DR. ASAEDA: Just the EMS personnel. I didn't recognize any of the Fire side personnel. Also I recognized one of the security personnel from 7 World Trade just because I used to go there weekly for the Mayor's PAD, public access defibrillation meeting. I recognized him. I also recognized the person who said he was either Secret Service or security, not as knowing him but just as he was next to me when we dove for cover, and then the patients who we had brought with us. But other than that, I didn't recognize any other personnel.

A. At that point, we got to the exit, made a decision to evacuate, got the patients, still not knowing which way to go because we really hadn't been able to determine what actually came down or what had happened. The decision was either to go left or right

and we ended up going right, between the two buildings, in the alleyway on the north, which turned out to be the right direction because apparently there was a lot of debris and part of 7 down already. Also, I did notice as I was making my exit the sound of the firefighters' alarms indicating that they were down. I did remember that as well but just could not see anything.

As we got into the alleyway, it just started to get a little bit lighter, almost like a dusk/dawn type of deal. We got through the alleyway, got half a block up -- I don't even remember which block that was, but saw one of the first ambulances, I think it was a Cabrini ambulance, one of the voluntary hospital ambulances with people just crammed on board. I made the decision to remove them because they were not hurt. I said, we have patients that are hurt. We loaded three or four and I remember just hitting the side of the ambulance and saying, go, go, go, go, and the driver, the EMT or medic, shouted back or looked back, where are we supposed to go? I said, just go north, just go north. So they took off.

I saw another ambulance. At this point, also, I saw people from OEM. Eddie Gabriel, who is one

of our EMS chiefs, was over there coming in with -- I think he had somebody on his arm. We saw police officers. There were some firefighters now in gear but not recognizable because of the dust. I didn't remember any identifying markers on them either.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Where was this now, Doctor? On West Street?

DR. ASAEDA: This is actually on -- let's see. This was West. This was Vesey. We took the little alleyway between the telephone building and 7 World Trade, ended up on the next block.

Q. Park Place? Murray?

A. It may have been Murray. There was a parking lot adjacent to it. It was a smaller street. I think may have been Park Place.

Q. Yes, I think so, too.

A. Then at that point I saw some of the OEM people that I recognized, just happy to see that they were okay. I got to the next ambulance, put people on board. At that point my beeper was going off. It just seemed to be the only thing that was actually going off. It turned out to be my wife calling because she had heard that I was going, and while I'm trying to coordinate everybody going, I actually picked up the

phone and tried to dial. It didn't go through.

Once I got them on the ambulance, I actually stopped and looked at the corner and saw that there was a pay phone and thought to myself, this is a Verizon phone. There's no way that would be working. I thought, well, I have nothing to lose at this point. I dug into my pocket, happened to find a quarter, the only change I had, and I thought to myself, it's probably with my luck one of those 35-cent phones anyway, you know, it's going to be like that. I get there, pick it up, it's a 25-cent call, dial tone is there surprisingly, dropped a quarter in and actually it goes through.

My wife [redacted] I knew that you were going to be there, the first tower came down. I said, listen, calm down. I'm okay. I'm not going to do anything to endanger myself further. I'm okay. Do me a favor, call my mom in San Francisco, let her know that I'm okay, and then I hung up the phone. I said, I'll call you when I can, and then proceeded back towards the north tower.

At that point I stopped myself and thought to myself, you've got to be smart about this. The first tower came down. There's a great chance that the

second one might as well. So I went back up half a block through the parking lot and then back onto West.

Q. You didn't know about the second plane at this point, but you knew the second tower was burning?

A. I didn't even know that the second tower was burning because I had no information that the second tower was hit.

Q. Got it.

A. So all the way up until the Secret Service or the security, whoever he happened to be, told me that the other plane was missing, that one plane had hit the Pentagon and another was missing, up until that point I knew nothing of a potential terrorist attack. It was only in my mind thinking in this day and age, it could be terrorism, so be careful. As a matter of fact, when I saw all that dust come through, I thought at that point, while I was walking, I thought, this must be anthrax. I mean, that's something that definitely went through my mind.

So at that point all our patients were onto the ambulances, our EMS group kind of disbanded, but I saw Captain Abdo on West and -- again, I'm not familiar with it. It's about one block further north of where 7 used to be. I met him at the corner and at that point

we were literally thinking of going back towards 1 World Trade, knowing that the command post was there, stopped ourselves thinking we've got to be smart about this, this is something else that might come down, and as we had thought that, the sound before the sight coming, saw the second tower actually come down and then heard it afterwards, at which point all of us turned north and started running. We got about a block, maybe half a block, ducked into a little alcove where there were probably 30 police officers, firefighters, again, I don't recognize any shield numbers or helmet numbers, against the wall, when other cops ran by and said, you're just not fucking far enough. So we turned around and ran north, at which point the plume of the smoke, again, kind of a warm feeling came by us, luckily no debris, almost kind of lifting us and then kind of surrounding us again.

Then, at that point, when everything settled, we set up another treatment area at the corner of -- what corner is that? I don't recall. It's just south of Chambers, about a block south of Chambers. We set up another treatment area, started to see some of the walking wounded. There weren't too many people seriously injured. There were some firefighters that

were complaining of smoke, of just inhalation and dust. We gave them some oxygen. That I'm sure was tracked because I had our EMT write down the names, but I can't recall any names.

There was one firefighter that he had given me his name, I actually wrote it down, I still have, saying that I'm sure they think I'm missing, please notify command that I'm okay. That I actually wrote down and I actually went to one of the chiefs and they took the name down, but their communications weren't 100 percent either. So they were trying to do what they could. I made that initial report.

At that point, while we were treating some patients and not more than maybe ten if that, they said there's suspicious packages around. I think the police officers came by and said we needed to evacuate. So we actually walked everyone further north another block and this time got to the Borough of Manhattan Community College and up on, I guess in their gymnasium area, up the stairs, we set up an area. We wanted to try to keep people like myself who were contaminated kind of out, keeping the area relatively fresh. So people who were covered like myself were kind of treating people on the outside, and those that were clean, those people

were inside giving oxygen and water.

We were probably there for about 20, 30 minutes, when we were told that there's suspicious packages again, and this time people were running towards north again saying that there's a gas leak. So we evacuated everybody and started running again, and at this point I think we all decided we're going to get as far north as we could, decided to go to Chelsea, and I thought that was a good area because just being there initially realizing this was really going to be a body recovery, unfortunately, I thought that the ice rink would be a good place for a temporary morgue. I had heard in the past, I have a friend that works at DEA, that that was a huge facility.

As a matter of fact, I took one of the Japanese firefighters from Tokyo, who was interested in that kind of thing, while he was visiting the Fire Department here, he wanted me to stop by there just to see what kind of health facilities they had to take back to Japan with him. So I remember actually seeing the facility and remembering that it was large enough that, if they would allow us to use that facility, that would be an ideal location.

Then, as I was running, an ambulance, I don't

even know who it was, I think it was a volunteer ambulance pulled up and just yelled, Doc, jump in. We were jumping into the ambulance, seven other people, kind of all in disarray. I remember thinking what just happened? Then I was dropped off at Chelsea, met with Chief Pascale and Chief Kowalczyk, who were at that point for EMS command, and then we decided to set the hospital area there.

About an hour after, they asked for us to return back to the -- I guess the Fire command post on Chambers and West. Then a couple hours thereafter, you know, we were trying to evaluate the best we could, 7 came down. I remember running again and some of the Fire guys started running and stopped and I guess they realized that we were far away enough. But I remember I just kept running until -- I figured until I see everything down, I'll keep running. I got about a block and then realized, okay, maybe I was a little silly. But I walked back to the command post, and then we tried to come up with a plan.

Then for the rest of the night we were trying to set up a hospital area, one at Stuyvesant High School, which we were able to set up, also trying to set up some strike teams up near the rubble pile,

really mainly for rescuers at this point, just realizing there wasn't going to be many victims, but in case a victim was pulled out. I was there for about the next, I think, total of like 28 hours on the first day, just trying to coordinate what we could, communicating with OEM as well as to the federal assets that were coming. We heard that the DEMAT teams were coming, also that the FEMA USAR task force things were coming.

By this point, John Claire, Commissioner Claire, as well as Dr. Gonzalez and Dr. Richmond, who were also at the upstate meeting, were flown back apparently by state trooper helicopter. This was probably three, four hours into it, I think by 11:00 or 12:00 in the afternoon, and they were trying to coordinate what they could from their site. At that point, Dr. Gonzalez, who is really in charge of our New York task force, USAR, Urban Search and Rescue Team, decided that he would put together some semblance of a team to do some of the rescue efforts. So part of our obligation, myself, as being the doctor there throughout the night, would be to cover the main medical command as well as the USAR activities as well.

At this same point, I heard that Dr. Prezant and/or Dr. Kelly had set up something at Pace, on that side. Initially, Dr. Cherson had set something up at the Liberty Street side, I think by the ferries. So I knew that we had good coverage in the areas. Then the rest of it was just trying to set up and coordinate. A lot of volunteers, medical staff and whatnot, came up very early, but I don't think they realized what magnitude of disaster this was. I had surgeons, I think 30 surgeons from a college conference at one of the hotels showed up by busload saying we're surgeons, we're here to help. I said, it would be great, but there's no one to pull out at this point. If you don't mind loading the water, that's what we're going to need at this point, you know, we sent everybody to Chelsea Piers and set up things over there.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you see any patients that night?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Approximately how many?

DR. ASAEDA: All the patients that I saw were rescuers in some shape or form. None were from the initial collapse. A lot of things in their eyes, which

we washed out, some respiratory complaints, some minor bumps and bruises, someone that actually needed some sutures and whatnot. The way we had it set up was that anyone who needed a transport would be placed onto the ambulance and actually sent to the hospital because we also coordinated with the hospitals to find out what they could handle and we were told that initially they got some of the burns and the sick patients from the initial planes, but that was only a few hundred throughout the hospitals. We looked at Downtown Beekman, Bellevue, St. Vincent's, as far as Cabrini as well, and we were told that, after the initial wave, they weren't getting any patients, they were ready, so we knew that we didn't really need to do too much treatment on the scene, we would try to go back to the way that things are normally run in these disasters where we'd do an initial triage, do basic treatment that we can, and then ship them to the hospital. We felt that's where they would better be served. But it turned out that there weren't that many victims from the rubble.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Just a couple other questions.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: When did you find out for the first time that a second plane had hit the other tower?

DR. ASAEDA: This was after, I guess after my initial run and as I was looking at the north tower and thinking of going back, they had said, yeah, did you hear the second plane hit that as well? Then I started to put things together thinking this was obviously a terrorist attack. But not until then, again, I think mainly because I was in the tunnel when the second plane had hit and Citywide at some spots apparently doesn't come through and the traffic was to hard to get on that I actually I got on the radio to tell them, 784 was my identifier for the day, 784, show me responding. I just could not get through after about three attempts and just tried to go on by computer, but that was logged as well, so I couldn't actually log on that way.

Again, in retrospect, maybe I should have had an FM station on. That would have at least given me the news. But not thinking to that extent, I just had 1010 WINS on. It must have taken me -- you know, I must have found out about the first plane maybe five to ten minutes after it actually hit because I actually do

remember seeing the smoke. I was in the tunnel when the second plane hit, popped out probably soon thereafter, and then with everything was trying to get on scene and listen to the radio. Again, I didn't hear anything about a confirmed second crash, either that or I just wasn't paying close enough attention or just didn't know about the second plane.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: My other question has to do with West Street.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Either when you were coming over to 7 World Trade for the first time or after you evacuated 7 World Trade after the first collapse, did you notice a lot of rigs and buses lined up on West Street from like the command post on down?

DR. ASAEDA: I remember more particularly on West Street, the south end of West Street, between the south tower and the first tower, I would guess, a lot of vehicles, heavy fire rescue vehicles and ambulances as well. I don't remember as many north of Vesey. I do remember there was like a ladder truck on the corner of West and Vesey, actually on West, on the northbound lane facing the opposite direction. That vehicle I do

remember and then sporadically here and there some other vehicles as well.

Where I parked my vehicle, I remember the vehicle I parked next to was a traffic enforcement vehicle, and then there were some -- they looked like I think it was a marked, no light, fire protection type vehicle I had seen as well, if I remember.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Was your vehicle destroyed?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, it was.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Chief Downey's vehicle, can you describe it, when you saw it?

DR. ASAEDA: It was a dark-colored, unmarked car. I thought it was kind of particularly odd in that he looked to me like he was sitting in the back seat, behind the passenger, which would seem odd to me because I would think that, I guess, if he wasn't driving himself, he would be in the passenger's side. But in retrospect, he could have been in the passenger's side as well because he actually moved right past me, not very quickly but just enough for me to actually recognize him and say, oh, Chief, and then he got in front of me. Again, once we got onto West Street from the south end, there were probably 20 to 30

vehicles already parked and then another 20 vehicles trying to get through, so I realized that I would not be able to continue. As Chief Downey's vehicle went forward and, again, seeing the ambulances on the left, I decided to go there, at least just get out of the traffic pattern. Then that actually worked in my benefit because I was able to bring the vehicle up the side street, the service road.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Anything else, Kevin?

MR. McALLISTER: I don't have any further questions. Do you have any other recollections or observations to share with us, Doctor?

DR. ASAEDA: That's about everything. I mean, obviously, all the volunteers, I know that everyone had great intentions, but I guess they didn't realize the extent of things. Just a tragedy.

Also, the other thing I remember is we used to have an EMT that worked here who was actually on the 86th floor of the World Trade building and I thought to myself, he must be in there. I thought he was gone, very afraid to call his family, as he was afraid to call me. When I finally found out he was okay via the office here, I called him and he had said that he

actually was also an auxiliary firefighter here in New York City and had some thoughts of becoming a firefighter earlier. But he said as he was making his evacuation and seeing the firefighters come up fully loaded with their gear and their hoses going up to the floors to fight the fires, he said he was thanking everyone, thank you for what you do, thank you for what you do, and he said all thoughts of ever being a firefighter went right out the door for him there.

I can only imagine what they must have been going through, and hearing that there's 343 firefighters lost, initially, over 300 initially, just the thought of that is just tremendous, but when I actually saw the names on the list, it made me think twice again and also looking at the pictures. Now, not recalling the names exactly, seeing the pictures, I recognized one of the faces and I realized that there were more people that I knew through the Dominican Republic deployment or even through the bioterrorism course. I don't remember if he's a chief. I think it's Chief Fanning or Captain Fanning was lost as well. I saw his picture on that. There was another chief that was on that list as well that I recognized from the class and it's just horrific. Not that not

knowing them makes any difference, but it just adds that personal touch that makes it really sad.

I didn't realize that Commissioner Feehan actually lived in the neighborhood that I just moved to a couple of months ago, and so once I got off the World Trade Center site, I heard about his wake the night before and went to the funeral, and it's just very hard to take, as I'm sure you know. Just devastating.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Thank you, doctor.

DR. ASAEDA: Sure. Thank you very much.

MR. McALLISTER: Thank you very much, Doctor.

DR. ASAEDA: If you need anything more, please let me know.

MR. McALLISTER: I'm just going to conclude the interview it's 1612 hours on October 11th and we are concluding the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110063

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT FIORENTINO

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 10 o'clock. This is George Cundari and Murray Murad with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. Vincent Fiorentino, Firefighter first grade. 42 Battalion.

Q. We are at 8653 18 Avenue, Battalion 42. Can you please tell us the events that happened regarding the September 11 tragedy?

A. We were in the kitchen in the morning watching Channel 5 news. They were giving a report about the primary election and the camera swung over and showed the first building, the fire and they said plane, we thought small plane, something like that. The Chief and I came up to the office, figuring that we were going to go pretty quick. We took extra lights, put them on the rig and we didn't immediately go. Took the 40 and 48 first from our end of Brooklyn.

Q. What Chief was that?

A. What Chiefs went?

Q. Who was the Chief?

A. Chief Coyne.

Q. Then we got our ticket at 910 to relocate to the 32. En route with that, we got changed to a third alarm assignment for the Battery Tunnel, Brooklyn side. When we got to there, we were told by Brooklyn that the 42 and the 41 were going to -- we were pulled back to Brooklyn and we had our complete third alarm assignment at the tunnel. With that, at some point Brooklyn took units off of our ticket and they were getting another box, another Manhattan box, an Albany Street box I believe it was. A few of them, I know 201 was one of those numbers on that that was taken off. They went through the tunnel ahead of us. That was right before the first collapse. 201 was caught in that collapse. I believe 113 was also in that group that was taken out of our group and they back filled the assignment and when the first collapse came, the reports at the tunnel were that the tunnel collapsed or that there was a collapse at the other end of the tunnel and we were trying to get confirmation from the tunnel people as to what was happening. They were kind of vague with that.

The Chief assigned a couple of units to assist in the evacuation of the tunnel and prior to

that we were -- I was on the radio with Brooklyn and we were right at the toll plaza where there was still traffic coming out of Manhattan and our guys were grouped together standing and I didn't see the building come down, but by looking at them I realized what was happening with the first tower. Then we were ordered by orders of Chief Cruthers, to take the entire assignment and go to the Brooklyn Bridge. That's what we proceeded to do. We left those other units there, I know 102 was one of them. They went into the tunnel to assist the people coming out of the tunnel.

Then we went to the Brooklyn Bridge and then we were stopped at the Brooklyn Bridge and they had a report that the other side was possibly untenable and the 42 Battalion went alone, left the rest of the assignment behind as a scout unit to check. We saw that Chambers Street was clear. We reported back to Brooklyn and the rest of the third alarm assignment came over with us. From there we reported in to the command post that was at Park Row and Broadway.

Q. Around City Hall?

A. At the point of City Hall park. We met Chief Haring there. We were assigned to work with the 15th Division, I think it was, and we went and operated in

number 5 World Trade Center. We assisted in the removal of 3 people from the concourse area. One guy who had an I beam on him in the bottom of this number 5 building. We finished that operation, then that building was on fire.

Q. Where was your Battalion car parked?

A. We parked right along City Hall park.

Q. Then you walked over to --

A. We walked to the command post, then we walked up Vesey Street.

Q. At this time was the tower still standing one of them or both were down?

A. I think they both were down. I mean it was like a wind storm of paper and dust, which I understand they said it was generated by that. It wasn't a windy day. We operated there and then we operated on the fire in number 5 and then later we swung around and we were at a sub cellar fire at the Bankers Trust building; 130 Liberty. We operated in 130 Liberty.

Q. Do you recall who was in that building?

A. What companies?

Q. Yes, Chief or anyone in there?

A. There were other Chiefs there that that -- 21, 43 and 42 and we were gathering up guys that had

cylinders that were able to go down because it was pushing from this sub cellar. So there was a lot of guys at that point that was later on, but a lot of guys didn't have masks. The Chief stopped guys from assisting us further down the stairs without the masks. We made one push, we expended our masks, everybody came out and then they went hunting down more cylinders. They found more cylinders and we went down with a second push and put those fires out down there. After that we were on the pile of number 2.

Q. Doing a search?

A. Right, that's how we operated, to the best of my knowledge. Time frames and all, I don't know. To me it seemed like all one big -- it was nighttime and when we started out it was morning. It went by very quickly in that vein of things.

Q. Which channel were you operating on, Channel 1?

A. When we got over to Manhattan we were told to switch to Manhattan. We switched to Manhattan and the Chief stayed on 1 and I switched mine, I think it was to 5 and both radios had a lot of Maydays. When we first came over there were a lot of Mayday calls, but you couldn't really know where they were all coming

from. Then the radio quieted down after that, at least the channels we were on.

Q. Initially it came in as a third alarm?

A. We went to a third alarm staging. They do that when they have a large fire somewhere. They bring units from other boroughs to be ready to go in for the next wave. That's basically the best I can remember.

Q. You had a lot of people passing you on the streets, a lot of civilians going, trying to get out of there when you got there?

A. When we hit the corner of Church and Chambers, we ran into two firemen that were totally disoriented and had lost their company, lost contact with their company. They were -- best description shell shocked. We took their names and we told them to continue heading more towards midtown to get out of the storm.

Like I said, the paperwork that we had anything written on disappeared. We came back to our car later in the night. It was filled with about 25 pairs of shoes, jackets. A lot of things were taken from the car, but there were no -- we had our masks with us. The guys wanted to take our masks when we were responding. We had to to like -- that's about it.

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for giving this interview. The time is 1010. This is the conclusion of the tape.

File No. 9110064

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF DOMINICK DeRUBBIO

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: The time is 10:15, and this is George Cundari with Murray Murad from the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is Battalion Chief Dominick DeRubbio. I'm assigned to Division 8. I'm doing the 25R group in Battalion 21. That morning I was surplus, so I was assigned to the field comm. unit.

I was running late that morning. [redacted] I got out late. I was driving in, and I was on the Gowanus and traffic was backed up. So I got off the Gowanus, and I tried to cut through Park Slope. Then I saw the smoke sort of to the west. I said, "Oh, it looks like we have a job somewhere."

Then I put on 1010 Wins, and then I heard that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. So I said, "Well, field comm. is going to be gone, so I'm going to have to get to

quarters." I parked the car, got my gear and started to get over there.

When I made the turn onto Flatbush Avenue, I could see the World Trade Center. I could see the smoke. I knew we had our hands full here.

Q. What quarters were you responding to?

A. I was going to field comm., which is Tillary Street. I was responding to their quarters. Traffic in downtown Brooklyn was a mess. I remember it was pretty jammed up down there. Then listening to 1010 Wins, I heard another plane crashed into the other tower. I said, "Wow."

I got to quarters, parked my car, grabbed my gear, and there was a group of some other firemen there. We walked over to the Brooklyn Bridge, which was closed. The cops had that closed. They got a Department of Sanitation car, and he drove us over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We got to like Chambers right in front of One Centre Street. It was just chaos. People were evacuating out of Manhattan. Everybody was coming towards us. So we walked through City

Hall Park over to Vesey Street.

I remember seeing Commissioner Von Essen. He was in front of Seven World Trade Center. They were looking at the fire in the tower. I noticed a lot of airplane parts in the street, a lot of gears and stuff like that.

Q. Excuse me. What was the location that you saw the airplane parts?

A. Going down Vesey, sort of in front of Seven World Trade Center. I knew they were airplane parts. You could see gears and pieces of airplane.

I got down to West Street and went south, and I saw field comm. They were in front of Two World Financial Center. They had their van set up there. I remember seeing Chief Cassano, and I remember seeing Chief Cross there.

So I reported in to field comm. I tried to get myself a radio. There were no radios left. All the radios were taken out of the van. I remember stowing my gear under the table, the field comm. table. I was talking to Chief Cassano. He needed a battery. I got him a battery, and I changed the battery in his radio

for him. He was standing there.

People were jumping out of towers. We were on West there. They were jumping out, and they were landing in the street in front of us. Just something you try not to pay too much attention to, you know.

There was a group of people there. There were people waiting for assignments. I remember someone saying they wanted to know if they could land helicopters on the roof. I think Chief Cassano said it can't be done.

After a while we were looking up at the tower, and all of a sudden someone said it's starting to come down.

Q. This would be the north tower coming down?

A. This would be the first one.

Q. Or the south tower?

A. This one here.

It was weird how it started to come down. It looked like it was a timed explosion, but I guess it was just the floors starting to pancake one on top of the other.

Luckily where the field comm. unit was,

there was a big open door behind us, a big roll-down door which was open, and that led to a ramp which went into the basement of Two World Financial Center. So pretty much everybody turned around and went down this ramp into the basement of the building.

A lot of debris came down where we were, and it also came down the ramp. All the dust and the smoke came down. Most of us who went down there -- I would say all of us -- were lucky we got out of the way.

After a while we sort of regrouped back to the top of the ramp. I was with a cop. He had a flashlight. It was so dark, you couldn't see anything, but we went back up and looked around to see if there was anybody up there. We didn't see anybody.

I tried to find my gear, and my gear was buried.

Q. Do you recall who went downstairs with you?

A. I'm pretty sure Chief Cassano was with me and Lieutenant Gates from field comm. There were some EMS people there. There was probably

some officers and some companies there also. It probably had to be about 30 people went down that ramp. Like I said, we were pretty lucky we had that, because if that door was closed I think we would have gotten hit with debris where we were standing.

Afterwards we went back down the ramp, and I was able to find a staircase. I walked into the lobby and went out the back of the building, which faced the Hudson River. People were starting to drift over to the west side. I think Marine Company 9 was there, and there were two New York City Waterway ferry boats there.

So I told the pilot in the marine company, "Tell the dispatcher any injured people, bring them to the Hudson River," because it was a clear area at the time and we had boats that were evacuating people to New Jersey. I know the marine company took quite a few people out of there and over to Jersey.

Q. Where was the marine company docked?

A. They had to be -- let's see.

Q. Here's North End Street.

A. They had to be over here. I think it

was south of this -- they were right here. People were coming west and coming over. They had quite a few people on their boat, and they took them, like I said, to Jersey. We were trying to help people evacuate and get over towards the Hudson River.

I didn't have a radio. I never got a radio, so I really didn't know what was going on. Eventually I was sort of behind the Winter Garden, and I had picked up a mask. I figured I might need it later. I didn't have a mask either. There was a mask laying there. I picked it up.

I was looking over the Winter Garden at the second tower, and then I saw that starting to come down. There were people standing next to me. We all just started running. I was able to get around the corner of another building, and I got into a doorway and put my mask on.

Q. So you ran north in the Winter Garden? This is the Winter Garden over here.

A. It had to be -- yeah, I ran -- it was probably around this building. I was able to hunker down in a doorway.

Q. You ran towards North End Street?

A. Yeah. I put my mask on. Like you say, you're sort of in shock that this thing even happened. It was really difficult.

After that it seemed like everybody started moving north. I met Lieutenant Gates, and we tried to set up the command board again, tried to get some kind of organization going, but it was kind of difficult.

Eventually we pretty much made our way north up to Chambers and West, and that's where the command post was set up. We had the staging, which was north of that by Stuyvesant High School.

That's pretty much it as far as I can remember.

Q. Murray, got any questions?

I just want to know, there was no assigned radio to you?

A. There was, but by the time I got there, all the radios had been taken.

Q. Okay. All right.

A. I guess people coming in, they stripped that whole field comm. van of radios.

That was it.

Q. Chief, I'd like to thank you for your time and for doing this interview.

MR. CUNDARI: It's 10:25. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110065

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GARY GATES

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McCOURT: The date is October 12th, 2001. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. This is in reference to the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001.

Would you please state your name, please.

LIEUTENANT GATES: Lieutenant Gary Gates, lieutenant in field comm. for about the last year and a half.

MR. McCOURT: Also present is --

MR. DUN: Richard Dun, New York City Fire Department, working on the task force.

Q. Lieutenant Gates, would you tell us what your assignment was on September 11th?

A. My assignment was that I was the lieutenant in field comm. and would work with two other people from DISCO having to do with the dispatchers. We were taking on multiple alarms, and the multiple alarm was the World Trade Center that came in around quarter to, 10 to 9.

Q. Lieutenant, who were you working with?

A. It was John Turverso and Richie Chiarillo.

Q. Are they firefighters?

A. They are Fire Department employees who were not in uniform. They work for the dispatchers unit, communications dispatch.

We were able to see the smoke from quarters, and at that moment the second alarm came in for the Manhattan World Trade Center. We responded with the small van, because the other ones were out of service. We went down over there.

Going over the Brooklyn Bridge, we could see one of the towers -- I couldn't tell you which tower at that moment was burning when we looked to the south. We found out later that the north tower was hit first; is that correct?

Q. Correct.

A. So that was the tower that was burning.

We went on to Broadway, and we driving down Broadway. When we got to about Maiden Lane, the amount of people going across Broadway to evacuate from the building there was enough to bring us down to a standstill.

I said to Richie, who was driving at the time, "Let's start the command here," because

you could see the fire. It was a fairly good place to be, I thought, anyhow.

I was out trying to help Richie and move people away from the van so that we could drive down and get a little closer, when Richie yelled that the dispatcher just notified him that they want the command post to be set up on West Street.

Q. What frequency were you operating on, what radio frequency?

A. The primary at that time would be Manhattan, the Manhattan frequency. As soon as we get to a multiple alarm in that borough, we go to the frequency of that borough. So we were on the Manhattan frequency.

So we drove down further south to try to work our way over to West Street. We were able to do this, and we came up from West Street. I'm not sure which street we came on to West Street from. It was south of Albany, I believe, whatever. Probably Rector. We were able to get through near Rector, and we drove up. Rector or Carlton. As I said, I don't really remember. There were many, many people.

As we drove up to West Street, we were going against traffic. At that moment Chief Ganci was standing right outside and he yelled, "Gary, right here," meaning set up the board here. That was about exactly opposite of One World Trade Center, which we didn't even know the number at that point. I knew it was the most northern tower.

Chief Ganci said, "Set it up right here." We opened the board, put it together. At that time more groups, more companies, were coming. So we picked the board up and moved it back towards the west side of West Street and up against -- back where there's a parking lot that leads into the building, where the parking lot leads into the building, which later on it happened to be very fortunate to be there.

We set it up there. Again, my position is we draw a schematic of what we see, the two buildings in front of us. At that point, then, the chief starts to disperse troops. Okay, we're going to send these companies to this particular section.

My job is to note that on the board so

you can have an overall picture of where the troops are going, where the firefighters, the officers are going. So you put that down on the board. The last I remember was Dennis Cross, Chief Cross, was given I think three units to go to the south tower. So off he went.

Then, again, no idea what time -- I have a watch, but I'm trying to move everything together at the same time. I looked up, and the building exploded, the building that we were very close to, which was one tower. The whole top came off like a volcano.

Q. What was that, was that the second plane hitting?

A. I realized later, which actually I realized in talking with people over a period of two weeks, that had to be the collapse, because since that was the north tower which was hit by a plane first, the other tower was hit by a plane just before we got there. So now both towers have been hit by a plane. The north tower was burning.

So the explosion, what I realized later, had to be the start of the collapse. It

was the way the building appeared to blowout from both sides. I'm looking at the face of it, and all we see is the two sides of the building just blowing out and coming apart like this, as I said, like the top of a volcano.

With that, I believe it was about 60 of us at the command board at that time, just turned around and went down into this parking lot, which happened to be very fortunate, as I said, because the 60 of us went down there.

I found out later on that Dennis Cross and the guys he was with -- again, I don't know the amount of units that he was sent with -- were found on West Street, from what I understand. So he never even got to the building.

Q. He was approaching it as it collapsed?

A. Yeah, yeah, I would say that.

Q. Where was Chief Ganci at that time?

A. Chief Ganci was within ten feet of the board. I saw Chief Feehan. I saw him and many of the other chiefs who were finally coming in, a lot of guys off duty, other guys working, stuff like that. I couldn't tell you a lot of their names because I'm not very familiar with a lot of

the chiefs' names and stuff like that.

I know one gentleman who I worked with him in fire prevention, Chief Tom Murphy, he was there. Another gentleman, Chief Dominic -- I'd have to look up his last name, but he was there. These two guys are still okay today.

Q. They went to the same location you did?

A. Yeah, yeah.

(Interruption.)

A. So as I said, we all went down in the basement. I found out later on that some of the guys had gone back up again. We had about 30 people downstairs who were trying to find a back door out. Not being familiar with the building, we found one of the parking lot officers there that dispatches trucks or receives trucks.

From there we were able to find a stairway going up by sending out what I would call scouts or something like that. Finally we were able to get upstairs and went out through the Winter Garden back door.

Q. So you came into the Winter Garden. From there where did you go?

A. From there we walked over to Vesey

Street. We went around to the right to go to Vesey Street to try to go up around to the front of the building at Vesey and West to get back into the game, so to speak.

At that time, again talking to this other chief officer, we were trying to regroup on that street there, Vesey and West. There were many injured firefighters at that time and firemen who were dislocated from their units. We were trying to take some kind of consensus of who was there to start to set up some kind of command post or reorganize.

Q. Do you recognize the highest ranking officer in this area at the time? Do you recall?

A. There was a chief there, but I could not recall who it was.

At that time this Chief Tom Murphy was going to go with the Secret Service. They were apparently going back to the building coming through the back by the Winter Garden and go back into the building to see if they could get out front, I guess.

As we went around the corner, they all came running back. We all ran back around that

building that we were in back of, which was on I guess it was North End Avenue or South End Avenue, whichever it was there.

That's when the next building came down. It was a big heavy cloud of smoke that came right around and followed us in there. We were able to get into another parking garage or something like that. So the smoke just blew past us.

Q. Who was with you at that point?

A. Several people from the building and one other fire officer. I couldn't tell you his name.

Q. Everybody was okay?

A. Yeah. There were only about five of us in there. We went one way. People were scattering all over the place.

Q. Where did you come out? The same way?

A. We came out the same way. We went back to that street, stuff like that. We again went back to Vesey Street to again try to reorganize what was going on. Then we found out everybody was going up to Chambers Street and West, so we all walked to Chambers Street.

We met Chief Cruthers up there. Again, we left the board that I used, the command board. Since that was now outside the front part, that had gotten -- we found out later -- we don't even know where it is right now. We know the van that we drove up was flattened. The board, they don't know where it is.

Q. Would you just indicate on the map where the second command post was set up.

A. The second command post, when I was with Chief Cruthers, was up here at West Street on the north side of the overpass. I'm sorry, that's Vesey Street. Okay, up here at Chambers Street. Chambers Street, the north side of Chambers Street and West. That was actually the second command post after the collapse of the two buildings.

Q. You remained there for the duration?

A. We remained there until after Seven World Trade Center collapsed, which I found out later on was about 5:00 that day, something like that.

Then after that it seemed like we were stretched out. There was companies in front of

us, companies behind us in the staging area. At that time Chief Cruthers moved the command post up to Vesey and West. That's where we started to work out of at that point. That was our primary command post for about four days, and that's where we worked out of.

Q. Anything else you can think of? Any other people that you saw there that you may be able to pinpoint what their actions were right before or after?

A. The --

Q. I'm sorry to interrupt you. Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan were there with you at the collapse?

A. Yeah, the first collapse.

Q. Did they go the same way you did?

A. That I don't know. That I don't know.

Q. You don't know which direction?

A. Because at that time when the building collapsed, we made a mad dash. I was assuming everybody came with us. But at that point he had to come down there because he was close enough to come down there. What his actions were later, I don't know. I found out later he went back up.

I think he was -- from the stories, he was caught in the second collapse. He had to go back up.

Q. So you didn't see him after that?

A. No, no. After the first collapse and we went down into that parking garage, I didn't see Ganci or anybody else.

Q. You continued on Manhattan that whole time or did you switch over?

A. Well, at that time we had no -- we only had handy talky radios at that point. We stayed on Channel 1, because that would be the primary tactical for getting hold of everybody. We were just trying to get people to shut down their handy talkies and conserve their batteries. We didn't know what was the duration of this.

Q. Who had primary control over communications? Did you guys have it? Before everything went down.

A. Primary control at that point is myself with the -- we had commcord yeah, commcord was there. Again, I'd have to look up to see who it was. Chief Ganci, of course. I believe I saw Chief Cassano and a couple of the -- I never saw Burns.

So at that point that was the command post. At that point who was in charge then would be Ganci. As I said, he was the first one there. He told me to open up the command board up here, and then all the other chiefs started coming and all the other companies started coming.

Q. Anything else you can think of?

MR. McCOURT: The time now is 8:47. The interview started at 8:30. This concludes this interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110066

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

JOHN TRAVERSO

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. McCOURT: Today is October 12, 2001. My name is Tom McCourt, New York City Fire Department. I'm working with Richard Dunn, New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are currently interviewing?

A. John Traverso, field comm., fire alarm dispatcher.

Q. Okay, John. On the date of September 11, the World Trade Center, can you tell us what your assignment was that day and everything that you can recall of that incident.

A. Okay, I was assigned to field comm. that morning. We were out in front of quarters. We just came down to check the rig and we noticed smoke coming across from Manhattan and as soon as we turned around to go say something a second alarm was transmitted right away, so we responded. Upon going across the Brooklyn Bridge, we found out via radio that a plane had hit the building and we proceeded to go to the location.

Once we got into Manhattan, we were radioed by Manhattan to go set up on West Street opposite the World Trade Center, set up the command post. So we responded over to West Street, we backed into a

building, I guess it would be right by the Merrill Lynch building where there is an underground parking garage.

At that time as we were responding there was numerous people running, just to escape the catastrophe that had happened. We backed into the entrance to the garage --

Q. Let me interrupt you a little bit. Who were you working with that day?

A. Richard Georello and Lieutenant Gates. We had a small field comm. van, not the regular field comm. apparatus at that time. We were told, as I said, by Manhattan to set up on West Street opposite of number 2. We backed in, we parked the truck on the ramp in front of the entrance to the underground parking garage. At that time Lieutenant Gates set up the local command board, I proceeded to go into the back of the van and operate the radios.

My partner Richie was acting as a go between, because radio traffic was so intense. I would give him messages of whatever I was receiving, people trapped on different floors and he would hand deliver them over to the command post where Lieutenant Gates was working so he could give them to the command Chiefs.

Q. What frequencies were you working on, do you know?

A. I believe it was frequency six on the handy talky, but I was on Manhattan frequency.

Q. Okay.

A. Really, because you couldn't get anything in on the handy talkies because it was so crowded.

Q. Okay, go on.

A. At the time we couldn't ascertain, but we saw a couple of bodies fall in the course of this, people jumping. In the middle of watching all this and receiving radio transmissions, I really couldn't look too well because I had to pay attention to what I was doing. At the time I received the report of people trapped on the 86 floor, I turned to the back of the van, gave it to Richie, who was working, he was going to bring it over, he looked up, stated an explicative and said everybody start running. Behind the van I remember seeing Mayor Giuliani, numerous Chiefs.

Q. At this time?

A. Yes, when I was there just prior to that. I seen, it was very crowded, it was all the command Chiefs. Assistant Commissioner Gregory was there. I'm not sure who else, I don't know, a lot of Chiefs, it

was so crowded. Everybody in the command sector was at that command post area.

As the debris started falling, it had to be from building two, because the second plane hadn't hit yet. People started running, what I did I dove down into the corner of the van and covered myself.

Q. In the van itself?

A. In the van itself. After the debris went by I was lucky enough. I had cupped my hands over so I could breathe a bit. I crawled out of the van and crawled down to the parking garage.

Q. Was anybody else with you there?

A. Nobody else was with me at that time. Guys that were already outside. Everybody took off in different directions. A lot of people went down underneath and then went out the other side of the building from what I understand. I met a fireman down there, a couple of other firemen and we proceeded to go back further and once it started to clear up, I ventured out to see where Richie was because he was out in back of me and I hadn't seen him.

There was a Battalion Chief I believe it was. I don't know who he was, said everybody start heading towards the water. So we started heading

towards the water.

Q. Which way did you come out of the building?

A. I came out the same way, right up to the field comm. truck because I remember there was one light still working on it. You could see through the dust and the debris the light was going around on it. You couldn't even get in there. I wanted to go see if I could operate the radio but it was shot. It was shot. We started heading for the water. Then the second one hit and we started running for the water and that came down.

After that I got checked out by EMS. Luckily, thank god, I was all right. Took some oxygen.

Q. Where was that? Where were you treated?

A. To be the street, had to be --

Q. Over by West?

A. No, it had to be over here by Vesey. Vesey, close to the water. Not near West, what is that, north, because they grabbed me because I had some dust and stuff on me. I proceeded up to Chambers and West, because that's where I saw everybody else was going. At that time I found Lieutenant Gates. He was trying to set up a command post at that time. There was a little bit of pandemonium. Everybody was trying to get

in and get set up. The field comm. truck arrived from the shops because it was on its way there anyway.

I got into the truck and I started printing a history of what was going on. I started operating the radios. Then Billy was there, because he had seen what happened, he lives by Jersey. He saw what happened, he came in. I said look I have to go get cleaned up. I got to sit down and for the rest of the day I just helped them a little bit. That night at 10 o'clock we found out that Richie had ended up in Jersey because he jumped on a ferry, or he was placed on a ferry, I think by the water when everybody started running. We found out he was okay.

That night, myself and Danny, walked across the Brooklyn Bridge back to quarters here. Just to unwind a bit. That's basically what happened. I really didn't -- I saw units coming, but faces. I was in the back of the van working the radio. I was writing things down and worrying about everything getting set up. I had no idea. I thought it was an accident. You know, a regular accidental plane crash at first. Then when they said the second one was hit and then the Pentagon. Then we realized, so it was a little unnerving.

Q. Sure. Anything else you can think of that you might have left out?

A. No, we just all were standing in front of quarters and seeing smoke. We couldn't see the World Trade Centers because there is a building in the way. We thought it was a ship, maybe, on fire or a belching something from -- they just started a diesel or something. We had no clue what it was until they dropped the second alarm.

Q. They told you on the way in it was a plane that crashed into?

A. We were aware of it once we started responding. Also I left one thing out. When we first arrived on West Street I backed in. It was a fifth alarm at that time. I was told by the command post to have Manhattan transmit an additional separate fifth alarm. So I transmitted that. I had them transmit that. Then I got the report of the people trapped and handed it to Richie, and then the building came down. That's about it.

MR. McCOURT: Okay. The time is 9:15. That concludes this interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110067

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT BUONOCORE

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: This is Ron Castorina conducting an interview with Vincent Buonocore, firefighter two, assigned to Engine 278. The time now is 1325 hours. Conducting the interview with me is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

FIREFIGHTER BUONOCORE: Firefighter Vincent Buonocore, grade two. I had the nozzle that day, assigned to 278.

MR. CASTORINA: The day of September 11th?

FIREFIGHTER BUONOCORE: Yes.

Q. Can you tell me what your assignment was for that day and whatever you can remember?

A. Yeah. I was assigned the nozzle that day. I remember walking into the kitchen and seeing one of the twin towers, smoke bellowing out of the upper floors. They said there was an airplane crash. I said to myself, it was such a beautiful day, I said, how the hell could someone not see that and avoid the twin towers.

A few minutes later I was watching the TV, and I saw the airplane coming from the right

side of the television screen, and one second later I saw the big explosion. All the guys were in the kitchen, and everybody was going, "Oh." Everybody was screaming.

There were two guys outside, Firefighter Jackson and Firefighter Zechewytz. They were outside looking at the sky. Firefighter Jackson said, "Wow, look at this airplane. It's flying so low." Maybe a minute after that they heard us screaming in the kitchen. They ran back, and sure enough, that was probably the plane that crashed into the twin towers.

Once that second plane hit, pretty much I knew we were going. I remember calling my wife, just letting her know that I was going to the twin towers, because I knew at that point it was terrorism. I didn't know the outcome of the day for anybody, so I just wanted to call my wife anyway just to let her know.

We responded. I remember going down Fourth Avenue, heading towards the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and I remember seeing papers flying in the air. Pretty much we went onto

Third Avenue. We were lining up on the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, waiting for orders from I guess the dispatcher or whatever.

We were hanging out there for about 15 minutes. I was talking to Firefighter Zechewytz. The next thing you know, I saw what I imagine the south tower coming down. Right then and there I pretty much knew it was going to be devastating to the department and to a lot of people.

At that point pretty much we started gathering up -- we lined up then. We took the rig from there, and we were going over the Brooklyn Bridge. We stopped on the bridge for about five or ten minutes, and we were watching all the people coming off from the Manhattan side, thousands of people, walking calmly. Pretty much a few minutes after that we went into Manhattan.

I was pretty happy we didn't go through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel because the only thing that was running through my mind is they're going to hit the tunnel. I didn't want to get caught in there. I was just happy we took the bridge, not knowing that, who knows, if another

airplane was going to be coming crashing into the bridge or what.

We ended up going into Manhattan. It was just ash all over the place. I don't remember which street exactly we were on. Pretty much we parked our rig, and we went to the command center. We stood there for a little while waiting for orders.

Q. Where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. We were, I believe, on --

Q. You were in Manhattan at that time?

A. Yeah, we were in Manhattan. Again, we were by the command center, waiting for instructions.

Q. So you were in the staging area?

A. We were in the staging area. Then I remember just seeing a whole bunch of dust going up again in smoke, not realizing that that was the second tower coming down.

That's the recollections that I have.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A. Basically it was a tragic day for our nation and our department, and hopefully

something like this never goes on again.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 1330 hours. That concludes the interview.

File No. 9110068

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

Firefighter Richard VETLAND

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

VETLAND

MR. CASTORINA: I am here with Firefighter Richard VETLAND. I am at Engine 278. The time now is 1310 hours. Conducting the interview with me is?

MR. MC COURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

A. Richard VETLAND, Engine 278.

Q. What is your rank?

A. Firefighter first grade.

Q. What was your assignment on September 11, 2001?

A. I was the chauffeur.

Q. Of?

A. The night tour and the day tour.

Q. Of 278?

A. Engine 278.

Q. Can you recall what happened that day, in detail?

A. Yes. I actually watched it on TV. The Chief went first.

Q. Which Chief was that?

A. Ed Henry. Actually, Roger Jackson was driving him, but John Picarello came in early and

took the run in. They went before nine. Then the rest of the us in the Engine we just had a feeling we were going. We watched it on TV and then watched the second plane hit and knew we were going. We I fueled the rig up, then we went.

We went down Fourth Avenue, to Third Avenue, over the bridge, then they stopped us at the tunnel and there was a staging area at the tunnel. Then when the first building came down we had a clear looking right at us.

Q. You were at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel?

A. We were at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

Q. You didn't get into Manhattan through the tunnel?

A. They stopped us there because 228 had said they thought a bomb went off in the tunnel actually.

Q. And they were in the tunnel?

A. They were in the tunnel. That was during the first collapse, because we seen it. They stopped us before that just to slow everybody down, I think. And then once that came down, that's when 228 said they thought there was a bomb. It was just smoke. But we were stopped before that.

Then we went to --

Q. What route did you take to get into Manhattan? You went over the bridge?

A. Then we went over to the Brooklyn bridge. We took the Brooklyn Bridge. We were the first ones over the Brooklyn Bridge from that staging area at the tunnel. Then we went over and parked on West Street, on the wrong side of West Street, facing towards everything. Facing south on the east side, facing the wrong way.

Q. Just put an X on the map where you were parked on that day, Engine 278.

A. We were parked right here (indicating).

Q. Had the second building collapsed yet at this point?

A. I don't know when it collapsed. There was a lot of dust, a lot of dust. I don't know where we were.

Q. Do you remember, were you directed anywhere or --

A. From there they just put us in a staging area.

Q. Do you know who put you in the staging area?

A. No, that I don't know. We were there

maybe -- we were there maybe about 15, 20 minutes and Father John came up and I talked to Father John. I talked to another guy. I know John Leanza from 122 truck. He was -- I know him from when we were kids and all he told me was "I hugged the columns like they told us in PS 30 and he was hugging the columns there and he said they lost I think two or three guys that he were standing with. He ran over and hugged the column and he came out -- he came walking out, Father John came walking out and just everybody started to come out. It was maybe 15, 20 minutes when people started walking, walking towards us.

So eventually -- actually we parked in and we started to go in and then they grabbed us and pulled us back. We left our rig a lot closer than where they made us go. So I pulled in and I drove right in up over here somewhere close and then they walked us back to the staging area. We basically unloaded food and oranges and stuff all day and then we went to Millennium later on. That was later on in the day.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. I can't think of anything.

Q. Okay. Fine.

MR. CASTORINA: That concludes this interview. The time is 1315 hours.

File No. 9110069

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JOHN HENRICKSEN

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: We're at Engine 278. I'm Ron Castorina, conducting an interview.

Your name, Tom?

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

CAPTAIN HENRICKSEN: Captain John Henricksen.

MR. CASTORINA: Where are you assigned?

CAPTAIN HENRICKSEN: I'm assigned to Engine 278.

Q. Can you tell me on September 11th, 2001, that day what your assignment was and the details?

A. Yes, on that morning at 9:10 we were assigned to report to the staging area at the Brooklyn Tunnel, on the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Tunnel. We were over there having responded to that location and then we waited for assignment over there.

As we were sitting there waiting for assignment, we observed the first tower collapse. At that time we had just previous to that sent one unit through the tunnel, and we were going to be the next unit to go through. As the first unit went through, they gave an urgent and no

units could go through the tunnel at that time.

Q. Do you know what that unit was?

A. I believe it was 228.

Q. 228?

A. Yeah.

So from there since we could no longer go through the tunnel, we were redirected to go over the Brooklyn Bridge. Then from the Brooklyn Bridge we were directed into Manhattan. We went to the staging area which was located on West Street opposite the Stuyvesant High School. I don't know what street that is, but that's where we went to.

I don't know at what point the second tower came down. I do believe we were in Manhattan at that time, but we were nowhere near the Trade Center.

Q. Who directed you to go to the staging area; do you remember?

A. That I don't recall. It was two battalions that were on the same ticket as us, and that's what was giving us the orders. I can't recall at the time that it was.

Q. So how close did you get to the

incident and at what point did you get there?

A. We didn't get into the incident until after the second tower had collapsed. Then from there we were directed to the Millennium Hotel. We were in the Millennium for a cautionary line because they were afraid of the fire extending to that building.

Then at one point they chased us out of there for fear of collapse of a building; I believe it was Seven World Trade. So they got us out of there because they didn't know which way that building was going to collapse.

When Seven World Trade did collapse, we were in the Woolworth Building. You couldn't even see. It was unbelievable. You couldn't even see your hand in front of your face. That's how much dust and debris was flying around.

Q. At any point were you or any of your guys or operation personnel injured?

A. No, no.

Q. You don't remember what corner you were on on West Street? You don't remember the location? Was it by Stuyvesant?

A. It was by Stuyvesant.

Q. Would the map help you, or you just don't remember?

A. I don't remember what street Stuyvesant High School is on. Do you know where Stuyvesant High School is?

We were standing on I guess the north side of West Street, opposite Stuyvesant High School.

Q. Were there still civilians being evacuated from the area while you were there or they weren't going near your location?

A. They weren't going near our location, but you could see them all being evacuated over the Brooklyn Bridge. There was no traffic whatsoever coming over the Brooklyn Bridge other than civilians who had taken over the whole bridge. The walkways and the road ways in both directions were just civilians pouring over.

Q. How were they acting? Orderly or was it panicky?

A. Yes, surprisingly it was pretty orderly. You could see they were involved in the collapse because they came completely covered with debris, you know, white all over them. It

was a sight to see.

Q. Is there anything else you recall or you want to add?

A. No, there's nothing I can think of.

Q. So you were just about there right after the second collapse?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Thank you, Captain.

A. I wish I could tell you more.

MR. CASTORINA: The time is 1305. This concludes the interview. The interview started at 1300 hours.

File No. 9110070

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT ROY DAVID

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 12th, 2001. The time is now 8:20 a.m. my name is Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview this morning with the following individual.

Please state your name.

LIEUTENANT DAVID: Lieutenant Roy David, emergency medical service.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Where are you assigned?

LIEUTENANT DAVID: Battalion 8, Manhattan south.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Lieutenant David, can you tell us about the events of September 11th, 2001, that morning.

A. September 11th, 2001, at approximately 8:50 in the morning I was assigned to the academy, the second week of an EMT refresher course.

While on a break just in front of the

academy, I was informed of an airplane crash into the World Trade Center. Subsequently this event was confirmed, and we were informed that we would be mobilized to the location.

There was a delay in obtaining vehicles for us to leave in. However, during that time some members, both of the ALS refresher and of the BLS refresher, were placed in ambulances, equipped and dispatched to the location. We then were placed aboard one Fire Department bus and two Transit Authority buses and in convoy, led by Chief McFarland, we responded into Manhattan.

Upon arrival in Manhattan, we were prestaged at a total of three locations prior to getting into the work area. The first one was the Pearl Street side of One Police Plaza. We stayed there approximately 35 minutes. The second one was Broadway just north of Chambers Street, half a block south of 26 Federal Plaza. Then we wound up at Church and Worth. There was some concerns about the 26th Federal Plaza being a potential hot spot, so we moved from there over to Church and Worth. That's an approximate. But it was on Church in the vicinity of Worth.

Then we were brought into the -- excuse me. I have to request the name of that high school, the one --

Q. Stuyvesant.

A. Stuyvesant High School, which is just to the west of West Street approximately two blocks north of the site.

At that point all the members that were on board the three buses were directed into the high school to assist there and be dispatched to other locations, and I was directed by an unknown person at this time to report to the command post to Chief Kowalczyk.

Upon arrival at the command post, Chief Kowalczyk directed me over to 225 Broadway. There in command of the medical treatment area, which included doctors and nurses, was Chief Charles Wells. I was eventually brought back to the command post by Charles Wells and then redispatched back to that location.

When I was sent back to the location the second time, I was armed with a list of units that were to be released from the scene and redeployed back into 911 due to the high call

volume.

While I was in the process of releasing those units and working it out with Captain Race who was left in charge of the medical operation, I was approached by a clergyman from the Federal Bureau of Investigation who informed me that Fire Department chaplain Father Mychal Judge had expired and was in the Church and was in need of transport.

I quickly grabbed one of the units that I had that I was in the process of releasing and directed them to pick up and move Father Judge. When that was accomplished, I remained at the medical post assisting and also assisting with the move. We transferred the operation from the 225 Broadway to the lobby of Pace University.

At Pace University we had -- we set up -- I'm sorry, we set up in that lobby of that building, the lobby and the actual whole first floor. There was a threat of collapse of building number seven, so 225, we had to evacuate it.

While operating at Pace University in the lobby of the building, building number seven

or tower seven did in fact collapse and create a hazard on our side. But luckily we didn't lose anybody. No one was injured as a result of it, and we continued the operation.

I stayed there until approximately 11:00 at night, at which point I was brought back to the command post and just assisted with some miscellaneous tasks. I probably left the scene at 1:30, and I secured a ride out of there with Chief James Martin.

Q. Can you just give me a little more detail when you approached about Father Judge?

A. I was approached by, again, an unknown priest from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, since that was the jacket he was wearing, and he stated to me that Father Judge had expired approximately two hours ago.

When I went into the Church, in fact he had been pronounced by Dr. Kelly sometime earlier. At this point they just wanted to remove him up to his perish so that I guess he could be prepared for the next step.

He appeared to have an injury, a heavy bleeding injury to the left side of the rear of

his head, and it was obvious that he was also covered in debris, as his face and the rest of his body was covered with just I guess crushed mortar and brick matter.

Q. So you picked him up from what church?

A. I don't know the name of the Church. It's on -- I'd have to refer to the map.

Q. I'm not sure if that map covers everything.

A. Yeah, let me just see. Let me orient myself here. It was St. Paul -- no. St. Peter's Church, which was on Barclay Street between Church and Broadway.

Q. So you assigned a unit there to --

A. Well, there were several units there that were operating supporting the medical unit for transport. As they were being released, this is the time that I was approached by this priest and asked for help.

A member from my command by the name of Carpenter was on one of the units I believe like an 8 Mary or something, perhaps an extra unit that had been running for the day. He was on that unit, and he was the one that did the

removal. I can't recall who his partner was at the time.

Q. And then they removed Father Judge to where?

A. They removed Father Judge to his parish, which is located on 31st Street. It's just opposite a fire station, I believe.

Q. Engine Company 1?

A. Yes.

Q. That's where they left his body?

A. Yes. They took him there, and I believe that's where they left him.

Q. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make at this time regarding the events that morning? Anything you say is fine.

A. Okay. My only concern was that -- and again this is not a bad mark against anyone. But knowing that at any time the personnel in the academy can be deployed, I think that the department should provide buses or some other type of mass people mover vehicles there, deadlined, ready to be moved. Because the only thing that we had that we could depend on was a few ambulances, and it just wasn't enough to move

60, 70 people from the academy.

Q. That's it? Okay.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview with Lieutenant Roy David. We thank you very much for your comments. The time now is 831 hours.

File No. 9110071

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FAISEL ABED

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 747 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Faisel Abed. I'm an EMT assigned to Battalion 8 and my unit is 08 David 2.

Q. Also present in the room is --

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Originally, basically we weren't assigned, but we heard so much commotion over the radio, we decided, you know, we asked Central, send us and we went even as they dispatched us to the World Center.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. Charles Beshett.

Q. So they assigned you to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, I mean there was so much noise when the

first call came over, everybody just went like ballistic over the radio. Whoever was there. There was 01 Adam that was like the under the building at that time and then there were a couple of other units that said we will go, we will go. We said we will take you. It sounded legit. It did sound legit, but in the back of our of minds, we thought maybe it's one of the generators that blew up, something electrical, something mechanical. It's just such a tall building, things happen, you know.

So we asked Central to send us the job and we are driving down 34 Street and we get to 23 Street and you see tower one. It's like oh, shit, oh, god. Look at this. The first thing that comes to your mind is oh, it's an act of god, it's a terrible tragedy. I mean you think you know -- you look at it and say -- it's not the first time a plane hit a building. You had the Empire State Building. My parents told me back in 1945 when a big bomber hit the building, so it's an accident, god, it's a tragic accident.

But then we are driving and now we are like, we are about a half mile out, halfway from the World Trade Center and we see this shiny object coming and me and my partner are going, what the hell, what's wrong

with that plane. What is wrong with that plane. There is something not right with that plane. And he just -- the tower blew.

So my partner said stop the freaking bus, stop the freaking bus. The building's going to fall. The building's going to fall on us. It was coming -- the force -- you see like the -- shit, the whole top of the building go off and just the junk that was coming out of there and the explosion was -- I thought it was Hollywood. I thought this was an act. I said this can't be happening. In New York. It's not happening.

I slowed it down. He got scared and I got scared so we kind of just slowed down a bit, you know, and he says listen, we really can't go in there. There is too much coming off the building. You could see stuff flying out of the building and people way before you get there. So we do it. We go, we go. We finally go to Vesey and West. Turned there.

There was a couple of other units there. They set the staging area up. We had about 15, 20 people coming out of the building and there were nurses from, they're from AMEX. I think they are from the American Express building. A couple of their nurses. They were bringing patients out. They were sitting

down right on the sidewalk. Some were badly burned, some were injured. Some were just in shock. Basically we are there. We are treating some.

Q. Could you indicate where you parked your vehicle.

A. Here is north, we are right here. I would say we are right here. Exactly right here. We are right here.

Q. Just make a number 1 there.

A. Okay. We were right here. West and Vesey and the water is right here and you can't go past the water.

Q. Okay, what vehicle were you in?

A. 350.

Q. 350?

A. 350.

So what happened at that point we get out. We get out our stuff, we are just starting to take care of the patients. We are tagging them red, yellow, whatever color might be at that situation at that time. We were there on the scene maybe -- I know the second plane hit a little bit after nine, if I'm correct. If I remember. We got our stuff out. We started triaging the patients. We stayed right there.

I mean we didn't go any further because of the fact that it was just a dangerous situation.

We stayed there, people were coming out and we triaged them. We were there, I would say approximately maybe an hour. I know it started -- I think that building starting coming down around 10 o'clock or something like that. I don't exactly remember what time, but it was about that time the first tower came down.

Q. We have the time.

A. Yes, I don't remember exactly, but I know it did come down, the first building, right. 9:55. About an hour from when we were first there. With the grace of god we had gotten all the people out of there. We had gotten all the patients out of there. They were transported and everything.

Next thing you know, you hear another -- they had said there were jets out there that day. They were out there. I started to hear another jet, right, it sounded like a flush of a jet. What it was was actually the building coming down. I didn't actually see the building coming down but you heard it. Why I didn't see it, I don't know. We were just so busy concentrating on what we are doing. You just heard

this thrushing, thrushing noise like a rocket. I thought the building was under attack again.

You just start seeing this smoke coming down. We just took off. We went north. We actually -- sorry, we went west. We went towards the river. All right. Then we just went towards the river and went up north a little bit behind the building. That was after the first one went down.

Q. Were you still with your partner at that time?

A. No. At that time, forget it, we were gone. We separated. It was just one of those things. We separated. I was looking for him. He was looking for me. I asked all around if -- someone told me he saw him. He was okay. I heard at one point that he went to the hospital with another co-worker of mine, but that wasn't true.

We were there, I would say for maybe another 20 minutes, half an hour or so, and then the second building came down, so we had to run even more further. We ran up north further, and then what happened we ran into the school. Actually the school was coming out, Stuyvesant High School, the kids started coming out. They didn't have a clue what was

going on.

So we have like 3, 4,000 kids coming out of the school, not realizing the magnitude of what's going on. So we are starting to walk. Now it's coming down and we are starting to walk, but the school is funny, the school is like a break wall for the smoke that is coming from the building, so when the kids got past one end of the school they started panicking. So we all started getting nervous, because the only place else to go was the Hudson River. I'm a good swimmer, but the Hudson River?

So I started telling the kids, everybody, just calm down, everybody keep on walking. Keep on walking, keep on walking. We finally got out to West Street and went just go all the way up till we stayed at the -- what's the place up there.

Q. Chelsea Pier?

A. Yes, Chelsea Piers. After that, then there was a gas leak. There was another explosion, the gas went. At that point it was just total helplessness. We felt terrible. We felt bad.

Q. Where your vehicle was left --

A. The vehicle was left right there. It was left right there at West and Vesey Street. Just left

it there, left everything. Just left everything. They tell you if running, don't look back. I was running looking back, making sure that cloud was coming, because it was coming. It was a horrific cloud.

It was like this monster coming out of the sky that was going to swallow you up. Then I noticed people jumping off the building. I caught this one guy over there. My eye caught him. It was just one of those things. My eye caught him. I was watching.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Once you got to the Chelsea Piers, and they had you staged there --

A. Well, I tell you, everybody -- it was so -- at that point, at that point, I think right after the first building collapsed, people were just walking around. They didn't know what to do. Everybody was just walking around. I was walking around like I lost my little puppy. I was definitely just total shaken. Forget it.

It got more organized at one point. At one point it started to get organized. I think after the second building went down, it finally started to get organized. Started getting all the ambulances lined up on West Street. It just really started to get

organized, but like I said, there wasn't really much for us to do. You had 400 ambulances there, just idling their engines. Not really doing anything. It was a shame.

If you ask me, can we ever prepare ourselves for something like this, not this magnitude. Not this magnitude, no. This was something else way beyond our comprehension and something that we, you know, can never handle again. It's impossible. It really is. As much training as we get, MCIs and things like that every year, I never want to see this again. I really don't.

I'm staged by the Empire State Building, so every time I stage by the Empire State Building, I'm like, I'm looking up all the time now. I mean I'm just like, oh. My partner is saying what are you looking at? Terrible terrible thing, really was.

Q. Did you eventually get to finding your partner?

A. Thank god, yes. We hugged each other. We gave a big hug, yes, we found each other.

Q. How long were you separated?

A. Almost until -- Jesus, almost until -- it had to be afternoon, one o'clock, 1:30, 2:00. I finally

found him down around the command center. What happened was that I had gotten pulled off. I had a Chief come pick me up and drive me to the hospital, because our Captain was hurt, so he saw me walking up the street and he says do you have a unit? I said no, he says hop in with me and he took me up to the hospital.

Q. Who was your Captain?

A. Captain Stone.

Q. Okay. He had gotten hurt on the scene?

A. Apparently. Now that I've opened my mouth, I'm sorry, but he actually escaped. He was in the building. He almost -- from what I know, he almost -- escaped with his life just about. He really did. You didn't hear this from me, please. I'm afraid I'm opening a can of worms.

Q. No, you are not, no.

A. He almost escaped with his life. He really did. He just missed it. The building almost fell on him.

Q. Thank goodness he got out.

A. Yes, he got out. So I was in the command car with him. He drove me up to Bellevue and then I was told to take the command car and I went back downtown

to the command center. That was pretty much it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this regarding the events from the time the plane hit until about 12 noon?

A. It was just mass chaos. That's all I could say. It was just mass chaos. I think everybody was just saying, you know, there really isn't much we can do when the buildings went down and that we just got to look out for ourselves and take care of ourselves. That's basically what it was. We were just taking care of ourselves. We had no choice.

If we get hurt, who are we going to help. It was just basically be safe, keep yourself, keep your distance, keep your ears open, keep your radios open to see what was going on. That's pretty much the whole thing in a nutshell.

MR. ECCLESTON: Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 758 hours. The counter on the cassette recorder is 194.

File No. 9110072

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JAMES MCKINLEY

Interview Date: October 21, 2001

J. MCKINLEY

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: It's October 12, 2001. The time is 6:56 and this is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

JAMES MCKINLEY: My names is James McKinley, EMTD. I work out of Battalion 8, my shield is 5501.

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Also present at the interview is…

CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department.

Q: James, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster of September 11, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about the events that happened that day?

A: Basically I was just getting off duty when news came in, the MERV driver came in and said there's a plane into the World Trade Center. He took off in a hurry, I was about to go home, and I convinced my lieutenant to let me go to the MCI. So I went, and after watching it on the TV for maybe 2, 3 minutes, I was about to put my stuff in my locker and I decided that I had to go to this thing. I went down and I grabbed Smitty, who was working cleaning the vehicles. We stocked the vehicle, 169, with the lieutenant's permission, and we went to the MCI. As we were going down the

FDR, I remember looking over and just seeing this huge hole in the World Trade Center. As we're going down, we went down the FDR, as we were coming across…I wasn't driving, I was teching. I remember coming up on the Trade Center, I don't know when the plane went into the building or how long it was there, but it was like, I was amazed to see that PD were already escorting people over the Brooklyn Bridge and to Chinatown. They were just clearing the whole area, and having people migrate towards Chinatown and over the bridge. So we came out of the FDR, we came across Vessey Street, and we were told by the radio to go to staging on West and Vessey. As we're going past we met command. I don't remember who it was. I remember seeing one, Gumbo, who was a lieutenant. I'm not sure what he is now.

Q: Chief?

A: Chief Gumbo, okay. So we parked out vehicles on Vessey street, I guess on the west side of the West Side Highway.

Q: Can you just mark on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle? Approximately, it doesn't have to be exact.

A: There was like 15, 20 vehicles there already, and we just joined in the group. So I would guess about here.

Q: What was the vehicle number you were in?

A: 169. Then we were just waiting for orders from officers on the scene about what to do, and they told us just hang tight. My partner is telling me that they want us to stay by our vehicles, in case they find something to do. I wasn't communicating with the officers, my partner was. I was just standing by the vehicle watching the

firemen do their stuff, watching the PD do their stuff. That's basically about it, I was just taking in the sight of the whole thing. Debris falling from the buildings, smoke, basically -----mayby this was a bad idea. Keep going?

Q: Keep going, you're doing fine. You're doing perfect.

A: As I was standing there watching this whole thing unfold, it was like I couldn't believe that some people were actually jumping from the building. Then as I looked up, I saw this helicopter hovering from in front of one of the buildings, it was the first one that was hit. Then all of a sudden I heard this huge explosion, I didn't know what it was cause nobody was telling me anything. I didn't know until we were called back to Chambers and something, Chambers and West Street, that it might have been a terrorist attack. I was this close to it, and I didn't know what was going on. After that I heard this huge explosion, I thought it was a boiler exploding or something. Next thing you know this huge cloud of smoke is coming at us, so we're running. Everyone is, firemen, PD, everyone is running away from the World Trade Center, up Vessey Street. This is North End, we was running around Vessey and around North end to get away from the first smoke. After the first building, I guess, I didn't know at the time that the building fell. After the smoke cleared, I went back, I was helping some people that were covered in dust and stuff like that. We set up treatment right on Vessey and North End, over here. As I was getting stuff to go into the treatment area, BP cuff, water, O-2, stuff like that, I was instructed to go back and treat patients. As I was picking up a patient on Vessey, on the east side of the West Side Highway and Vessey, I didn't know what was

going on. I was just trying to treat patients. I put a fireman on a stretcher, I was leading him back to the treatment area. As I was getting to the treatment area, everyone is leaving the treatment area. I was like where is everybody going? They said the other building is leaning, we're getting out of here. We're moving the treatment area. So we put the fireman in an ambulance and they took off. We was trying to clear out the treatment area, and as we're clearing the treatment area, I hear this huge noise. Someone told me the building is exploding, I couldn't believe it. So we started moving the treatment area back even further. After the second one fell, we started running up…where is it? I'm not sure what these buildings represent, but we ended up down by the water, the cloud pushed us all the way to the water. And that's basically, after that it was like, we went back to survey the damage and we was trying to get our vehicles out of the rubble. Like after the first building fell, we were trying to recover, we were trying to move the vehicles off of Vessey Street and on to North End Avenue. I'm like moving vehicles, I'm helping people, we have this one fireman that had his arm --- it was deformed, it was broken and everything. I helped splint it. I tried to move four or five vehicles before I set up staging over near the treatment area. After we moved, we moved the treatment area like three times. We moved it around here. Then after the first one fell we tried to get back in there. Then the second one was falling, I don't know. After the first one fell, as I went back, I was just looking at it. There were vehicles on fire, there were ambulances too close to fire trucks burning, gas tanks were popping. The parking lot over here where we parked our vehicles, cars in the parking lot were on fire.

Q: That was the parking lot over here?

A: I think this was a parking lot over here. I think this was a parking lot too, cause as we were running when the second building….this fireman was in front of us and we ran into almost like a dead end. As we're running behind him, he's like, "this way". I think he was a fireman or a police man, if we had followed him, we would have wound up in a dead end, and we probably would have got smoke in our lungs so we noticed that going in here would be a dead end, we have to go down this way. After the first one fell I was running up Vessey, then I walked back down Vessey towards West Street where all the fire engines were. They were covered in debris and they're smoldering. I just couldn't believe it. What amazed me too was things you don't even take notice of. Like, the street was littered with paperwork that was in the office building. I can't remember anymore, you know.

Q: It's ok, you're doing a perfect job. Just keep going with what you're doing.

A: After the first one fell, I was trying to sort through everything, going around helping people, seeing what we could do. Once I got too close to a vehicle that was smoking, it started to pop, I was afraid that the gas tank would explode. Everyone was like watch your back, watch your back, the firemen were trying to put out the fire. I keep reading in the paper now that it was at this point that they was trying to get the guys out of the other building that hasn't fallen yet. I can just imagine what it must have been like running down the stairs in the World Trade Center. As I was saying before, I didn't

know what was going on. I didn't even know that the building had fallen. Maybe it was the overtime or the fact that I had worked all night, I was tired or whatever. But as we cleared the second building, our dispatcher kept telling us after the second one fell, told us to drop back to Chambers and West Side Highway. We had to go back to our vehicles that we had abandoned running from the building that had fallen. We thought it was gonna fall on the side, so I was running looking for the shadow of the building, hoping that it wasn't falling my way. If it was falling my way, I would want to know because I don't want to stop running to look back to find out which way it was falling. I had to find out a way to see if it was falling this way, if it was falling on me. For some reason it fell like this. So as we ran, we came back to move all the vehicles, get all the stuff out. I was trying to fall back to Chambers and West Side Highway. Then, I met my partner, we had lost each other when the building side collapsed. He was telling me, as I'm driving the vehicle up the West Side Highway, all of a sudden, there's my partner standing in the road there. I'm like, ah, there he is. I'm not sure if he got the order before I did, cause I was told to drop back to Chambers and West Side Highway. So, I parked the vehicle up there, and I went back, and we're standing. He's like, he told me that the guy, the terrorist?

Q: Osama Bin Laden?

A: Yeah. He's like, he said he was gonna get the World Trade Center. So I'm like, what are you talking about? He said, this is a terrorist attack. I'm like what? Then all of a sudden, he told me that something was happening in Washington too. Then

he told me that they shot down another one. They said that the Air Force shot one down in Pennsylvania. But they later found out that they had a struggle. At this point, something happened. I think we heard some explosions or something, so the dispatcher starts telling us to go up to 23rd street and Chelsea Piers. My partner's like maybe it's gas or something, not just explosive gas. Not like Con Edison gas but like sarin gas or something like that. So we're packing everything up again, helping civilians who stopped to see this thing. So we pulled it up to 23rd Street and Chelsea Pier, that's where we made staging. Basically after that, once we got to 23rd Street, we started to see other vehicles were coming already. They told us to fall back, they told everybody that was responding in to go to 23rd Street, cause there was ambulances there already. So we got in line, steadied our pulses, dusted ourselves off, kind of like composed ourselves. And then there were lieutenants going around asking for unit numbers. After that it was just a big rotating in, at least 75-100 vehicles down there on 23rd street, all over. As we stayed there hour after hour, they kept coming from all over the state. Upstate, Jersey, Pennsylvania, we seen them from all over the state. As you stayed there they kind of like, rotated you in. If you were up front and they needed ambulances down there, they would send them down. We lost everything down there. I lost my tech bag, the only thing I didn't loose was the things that I had on me: my stethoscope, my helmet, my jacket. We even lost our stretcher. I don't know if we put in for it or not, but basically that's all it was. We got down there, we reported to the lieutenant. Then when the buildings started falling, we started falling back, the dispatcher telling us where to go. Chambers, then 23rd street.

Everything like, hold on a sec, they ran out of planes to drop on us. So everything started becoming a little more predictable, Fire and PD performing their duties.

Q: Were you guys getting any news reports like what was happening? Like all the planes had been grounded and that information?

A: I thought that was great too. They said over the radio that they ordered all the planes across the country to just hit the ground. Anyone up after a certain time would be shot down. As you stand at 23rd street, we saw there was fighter jets cruising the air and stuff. The people at the 23rd street pier, they saw the ambulances there, they heard the news. They started bringing out bottled water for us, they started setting out tables. I don't know if they have some kind of disaster plan that they followed, but they were very nice. They started bringing out water, bread, then sandwiches started appearing later on, fruit, apples. They made the whole facility at our disposal. I don't know if that's ---- but I was very amazed at the way they responded to the situation. I sat there for like 2 or 3 hours waiting to go back in, but they never sent me back there. I thought they would, but they wouldn't. Even the hospitals were surprised at how few patients they got. Basically that's about it.

Q: What time did you end up working till that day?

A: Well, we waited at 23rd Street pier, and then finally a lieutenant put us back in service, back into the 911 system. We did one call and we went to this Gouvaneer hospital, picked up a young lady. I call them young, but she was in like her 70s. She was being treated there, being transported back over to Bellvue Hospital. I

didn't know that you're not supposed to take a stable patient not part of the incident, Ground Zero, back to Bellvue. So I went to Bellvue, and all the doctors are expecting something from Ground Zero, and this lady's from Gouvaneer. So the doctor's like oh, okay, we'll treat her anyway. Well, he didn't say anyway, not that attitude. After that, I went back to the station, we had to re-start the vehicle before we brought this patient up. We went back in the 911 system and over to Bellvue. Then I went back, and I started work that night at about 10:00. I didn't get off till the lieutenant…I worked something like twenty hours that night, until 6:00. Then I went upstairs to the locker room. I think I was tired but I wasn't tired. I slept on a bench maybe an hour or an hour and a half. Went out, got something to eat, came back, washed up, put on my spare uniform and reported to duty about 12:00 that night. I don't remember, what did I do when I came back on duty? I think they sent us over to the Chelsea Pier, with all the other ambulances. All those other ambulances from all over the state was just standing by there. I guess they came down, they wanted to go down to Ground Zero. They didn't like sitting at 23rd street. They wanted to go down there, help do something. The bosses say you gotta sit here, you gotta sit here. That's basically what happened. EMS went on 12 hours on and 12 off. I finally got home the next night, took a shower, felt good, fell asleep. That's about it, unless you have any other questions.

Q: No, is there anything else you would like to add to this in regard to the events that happened prior to noon that day?

A: Before the planes hit? Something I observed?

J. MCKINLEY

Q: From when the planes hit until approximately noon. Is there anything in there that you want to add other than what you've already told us?

A: Um…like…?

Q: Just, if there's something that you thought of that you forgot to tell us, that you want to tell us. If there's nothing, that's fine, you can, you know…that's fine also.

A: I don't know, basically that's about it.

Q: Okay.

A: But what I found amazing was that nobody knew what was going on. I didn't know what was going on. I think that if we had known that these people would have done something like this, and that this is what it was…I usually watch the planes. They usually go from south to north, so when I heard the news about a plane hitting that side of the building, the plane would have had to been going from north to south. I thought it was an accident. That's what I was working on, down on the scene. It was a horrible accident, this guy was maybe coming out of Newark, and to avoid another plane, he swerved and couldn't get control of the plane. I think that if all of us would have some idea of what was transpiring, it would have been a lot different. Basically, I can't say, I don't know if that's enough.

Q: Perfect. James, I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. The time is 7:21. The counter on the recorder is 373 and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110073

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN JAGODA

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

J. JAGODA

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 0627 hours, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

JOHN JAGODA: My name is John Jagoda, my badge number is 3378, I work out of Station 13, Battalion 8.

Q: John, were you assigned to the World Trade Center Disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A: Yeah. When I received a phone call at home, I asked if I should come in and I came in on my bicycle, met with another guy here and we went down there.

Q: En route to the assignment what did you see?

A: A lot of smoke, a lot of fire. People just scared in the streets, it was from a distance away, but it was very scary to see.

Q: When you arrived at the World Trade Center, where did you park your vehicle?

A: It was right around Broadway, I guess, and Vessey Street.

Q: Can you just indicate there on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Around here.

Q: Thank you. Did any civilians report anything to you when you first arrived?

A: Well, when we first arrived the building had just collapsed I guess just five minutes after we got there. It was pitch black for awhile, and as the smoke cleared, two men were dragging a female cop over to us who was having chest pain and couldn't breathe. Another cop came over who had chest pains and couldn't breathe. Then there was another gentleman who asked us to help him, his arm was almost off. I mean, from the elbow down it was just bones ripped apart. There were so many other people. We just did what we could handle. We handled those three patients and took them to the hospital.

Q: You said when you arrived the building was coming down, which tower was this that was coming down? Was it the first one or the second?

A: It was the first one. Because we had brought the patients over to Bellvue, and were on our way back when we heard that the second one had come down.

Q: Okay, what happened next?

A: Well, we got those people in the ambulance and brought them to Bellvue. It was just total disbelief, you know? Everybody at Bellvue was waiting for us. We basically just washed our hands then turned around and went back. We knew there was gonna be a lot of people down there.

Q: When you said you went to Bellvue, who were you talking about we?

A: Me and my partner, and the two officers, and the one male who's arm was pretty badly mangled.

Q: Who was your partner?

A: Pete Rosie, he works up at Harlem. He lives not too far from here, so he rode his bicycle also.

Q: Okay, so you brought these patients to Bellvue, and then what happened next?

A: We cleaned up and then just went right back down.

Q: Okay.

A: When we got down there we were on the opposite side, I think near Washington Street or Greenwich Street. As a matter of fact, we were on Church street, maybe Church and Park.

Q: Okay, can you just indicate on the map with a number 2 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Right there.

Q: Okay, what vehicle was that?

A: 340.

Q: 340? Okay.

A: From there we met up with a group of other ambulances and supervisors over that were there and just kind of waited. From there I can't remember.

Q: Okay, just to the best of your memory…

A: It was just a bad day, it was a terrible day. I just want to put it out of my mind to tell you the truth.

Q: I'm sure. When you arrived back at the scene, had the second tower come down already?

A: Yeah. It came down…as we were leaving here, heading back down we heard over the radio that the second tower had fallen. So we all went to let's see…is this Washington here?

Q: This is Washington here.

A: This is West?

Q: This is West Street and this is West End

A: Yeah, we were all right here, by West Street here and we were down by the West Side Highway and Barkley.

Q: You were staged there?

A: Yeah.

Q: Who were you staged with? You reported to a particular officer there?

A: I honestly don't remember, there were so many people. I'm also a MERV driver, so at one point I was working the MERV.

Q: Okay, was that shortly after you arrived back or was that later on in the day?

A: That was later on in the day. Then I was on the MERV the next day. I believe the next two days.

Q: Were there people there that you recognized as Fire Department personnel, but they weren't in their uniform?

A: Not that I saw. I saw one guy who used to work here and he was in the streets. He used to work with me up at Met. When I was there. I don't know if he's still on the job though. But he was in plain clothes. He came up to me and said hey, how are you doing?

Q: What was his name?

A: I don't know, I left Met six years ago, so I don't know. It was just a very frustrating few days. Then to find out on Thursday that I lost so many friends, that's the hardest part, just being there and not being able to do anything. I just felt kind of helpless.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this day, the events up until about noon?

A: Until noon we just ran back and forth. We took three patients. Then the second trip three. Then we took one. I think we made like 5 or 6 trips to the hospital.

Q: The next trip you made, do you know how many patients you took?

A: The second trip? I think it was three, but I know at one point, there was one where we took a fireman who was having trouble breathing, he was complaining of a little discomfort. But he just kept saying it was just aggita. But we said now is the time to take you to the hospital. So we took him to Beth Isreal, as a matter of fact, (inaudible)

Q: All the trips you made to the hospital, you went to Beth Isreal? You went to Bellvue?

A: We went to Bellvue and Beth Isreal.

Q: So those were the only two hospitals?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, after you brought him to Beth Isreal, were you back on the scene before noon? Approximately, was it after noon?

A: I think so, the time was just…time didn't count. It was just back and forth back and forth. Time didn't mean anything. When we got to Beth Isreal, there was

someone there hosing down the ambulance because we had about two inches of soot on it. The time…I don't know about time, it seemed like everything stopped, you know? It was just, I was more or less like a zombie focused on going taking, going taking, going taking, and not paying attention to anything else at all. Come to find out later on that I had so many friends in there. All these guys dying…

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

Q: I thank you very much for speaking with me. This interview is concluded at 6:37.

File No. 9110074

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ADOLPH SMITH

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 12th, 2001. The time is 10:31 hours, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name and title.

EMT SMITH: Adolph Smith, EMT.

MR. ECCLESTON: And your assigned command area?

EMT SMITH: I'm assigned to Battalion 8.

MR. ECCLESTON: Of the New York City Fire Department?

EMT SMITH: As a de-con specialist.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also in the room is --

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Chris Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Mr. Smith, were you working on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you please tell me about the events

of that day?

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 10:33, and we are going to be continuing this interview.

Q. Mr. Smith, can you tell me about the events of September 11th?

A. I was assigned to the World Trade Center incident, and we arrived and were directed to go to Vesey and West on the west side of West Street. We arrived in that area, and I don't remember the captain's name. He directed us to park along (inaudible). So we did. So we backed in to park.

I just happened to look up, and what I thought was debris coming down from the north tower was people and bodies.

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 10:35 hours. Mr. Smith is unable to continue with this interview.

File No. 9110075

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT RENE DAVILA

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12th, 2001. The time is 1220 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of New York City. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

LIEUTENANT DAVILA: Lieutenant Rene Davila, shield number 328, lieutenant in Battalion 04, Fire Department of New York.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present in the room is.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Lieutenant Davila, were you assigned World Trade disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. I was assigned or I put myself on assignment immediately after I heard the transmission of the plane hitting the tower.

Q. Can you tell me about the events of that day?

A. Okay.

Q. Start from the top.

A. Actually just prior to the plane hitting tower one, I was in the office communicating with Lieutenant Bill Melarango. I just happened to be standing over the desk when I heard one of my units, "01 Charlie," put a priority message over the frequency stating that the plane just hit the tower. Seconds later I heard another one of my units, "01 Adam," yelling the same thing.

I immediately put myself on the assignment. I ran out, jumped in the vehicle, starting responding. When I got over to Rutgers and South Street, I was able to see the building. I saw a big hole, what appeared to me at that time to have been a fire or probably secondary to an explosion. I confirmed there was an incident. I couldn't confirm it was a plane because I didn't see the plane.

Immediately I confirmed the incident. I was over the citywide frequency. Basically I started calling for resources. I told them immediately to alert the senior staff. I told them to get the MERV rolling, start sending all

available units to that location. Being around during the bombing, I basically knew we had an incident which was going to generate a great many patients.

I couldn't tell you exactly what floor it was. I couldn't tell you how many floors were gone but there was a good portion of the building that was definitely destroyed. So I knew we had some casualties and fatalities.

Responding now -- what do you want me to talk about? Do you want me to talk about personal feelings too?

Q. Sure. Everything.

A. Well, as far as I feel, a lot of personal feelings came. Personally I always thought about -- you know you see that guy on 911 or something like that and he's a hero or something and he's a big shot or whatever. I know for myself -- I can't speak for somebody else -- yeah, I'm going to be like that. Well, I was given the opportunity to be that guy, and I immediately did not want it.

As I'm driving, I'm driving and I'm also talking on the frequency. But I remember

that coming through my mind. I also thought of Lieutenant Tony Torres, first of all because he's from the battalion, second of all because he's Hispanic, but next he was the first responding supervisor to the bombing at the World Trade Center towers.

Going through all those thoughts and stuff also, I started trying to think logistically, trying to think of how we were taught. Preplans, I don't even know if they existed since the merger. However, I still think that way.

So when I traveled down there, I was trying to go ahead and get down there where I could get down by Vesey Street. Vesey, as far as I remember, is the preplan for our staging area.

I remember I ran down, I came down around across by Beekman Hospital and made a right over on Beekman Street and went up. I did a couple turns across Broadway. I ended up coming down Vesey.

Right over here, right before the union is normally where we would have set up staging, but it appears when the towers got hit that a lot

of debris already was in that street and in that area. A lot of debris was flying around there, and it definitely wasn't, if anything, a safe area to set a staging. Plus I noticed that all the other apparatus and stuff was still continuing on over to West Street.

So I continued on to West Street, made a left-hand turn, and I set the first -- staging and command post basically -- you've got West Street. I was on the east side of West Street. I was setting staging of my units, and I had my command right over here, pretty much adjacent to the rescue that was running into tower one.

Q. That's where you parked your vehicle then?

A. That's where I originally parked my vehicle.

Q. Can you just indicate that by a number 1 on the map?

A. Trade Center one, Trade Center two. So I'll be like number 1.

Q. So you parked your vehicle there.

A. Right.

Q. And you tried to establish a command

post there?

A. That's what I had given directions. Right behind, right on the other side of the median there was the bus of 01 Charlie. I couldn't see my other unit, 01 Adam, which later I found out they were actually on Liberty Street.

A couple other voluntaries were starting to arrive at that time, but I remember going over to 1 Charlie because they were my unit. I went to the back of the vehicle. They had about six -- is my language permissive?

Q. Whatever you want to say.

A. This is exactly the way I talk.

I ran to the back of the vehicle, and I said, "What the fuck you got?" No, I saw the patient in the back of the vehicle. I saw some people with difficulty breathing. Nobody was on O2. I didn't see no amputation or anything at that point.

I already knew that there was that type of patient coming out, because when I first went 84 on the scene and advised citywide, one or two people leaving the tower, I'd seen a couple of amputations. I'd seen a couple body parts in the

street coming towards that location.

I saw people coming completely burnt at me where their clothes were singed off with burns, probably from one to fourth degree going down into the bone. They were walking to me, and I was immediately going, "Walking wounded, you go down that way across the street."

I went in the back of 1 Charlie. I said, "Do your patients walk?" He said, "Yeah." "Tell them to get the fuck out and run that way." At that time I told him to close the door to the vehicle and pull every triage tag that they had available. I started just yelling at them, "Triage, triage, triage."

Then as the other units were responding in, all I was telling them is -- they were like -- everybody was trying to run to grab a patient. I said absolutely not. I think that was one of the most difficult things I had. In fact, right now today, I was talking at roll call to people about triage and the importance of triage. I said, "Triage, triage, triage."

There were a couple AMR units there. I think the next unit I saw was a St. Vincent's

paramedic unit, and the same thing again. They're serious. I don't care. Triage, triage, triage.

At that time I went ahead and I noticed already I was losing my voice. I grabbed the crew of 1 Charlie. I knew these two guys. I told both of them to stick to me like glue. One of them was the staging officer. The other one had to stay with me because he was going to be my voice. Just in case I lost my voice completely, at least I was able to talk through him and he would have been able to communicate for me.

The onset from the time I was basically trying to grab a hold to try to get an ICS system operating. I knew senior staff was responding. I have to be honest, when I first got there, the first thing I did was get out of my vehicle and look to see if I saw another light blue shirt. I was hoping somebody else got there before me. That's what I was actually hoping. But no, to my dismay, there was no one else there.

Q. Who did you make this staging officer?

A. The staging officer was EMT Alex Loutsky.

Q. Who was the other --

A. As a matter of fact, you'll probably see him. He's in the press paper. He's downstairs too.

Q. Who was the person that stayed with you?

A. He was the one that just went out ill, secondary probably to this, Ralph Ramos.

Again just trying to get a hold of the whole situation. At that point I remember one thing. St. Vincent's unit had some people in their vehicle they were going to transport, and I said, "You're not going anywhere. You're triaging." I knew the importance of triage at that time until we got some more resources.

In between that I'm trying to transmit basically what's going on. I can't really remember much of my words except basically I was given them the access and advising that we have clear access to the location from both sides of West Street. I knew that was clear on both sides, whatever they could get in from that location.

There was debris all in the air, and I

remember I mentioned at one time this is a hard hat operation.

Then as I'm communicating I catch from my peripheral vision on the right -- I didn't even think about it hitting the building. I'm just basically like what the hell is he doing there. Before I knew it, he disappeared behind the building, and bingo, there was an explosion. I remember yelling over the frequency, however I communicated, a secondary explosion in the second building. At that time I remember I repeated over and over, because I had debris hit my helmet, "This is a hard hat situation, a hard hat operation, a hard hat operation."

I looked around me, and everybody like maybe stopped for a few seconds like, whoa. I can honestly say that it didn't stop the operation from moving in the direction that it was moving at that particular time. Everybody kind of appeared to still continue doing what they were doing. The firefighters were still loading into the building, except that now they're starting to run over to tower two.

A little while right after that, I

started seeing a couple light blue shirts come in. I don't remember the lieutenant's name. Lieutenant Mann was one of them from operations I remember seeing. Then I saw Lieutenant Terranova.

Q. Ross?

A. Ross he's here now. And Chief Gombo. I came over to Chief Gombo. I still speak about this, because the look that he gave me -- he looked at me with his mouth open, and I looked at him the same way. I handed him my clipboard with the units that I had there to start. It was basically like the command was turned over with very little communication. It was just like this is it.

He knows I knew the area, and he asked me what was in the other side of the building. I'm like a little rattled. I think Loutsky or Ralph, because these guys follow directions, I told them to stay with me like glue. Every time I turned around, I bumped heads with them.

They told me Church and Fulton. Church and Fulton was told to Chief Gombo. He said, "You go ahead and start operations over there and

get the vehicle over there." We sent 1 Charlie, in their bus, came back over here, on Vesey going over to Church and Fulton right here in front of the Millennium.

Q. Did your vehicle go there also?

A. Yeah. I got in my vehicle, and I started going. However, on the way there a body jumps -- well, I think I drove over a couple of bodies and stuff like that.

Another walking body jumped in front of my vehicle. That happened to be Captain Stone. He was like, "Stop!" He ran from somewhere and just -- "Where you going?" I said, "Church and Fulton." He said, "I need you to take me here." I said, "Chief Gombo told me to go ahead." He said, "I told you to fucking take me here." I said, "Okay. You're going there. You're going there."

I put him in the vehicle and brought him over to the command post, got my vehicle turned back around, and I made it to Church and Fulton.

Q. That's indicated by number 2 on the map?

A. Right.

Church and Fulton, I tell you, when we first got there, it took longer than it would take normally to get there. There were lamp posts in the street. There was all kinds of metal on the street. There's soot about two feet high in different areas throughout the street. There's bodies. There's been a couple of bodies and people still coming out.

Of course now we're being approached by PD and everything: I have a patient here. I've got a patient there. I'm telling them, "I can't handle it. Tell them to run and go that way. Tell them to go that way."

What we started doing is right in front of the Millennium, started to direct walking wounded to go over up Fulton Street, and the ones that needed oxygen, things of that nature, we were setting up over here in this area.

Already by that time now I started getting more resources. I saw the Cabrini paramedics show up. I had a lot of AMR units there. Lieutenant [redacted] came. [redacted].

Q. [redacted]?

A. [redacted], right.

Now, you want to hear personal feelings? I'll give you personal feelings. You know what, she could be a fantastic person, but they don't have field experience. I think this is very important, because a couple incidents happened.

I went over and I see Loutsky, and I walk over. First of all, she was there. She was a captain, the highest ranking. But I still felt that I was in charge of that operation and I felt it calling me to that.

I had my unit 1 Charlie, and I see Alex. By that time we've got AMR, and we're loading the AMR buses. They were parked, and they were parking all over. There was no structure. So what we're doing is we're blocking that access and egress out of that location. There was no structure.

The same thing with my voluntary units that were coming there. They had 911 training. They're able to go ahead and treat the patient accordingly. However, no idea of the incident

command system, staging or about getting in, getting out.

When I started doing AMR, I started to tell Loutsky, "Load all the minor injuries and stuff in there. Get them and just tell them to take the bus over to Brooklyn." I didn't want to load the hospitals in Manhattan. Shoot the bus over to fucking Brooklyn. Just get them out of the way, because they were in the way. That was the bottom line.

But I see Loutsky at one time with a clipboard, and he's trying to take names of people that are fucking hysterical. I said, "What the fuck are you doing?" He said, "The captain told me to do tracking and take names." Tracking is fine when you've got 10 patients and 20 patients and maybe even 50 patients, but I've got two fucking 110-story buildings emptying out in front of me and I've got a captain telling me do tracking.

So I told him, "Fuck what the captain said. I'm in charge, and I'm telling you forget about names and forget about fucking numbers. Just load them in the bus and get them out of

here."

If I'm wrong, you write me up, and I'll go see your guys in BITS. But you know what? Fuck it. I thought that was -- and I told her afterwards when we did that interview for Third Watch. I made it a little joke. I had to be a little respectful, but I had to go ahead and explain that.

The sector was starting to get formed -- we had like the sector. I had [redacted] -- again, people from operations [redacted] is a very nice guy. People in operations, they're not used to the fucking street or to reality. He came in and all of a sudden he started talking on the radio. I said, [redacted] what the fuck you doing talking on the radio?" Gombo don't got time to hear that shit. This is the big one. We got an assignment. You do the assignment. Bottom line, get the patients out. Maybe down the line you get calmed down. Then you start playing here's the command system.

Bottom line is you've been trained to do this; you go ahead and do it. I'm pissed off a little now about it after the fact. Then you

didn't have the time. It was just like what the fuck are you doing?

So I came out and said, "You want command? Here, use my radio. Take command. But we need to react. Somebody needs to be the treatment officer. You're a medic. I gave you the treatment officer." Bottom line, I didn't want to go ahead and pull I'm the senior lieutenant, whatnot. It wasn't time for that.

These are some of my feelings, because if they're going to do anything about this, people need to remember the old way we used to do it in EMS that, you know what, the senior lieutenant is the one in charge until the next person of rank comes in, in that nature.

The bottom line is get the patients out. Triage and get the patients out of the goddamn way. That's the bottom way. That's the way I was taught. That's the way Chief Goldfarb taught me back in the old days. This is the way you do MCI, this is the way you do it, get it done. Guys like Captain Stern and Jeff Armstrong. All these guys, they did MCIs, not the playing and fucking around on the radio,

talking about I've got this and that, because you know what? You got thousands of people coming.

By now I'm watching people jump out of windows. It's not like when I saw them jump six, seven or eight out of the Shomberg Plaza up in Harlem. They were jumping now one, two, three, four, smashing like fucking eggs on the ground. People were getting hit by bodies falling.

These guys were talking about write down names. I was like, you're fucking out of your mind.

(Interruption.)

A. Again, the system was starting to get running. I remember Duane Walker. Duane Walker is one of the division supply guys. He came and brought extra tanks of O2, starting unloading those in the sector. I remember asking somebody to try to tape off areas over here in front of the Millennium, because you had the lobby, you had the lobby was here in the corner, and I was telling the walking wounded to go that way.

We had people with all kinds of injuries. A lot of the primary injuries that we were getting originally was nothing but

hysterical patients, a lot of hysterical. I remember one guy across the street went into a grand mal seizure and stuff like that, and they pulled me over there. This guy is down and I looked. I said, "He's having a seizure. Just stay around him and make sure he doesn't get hurt. Bye."

We were starting to get people moving. Again, we were using AMR. They had like three or four buses there, if I'm correct. I know about two of them before the collapse happened I was able to get out, load them up and get them out of here.

Now, something that really fucks with me a lot is Lillo. Lillo came up to me and said, "Lieutenant, my wife is in the building." I'm like, "Oh, what are you saying? What are you saying?" I don't even know his wife. I knew his other wife that worked the same job, but I don't know his new lady. "Okay, do me a favor. Help me out here and if I see her I'll direct you to her."

We were just working along. People were pulling my coat, "This one is more serious.

I've got to go." Tag them. We get a bus, we throw them in.

I remember one guy was laying down. He had an open chest wound about the size of my fist in his right chest. I kept on looking. I knew what was coming. I knew he was going to go downhill. He had that look in his eye like -- he wasn't even talking. He was going into shock.

All of a sudden you heard the rumble and people yelling and screaming. You look and you see -- I didn't see the top of the building. I didn't see the top of tower two. The collapse started. You felt like the ground -- it was like a deep sound, rumble; like you're laying on the platform and the D train is coming. You look and you see what -- I best describe it as a wave coming.

I started running in my direction. I started running into the hotel. Something knocked me. I don't know whether it was --

Q. The Millennium?

A. We were in front of the Millennium. I'm talking going in through the lobby.

Q. Okay.

A. Something knocked me down. I don't know if something hit my helmet or whether it was a force. I got down, and I thought I've got to get up. By the time I got up, it was like [sound] I'm overcome by black and I'm running in the building in this black, and I'm running and I'm running and I'm running.

The next thing I know, I see a little light, and I follow that light. I run in there, and I find I'm in an office, and I close the door. I close the door and then I start walking, and I'm panicked, I'm panicked. I lost it. I lost it for a few minutes in here.

In this room there's nothing but computers, maybe five, six computers, and phones. As I'm in there, this force is still coming through the cracks of the door. I see some coats and I saw a water fountain. So I wet them, and I wet them and I stuff them under. I'm like walking back and forth, "I'm a medic. I'm a medic. I'm not a fucking firefighter. What do you do? What do you do? What do you do?"

I went to one of the computers for a minute. I thought I'd go on AOL or something and

call for help. I was like, "What the hell am I doing?" I was in a dead end. There was no way out of that office. I'm now going, "What the fuck did you do? You idiot. You ran out. There's no way out. You're going to die in here." It was getting real difficult for me to breathe in there, the dust, and there was no air transmitting across.

There was a bunch of debris. I tried to get out. I said, "I've got to get out of here." I've got one of those little super lights from Gauls magazine. Better than a mag light. It's pretty bright. It wasn't bright enough.

Could you excuse me a minute?

MR. ECCLESTON: We'll stop the tape at 12:47.

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: We're continuing this interview at 12:49.

A. I was in this office or whatever it was. I went ahead -- I opened up the door, and some of it -- the noise had settled. However, you heard distant sounds. I said let me try to get out of here. I opened up. It's pitch-,

pitch-, pitch-black. The only light was inside the door.

I grabbed this mag light, and I said maybe if I could make it out through this corridor or whatever I walk through I'll hit some light and I'll get the hell out of here. I've got this light and I'm feeling myself through the wall. With the flashlight you could only see probably less than a foot.

I'm feeling. All of a sudden I am walking and walking and I find myself inside an elevator. That's when I realized this is the wrong thing to do, because it could be the elevator is not here and I'm going to end up falling down the shaft.

So I tried to get back. It took me a while to find myself back. By now I'm really gagging for air. I get back in, and I close back that door. When I got in there, now it's a different feeling. It's a feeling of this is it, I bought the bullet, I'm going to die. I have to honestly say, all of a sudden from the panic that I was at it was just like a warmth. What do you do?

Actually what I did, I picked up the phone, and I got a dial tone. I called my wife. She doesn't really work too far. I called her, and I'm thinking -- if she answers the phone hysterical. I got the secretary or somebody in the office, and she was on the phone. She said, "I saw it." Her office is up at 250 Church. They viewed the whole thing. She knows I work this area and the whole nine yards.

I'm said, [redacted] You could hear her yelling on the other side of the phone with people from 911.

I'm said, [redacted]

[redacted]

I don't know how much time goes by between those periods, but there still wasn't the second collapse. I come out. I push out some of the rubble and stuff like that. I started seeing a little light, which turned out to be the lobby. I came out in the lobby, and it's destroyed. I couldn't go out the way I came in through the lobby. I came out through the side door on Fulton Street. I'm covered in soot.

I come out. It was terrible when I got there and we set up all of this and how I drove there. There were people on the ground. There was debris morbidly all over.

I was devastated. I was like relieved that I got out of that building, but I was like look at this. The radio was basically quiet then. If you heard anything, it was point-to-point communications. You heard some maydays and you hear people yelling for help, 13.

I'm like walking like the (inaudible), and I met up with this kid Ramos. And we hugged

and we kissed. I told him, "What we can't do alone we can do together. We'll get the fuck out of here."

He goes (inaudible). I said, "Ramos?" He said, "What?" I said, "I left my wallet and my refund check in the fucking vehicle. I don't think Uncle Sam is going to give me another refund check."

Q. At this point was your vehicle lost?

A. Basically all we to do is go around the building, came around. But it took longer than usual because you're walking in like this shit. Like you move and it's this soot like heavy dust.

While we're walking I realize that we only have two people. I see my vehicle. The seats are covered. I've still got my bag. I hold it like a trophy. Like people collect basketballs. I haven't touched -- whatever the force was, it was so strong that it went inside of the bag.

But we were there. Vehicle 219 was destroyed.

Q. Was it on fire?

A. What?

Q. Was it on fire?

A. Fire? We saw the sucker blow up. We heard "Boom!" We were walking up Fulton Street. I don't know how far we made it up when someone says, "The building's coming down." By the time I realized, it's a repeat.

We were running, and I looked back and it seems like the sides of the street were getting narrower. The sound got louder and the wave. I remember we separated one time and Ramos wanted to go down into the train station. I said, "No fucking way. We're out here. Without ventilation, we're definitely dead." I said, "If I'm going to die, I'm going to die with a fighting chance."

We held hands, and we were running. The next thing we know, [sound]. When it covers you, it's silent. Ramos was just a little slightly like (inaudible). I couldn't see him. I tell him -- I always have a handkerchief; it's an old Spanish thing. I had my handkerchief, and I wrapped it around. I told Ramos the same thing. I said, "Wrap something around your mouth. Keep the soot and stuff out and just

breathe shallow. Just take enough oxygen, because you don't want to breathe all this dust."

If anything that was comical, the human body -- or maybe I'm just a fucking nut. Things that happened, because we're walking and Ramos says, "Lieutenant." I'm like, "What the fuck you want?" You could hear each other and that's it. He said, "I lost my radio." We're dying. We're going to die. This guy is telling me he lost his fucking radio. I said, "Remind me if we make it through this, and I'll fucking write you up."

The next thing you hear (knock), my helmet hits -- I still don't know what it is. I'm assuming it was a lamppost or something. That's when I told Ramos this is not going to work, we're not going to make it. We decided we were holding on together. We held together, baby.

We moved over to the right, and we felt along through the buildings. Along through the building, all the businesses must have been locked up after the first impact, because all the businesses were closed. We're walking and walking.

I happened to catch a little light. There was a glass in a cleaner. I'm banging, "Open the fuck up or I'm kicking this shit in." Nobody wanted it kicked in because all that shit will come in. They opened up. We ran in. We came in there -- what turned out to be a Subway store.

There were a bunch of people in there. I was happy to see them; they were happy to see us. I have to honestly say that thank God for those people and the situation I thought of, because they were looking at us because we were in uniform. "Us" is me and Ramos. Ramos is looking at me because I'm the lieutenant. So that took away the panic from me, and reliving this it's, okay, I'm Lieutenant Davila, I've got to be a leader.

So I remember -- I go and I yell out, "Who's the boss?" An oriental guy raises his hand. I said, "Well, by order of the City of New York, I'm the boss now. Go in your register, get your money, put it in your pocket." Then I told everybody step back, and I told anybody who tried to open up the door I was going to kick their

ass. I got everybody to the back of the store.

I remember I told the man -- there was two guys that were willing to help. I said, "Just get some stuff, stuff it under the door and try to keep as much debris, or whatever, coming in."

I didn't know what was going on. I know the first building fell and there was shit all over, and I know the second one fell and we were closer to it. I have to honestly say after the first plane hit, I thought there was a chance of me dying. After that first collapse and I was in that building, I thought I was dead. I made it through that and I'm like, oh, fuck.

I tell you, the feelings, again, that I've had, you know what, false pride is unbelievable, things that we have to go through,

[redacted]

This is what I'm thinking about. But I was thinking of myself as a corpse already. Lieutenant Davila died in the line of duty.

I kept these people in the back. They're all hysterical. I'm like, "Shut up. Stop it. You can't control this. Let's try to make it together. Save the oxygen." I was telling them, "Nobody move without me knowing where you're going."

You know what was the funniest thing? I ended up taking off my turnout coat. I took it and I threw it over the counter. The Chinese guy came and took my turnout coat and pulled it on the floor. I'm like, "What the fuck you doing?" He said, "Food, food." I'm like, "Fucking food, there's soot all over this shit." Now I'm mad. I took my fucking thing and I put it back over it. "Fuck you, you jerk."

[redacted]. I made him open up the refrigerator, get bottles of water, give it to the people to drink.

We were in there for a while. The time period that we were in there I really don't know. I would probably say maybe 20 minutes or so like

that. Then all of a sudden we start seeing the lights start flickering.

So what I did was I told them to open up the door and I came out. I came out just to look and see what's going on there. I started seeing some people up in the corner. It was much clearer. I guess that's where the avenue opened up, West Broadway, where it was opening up. I think Chase Manhattan Bank is over here.

So what I did was I came back in there. I saw a couple ambulances and stuff. I asked the Oriental guy, "Do you have any towels?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Everybody grab a towel. Wrap it around your face." I had everybody holding hands. I had about 18, 20 people in there. I had everybody hold hands, and I just had them go out the side of the building and just head east.

We came up here, and it was me and Ramos. We came out to sunlight, I saw Bruce Medjuck there. I think I saw Pat Scaringello. Then we started hearing the radio: "Stage in Battery Park or Chambers and West." It would be just sounds and it was horrible. It sounded horrible. I really thought that we had -- EMS

would have a lot more casualties than what it was, because I didn't see them. The thought was devastating.

Then, I forgot, Amy Monroe showed up at the staging area [redacted] Bill Melarango. These people need to be commended. We came in and had to be there. Bill was a station boss. She was out on leave of absence. Then she shows up in a crisp white uniform.

When I got up there, my concern was for Bill, Amy and Alex. [redacted] But me and Ramos went nuts going looking for them. Walking back over there, we found Alex. He's okay. We never found Amy. We never found Bill. We went back there looking for them and looking for them and couldn't find them. We thought maybe we lost them.

So again it was me and Ramos. You know, I go to the right guy. I said, well, okay, we've got to regroup. I hear this going on -- and we begin walking. We walked down to Beekman.

Beekman was set up pretty nicely. We waited for patients and stuff like that. There were a couple of patients, but not what they were preparing for. That was really like -- I started thinking, we ain't getting the numbers.

The force of this was so great that there was debris and soot all the way down past South Street.

So I had to do something. We're there. I called it war then. It's really war now. I said, like, okay, I've got to deal with this. What will you do? What am I going to do? I started meeting a couple of people straggling out, some of St. Vincent's units. I'm going, okay, I'm the only one here with any authority.

So they were helping out at the hospital, and I told them to continue. I asked them what they were doing. They just brought a couple patients there. Then one or two of them, their partners were missing, so they were just cross-eyed. I got them in the room, calmed them down, take it easy.

I found this guy Duane Walker, the equipment guy, here. Basically I'm like, "Come

on, fellows." I got Lawrence from communications. I don't know how he ended up getting them. He ended up there with civilian clothes and a shield. I said, "You're going to stay with us too."

Q. Do you know what his last name is?

A. No. I know he's an EMT for -- he works for communications. (Inaudible). He was there.

Ashby, you know about Ashby; right?

Q. Yes.

A. I found out that there was -- I forgot the name of the place now. I go there all the time. But right down Fulton Street -- okay, this is further down. Down by Beekman, down by Fulton and Pearl there's a nursing facility, and they work in conjunction with New York Downtown. I heard they were starting a triage and the treatment center over there.

I took a walk down there to see how they were doing. I spoke to one of the doctors over there. Basically what the doctor at that time told me was that they needed some saline and tubing for eye washing stuff.

So I walked back to hospital 01. I

wasn't going to bring that equipment back over there, because I knew I had to get back to an EMS command. I had to make a decision, I was going to the Battery or I'm going to West and Chambers. So I told them and I got the Cabrini people to go ahead and bring them their supplies. I did that.

Finally I was trying to decide which way I'm going to go, and my decision was I'm going to West and Chambers. My real reason for going to West and Chambers is because I knew my wife was on Church, and in walking I had to go by there, it's just a block by. I actually went by and said I'm here, I'm alive.

Then I left and headed to the command post at West and Chambers. Everything down there was pretty calm. Actually it took a little while to get to West and Chambers and stuff like that still. You're meeting up with people. I found out they had a little staging area already. That's where I met up with Captain Parra.

MR. ECCLESTON: Rene Davila on October 12th, 2001, continuation on side two.

A. Actually prior to meeting up with Parra on Greenwich, after we started crossing Church

the other way, I ended up meeting academy personnel. I met up with a bunch of people from the academy. Captain Gio Pineda was there with a couple other people.

I guess I must have been rowdy because they came both to me and Ramos and looked at us and said, "Come on, get in the bus, I'm not going on no bus. I've got to go work and everything else."

Then the news media started. They found out that I was there, that I was in the Marriott and the first boss there. And Travis was there. Not the captain, the lieutenant.

Q. Barry Travis?

A. Yeah. And Maggiure -- the news media -- that's okay -- I walked away from them. That's when everyone went by and I saw Fern and I started heading towards West and Chambers and [redacted]

[redacted]

I made it back to West and Chambers. That was a good sight. It was a good sight to see all the firefighters and all the firemen and seeing buses from like counties I never heard of. It must have been a couple hours already that passed by.

Then I made it to Stuyvesant School. Again, I'm not -- me and Ramos stuck together. I went there and I said I'm not staying and sitting in an auditorium. Then I was looking for

something to do. I know I was part of it and I wanted to do more. I saw the itch in these poor kids that got there, and they wanted to do something. They were keeping them locked in -- you know why they should have had them standing outside. They were dying.

I remember I made it back out to the street and stuff again, and Chief McCracken came up to me. Chief McCracken saw me, and he said, "I thought you were dead. It's good to see you." That was it. We talked. We did it facing everybody hanging out there. That's all there was.

I'm still looking for Amy and Bill. I finally started -- somebody told me that Amy was at the hospital. I'll tell you a story about that. I don't care how unofficial that is, I (inaudible) on that one. Somebody saw Bill, so I felt a lot better.

Everybody took to their high horse and shit. I have to say that when I got to the command, I see Kowalczyk and everybody looked like they're gummy bears, full of dust, and he was in his crisp white shirt. [redacted]

[redacted]

Then I saw Stone coming in, and he said, "Rene, what are you doing? I want clipboards and paper pads." I'm like, "You're fucking serious? You want clipboards? I'll get you fucking clipboards. I went to Stuyvesant High School. I'm Puerto Rican. I'm pretty good at something."

I found my way to an office, and I start opening drawers. The secretary's always got a stash. We open drawers and find a bunch of pads. I got him a pad, I got him a fucking pencil sharpener, I got him a fucking ruler, I got him clipboards, I got him everything out of there and said, "Here, mother fucker."

I think McCracken just noticed that I was fucking wild. He ordered me, "I want you to sit down. You're upset." "No." "That's it. Sit down."

That was it. That was basically where I ended up, me and Ramos. Then all of a sudden Ramos kind of collapsed on me, so I got a bus for Ramos. We were married then. He was going to

hospital 01. I'm going to hospital 01 with him. I don't know about what time. I guess it was about 8:30, 9:00 at night.

We get him on a stretcher and into hospital 01. The nurses saw me there, and they grabbed me. I kind of buckled at the knees. They treated me like (inaudible). I still couldn't stand still. I was like, "Get this shit off me."

That's basically my part. That's how my day went. I finally got out of here probably around midnight or so, and I was back up at 4:30 in the morning. I was back here at 6:00 again. [redacted]

That's it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add? Any other feelings or anything?

A [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

On the EMS side of this, that I'm aware of, there's only two fatalities. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

I saw people die. I saw people jump out of windows, more than I've ever seen in my

life. Let me tell you something else. I'm 51 fucking years old. I've seen just about fucking everything and I've done a lot more. And you think about it. We have been able to keep ourselves intact.

[redacted]

[redacted]I'm glad to see my bosses there. I'm glad to have seen McCracken there. I thank them. And Gombo, who I heard almost died in this.

I'm glad to see these guys. I was glad to hear Goldfarb on the radio, Mr. MCI. It was like, okay, here we go. [redacted]

Q. You've got a lot to be proud of.

A. EMS didn't do things that bad.

[redacted]

Let me shut up. Thank you.

Q. Thank you today for conducting this interview with us.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 128 hours. The counter on the cassette player is 892 /-FPLT

File No. 9110076

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CAPTAIN MARK STONE

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time now is 850 hours. I'm at Battalion 8. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name rank, title and assignment.

A. Mark Stone, Captain, Commanding Officer, EMS, Battalion 8. Day of incident, unit DC 01.

Q. Also present at this interview is --

A. Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Captain Stone, I would like you to tell us about the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

A. Well, just before the incident was transmitted, we were preparing to move the station into our new trailers, because they were going to destroy our old station. We were at the trailers when the MERV operator, who was with me, informed me of the incident. He said that a plane hit the World Trade Center.

Q. Can you just tell me the MERV's operator's name?

A. That was Rick Perez. So I was with a member

of executive administration, Mr. Dave Harney, and all of my equipment would have been located at Division 1 down on pier 36. I asked Dave if he could give me a ride down there. His vehicle doesn't have any lights or sirens, it's a regular sedan, so we jumped in the car and we took off. We were heading down the FDR Drive and listening to it and it seemed pretty chaotic already, the Lieutenant giving his first report, that he wasn't even on the scene, that he saw heavy smoke from the Trade Center.

At one point the Trade Center became visible to me. My first thought was oh, my god, a plane really hit the World Trade Center. I used my cellphone and I called RCC to make sure I was logged onto show me a route to the Trade Center. I called the Division to have my aide for the day-to-day, Gregg Brady, get the truck ready, make sure he had all my equipment so that we were set to go when I got there.

It was interesting later on I don't even know why. I ran upstairs and I grabbed extra cell phone batteries, which I never do. It was pretty interesting. We got in the truck, listening to reports coming in on Citywide and we ended up taking the Battery Park Tunnel underneath to come up on the West

Street side of the incident. We came up right out of the tunnel. I was looking up to see if I could do a little more initial size up. That is when I saw the second plane hit the building. I just watched it coming in.

I see that the plane hit and I'm really thinking for the safety of the members that we got operating already, Lieutenant D'Avila did a great job. He notified everybody it was a hard hat operation and he started setting up the incident command system for this event, which later on just had to be reworked many times.

Everything was completely grid locked at the mouth of the Battery Tunnel, so I had to get out of the truck at that point. I told my aide when you free it up, park the vehicle and meet me at the command post. I actually walked up from the Battery Tunnel and when I'm walking up, I'm trying to watch what's going on, get a good picture of the area.

Some people, instead of walking along buildings, were in the middle of the street. I directed them to the side. The cops were doing a good job. It was pretty good evacuation going on at that moment. Orderly, there weren't many people who were

hysterical. No patients were presenting themselves south, so things were really moving along.

I got up to the front of the building and took a better look. I heard Lieutenant D'Avila was on the opposite side.

Q. Which building was that?

A. I was approaching number 1 World Trade Center, because that's where I knew he was, on the other side towards Vesey from listening to the radio. I was approaching number 1 World Trade Center, because I was going go into the lobby of the building where the command post was being set up.

I knew there were other officers coming in and there were many senior officers coming in. I wanted to see what I was going to be confronted with before I predetermined in my mind that I would be taking command of the incident.

I'm looking along the buildings and naturally glass and debris is flying from the building, but it was really clear that if you walked along the side of the building, you were fine getting in. There weren't -- naturally everything is a safety issue at that point, but it was really clear going in. If you stayed along the side of the building, you would be okay,

because everything was falling out more into the street.

I made it into the lobby at the command post and Chief Gombo was just arrived as well. We met together really quick and we determined that we would need a few ambulance crews inside and we would start setting up a triage area in the lobby of the building. He asked me to identify a place really quick. There was an area that was set off that wasn't being handled by the command post. It was really at the time we thought a safe location. Who was to know what would happen later.

We went back out and, myself and my aide, Gregg Brady, we identified three crews, two BLS and an ALS crew. I remember specifically that I took 9 Charlie, 7 Nora and 11 x-ray. Thank god that all those guys made it out alive.

Q. Do you remember who the personnel on those units were?

A. I remember that 9 Charlie or 7 Nora. They are both St. Claire's units and 11 x-ray is a Lenox Hill unit. I made sure everybody had helmets because I wouldn't take anybody without one. They did said they did. I know from working with these guys in the field

that they are all working crews, that I took some good crews with us.

I went back into the lobby of the building and my aide was behind me and he came up to me and he said Cap, they are concerned about coming into the building. I told him, I said, at this point, you know, orders only go so far. I told him go back. If they don't want to come into the building, if they have any hesitation, go get me three crews that will come into the building. It's sort of fruitless to start ordering people at that point.

We just find the volunteers that we can and it turns out they all came in. We had the crews and then in speaking to Chief Gombo, I don't know how he came up with it, but he said go scout out 7 World Trade Center for me over by OEM. They want to set up a triage over there.

Rather than go back out through the buildings, which I knew what we were facing safety wise, we went through the complex and we came out on Vesey Street right opposite 7 World Trade Center. We made it into the lobby. There was no problem at that point. We found out that 7 World Trade Center houses OEM and Secret Service and a bunch of other agencies,

but they were all evacuated at that point.

They shut down the command center and they were evacuating OEM. Everybody felt it was pretty safe to be in the lobby of the building. At that time I met Chief Peruggia, Captain Abdo Nahmod, and Richard Zarrillo, who is the special events coordinator for Chief Peruggia. I spoke with Chief Peruggia real quick and I left the crews with him and he told me to go report back to Chief Gombo.

The interesting thing to that is when I talked to John later on, a couple days later, if I would have stayed one second later and talked to him another second, I would have been in the lobby when the building collapsed. Or if I would have left him a second earlier, I would have been standing next to Chief Ganci when the building collapsed. There is a whole bunch of fate going on here.

I went back through the lobby of the building and we were met with a Secret Service agent who was just physically exhausted from running up the buildings. I told him now is not the time to be exhausted because he thought that he was going to be a patient. I told him if you can evacuate yourself, evacuate yourself. Everybody was out of the building.

I made sure there was nobody from EMS still in the lobby because we were moving our entire operation. I was the last one out of 1 World Trade Center.

I made it about halfway across West Street and I was just stepping into the street off the center median when I heard what is going to be instilled in my memory forever; a sound that combines a railroad car, an airplane, a fighter jet and thunder. I looked up and I saw the World Trade Center falling down. Number 1 World Trade Center was coming down. Number 2, I couldn't even really be sure at that point. One of the buildings was falling on my head. I said oh, my god. You really only had a split second to make a decision. I could have ran left, I could have ran right, which would have been north or south on West Street, but I looked right in front of me and I was looking at the command post where I saw all the senior Chiefs. I saw Chief Kowalczyk. I saw Chief Gombo and there was, in the American Express building, in the World Financial Center, there was actually an underground garage and I don't know why I chose that garage, but I chose to run straight ahead for the garage. I must have made it in -- I don't know whether I was in 10, 20, 30, 50, 100 feet. I know I wasn't in far, but all of a sudden just

a woosh and a thrush, just, I started getting hit by debris. I got picked up and started being thrown. We were tripping over each other; firemen, Chiefs, Captains, Lieutenants, EMTs. I don't know if there were any EMTs, I should not say that.

We just got thrown, and everything went black and it was almost silent. Right at that moment I saw my two kids. I saw my father who passed away. I was actually in the air flying along and it was only, I guess, maybe a second, and I said to myself my god, that's it, it's over, because it was black and it was silent.

Then I hit the ground. Then stuff was just piling on top of me. As soon as I hit, I fell on my shoulder. I got an excruciating pain. So I said to myself -- this is all within a second this is going on through my mind. I said to myself, I said, you are not dead because there is no pain in heaven. I feel this excruciating pain running down my arm. Now I'm getting hit in the back of my head and everything and thank god I had my helmet on.

Another interesting thing was that I wore my turnout coat that day. I don't wear my turnout coat too often. Forever I will wear my turnout coat every

day. I wore my turnout coat, so everything was just hitting me in the back. I said all right I'm not dead, because I'm not in heaven. Then I said wait a second. Maybe I'm in hell. Right at that moment I just decided there's no way I'm staying in hell. I don't belong here. I just stayed down for a another few seconds. I know that was a conscious decision I made just to stay down and try and let things subside a little bit.

It was still pitch black. Dust was flying. I couldn't breathe at that point. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't hear anybody else around me, so I'm just assuming that there really is nobody else around me, that, you know, the worst has come. I didn't want to come to that realization yet. While I'm thinking it, I didn't want to believe it.

I waited another few seconds and then I -- it was sort of like it subsided a little bit, because I didn't hear any more rumble, but it was still quiet. I managed to get up, clean some stuff off me and start figuring that I had to search my way out of here. I think of a few things really quick. Back to years and years and years ago when I went to basic fire training in Suffolk County Fire Academy, I said you know what I got to do. The first thing I got to do is I got to

breathe, otherwise I will be dead in no time. So I actually took my head and I took my turnout coat and I disengaged. I pulled the snaps off and I disengaged my liner and everybody always made fun of me because I always left my full liner in the coat even in the summer. I disengaged the liner and I actually used that to shield me to breathe. Probably one of the two things that saved my life.

The other was after we started going I remembered that coming from SOD, you always had Nomex hoods, because when we suited up we had to wear hoods. I said, well, I got my hood in my pocket. I pulled my hood out and I used that also. So I had at that point, which was a double filter, to allow me to breathe. So it had to be like -- I'm estimating, probably another 10 minutes, that I couldn't find anybody. I was just -- I guess sort of just wandering around in there, just trying to find my way out.

Then I saw a light and it was a fireman. He was calling out to people. I said yes, I'm over here. Now it's just the two of us. We started moving down. We made a pact that we were both getting out of there alive. I don't know who this guy was. I believe that he saved my life, because without that light, without

the two of us reassuring each other, I'm not quite sure I would have made it out of there. I would love to know who he was. The two of us together, we said we stay together no matter what happens.

Another few minutes later we found another firefighter, another firefighter. Nobody was injured. My shoulder wasn't really a concern at that point. I had sprained my knee, I had hurt my shoulder, but that wasn't like a concern. We found a few more guys. I don't know how long it was. It was a while, but everything was still pitch black. Nobody could breathe down there. A few firefighters had masks. They were passing them off to help some people out. Some firemen didn't have masks. There was a real spirit of -- this was at the time like 5 or 6 guys, that we were just fighting for our lives.

I don't know, it could have been two minutes, it could have been two hours. It could have been 20 minutes. Best guess that I can imagine was like 20 minutes. We searched our way and we had an orderly search that we all just held on to each other and we found a wall and we essentially just searched our way out of the building.

These guys, everybody just sort of fell back

to training that they had learned over the years and you know, that's how we searched our way out of there. We found a stairwell and then we found a whole bunch of more firefighters. I guess it was about 20 of us then.

Q. The stairwell, was this lit and everything?

A. Yes, actually that was the only thing that was lit, which was pretty strange. I imagine from the emergency lighting. So we walked up and the door -- I think they said it had to be forced. I wasn't sure, because we were in the stairwell for a minute. We were talking to each other and we said, you all right, you all right, you all right.

We made it out of the stairwell. It led us right out, I want to say that we were -- we actually came out the back of the Financial Center, because I was looking at the Hudson at that point. That's where we walked, just right to the water, which wasn't far.

At that point I said out loud, I said, okay, let me get my thoughts together. We got to go back to work. One of the firemen looked at me and he said are you stupid. I said yes. In this case I must be. I remembered clearly at that point -- I mean some people were jumping on boats at that point, because there were boats lined up along the Hudson. People were just

jumping on boats and I thought of doing that at a point.

But I remember specifically that I remembered Chief Kowalczyk, that I left -- that he was the last person that I really physically saw. I ended up making my way back to Vesey Street. I was actually over at West End Avenue. Is that West End?

Q. North End?

A. North End, right. I was at North End Avenue and Vesey Street, where I met with Chief Goldfarb. At that point we didn't know really what the outcome of this whole thing was going to be, but we decided real quick that we needed to put together a plan because there is still a monumental incident ahead of us. I was just trying to keep my composure at that point, because I still had a job to do. Being a Captain, there are still many people that are under me who are going to look to me for guidance and support. There is also Chiefs that really need me to function.

So I took a few seconds, I took a few deep breaths and I told Chief Goldfarb that I remember leaving Chief Kowalczyk and I need to go back and find him, because we still haven't seen him. Again the time frame wasn't much after the building collapsed. Still

I don't even remember which one collapsed first. I'm sort of, I guess to this point, one and two was immaterial. It was one of the towers. I believe it was two that came down first, because right after that, I told Chief Goldfarb, I am going back to find Chief Kowalczyk. I know where I left him. I know where he should have been, because we still haven't seen him. We haven't heard from him.

At that point my aide, who I'm thinking all along, because he was behind me, collapsed and I didn't know. I just assumed that he was dead. That -- you know, now I am by myself. He popped up and then there was a quick moment of embrace, hugging and again praying to god at that point. Like someone said, there were no atheists down at Ground Zero.

I said okay. Now we are going to go find Chief Kowalczyk. We went back around and I was standing in the corner of West Street and Vesey Street where I met Chief Basile, Chief Cassano, Chief Hayden, Chief Pfeifer, Chief Pfeifer from the first, Chief Hayden, Fire Division 1 commander, Chief Basile, EMS Division 2 commander. Chief Cassano at the time was the Citywide Tour Commander. We were briefly speaking for a second.

We were standing in the corner of West Street and Vesey Street, and I heard that rumble again, that roar, that thunder, and I said dear god, I almost died once. God can't be letting this happen to me again. I looked up. This is how I know 2 fell first. I looked up and it was happening again. 1 World Trade Center was falling on my head now.

I said holy cow, this really can't be happening. Again you have that decision, do I run north on West Street or do I run to the water. I said screw this, I'm just -- I'm going for a swim in the Hudson. That's where I'm going to run. It hit this time, but the difference was when it hit was because we were outside, it was just a deep dark gray rather than pitch black. Things were hitting us, but it was more dust, just more of the construction dust at this point.

I was still running but I couldn't see and we were tripping and while we were running, I thought I lost Chief Basile this time because we were running side by side. I later found out that he actually ducked into a doorway, but I just kept running until I hit North End Avenue again and then all I did was I just took a sharp right and it all just sort of just

passed me. I was standing there almost in the clear. Everything was much thinner, the dust and you could breathe over there.

We were sort of safe at that point. That's when Chief Kowalczyk emerged. He had come around from the other side. Chief Gombo was there. Chief Basile was there. We found out that he ducked into the doorway. We were all sort of reassembling then. We were going to start moving up to Stuyvesant High School, and I said to him, I said I don't think that's far enough north for us. I said we really need to move this thing north.

We all just kicked around where we were going to go. I said why don't we just go up to the piers. It's wide open, and Chief Gombo agreed that that would be a good plan, that we could start reassembling up there and try to figure out who was dead or alive, because we knew there were going to be numerous deaths at that point.

You are running into so many people during the time through the whole thing. I mean I can't even really remember how many people I saw. At that point we started -- the MERV was over at North End Avenue and Vesey. I don't even remember the building number. I

think it was a hotel actually. We started putting together a triage area over there and we ended up moving it. MERV relocated.

I walked up towards Murray Street and then I walked up to the West Side Highway and I just turned around and looked back at the Trade Center and I said oh, my god, because I'm sure that everybody has heard a million times, whoever in their right mind would have thought that the World Trade Center would ever fall down.

I was at the first one, the first incident in '93. I think we were all lulled into really a false sense of security that they couldn't take it down with a bomb, that this would never happen. A lot of emotion hit me at that point. I saw Rabbi Birnhack at that point. He said a prayer for me.

I started walking north on West Street. I didn't know how far I was going to go, but I was -- I just didn't know what I was going to do at that point. I didn't know what my thoughts were. I was just sort of in a daze. Two 110 story buildings fell on my head so to speak. I was trapped before. I don't like using the word trapped because the fallen firefighters, police officers, they are trapped, and they are dead.

That's not a good word. I was just entangled for a little while. Then I was able to thank god extricate myself from, you know. I mean I lost a lot of friends, a lot of people I worked with over the years, coming from SOD. I worked with a lot of guys in specialty units. Being in Manhattan I worked with a lot of guys. The names of -- you work with all the Battalion Chiefs and all the first line Battalion Chiefs who got killed. Terry Hatton, from Rescue 1 who I know for many years, he got killed. There were many other guys, Dennis Mojica, all the rest from Rescue 1 who we deal with on a regular basis, because being a Captain, a lot of first line supervisors deal with Engine companies, but I knew these guys. I know a lot of these guys. Couple of guys I grew up with.

One happens to be a police officer, Joe Viggiano, who was in truck 2. His brother John Viggiano was a Firefighter in Ladder 132. They are both still missing. Just a tremendous amount of people that I would find out about later. [redacted]).

[redacted]

I was with my aide Gregg. We were just

walking north. He says what are we going to do. I said I don't know, just give me a few minutes. I got to get a few minutes. I just got to put this together in my head.

Then I met with Chief Hirth, who is Division 1 commander and Grace Cacciola, Lieutenant in the Division, were in the Academy or so I thought, in refresher. Right at that moment they appeared. I just grabbed Grace and I hugged him. We both cried. I didn't know they were there, they thought I was dead. Because just my personality and where I have been in SOD, they assumed that I was in the building. The only reason I got out was God has determined that it's not my time yet.

We just held onto each other for a few minutes. Then we said okay. What are we going to do. It was time to head up to the piers. We started regrouping. We head up to the piers and they started putting things together. At that point I was pretty well limping because my knee was hurting me and my shoulder. I was still in a lot of pain. So Chief Hirth actually ended up driving me in a command car. We had a command car. He drove me over to Bellevue Hospital where I was evaluated. We found out nothing

was broken. It was some just sprains and stuff. They took a chest x-ray because I must have eaten 50 or a hundred pounds of construction dust, asbestos, and everything else that was in the air that day.

They said -- Bellevue signed me off from work. I said that's great, but there is still a monumental job to do. I mean we weren't even close to getting a hand on anything at that point. So I took a few minutes. I washed my face. I cleaned myself up. I put my turnout coat and helmet on. Back to the Trade Center I went.

That was pretty much the morning. I was there probably until 4:30, quarter to 5 the next morning, at which time I was released. That's the morning of September 11. Ironically, that's my sister's birthday. She is a police officer. She was off that day, thank God. Her birthday is never going to be the same, which is just -- we are two years and 51 weeks apart. My birthday is a week later and it was a big thing.

I got home that morning and after I got on to West Street, early, before we walked down to Chelsea and I went to the hospital, a few interesting things happened. Everything happens for a reason, fate. My

wife, who is a Lieutenant on our job, she is EMS Lieutenant, she knew that I was there. Right after the first building collapsed, I picked up my cell phone along with that 450 trillion other people and nobody could get any cell sites and I said I got to try at least to let her know that I'm okay, because I'm sure she was going to be panicking.

My cell phone went through the first time. It happened again the second time and I called her and I said I'm okay the second time. My son was playing and I said don't bother him. We walked up to West Street, right after I saw Grace and I called my wife back and I said I need to talk to my son. He is just coming up on 3 years old. I said I need to talk to him and he is so innocent to the world and he just said, he said Daddy, what are you doing. I said to him, I said Daddy's at work now, but you know I love you. He said okay Daddy, I will see you later.

That was -- I have another son who is six months old, so I couldn't talk to him, but that's what got me through. That's what got me through. He still asks me every day, he says you know, is Daddy going to work. I says yes, Daddy is going to work. He says you coming home? And he knows. He knows that something

happened.

I'm not quite sure he knows what and I pray to God that he never ever has to know for many years. God is good all the time. God brought me home to my boys. We go on. There was a lot of other stuff, reactions of people, direction that was given. Just happened to find out that the three initial crews that I brought in made it out. People that were closer made it out.

I did see Carlos Lillo for a while. I remember he was looking for his wife. The last I saw him, he was still looking for her. He was outside somewhere. I don't remember exactly where I saw him, but I remember I talked to him because I happen to know him, because my wife worked with him at a station years ago. I pray for him and his family and Ricardo's family, all the other families. I pray for them every day.

It's just as a field commander, you play over the decisions you make every day. Did I make the right decision. I played it over a million times in my head and I said, I keep saying to myself I don't think given the same scenario tomorrow everything that I know in all my years of training, my command experience, what

would I have done differently. I can't come up with anything, I don't think.

Nobody in the world, nobody ever would ever have thought these buildings were coming down. That's what we do. We go to lobbies and do triage and upper floors and do forward triage. We just make decisions. I hope I made good decisions. I know that thank God, nobody who was under my command that day suffered any ill effects. I know because I researched that everybody went home okay at the end of the day. That was pretty important to me.

There's a lot of other things that go through my head, but that's pretty much the bulk of what went on that morning.

Q. Anything else you want to add, any final thoughts?

A. No, I just -- every day I just pray that this new war on terrorism -- I pray to God that our President, President Bush, gets us through this. Mayor Giuliani did a fantastic job, still does a fantastic job, I pray for our Commissioner, who is tired himself. I see him every day on TV. I have seen him a few times in person since then. He is a tired man, but he has given everything. There is nothing more that he

can give and I just pray that God gives him -- continues to give him the strength.

Chief Nigro, who is now our Chief of the Department. Chief Cassano, Chief of Operations, Chief McCracken, Chief of EMS, I just pray that they continue to have the strength to take us through these really tough times. That senior officials. I knew Chief Ganci. He knew me. Not so much on a personal level but more professional. That I pray for their families, Commissioner Feehan, Chief Feehan. Recently with them just a week before, at a dedication for the Central Synagogue that was burned down a few years ago. Chief Burns. All the Chiefs, I pray that God gives them strength to take us forward and that if there was anything that could have tipped us off that this was going to happen, we find it and that we learn from it. I don't see any mistakes. We just have the strength as leaders; myself, that we go forward.

Good leaders and good commanders and God gives us that strength. So we will get through this. I'm sure we will. I just hope that history looks kindly on us. A lot of people and I don't even really include myself, but a lot of people. I saw strong men have to cry that day. I see strong leaders who are the

rock of this organization who are the backbone of this organization, get tired.

I just -- I pray God gives them a little break, that they can take a breath and step back and just get a break. They all need it. They are tired. They give their all. I just hope they find some peace and rest.

I guess that's about it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. That concludes our interview with Captain Mark Stone. Thank you for your time. The time is now 926 hours.

File No. 9110077

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF ULYSSES GRANT

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 12th. The time is 1318 hours. I'm Mike Tambasco of the World Trade Center Task Force conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. We'll be conducting this interview with Chief Grant.

Chief, would you just be good enough to identify yourself and your command?

CHIEF GRANT: My name is Chief Ulysses Grant. I'm currently assigned to the Fire Department EMS Bureau, EMS Division 5.

MR. TAMBASCO: We're in the conference room of EMS Battalion 43.

Q. Chief, if you would just be good enough to give me your memory of the events.

A. To the best of my recollection, it started out to be a normal day for me and my aide. Basically we were at Staten Island. I was doing some administrative work. And I believe the young lady that works also there with us, Ms. Alice Suskowitz came in while I was in my office and said Chief, did you hear, a plane just went into a building at the World Trade Center.

I said what?

I'm in my office. I have a television. I turn it on. Sure enough, there was coverage of the World Trade Center being struck with an airplane. We were all watching.

My next thing was to a little more carefully monitor the citywide radio. I could hear a lot of radio transmissions over the air. I didn't necessarily associate it with a person, but I could hear there was a lot of talking going over the citywide radio.

A combination of listening to the radio and watching the events as they unfolded on television, I said you know what, I've got to make a decision here, it's either to go to the event or, knowing the magnitude of this type of event, maybe my resources might be needed at headquarters or something of that nature. I made the decision to go to the event.

Surprisingly we got there very quickly. I think probably what assisted that was the HOV lane on the BQE where you can jump right in and make better egress in getting there. The other thing that I remember was that at some points

along that HOV route there were police officers there, I guess in an effort to direct traffic for an event that had already taken place.

So we got there relatively quickly. I remember we got as far as we could and got out of the Battery Tunnel. I remember there was a large number of police officers right as we got to the end of the Battery Tunnel, waving us on, come on, come on. We got through the tunnel.

I remember we got to a point as close as we could, and there were other emergency vehicles responding. We got north to west. What I remember is all of a sudden there was someone like pushing us back saying go back, go back. I don't think that was in reference to either the towers falling at that point; however, reference to maybe some debris that was coming down over in that area.

So we pulled back as far as we could, and we got out and pulled on our turnout jackets, helmets, made sure we had radios, helmets, cell phones, whatever normally we would take to an MCI response.

I remember as I was walking up I

noticed Chief McCracken several feet ahead of me walking as well with his lieutenant. Lieutenant Cronin was also there.

Q. That was up West Street?

A. Walking up West. We were walking up. You know you could see what was going on and we were going in that direction. We got to a point where we saw several municipal ambulances there, Hazollah members were there and there were all sorts of voluntaries. I'm not quite sure which ones they were.

At that point Chief McCracken had given me some directions to start setting up a treatment center, because we knew the resources we had. And we were going over some of the safety issues like making sure people stay together, making sure what officers we have, taking on certain roles. As a matter of fact, Captain D'Amato was there also. He had been there a while.

Q. Chief, could I just interrupt and ask you whereabouts was that, where this took place?

A. One of the points that I remember was that Chief McCracken actually asked what street

we're on. At that point we looked and the street sign was indicating South End. The other street sign wasn't necessarily visible. However, I think, you know, just looking at surroundings and looking at this map, it was probably Liberty or in that vicinity, one block over.

Q. Great.

A. Chief McCracken was discussing about setting up this treatment sector. Basically we agreed to move it somewhat further back. I was walking with some of the Hazollah or the chief representative of Hazollah to explain to him that the people should stay together, let it be you that I communicate with as responsible for Hazollah, let it be Captain D'Amato for the municipal and voluntary resources and so forth. So we were in the process of doing that.

The next thing I remember is I saw people running in my direction, not even a full walk up but just people running. I said what the hell, what are they running from? I didn't have a clue there.

People talk about -- you know since the incident they talk about hearing this loud

thunderous sound. To the best of my knowledge, I don't remember hearing anything. However, I do remember seeing this loud, large cloud coming about like it was turning a corner and coming in my direction.

So I also turned and ran. What I remember seeing when I was running was a Hazollah truck. It was open. The back of the truck was open. Not that I had full conscious coherence of what was going on, but I said you know what, let me duck in here because there's stuff coming down from somewhere. Let me duck in here.

So I jumped in the back of the truck. There were other people there that jumped in the back of the vehicle with me. I remember it immediately filling up with stuff and you hear the tingling of the particles and whatever it was that was coming down, just filling it up, filling it up. At some point I couldn't even see in front of me.

I do remember someone kicking at the door trying to get the door of the vehicle open. There was a problem in opening it, but it eventually opened. There was someone in front of

me. I was feeling my way. And I latched onto their belt in the back. To be quite honest, I wasn't letting go because I couldn't see. I had no concept of what was going on. I just held onto that person.

He went forward; I was right behind him. Within a few -- I don't know, maybe 30 feet or whatever it might have been, we more or less fell into a building. It seems like we just fell into a building, rolled in. We all were covered with dust. I had no idea still what the hell was going on here.

I remember a young -- it looked like a young black woman. She looked like she was a secretary of some sort. A gentleman was at his desk working, like where did you people come from? We just stumbled in.

I remember being very confused, not knowing what happened and anyone that was around me, I no longer saw. So one of my first thoughts is where the heck is my aide? Where is she? She was here a few minutes ago. Where is she? And the people around me, where are they? What happened?

The dust settled somewhat. I started -- there was a Hazollah member there. He started brushing his clothes off and trying to get rid of some of the debris on his helmet and clothes. Then I remember saying wait a minute, we can't stay here. I don't see anybody I know. It's not a good idea, I don't think, to stay here. We've got to move on.

I wasn't sure if that was the right thing to do, but I decided to go out. And as I went out, I walked several feet and I remember now meeting an EMT who I now identify as an EMT that works for me out at Battalion 22, Rothmund. And he said Chief, I don't know, where are you going? I said we've got to go. We can't stay here. We've got to go. He said well, if you're going to go -- and he gave me a bottle of water and some paper towels. He said wet these down and cover your mouth if you're going to go.

I traveled a little further, wandered up into this deli. I remember seeing fruit around, the people not comfortable with what was going around. The owner was there, but there was a lot of confusion. I stayed there very

momentarily, found out where the exit was to get out of there, and moved on.

The next thing I know I found myself over in what I believe now was the Battery Park area. We were there. A lot of people had begun to gather. I remember someone walking up behind me who later was identified as Lieutenant Cronin. I said where's Chief McCracken? She said right now I don't really know. I said where are you going? She said Chief, I'm following you.

So we walked a little bit. There were a large number of people there. One of the things I distinctly remember was that Al Simons, who was the supervisor of Maimonides Hospital, had also been hurt and he was on a stretcher. There were several members of Hazollah working to get him out of the location of where we were.

It was a small boat, if you will, that approached at the water. However, I'm looking over it and looking at what they were trying to do. I saw it was at least 30 feet separating him on the stretcher and being able to go into the boat. I remember distinctly telling them: You can't do this, no, no, don't lower him in there,

don't even think about it. So they brought him out.

I then saw Chief McCracken. He was coming around and he was speaking. What I do remember is I said to him: Chief, what do we do now? What are we going to do? He said you can't go anywhere. I said we can't stay here. He said look over there. If you look back there, you could see the large dust and debris falling from the first tower. The only other thing you could see was the water. We weren't going in either direction.

So we were there. Then I remember the people that were around me were very panicky. There were a lot of civilians that were very panicky. What they had told them to do was lay down, cover your heads and remain calm. It seems like they followed that direction because we were the only ones giving any directions.

So they basically followed. They laid down, and they were crying and very upset. I remember a lady next to me being very upset and saying we're going to die, we're going to die. I said we're not going to die; we're going to be

okay.

There then was a larger vessel -- I don't know if it was one of the ferries or not -- that came close and someone there of authority made the decision that it should be women and children first to get on the boat and go. It sort of like reminded me of the movie the Titanic, and that's what it felt like.

What we were doing at that point was looking in the crowd and calling up women that we saw with children or whatever, and we were putting them on. We were handing them over to the guys that were on the other end of the boat, putting them on.

We did that for several minutes. I remember a woman that looked like she was either Latino or Hispanic but, somewhat bewildered. You could see that there was a communication gap with her and what was going on. So I went a little bit into the crowd, and I pulled the woman with the baby carriage out and got her on.

All this time there were people pressing up real tight against me, against me real tight. I remember that. So I went after

that was done and I sat down. It was like a little bench area, not benches but a grass area with some sort of cement covering. I sat there for a while.

I started being short of breath. I just was gasping for air, gasping. I sat there, figuring the best thing to do at that point was just be still for right now.

I heard like a noise coming up out behind me, and it was a Lutheran ambulance that came out of nowhere. And they proceeded to load Al Simons, who was the supervisor for Maimonides. I remember another gentleman sitting in the ambulance who had an apparent leg injury, and it was starting to throb and hurt.

There was a big, heavyset paramedic, white pants, blue shirts, very stocky guy, and another person. Someone said Chief, you've got to go. You've got to get up in here. They more or less pulled me up into the back of the truck. We started out slowly.

I was under the impression, I guess obviously with other people in here, we were going to the hospital. We got out. We were all

in confusion there. I could see the guy being flagged on. They gave me oxygen and had me sit in the corner.

We got into the Battery Tunnel, and the ambulance began to overheat because the guy was slowing down. The Battery Tunnel was at that point full of all of the smoke and whatever else was coming in. I could see it just coming in. The guy, you know, he had to shut down the AC because it was overheating.

Al Simon yelled at him: Keep going, keep going, keep going, don't stop. Meanwhile I don't think he supervised the Lutheran guys, but he yelled keep going, keep going. We got out of the tunnel, and the next thing you know not long after we were at Lutheran Hospital. They threw oxygen on me there. I had a couple of them see me. I told them I'm fine. I'm just having a problem breathing, but I feel a lot better, I feel a lot better.

I settled down. I saw Bill Killeps, who was the ambulance supervisor at Lutheran, a little later on. He offered me some help or whatever the case.

I remember seeing he looked like a priest or a fellow at the phone, one of the phone booths near the treat -- I guess it's the asthma treatment area. It looked like he got through on the phone.

As soon as he hung up, I jumped up, because my impulse was to call my wife and let her know that I'm here, I'm okay, because I know she would be watching the news or heard about it and things were going to go through her head. So I said even if she just hears my voice she will settle down.

So I was able to call out. I got through. Settled her down. I'm all right. I'll be here. I couldn't see very well. In fact, I needed to flush my eyes at some point. After I felt better, they took the oxygen off, basically said, okay, Chief, go on.

I wandered outside. They were periodically bringing people in from the event. There was a park across the street, and no one was in the park. They had cordoned it off, quarantined it off. I went into the park and sat down just to get my thoughts.

All along one of the things -- I did have my cell phone. I had not accounted for my aide yet. So I called her home, and I guess it was fortunate that I got no answer, because sometimes her daughter is home. Fortunately I got no answer, because I guess I wanted to know where was she, but I didn't know and it would only be frightening for me to say well, I, her supervisor, don't know where she is.

So I called her division and I spoke with Alice who's there, the PAA. She said oh, Chief, you're okay. I said I'm going to be okay. Have you heard from Mary, my aide. She said Chief, we haven't heard from her. I said my phone's working, my pager seems to be working. I was getting pages.

I sat in that park for a while, just kept flushing my eyes with water. There was an ambulance crew that gave me some water. I kept flushing my eyes out, like that. I finally got a page from Alice. I called her. She said Chief, we found Mary. I said thank God.

So I said where is she? She said stay there, she's going to come pick you up. I said

how the hell is she going to pick me up? In what? What is she going to pick me up in? I thought for sure the car was destroyed.

So sure enough, I guess about 40 minutes later, here she comes pulling up in the car, looking like crap, all kind of shit on it, and she comes out, all dusted up. I said thank God you're okay. I got in the car, went in and washed off in one of the other areas at one of the battalions.

And that was the day, a very unforgettable day.

Q. Unforgettable, I'm sure.

A. I think back many times and I consider all of the other things going on in my life right now and I said God was on my side this day and I should be thankful for that. It was really some experience. I'll never forget it. I'm sure I'm not the only person. I hope that things work out.

Q. All right, Chief. I thank you. Is there anything else you can think of you'd like to add to that?

A. No, I think that pretty much covers --

summarizes that day. I don't remember looking directly at the buildings coming down. I know that when we first got there that day. I saw what I thought was a rag or something falling off one of the buildings. The person standing next to me said Chief, that's a person. But you could see it was burning.

But I remember distinctly people just running, running, wondering what's going on. Then it wasn't long after that there was debris and stuff coming down from the World Trade Center had descended upon us. The only choice was to run. I don't think it was a question of saying what do I do next.

The only option was to run at that point and take cover. That's what I believe most people did. I guess some had more advantage being either closer to a building or a place where they could get into, and some of us were just left wide out in the open.

There was a Hazollah truck, and I remember diving in there and some other people dove in with me, still not knowing what was going on around us.

So I'm thankful and thank God I'm here today. I thank God for the people who have survived it. My heart and thoughts go out to those who didn't because those people came to work that day, whether they were civilians or firemen or EMS workers, not knowing what to expect, certainly no expectation of losing their life that day. I guess it's just the will of God. That's about it.

Q. Once again, Chief, I thank you.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview is concluded at 1337 hours.

File No. 9110078

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

MARY MCMILLAN

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 12. My name is Mike Tambasco. Assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We are conducting an interview today into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. The time of the interview starting is at 1254 hours.

Q. Our interview today is with --

A. Mary McMillan. I was assigned with Chief Grant, car 65 on 9-11. We parked our car on the West Side Highway.

Q. If I could ask you, could you start with when you first heard about what was going on, when you were responding?

A. Okay. We were at Division 5 on Staten Island. They heard the call, Joe LaBarbera, who was (inaudible). He heard the call and the Chief was listening to it also. He said Mary get your coat and let's go. So we left. I was driving.

We followed -- took the BQE to the tunnel and parked on the West Side Highway. Someone told us don't come any further, stay where you are, and we did. There were other cars behind me. We couldn't go any further, so we got out and walked over to the command post, where we met Chief McCracken. I believe that was

at South End and Liberty Street.

While I was there I was asked by Chief Grant to gather a list of resources. I didn't have a piece of paper with me, so I got it from Kathleen Zarr. I met her and I met also Mala Harrilal and Brian Pastore. I don't recall who else I seen there at that time.

As I was gathering it, I was saying to Mala, that I'm looking up at the building and I said to her, this is going to fall. I said we should get out of here. This is going to fall. She says I know. I think we are in the wrong place. I tried to tell Chief Grant and Chief McCracken I think it's going to fall, but they were so busy talking among themselves, I didn't have a chance to tell them what I was feeling.

I think I should have shared with everyone, but when I felt that way, I looked around me. I gathered the resources, but I'm thinking what do I do when this thing falls. I looked around me and I saw this building on my right. It had the glass bottom doors and I just made reference to it in case god forbid, anything happened, my plan would be to run behind that building, grab my jacket over my head and just stay there for a while.

Sure enough, after my thoughts travelled through my head, all I heard was run and I heard the sound, a sound -- I can't really describe it. It was an unusual sound. Then they are saying run, so I started to run and I looked back and I saw this white smoke just moving in this boiling motion towards us and I was like oh, my god, what's going on. I was scared, I was frightened and I'm running and everybody's running.

Someone grabbed on to my hands. I don't know who it is. I was dragged, literally dragged on the ground. I said let me go please. Let me go. Let me go. So he let me go. I got up on my feet and he said get the fuck in here now. I went in there. I didn't want to go in there because I'm thinking this thing that's falling down is going to crash the glass that surrounds this building.

So we got under there and I just broke down in tears, and the debris, I was covered in debris at that time. I ran inside and they closed the door. I stood by some console table. I took my helmet off and I said oh, my god we are going to die. We are going to die. I was so afraid and then they said shut up. Shut up. Stop saying that.

Then it calmed down somewhat and everybody started leaving the building. Now we are not making any friends, everybody is just trying to get out. I was like oh, my god. [redacted] I don't think they had a plan. What's going on with them.

Q. You lost sight of them completely?

A. Yes. So when I got out I walked, looking in the area where I left them. Because I didn't look back or anything. I just ran and I didn't see anyone. Everybody is looking for everybody. Everybody is covered in this white dust. You can't breathe. You could hardly see. You are looking for water. There were people out there giving you bottles of water. They said wash your face, wash your hands. It felt like something was sticking you when you washed your face. I guess little pieces of glass, because when I got home also. When I washed my face. There was something sticking me. Like glass in my face.

So I got the water and I washed my face and my hands and I started looking for them. I walked up South End I believe. I was walking in the opposite direction now and I saw Chief McCracken approaching me. I said where is Chief Grant. He said oh, he is in

the store down the block. Just a couple of stores down. Just keep walking.

So I decided to walk just to look for him and I looked in every building I passed. I didn't see him. I just saw a lot of people. I don't recall who I saw. I asked them if they had seen Chief Grant. Everybody is no, no, I didn't see him. I don't know.

So I walked further, further back and forth, back where I was, further, looking around and up the stairs to some store above there. They says come, wash your face off. I said I'm fine. I'm good. Leave me alone. They gave me water. I took the water and says here, you need a mask, take a mask, they gave me a mask and I put that on and that helped so much. That mask helped me out.

Then I walked over to -- going towards the water, because everybody says get towards the water. It's better over there. So I started to walk towards the water and I walked up and down looking for him. I said anybody seen -- I asked, because I think I seen everybody who I met there initially except Chief Grant. Then I walked around the water and I saw Kathleen Zarr again and she says let's go in this building and set up triage for anyone with asthma,

which she did.

I met Captain D'Amato. I met him and he looked so out of it, like he wasn't there.

Q. Dazed?

A. Dazed. I said to him let me borrow your radio and I intercepted transmission asking for Chief Grant. I didn't know where he was and he says take it. I said are you okay? Didn't answer me. Just sat there in a daze. They did triage and the next thing you know we saw a boat coming in and they says get back in the building, because the other building was coming down now. This big ball of smoke overcame the building again and we stayed inside there and did the triage. We tried to make some sense of what's going on. Everybody is talking and confused, people with their children, with their dogs and their family and the boats started to come closer to the water.

I don't know where I was then. But the boats came over. There is a place.

Q. I think there is a little dock.

A. At a corner, a very corner, like a corner, corner, and a building is here and the water is circulating here. And there is a corner. People could walk down towards like --

Q. Like a pier?

A. Like a pier. Walk down towards it and then the boats were there and we directed the people to get on to the boats.

Q. It was civilians, it was everybody?

A. Civilians, people from the building, children, anybody who wanted to get out of there. After that I saw Chief McCracken again. I said did you see Chief Grant. He said no. I said have you seen him at all. He said yes, I saw him. He's down that way. He is okay. He is okay. I think that I was just being pacified at that moment, because I don't think he seen him, but when I met Chief Grant he told me he did see him one time.

After that I saw -- who was it? I don't recall who it was that drove me on the gator, that drove us on the gator over to a much better area. We are getting further away from the building.

Q. Further down south towards the ferry terminal and stuff?

A. Yes, closer there. There was like a park, a park like area. You could sit down and you know, benches over there. I met the Chief, Chief Villani was there, then I saw Captain D'Amato over there also. We

were talking and I says can't anybody just ask, somebody just tell me what do I do to find out if he's okay. He says he is fine, Chief McCracken told me he is fine. I said Chief Villani what do I do. What do I do to find out. I have no phone. My phone is not working. I don't know what's going on. He just took Captain D'Amato's radio from me at that point and never said anything to me.

Then they took me over to the ferry terminal where the command post was set up and I sat there for a while. I went and cleaned up in the bathroom, but I went back out. I went back looking.

Q. Back north up to go looking for him again?

A. To the same spot. But I went in and out. I went in and out of the streets looking and nothing. I did that maybe about three times from the command post and back there. After that I stayed there, because after receiving like numerous pages from Division 5, I didn't answer it, I think it was Alice, just wanting to know hey, are you okay. So I didn't bother.

I settled down. I calmed down a bit and that's when I made the phone call to Division 5 and Alice told me that Chief Grant was admitted at the hospital and he is okay and he just wanted to know if

you were okay. So now they heard from me, everybody was fine.

After that, I said to her, just tell Chief Grant I'm going to bring the car. I left a whole lot out. I'm going ahead of myself.

Q. That's okay.

A. I said tell Chief Grant stay there. I'm coming. That's all I said and I hung up. I had at some point when I walked back, one of those times I walked back to the area. I moved the car, it was filled with debris, you couldn't see anything and the cars were coming back and forth just covering you in more debris.

I turned the car around, I put it in a different direction. At least I said if you see the car in a different direction you will know that I'm alive, because I'm the only one with the other key. So I cleaned the car out somewhat, and I drove over to Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Bridge? Yes, the Brooklyn Bridge, and I made it over and I went to Lutheran Hospital and I saw Chief Grant. I left the scene entirely.

Q. What hospital was that?

A. Lutheran Hospital. That was it. When that

debris fell and I first ran into that building, I didn't think that I would make it out alive. I never thought I would see the next day. I practically gave up hope, thinking that this is it, this is my destiny. Here I am. Take it. I'm giving it up all right now.

That was my story. I thank god I'm here right now.

Q. Another quite interesting story. There has been a whole lot of them. There really have been, yes. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to put into this?

A. Not really.

Q. Okay.

A. I never even seen Mala or Frank to see how they are doing. I don't know even know if they are okay, but we didn't have any fatalities or anything.

Q. Right. As far as I know I have been -- as far as I know I believe both of them are okay.

A. Oh, you know.

Q. Well, Frank I know, I'm pretty sure he is okay?

A. And Katherine, she is home recuperating.

MR. TAMBASCO: Right, so, but, yes, well, okay, Mary, thank you for the interview. This

interview is concluding at 1305 hours.

File No. 9110080

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL WERNICK

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time now is 1027 hours and this is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual. Please state your name, rank and area of command.

A. My name is Michael Wernick. I am from Ladder 9, I am a chauffeur. I was a chauffeur that day.

Q. Firefighter?

A. Firefighter.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the Lieutenant's office located at the quarters of Ladder 9, Engine 33, regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is?

MS. QUEVEDO: Fabiola Quevedo of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. What I basically need from you, sir, is just a scenario of what happened when you got the first alarm until the events surrounding the collapse of the second tower. Go ahead.

A. That morning we pulled up and I was the chauffeur and positioned the rig -- looking at this map -- on Church Street, right behind Saint Paul's Cemetery. From there we got all the guys and then we went into the north 1 World Trade Center. Enroute there, lots of debris along Vesey Street and we entered 1 World Trade Center. We gathered in the lobby and we proceeded to go up the stairs as a group and as we were going up the steps -- over time, we got separated in the stairwell and some of us stopped at different floors.

Mike Maguire and I stopped at the 12th floor and we stopped at the 27th floor. It was really the 27th floor was the highest level we attained on that day. We took a rest on that floor. We saw various companies. Some of the members, after thinking about it after a while, I did see 6 Truck on that floor.

Q. Were you able to recognize any of the firefighters?

A. None of the firefighters. But I do remember Captain Burke, Billy Burke, he's still missing. And then I do remember the 6 Truck, a couple of the guys recognized me. I saw them last

week. They said, oh, you were the guy lying on the floor. And his mask was next to mine, this guy sal, form Ladder 6.

We were there resting five, ten minutes. We heard reports that possibly more planes were coming in our direction and that was from the FBI. And there was Battalion Chief on the floor.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. I'm trying to think who it was. I think it was from Battalion 2.

Q. You don't know his name?

A. No. And at that point we heard a loud noise and the building shook. It was like a rag doll. At that point we said, "We got hit by another plane." The indications were really poor at that point.

And then the Chief basically said, start filtering down. So we decided to go down rather than up. We went down one stairwell, I think it was C, and we caught up with my boss, Lieutenant Smith at that point and then around the 11th floor, it was clogged up at around the 11th floor in that stairwell, and someone on the 11th floor grabbed us and said go down another stairwell.

Q. What was it clogged up with? Civilians?

A. Both firemen and civilians. And at that point it was actually quite lucky that we went to another stairwell that was empty and then we made it down to about the 5th or 6th floor and I remember seeing Lieutenant Desperito because he used to be in 9 truck. I ran into him on that floor. That was a very vivid moment in the stairwell, because he was helping somebody out.

Q. A civilian?

A. A civilian. And I think we passed 6 Truck. They were in the stairwell with civilians as well. Mostly firemen at that point. There really was very few civilians. I remember seeing Engine 5 somewhere along the way. We made our way down to the lobby which was blown out at the time from the debris of the first tower that came down, the south tower that went down.

At that time we still didn't know that the building collapsed. We were still unaware. We thought we either got hit with a plane or that thought it might have been a partial collapse from the upper floors in our building. We got into the lobby and the lobby was completely blown out. I

guess from the debris, and we had to climb out there. And as we left the building we still didn't know the first tower collapsed. No clue that that first tower collapsed.

We made our way to the street and about 45 seconds out of the building the north tower collapsed. So we just made it out. We got blown up the West Side Highway, most of us, and --

Q. Who was in that group with you when you left the building?

A. I think I was with B.J. Casey, a fireman from Ladder 9. I don't remember if Casey -- I think Casey was from Ladder 9 and Mike Maguire.

Q. B.J. and Casey, those are nicknames or --

A. Firefighter Springstead and firefighter Casey and Firefighter Maguire.

Q. Okay.

A. I think in the lobby I remember seeing Firefighter Walz and Baptiste.

Q. All from your company or --

A. Neither of them made it out.

Q. And that was 1 World Trade Center you were in?

A. The north tower. And then we sort of made

it up the West Side Highway. Well, we walked out to the West Side Highway. The minute we did that the building came down and that blew us a few feet.

From there on, you know, we had a lot of debris in our eyes and face and we couldn't breathe. Eventually I got up, walked around in a dust field and eventually I was taken to Beth Israel Hospital.

Q. I just want to know, when you first got the run, you said you were the chauffeur. Did you receive any specific instructions on where to stage or where to go?

A. No.

Q. The alarm just came in of what, as far as you are aware?

A. Well, actually when it came in Engine 33 went first. They were like 9, 10 minutes ahead of us and then what typically happens in the city is when something comes in they wait for 9:00 o'clock. You know, the dispatchers, because it all has to do with money and overtime. So at 9:00 o'clock the alarm went in for us. So then we proceeded down, I guess it was on the fifth alarm at that point, with no indication of where we were gonna go. I knew we were going to the World Trade Center. You could see

the hole in the building right out here on Lafayette Street.

Q. So the first plane had struck, the second plane hadn't struck when you were responding?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. And then as we were going down there it struck.

Q. Did you see it hit?

A. No, We saw the aftermath.

Q. When you got down there, where did you park? Where did you stop the apparatus?

A. I was going down south on Church Street, against traffic on Church Street and I pulled up right behind St. Paul's Cemetery.

Q. Could you mark that.

A. (Complied with request.)

Instead of going -- normally when we -- Like when we went to the one, we went down the West Side Highway, we pulled up over here. As we pulled out here, there was so much debris, the Lieutenant said, "Just park it over here." So, you know, this cemetery, there was papers flying all over the place, there were engines all over, plane parts,

building parts, and then we proceeded to walk down Vesey Street into the north tower.

Q. Okay. Did your Lieutenant receive any instructions from a Captain or a chief on where to go or --

A. We just walked into the lobby and at that point they probably got instructions to go as high as we could climb.

Q. When you entered the lobby, did you treat anybody? Was there any civilians that you needed to treat or any patients that you made contact with?

A. Not at that point, but at that point there were a lot of bodies all around outside. We were Dodging bodies to get in.

Q. Were you asked to assist a particular unit, either verbally or by radio?

A. No.

Q. When you exited 1 World Trade Center, do you remember where you exited from?

A. Where we came in, in the northwest corner.

Q. Can you mark that.

A. (Complied with request.)

Q. That's where you entered. And you exited?

A. The same way.

Q. You said you made it up to the 27th floor?

A. Yes.

Q. How long do you think it took you to walk up?

A. About a half hour. Twenty minutes, a half hour.

Q. Were there lights, any lights on?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know the status of the elevators in that building? Were they running at that point?

A. When we first pulled -- I do remember when we first came in one elevator was blown out. That was on the main floor. We couldn't use the elevators. I don't know if the other elevators were working. I know that definitely one was blown out.

Q. How about the stand pipes? Were they working?

A. No.

Q. You said you weren't aware of the first building collapse.

A. That's correct. Most of the guys weren't.

Q. Did you have a handy-talkie with you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know, was it on the private

channel? Was it on a Manhattan frequency?

A. Just on the regular channel.

Q. How was communications?

A. It was pretty bad.

Q. At any time were you asked to change to a different frequency?

A. No.

Q. Were you staying on the Manhattan frequency?

A. I stayed on the Manhattan frequency.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important? Any other people that you may have seen that you recognized?

A. I remember Andy Desperito, Lieutenant Burke, I saw Mannie somewhere, Mannie Devalle in the stairwell at one point while I was coming down. It was the 6th or 7th floor. He's from Engine 5.

Q. That was the last you saw of him there?

A. Yes.

Q. What did it look like he was doing at that point?

A. I think they went on the floor. They weren't in the stairwell. I remember the door opening on the floor and they were just like in the

lobby of the floor.

Q. That was the C stairway you say?

A. At that point we changed over to B.

Q. That was the one that was less crowded?

A. Yes. But around the 4, 5 or 6 floor it started to get crowded.

Q. Civilians and firefighters?

A. Mostly firefighters. But we were still able to move. But I know that there was no urgency at that point trying to get out of the building. It wasn't like "Let's get the fuck outta here." You know? This thing is coming down. It was like filter down guys and start to get out.

Q. Do you think anyone around you was aware that the other building collapsed?

A. No.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add?

A. No. That's pretty much it.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for spending time with us. It's very important that we get this accomplished. The department is appreciative.

That concludes the interview at 1040

hours and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110081

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT ROBERT LAROCCO

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 12th, 2001. The time now is 1102 hours. This is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and area of command.

LIEUTENANT LAROCCO: Lieutenant Robert Larocco. I'm assigned to Ladder 9 in the 1st Division in lower Manhattan.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting an interview at the lieutenant's office in the quarters of Ladder 9, and this is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Also present is --

MS. QUEVEDO: Fabiola Quevedo of the Fire Department, City of New York.

Q. Okay, Lieutenant, you can go ahead.

A. I'll start my story on the morning of the 11th, Tuesday morning. I was off duty and I had an appointment with a friend at 10:30 in the morning. So I took the train into the Village

over here. When I got off the train, I thought to myself what should I do, should I go have coffee with the guys in the fire house, which I kind of do all the time. It's kind of loud and noisy. Or should I do some like quiet time.

There was a greasy spoon diner on Second Avenue. I figured I'd go have the breakfast special over there, read the paper, get served, have a couple cups of coffee. I was early, so I thought I'd kill some time.

I was walking across town on Tenth Street. When I got to Tenth Street and Second Avenue, right where Stuyvesant cuts in, there's a church over there. In front of the church, there's kind of like a park. It has trees out there and benches. They were setting up a green grocer market. So I stopped.

It was a real nice day, clear day, nice weather. I was looking at the stuff that they were putting out. Now we all heard a plane that sounded like it was in trouble. So everyone stopped what they were doing. It was obvious there was something wrong with the motors. They were like straining, and they were louder than

normal. Normally over Manhattan a plane flies very high.

We all looked in the sky and didn't see anything, but then for six or seven seconds flying out of the northeast, headed southwest, was this jetliner, like the kind of thing you would go on to go to Miami Beach or Vegas or something like that.

It was flying very low, probably about 350 feet. As it passed over us, it wobbled, just a little bit. Then after six or seven seconds of seeing it -- we lost sight of it, because there were six-story tenements around us so that patch of sky that we saw it for just lasted that small amount of time.

Anyway, I kind of thought to myself that it was headed toward Newark Airport. It was going southwest kind of in the general direction. I didn't think much of it. So I started walking to go where I was going to have breakfast, and then I heard a dull thud; not an explosion but an actual dull thud with a little bit of metal to it. I kind of stopped in my tracks and I thought for a second. I said nah.

I continued going for my breakfast. I crossed Second Avenue and started walking north on Second Avenue between 11th and 12th Street. At that point probably within a minute of the thud, people started running out of the stores on Second Avenue there. They were saying, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center."

I kind of thought to myself that they were making -- putting two and two together with a low-flying plane, a thud. I kind of thought the worst-case scenario that it dropped a motor or something on the west side or somewhere downtown.

I continued heading toward the greasy spoon diner. When I got like a store or two before, a woman runs out of the store and she possibly grabbed me by my arms; I'm not sure. She looked me square in the face at very close range, and she said, "Sir, sir, it's so terrible, it's so terrible, did you hear, a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center." I told the lady, "Lady, come on, get a grip." She said, "I'm not kidding around. She said go inside the

store. They have it on the radio."

She's looking at me like pretty serious. I said I'll humor this nut job. So I went into the store. In the store there were two guys with a radio, and they were intently listening to it. I stood there for like five seconds and said, "Hey guys, what's going on?" They said, "They're saying a plane crashed into the World Trade Center."

I thought for a second. I went out on Second Avenue. I looked south on Second Avenue. You normally can't see the towers from where I was. But going from west to east was a cloud of white smoke with dust. Actually I thought it was a cloud at first. It wasn't traveling fast, but it was like a long cloud.

Then I noticed that this cloud had like a light to medium gray tint on the top of the cloud. I kind of thought to myself oh, that must be a rain cloud. Then all of a sudden the light bulb went off in my head: If that was a rain cloud, the dark part would be on the bottom. I said something's wrong.

So I jogged back to the fire house,

which is 11 blocks. As I turned on Great Jones Street, I saw Ladder 9 whip out of quarters. I ran to the fire house. There was no one there. I stopped at the house watch, and I saw on the TV the towers were on fire.

So I called my mother from the department house watch and I told her, "Mom, turn on the TV. The towers are on fire." She said, "Are you kidding?" I said, "I'm not kidding around." I said, "Listen, I've got to go." That was one of my aces in the hole. I know at that point my mother started praying for me. She knew that I was probably in trouble. I usually am.

I had nice clothes on, and I wasn't going to meet my friend at 10:30. So I changed my clothes. I threw on my uniform. I jumped in my bunk pants. I grabbed my turnout coat and helmet. I ran a block and a half over to Broadway, and I flagged down a cop car.

They stopped and just said, "Come on, get in." So I dove in the back of the cop car, and they drove me down Broadway. We stopped somewhere east of the towers, possibly at Broadway and Dey. I'm really not sure of the

street.

I hopped out of the car. There was pandemonium. There were emergency vehicles all over Broadway. There were a lot of people running around in the streets. Anyway, I knew I had to make my way through to the towers. As I started walking onto the side street -- actually as I stepped onto the side street, the strangest thing I noticed was there was like three inches of snow on the ground. The snow was probably pulverized concrete, sheetrock, loose tiles, insulation, asbestos or what-have-you.

As I started walking west, I was looking at the towers and I was amazed. On both towers there was ten or more floors of fire going on. I wasn't aware the second plane had hit. I thought it was all from one plane. I didn't know.

What I did at this point is I wanted to make my way into the towers. I was most familiar with the south tower, so I figured I'd operate there. I was familiar with it because I covered them before I got the spot at Ladder 9. I covered them at the 1st Division for almost three

and a half years, and from time to time I worked vacations in Engine 10 and Ladder 10. They're on Liberty Street directly south of the towers, across the street. So you were in and out of the towers a lot.

Plus during the latter part of the Clinton administration, Clinton and Gore would come to New York City on a pretty regular basis and they needed someone to man the Secret Service command post at Seven World Trade Center. So I would get that assignment pretty often.

You would get, needless to say, a couple of coffee breaks during the course of the day, because they were long tours. What I would do is I would walk around the area, Seven World Trade Center, the towers, look around, just kill some time. So I kind of had a good map going there in my head as to where most everything was.

So anyway, I approached the towers from Church Street and Liberty Street moving west on Liberty Street, staying on the far side of the towers and looking up. Stuff was falling off the towers every once in a while, panes of plate glass or metal or what-have-you, concrete.

Sporadically every once in a while you would catch a jumper going down. My mission was to get into the tower. I really couldn't concentrate on watching them take the whole ride all the way down. So I kept moving.

Anyway, when I got across the street from the towers, somewhere near the quarters of 10 and 10, I wanted to make my way up against the south tower. I ran as fast as I could, looking up, making sure I didn't get hit with anything. So I had to zigzag when I saw something coming and had to keep looking down, so not to trip over anything.

There were people's unidentifiable guts here and there on Liberty Street. The one thing that I remember most was that I noticed forearm and hand. It looked like a young woman. Her hand was manicured, and she had a nice ring on. I looked at it for like an extra half a second. I was amazed how it kind of looked fake, like a mannequin.

Anyway, so I continued to the building. I got up against the south tower. I put my hands on the building, and I sidestepped, looking up,

trying to avoid getting hit from stuff that was falling. Ahead of me between where I was and the doorway that I wanted to get into, two people jumped from an upper floor, and they hugged all the way down. When they hit the ground, I could just see like a smash, not realizing the damage they had done to themselves.

For me to get to the building, when I came upon these people, I had to step over them, do my sidestep. I actually had to do a little hop over, it was kind of wide. The two people, both their legs were blown off and one of their heads was smashed into a thousand pieces of Jell-O. There was nothing left of it. You couldn't identify whether it was male or female either.

Anyway, I made my way into the door of the south tower soon after that, and I ran past the fire command post on the south end of the south tower. It was one or two of the usual fire safety directors, hired by the World Trade Center over there.

So I ran to the north end of the south tower, and there's two escalators going down.

They're stopped. There's civilians self-evacuating. There's a conga line coming down. At the bottom of these stairs was Chief Donald Burns, with his aide, and trying to make a handy talky transmission or listen to a handy talky transmission.

I ran up and I kind of stood in front of him. When he was finished with what he was doing, he looked up at me. I said, "Chief, Lieutenant Larocco, Ladder 9. I'm at your service. What do you need, sir?" He said, "Lieutenant, I need company men here ASAP." I said, "Yes, sir."

I turned back and I ran back to the south end of the south tower, but I stayed inside the doorway. I had the doorway open, and I could see units going across Liberty Street from the east end to the west end, and I was calling out to them as loud as I could. It's like they didn't hear anything. They were just on their mission going. I thought to myself the only way to get their attention and get Chief Burns a company would be to run back across the field of fire.

What I did was I noticed on Liberty Street there was an arc foot path, possibly about eight to ten feet wide. So I kind of looked up, made sure I wouldn't get hit, and I ran towards this foot path. I used that for cover to get across Liberty Street. I ran into Rescue 4 with Kevin Dowdell. That's a lieutenant. We were firemen together at Rescue 2 for many years.

I said, "Kevin, Chief Burns needs a company of men ASAP, north end of the south tower." He goes to me, "Rock, I've got orders. I've got to head toward the west command post." So I wished him well. I saw every guy on Rescue 4 that was working that day.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. No, no. But definitely Kevin Dowdell was the --

Q. Chief Burns' aide, did you recognize him?

A. No, not at all.

MR. FEILER: We're going to stop the tape at 11:15.

Restarting the tape with the same people: Fabiola Quevedo, Lieutenant Larocco

and myself, Monte Feiler. It's 11:18 hours.

Q. Go ahead, sir.

A. After making contact with Rescue 4 and there was no other units around -- by the way, there weren't any -- I really didn't notice any incoming FD apparatus parking on Liberty Street due to stuff falling down. Once again, I ran the gauntlet, for lack of better terms.

I went into the tower, and I went towards Chief Burns. When I caught him inside, I saw he was surrounded by units. Looking at the area where he was, there was really no way to get up because of people streaming down those escalators.

So I made my way around into the Marriott. Once in there, there was a command post. At the command post was Chief Galvin. After a couple minutes, Chief Cassano showed up. Units were reporting in one after another. I caught Chief Cassano's view. I was waiting for orders and he gave me like a stand fast signal.

In those few minutes there was a pay phone, and I called my wife, believe it or not. I told her where I was. I was with my gear. She

was really worried. Actually I had to lie to her. I told her I was assigned to a first aid station three blocks from the tower with people doing first aid. So once again I got another person praying for me. So there's another ace in the hole going for me.

Anyway, I hung up on her, and I went back to the command post. Units were reporting in one after another. One unit in particular that I remember, Ladder 11, Mike Quilty. I was standing up against the counter of the command post. He came up to me shoulder to shoulder. I wanted to say hi to him. He's a friend of mine. In the speed and confusion the way things were going, he just got his orders and took his men upstairs. By the way, Ladder 11, there were no survivors from that tour from 9/11.

Units were coming in fast up to the command post, and orders were being barked out fast. They were getting sent up all different staircases and making their way up as best they can.

Anyway, at this point Billy Spade -- he's from Rescue 5. I knew him because I was in

Rescue 2 for nine years. He comes into the command post, and he goes, "Hey, Rock, did you see where Rescue 5 went?" I said, "No, I didn't see anyone." As far as getting a transmission over the handy talky, forget about it. There were so many units on the scene at this time there was too much traffic on the handy talky channels, it was like useless.

Anyway, Billy and I, teamed up and we made our way somewhere north on the first floor where there was another command post going. There I saw Chief Hayden, and there were some units kind of standing fast. Me and Billy Spade went past them. We went up to the second floor. On the second floor we found the staircase on the northwest side of the building.

Q. Are you still in the Marriott now?

A. We're in the Marriott. People were streaming down from the tower -- I'm sorry, we came out of the Marriott and into the tower through the interior. So now we were operating in the actual tower.

Q. South tower?

A. South tower. All the interior

operations that I've been describing were in the south tower.

Let me take a step back. My wife reminded me the other day, I said, "What did I tell you when I called you up besides that I was working at a first aid station?" She said that I told her that it's raining people, and she said that I had like a hollow sound in my voice when I said it.

Anyway, fast forwarding back to Billy Spade and I. So on the second floor of the south tower, northwest end of the building, there's a stairway there. People were evacuating down the stairway, and I notice water streaming down the stairway. That's telling me that when the plane hit it took out the standpipe in that particular stairway. I was just saying to myself by the size of the plane and whatnot, it probably took out most of the standpipes and fire suppressing systems within the building.

Anyway, like I said, people were self-evacuating, and Billy and I went up a few floors. We separated ourselves by two floors. What we were doing was, we were just like a Fire

Department presence, telling people, "Calm down. You're almost at the bottom." We were reassuring them.

From time to time I would ask people, "What floor are you from? Hey, you guys, what floor are you guys from?" They would say 51. Then I'd wait a few minutes. "Where you guys from?" They would say 63.

Anyway, at this point some ESU cops were headed up the tower, and they had Scott packs on and no turnout coats or anything like that, just police uniforms. One of the sergeants sees me and goes, "Hey, Lieutenant, Lieutenant, I've got to tell you something." I said, "Yeah, what's up?" He actually pulled me to the side and he whispered in my ears and said, "The Pentagon just got hit with a plane." I said, "Get out of town. What, are you kidding me?" He said, "I'm not kidding around. I have good information. The Pentagon just got hit, I'm telling you." So at this point I kind of realized this was a terrorist act, not an accident.

Anyway, from where I was stationed,

like I said, I kept asking people what floors they were from. People started coming down from 88 and 89. I identified those floors. There were people coming down from 89 and they were dragging a woman with them.

I said, "What's the matter?" They said the woman had a heart attack. I said all right, put the woman down. I ran down, got Billy. Me and Billy ran up the stairs and carried the woman down the stairs. When we got to the second floor of this particular staircase where the staircase terminated, there were three Port Authority cops there. Right away they said, "We'll take her from you." She was kind of heavy, and we were happy to put her down and take a blow.

So we laid her down, and Billy and I turned to each other and were getting a game plan going, perhaps 15, 20 seconds, and I turned around and I looked at the cops and I looked at the woman. The woman was just like laying there. The cops were just standing there. They weren't doing anything.

I said, "Hey, guys, are you going to help this woman? What's going on?" I noticed

one of the guys was a sergeant. I said, "Sarge, did you radio for oxygen?" He had a handy talky on. He kind of looked at me and shrugged. I said, "Come on, let's pick her up, we'll carry her right downstairs. We'll throw her inside a bus, an ambulance."

So one of the cops grabbed her from under the arms and I grabbed her by the legs, facing backwards, walking backwards. We carried the woman across the north end of the south tower from the west side to the east side.

And we got to those escalators that I was telling you about earlier that Chief Burns was earlier operating at the bottom of these escalators. There weren't that many people on the escalators, and the escalators -- like I said, the motors were stopped. The stairs were stationary.

Just as I put my foot on the first stair on the escalator, the building started like shaking. It was like a wave in the floor and a real loud noise. What we did was, me and the police officer started running from the east northeast end of the building toward the west.

Along my right side is the north wall, and it's glass. It's about 25 feet of glass, and about every 25 foot there's a concrete column there. I know this is right at my right side, like maybe three or four feet over my right side.

Anyway, just to describe to you the collapse of the south tower coming down, I really wasn't aware there was a full collapse. I thought it might have been just a localized collapse. It was the loudest noise I've ever heard in my life. It was in both ears. Kind of like those rockets that they launch the space shuttles with, it was like I had one going off in each ear. When I thought it was the loudest noise I ever heard, every second it was just increasing getting louder and louder and louder.

I was running as fast as I could. With this noise getting louder and louder, also what's happening simultaneously was light -- whatever light we had was becoming darkness, like obscuring and getting dark fast, like someone pulling down the shades real fast.

Anyway, it kind of sounded to me as if the collapse was aimed right at me, right at my

back. I was running as fast as I could, and when I felt that I was getting overtaken by the collapse, where there was no hope, I threw myself on my knees at the next concrete column that I came up against I kept that on my right side.

I held onto my helmet with my hands and I yelled out, "Jesus, save me." With that the collapse came and I started getting buried. Stuff was falling down. It was loud and just kept coming and coming. It's hard for me to give you a time frame. I'm just going to guess and say this collapse probably took about 30 seconds before I caught some silence, the collapse started to terminate. Maybe it was a little more than that. I don't know. There's no way of telling.

At this point I'm there and the first words I said to myself -- it may sound strange hearing this in the office, but I said to myself, "Am I still alive?" Because there was no way of knowing. I knew I had brain function. Am I already dead? I don't know any of this.

What I did was I said let me see if I can move. So I moved my left arm. I said all

right, that wasn't torn off. I moved my left leg. I said all right, that wasn't torn off. With that I went to take a breath, which apparently I held my breath this whole time. I guess it's like some kind of survival instinct, whatever you want to call it.

I went to take a breath. I took in a mouthful of this thick dust of, once again, pulverized concrete, sheetrock, insulation, asbestos, whatever the heck was floating around.

What I did there was I kind of hacked out what I could and put my face underneath my shirt. I was breathing the air that was next to my body, which was fairly fresh. I opened my eyes to look to see if I could see anything, and I saw nothingness, like total blackness. The best way I could describe it to you is if I was buried in my coffin with six feet of dirt thrown on top. Total absolute black.

Anyway, what I did was I had some light stuff covering me. I really wasn't hit with anything too heavy. I kind of threw off whatever was on top of me, and I dug myself out of this pile of dust that I was in, like pulverized sand

and powder, actually more like flour than anything else.

Being familiar with the buildings, I knew somewhere along that north wall I would find a doorway that would lead me to my next point of contact, which I'll get into as we go step by step.

I started crawling along that side with the glass to my right, which is my north side. So I was headed west, still going in a straight line, and feeling each pane of glass, as I was hoping to find that doorway. At one point I stopped and I tried to kick my way through the plate glass, but it really wasn't working. I just, undeterred, continued on, and did not go back.

Also what I did before I started moving, in my turnout coat pocket I had a tuberculosis mask. So what I did was I took it out of the package, and I was able to get on this tuberculosis mask to kind of filter the air. It gave me a little bit of help. Then I started crawling.

Anyway, like I said, I started

crawling. I hear people moaning from time to time, but things were so critical, the situation was so bad, that I didn't know if I could help them. I kind of felt that if I stopped to help them I wasn't going to make it out. So I thought my best way would be to make it out and try to get help for them from the outside.

So PS, I'm crawling and crawling, operating in total blackness, but being a fireman on the job over 20 years, that's how you operate a lot of times. You operate on blank, you operate on feel. Knowing I had this straight glass wall with these concrete columns every 25 feet, following that pattern was pretty simple, believe it or not.

So I followed the glass and concrete until I found a door handle on one of these panes of glass. I pulled it, and I was able to open it up. What I did was I got on my knees, I opened up the door, and I pulled the chock out of my helmet. I stayed on my knees --

MR. FEILER: Stop the tape at 1132 hours.

Resuming the tape. Present is

Lieutenant Robert Larocco and myself, Monte Feiler, and Fabiola Quevedo.

Q. Go ahead, sir.

A. I was at the door, and I pulled the chock out of my helmet and I chocked the door open. I got on my knees, and I faced the area that I had just come from. Like I said, I passed people that were moaning.

I called out to the people. I said, "You need to listen to me. I'm a fireman. I have a door open here. Make your way towards my voice. This may be your only way out. Everybody, come on, you've got to try. Make your way towards this area. Make your way toward me. I'm here."

Perhaps they were civilians, firefighters or police. I don't know. Like I said, it was absolute zero, and they had to make their way towards something. So I stayed there, and I called out to them for a couple of minutes.

It's funny, no one came. But a few days later I told my sister the story, and she was like, "Stop the story, stop the story." I said, "Why, what's the matter?" She said, "I was

just listening to the radio. There was some guy trapped in the south tower, second floor, north end. He said the only reason he's alive is someone said, 'I'm a fireman, I've got a door open over here, you need to make your way to my voice.'" He kind of quoted me verbatim. She said the fellow said, "I don't believe that was actually a fireman; it was an angel sent from God. That was my only way out."

Anyway, getting back to my situation, as far as I know, no one was coming. So I turned and I started crawling. In the map that I had in my mind, I knew I had to find these six elevators, a bank of three on each side. From there I would find the escalator and be able to make my way down to the first level and from there try and get out.

So what I did was I was crawling, and once I got outside the doors, believe it or not I had about a foot and a half of visibility. So things were starting to look up for me. I just started making methodical searches as I would searching a fire apartment.

Sure enough, I found what I was looking

for. I found the three I was looking for, and just opposite them I found the second bank. I knew that I was very close to this escalator that I was looking for that I needed to find.

So what I did was I was feeling around the area searching, and I found that rubberized handle, whatever that is, and I felt the way it looped up. I felt for where the stairs were, and I felt the tread of the stairs.

I went down the stairs backwards, kind of not knowing if the stairs were collapsed, so I wouldn't take a header and fall down a few levels should the stairs be missing. God was watching over that set of stairs, and I was able to make it down to the first level.

When I got down to the first level, I started crawling around, looking for that way out, that exit door. I kind of realized something, that I was in an area of the building that I was unfamiliar with. The best way to describe it was it's some kind of service area of the building.

I thought to myself what should I do, should I backtrack and make my way up? Also what

was going on while everything else was going on, I was detecting more and more smoke in the dust. Fires in that area were starting to take off. I thought to myself without the benefit of a mask SCBA operating in that environment, I might get overcome by carbon monoxide and would never make it out. So I figured I'd roll the dice and really give the area that I was in at this point a good once-over, see what I could do.

I crawled around, and I found some steps going down. I went down these steps, about five steps they were, and I was in a small little lobby, and I found what I was looking for. I found doors with push bars. So I stood up and pushed the push bar to open up the door, and nothing happened. I thought to myself this is a locked exit. That's illegal. It's funny the things that you think about.

So I tried a second time, and I pushed the push bar, pushed the door and nothing happened. So I tried a third time, pushed the push bar, and then I muscled the door as best I could. I was only able to get the door open two or three inches. I could see the sunlight come

in through the door. Through the dust I could see the sunlight.

I was able to look out the door, and I saw that everything had collapsed. There was a lot of stuff that had collapsed in front of that door that was blocking that path. Like I said, keeping in mind there's fires in the area, there's smoke in the dust. I had to make my way out of these doors one way or another.

I didn't have any tools or anything, so what I did was I maintained the door in its open position, about two or three inches that I was telling you about. I laid down on the floor, and I put my feet flat on the door and, with my hands, I reached one hand between my feet and one hand above my right foot. With my legs I pushed the door with all the force I had in my body. I was pushing for my life. Even pushing for my life I could only get it open about ten inches. Believe it or not, I was able to work my way out that door opening there.

Once I got out, I was somewhere on the north end of the building. I stumbled around. My visibility was cut by 90 percent because I had

all garbage in my eyes. They were burning me. Maybe it was like pulverized sheetrock, the limestone. My eyes were on fire. I could see a little. I was aware that I was outside and whatnot. Perhaps I was a little bit stunned or maybe in shock. I knew I was outside.

I kind of wandered for, I don't know, maybe a minute or so. I got a game plan going. I knew that I wanted to head north. So I headed north for approximately a block. I came to a street intersection. I really couldn't tell you what street intersection it was, but I will tell you this: Just to my left hooked up was Engine 235. They were hooked up to a hydrant, and the chauffeur was running water through the pumps and out the outlet.

The chauffeur ran up to me -- it was Phil Scarfi from 235 -- he said, "Lieutenant, Lieutenant, I need to help you. I need to help you." I thought to myself, gee, I must be badly hurt and not know it. Maybe I'm bleeding out or something. So he grabbed me by my turnout coat and he pulled me over by the engine.

What he did was -- he took my helmet off

me. I got my head and face underneath the water and I started washing out all the garbage that I had in my nostrils and in my throat, and I got to wash out my eyes. When I was through doing that, I ran my head under the outlet of the water for about a minute just to like cool down and get my wits about me.

When I pulled my head out, I was drinking the water and everything. I pulled my head out and I looked at the water and the water that was coming out and it was thick brown. But I tell you the truth, it was the best water I ever tasted.

Anyway, Phil Scarfi turned to me and said, "Lieutenant, what should we do now?" He was there all alone. By the way, everyone else from 235 ended up getting wiped out. I told Phil Scarfi, "You got any gear with you?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Get your gear. We'll try reporting to a command post." I said "We're going to have to effect rescues. We probably have a lot of our guys missing." In the back of my mind, to tell you the truth, at that point I knew things were bad, but I really hadn't

realized the whole south tower had collapsed.

So PS, Phil Scarfi, and I made our way to the street intersection of Vesey Street and West Street. I stood on the west side of West Street and Vesey Street facing south, and I was looking for that command post that I thought would be there and wasn't there.

What I saw was total pandemonium. I saw policemen, firemen, running around, civilians running, no real direction. They were all running in all different directions in a panic. Some civilians were covered with blood. I recall that. Looking up at the tower, another jumper coming down.

Anyway, while I was taking all this in -- this was all, say, less than ten seconds I was looking at all this -- I notice two things. I notice my hearing -- I could hear everything, but my hearing was like turned down, like the volume was turned down so I only had about 10 percent of my hearing. People ran by screaming. I could hear them. I was aware they were screaming, but it wasn't loud. But I could also hear people talking. It was kind of like weird,

but that's what was going on between my eye balls.

Also the other thing I was aware of, was that as I stand and I look, normally everyone is moving at a pretty quick pace, and they were in one sense, but my perception was everything was moving in slow motion. Just let me add to that everything was crystal-clear. I was taking in everything that was happening and checking it all out.

Anyway, at this point three guys started running toward me. One guy believe it or not -- it may sound weird, but to me an Arabic-looking guy, American though. And the two guys that were chasing were yelling, "Stop, stop, FBI, FBI." One guy was a tall white guy. He had a long-sleeved white shirt and tie on.

Anyway, I watched them chase this fellow toward me. Just as the guy was passing to my right maybe about 12 feet away, the so-called FBI guys, they get a hold of the guy, threw him on the floor and put cuffs on him. I'm watching all this occur like in that slow motion thing.

The next second I heard that loudest

noise in the world that I was describing before getting louder and louder. What I did was I made a 180, and I started running north up the west side of West Street. On both sides of that side of West Street, there were FDNY rigs, one parked one right after the other.

What happened was I saw guys dive underneath the rigs. Although that seemed tempting, I knew not to do that. That was something I didn't want to do, because I kind of figured the tower was toppling. Once again the way the noise was getting louder and the lightness of day was turning into the blackness of night due to the impingement of the collapse, I just wanted to keep moving.

Anyway, I ran and you really weren't getting too far before you got hit with the collapse. So in my mind, coming off Vesey Street and West Street, I said if I can only make it to the rear of the third rig, that's where I'm going to stop and I'm going to get behind the rig and hug the back of the rig so if I do get caught in the collapse, which seemed inevitable, perhaps I get caught in a void and maybe dig my way out or

really not be crushed too bad, so if my body was recovered it would be pretty much intact. Weird things go through your mind.

Anyway, as I got to the rear of the third rig, in my mind I was saying all right, this is it, that's where I'm going to go. Like I said, it sounded like the collapse was going to overtake me anyway before I reached the rear of that third rig.

When I got to the third rig, my mind was saying stop, but my legs kept going. They wanted to make it to the fourth rig, which is Ladder 118. I really feel like God had his hand on me, because from what I understand a concrete column came through the front of 118 and came down and would have ended up crushing me had I chosen to seek refuge behind rig number three.

Anyway, I started running. Ladder 118 is a tractor-trailer. It's the longest rig that we have in the Fire Department. I really didn't feel like I was going to make it. My legs were really -- I was really cooking. I was running as fast as I could for 46 years old.

Anyway, I made it to the back of Ladder

118, thinking that I had zero time left, but in actuality I had two and a half seconds. In that two and a half seconds, I got on my knees behind the rig and there was an eye coming off the back of the rig and I shoved by right hand inside the eye and with my left hand I put my hand on top of my helmet to hold my helmet on my head.

Not thinking I had any time, the last thought that came through my mind -- because, as I'm saying, I had about two and a half seconds to think this -- was I thought to myself death, I said I just cheated you. I said now you're going to come back and get the payoff on me.

With that, we got hit, and we got hit hard. The collapse came. The noise level was very, very loud. Zero visibility again. You feel like the ground shaking and stuff flying around. Afterwards, days later, I saw steel I beams got twisted and thrown around like toothpicks. There wasn't much too them.

Anyway, so the collapse occurred. The time frame again, I'm going to guess and say perhaps 30 seconds, perhaps longer. I can't really give you a time frame. Not for a million

dollars I couldn't give it to you. That's not really a lot of money nowadays, a million dollars.

Anyway, now the collapse stopped. The sound stopped. Now once again, and I'm dead serious, I ask myself am I still alive. With that I took a breath, because like I said I guess that defense mechanism in a situation like that you kind of like stop breathing.

In that breath I took a mouthful, a big mouthful, of that dust. I kind of like hacked it out as best I could. Once again I stuck my face underneath my shirt to get some fresh air. I took about four or five breaths, and during that time, even though there was zero visibility, I was aware there were guys all around because I could hear them. They weren't talking. Some of them were crying like they were children, and others were whimpering like little babies.

I took my fourth or fifth breath, and I really feel like God gave me the words to say to them. I blurted out the orders. I said, "If you can hear my voice, you're still alive. What you need to do is get your faces under your shirts

now. Come on, do it, do it, get it done, go, go, now, face under your shirt."

With that I covered up my mouth again with my shirt. I took about four or five more breaths. I heard about half the guys stop their crying and whimpering, but the other half were still crying and whimpering. So I took another deep breath and I blurted out, "You guys want to see your families again? Get your faces under your shirt. Come on, do it now, get it done, come on, faces under your shirt, everybody, come on." I covered up again.

During the next four or five breaths, I noticed no one was crying, no one was whimpering. So now I took another deep breath and I said, "Okay, guys, come on, the collapse is over. What we're going to do is, we're going to stay here until we get some visibility. Then we're going to move away from the collapse area together. Let's hang tight guys. Stay right where you are." So now I took another few breaths, and from time to time I would call out to the guys. I asked if anyone was hurt, and no one was.

MR. FEILER: I'm going to stop the tape

at 1204 hours and switch to side B.

Continuing the interview with Lieutenant Larocco and Fabiola Quevedo and myself, Monte Feiler, at 1205 hours.

Q. Continue, sir.

A. All right. So there we were. We were behind Ladder 118, and guys were all around in that area. We waited for a few minutes, and from time to time I would call out to the guys and just try and instill some confidence in them, try to keep even one guy from panicking, because I know if one guy panics he can start a wave of panic. So I kind of tried to talk everyone through it my best.

After a few minutes, we got a foot and a half, maybe two feet of visibility. I called out to the guys, "All right, guys, come on, we've got to make our moves now. Anyone need help? Anyone can't move?" No one answered.

Underneath the truck there was an ESU cop that where I was kneeling on my knees he had his head like between my knees on the ground. During the course of waiting for us to get visibility, I was aware that he was there. So I

helped him up, and I helped up another firefighter.

We started moving away together. We started going north up West Street, and it was very dusty. There wasn't a lot of visibility. Perhaps as we started walking we got about three or four feet of visibility. Everyone was aware that there were guys around them, although you really couldn't see anyone. Of course the cloud was kind of like a nuclear winter thing. You're walking through fallout.

As we were moved further away from the collapse area, and as time passed, you get more and more visibility. You get 6 feet of visibility, then after a little more time maybe 8 feet then 10 feet then 12 feet. Now you're aware there were a lot of guys around. You hear masks going off, the pass alarm. I stopped at a couple of masks, but they were just masks. There was no one attached to the masks.

Anyway, we walked north for a distance. I can't really can't give you the distance, but I'm going to try and tell you it was about five blocks. Then you were getting more and more

visibility. Then you kind of like stepped out into the sunshine, almost like where this cloud ended and fresh air began.

Anyway, in this area there were a lot of guys, guys running around. You could see everyone was covered with this dust and whatnot. So I just figured let me continue north. Maybe they're making a staging area -- you figure they would have a staging area a little further away from the collapse.

So I walked about a block north and I hear "Lieutenant Larocco, Lieutenant Larocco." I look and I see Mike McGuire from Ladder 9. I go over to him, and say, "Good to see you, Mike. You all right?" He says, "Yeah, I'm all right." I said, "Where's the rest of the guys?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "You stay with me."

So Mike stayed with me. We walked north about another block. A guy starts calling me, "Rocky, Rocky." I look to my right, and I see a firefighter calling me, covered with dust. I look at him and say, "Who are you?" He said, "Smitty." Smitty, Lieutenant Smith, Ladder 9. He was working the day tour on September 11th. I

said, "Smitty, good to see you." I was almost apologetic for not recognizing him. With him were Donald Casey, Ladder 9, and Bert Stringstead from Ladder 9.

Bert and Donald were sitting on that median in the middle of West Street. Actually Donald was like laying down. He sat up, looked at me, gave me like a peace sign, and he laid back down.

Lieutenant Smith said to me, "I'm missing guys," this, that and the other. "Who are you missing?" "I'm missing Mike McGuire." I said, "Here, one down, Mike McGuire is right here with me." I called Mike McGuire over. Here's Mike McGuire. Who else are you missing? He said Jeff Walz, Ladder 9, Gerard Baptiste, Ladder 9, and John Tierney, Ladder 9, our probie. He had just came to the fire house July 28th, so he was only with us for about six weeks.

I said, "All right, Smitty, stay here with the guys. I'm going to go back. I'll see if I can dig him up." I tried to assure Lieutenant Smith that --

MR. FEILER: Stopping the tape at

12:09.

Resuming the interview with Lieutenant Robert Larocco. Fabiola Quevedo and myself, Monte Feiler, at 1302 hours.

A. I tried to assure Lieutenant Smith that the guys were more than likely okay, that they probably just got fragmented away from the unit, that there was a lot of confusion, guys running in different directions, the dust making recognition almost impossible at times.

So I walked back north up West Street into the area of the cloud. I would see guys walking out and I would try to look at them to recognize their faces, but it was kind of hard. Everyone was so covered with dust, you really couldn't tell who was who. It would be hard for me to tell my best friend.

What I did was I would call their names. I would call out, "Ladder 9, anyone from Ladder 9? Jeff, Jeff Walz, are you around? Gerard, Gerard, where are you? John, John Tierney, are you around? Where are you guys? Come on, Ladder 9, where's the Ladder 9 guys?" I searched around as best I could, and I didn't

come up with anything. There were still guys leaving the collapse zone sporadically, not too many at this point.

So I went back to Smitty, and I told him I didn't find them but it doesn't mean that something bad happened to them. They're probably attached to some other unit on the other side of the collapse or somewhere around.

So PS at that point -- my eyes started burning again, and my skin was all irritated from sweating and having I guess that pulverized sheetrock that's made of lime and was making me itch and everything. I was looking for a place I could clean off.

Somewhere between those buildings on Greenwich Street -- they have Greenwich Street addresses. I know my aunt lives in 310 Greenwich. But between like between those buildings, maybe between the second and third building, there's a side street right off of West Street.

There's a hydrant that was opened up. It was a shady spot, so up against the building I went and I took off my helmet, my coat and my

shirt, stripped down to the waist. I got up underneath the hydrant and gave myself a bath out in the street and got all the stuff off me that was itching me and irritating me. I got myself together.

I saw a few guys. I ran into guys from Engine 5. They were missing Manny, who to this day is missing, more than a month later. Otherwise their unit was intact. I saw my buddy Billy Walsh from Ladder 1, and we sat down in the shade and we spoke about our experiences, what we went through, for a couple minutes, anyway. We drank some water and got ourselves together.

At this point I went back out on West Street. I walked around on West Street. There were a lot of guys. There were guys that had been there prior to the collapse. There were guys for the recall. Units were reporting in, probably a few thousand guys, maybe two, three, maybe more 4,000 guys.

There really weren't any orders for a concerted rescue effort into the collapse zone at that time. We were hanging out for what seemed a long time, perhaps an hour or so after the

collapse. The guys really didn't have any direction.

What I did was I walked -- I stepped up on a median. As I walked, I called to the guys, "Come on, guys, get yourselves out of the sun and into the shade and get some water in you. When we start a rescue effort, I need everybody here a hundred percent. Come on, guys." Sure enough, hard to believe guys actually listened, big groups going into the shade and taking my advice.

Anyway, time started passing, and perhaps we were there for maybe two and a half hours that passed. There were a lot of rumors going around, and I still really didn't believe that the second tower was hit by a second plane.

MR. FEILER: Stopping the interview at 1306.

Resuming the tape at 1308 hours. Same people present.

A. Like I said, the rumors were flying around, and they turned out to be quite factual, about the second tower getting hit. Although at the time I really didn't believe it until I saw it later on television. The thing about the

Pentagon, the plane crashing out in Pennsylvania, it was all coming into the picture that this is something major going on.

Anyway, so there we were. We were in the middle of West Street, a few thousand guys waiting for orders. It really wasn't happening in a concerted effort. Perhaps there were small splinter groups of guys getting orders to do things. There we were, like vulnerable.

Anyway, all this talk about planes crashing and guys using words like "kamikazes" and whatnot. At that point we hear a plane -- it turned out to be two planes, and they were closing in on us and the motors were getting louder and louder.

All eyes went up to the sky and were looking. I kind of thought to myself as I looked at guys running for their lives and for cover that now we're going to get kamikazed. The rescue workers, they are trying to take us out.

I stood there and looked at the sky all around in all directions and couldn't really tell where the sound was coming from. It was getting louder and louder. Then I spotted them, they

were coming out of the west, like out of Jersey City, that way. They were two F15 fighters. I saw them, they were fully armed and the dual tail. I started yelling, "Hey guys, guys, look, those are our planes, those are our planes." Other guys started yelling it.

I'll tell you, everyone stood on their feet and everyone was cheering. I'll tell you, at that point even though I was kind of beat up at the time -- I wasn't going to give up, but I was beaten up. I stood up straight, I looked at those planes as they circled us and protected us, and I really felt proud to be American.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important? Anything I haven't asked you?

A. The only thing is that later on I teamed up with Chief Jay Fischler of 46 Battalion at the time. Now he's in the 8th Battalion. We walked over by number Seven World Trade Center as it was burning and saw this 40-plus story building with fire on nearly all floors. We ran into a few of our old buddies from Rescue 2.

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. You know, right now I'm drawing a

blank. I know these guys like my brothers. Mark Gregory was one, and maybe Billy Esposito from Rescue 2. I'm not too sure about him.

Q. What about firefighter Spade, you said initially did you run into him?

A. No, you see, when we put the woman down and gave her to the cops, we were talking. When I saw the cops weren't doing anything, I said pick the woman up and let's go. I kind of thought Billy Spade was going to pick her up, but there was a cop right there and he grabbed her.

At that point Billy and I separated. Billy ended up living. I wasn't too sure. I even told my wife a few days later this guy had to get killed. It was really bad, the collapse. He ended up surviving. From what I understand, he had a broken leg and some internal injuries.

As a matter of fact, he told the guys from Rescue 5 that I was probably dead, and I was on their board missing, presumed dead, until Sunday morning. That's a whole other chapter of the story. I made it. I'm here.

Anyway, after the operation Jay Fischler and I walked up to 1 Truck, and that's

where I saw the second plane hit the tower on TV. I was amazed. I hung out at 1 Truck for about 20 minutes, got some water, and then from 1 Truck walked back here to Great Jones Street. I met a lot of different civilians, and they were very supportive. That's how I spent September 11th.

MR. FEILER: Thank you very much on behalf of the department. We're going to conclude the tape at 1313 hours.

File No. 9110082

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER CACHIA

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 15, 2001. The time now is 655 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck with the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the New York City Fire Department.

A. My name is Peter Cachia. I'm an EMT with the New York City Fire Department, assigned to Battalion 4.

Q. Also present today is --

A. Christopher Eccleston of the New York Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Mr. Cachia, we would like you to relay your experience on the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to my Battalion in a light duty status, secondary to an injury back in the past. At approximately, let's see, right before the first plane hit the first tower, myself and the two Lieutenants on duty were at the desk and we heard the radio transmission that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Centers.

I remember the conditions boss leaving to go to the scene, and the desk Lieutenant on duty was

basically getting things in order. People were coming in. He was assigning them ambulances to go to the scene. After a few minutes of that, the Lieutenant had left and he had given me the keys to the station and said I was to -- anybody who came into the station, I was to get them to the scene, give them a radio and an ambulance and have them go to the scene.

About 9, 5 after 9 or 10 after 9, Lieutenant Amy Monroe came to the station and asked me if I could drive her to the scene. I advised her that I was on light duty. She said-- she asked me if I could drive and I said yes I can, as long as I didn't have to do any heavy lifting. She said okay.

We then proceeded to the scene, parked the ambulance on Cortlandt Street and then we proceeded to the first triage center, which was on Church Street, basically in front of the Trade Center complex.

Q. I'm going to ask you to mark on the map with the number 1 where you parked your vehicle. Do you know the vehicle number?

A. 13.

Q. Vehicle 13?

A. Yes. At that time when we proceeded to the triage center, at this time both towers had been

struck. We met up with the triage Lieutenants there. I think Lieutenant Medjuck was on scene. Lieutenant D'Avila, Lieutenant Melaragno were all on scene. We started treating the patients as they came out. I saw a few of my partners that I worked with in their units there. They were treating patients in their ambulances.

We were there maybe for about 25 minutes or so and that triage center had been getting a little crowded, so Lieutenant Monroe had asked me if there was another triage center. I said I think there was one on Liberty Street, so she had asked me to go to that triage center and to see if they were taking, you know, patients over there or if they needed help or anything.

So I left her and I went to -- I was on the way to the second triage center when the first tower started coming down, which would be, I guess the south tower was coming down. When that started coming down, I basically turned around and like everyone else, I started running up the block, but due to my injury --

Q. Which way were you running, do you know?

A. I was running -- I guess this is, let me just get my bearing, this would be northeast.

Q. On Liberty?

A. Up Liberty. I was very close. I was like a little too close to the tower when it started coming down, because when I started running, I knew I was too close and I really didn't think I was going to get out of there. So about halfway up Liberty Street I saw a truck, I guess an SUV. It wasn't a police or a fire vehicle. It was just a car that was parked there. I went under the truck while the tower came down and the ground was shaking and the truck was shaking and I thought that was it for me. I thought I was done.

I stayed under there until I guess everything was over. I remember opening my eyes and looking out and it was just pitch black. I guess after a few minutes after it cleared up, after I opened my eyes, I looked out and it was bright out again. I got from under the truck and I went back up Liberty, which was now just a pile of rubble and I went to go back to the triage center where I was, where we started out and everybody had gone from there.

So I just continued going up Church Street and when I got to Church and Fulton Street, I met up with Lieutenant D'Avila again and he told -- said let's get out of here, the second one might be coming down.

So then we went back up Fulton Street and the second tower had come down, but we were far enough away from it, but again, like everybody else, we just ran.

After that, I remembered running down Fulton Street and going into a store, seeing the cloud of dust going by from the second tower and then hearing it coming down.

Q. At that time, were you with any other EMS personnel or fire personnel?

A. No, Lieutenant D'Avila had gone one way and I went the other way. When I came out, I started going back to the scene, but now my back was just bothering me a lot. I turned around and I was walking towards Downtown Beekman Hospital. I walked towards there. As I was walking towards there two police officers had saw me and they saw that I was in pain and I could hardly walk and they helped me down to Beekman Hospital.

I got to Beekman Hospital and the doctors, you know, they rinsed me off, because I was just covered in that dust. They asked me what the problem was. I said, you know, I have 3 herniated disks in my back. I'm fine. I just need to rest, just take care of everybody, because they were -- I mean -- they were overrun with patients.

I said just take care of everybody else. I'm fine. I just got to rest a little bit. So I sat down for a few minutes. I remember being in the hospital. I remember hearing somebody saying that they crashed a plane into the Pentagon also, so it was like just unbelievable what was going on. I stayed in the hospital for a little while.

Then I walked back down towards South Street and as I was walking down South Street, I was going past - I forgot the name -- there is like an apartment complex right across from Beekman Hospital and that was also being set up as a triage center. As I walked past there, I saw Lieutenant D'Avila. He said come inside, just rest for a little while. So I went in there and sat down for a few minutes. I stayed there for a few minutes and as I left, I walked out and I walked back down to South Street and at that time I flagged down a police car. He had taken me back to the station, because I was just in too much pain where I couldn't do anything after that.

So I came back to the station. I just basically stayed here for a little while. At the end of my shift at 3:00, the Lieutenant just said for me just to go home. I went home. I mean I didn't want

to, but I was basically useless, because I couldn't -- my back was just in severe pain. I really wasn't any good to anybody. There wasn't anything to do here. We didn't have any phones or anything to answer, no computer to go on.

So that's about it. That's basically the day I don't think any of us will forget. Something that I never thought I would see in my life. Just lucky to be alive I guess. I guess it just wasn't my time.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this about the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. No, I mean it's -- I don't know. It's just as a service, as an EMS service, I think we were very lucky. From the units from this Battalion being the first ones down there and us not losing anybody is a miracle.

Q. At any time, did you go into either one of the towers?

A. No. I mean I didn't want to, I really didn't. I mean I don't think anybody thought they would come down. I don't know, just I remember getting there and just looking up and just seeing these two gaping holes in the side of these buildings. It was

just like watching a movie. I remember after the first one got hit, we all went out the door out here.

When it came over a plane crashed into the Trade Center, okay, a little Cessna. We didn't know until we went out and we looked and we saw and we all said this wasn't a Cessna. I remember coming back here. At that time the TV still worked. We had the TV on channel 4 news. We were watching it. I remember watching the news and looking and seeing the second plane going into it.

I said oh, my god. Is that the first plane or is that the second plane. I saw it was the second plane and then I remembered hearing Lieutenant D'Avila coming over the radio and saying Central be advised, a second plane just went into the second tower. We ran out and we saw the second plane.

It was like watching a movie. It really was. Something that you never thought you would see and something that you never comprehend. It's just a day, like I said, nobody will ever forget.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Thank you for your time and your thoughts. This interview is concluded at 706 hours.

File No. 9110083

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT THOMAS J. BENDICK

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 15, 2001. The time is 745 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Thomas J. Bendick. Emergency medical technician, assigned to Division 1.

Q. Also present?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Thomas, can you tell us about the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Approximately I guess sometime around 9:45 or earlier, I arrived at work. I met up with one of the guys from the Division, Duane Walker, and myself and him responded to the World Trade Center incident, and parked our vehicle, which was an empty ambulance full of supplies, someplace approximately Fulton and Trinity, I guess near St. Pauls cemetery, where Lieutenant Melarango was on scene triaging patients. Exited the vehicle. We left our vehicle at that

location.

Q. Can you mark on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A. Right about there, I guess.

Q. Also, would you happen to know what vehicle number it was?

A. I honestly do not. 300 series, one of the newer ambulances. I wasn't driving. I was the passenger. That vehicle was parked there and left there with supplies in the back. It wasn't being used for transporting patients. It was full of backboards. As I exited the vehicle , I spoke to the guys with Duane and said I was going to go to the command post to meet up with the Chiefs, being that I'm a Chief's aide.

Left the vehicle. I guess within a minute on scene, I left that location, took my bag of supplies that I had with me, some extra batteries and supplies, being that I figured we would be there for a long time, proceeded down Vesey Street towards the West Side Highway. Got to 7 World Trade Center.

I saw another EMS triage location with Captain Nahmod and Chief Peruggia were treating patients and I guess a little bit after I got past that

point, there was a loud roar. This is probably I would say about 5 minutes after I got on the scene, maybe a little bit longer.

I figured another plane was coming. I stopped for a second, looked around and I didn't see anything and then I began to run towards the West Side Highway, where I saw MERV 1, figuring to get as far away from buildings, not knowing what was going on. I got to the corner of 140 West, where the New York Telephone Company building was, saw a little -- like a little indent into the building. It was a construction barrier or wall that was built.

I went behind the wall I guess with another Firefighter, Police Captain and a couple of civilians. We put our backs against the wall because of not knowing what the heck was going on. Then in a couple of seconds, the roar stopped and I guess like in a split second it was just pure black.

After it got dark, one gentleman said is everybody all right. I think everybody that was standing there was like yes, I'm fine. I think the same gentleman who was doing most of the talking, he asked a guy out loud who was talking to himself, he goes do we stay here or do we leave.

At the same time you hear everybody start coughing and choking on all the dirt and the fumes and the smoke, so immediately you knew there was no chance of staying there, so one guy is like well, we got to get out of here. Like I said, out loud everybody is basically thinking to themselves. One guy says, well, I think there is ambulances and fire trucks behind us going towards the highway. Then he said does anybody have a flashlight?

So I reached down in my belt and I actually had a small flashlight with me. I took my small flashlight out and turned that on and the guy that was talking, grabbed my hand immediately, because I guess he was standing right next to me and then we waved the flashlight around asking if there was anybody else near us. You could hear a couple of voices near us, but most of them said they couldn't see the flashlight, even though they sounded like they were about 2 feet from you.

So eventually, I think about 2 more people we were able to get and we all held hands. Then a couple of other people were able to work their way over and then grabbed on to us. So it was about I guess 5 or 6 of us, we all held hands and we used the one flashlight

and we started walking towards the West Side Highway.

Like I said, we had an idea which way to go. You could kind of hear the diesel engine from one of the fire trucks, so like I said, we were hoping that was the West Side Highway. Like I said, the visibility was, I guess with the flashlight, about a foot. Without the flashlight it was zero.

Meanwhile you couldn't breathe, so at that point I was using my turnout coat and my shirt, put that over my face, trying to filter the air out. It wasn't like it was smoke. It was just dirt. It was like breathing dirt. So trying to just keep the dirt out of your mouth so you can get some form of air.

I remember not being able to see. I remember walking, hitting the curb, going by the guy who was in front of me, who was holding my hand with the flashlight. He tripped off the sidewalk and I held him and he said, you know, we said everybody watch out. There is a sidewalk, so I remember stepping off the sidewalk. You couldn't see your feet. You could just feel it. I can remember stepping over several fire hoses. Once again you couldn't see them. You could just feel them.

We found the fire truck we heard. We walked

along the fire truck. We were holding the fire truck, feeling it. Got past the fire truck and there was more like open space, so we just kept walking up in the open space, heading north, trying to -- we couldn't run, you just had to go slow because you couldn't see.

I guess we got about -- I think about Murray Street, I would say. It would have had to been by the time we got to fresh air, because I remember the college. So we got someplace around the college where the fresh air started and I think in the middle of West and Murray, there was a Citywide ambulance parked with its passenger door open. I guess they had been and gone.

So I climbed in that ambulance, climbed in the back of their ambulance because it was a van. You can climb through. I got their saline out of the back, because my eyes and everything, my mouth were full of garbage. So I got out of the ambulance from the side door, and I washed my eyes out, washed my mouth out, trying to get as much of the dirt out of me. The other gentleman with us, once we got to free air, they all scattered and went to wherever they had to go.

After I washed my eyes out, I went back to I guess about the south point of the college on Murray.

There I met up with Captain Nahmod, who was at 7 World Trade Center. He got out. He was by himself and 2 FDNY EMS physicians came by. They had some of the dust masks, so one of them gave me a dust mask. I honestly don't know who they were. They were Fire Department members. So I got a dust mask, because it was still kind of dusty where we were standing.

At that point, they were trying to get an idea of what was going on, get a plan together. At that same point, I was looking around and I saw -- numerous civilians were asking are you all right, do you need anything. At that point, some place on the west side, on the West Side Highway, a cop had opened a fire hydrant and he had the hydrant going and everybody was like washing their face off, so then I went over there to wash off. I was letting the water go through my mouth and the cop is saying the water is dirty, what are you doing opening your mouth. I said at this point it doesn't really make a difference clearing what's in my mouth.

So I washed off again, because there was just so much stuff on you. Then I met up with Lieutenant Albuerme from Battalion 8, who now got on. I don't know where he came from, but he ended up on the same

point, right around the college. So myself, Joe Cahill, a bunch of us met up, so we all started talking to get an idea together of what we wanted to do.

Right about that point, we were looking southbound and we were all standing like in a group huddled. We were saying okay, if people come out, you know, I guess we will get them, put them to the side, and sometime around there you saw that the north tower collapsed. That I actually -- the south tower I never saw collapse, didn't know it collapsed. All I could see was a large cloud.

At that point I could actually visually see the top floors of the north tower starting to give way and that began to collapse. At that point we all began to run north.

Q. Where were you at this point?

A. We had to be right at the same area, about West and Murray, because this is the -- where is the College of Manhattan College?

Q. This is it, I believe. That's not it. It's further up.

A. So we were further up at that point.

Q. It's right past Chambers, so you must have been like right around here.

A. Okay. So we had to be around Chambers, because we were at the south side of Manhattan Community College when the second building collapsed. So we actually may have walked even further then, because I remember we got to about Manhattan Community College. The other thing I should note, the pedestrian bridge there, which I think is all in the same area, and that's where we met up with everybody.

At that point, we ran north alongside of the college, because I was on the sidewalk right next to the college, going north and between the college there is a walkway, actually a road that goes under the college, so we ran in underneath there, so the college building is against our backs and then when the debris came, it would go past us, not necessarily striking us. The only thing we worried about was anything coming down on top of us.

At the same point, a plain clothes, which I assume was a police officer, fired three rounds of his revolver into the door of the Manhattan Community College, the glass doors, which caused a panic. Everybody was screaming shots fired, get down.

I actually visually saw the guy fire the 3 shots. He wasn't in a uniform. He was in plain

clothes. I was actually screaming, no, calm down, he is shooting the door out because like I say, he just caused a huge panic, because now, obviously everybody knows it's a terrorist attack, and this guy is shooting his gun off. So he blew the doors out to the college, because they were glass doors. He climbed in, called people, try to get to safety.

At that point, I looked back, right before I made the turn, and it looked like most of the dust. It wasn't coming that far, so I wasn't too concerned about the actual building, so we stopped for a minute, relaxed, and walked back out on to the highway, and then said, okay, we need to set up another triage, figure something out. By the same people, Joe Cahill, Lieutenant Bearman and myself, some other people, I don't know who they were, all met up at the north corner of the college and we were trying to figure out how to get into the college to set up the triage and just get people off the street.

Joe Cahill made arrangements with some staff person at the college to get the gym open, which was on the second floor, but had an access stairwell from outside the building. So we went up into the gym, which they got open. We laid -- there's mats. We laid

down mats. Brought some supplies in from the ambulance that was sitting on the street.

Don't ask me the number, it was an ALS ambulance. We got into the back door. Took their supplies out. Put those inside. Figured we will take members, police or whoever was like, you know, couldn't move, but you know, wasn't in need to go to the hospital, we just let them sit in there and take a break.

After we got that set up, we figured we will shuffle people up, MERV 4 was parked in the street right outside the door, so they were taking anybody that was truly hurt. They were looking at -- there was numerous ambulances on the West Side Highway. Basically like I said, everybody was just trying to see what they could do.

At the same point, one of the Lieutenants said, I don't know his name, said get everybody to take their coats and their gear off, because we don't know what's -- if they are contaminated with anything, before they go into the building.

So at that point, I went over to one of the fire Chiefs on the West Side Highway, where there was a fire truck parked. There was no firemen except for two

injured firemen and this injured Chief, we were thinking of taking supplies off the truck, possibly hook up a hydrant to get decon going. The Chief said take whatever you want.

So it looked like a probationary firefighter who was off duty, because he was clean, he just like -- he had just shown up and a plainclothes cop and myself took a fire hose, hooked up to the fire hydrant right in front of the Community College, about a hundred feet from this intersection, and we put the hose to the corner, figuring as people come out at the intersection, we will wash them down, throw them in the gym, and let them get -- you know, take a break.

I don't know what time frame that was, or how long it took us to get all that accomplished, but it took a time. By that point, we set all that up, the gym was open, we had the whole plan, put everybody in the gym, wash them down, and if there was injured, the MERV was there.

So it seemed kind of organized, and it had an action plan, and sometime around there, we could hear on the Citywide radio that they were sending the rest of the units in to Chelsea Piers for north staging. I don't think they even knew we were there, because the

radio was just too tied up to even try to tell them where we were.

So we just figured, you know, we are together, we will stay together, the people we had, treat them, there was ambulances there. Just throw them in the ambulances and get them out. We need to get people out. I guess all the responding units were going to Chelsea Piers, but we figured it was too far away to try to bring patients, because, I mean, it's a drive. So we figured if anybody -- if we needed to go there, we could go there, but we figured we still needed to treat people where we were.

Sometime around the same point they ended up calling, the Lieutenants came out to everybody and said we are evacuating, drop whatever you got, grab our supplies. We are getting out, because the Stuyvesant school they were feared was going to explode and there were reports of gas leaks and additional devices.

So about the same point we dropped all of our equipment, some of the EMTs and Lieutenants took the supplies that we had in the building out, threw them in the back of some of the ambulances, and sometime around that point, we were just like, okay, let's just get out.

At that point I was tired and I was like okay, I'm getting out. Got in the back of one ambulance that had the windows blown out, but the crew was in the front, so they start driving, so they opened the back doors and we stood in the back and there was all the other people on the street. We piled them all in the back of the ambulance and we drove up to Chelsea Piers. I remember, I think it was Pelham Manor Fire Department we threw in the back. A couple of cops, a couple of EMTs, I think St. Claire's EMTs. We had about 20 people in the back I wouldn't doubt it. We just drove up to Chelsea Piers.

At that point, that's like, we just gave up on what we were doing and we just headed to Chelsea Piers and then, you know, everybody regrouped, found who they were working with. Looked like most of the guys who were by themselves, they lost their partners, teamed up with somebody else and about that point they were setting up the hospital at Chelsea Piers. Some of the guys that were by themselves, I noticed went over to the hospital and were working out of the field hospital, big help. But I didn't see any patients go up there, except for that one Firefighter. I sat there for the rest of the night.

Then the Lieutenant said I'm going back to the station. You got a vehicle? I said okay, I'll come with you. It had to be sometime, I guess, around 6:00. Like I said, I can't tell you how long it took to accomplish the tasks. I didn't notice the watch. I was on the north side of the north tower at 6 World Trade Center when the south tower collapsed. Got out of that, grouped, the north tower collapsed, got out of that, went to the college, tried to set up and that's when they said they blew up the school and there might be additional explosions and they said evacuate the downtown area and then I went up to Chelsea Piers.

I don't think I missed any, but that's about it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this? Anything at all?

A. I don't think so. Obviously as you know, there was a lot going on. Lots of people moving around. Obviously there was numerous firefighters and everybody was coming south. We were all trying to find a safe distance to triage and do our work, but they didn't tell you what was safe at that point.

MR. ECCLESTON: Right. Okay. The time is 8 o'clock, this concludes our interview with Thomas

Bendick.

File No. 911084

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE GUIDETTI

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: I'm Kevin McAllister from the office of administration. It's October 12th, 2001. We're on the eighth floor at Fire Department headquarters. It is 9:41 hours, and I'm here with Firefighter Pete Guidetti, who is going to recount his experiences from September 11th.

A. We'll start out I was in Ray Goldbach's office, the executive officer to the fire commission, discussing the things that had to be done that day around the office. Ray got a Nextel message that a plane went into the World Trade Center, and we both more or less thought it might have been a Piper Cub, a Cessna or something like that. We had no idea it was a commercial plane.

With that I look out the window, and I see the World Trade Center, I see the hole, I see the black smoke, and I just yelled for my boss, Commissioner Feehan. He came over. He saw it. He said, "Oh, my God. Let's go."

With that Ray says, "Do you want to come with me?" to Commissioner Feehan. Commissioner Feehan said, "No, I'm going to go

with Pete, my driver. He has all my gear and stuff in the car." Then Ray says, "All right, then I'll come with you." With that Tom Fitzpatrick and Tom McDonald were nearby. They asked Commissioner Feehan if they could come along also. He said absolutely.

I went down into the garage first to get into the car and get it ready for them, and a couple minutes later they came down and they got in the car with me.

Q. All four of them?

A. Four of them, Feehan in the front, McDonald, Ray Goldbach and Fitzpatrick in the back.

We exit the garage. We go over the Brooklyn Bridge. One lane was open and cleared for us. The other two lanes to the right of me were just bumper to bumper cars. I had this one clear shot over the Brooklyn Bridge with no interference of traffic.

Q. Could you see the Trade Center as you were driving over the bridge?

A. I didn't look to see it because, driving kind of fast, my eyes were glued to the

road. If they got glimpses of it -- we saw enough of it initially in Ray's office to know what we were heading into.

My plan of action was to take Chambers Street over to West Street and down West Street to the World Trade Center. Exiting off the Brooklyn Bridge, heading towards Chambers Street, Ray Goldbach said, "Pete, don't take Chambers Street. Make a U turn right here." With that I made the U turn, and now I'm heading past City Hall. With that a police ESU vehicle pulls from Park Row South in front of me. Commissioner Feehan says to follow him. So I got right on his tail and went right down to Broadway.

We got as far as Broadway and Dey Street, at which point I pulled the car half on the sidewalk, half in the street, because of all the people, the emergency apparatus coming in, rigs as well as ambulances and cop cars. So there wasn't an easy way to position the car other than to position it that way.

I popped the trunk. The four of them get out. Commissioner Feehan grabs his helmet and puts his fire coat on. There was a fire coat

in there that I believe Tom McDonald put on, or Fitzpatrick, I'm not sure.

I slammed the trunk down. I turn around and tell the people, "Get out of here. The building's coming down." Why I said that, I don't know. I just really felt strongly about it. Talking to the upper echelon in this job, nobody thought the building was coming down.

Q. So you said you told the people.

A. People. There were people all over the place. People were in a position they just wanted to watch. I said to them, "This building is coming down. Get out of here." A few woman scattered, "Let's get out of here, let's get out of here." People just stayed there. Boom, the second plane hits.

Q. So you're right on Broadway when the second plane hit.

A. Right on Broadway when the second plane hit. Shit and debris flying all over the place, people screaming, running for their lives, myself included. Where I ran, I ran five feet under an awning in front of a store.

When all hell calmed down from that, I

got into the car to reposition the car and get it out of the way. More ambulances were coming in. I went down Broadway to Liberty and made a left on Liberty. I parked the car about 20 or 30 feet off the corner.

Q. You're by yourself?

A. I'm by myself. These four guys -- Feehan, Fitzpatrick, McDonald and Ray Goldbach -- once I slammed that trunk and I turned to tell the people this building is coming down, they were already in motion. They were running down Dey Street.

Q. So you were by yourself when the second plane hit?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. My understanding with them was Feehan went one way, the other three went another way. When you have a mass exodus of people coming at you, it is very easy to see how four people could not stay together and would be separated.

So anyway, after repositioning the car and locking it up, I start heading down Liberty towards 10 and 10, not knowing where the command

post was. I figured let me go and hook up with Feehan -- he's my boss -- in case he needs anything.

I have no gear. I'm LSS. I was never issued bunker gear, helmets or any of that stuff because there's no need for me to have that.

Commissioner Feehan, First Deputy, went to major incidences. Most of the time I never had to take him to third or fourth alarms and things like that. He would let his chief of department run it, his chief of operations. In this particular case he wanted to go to this one, so we took him.

I was just going to go and hook up, try to find him, stay by his side: "Boss, do you want me to go get your phone? A glass of water?" In my capacity as an aide to him.

Q. At the command post?

A. At the command post. Wherever he is. Sometimes he's remote from the command post. If he happens to say, "Yeah, let's take a ride to this third, Pete," we would take a ride. Sometimes he stays in the background and sees how it's going.

My theory was let me go find my boss and see if he needs anything. I was glad to get the car out of the way. I didn't want it to be buried. I didn't want it to be inaccessible or in a position where we couldn't get it out of there should Commissioner Feehan five hours from now from that point want to go back to headquarters, get a change of clothes, whatever. That's what made me get that car out of there also.

So I get that car out of there. I'm heading down Liberty towards Church.

Q. On foot?

A. On foot.

I stop before Church, look up -- this is the second tower that got hit -- and I said, "Pete, don't go any further. This fucking building is coming down." I'm sorry I cursed.

Q. That's okay. This is your recollection, your words and your observation.

A. With that, within two seconds I hear a rumble. I'm still looking up. I didn't do anything. I'm still more or less -- not frozen but I'm standing there in awe how this building

is still staying up.

Q. You're on Liberty. Are you west of Church or east?

A. I'm before Church. I never made it to Church.

Q. You never got --

A. Never made it to Church.

Q. In between Broadway and Church?

A. Between Broadway and Church, looking up.

I stopped. Not that I froze, but I stopped. I said, "This fucking thing is coming down." With that I heard the rumble within a couple of seconds, and then I saw the brown, thick, malted milk dust cloud and smoke and whatever else coming down. It was rolling down with a roar like you couldn't believe.

I turned around and I start fucking running. Everybody's running for their fucking lives. Somebody runs by me, knocks into me, I fall down. The last thing I needed running away from a falling fucking building is to fall down.

But I manage to get up, start running again. By then the building had pancaked down.

The force of it just hit me in the back and blew me like ten feet into a police van.

Q. Was it just the air, the force of the air? The debris?

A. Air, dust, dirt, debris. Not heavy debris. It felt like I was shot in the back with a shotgun, pellets. All these pellets were hitting me, the force. The dust engulfed me, pushed me, literally -- I guess I was off my feet for ten feet. Then I banged into the police van, dropped down to the floor, scrambled to get around the building that was on the corner for protection.

Q. Now you're on Broadway and Liberty, do you think?

A. Yes.

Now I can't see anything. I'm huddling on my knees. I'm trying to feel if I'm bleeding, because I am on blood thinners.

Q. Did you hear anything at that point?

A. A lot of screaming, a lot of screaming. I was a little disoriented. I couldn't see anything. I was in the thick of it as far as the dust cloud was concerned. Day turned into night,

literally.

I started wandering, not knowing where I was heading, because I couldn't see street signs, I couldn't zero in on what fucking street I was on. But anyway I was heading east towards the seaport.

Q. Okay.

A. Midway in that trip from the west side to the east side, I hear more planes coming. I did not know it was our jet fighters. That was told to me later on by Dr. Hittman.

Q. Okay.

A. I just huddled up against the side of the building. There's no place to hide. You couldn't see anything. There is a building there; that I can determine. I just stayed up against it while I thought there was another plane coming in. But it wasn't. It was our jet fighters. That went overhead. I continued to walk.

I get to the seaport. That must be Water Street there.

Q. Yeah.

A. I see the blue sky for the first time.

So I start walking north. Somebody gave me a bottle of water. All I can remember saying to myself is, "I can't find Feehan. I can't find Feehan. They're all dead. They're all dead," meaning the four I took.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. I look up at the Brooklyn Bridge, loaded with people, mass exodus coming out of fucking Manhattan.

Q. On foot?

A. On foot.

[redacted] I keep walking, keep walking. I walked to the Manhattan Bridge, which had less people on it. Naturally people are going to go for the nearest thing that they can get out of the borough.

Q. Sure.

A. So the Manhattan Bridge wasn't bad to walk over. I got to the Manhattan Bridge, walked over.

Q. Did the second building come down while

you were there?

A. The second building had come down when I was midway -- I wouldn't even say midway. I would say after I started -- after I regained some composure, got off my knees from this huddled position, I started walking. Then the second building came down.

Q. This is before you got to the Manhattan Bridge?

A. Oh, way before. Way before I saw the blue sky.

Q. Okay.

A. Then as I'm walking up to the Manhattan Bridge, there was a car bomb. A car bomb went off in some car, because the cops were saying, "Come on, people, shit is happening. Let's go. Keep moving, keep moving."

You could see another plume of smoke. Somebody yelled, "It's a car bomb, a car bomb." I kept fucking walking towards the Manhattan Bridge. I got over the Manhattan Bridge. Some heavyset black lady just put her arm around me and walked with me and just talked to me and said everything's going to be all right and you'll be

okay.

I don't think I looked too good from --

Q. I saw you when you returned. I was at headquarters when you returned, and you were covered in dust and you were clearly disoriented and we got an EMT to look after you.

A. That I remember, yeah. They were very nice. I was sitting up front at Corey's desk. I know I had been crying a lot. I really thought all four of them were dead.

Basically they calmed me down. They told me I had to go and decontaminate in the shower, get rid of all the clothes. I got some spare clothes from Roy Katz, and I went and took the shower. Then they said, "You should go in for debriefing." That was on the seventh floor, I believe [redacted]

So I go. I get off and go on the seventh floor. I come in an office like this, a room like this. I sit at the head. There's six people: a marshal, a couple of EMTs, Ken Cox, a couple other people. I sit down. This one EMT

says, "If you want to talk, you can talk. If you don't want to, you don't have to. Whenever you feel like it, you can talk if you like or whatever."

I'm just sitting there. Then there was quiet. There was silence. They're all staring at me, six people staring at me. [redacted] So the EMT girl says, "Okay. That's perfectly okay if you just want to sit a while."

[redacted] "Okay. That's fine. If you want to come back later, you're more than welcome to. We're here to help you. We're here." I understood all that, but maybe had they asked me questions I would have been responsive to each question rather than six people staring at me, waiting for me to start talking.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't want to relive what I just did, what I just experienced, at that time. I'm doing it now, and I've done it quite a few times in telling friends and loved ones what I

experienced. At that time with six people staring at me, I said, "You know what, I want to go upstairs." And they let me go upstairs.

I just went back to my office. I sat down. One of the light duty guys got me a glass of water. Basically that was it. I stood around until around 4:00, I believe it was, 3:30. Then when I had the moment, I just left without saying anything to anybody, and I got in my old pickup truck and I headed home. That's all I wanted to do was go home.

Q. Sure.

A. [redacted] The next day I didn't come to work. Ray called me at home. A couple of people called me at home[redacted]

Q. Sure.

A. I said, "I've got to go back to work. I can't do this. I can never not go back." So the very next day I came in.

Basically I would say that's the whole thing in a nutshell. Was I as close to the

building as a lot of people were? Absolutely not. I was out of harm's way. The most that happened to me was the force of air, dust and pieces, tiny pieces, of concrete, plaster that just engulfed me, knocked me to the ground. I got a little scrape on the arm.

[redacted]

Q. Yeah. You were disoriented, but it was understandable after what you'd experienced. I saw you that afternoon.

A. Yeah. I felt I had all my faculties but yet something was missing. I couldn't pinpoint it. I wasn't hurting. I wasn't like, "Oh, my shoulder is killing me. My arms are bleeding. I'm cut." No physical pain. I just felt I wasn't right. I knew I wasn't right. Did I think I was in shock? No, again, because, as I said, I made it back here on my own.

What else could I add to it? Other than the fact that I saw one distinguished

jumper; several others, but the position I was in when several others were jumping, I didn't really get a good look at them, but the one I did.

I don't know what more to say other than I don't know what companies were where. I couldn't tell you if Engine 33, which was my company, was on Church and Vesey Street. I couldn't tell you that. It all happened so fast. We got there, the second plane hit within a couple of minutes. That just totally confused all these people even more, as well as myself and I'm sure firefighters and Feehan and the rest of them.

Basically that's it. I didn't see any firefighters get injured. I didn't see any rigs in position that I can say, yeah, Kevin, I remember 33 engine being on the corner of Church and Vesey. As I started to run, there was an empty rig. I didn't see any of that.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't get close enough.

As far as getting Feehan closer, maybe if I would have went Chambers Street to West, maybe I would have gotten him closer rather than

him have to walk from Broadway and Dey to the command center.

Q. Right.

A. I might have come in the other way and might have gotten him there -- I don't know. These are things I question myself, why did I go so fast.

Q. He made it there on foot. He made it to West Street, and he was on the west side of West Street. So either way -- he didn't get hurt before he got there. He was hurt after he got to the west side of West Street.

A. All right.

Again, I said I think I drove too fast. I got him there too fast. I didn't have some needle, life-saving syringe here that I had to go so fast that we had to get it there. I was taking a 72-year-old man to probably one of the most horrendous things that he would ever see -- had seen in his career or would ever see, had he been still alive. I question myself about that. Maybe if you would have just take it easier a little bit you wouldn't have gotten him there so fast. Ray chimed in with, "Did you ever stop to

think by getting him there that fast he saved 200 lives by giving an order here or giving an order there?"

Q. Right.

A. That kind of made me feel a little bit better. But I do question why wasn't I with him. I normally am in the few times we do go to scenes. Unless it's something like, "Pete, just sit in the car. I'll be back. I'm just going to go check in." Then I would just stay with the car.

But I had this sense of -- I don't know, is it guilt or is it --

Q. Some people describe it as a survivor's guilt.

A. That's what I've been experiencing lately. A couple of times it entered my mind that I was pissed off that I wasn't one of them, which is -- I don't like to even say that. But kind of like -- I don't know. I think the survivors suffer more than the instant impact of death, you know.

I'm assuming and hoping and praying that as Feehan was running as well as all the

other guys that there was a bang on the head, knocked them unconscious and then whatever happened afterwards he didn't feel. That's quick. Okay? That's kind of a quick way of going.

The people who survived that now, that walk away from that, is that survivor's guilt? Is that, "Why wasn't I there too and why wasn't I -- should it be a lot easier if I was fucking dead than to go through life day in and day out like this, questioning?"

Q. Why by an act of fate did I survive and another guy is dead.

A. Right. Oh, yeah.

Q. People are so racked by that.

A. Little things too to make a person not be caught up in that collapse, like Chief Ganci giving Nigro an order, "Go check the side of the building. Tell me what we've got, Dan. Tell Steve Mosiello, 'Steve, get me two good trucks over here.'" So those two guys had a direct order. They leave Ganci. They survive. Ganci is dead.

My boss, with three of his close

people, all four going down the block at the same time, same rate of speed, because people coming out and you can only run so fast or walk so fast, they went one way, Feehan went by himself another way. Feehan eventually got to the command post. Where these guys went I'm not too familiar with. I think Ray tried to hook up with the commissioner, rightfully so. Fitzpatrick and McDonald, I don't know where they were headed.

To make a long story short with that particular statement, why Feehan goes this way, these three go that way, these three live, Feehan dies. Feehan goes this way, his aide moves the car this way, starts heading towards hooking up with him, he lives, Feehan dies.

Q. There's no explanation for it. Everybody experienced the same thing, and why one person got hit with something that ended up killing him and another person didn't, I don't know what the explanation is.

A. When you get in that thought process of thinking about all that, you probably just ransack your brain for answers when you can't come up with them. Even discussing it with other

people, nobody is going to say, "Well, this is why" and give you a direct answer. There's probably just a lot of things involved with it.

I don't understand why nobody -- when I say "nobody," the people I spoke to, the upper echelon, your Fitzpatrick, your Ray Goldbach. These are knowledgeable guys. They're fire officers. They told me, "We did not think the building was coming down."

The first words out of my mouth when I slammed that trunk lid was to tell these people, "Get out of here. This building's coming down." I always felt those World Trade towers were a firefighter's nightmare. I always told my wife I do not want to be working when we have a fire in there.

About 20 years ago when I was full duty -- I was full duty for 16 years before I got hurt and became high duty LSS. So about 20 years ago I'm in front of the firehouse. It was a Friday night. I'll never forget this.

Q. In Manhattan?

A. Manhattan, 33 Engine, which is buried under the rubble. I'm standing in front of

quarters. It's the 12 to 3 watch, summer night, beautiful night. A civilian is walking by, stop, he's looking in, the apparatus doors are up. I start talking to him. He turns out to be an architectural engineer. He builds high-rise buildings, skyscrapers.

I said, "Let me ask you a question. Can I ask you a question?" He said, "Yeah, sure." I said, "The World Trade Center --" He says, "Yes." These are my words, Kevin, on my father's grave and my mother's grave. I said, "Let me ask you a question. If a 747 out of Newark topped off with jet fuel crashes into the 80th story of one of the stories, will it topple the top 30 stories?" "Oh, no, it's not designed to do that. It's not designed to do that the way we constructed this. We took things like that into consideration in the building of it. That would not happen."

It didn't topple.

Q. Right, well, that's true.

A. At that time when I ask this guy this question, I'm picturing a plane going in, blowing out loads of floors, fully loaded, 747 I quoted,

topped off with jet fuel, would it topple the 30 stories. He said no.

Did I think when I said that day these buildings are coming down, I didn't think they were going to pancake all the way down. I'm looking up at that second building saying how are those stories above it staying up. The hole was huge. It looked like toothpicks, four toothpicks in the corner were holding the rest of the stories above it up.

In me saying that these buildings are coming down, I thought it was going to collapse, it was going to topple.

Q. From above?

A. From above, like 30 stories, 20. Whatever was left above the plane crash in either tower would just give way and go this way and come down into the street. I did not think the whole building would pancake down. They were designed, from what I understand, to do that. 20 years ago the guy didn't tell me that. He didn't turn around and say, "Oh, no, you don't have to worry about the building toppling. However, you have a strong possibility of it pancaking down on

itself because it's primarily steel construction. Steel expands one inch for every thousand degrees rise in temperature. So you're popping rivets, you're twisting beams."

But again, he didn't say that. He just said it's not coming down.

Q. And they spoke a lot about impact. Apparently the building was designed to withstand an impact from a 707, which was the plane of the day. But it doesn't appear anybody considered the impact of a fire with all that combustible material added to it.

A. Right, that fireball, that massive amount of jet fuel burning instantly. It all goes instantly.

That's it. I was amazed at why I thought they were coming down, and I was amazed at that question the way I worded it 20 years ago, was the truth. The reason why I used the 747 in asking this guy that question back then was because 747 was the biggest plane we had. Topped off with jet fuel, it's going to have the maximum amount of fuel. Right out of Newark, you're not going to burn much to hit the World

Trade Center.

Q. A flight to Europe or somewhere else.

A. I didn't think of terrorism back then either. I'm just saying an accident, the fog, something, a plane is going to go into the World Trade Center. I'm going to give you a scenario, what do you think, you're an architectural engineer.

So I found that kind of strange as well as that day looking up at them saying they're coming down, saying it to people, saying it to myself with the second one, and then actually seeing it come down, looking up at it as it's starting to come down.

500 feet to the base of the building, maybe, 600 feet, I would say I was, going by the map and the schedule in the map, one inch equals 600 feet, on one of the maps I have. I was trying to find out where I was. I used that. I would say about 600 feet from the base of the building.

Q. Sure.

A. Which to me 110 stories up, it's coming down, is a little too close for me.

Q. Right.

A. If somebody told me, "you want to stand 600 feet away from the base of the World Trade Center when it starts to collapse?" I would say, "Absolutely not. Get me ten fucking blocks away."

But anyway, again, I was out of harm's way, because I wouldn't be here now. It's just, all of it, the hearing of the second plane exploding, people jumping, losing my boss, losing friends, my company's buried, just putting everything all together, I have no words to describe what I feel. I'm sure a lot of people feel most of what I feel. Some feel worse because of being closer, seeing a lot more worse things than I did, like body parts. I really didn't see any body parts. Some people saw that, who witnessed that, who were closer. That company that was in the stairwell, what was it, 6 Truck, 9 Engine.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean, talk about questioning fate and everything; right?

Basically I guess that's my whole day

that day.

Q. I appreciate that.

A. I don't know if I was of help. I hope I was of help.

Q. Yeah, absolutely. Everybody's recollections are unique, and we appreciate the fact that you shared yours with us.

A. Do you have any specific questions you want to ask like -- I never made it to 10 and 10. The command center wasn't there anyway.

Q. Sure.

A. That's number one, had I gotten there. Had I been a little faster, I probably would have been by 10 and 10 and God knows would I be here now. I don't know.

All these questions you run through your mind. I'm thankful to be alive. I do think my career with the Fire Department is over, after 31 years and losing a boss of 11 years and my company being buried, again, and me coming close to either being killed or seriously injured. I think I want to spend some time with the wife and the family and the grandchildren.

Q. Sure.

A. You've got to remember something, I'm light duty LSS. Okay? For a light duty LSS guy to come close to buying it at the scene of a fire, I mean, that's a little scary. I have no equipment. Most aides to like the chief of department, chief of operations, they're full-duty guys. They get out of their car, they're throwing helmets on, coats, boots, they're going with their boss, they're staying by their side.

[redacted]

[redacted]So I guess that helps me in the fact that I wasn't by Feehan's side, because in a situation like that I don't think anybody who's [redacted]with no equipment and a short-sleeve shirt should be at the base of a building that parts of planes are coming down, debris is coming down, bodies are coming down, eventually the whole building is coming down.

So maybe I helped my own guilt of not being next to my boss's side with that. I feel it's a pretty legitimate excuse, if that's the word I want to use, "excuse." I don't even know anymore.

But basically that's it. What else? I couldn't find Feehan's car. Dismay held the marshals for days. Then eventually they did find it.

Q. Yeah.

A. That's it, I guess, Kevin. I don't know what else.

Q. Okay. That was great.

A. My whole story.

Q. That was very detailed, and that was a good account. I appreciate that.

A. Okay. Thank you. If there's anything else you need, you think of, one single question or something.

Q. Let me wind it up?

MR. McALLISTER: It's 1013 hours on October 12th, 2001, and we're going to conclude the interview now. Thank you.

File No. 9110085

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOSEPH CAHILL

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 15, 2001. The time is 1217 hours. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. My name is Joseph Cahill. I'm a Paramedic. My office title is Citywide advance life support coordinator and I work in the office of EMS operations.

Q. Also present is?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Joe, can you tell me about the events of September 11, 2001?

A. Okay. Well, I was running late. So I was on an odd train, which means that when things started, I was actually in the train in New Jersey. I heard one of the other passengers yell out holy fuck. And I looked out the window. One of the twin towers was visibly on fire. You could see the red of the smoke or

the red through the smoke from the side of the building.

We got to Hoboken station. Naturally the PATH train to World Trade Center was closed. World Trade Center is the only stop on that -- New York stop on that train. So I took the 33 Street train to Christopher Street with the intention of walking into the scene, which is essentially what I did. I walked in about halfway down. A postal employee gave me a ride in his postal truck. He gave me a ride to, I guess it must be Vesey Street.

He dropped me off, drove me down whatever street this is. I don't know what that is.

Q. I think that's --

A. But I remember coming down through here and I don't know, maybe he drove me down --

Q. West Street?

A. Yes, I think he might have. Because I remember coming straight down. I don't remember making this zigzag, coming straight -- yes, and ending up here. He let me out on the zebra stripes over here. My original thought was to go to OEM, because I routinely work OEM for the Chief during other emergencies, but I figured I would find out what was

going on a little more first.

Let's see. At that point I remember seeing -- it was a proprietary ambulance. I don't believe it was part of the 911 contract there. Asked them if they knew where the command center was. They kind of shrugged, threw some equipment over their shoulders and we both walked up to Church Street, where there seemed to be a couple of other units there.

I spoke to them briefly. I think there was an officer there but I don't remember who. That looked like it was under control. So I walked back down Vesey. I remember seeing Frank Larkin from the Secret Service run by at a dead run. That just stuck in my head.

I got all the way down to Vesey and West Side Drive and I ran into Chief Villani. Talked to him briefly. I looked around, down here, adjacent to the Trade Center, there seemed to be a lot of vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks, up the West Side Highway. There was also a lot of vehicles with more coming in.

I told Chief Villani listen, it doesn't look like there is anyone staging. I will walk up there and start organizing that, but I don't have a radio because I came in on foot. He said okay. I don't remember if

it was then or when I got up here further that I ran into Pinky. I don't know Pinky's last, real name. He is a Lieutenant at Bellevue. A little Spanish guy. I don't know his last name. I think it might have been at this point, because I couldn't have gotten much past Barclay when the first building collapsed.

From where I was standing, wherever that was, it was definitely south across here somewhere. There is a pedestrian walk, but it was definitely right below this pedestrian walkway. From where I stood, Chief Villani had said -- he pointed out one of these buildings. I can't, without being there and looking at it, I'm not sure which one of these it is around the Winter Garden.

But he said the command post is over there. If you need anything come over here. I said you know, I told him about the radio thing. I got about here, which is where we started to put staging together, when one of the towers collapsed and it looked for all the world like it collapsed right on where he indicated the command center to be.

I don't remember who told me before the collapse, but it might have been Chief Villani. It might have been somebody else, told me that Chief

Goldfarb was in the command post. At that point truthfully, Pinky and I, because sometime shortly after that we hooked up, or shortly before that. At that point I thought Pinky was probably the highest ranking guy still alive on the scene.

We proceeded up above the walkway, started to organize a staging area there the second time and then the second building collapsed, drove us from that position up further. Is this College of Insurance? Do you know which one of these is Stuyvesant?

Q. Yes, it's up here.

A. So when we were driven out the second time -- so maybe there is another walkway up here.

Q. Yes, there is --

A. Then it's not this walkway. It's this walkway.

Q. Pedestrian walkway? Where you were talking about when the first building came down you were by the pedestrian walkway.

A. I was between these two walkways.

Q. Just south of Chambers?

A. Yes, I think so. Chambers, Warren, something like that.

Q. This map could have been better if it was

extended more.

A. When we got driven out by the second collapse, we went up and I remember we started setting up right next to Stuyvesant High School. Then we got the word that there was a gas leak in there and that we had to evacuate that area. We were driven back further up. But that was later on.

I remember talking to an ass load of Hatzolah guys. They must have had 6 units on the scene. There was a bunch of our units. Before the first collapse, yes, I must have been up here. Because before the first collapse I had made it just about to where the vehicles started, where we were starting to organize staging. I remember seeing George Burbano from Battalion 22.

Q. 22?

A. He was off duty, so I gave him my work sweat shirt, so he had something so the cops wouldn't try to eject him from the scene. I remember he was helping me move vehicles. I remember running from both collapses with him, both of the tower collapses. Then I saw -- I don't remember whose shield numbers these are. I remember I saw Rich, not Rich, Mitch Berkowitz, who was also off duty. I don't know if he is light duty or off

duty. I remember all he was wearing was his medic blue shirt, dark blue shirt and a pair of jeans, which might have mean that's what he grabbed out of the car when he jumped out on his way to the station or might have meant he was doing retrieval while his wrist healed up. I don't know.

I remember collecting these two shield numbers for some reason, of people that were there.

Q. That would be 1172?

A. 74.

Q. 74, sorry, 1174 and 3871?

A. 3871. I had given these shield numbers to one of the new Captains, Debbie Monte, a week or so afterward, because she was riding the desk here that was keeping track of the list.

So anyway, once we got beaten out of the position for a third time, we got from the gas leak, actually before that. When we were beaten out by the second collapse, I went into the Borough of Manhattan Community College, looked for a phone. I finally found one in the security office. I called my office downstairs. I asked them to -- I asked Mery Bento, who is one of the secretaries down there, to page out the Division ALS coordinators. The first one she could get

a hold of was to take a vehicle, drive to the pharmacy, find a pharmacist, get 10 cases of everything, get 20 cases of asthma meds and -- I think I ended up with 20 cases of everything, 50 cases of asthma meds and eye drops, because it looked like we were going to be dug in for a long time.

There must have been a significant period of time between the second tower collapse and when we got beat out of the position by the gas leak. I don't think the gas leak is on there. We got beat out of position by the gas leak, because we had started to set up a walking wounded treatment, a holding area in the gym of Borough of Manhattan Community College. The reason I say that we must have -- must have been some amount of time, we started seeing patients in that time period.

There was -- I don't know who owns it -- there was some kind of blood mobile. No, you know what it was, it was one of those blood pressure screening vans, but it was a respectable size RV. We set that up as a MERV at one point. They had a PAA. We put -- I think we used a crew from Hatzolah and Tommy Carlstrom, I think we put in there, to kind of interface everything and make sure everything stayed on

an even keel.

Hatzolah had a huge amount of equipment there, because they were in their private vehicles. So we grabbed a couple of their guys and a full set of equipment and threw it in there. I don't think we ever got to use it though. We started seeing a lot of patients with crap in their eyes, a lot of patients with inhaled stuff and that's the only reason I knew we needed to get those -- bulk up on those specific two things of medication.

I also called Jimmy Geraci, who apparently had seen either the real life version or on TV on radio, was starting to crank up his guys, get his disaster trucks on the road. I gave him a heads up that what we are going to be needing a lot of is eye wash, eye flush, stuff like that. I don't know whatever happened to those trucks because right after I had that conversation with him, we got moved out because of the gas leak. My understanding is they finally got to the scene at some other point. Where we were north of the job, it never came there. I understand they got to the south part somehow.

After the gas leak we went further north. I don't remember how much further north. I could point

the building out on the scene. On the scene, if you are looking northward, Borough of Manhattan Community College is a brick building on the right-hand side. It has got a little underpass to let one of the roads through. That line of route continues up another block or a building or two without appreciably getting higher.

The next really tall building is where we tried to reform again. It's got something to do with the phone company. It's an AT&T office building, something like that. I don't remember. It would be relatively easy to point out on the scene. We stopped there, started getting under control again and somewhere in that point, I started to walk down and chase straggling vehicles, and head personnel up. I ran into Chief Hirth, Lieutenant Cacciola, Grace.

Q. Grace?

A. And Mark Stone, who looked pretty worse for wear. Essentially they told me at that point that we were going to start rallying up at 23 Street at the piers. We were going to start putting together a thing up there. I said okay. I'm going to come down a little bit and start chasing stragglers up so that they aren't wandering around down here with no direction.

At that point I saw Jimmy Schrang. I started talking to him. My absolute favorite story of this whole thing. Jimmy Schrang goes, you know, my friends from Bosnia called me today to see if I was okay.

Anyway we took one of these cross streets. It's probably like Warren or Murray, because we didn't have to cut through any of these buildings. We didn't have to zig around any of these buildings. We came over here. Every once in a while we would run into somebody. We would send them up to Chelsea Piers.

Then we got -- I kind of imagine it was over here somewhere. No, because we couldn't see City Hall, so it must have been on Church Street somewhere. It's Church or whatever there, West Street. We started working our way down. Somewhere in here Jimmy saw a guy over here. I saw a guy over here in uniform. He said I will go back to talk to him, I will go over and talk to him. I will meet you back here in a minute.

I went over here to talk to him and found that "him" was the furthest outlier of a big treatment sector that was here. I don't remember if it was here. I don't think it was up here. I don't remember seeing St. Paul's. I don't know how -- maybe it was further up this way. I do remember that this side of

the block had a small --

Q. This side of Church?

A. Yes, the west side of Church had a -- some kind of courtyard, like a building courtyard that was securely fenced off, because I remember seeing cops climbing over the fence, but it had trees, little trees. Not great big jongando trees, but little trees.

Anyway, I ran into a treatment sector here. Lieutenant Platt was in charge, Ed Platt. He and I talked for a little while. There was a lot of units there. There was maybe 4 or 5 FDNY units. There was two units from Jersey City, at least. There was a couple of commercial ambulances there. There were a couple of voluntary ambulances there. What was also there was a suspicious package on one of these side streets.

So I told him that, you know, the direction that we had gotten was to fall back to 23 Street and Chelsea Piers, at which point he said well, who gave you that direction. The truth of the matter is that Chief Hirth didn't say Joe, go get everybody and make everybody fall back. So I really didn't have a good answer for him. So he had a radio, so he was able to

actually reach Chief Peruggia, who at least temporarily told to us hold position there.

We organized these guys. I started working essentially as a staging officer. I walked down the row of ambulances that were probably scattered around over here, who's on your crew, what's your unit, where do you work from. What vehicle you got. Be ready to move in 10 minutes because we may end up bugging out. A short while later we were given the order to fall back, but not to Chelsea Piers, to Greenwich and something. Greenwich and something. No, it was -- I never got south of the Battery Tunnel over the entrance. That was only way way later. That was like 6:00 the next morning. It was Greenwich and something. I don't know. Oh, you know what, it was right in front of the Travelers Insurance building because we used the umbrella as a marker. This two story umbrella logo thing.

So at some point in my walking down there and starting to do the staging and writing down the units, a fellow walks up named Harold Watkins, and says yo. He is in a polo shirt, one of our uniform polo shirts and uniform pants and shoes and looks well, just kind of bewildered, but looks like he is in uniform and

ready to go. I said hey, how you doing. Who are you. He said oh, my name is Harold Watkins, I'm a fire cadet and I work at the Fire Museum on my off -- as well.

I saw this all going on so I thought I would come and lend a hand. So Harold and I went around and did all this interviewing. When the order came to move, actually John Clair came through there as well while we were there. But I don't know. Time really didn't have that much relevance to me. There were no patients under my care so there was no time vitals, none of that stuff. We were just there for the duration of the job. So time really didn't mean much to me.

At some point we started to bug out. Some of the vehicles had trouble. One of them had burst a radiator hose or had a leaky radiator hose, so we started to organize getting a couple of vehicles jump started. John Clair had Joe Fell from the State with him.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. Yes, just as I remember stuff. We pulled out of there. We had to jump start two or three vehicles. One vehicle had, like I said, a leaking hose so we put them further up in the line and said, you know, if you

can't make it any further, pull on to the sidewalk out of the way. We told all the vehicles behind them if you see them pull out on the sidewalk out of the way, you need to stop and pick them up, you know.

The reason we were given for why we were moving was that 7 World Trade Center was going to collapse or was at risk of collapsing. So we must have been somewhere in this area where we would have had a problem with that. But I honestly don't remember. It all looks -- I'm fairly familiar with this, actually this, from West Side Highway east almost to the river or certainly past City Hall from Liberty or not even -- from the Battery Tunnel opening north to Vesey, I'm fairly familiar with because I have travelled through there commuting a lot.

I drove through there the day after, the morning of the 12th and I didn't recognize most of the places I was. It all looked very different. It all looked like those videos you see of Pongo Pongo, a little island in the South Pacific has had a volcanic eruption and all the ash is falling out of the air. It was just -- I don't know exactly where we were.

We must have been up in this area somewhere. I know there was a physician's group -- would have been

on the north, or the south of one of these streets.

Q. Like Warren, Murray?

A. Something like that. We had to have been in that range because --

Q. On this street?

A. Yes, because they were worried about us. They wanted us to move the treatment sector because of 7 World Trade Center was imminently to collapse, which, of course, it did. In fact it did while we were moving.

So this guy Harold Watkins and I, not having a vehicle, everybody else was moving out, I told Ed, you know what, we will start walking back up and we will meet you there. There was a volunteer unit and I don't remember from where, that was parked on the -- would have been the west part of the intersection. It was an odd shaped intersection too, in that it was almost like-- it was a triangular intersection where there was two roads coming north-south that came together, joined -- I wonder if we weren't here. I don't think so. We might have been here up by like West Broadway, because -- yes, you know what, I think we were on Broadway. We would have been right in here between Broadway and West, like around Murray or Park.

The police had one of these eastern cross streets blocked off, like I said, with the suspicious package, which looked like a suitcase or an old fashioned briefcase.

So Watkins and I walked back up and met the rest of the group at Greenwich, at the Travelers building. Got to chasing a few stragglers up. The rest of the group set up there. I don't know what happened to Platt. I didn't see him again. I don't remember where he ended up. I did see when I got to the Travelers building, which maybe that wasn't where we were originally headed. Maybe that isn't Greenwich and something. Maybe they ended up setting up another treatment sector somewhere else.

When we got to the Travelers building, there was a huge amount of units. There must have been 20, 25 units there. But there was an enormous amount of people. There was a queue of like 3,000 people waiting to help. There was some enormous firefighter. I don't know if he was our Firefighter or from somewhere else. The bunker gear, he didn't have the jacket so you couldn't really tell, but his bunker gear didn't look like ours. I don't remember why. It was the wrong color or the wrong something. His job was essentially

to organize the volunteers.

What he did was he organized them. They were moved over here. They had a little briefing. Then they moved them over here. Then they had another little briefing. Then they moved them over here. They essentially just paraded them around this section, because there wasn't anything for them to do, because they couldn't send them into the unsafe zone, but there was huge amounts of people.

So again, I remember seeing there, I remember seeing Tommy from Bellevue. What the hell was his name. Used to be Chief Pascale's aide when I was their Division coordinator. I will think of it. I can picture him. Eppinger, was there. There were at least two other Lieutenants there. So I slipped into the familiar -- now familiar role of staging officer and Harold Watkins and I walked around to all the units, who are you? Where are you from? What are your shield numbers? You know. All right, take a roll of 2 inch tape. What's your normal 911 designation, good. Put that on the windshield. Don't have one? Okay, you are now Jersey City one. You are Jersey City two. We labeled all the windshields with who they were. We stayed there for a while. Again I don't really know,

time was really kind of meaningless. I know we had at least one command car there. One of the supervisors had a car, because we were storing some stuff in it. Now my briefcase ended up in Pinky's car real early on.

So we didn't see a whole lot of patients there. I don't think we saw any patients there. Sometime during the day a guy in what looked like -- he was in battle dress fatigues, he looked like he was from the National Guard, but I don't know. David something. Came up, said hey, you know, we got a hospital over in the Borough of Manhattan Community College and we got no transport resources. So the supervisors and I and him talked about that for a minute.

I got the assignment to walk down there with him, see what was going on down there, because as far as we knew at that point, at least in that location, by Travelers, we had abandoned the location in BMCC. Went back there and there was in fact a really big operation cranking up there, between Port Authority and I don't even know where they were from.

An emergency room physician had brought like a bunch of his staff and the Red Cross was helping out

and they were unloading truck loads of shit into this place. Stretchers, you know, little folding stretchers the Red Cross had, blankets, medicines, not a lot of medicines, like a lot of eye wash and aspirin and stuff like that. The Port Authority occupied another piece of it and they were bringing in all kinds of stuff. Brought cases of rubber boots, work gloves, flashlights, all kinds of stuff like that.

What essentially -- I came in agreement with the doctor that was running there is that, you know what, as long as the Port Authority will let us park, because they were controlling that block. As long as they will let us park there, we will keep an ALS and a BLS there. You use them? Send somebody up to us. Let us know where they are going and we will send you another bus.

That's where we kept it. We had a lot of problems with parking and stuff, moving around. That's where we kept it. I don't think they transported maybe a handful of patients. They saw a huge amount of patients, flushed their eyes and stuff. I know a bunch of the Port Authority guys went out to the pharmacies and brought stuff back.

After that, a couple of different times, I

went back and forth between those two locations, Travelers and BMCC, but I don't think they really saw a whole lot of patients. They ended up setting up food there, so they probably saw a whole lot of EMS people. What?

Sometime later on, I don't even remember how much later, I walked down to Chambers, which is what, this one, to the command post at Chambers and west side, and I saw Chief McCracken, talked to some of the other people there. Saw Lieutenant Cronin, and saw John Clair and was given the direction to start organizing, breaking down the BMCC hospital, because no one was aware that BMCC was there. They had already set up another hospital in Stuyvesant, which they are literally 3 blocks apart.

So I went back, talked to the doc, I said listen, you know, there is another hospital right down the block. They are going to catch all the patients because they are closer to the scene. What we would like to do is split up your materials and your personnel, send some up it up to the pier and some of it down to this other hospital. It's a more effective way of doing it.

He was very amenable to that. What that

ended up meaning is we split up his personnel from the equipment, took all the equipment that they didn't want to -- stuff they wanted to take, I mean, obviously was theirs. But then I think they only took the expensive equipment that they had personally brought.

We moved everything else down to Stuyvesant, which we used I guess a couple of busses from -- I want to say Metro Care, but I'm not sure if that's right. It was definitely one of the big commercials. They had 25 units lined up on the West Side Highway at that time. Like 18 of them ALS. Some of them from as far away as Connecticut. We used 2 or 3 of them, and there was a van there, a regular passenger van from the academy with a driver. I don't know that guy's name, but we used those three vehicles to move the stuff down into Stuyvesant. Put stuff in Stuyvesant.

At sometime during this, the Division 6 ALS coordinator, Al Suriel, arrived with a truck full of pharmaceuticals from our pharmacy. Had to be early on, because I remember bringing some of them up to Borough of Manhattan Community College and trading them for stuff we need. Truthfully, my whole day from that point on essentially doing what I do best, take a little stuff from over here, give it to this guy over

here. Oh, what, you have extra, good, take that from over here, bring that over there. Take some stuff extra from over here, bring it back to the first place.

Q. Bargaining?

A. Yes, and just, unfortunately, the whole thing -- well, what we obviously didn't know at the time, but unfortunately the whole thing was, you know, when you work the marathon in one of the tents, what happens is that like about two and a half hours in, everybody starts getting really antsy and if you don't stay on top of controlling the tent, what you end up with is 400 sets of IV fluids set up around the tent and that's exactly what was going on.

People were starting to get antsy to see patients. There was no one to see. I think a lot of movement of equipment was probably unnecessary, but kept people out of trouble too, which is okay. They did see -- I know Stuyvesant and BMCC saw a large amount of crap in the eyes, crap in the lungs. Got a boo-boo. Doesn't need a stitch, no, good, I'm back to work kind of thing.

So that's pretty much what I did the rest of the night. Al Suriel had a MUP student with him, because he was at refresher when he got paged. Her

first name was Ronnie, I don't know what her last name is.

Q. Were they there prior to the collapse or after the collapse?

A. Probably not, probably not.

Q. We are mainly interested in people that were there prior.

A. Then we are done. I'm already into the evening at this point.

Q. Anything else you would like to add? Comments, feelings.

A. No, I think that probably the biggest impression I got out of this whole thing was this is probably as close to being in an infantry unit that gets overrun. We are scattered everywhere. Nobody knew where anybody was. Nobody knew who was in charge. It really felt for a moment that I was in Apocalypse Now, where Martin Sheen goes, where is your CO? Ain't that you? No. Uh-oh.

Let's pause for a second.

MR. ECCLESTON: Pausing the tape at 12:50.

(Pause)

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being restarted again at 1:10.

Q. Can you please continue with the events.

A. Yes, I mean I think where we left off was essentially recounting what happened the rest of my night, which was at different points shortages would show up in the Stuyvesant hospital. They need more fluid, I would find fluid for them. They need more eye drops, I would find eye drops for them. I remember we moved the multi-lator and the big M tank from the van at the bureau of training center, brought it inside, set it up, treat asthma. We made a little asthma booth out.

After that, there was a whole bunch of false starts where BOT were going to take people back and eventually Al Suriel and Ronnie went back with them to BOT because they were both in refresher and MUP class respectively.

I took over control of the pharmacy truck. I went to the command center and essentially stood by there for direction, because -- I hung out in the MERV for a while. All this stuff, it was already dark by this time. It was already early the next morning.

Then at the end of the day I walked back up to Christopher Street and another postal employee gave me a lift.

Q. Back to the train?

A. Back to the train. I took the train home.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this in regard to the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. You know what, I have been over it because I'm sure everybody else has as well. I have been over it in my head a great deal since then. I can't think of anything we could have significantly done better, but truthfully, the section I was in up on West Side Drive certainly north of Chambers for most of the day was not where the action was. It really wasn't where, you know, it wasn't where command post got collapsed on or treatment sectors got collapsed on. It certainly wasn't where I expect any of the missing, our missing, EMS missing people, would be from.

So I don't know.

MR. ECCLESTON: Okay. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 113 hours.

File No. 9110086

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT BRUCE MEDJUCK

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time is now 1123 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. Today I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title, your assigned command area of the Fire Department.

LIEUTENANT MEDJUCK: Bruce Medjuck, Lieutenant, assigned to EMS operations.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present at the interview today is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade disaster task force.

Q. Lieutenant Medjuck, we're going to ask you if you could please give us a synopsis of the events that happened September 11th, 2001, in regards to yourself.

A. Okay. Begin?

Q. Yes.

A. I don't know. Tuesday morning I was up -- actually I had done my little tasks in the office, some small tasks. Then I had come

upstairs to the office of medical affairs, and I was talking to Paramedic Delgado when we received a phone call from a representative of the New York State Department of Health. Mr. Farrell called in and asked us what was going on at the World Trade Center. We were completely unaware of what was going on. It had to be about 8:30, quarter to 9. We were not sure what time it was.

So we walked over to Laurie Santo, who was sitting at a computer that had CAD and we looked it up, the call, and she said that a plane had just hit the World Trade Center.

So at that point Dr. Cherson walked over and told Manny, "Let's go." The pagers started going off, that the plane had just hit, you know, the group pager.

So I actually ran downstairs to the office. By the time I ran back to operations, Lieutenant Mann and Lieutenant Nevins were getting radios from Lieutenant Frick and they were running out of the building.

So Captain Olszewski and I -- I grabbed a set of radios and all of my equipment. We went downstairs to Captain Olszewski's car, which was

parked in the outdoor parking lot. We got into one of the Chevy Luminas. I'm not sure of the number.

I had called the RCC supervisor, which was Lieutenant Vitale at the time, and asked her to log us on, responding into the incident. We actually had to respond there down Flatbush Avenue without my lights and sirens trying to get through traffic.

Janice was driving, and we got into the -- they let us onto the Brooklyn Bridge. There was nothing on the Brooklyn Bridge. There were just emergency vehicles, all unmarked emergency vehicles responding in front of us.

I would note as we were coming out of the girder part of the Brooklyn Bridge just as you could see it clearing. We saw when we first started to go over the Brooklyn Bridge, the building smoking, tower one smoking, heavy black smoke coming out. Just as we came out of the bridge, we could see again the towers also with the plane come and slam into tower two.

There was like a little bit of delay, and then all of a sudden this fire ball just shot

out of the opposite side of the tower. When we saw -- I said to Janice: Did you see that, did you see that? She said no, I had my hands on the steering wheel; I'm watching the road.

So we came off of the bridge, and we actually went straight onto Chambers Street, where we came out. You know how the bridge lets you off by Chambers Street. We were trying to cut through all this traffic on Chambers Street in a car without any lights or sirens. Janice is driving as best as she could.

We cut across to West Street, and on West Street we cut left and went over to Vesey. By that time there were emergency vehicles all over the place. I told Janice just park the car on the corner of West and Vesey, which I marked on the map with a 1 next to it. We parked actually on the southwest corner.

We got out, and just as we got out of the car we had noticed -- we went right up to Chief Gombo who was there already. He was with Ross Terranova. Ross was operating the radio. Lieutenant Davila was just coming up to talk to Chief Gombo, along with Captain Pinkus.

Who else? I think that was really it for supervisors. I noticed out of the corner of my eye Chief Ganci's driver/aide Steve Mosiello. He was there.

Chief Gombo told myself and Janice -- he said something and then Rene Davila disappeared. Chief Gombo told myself and Janice to go over to the other side of the building on Church Street and set up a triage area, which was at the corner of Church and Fulton on the southeast corner, which I marked by a number 2. We were right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Then Lieutenant Davila came over there, and we were pretty much working out the logistics -- I mean, there were a lot of patients coming out of the buildings, a lot of people coming out, mostly with minor stuff going on. We were trying to organize what was going on, but there was just so much going on so quickly that we really didn't have a chance to really get a whole treatment and triage area established.

I do remember when we were coming over from West and Vesey we went down -- we went east on Vesey Street. I remember just as we came past

the PATH train by Seven World Trade, the entrance to the PATH train over there, just as we came out from underneath that underpass right there, we saw a whole bunch of what I thought -- and I don't know but I thought was airplane parts, pieces of the airplane.

I commented to Janice -- I was commenting in my own words about all of this -- all these pieces of plane that were hanging out -- that were just laying on the ground.

I got over to the other side. We set up the area. I remember there were people coming up asking us if they could help, people that were trained, doctors and nurses. Everybody was volunteering to help. They were just dragging people out to us in the area there.

I remember that Dr. Cherson came up at some point with Manny Delgado, helping us out over there. There were a whole bunch of units. I remember the Beekman unit was there. There were BLS units. Cabrini was there, New York Hospital. Cornell was there. There were some EMS units. I remember Alex Loudski being there, doing some tracking for Lieutenant Davila.

And then I remember someone coming up to me and telling me they were 49 Henry, a haztac truck, and they took out their hazmat tape and they cordoned off the whole area. We started to get people who weren't patients, throwing them out of the area and just bringing patients in there.

Let me see what else. There were a whole bunch of people coming over to us, units just coming in and telling us that they were helping us out. And I really don't remember all the units because there was -- a lot of it's a blur.

I remember them telling us that some cops came out of the building -- after we had started to establish in this chaotic area, a triage area. Even though it was chaotic, we still had some -- something going on there. We had divided all the stable people and all the critical people. We were taking and moving out the critical people as they came. We were actually starting to move out the stable people, some of the stable people, also.

I remember cops coming out of the World

Trade Center saying that there were a whole bunch of people stuck in an elevator shaft and that they needed us to go in there and bring them out. We were like you have to bring them out to us.

Some ESU cops -- the next thing I remember was quickly getting from one of the medics reevaluating patients and who really was -- we did a whole re-triaging the critical and non-critical patients.

I remember them then bringing out this lady on a door that they had made a makeshift long board for her. They put her on the board, and she had burns on her and she had this back injury.

I remember Dr. Cherson saying that we have no time, because there was a doctor there also that wanted to do, you know, multi traumas with sterile -- with water and everything for the burns. Dr. Cherson was saying, we need to get these critical patients out of here, go to the hospital.

I remember there was a lot of -- and you couldn't control it. A lot of -- as ambulances were coming in, patients, they weren't

even getting to the triage area but they were just getting loaded up with patients and going.

I remember Commissioner Drury coming up to me and saying to me, "Where is the command post?" I sent him to the other side to West Street.

Cops coming and helping. Everyone was just coming and helping, but it was so chaotic. Actually now it's kind of like really a blur.

Then I just remember that, distinct noise like an airplane being on a runway and it's ready to take off. I heard the loud roaring of like the engines, and I thought another plane was hitting the building.

Someone yelled run. I looked up, and the top of the tower I saw was starting to move over. It was bending like it was going to come down. Everybody started running. I ran up the block, and I didn't know what to do. I was all confused. I mean, everyone was running. People were falling on the floor. Nobody was helping to do anything. Everybody was just running for their life.

I know I made it about a third of the

way up the block, and I went to go get underneath a car, the trunk area of the car. I slid underneath there. And as I slid underneath there, this big blast just came and knocked me down the rest of the way.

I remember my helmet falling off, and I was in the fetal position underneath the car. As I turned my head to see what was going on, to see if I could see underneath the car, because I really didn't know what was happening, I thought a plane had actually hit the building, a third plane. It was just this huge blast of smoke that hit me in the face, white smoke. Then it was pitch-black. I couldn't even see.

I didn't think I was going to die from stuff falling; I thought I was going to die from the asphyxiation. It was just incredible. I couldn't breathe. I was trying to spit this stuff out. I'm feeling around for my helmet because I really don't know what's going on.

I looked over my shoulder. It's pitch-black, and I remember seeing this ball of flames shooting down the street, and then it just sucked right back into itself. It went away.

Then it started to clear up.

There was a lady in front of me leaning underneath the car, and I asked the lady if she was okay. She kept saying to me: No, I'm not okay, no, I'm not okay. I didn't know, if she wasn't okay, I couldn't do anything really for her.

So I had gotten up, out from underneath the car, and I looked around. It was still white smoke, like you couldn't breathe. For some reason I walked back towards the Trade Center, and I walked in the whole area that we had just had the triage area. I remember leaving people there, the critical people that couldn't walk, that they dragged out and they weren't there anymore. Nothing.

Ambulances were trashed over there. There were cars that were parked in the middle of the street, marked, unmarked police cars. I don't know who they belonged to. Things were just crushed and blown out.

I was walking around. I was walking towards the Trade Center, and someone -- an EMT came up to me and kept on saying, Bruce, are you

okay, are you okay. It was Jai Zion of Battalion 4. I was like yeah, I'm okay, I'm okay.

He said come with me. I said no, I've got to look for everybody. I've got to start to regroup everybody. He's said no, come with me, come with me. I really don't have time for this. I said you go and come with me to the area.

Then I started walking back up the block in the opposite direction of the Trade Center, and I ran into -- the first one that I ran into that I knew was Bill Melarango, Lieutenant Melarango. I saw him. He was walking up the block. He turned around and walked up the block.

Then I ran into -- at the corner of Broadway and Fulton, I ran into Jay Swithers. I also remember running into Bonnie -- I don't know what Bonnie's last name is. She works down in BHS. She's a medic who worked down in BHS. I don't know what her last name was. I remember running into her, and she was helping someone walk.

I got on the radio at this point, because I had a radio with me. I told them -- I

heard Captain Sickles on the radio, talking on the radio now. I told him that we were regrouping and we were now at Broadway and Fulton for a triage area.

We found an ambulance that was just driving into the area, and we stopped them. We had a whole bunch of people just coming to the ambulance. People were bringing out stuff from stores, wheel barrows, garbage cans filled with water and drink and stuff like that.

I remember going into the ambulance looking for a mask, and I couldn't find one. So I took a cravat and I tied it around my face like a bandanna so I wouldn't get killed by this smoke.

I don't even know how long we were there. I remember Captain Sickles on the radio telling us that we needed resources over there. I remember seeing a fireman riding a motorcycle coming -- driving down there.

I was talking to Jai and trying to say to Jai I lost Janice, I lost Phil Ashby. He was a medic that was with us. You know, all the people that I didn't know where they were.

Anybody who was with us in our triage area, I had no clue as to where they were.

Then I ran into Dr. Cherson, and he's like where's Manny Delgado? We couldn't find Manny. We were looking for Manny. So we were like let's get this triage area and we'll find him. So now we were getting the triage area back in order, and he was helping us out.

We didn't know what was going on really with anybody. I remember seeing Car 33 pull up and Lieutenant Mendez was in the car and Dr. Garcia was in the car. I don't know who else. And Jai was there and his ambulance crew. I remember St. John's paramedics were there in this area.

We were getting overwhelmed with patients. We were just throwing patients into the ambulance. There were people coughing up, lying on the ground there.

Then before -- all I know is that someone yelled another building -- the next building -- the other building's coming down. I didn't even hear the rumble this time. I just started running. I ran up a block. I didn't

know what block at the time it was, but I figured out afterwards where I came out. I ran up Ann Street.

I was running up Ann Street, and there was a bay door open, a loading dock bay door. I saw a few people running in there, and I ran in there. I ran in, kept running into the bay. I rested on like the step where the trucks back up into to make it level.

I remember them yelling close the door, close the door, close the door. All I know is I looked over my shoulder and I saw that big mushroom cloud coming in the door again. I jumped up on the bay, on the dock, and I ran into the building with all these other people running into the building.

I just kept running, down -- everybody was running down two stories. I was running down two stories with them. We went into the basement, and I remember [redacted] was with us. It was just me and him in this building. I told [redacted] -- I said, come on, we've got to go back upstairs. He said I'm not going back upstairs, I can't, I can't. Okay, stay down here, I'm going

to go upstairs and check it out.

We couldn't find our way out of the building. We eventually came out in some diner that was part of the building, a little restaurant, that was part of the building. Everybody was in there: cops, people -- I remember I ran into a traffic agent telling me that she was having an asthma attack. I told her to just sit there, relax, I don't have any equipment with me.

Then I came out of the building and I was like -- now it was a ghost town. I mean, after the second tower came down, Broadway -- there were cars, emergency vehicles all over the place, but there was nobody to be found.

So I walked out. Again I ran into Dr. Cherson, for the second time. Every time a tower dropped, I'd find him. He was the only one that I would find. So this time I decided to stick with him.

We found Pat Scaringello there. He was walking around in a daze. I said come on. I hear on the radio -- now I'm not talking on the radio. My battery is going dead. It's

beeping -- it was one of those new radios. It was beeping away. I told him that I heard them on the radio anyone south of the event should go to the ferry terminal; everybody north should go to Chelsea Piers.

So I was like -- we're right smack in the middle. Let's start making our way. I told Dr. Cherson and Scaringello let's start making our way to the ferry terminal. So we said, you know what, we're not taking any chances. I said let's walk along the water so it's all clear.

So I remember we started walking the wrong way. We were walking north on Broadway, because we really didn't know where we were. I worked lower Manhattan. I remember the Brooklyn Bridge. I remember people coming off.

I remember we started to walk north on Broadway, and we saw this unmarked car -- we didn't know who it belonged to -- and a cop, an ESU cop, in the car in the passenger seat not moving. We were banging on the window. He didn't do anything. We opened the door, and he was in there petrified. We just closed the door and left him.

We had seen an ambulance come over. They were going back to Brooklyn. They were getting out of there. Then we started walking in the right direction, and we walked up some street. I don't even know what street we walked up. I think it was Fulton Street. We ended up walking up, me, Dr. Cherson and Pat Scaringello, walking up Fulton Street to the east side to the seaport.

We found the St. John's medics -- we found the ambulance from St. John's. There was nobody in it, and it was running.

Then we were walking up to where we found Manny Delgado right by Beekman Hospital. He was in that little square by Fulton Street -- and I don't even know what the heck the name of the street was. We found him standing there. So we got him together, and Pat.

Then we hiked it. First I went to the ER to see who was in the ER. I saw a lot of ambulances there. I was trying to gather everybody to get them. But none of them were our ambulances. They all belonged to the volunteers.

I walked inside to the ER, and it was a

madhouse in the ER, people all over the place. I remember saying you know what, I can't do anything here, there's nobody from us. So I walked out with Scaringello and left him there. He didn't want to come with us to the ferry terminal.

So me, Manny and the doctor hiked it to the ferry terminal, and that's where we found Chief Basile standing there with Louie Cook. We were talking with him, and he said that we were putting together a treatment area up on the second floor of the ferry terminal, and he put me in charge of it, going to put it all together with Lisa Desena. She was the ALS coordinator for Division 4.

So we were there. We set up everything over there. We set up everything over there, and we were just -- people were coming in dribs and drabs, but more emergency personnel. They were making this a staging area.

That was it. I mean, we stayed there until like 4:00. They brought food in. I ran into EMT Zion again. I mean, there were no real specifics going on there. That was the first

time I ran into Chief McCracken. The first time was there where I ran into him with Pauline Cronin.

I got to use the phone for the first time. His phone was the only phone. I tried on my cell phone to make phone calls to tell someone I was okay. I couldn't get through. So I finally got through on Chief McCracken's phone. I called here and spoke to Kathleen McCrory to call my wife and my mother to tell them I was okay.

A lot of people were coming into the ferry terminal. I remember that off of the boats -- firemen were coming off of the boats from Staten Island. We set up a whole treatment and triage area over there.

And we stayed there until like 4:00. Then we wanted to get out of there. So I left Chief Basile, Louie Cook, Chief Villani was there and a whole bunch of other people. We decided it was time for us to leave.

Me, Manny and the doctor found his car. We walked back to Broadway and Fulton, found his car and drove his car out of there and went to

Battalion 4 to clean up. Some guy cleaned our car for us at Battalion 4. We were in Dr. Cherson's car, because the car I drove over there, I have no idea what had happened to it.

They told us -- after we got done at Battalion 4 and making phone calls -- because they actually had phones working at the time. I remember calling the office here, and this was like after 4:00 already.

So then I -- what did we do? We were coming back to Metrotech here after 4:00, and they told us on the radio that they wanted us to go to Chambers and West Street to the command post there. So we drove back there, and we stayed there till -- I stayed there till like 10:00 at night.

Dr. Cherson was doing what he had to do. Manny Delgado, about five minutes before me, caught a ride back to Metrotech. I caught a ride back. I took Chief McCracken's car back to Metrotech at 10:00 at night with Lieutenant Cronin. There was someone else in the car with us; I can't remember who. Some Chief's aide came back with us? I don't remember who came back

with us here to Metrotech.

We cleaned off the car. They brought me back in here and it was like go downstairs, get into uniform, take a shower. Then I took a shower and went home, and that was it for the day.

To think about the people, all the EMTs that were lost and the medics that were lost in the World Trade Center, were all from our one triage area. And I don't know whether it was after the first collapse or the second collapse, because I never saw them -- I never saw anybody from our triage area after the first collapse.

I was like I don't even know why I didn't go -- I never went back to West Street. I remember things like Captain Olszewski telling me in the triage area, maybe it would be a good idea to move the triage area back a little bit and I told her no, everything looked like it was starting to get organized. We wanted to set up a staging area, and we had set one up and it wasn't working because units were coming in from all over the place and just parking all over the street.

So I said well, let's just leave them park on Church Street. Janice said all that debris down there. I said that's the whole point, nobody's going to go down into that area because -- this was before the buildings collapsed. There's debris there, but there's like no one going over that area. So that would be a good area to start parking the ambulances, because I had seen the command car from Battalion 4 parked there.

I don't know. I think that's -- you run in with Dr. -- with other people. You start talking to them. Like I was talking to Jay Swithers, telling me when I saw him, you know, that things had occurred that I don't even remember, because people were asking me like the most ridiculous things like are any ACRs being done on these patients, any tracking being done on these patients.

I was like you guys have got to be kidding. Like who really cares about that right now? There were so many patients there, we have no way of tracking them, you know. I couldn't believe supervisors were actually asking me these

questions. I was like to hell with it. You get your tracking done at another time.

I remember Amy Monroe in our triage area. I remember she was in charge of the transportation end of it. Everybody who had transportation, Captain Olszewski told her to take transportation for our area. So she was handling that.

I don't know. It's all like kind of a blur. The worst part about it is just remembering that thick, black smoke and that you couldn't breathe in it and worrying what was going to happen to me, am I going to die right here and now.

The other thing that went through my mind was after I realized it was a terrorist attack, when the building came down, I didn't know it was the building coming -- I thought a third plane had hit the building, causing the building to come down. The things that went through my mind was there chemical warfare going on now. I mean, what's going on? I didn't realize -- I had no concept of what was going on. So many things going through your head.

That was really about it, that I remember. Little things that I don't remember, someone -- how people tell you about it and you just -- oh, yeah, that did happen. They refresh your memory. But that's about all that I can remember from my memory right now.

Q. Anything else you wanted to add, Bruce?

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview with Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck. The time now is 1155 hours.

Thanks, Bruce.

File No. 9110087

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT CHARLES FRASER

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time now is 1007 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Lieutenant Charles Fraser, EMS Division 4.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting the interview at the conference room of the Division 4 EMS command at Queens General and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is.

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, investigations and trials.

Q. Go ahead, sir. We're looking into your participation in the World Trade Center incident.

A. The morning of the incident, I was at the EMS Academy at Fort Totten in Queens and we were alerted that there was a plane crash at the World Trade Center. We saw a small clip of it on television. Shortly thereafter I was advised to start out to the scene with Lieutenant James Scullion. That was at the

direction of Chief Charlie Wells that they were doing a recall of the hazmat trained and special operations division supervisors.

I started out in the Bronco with him. He was driving and he said that we had gotten Charlie Wells on the cell phone and he said to direct ourselves into the lobby of 2 World Trade Center and set up operations there and that we would just coordinate with him what needed to be done. We took the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway over to the Brooklyn Bridge, and I recall we got about a quarter of the way onto the bridge and there were thousands of people just evacuating into Brooklyn over the bridge. As we headed into Manhattan, I looked over and we started to see the first tower come down, just a devastating sight, to the point where we had to physically stop because there were police cars in front of us. We looked over and I remember thinking, oh, my God, you'll never see this in your life again, and I remember actually blessing myself with the sign of a cross thinking, my God, there were people in there, there were guys in there, let alone our people, between police, fire and civilians.

We came over the bridge, we went over Park Row, past City Hall, which they looked like they were

attempting to secure and lock that down. We came down Park Row to Fulton Street, we came across Fulton, and as we pulled up on Church Street, we got out of the vehicle, we started to get on our bunker pants and get dressed ready to go into 2 World Trade when the second building started to come down and we heard on the radio a lot of people screaming Mayday, evacuate, it's coming down. We started to look up and we could see what looked like the top of this tower coming down at us, and then like a roller coaster, like a wooden roller coaster sound, and just bodies all over the ground, hitting the ground.

We got into the vehicle, we started to pull out, we made a tight U-turn and we actually struck two metal parking stanchions that were in the way because there were a lot of vehicles on the street that we were trying to get around, and as we struck these two, the bumper came up into the front end of the vehicle and then on top of that two emergency service officers jumped onto the back of the vehicle and actually threw their weapons into the back window and jumped onto the vehicle, and I watched through the rear as people just like disappeared into the black smoke. We made it about a half a block to the east on Fulton and we

stopped the vehicle. We couldn't proceed any further and we were just engulfed in a cloud. You couldn't see probably five feet in front of you, and then it just got darker and darker, the wind picked up, and then this stuff started hitting the vehicle, just large chunks of computer monitors and concrete and panes of glass. Then Jimmy Scullion with was able to get the vehicle started again. We drove up further. We actually drove out of it onto Park Row and we stopped at Park Row and we waited I'd say probably about ten minutes or so because you just couldn't proceed. You couldn't see where you were going. You couldn't move.

We walked back down Fulton Street to Church, and when we got to Church Street, I guess we were on like Barclay and Church, we had noticed that there was a large setup of police emergency service. That's where we encountered the first EMS unit, 49 Henry. It was Kevin Barrett and Brendan Mulroy, two of our hazmat trained EMTs. We grouped them up and took them with us, and the next thing we did, I ran into Chief McCracken's son and he had come in to the scene and he had been inquiring if anybody had heard of his father. I didn't hear him on the radio. I'd heard Captain Deshore on the radio quite a bit giving updates on

patient counts and access, and then I didn't hear her on the radio anymore. There was a lot of silence on the radio.

Q. What frequency were you on?

A. I was on the Citywide command frequency. It was a lot of silence, nobody talking over EMS.

Then we proceeded down into the subway station at Barclay Street and Church because they said that there was numerous people down there trapped towards West Street. We walked from Church all the way down to Barclay and West, and we couldn't exit the subway because there was so much debris and everything above us, but there were people down there. So we ended up coming out by -- I guess back to West Street, and as we came out on West Street, I ran into Lieutenant Kevin Haugh, who had responded down from Manhattan North, and what we started to do was pretty much safety and accountability, trying to find EMTs and medics that were just wandering. It was like they were shell shocked. They had lost their partners, they couldn't recall where they were, who they were with, where their vehicle was. We commandeered a city bus that was parked on West Street and we started to put everybody into that vehicle.

The next one I ran into was Chief John Peruggia. He was establishing a command post on West Street by Barclay and he had assigned myself and Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Haugh to do the safety officer and to start doing accountability and to try and access vehicles that were down on Liberty Street. There were numerous ambulances, they said, that were buried and could we get down there to ID these vehicles and/or the people.

As we headed on down, it ended up we couldn't walk any further because the bridge had dropped across West Street. So what I ended up -- what we did was we went into 3 Financial, the American Express Building, we worked our way through the lobbies and we actually came out on the other side by Liberty. As I recall, I think there were about ten or eleven ambulances there and they were all buried in debris. Two of them were burning, actively burning. We had taken the VIN numbers off of them, the vehicle ID number, so that we could match it up, and later on in the tour we went to the Police Department and they were able to run the VIN number and give us the vehicle number and then trace down the crew that was with that.

The other ambulances that were intact, we

cleaned them off as much as we could, we spray painted them to ID what they were, whether it was fire, one was a Metro Care ambulance, and I remember there was a civilian dead next to that Metro Care ambulance but half under the vehicle and the legs were out, and as we pulled the person out to kind of see, the whole back of her head was blown off and it's like she was just decapitated. But she wasn't in a uniform. She was in civilian attire. So we covered her over with a blanket and then we ended up going through these vehicles, getting personal effects out that we could. You know, crews usually have a bag with personal effects. We went through there and tried to ID who was even in that vehicle. Once we obtained that information, we gave it to Captain Dave Fenton, who was doing accountability by then. This was about, I guess, 1:30, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Then as we proceeded on, most of the rest of the evening I was doing safety officer work and accountability stuff, working mainly off of the back side by North End there, I would say, up by 2 World Financial Center and the Winter Garden, assisting with setting up temporary morgue and safety of EMS people because we had a lot of off-duty people that weren't

even tagged in the system that we didn't even know where they were, taking down their Social Security number, regrouping them, keeping them into a triage treatment area.

I think the hardest part that we had on the overnight -- well, I would say right after and preceding the second collapse and then on into the afternoon was just we had no resources, we had no equipment, we had nothing. And radio communications, same thing, we just couldn't get through. You couldn't get through no matter what you tried to do accountability.

Q. The off-duty people, anybody that you recognized, any names offhand?

A. I know Maureen Bartwink from Battalion 49 was there. She had come down with her partner, which was Ron McCue. They were together. Jack O'Loughlin, a lieutenant from Queens was there. Early on, as a matter of fact, we had turned over a triage area that we set up by Park Row and Fulton Street, we had set up a large triage treatment area prior to going into that subway entrance. Lieutenant Scullion and I had gotten a few ambulance resources together along with St. Vincent's Hospital and Lieutenant O'Loughlin said he

would take over that sector so that we could proceed on when we got this request that there were people in the subway. So I know he was there off duty. But that's about it that I can recall offhand.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the towers?

A. No.

Q. The second one or --

A. No. They collapsed and on our way back we had been sent -- we had gotten sidetracked prior to reporting to Chief Peruggia because they said that there were five police officers that were buried, and that would be, I guess, I'm looking at 1 World Trade Center, and they were in between 6 and 1 World Trade, and we had gotten down there and ended up -- I remember a police officer coming to me and he had a serious hand injury, actually, it was a detective, in uniform with a detective shield, and he had a left hand with serious, serious injury, burned, cut down to the bone, and we had treated him with St. Vincent's paramedics and they had removed him to a treatment area. But when we tried to get up into where these officers were, it was like walking in snow. Every three footsteps you took, you were back one, and it was just like in a deep, muddy slush.

Most of the entry that we did was down by around 1 World Trade and 3 World Trade later in the afternoon because we had a lot of EMS people. Some were in uniform, some weren't in uniform, and they were just wandering about, like trying to help out in different areas. So what we had worked to do was pull those people out and get them into a unified treatment area so that we'd have accountability of them.

I'm thinking of who. I know I had Steve Scarinzi with me from Battalion 49. He had come down off duty and I linked up with him, I guess, 1:00, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, and I had him for a good part of the evening with us.

Q. Where did you leave the Bronco?

A. The Bronco was left on Park Row right by I guess Broadway, Park Row and Broadway, because right here is a cutout on the map where there's some parking stanchion. We had parked it there. There was significant damage to the front end from us trying to pull out. Luckily enough, we had particulate masks that we had found in the vehicle, so we were able to get masks on right away because I don't think we would have been able to proceed any further. I mean, it was just you couldn't breathe, it was just so thick, and

those masks only lasted probably 15 minutes before you were saturated.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important, any other recollections or impressions that you'd like to add before we conclude?

A. Not really, no.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I want to thank you on behalf of the Department for conducting the interview with us. The time now is 1021 hours and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110088

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SAL SANGENTI

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

S. SANGENTI

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time now is 9:48. This if Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank and assigned command.

SAL SANGENTI: EMT Sal Sangenti, assistant to the division 4 commander.

Q: Of the New York City Fire Department. We are conducting the interview at the conference room of the Division 4 EMS command, Queens General, regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present at the interview is…

DIANA MAGGI: Diana Maggi, Investigations and Trials.

Q: Go ahead starting with when you first became aware of the incident and the events surrounding that.

A: Okay, I was sitting in the office waiting for Chief Carrasquillo to come into the office, he notified me by phone telling me that we were going to the 1040 at the World Trade Center. I was aware of this because we were all monitoring CAD, and at that point myself, Jason Katz, who is Chief Day's aide, and Captain Rivera were here and we all went into Chief Carrasquillo's car and responded to the scene. We went to the command post and at that time, both towers were engulfed. As we were setting up, I couldn't tell you a time frame, but at that point, when we were setting up, the first building collapsed.

Q: When you arrived, where did the vehicle stop? Where did you park?

A: On West, I can't tell you the street…I am bad with directions in Queens, but in Manhattan it was even worse. But I know we were on West.

Q: Okay, and you said you went to the EMS command post?

A: The command post there. Chief Ganci was there, Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Moore, myself, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Browne, Jason Katz, I think that was it. All I remember.

Q: Where was that located?

A: That was across the street on West. It was in front of a parking garage.

Q: Was it on the Trade Center side of West, or on the River side?

A: It was on…I don't remember. It was, it had to be the Trade Center…

Q: Do you remember crossing over a barrier?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: It was on the West side, I guess the water side.

Q: Then what happened?

A: Then at that point we were there just trying to strategize and at that point, the building collapsed. Myself and Chief Carrasquillo and numerous people ran into the garage and I found a little room to the left side of the garage. It was myself, a Port Authority female Sargent, and a detective were in the room. We had air for the first 20 seconds, then the room got engulfed. The room had air conditioning, so at that point the

air started to circulate a little, and we kind of got our composure, but unfortunately, there was debris in front of the room now and we were stuck in the room. I kind of told everybody, just relax. I don't know how I took the initiative, but I did, told everybody just relax. The woman, I wiped her face off cause she was really engulfed with the ashes. The ash and the concrete and all the other stuff, and the time frame I couldn't tell you. But at that point we were able to get out and I finally heard a fireman who said come on, let's go through the garage. We went through the garage and we ended up outside, I couldn't tell you exactly where I was. I lost my whole, you know…

Q: How were you able to get out of the room?

A: Actually we kind of, it was maybe 2 ½ maybe 3 feet of debris, and we just kicked it. We kicked as much as we could. It was a lot of paper, dust, actually I remember kicking a vehicle mirror. Because I stepped on it and I thought I stepped on someone's glasses, and it was an actual mirror. At that point, we got out and we walked through the garage and came up where I couldn't tell you.

Q: Did you have any radio or cell phones?

A: I had a radio and my own personal cell phone.

Q: Did any of them work down there?

A: No. Actually, I thought I lost my phone, but I had everything in tact, then I couldn't anybody. The only people I was with were the fireman, the Port Authority Sargent, and the detective. That was it.

Q: Did you get anybody's name or commands?

A: There were no names, and at this point that I remember, I didn't see any EMS people at all. At that point, I really thought that Chief Carrasquillo was gone. Because the way it works is, if you ran to the sides I don't know if you would have survived. The building was the way to go cause you had some kind of cover. That was it, and then it felt like an hour, but it was probably just minutes that I walked. I walked to probably by…I'll tell you in a second, I'm bad with directions…it was by the water, so it has to be, I couldn't even tell you, I'm sorry. I remember walking towards the water, I remember seeing the water, and I must have walked like four blocks and I finally saw Chief Carrasquillo.

Q: And where was he?

A: He? Again, I know he was there with Chief Gombo and Chief Kowalczyk. Hugged them and thanked them, that was it. At that point, the second collapse went and we were probably about a block away. The dust and all the other stuff hit us and at that point I couldn't get my composure. I just sat there and relaxed and at that point we started to get everyone together, and we took it from there. We went to Chambers and West and that's when they established a command post. Me, Ron Pfeffer, and at that point was when everyone started to come, Charlie Wells, J.P. Martin. Then everything started to, you know, fall into place.

Q: Do you know the location where you met them? Where they met you actually…

S. SANGENTI

A: Actually it was in the back, where's the school? Where's Stuyvesant?

Q: I think Stuyvesant is up here by Chambers Street.

A: So what I did was I walked over here. They were gonna establish a command post at Stuyvesant, but they weren't sure if there was a gas leak in the school, or it was running underneath the school. So they moved everything, they moved everything to Chambers and West.

Q: Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A: The Trade Centers? No.

Q: Number 7 World Trade Center?

A: No.

Q: Did you have to treat any patients?

A: I mostly just helped. I helped a lady, she was walking, when I finally got out of the garage, there was a lady there. She was pretty much just dazed, and I helped her I said come on, keep walking, keep walking, and that was it.

Q: Is there anything else that you felt was important? Any other people that you may have seen: firefighters, EMS?

A: No, pretty much like I said, the only people that I know are the chiefs, cause I work with them. I remember seeing Chief Ganci, I remember seeing Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk, Chief Carrasquillo. But once I got into the garage, I lost everyone.

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Q: Okay, anything else?

A: That's it.

Q: I want to thank you for you time so we can conduct these interviews, and the time is 9:57. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110089

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF PEDRO CARRASQUILLO

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time now is 9:16 hours. This is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting on interview of the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area of command.

CHIEF CARRASQUILLO: Pedro Carrasquillo, Division 4, EMS command.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting the interview in the conference room of Division 4 EMS command, the property of Queens General Hospital. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Also present is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, investigations and trials.

Q. Go ahead, sir.

A. Heading into the office that morning, when on the air, I heard conditions 04, Lieutenant Rene Davila, sounding very anxious on the radio stating that there was some form of

explosion. I didn't catch it all. I raised the volume and then heard him indicate that there was a plane that ran into the side of the World Trade Center.

So right away I started continuing into Queens General. I called citywide. I told them that I would be responding. I came by Queens General on my way from home, picked up Sal Sangeniti, picked up Captain J.R. Rivera, and I picked up Jason Katz, who were here waiting for me.

We continued in. Then we heard the report of a second airplane crashing into the other tower. Initially I thought it was just one of the commuter planes, or one of the sight-seeing planes along the water there, but then when I heard the second plane, then right away I thought it must have been terrorist activity, but still not knowing what type of aircraft went into the building.

So we responded in. Traffic was heavy. We were able to get through into the express lane and went in through the Midtown Tunnel, taking the drive southbound and seeing the smoke and

seeing the World Trade Center. At one point, seeing the gaping hole on one of the towers and the smoke on the other going all the way up, I was thinking everybody from that point on up will probably be dead if not from the smoke, certainly from the fire.

We took the tunnel underneath the tip of Manhattan and came up alongside, I think it's the New York Athletic Club. I parked a couple blocks before the World Trade Center just because I didn't want to go too much closer with my vehicle.

I parked, got out. People were running. I got out, got my helmet, got my turnout coat. At that point, right there, there was some debris, and there were some body parts that were on the street. Some of the police officers were trying to cordon off those areas. So we were very careful when we were walking.

We went over the median onto the West side of West Street and continued up to the command post, which was directly across the street from the World Trade Center. At that point, just before I got to the command post I

saw Jack Delaney with his medics from the New York Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian, and they had their vehicles diagonally parked on West Street. They were out in front of the vehicle.

I called Jack and his men over because that location didn't seem to be a safe location because of the debris that was falling out of the buildings. So they came over by the command post. They had given them instructions, and they took off in the south direction to their assignment.

I reported to the command post. Chief Gombo was there. I remember seeing Chief Browne and Jason Katz, who came with me, went with Chief Brown. They got their assignment, and they headed in a south direction.

I hadn't gotten my assignment yet. We were talking. Then all of a sudden we heard a noise. People started running. People were saying that the building was collapsing. At that point I heard the noise. It was enough for me to react and run.

I didn't turn around to look. I just heard the noise coming down, and it was like a

jet engine, just getting louder and louder.

At that moment I'm thinking which way to run, north or south. And it seemed like the corners on either direction was falling and I wouldn't be able to outrun this thing. So we all retreated into a garage that had a ramp going down directly across the street. I think it was the American Express building or one of those buildings there.

We went in. As we're running down, I'm looking at where I can hide. There were some little cutouts as you're going down the ramp. So I went to one of them. There were three other firefighters there. We squatted down. Just as we did that, everything just passed right through into the tunnel, into the garage ramp.

At that moment everything was just total darkness. You couldn't see anything. You couldn't breathe. We were coughing. I got out my handkerchief so I could at least use that as some type of filter. I got a couple breaths, and then you're just coughing.

Firefighters there had on their respirators, and then some of them had

flashlights. So at least we were able to head -- we were all starting to head in the up ramp direction going up, which is the way that we had come down.

I'm hearing people saying that we were sealed in. So right away the first thing is, that's it, this is how we're going to die, down here. I remember Chief Ganci behind me, hearing his voice, stating that we have to move up. Up is out.

So we started to go up. We're getting towards the top, and you couldn't see. There was total, total darkness. I see a flashlight shining from the top and somebody screaming down that this is outside. We started working our way up towards that light, and there was debris all over. So you really had to be careful on how you were stepping because you would trip and fall.

When we got outside, there was a suburban right next to the entrance. I don't know if it was pushed up there or how it got there. So at that point you still couldn't see anything, but you could see silhouettes of trees, so we knew we were on the outside.

I started heading north to the corner, which is Vesey Street, and there we started to regroup some of the people. As I was walking West on Vesey, I ran into Captain Stone, who appeared to be injured. His shoulder was hurting him. I saw Artie Gonzalez who was a paramedic out of Bellevue that was there.

Then I went into the lobby of the American Express building. In the lobby I ran into a couple of other EMTs, but at that point I really couldn't see much because I was covered in the soot. So I was able to get some water to clean my face, cough, spit, gargle, trying to get some of that soot out of me and clean my glasses.

Then we started -- we were hearing of possible gas leaks and possibly the next building coming down. So we started to get everybody mobilized at the west -- West of West Street by --

Q. I have a map.

A. -- Vesey and North Street, I believe it was. We started to go up Vesey Street, and we started heading towards North End. At North End on the northeast corner there's an Embassy

Suites. We started to make that a triage treatment area for all the people that we were bringing in.

At that location we started to meet Captain Sickles, J.R. Rivera again, Sal, I saw them, because we lost contact once we ran down into the garage. Then Chief Gombo was there, Chief Pascale. I don't know where they were before. So we started making a treatment area.

Then I went back down Vesey Street to make sure that everybody started to clear out from the American Express lobby that we were at.

Then I decided to take a walk towards West Street just to see if in fact that tower, the whole tower, had come down, which confirmed, yes, that it was completely down.

I started to walk back again, making sure everybody was out, and started to get all the vehicles, all the personnel to North End.

As I was walking back, I heard the second sound, which was the second building coming down. I ran into the American Express or right in between here, looked around. I saw a lot of windows. Now I'm looking for a place that

I'm not going to get hit with flying debris.

I had two EMTs, that I don't know who they were, male and female. I told them come on this way. There was a civilian that was going to walk out. I said you can't walk out there, the tower is collapsing. I grabbed him. Then we went behind this marble pillar, a huge marble pillar with a wall behind it, back there and squatted down.

The second wave came down through Vesey Street, blowing out the windows along the sides there. Then I told the guy can we get out another way, and he said yes. We were able to go through some hallway. We came out on North Street. We were able to go underneath and came out here and then walked over to the Embassy Suites lobby there.

There we tried to regroup who was going where. Chief Gombo, everybody was going now to I think it was police headquarters. They told me to initially go to Chelsea, but then they assigned somebody else to Chelsea and I stood there.

Q. How did you receive those orders?

A. No, no, no, we were there in the lobby. Chief Gombo was there, Peruggia was there, Fran was there, Chief Pascale and myself.

Q. That was in the lobby of American Express?

A. No, this was in the lobby of the Embassy Suites.

So everybody got their assignments. I think Chief Basile was there as well. He went to the ferry terminal. He was working his way out to the ferry terminal, I believe. Chief Villani was heading that direction as well. Chief Pascale went to the Chelsea Piers for the staging area out there. And I stood at Vesey.

We were treating people, and we started to -- I started to let everybody -- we need to get these people into vehicles and out of here and to the hospital or to an area of Chambers Street, because now we're getting reports there was gas leaking and possibly rupturing. So we were not in a safe area.

We started to do that. We got everybody outside. Then we drove all the vehicles -- some of the patients got into the

vehicles, and we transported them out to the area hospitals. The rest of the vehicles continued now northbound to Chambers Street.

At Chambers Street, we regrouped there, and we were going to start a treatment area by the grass area. We went up Vesey, and we went up West End. We worked our way back here to Chambers Street, which is right near Stuyvesant School.

We were going to go into this area that's indicated North Park to set up some sort of a treatment area there so that in the event that we needed to transport people and the area was blocked off and we couldn't get vehicles, there were some ships, boats, that were coming in. So we would use them to get the people out of there and take them either uptown, downtown or to Jersey, if needed.

At that point, however someone came by and we had to evacuate that area because there were gas lines underneath there and that would possibly blow up. So we regrouped then and just went down the block on Chambers, and we went to Chambers and West.

As we were retreating from some of these places -- I mean, a lot of equipment too was just left behind, and vehicles, until we were able to come back later on. At any rate, we regrouped to Chambers and West. Chief Peruggia and myself were there. Then we set tried to set up a plan.

He stood in control of communications, and then I went as the liaison with OEM at the Fire Department. And we just kept on operating at that location with some of our units. As we would get patients, we would treat them and take them out of there or transport them or treat them and release.

At that point we wound up getting a large contingency of people from the academy. So they were outside, and we told the captain from the academy -- I don't know his name -- to get all the personnel and bring them into the area of Stuyvesant School and leave them in there, because outside were all the dust -- every time the vehicles drove by, it just picked up all the dust and debris. Then as we were going to utilize them, then we would call them.

Then I just worked as the liaison office with OEM, and I was just coordinating whatever resource they needed. Then we started to try to get a sense of who was missing. We didn't know how many units were assigned and so on. So we just took a tally of the units nearby.

Then we just continued to operate. I attended a couple of the OEM meetings, what we needed, where we were going to set up. We talked about possibly having a field hospital. We were going to set it up at the North Park area, because now it was secured so we were able to get -- we were going to try to get the Parks Department to set up some tents.

We had a Coast Guard cutter that was anchored along the side, and they were able to provide us with generator power and supplies and water and so on.

So that was a plan. We were trying to get a hold of the medical examiner to set up a morgue sector or request for a team, because we knew we were going to have to process a lot of bodies there. So we were trying not to anticipate a lot of things.

Following the meeting, OEM -- because OEM got established in the Stuyvesant School, we were there. They told us in the morning they were going to get a ship, a hospital ship, that was coming in and anchoring at the pier. Then the rest of the resources and some troops and whatever things that we needed.

So we spoke about DMAT teams coming in to try to set up as treatment areas and just continue to operate there throughout the night.

Q. When you were coming in, you said that you heard Lieutenant Davila talking. Was that on citywide?

A. Citywide, yeah.

Q. That's the frequency that you were listening to?

A. Yeah.

Q. And when you called citywide, you did that by radio or telephone?

A. Telephone.

Q. Did they give you any specific area to respond to?

A. No. I just told them I would be heading in, going to the command post. Then I

called RCC. I called to RCC and told them call all the stations throughout the city, anybody that's going home, they have to stay, and try to keep as many people as possible, in the event that we would need more resources down there.

I wasn't the incident commander, but I'm sure that the people there had their hands full and I didn't know if any of them had relayed any information, so I just did that on my own.

And I spoke to -- just before I left here, I told the crew here and the L S U crew here to respond not to incident but just on the other side, on the Queens side of the Midtown Tunnel area. In the event if they needed them, they would be right there so they can just go in.

Q. When you arrived at the scene, you came out of the tunnel that connects to the FDR Drive and the West Side Highway?

A. Correct.

Q. Where did you say you parked your vehicle?

A. I parked my vehicle on the east side of West Street or the West Side Highway right near the New York Athletic Club, the club down there.

Q. You know what, mark it if you see it on there.

A. I believe it was --

Q. Is that where the vehicle stayed for the remainder of the incident?

A. Until about 3 in the morning, when I looked for it. I brushed off all the debris.

Q. When the first building collapsed and you retreated into the underground garage, you said you met up with three firefighters. Were you able to determine their names or where they were from?

A. No.

Q. And then you heard Chief Ganci?

A. I heard his voice, yeah.

Q. You never were face-to-face with him?

A. No, you couldn't see.

Q. Did you meet up with him any time after that or you lost contact?

A. No, I went back to Vesey Street, and I went into the American Express building to try to first clean myself off and then try to establish some form of a treatment area.

Q. Other than the people that you

mentioned, did you see any other EMS officers, EMTs, medics, fire officers that you know?

A. No. Those are the people that I recall. There was another medic that I saw in the lobby, Perez, from -- I think he's -- he used to work for us. That's the only one I recall. He asked me if I was okay. Then that's when I just cleaned myself off, at least my face, anyway.

Q. Besides the American Express and the Embassy Suites, did you ever enter either one of the trade towers?

A. No.

Q. Building number seven?

A. No.

Q. Initially you said there was an EMS command post that you met up with Chief Gombo. Where was that?

A. That was there, right across the street from the Trade Center, just next to the garage.

Q. The north tower or the south tower?

A. It was in between both towers.

Q. Can you just X that, make it D.

A. I think it was in this area here,

because I remember this pedestrian bridge being on the outside and looking trying to see where. This is the area.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add before we conclude?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for your time and providing this interview. It's 9:38 hours, and we'll conclude this interview.

File No. 9110090

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROBERT SHORT

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

R. SHORT

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time is 11:01 and this is Monte Feiler of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, and area of command.

ROBERT SHORT: Robert Short, EMT, 5071 MERV operator for Division 4.

Q: The New York City Fire Department. We are conducting this interview in the conference room of Division 4 at Queens General Hospital regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is…

DIANA MAGGI: Diana Maggi, Investigations and Trials.

Q: Okay, if you can just start off with what your assignment was that day and how you became aware of the incident.

A: My assignment was Merv 4 operator. I got assigned, I don't remember the exact time I got assigned on the job.

Q: Who assigned you?

A: The citywide dispatcher. We were told not to go through the tunnel, so we went up 59th street. Not 59th street, Queens Boulevard, over the 59th Street Bridge, and down Second Avenue, cause they had it completely closed off. As we were going down, that's when we seen, I guess it was the second (I don't really remember) you

know, hitting the tower. Cause the first tower was on fire, as we were coming over the bridge, we saw that. Then we parked at West and Vessey.

Q: Who directed you to park there?

A: Lietenant Hadala

Q: Where did you meet up with him?

A: We all parked. He was in his command car, it was an LSU truck in front of me, then it was me with the MERV. As soon as we pulled up, we immediately were contacting patients.

Q: Okay, who was in the MERV with you?

A: A paramedic Dibriano. We started treating the patients, most of them were firefighters. I remember one--then I think the building collapsed. All the smoke, or whatever it was, the debris and everything, we got knocked out of the MERV. Whoever was in the MERV, I don't know what happened to them. Cause a lot of them ran out, ran in. All of our equipment got blown out and everything so we ended up, I don't know where I ended up because it was dark. But we ended up somewhere near the water. I was by myself. No EMS personnel, I don't know who it was, but I guess it was near the water, yeah. Then I went back to the MERV and started cleaning out the debris, cause it was mostly all dust and everything. Then a fire captain, I remember this clearly, a fire captain ran up to me and said look, I lost all of my men. I can't get into contact.

Q: Do you know what his name was?

R. SHORT

A: No, I think he was from, I think it was Rescue 3. Cause we had Rescue 3 guys who were walking up West Street, we gave them a ride up. We rode 'em up, we said guys hop on, they hopped on, I don't know what happened after that. I heard later on they all got killed. Well, either he was from Rescue 3 or Ladder 43, I remember seeing a 3 on his hat. A white hat. On the MERV we have all the channels for the fire telephone radio, so he started doing command orders or whatever. I don't know what he was doing, and we were doing patients. Then the second building collapsed. Again, we just ran.

Q: Were you in motion at that point?

A: No, actually we stayed on Vessey.

Q: So you stayed there?

A: Yeah, we stayed there. Because I believe it was the Verizon Building, I don't know if that's on Vessey, cause I remember we started off on Vessey, and then we moved under these, like an overlook that goes across from building to building. I don't know what it is.

Q: Like a pedestrian walk?

A: Like a pedestrian walk. We moved back or forward, I don't remember. But then the second building collapsed, and then again we ran. We couldn't see nothing. Then we ended up on West and Warren by foot. We left everything there.

R. SHORT

Q: So when you first arrived, where did you park the MERV?

A: Vessey. West and Vessey.

Q: And that's where it stayed?

A: Yes. But, oh yeah, here's the pedestrian bridge here, so I was right. We parked here in the beginning. Then the second thing collapsed and we got caught in it. Then we just started around, I don't remember, just all these people tramping on you basically. Then we moved the MERV, I guess it was up to here.

Q: So just south of the pedestrian bridge?

A: Yeah.

Q: Now were you on the river side of West Street, or on the building side?

A: On the, well at the beginning we were here, on the building side. Then when we moved it after the first collapse and everything, we moved over here somewhere, so we were near the water.

Q: So you were on the south side?

A: Yeah.

Q: And when the second collapse, where were you then?

A: Over here.

Q: You were in the vehicle?

A: Yeah, I was in the vehicle. We were in the vehicle, cause we were seeing patients, and then we were in the vehicle. When that came down, everyone just looked up and we just ran. I ran this way.

Q: Did you ever get back to the MERV?

A: Yeah, I ended up meeting up with the LSU guy, cause I didn't know where he was.

Q: What's his name?

A: Mark Mazzur. He was actually in here, because he was ahead of me with Lieutenant Hadala. So I thought, when I moved the MERV after the first collapse, I moved it up here. Cause we got the lights on, people are running and everything. I thought they were killed, cause they were over here. That's where the building with Chief Carrasquillo and Chief Browne, and everyone was over there.

Q: Did you see them there?

A: Well in the beginning, when I pulled up here, I saw their cars. We said we're gonna set up here and they went ahead. So I knew they were in the same area here. So when the second building, I guess collapsed…well, it was the first building collapsed, I moved forward, and then the second building collapsed, and that's when I walked over here and saw all the debris. That's when I said "I gotta get outta here". I started going back to the MERV, and you know, the second building, everything went off. The power and everything. So I just went up and started running this way.

Q: North up West Street?

A: Yeah, and I ended up on I think it was Warren, I think it was over here.

Q: And who treated patients on the Merv?

A: It was just me.

Q: You were the only one, you had no medics, doctors?

A: I don't' know where anyone was, no. After the initial---it was me and Dibriano, but then you know, after that, it literally just blew us out of the MERV. Cause we had the back door open with the ramp, and just everything went right out the front.

Q: Did you ever see Dibriano past that time?

A: No, I didn't see him till maybe 6, 7 hours later. But I met up with Mark Mazzur. Like I said, he went in this way after the first collapse, and I was treating patients. He was tying to…cause there was a lot of rubble. So I guess he was looking for the chief, cause we didn't know where anyone was. Then the second collapse, I left it there and I ran this way. That's where I met Mark, I think it was about an hour or two later.

Q: At about Murray and West? Warren?

A: Yeah, it was up here. They had a, Hazollah ---had a big MERV, and they were cleaning us up. I had shit in my eyes, and you know…

Q: Did you get any direction from that point?

R. SHORT

A: Well from there, the MERV was here. When I met up with Mark, and you know, they flushed out our eyes, and we washed out our face, took on a little oxygen and stuff. We went back to the scene, me and Mark Mazzur, we went back, got an ambulance, jump started the MERV, and got the LSU. Then we set up staging on I guess it was this side of Vessey, towards the water. Like right over here. Cause there was still a lot of people coming down this way. Also, we met up with Lieutenant Hadala, who lost his command car somewhere over here.

Q: Okay, so you re-located your MERV between North and West Street on Vessey?

A: Yeah, right over here I'd say. Cause this is the water, so…

Q: What ambulance did you use?

A: Um, I don't know.

Q: You don't remember where you found it?

A: No, there was people in it though.

Q: Did you recognize them?

A: No, I didn't recognize them, no.

Q: Was it a Fire Department ambulance?

A: Yes, Fire Department ambulance.

Q: Okay

A: They had cables. I said, do you have cables, and they said yes. I gotta get this thing outta here, cause of ----Then we turned it around and we set up, that's where we all kind of grouped together, we were finding people. Then we sort of set up right here, cause here's the water, and then we started taking in a lot of patients.

Q: Civilians?

A: Mostly civilians at the time, I don't think there were any firefighters.

Q: What type of injuries?

A: Eye, smoke, we have the multi-regulators. This MERV can hook up 16 people at once. Plus we had another 12 multi-regulator, and plus we had 2 more on the LSU. So we had I'd say about close to 40 patients just between me and Mazzur. So mainly oxygen.

Q: Okay, and were you able to maintain radio communication?

A: NO, after the first building collapsed I told them on city-wide "listen something's going on, we're getting outta here". They were like "where's the MERV? where's the Merv?" I said I left it a long time ago. Then when we came back, we couldn't transmit for some reason, I don't know. I guess cause they said the tower had the thing on it. But after that, I would say for about 3 ½ hours we couldn't transmit. We didn't know where anyone was.

Q: Did you enter any of the buildings?

R. SHORT

A: Did I go in? No, I didn't go in. There was a big pile of rubble, that's about it.

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add, any recollections or EMS people you may have seen that you knew, that you can identify?

A: Lieutenant Remz…

Q: Where did you see him?

A: Up here somewhere…

Q: That's Warren Street between West and…

A: Yeah, and we ran up here. IT was Lieutenant Rems, Lieutenant Santamaria, and they were with the Hotzollah truck.

Q: And where was that truck parked?

A: They were parked on West between Warren and Park Place.

Q: Did they give you any direction?

A: Well, they were treating me at the time, cause in fact, I had an eye infection from it. After that was done, we ran back, seen an ambulance, jump-started the MERV, got the LSU, and then we set up over on this side of Vessey near the water. Then as the day, we were like all around. We were there for like 25 hours, okay.

Q: Anything else?

A: We need respirators like the Fire Department, that's all I have to say.

R. SHORT

Q: Okay, I want to thank you for participating in this interview. The time now is 11:14, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110091

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P LISA DESENA

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

L. DESENA

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time now is 10:42, and this is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, title, and assigned area.

LISA DESENA: Lisa Desena, paramedic, ALS coordinator, Division 4.

Q: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview in the conference room at Division 4 EMS command center at Queens General Hospital, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Go ahead.

A: Okay, we were in the office when we became aware that the first plane hit. There was some confusion as to where we should go. Whether I was supposed to go on the MERV. What ultimately happened was we received a phone call from Joe Cahill, the Citywide ALS coordinator who instructed me to take a full set of ALS equipment, put it on vehicle 833, and come down to Division One. As I was loading the equipment in, Lieutenant Maggiore stopped me. He wanted to accompany me. There was also another paramedic there, Christopher Lefkidakas. Because I was with Chris, I was able to sign out narcotics with the ALS equipment. Lieutenant Maggiore put his equipment on, and we proceeded to the incident. Do you want to know which route we ended up taking?

Q: Sure.

A: We took the Grand Central Parkway. We went over the Triboro Bridge. We came down the FDR Drive. We briefly stopped at Division One to receive

instructions on how to proceed. We continued up the FDR Drive and around the Battery, Battery Park.

Q: Who directed you from Division One?

A: The ALS Coordinator for Division One.

Q: Where did she tell you to go?

A: She gave us a number of locations. She said she didn't really have specific instructions. She basically just told us where the staging areas were. So we proceeded down, we ended up at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. This was just right after, I think the second tower had just fallen, or was falling at the time. We stopped at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. We unloaded all of our equipment. We set up the triage area, and then from there, Lieutenant Maggiore and I went down to Liberty plaza, where we had to set up another triage area. One had been set up, but a lot of the people who were there at the time were missing or had gone to hospitals.

Q: Liberty and what? Do you know the cross street?

A: It was One Liberty Plaza. It was the building right next to the Trade Center. I'm not that familiar…yeah, it was right there. It was on the corner of Church and I guess Liberty.

Q: Okay. From the time that you got your assignment to the time that you got to the fire terminal, if you spoke to anybody was that by a cell phone or by radio?

A: We spoke to Citywide by radio. I can't remember, Lieutenant Maggiore may have also tried by cell phone to get the best route to get to the incident. By the time

they gave us instructions over the Queensboro Bridge we were already right next to the Triboro Bridge. I know there were several academy vehicles, ambulances, behind us. Since we were in a command car, we were able to get through and stop traffic so that the academy ambulances could follow us. They came the same route we came, but once we got on the FDR Drive, I don't know where they ended up. I'm trying to think…I know that they had, I think, all the units go to Manhattan South and all the supervisors stay on Citywide. Then we were on Citywide. Lieutenant Maggiore had that radio on. The only radio I had was the Division radio. I was on the command frequency, 4E. So he really had the radio. Like I said, we went to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, we set up a triage area there, saw a number of supervisors at that time.

Q: EMS Supervisors?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know their names?

A: Chief Basile, Chief McKracken, Lieutenant Cronin, paramedic Louie Cooke was there. Chief Browne was eventually brought in, and his aide Jason Katz. Dr.Cherson, Bruce Medjuck, I know there was more, I just have to think. Then we went over to Liberty Plaza and the only supervisor on the scene, the only person there was Lieutenant Soto. Lieutenant Maggiore and Lieutenant Soto took over command and I tried to go inside and set up that triage area. But there were no FDNY people there except for me.

L. DESENA

There was a number of units from New Jersey, and a lot of doctors were there. There were no other FDNY units there. I was the only one there.

Q: Do you know what departments were there from New Jersey?

A: Actually no, down at Liberty Plaza was so chaotic that it took a long time just to get any semblance of order. The doctors continually kept trying to run down the street and go in the hole. Every time they thought there was someone down there. There were three different building collapses at that time, so everybody was really running all over the place. I honestly don't know who the Jersey units were. I just know there were no FDNY units down there at the time. I stayed down there till 6 AM the next morning.

Q: Did you treat any patients?

A: We had a number of firemen who came in for exhaustion or dehydration. We did have some minor injuries. We had one person pulled out who had been pinned down for several hours. But he wasn't there long, cause Dr. Gonzalez--- he already had blood, an IV. They were giving him blood. They rushed him went to the hospital.

Q: A civilian?

A: A civilian, yeah.

Q: Where did you get the equipment for the triage?

A: My equipment remained at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, so when I got there, there was equipment there. As time went on, they brought down more stuff. We

would tell them we needed oxygen, bandages, fluids, and it would end up getting delivered. At the beginning there wasn't a lot of stuff. I think the doctors brought down some stuff with them. So there was some stuff there. It looked like it had been set up prior to the building collapsing Then all the people that had staged that, I guess went all different places. So we're stuck there, and there was stretchers set up when I got there. The people who were originally there weren't there.

Q: Did you have the opportunity to enter any of the buildings?

A: Except for Liberty Plaza? That morning? No. I stayed there. I was down at the site several times. But because it was so unstable and buildings kept collapsing at the time and because there were no other officers there, Lieutenant Maggiore asked me to stay there and do triage and transport. Which is what I basically did.

Q: Did they have ambulances there?

A: Yes, mostly either the voluntaries or a couple of the volunteers from Long Island, and an occasional FDNY unit was there. We didn't have any problem with the ambulances. Once we were able to set up a staging area, the ambulances would come in. We'd have about 4 or 5 of them there at a time, and as they left we backed up. But that wasn't a problem.

Q: And that was to transport them to the hospital?

A: Yes.

Q: So who was transporting the patients to the triage area?

A: Either firemen or…

Q: This was on foot?

A: Yeah, cause we were that close. We were half a block away from the incident. Yeah, the firemen would bring them. The police officers would bring them. There were some people at the pile, and occasionally they would bring people back. But as I said before, most of the people at that time were FDNY, or uniformed service people who had gotten injured, or needed to recline. Most of the walking wounded people had left the area.

Q: Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add? Any observations? Any other personnel that you may have seen?

A: No, I don't think so. Anybody else that was down there that'd I've seen was accounted for and working today.

Q: Okay, I would like to thank you on the behalf of the Department for participating in this, the time now is 10:52. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110092

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT ADAM BRYNES

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time is 1244 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant Adam --

LIEUTENANT BRYNES: Brynes, B-r-y-n-e-s, Shield No. 0109.

MR. RADENBERG: -- assigned to EMS Battalion 57 of the Fire Department, City of New York. We are conducting the interview at EMS Battalion 57 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. I was assigned as conditions 572 on 9-11-01. I received a call from the Brooklyn North dispatcher to switch over to Citywide and respond to Manhattan for a report of a signal 1040.

I responded over the Brooklyn Bridge, came around by City Hall, noticed an ambulance treating approximately five people. At this point Tower 1 was engulfed in flames and heavy smoke condition, and the ambulance turned out to be 10 William, Tour 2. They were treating some soft tissue injuries and some burns and some respiratory distress patients, and their location was in front of City Hall by -- what street is that? Between Park Place and Barclay Street off of Centre Street there.

I was trying to receive additional resources for transport of these patients to the nearest facility. I had difficulties -- I couldn't raise anyone on any of the tactical channels to have any further ambulances deployed to me. So I assisted in treating these patients with 10 William when we heard a loud explosion and noticed Tower No. 2 engulfed in flames.

At that point further attempts to get in touch with Citywide or any operations officer at the MCI were unsuccessful, at which point I remember Tower 1 collapsing. I assisted 10 William in getting everybody in their ambulance and I directed them to transport to the nearest 911 facility.

At that point I continued down Broadway. I reached about Dey Street. I was attempting to get to the command post to assist in this incident when I was engulfed by tremendous amounts of debris and smoke and dust, making any further travel impossible.

During this time I had numerous people banging on my command car for help. I decided that, in the best interests of my personal safety, that I would egress from that location. Prior to doing so, I exited my vehicle and grabbed as many people as I could into

my command car and then I proceeded to turn around and I drove from the location with approximately six people in my command car that were all suffering from severe trauma. I advised the Citywide dispatcher that I needed a place to transport the personnel. The dispatcher did not know if any of the treatment areas still existed, so at that point I concluded that the nearest place I could get to was Beth Israel Hospital, and I started transporting those six individuals to the hospital.

At that point I noticed another command car, a Fire command car, behind me, trying to get through the traffic, and that command car followed me up until about 14th Street and Park Avenue, at which point that command car died. I went up to the command car and found Lieutenant Monroe, who was suffering from acute stress regarding this incident, like all of us. She had about five people in her command car that were suffering from trauma and associated injuries from this event.

I got back on the Citywide frequency and requested two ambulances to my location to take care of all these people, but after a few minutes I realized that the likelihood of receiving an ambulance at that

time was not going to be expeditious, and in an effort to provide the best care I could to these approximate eight to ten people, I decided to take Lieutenant Monroe and all of the people in her command car in my command car, where I transported everyone to Beth Israel Hospital. After getting everyone into the hospital, I land lined Citywide advising them that I had brought Lieutenant Monroe into the hospital and about eight civilians and requested further instruction.

At that point I was directed to respond to -- what they had at that time was a Battery Park command center. I traveled across town from Beth Israel down to the West Side Highway. En route down the West Side Highway, I noticed a group of EMS personnel and ambulances and a Chief and I mistakenly took that to be the command center. When I approached the Chief, whose name I cannot recall at this time, he told me that he would need my assistance gathering the personnel to set up a staging area.

I assisted in that for about 20 minutes, when I heard reports of a massive gas leak and there was a massive evacuation. I saw numerous people in vehicles driving north up the West Side Highway to evacuate the

immediate area. I was told that there was a massive gas leak and that we needed to evacuate. So we evacuated all personnel to Chelsea Piers, where a new staging area was set up. I assisted in logistics at that staging area, at which point I met up with Chief Kowalczyk, who requested that I transport him down to the command center that was established on West Street and Chambers Street at that time.

I responded down to West Street and Chambers Street with Chief Kowalczyk and his aide. I was given direction at that point to become a staging officer for all extra resource personnel that were sent in, and we established a treatment command center at Stuyvesant High School auditorium, at which point, sometime later, I was directed then to become the transport officer for the operation, where I responded to, again, West Street and Chambers.

I assumed transport operations for some period of time, several hours. Then I was directed to the command post, where I became the recording officer for Chief Kowalczyk and Chief McCracken, until about 2000 hours, at which point I was relieved and I retrieved my command car and responded back to Battalion 57, where I signed out at 2100 hours on

09-11-01.

That basically is my recollection of my operations on that date and time.

Q. The people that you had in your car and that Lieutenant Monroe had in her car, as far as you know, they were all civilians?

A. Yes. As far as I knew, they were all civilians. I didn't see anyone in any uniform and no one at that time identified themselves as being a uniformed member of any service.

Q. When you came down from Beth Israel, you said you were coming down the West Side Highway?

A. Correct.

Q. Do you remember how far, about how close you got to the incident when you came across the Chief and --

A. I believe that I stopped somewhere maybe 20 blocks south of Chelsea Piers. If they were named streets, I didn't see a name on them. But it was about 15 blocks south of the Chelsea Piers, about 15 blocks south of that.

Q. What is Lieutenant Monroe's first name?

A. Amy Monroe.

Q. Do you know what battalion she's at?

A. She is Chief McCracken's aide.

Q. Do you remember the collapse of the second tower?

A. No. All I remember is that I found out about the collapse of the second tower when I got to Beth Israel Hospital.

Q. So immediately after the collapses, the collapse of the second tower, you didn't actually make it down to the Trade Center complex?

A. During the collapse of the second tower?

Q. Yes.

A. No.

Q. In that period?

A. No. Because I got stopped, you know, I was coming down West Side Highway and I got stopped there before I got down any further. By the time I got back to the command center with Chief Kowalczyk, No. 2 building had collapsed. There were massive fires everywhere, so we weren't allowed to go south of Chambers Street at that time.

I do remember seeing the collapse of 6 World Trade Center. Was it 6 or -- I think it was 6. Did 6 drop? It was one of them, 6 or 3 or 7. I just remember watching the collapse of another building at

that time and that got us pretty nervous because there was, again, a big smoke-like cloud coming towards us and I just remember everyone at the command center running for cover until after that blew over. But that's the only other building I saw collapse. I think it was No. 6. I think, I'm not sure, but I think it was No. 6. Somebody told me it was No. 6 that had collapsed.

That's the best I can remember it. It was without a doubt a very hectic and totally uncontrolled environment. But that's what I can recollect.

Q. When you first got into Manhattan, you met up with 10 Willie?

A. Correct.

Q. Are they a Fire unit or voluntary?

A. They're a private, voluntary unit.

Q. Do you remember what hospital they're from?

A. I'd like to say New York Hospital, but I can't be sure.

Q. Okay.

A. Tony Brooks was one of the paramedics. I remember him because I used to work with him as a medic before he left EMS.

Q. From the time that you were with 10 Willie

until you started to transport up to Beth Israel and found that Lieutenant Monroe was behind you, did you see any other Department personnel?

A. No, not that I can recall.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments that you'd like to add?

A. No. I'd just be interested in going over the post-MCI critique about the incident. I've had some concerns regarding communication ability during something like this. I felt that something can be done in the future to allow us a better communication capability when something this big happens. I'm not saying that anything necessarily failed in this case, but I think that something could definitely be improved on to probably help our ability to perform our job.

That's about it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1301 hours and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110093

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL OBER

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

M. OBER

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 16, 2001. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, rank, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

MICHAEL OBER: My name is Michael Ober, I am an EMT with the New York City Fire Department. I am currently assigned to Division 3 in Brooklyn.

Q: Mike, were you working on September 11th, the day of the World Trade Center disaster?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: And were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: In your own words, can you please tell me about the events of that day?

A: Um, the morning of the 11th, I was in the office, I am currently assigned to Chief Kowalcyk. He was up here in the office, and he called down to me, "get the car ready". I said why? He said a plane crashed into the Twin Towers. I didn't really believe him at first. Then on the way out the door, one of the people who works here turned the TV on and we could see the towers burning. I said all right. I didn't think it was going to be so massive. I thought it was a Cessna or something like that. I had no idea it was going to be a 767. So I ran downstairs, got the car ready, we started to leave. I don't

know what road we were on, but I could see a nice picture of the city skyline. You saw the towers right in front of you, and the first tower was hit. I couldn't tell at first if it was papers or birds, but something white was you know, like flickering up in the sky. It just seemed weird. But anyway, we got into Manhattan. The Chief was trying to prepare us for everything. He said, "you know, just get ready, this may be a bad day. You might see a lot of dead people. You might see a lot of bad things". He was also saying that, just be prepared, cause it might be a terrorist act. At this point we still had no idea what was going on. We just heard that a plane hit the Twin Towers. He said, "be ready for secondary explosives". Just, you know, stuff like that, just trying to give me an idea of what he wants me to do when we get down there. We got out of the tunnel. Do you want this to be really descriptive, or do you just want to know…?

Q: Absolutely, sure, as descriptive as possible.

A: We were coming down what I believe is West Street, and the Chief says, what is that in the road up there? We just saw a pile sitting there, had no idea what it was. But we came closer, and found out it was body parts. We turned back the car, I have no idea exactly where, to be honest, I can't remember the street. We started walking to the building, I believe the building we walked into was the South Tower, I'm just not sure. But it was where the fire command post was, whichever building the fire command post was in, that's where we went. We walked into there, on the way into the building, there was people running around, people that was jumping landing on the grounds. Whatever building we walked into there was a glass canopy, foyer type thing

where from the street you can see into the building. As we were walking into the building, we just heard a huge bang. As we looked up, it was someone who had jumped, god knows how far up. We got into the lobby of the building and it was like chaos, there were people everywhere. Once we got in there, I don't remember exactly who it was, I think it was one of the fire Chiefs who said "you know it's not safe, we gotta get outside". So we left to go outside, and as we stepped out of the building, it was like, raining people. People were just jumping from everywhere. Just all over it was bodies and parts just scattered. We walked across, I believe it was West Street, and we set up the command post over there next to the fire command post, just trying to get everything in order. At the same time we're trying to watch to see what's going on. The only thing that was going on was you could see the buildings burning and people just jumping. You could watch them fall from like the 90th floor all the way down. It's like you go to school for so long to be able to take of people and treat them and be able to fix them when there's something wrong with them, and there's nothing, they hit the ground, and that's it. I saw one guy got split in half by a light post, his torso and his legs weren't together. You just feel helpless, there's nothing you can do. So we're sitting there trying to set up the command board. I really don't know how long we're there for, to be honest, I have no idea. Then we heard a rumble, some twisting metal, we looked up in the air, and to be totally honest, at first, I don't know exactly…but it looked to me just like an explosion. It didn't look like the building was coming down, it looked like just one floor had blown completely outside of it. I was sitting there looking at it. I just never thought they would

ever come down, so I didn't think they were coming down. I just froze and stood there looking at it. Then I saw everybody running past me and I said, I better start running. I turned around, luckily there's a parking garage behind us. We ran into the parking garage, and right before I got into the parking garage, I turned around and I could see the debris starting to come down.

Q: When you say we were running, can you tell me who else was in this group that was running?

A: Well, the command post was set up, I believe it was right on the sidewalk directly across the street, and directly behind us was like a driveway into a parking garage. The command post in front was myself, Chief Kowalcyk. There was either a Lieutenant or a Captain from Manhattan, one of the EMS officers. Then it was either directly to our left, or just a little behind us was the fire command post. Chief Ganci was there, Commissioner Feehan, all the guys who didn't make it out were standing right over there.

Q: How far from you were they?

A: Five, ten feet max. Then behind us, there was just lots of firefighters, I can't even begin to tell you how many. There was some cops back there, a lot of firefighters. They had all their gear sitting there, I guess they were just waiting for orders, just sitting there. After hearing this and looking up and seeing the building, what I thought was an explosion, everyone was running, I turned around and decided that I should probably take off like everybody else. So when I got to the entrance, I turned

around and saw the debris coming down. I didn't know if I was gonna die or get trapped. I was just like, I kept thinking, I don't want to be alone. I need to find somebody. I went into the parking garage, I made it about 5 feet. I saw some firefighter up against the wall, he was on the ground right close to the wall. I just jumped on this guy's back, I had no idea who he was. I said, are you all right? He was just like, yeah buddy, are you all right? Yeah, I'm fine. Just as he said that, a huge gust of wind just started coming down. It wasn't like huge chunks of debris, but it was a lot of dust, you know, just dust, it might have been ash too. But it was pitch black. We just layed there till it stopped coming down, then we finally got back up, it probably had to be inches of just stuff on top of everything. It had to be probably like six inches of dust and all kinds of stuff. After it stopped coming down, I finally got up, and thought we gotta get outta here. We got up. We're trying to figure out where we were. It seemed like a movie, it was just like guys in fire companies were screaming out their company numbers. I think it was 16, I'm not sure. But I remember just hearing someone in the background screaming 16, where are you? It didn't seem-- I just felt like I was in a movie. So myself and this firefighter, I have no idea who it is, decide that we're gonna walk towards this entrance where we came in. We walked, and I'm like, we're stuck. He said, no we're not at the entrance yet. Somebody says no, you're outside. I'm like we're not outside, it's dark out. He said look at the air, there's so much stuff in the air, no sunlight's getting through. The amount of stuff that was in the air, you couldn't see it. It was like a curtain of just dust that blocked out all the sunlight. Breathing was horrible, it was just ash and dust. Every time

I took a breath, I could feel more of it going into me. You try covering up your mouth, but it was still getting in. Cause it was just so thick in the air, it was hard to see 10 feet by you. It was horrible. There was just gear everywhere. I had no idea where I was, I had no idea how I was getting out. I somehow stumbled over a Scoot Pack and picked it up, just in case. I never used it, but I just picked it up and brought it just in case I needed to use it. We found out we were outside. At first you really couldn't see anything, it was just dark. Then after that, we were just looking for people, anything around us that we would know, that could get us out. Someone that could help, it was just confusion at first. I didn't know what to do, where to go, who to help, who to look for or anything. Then the air started to settle down a little bit, and some of the air was coming through, and it felt like I was looking at a black and white TV. Everything was a shade of gray. Everybody around me was just covered in gray. I saw a fire engine that was just completely destroyed, and it was just gray. Every fire engine was just a different shade of gray. It was just crazy. Actually, with all the devastation that was going on, that was the real cool thing to see. I don't know why, it was just really interesting. It was just like I said, it was like a black and white TV.

Q: At this point, did you know where your partner Chief Kowalcyk was?

A: No. I had no idea.

Q: The last time you saw him was at the command post?

A: Once I finally got situated, and got a hold of myself, I realized what was going on. I started looking for him. After a couple minutes of looking for him, another

Chief's aide, who I don't know his name, I know his face, he came over to me and said where's your Chief? I had no idea. He's said where's your Chief? I said I don't know. We started walking around looking for him. I don't even know how long we looked for him, time was just a big blur. We didn't find him anywhere, we went back into the parking garage, we couldn't find him in the parking garage. We walked down to the corner and both of our Chiefs were standing there together. We started heading down the block to get to the Chiefs.

Q: Who was the other Chief who was with Chief Kowalcyk, do you know?

A: I'm not sure…sorry. I can't remember.

Q: No, no, it's alright.

A: Just as we got to the Chiefs, the rumbling started again, and it was just like a sound I'll never forget. Days afterwards I heard a rumbling noise and I was hiding. You knew what was happening, we turned around and the second building was coming down. So we took off running again, and I don't know what building it was, sorry I don't really know the area very well…

Q: It's fine, it's fine.

A: I just found a safe area, so I didn't care what street it was. We ran behind this building, and had shelter in that building. People were just coming in. They let people in the doors. Then from there, for a while I don't know what happened. I know we left the building, we found an ambulance crew and we told the driver that we had to set up some kind of staging. Set up some kind of triage, we had to get some kind of

order. We figured the best way to do that was to take a step back. So Chief Kowalcyk said take them down to Chelsea Piers. He figured it was a big area, they had a lot of big open rooms in there. If need be we could make it into a make-shift hospital, or a triage area. We took a ride down there. I don't even remember how long we were down there for. I just remember flying through the streets of Manhattan, going down there. When we got down there, it was just like, go down to the end, there was a little cobblestone driveway. It was maybe like 2 cars wide, maybe a little bit bigger than that. Then there's like a main road, you just go to the end of the driveway. He just told me to switch any ambulance that shows up over to the command frequency. Keep the driver in the car, tell them don't leave the ambulance. He just had a lot of orders. Write down the unit number. I went down to the end and the ambulances just started showing up from everywhere. Ambulance companies that I had never even heard of before. People just from everywhere were showing up. There had to be hundreds of ambulances lined up there. I had ambulances show up, and all I had to do was write down what kind of crew they were, whether it was a BLS crew, an ALS crew. Whether they had you know, two people or ten. The ambulances would show up and I'm like well, what's your crew? They'd be like, well it's myself, my partner, we're both EMTs. I have five doctors, and four nurses in the back. There was so many people. So many people with so much training and so much knowledge. These amazing skills that they could treat these people with, but there was no patients. We had all kind of medically trained people there and nobody to take care of. We had ambulances just lined up, and everybody's getting

frustrated cause they know what's going on. It's like everybody who came out here who had bumps and bruises. Or they didn't come out, they were dead. There was really nothing that anyone could do down there, so they were getting frustrated. Then I just, I don't even know…time was just a blur, I don't remember what time it was. There was a rumor about a gas leak going on down there, and about 2 minutes after this rumor of the gas leak, Chief Kowalcyk calls me on the radio and says we're going back down there. I remember getting down there, that's about it. I don't remember exactly what we did once we got down there. It was weird, it was probably the most devastating thing I've ever seen in my life, and so much of it I can't remember. I don't remember where I parked the car, you know, I don't remember the people that I saw. I saw so many people, and it's like, a lot of them I know by face, and I will never forget faces. But I don't know names. Both people that I work with, and both victims that I saw parts from were like, someone's face that I saw them jump, and they landed 5 feet from me. I don't remember the sound of the building hitting the ground. Somebody told me that it was measured on the Richter scale, I don't know how true that is. If the building is hitting the ground that hard, how do I not remember the sound of it? The smell was just --- it has a distinct smell. I've been to Manhattan many times since then, and that smell just brings back every single…I don't know if it's like World Trade Center cement. I don't know what exactly it is. It's just that like, the smell that we inhaled so many times with the rest of the dust and everything in the parking garage. It's just a nasty smell. I mean, it's not that bad, but I

just don't like the smell. Um, I don't know…we were down there, there was rumors about the other stuff going on. But nobody had definite information.

Q: About what other stuff?

A: One rumor I heard was that they were taking out the tunnels, which seemed pretty damn scary considering we took the tunnel on the way over here.

Q: The Brooklyn Battery Tunnel?

A: The Brooklyn Battery, there you go. The Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Then we heard about the Pentagon. Somebody also said the Sear's Tower was hit. That's about it as far as I know. People were just talking. You didn't know what was true and what was not true, you know? I remember standing on, I think it was on West Street, and it was the first plane I had heard in awhile. I started flipping out. I turned around and I'm looking at the Empire State Building, and I'm like, it's gone. All I heard was the rumbling of an airplane, and I'm like, they're taking out the Empire State Building too. It was some kind of F-15 or something came like, screaming over our heads. That was the greatest thing I saw all day long. I'm like, they're not hitting us with anymore planes. It's just like I said, a lot of the stuff I'll be getting here and there. It's all bits and pieces.

Q: Is there anything else that you feel you want to add to this interview? Anything at all?

A: Sure, I probably should have said, or told you about. I know this is just a personal feeling, but the amount of devastation that was going on down there, it's just unbelievable the number of people who came out. When I was down at Chelsea Piers

lining up the ambulances, I had people coming up to me who wanted to just do something. Someone was like, I'm a retired Vietnam veteran. I can help you know. I'm, used to this kind of situation. What can I do to help? There were people everywhere, "I'm a lawyer", and you see them out there directing traffic. They tried so much to bring us down, whoever did this. It's just not gonna happen, you know? It's just so many awesome people out there. Just the way everybody's doing the job, it's unbelievable. This city, I'm proud of where I work.

Q: You should be. You have good reason to be proud. Well Mike, I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 11:02. The counter on the cassette player is 313.

File No. 9110094

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P ERIC RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

E. RODRIGUEZ

MIKE TAMBASCO: Today is October 16, my name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The interview today is with paramedic Eric Rodriguez, who is assigned to Unit 35 Zebra, tour 2. We are in the Battalion 57 locker room. Alright, Eric.

ERIC RODRIGUEZ: My name is Eric Rodriguez, I'm a paramedic assigned to 35 Zebra 2. On the morning of September 11th, my partner and I, Joel Pierce went over to Carl's Place, a little deli over on Union and North 8th where we get our breakfast every morning, cause it's right around our 89, and it's really relaxing. As we were sitting down eating, all of a sudden we heard a lot of Brooklyn units getting switched to Citywide. A lot of 31 Units down by the Brooklyn Bridge. So we looked at each other and said wow, something must be going on, let's see if we can, you know, something good to buff. So we switched over to citywide and we started hearing all these reports about we have fire showing at the World Trade Center, explosion. So we go woah, so we drove over to Kent Avenue and as we got around Kent and North 6th, we could see that the North Tower had been struck. I didn't know what it was. I mean, the plumes of smoke were coming, and I remember getting on the phone and calling my wife and my mother saying turn on the television. There's a hole in the World Trade Center. So now at this point, my partner is calling Citywide, telling them we're an ALS haz-tac,

we can be over the bridge in 5 minutes. You know, put us on the job. Cause at this point we had also heard the MCI code for an airplane crash. So we're thinking haz-tac, we can get there and really get in on the job. We couldn't get out on the phones and we're trying to get through on the radio, but not stepping on anybody. As we're standing there watching the buildings is when the second plane hit. It was then that we realized that this was not just a fire. That whole feeling just like, your stomach dropped out. At that point, we got on the radio and said 35 Zebra, we're going. We had our Sargent from the 90 Precinct, was down there. He had already got --cleared traffic for us straight down Broadway to the Willie B. I remember going across the Willamsburg Bridge, I looked at my partner and said brother, no matter what happens, we go home alive tonight. Cause even then we were thinking there's got to be very heavy patient care. But who else knows what's going on. When we first got into Manhattan over the Willie B, we got directed over to Canal down to Broadway. We were coming down Broadway past City Hall, and it was pandemonium. There was all kind of resources over here, we're trying to look for some kind of EMS command post. There were crowds of people over here, we wound up coming down, coming across over here. There was wreckage everywhere, and there were body parts.

Q: So you came across West on Vessey Street?

A: Yeah, and there was nothing but, it was absolutely like Berlin 1944, 45. We couldn't get across over here because there was too much debris, it didn't look too safe. We didn't see too much trucks or apparatus. So we came down here.

E. RODRIGUEZ

Q: You came down Church Street going south.

A: Then we had to divert back over this way, cause we couldn't, there was too much debris. You know the stairs that's over here, across from the hotel that's usually over here?

Q: Right, right.

A: There was far too much stuff here, and there were body parts in the street. We didn't want to run over them, so I came back across over here on this little street, I guess that's Dey.

Q: Dey Street, you went over east, right?

A: We got back to Broadway, then we started, we lit it up again and went all the way down Broadway.

Q: Southbound on Broadway, right.

A: We started picking up all these ambulances. They just started jumping in line behind us. We came down across by the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and got over to West Street, and just headed back up.

Q: Right, up north.

A: Up north. Now at Liberty, we saw a command vehicle with an EMS officer standing at Liberty and West Street. So we figured that's where it was. I was listening to the radio, I was hearing Chief Goldfarb on the radio. I know his incident command is second to none. So I figured that's where he was, and I pretty much trust a

lot of his decisions. Okay, we're here, we're haz-tac, what do you want us to do? Well, it turns out he wasn't there. But there was a captain, I forget who he was, but he was newly promoted, a kind of heavyset guy.

Q: Captain D'amato maybe?

A: Maybe. We're like, where do you want us? He said, give me a second, I just got here, this isn't a command post as far as I know. But at this point we're standing there talking to him and other busses are going around us and starting to line up behind his command vehicle. It also looked like PD was setting up a command post right there, they had a lot of units in plainclothes. Apparatus were still showing up, so we initially started staging right underneath that little walkway that goes across…

Q: That goes across West Street?

A: No, Liberty. This one right here.

Q: Got you.

A: That's when we started noticing that people were jumping on that side. At first I said look out, there's debris falling. We looked up and said no, that's not debris, those are bodies. We're thinking bodies from the fire floors. Then we started seeing they were screaming and they were moving, and we were watching them hit the ground. At that point there's nothing you can do to treat them. You know we might need to move back cause they're gonna start taking some of us out. So we moved back here where South End and Liberty meet.

Q: West, where South End, right.

A: We started staging over here, they wanted us down on South End. They told us listen, you guys are haz-tac. We have about 2 or 3 of your haz-tac units here. What we want to do is, we want you to stay up close here because we're gonna consolidate you guys, you're gonna Scott up, you're gonna go up and do searches.

Q: Do you remember who told you that? Was it an EMS captain?

A: There was a captain. No, there wasn't cause I had to tell the captain. Who was it? It was a chief said it, I don't remember what chief was there.

Q: Okay, fine.

A: Cause it wasn't Chief Goldfarb, cause I know his aide. It was someone I didn't know. It might have been Chief Wells, I'm really not sure.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause at this point I hadn't actually physically seen any of the chiefs, but I was hearing them on the radio. I was hearing Brynes on the radio, so I was trying to get a sense of where everybody was. I knew there was a command center inside, there was a forward triage. I was thinking I don't see too many medics here, I see a lot of EMTs. So me and my partner are like we gotta get in, at least maybe we can do something over there. So we're standing there, and we're hearing the reports, patients with major burns and all that. My partner says listen, I want to go find out what's going on. So he starts walking over towards West Street and Liberty and South. I was on the corner of Liberty

and South End Street. I went into the back of the truck and started hanging trauma lines. I figured if we get a burn victim or whatever, we're prepared. I don't know how much time went by. I know I slipped out of the truck for a minute and then Chief McCracken was there, and I think it was Chief Grant was there. I remember Chief McCracken saying chief Grant is taking over, he's assuming command of this sector right here. Anybody needs directions, I want all the drivers to stay with the vehicles and everybody else to come over by Chief Grant. Well my partner was already over there, and I was driving that day. So I figured well, I'll finish hanging all the trauma lines. I was in back of the vehicle and I heard, it sounded like I thought another plane had struck the building. This loud bang and then it sounded like a locomotive, or like when I used to live in Howard Beach, when the planes used to come in at night, flying right over the house. Everything started shaking and I heard like a thunderstorm. Somebody screamed it's coming down. I don't remember if it was on the radio, because the side door of the bus was open. The back door of the truck--I could see out of. I looked, and I bent all the way down to look up as far as I could, and I could see the cloud coming. I thought the building was actually falling over. I didn't know it was pan-caking. I was like, I'm not getting out of here. So I dove on the floor of the truck. I was praying, if something hits this bus, don't let it collapse the box. If it does, I hope there's a big enough void that I'll be alright. I remember something hit the bus hard enough that my siren went off. Then the siren died.

E. RODRIGUEZ

So the siren went off and then it died. It was pitch black, and I heard the May Days come across. I couldn't breathe, you know.

Q: Can you remember anyone specific you heard on the May Days?

A: No, I just heard someone say May Day, May Day. We are pinned, we are pinned, like that. People stepping on each other. I remember hearing Central say units, calm down, you know-- of that nature. I was suffocating and then I realized that…and then I remembered that we had Scott packs. There was a piece of metal that was like, wedged in the doorway. I grabbed my mask, I was able to get the metal out of the way, and the soot and stuff was about halfway up the side of the bus. So I was able to dig through that, get to the compartment, and get my Scott pack on. I thought I was actually under a debris or something, and I'm thinking whatever's on top of me I hope isn't a fire part. Cause I don't want this to just collapse and then you know, fry and all that. As it started to filter down, I'm thinking, where the hell is my partner? There was a Lincoln Navigator that was right next to the bus, that when I went to step in, I had to move the door cause it wouldn't open all the way. It was gone, I mean it wasn't…it was gone. There were a couple of ambulances that were completely totaled. You know the Hottzollah MERV that they had up there was completely flat. As it was clearing up, I could see more and more of the apparatus that were there completely destroyed or gone. Then I don't remember seeing anybody move, it was dead silent and it was like being on the surface of the moon. Cause all I could hear was the Scott pack, you know? So I'm looking, I'm looking and I ran into Timmy Keller, from Batallion Fifty.

E. RODRIGUEZ

He was kind of standing up, he looked a little dazed and I said Timmy, are you alright? And he goes, I can't find Karen, Karen DeShore. I said, where was she? She was right next to me before everything happened. He said, I jumped under the car, I can't find her. I said, well have you seen anyone else? He said no. So now I'm still looking for my partner. I finally found Joel, he was having a hard time breathing. I said, lets go get your Scott pack and get out of here. He says no, we got to go back to the first tower and start digging. I said listen, if this one came down, the other one's probably gonna come down. Trust me, turn around, get on my ass, we'll get out of the area. If they say it's not gonna come down, we'll come back. Until such time, we need to get out of here. When we got back to the truck, he got his Scott pack on. The vehicle was dead, it wouldn't move, I think one of my rear axles was busted too. The vehicle was dead. We started hearing on the radio, all units within the vicinity of the World Trade Center, you need to evacuate the immediate area because the North Tower is beginning to lean. So, we started hoofing it, and we found another crew was there. They had no stretcher in their bus. There was this paramedic, and I know I've seen him, but I can't remember if I've seen him in Manhattan or from when I worked in the Bronx.

Q: One of our units?

A: One of our guys. I said, does that truck run? He said absolutely, everybody get on. So we jumped in the back right as the North Tower collapsed.

South End is not a very big street, but he was flying down that street and that cloud was coming. It looked like we were parked. We got to the end of South End Street, by that building over there, and they had all those boats, they were trying to get people on them. That's when the second cloud came. I got separated from my partner at that time again, so while we were standing there, I'll never forget it. It seemed to be just completely disorganized, and people were like, let's just help these people to the boats and all that. The paramedic who was driving that rig turned around and said listen, get a pen and a paper, we need to start writing down who's here. I'm assuming command of this area. We started doing that, and I told him, I'm gonna go find my partner. He was like, I wish you'd stay here, and I was like, well, no. I finally found him. We made our way down to South Ferry, and we met Chief McCracken. Then we wound up going over to Liberty Street. Not Liberty Street, Joel went back to Liberty Street, I stayed down in South Ferry. Where I met him, he was on the north side of everything when it happened.

Q: Anything else you want to add to it, Eric?

A: Nothing else. That's about it.

Q: Thank you. This interview concludes at 13:13. By the way, it began at 12:58.

File No. 9110095

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF WALTER KOWALCZYK

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 16th. My name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. The time is 10:47 a.m. I am in the office of Chief Walter Kowalczyk in the Battalion 58 building. We will be doing an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center.

Q. Chief, if you would just be good enough to tell me in your own words what happened.

A. On the morning of the 11th, I started my tour of duty at approximately 5:30 in the morning. I was in my division office. I was also scheduled to be, for the date of the 11th, the citywide EMS chief. What that means is that for the 24-hour period starting at 8 a.m. on the 11th and terminating at 8 a.m. on the 12th, I am the ranking EMS officer responsible for EMS activities.

I was sitting in my office doing my work. I always monitor the fire scanner as well as the EMS dispatch frequencies. At which point a second alarm came over on the Brooklyn fire frequency. Brooklyn fire transmitted a second

alarm for the World Trade Center. I immediately turned the fire scanner to the Manhattan frequency, and there was a report of a plane into the Trade Center.

At that point I advised my staffer to get an overview of division operations. I'm responsible on a day-to-day basis for EMS Division 3, which is approximately 700 people and about 65 ambulances at peak shift.

As I was preparing to leave, there was a TV on in the other room that had a live shot of this. I realized going out that this is probably something fairly major. However, in my mind I thought it was probably a small plane into the Trade Center.

My aide Michael Ober and myself responded to the Trade Center. The best access route that we took was the Prospect Expressway into the Gowanus. As we approached on the Gowanus, the enormity of the situation was live in front of us. And there was not much we could do because we were facing some heavy traffic.

I remember turning to my aide and saying we need to use caution going into this,

looking at the enormity of the situation. From a safety perspective I was also concerned that this could be terrorism. I have taken a good number of courses in preparation for the medical aspects of bioterrorism.

We were stuck in traffic for a little bit, and then traffic started to move. It appeared that the Police Department had very quickly put some traffic patterns into place to pull emergency traffic through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

As soon as we came through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, the devastation was almost immediate. In my career I have managed many multiple-casualty incidents from plane crashes to severe train derailments, so managing high-scale incidents never scared me.

However, as you're driving down West Street and you have to maneuver the vehicle to avoid driving over what appeared to be body parts as well as debris, my mouth went dry. I had the sensation that I had a job to do. I had to ensure the safety of the EMS work force. But how do I do this if I can't talk?

I asked somebody for a -- so we parked our car and came down West Street. There was no clearly defined staging area at that point in time. It was a fairly chaotic event. And at that point the only thing that was evident was fire from at least one of the towers.

We positioned our vehicle on Liberty Street between West Street and North End. I pulled my safety gear out and my portable radio and we took a command board. That was the last time I was to see my vehicle in an upright position.

We proceeded north on West Street, trying to find the command post. In most incidences to find the command post is very clear and evident. However, at this point in time it was not clear and evident. We found some officials to say that the command post was in the lobby of One World Trade Center, which is the north tower.

Q. The north tower.

A. I think the most devastating or one of the most devastating views I had was as we were entering Two World Trade Center there was a torso

on the ground. It looked to me a little like a CPR mannequin. But I had to focus to keep going.

Debris was coming down around us. We entered Two World Trade Center through a shattered window. We found Chief Gombo, who was the ranking EMS officer on the scene. I remember seeing Chief Peter Hayden from the Fire Department there.

At that point they indicated we needed to move the command post. There was a report of another plane coming. In retrospect, knowing the events that had occurred, I'm not sure if that was the second plane that was coming or the second plane had already come and now intelligence was starting to develop and maybe there was a third plane inbound.

We moved quickly but cautiously outside and started to establish a command post in the driveway in front of Two World Financial Center, which is on West Street, basically midpoint between the intersections of Vesey and Liberty Street.

At that point a formal command post of fire officials started to develop, including

First Deputy Commissioner Feehan and Chief of Department Peter Ganci. I think Chief Ray Downey was there. Chief Gombo came over.

Basically I started to assume the responsibility of the EMS operations chief. I started to, in the midst of the chaos, establish some type of infrastructure for the EMS operations. I remember deploying chiefs and officers to Vesey and West and to Liberty and West with global direction of trying to set up operation there.

It was very difficult to concentrate, given the enormity of the situation. Probably the most emotional piece was when we saw the bodies coming off the Trade Center. Now, I'm not talking about one or two bodies. We had to have watched between 10 and 20 bodies come down. I will never forget the sound of those bodies hitting the ground.

I believe it's the front of One World Trade Center, it's structured in a manner that has a glass canopy over the driveway. Again, my recollection could be wrong. It could be either that or Three World Trade Center. It was one of

the buildings on West Street. I believe it was One World Trade Center.

The bodies were coming down and going through those plate glasses. The sound -- if you ever heard sounds of plywood dropping on the ground, just that force, it was multiplied. I thought I was at an event at Universal Studios, on the side, watching a movie being taped. But this was no movie. It was real life, and it was moving in slow motion.

There were some thoughts or words of people that you just can't forget. I'm sure it wasn't the last words that Chief Ganci said, but I remember words such as "oh, shit, those bastards." That's the last words I ever heard Chief Ganci say.

We were trying to get a handle on running the EMS operation when suddenly what appeared to be in slow motion was a humongous black cloud starting to descend from the sky. That black cloud was, later I realized, the collapsing of I believe the north tower. In retrospect, it happened in slow motion, but yet it happened so quickly. I don't remember which

one it was.

We turned, and we ran down this driveway. As I'm running down this driveway, I probably said why am I doing this? Why am I running down a driveway into a parking garage that would be a natural flow for debris? Again, in my mind I had been to building collapses, and building collapses usually come down at an angle.

[redacted]

[redacted]two fantastic children. As I was running, I wasn't sure if I would ever see them again.

We ran into this garage along with Chief Gombo, Lieutenant Terranova and members of the Police Department and firefighting operations. I believe Commissioner Fitzpatrick was with us along with emergency service officers. I thought we were going to die.

A haze was starting to develop. We could not see the driveway. That was black. I wasn't sure if the haze that was developing was a smoke condition starting to impact us or the debris.

I heard a fire officer scream: 18, where are you? It was either 18 or 16 -- 18 or 16 Truck, where are you? It seemed like a scene from Backdraft where they're trying to recall their members. But this was no movie; this was live.

Then we were all scared. There was probably 15, 20, 30 people with us in the garage. Chief Gombo was coughing, and I was concerned about him. We were all covered with soot. I wasn't sure if I was going to get out. Nobody could find an exit, nobody.

I didn't know what would happen then. I kept hearing the sound of -- I guess it's the sounds of silence. But it wasn't silence; it was a cloud just coming down on us.

We regrouped. People were trying to get out on cell phones or radios to no avail. There was a phone there. I'm not sure if anybody ever got out on the phone. I'm not sure if we knew where we were, except across the street from the Trade Center. That really doesn't narrow it down in New York City.

Somebody found an exit. I'm not sure

how long we were there for. We came out, I would probably say at the south side of Two World Financial Center. People said that it was near the area of the Winter Garden. It looked like a snowstorm, covered with white, and quiet, ever so quiet.

The other scary thing -- to go back for a second -- I couldn't find my aide. My aide is a young man who happens to live in my neighborhood. I couldn't find him. For that moment, while I was trapped, I knew I was breathing and alive. I didn't know where he was.

As we got out, we looked around, and people were devastated and just did not know where to go. What was weird is behind Two World Financial Center there's like a little cove. On the map it's indicated as the North Cove Yacht and Harbor. And I knew water was there because I had done planning in the past for the Statue of Liberty celebrations. You couldn't see the water.

We regrouped, found Chief Goldfarb, Chief Villani and Chief Gombo. Probably the happiest moment of that day was when I saw my

aide Michael. He said he came into the garage. I didn't see him. So I'm not sure if he even did. Once we were in the garage, there was a separation between the front and the back from debris.

We went into another building, which I think was Three World Financial Center, or it might have been Four World Financial Center, one of the other buildings to the north, to try to strategize. We had discussions that we needed to reorganize and move north. We did not know what the issues were at that point in time.

So people spoke about setting up staging areas on Chambers Street. I recommended that we go further north, just to stabilize. We later decided to move up to 23rd Street, to Chelsea Piers. I've commanded many operations. I'm a very aggressive, on-scene commander with the safety of the people that work with us first. But at that point in time I think I got selfish and I aggressively volunteered for the 23rd Street operation.

I had fears I would never see my kids again. And I had an opportunity of life again.

I found an ambulance crew. My aide and myself got into this ambulance, and it was like a slalom course, driving through debris.

At that point the man-made snow of the World Trade Center was fairly deep. Somehow the operator of the vehicle -- to this day I don't know who it was -- got us up to 23rd Street.

I met with representatives of Chelsea Piers. I asked for their assistance. They overwhelmingly welcomed us, whatever you need. That location would later be a very beneficial strategy point for days and weeks into the operation.

As I was managing that, ambulances from all over were coming in. We tried to organize them, move them inside from West Street so they were safe. It was like I was at the gates of Shea Stadium at the end of a game. People were just running towards us.

Ambulance crews were approaching me: Chief, I'm a haztac unit, let us go in there. I said let's get organized, they know we're here. About ten minutes later that same haztac crew came to me and got in my face. He wasn't

insubordinate, but he was very aggressive. I pick him out as a sample of the work force there. Employees with an unknown danger but wanting to go and do their job and help people. I again, in a firmer tone, said you have to wait to get direction.

Later that crew -- and one of the things that I clearly said to that paramedic or EMT, I'm not sure what his medical certification was, that it's my job to get you home at night to your family. Let me do that job. Some half hour later that same individual came over and thanked me and understood the reason why I stood my position.

As time went by, many more resources started to arrive. We had Secret Service personnel at that location that helped us to develop a secure area separate from the public and to operate.

Chief Pascale arrived. Several supervisors arrived. At that point it appeared that Chief Peruggia was the only person we were hearing on the radio. Chief Peruggia was trying to manage the operation.

Sometime later -- and again, the clock stopped -- he requested my response up to the command post location. At that point you have to envision that the only thing we're able to see is large columns of smoke and hundreds and thousands of people running towards us.

I remember going over to Chief Pascale and turning the Chelsea division over to her. I remember hugging her. I said Fran, they asked me to go to the command post. I'm not sure if I'll ever see you again, because of the unknowns of the situation. She said let me go, I'll go for you. It's okay. They asked me to go to the command post. I'll go down there.

I took my aide, along with Lieutenant Byrnes in a command car, and we proceeded down West Street. I was scared. I was scared.

We approached the command post. Chief Peruggia asked me to come down because he needed the help. I started to manage the operation, and I saw that command by committee was not going to work here. Everybody was putting ideas in.

I said to Chief Peruggia: Don't take this the wrong way. But I'm going to take the

job from you. At that point in time I assumed the responsibility for EMS operations, located next to the Fire Department command post and tried to put a strategy together.

The hardest thing is that we didn't have contact with the outside world. We couldn't get through to headquarters. We were not sure what system policy decisions were made or implemented. We knew the people would come through and do the right thing, because that's what the Fire Department is made of, specifically the EMTs and paramedics, no different than the firefighters. When it comes down to it, they want to try to do the best job they can.

We were setting up our operation and probably the most frustrating thing was that there were no patients. We had been trying to get a handle on the divisions and we put some structure to it. We set up a north and a south division; south being down by Battery Park, north being up by Chambers Street. Slowly an organizational structure started to be developed.

It was sometime later that Chief McCracken made it up to the command post. We

spoke about some policy issues and where I saw the organizational structure needing to go. I tried to provide my recommendations. One of the objectives was to get the EMS system back in operation.

One of the hardest things to swallow was when I asked for a call status on the city. The dispatcher indicated that they were holding in excess of 400 assignments. I had to make a decision. I was looking at the enormity of this situation. I had to be concerned with Mrs. Jones having chest pains in the Bronx or in Brooklyn. We had a large number of resources up at Chelsea.

Initially, I conferred with the fire incident commander, Chief Nigro, Chief Burns and Chief Carruthers and, I'm sorry, Chief Butler and Chief Carruthers. They asked me not to de-escalate any resources at this point in time.

Losing the concept of time, I eventually -- or we eventually released 20 to 40 ambulances back to 911, and the 911 system started to come back.

In speaking with Chief McCracken, we had the concern of putting the 911 system back

into operation. The way I recommended to do it initially was to utilize mutual aid resources for the scene operation and return the city units back to operation.

That would do two things. A, we get the city people eventually back to their stations so we can regroup. It's difficult to take units from New Jersey and outside New York City and ask them to do 911 calls in the system when we didn't have the infrastructure for it.

It was very hard to keep focused at establishing a strategy with the devastation in front of you. It was like building an EMS system from scratch. I remember through the night meeting with Coast Guard officials about hospital ships coming in, talking about DMAT, disaster medical assistance teams, coming in. It was like putting a system together from scratch.

During this period the news started to filter into the command post about the passing of Chief Ganci, Father Judge, Commissioner Feehan, the reports of EMS, firefighters, police officers and civilians missing. This was not going to be an operation that we will secure in an hour.

As I indicated, I started my day about 5:30 in the morning. In between and amidst the chaos, I had to get phone calls to my kids and to my parents and to my in-laws to let them know I was okay and to make arrangements for my kids. I knew I wasn't going to be home that night.

The day that started as any other day at 5:30 in the morning on September 11th ended when I went home about 9 to 10:00 the next morning. The days and weeks following it were scary. [redacted], but things evolved, structures were put in place, things were modified. I probably did not talk to my staff from Division 3 for several days.

It was an event that I will not forget. I think what's most troubling is in doing major assignments in the past, you go home and people watch them on the news and it's a forgotten memory in a day or two. In my local parish in Williston Park there were approximately 17 to 20 people missing from our little neighborhood.

[redacted]

[redacted]

So here as we sit on October 15th. Tomorrow I have to go to the funeral of her friend's father, along with many other funerals and memorial services.

I think what's frustrating is usually I have to deal with this stuff inside myself. [redacted]

[redacted]

Thank you for this opportunity.

Q. Chief, if I might just ask you one other thing. When you were, just going back to running into the garage in the World Financial Center, that, I assume, was building one coming down, the first tower.

A. That's correct.

Q. After that do you remember where you were when the second one came down?

A. There's two other collapses that I

remember. I believe when the second one came down we were probably in that Winter Garden area. I remember again that same silence but yet roar and the vision.

I remember when we had gone down to set up the command post. I was working with Chief Peruggia. It was another fear for our life when Seven World Trade Center wanted to come down.

Sometimes you just don't know where to run.

Q. Chief, unless there's anything else you can think of or you want to add, I thank you ever so much for the interview, your thoughts and all the rest.

[redacted] I cannot begin to fathom the feelings of the families of the police, fire, the EMS and all the civilians who are groping with this horrific disaster. We just don't know where it's going to go next.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Q. Once again, thank you ever so much, Chief.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview concludes at 1125 hours.

File No. 9110097

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CHAD RITORTO

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time is 1541 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT RITORTO: Chad Ritorto from Battalion 43, EMT 3015.

MR. RADENBERG: The interview is being conducted at the Fire Department headquarters, fourth floor, in the BITS offices. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Please start with when you went into Manhattan.

A. Well, previously I called my battalion, told them that I was available. They stated that they didn't have anybody for me to work with at that time, to stand by. I then decided to proceed down to the World Trade on my own. I put on my Fire Department uniform, got all my gear. I went down in my personal car, down to the World Trade Center.

I parked my car at approximately Albany and the West Side Highway. I then proceeded on

foot to where they were doing forward triage, which was at Liberty and the West Side Highway. I met up with an EMS chief; I'm not sure of his name. I met up with a chief, and he made me staging officer.

We were in the process of collecting keys, and all of a sudden we heard somebody say run, the building was coming down. We looked up. Sure enough, the building came down.

I then proceeded to attempt to evacuate the area by running west across West Side Highway from Liberty and managed to hide underneath the pedestrian foot bridge underneath the concrete staircase that leads from the street to the bridge.

At that point I took cover. Building debris came down. I was struck on my head, my arm and my leg. I received a laceration over my right eye from it. With several other EMTs and paramedics from unknown destinations, we then went into the World Financial Center, and we managed to go through that building and come out on the gateway plaza walkway. From there we proceeded down towards Battery Park along the

esplanade when the second tower came down.

After that I went back to where my car was and got in my car and proceeded north of Chambers. There were numerous patients that we were treating. There was debris falling from the windows of the buildings. There were bodies coming out of the windows. There were body parts all over the street.

I don't know. That's pretty much the gist of what went down. It was scary.

Q. So when the first tower collapsed, you were under here?

A. Right.

Q. In here?

A. Right. I was actually on this corner, because they were --

Q. On this side?

A. Right. They were pulling people out of this building. People were coming out of this building here, out of Two World Trade Center. There was an exit right here. This was forward triage. Initially they wanted us to go in there, but one of the captains didn't want EMS in there.

Q. A fire captain or EMS captain?

A. An EMS captain. A fire chief told an EMS captain to bring about 30 EMTs into that tower, and the EMS captain didn't want to do that. So the fire chief got a little annoyed at him. All the EMTs stayed outside. But if the EMTs weren't outside, we would have had a lot more EMS fatalities when that other tower came down, because most of the EMS was outside and they were able to actually scatter down Liberty, down Washington, and down the West Side Highway.

I was tripping over EMS guys underneath this bridge. They were like Hazollah guys and guys from Cornell and people from Metro Care.

Q. This was forward triage over here?

A. Right.

Q. Liberty and Washington.

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember who the EMS captain was?

A. I don't know. I don't really remember. Everything just happened like so fast. You were more worried about looking up. I had this feeling that we were too close because there was debris coming down. The aluminum siding, that

was just coming and it was just flopping down. It was in the air and looked like paper, but when it came down, it made such a crash.

I told one of the chiefs we were way too close, we were way too close, we need to pull back. No, no, no, we're safe from here. I'm like, all right, whatever.

Then somebody just said run, the building's coming down. We ran. I remember looking at the building. I was running for the building. There were guys in the doorway waving everybody in, trying to pull everybody in. I wasn't going to make it.

I hid under that bridge. I tripped over somebody, and my helmet flew off. Then I got pelted. I managed to put my helmet back on and then just prayed. Then all of the debris came down. One minute there was light and air, and the next minute there's nothing. It was darkness and dust.

You took one breath, and all the soot went in your mouth. It just dried your mouth instantly. You're taking it out of your mouth. It was like I didn't want to take a deep breath.

I'm taking small shallow breaths so I don't inhale all this stuff.

I'm fumbling over debris, big bricks. I remember I saw the windows of the building, and I grabbed something. I burned my hands on it. You can see the scar here. I burned my hands on it. Then I went through the window. Then I remember seeing all the computers, and the lights were still on. The computers were all intact. There was really no debris on the ground. It was just really dusty in there.

I managed to meet up with a bunch of other paramedics that were all in there.

Q. That was --

A. That was in that building right there.

Q. This here?

A. Yeah, the building that had the green dome on the roof. It's got to be the World Financial Center.

Q. Yeah, one Financial.

A. That's what I'm thinking, One World Financial Center. It's the only building that's right there.

Q. When you initially got into the center,

you said you parked your car down here around Albany?

A. Around Albany or Carlisle.

Q. At what point in what was going on was that that you got there? Was the second tower already hit?

A. The second tower was already struck. I got there probably a half hour after the second tower got hit. So we were there for about maybe 20 minutes, 25 minutes, maybe. Time is like really sketchy. When we pulled up, it looked like a Sunday afternoon. There was nobody around, but there were cars everywhere and you can hear the sirens. You can actually hear the fires burning up in the buildings.

There were like body parts all over the street. You couldn't even recognize anything. You just knew it was body parts because they were wrapped in clothing. It's like you're thinking, wow, that must have been some -- because there was debris everywhere. There were pieces of metal. There were people laying around. It was incredible.

This was down over here. This wasn't

even anywhere near. There were body parts along the West Side Highway about as far as here, about two blocks south. It was incredible.

We looked up, and it was just like a scene out of a movie.

Q. When you got up to Liberty and Washington, that's where you met up with the EMS captain?

A. Right.

Q. So there was an EMS chief there too?

A. Yeah, because he asked me, "Who are you with? What unit are you on?" I was like, "I'm extra personnel from Battalion 43." He said, "Good, you're staging officer until I can get somebody else down here. You're staging officer."

Q. You don't remember who that was, the EMS chief?

A. No. An older guy with a mustache, grayish-black hair. There weren't too many EMS chiefs there. I don't know if it was Chief Grant or -- Chief somebody. I don't know. I couldn't even remember.

Q. How about EMS units in that area?

A. There were two or three Fire Department ambulances there. When I was doing staging, I was collecting keys. Most of the ambulances that were there -- we had Hazollah there. There was Metro Care there. There were two ambulances from Broad Channel Fire Department there. There was a Cornell truck there. I remember seeing the Metro Care MERV. It was down closer to over here, to where Three World Trade was. They were closest. They were in front of that.

That's pretty much as far as ambulances goes. Mostly Metro Care and voluntary hospitals and like three or four Fire Department ambulances.

Q. Did you recognize anybody on the crews from those?

A. From Metro Care. I used to work there. So everybody that was there I knew. I pretty much rendezvoused with them because I was doing staging and just sticking with people we knew. It was just easier for me to know whose bus is what.

I don't recall if there was anybody -- I don't think there was anybody there from my

station. There was nobody there that I knew from the Fire Department. Nobody there that I knew from the Fire Department. Some from Metro Care and that's it.

Q. You were down over here when the second tower came down?

A. When the second tower came down, I was on the esplanade helping carry some injured firefighters to an ambulance.

Q. Could you show it on the map?

A. Yeah, right over here, because this is where -- we walked down from here, and we were carrying the injured firefighters to this point. There was an ambulance here. We took their stair chair because he couldn't stand anymore.

So we took the stair chair, and we grabbed the stair chair and wheeled him just about as far as we could find an ambulance that was running. We tagged a Lutheran truck, and we put him in the Lutheran truck and they took off. Wherever they went, I have no idea.

Q. Do you recall his name or company or anything like that?

A. No. All of that stuff is just -- those

minor details, they're just gone with the wind.

Q. Where did you pick him up?

A. He was right outside -- he was in the gateway plaza. He was in the park area, where the park was. Because when we ran into this building, there were mostly EMTs. I think there was one ESU cop, and the ESU cop was leading us into the bowels of the building. I'm like, "Where are you going? You're bringing us further into the building. We don't know what kind of damage is up top. We need to get out of here."

So we went back the way we came, and we found the door. It was a door like this, and it had sheetrock. The door was locked, so we kicked out the sheetrock. When we opened up the door, we happened to be like in the lobby.

When we were in the lobby, that's where all the firefighters were in there, and they were waving us out. We saw the flashlights and stuff. They were waving us out, and we all ran out. That's when we hooked up with this injured firefighter, and we started carrying him down.

We walked down just about as far as you can. It's like now that I think about it, what

we should have done, we should have walked north, because as you're walking south, when the second tower came down, we were already down like by -- there's a pier down here or something. There's like a little pier or something.

Q. Okay.

A. And they were bringing up boats, power boats or regular boats. They were shoveling people off, and whenever they were bringing them, I don't know. It got so crazy. Then the second tower came down, and then an even darker cloud of dust started creeping over the park.

People were just freaking out and trying to jump on the boats. It looked like a riot. Women and children first and everybody -- I'm like, look, the towers are down. That's it. The towers are down. Everyone needs to relax and keep walking, keep going, keep going. Everybody was just freaking out. The harbor boats were packed. They were starting to teeter-totter.

I don't know. It was crazy. I was like, you know what -- then an EMS lieutenant, I met up with her, and she was like, "Oh, we have to go to Liberty Island." [redacted]

[redacted]

Q. Do you know who that lieutenant was?

A. No, it was just a female EMS lieutenant that was down there.

Then I met up with one of the guys from Metro Care that I knew, and we just started walking. We walked back through the plaza, and I think we went down Rector Street. We came through here and walked back up West Side Highway. It was like, all right, you know what, we need to get out of here. We need to get out of this dust cloud. It's not doing anything for us.

I was walking back to my car, and I expected to see an I beam through my car. I thought my car was going to be destroyed. But my car just had dust on it. We got in my car, and we just drove around the entire plaza like around 1 PP. We went all the way around and came back up to over here. I just parked my car somewhere up here.

Then we just started walking around. Then we went into the Port Authority building that was over there. We got equipment, flashlights, helmets and stuff. They evacuated us out of there because they thought the building was going to explode or something. They said there was a gas leak. So we ran out of there.

I met up with one of my good friends from Cornell somewhere on West Street. He saw the injury on my head. He said, "Where are you going?" I was like, "I don't know. I've got to go to a hospital. I'm going somewhere." He said, "Well, park your car somewhere." I jumped in my friend's car, and we jetted up to Cornell. I was like the first patient into Cornell.

There was a Fire Department liaison there. He took my name, he took my shield number, he took everything. He had my equipment. He had everything. He took everything down. They did whatever they did. I got stitches and whatever. Then I met up with him. I never heard anything from him either. The Fire Department didn't know I was there.

What did the Fire Department liaison

do? He had Fire Department ID on, and he was like, "I'm a liaison. Give me your name, give me your shield number." I specifically told him I'm from EMS, the Fire Department but I'm EMS. I'm not a firefighter; I'm EMS. Make sure you -- it's a big difference.

Q. He was from the fire side?

A. Yeah. He was a Fire Department liaison. I'm pretty sure it was the fire side. I don't think we have any. He took my name and stuff, and that was it.

Q. Okay. Anything else you want to say, comments?

A. No. Pretty close experience. Pretty scary. It might sound stupid, but I would do it again if I had to. I'd do it all over again. I don't care.

Q. I thank you.

A. Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1457. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110098

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER JAMES DRURY

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: My name is Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with Assistant Commissioner James Drury, of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials in the Fire Department. We are in his office located at 9 Metrotech, 4-E-18. The time is 1632 hours and Commissioner, I would ask you to tell us your story.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: I was driving to work that morning on Third Avenue when the pager went off, indicating that a plane hit the World Trade Center. I continued on into work as fast as I could, arriving I would estimate, just around 9 o'clock or shortly thereafter. I parked in the garage and I went into the lobby planning to take the elevator up to my office. As I pulled into the garage there were no cars in the garage, which led me to believe that everybody who had been in the building had left to go to the World Trade Center. My plan was merely to drop my things off in my office and then head over there, but there were two EMS individuals in the lobby when I opened the door of the garage lobby and they were literally begging me to give them a ride

over to the World Trade Center. They were Captain Abdo Narmod and EMT Richard Zarillo. My car is not equipped with a siren, but it does have dashboard lights, so we headed over the Brooklyn Bridge, where we could see both towers now on fire. I got off the bridge and took Chambers across. At that point you could notice mass panic and hysteria. People were running everywhere across the street. We made the left on Broadway and I parked the Department vehicle that I was driving in front of Saint Pauls Chapel at Park Row on Broadway, right in front.

The Captain and the EMT got out of the car immediately and started running on foot to find the EMS command post. I then walked down Vesey Street from Broadway until I reached the corner of Church. I could see mass panic and hysteria there too. People were evacuating the World Trade Center, running, people running in all directions. I noticed police officers with First Deputy Commissioner Joseph Dunne of the NYPD in the intersection of Vesey and Church. You could see airplane parts on the ground and although I didn't realize it at the time, I later realized

there were body parts, both on the concourse and on the street.

I made a left on to Church, heading down now past 5 World Trade Center on my right, the concourse, which is also on my right, where people were evacuating the building trying to find the FDNY command post. I came upon EMS Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck, I guess near the corner of Church and I guess it would be Liberty. More Church and Fulton or Dey Street. He informed me that the FDNY command post was down on West Street. They were treating an injured person and they placed that person on a stretcher. I then retraced my foot steps all the time looking up at these two buildings on fire, back up to the corner of Church and Vesey.

I now made a left on Vesey and walked down the street on the 7 World Trade Center side, where I could see more airplane debris and building debris on the sidewalk and on the street. I passed underneath the foot bridge that ran, I believe from the north tower to 7 World Trade Center and arrived on West Street where I observed numerous Fire Department rigs and ambulances on

West Street. I crossed over West Street where I found the FDNY command center in front of the World Financial Center or the AMEX building there in a driveway leading me to a garage.

I saw, among others, Chief of the Department Ganci and First Deputy Commissioner William Feehan, who I nodded to and he nodded back to me. I was merely trying to observe what was going on, and at that point in time, more firefighters arrived. I also saw Deputy Commissioner Gribbon in there and at some point, I saw Commissioner Von Essen. While he was talking to a couple of people from the Department, I stood to the side and was watching him speak to them and in the background I could see Mayor Giuliani and his aides, walking along, I guess in front of the World Financial Center there.

At that point Commissioner Von Essen left, and I was mainly observing. Of course, at that point, you could see numerous people jumping and floating down to their demise, making a gruesome sound when they hit.

At some point, Assistant Commissioner Tom McDonald approached me and asked me to give him a

hand moving north from the command post to try to get some Fire Department rigs moved so that we could clear a path for ambulances.

I joined him and started heading north back towards Vesey Street and beyond. As I was approaching Vesey Street, I saw a cop I knew from from the ESU unit, Officer Sullivan, and we nodded to one another. Then we got another Fire Department individual to join us. We were in the process of getting some rigs moved when I turned, as I heard a tremendous roar, explosion, and saw that the first of the two towers was starting to come down.

At that point both Commissioner McDonald and I started running north. He was behind me. Then I lost track of him. But I started running north as the cloud approached, winding up somewhere farther down on West Street. I waited a while till some of the dust cleared. I realized then that my cell phone wasn't working, my pager wasn't working and I borrowed a radio from some voluntary hospital EMT.

When the dust started to settle, I headed back down towards the World Trade Center and I

guess I came close to arriving at the corner of Vesey and West again where we started to hear the second roar. That was the north tower now coming down. I should say that people in the street and myself included thought that the roar was so loud that the explosive - bombs were going off inside the building. Obviously we were later proved wrong.

But now the second tower started coming down and I had to run again back up north. Again the cloud was approaching. I ran several blocks north. I think I got up as far as that community college or even Saint Johns University and at that point after the dust cleared, I decided I had enough, I wasn't going to go back all the way down, although I did start heading south again, where I came upon Commissioner McDonald lying in the street with, I believe his right leg bandaged. I went over to him and told him it was great to see him and glad he was all right and he told me that while running, he had torn or injured his calf muscle in his leg. I believe he was assisted over to a FDNY van, and placed in there.

I then saw Deputy Commissioner Fitzpatrick

and I inquired as to whether or not he knew whether everybody was okay and it was there for the first time that I found out that both Chief Ganci and First Deputy Commissioner William Feehan were missing. I then saw, like a ghost appearing out of a haze, Commissioner Steven Gregory, covered with soot and dirt and a little dazed. I tried to get him to sit down, but he just wanted to continue on.

I then hooked up with him and we headed over towards where I had parked my car because that's where we heard the FDNY was now setting up a new command center, over at Park Row and Broadway. We stopped at a McDonald's that we found open so that Commissioner Gregory could call his wife. The owner of the McDonald's was very accommodating. He gave us water. There were other firefighters and cops that came in there. We got some water and Commissioner Gregory was able to clean off his face. He called his wife and then we continued on over to Park Row and Broadway.

Now it had been a beautiful sunny day, but as we headed down Broadway in the Park Row area, day literally turned into night. This heavy dark

acrid smoke was covering the entire area. The Fire Department was trying to muster their companies and men to see how they could attack the fire and start a rescue operation. I lingered there at the command center post for a little while. Then because the smoke was choking, I didn't have a mask or anything, I went over to my car, which was covered with soot, dust and paper and firefighters had put a couple of pairs of shoes and a couple of tools on it. I got the dust off as best as I could and I got the tools off of it. I got into the car and was able to drive it out of there. Driving down Broadway, cutting over back streets, turning around back up to Park Row and the Brooklyn Bridge.

I then proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge very slowly, because the car was still covered with dust, dirt and debris. There were hundreds of people walking over the Brooklyn Bridge. At that point in time I was the only car on it. I made it back to headquarters, parked my car, went upstairs and reported up to the 8th floor, where I learned for the first time that Commissioner Feehan and Chief of Department Ganci had been

found dead at the site.

I then teamed up with some of the eighth floor aides and wound up driving with them up to the new OEM command post up at the Police Academy. There we tried to follow the events that were going on and watched on TV the press conference the Mayor and the Commissioner gave.

From there I left and went back down to Ground Zero with a couple of Fire Department aides, where again I saw Commissioner Von Essen. I ran into Chief Nigro, who I saw at a field communications unit there and I went over to chat with him. As I remember he was quite upset, quite distraught, but in a quiet way. I must have lingered there. There were hundreds of firefighters waiting to -- they were waiting for 7 World Trade Center to come down as it was on fire. It was too dangerous to go in and fight the fire. I lingered there for quite a while, but the smell and the smoke was finally too much and I decided I wasn't doing any good there.

So I decided I was going to try to get back to headquarters, but I wasn't able to get a ride. So I walked and I walked all the way over to the

City Hall Park, Pace College area, to the Brooklyn Bridge entrance where there was some guy in an FDNY van sitting there, who I asked for a ride. He agreed to drive me back over the Brooklyn Bridge to headquarters, which I appreciated very much.

The memories I have of the day are after the first collapse, running down that street just feet ahead of that cloud. And the amount of EMS and fire personnel and civilians put out on the streets, and walking literally for hours, both after the first collapse and then after the second collapse. I guess I didn't get back to headquarters for the first time until, guesstimating, maybe two or three in the afternoon. I just remember the panic in the street, people didn't know what to do. I heard that EMS was setting up a triage center at Pier 92 I think it was. I remember running into other EMTs on the street, seeing dozens of firefighters arriving and then basically that was it. I spent the rest of the day in headquarters trying to help out in any way I could. I guess I didn't leave headquarters that night until 12 or one in the

morning.

That's basically what my memories are of the day. The sight of the jumpers was horrible and the turning around and seeing that first tower come down was unbelieveable. The sound it made. As I said I thought the terrorists planted explosives somewhere in the building. That's how loud it was, crackling explosive, a wall. That's about it. Any questions?

Q. Any other feelings or thoughts that you might want to have included in this?

A. No, it was just unbelieveable. Seeing how close Commissioner Von Essen and the Mayor were to that location was also quite startling. That's about it.

MR. TAMBASCO: Commissioner, I thank you for your interview and input. This will conclude now at 1650 hours.

File No. 9110099

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT AMY MONROE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 0934 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned area of command.

A. Lieutenant Amy Monroe, EMS operations.

Q. We're conducting the interview in Chief McCracken's office, 7th floor, 9 MetroTech, Fire Department Headquarters, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

If you can, begin with the morning's activity, lieutenant.

A. I responded to the triage, actually the staging center at Broadway between Fulton and Dey Street. Immediately after staging some of the vehicles, I immediately moved to the triage center, which was in front of the Millenium Hotel. That was at the intersection of Church and Fulton, directly in front of World Trade Center 1, which is the north tower, and I began to work there as the transport officer responsible for transporting patients and making sure patients were being transported to

appropriate hospitals.

Q. How did you become aware of the incident?

A. I actually saw it on TV at home. I called my battalion and the officer there -- I was actually at that time working for Battalion 4 -- was screaming and saying get in here, just come in here.

Q. How did you get down to the location?

A. I drove my personal car to the station and I drove an ambulance to -- had somebody drive me in an ambulance to the location.

Q. Were you given any specific direction on where to go, where to stage, anything like that?

A. I can't recall how I knew, but I knew where the staging area was. I think maybe I just heard it over Citywide. But I did know where to go.

Q. When you arrived, where did the ambulance leave you?

A. We parked the ambulance on Broadway, Broadway maybe and Dey, maybe a little bit further down, further south.

Q. Did you encounter any other officers?

A. I did. Lieutenant Bill Melaragno, he was staging up on Broadway as well, and as I walked down to the triage site, Captain Janice Olszewski was in charge

there and Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck was there. I don't think I recall any other officers being there.

Q. As far as time reference, this was the first plane, second plane?

A. This was after the second plane had hit.

Q. Then what happened after that?

A. We proceeded, like I said, to transport patients, and during the middle of transporting -- we had a lot of patients triaged which were sitting against the Millenium Hotel and which were walking wounded. Some of the burn patients we were transporting. We didn't have a lot of units down there at the time. They were trying to hold the units back onto Broadway. So we only brought the units down when it was absolute they were ready to pick up patients.

Q. Right.

A. Then World Trade Center 2 collapsed, and when 2 collapsed, I actually ran east on Fulton. I was at the triage on Church. I ran east on Fulton, right near St. Paul's Chapel.

Q. That's where you stayed?

A. Yes. I ended up actually on Broadway and was caught in the collapse.

Q. What happened after that?

A. After I was caught in the collapse, I eventually -- there were three civilians. We were in a vehicle. Eventually we were able to drive out of the collapse. One of them was pretty serious. We all, of course, suffered from smoke inhalation. We drove as far as we could. The vehicle died because it had been exposed to, I guess, so much dust and everything.

We drove to 14th Street and Broadway, and another lieutenant who had seen us who was not in the collapse was driving a command car, which was Lieutenant Adam Brynes. So when our vehicle died, he picked up all of us and the patients and we proceeded to Beth Israel Hospital. I ended up at Beth Israel Hospital for some time and the other patients, the three civilians, were treated there.

Q. Anything else that you think is important, any other EMS people that you may have run into or spoken to that you recall?

A. No, I did not really. I actually -- I'm trying to think. I did leave there. I was actually medicated, I had an IV, but I left there because I was actually on the FEMA team. So I left there and walked home and then went back down and redeployed right after that with the USAR team.

But as far as the officers that I ran into, you know, after the collapse or during the collapse, no, it was just so quick, it was so sudden, and then really everybody was separated, totally separated.

Q. Did you have a radio?

A. I did have a radio, but there was really no radio transmission until just -- during the collapse it was so silent, and then after that I think the -- I believe I did hear over the radio, what I was hearing, what I thought I heard -- it might be wrong, but this is what I thought I heard -- was deploy the weapons of mass destruction, the antidote kits, and that's the only thing I heard and that's the last thing I heard and I didn't hear anything over the air after that. I don't know if my radio went dead or whatever. My radio was covered, though, so it was broken.

Q. The crew that drove you down there, do you remember who they were?

A. The crew that drove me down there? EMT Peter (inaudible). He was actually on light duty. He drove me down there.

Q. Anything else that you think is important?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for spending

the time with me for the interview. It's 0940 hours and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110100

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF JERRY GOMBO

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17, 2001. The time now is 0828 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Assistant Chief Jerry Gombo from the EMS operations.

Q. We're conducting this interview in Chief Gombo's office on the 7th floor at EMS command. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001, and if you can just begin at the morning of September 11th.

A. Sure. I logged on my usual early time, somewhere prior to 0530, on that Tuesday morning and arrived at my headquarters somewhere around 6:00 o'clock. At that point I was just doing my usual morning activities, reviewing UORs, just checking the schedule, making sure that everything is in place as far as getting prepared for the day for the most part and reviewing the night activities.

Then I recall somewhere prior to 9:00 o'clock Ross Terranova, Lieutenant Terranova, who at the time

was working down or situated down at 5 Operations, came running into my office informing me that a plane hit the World Trade Center and it was observed by Chief Ganci from his office. I ran down the hall just to see because you could see the towers from the other side of the building, which is just a few yards down, and I actually saw what appeared to be flames and smoke in one of the Trade Centers.

I gave Ross the keys to my car and I came back here to secure my radio, which was charging, and we went down to the garage to start responding to the assignment. From looking at the job history for that day, I know that they assigned me to that job at about 0855 hours. At the time three cars left from the garage heading in that direction. It was Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, followed by myself. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge and headed towards the Twin Towers.

Q. Were you with anybody?

A. With Ross. Ross Terranova was driving the vehicle and it was just the two of us in the car. We were there quickly. As quickly as we left here, the entrance ramp to the Brooklyn Bridge was already shut down by PD, you know, accept for emergency vehicles. So on the approach to the World Trade Center listening

to the units getting assigned to the Center, we knew that -- well, obviously, we saw that there was a plane at that time, we didn't know the significance, whether it was a small plane, a large plane. The initial information was extremely sketchy at that point and I believe there was no Manhattan Chief on duty at the time. I believe Chief Hart was in refresher. So I knew that I was for the most part the first due Chief in coming from Fire headquarters.

Anyway, as we made our way downtown, you know, traffic started getting a little congested already. As we approached the towers, we ended up leaving the car in close proximity of Trinity Church, you know, there's a cemetery there, downtown.

Q. On the map, where would that be? What would be the cross streets?

A. Okay.

(Pause.)

A. I don't believe it's on your map.

Q. Would that have been somewhere on Church Street?

A. It's off of Church. Trinity Church.

(Pause.)

Q. Actually, we can look for that later if you'd

like.

A. Okay. Anyway I parked over -- well, actually Ross parked over in close proximity to the church and then we walked on foot towards the World Trade Center, which was down the block. It was in close proximity, but not so close as to interfere with any type of responding vehicles or anything like that.

As we approached the towers, this would be from the east side heading west, we saw people it appeared, lots of people, you know, possibly hundreds, evacuated, which was a good thing. It seemed to be fairly quickly but in an orderly fashion as well. We saw several EMS units and I believe they were Fire Department units at the time. I know I did converse with a few of them because they were treating patients laying on the floor and this was on Church. Everybody was wearing their helmet, which was good because there was debris, like just different types of parts. It might have been like plane parts, in fact, they did look like it, on the floor with stuff coming down as well.

So I told the crews to cross back up to the further side of Church and that's where they should set up their treatment and triage area at that point. I

don't believe there were any officers there, but there were like two or three units operating and they were setting up triage. I don't recall any of the employees' names.

At that point I wanted to head to the other side of the tower where our planned staging is located. I walked around on foot, of course, the other side of the tower. Now I'm on the south side of the tower, which was West Street, and there I encountered several other EMS units that were coming into the area. People were exiting the building, the Trade Center. Lots of people, it appeared, in orderly fashion, but there didn't seem to be any patients, if you will. Everybody was like walking and no one was complaining of any types of injuries or ailments or anything like that. So we set up a staging area on West and Vesey and I think that was communicated to citywide that that's where the units should come in to.

At that point I did come across several EMS officers. Captain Olszewski from this office as well as Bruce Medjuck, who I sent around to where I initially came, because when I arrived there, there were no supervisors operating on the east side of the

building.

Q. Church Street?

A. Right. So there were no supervisors there. Although I knew more bosses were responding in, I felt it important to get at least a captain and a lieutenant there. So they were both directed to go over there and to set up a staging and treatment sector there.

On my side now, I ran into several people, Captain Stone, Captain Pinkus, and Ross, who was with me the whole time. He had the radio and stuff like that. Those two captains, I believe Chief Basile and maybe Captain Sickles as well. I did a similar type of setup on that side as well. Because there were no patients at all, we communicated that staging should be set up there. I believe I left Captain Pinkus over there to coordinate staging, which at that point was going to be our primary staging location.

I inquired as to where the Fire command post was set up at that point and I was told that it was in the lobby of the tower.

Q. The north tower?

A. Tower No. 2.

Q. Which I believe is the south tower?

A. Let me just look at your map. This is the

north tower. Where is the south tower on your map?

Q. Right here.

A. I believe it was the north tower, correct.

So I made my way over to the command post with I believe Captain Stone, and we took a crew with us on foot, you know, the ambulances were staging there, and we headed towards the lobby of the command post.

As we were approaching the lobby of the command post, at that point we saw there were a significant amount of body parts, torsos, half torsos, arms, the whole gamut, as far as what one might expect from this type of disaster. I made my way into the command post. I informed Chief Hayden, who was at the time the incident commander, that we're here and that we're going to be setting up EMS operations staging outside. Obviously, he was involved with coordinating a significant amount of Fire resources. And I said, if you need anything, I'll remain in eyeshot.

Once again, although there were a significant number of body parts exterior, there were really no viable patients to contend with. There were not many civilians in the lobby where the command post was being set up. It was I believe the security desk. You know

where when you come in into the center you check in.

Q. Right.

A. So there were like security personnel by the command post, building security that is, you know, and a significant number of Fire personnel as well as PD, but beyond that, few if any civilians that I noticed.

I did run across Chief Gabriel, who was assigned to OEM. We conversed a little as to what the game plan was going to be as far as EMS, once again, keeping in mind that people were exiting and we weren't being overwhelmed with patients.

I believe at that point we couldn't transmit over the radio from in there, the citywide frequency, you know, it was just too much interference. Even though we were in the lobby and the majority of the windows were blown out, we weren't able to transmit. I don't know whether it was because it was just interference or whether there were too many units on the frequency.

So we were there for a few minutes and Chief Callan from the Fire Department, one of the tour commanders, I believe it was him that initially told me, but it could have been Chief Hayden, I don't recall which Chief told us that they were going to secure the

command post from the tower lobby and move it directly across West Street. Also, that I should pull the EMS resources out of the tower, it was deemed not safe, you know, and that they would be pulling out the Fire resources as well and set up across the street.

I believe I left Chief Basile and Captain Stone there to make sure that all the EMS resources were pulled out. There was a lot of emergency personnel coming in and out and given the fact that we don't have protective clothing, the decision was made for EMS to evacuate. I left them there to make sure that EMS personnel were evacuated from that area and returned to the staging location. Then once again on foot with Ross I started to make my way out of the tower lobby and go to the command post, which was going to be on the other side of West Street.

So I arrived at the command post there and at that point they had the Fire command post set up there and Chief Kowalczyk was on the scene. He was the major that day, so he functioned as the operations officer, and I was there. I recall being with Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan and several other Chief officers from Fire and, once again, Fire set up their post, their command post, and we set up a few feet away in

eyeshot. I asked Chief Kowalczyk to continue functioning as the operations officer. Apparently, he was able to communicate with the radio at that point.

I believe that the initial staging that was set up on both sides of the building were functioning and active. However, once again, there weren't a significant number of patients to deal with.

No sooner than, I don't know, it seemed like a few minutes -- and I have to just share with you at this point, my times might be off. At the corner of my eye, the second plane now comes into the building. I know that there was a time line that you shared and...

Q. 9:06.

A. 9:06 was the second plane?

Q. Right.

A. Okay. At that point I would say that we knew it wasn't an accident. I mean, two planes on a clear, sunny, warm day, into the Trade Center, we knew that there was something very unusual going on. At the time of the impact, we were able to feel heat that was generated from the explosion at the command post, which was across West Street, and West is a fairly large street with that island in there, and debris was showering all over West Street. And I can only tell

you from what was within my eyesight.

It appeared after that the pace of the civilians exiting the building increased, but throughout, for the most part, there was an orderly evacuation of personnel. I guess the sense was disbelief, you know, because here you're dealing with one major operation and before you know it, it's like a mirror image, if you will, but this one, when you were there and you heard it and you felt it, it had more of an impact.

So at that point I believe I was conversing with Chief Kowalczyk about the operation and the deployment of some resources, both ambulance and Chief officers, further down West Street to deal now with this other plane into the tower that we were going to have to contend with.

No sooner than that, I guess the best words that I could describe this, it felt sort of like an earthquake. The sky darkened and you heard this thunderous roar. It was like a volcano, if you will, not that I ever experienced a volcano, but I guess that's the way I could describe it, and this cloud just coming down. The ground was shaking and this roar and at that point everybody from the command post -- I

forgot to tell you where.

The command post was in the driveway of 2 World Financial Center. It was a fairly large-sized driveway. So we were on the incline, we meaning the Fire and EMS command post.

Q. Where would that be on the map?

A. Right here.

Q. Okay.

A. 2 World Financial Center, there's a driveway leading to West Street, similar to the driveway when you come into Fire headquarters, but whereas this you drive into the building and it's covered as soon as you enter, there the driveway was open; there was no roof on top of it. So you had the incline and we were set up right at the base where the street met the driveway and, like I said, Fire and us, and then this thing came down on us, which obviously was the first tower that collapsed, and everybody took cover or ran.

I'm not sure whether I was pulled or it was instant, but based on the incline, we went into the garage of 2 World Financial Center. I know Ross was with me. I believe there were maybe up to 20 other emergency service personnel there. However, it was difficult to tell because what happened was we ran in,

we dove behind this white van that was parked like at the base of the driveway. We ducked behind that and then the whole place became dark as a result of debris just filling the whole driveway. And mind you, this was a significant-sized driveway. We knew there was a lot of debris out there and, like I said, it appeared that some of the people ran in the opposite direction from the garage and quite a few people did retreat to the garage.

There were no lights. It was dark. As much as you wanted to breathe, it was extremely painful. I'm sure I'm going to reiterate what other people experienced. Every time you took a breath, your mouth filled up with this soot, powder, cement, whatever it was, and although you didn't want to breathe, you didn't have a choice; you had to breathe.

I carry a flashlight on me always and I know that people always are like why do you need a flashlight? So I took out the flashlight and I turned it on and you still couldn't see in front of you; there was that much debris and stuff. So what I attempted to do to the best of my ability without having good vision -- and there were a few of us. We were talking. We were able to communicate with each other. I think what

we wanted to make sure was, before we advanced to the back of the garage, because we were not going to be able to exit the way we came down because the whole exit or entrance to the garage was covered with debris, we just wanted to make sure that we weren't leaving anybody that was like partially trapped, if you will, behind us. To the best of our ability we made sure that we moved forward not leaving anybody behind. However, you know, we didn't know what was going on at the other side of the rubble.

We made our way up a small staircase that looked like maybe the attendant or security office of the garage, and I recall seeing this water cooler, you know, the five-gallon jugs of water. There were a significant number of people down there at the time and we were all rinsing our mouths just trying to get some of the soot out of our mouths so that we could breathe. There were a few Fire personnel. I remember an OEM, Harry Winters, was down there with us. Who else? Several firefighters.

We asked them, because they had their Scott packs and stuff, to find us an exit because clearly we weren't getting out the way we came in and we couldn't see any doors right in the back. There was a phone on

the desk where this water cooler was, but it was dead. I mean, there were no phone calls. So at this point we didn't have any type of radio communication, the cell phones didn't work, the hard line phone didn't work, there were no lights, and once everybody got into the office area we closed the door behind us and put something by the door to try to keep the area as clean as possible without all this soot. I mean, it was beyond belief the amount of soot that was in the garage.

We must have been there, although it seemed like an eternity, a few minutes when they informed us that there was an exit onto the marina side. If you look over here on the map, it would be the North Cove Yacht Harbor. So we exited from the back through a staircase. We had to go up because we were in the basement and we came down on this side and it was amazing. When you exited on this side, it was a sunny, beautiful day. There was no debris, no anything over here.

So at that point we decided we were going to, once again, return to the command post. The way we were going to go about doing that is there was a walkway or a driveway that led you onto North End. We

were going to go back down Vesey to West and be at the command post, you know, to continue coordinating the operation. When we got to Vesey and North End, right over here, there were a significant number of EMS resources staging there.

Now, it was like wild because when we were in the harbor here, it was like nothing happened, and as soon as we were able to make that turn and visualize what was going on, it was like going from one extreme to the other. There was still soot coming down, and one of the amazing things, that paper, I mean, as much as that doesn't seem significant, mounds and mounds of paper just scattered all over the place. So, as you were walking, if you could imagine walking in a snowstorm?

Q. Right.

A. That's what it actually was. You had this soot coming down on you and then in lieu of snow on the ground you had mounds and mounds of paper, I mean, an unbelievable amount of paper. I'm not talking about one. Just every time you took a step there were mounds of it, it was inches high, plus all of the soot and debris and stuff like that.

So there were quite a few ambulance resources

not limited to Fire, you know, and the MERV ended up here. At that point we were informed that the initial triage that was set up on West and Vesey retreated one block at the time of the collapse.

Now, when we ran into the basement, we lost contact with the world. We really didn't know what was going on on the outside, and our initial objective was to make it back to the command post.

Anyway, we did bump into a whole bunch of EMS personnel here and they had a treatment sector going on in the lobby of the building here. I don't recall the name of the building. But, once again, it was a fairly large lobby and seemed to be a safe environment because you didn't have all that soot or garbage coming down, and there were patients and treatment going down there.

Q. Civilian patients or a combination?

A. I believe primarily civilian patients.

So I recall at that point seeing Chief Carrasquillo, I believe it was, and it seemed to me that they were able to deal with the patient load that they had there. So I was going to attempt once again to make my way up Vesey back to the command post.

No sooner did we get, I would say, several yards down Vesey Street heading east to west when the

second tower came down, and once again this huge mushroom cloud, not going up but coming towards us. So there was a rush of primarily uniformed personnel. Now, according to this, the north tower, that was at 10:29.

Q. Right.

A. So I take it that that's an approximate time that we started making our way there. So once again we retreated back to this lobby area.

Now, at that point there were several EMS chiefs that were there. I remember Chief Goldfarb, Chief Villani, Chief Pascale, Chief Carrasquillo and Chief Kowalczyk, besides myself. We went into the stairwell of the building here just to converse for a little while and to put together some type of strategy.

Once again, mind you, we have no communications with the outside world and, in essence, what we were able to see is just what we were able to see on this block. So there are no phones, no radio communications.

We spoke, and after assessing the situation, the decision was made that it was not safe for us to try to make our way back up Vesey to West. We did not

know whether there were other buildings in danger of collapsing, and at that point the decision was made for the EMS resources to go to two different staging areas on the outskirts of this incident. The decision was made, on the north, Chelsea Piers because there was a large parking area. We really wanted to move back out of this area until it was deemed safe for EMS personnel to operate. On the south, we decided that we would use the ferry terminal, Staten Island ferry terminal. So those were the two staging areas that we were going to send the EMS resources that were there after they finished treating the patients.

I divvied up the chiefs that were with me. I believe I sent Chief Pascale and maybe Chief Villani to the ferry terminal and Chief Basile I sent, I believe it was Chief Basile, up to Chelsea. Mind you, all of this had to be on foot because the cars were elsewhere and we didn't know their condition, and because there was no communication with anybody. I told them, I told these chiefs, we're going to go there. We're going to secure this area with patients. I left Chief Carrasquillo behind until we were able to evacuate that location and go to those two locations.

I decided that I was going to make it to One

Police Plaza. Knowing that we weren't going to have access to 7 World Trade Center where the OEM office is, the most logical thing that came to mind within walking distance would be One Police Plaza. So I figured I would go there. I took Chief Goldfarb, Ross Terranova and Chief Goldfarb's aide with me.

That was the plan. The resources would go to those two staging areas and I would go to Police Plaza and try to coordinate activities there.

Q. At this time I'm just going to change the tape to side B.

A. Sure.

(Pause.)

Q. Continuing the interview with Chief Jerry Gombo, go ahead, sir.

A. Okay. So we started on foot heading towards One Police Plaza, the four of us, and as a result of what was going on and what we were able to determine, we decided that we would need to take the scenic route, if you will, around to One Police Plaza. We were going to walk north and up around City Hall and then come around to One Police Plaza as opposed to trying to make our way across Vesey. Although that would have been quicker, at that point I deemed it to be too

dangerous.

We walked a few blocks. I remember a few things that come to mind that I most probably will never forget. The silence. It was just dead silent, like it was like the middle of the night, but yet it was sort of day with this haze. You saw this smoke, the soot was still coming down, papers all over the place, and that was pretty much the way it was throughout our journey.

I came across Chief Callan, who prior to that, the last time I saw him was in the lobby of the Trade Center where they set up the command post. He appeared not to be injured but to be in a daze. I informed him at this point I was going to make it on foot to One Police Plaza. I invited him to come with us so that we could set up some type of operation there and coordinate it with the other agencies, and he opted not to take me up on that offer but to attempt to make it back to the command post.

I asked him that, if he was able to do that and if he saw Chief McCracken or any of the other EMS chiefs operating on the scene, to let them know what we did as far as the two staging areas where we retreated to and let them know that I was making my way to One

Police Plaza. Just like I didn't know who else was operating on the scene as a result of not having communication, I knew that people were going to be inquiring as to individuals' whereabouts and things like that. I knew it was going to take us some time to make it to where we needed to go.

Q. Where did you meet Chief Callan?

A. It had to be several blocks from Vesey and North End. I believe we were walking up North End and I believe that actually changes into some other street. But that was the direction which we were heading in. We were heading north on North End, once again, in an attempt to come around City Hall, which is not on the map here, I don't believe.

Q. This is City Hall park here.

A. Oh, City Hall park. Okay. So our plan was we were going to make our way up North End, City Hall Park, I think to -- well, it had to be somewhere I would say around maybe Murray or Park. The reason why I say that, after we passed Chief Callan, after another few minutes on foot, a police officer from the Chief of Department's office came by in a golf cart and he noticed us. We were wearing our uniforms and helmets and he saw the stars. We flagged him down and asked if

he would be kind enough to take us over to One Police Plaza. We were trying to get to command and control. He was gracious enough to do that. So the four of us got onto this golf cart and this officer took us over to One Police Plaza, which saved us a significant amount of travel time because we were going to do this on foot and he was able to take us practically to the door, which was great.

We got to One Police Plaza and we went up to command and control, which was on the 8th floor. I went over to the desk and inquired whether there were any other Fire Department personnel here, which at the time I was informed that there were not. I told them that we're from the Fire Department, EMS, and the room was jammed with all different types of representation from agencies. However, we were the first Fire Department reps to get there.

Within a few minutes they were able to give us some table space and some phones. I made contact with several locations at that time. I called FOP, fire operations. I introduced myself to them and gave them the phone number and I told them that I was at command and control. I made similar notifications to EMD, our office here in operations, and we just tried

to coordinate whatever information we were able to get from EMD or FOP at the time.

We were there actually for quite a few hours. We finally left that location at I would say roughly 10:00 o'clock or so in the evening. I called and had Captain Connelly, who was on duty, come down to man command and control. There were other Fire personnel. I don't recall the officer's name, but there were a few other Fire personnel that prior to that, like several hours after we arrived there, also arrived to represent the Fire Department.

When I left in the evening at 10:00 o'clock, we made our way, once again, on foot, back towards the EMS command post at that time. We went past Trinity Church to see if I had a car and if it was there. To my surprise it was. It had a significant number of scratches needless to say. The driver's window was smashed. But the car was there. There was Fire apparatus around it functioning with Fire personnel. There were charged hoses all around the car.

So I figured it was safe. At that point we made it down to the command post where it was good to see some of the EMS personnel that either I didn't see beforehand or I did and we got lost in the sauce, if

you will. I stood there for a little while and then made it to my car and I was able to get it out, and that's the story for 9/11.

Q. I just want to ask, after the first building collapsed, you said that the Fire command post had relocated to World Financial Center?

A. No, no. From the lobby. That was prior to the second plane hitting.

Q. Did you ever re-establish contact with them or you never made it back to them?

A. No. We weren't able to do that. We came out on the marina side, because the whole garage, we were buried. We were buried in the garage. So I made it out the marina side up North on Vesey and attempted to go back, but when we made this turn and went up Vesey, that's when the second building came down, and at that point the decision was made that there was no sense in jeopardizing our safety in making it to that location. If we couldn't even make it up this block, we said there would be no way that the command post would be able to be functioning at that location, and that's when we made the decision for the two staging areas in a safe proximity away. Because we had no phones or radio communications, that's when I decided I would

hope that One Police Plaza would be the most logical thing. I found out after we were there for several hours that an interagency command post was set up at the Police Academy up on 23rd Street. As to why that decision was made, that was beyond me.

Q. Was there any other EMS personnel or Fire Department personnel that you remember seeing that we didn't talk about?

A. There were so many names and faces. I tried to mention the ones that I had the most interaction with. I'm sure that I left out some specific names and locations. Most probably, somewhere as I was crossing over from the tower to the secondary Fire command post on the other side of West Street, I saw a lot of EMS personnel, but at this point the names escape me. So I was only able to recall the ones that I interacted with or had conversation or gave direction to or things like that. But that's my plight and I'm glad I'm here to share it with you.

Q. I agree.

A. Hopefully I was able to give you some insight as to some of my actions during the course of the day. Unfortunately, afterwards we found out that the people we were with at the command post didn't make it. You

know, Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan and Father Judge, just a tremendous loss, a tremendous loss.

Q. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A. You know what? I think I gave you everything that comes to mind, leaving out some of the gory details, which I'm sure other people have talked about. But as far as an operations perspective, I think I shared with you the most significant things that I'd been involved with.

It was just a very difficult situation. I've responded to my share of MCIs during my career and this was a very complex situation as a result of the ongoing collapses. From a patient perspective, it wasn't that complex, but there was absolutely no communication other than face to face. No cells, no radios. The only thing I could say, in retrospect, I believe that we made the best decisions as to how to proceed operationally given our assessment of the situation and the resources and the scenario that we were presented with.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I want to thank you very much for participating. The time now is 0923 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110101

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC NEIL SWEETING

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th. The time is 11:31 a.m. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview this morning at Battalion 20 with the following individual.

PARAMEDIC SWEETING: Neil Sweeting-5274, assigned as the paramedic coordinator for Division 6.

Q. Neil, I'm just going to ask you if you can recount the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. I was in the division office, which is located up in the north Bronx on the grounds of Jacobi Hospital, when we started hearing reports of a plane crash into one of the towers at the Trade Center.

Chief Pascale from the division got paged, and she came out and told us about this. We started hearing reports of it over the citywide radio frequency. We turned the television on in the office, and pretty shocked, just as anybody was.

My first thoughts were oh, my God, some

plane was drastically off course and crashed into the building. I didn't realize it was a large airliner. I thought it was a small plane, just seeing these awful photos of terrible fires and smoke billowing out.

We hung out at the division. I was chomping at the bit with everybody else wanting to get down there, but the chief was holding us back until she was assigned.

While we were watching, we were hearing the radio on the citywide frequency, and all these units being assigned and supervisors calling for more help and trying to set up different treatment areas, when we saw the second plane hit.

I remember saying to the other coordinator, Steven Pilla, that we saw the plane go by, and my first thought again was oh, my God, this pilot must have been blinded by the smoke or distracted and then he crashed right into the building. At that point we realized something was seriously wrong.

At this point Chief Pascale said, "Let's go," and we all ran out of the office and

jumped in the car and started heading downtown. There were five of us in the chief's car. I was driving Chief Pascale, Lieutenant Mike Cahill, Steve Pilla and EMT Amedegnato.

We started heading down, cut across the Bronx, got to the West Side Highway, and proceeded down and actually got caught in traffic around 125th Street -- 158th Street. The Police Department was turning all vehicles off the highway, but they were ushering emergency vehicles through. But we got tied up in the traffic up until that point, which was annoying but at this point, as the story went, it may have had a tremendous outcome on the five of us in that car.

I remember driving down the highway, and when we got down, oh, into like the eighties and nineties on the highway, we started to get a really good view of lower Manhattan and you could see the two towers burning. It was just surreal.

We started hearing terrible screams on the radio of people yelling, "Oh, my God, there are people jumping! There are people jumping!" I was at the first Trade Center disaster in '93,

and I thought that was going to be the biggest thing I would ever experience in my career. I had a feeling this was going to be even worse, not knowing they were going to fall down.

As we got closer, I remember saying to the other people, I said, "This is the kind of fire, there are going to be a lot of people dead in this. This is also a fire that you're going to lose firemen in. This is where people are going to die, unfortunately."

We proceeded down. We got stuck in a little more traffic down below 57th Street when we hit like 12th Avenue, the West Side Highway there. We made it down, and we got I believe it was around West Street and Barclay, which is probably about two blocks, a block and a half away, when Steve actually said, "Oh, my God." I looked up, and the tower's falling.

We didn't hear it, which was really weird, because we had the radios going and the sirens going. So I didn't hear the sound of it initially. Once I looked up, I started hearing it.

At this point hundreds of people are

running at us. We pulled over -- we looked for a spot to park initially, but then there were so many people coming at us that I was going to run somebody over. We just abandoned the car on the corner of West Street and Barclay.

Q. Where you indicated the number 1 on the map?

A. Yes.

I remember all four doors opened up before we even stopped moving. We pulled over, we jumped out and popped the trunk quickly and grabbed our helmets and just started running and got enveloped by this cloud of dust that's so vivid to everybody now.

We didn't really understood the magnitude as to what had happened at this point. There was just so many people running towards us. We kind of went west towards the Hudson River. We were just totally enveloped in this cloud. You couldn't see. It was choking. It was in your eyes. I felt like somebody had poured a cup of sand down my throat. It was horrible.

After about ten minutes of this, it kind of calmed down a little bit. People stopped

running. We actually headed back down closer in to see what we could do and got down to Vesey Street.

Q. At that time were all of you still together?

A. No, we weren't. No, I'm sorry, we were together. We all ended up back on Vesey. We didn't walk down as a group, but we all kind of migrated, because people were kind of turning back and going down to see what they could do.

We got to Vesey, and we were -- at Vesey and West there's I believe it was part of the Financial Center. We started helping some people that were coming out and looking for a triage area. People came out, and Chief Villani, a chief from the Fire Department from EMS, said, "Let's start setting up a triage area here in the lobby of this building."

We started actually seeing a lot of patients. They were bringing a lot of people in. We didn't have a lot of equipment. We didn't have anything with us. But even the units that were there, people had run and abandoned their equipment during the initial stages. But people

started getting stuff, and we brought a lot of oxygen in. It was basically just a quick triage, and we were trying to move some people out.

I remember a battalion chief coming in. There were two chiefs. There was one chief that we were treating who was badly injured. His head was split and he was bleeding bad, and he was just in a daze and just staring straight ahead like he had no idea what had happened. None of us.

Another chief came in -- and he was telling us first, the first chief, "We shouldn't be here. We should get out of here." A second chief came in and said, "Listen, we need to move. This is a terrorist act." That's the first time I thought that way. He said, "We've got to get away from this place."

Q. They were both fire suppression chiefs?

A. Fire suppression chiefs.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. No, I don't.

We started moving out, loading people up. We brought a bunch of stretchers at this point, and we were just loading patients, just

putting them on the stretchers. We had some people that were pretty seriously hurt, some head injuries, a couple people -- there was one gentleman that was unconscious, a lot of people with respiratory problems from all the dust, eye injuries from the dust. We started throwing them on stretchers and running and getting out.

I remember the maintenance guys or engineers from this building, this big office building, brought big jugs of water that we were using, and we were wiping people down and flushing eyes. They had a cart full, like a linen cart, full of towels, which was great, because we were wiping people down. It was really very helpful.

I remember when we heard abandon the site, I said, wow, this would be really good to keep with us. So I started pushing this cart, and I got stuck in the doorway with it, when we started hearing this rumble. I can remember -- I specifically remember this like twisting sound of metal. We were probably about half a block away from the complex at this point.

You heard a big boom, it was quiet for

about ten seconds. Then you could hear another one. Now I realize it was the floors starting to stack on top of each other as they were falling. It was spaced apart in the beginning, but then it got to just a tremendous roar and a rumble that I will never forget.

We started running. People were diving into the back of ambulances that were open and on the hoods of ambulances, cars. Anything that was moving, they were trying to get into. There was one ambulance, there must have been 25 people piled into the back of it: firemen, policemen, civilians, EMS. It was just incredible.

I remember the MERV bus with the ramp that it had going up the street. The guy didn't even stop to unhook the stairs of the ramp, and everything was dragging down the street. I thought it ironic, watch somebody live through this and get run over by the MERV or wiped out by this ramp that was dragging behind the bus.

We started running, but there was a woman on Vesey Street between the Financial Center and the complex, like the plaza, and she got hit with something. She just went down like

a shot. She got up and tried to run and just collapsed again. You could see that she had snapped her leg, her ankle, like right at the TIB-FIB and her ankle. It looked like when horses snap their hoof. Her foot was just flopping. The poor woman was trying to run.

I saw her, and a paramedic from Cabrini Hospital -- I don't even know his name -- he must have seen her at the same time because he ran down and we picked her up, the two of us, and started running west on Vesey Street towards Battery Park and the promenade and towards the Hudson River, when the wave, the first concussion, came down the street.

When you were that close, there was like a wind to it. I'm 6-4 and 240 pounds, and it knocked me down like a rag doll, ten feet away, down the street. I landed on top of this poor woman. She was having a bad enough day.

We picked her up, and I ran to the corner of the Financial Center building and I guess that's part of the promenade there for Battery Park, the walkway there.

Q. Right over here, World Financial.

A. No. Right. Okay. I picked her up like right in here. We ran down here. Actually on this building here, we dove down the side of that building to use it as a --

Q. You're indicating you dove around the corner of Three World Financial Center?

A. Of Three World Financial Center.

Q. The American Express building?

A. Right, into this like courtyard here.

Q. Okay.

A. And used that as a shield to cover us. I think that I had my helmet. Actually since I was -- actually the assignment I'm in right now is a very last-minute, temporary assignment. I didn't have my helmet or coat or anything with me. It was all back in my station in Harlem. So I grabbed somebody's helmet from here. Thankfully when I ran out the door I grabbed somebody's helmet.

When I dove around the corner, I just curled up into a fetal position and covered my head and just tried to ride it out. There was just this roar. It was pitch-black. I could feel stuff hitting me but not like big debris but

smaller stuff that was mixed in with this cloud. It was choking. It was hard to breathe. You couldn't see.

Then the concussion and the wave stopped, and you were still encompassed in this, but the pressure wasn't to it that was initially there. We were stuck in this cloud probably for 20, 30 minutes afterwards. The cloud eventually went blocks and blocks up the street.

I grabbed an ambulance. I flagged an ambulance coming down, and I had the guy quickly toss some stuff into my eyes, water, because I couldn't see. I remember reaching in and grabbing one of his masks that he had. I just threw that on.

We picked the woman up, and we just put her on the bench. He had some people in there, so we just laid this lady out on the bench. That was the last I saw of her. It was an ambulance unit from St. Vincent's Hospital, and they just started heading north up out of the area.

I stayed and was walking in a daze. I remember there was so much stuff hitting my eyes I had to put my sunglasses on, which was really

kind of funny. Here it was dark. It was almost pitch-black, and I'm walking around with sunglasses, just because I needed something to block my eyes.

Then it was just eerily quiet. It was just so quiet. I don't know if it was from the dust that was just suffocating the air. But for the next 10 minutes, 15 minutes, nobody knew where to go, what to do and where to start.

There were a lot of people walking around, but there weren't a lot of -- now that I think back, there weren't a lot of walking wounded. There really were more just people stunned that were walking around.

I'll never forget how quiet it was. I said it to people that day, but it's actually an analogy that seems to be being used a lot, like after it snows when it's very quiet. You could hear people calling out. You could hear a lot of firemen, their alarms going off on their air packs.

I had a radio with me which I lost when I got tumbled, thrown. It came out of the holster. So I couldn't talk to anybody. I

didn't know where anybody was. The four other people I was with, I had no idea where they were. I knew they were with me when we were in the Financial Center and then started running out. I found two of them in about 45 minutes. Another one was about an hour after that as we started heading north out of there.

But Chief Pascale we didn't find for about five hours, and I was like, oh, my God. We had no idea where she went. One of the guys said they saw her running -- when the second one came, they saw her running north. I'm figuring that she wasn't buried, because we weren't right underneath it. We were knocked down by the concussion, but we weren't -- so I didn't think she was buried or anything, but I didn't know where she had gone at this point.

So we tried to see what we could do down there. Some people were coming up to me asking for help. My first 45 minutes of triage just involved telling people "Go north. Get out of here. You don't want to be here." They would ask me, "Where do I go?" I said, "I don't know. But you don't want to be here, go north. They'll

be setting stuff up." Just get people out of there.

I don't know who it was that told me, but we finally started moving. When I started running into some of the other people, they had some radios. They were advising people to go up to Stuyvesant High School, which is on the corner of Chambers Street and West.

We got in there, and we were in the building like a minute when people just started screaming, "Run, run, run, run." I'm like, oh, my God, now what? It was one of those things, you just run when everybody's running. People are just storming out the back doors and just running up the highway, West Side Highway there.

I find out that it was -- one, somebody said there was a bomb, but it turned out it was Con Edison was screaming that there was a gas leak and they were afraid something was going to happen, it was going to blow up. Everybody was just so jumpy at the time that just the slightest thing would set them off. People were just running.

So we ran out of there. We were then

again milling around, not knowing where to go. We were originally trying to get a triage area set up in Stuyvesant High School. Everybody bailed out on that. Then there were people saying to go to Chelsea Piers, which was a good hike. That's a good 20 blocks away.

We started walking, and I got up to north Moore Street and the West Side Highway. It's part of the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The Port Authority had kind of taken over this building, the police. They were using the gymnasium as their meeting point and treatment area there for their employees.

They started calling, "EMS, EMS, EMS. We have some guys hurt." So we went in there. Again, I didn't have a radio. I couldn't talk to anybody. I didn't have any equipment. There were a few people; mostly walking wounded, but there were a few people that were pretty banged up, a lot of respiratory problems. I didn't even have an oxygen tank.

I guess a few more units or some people must have gotten flagged because some equipment started coming in there. I don't know where Port

Authority -- they must have had some type of contingency for their equipment from their other facilities at the airports or bridges and tunnels, because they started bringing truckloads of their equipment in.

So we stayed there, the three of us. We stayed there pretty much for a good four or five hours. I'll never forget, they brought a truck, and it looks like they must have gone to a Duane Reade store because they must have just held the bags up and people cleared the shelves, because there were like hundreds of bottles of Tylenol and bandages and tape and gauze. I could just see they probably cleared out a Duane Reade store.

So we tried to do whatever help we could. Some hospital doctors were showing up, and they started bringing some of their own equipment in. So we started having some stuff. That wasn't one of the actual EMS or Fire Department established triage areas; this was pretty much one of the hospitals started doing it at that point. But we hung out there for a good part of the day helping out, seeing what we could

do.

I remember I figured I need to call my wife. I know she's going to be freaking out. She's a schoolteacher over in Queens. I called her school, and I couldn't get through. It was busy, busy, busy. At first I couldn't get her cell phone. I finally -- I guess this whole thing happened before 11:00. I finally was able to get through to her at about 4:00 that afternoon.

I went and started walking around Manhattan College, Borough of Manhattan College, and I left the gymnasium and was walking through the hallways, just trying to find any office that was open that I could use the telephone. I was sitting at some guy's -- I don't even know who it was, somebody's desk, and using his phone.

I called my house. She wasn't home. Something made me just call her family in Queens. It turns out that's where she went, because they had closed a lot of bridges down in the city. She couldn't back over the Whitestone Bridge. I finally got a hold of her; it was probably a little before 4:00.

She had heard the reports of possibly hundreds of Fire Department rescue workers possibly killed or missing and the whole scenario of the towers falling. I cried. I was crying. I left two messages on my machine in case she had gotten home. She said, "You sounded terrible. You sounded like a wreck. Your voice was shaking." I was. I was visibly shaking.

I remember asking one of the Port Authority cops what exactly happened, because I didn't know the whole magnitude. I didn't know anything at this point. It was several hours before I heard about the Pentagon and the plane that went down in Pennsylvania.

I didn't realize the towers had come down completely. I thought it was just the area above where the planes had crashed. I didn't realize they had come all the way down. I thought the tops had fallen off. They were like no, they're down completely. I said, "No, no, just above where --" He's like, "No, I'm telling you, they fell completely."

I didn't hear about the whole other episodes out of town for several hours. Then I

started hearing people telling me. I heard rumors that the military shot down planes, they had attacked the Pentagon and there were other sites. I didn't really grasp the magnitude of it at that point.

I didn't get out of there until -- I don't know, it was probably close to -- I don't know -- 10, 11:00 that night we kind of got relieved. Then we were back at 4 a.m. I went down there for another 20 hours. I remember being down there again that day. I was exhausted. I spent time in the morgue, which was just a grim, grim detail the first day or two. Very few intact.

I remember while we were there another building fell, like a half a building that had been damaged. I remember everybody running again, just taking off and running. I just said, I'm tired of these buildings falling down on me. I can't run from these things anymore.

Q. Was that still on the first day?

A. That was the second day.

Q. Seven came?

A. Well, seven fell about 5 or 6:00. I

was there. I was several blocks away, but I saw the whole thing go down. Again you could see everybody running. But I didn't run because I knew I was far enough away.

But this other building that fell, it was one of the ones damages that was like a fire damaged building that part of it fell the next day.

It was something I'll never forget. The scariest time of my life. I remember after I got up after diving behind that building, I was counting body parts to make sure everything was still with me.

Last night actually -- this is, what, a month, five weeks later -- I go to graduate school in Manhattan. School had been canceled because of this, and last night, October 16th, was our first night back. It was the first time that I had driven down the West Side Highway since that day. I've been to the site numerous, numerous times, but I always came in from the east side of Manhattan. This was the first time I went down.

It really shook me up because I

remember -- I started getting these flashes of I remember the towers burning and watching them and saying oh, my God, this is where we were when we were saying things like people are going to die, this is going to be terrible.

I can still see these pictures in my mind of them burning. It really shook me up when I went to class. Then they're not there anymore. It's just like this major hole in New York City down there. It was terrible.

So that's pretty much my story. I consider myself very lucky since I was close. I wasn't right underneath it, but I was close enough to actually be knocked down. At this time I'm thankful I was stuck in traffic, because I was driving a chief and we would have been going to the command post. There are numerous chiefs in the Fire Department that are no longer here.

I've heard stories from chiefs and fellow chiefs aides who were right there that really had very close calls. I wonder where we would have been if I hadn't lost five minutes in traffic on the highway.

It was tough. Since I've been in this

position, I haven't been on an ambulance since I've been working in the coordinator position, and I'll be in this position for like another month. [redacted]

So that's about it. I'm thankful we're here.

Q. Any final thoughts you want to add?

A. I think it was -- even in the total terror and chaos of the first 45 minutes to an hour, even, prior to the buildings falling, there were just some incredible acts performed by people, not only from EMS, the firefighters, the police officers.

But when the towers came down, the way

people came together and just started doing whatever had to be done -- there were people that weren't officers, EMTs and medics, that were stepping up and saying this is what needs to be done. We need to set up something here. Let's just do it. People just talking the initiative on their own. I think it was amazing how it ran.

Unfortunately there weren't a whole lot of people to help, unfortunately. At the first Trade Center in '93, there were a thousand people and we were very stretched. But this time we weren't -- unfortunately there weren't people to help.

But people stepped up. We were just seeing people going above and beyond and people walking around in a dazed look but still doing what had to be done. It was amazing.

In a way I feel fortunate in a way that I was there because I got to see people at their best and do what they're trained to do and do what they're not trained to do and pull it together. That's an experience I'll never forget.

On the other sense, sometimes you hope

you weren't there because the horrors that were experienced will never be forgotten. I had a lot of trouble sleeping for the first couple of days, because I was working an incredible number of hours. I really had trouble sleeping. It was rough, but we're going on.

This has to be rough on you over and over.

Q. Yeah, it gets a little rough, a little rough.

A. It was close. I had a doubt at one point when the second tower came down and when we picked this woman up, especially when we were knocked down on the street. I really had some doubts for a few seconds there. It was scary, but we got through it.

It's changed me. I'm in graduate school. I have a little ways to go. I was kind of thinking that I may explore other options, career options. Even just prior to this I was getting a little tired of the EMS field and the job. I've been in this for 15 years with the city now. I was looking, kind of exploring things out there. If the right opportunity

presented itself, I probably would have stepped up and taken it.

But right now, even after all this, I feel right now I can't leave right now. There's something that's holding me here. I haven't looked at anything since, but it's just I don't feel like I can leave right now. There's something that has to be -- until that pile's cleaned up and these people are found, I don't think it would be right for me to leave. It may not be the best thing for me to stay, but it wouldn't be right for me to leave. So we're going to hang in and stick it out for a while and take it day by day, see where we're going.

I think that's enough.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time is now 12:06.

Neil, I thank you very much for your time. This interview is now concluded.

File No. 9110102

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF FRAN PASCALE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: It's October 17th, 2001. The time is 9:45 a.m. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck with the New York City Fire Department. Today we are conducting an interview with the following individual.

CHIEF PASCALE: FRAN PASCALE, division commander of Division 6, EMS operations.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center disaster task force.

Q. Chief, we would just like you to relate to us the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. Okay. I was in my office, and I was on the telephone. My staff yelled to me from inside of the outer office, indicating that a plane had gone and hit the World Trade Center. They happened to be watching this.

I got up, and I went over to the television. I came back into my office, and I'm not sure if I actually called up citywide or RCC

to see if they had any additional information. From there we turned on the radio, and I knew there was quite a few chiefs starting to head down that way.

Right after that we were told another plane hit the World Trade Center. From there I called up citywide, and they had indicated that maybe I'd better go. They hadn't heard from anybody.

What was actually on my mind is one of the things that chief McCracken always stresses, that he didn't want all of the chiefs to respond at one particular incident. Wait to see if somebody calls you, because otherwise all the resources are tied up in one location. So that kind of stuck in my head.

With that I told my staff, "Let's go down into the World Trade Center," especially since citywide hadn't heard from anybody. So I took my staff, and in my head I was already planning that if I go to another sector or part of the division, depending on how they divide up the World Trade Center, I would have a sufficient amount of staff that we wouldn't have to pull

from anybody else.

I also told the paramedics to bring their ALS equipment in case we would need them for triage. Most likely we stocked up the car with not only equipment, I had a lieutenant, I had a light duty person. I figured she could do at least recording or tracking, whatever the need would be. The lieutenant certainly could handle a sector, and I had the ALS coordinator, which he could certainly be used as a paramedic. So that was my plan as I was going down there as additional resources.

Ironically we wound up having a lot of traffic, and we were finding it a hard way getting down into the World Trade Center. Anyway, we finally managed to get onto West Street and it started to move, the traffic.

As we got into the area -- and I guess it was somewhere on West Street, 30th or something like that, you could really see the type of disaster that was going on. My initial thought was I wonder what really was happening down there.

As we hit, it was West and Vesey, there

was a police officer -- we hadn't even parked the car -- who starts yelling at us, telling us to get out of the way, pull the car and run, the building was coming down. Either he heard a rumbling, whatever. At that moment you could see this big cloud.

We pulled over. It was as we're on Vesey Street we pulled the car to the side. We started to see the debris starting to come down. We really didn't grab any type of equipment. We just figured, well, they know more than we do. We better star running.

At that point --

Q. Would you just indicate on the map where you are with a number 1, where you left the vehicle.

A. It was between -- I think it's called West End and West. So it's on Vesey between West and West End. So it's right in between that block and -- where is it? It's on --

Q. North End?

A. It's probably, yeah, only a few car lengths, figure halfway into Vesey. So maybe midpoint.

Q. Just indicate it with the number 1.

A. I would think that's --

Q. Just an approximation.

A. -- pretty close to it.

We basically got out of the car. We didn't really take anything because by then there was a tremendous amount of debris, and it became engulfed with a black cloud. I did not see where my personnel had ran for cover. It just got very black, very dark. I think probably at that particular moment I was more concerned, thinking of where did they go, because I could not see anything in front of me.

I continued to run up, and I think that's where I ended on West End Street. It was quite a while before I saw anybody. Then all of a sudden as the cloud kind of lightened up a little bit -- I was pretty much covered with the soot and the debris -- I started to see a tremendous amount of ambulances coming my way. That would be actually on West End.

From there what I did is I notified citywide that I had numerous vehicles coming in my direction. At that point I think I was the

only voice there because I was standing right on the corner.

What I did is I stopped the vehicles, and by then I saw I think it was Lieutenant Cahill and a few other people that I knew. Some of the ambulances I knew.

So what we decided to do at that moment was to set up a secondary staging. I didn't even know where the original staging was. So we separated the ALS units from the BLS units and make it very easy to identify should they start calling in the units.

I remember seeing Hazollah. I remember seeing some voluntary units. Definitely there were Fire Department units. I did not see any of my peers at that time. I saw a few other lieutenants. I know there was Lieutenant Cahill. I think I may have seen Captain Stone. I'm not sure. Everybody was pretty much running around a little bit.

We were able to set them or at least guide them on both sides, and what we had automatically did with them is make sure that all of their -- they put some type of face mask on

because there was really very heavy -- it was dark, but it was clearly up a little bit.

So we got everybody to put face masks on. There were a few patients around. A few people had some minor injuries. We had whatever units were there on site -- whether they were ALS or BLS. We separated them. They were continuing to give some treatment. They actually transported a couple of people from that location.

Q. Where was that staging area?

A. This was all along West End Avenue. Let me just see where -- this is North End. Where they actually came from -- they had to come from the north side behind the Merrill Lynch building. I believe that was the one. That's where I saw all the units coming from. We had a couple stragglers coming up from Vesey, but most of them were coming from that location.

We were doing fine. I hadn't seen still nobody there. All of a sudden we heard I guess a rumbling of some sort. ESU had showed up with their vehicle and stuff and said we have to go before they collapse, get everybody out of the

area.

I wasn't sure which way the building was going to fall, so what I did is -- and with some of the EMTs and paramedics that were standing outside with their vehicles, we just told them to get in the vehicles and start moving, just get out of the area.

I ran. I didn't think of taking a vehicle or jumping inside a vehicle. I stood there watching everybody leaving the area. The cloud was worse than actually the first one, I thought. Total darkness, completely darkness, a lot of debris.

I wasn't able to see, and I don't know if it was just the fact that my glasses were so full of soot and everything as well as getting some soot in my eyes. I certainly didn't need anything more. Seeing was difficult enough.

With that, I remember running, and only later on did I realize I was somewhere around the school. Most of the units left. I did not know, actually, at that point where to take cover. There was nobody else with me. I didn't even realize I was in the street until I heard

something behind me.

When I looked, turned around, I remember it was one of our vehicles. They were kind of lost. They didn't know where they were traveling, and I just told them keep straight and go very slow, only because we couldn't see anything in front of us. I just reminded this unit -- I think it was the medic unit from Coney Island, and if I saw the fellow, I would know who it was.

So we spoke a couple minutes. I told him to watch whatever's in front of him, because I had no idea if the vehicles had stopped, if there were people just abandoning them, or people were walking in the roadway, like I was walking in the roadway.

If I didn't turn around, he probably could have ran over me. He never saw me, and I never saw him, except he had the lights on and I saw the flashing.

From there I remember a woman coming out of the cloud, and that's the best way of saying. She was coming, up it would have been off Vesey Street. Actually my first initial

response was I told her, "What are you doing here? You have to get out of here." I remember her reply, and only then did I realize she had a camera. She turned around and she said, "You don't understand," and she disappeared, just disappeared.

I would not even be able to find out who she was, what she looked like. I know it was a woman. My reaction to her comment was that she must have been media and she wanted to take as much film as she could, because it was a large-size camera, movie camera, that she had. So it wasn't just somebody just walking around with this. She just disappeared.

Then as the cloud cleared up, I was like in a round circle, and I think that is where the school is.

Q. Stuyvesant High School or the college?

A. I think it was Stuyvesant. It goes around. I wasn't too far from there, and that's where I ended up.

I made my way back, and then I started to see other units kind of coming back. I remember speaking to somebody and asking them if

they saw any chiefs, anybody around. I think it was CHIEF GOMBO on the air. Somebody had directed me toward the building where there was going to be a triage area.

When I walked in the building, I remember seeing Carrasquillo. There was Gombo there. Who else was there? Lieutenant Cahill was there. I remember seeing Steve Pilla, who is my ALS coordinator, and I couldn't believe that that's where they were, so close but so far away. That was my reaction to them, where were you? I thought something terrible had happened. We didn't know. They didn't have any radios on them.

From what I was told, one group ran in the building and then a couple of my other employees ran into I guess it was a trailer. They all piled up in this trailer. I couldn't even tell you where the trailer was. They said it was close to where I was. I couldn't see a thing.

So I went into the area, and I saw Chief Kowalczyk, I saw CHIEF GOMBO. I asked about Chief McCracken. Nobody had an answer.

They had said they saw Chief Basile around. I wasn't sure who else was down there. I know Chief Goldfarb was down there. I didn't even know that Chief Villani was down there. A lot of people had responded down there. Until much later on I had no idea actually who went down there.

From there CHIEF GOMBO had requested that the chiefs all gather outside of the building, which I'm not sure the street. It was on the corner of that building --

Q. Stuyvesant is up over here somewhere.

A. No, Stuyvesant is where I landed up after trying to beat the cloud, which obviously I didn't. It was on the other side.

Q. The hotel, is that where you came out?

A. No, I don't think it was the hotel. It had a beautiful -- it could have been part of the hotel, come to think of it.

Q. Was it on the water or by the water?

A. Maybe it was Four World Trade Center. It may have been Four World Trade Center. I think they have a large -- I remember taking a look when I got into the building. What do they

call it? They had a garden in a dome.

Q. An atrium?

A. The atrium and everything. Then I remember somebody gave me some towels so I could wipe my glasses. Just little things I remember.

I went outside, and then CHIEF GOMBO wanted to basically try to get the sectors and whatever else needed to be done, start some kind of a plan.

I remember Chief Carrasquillo and I -- at first he had indicated that I was going to stay down there, but then he had wanted me to go up to Chelsea Street. He had asked me where my car was, and I told him -- I said, "It's parked, but I couldn't tell you the condition of the car right now."

He had asked me to take somebody with me, preferably a supervisor. I remember asking for Captain Pinkus. He was there, so the first person I saw. He had asked me if there was a way if he could possibly grab some type of vehicle or whatever and get up to Chelsea.

Believe it or not, I guess at that point I had no idea where Chelsea was. I

couldn't even think of how far are we from Chelsea. I'm thinking of everything was in such a small area. I would have never thought Chelsea being considerably different, you know, pretty far away. That was off on 17th.

So we looked at each other. We asked where this pier was, and Captain Pinkus and I -- and I couldn't tell you where we grabbed this unit, who this unit was. It was volunteers. We just told them, "We need your vehicle. Take us to Chelsea location."

I don't even know how far you want me to go into this.

Q. Just go a couple hours past.

A. Okay. This particular crew was ironic. They looked at me; I looked at them. They said, "No, we can't take you." I said, "There's not going to be any questions. You're going to take me, and that's the bottom line."

Between the two of us, the way we looked and the captain turned around and said, "You don't realize, this is a chief. Just listen to what she says. Otherwise she's going to take the whole entire vehicle." This poor crew, I

couldn't begin to tell you who they were, but I remember they had no stretcher. It was a half-equipped vehicle.

It was so funny, we finally managed to get into West Street again, trying to go up to the West Side Highway. As we were traveling -- it wasn't even West Side Highway. I don't even remember what street we were traveling on. We couldn't get down to the west side. We had to take a detour.

As we were traveling, there was a group of people who actually flagged us down. They said that we had a pedestrian struck. We're looking at each other. We're saying, well, this is good, there's no equipment, no stretcher, no long board, nothing in the vehicle. We better think quickly how we're going to lift up this patient.

Pinkus and I jumped out of the vehicle. The male was actually laying on his stomach. I rolled him over. We opened up his airway. We were able to get a pulse. It turned out that he wasn't actually a pedestrian struck. It was medical-related. Later on I understand that it

was cardiac-related.

So we rolled him over. I told the crew -- we did have oxygen. The crew brought oxygen. I attempted to put an OPA in him. He gagged, so that was a good sign for me. There was a couple of us who were able to lift him up, and we were able to put the man on a stretcher. We told the crew take him to the hospital. This was a situation we certainly didn't expect.

From there we jumped out of the vehicle. I'm not sure how far we were. It seemed like we were miles away, because I couldn't even tell you where we were flagged on this. Maybe it was even Broadway. It was a major roadway.

With that we were trying to stop other vehicles, because we had no vehicles. I mean, it was the craziest situation. Any other time you would say, well, I'll grab another command. There was no such thing of grabbing anything. You had to use your common sense.

So with that we went over to -- there was a group of construction workers, and I asked them if we could have a lift from the

construction offices. At that point there was no supervisor, and their truck -- we were going to hop in the construction truck. It doesn't make a difference at that point. Their truck was kind of jammed up with all sorts of material. They were actually constructing at a site there.

We ran in the street, and we tried to stop a vehicle. I remember getting very angry at this particular vehicle because it happened to be -- and I'm not sure, but it was definitely either a private contractor or one of their non-911 transport unit.

I remember looking at their name, and I said if I could catch their number, I better not see them again, because they just blew the light. They just kept on going. That really ticked me off, in plain English.

Some of the construction workers came over, and they said, "What could we do?" I said, "Whatever vehicle it looks like you could put two more people on for one stop, and they're going to take us to where we need to go."

Ironically we stopped a vehicle, and I don't even remember the type of vehicle we hopped

in, but we got our lift up to Chelsea Street. By then Kowalczyk was already up there. Truthfully just thinking about it, I may not even have seen Chief Kowalczyk at that initial briefing, because he was already up there. He was actually in charge of the Chelsea location. Actually Chief Gombo wanted me to assist Chief Kowalczyk with the staging up there.

I remember us jumping out of the vehicle and we walked over there. We then got word that they wanted Chief Kowalczyk back down to the site. I remember talking to Chief Kowalczyk. [redacted]

lot of people reacted differently during different times.

[redacted]

had offered to go back down there at that point. It really didn't make a difference where I was going to be. I stayed in the Chelsea area, and I basically tried to continue what he started. I remember there must have been about 75 vehicles lined up on the West Side Highway. So we were trying to organize that.

With that, I remember two bus loads of doctors jumping out of the vehicles and saying, "We're here to help. We want to go downtown." Basically I didn't want them to go down there. It was dangerous enough to start off with, but I think we needed to -- if we were going to use these medical personnel, we needed to use them the way they should have been, call them in, set them up.

When I saw all these bus loads of doctors, they had just finished a convention. I remember that very clearly. They were at a convention, so the whole entire convention closed down. These were surgical doctors, medical doctors and everything. They had asked, "What can we do in the interim?"

With that I remember Dr. Asada showing up and Dr. Neal Richmond. I had to let them know we had a lot of doctors; what could we do. Also, I wouldn't say this, but to keep them occupied. I just didn't think it was good to get too many people in an area that was really dangerous.

If I would have sent them down there and anything would have happened, I think that

would have bothered me. It was bad enough to control your own people that were down there. So we decided that the best thing to do -- and really it was a very good idea, although it wasn't used.

We went into the pier, and I spoke to basically the director of the pier, Pier 36. I could be wrong on the pier number, but I think it was Pier 36.

We got permission to utilize the whole entire pier, and we had a lot of resources which we really would have been very beneficial should the situation turn out other than having so many fatalities as opposed to the wounded.

I remember '93 because I was down at the World Trade Center in '93. We had more injuries as opposed to fatalities. So it was a bit different. We didn't know what was going on as far as fatalities down there.

So what we did is we got permission to open it up, and we set up probably an unbelievable hospital. We set up an area for family members. Should the need arise if the hospitals were inundated, that was going to be an

off-site hospital. It would have saved our resources as well as definitely it would have saved the resources from the hospital.

These doctors were very good. Where they got their stuff is beyond me. But if you walked in there -- it took them several hours to set up, but they had every type of surgical, plastic surgeons, medical; you name it, they were there.

We had a meeting with them, and we broke them up into teams. The teams were comprised of their professional -- what they were --

Q. Specialties?

A. Thank you. I couldn't find the word. Their specialty.

Then what we did is we assigned a team leader, and the team leader was either whatever EMT or paramedic we had, anybody who was very familiar with triage, we went over triage with them. They all got their little packet, and with the team leaders we were able to keep track of everybody who was at least in that place. Probably we wound up with 125 doctors and nurses

from all the hospitals.

We probably at any given time had 75 to 100 ambulances showing up. We finally got a trailer to have it like a command post and we were able to get that set up. That was all -- initially that was several hours.

From there I think it must have been around -- I don't know -- 4 or 5; it was still very light and everything -- I got a message to report back downtown. They were going to have a meeting. I don't know how I got back downtown, but I was a little bit more resourceful. There were a lot of Fire Department vehicles over there. I think it was a command car. They took me down there.

I was able to get down there. I left Pinkus there. There were a tremendous amount of people. There were people that were constantly showing up over there. We were trying to really manage the unit. They were all over the place.

We had actually asked the police, because we were trying to stop the units from all the areas, as well as our own, just bypassing and heading down to West Street, because everybody

wanted to be there. It's understandable, but it wasn't something that really should be. If we needed them, then they go down there. There was accountability of the people.

The only reason I kept this in my head is because when I was traveling down to West Street and after the first building collapsed, I really thought that a lot of chiefs may have been lost. To me it seemed like a very long time before I made any contact with anybody else. That really -- like, who was down there? Did we lose anybody?

Not to jump back and forth, but I remember people saying, "We don't know where this chief is. We may have lost that chief." It was like you didn't know. You really didn't know. So you were really kind of working in a blind there, so to speak.

So I guess when I got up to Chelsea that kind of stuck in my head and really stuck in my head to watch the people, because I lost my own personnel for a brief period of time, and they just ran in different directions. That's it. They just ran in different directions.

If we would have ran up to West Street or if we were there probably -- and this is probably one of our major discussions that my staff and I constantly have since this World Trade Center was if we got there another five minutes earlier, maybe even less, we would have been going to the command post. There's no ifs and buts about it. Maybe not even five minutes. We were right there on the corner. We happened to be in the car.

Not that we joke about it, but maybe in the sense of releasing one's feelings about it, we would say, well, we're glad that it was Neal that did the driving as opposed to somebody else, because we would have gotten there much quicker.

So these are just things to me it's kind of good to talk to the personnel. You sometimes need a little sense of a break or a little -- not that it's a joke or anything like that, but it's kind of a release and it lets everybody think a little bit more and release it out a little bit more, because I think everybody was kind of taken back.

Everybody wants to be very brave and

very tough. That's all well and good on the outside, but it's really the inside that you have to worry about.

So anyway, with the request for me to respond back down to the command post, I finally got down there and I remember seeing Chief McCracken. Probably during that whole period of time, "Did anybody see him?" Everybody kept on saying, "We don't know where he is." So when I saw him it was like, wow, you're okay. We kind of hugged each other.

Then I saw Charlie Wells, and I didn't even know the type of personal disaster that he was going through, we were all kind of war-like hugging a little bit and grabbing on each hand and support amongst managers, I guess you would want to say. I remember finally seeing Chief Villani, you start seeing other people.

So we were down there and we were talking, and they wanted to go over another plan to see what was going on and who was going to do what. Already it had to be fairly -- between 5:00. All of a sudden for some reason people started to run again.

I was there, and I remember Chief Fellini looking at me, and he said, "We've got to get out of here real quick." I guess that's when the world whatever came down.

Q. Number seven.

A. Came down. We were standing in the overpass, and I said, to myself, "Boy, these people run awful fast. I'm still here." I remember saying that. Oh, my goodness. I remember Fellini opening up the door, jumping in the car, grabbing onto me and pulling me literally into his car.

I remember another supervisor of mine, which was Lieutenant Haugh, coming up from in front of me, like, and we grabbed him and we told him, "Get in the vehicle." There was one more person in that vehicle, and I think it was Chief Butler.

Chief Butler and Haugh jumped in the back of the vehicle, and myself and Chief Fellini was in the front. He just hopped over his seat. He didn't care, and I just hopped right in there. We closed up the windows and doors.

I said to myself, oh, my God, I don't

believe it. It's scary. It wasn't as bad this trip, but it was three times. I said I just hope the fourth doesn't come down. You know what they say, you know -- my husband always says three strikes and you're out.

That cleared at some point, and all of a sudden everybody just kind of walked back. It was the strangest feeling, like where did you just go? They were all jumping. I was just telling them, I can't do all this running. My knees are killing me. You just left me. First my staff ran away from me, and then you guys ran away from me.

It was so funny, and I don't think I thought at that point that we were in a predicament either. I don't know why I didn't think it. But what brought it to my attention is I had seen Chief Fellini the following day in which I was assigned to the operations where Chief Cruthers was there -- I have to really look at that map to see where I really was. It was right by the Manhattan College.

Q. That's Chambers and West.

A. I think it was maybe one block down.

Q. Not exactly at the corner, but that's where.

A. It was somewhere around that area when the other building came down. I remember seeing Chief Fellini because when I was assigned to another job the following day, maybe two other jobs the following day, and there I went to the operations where -- it was the pile; it was ground zero.

I remember Chief Fellini turning around and he said, "You know, for a minute I thought that you all bit the dust." I looked at him, I said, "You know, I never even thought how precarious we were in again." I don't know why. I could not begin to tell you.

I don't know if you could say it was emotional at the time. I can't really tell you. I can only speak for myself to the point that I think it was -- you could not really grasp at first the significance, the catastrophic situation.

It took me a while, I think, and only really until after our first meeting with Chief Gombo did I really think about this as being a

terrorist act. I don't know why. Maybe you kind of block it out of your head. I can't really begin to tell you.

I just didn't digest that until they were saying that and somebody was talking about the Pentagon and everything. That just kind of took my breath away, a little bit, I think. God Almighty, this is unbelievable.

Also at that point I did not realize how many people we lost. As I was listening to everyone, it was a devastating feeling, a hollow feeling, I guess, maybe a numb feeling that some of these wonderful chiefs that I got to know -- I just couldn't believe they were not there.

(Pause.)

A. Then I started to hear -- I was very concerned with some of the people when I was told that there was a lot of ambulances, a lot of people injured. I started to hear a couple of my own people -- I lost three vehicles myself. You couldn't help, how did those people get in there so fast. I want to beat them up. I did.

I don't know. They must have been on heavy duty speed mode, because I could not

believe -- I mean, here you have what I had heard some of the people were missing. I could not believe somebody from Montefiore could have gotten down there so quickly.

I had heard two of my employees were somewhat injured. They were sent over to New Jersey. We didn't know their status. I knew they weren't critical or anything like that. I knew two more of my employees at that time getting injured.

I guess then the division mode took over, because I wanted to know how many of my people were actually involved. I said, gee, if they can make it from the Bronx, I know my Harlem people must be down there too. These are things that probably go really kind of search your mind a little bit.

Again, a lot of this really -- as you really start talking about the people that were being lost, who was definitely lost really was -- there's really no words for it. There really and truly are no words for it.

I would like to add that he was a great guy. He was the most cordial individual, funny.

He was always happy. It was good, because, you know, when you did the merge and everything you said it's good to have a relationship with these people. It was really very important.

He was a wonderful person to me. And I say that only on the EMS side. I'm sure you have your own wonderful words for him on the fire side. But just to know him of how he was with us was really important.

I could not believe Deputy Commissioner Feehan, I could not. And the Father, I think he was -- Father Judge. My response is how could these people have been in that building at the time. You just could not put it in proper perspective, losing these people. They announce the names, and people are being told that day.

I guess it was just very hard -- you took it in. You just kind of took it in. You walked around very strong, tough, whatever you want to say, because I guess it's the -- through the years what you need to learn, especially when you become any level, you need to be strong for your people. We kind of all earned that one way or the other, so when you go home you're somewhat

different.

That was the first day, the day I certainly really would prefer not to remember. But a lot of good people were saved, and we can only be thankful for that. That's the way it goes. Hopefully it never happens again.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add to the events?

A. Prior to --

Q. Prior to the second collapse.

A. It's hard to say -- well, no, it's not hard to say. It was the most disorganized feeling I ever felt. I could say that there was no sense of being organized. It was an impossible thing to be organized. But even though you were tempted at certain points to try to get yourself up and running -- and they talk about we've always learned through the years, EMS, well, I guess we could throw that in the garbage that day. It just didn't work. It just didn't work.

Just the biggest thing is you did not know -- people were just coming in. People were coming in. People coming in. You didn't know

where they were coming from. People that did not have uniforms. People you thought were on light duty wound up down there.

You just did not have the control for quite some time. Certainly I don't think it was within the initial 24 hours because so many people just kept on showing up. It was like everything else, people had to be down there. That was something people had to do.

It didn't matter if you were in the Fire Department or EMS, you were a volunteer, PD, whatever, just the strangers we had a tendency to bump into like just going up and down. But probably one of the most memorable --

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This is side two of the interview with Chief FRAN PASCALE.

A. Just a last note, I think probably one of the memorable times that I remember going up and down West Street, if you want to call it going up and down, was probably the people lined up supporting everybody. I think that was so important, and it was for everyone. I think that was really good for our own people. They have a tendency to think they're not appreciated. For

whatever reason, they truly feel that.

I remember speaking to the people when I was leaving there to go back to Chelsea. From Chelsea I wanted to go back and pick up the rest of my people. This is late in the evening. I remember just listening to people talk. And these were our units. These are supervisors, not chiefs, supervisors, looking at this and digesting all of this and saying, gee, we are appreciated.

It was really very good at that time to give them support, but the support was coming from civilians. You're not always thanked on the civilian level. These people were showing up with flags, clapping; signs, "We love you." It was so supportive. That went on for the longest time, into the wee hours, every day, every night.

I remember up to only maybe two weeks ago going down West Street and there was still a couple of people standing there, all by themselves, with their signs. Sometimes a lot of good comes out of some times that may be very bad.

This was really very good emotionally

for the people who were up there, and that just wasn't our people; it was a lot of different people. PD was up there, doctors were up there. A lot of people were up there. There were firefighters up there.

It was important to give them that boost, that energy, and that's what it was. It gave them that energy to go back down there and do something that nobody really ever thought they would have to do and dig out their own and try to find people alive. That helped people. It gave them that energy to do it, because they knew whatever the end result was they were going to be appreciated. That was even the first night.

So I kind of remembered that, and when I went home I told my husband, "You just won't believe it. People just came out." I don't know where people came from. The west side is not that populated. They did.

That was really very important, and it was very important emotionally for a lot of people who saw it and for people who were going down to the hot area, as they traveled the west side, was the biggest roadway that everybody used

to get down to the site.

So it was everybody going down there who I think felt the importance of their job and that people appreciated what they were doing. How bad it was, they appreciated you no matter what.

That was just one thing I wanted to add, how the public I think boosted up morale.

That's about it.

Q. Thank you very much, Chief.

A. You're welcome.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This interview is concluding at 1038 hours.

File No. 9110103

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC LOUIS COOK

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 721 hours a.m. my name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. This morning I'm doing an interview with --

PARAMEDIC COOK: Paramedic Louis Cook, Division 2, ALS coordinator.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for this interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center task force.

Q. Louie, we'd just like to ask you to give us your account of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. That day I started my tour at 6 a.m. I was in my office with Chief Basile, when he came out and announced that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. He got this information over his beeper. We all kind of just shrugged our shoulders and thought very little of it. Put on the news, the TV, to see whatever news station was on and saw the north tower burning.

We looked at each other and decided

that since this looks like it was going to be a big job, we loaded up our equipment into the car and we started responding to the location.

We went through Queens into Manhattan and down the FDR Drive to the World Trade Center. We parked the vehicle somewhere around West Street, I'm thinking between Albany and Cedar.

Q. Can you just mark that with a number 1 on the map?

A. Sure. I'm pretty sure it was like right around there where we had parked the car.

I do remember seeing Chief Carrasquillo with his aide in front of us parking. I remember seeing Chief Hirth and his aide, and I remember seeing Roger Moore of operations there. They were in the car together.

Q. When you responded with Chief Basile, who else was with you?

A. Just the chief and I. We were alone.

We parked the car, geared up, took our equipment and started towards what was the -- from what I understand to be the initial interagency command post. It was across the street on West Street in front of I believe -- it

was like between one and two number World Trade, give or take. You had a very good view of number one. We saw number two and number three, actually.

We walked up West Street northbound to get to the command post, and there I remember looking to my right and seeing an aircraft landing gear tire. I remember we were walking up, we were zigzagging through bodies and body parts. I just remember the smell of it being like a butcher shop with all the bodies around. I remember smelling that distinctly.

I remember Basile turning around, looking at me, and just telling me, "Louis, don't look around. Just let's get to where we've got to go."

So we got to the command post, and I saw Chief Kowalczyk, who was -- I believe he was the major response chief for the evening, and some other EMS chiefs. I don't recall who was there. I can't remember the faces right now. I do remember him distinctly telling -- stating to us before we even got within ten feet of the command post and saying, "Jimmy take tower one."

So we just immediately turned around and started walking across West Street to tower one. I remember a lot of debris falling from the southwest side, a lot of fire coming down, a lot of parts, a lot of debris and some bodies, some body parts.

We went into the lobby to establish a forward command in the lobby command post. I remember running into Chief Pfeifer, the 1st Battalion chief from the Fire Department. I remember seeing him. We got to the command post, and we started to formulate matching plans. It was another fire chief, a deputy. There was a Port Authority police officer of higher rank in a white shirt, a sergeant. There was a New York City police officer there, I believe a sergeant. We all decided what was going to happen.

Chief Basile asked me to find another egress out of number One World Trade Center. He wanted me to find a safe way if I could get civilians out and aided out if there was a way, even if it was covered, would be perfect.

I went to the Port Authority sergeant and I asked him -- I needed a cop who was

familiar with number one. He tapped some cop and told him, "Go with him and take him where he needs to go."

I was going around in the lobby, and I was making a circle of the lobby. I wanted to see exactly what entrances and egresses were in the lobby area. I was going to go up to the mezzanine, and at some point I saw another elevated portion of stairs that went up to a landing and looked like it went over West Street.

I asked the police officer where does this go, and he told me this was the north bridge to World Financial Center. It's covered and it goes over West Street, comes out to number one, and you can get out through number one to Vesey Street. That's this north bridge right here, pedestrian bridge.

Thinking that since this was covered and away from the side where debris was falling, I figured it best I should investigate this being a safer area to get people out of. It just seemed like a good idea at the time.

I made it up onto the -- I guess you call it the concourse level, the mezzanine level,

and onto the foot bridge when I started to hear -- I thought I heard an explosion of some sort, but I kind of dismissed it. I figured, ah, it's just something burning upstairs. I really didn't think of what was going on.

Okay. I start going across this pedestrian bridge. I'm the only one on this bridge. I'm walking across it, and then I just remember feeling a rumble and hearing this rumbling sound that was really intense. It actually shook my bones.

I turned around to look for the cop, and the cop was gone. I don't know where the hell he went. I didn't know which way to go. I knew number one was on fire. I didn't know which way to go because I thought now the facade or something from number one was coming down, feeling that this rumble was going on.

So I ran. I started to run across the pedestrian bridge, and I got about halfway there when a lot of major debris was hitting the ground, really hitting the ground. You can feel it -- it shook your bones, the things hitting the ground, the rumbling. It was extremely loud.

I remember everything went black. All the windows -- because there are windows on both sides of this walkway -- started to implode in on me, and ceiling tiles -- they had beautiful ceiling tiles in this thing. I think they were mosaics whatever. They just started falling on top of me.

I made it to about halfway, and I couldn't run anymore because of all of this stuff hitting. I decided just to lay against the column and just hold on, because there was nowhere else to go.

It was black. I had some stuff coming in the window, some debris coming in the window on me, and I just waited there until it all stopped, which it felt like forever. Once it all stopped, you couldn't breathe because all the dust. There was just an incredible amount of dust and smoke. It seemed to linger. It didn't seem to settle. It just stayed that way.

When the rumbling stopped, I got up, got out from all the junk, and I started walking -- I kept going across the bridge. I couldn't see, so I hugged the wall that I was

next to and I just kept walking and I just kept my hand on the wall so I knew where I was. I was trying to feel in front of me to make sure nothing was going to be collapsing and there were no holes or voids to fall in.

I kept going straight. I got to the end where World Financial Center is, and everything was locked. The windows were still intact. The doors -- the security bolts were intact. So it was locked. I was kind of trapped in there.

I turned around. I can start seeing a little bit now. I decided, well, I could see a little bit down the hall and I'm going to have to go back now because I can't go out this way. I have nothing to break these windows out with.

As I went, I came across this painter's stuff, a cart and it looks like they were setting up to do some paint work or something. I found some painter's rags. I put the rag to my face. They had a jug like a gallon jug of water. I picked that up. I hosed my face off, and I gargled and spit. I took the jug with me, and I started walking back down.

Really I had nowhere to go. I got back to number one, where I met Chief Pfeifer and his aide. I remember that distinctly, because I know Chief Pfeifer's brother. They look very similar.

Q. At this time did you know where Chief Basile was?

A. No. I was totally away from him. My radio was the fire portable, and for a while it was quiet and then there was a lot of transmissions of maydays. I didn't want to come up on a mayday because I didn't feel I was trapped. I didn't want to interfere with somebody else getting rescued, so I didn't want to come up on the radio.

I didn't know where he was. I had no idea what had gone on. I just knew some -- there was a structural collapse of some sort. I had no idea of what was down, where it was.

I got probably halfway back again to where I originally had to stop, give or take -- I don't know, back between the two. I caught Chief Pfeifer and his aide. I gave him the jug of water, his aide, because he was covered in white powder. He wiped and gargled and rinsed off his

face.

I think I asked Chief Pfeifer what happened to the command post, where is everybody, and he didn't have an answer. So I turned around and I just tagged on with him because for no other reason than there's safety in numbers, I guess.

We turned around, went back to World Financial. I think the aide had some kind of tool with him. He either had a Halligan or he had an officer's tool or something, and he broke the window out of one of the doors. We got into the lobby.

On the side of the lobby, there were two escape stairs that had a panic button door at the bottom. The dust was really heavy in there because it was below us and it was more concentrated than was up by us.

So he broke it out, and I didn't know where else to go so we went out underneath the pedestrian bridge where you could see number two had been totally down. You could just see it. You walked out into this sea of paper and debris and dust that was like to me -- I'm a short guy.

It was almost up to my knees. I was kicking this stuff. I just remember looking and seeing number two and, holy shit, look at this. I had no idea why number two collapsed.

I asked Chief Pfeifer, "Do you know what happened to the command post?" He looked at me. He got up on his radio. I guess there was another fire command post set up. He reported in his position, and he reported he was with me. He didn't know how to report me. He said, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm 62 alpha," and he reported that to the fire command post over his radio.

I don't know where he went. We stood up, because I started heading into number one back across West Street. It was like all this debris and all this stuff. I really had to reorient myself now because I kind of knew where I was but I couldn't tell where I was because nothing looked really the same. Geographically I had an idea where I was, but nothing looked right.

So I waited a little while. I was making my way into number one again, and there was a problem getting into number one where we

went through, because debris had come down across that side.

I remember seeing two civilians on an EMS stretcher and some EMS equipment. The guy ran up and looked at me and said, "Where do you want me to put this stuff?" I looked at him. I'm like, "Right here. There's nothing to do with this." The guy was like, "Oh, I don't know what to do." I was like, "There's nothing to do. Just don't go in the collapse zone. Just go back that way." I pointed him north up West Street.

They were out of masks. They couldn't find masks. They were rifling in the tech bag. So I gave them my shears and cut the stretcher sheet for masks and then they took off.

I made it to one. I couldn't get back into one. I started and went around number one, because I didn't know which way to get in now. I went towards the collapse zone, because I figured, seeing what it was and even though it was down -- this sounds off the wall. I would try to find another way to get into one to get to Basile. I'm not going to raise him on this radio because he has EMS portable, I have the fire

portable.

I'm trying to get in, I'm trying to get back, and people are running up to me. They see the blue shirt. They're looking for direction, EMTs, guys I never saw before. They wanted direction. My response to them was not to go into the collapse zone. I told everybody that I encountered. They're running up with all kinds of equipment and junk and SAEDs.

Go back to Vesey and West and wait on orders. Don't go into the collapse zone. I don't know what's going on over there. Just wait there so I know where you are. We'll get everybody there. These guys just -- I don't know where they went after that.

I was trying to get back into one. I'm somewhere in between one and two, and I start feeling that rumble again, start hearing the noise. I didn't look up. I figured I've been through this once. I know what's coming now.

I started running north on West Street. Stuff just kept hitting it seemed like right behind me. I got to past where I was. Somewhere along I passed one of the tactical trucks from

the fire side, tac 1 or 2. I remember seeing a guys shoes there. I kept running past everything. I remember not seeing a lot of people. It felt like I was alone.

I was running, and stuff was coming down. This time fire was coming down, because I could feel the heat. I grabbed a firefighter's turnout coat that just seemed to be in front of me. I grabbed it. I threw it over my shoulders. I didn't make it much further than that. I ended up diving down next to some kind of truck. I think it was an ambulance, a van ambulance, of somebody's.

I just waited there. I just covered up. This stuff was really hitting the ground. The heavy stuff was really hitting the ground. It was somewhere -- it was shy of Vesey. It really wasn't very far. I didn't make it to the corner. I just waited there for everything to stop. It was really hot, because this time there was fire. I know that because my neck burned. I was just waiting.

I just laid there. I didn't hear anybody else. I didn't hear anything else. I

just laid there and tried to figure out where the hell I was going to go. I thought I was going to die. Once everything stopped and kind of settled, it was quiet.

I knew I was facing Vesey Street, and I didn't know which way to go. I just stayed there. I couldn't breathe. I'm breathing in my shirt. I didn't know where to go. I start -- laying there, I'm not dead. It's all quiet. So I figured, all right, now you've got to find a way out of here because you're going to suffocate.

So I start crawling -- because I can't see, I start crawling and doing one of these, sweeps in front of me so I don't hit anything. Somebody yells, "Is there anybody out there?" I was like, "Yeah. It's Cook." I yelled out, "It's Paramedic Cook." The response was, "Yeah, this is Chief" -- McCarthy or McNally. I want to say McNally. McCarthy.

So I yelled, "Just keep yelling. I'll find you." He started just calling back and forth his name. I remember crawling up to him, and I think I grabbed his arm. I grabbed him by

the arm. He reached out and grabbed me. We latched onto each other's arms. We were crawling, and we stood up.

He said to me, "All right. As long as we make it to the water, we'll be all right." I was like, okay. I had an idea where the water is. You still can't see it because it's dark as a mother. You can't breathe. It's so heavy with smoke and dust and ash.

I can't breathe. I have, for lack of a better term, dust impaction in my ears, in my nose. I was coughing it out of my mouth. It felt like I had a baseball in my mouth. I was just picking it out with my fingers.

I get up. We start going. We make it to about -- on Vesey Street. I'm looking at the map now, and I see number Three World Financial, the American Express. We got past there. On the north side of the street there's a bunch of shops. Here I just kind of fell across the wall where it was clear out and waited.

Somebody ran up -- I don't know. Somebody had water, pitchers of water. They came up. They splashed us with it in the face. I

remember coughing. He was coughing. I remember it was so bad I was coughing, I threw up everything out of my throat.

I got up, and I didn't see anybody I knew. I went back towards the collapse zone, past the AMEX building. There were a bunch of EMS people there. I remember they were all standing there with their helmets on: our guys, Lenox Hill guys, a bunch of other people. They were setting up some kind of triage area.

I remember a crew was loading up a stretcher with equipment. I walked up to them to find out who they were, where they were going. They looked at me, and they were going to start to treat me as a patient. I'm like, "Listen, don't bother with me. I'm ambulatory and fine. There's nothing you can do for me."

The guys are all gearing up. They're loading these stretchers up with everything, with life-packs, some SAEDs, suction units, and they started marching into the collapse zone. I had to grab one guy. The kid was brand-new. Everything was brand-new.

I said, "Are you out of your mind?

Stay right here. Don't go into that fucking collapse zone. You don't know what's going on. I know we've lost a building. I don't know what's going on. I know there's fire over there. It's real dangerous. You cannot go there. Stay here."

One of the guys turned around and said to me -- he was a medic. He knew my name. I think it was Raoul Perez. He said to me, "Louie, you don't understand. We've got to go in there. Our people are dying in there." I turned around, and I remember saying to him, "You're out of your fucking mind. Everyone's dead who was over there. It's unsafe. I don't know where to send you guys or what to do for you guys. Don't go there."

They all just kind of blew me off and said they were formulating a plan. So I told them, "If you're going to send somebody, two guys go with a tech bag and that's it. One guy stand by the corner to watch them and you guys stay here. Don't go past the line of sight. If you're going to go and just go forward to see if there's anybody immediately right there."

They all kind of thought that was a better idea, and they left it at that. I left Raoul, who seemed to be taking kind of charge, one of the medics.

I went back to the collapse looking for Basile. I thought he was dead, because I didn't know where he was and he didn't come up on the radio. I tried to find him. I went back towards number one. There's nothing left of number one. There was nothing left of number two. I didn't see anybody else I knew.

I got back to one. I just looked at -- I just remember looking at both of them, and I thought -- I saw how bad it was and I was like, there's no way they got out of that frigging collapse. There's no way they get out.

So I walked out and tried to see if there's anything standing that I could get into to see if I could find him. There's nobody there. I came back around to find those guys, the medics and the EMTs that I left.

I ran into Mark Stone. Mark looked at me. I didn't know what to do for myself. He came over and gave me a big hug. He started

calling somebody, I think. He started washing my face off again.

Then I saw Richie Zarillo, the guy who's (inaudible). He looked at me and as he's walked around of the building and he had his helmet on and he looked at me and -- I don't know what he saw, but his face dropped. I just remember seeing his eyes light up and his jaw fall when he saw me. He's like oh, my God. He was like totally, unbelievably upset. He was like, "Are you all right, what happened, oh, my God."

Then he asked about Basile. I said I don't know. I don't know where the hell he is. He was in one, we got separated, I went back, I can't find a way to get to him. He was like, "All right. Just stay here." He gave me a bottle of water or some shit, something in his pocket. I just remember rinsing my mouth and spitting and just living with that for a few minutes, sitting against the wall.

I remember seeing -- at that point I think I saw Sal Sangeniti, Pete Carrasquillo's aide now. He was leaning against the wall, and

[redacted] I said, "Are you all right?" He's like, "Well, I just ran my ass off and whatever."

He said to me -- he looked at me -- "(Inaudible) and I'm having some chest pains." So I'm thinking to myself, oh, great, this guy's going to have an MI here, fuck. I said, "Sal, what do you want? Come on? I started telling him. Come on. We'll get you help. We'll get you taken care of." He said, "No, just leave me alone." He's like, "It will pass. I just want to be left alone."

So I just stayed with him for a while and didn't say anything. I don't remember talking about anything. We just kind of stood there and looked. [redacted]

He said something funny about leaving to be something ridiculous like, I don't know, opening a deli or something silly. I kind of chuckled at that.

Q. I can picture Sal. I can picture him

so vividly.

A. I had to chuckle at that, because I'm like you know, you're right.

Richie turned around. He stayed with me. He won't let me alone. He won't leave me go. He's standing next to me. Mark Stone I think went off, because I remember saying the MERV is close by because I thought I heard the generator, but I'm not sure.

I remember a few minutes later Richie's face -- he turned around and looked at me and he said, "Oh, there you are." I turned around. It was Basile. We hugged each other. I was grateful that he was there. He looked at me and wanted to know if I was all right. He hugged me. He said, "I thought you were dead." I told him, "I thought you were dead too." After that we didn't say much more.

We kind of got back to work. We brushed ourselves off, went into this hotel up on North End Avenue. There was a triage set-up going on up there. There were people getting triaged and treated, things going on. EMS chiefs

started to filter in. I remember seeing Gombo. I remember seeing Pascale. I remember seeing Pete Carrasquillo. I was happy to see Pete.

I remember washing myself off in this decorative fountain in the lobby. I was very, I guess, from fiberglass or whatever because I wasn't char burned; I was red. So I just washed myself off, dunked my face and my head.

We went into this conference room or towards the conference room, and we stopped in the hall. We had to formulate a plan what to do. I just remember the discussion. I know probably it wasn't my place, but I don't care. I threw in my two cents with things that were being said.

The idea that I thought was very good was creating two casualty collection points and not doing anything at the site, because there's really nothing for our people to do right in the pit. They're not trained to handle this, let them stay on the periphery and let's have some outer collection sites for people.

So Basile gets told by Gombo to set up at the south ferry, and we just kind of take our stuff and we started walking out of the hotel and

we start walking from North End Avenue. We looked. From where we are you can kind of see the pit and you can see the debris and everything going on.

He looked at me and said, "Louis, there's no way we're going to make it to the south ferry from here walking. It's going to be a while." So I said to him, "Well, we'll have to find us some alternate transportation." We were outside this harbor here, the North Cove.

I looked down, and there's these large vessels, these sight-seeing boats. There's a guy up on one of them, a deckhand of some sort, and he's cleaning the dust off one boat. I look at him. Basile doesn't know what I'm up to. I go down the finger planks of the dock, and I whistle up at him and I yell at him. He turned around and looks at me. I said, "Your boat and motor work now?" He looked at me and he said, "Yeah." I said, "Let's go."

He came down and he took us down another dock, and he put us on a boat, on a rigid hull inflatable, one of those Coast Guard type boats, about a 20 footer. He cranks it up. We

told him, we have to go to the south ferry, and we have to get there now. So the guy just fires up the boat, and we go.

We make it out into the Hudson, and we're going down the Hudson River. We're looking back, and all we see is this big cloud of smoke and dust. We're just like in shock, how could this happen. We couldn't believe what happened.

I'm at the bow of the boat, and the chief is sitting at the console where the pilot is piloting the boat. I looked up -- I don't know what made me look at this, but I thought it was funny because one of the pontoons in the back of the boat was flat. Something must have hit it and flattened it.

I looked at it and I laughed. I said "Oh, great. We survived all this and now we're going to drown." He looked at me, and Basile's face lit up. He smiled and he's like, "You know, you're a pisser, Louis. You just do the funniest shit."

So we make it to the south ferry, and the boat dies. They get me up to the ladder to climb up onto the dock, and I tell the chief,

"Just stay. I'll get your dock line. Don't worry about it." The boat dies, and they start drifting out into the harbor.

I pick up all these life savers that they have laying on the dock with some line. I throw it to him and of course the line gets all tangled. So I just let it go. They were laughing because I was cursing. A Coast Guard boat comes by and I start waving at him, and they're waving at me like I'm saying hello. Schmucks.

So they get the hint that the boat is adrift. They come back in. The guy -- the prop was fouled on the boat. So he cleared it to get the boat started, brings it back up to the dock, and Basile climbs up the ladder, which is funny to see a guy his size climbing up the ladder.

We just went to work and set up the south ferry. We got there, and there were off-duty EMS people doing some election detail stuff, I remember because they were wearing election shirts. We got there --

Q. Do you remember who any of them were, Louis?

A. Okay, I want to say, yeah, Joan Hill Gardner. I know she was one. I think Bill Haigney was another. For the life of me, I can't remember. But they kept coming in.

(Interruption.)

A. We were in this place. The Coast Guard was there. They were assigned to the station at the terminal. I remember seeing a lot of EMS people coming in. The ferry was coming back and forth. They stopped it on the Staten Island side. I remember speaking with the dock master to hold the ferry for the moment.

Then MEU showed up with a truck, and it was Richie (inaudible). We started setting up the folding cots and started setting up all kinds of equipment, like we do in MASH tents. It was just a lot of activity going on.

I grabbed a Coast Guardsman. The petty officer and I grabbed him and said, "Where's the commander of the station?" He said, "I'll get him for you." He got the commander of the station. He came over. We introduced ourselves. I told him what we were doing.

I told him I needed to know if they

were armed. He was like, "Why?" I said, "We're going to need armed guards in front of this place because I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if we're going to be -- if there's a potential for us being attacked or not or anything's going to happen. I need armed guards."

He looked at me and he said, "This is an unarmed station. I can recall a patrol boat that's armed, but I don't have guys with guns." I was like all right. I asked him if they were trained as EMTs, and he said half the guys at this assignment were EMTs.

So I told him I wanted to choke off the ferry terminal and have people who want to seek treatment to come into a choke point to come upstairs in the ferry terminal, be triaged, treated and we'll get them out. I don't want just civilians wandering in, uninjured.

He agreed with me. He put his people into action. We had the ferry still out. I asked him, "Is there any way we can get in touch with the ferry? I need to have the ferry on our frequency all together. I need to have them."

He said, "What do you need that for?" I said, "If we have to move all our patients, I'm taking them over to Staten Island. I will bring the resources from Staten Island with the ferry. At the very least if we have a lot of fatalities, we'll send them over there too."

He's said, okay. He said, "Let me get the dock master." He got the dock master. He got the dock master's extra radio, and we started listening up and we started communicating with each other. They brought the ferry back, which had people from Staten Island University Hospital or one of those hospitals over there. There were nurses, physicians, EMTs, firefighters off duty, cops off duty, because they were coming like with half uniform, half equipment and stuff.

Some of the firemen stopped who were CFRD and said if they weren't needed here they were going to go over to the collapse. We kind of pointed them the way to the collapse.

We had some units show up. I remember seeing two paramedics from here, Kevin Kelleher and Felix Marquez. They showed up.

Basically we just waited for patients,

and we really didn't get any. I remember at some point Dr. Cherson came. I remember seeing Manny Delgado. I remember seeing at some point Jerry Bacchus. I remember seeing Phil Ashby. At some point McCracken and Cronin showed up.

I remember McCracken was getting an abuterol treatment. Basile was needling him. That was pretty amazing. He kind of zinged him a little bit. It was funny.

I remember seeing Roger Ahee. I can't for the life of me now figure out who else I saw. I know I saw volunteers showing up and volunteer ambulances.

I started seeing the exodus of civilians. It was funny. I say exodus because when we were coming down in the boat around the horn of Manhattan, I remember seeing boats coming in, all these boats, tugboats. Every boat imaginable in the harbor was coming in at a full clip. I remember them hitting the sea walls.

Wherever they could stop and take people on, they were taking them. I just remember seeing that. I remember tugboats just coming right to the wall with deck hands and just

pulling people. You could see some people bleeding, some people were injured. Some people were like totally lost. Wall Streeters with like half their clothes and no briefcase and stuff. I remember seeing stuff like that. They were just getting on the boats and going. I remember seeing that.

I remember seeing tugboats and I remember seeing fire boats coming in. I remember seeing one of the harbor boats, the cops, loaded with cops. It was just amazing to see these guys coming by boat. People were just leaving on boats.

The civilians would come to the ferry, and they were all -- some of them were injured; some of them were not injured. Those that were injured just kind of came up, got wrapped up, got irrigated, whatever, went home. The ferry came back, and they held it for a while.

Then since we weren't getting any patients, we cut it free. We said, all right, if you feel it's secure enough, take the people who want to go to Staten Island across. They started their route back and forth again, but they

understood we would call them immediately if we needed them.

I remember one trip coming back from the ferry, because I took over the dock master's office as a command post. I remember Billy Olsen coming over on the ferry. He said he had a skating rink on the other side set up and iced over for a morgue. He set that up. I didn't know what to say about that. I just let it go. There was nothing I could tell him.

That was it. We stayed there the day, saw next to nobody as far as patient volume, then we -- sometime during the day -- I'm assuming it was the latter part of the afternoon, I saw Mark Steffens. He finally came up, and he was a wreck. He gave me a big hug. He was glad to see me, and actually I was glad to see him. I didn't know where he was. He told me his story. He was really shaking, I remember.

We got a message we had to go to Chambers and West, there's an interagency meeting happening immediately. So we had to find a way back to get Basile's car, if it was even there. I don't know how the hell we got there. I don't

even know how we got -- I don't think we walked back, but I don't know how we got back to Basile's car, to get his car. I don't know. I don't know how we got from one place to the other.

We were walking up West Street, because we came south -- yeah, it was just a couple blocks away. We went through Whitehall Street. We came south again from the towers. We tried to find the car. It was amazing to see just what was all over the place. Buildings burning without any fire suppression or anything going on.

It was amazing. It was just chaos, just junk and cars crushed. The bodies that I remembered seeing on West Street when we were going up to the command post originally were just kind of like covered up. They were all covered. I remember just thinking where all the bodies are. I'm walking around now and I can't see them.

We found Bobby Brown's car, which was Billy Day's burned. Billy's probably pissed. Nose smashed in pretty well. I crawled and

popped the trunk lid and took his bag and left everything else, personal effects, there.

We just tried to find our car. We found it eventually. It took us a while because everything just didn't resemble what it was. We found it. It was covered in dust and soot. Without exaggerating, a foot and a half of dust on the car. You just couldn't tell whose car was whose. The only way we found it was he said, "I'll try this one," and he stuck the key in there and the cylinder turned. It was ours.

We brushed off the debris and the dust.

(Interruption.)

MS. BASTEDENBECK: We're continuing the interview with Paramedic Louis Cook.

A. We went back around to the south ferry. We picked up Mark Steffens. I was in the car with Chief Basile. I have no idea who else was in the car. I know the car was packed because we were shoulder to shoulder. I can't remember who else was in the car.

So we dropped off some stuff, started up the FDR Drive, got off -- actually the service road of the FDR Drive. We came around by 1 Truck

by South Street and I can't think of the cross street, like Beaver or something. We started weaving our way through the streets because we just had no idea where we could get around.

We finally made it up to Chambers and Greenwich. We went up to Chambers and Greenwich through this mess. Driving through this was like nuclear winter with all the dust and everything else. We got to Chambers and Greenwich, and the chief turns around and says, "There's number Seven World Trade. That's the OEM bunker." We had a snicker about that. We looked over, and it's engulfed in flames and starting to collapse.

We're kind of caught in traffic and people and things, and everything's going on. We hear over the fire portable, "Everybody evacuate the site. It's going to collapse." Mark Steffens starts yelling, "Get out of here! Get out of here! Get out of here! We've got to go! We've got to go! It's going to collapse."

I turned around, and I piped up real loud and said, "Stay in the frigging car. Roll the windows up. It's pancake collapsing. We'll be find. The debris will quit and the cloud will

come through. Just stay in the car." We pulled the car over, turned around and just watched it pancake. We had a dust cloud but nothing like it was before.

We ended up, up the street at the command post, and it was a sea of people. For the life of me, I can't tell you who was there. I just don't know. Everyone was chattering and talking about this and about that. No one really had any stories. It was just like business. I just remember that.

He looked at me after the meeting at the interagency meeting. I remember seeing Ron Pfeffer at the command board doing tracking, doing tracking and stuff. I spoke to him for a moment.

That was it. They sent us home later that night from the command post, and we came back the very next morning very early back at the World Trade Center. I came here. I don't remember if Basile picked me up or I took the car. I remember we met up down there. We were there together. I don't remember from there. We stayed for days doing our job.

That's pretty much it. That's pretty much it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to the events prior to 11:00 that morning?

A. There was just so much going on. I speak about it and then something else will pop in my head, things that I can remember.

After the collapse I just had a disturbed feeling that I knew we lost people, a lot of people, EMS people. I started thinking about that and I thought about all my friends that I've known for years.

I started thinking, well, where's my sister, because my sister's a cop. I'm like, great, I don't know where she is, I don't know where anybody is, I don't know what's going on.

It was very, very disturbing. I have no bravado. I've seen plane crashes and all the jobs and stuff. I've never quite seen some of the things there that seem to overwhelm my thoughts.

I don't know what else to say I don't know what else to say. I feel like I haven't really contributed much. It's just a lot, I

guess, a lot of that going on. I really can't think of a lot else.

I don't remember seeing -- I remember seeing some fire officers and I remember seeing Fire Patrol, the guys with the red helmets. It's sad that we lost all those guys. Basile I think at one point said --

(Interruption.)

A. I can't recall anything else. I know Chief Fanning was with us or Chief Galvin was with us at some point at the command post. Actually that's what Chief Basile told me.

That was it. I just really can't remember much. Everything seems like a blur. I get these moments where I remember something. That's about it. I can't really add. I wish I had more information for you.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. This concludes our interview with Paramedic Louis Cook. The time now is 816 a.m.

File No. 9110104

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC STEVEN PILLA

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time is 11:27. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, title and assigned command of the New York City Fire Department in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

PARAMEDIC PILLA: My name is STEVEn Pilla. I'm one of the ALS coordinators for Division 6 EMS.

Q. STEVE, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you please tell me in your own words about the events surrounding that day?

A. Well, let's see, in the morning I got to work like usual. I heard that there was an explosion -- I heard the radio on citywide in the office. So we heard the lieutenant on the scene screaming that he needs every available ambulance.

It was very interesting because I was

at that explosion in '93. I was on the street at that point. I remember when they sent us down there, we turned to citywide. It was a very similar conversation from that lieutenant: Give me everything you've got here. Smoke coming out of the world -- I thought that it was a tape on. They said no, there was an explosion. We turned the TV on. Sure enough, the tower was on fire.

As we're watching the TV, we saw the second plane hit. I'm like, is that another plane that hit? Like God, one could be, two is no longer an accident. The chief rounded us all up, and we started heading down.

Q. Which chief?

A. Chief Pascale.

We took the Henry Hudson Parkway.

Q. Can you just tell me the other personnel that you were with?

A. It was myself; Neil Sweeney, who is vacation relief right now for the other coordinator who is out on refresher; Amedegnato, who is one of the chief's aides here, EMT; Lieutenant Cahill, who was the officer in charge in the division; and Chief Pascale herself.

All five of us got into the car with some equipment and took off down there. We got to the Henry Hudson from Jacobi. We hit a lot of traffic. It was at that point I think they already realized that this was some sort of attack. After getting through barricades and then smooth sailing, to find more barricades. We kept getting delayed getting down there.

We finally get to the end of the West Side Highway. As we turned, we could see both towers on fire. This brought back from '93 when I got there all the smoke coming out, glass breaking and stuff. I had no idea what we were going to face.

As soon as we got there, we just passed one of the walkway bridges just past Stuyvesant High School. There's a walkway bridge. We just passed that, got to Vesey. The chief was saying we have to find the chief, find the command center at West and Vesey.

We see this plume, come down in front of us. Originally I thought basically it was the facade of the building that came down. We made a quick right. I looked behind me. Neil was

driving, I wasn't; I was in the back. I looked behind me. I could see this plume of shit just chasing us. They're looking for a place to park, and I'm going, "Keep going. Keep going. Don't stop." It finally overtook us to the point we couldn't see where we were driving.

We parked the car, and then we got out, got our helmets. We were getting ash and stuff coming onto us, this dark plume. One of the firemen who now works as a medic for one of the private hospitals, he comes out and sees me.

Q. Do you know his name?

A. I'll give it to you later as soon as I --

Q. Okay.

A. He comes out and he goes, "STEVE." I said, "What?" He couldn't find his partner. I'm looking to him and saying to myself, you can't find him? I'm thinking the worst. Then someone else was coming out of the plume. The lieutenant and Neil went to get them and came out.

Then we all had to leave because it was getting darker and darker and stuff was getting bigger and bigger. So we all took off I find out

in different directions. We couldn't find anybody for a while.

We found an ambulance and got some paper masks to wear for the ash. But it was really dark, like nighttime, just waiting until this stuff goes over. I remember after the darkness went away I could see the sun coming through the sky. I guess the building was no longer blocking the sun.

We walked around. I believe now it was close to water. It was towards the American Express building, I'd say, or Merrill Lynch, one of these buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. The ambulances started coming around from the side. They just filled with all the debris from the tower. The MERV took off with its doors open, the steps on it, bouncing down the street. I was like, hmm, this is not a good thing.

We managed to set up some triage, get ALS up. Then we found the chief, found the lieutenant, found Amedegnato and Neil and tried to get the ambulances together, around the

corner, staged. I remember on one ambulance there was an hysterical EMT in the back that couldn't find her partner.

Q. Do you remember who that was?

A. I don't know who she was. She was looking for her partner Patrick.

Q. Do you know Patrick who?

A. Sorry.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. So how she's looking for her partner. She wanted to go back. I told her -- someone was with her. I said, "You've got to hold her here. Hold her. Don't let her go back." Obviously we had a big disaster. Like ten minutes later her partner walked up. I said, "Go hug your partner. She misses you."

We set up a triage area in the lobby of the building. I'm still trying to figure out what building we were in. I believe it was the Winter Garden building. That's the only one I can think of. So we're in that building. People started coming in filled with ash and choking and respiratory problems. But no one was really hurt. So we were taking care of that.

Then they said the building was coming down, the other tower. We need to leave. So we all took off. The people who I was taking care of who couldn't walk got out the door before I did. It was unbelievable.

You could hear the roar. Outside you could hear the roar of the building coming down. It just slowly got faster and faster. It was unbelievable. It was like a freight train.

You go around the corner only to be greeted by another plume of smoke from the other building. So now ambulances were taking off, and one ambulance stopped and said, "STEVE, get in the ambulance." I jumped in, and we waited there until it settled. No big debris came towards us. It was just the dust and dirt. When that kind of settled, you could see the light again.

I popped out, went back into the same building, which wasn't as damaged, and did triage again. There were more and more people in there. There was a girl with a broken leg. She got blown just from the force of the ash. She kept going down from the force of the ash. We ended up treating her. She was stable.

There was a chief in there, a fire chief, with a broken shoulder and bloody nose. I was going down the line triaging people. They were upset, they were bent. People with no shoes on I guess from running out of the tower.

A fire chief comes over to me and says, "Listen, son. There was a terrorist attack. This building's next, because they know they're going to start attacking other buildings." He had a very good point there, because you're always waiting for the next attack. This is a terrorist act.

So I got my chief and decided to go into Stuyvesant High School. At that point I was going to get the fire chief out, to an ambulance, get him out of the way. There was a Port Authority cop who crashed on us. He was doing fine, the next minute he had no blood pressure. We got him out to an ambulance.

Q. What kind of injuries did he have?

A. Nothing obvious, but it must have been the shock from the whole thing, or an internal thing is possible. Maybe mashed, he might have been squished, hit by something, and not even

know it. We got him in an ambulance and got him out to a hospital.

Q. Do you know who his name was?

A. Maybe this happened -- the time period is like within an hour. It's amazing. On the map I see now we actually ran towards the other buildings instead of running away from everything.

At that point we're getting everything together, and now we're going to move to Stuyvesant High School. Somebody comes in and says there's a gas leak, there's explosions going on, we have to evacuate.

So now we're all running out of the building again. The 20 people I'm treating again beat me to the door. I have no idea where these 20 people are. Someone is running around with a triage cage around their neck.

So we run out. You try not to hear the explosions in the background, things just blowing up; vehicles, I guess, that were on fire from the debris or if there were gas leaks. You could hear them getting closer and closer, so there was a good possibility there were gas explosions.

I get into Stuyvesant High School and the dust settles. You calm down. You figure you're safe now. Somebody comes in yelling there are gas explosions coming towards the high school, we need to evacuate.

At this point you have hundreds of people running into this high school. Now you're evacuating again. Once you get yourself together, you had to run. You just kept doing that for like the first hour. We just kept running until I could see the buildings. We're about this big. About an inch. Okay. Now everybody's safe. What do they do, the rule of thumb. But I used my pinky, though.

We stayed there on the corner for the longest time. Sure enough, people were still coming out of that portion with ash on them and problems breathing. I took my oxygen tank with me. It's like my safety blanket. Everywhere I was going I was giving oxygen to people to get themselves back together. There were 20 people just stopping, giving them oxygen, and going to the next one.

A Port Authority cop came out. Their

suits are dark blue. He was white. His whole suit was pure white. They set up their own triage area in another high school, one of the colleges.

Q. Across the street from --

A. No, it's down the block. So they're there for the longest time, because they needed some supplies, needed ambulances. The radios were not working. We had a radio with us. But I knew there was a triage area and transport area two blocks from there. They had like ten ambulances. Another triage and transport area down the other road with MERVs and ambulances. So we were basically running back and forth where they need an ambulance, playing gofer. Somebody just needed a gofer to go back and forth.

We went upstairs to the (inaudible). It was in the auditorium, like a gym. They had doctors that had come in from all over, doing treatment. Great. Some EMTs showed up from Hazollah. They were in there. A lot of walking wounded. No one with real life-threatening injuries. But then again I kind of figured that because all the life-threatening injuries were in

the rubble.

So strange we had all these triage areas set up and we were getting dribs and drabs. There were no real patients. You think people would get out of the muck; right? It was like walking wounded or dead. That was basically it. There was no one or few critical. When the first building came down, we did. When the second building came down, it was even less.

It was kind of strange, we had a tugboat set to go to Jersey with a frequency how to get in touch with them. We had doctors at another triage area. But there were no patients.

(Interruption.)

A. Then it was about 5:00, because I was getting hungry. We were eating oatmeal cookies and watered-down Gatorade from the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. They were great. They had plenty of food. But we were getting hungry.

We walked back. We didn't do any further because building number seven was coming down. That was another problem, to wait for building seven to come down, because that was unsecure. It was about 5:30 that building came

down.

Again another plume of smoke. Again if you got too close you had to start running again. In the plumes there was like big debris, small debris, not to mention whatever contaminants were in it.

We finally got to ground zero, Chambers and West. I met Al, who was in refresher who was now sitting down there with an ambulance full of patients. He got sent to the pharmacy. So I was standing there for a while, looking at the MERV. Again, there was not a lot of patients coming in, just people coming in with ash in their eyes. That was it.

We didn't do much, to tell you the truth. I was just walking around aimlessly, because there was nothing much to do. You sat there. You were amazed. You just lost two buildings and possibly 50,000 people at most, if not maybe about 10,000 if they got the buildings evacuated. You just watched 10,000 people die. Unbelievable.

I remember going back into the high school and got some food. At that point it

really hit, I'm hungry and thirsty. I get headaches when I don't eat, so I was getting this bad headache.

The only thing I remember is walking around and it's like five inches of ash and paperwork from everyone's office. Some were burnt, so you imagine where that paperwork came from. People's personal memos, financial records, everything, on the street.

It was about 7, 7:30 we finally contacted the chief. We had lost her. We didn't know where she was. She didn't know where we were. She came back to ground zero, and we met her. She got all of us together, and we went back to our car to get back here.

We got back to the car. It was filled with ash. It was like it snowed. We didn't even wipe the car off before you got in the car. It was ash; it wasn't even snow. It even managed to get inside the car. It was totally unreal.

I remember somebody saying to everybody, "Don't forget to fill out an exposure form when you get back." God only knows what was in that. You could feel the fiberglass on your

arms. You knew it was like pulverized glass and fiberglass. Everything was pulverized.

We got back here and chilled out, went home, hugged my wife, ditched my clothes, and came back to try to see what to do the next day. I've been in the office since. I've never gone back down to ground zero. Some day I do want to go back there just to actually physically see where it was, where I was running to. In the whole maze, you're just running and running and you don't see where you're going.

I know when I ran out the building the building was falling. I looked to the right, and the plume was coming towards us. I looked to the left, and I said I can't go back that way because the building (inaudible). I can't go this way, to the right; I can't go left. I hope my helmet works. That's all I've got left. From the looks of things, it's not going to work too well. So that's when an ambulance pulled up and said hop in.

That's about it. I spent the rest of my time trying to get myself back together again. Today is the first day I actually got myself on a

normal schedule. It's over a month.

A plane passes over, you hear -- the only other plane -- I'm in Westchester. The airport closes at 12 midnight it's 2:00 in the morning, and I hear this roar of a plane go by. It's the same rumble. I was dreaming about this building falling down, with the smoke and all.

That's my story.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this in regards to the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. No, I pretty much gave you every detail I could imagine.

Q. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 1147 hours.

File No. 9110105

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF JAMES BASILE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th, 2001. The time is 839 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York Fire Department. I'm here to conduct an interview with the following individual.

CHIEF BASILE: Chief JAMES BASILE, B-A-S-I-L-E, EMS operations, EMS Division 2 commander.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston from the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center disaster task force.

Q. Chief, I'm just going to ask you if you can recount the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. I first became aware of the World Trade Center incident from my staff, who was watching the morning news. They had turned on the news, and we had seen the original plane had struck tower number one of the World Trade Center. At that point we started to monitor the radio activities here, the CAD job.

Within a few minutes, the other building was struck. At that point I called the

Citywide Dispatch Supervisor, informing them we were available if necessary. I felt at that point based on the magnitude of the incident that I should respond.

So I responded from Division 2's office with paramedic Louis Cook. We traveled Pelham Parkway onto the Hutchison River Parkway to the Whitestone Bridge, where we had seen the magnitude of the incident outplayed firsthand. From the Whitestone Bridge, we entered the Whitestone Expressway onto the Van Wyck Expressway onto the Long Island Expressway, where we started to take a real perspective of the incident because of the closer we had gotten.

By the time we reached the Queens Midtown Expressway, that perception now before the tunnel, we had seen how big it really was. My greatest fear was additional attacks at that point, knowing past history with terrorists and how they operate.

By the time we got to the tunnel, there must have been 20-25 vehicles behind us, a few cars in front of us. Chief Hirth was in front of us. Chief Carrasquillo was also in front of us.

We got into the tunnel. We had clear access into the tunnel and onto 34th Street and the FDR Drive.

We traveled the FDR Drive, came through the tunnel down in lower Manhattan and out onto the West Side Highway. I parked the vehicle at approximately West Street and I believe it was Albany to Carlisle. It might have been Albany.

Q. Can you just indicate with the number 1?

A. Carlisle to Rector or Albany. I'm going to put a 1 here.

I exited the vehicle with all my appropriate gear and walked up to the command post, which was located adjacent to the Winter Garden theater at that point. I met with Chief Jerry Gombo and Chief Walter Kowalczyk and was directed to go into the lobby of number One World Trade Center at that point. The buildings are still up and intact.

Louis Cook and I went in together. We found out it was very dangerous entering the premise, that there was numerous parts of the building and other foreign bodies being thrown

around from the higher floors.

We entered the lobby. There I met Citywide Truck Commander Joseph Callan, Fire Division 1 Commander Chief Hayden and Fire Battalion 1 Joe Pfeifer, Safety Battalion Chief Stephen King, Father Judge, and OEM Port Authority officials in the command post within the lobby of number one.

We were looking to effect a way of exit for personnel in the building and a place where we could establish treatment sites. I advised the incident commander that was in the Trade Center with me that access from the front of the building was inappropriate and that we should look for other exits. That's when I sent Louis Cook with a Port Authority cop to find a different access for civilians and public safety personnel to come in on.

We were operating in the lobby, and all of a sudden we heard the roar of a jet engine, is what it sounded like. We thought that there was another plane coming into the building. We went from the lobby area into an elevator bank area -- escalators that led into the concourse area. So

there was essentially a wall that we went around from the command post area to the escalator area.

Not two seconds later debris and dust started to come in, and essentially we were just shut down. Everything was dark, pitch-black.

Q. Before the collapse, was the lobby still lit?

A. The lobby was functional. When I first arrived there, there appeared to be a lot of people there. The Port Authority had set up some type of chain to help lead people out. I would say within the last two minutes before building two had fallen that the bulk of the people were out of the lobby and it was essentially just the Fire, Port Authority and OEM personnel with me. The lobby was essentially clear.

Q. Did you go into any of the stairways or did you stay in the lobby?

A. I just stayed in the lobby at that point. We heard the roar of the jet -- what I thought was a jet coming in, and I believe the others did, and we went into the escalator area for shelter.

Everybody got down on the ground.

There was some debris that fell. There was a lot of soot and dust. It was pitch-black. The only light that we had was the handheld lanterns, and there was a photographer, a video crew that was following one of the battalion chiefs, that he provided some light.

All access to the lobby area was cut off, and any egress from that level was cut off. I opted to grab a hold of a Port Authority cop who knew the building well and ask for another way out. We ventured to take the escalator up into the concourse level.

I went up to the concourse level. All the glass had been shattered out at that point. We were able to get out. I saw people starting to come out from the building on the concourse. I met with Fire Battalion Chief Turner and a few other firemen -- I don't know their names -- and assisted in moving patients, civilians, out.

I did some quick treatment of a couple of patients. One gentleman had a severe gash to his forearm. I don't know how, but he had gauze with him. So I wrapped him up. I effectively was able to bring out about 300 civilians from

the building at that point in the matter of, I guess, 12, 15 minutes.

We were helping people over large areas of debris and channelling them, trying to keep them calm, bringing them over to a walkway that led to number Seven World Trade Center.

When the majority of the civilians were out, I waited a few minutes. There was nobody else coming out. I had a feeling, a gut feeling inside that it was time for me to leave. So I started walking. I went over the walking bridge to number seven. I went into the second level or the main lobby of number seven and walked down the escalator.

As I was approaching the corner of West and Vesey, I heard over the radio that the building was leaning. As I was crossing West Street, that's when I heard that jet sound again. I knew that the building was coming down. I made it about -- somewhere between West and North End there was a fence, approximately, I guess, 200 feet or maybe 100 yards away. I decided to use that as a wall to protect myself from any debris, not knowing what the extent of the magnitude was

going to be.

I brought a couple of civilians down with me, a couple of firefighters, I brought them close to the ground. I covered them with my turnout coat with me. I essentially waited and figured that was it, it was all over, because of the proximity to where we were to where the building was.

It went down, got filled with this dust and dirt, debris, again, this cloud. I opened up my eyes. It was total darkness I guess for about two, three minutes. I thought I guess this is what it's like to be dead. Then I heard a woman screaming next to me, and I said I guess we're still all here. So that was good.

We waited until we were able to see a little light. I was able to get the woman up. We went into a bagel store which was located at North End and Vesey, where we took some water. I gave her water and a couple other people. At the back of the deli counter in the kitchen area, they had like a little portable shower, I guess a dish shower. We hosed each other down.

I went into a building off of River

Terrace, I believe, and Vesey where a lot of the chiefs had regrouped. I met with Chief Kowalczyk, Gombo. I don't remember the other chiefs that were there at the time. Essentially we were trying to put a plan together of what we were going to do.

I was directed at that point to set up a treatment site over at the ferry terminal. Louie Cook and I, we wound up finding each other. I thought he was a goner too. I didn't know where he was. I thought it was all over.

We met, and we took a few minutes out. I told Louis, I said, "We're not going back to the West Side Highway. We're going to walk around if necessary." So we were walking down North End. We were down by the yacht harbor. Louie Cook saw a boatsmate who was sweeping debris off of one of the boats.

He called out to the boatsmate and asked him, "Do you have a dingy?" The guy said, "Yeah, what do you need?" He said, "Well, we need a ride out to the ferry terminal." He said, "Okay." So we wound up having a zodiac inflatable boat.

Actually it was a good respite because we were able to get away from the scene for a little bit and clear our heads and the air was clear and we were able to see the magnitude of what had just happened with us.

We got into the zodiac, and we traveled down the Hudson River to the MIL, the marine input center, the Coast Guard station, where they dock their vessels. Of course Louie got off, and he was going to hold the boat for me, and then we got carried out into the water. Then something jammed in the propeller, so we're stranded out there.

I saw some Coast Guard or some New York City cops in another zodiac. I tried to wave them down, and they zipped by. Five minutes later Louie is trying to throw me a life preserver on a rope, which got about two feet off of the pier. It was comical, to say the least. He was able to unwrap the rope from the propeller, and we got started again. I got up the ladder, and I exited.

At that point we went over to the ferry terminal. There were some EMS crews there

already. I'm not positive whether I met Dr. Cherson at that point or if it was slightly thereafter, but in essence we took over the second floor of the ferry terminal and we established a medical treatment site.

We had moved all the benches out. We had prioritized all the areas as far as treatments. A number of physicians and health care professionals had come in, civilians from the street. Dominic Maggiore was there at the time and helped set up the treatment and staging areas.

Essentially I spent the best part of the day there, trying to get things established, thinking that there was going to be a mass exodus to the ferry terminal, patients looking for treatment, at least everybody going back to Staten Island.

In essence we didn't treat that many patients. We did about five transports, one being Deputy Chief Robert Browne. He had staggered in. He had severe conjunctiva of both eyes and some back pain. He was immobilized and transported to Penninsular General.

About 4:30 I was asked to go over to the command post which is located at Chambers and West, so I had gotten together -- I was with Mark Steffens, Fred Villani and Louie Cook. We picked up the car, brushed it off. There was about four or five inches of dust on the car.

We traversed around the east side of Manhattan, tried to get to Chambers and West. We had gotten to -- I don't know what street this is -- Washington. We were at Washington and Chambers when we saw number seven come down. That was about 5:20. We watched that come down. We watched this plume of smoke coming at us.

I just drove up the block, and I said, "Everybody stay in the car." We waited for everything.

We went to the command post. I was shot for the day. I had severe conjunctiva. I couldn't breathe. I came back at 6 the next morning.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it. I think everybody's story is going to tell it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes the

interview. The time now is 855 hours.

Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110106

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOHN NEVINS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 17, 2001. The time is 1327 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Lieutenant JOHN NEVINS, New York City Fire Department, assigned to fire operations.

Q. We are conducting this interview at 9 Metrotech, fourth floor, in the BITS interview room, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On September 11, I was at my job location at 9 Metrotech, 7th floor. At approximately 8:35, 8:40, somebody announced in the office that a plane had struck the World Trade Center, at which time, we looked out the window. We could see that there was a large hole in one of the towers of the World Trade Center.

I proceeded with Lieutenant Bradley Mann down to the EMS operations area, obtained radios, and began to respond to the assignment.

We exited 9 Metrotech from the front doors, proceeded around to the garage area where we met Citywide Chief Sal Cassano, exiting the garage. We got into his car and responded into Manhattan. I believe he went -- I'm not sure which way he went through Brooklyn, but he arrived at the Sand Street entrance to

Brooklyn Bridge, proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge into lower Manhattan.

We exited the car. I believe the Chief parked at West and Vesey Street. Actually, the map is more (inaudible). I believe this is Broadway.

Q. Yes, this is West Broadway.

A. Yes, West Broadway, behind the US Post Office Federal Office Building across the street from the 7 World Trade, Lieutenant Mann and myself began down towards West Street on Vesey. Chief Cassano exited the vehicle and I believe he headed towards Church Street. That was the last I saw of him until Thursday.

As we turned the corner and were standing in front of 7 World Trade, the second plane struck tower number 2. Lieutenant Mann and myself paused momentarily to find some shelter in front of 7 World Trade under an overpass. We then proceeded once we were safe farther down Vesey Street to the corner of West Street, where we took over West and Vesey staging.

We began staging ambulances on Vesey Street between West and North End Avenue. I'm not sure of the exact number of ambulances, somewhere between 20 and 30 had arrived from numerous agencies; Lenox Hill, Cabrini, FDNY. Also at this location a MERV was staged

approximately between 3 World Financial and 12 World Financial. There is a parking lot in front of the Embassy Suites Hotel. We staged in the street facing North End Avenue.

From there we spent -- at that point, from the staging location, we remained there staging ambulances until the collapse of 2 World Trade Center. Just prior to the collapse of 2 World Trade Center, probably 5 to 10 minutes, Chief Fred Villani arrived at our location and he was transitioning into taking over the staging at that location.

At that point 2 World Trade Center began to collapse. I was directed by Chief Villani to run, at which time we continued down Vesey Street on to North End Avenue. Following the collapse, we attempted to regroup, shuttle ambulances down on to North End and reestablish the staging location at that area.

For approximately 10 to 15 minutes we continued to do that until we were told that -- I believe at the direction of the police, that that area was probably unsafe due to the impending collapse in number 1 World Trade Center.

At that point, I continued down North End Avenue towards Murray Street. At that point I entered

a construction trailer, I believe located between Murray and Park Place in an attempt to find a helmet. At that point, the collapse of number 1 World Trade Center occurred and myself and a large group of police, firefighters, and some civilians took refuge in that area until the debris and dust cloud had settled.

Following that, I exited the construction trailers, headed farther down North End Avenue attempting to locate personnel and ambulances. I came around to the park area along the River Terrace, at Chambers Street, and at that point I found approximately 3 ambulances. I believe one was a Lenox Hill bus and two EMTs or paramedics, who stated that they had shuttled the ambulances to that location. However, they weren't aware of where the crews for the trucks had gone or the location of any other personnel.

At that point we attempted to -- I attempted to gather personnel at that location and through the park, I began to walk through the park to see if there were any personnel taking refuge in the park. I didn't find any. However, along the bulkhead of the park, there was numerous New York Waterway ferries, so we attempted to establish a transport center if necessary

with them to transport any patients to New Jersey if it became necessary.

I was standing by at that location when the police then directed us to exit the park due to the fact that they believed there was a ruptured gas main underneath the park. I headed down Chambers Street to West Street, at which point I ran into EMT Richie Zarrillo from operations, Chief Hirth and his aide.

At that point I asked Chief Hirth for direction. I was told that he was not sure what exactly -- whether we should head back toward the World Trade Center or head up to Chelsea Piers, where a casualty collection point had been set up. I had heard that previously on the radio, so I decided along with EMT Zarrillo that I would head up to Chelsea Piers.

I started walking along West Street for numerous blocks until I was able to get a ride with a Hatzolah ambulance up to the staging location at Chelsea Piers, where I again became the secondary staging officer for Chelsea Piers.

Q. Do you remember approximately what time that was by the time you got up to the pier?

A. Probably half an hour to 45 minutes after the collapse of the second tower.

Q. When you came over to Vesey and West, prior to the first collapse, most of the vehicles there, the ambulances, were not Department ambulances?

A. No, most of them were not Department ambulances. There were ambulances from Lenox Hill, there were Hatzolah volunteers, there were a few EMS ambulances. One of them was I believe 22 Henry, Staten Island HAZTAC ambulance. I remember that one specifically because they had requested they needed to bring their HAZTAC equipment with them. I believe there was a Metro Care ambulance that was --

There was vehicle 125 and -- unfortunately the list of all the units that were in staging were -- got lost in the ensuing.

Q. Chaos?

A. Chaos of the collapse. There were a few Chief's cars. I believe they were Fire Department, Chief's vehicles, unmarked vehicles, that were on Vesey Street off of West Avenue. There was a small upgrade across from American Express. They were parked along there next to the -- there is a parking lot there.

Q. You were with Lieutenant Mann?

A. Yes, Brad Mann.

Q. He is from EMS?

A. Yes. Fire operations, EMS fire operations.

Q. Did you see any other Department personnel when you got over to West and Vesey that you recognize their full name that you could place there?

A. Not from FDNY, but there were -- actually, one of the FDNY people that was there was Gary Smiley, a paramedic, and his partner. I'm not sure who his partner was that day. I actually had seen him later at Chelsea Piers. He arrived with his ambulance and his partner. Chief Villani was in that area. Again his car was parked on Vesey between West and North End.

One of the others, let's see, Raoul Perez, he is a paramedic for Lenox Hill, him and his partner were in the staging area. I can't think of anybody else that I definitely recognized. There was a Hatzolah crew. I believe they were the midtown Hatzolah. There were approximately 4 to 5 people in their ambulance. They just kept asking me if they needed to -- if I wanted to send them up towards the building. However, I told them to stay with their vehicle.

Q. At that point were there any patients in the area?

A. We were getting reports of patients in the foyer areas between 3 World Financial Center and 4

World Financial Center. However, I hadn't headed over to that area and none of the crews that were with me were reporting treating any patients. One ambulance did come through, I'm not sure whether it had picked up a patient, however, as they were heading out past the staged ambulances, we stopped them and they said they were transporting a burn patient. They were headed I believe to Cornell. I believe they left prior to the collapse.

Q. When the first tower came down, from where you were, debris that was coming down, did it come down into the staging area here or --

A. No.

Q. Can you remember?

A. No, the only thing that affected us was dust and debris. I had actually been standing -- I was standing facing towards North End Avenue, so I was facing away from the building when there was a -- started a loud noise, I remember like a sound, like a cracking sound and Chief Villani ran past me and told me, John, run for your life.

As I turned around it appeared to be the top of the tower was shifting. I just started running down towards North End. I didn't stop until I rounded the

corner past the Embassy Suites hotel and at that point, there was a lot of dust and debris, tough to see back down. Couldn't see down Vesey Street to West Street, so I was unable to see where debris had landed. I began in the intersection attempting to get personnel to move ambulances and bring them farther up the street and around back onto North End Avenue.

Also at that point, I'm not sure which -- there was an ambulance from the voluntary hospital treating one patient on a corner, I guess it's the southwest corner of North End and Vesey on the corner. There's an apartment complex across North End, by 4 World Financial. There was a patient on the corner there and I directed one of the voluntary hospital units who had both crew members to treat the patient there.

Again, what happened to that patient and where they went, I'm not really sure, due to the fact that they had loaded the patient into the ambulance, but we were directed to move farther away before they had given me any disposition on where they were going.

Q. Right. Okay. You said the best you remember, Chief Villani arrived after the second plane had attacked, but prior to the collapses?

A. Right. It was very close to the collapse of the first tower. Approximately 10, 15 minutes, because we hadn't even -- I hadn't given him the full report on the ambulances that were in the staging location and what resources were available and patients were being treated.

Q. Any thoughts or comments on the situation?

A. Not really. Very chaotic scene. I think we did the best we could given the situation and then, you know, the ensuing -- once the tower started to collapse, we were -- we did the best we could.

Actually, one thing that just thinking about it now sticks in my mind. The MERV driver should be commended. He went back and -- I have a clear mental picture of the MERV with both ramps hanging out, going around the corner from Vesey on to North End. But the guy went back, definitely, probably the farthest down the block to save the MERV to get it out of there, get it away from the collapse.

Q. The MERV was I assume from Bellevue?

A. Yes, that was MERV 1 from Bellevue.

Q. Is anything else you would like to add?

A. I think that's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 1445

hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110107

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JOHN KEVIN CULLEY

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time is 1135 hours. I am George Cundari with Richard Dun of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is John Kevin Culley. I go by my middle name, Kevin. My rank is Captain. I have been assigned to the Office of Emergency Management since 1997.

Q. Regarding the events of September 11th, 2001, can you tell us what happened that day and where you were?

A. In my capacity at OEM, my assigned tour begins at 0600 hours and my work area is 7 World Trade Center, 23rd floor. I arrived at 0600 and I found myself on the lobby of that floor, the third-floor lobby of that floor, when the first plane hit the north side of 1 World Trade Center.

From the lobby we saw debris falling from above. We could not actually see the impact due to the view. When the debris stopped falling, I left the third-floor lobby, ran out onto the street, looked up,

saw fire showing out of two, three floors, on two sides of the building, the north face and the east face of the building. There was no sign that it was a plane, at least not to me.

I ran to my car, which was parked on Barclay, picked up radios, and crossed over into the plaza, into the -- what's that called? Anyway, the passageway that brings you to the PATH trains under the Trade Center.

Q. Concourse.

A. Concourse. We sort of assisted people coming off the trains. The Port Authority Police were directing everybody out of the building.

Q. Were there any apparatuses arriving yet?

A. No. I have no memory of apparatus on Vesey Street. I passed the concourse and then grouped with others at the lobby, the fire command station at the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. In my capacity as an OEM coordinator, I reported in to the incident commander, which was the 1st Division, at that time it was Chief Hayden, and in that capacity what I'm supposed to do is liaison to any agencies other than Fire with the incident commander. So at that scene you had Port Authority, you had some other federal agencies, FBI is one that I recall, and you also had

your building -- the World Trade Center Fire Safety Director and his staff, and the Chief starting setting up for high-rise operations in that lobby.

Q. This is in the north tower?

A. This is in the north tower, 1 World Trade Center. The fire command station is located on the north face, the north wall of that lobby.

Q. What were you seeing in the lobby as you got there?

A. In the lobby, all the usual people, the 1st Division, 1st Battalion, reporting in units, I can't remember specifically, the Fire Safety Director, who I recognized, FBI agents, people on the staff, building staff, particularly people that were involved with helping us read the elevator panels.

Our first thought, normal high-rise operation is you want to get people up to the floors, the fire floors. That's normally done on elevators and we had a problem. There were no elevators in operation. What made it more of a problem is that all those elevators were shut down and there were people in them. So we were actually -- once I had staff that could operate the panel, they could speak to each individual elevator, ask how many people are in the elevator, what

floor they were on, and if there's anyone injured, and I was passing that information on to the incident commander.

Q. Can you describe what you visually were seeing around, like outside or on the concourse?

A. On the concourse? I don't remember on the concourse. In the lobby? As I said, the usual people that would show up. I saw at least three chaplains there.

Q. Was there a lot of debris falling at the time?

A. Once the plane hit, there was no debris, or it fell. What we did have coming out of the building were people. We were closer to the west entrance to the 1 World Trade Center. A lot of the glass had been taken out upon the impact of the plane. So we could actually hear outside, but what you heard were the thumps and crashes of the bodies.

Also, I'd note that, once I arrived at the fire command station, I was told by someone who had actually witnessed the plane hitting it that it was indeed a plane. Up until that point, I thought it was a bomb.

Q. So you continued the operations?

A. Continuing operations, obviously, this was going to be difficult. We had no elevators. The only report that I remember was that somebody I believe in the FBI had a telephone conversation with somebody on the 51st floor reporting that there's jet fuel on that floor. It wasn't clear to us exactly what floor the impact was on, but I knew it was higher than that.

We were still working on trying to find maybe there would be freight elevators or any kind of elevator that's working. Are all of the elevators out due to the incident or are some just maintenance problems that we may be able to get moving? That wasn't happening for us.

What else did we see? I'm trying to think of things.

Q. Were a lot of civilians in the lobby coming by as you were in there, coming out of the building?

A. A lot? No, I wouldn't say a lot. There were a lot of people responding. This was, I understood, as I found out later, it was a third alarm right away. So we had a lot of Fire personnel and anybody else that usually shows up, emergency personnel, in the lobby.

I did suggest -- I remember bringing it to the attention of the Port Authority Police there that

this was most likely a terrorist attack and to look for a secondary event. I was concerned about the safety of the people actually at the command post. So what we wanted to do was provide security in front of the lobby so that something couldn't happen to us. I don't know if any of that actually took place, but I know I made note of it.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and confusion with civilians trying to exit?

A. No, not that I recall. The lobby is huge and there's a lot of exits to it. Now, I came in from the concourse and I don't recall having a problem entering with all the people exiting. It was not an issue. I do remember civilians in the area exiting, but never like masses of people that were clogging things.

Q. Were there any communications at that point; radios still working?

A. The radio that I carry is an 800 megahertz connected to the OEM channels. I was transmitting and receiving. All the Fire Department radios that I was aware of were transmitting, you know, you could hear all the conversations going on. We did hear the jumpers jumping.

So that brings us up, you know, the next key

point is when the next plane comes. We heard the engines of the plane. I heard the engines of the plane.

Q. The second plane?

A. The second plane. You heard this thump and the rain of debris coming down. Then it became clear to anybody that may have had a question about what's going on here, it was pretty clear then that these weren't accidents. It was also clear then that there wasn't any control of that building, no elevators, communications above. Except for that one conversation on the 51st floor, as far as I know, there were no other conversations. That doesn't mean I knew everything. We did have conversations with people stuck on elevators and that was it.

The second plane hits. Now we have -- I was told later. I didn't know this at the time. People had left the north tower to go to the south tower, you know, command people. Also, at that time, I'm pretty sure that prior to the second plane hitting, there was discussion as to moving the command post out of the lobby. Personnel, a lot of personnel, staff personnel, were moving out onto West Street. Certainly after the second plane hit, that was being done. A lot of people

were going out on West Street. I stayed, though, in the tower.

Q. At that point, other Chiefs were arriving? And did Giuliani make it?

A. I know that after the second plane hit, sometime before the south tower fell, we had word that Giuliani was going to be arriving. So we were pretty aware that he was going to be coming. He never did come into the north tower. I actually spoke with him later. I know that he got onto West Street. I think he said he spoke to Ganci and then left and was two blocks away when the tower came down.

Q. At that time you were still in the north tower?

A. I was still in the north tower. But if my memory serves me correctly, we had a lot of high Chiefs now. Now you're starting to see staff Chiefs. Some are with us and some had moved out onto West Street or had moved to the other tower. I'm not sitting there logging who's going where. All my concentration is with the staff of the building and the 1st Division.

Q. The first building came down. What was the operation line? What was going on?

A. Nothing really had changed. Like I said, all

the elevators were still stuck. I think there were elevators that were on the first floor, the doors closed. Not that I saw it. I looked at the panel and realized that some of these stuck elevators are right here on the lobby floor and people were assigned to go take care of that.

The second tower gets hit. What else was going on there?

Q. When the first tower came down, did people run back into the north tower to escape some of the debris falling?

A. Okay. I can only say what I saw.

Q. That's what we want.

A. I haven't seen any of the TV. So I know that the tower doesn't come down instantly. It starts coming down. What we saw or heard was all the material falling, all the debris falling, like when the plane hit, debris fell. We hear the debris falling and it's coming through the windows on the south side of the north tower, and then we started hearing this noise, this roaring noise. When that was apparent, the group that I was with -- again, I was on the north wall of the north tower.

Q. Northwest wall.

A. We found an opening and ran what I thought was directly down a set of stairs. I found out later we actually were in a hallway for a while and then ducked into some stairs. My belief is that we actually ran out of the building enclosed. The stairwell we were in was probably inside of 6 World Trade.

Q. You knew the building was coming down?

A. No. We were reacting. There was no logical thought. You were reacting to the noise. The noise was getting louder and louder. It was like a jet engine or a train coming at you. So we just ran and ducked. Then you got the debris cloud. We were with the chaplain, Chaplain Judge.

When the debris had cleared -- the noise stopped and we were covered in dust. You couldn't see. It was actually black. Flashlights pop out. We're asking one another, are you all right? Are you all right? Everybody's saying they're all right. But if you're not all right and you can't talk, you're not saying that.

We stumbled upon Judge. He had no pulse. One of the Chiefs just said we're not going to leave him here. We just picked him up and went up the stairs we came down. I can't tell you how we got outside. It

was still dark. We ended up in front of-- we ended up on the west face of 6 World Trade Center, which happens to be up on a pedestrian walkway which is like three stories up. We had no way to get down.

So we were still carrying the chaplain. We come around on the Vesey side of this pedestrian walkway. You really couldn't see more than about 60 feet in front of you at best. So I sort of ran ahead of the group to see if we could get over any obstructions, and if it became a dead end, we were going to have to turn around. So that's what I was doing.

We got to the end of 6 World Trade, there's a gap between 6 and 5. We really didn't know what had happened. We heard all this noise, but we didn't know what actually happened. There was a lot of debris out there. It was unclear. I looked to where 2 World Trade -- the south tower was. You really couldn't see through it. I figured it was a dangerous area. We were going to have to run this gap between 6 and 5. It didn't seem like anything was happening.

We took Judge's body in a chair and we ran across that gap. We went down the escalator stairs right there and that gets us down onto the street. Now

we can get away from the building.

Q. Were the radios still working at that time that you can remember?

A. I wasn't carrying a firefighter radio. I was only carrying an 800 megahertz radio. I don't recall transmitting anything.

Q. Okay.

A. We get to the corner of Vesey and Church. We turn over Judge's body to some EMTs. I ran into two federal officers, I always think they're FBI, but there's a lot of federal badges, and they said they were going to be setting up -- or somebody had notice that there was going to be a command center set up on either Park Place or Murray, one of those streets just north of the area, and that's where I would normally be assigned. So I started walking north up Church Street when the other tower fell.

So I heard that noise. I really thought it was the south tower. I didn't know what had happened. I thought that might fall right down Church Street. So I ducked down Murray, I think, and when you could actually see there was a debris cloud coming, I broke into an OTB thing and ducked out of the way.

Q. Did you see a lot of injured members on your

way running?

A. Well, we were carrying Judge out. It was pretty obvious, debris everywhere.

Q. Right. I know. But like --

A. People were helping other people. I have to say, either I blocked out or I didn't see -- I don't remember seeing any bodies or body guts or anything like that.

Q. All right. You were just looking to see --

A. But I know people were scurrying inside, you know, looking under things.

Okay. That building falls. Then you get the second debris cloud. I leave the building. I start walking -- actually, I started walking east and I noticed that I was coming on to City Hall and, in fact, in my mind, now that I'm making really my first logical thought, I said, well, we just got hit with two planes. Two is enough. I looked at City Hall and said I'm not going there. I turned west. I'm still looking for this command post that never got set up.

I got about halfway down toward -- past Church toward West Broadway and I couldn't see any more. There was a bar open. I went into the bar and had somebody wash my eyes out. It cleared up. I

actually made a phone call to a friend to tell him I was alive. I left, found myself back on West Street and Vesey, and I ran into the 1st Division again and we just started going to work and now it was rescue and recovery.

Q. Your vehicle, when you arrived, where did you leave your vehicle?

A. I never used my vehicle. I went around to get my radio out of the car. It was parked on Barclay.

Q. So the vehicle stayed on Barclay?

A. Yes.

Q. The vehicle was recovered?

A. I recovered it later.

Q. So with the secondary collapse, the only persons with you were FBI agents? Were there any Fire Chiefs?

A. No. I was with a group. When we carried Judge's body out, I was with the 1st Division, a couple of Port Authority cops, one of the aides, one of the firemen. I couldn't tell you who else. I remember another OEM fellow who I had met on the way down.

Q. Is he a firefighter? Is he Fire Department personnel?

A. He was an EMT that works in OEM. When I get

back to West and Vesey, I run into Chief Hayden, 1st Division. I don't know why, but he decided he was going to work at Liberty and West, which meant we had to get around the World Financial Center and come up from behind there and walk at that point. He probably had that in mind because he has Fire Department radios and there were calls made in that area.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. The one call that I'm familiar with is that Al Fuentes, Captain Fuentes, who was working in the Marine Company, was trapped on West Street, because we ended up right in front of that area.

So at this time, again, I don't see any bodies or body parts. What I'm seeing is everybody coming out from cover.

Q. Okay.

A. I helped the Chief get on top of a vehicle. He got on top of one of the squad apparatus so he could give direction to the crews that were going out and trying to recover.

Q. Did you see a lot of apparatuses on West Street when you were there?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Were they buried or were they in working

condition?

A. Everything looked terrible. I mean, the rig we were on was half buried, but we knew we had a surface on the top that we could stand on. I know it was one of the squad vehicles.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. After that, it's just directing people doing digging. But I'll tell you one thing. One of the Rescue 1 firefighters recognized me as being an OEM and he said basically that there's a U.S.A.R. cache from the New York City team located in Queens, and I transmitted that, I put in a request for that through our people, and I found out -- it took me two weeks to find this out, but that call did deliver the material.

Q. Oh, okay. Excellent.

A. If I did nothing else that day, I got that out.

MR. CUNDARI: Okay. Thank you, Captain, for the interview. The time is now 11:55. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110108

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SAMUEL HARRIS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 1025 hours. This is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area.

EMT HARRIS: My name is Samuel D. Harris. I'm an EMT. I work in the Bureau of Communications.

MR. FEILER: Fire Department of the City of New York. We're conducting the interview at a conference room within investigations and trials, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can go ahead, sir.

A. I reported for work at 7 a.m. on September 11th. Most of the morning was pretty routine up until the first reports of the airliner hitting the World Trade Center.

About that time I was getting some coffee. I noticed that people who were in operations, which is adjacent to communications,

were scrambling. I didn't know why. They were running into FOC I guess to -- at first thoughts I thought that somebody had went down ill in FOC the way people were running and moving. But then when I noticed that nobody was really calling for any ambulances or bus, I noticed it had to be something more.

As I got more to my desk, I noticed people started talking about looking through the window, look out the window. At that point, still at my desk, curious as to what's going on, I was approached by Commissioner Gregory, who stated to Captain Pinkus that a plane had struck the twin towers. So that probably was around 8:50, around that time. He then instructed me, Captain D'Amato and Captain Jace Pinkus, and we got into his vehicle and we headed toward Manhattan.

Coming across the Brooklyn Bridge, you can see that the tower was just engulfed. Tower one was engulfed. As I got across the bridge and I got to West and Vesey, right at what is now considered ground zero -- I was literally right at the corner -- I then was instructed to move my

car, move the commissioner's car, further up Vesey toward North End Avenue. But I wasn't able to get up that far because police officers were cutting that block off.

Q. You had originally stopped at West and Vesey?

A. West and Vesey Streets.

At that time I was still in contact with Captain Pinkus. I had lost sight of Commissioner Gregory and Captain D'Amato. As I went to park the car, they scrambled to whatever other areas they proceeded to.

I met back up with Captain Pinkus, and we went back to West Street, where we met up with Chief Gombo, the assistant chief of EMS operations, and Lieutenant Ross Terranova. I was assigned to Lieutenant Terranova to kind of keep a record of what was going on.

At that point Captain Pinkus was detailed to do something else with vehicle operations with staging. Chief Gombo, myself and Ross Terranova, we went into what was the operation command post at that time. It was in One World Trade Center in the foyer basement

area.

At that time there were numerous people in there, people from the World Trade Center, people from OEM, people from all over, Port Authority, firemen, EMTs, the Fire commissioner, the first deputy, Commissioner Tierney. You couldn't count how many people that were probably just like right there in that foyer.

I believe at that point after some preliminary instructions were made, I noticed that people were going upstairs. They were shutting down elevators and just trying to move people expeditiously out of the building. Sometime after that, maybe 20 minutes, I don't even think it was, I believe the decision was made that we should pull back to across the street.

Without getting into great detail, it was very graphic some of the scenery that you saw just even walking into the building. But we made the decision -- they made the decision, I should say, to go across the street. As we did, we were on West, which would probably be the World Financial Center or American Express because

they're so closely together.

Everybody was basically standing in the garage area. It has a two-door garage in this area at the corner. At that point everybody was making operations. Chief Gombo instructed me to go inside the building and contact Chief Diggs about point-to-point operations and communications so that they can have a whole line that was set up or dedicated that people can talk point to point without any interference.

As I followed that direction, as I started to go into the building, I heard on the radio that what I was instructed to do was already done, primarily. You could hear it over the command frequency that it was already being done. But just to follow those orders that were given to me, I went ahead inside the building. I proceeded to make this phone call.

As I got through to Chief Diggs, I believe I remember seeing Commissioner Fitzpatrick in there for a brief minute. I believe he walked out. At that point I spoke to Chief Diggs. I got direction from him. He gave me direction to relay back to Chief Gombo.

As I related back to Chief Gombo -- or I was getting ready to walk out and tell Chief Gombo what I was told, that's when tower one started to pancake and collapse. The only thing that I remember was the guy in front of me who was standing there in awe of just the earthquake feel, for myself as well.

I had grabbed him because I didn't know if we were going to walk out of that building. The glass was shattering around us. We were in the big foyer. The building that we were in was primarily glass doored, and so was the area that you had to go in to use the phone, which was sectioned off.

As I grabbed him and we ran back inside, some gentleman -- I believe he worked for the building. I don't recall his name. I believe this gentleman worked in the building, in that particular building. He was one of seven people that were in the building with me after One started to crumble.

As we ran down the foyer or down the hallway, at that point it was so dark and so thick and the lights went right away that you

couldn't even see your hand before your face. As you turn back to just look down the corridor, you couldn't even see the corridor that you just ran down. That's how dark it was. That's how eerie it was. That's how very scared I believe of us were keep down. But we all kept cool heads. We all stayed together. We were looking for another exit, and there weren't any.

Q. Who was in that group with you?

A. Now with me there was a paramedic. I believe I learned his last -- what's the name? Glenn. He was in there with me. There were two New York City detectives in there with me and the building manager for that building, and the rest were just office workers. There were no other people left.

The two detectives basically -- we coordinated and I was trying to tell them that the building came down. He thought I was being kind of nervous. I told him, yes, I am, but I'm not all that nervous. I just wanted to make sure that we were all alive, that that big building was not going to cave in on this little building and we were going to get crushed, because who

knew.

After we made several attempts to look for other exits out of the building outside of the front door, there were no other exits. What we did was the building manager took us into what seemed like a computer room or a security room, and he found some flashlights.

The decision was made for us to wait for a period of time, probably I'd say we waited a whole hour, maybe more before we could even see anything. There was that much dust and smoke, and you couldn't really breathe.

So we waited until some of the dust settled, and then we all -- two people would go ahead and check to see if we can go out the front door. If there was no access way from the front door, we would wait until somebody came and eventually got us. But we would all stay together.

So what we did was we formed a line. We grabbed each other's belts, and we shined the flashlights. We didn't go up to a certain point, and the two men went ahead. They noticed that there was an exit way for us to get out. Thank

God.

After we came out --

Q. Where did you come out of?

A. I came right out the front door that I went in, which is probably the World Financial building, World Financial Center building, because this would be the garage area right here. In the first rehaps I believed it was the American Express building, only because it was so closely related.

After we came out of the building, I immediately went to the garage area. The garage area where there were hundreds of people standing there when I left to make this phone call, there was about 25 firemen.

At that point I ran into Chief Kowalczyk's aide, and I was asking him where was his boss. He said he didn't know, and he had no clue as to where he was. He was with Chief Gombo and several of the others before I walked into the building to make the phone call.

Outside of that, the field comm. truck, the van truck was crushed. The guard shack that stands between the two doors in the garage was

crushed. It looked almost like the two garage doors were blown open. Debris was everywhere: metal, paper, dust.

At that point after staying there for I'd say 20 minutes trying to find somebody I know, I ran into Captain Sickles, Howard Sickles, and I noticed that he was standing toward the curb or what would have been the curb. He was trying to give a progress report.

I was trying to persuade him to let's move out, to let's get out of this area, for fear of whatever is going to happen again.

Q. Where was that located?

A. That was at the beginning of this building at probably West Street. So we're facing West at this point.

Q. On Vesey?

A. I'm sorry, Vesey. We're facing Vesey at this point. He's at the corner, and I'm trying to get him to let's go up Vesey toward North End. Let's go further up to get away from the aftermath.

At that point as I was trying to persuade him, I did see at that point Chief

Ganci. Chief Ganci was trying to rally some of the firefighters that were in the area to also move up toward North End, to move out of the area.

As he was doing that, I was still trying to persuade Captain Sickles to give the 12 and make it brief but let's go. He continued on the radio to the point where I just grabbed him by the arm and was pulling him, let's go, let's get out of here.

There was a firefighter at the corner of Vesey and North End when we walked up to North End, and he said that this was really bad. I said, "Yes, it is. How could something like this happen." I said, "Well, listen, what we should do is move because the north tower is on fire still. I said, "We don't know if this one is going to come down, so let's move out of the area."

At that point police officers and other people were trying to move people up North End Avenue to get them away from -- or more so up Vesey toward North End.

At that point as I was walking up, I

approached where the commissioner's car was, and that's when you heard the rumble again and the other tower started to come down. At that point my thought was to try to move the commissioner's car, and right behind me unbeknownst to me was Lieutenant Ross Terranova, who told me, "Forget it. Just go. Let's go," and we all started running, with Captain Sickles behind us.

We ran into North End Avenue, and right in the back of North End Avenue at the corner off to the right was where the MERV was. There's a building of some sort there like a hotel or like a coffee shop right on the corner where the MERV was parked. We all ran inside there.

At that point right behind us about 20 people -- two police officers were badly hurt. They probably got hit with some type of rubble, and they rushed them up that way. There were a few civilians. The LSU unit was there, and me and a couple other EMTs just started trying to bandage who was there and treat who was there.

At that point I was reunited with Captain Pinkus again at that point and some of the other EMS chiefs: Chief Basile, Chief

Carrasquillo, Chief Gombo, at that point -- I did see him for a brief minute -- Chief Pascale.

At that point after that area was made for a treatment area for people who were coming in, everybody was being taken care of. Everybody was given water to flush their eyes and to give them some sort of first aid, some sort of comfort, given what they just went through.

At that point about an hour or so, hour and a half after that, me, Captain Pinkus and Chief Pascale proceeded to go to Chelsea Pier, where we stayed basically for the rest of the duration of the evening into the morning.

Q. Were you aware that a second plane had hit one of the towers?

A. Yes. I believe the second plane hit just shortly after probably coming off the Brooklyn Bridge. I didn't really realize it until after, because I believe you felt like the bridge shift as I was coming over, and I never felt it that way. You didn't realize it. My whole modem was just to get across this bridge, get to West and Vesey.

Q. What frequency were you utilizing?

A. At the time I was on the command frequency.

Q. EMS command?

A. Yes.

Q. And were you given any specific locations where to go to; do you recall?

A. No, not until -- no, because when I got to Lieutenant Terranova, basically they were still in the process of setting up staging areas. I believe that the staging area switched quite a few times in the time that I was with him before one had collapsed.

So the decision was trying to put people in areas of safety but the greater number of where we can get the most resources available without anybody.

Q. You said you had seen Chief Kowalczyk's aide. Do you know who that was?

A. I don't know his name offhand. I know him by face. I didn't know his name.

Q. Was there any other EMS people that you saw, firefighters, chiefs, anybody that you recognized?

A. Not so much out of the firefighters.

But like the paramedic, I didn't know him until afterwards. We talked later.

Q. What was his name?

A. Glenn, Mike Glenn.

Basically it was Chief Gombo, Chief Basile, Chief Pascale, Chief Hannafey, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Scibelli, I saw later in the evening. But most of those -- Alan Cruz on the ALS unit from Manhattan. The MERV driver I knew from 13. I didn't really know his name, but I recall him being. Sedley, Sedley was another LSU driver from Brooklyn. He was there. I remember seeing him.

There was just so many people. Linda McCarthy from EMD. She was there. There was just so many people that I crossed paths with, but then as you're trying to focus on just the task at hand, I was just -- basically coming out of the building after the first collapse, I was nervous for everybody that was standing out there because if it wasn't for Chief Gombo, I mean, I would have been out there too instead of inside.

I don't know. I really don't know, if Chief Gombo would have not sent me in that

building, I thought we would have been amongst them. I'm glad and relieved to see that he wasn't hurt or injured during the aftermath.

I lost sight of Commissioner Gregory. I didn't see him. I didn't hear of him until like at least the next day. Also Captain D'Amato, I didn't hear his whereabouts or how he was.

Once I got to Chelsea Pier, Chief Pascale assigned me with Captain Boyle, Jack Boyle, and I was assigned with him for a good many hours. We stayed a good 12, maybe 13 hours together, driving people back and forth, the doctors, setting up the doctors and the triage and the temporary morgue that was all down at Chelsea Pier.

I was able to focus on the task basically that was given to me. It was just hard to forget. Every few minutes you thought about somebody you knew back there that you didn't hear was okay. Chief McCracken, for that matter, for a long time, until I got to see him later on in the night.

I didn't hear the passing of the first

deputy commissioner until later on, and also Chief Ganci, who I had just saw at that building. I believe once I started to make my move up Vesey more toward North End Avenue, I believe they made probably the decision to see what was going to happen in tower two.

It was my thought that that's where they were fatally taken away from us at that point, that maybe they went down to building two, which is probable because I didn't see them after that.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to before we conclude?

A. No, without really getting into some of the graphical details, that was pretty much as accurately as I can come to say what happened.

Q. Thank you very much for participating in the interview.

A. You're welcome.

MR. FEILER: The time now is 1052 hours, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110110

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MAUREEN MC ARDLE-SCHULMAN

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 1205. We are conducting an interview. We are at Engine 35. My name is Ron Castorina. Your name?

MR. MC COURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, ma'am?

A. Maureen McArdle-Schulman.

Q. Could you tell me what your assignment is, and your rank?

A. Assigned to Engine 35. I'm a firefighter first grade.

Q. On September 11, 2001, can you tell me on that particular day what the events were, what you can remember?

A. I came in to work for a roster staff tour. Usually on roster staffing you're detailed out if your company doesn't need you.

I was assigned to 91 Engine. I was in our quarters when the first plane hit. We weren't sure if it was a small plane, a big plane.

So I was in the firehouse when the first plane hit. I had the detail out of the house to 91 Engine and I had just got into my car and left. I got into my car and went over to 91 Engine. I parked on the

side street on 111th Street, walked into the quarters. I had all my gear in my arms and the announcement came over that it was a fifth alarm and 91 Engine was responding. It's unusual. It usually comes over the computer. It came over the loudspeaker.

I happened to have my cell phone in my hand, that God. I stuck it in my turnout coat pocket. I got on the rig and responded to the World Trade Center. We ended up going through 112th Street, down to Central Park South. We came out of the park and we ran into all the other rigs. They were all responding. Police cars, unmarked cars. It was like a big caravan down there.

We parked on West Street. You know, basically we were all in line. Whoever was in front of us parked in front of us, we parked behind them. We were on the wrong side of West Street facing the towers. So the windshield was that way so we were on the wrong side of the street. We got out of the rig, got our stuff, carried cylinders, roll-ups, standpipe kit, all our gear, started huffing down West Street. I was a little slower than the rest of them.

Q. Where were you going? Heading on what street?

A. Heading -- West Street, towards the towers.

Q. At this point did the first collapse occur?

A. No, no collapses. The second plane had hit.

Q. So you just saw the two towers burning?

A. Burning. We went to the command center, the lieutenant reported in. There was already 75 to 100 firefighters standing in this parking garage, at the entrance, waiting for assignments.

Companies were coming out, companies were going in for relief. Somebody yelled something was falling. We didn't know if it was part of an airplane coming out, if it was desks coming out. It turned out it was people and they started coming out one after another.

Q. You saw the jumpers?

A. We saw the jumpers coming. We didn't know what it was at first, but then the first body hit and then after that we knew what it was. And they were just like constant --

We were lucky most of them hit the set back, they weren't landing on the ground.

Q. How far were you from where they were jumping at this point?

A. I didn't see anyone landing on the ground in front of us. Most of them were hitting the set back. I'm still across the street in the parking lot. Me and another guy from 91 just -- I was getting sick. I felt like I was intruding on a sacrament. They were choosing to die and I was watching them and shouldn't have been so me and another guy turned away and looked at the wall and we could still hear them hit.

The Lieutenant came up to us and said, "We're going in." So we all got our gloves and Scotts back on and went up to the part by the command center, and they said, "We need forcible entry tools." In an engine we don't carry anything but our hose, we have standpipe kits. We had things that we thought we would need. They were sending us to Tower 2, sub-basement 6.

So I called my husband on my cell phone. I said, "I'm going in. This is where I'm going." I left a message on his machine. He wasn't at his

desk at the time. I was standing there and my Captain, who was at the medical office who just had surgery on his shoulder happened to be there.

"What are you doing here? You're on medical?"

He said, "Nobody's on medical anymore. Everybody's at the scene."

Okay. So my Captain and the chauffeur from 91 volunteered to go back to 91 to get us some tools we needed, because there was nobody to let us into sub-basement 6 or anyplace else.

So they went to the left. We're standing at the command center, listening to everybody give their positions. You know, what stairway they were using. You know, escape stairway, rescue stairway. Things like that or what floor they're on. We're hearing the whole thing where everybody is.

Someone comes running over to the table and said, "A firefighter was hit by a jumper. He needs last rites." So a couple of guys went to the right to give this guy last rites with Father Judge, I guess. I don't know who else ran over. My Captain and the chauffeur from 91 went to the left. We're standing there and we're looking up and we're trying

not to look at people jumping. We really felt like we were intruding on them. And the building had red fire, a ring of fire. They started pumping and bouncing and I'm standing there staring. Finally somebody yelled "run." It took everybody out of that trance we were in. We ran back into the garage. Anybody that went to the right was killed. People that went to the left were okay.

Q. Do you remember seeing anybody in particular that ran that way?

A. No.

Q. You don't remember?

A. No. I was just mesmerized, absolutely mesmerized by this building. I couldn't -- we just -- it was like watching people jump. You just can't believe what you're seeing and you're just standing there like idiots staring.

And ran back into the garage -- I mean I didn't run, because I was ahead of the pack. By the time I turned around, it was asses and elbows and I have a really bad sense of direction. That's why I stay in the Engine.

So I moved all the way over to the right and there was a curb and I ran my foot along the curb.

I still had my roll-up on my shoulder, ran my foot along the curb cause if I get turned around, I don't want to keep walking in the same direction. So I just was walking along with this stuff on my shoulder trying to stay away from the pack because I didn't want to get killed by anybody running and the thing -- I didn't actually watch it come down. It just came down behind me. I was stuck inside the garage and --

Q. That's while you were on the move?

A. Yeah. I was just kind of walking and feeling close with my foot. I didn't want to get lost. And all I kept thinking was this is the garage they blew up last time. You know, you always hear about secondary problems.

So we got in there and pretty much everybody started "Are you okay? Are you okay?" I was feeling around the ground to see if anybody had fallen and then some guy said, "I know how to get out of here." So by now I put my face piece on and it was full of crap. So I sucked in what I now find is asbestos. It was all in my eyes. My eyes were on fire.

This guy says, "I know how to get out of here."

So we're all like holding on to eachother's shirt sleeves and he leads us outside and the guy next to us starts having an asthma attack. So he says, "I need your mask." So I gave him my face piece and me and someone else pulled in a police van with air conditioning on.

And we were outside and except for a piece of a tree that I was standing next to 15 minutes before that, I didn't know where outside was. It was complete black. Everybody had 2 inches of soot on them. It was just you couldn't breathe. You know, we really couldn't breathe.

So afterwards everybody seemed to calm down. I went back into the garage and I started calling for my company that I was with. The Lieutenant found me and one of the guys from 91 found me. We were still missing one member. The Lieutenant said, "Come on. Let's get out of here." They actually took me into the parking garage and through the building and came out like half a block away. They said, "Go to the rig and stay there."

So I went back to the rig with the other guy, the other firefighter. I said, I got a find our other guy. So I went back to the rig, checked the

rig. The rig was still running. Because that's what they would do, is keep the rig running all the time. The lights were still on. So I said to him, kidding, I said, "Let's move the rig a little further." So he backed up a block and we're standing there waiting for everybody to come. Nobody is coming back and there were people wandering all over.

It was, you know, we all kind of started going back towards grounds zero because we were missing people. We felt like you weren't doing anything standing there. And right now the sun was out and all of a sudden you're hearing, there is a guy dressed in army fatigues with automatic weapons shooting people, that there is four more planes missing.

Q. You're hearing all these rumors?

A. Yes, rumors. There was a guy with a little TV, like a civilian, hooked it up to a building with an outlet. He said, there is eight planes all together and they only found four and, you know, we're getting bomb scares on this building and we're running for our lives.

I said, "Where are we supposed to go?" He

said, "Go by the water."

Q. And there is supposed to be a guy shooting at you?

A. Yes. "Go by the water at least there is no building there." I said, "But these buildings are so big. If they come down, it doesn't matter." So we went running, not knowing where to go. So finally I get back to the rig and I said, "I got a call my husband." I just called him and told him I was going in the tower. The tower just imploded. So finally I couldn't get a signal on my cell phone. I found a pay phone.

A guy gave me his calling card. The pay phone, he had used it two seconds before. It didn't work for me. So finally I get a hold of my husband. I said, "I'm okay." I must have been hysterical. He said, "Calm down. Calm down." I said, "I'm okay. I made it. I'm all right." Then I called my father, I have two brothers on the job. So I called my father to find out where my brothers were. Both of them already called. I'm one of the few families that lucked out.

Then I went back to the rig again and we were standing there, I'm standing there with this one

firefighter. We still don't have the Lieutenant back. We're still missing one member. We're standing there and I look up. The second tower starts with the ring of fire. Some puffing and bouncing.

Q. Just like the first one?

A. So he said, "It's going, just like the first one." So I ran to the back of the rig and got on the back step. I still have my gear on, I'm in a fetal position. I was afraid that if I got in the rig that if anything came flying down the street it would go through the windshield and kill me. So I figure I've got the whole rig in front of me. The hose bed is there. Hopefully if I stay down low enough -- he went and ran under a rig, got under a rig and the second building came down. The second building came down.

So the second building came down, I didn't see him for a while. Kind of like I saw him for two seconds and he said, "I gotta find the rest of the guys." And I said, "You know, I'm gonna move the rig again. I'm a little too close." So we actually moved it with him.

Q. So when the second building came down did

all the rubble and the dirt --

A. Yes. Came right down West Street.

Q. Right up to your rig?

A. Just the way -- just the way it shows in the news. That picture of this cloud coming down the street. That's exactly what happened. So I moved the rig another two blocks away and I turned it around to not face the towers and the other guy kind of saw some people he knew. We still didn't have a Lieutenant. We were still missing one of the guys from 91. The chauffeur from 91 I heard they had taken to the hospital. He had chest pains. I saw my Captain after that. I knew he was okay. So I was walking back and forth. "How close should I get."

All of a sudden building number seven now has twelve stories of fire and I ran into one of my guys, from my company, and from there he told me where the rest of my company was. So I found the rest of my company. And they were in the parking garage, which I didn't know when I saw it if it was the parking garage I had been in earlier.

He said he needed search rope. So I found a rig and I found a search rope and I told them to

search -- how far the rope went.

So I, you know, I really didn't know what the situation was and 35 Engine had lines on Tower 2. On Tower 1 they were doing some searching and then they pulled everybody out to get away from the scene. So we basically -- I found my Lieutenant, we finally found the missing guy. Everybody in my group was okay. Everybody was accounted for. I told the other Lieutenant, "I'm staying with my own company. You guys are too all over the place for me. I want a company that stays together. My company stays together."

So basically we went back to the rig and by now the recalls were coming down. The bus was stopping right by the rig. Everybody company that got off the bus was taking whatever they could off our rig. You know, tools, whatever. So basically we're standing there. We didn't even have a Scott mask at this point. Everything is gone.

Q. How was your breathing? Were you okay?

A. It was horrible. I had my eyes cleaned out about 12 times.

Q. Did you go to the hospital?

A. No. Somebody left a baseball cap in the

rig, so I grabbed that, because the sun was killing my eyes. I mean it took about a week and a half before the --

Q. From the dirt.

A. Plus it didn't help. I put the face piece on and I sucked the air in and the whole thing was full with whatever that was and all the crap went into my eyes too. Pretty much that's it. You know, we stayed at the rig the rest of the day, hung out, got water when we could, found a bathroom I could use, which was real important to me, and stayed down and at 9:00 o'clock I finally we all started wandering around and I went down to where the first overpass is and I saw a Captain sitting at the table. And what happened was I heard one of the other female firefighters on the radio and I wanted to find her to find out -- some girlfriend of the Captain of Engine 6 and I knew her company was the first or second through there. So I wanted to see if anybody knew if she was working. So I didn't find --

Q. So you knew your brothers were okay.

A. I knew my two brothers were okay. My brother Kevin, he's in Squad 41. He wasn't working

so he was in on the recalls. So anybody that came in afterwards was pretty much all right. It was just the initial sign-ins. And I passed his rig.

Q. Where does your other brother work?

A. In Queens. I knew he wouldn't be there unless he was on detail, from 84. Again, I saw the guy, the Captain I knew, he used to be a firefighter on 42 Truck, Charlie, and he said to me, "Oh, my God you're alive. We have you as missing." So I said, "okay."

What happened was there was a big communication problem. They kept calling my house from the battalion to see if anybody heard from us. Because they didn't know who went down. Because with the recall, anybody who was here jumped on the rig.

Q. Right.

A. So everybody went. So, you know, that's why rescue companies lost 10, 12 guys. At a quarter to 9 they grabbed everybody they could and got on the rigs. Pretty much that's it.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. The time now is 1220. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110111

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS HANSARD

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 18th. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview with Firefighter THOMAS HANSARD of Engine 209 at the quarters of Engine 209. The interview is beginning at 1438 hours.

Q. Tom, I just ask you to tell us your story.

A. I was here at work, changing tours. They said that an airplane hit the World Trade Center. We went up on the roof, because from the roof you can see the World Trade.

Q. That's right.

A. We got up on the roof and saw the explosion, not knowing that it was a second plane hitting the World Trade Center. As the explosion came in, the box came in and we responded to the World Trade Center. I had the backup position on the engine, and we went.

We went over -- there was a little bit of traffic on Park Avenue. We got down to the Brooklyn Bridge where we took it quickly, and they had the Brooklyn Bridge wide open for us. No cars, just us and police.

We pulled over and we came across Chambers Street. We came straight down Trinity and we stopped at the corner of Trinity and Liberty, which 217 was parked right on this corner and 230 was on this corner, and we stopped on this corner.

We got out and picked up our equipment, our Scotts and extra air bottles and hose, and we started to walk down Liberty Street towards --

Q. The World Trade Center?

A. -- the tower.

Q. So you were walking west. Okay.

A. As we walked down to the tower, we went to 10 and 10, thinking that that was the command center.

Q. Okay. Right.

A. It wasn't the command center. They told us to go down onto West Street, Liberty and West, which was the command center. So now we walked down the block, and walking on this block there were people waving at us and jumping. We walked through like body parts and all of this stuff on the street, littered on the street. We passed a guy, Suhr, from 216, his helmet and his

stuff was down, and guys took him away.

From there we came down to Washington. Something was in the street there. We cut up Washington, and we went down Cedar, and then we came back up West Street.

Q. You came back around up West. Okay.

A. We were standing right here on this corner, and the lieutenant from 219 was looking for the command post. We stopped right there while he went to check in at the command post when we were standing there.

As we stood there, another member said, "Let's move a little bit," because a lot of stuff was falling on us. We moved about 20 feet. Once we moved that 20 feet, the first tower came down.

Q. You were like right on West Street and Liberty, right there?

A. We were like right here, West Street and Liberty, and we ran across here to in front of the building here, which was like One Federal plaza.

Q. That's the one that the walkway goes across to.

A. Yeah.

Q. Right.

A. The walkway, we were under it and like over here. I don't know where it is. We just ran across the highway or street or whatever it is, and two guys ran into the revolving door but it was locked. I just stood up against the side of the building, and I found a little corner in front of the building, and the building came down.

It started coming down. We ran just there. The building just came down. I stood there. We didn't know what to do or whatever. Then the next thing, the asbestos or whatever was coming and you couldn't breathe, couldn't see.

It just took forever before you could do anything. I don't know in time how long it took or whatever. But when it finally cleared, I got up out of my little corner, and I heard a cop's radio, which was right near me, and I dug about a foot or 18 inches of cement, looking for some cop underneath this. I didn't find him; I just found the radio.

Q. Just the radio.

A. I found two other guys, two guys that

were with me, Frank Dileo and Mike Minogue. They went into that revolving door, and the cop came in and Frank took his night stick and busted the window in order to get into the --

Q. Revolving door?

A. Yeah. So they were good. Then Todd made it around the corner of that building. I didn't know he could run that fast. It was coming out so quickly. It was just get as far as you could.

Now the four of us met up, and Frankie was blind from --

Q. Dust and other stuff in his eyes?

A. I was half blind, and my eyes were all blurry. Todd, I don't know that he was okay.

We regrouped, and we were going to the tower now to look for survivors. We didn't know where our officer was or whatever that we were looking for. No sooner than we started, the tower -- we regrouped like on this corner.

Q. Down by Albany Street.

A. Yeah. We ended up going this way to look for something. I don't know why we ended up over --

Q. Towards the water, westbound.

A. I think over here there was a bar over there and there were people running all over the place.

We regrouped there. Then it's like, okay, we're going back to the building to look for survivors. As we were going back towards the building, the second tower came down. I just stood there in shock. We were further away from the second tower.

I sat there, and I couldn't believe that I was watching this antenna come down. Then finally somebody just grabbed me, and I went back into the building. There's a bar over there.

Q. Right.

A. After that cleared up, however long that took, then we went back, trying to get into tower --

Q. The south tower?

A. Right. And I ran into -- who was it? Was it Cruthers? Mike Cruthers? I knew him from like -- he didn't know who I was. I was just asking him what we could do, because being backup I had no radio, I had no communication. I didn't

know what was going on.

We were going back towards there, and all of the rigs now and the EMS and everything was on fire. People were running. It was --

Q. Pandemonium?

A. Yeah. We were trying to figure out what to do. Now I think where the hotel was --

Q. Right, where Three World Trade Center was.

A. That was all down. We were climbing over the rubble. We were trying to get -- from there we were trying to get into the lobby and climb over all this rubble and get into this lobby, because there were reports that there were firemen.

Q. Trapped.

A. -- trapped by some elevator bank. When we were going up there, there was fire burning. I don't know if it was Liberty Street or what, but you could see down maybe four floors to the street. You're climbing over the rubble, and you're trying to get in place.

We had no water pressure. We had some hose lines run. There was no water pressure, and

we were just trying to put the fire out and make a push.

From there some squad guys and some rescue guys came in, and they were taking over after this report. From there it was like just trying to search for hours. Finally I walked away like hours later. Time didn't really mean a whole lot.

Q. Right.

A. I went and I was looking for my rig on Trinity. I ran into another guy that was on light duty at Metrotech. He came, and we walked, looking -- we walked back up Cedar back to Trinity, looking for our rig, and I didn't find it. And I was looking for the chauffeur.

He left. He was hurting. I came back to this section I think where Rescue 4 was.

Q. The north tower.

A. Yeah, in the middle somewhere.

Q. The middle.

A. I found our rig over there, like right -- maybe it was back here.

Q. I've got you, right here, away from the buildings on the other side of West.

A. I don't know how it got here and then over to there. But it was there, and it was pumping to tower ladders and to hand lines from the marine unit, which was over here somewhere.

So since I'm the chauffeur, I just took it over.

Q. Right.

A. You know, the guys -- you know we have a new rig. I pumped until like 1:30 that night. The new rig has a computer throttle, and every time we lost water it overcompensated for itself and it started overheating. Then everything was clogged from --

Q. The soot and debris?

A. Yeah, the debris. It started smoking real bad. The chief said take it out of there. I took it out, and another rig took my spot. I just parked it over here. There's like a walkway back here.

I drove the rig down like here and left it here for a while.

Q. Like by that Merrill Lynch building, around the back, closer to the water?

A. Yeah, because there were boats and a

walkway. I left it there for a couple more hours.

I grouped up with all the guys from the company, and we all were here just for a while, because guys came in. Everyone regroups and (inaudible). They were going in and out and doing whatever.

I had enough. It was like 1:30. I was there from like 9:15 or 9:20 before the tower. I had enough. They took the chauffeur away to the hospital. They took Frankie to the hospital. They took Todd to the hospital. So it was just me and Mike left.

So me and Mike got on the rig around 1:00, 1:30, and we brought it back to the firehouse. We had nothing. All our hose was taken off the rig, all the equipment. You know, guys just took whatever they could use. When we came here, we restocked the rig.

From there, I called 230 and there were guys that came in and were just hanging here. They came over and --

Q. They got on your rig?

A. Yeah. They helped me, because I was

worried about the overheating. We washed out all of the filters and whatever we could do when we got it here to get it running better. They were going to help us ride, and we got the rig back in service.

The lieutenant from 230, he came in. I figured I'd let him be the boss. We went back to the dispatcher, and the dispatcher sent us back out at about 5. Then we went back at 5:00. When we went back again, it was just trying to search and looking for people.

I was pumping water -- at that time I was the chauffeur, and we parked back like Broadway. There were rigs there. We just parked our rig. I didn't even want to pump from ours. I used the other rigs. Actually I was pumping three rigs. I'm trying to think of the numbers. There were three rigs relaying water.

Q. All the way up from Broadway?

A. Yeah. Even further than Broadway, because one was down Broadway and Vesey?

Q. Yeah, Vesey, right around in here.

A. That relayed to here, and then that was relaying to another one, which was like right on

this corner.

Q. By the cemetery?

A. They were supplying two towers and a hand line.

I had to make sure, because this one was running out of fuel. Then the one I was in was running out of fuel. I was just one chauffeur with three -- actually I had four rigs.

Q. Running, running, running.

A. Right. The guys went -- they did whatever they could. But I was pretty much from there on the street.

By then somebody came, sanitation or transit, to fuel me up. So we got them all fueled, and we just hung out there, because I'm sitting there ready to go. I'm sitting there saying that things must be organized. These guys must know that I'm -- I'm thinking I'm here doing regular fire and I'd be out of there by 9 or 10:00. I ended up being there until like 4 o'clock.

We went back here and just back to regular. We went back again.

Q. When did you eventually get home?

A. That night on the 12th I got home maybe around 5:00. I got home at 5 because it was my girlfriend's daughter's birthday. I picked her up later, and we went to eat. We passed like 105 and 219. They had their street closed off. I stopped in there, because I know all the guys there. We went to eat, and by then it was like the next day.

Basically that's what happened.

Q. Well, Tom, unless you've got anything else you want to add to it, any feelings like that -- like I said, it's going down as a history, so it's up to you if you want to say anything else; if not --

A. It was just very unorganized. All of the bosses were killed, so no one knew what to do.

Q. Right.

A. Just the way the manpower was and all of the reports that you heard, they said we were under attack. It was like, look, you've got to do this, you've got to get ready for the next one. We heard all kinds of stories.

Q. Sure.

A. The truck was told to go through the Battery Tunnel, which saved their lives, and they had to walk through the Battery Tunnel. So by the time they walked through, everything fell.

Q. It was down already.

A. Then we're here reports that they blew up the Brooklyn Bridge. We're like, wow, we just came across the bridge. You know what I'm saying? I expected worse. I just think that the organization was -- like guys coming in off duty or whatever, manpower, everything has to run even in the chaos.

Q. Right, right.

A. When we got back to Bed Stuy, there was no one here. If there was a small fire or whatever it would spread -- the rest of the city was left defenseless. The building was way too big. We had the one years ago. I felt that they should have torn it down or do whatever then and spread out. The rest of the city, like around here, is vacant, vacant warehouses and property.

Q. They could use a few buildings around here.

A. Yeah. And it's close to the Wall

Street area. Now that Metrotech is being built up, people are looking on this side of the river.

Q. Right.

A. That's basically all I have to say.

Q. All right, Tom. Listen, thanks a lot for your interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview concludes at 1459 hours.

File No. 9110112

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN ROTHMUND

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 17th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 1655 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT ROTHMUND: JOHN ROTHMUND, EMT, Battalion 22.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 22 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. All yours, John.

A. Okay. I was working 22 Adam with John Heer, my partner. We got assigned a job along with I believe five other units at the time. They told us to respond to the foot of the Verrazano Bridge and stand by. So we went. We were 63.

By the time we got to the foot of the VZ, they had already called us through to the Brooklyn side of the VZ and stand by. Not a clue, never got a job, never heard anything. We really didn't know what was going on.

We go over the bridge. As we get over the bridge, we look to our left and we can see

one of the towers was burning. So we had an idea what was going on. We got about to the foot of the Verrazano Bridge, and they called us again and told us to take it to the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel and stand by.

Once we got onto the Gowanus and over that bridge, there was a chain of emergency vehicles. We just kept going. We got to the foot of the tunnel. There was no way to turn off, no way to go, so you had to keep going.

We went into Manhattan, came out through the tunnel. We wound up going up West up until I think it was Liberty, and staging was set at Liberty and West, right in that -- it could have been here (indicating), over there.

At the time we had no idea what was going on. The only thing we knew, there was a fire, and we knew that from looking over off the bridge that a plane had hit it, but we thought it was a Cessna, like a little tiny private airplane. Nobody had a clue it was a commercial liner.

Q. Right.

A. So we set up staging at that area,

Liberty and West, and my partner and I got out. We were one of the first three at that location, ambulances. We got out. Saw how close we were in relation to the towers, we also saw that both towers were in flames. We didn't know what was going on there either.

We decided to go see who we could talk to. We relocated the staging. We felt that it was totally unsafe where we were. So me and my partner tried to find authority figures, and there was really none around. The only person that seemed to have any kind of sense of why the staging was there was a voluntary unit.

We figured, you know what, we're just going to relocate them. We relocated from Liberty and West down to South End. We started to line ambulances from South End up until Liberty. So you came from South End and Albany. I imagine it was Albany. Right now I can't remember. From the map that's what it looks like.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know, there had to be 20, 30 ambulances there that we moved. We felt it was

unsafe where we were.

Q. Right.

A. A long story short, we get all our stuff out, our equipment out, and we stand by. We were just waiting. We received one patient which had a head injury, laceration, who we gave to the voluntary Hazollah unit, because they already had a previous patient and they were going to go 82 to the hospital. So we put them with them so we don't lose another bus.

At this time we saw people jumping from the roof, so we kind of realized the gravity of everything. We really just thought it was a bad fire. We really didn't know what the hell was going on. We saw so many people jumping. We just waited.

We had walked up with equipment and whatnot from this location and up until Liberty, and we were standing by on Liberty just trying to see what was going on. Again, there was really no authority figures whatsoever.

At that time we were looking at the top of the towers and all the rubble and people coming off, and all of a sudden you heard -- it

sounded like another airplane, or a missile. It was like a slow shake. The whole ground just vibrated and shook. We just told everybody to run, run into a building, let's go, run, run, run.

We ran off of Liberty. We couldn't get very far. We got into a superette. We threw as many people as were coming into this superette, me and my partner. We never left each other's side the whole entire time. We were like Velcro. We got everybody into the deli superette. I don't know what the hell it was. It was big. It was good size.

After that the debris was just coming down and coming down. Nobody could really stand there anymore. There was nobody else coming in, so we went in. We got inside. Again, we're the only kind of emergency service people that were in there. We were just as scared and nervous as everybody else. We just couldn't panic.

We had about 40 people in this deli that we had to try and keep calm for a while. For the longest time we thought we were pinned in. We thought the rubble was in front. It was

rubble in front of the deli, in front of the windows. Whatever debris can be. We really didn't know. We just saw dark smoke.

One guy fainted in the back, some Parks Department person, green uniform, gold shield. We roused him. He woke up. At that time after trying to keep everybody in the back of the store and calm, we tried to find an alternate exit.

As we were trying to find an exit, somebody came down from the buildings up top; I don't know how many floors. I know we walked three floors. Anyway, we tried to find it, and they said there's women and children up top in the building that are stuck. They can't breathe, there's smoke, there's so much smoke nobody could breathe.

So me and my partner grabbed a couple wet towels, ran upstairs, pulled out probably upwards of 10 to 20 people, women, children, pregnant women, pets, whatever the hell was up there, and we brought them all down into the store, because we had seen a back door.

The back door was just as much filled with soot and smoke, but it was a way out. So we

figured we would keep everybody in here protected for a while. We brought everybody down. We just sat there and waited for a minute or two we saw that the front was clearing up. Everybody remained in side for a little while.

We went outside, and you could see your hand in front of your face. That's how much it had cleared up. So we decided we've got to go and see what's going on. So we told everybody stay inside for a few minutes and let the dust settle. We had no patients. Everybody was relatively shook up, whatnot, but for the most part everybody was all right.

We went outside. It was just like horrible. It was like a war. There was just nothing but soot and concrete chunks and whatever everywhere. Ambulances were covered in soot, doors wide open. There was nothing you could do. Everything was just a foot of soot and dirt, whatever you want to call it.

We came out of the deli, and we see Chief Grant. We see him walk by. He was kind of dazed a little bit altered, a little AMS there. We went up to him to actually look for some kind

of -- to find out where we were going, what the situation was. He became more of a patient than anything. We made him our priority at the time because nobody else was there anyway. We put him back in the deli.

We told everybody it's clearing up, to head to the water, come around, go down toward the esplanade. We treated him, gave him oxygen, flushed his eyes, gave water, whatever, tried to hook him up. He was a little bit shocked, is really what it came down to.

We treated him for a few minutes. A few minutes -- time had no concept whatsoever, really no concept. It could have been 15 minutes; it could have been 5 seconds. I have no clue. We took care of him.

We wound up having another patient outside with minor bumps and bruises. We went to check on him with my partner. We never left each other. When I say "me," I mean "we"; okay?

Q. Right.

A. We went to check on this person. We turned around and Chief Grant was walking out of the building, heading right to the water. We

figured, you know what, he's going in a good direction, let him go. We're going to watch him walk down and that's it.

That was the only place that had any kind of air was down next to the water.

Q. Right.

A. So we sent as many people as we could down towards the water if they're able to walk. We did have a few fractures and whatnot. Splinted like lightning, you know what I mean, got them out of there.

Then we got into the ambulance, threw the stretcher back in the ambulance, because it was still running, and we figured the other tower's got to be coming down. So we took the ambulance and we moved the ambulance away down to the esplanade. Where we figured it would be kind of safe.

Q. Right.

A. As we were going down I think it was Albany, I imagine. I'm really not sure. As we were going down Albany, I saw a captain. Oh, and at the time, after Grant had walked down towards the water, Chief McCracken came walking down and

walked back up. I couldn't catch the man. I don't know where he went. He disappeared into the smoke. I couldn't catch up to him no matter how much I tried. So we figured we're alone here, you know.

As we were pulling down, we saw some captain. I really don't know who the gentleman was -- heavyset guy, black hair, it appeared to be, white helmet, blue shirt and the bars, you know -- asking us for a ride. I'm not going anywhere, I'm telling him. We're going down to the corner here, you know.

I guess shock kind of took over him too, kind of getting emotional and whatnot. So we stopped and we let him into to the empty seat that we were going to drive, took him down.

The inside of the ambulance was in no better shape than the outside air was. But we brought him down to there, told him here, get out, parked the truck, turned the battery off, whatever, got another patient.

So I walked him back up again and got another patient. When I say "patients," minor: bruises, cuts and scratches, fractures that, go

ahead, keep walking. Fix you up quick and go.

As we made our way back into it again trying to get -- to help, the other tower came down. We couldn't see anything, the smoke was just -- we couldn't -- the stuff, soot.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. The second tower came down --

Q. Still back down in this area?

A. No. We were probably up on South End or you know what, it might have been more on West. Yeah, it had to be on West, because we had moved the bus down and we had started walking north to get -- to help. That's what you assumed happened was the towers came down.

Q. Right.

A. We didn't know whether it came down or not. We really thought it was another plane hitting, but we figured if it was it was devastating, whatever it was.

After we got the bus to safety, because that was our only egress out of there was that bus.

Q. Right.

A. We treated another one, sent him on his way and went back up. Like I said, did a couple fractures -- what I'm guessing is Albany to west side. I'm really not sure.

We went up toward midtown, and we went left on either South End or West. Right before we got anywhere near the towers, the other one -- you couldn't see the towers. You looked up and you couldn't see what was there or not. There was nothing but smoke.

All of a sudden it happened again, the same exact sound, the same thing.

Q. The noise and the vibrations?

A. The noise and the vibrations.

At that point everything -- it just came down. All you saw was the cloud of smoke coming at you, so we ran. No shame. We ran --

Q. None at all.

A. -- right down Albany again to the esplanade. We escorted hundreds, hundreds of people down the esplanade, walked down to -- I have no idea where it was. We got to a point in the esplanade that seemed like it had a dock on it of some sort. A fireman or police officer --

I was with maybe a handful of firemen, maybe two or three police officers.

As I got down and escorted people out, we were trying to keep away from the smoke. We only had the respirators, which was after the second tower came down anyway.

Q. Right.

A. We just inhaled that air. And the air was nice over here. If you stayed on the bottom, stayed down on the ground and sucked a little air, you got a clear breath.

Q. Right.

A. Pulled all kinds of people down. Again, we didn't know what was going on. We thought it was a bomb, you know, like planes were dropping from the sky or missiles were hitting. We didn't know what the hell was going on.

So a police officer took out a Chinese restaurant door, knocked it in. Whatever the case may be, he got in. We started lifting people up into this restaurant, the women, the kids, anybody, elderly people. We had to lift them over some kind of railing, because it was the easiest access from the esplanade to get them

in and out, because, again, it was just like a war zone. You didn't know what the hell was happening.

So we got as many people as we could that came walking along that esplanade into that building and kept them there. At that time I believe Mark Harris -- I saw Mark Harris and Kathy Zarr. They came over, and as they started to make up the triage area with zero equipment. We had nothing. Just maybe a supportive thing for themselves or for the patients. We really had nothing to do anything with.

The boats started coming in on the corner over the water. We started pulling out the women and children from where we put them in not 20 minutes before or however long before. We started pulling them back out, put them on boats to get them over to New Jersey. I don't know how long we did that for. Again, treatment for minor things along the way, nothing to speak of. We pulled them all out.

We didn't like the idea of having a triage here because we had nothing. We decided we've got to walk and find somebody else, some

kind of brass.

Q. Right?

A. After this whole place was evacuated, there was nobody left on this esplanade, me and my partner took off walking down -- I don't see it on the map. I really wouldn't know where to begin what the name of the street would be.

Q. Let me see if I have another map. I don't know if that's going to be any better.

A. Not a bad map. We were right here. This would be --

Q. South Cove Park?

A. Right. This is where we were. South Cove Park is where we were putting people on boats and where we had put the people into that restaurant, keeping them safe and out of the fumes, the smoke.

After we got everybody off of that esplanade and out of that restaurant, women and children, onto these boats, we had no patients. It was just mostly men who were totally capable of handling themselves.

Q. Right.

A. Police officers there, firemen, still

remained there. Like I said, we had no brass. We had no equipment to set up a triage spot. So we started to walk down along the esplanade down South Cove Park. As we were about to turn the corner, we saw another EMS guy. I don't know who he was. He said they set up a triage point, a staging point, at South Ferry and they also set one up at Chelsea Pier.

So in relation to where we were at the time, we felt that the south ferry was a lot closer. So before we walked any further, we decided we've got to go back and see what we could do. We turn around, went back up. As we went back up, everybody was just coming back down. I mean, firemen, cops, everybody, just coming back away from there. Nobody was saying much of anything, just like don't go there, just leave, don't go in there.

So we went back up to where we had parked our ambulance on Albany and the esplanade, went to get back into the ambulance, and the windows were all gone. All the windows were blown out in the back. We tried to get in to start it. There was an amazing cloud of soot in

there. The soot was on the seats like six inches deep. We jumped in to try to get it started, and she was dead.

So we then walked the whole esplanade down to I guess maybe First Avenue, First Place, still on the esplanade, though, to where we found a chief. I don't know who the man was. Nicest guy in the world.

Q. EMS chief?

A. EMS chief. EMS chief. I don't know who he was. He didn't want to hear anything but how we were. I guess we looked pretty horrible at the time. He asked us if we needed treatment, whatnot. We said we needed a little rest, a little water, wipe our eyes out of the soot.

He said he was setting up a small staging spot with just one ambulance. He had equipment, had oxygen. He didn't have an oxygen regulator. It just so happened I had my own personal regulator on me that I didn't want to leave in the ambulance and I took, which I never saw again. It was gone. I gave him the oxygen.

Again, we set up a treatment area right at that area. I don't know at all where that

would be except for maybe First and esplanade if that even exists. Needless to say, we sat there for an hour or so. Again, time really is hard.

Q. Right.

A. Evacuating people off of Manhattan onto boats with the Fire Department and Police Department. We treated whomever needed to be treated in the ambulance that was there. There was about maybe five or six other techs there, and I imagine the chief stayed. I don't know who it would be.

We didn't do much treatment after that point because we were pretty shot. He was just letting us sit for a few minutes, cooling off, whatever. If I had to guess, I would say this was about 1:00 now, maybe 2:00. This was late. We were there for a good piece of time. We didn't get down to this ferry until maybe 2, 3:00, something like that.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm really not sure. But he had told us that this area was a safe area. He had heard something about the ferry being set up as a triage point, but he wasn't sure. He said as

soon as he gets more information he'll move us if he needs to. But as it was, we were in a safe area. We had a steady flow of people who were potential patients. So we remained there for a good piece of time. I don't know how long.

After most of the patients evacuated off the island already in the boats -- and there were numerous amounts of boats along the promenade, just pulling people on. You throw them on.

Q. Right.

A. We all picked up and walked. I guess the esplanade goes around lower Manhattan. So we walked along the water across a park -- I don't know where the park is; here you go, Robert F. Wagner Park -- down to the ferry.

We got to the terminal, and it was like a godsend, because everybody's in there. All the triage stuff was set up.

That was it. We remained there. Not many people to treat at that time. Everybody was off the island. Anybody that was walking and able to treat was treated and sent off that island already, whether it be on a boat along the

promenade or underneath the ferry or Chelsea Pier, whoever walked over there. We didn't have anybody really that I can say was serious. Everybody was gone. They got up and left.

At that point we stayed there until 12:00 that night, maybe, 12:30 that night. I jumped on the ferry and came back to the island. I didn't have a ride once I got to the island. We had to take a train to Eltingville. We sat on the corner of Eltingville waiting for a lieutenant to come pick us up, which there was none of.

We wound up getting a ride from some hell of a nice guy that just pulled over and drove us back to the station. So that was the tie-in to the fitting night.

I don't know what else to say.

Q. When you first came into Manhattan through the battery, you came up the West Side Highway coming up there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember who else was with you when you got up to West and Liberty up there?

A. No. As far as units?

Q. Not necessarily the unit numbers.

A. I know a couple of the guys, but I'm new out here too. So I don't know them by name or anything.

Q. They were from --

A. No, they weren't from EMS. They were from Staten Island, yes. One was a Staten Island unit which pulled up -- I don't know, I'd have to say a few minutes, four minutes after I did, maybe.

Q. Volunteer units?

A. Yeah, volunteer.

Q. Staten Island Hospital?

A. Yeah, Staten Island Hospital.

One guy's name was Mitch who was over there. Then I saw a Vinnie's unit. These are ones that I took note of because I knew the guys.

Q. Right.

A. There was a few Hazollah. There was a couple of Richmond County. I saw some Metro people.

Again, when I pulled up it seemed they had this triage spot where the ambulances were sitting, awaiting patients. There was, I have to

say, a bravo ambulance, if I'm not mistaken. I don't really know for sure. None of them were EMS. None of these ambulances were EMS who set up this staging point. That's why we changed it. We said, you know what, this is not a spot for us to be in, so we moved it around.

Q. Okay.

A. That's all I remember. Nobody stopped there anymore. Everybody just turned around and came down the street. They didn't think twice about it.

That was it. I saw no brass. I saw no brass.

Q. On Liberty? You didn't come across any supervisors?

A. No. There was, I imagine it was a lieutenant, whether it was EMS or the Fire Department. I saw numerous PD who instructed me where to go, and the lieutenant instructed me where to go. I couldn't tell you who he was. If you paid me a million dollars, I wouldn't know.

There was umpteen brass all over here, but we hadn't gotten that far yet. After we relocated our ambulances, we got up to Liberty

and started walking in, and it happened. Everything came down. We didn't know where, what. We just took cover, basically.

It was west side to Liberty. We relocated from Liberty to South End and Albany.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments?

A. No. I'm glad I made it out of there; sorry for the people that didn't. I wish we could have done more, but there was nothing we could do.

Q. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1722. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110113

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK SWEENEY

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 18th, 2001. The time is 9:35. I'm George Cundari with Richard Dun of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting the interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER SWEENEY: My name is Frank Sweeney, firefighter second grade, assigned to Engine 3.

Q. Frank, can you just tell us the events of September 11th, 2001?

A. I was assigned to Engine 3 approximately two weeks before this happened, so I was kind of unfamiliar with the way the high-rise unit operated. But that morning I came in. I got here about 8:00 in the morning, reporting to work. I was upstairs.

I think I was brushing my teeth or something with Angel and Michael. I can remember Angel making fun of Michael, the way he was doing his hair. Angel said, "Frank, go downstairs and make sure they've got your name in the house

watch ready to work.

So I came downstairs, and I walked into the house watch. Battalion 7 was to go down to the World Trade Center for a fire. Somebody pops on the news, and we can see the World Trade Center. There was a lot of black smoke coming from the north tower.

Q. Who was working Battalion 7? Who was the chief?

A. Orio Palmer.

Q. Orio Palmer.

A. So they go down. Very shortly after another set of tones go out. I don't know who is being dispatched. I think it might have been Engine 3. Somebody got on the air and said, "Do you want us to bring the high-rise unit?" The dispatcher came back on and said, "Bring everything you've got."

Now the truck guys are getting ready to go. I'm like, "Holy shit, Scott, what do we do? Where do we go?" Because I don't know who goes in the high-rise unit. So Scott said, "Yeah, come with me. I'll drive the high-rise and you sit next to me." I was like, all right cool.

3 Engine got right out. We were right behind them. We were flying down Seventh Avenue. You can already see people are out on the streets looking. People are already watching. The citizens are already watching what's going on.

Q. When you got there did you see a lot of debris on the ground already?

A. When we got to the scene?

Q. Yeah.

A. When we were coming down -- well, we crossed over West Side Highway and were coming down still just -- you could see a lot of things falling from the tower. But no, I can't see a lot of debris on the street, no, because the World Trade Center is actually up on like a parapet wall of some sort. There's like some kind of wall there you can't see.

We got in front of the World Trade Center, and we could see things were falling. Scott and I just looked at each other like this is not a good place to park. Scott turned the high-rise unit around and parked it under the pedestrian walkway.

At that time I remember looking at

Engine 3. Engine 3 went really far south, and the lieutenant had them turn the rig around and come back north. So we were actually facing the other way and were near a couple hydrants just north of the high-rise unit and just north of that bridge.

Then another unit comes in around us. It was another engine. I can't remember what engine it was. We're standing there for a short period of time. I remember the lieutenant turned to Scott and I and said, "You know, this could be a terrorist thing. Maybe it was a bomb or something." I can't remember his exact words.

Shortly thereafter Scott said, "What's wrong with the flight patterns around here?" I said, "What are you talking about?" And the south tower blew up. Scott said, "That was a plane." I said, "Scott, it was not a plane. It was probably another bomb." He said, "No, I saw it. It was a plane."

Then a chief came up to him and started yelling at Scott saying, "Are you sure you saw a plane?" He was like getting angry. He wanted to make sure that it was a plane that Scott saw.

Scott said, "Yes, I saw it." That's when things really started changing. You could see the fear in a lot of people's faces.

Q. The plane never came over your head, then?

A. No. That was south of us. That was south of us.

All the meantime, we were seeing people jump. That's what really started getting to me. At first it didn't start getting to me. I was like, all right, people are going to be jumping here. We had to keep our heads up to make sure we don't get hit by any of these.

Then I think we were there an hour and it really started getting to be too much. I saw one woman come down and beheaded. It was just too much.

Q. Are you still looking up at the north tower?

A. Yeah, I'm looking at the north tower. The south tower is going. Somewhere in this time -- it's really hard to tell time frames, but I saw Giuliani with Von Essen, and they were going to what I believe was the command post.

It was set up like maybe in front of the Marriott Hotel, somewhere around there, maybe on the West Side Highway, yeah, in front of Two World Financial Center. They were walking over towards there somewhere.

I can remember a lot of the officers yelling to the guys, "Do not put down your equipment. If you put down your equipment, stand next to it, because you don't know who's putting what down next to us."

We were clearing all of the civilians out of the area. I can remember getting upset with one civilian who was being very theatrical about the jumpers, and I asked him to leave. He didn't need to be there.

I can remember about seven people walking from like at the Marriott over to where we were. I said, "Where are you people coming from?" They said the south tower. But it was only like seven people. Other than that there were no civilians walking in the front there. There was nobody coming out from the towers. I was very surprised about that.

Q. Did you have a lot of chaos or mayhem

around you?

A. Not at this point, no. Initially when we parked the rigs there was a lot of civilians still in the area. At this point now it's a lot of security guards from the World Financial Center and a lot of Fire Department and police.

So we're standing by in front of the Winter Garden. The lieutenant has us up one level from the rest of the fireman because he thought if something else were to happen we would be able to run through the Winter Garden, where all these guys would be stuck down there in the basement.

We were actually under the pedestrian bridge at the entrance to the Winter Garden. Scott said, "If something happens, we'll all run into the Winter Garden and go to the right." I said, "Scott, look at this huge concrete pillar here. Nothing's going to go through this thing." Later on the north tower did.

So anyway, we were standing there. One of the chiefs calls for three engines and three trucks to the south tower. I can remember we went back outside, because we walked inside for a

short period, just walked through the doors to see where we could run to in case we needed to.

Q. You heard that over your radio?

A. Then we walked back out. Yeah.

Q. That came over your radio?

A. Came over the radio.

Q. Were there a lot of maydays on the radio at that time?

A. No, no. I don't remember maydays at that time, no.

The lieutenant said, "Let's go, 3 Engine." I bent over to pick up the hose, and I hear what sounded like firecrackers and a low rumble. I look up, and the south tower -- I could see the top part of the siding overlapping the bottom side of the siding. The siding actually was like this. Then I saw the dirt above that.

I ran. I was right behind Scott. Scott ran into the Winter Garden and got against a concrete pillar, and I just hugged the pillar with Scott. Aguilera was right behind me. I thought we were dead. I thought the tower was coming down on top of us. I thought we were

gone.

It was a loud rumble. The Winter Garden filled up with the dirt, the dust and that was it. Then it was quiet. Then you heard the maydays on the radio. I can remember hearing, "Mayday, mayday, mayday. Mayday, mayday, mayday." I think I can remember like Ladder 4 or something like that, if that makes any sense.

Q. Right now you're just with Scott in the Winter Garden? Anybody else with you?

A. Scott and Aguilera.

The rumbling stops, and we start looking for people. I can't even see Scott, and I'm right on his back. That's how thick it was.

We start back towards the entrance to go back out of the building, and we hear people in this little room. So Rob and I go towards the little room. I don't know where Scott went at that time. We grabbed the people out of this little cubbyhole and bring them to the back of the building.

Then we go back to the front of the Winter Garden and we found another person just wandering around. He said he's Commissioner of

the Fire Department and he needed to make a phone call. He tried making a phone call on one of those little security phones. We're trying to tell him he can't call out on that phone. He says he has to call headquarters. We just grabbed him, pulled him and dragged him out back.

Q. Do you know which commissioner this was?

A. It was not Von Essen. It was somebody I don't recognize. He identified himself as a commissioner. He was trying to make a phone call on that little white security phone. So we just told him, "Come on, let's go. You're in shock or something." We just dragged him out back of the Winter Garden.

Then we came back out front looking for the lieutenant, who then shortly appears. Now we're worried about Kevin Cronick and our chauffeur. We didn't know where our chauffeur was. The interesting thing there is the pedestrian walkway bridge is still up. It's still intact at that time. The south tower is gone. Rob Aguilera says to me, "The Marriott's gone." I said, "Never mind that. The tower is

gone." I didn't think that the tower would come down, not like that. I thought maybe a quarter of the top came off, because it didn't seem like that long of a rumble.

Q. How dark was it for how long a period? Was it a long period or short time?

A. I thought it was kind of short, thinking of what came down. What was interesting is when we went back out towards the walkway, it was actually getting clearer. The closer we walked to the tower, the clearer it was getting. Inside the building it was very dense.

Q. Were there a lot of people there other than you and your partner in the Winter Garden?

A. Just the commissioner and maybe three other guys that we took out back.

Q. There were no civilians?

A. No, no. I don't know where they all escaped to.

So the pedestrian walkway was still up at that time after the south tower came down.

So we just got together with our company, and we walked through the garden out to the back.

Q. The second building hasn't come down yet?

A. No. The north tower is still standing.

We come out on Vesey Street and we walk towards the Hudson River. The lieutenant -- I said, "Where are we going? We've got to do something here." He said, "Well, this other one may come down." I said, "This ain't coming down. That was just a fluke that that first one came down." All the time I wanted to go up in there. He said, "Yeah, the second one -- that one may come down too." Not even five, ten minutes later the thing came down.

Q. So you were around North End Street and Vesey at the time the second one came down?

A. Yeah, North End and Vesey. Everybody started running north, up to where you see North Park on there. We started running north. That whole area became cloudy.

Q. Were there boats parked over there, going to New Jersey, taking people over?

A. There were boats taking people over, but I don't know if it was before the second tower came or after. I know afterwards when we

found Engine 5 and the fireman having a heart attack, yeah, there were boats there and we put him on the boats and sent him over.

Then the rest of the day we just spent running from bomb scares and gas leaks. Stuyvesant school had a gas leak. The World Financial had a gas leak or bomb or something.

Q. Then you were putting out fires on the rigs, ambulances, police cars at that time?

A. No, no. By that time we were up by Chambers Street. We're north of Chambers now. Now the Fire Department is trying to gather the people and make some kind of organization out of it and getting companies together at that time.

Once they got us back together and organized somewhat, they sent us back down to Vesey, where we stood and waited for Seven World Trade Center to come down.

Q. Were you able to drive your apparatus back or you came back with Engine 3?

A. Well, no, that's the interesting thing. After the north tower came down, that pedestrian walkway bridge was gone, and the high-rise unit was underneath there.

Q. How did you get back to quarters? Jumped on the back of a volley rescue.

A. Oh, right, right, that's how we got back. That's right.

But that was a long day.

Q. After the towers collapsed, you never really saw any injuries after that? No civilians were coming up to you?

A. No, it was surprising; right? Not many injuries at all. I think you either got hit with that building and died or --

Q. It was unbelievable the lack of injuries.

A. Yeah.

Q. Anything else?

A. No, you know, I can remember -- we were standing on Vesey Street, and it was just -- everybody is looking around in disbelief. We were wondering where 12 Truck is, when Angel Rivera?

Q. Yeah.

A. Angel Rivera was walking around in a daze and we found him. We said, "Where is the rest of the truck?" He started to explain where

the rest of the truck was and what happened.

Q. And they came up after that?

A. Heinz came up, and then we found McGimpsey.

Q. He told us that Mazy and Matt Tansey were shipped to New Jersey.

A. Yeah, I didn't hear that part. I remember they were trying to rinse McGimpsey's eyes out. His eyes were killing him. They were bright red, and they were hurting him really bad. So we sat him down and tried to wash them.

Q. Anything else to add?

A. I wish I could help you with the placement of rigs or something, but I can't.

Q. There was a lot going on that day.

A. The only other thing as far as citizens was in the north tower I can remember seeing citizens walking through the glass out an exit way. It looked like they were exiting out the north, but they could have been circling around to the back.

There's nothing really else I think I could help you with.

Q. I would like to thank you, Frank, for

taking the time and doing this interview.

MR. CUNDARI: This concludes the interview. It's 9:50.

File No. 9110114

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SCOTT HOLOWACH

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 18, 2001. The time is 9:15. I'm George Cundari with Richard Dunn of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an individual with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command?

A. SCOTT HOLOWACH, Firefighter third grade, assigned to Engine 3.

Q. Can you please tell us the events of September 11, 2001.

A. I just got on that morning. We were in the house -- I was in the house watch with Angel Juarbe, one of the guys who was missing from Ladder 12. We noticed on the news that one of the planes hit the Trade Center. Shortly after that the Chief was sent and I guess like 30 seconds later we were sent. We were sent by ourselves at first and we called up dispatch and asked if they want the high rise and they said to roll everything, so we took the high rise down with us.

As we were going, we went down to Canal Street and made a right and went to the West Side Highway and came down towards the Trade Center on the

West Side Highway. As we were responding, all you could see is a lot of smoke pouring out of the north tower. I had Firefighter Sweeney with me in the high rise rig.

When we first pulled up, we drove just south of the pedestrian bridge, the north pedestrian bridge, which came out of the tower to the Winter Garden. I noticed a lot of debris coming down from the building, so we had to jump back into the high rise rig and made a U turn and parked underneath the pedestrian bridge facing north.

At that time, I started walking towards Engine 3. Engine 3 drove south to the south pedestrian bridge to make a U turn to come back and as I'm walking towards the Engine to find out what Lieutenant Walsh wanted us to do, I heard the sound of a jet plane. I looked up and saw it pretty close and I was like holy shit. What's going on with the with the flight patterns. All of a sudden, the wings turned and it dove right into the building and it was screwed up.

At that time Chief Ganci was behind me and he thought there was another explosion in the north tower and that's when I turned around and said Chief, listen, there is a second plane that hit the other tower. He

was like no no no no, we have another explosion. I said no, Chief, I witnessed it. I watched the plane hit the other tower. He is like are you sure. I said Chief, I'm 100 hundred percent positive I watched the second plane hit the other tower.

That's when Ganci got on the radio and called for the military. Walsh walked up to him and said Chief, 3 engines here with the high rise. Do you want us to go into the tower and report to the command center. He said, no we are going to set up another command center outside. Just stand fast. They set up the command center in the mouth of the garage of the World Financial building. We were standing there and Lieutenant Walsh said listen, why don't you go stand on top underneath the pedestrian bridge, because if anything happens there is too many guys, here at least you guys can run some other way. This way you are not tripping over 100 other guys.

We were standing underneath the pedestrian bridge. We were watching people jump out of the building. I guess we were there for a little while, 20, 25 minutes. In the meantime we were sitting there and something gave me a gut feeling that something was going to happen, so I turned to the guys and I said

listen, if anything happens, I said let's dive into this building because the Winter Garden, the staircase is pretty solid and there is two hallways. We will run to the right.

Shortly after that, sure enough, I heard -- I don't know even -- I guess a rumbling sound. I looked up and I see the whole 70th floor basically like buckle out and start crumbling down the outside of the building. At the time I grabbed two other guys and said let's get the hell out of here. We dove into the building and after the rumbling stopped --

Q. Would have been south tower collapsing?

A. The south tower.

Q. You could see it from your position?

A. Yes. I visually watched the 70 floor. It looked like almost it was buckling outwards and then it just went down the outside of the building, just like scaled the outside of the building and it just started pancaking and that's when I grabbed the two guys and the third guy followed us in. We dove into the hallway to the right of the staircase and huddled the wall. I guess the fourth guy, Cronick, ran out the back of the building.

But after the rumbling stopped, it was so

thick in there you couldn't even see each other next to us, so my first thought was to make sure the guys were all right. So I asked Sweeney and Aguilera, who was a proby, a 14 weeker here, if they were okay. I screamed for Cronick and they said they think he ran out the back. I said all right, I said we got a lot of people with us, we got to start searching the area.

So we started searching the area to make sure that everybody is getting out, take them out the back. I got split up from these guys. I ended up with another proby from another company and we went and started searching the lobby of the Winter Garden and the first floor of the World Financial Center.

Q. Scott, did you have a radio at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you able to contact anybody on the radio?

A. I didn't try to, actually I didn't think about it. I don't remember if anybody was --

Q. Was it working?

A. Yes, it was working. I don't remember hearing --

Q. What channel were you on?

A. I think I switched to 7. I'm not sure. I

don't remember now. I'm pretty sure I did. Like I said, after I ran to the proby, we searched the ground level of the World Financial Center. We ended up outside on the southbound side of the mouth of the garage. We searched out front and we ended up directing a bunch of people, Chiefs and civilians, towards the water. When we walked back to the entrance to the Winter Gardens is when we ran into -- found you guys again and we came outside and found Lieutenant Walsh. He was worried about our chauffeur. Now we started looking for our chauffeur. We found our chauffeur. We were standing on Vesey and West and I guess the Chiefs and the other officers made the decision to move everybody down towards the Pier, towards the water, to reorganize and figure out what's going on.

Q. That was by where the fire boat was?

A. Yes.

Q. Bank Street?

A. No, actually down by the river terrace. We were actually on the water, right where Marine One ended up being docked. I guess we were there 10 minutes, 15 minutes. It's hard to tell time. Everything went so quick. We were there a short period

of time and that's when we heard the north tower coming down and noticed the big dust cloud and we started running north towards the water.

Before the north tower came down, we helped a lot of firemen get on the ferries and shipped them over to Jersey.

Q. Were they injured?

A. Yes, they were injured. We had the one Lieutenant on it. I don't remember what company he was from. He looked like he might be having a heart attack, so we put him out. Guys from 21 Truck were there with injuries, so we put them on the ferries. A few other guys from other companies, I'm not even sure where they were from.

Like I said, after the second collapse, and the dust started settling, we went back and grabbed whatever gear we could and headed north to the end of the Pier and then went back to the West Side Highway is where they were mustering everybody and they kept on pushing us north because they thought there was a gas leak and a bomb in the American Express building. They kept on moving us north of the high school there.

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Yes, Stuyvesant High School, until they

figured out, I guess, there was no gas leak or no secondary bomb. Or no bomb. I guess they put the PD in there to search it. They moved us back south. We ended up back up on Vesey Street and West Street and just hanging out until tower 7 came down.

After tower 7 came down, we went right to work over at tower 7 to put the fires out. That's where we stayed until we were relieved.

Q. Did you see a lot of civilians coming out towards you away by the water on West Street?

A. There wasn't much civilians at the water, no, no.

Q. There wasn't too many --

A. More Fire Department personnel, PD and EMS on the water. There was a few civilians, but not an overwhelming amount. As I said, more of the emergency personnel went towards the water. I think most of the civilians went north.

Q. After the collapse, did you -- was there many injuries after that or you saw a lot of injuries after the collapse?

A. I saw a few. I expected a lot more. If we saw 20 or 30 injuries, that was a lot. Most of the injuries were from taking in all that dust it seemed

like. More people just coughing and difficulty breathing afterwards.

MR. CUNDARI: Scott, I would like to thank you for taking part in this interview. Time is 9:25. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110115

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC WILLIAM SIMON

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time now is 1617 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC SIMON: WILLIAM SIMON. I'm a paramedic with the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 58, Brooklyn.

MR. RADENBERG: We're conducting the interview at EMS Battalion 58 concerning the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Bill, if you would start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. All right. It was a pretty routine day. We came on and we checked the truck and we figured we're going to be on our normal everyday routine assignments. When we're in Canarsie, not too far from the station, following our check out our vehicle, we heard a report of the Trade Center being struck.

At that point we proceeded closer to our 1089, because we knew that we would in all probability have to be utilized. We subsequently

were assigned to the city for a diff. breather at Broome and Broadway. That was, I would say, about 9:50.

We knew at that point that tower one had been struck and was on fire. We couldn't believe the reports. My first impression was that it probably was a terrorist act. I don't think the second building had been hit at that point. It was a bright, clear, sunny day, and my impression is any pilot, any novice pilot, tries to do everything in their power to avoid striking a high-rise building of that height.

At any rate, we were assigned to Broome and Broadway for a single individual having trouble breathing, which I thought was somewhat unusual because there should be hundreds of people related to that event having trouble breathing.

My partner, Barry Hirsch, was driving. We arrived in the city I would say maybe 10 to 12 minutes after we were assigned. I was basically doing the navigating for Barry so that we wouldn't make any misturns and would take the most expeditious route.

We came across Delancy Street -- first of all we came into Manhattan through Brooklyn over the Manhattan Bridge, came off of the Manhattan Bridge and responded, took a few turns and got over to Allen Street, Allen Street to Delancy, and then we started to travel west on Delancy. Then we crossed Bowery and then Lafayette and we dropped down to Broome Street, Broome and Broadway.

We were both awestruck by the scenes that we saw of the dust and the debris cloud that we could see as we were entering the city. I believe by the time we got there, I think the second tower had been hit. That also was an awesome sight.

We got to Broadway, and there's a tremendous amount of dust, pulverized masonry on the ground, office materials, papers, computer files and probably 10,000 people walking north on Broadway in various states of -- I wouldn't say people were panicking, but they were walking briskly to get away, hastily.

Some people were wearing makeshift masks from scarves of their own clothing. Some

had obtained filtration masks, which we utilize on the ambulances, probably from some of the EMS crews that they had encountered.

What amazed me was that we were approximately 18 to 20 blocks from the World Trade Center plaza and the amount of dust that was on the street was anywhere from maybe a half inch to an inch, all over the cars, all over the street. The amount of paper looked like there had been a ticker tape parade on Broadway.

Also it reminded me of the descriptions of what a nuclear winter would look like after a nuclear attack or something out of what had happened at Hiroshima.

After we arrived at the scene in this maze of people that were walking past us, we parked the vehicle. We said there must be somebody out here who's having trouble breathing. So we exited the vehicle. We approached one of the police officers that were one of the officers directing traffic at the intersection. We asked her did anybody approach her about having trouble breathing. She said no, there's been hundreds of people that went past her, and nobody approached

her specifically.

We felt it would be appropriate to exit the vehicle and try to canvas those storefronts that were still open, because there were still some merchants that had their doorways open and were looking south at the event as this mass of people were walking past us.

So I went south of Broome Street and canvassed on the east and west side of the street, and my partner went north. We canvassed east and west, on the east and west sides of the street, to all the store owners and as many people as we could encounter. Amazingly nobody was complaining of trouble breathing.

We actually wanted to get a patient, because we wanted to get involved in the actual rescue at that point. We figured some of these people had to be in distress, but I think their primary focus was escape and to get to their loved ones and just to let their family members know that they were all right. They really didn't want to, unless it was absolutely necessary.

We even saw some people with minor

cuts, and they --

Q. Didn't want treatment?

A. Yeah, didn't want treatment. They said, "No, I'm fine."

So at that point we got back on the radio and we told the dispatcher our current location and our status and that at this point we had no patients or nobody that was requiring assistance.

We knew at that point we were probably going to be dispatched either to One World Trade Center Plaza or one of the other staging areas, and we subsequently were. We were instructed to respond to Chambers and West Street. That was the new staging area following the collapse of tower one. Units were being deployed over there.

It took us about five minutes to get over there, moving through the mass of people and vehicles and emergency rescue vehicles. The first EMS officer that we encountered were Lieutenant Fitton and Lieutenant Pinkus, who were on West Street. They were coordinating the reassignment of EMS units on the west side.

We identified ourselves. They're

colleagues of ours, and they acknowledged our presence and were glad to see us. We were glad to see them, somebody to give us some direction.

We parked our vehicle in the now redeployed staging area and got a quick briefing on the events that had transpired. There were still a lot of questions to be answered about the magnitude and what rescue efforts were actually going on and the conflicting stories about our people involved and how many firefighters and police officers were injured. All we know is this a horrendous event of amazing magnitude. I looked south, and I was mesmerized by what I saw. It was like something out of a movie except we're in it.

They asked us to park our vehicle and to walk south on West Street and to render any care to any people who were ambulatory or confused about where to seek treatment and to instruct them where the new staging area was.

Also any EMS units that might be disoriented or confused about where the staging was, because our communications -- the tactical frequencies were so busy that there was a lot of

miscommunication going on at that point. I think we were not only rescuers at that point but we were a way of communicating to the other units where to regroup.

My partner and I started to walk south down West Street and tried to answer as quickly as we could the questions of the people who were ambulatory on the street. All we could basically tell them is just keep walking north, keep walking and you'll see additional EMS resources and the police staging area. Your best bet is just to keep walking as far away from the event, because we're really not sure of what's going on.

We must have gotten two to three blocks south of Chambers Street, and I was still in awe of this spectacle that I'm witnessing. My partner and I were looking at tower two, and we're looking at I guess 20 stories -- 15 to 20 stories down from the top of the roof just in flames and smoke.

Then we hear a rumble, and we see a blast of smoke and a slight ball of flame coming out from the silhouette of the building, and we watched the antenna collapse into the building.

To be honest with you, for about five seconds or so I was transfixed. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. From our perspective, it looked as though the antenna was falling towards us, north.

We were motionless for maybe five seconds, until we realized that, hey, the building's coming down and now we've got to run for our lives. We turned at that point and told everybody else, "Listen, the building is collapsing. Run, run, run."

I guess had the building toppled north and not collapsed into itself, we probably would have been victims in the road too, because we were close enough for that to have occurred.

We sprinted for a good two to two and a half blocks through a mass of people who were running at various rates of speed. All we could really do is just tell people to just get out of the way, run, keep running north.

We were initially looking for shelter. I believe there was a school on the right-hand side. All the doors, the accesses, were locked. We still felt as though we were in the path of the debris. I looked over my shoulder once and

saw the cloud of debris coming up the street and particulate matter bouncing all over. At that point we still weren't certain that we were safe.

We ran just as fast as we could, and we tried to seek shelter. Me personally, I know myself and one thing I feel good about is I didn't push anybody out of the way. It was everybody for themselves.

After about two minutes of stark terror, then we realized that the blunt of the debris had already fallen and we were relatively safe. But there was still the dust, the smoke, the noise, the confusion and the panic on some of the civilians. But we knew we were relatively safe.

Then the reality hit me that at that point we were witnessing, maybe not directly, but we knew hundreds of people must have perished at that moment. That was a sobering feeling. But you also thank God at that moment that you were able to survive or carry on or what set of circumstances allowed you to persevere.

When we got to approximately Chambers Street, there was a lot of noise and we even

heard shots. I've heard shots in Brooklyn before. I couldn't fathom what was going on unless maybe an officer fell and his weapon discharged or maybe they saw some people trying to loot.

There were some windows blasted out, and we didn't know what had actually transpired at that point. But I'm told there were probably some officers that were firing to seek refuge in some of the locked buildings that I think was an adjacent school. They probably saved a lot of people from being in the direct debris path. At least that's what I'm told. I didn't know it on that particular day.

After about ten minutes or so, things were unbelievably quiet. People regrouped, regathered. We made contact again with the EMS supervisors that were there, and we set up an additional triage area. We tried to restructure the triage area in I think Borough of Manhattan Community College on the north side of the building. A makeshift triage area was set up on the upper mezzanine.

At that point myself and some volunteer

EMTs and some people who I believe responded to the area from the voluntary hospitals started to man that location. We treated one or two police officers for dust inhalation and exhaustion.

There was one young girl that was obviously in a state of total disbelief and severe anxiety. We examined her for any serious injuries. She just had some minor cuts and bruises. I think she was like all of us. She just couldn't believe the events that transpired and the circumstances that she was in the middle of.

Shortly after that, I would say maybe about 15 minutes after setting up that area, we were instructed to evacuate that area and move further north to another safe location up by Chelsea Pier on 23rd Street because there was a report of a gas leak.

So now we had to retrieve all the equipment that we had now deployed and put it back into the trucks, the trucks that were accessible to us, and move quickly up north.

At this point there were two or three EMTs on my truck. My partner, Barry Hirsch,

because of his training with special operations, he had gone with Lieutenant Santiago, and they had separated. He said that he would be back in a few minutes because they were going to see if they could coordinate and regroup and see what EMS units were in need of assistance further south.

At this point, under the instruction of one of the lieutenants at the scene, we started to move the truck up north. There were a few civilians that were not as spry as some of the younger people, and we opened our doors and let them in. We transported them as far north as we could without jeopardizing their well-being. We let them exit at the Chelsea Piers.

After that, that's basically where our unit remained until later that afternoon. I stayed and hooked up with one of the medics that I know from the academy, since I only had one partner at that point.

I was with Tommy Maher until about 5:00, 5:30 in the afternoon. Then we were released from the scene. From there I got back to Battalion 58 and dropped Tommy off and knew

they were going to get off the scene.

Q. When you were up on Chambers and West, that's where you encountered Lieutenant Fenton and Captain Pinkus; right?

A. Yeah, Lieutenant Pinkus, Lieutenant Pinkus.

Q. Oh, communications; do you know?

A. Maybe it's another Pinkus.

Q. Okay.

A. I know he's from -- I know it's a Lieutenant Pinkus, and he's from Metropolitan.

Q. When you were going south with your partner on West, do you recall how far, or what street you got to?

A. We probably were somewhere between Barclay and Murray or down around Warren Street, somewhere over there. I know we were -- let's see, Chambers -- we may have gotten down about here, I would say down around Murray and Barclay.

Q. Do you recall anything on your way down there, meeting up with any other EMS personnel along there that you remember?

A. There might have been some personnel, but we didn't really have an encounter with them

because they basically were responding north, and that was our instructions, to tell any units that were on West Street to respond north and where to respond. So we were assuming that all they had to do was continue north and they would run into the new staging area.

Q. Right.

Other than Lieutenants Fenton and Pinkus, do you remember any other officers up at Chambers?

A. No, they were the two officers that -- there may have been more, but those are the officers that I actually had conversations with.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd like to add?

A. I guess the only thing that I can say is that after the events of that morning, the tragedy, I get up every morning and I appreciate waking up more every morning. I appreciate my family more, my wife.

My heart goes out to all those families that even today have no closure on the whereabouts, and may never have closure. I'm saddened just to think about the evil which

wrought this type of devastation.

My coworkers and associates, I hope that they will not have died in vain.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1644, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110116

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RENAE O'CARROLL

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 18th. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at EMS Battalion 39 in the lounge. The time is 1603 hours. We're conducting an historical interview with EMT Renae O'Carroll from working unit 39 Mary 2 on September 11th.

Q. Renae, tell us your story.

A. My partner Eddie Rodriguez and I logged on that morning at 8:00 39 Mary. Our first call came about 8:20 that morning -- no, more like 8:35, downtown Brooklyn. The call was a dupe to another unit's job. I can't remember. I think it was a 31 unit. I'm not sure.

We gave our position to the dispatcher that we were 98. We looked up and we saw this big mound of smoke. We turned the radio on, and we heard a lot of screaming and noise on the radio. We pulled over, went into a laundromat, because we saw a lot of people crowded around a television. That's where we saw what was going on.

We called up the dispatcher. It was really hard to get through. We went on Manhattan

frequency. That was the only one that was working. We told them that we would like to go down there and help if they needed anyone else.

Q. Right.

A. They said, "Yes, we were trying to call you, we didn't hear you, to send you over there."

We went down Atlantic Avenue going towards the Manhattan Bridge, and the heat was so intense, so intense, you could actually feel it while you were up on the bridge. I mean that intense you could feel the heat. Cars were coming this way, and we were driving that way.

They assigned us to go to Church and Vesey. We were going towards that area. The cars are coming this way. People are screaming and running, and we're going the opposite direction into the mess, into the belly of the beast of this thing. I still can't believe I had the nerve to do that to this day.

We got down there, and the scene was just horrendous. I've never seen anything like this before in my life. You were kind of afraid, but you knew you had a job to do. You knew there were people in there.

We went to the corner of Church and Vesey. That's where they had staging at. We were the third vehicle in line, one of the first units actually down there. The lieutenant there just said feel around and pick up whoever you can.

Q. You don't know who the lieutenant was, do you?

A. I can't remember.

At that point it was just mass hysteria down there. Nothing was really organized, because the mounds of people were just running all over the place. You were just picking up people that you saw screaming. That's how horrendous the scene was down there. We had our staging area, but because of the mass amounts of people -- you had FBI, you had police officers, you had corrections. You had everyone who was anyone down there.

We grabbed three people off of the ground. We had an elderly lady. She looked like she was burnt. At that time there was really no triaging. You were just pulling out of the mounds of people those that looked like they were

viable.

We had three ladies, one elderly. She looked like she might have been burnt, maybe heat-related, and two other ones. One was ambulatory, and the other two weren't. We grabbed them and put them in the vehicle. My partner said, "Close the door and let's go."

We were down there for maybe 11 minutes before the building fell. My partner Eddie said, go to the front and let's get out of here. I said we're going to go. At that point --

Q. The building actually came down at that point?

A. The building wasn't down yet. I was getting ready to pull out, and the transportation officer waved me over. He wanted to tell me what hospital to go to.

Q. Right.

A. I had my back turned towards the building, because we were directly in front of the building at Church and Vesey. I had my back to him. He was facing the building, looking over my shoulder. He looked up, and he had the look of fear on his face.

I heard something that sounded like marbles crashing down. At that point I looked behind me. I heard everyone say run. I looked behind me, and it was a gigantic blob of ash and molt and fire and everything just behind you, and I ran. Everyone was running.

I tried to grab people. People was grabbing on to me. We were just running, running, running. I have never seen anything like that before. I understand what someone says I looked death in the face. That was death coming to me. That's all I know.

I'm running. I'm ahead of it. Everyone's running, and it's just a stampede. I'm about ten feet in front of it, running, actually sprinting because I'm an athlete and I'm running. What happened when I got to the corner, because I remember my feet hitting, coming off the sidewalk, another blob of stuff came around.

Ash came around another building in front me, and it caught me in front of me and in back of me, and everything was pitch-black. Where it hit me from the front and the back, it actually lifted me off the ground and threw me.

It was like someone picked me up and just threw me on the ground.

Everything was pitch-black. You couldn't see anything. All I saw was big bolts of fire, fire balls. I could feel the heat around me. It was pitch-black. I couldn't see anything at all. My lungs, my airways, everything filled up with ash. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see anything.

I got back off of the ground, and I'm moving around. I heard people screaming, begging for help. I could feel something on my ankle; I don't know what it was. It was pitch-black, and I'm feeling. At this point I walk into something, and it knocked me on the ground again. I don't know what it was, but I hit my forehead on something.

It was just basically dark. I had never been through anything -- I thought I was dying. The only thing I could see was balls of fire, just balls of fire. At one point I thought I was on fire because it was that close to me. I could feel the heat. I said to myself, wow, I'm on fire. This is what it feels like to be on

fire. I don't know what it feels like to be on fire. I thought that's what it feels like to be on fire.

At this point I couldn't breathe anymore. I lie on the ground. I couldn't even get up. I couldn't move. I couldn't do anything. I thought I was dying. That's basically it. I thought that I was dying.

At this point I laid down, and I started saying my prayers. Having memories of my kids, my mother, people at work. I mean, my whole life is just flashing in front of my eyes. What they say is true, everything is just flashing. I accepted it, because I didn't feel I could move on. It took the wind out of me and everything.

I just lie there and I was praying. I looked up to my left, and I saw a light opening up in the sky. I figured that maybe the ashes and stuff is clearing a break. It was a beautiful day out. The day was sunny, bright and warm. I remember very well, it was a beautiful day.

I looked up and it didn't seem like the

sky; it seemed like a different type of light. Whatever this light was I was looking at, it made me feel safe and secure. I felt that that was the light that everyone's talking about. I said to myself at that moment I guess this is the light, I guess this is my time. I felt it was opening up and it was my time to go.

I didn't have any fear. Whatever fear I had prior to that, I didn't feel it. I just felt safe like someone was cradling me, and I accepted it. I was getting ready to die. I was losing my breath. Something told me -- I looked to the left on the ground, and I saw a red light. I don't know what that was. I'm thinking it's another light.

I can laugh about this now. At that time I couldn't laugh about it. I couldn't laugh about it.

And that's when I put my hand to the left to see what that light was, and I felt glass. What happened to me was just a miracle. The glass door opened up. It was a door. It opened up. It opened up, and it felt like someone put their hands under me just pulled me,

picked me up and pulled me.

I rolled down some stairs, and the door behind me closed. Down there it was a basement to somewhere. I remember there was a subway station that I ran past. I figured maybe it was the other side of the subway station.

The first thing I saw when I got up was a bucket of mop water. I needed to clean my eyes out. I took and I put the mop water in my face. I felt, whatever's in this water, if that didn't kill me, this is not going to. I took and I washed my face off just to see, because I couldn't breathe and I was blind. I could feel my J.V.D. My neck was rigid. I felt that I was still dying.

I felt around. I could see only maybe half a foot in front of me, half a foot in front of me. I'm doing like this, and I'm feeling. I saw something that said "men." It was a men's room. I couldn't get the door open. It had a padlock just like this station door. I couldn't open it up.

There was one that said ladies' room across there, and I started saying, "God, how am

I going to get in here? You brought me in this far. You're going to let me die down here?" I started questioning him, "Why didn't you let me die with everybody else up there? Why bring me down here?"

What happened next was very amazing. From out of nowhere I just pressed the numbers 325, and the door opened up. And that's the same numbers that we have on the station door.

Q. On the station lock.

A. 325. That was the only numbers I could think of. I couldn't think of any other numbers to a padlock. It opened up.

When I got inside of there, there was water. I turned the water on, and I washed my face. I cleared my airway out. I made myself vomit to get the stuff out of me. I cleared my nose out. I did that again. I looked in the mirror to make sure that I didn't have any more J.V.D., and that was going away and I was able to breathe better now.

I drank some water. Now I really needed to flush my eyes, but the water wasn't coming out fast enough in the faucet. So what I

did, I went and kneeled down over the toilet. I figured if upstairs didn't kill me, the toilet water is not going to kill me either.

I kneeled on it and I put my hand on the flush and I let the water go down. As it was coming up, I washed my eyes out, and I was able to see around me. I looked around and saw I was in a bathroom and that it had vents up there and that there was no smoke in there.

I wet paper towels and put it around the door. I was exhausted at this point. I lie down. I found out later on when I lie down and I went -- I don't know if I lost consciousness or what. I went to sleep. I found out later that's when the other building fell. Because when I was down there, that was the first building that fell.

Q. Right.

A. I tell you, it's amazing. It's really amazing. When I woke up, I don't know how -- they told me I was missing seven or eight hours. I don't know. I was asleep. I was asleep. I was asleep a long time.

I got up. I had no sense of time. I

got up, and I start thinking what should I do? I need to get out of here. I closed the door and I checked the numbers again to make sure I wasn't dreaming. It opened up. I was afraid to close it. I put something there.

Q. To hold the door open?

A. Yeah, because I knew I needed to get back there. Just so I wouldn't lose my way when I go running around, I took some tissue paper and I laid it out.

Q. A trail of bread crumbs?

A. Yeah, I did. I made a trail to find out where -- so I could get back there, because that was a safe haven for me. There was no smoke or anything.

I found out it was a boiler room, because it had an engineering door and it had a padlock on it. Then there was another one that said electrical. It was basically a work area on the side of the subway station.

I found an open window. I went to it to get some fresh air. I was afraid. There was nobody down there but me. It was dark, pitch-black, except a little light in the corner.

I should have been afraid, but I really wasn't, to be honest, because I felt now God was with me. He brought me through all of this and there was a reason I'm here and I didn't fear I was going to die at this point, just how to get out of here.

Q. Right.

A. I couldn't remember how I got in there. I didn't remember.

I saw some stairways. I went up the stairways. The door wasn't open on the first floor. I went up another flight. It wouldn't open. The third floor let me in. On the third floor was two glass doors to an office. I saw a phone. I'm trying to get in there, but it was closed. It had a doorbell on it, and I rang the doorbell, like somebody's going to be there to open it; right? Like somebody is going to open it for me. I'm ringing it.

I saw a fire extinguisher, and I'm trying to get it out of the glass. I had nothing on me. My radio had fallen, everything. I didn't have my cell phone on me. I couldn't get in, because I was going to crack the door if I could get to the phone to call somebody.

At this point I was still tired. I wasn't breathing the way I should. I was still a little tired. So I went back downstairs, following the trail, and I went back in there and I went back to sleep. I don't know when I got up again. I don't know. I got up again, and I said I better go back out there again.

I felt a little more rested. I was breathing a little better. I walked the opposite direction this time, and that's the way that I found my way out.

Q. To the top of the street?

A. Yeah, because that was the glass door. When I looked out there -- I got there, and I looked out there. It looked like hell. There were there on the ground. No, there were parts on the ground. There was metal on the ground. It was ashes and everything. It looked like a third-world country. You had people running, screaming. Ambulances at this time was running one man.

I opened the door and did like this, and someone grabbed my hand. A police lady grabbed my hand, and she dragged me. I said,

"Help me. I can't really breathe." She was crying and everything like that. We were pretty much holding each other up.

She jumped out in the street, and an ambulance -- it was a private ambulance, maybe Cabrini or New York Hospital. I'm not sure. At this point they were riding one man with the doors open and no equipment and whoever could jump in jumped in.

She took me and she threw me in the bus. She threw me in the bus. The guy said, "Get in and let's go." She threw me in there, and I said, "Please come with me." I grabbed her hand. She said, "I can't. I have to stay." I have to stay and help people. She couldn't breathe herself.

I wish I could see her again one day, a little small thing.

Q. You have no idea who she was?

A. I don't know who she was. I don't know who she was. I got in there. She might have been an angel. I don't know who she was.

The ambulance made two more stops with the door open. No equipment in the back. He's

riding one man. He's got ashes on him himself.

Q. At this time how late was this? Do you have any idea?

A. I don't know.

Q. No concept of time?

A. I had nothing. I don't know anything. I didn't know anything until I got to the hospital.

At this point he stopped to let two more people in, a police officer, an Officer Palono from the first transit -- from District 1, I think it was. I don't know. He came in. He was saying, "I can't breathe." I found one pediatric oxygen mask. I turned it on, and I gave it to him.

Q. Right.

A. I helped him. I put it on him and told him it's going to be okay. I'm not all right myself. I said, "You're going to be okay." I said, "Let's pray." Then they stopped and another elderly lady, I grabbed her hand, pulled her in and shared the mask between the two of them.

Q. Right.

A. We laid back there, just on the floor, sat there and prayed.

The ambulance pulled up to -- I found out later it was Beekman Hospital. There someone opened the door, and they grabbed us out. They just grabbed people out and threw you on a stretcher. The first thing they did was to make sure your airway was clear. Then what they did after that was take you and throw you in the shower to wash all of this stuff off.

I still had no concept of time. I didn't know what time it was. It was still daylight. But because of all the ash and everything flying around, it looked like it was nighttime.

Being in the hospital, it was like being on a conveyer belt. You went from one room to the next. They sent you from there to -- from the shower they sent you to another room where you got your eyes -- they put drops in your eyes. Then they sent you back to the airway room. There must have been a thousand people in each room. They were going down the line, actually putting drops in everyone's eyes.

It was just the worst day that -- I hope to God I never go through anything like that again. I've never seen anything like this before, never, never, never.

The job tries to prepare you for stuff like this, but for something like that there is really no way of preparing somebody for this; there really isn't. You wouldn't think in a million years something like that would happen.

Q. Right. What happened with your partner?

A. I don't know. I thought he was dead.

Q. You lost touch with him at that point, and that was it?

A. I didn't even remember anything about him. I don't know. I didn't remember anything. I didn't remember anything. I don't know what even happened. All I know is I saw a blob of smoke, and that was it. I don't know. I felt something lift me up and down the stairs. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know anything.

I remember my belt, my belt with my pink scissors. The building I was in, where I

made the trail, my belt is down there with the pink scissors on it. So if ever they find it, that's where I was.

Q. That's where you were.

A. Yes, I sure did.

I was in the hospital I don't even know how many hours. Finally I made my way to a phone. They made an announcement that the phones were up, that there's one phone on each floor that the patients can use. I was on a line of maybe 80 people.

When it got to be my turn, I called to let them know I was okay. The lieutenant was on there. He was crying. The captain was on the phone, Captain Medeiros. He was crying. I was crying.

That's basically it. I stayed in the hospital, and a unit brought me back to Division 4. I took a shower there. I cleaned up. They gave me a towel. I didn't have anything on. The only thing I had left of mine was my boots.

Someone brought me from there back to Brooklyn, and the whole station, everyone from all three tours was there. When I came, they

were clapping, and we all cried. It was just beautiful.

But I'm glad that I was there and they weren't, because it might have turned out differently.

Q. Right, right.

A. It wasn't my time to go. That's all it is.

That's it. That's my story.

Q. That's a story all right.

A. Yeah.

I went back down there two weeks later to help out at the morgue, because it was really bothering me. I had to go back down there, because I felt I ran away the first time. This time I had to go back and face it. I had to have some closure. I had to go back down there and face it.

I went back down there, and I said I'll work staging, because I had to get over that fear. They said, "No, you're going to the morgue." I was in the morgue for 22 hours. 22 hours. I had to get back there and face whatever it was.

Q. Right.

A. I know if something like that happens again I'll just have to do my best. I'll probably still react the same way. While people are running out, I'll just go towards it. That's it.

Do you have any questions to ask me?

Q. No.

A. That's it.

Q. Nothing else you want to say, that's it. Renae, thanks very much for your interview, quite a story.

A. It is.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview is concluded at 1625 hours.

File No. 9110117

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM RYAN

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CASTORINA: My name is Ron Castorina. I'm at Division 8 conducting an interview with Lieutenant William Ryan. With me is --

MR. CUNDARI: George Cundari.

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Lieutenant William Ryan, Ladder 85.

Q. Lieutenant, could you tell me, on September 11th, 2001, on that particular day, the events that took place that you can recall?

A. I guess I'll start at the Staten Island ferry. That's where I was when I first -- you know, I was on the bow of the Staten Island ferry. I should have been on the 9:00 o'clock boat, but they stopped all the boats because both towers had been hit already. I didn't see the planes hit the towers. I just heard it. They held the boat up, and I guess they held the boat up for probably 50 minutes, 40 minutes, to wait for the Staten Island police task force, and we waited for them to load like four vans with like 40 cops. Meanwhile, about 20 to 30 off-duty firefighters assembled on the boat. We were about parallel to Governors Island when the first tower collapsed.

MR. CASTORINA: Excuse me one second. The time is 1:25, 1325 hours.

A. The ferry boat was probably parallel to Governors Island at the time the first tower came down. The dust cloud was pretty tremendous. As soon as they slipped into the ferry terminal, we got off the boat and we started walking up. We decided as we approached that -- we could see the wind was blowing a little from the west, so the cloud most likely would go east. So we decided to go west. We figured it might be a little easier to breathe.

We had no idea what we were going into. We didn't know at the time it was a terrorist attack. We didn't know the towers had collapsed completely. We couldn't see anything from our vantage point. We just knew we were headed up there, figuring somebody needed help, and we just went up.

Q. What did you think you were responding to at that point?

A. Well, we knew we had fire. We knew we had partial collapse.

Q. From an explosion or --

A. Yes. Well, we heard a loud boom when we were getting ready to dock the ferry. Probably the jet fuel igniting, I assume. I was with Deputy Chief Blaich and Battalion Chief Billy Blaich, and about, like I said,

20 firemen. Some had bunker gear; some didn't. We were thinking chemical warfare also at the time. We actually did mention that on the boat because the police had gas masks and we didn't.

As soon as we got off the boat, we were in the dust cloud. You couldn't breathe. I had a bandana wrapped around my face. It was hard to see. Civilians were all over covered with shit. We just started walking through Battery Park. We were trying to go west and go up north, west-north.

When we got just to the other side of the park, I assume -- I couldn't really tell you where I was. I just assume we were outside Battery Park headed up West Street. We ran into a couple of firefighters who were dazed, confused, and we took their bunker gear off them, asked them if we could have their gear, their helmets and their coats, and we continued up. By the time we got to where we started operating out of Liberty and West, we probably had about ten guys in uniform. We actually even found some Battalion Chief and we took his handie-talkie off him.

We weren't in there 30 seconds and we picked up our first Mayday. Chief Blaich had the radio. Deputy Chief Blaich had the radio and he had a crew of

guys, and the guy had told us, "Mayday. Mayday. Engine 65 with a Mayday. I'm stuck in my rig. My rig is on fire." The Chief just asked him, "Where are you?" He said, "The last I remember, I was parked on West Street about 50 yards north of Liberty."

We couldn't tell where we were. I mean, I'd even worked down there seven years. I didn't know where I was standing in the street.

Q. It was very foggy?

A. Visibility possibly 30 feet at best and you could only see shadows. You could see several fires, dozens of fires, things blowing up, cars on fire, fire trucks, 113 where I was working for a while on fire. I've never seen anything like it. No one ever has. Chaos.

So we find a street post and we dust off the sign and we see we're at Liberty and West. We assume the guy is in the pile right to our left. We had no water. We find a rig and we get it started. The hydrant is no good. Together, as a unit, we decided we've got to split up and get water. So I said let's stretch into one of the buildings close to there and use the standpipe water.

We ended up getting water. We got water

through a standpipe. We used a deck pipe, stretched it two and a half, knocked the fire down. Guys got in there and they ended up getting the guy from 65 out, and he was banged up pretty good.

Q. Who was that? Do you know who that was?

A. That was the chauffeur. I don't even know his name. I've seen his name on the list. I didn't know him.

Then right from that, we just kept moving. Me and all the other guys, I've spoken to them since, I expected to find more people. The fact is there was nobody around. It was gray. I remember it being real gray, dark.

Q. Both buildings were down at that time?

A. I assume, yes. I don't know. I guess they were because they said -- I don't know. They were 18 minutes apart? Yes. So the first command post, as I found out later on, was crushed. That was under that bridge. 65's rig was just south of that bridge that collapsed where the first command post was set up. I know that from talking to friends later. It's probably this bridge right here, this pedestrian bridge. The furthest north one collapsed, and 65 was probably right about here, this guy, somewhere. He's right in front

of this building because we took water from this building, stretched to a pumper here, and we worked our way down. I mean, everything was so hard to work.

Q. It's marked on the map?

A. You're climbing over tons of debris. I assume he was under about two or three stories of I-beams. It was a nightmare. This pedestrian bridge was still up. So we were by there. That's the only thing I can use as a landmark, basically.

When we got word that they were getting him out, I kind of left because they really didn't need me over there anymore. They had a bunch of guys, and Chief Blaich grabbed me back over here and wanted to try to do something else. We were working in the pile. We were just looking for guys. He picked up a Mayday again. I think at that time we picked up a Mayday for 39 Engine and I think Ladder 6, and he was trying to get coordinates as to where we were.

We still had no idea what was going on. I didn't know the towers had both collapsed all the way. We didn't know. A couple of guys I've talked to since then said they didn't know. No one knew.

Then we just started more lines trying to put out some of the fires. At that time we had no idea of

the magnitude of what we were up against. It was like pissing in the street. We just started knocking down fires. There were all kinds of fires all in here. There was a big fire going right here on Liberty right, I guess, west of 10 and 10, they are over here somewhere. We were over here.

So we have no water. We were operating off whatever standpipe water was coming out of the standpipes in the adjoining buildings. The hydrants were no good. Later on someone comes up with a line from the street, but that's like three hours later. We just kept searching. We were just looking around for bodies. Guys were coming out. Firemen were coming out of the pile.

I ran into the probie from 5 Truck that I knew, Frucci, Bill Frucci, and he survived both collapses. He jumped on 5 Truck's rig. I was up in here somewhere by Liberty, just next to the No. 2 tower, I guess, right to the left of it, and I found him stumbling around. He was covered with debris. I asked him where the rest of 5 was and he was like, "They're all dead." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, they're in the tower." Then I questioned him again, "Where were you?" He was fuzzy. So I sat

him down. I had put water in my backpack that I grabbed from the ferry. I gave him a bottle of water and I sat with him and I told him, "Just sit here for a minute." I made him sit about a half hour.

We kept searching, looking through the piles for guys, and guys were coming out. There were firemen coming out of that pile. I went back to him later. He ended up telling me later that Lieutenant Warchola wouldn't let him in the building. He ordered him to stay outside. He survived both collapses standing in front of 10 an 10. I don't know how he did it. He said the first time it blew him into 10 and 10, and then he got up and started looking for guys, and then the second one came down.

Q. Did he say where Rescue 5 was?

A. Ladder 5 that was.

Q. Or Ladder 5?

A. He just told me they went into the tower. He didn't know. I know now that they were in the north tower. They were in the first tower. I spoke to the guys. 24 Engine was in the same house with them. They survived. A Lieutenant from there told me they were both on the 37th floor together and some Chief came running by and told them to drop their gear and get

out. He said they had no communications on the handie-talkies. That was the only message they got. 5 Truck went right. 24 Engine went left. 5 is all dead. 24 is all alive. They have a story of their own. They ended up carrying some woman down the whole way, not the whole way, nine stories.

Anyway, back to me, we just kept busy. Time was flying. I had no idea where time was going. The first time I looked at my watch, it was 1:30 in the afternoon. I was very thirsty. I stopped for water. I had hooked Frucci up with a couple of other guys that were walking around, stumbling around, and we assisted them all and told them to head to the ferry. I told them head to the boats. Basically, the advice we were giving everybody was get off Manhattan, get off Manhattan as fast as you could. We wanted everybody to get out of there because we didn't know what was going on. We knew something big was up, but we didn't know how big. We had fire all around us. Fire was everywhere. 90 West, which is this building right here, was fully involved.

Looking back at my notes, we had almost a third alarm assignment of firefighters in there at one point or volunteers that came up afterwards. Chief

Hayden came later. He ended up moving the guys out of there. But I'll get back to that.

So at this point we just keep looking through the debris, assembling guys, trying to get our act together. We were taking tools off the trucks that were there. We had no masks, no equipment. I was still in just a T-shirt and sneakers. So Deputy Chief Blaich grabbed me, and that's when he asked me if I had a notepad, and I started writing notes and he made me the command post coordinator. He had a handie-talkie and he was communicating with his brother Billy, who was up in the pile somewhere talking to 6 Truck.

They ended up making a rescue later. I don't know. I wasn't involved in that. I know at 1:33 p.m. is when they got them out because I wrote that down. When they mentioned that they were getting them out, that they were out, I wrote it on the pad, 1:33 p.m. So I basically got stuck over here now. I'm on top of Squad 1's rig that's now crushed.

Q. You were there?

A. Right here. They were parked on Liberty, right on this corner, I guess. They were on the southwest.

Q. Liberty and West?

A. Liberty and West. They're right here. Squad 1. Rescue 5 was parked here. We were using this engine here to pump off of and there were a bunch of rigs, ambulances all over, cop cars, everything crushed, on fire. All the rigs over here were on fire. These rigs were on fire.

So, basically, what was happening now, guys started showing up. For a while there it was just the ten of us, and then now, all of a sudden, I don't know where they were coming from, but firemen for some reason started showing up over here. It was pretty good, actually, because they must have spotted me up there and they started coming up and we started assembling them as companies. Five guys. If we had an officer, we would stick an officer with them. Chief Blaich would just turn around to me and say, "Send me ten guys, give me six guys, give me eight guys, ten guys." I kept pointing to him up in here somewhere, I guess, and he would just send them out where he had to send them.

We started getting bigger and bigger. I wrote down how many companies. Chief Mosier, who works here now and I work with him, was in charge of 90 West trying to put the fire out, and later on Chief Hayden

came up and relieved Chief Blaich basically, told him to move up.

Now I'm standing next to Chief Hayden and some guy from OEM office -- Hayden was at the job. I didn't know. He knew so much more than me. I didn't have a handie-talkie, so I had a disadvantage. I didn't know what they were communicating to one another. But he got up on the rig next to me and he said basically his concern was that he didn't want to lose anymore firefighters, that too many guys were dead already, and he basically called Mosier aside and told him, "Get everybody out of 90 West. Fuck the building. Let it go."

Later on he came over and told me, as I'm standing next to him, you know, I was still assigning companies, the street is filling up with guys, starting to flood up with guys. I assumed by now it was about 2:30 in the afternoon. He kind of took me on the side and he said -- at this point it started to clear. You could see a little bit and now you could see that thing sticking up over here, I don't know what it was, that thing that you always see now in the pictures, and I realized that the tower was gone.

Q. This is the first time that you realized that

they both had collapsed?

A. Yes. About 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Q. 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon?

A. And I realized fucking everyone's dead.

Q. You were initially there at just before 11:00?

A. I guess 10:30, 11:00. I assume, looking back and thinking, the second one must have collapsed as we were walking up. We heard it. But you couldn't see anything.

Q. You couldn't see in all the smoke?

A. You couldn't see anything.

Q. Were people running towards you, away from you?

A. Oh, yes. There were people all in Battery Park, people all over the place. We didn't run through that major crowd I see on the news now. But they were all along the fences. There were civilians everywhere covered with shit.

I remember Chief Hayden saying to me, "We have a six-story building over there, a seven-story building, fully involved." At that time he said, "7 has got fire on several floors." He said, "We've got a ten-story over there, another ten-story over there, a

six-story over there, a 13-story over there." He just looked at me and said, "Fuck 'em all. Let 'em burn." He said, "Just tell the guys to keep looking for guys. Just keep looking for the brothers. We've got people trapped. We've got to get them out."

That was our focus for the next 48 hours, and basically that's it. I don't know. After that, I remember the next biggest project was to find our men from the north. Now I realized that there were other people around. There was a northwest command post. They were up here somewhere. Then I heard there was another command post over here somewhere.

Chief Hayden must have come down from here because I remember we were running through these buildings. This is what we were using to get back and forth to talk to one another. There was a lobby here you could cut through and you'd come out over here. This glass was all crushed. You would come out on this side and we were running messages back and forth sometimes when we had to get stuff up there and you couldn't get through on the radios.

Then we found out, I guess around 3:00 o'clock, that they thought 7 was going to collapse. So, of course, we've got guys all in this pile over

here and the main concern was get everybody out, and I guess it took us over an hour and a half, two hours to get everybody out of there.

Q. Initially when you were there, you had said you heard a few Maydays?

A. Oh, yes. We had Maydays like crazy.

Q. You were getting radio transmissions?

A. There were people talking. The guys I've talked to that were with us heard voices and were shouting to people. We had heard pass alarms, but then we didn't hear voices, no more pass alarms. The heat must have been tremendous. There was so much fucking fire there. This whole pile was burning like crazy. Just the heat and the smoke from all the other buildings on fire, you couldn't see anything.

So it took us a while and we ended up backing everybody out, and that's when 7 collapsed. Then, basically, after 7 collapsed, I went over and told the Chief that -- by then they had companies with handie-talkies, masks. You've got to remember, the first 200 guys went in there with no handie-talkies, no masks, some of them with bunker gear, some without. A lot of guys I recognized. I'm on the job 23 years, so I know a lot of guys, and they were just coming up to

me. It was good to see everybody was there trying to do something.

Basically, we fell back for 7 to collapse, and then we waited a while and it got a lot more organized, I would guess. By then there was some heavy equipment showing up and the Chiefs took over, and I basically kind of slipped away from the Chiefs because I didn't want to be doing what I was doing anymore. I kind of felt stuck there.

I just got myself up in the pile and did a little digging and stuff, and I just looked around. I probably stayed until 2:00 a.m., and then I went home, slept, got up the next morning and went back up there. I didn't sleep well. I just went home to have my wife and kids see me. I took a shower.

Q. Were you able to get in touch with your family?

A. I had called my wife. I called her from the ferry. She was at work. She said, "Do you see what's going on at the World Trade Center?" I actually was on the Staten Island Rapid Transit. I said, "Yes. I can see it from the train window." So she said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Listen, I've got to go there." She said, "All right. Be careful. I'll see

you later." I told her I loved her and I just left. I was at the ferry when I called, and I ended up calling her again at about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon from a position over here. I went in there to take a leak and I just looked around. I guess when we fell back for 7 to collapse I called her. I found a phone that worked, a landline, and I got through to her. I didn't know the Pentagon got hit. I didn't know. She started telling me all that shit.

Q. She was relieved to hear from you?

A. I was crying and I just -- that's it. Basically that's it. I mean, the rest is history. But that was my first half hour or whatever. Just five hours of chaos.

MR. CASTORINA: This concludes the interview with Lieutenant William Ryan. The time now is 1:42, 1342 hours. Thank you, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT RYAN: Thanks, fellas.

File No. 9110118

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MARK MAZUR

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19th, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0651 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT MAZUR: Mark Mazur, EMS command, shield 3613.

MR. RADENBERG: We are conducting the interview at the Division 4 office, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. Pretty much that day started like any other normal day. I logged in at 6:00 in the morning. Around 8 or so I was monitoring citywide radio. One of the officers heard all the commotion going on on citywide.

I called my counterparty, who was on the road with the LSU truck. So we could man the MERV van, and that was specialist Bobby Short.

When he came in, we went downstairs. We were watching the TV and found out that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. So we load up the MERV van with new equipment that it needed in the truck, stuff like that, the ALS equipment.

I threw my equipment in the LSU truck.

We met Assistant Chief Pete Carrasquillo at the division. He loaded up his car with the duty captain and his aides, and they went up to -- they were going down to the event. They told us to relocate to Battalion 45 Woodside, wait for Lieutenant Hadala and any personnel that come down to respond into the event.

Pretty much the radio was -- all you heard was like commotion going on. You couldn't get through to the dispatcher, because they knew that LSU 4 and MERV van 4 were responding in. We finally got through to them for that.

We were coming over the 59th Street bridge. We were looking over at the towers, and you could actually see the people jumping. At first I thought it was funny, because you see these little X's coming off. You say, "What the hell are these things?" You're thinking then those X's are people coming off.

As we were coming over the last bit of the 59th Street Bridge, tower one collapsed. The radio pretty much went dead. When we came in, I

tell you, what helped us out the most was the traffic department. You know, those guys are always made fun of. They had everything shut down, and we had such a breeze coming over the bridge. The traffic was shut down.

When I hit 57th Street, everything was shut down and we just came down like gangbusters. When we respond with a MERV, we need two escort vehicles, because that thing doesn't go fast enough. So if you try not to stop it, you can get there faster. So we were blocking streets.

We got to the West Side Highway, and we saw a lot of people walking down. When we arrived 84 at the scene, where the first, I guess, staging area was, a lot of firemen there. Everybody was packing up and getting their hose packs and bottles and stuff like that, and walking down.

Q. Do you remember what street that was?

A. West Side Highway.

Q. And the cross street?

A. Not offhand. If I looked on this little thing that you have here, if that's the foot bridge, it had to be the first one by Warren

Street. Then Warren Street, we crossed over the other side of West Side Highway. We came down the opposite side of the West Side Highway facing out, because we had a bunch of fire apparatus that were parked all the way down.

So we stayed on the other side to come up, and then we crossed over by Vesey. That's where the MERV was. We started staging up over here.

Lieutenant Hadala and his command car came on the other side of the West Side Highway with me, and then I parked just on the other side of that foot bridge by Stuyvesant School, I guess it is.

Q. Stuyvesant, I believe, is up here by Chambers.

A. Then it's this --

Q. This is the American Express.

A. That's what we did. The white foot bridge that comes over?

Q. Right.

A. Yeah, okay, I was just on the other side of this, and I crossed back over. Over here you had a bunch of fire apparatus that was on the

south side of the street. What I did was I nosed my truck in between them, because I needed the back doors of my truck, I don't need the front.

Q. Right.

A. Then, again, I noticed firemen carrying hose packs, bottles and stuff like that.

After I parked my truck, I started taking my equipment out and all of a sudden I heard this sound. It sounded like a jet, a high, whistling sound. There was like a rumble behind it. It was like a jet with a locomotive behind it.

I heard people screaming. All of a sudden, the firemen that were behind me were throwing their hose packs down. When I came out of the back of the truck, I looked up and I saw the second tower coming down. The second tower was coming down.

Everybody just started to run down the West Side Highway. So with this I jumped out of the truck. A police car was coming up. It was snaking the traffic like I did. He stopped behind my truck, threw it in reverse and was going back. I jumped on his hood, because I

can't run that fast. I rode that for about a hundred feet. He hit a car, and when he hit the car, I rolled off the hood again and I just kept on running down the street.

Q. Was he going back up north?

A. Yeah. When the building came down, it had to be like a ten-story dust cloud or storm that came after us, and you didn't know what the hell was in there. All you saw was papers and you could see like the light in the papers. You didn't know if it was glass or whatever. It just turned the whole street dark, and it just came over. The best I could describe it is like a tidal wave that was coming towards us.

By the time I stopped running, it was like Barclay or -- you really couldn't tell, because when it hit you, it actually knocked you down, the motion of that pressure behind that. When I got up, there was dirt and dust everywhere. You really couldn't see. You couldn't breathe.

I made it back to the LSU truck. I had about, I'd say, 10 to 15 firemen in the back of my truck. They were bewildered. They didn't

know what to think. So I pulled my multi-laters out of the back with these subway manifolds, so you can give multiple O2.

Q. Right.

A. I hooked them up, and I started to give a O2 to everybody. I pulled all my masks out, so I gave them masks to guys that were still trying to get up to the scene, to rescue people.

Pretty much it was pandemonium going on. You could hear -- the thing was, I'm a fireman, a volunteer fireman. You could hear the pass alarms going off, all over the place. You didn't know what you had.

I was working there, there was a Hazollah truck that was right across from me. They were giving care to everybody. I was working with a guy from Hazollah, and you hear these explosions going off. It was crazy because -- what the hell was going on?

A fire lieutenant or EMS lieutenant -- I don't know, you couldn't tell because he was covered with dust. He came up to me and said, "Does this truck run?" I don't know. It was covered with papers from the World Trade Center

and dust. He said, "If it runs, get out of here; if it don't, then abandon the truck and just get out of here. We don't know if we're going to lose the whole area, because there were gas leaks under the sewer caps in the sewers."

So what I did is I took everything that I had out. I threw it in the back of the truck. The last patient I had was a Port Authority female. She was encrusted in this thing, in the dust. She couldn't see. I put her in the front seat.

I got my truck started. I backed out and then we pulled down the West Side Highway until we hit a safe area, which I don't know where it was. They had a fire hose hooked up on a stanchion like a shower. I took her out and hosed her off.

We ran into my friend Bobby from LSU -- from our MERV van. Both of us moved our trucks all the way down until we ran into two lieutenants and Commissioner Claire. We asked him, "Where do you want us to go?" Trucks are needed, we're getting back in service. He said, "Wait here," and just kept on walking. He really

didn't know what -- again, we were all -- nobody knew what was going on. We had no real command stations.

Q. So you don't remember where that was that you met up with him?

A. There was a restaurant there, Ponte's at Desbrosses Street. We were up by Desbrosses Street. That's where we were. I went to that restaurant one time.

Q. North of Chambers?

A. Yeah.

While we were there -- when that blast hit, that pretty much blew everything out of the MERV van. What we did, we got the MERV van operational and got all the equipment back on, put it where it was supposed to be, got it dusted out as best as possible.

We pulled the equipment out of the LSU truck, because it had like two inches of dust inside, the multi-laters were covered with dust. I blew all the regulators out. Now that was back in service again. Pretty much just threw all the big debris that we had in the truck out. My cab was filled because the windows were open.

The only thing that saved my truck was because I angled in when I pulled in between those trucks because everybody that was next to me blew their windshields out of their trucks. They got really blasted. Mine, I had papers and stuff like that inside, and dust and sand. But it saved my truck.

Once we were at that staging area by Desbrosses Street, we used my cell phone, because it was the only one that was working. Communications was screwed. We got in touch with citywide. They deployed us to Greenwich Street and somewhere down, I think. Is Greenwich on here?

Q. No.

A. Greenwich would be like up in here. I think this was Greenwich. They sent us to Greenwich Street. We reported over there and set up a treatment area. Greenwich Street and Murray, right over here. There was I think some kind of school or office building.

We set up a treatment area utilizing the equipment from the LSU and MERV van. We had a bunch of doctors from all around the country,

really. There were all kind of doctors. They were here for a seminar.

Q. Right.

A. They shipped the seminar down there and over to us. So we begin working over there. Again, we were just like covered with all the dust and crap and all.

Then the third building fell. That was over here.

Q. That was number seven, I believe.

A. There were a bunch of people standing on the corner of Greenwich and Murray Street. It was funny because we had two lieutenants who I didn't really know. All of a sudden when the building came down, it started stampeding all the people. When the people started stampeding, he said, "Go out there and slow them down."

Did you ever see Animal House? Remember that guy? I had that shot in my mind. I said, "You've got to be crazy." I'm a big guy. These people are out there trampling. So I stood on the back of my truck, holding onto the door rails saying, "Slow down, everybody." People were getting stomped in front of us. Then that

stopped.

We were there I'd say till about 8:30, 9:00. Then they moved us over to the Battery Park side. They wanted the LSU and MERV over to there, the treatment area.

That out of the whole deal has to be the most scariest part of the whole deal, because when we picked up -- you have to picture -- I don't know if you were there -- how heavy the dust and dirt was. When night came, it was just dark, no lights in that area. They had us driving all different side blocks to try to get on the other side of the World Trade Center.

So we were driving down this one block -- again, I don't know the names. I was following in the MERV. It was smoky, dusty, and you could hear a mouse it was so quiet. It was really eerie.

When we came up this block we saw burned out fire trucks, crushed ambulances, burned-out police cars. It looked like downtown Beirut. Plus you had fire hoses all over the place. We were jumping over fire hoses with the vehicles. The headlights didn't work because it

was so dark.

All of a sudden you see silhouettes of firemen pop up. Guys like walking away from the battle. They're like, "Hey, brother, how ya doing? Got any water?" They were just wiped out at that point. It's like, "Yeah, I've got a water here." You hand it out of the truck.

It was the most eeriest feeling. You couldn't tell what was in front of you. You didn't know if there was another building like leaning over. You can see all these crushed cars and vehicles. What's up above me?

Q. Right.

A. They put us on the opposite side, the Battery Park side. They had us park in front of a building. Then a bunch of people came up and said, "You have to move your truck because this building is going to collapse." I think it was the American Express building. It was unsafe or leaning, or something like that.

So they backed me up by the water. Again, I don't know the street, those Battery Park buildings, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A. Those high condos or apartments. It was right on the water. We backed down this block and we got the MERV and the LSU set up and had a bunch of ambulances coming.

That night we were there about -- we got down at that point about 11:00. We finally got released from there -- we set up the treatment area about 4:30 in the morning, quarter to 5. Then we were sent up to the command post back on the West Side Highway.

We got released about 7, 7:00. It was a pretty long day. I came in around 6. So I was on borrowed time on that.

Q. When you were here by West and Vesey, by the pedestrian bridge, do you remember, aside from Bobby Short, any other EMS personnel, or officers, that were there?

A. No. Oh, by the time I got done running, you had Tony Dimao, who's from M.T.D. You had Mike Felice from M.T.D., deputy director, the motor transport division. It was funny, because when I got done running from that blast, I turned around and said Tony -- because you couldn't see the block anymore. I turned around

to Tony Dimao -- we're always fighting to get a new truck. I think I need a new truck by now.

He looked down the block and said, "I think so." I know he went back down again, Tony Dimao and Felice because they got an engine -- they got a truck and a rescue truck out before we lost them, the trucks themselves. Unfortunately the personnel was still in the building. He told me when they moved the trucks they had to move some EPA escort. The guy moved it and he said, "Well, that's almost a million dollars of equipment they were trying to get saved and get out." It's like a $7,000 high-tech (inaudible).

Anything else I ran into? Again, I had the Hazollah guys there with me. That's -- Hadala, Tony Dimao, Mike Felice. I think I took care of their boss. I don't know who their boss is. I don't know if he was in charge of -- in charge of fleet, because he had a knee injury. I took care of him when I went to that safe area and got the shower.

Q. Right.

A. I gave him some ice packs because his knee was all swollen.

Again, we didn't know what was going on. When we responded in, we only knew a plane. We didn't know about a second plane hitting. We saw the fire in the two towers, when we came off the 59th Street Bridge. We thought it jumped over, but we didn't know a second plane had hit.

When we responded in, we had the first tower went down. All we knew was that everybody was gone. Those are the people you work with, like my chief and everything, the duty captain and all. They were in front of us. They were at the command post. So we didn't know they were still around until about 7:00 that night.

I called up my division, this office, and talked to somebody, and they said, "Oh, no, we heard from this one, we heard from this one." The lieutenants we were working with down on Greenwich Street, they had no clue. As far as they knew, Chief Carrasquillo was missing, Captain Deshore was missing, Captain Rivera, Chief Brown's missing, Chief Mittleman's missing. He went down the whole list.

Then he said, "LSU is missing." I said, "Oh, stop there. I'm LSU. I know where I

am."

Q. There you go.

A. So we're back with the people again, because they thought we were gone. Their last dispatch was that we were 84, up on the West Side Highway up there. We rectified that.

After that they had me on the missing list when they screwed up on something else. That's when we called the division office and finally talked to somebody and found out everybody we worked with was pretty much still around.

Again, we didn't find out it was a terrorist attack until we went to that safe area by Desbrosses Street. Getting the truck set up, someone said, "Watch out for anymore aircraft." "What are you talking about?" We don't have AM-FM radios in our trucks.

They said, "Well, they hijacked so many planes and this is an attack on America. They attacked the Pentagon. We were totally clueless." "What are we talking about? What's going on?" They said, "Watch out for any aircraft. If you hear any aircraft, duck down."

All of a sudden we heard the helicopters. They were guys coming in from New Jersey, cobras, so they were our attack helicopters.

Q. Right.

A. Then about five minutes later what really scared the hell out of us, we heard a jet coming down. It was an F-16 that came roaring up the Hudson River. It's like where the hell did he come from? Then it sunk in, they weren't kidding, because I thought they were kidding us. They said no, we're under attack. I thought that was somebody's wild imagination.

All of a sudden this F-16 is whipping down the Hudson. I go, holy shit, this must be really happening. They are after us. Now the big boys are here. You don't see military jets flying over.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

Who was the duty captain?

A. Rivera.

Q. Rivera?

A. Yeah. He was trapped for a while.

Q. J.R.?

A. Yeah. First day in Queens. He was

happy too because I gave him a locker that day, and everything.

Q. Do you remember who the aides were?

A. Katz, Jason Katz and Sal Sangeniti.

Q. Sangeniti?

A. Yeah, an Italian guy. Sal Sangeniti is Chief Carrasquillo's aide. Jason Katz is Chief Day's aide. Chief Day is out with an arm injury.

Q. Chief Day was at --

A. He was not at the scene. He's been out with an arm injury. The captain in the division, he went in with Chief Carrasquillo, the captain and Sal.

Did you talk to Captain Deshore?

Q. Not yet.

A. She was trapped for a while. She was forward command. We thought we lost her. She's a tough German captain, so we figured we would find her in New Jersey. She got rescued on the boat.

Q. Right.

A. When the second tower came down -- before the second tower came down, they got them off onto either a PD or fire boat. She was in

there with some people from the treatment area. We figured if she was in Jersey she was probably ordering people around. She's a tough captain.

That's pretty much everybody we worked with in Queens. A lot of Queens people were there. Unfortunately, we lost Carlos Lillo.

Q. Any thoughts or comments?

A. The thoughts, again, it was unfortunately an unforeseen tragedy. If it happened again today, pretty much we would have to do it the same way right now. I have a lot of friends that were in that building. Firemen on the job. All of us in that building would say, "We'll stay back here because it's safe."

We all came in knowing there's risk on this job and we know we have to go in there and get people out. They saved thousands of people. You can't imagine how many people they saved. Unfortunately they all lost their lives.

A building that big, you can't try to figure out every emergency that could happen to it.

Did you see that special on the History Channel?

Q. No. I have it on tape. I'm waiting.

A. Again, the guy said it. He said it in one sentence. He said, "You can't figure out kamikaze commercial jetliners." No way you can write that in the book. You can't plan for something like that.

Again, we got caught really bad this time. I don't think anybody acted out of the ordinary as far as bravery goes or doing their job. But they had to do what they had to do. Unfortunately to the end. If I had another job, would I hold back? No. It's not in me. If I was going to hold back, I wouldn't be on the job. It makes you really think, take stock in what you have.

Everybody did what they had to do. Communications could have been better, but it was hard because when we were coming up to the scene all you heard was those people trapped, over the command frequency and citywide. It gave you that much more adrenaline to get up there and try to get these people. When the second tower came down, you had enough.

The radios were pretty much dead. The

800 trunking radios were working very -- you know the 800 frequency?

Q. Right.

A. They were working very shabby. You had the repeaters on the World Trade Center. That's about it. The cell phones weren't working. Only AT&T was working.

But I got to admit, everybody stuck together. The system was working. I lost my beeper and my cell phone. I found the cell phone right away. It fell in the back of the truck when I jumped out. When I jumped on the police car, I must have lost my beeper in the Street.

It's funny, about a week ago the police property office, they called my Fire Department and said, "We have a beeper." They said they checked and have it assigned to a Mark Mazur, is he with your department. One of the guys there said, "Yeah, he works for the N.Y.C. Fire Department."

So they sent it in the mail. I got it back. It's all beat up. It's funny because I got my beeper back. I got my beeper back. Out of all that rubble and crap, I got a beeper back.

It's amazing, totally amazing. I was floored by that. I go, the system works. You figure thousands of people going around on the West Side Highway, thousands of people, trucks, and I got a beeper back. So the system works.

You had some cop down there in the property room, and he called up. Very weird. There's a reason why we are the biggest and the greatest department going. You start thinking of more and more stuff as far as when we pulled up there, the debris that was there, and unfortunately the people.

Fortunately I wanted to work really hard to take care of patients. That's the downside of it, the way that treatment area was set up, we were waiting for thousands of patients. They never came. If they arrived, they arrived on the other side.

That's it.

Q. Thank you.

A. Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0721. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110119

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GREGG HADALA

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19, 2001. The time is 0558 eight hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Gregg Hadala, Lieutenant, EMS command, Shield 387.

Q. Of EMS Battalion 50. We are currently at EMS Battalion 50. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Start with --

A. Okay, I was conditions 54 that morning, covering my regular area. We started hearing about a plane into the towers. I was with another unit on a call and we were listening on Department radios and the news radios, something was going on. I figured maybe a little plane, an accident and we found out it was much worse than that. I wasn't sent in on it. I was in the area. I was by -- sending messages that I could respond to that area, do you want to send me. I wanted to get a view so I went by 69 Street and Grand Avenue.

You could see the whole tower was on fire and stuff, both towers were still up at that time. People were pulling over in their cars and looking at it and everybody's like in shock. I waited by 69 Street before I -- people were getting out of my way and

stuff. I didn't even have my lights or anything, I was just driving regular and like everyone was like listening to their radios in their cars. They were sending the MERV-4 vehicle, that's the big bus outside.

Finally after an hour they were sending it and I knew it would be hard for them to get by in the traffic and stuff, so I escorted, escorted them in to Manhattan, to get over there so then they put me on the job.

We took Queens Boulevard -- we had to wait by BN. 45, between the LIE and Queens Boulevard over there. Rather than send them in, they said wait there for some reason. So all right. I escorted them over to Queens Boulevard to the 59 Street Bridge, over on 57th Street, shot over to the west side, and then downtown. I was like -- traffic was clear. They closed all the access roads to emergency, you know, emergency vehicles, so it was a clear sailing down there and as we were going down, everybody is evacuating from lower downtown. All the people are walking up in their suits and stuff, some were dusty. It was like an end of the world thing.

There was no direction really where we should

go, where to set up. There were supervisors, officers, Chiefs, fire side, EMS side calling for help and like just cries for help. I think that's when the first tower went down. I figured that people were trapped, people were dying, were dead already. Let's see.

I must have pulled up somewhere about 15 minutes or so before the second tower came down. Came up the West Side Highway, past 23rd and 14th. There was like vehicles coming from all over. Staging. Some were going in, some were waiting. We wanted to get a little closer to treat patients, but not too close, so we wound up by Borough of Manhattan Community College, Chambers, a little past there. Not all the way to Vesey, but we could clearly see the tower in flames and stuff and a lot going on.

Just trying to size up what's going on. We were basically, you know, had to make our own decisions because there was no upper command there telling us -- giving direction or anything. It was like that for the rest of the evening, so we had to do our best. So let's take a look, what's going on. And so we grabbed some people to see if there were any injuries, and treated wherever. While I was doing that, they said look out, look out and the second tower crumbled and

the shock wave and debris came. I had the big bus with me and another truck, the equipment truck. There was one medic with us.

Everybody took cover. Most of the people I was with, I didn't -- I was away from my vehicle. I was going to dive under a truck. It was a police truck and some guy was in it already. He said get in there. It's open. A Con Ed guy or something, so I rolled up the windows and the dust, the shock wave passed over. After a few minutes when the daylight came again, we got out and assisted anybody who wasn't able to take cover, and was covered with that stuff, and washed down some firefighters and police officers and EMS guys that were outside.

Then we can go back in the debris area and see injuries and stuff. Then they made us evacuate that area, they said there's another explosion, or said there's a gas leak and made us all head up towards like 14 Street. They told other units to go all the way up to 23 Street. Chelsea Piers. Apparently it became the staging area, so we got up to about 14th or so. I'm there, and you know, the big bus broke down so we had to clean her up a bit, because it got all dirty.

We got back going again and I let command

know that I was back in service, where we were, they told us to get over to another location. I think was probably near Vesey and Trinity, somewhere on the other side, I guess most of the injuries were.

By the time they gave us that direction, came down, Chambers and a little past Chambers, I don't know. It might have been Barclay. We wound up stuck in traffic by another building where they had set up a hospital area. Whoever was in charge there just told us to park there and work with the docs and the nurses there. We were waiting for victims and stuff but they didn't come. We just treated some rescuers that got hurt trying to rescue, but we didn't get any more victims from the Trade Center.

We remained there for several hours. Then that night they directed us over to the Battery Park City side. All these streets here. Just across the street from the towers, Ground Zero, whatever they call it now, and the apartment buildings.

Q. Down around Albany and West?

A. Yes, somewhere over there, close enough that, you know, if they pull anybody out or any rescuers get hurt, we're there to treat them.

Q. Right.

A. We were there till like about 5 in the morning. Washed down some guys, gave some oxygen. Finally were released 5 in the morning. They had set up some kind of command post on Chambers and West Street. There was an EMS Lieutenant and Captain there. I don't know where my vehicle is. I didn't know if it was still in one piece, whatever, you have to worry about de-conning it, whatever. They were like, yes, right.

Then I mentioned some missing equipment and all that. They were just like, whatever, go to your vehicle, go back to your station, go home. There were firefighters, Battalion Chiefs, like, you know, needing rides back to the Bronx and Harlem.

We were like full already. Just like -- I don't know -- maybe guys who lost their companies and stuff, they were just like, 6:00 in the morning. It was just like, you know, still just walking around. Got back, there were some extra personnel in the area. They de-conned the vehicles a little bit. That was it. Then we went back, you know, over time towards --

Q. Right. When you got in with the MERV to West and Chambers, do you know who else -- who was driving the MERV?

A. Yes, it was EMT Short, Bobby Short.

Q. Short. Recognize anybody else that was up there?

A. A medic that came with them, Wilson DiBrianno. He had no partner or something, and was at the station and jumped on.

Q. DiBrianno is from 50?

A. Yes, yes. Also with us was the equipment truck guy, Mark Mazur. He drove LSU-4.

Q. Right. Was there, when you got to Chambers and West, was there any other EMS staging or command area set up there or were you the first guys to get there?

A. There was guys by 14 Street or so. I think we were like the first guys to push up towards Chambers Street and after it collapsed, all units came up, there was a couple of ambulances down there. Fire trucks from towns I didn't even recognize and ambulances.

Q. Was there any other EMS officers?

A. There was, yes, Lieutenant Pincus, and another guy, he is from Battalion 8. Another Lieutenant, a Spanish guy. I forgot his name, but he was in the area. Initially that's all I saw, no supervision. Later on after the collapse, I saw one of

the Chiefs from our Division.

One of the Chiefs, he was there. He was doing whatever he had to do, he checked on us. I told him the MERV was down. It wouldn't start. We were trying to get it back together. I don't know who else. I saw one of the new Captains. She used to be here, Janice. They were taking her away in an ambulance. She was hurt. Olsz --

Q. Janice Olszewski, something like that?

A. Yes. I saw she was hurt, all covered in dust. She was stable. We were hearing things, this one is dead, this one is missing, that one is missing. Just frustration to see the tower on fire there and knowing that people are in there and rescuers went in. Firefighters, all those guys were in there. You know, when it collapsed, you said oh, man, it's like a lot of people just died.

There wasn't a lot of patients to treat. It was just, with something like that you figured it would be in the hundreds, thousands of casualties. Either you made it out or you didn't. That night you had to drive all around lower Manhattan to get to the other side there. You'd go walking down by the graveyard, all those areas around Battery Park City were all

covered with that dust.

Q. Any particular event that stands out in your mind for -- or struck you as odd or anything like that?

A. Just actually the collapse and the sound it made. It was like a strange sound, rumbling, not the loudest thing you ever heard, not like a boom explosion type thing, but just strange. How fast it was collapsing, you just started running. Looking back and seeing all the pictures they got after and the videos they are showing over and over again. Pretty bad day.

Q. Yes. All right. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. No, just as far as the medical staff was concerned. They were really not prepared, but nobody was. As far as like equipment, protective stuff, masks and stuff for the EMS crews, there was none after a while. The other stations, they had more stuff, that had no units involved. We didn't have much in the way of counseling and all that, checking on people's equipments and checking on us. You guys come down. It's like a month later finally seeing what happened, but we just felt that the EMS part could have been better organized and watched out for us a little better.

We are still waiting to hear about, you know, nobody went down for medicals or anything after. Some of us got sick. We were exposed to what we were and you fill out this exposure report, send it down and get no call backs. We don't even know if they got it or not. If anybody has got problems later, it's a concern that I have heard from our personnel. And equipment and what else to expect. Like what's the plan. If something else happens what is our plan. What do we do. Bioterror or whatever. We used to have special units to go in. HAZTAC trucks and stuff.

Q. Right, ERS?

A. Yes, I mean talk about bad timing. I think that should be back on-line. Working closer with the fire side. I mean, you know. Everybody has to work together and even closer, because our safety, our lives are at stake. I really don't see that happening, to the extent that I think it should.

So the people who didn't make it and stuff, their families. They don't even know how many people were in the buildings and stuff. I don't think they'll ever know. I've just been like working in sectors, on overtime in the past weeks, just seeing very few whole bodies going out, pieces of people, shoes and clothing

with some bones inside. I never saw anything like that.

Plus us police and firefighters on like 12 hour different tours. And they have been pushing us for over five weeks to run an extra unit. RCC says extra units, and this and that. Like yesterday, they tell me go down to the Trade Center in the morning. There's not enough people on overtime so they pull people from the station; ambulances, EMTs, and supervisors. So I get down there and they said oh, you are cancelled. We don't need you. Go back on patrol.

Two hours later they send me a message, report back down there. Went back to the city, and they called the command and Chief (inaudible) was in charge. Oh, what is he doing there. We don't need them now. Go back. You think a month later they would have it down how they want to do this.

Take an overview and catch up on things, recognize things that go well and try to tool up the things that didn't go good as far as organizing us, helping us out. That's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0618. Interviewed is concluded.

File No. 9110120

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DOMINICK MAGGIORE

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick.

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 19. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force conducting an interview with Lieutenant Dominic Maggiore, EMS Battalion 50 in the kitchen of EMS Battalion 50. The time is 0640 a.m.

Q. And Dom, if you would be good enough, tell us your story.

A. I was at Employee Health Service when the first plane hit. I had just been cleared for full duty, because I was out with a broken toe. I was on modified duty for a couple of weeks when the first plane hit.

As I was on my way back to Battalion 50 from BHS, I saw the second plane hit the towers from the BQE. I came back to Battalion 50, and I got in the command car with Lisa DeSena, one of the division ALS coordinators, and Paramedic Chris Lefkaditis, and we responded in.

On the way in or around when we arrived at -- we first responded to the Staten Island ferry. Around the time that we first got there or on the way in, I'm not really sure, was when the first tower fell. When I got to the Staten Island ferry, there was one BLS unit there. Shortly after -- and I don't know which unit it

was in the confusion.

Shortly after that, an ALS unit showed up, and we established the triage treatment area at the Staten Island ferry on the 2nd Floor of the ferry terminal. Communications was gone. Basically I used my cell phone to do all the -- most of the communication with citywide.

We set up a triage treatment area. As we established the area, you know, more resources started showing up. Somewhere along the way -- awhile later, Chief Basile came and took command of that area. It was, I would say, at least an hour or two into it by the time -- you know, we established the staging area, and the units started to respond to us.

Q. Right.

A. Basically we treated very few patients. The area -- it was mass confusion, because that was the staging point for the evacuation of downtown, so it took a bit of time and energy to get the area set up.

With that, we started getting voluntaries and volunteers, and we had probably 30, 40 beds set up, you know, with plenty of staff, medical staff doctors, and such.

I would say a little while after we were

basically established, Dr. Cherson and Manny Delgado came in, and they get there shortly after the second tower fell, I think, because they were blown from the force of the tower falling. They were up there.

I don't know time frames. I really can't tell. A little while after that, Chief Brown came in. We wound up treating and transporting Chief Brown, because he was in the rubble.

A couple of hours into it, it was pretty obvious that we weren't getting too many patients at that location, and Lieutenant Phil Soto was up at the One Liberty Plaza screaming for help. He was right there. The rubble was -- actually, I got there, you know, a little while later. I took my command car and two medics that came with me, Lisa and Chris, and we went up to Liberty Plaza, and it was a mess.

It was just -- the rubble from the tower was on the stairs, on the Trinity side of One Liberty Plaza. By that time it was starting to get dark. It was starting to get dusk. I don't know whether it was the dust, or it was starting to get dark or a combination of both.

There were a bunch of basically volunteers. There were some Jersey units there, some private units

there. I know particularly there was a girl Chris from somewhere in New Jersey who kind of set up like the triage treatment area in the lobby of One Liberty Plaza, and by the way, she did an excellent job.

When I got there -- Phil got there I guess a little bit before me, but he was more involved up on the rubble pile. I established the triage treatment. I, you know, kind of face-to-face with everybody. There was numerous doctors, numerous nurses, all volunteers. There were a bunch of people all over the place.

I spent a lot of my time fighting with these people to keep them away from the pile, because I had some serious concerns about it being stable, which unfortunately, later on, proved to be true, because there was a secondary collapse, which I think wound up taking the lives of a couple of the Port Authority officers who were in the rubble.

Somewhere during the course of the night -- I was there from daylight on Tuesday until about six o'clock, seven o'clock Wednesday morning, and somewhere -- during the course of the night, I had a problem with an Assist ambulance crew, that they were -- they had smuggled a reporter into ground zero

in the back of their ambulance.

When I confronted them and tried to get some straight answers, they got a bit belligerent. So did the reporter, and I convinced him to leave the area.

Back to the other part with the rubble. We had units operating close to the rubble pile and a couple of times on the rubble pile. Lieutenant Soto and I agreed that that was not a good situation, and we tried to get the attention -- we got the attention of the fire supervisors, and I think they kind of backed off to the edge of the rubble pile and were proceeding a little bit more cautiously.

We pulled out I think about two or three more patients during the course of the evening. Dr. Gonzalez had shown up, because there was a bunch of problems, you know, with doctors staying off the pile, people, you know -- narcotics being sent to the front line, you know, via anyone who said that the doctor up front needed them. You know, there were a lot of problems like that.

I spoke to a police -- I think he was an inspector, two-star inspector. I couldn't remember his name. I had issues with the Port Authority cops being up -- they were probably 30 yards into the rubble

climbing around, and shortly after that was when there was a secondary collapse.

There was a Port Authority sergeant who came to our, you know, treatment area, and he requested some narcotics, the morphine, because either one or two of his officers were trapped, and he made statements to the effect that they were going to try and cut them out. He said he was a nurse.

With that, two doctors who were at my staging area naturally volunteered to go up on the rubble, so the paramedic decided -- I advised the paramedic to send them to give him the narcotics, and they did.

To my knowledge -- and I was there all night -- those officers never came to our staging area.

It was just mayhem. I don't know how else to explain it. For the most part, our people and the volunteers, you know, they really did a really good job, a little bit unorganized, in my opinion. Like I said, unfortunately, I spent too much time -- I think I had to spend way too much time baby-sitting the doctors and nurses, volunteers. They really had no idea, no conception of command, and to the command -- they were all great and willing to help and all that kind of

stuff.

As a matter of fact, the fact that there were no patients or very few patients contributed to everyone being anxious and mulling around and all that type of stuff, and it just kind of complicated things a bit more.

What did get my attention, and the hair on my arm stands up as we talk about it, the people -- maybe not the higher-ranking, but the people who were down in the trenches -- cops, the firemen -- it was that they worked like they had worked together forever, like two good partners. They, you know -- for the most part, you know, listened to direction, you know, when it made sense, and anything you needed, people were right there, you know, hand in hand.

The volunteers, the public were outstanding. Even that early on, there were people walking around, you know, giving out cold drinks, you know, all of that kind of stuff. It was -- it was what kept me going the whole time.

I wound up being there from Tuesday morning until Friday, approximately 60 out of the 72 hours. I went home because [redacted]

[redacted].

Back to that Tuesday night again, there was a secondary collapse, which I'm not sure, but in my opinion, and what I think happened, that's what wound up taking a couple of those Port Authority cops that were missing.

Along with that, just in the mayhem to get away, we wound up treating three or four patients, just who got trampled, you know. You know, we had some problem with some organization. It's kind of difficult.

First of all, just two lieutenants. Phil Soto spent most of his time up at the edge of the pile with a couple of crews. Again, we face to faced a couple of times. We tried to keep the personnel at the pile as minimal as we could.

First of all, there were plenty of people. Second of all, nobody knew and it turned out hindsight is great, but there wound up being a secondary collapse a little bit later on the other side, which -- let me just kind of get a reference --

Q. The west side?

A. I was at Trinity and Liberty.

Q. Right.

A. Somewhere over here.

Q. North, up near --

A. Somewhere in this area.

Q. Right, it would be towards --

A. Is that the northeast plaza building.

Q. Yes, near West and Vesey.

A. There was some kind of other -- another secondary collapse or something, because you heard the big crash, and everybody by that time now they are already -- everyone's on eggshells. Anytime you heard any kind of a -- whether it was a crane on the other side or anything that sounded like -- people were squirming and running.

I wound up getting out of there Wednesday morning, like I said, somewhere around seven o'clock, six, seven. The time frame was fuzzy. I came home. I came back to the battalion. I wound up being treated at St. Joseph's ER, because my eyes were so severely irritated. I had bilateral abrasions.

I went home for -- seemed like forever, but it turns out there was, like, a five-hour span between when I drove to Commack and got back here. I was back here by about 12 o'clock.

As a matter of fact, Lisa and Chris were

waiting for me and wanted to know what took me so long, and we headed right back in again. When I got there, Captain Boyle was there. I can't think of one of the doctors. There was a doctor from the Fire Department. He was involved with FEMA. Kind of a big guy, oriental or Hawaiian type. I don't remember his name.

At that point, there was a triage treatment at Church and West at the Stuyvesant School.

Q. Right.

A. And at that point -- this is midday on Wednesday. It was still out of control. Narcotics and supplies were being sent up to the front line with civilians with a piece of masking tape on their shirt saying "EMT," and sending, again, supplies and even narcotics until -- I think it was Dr. Gonzalez was there. He told me kind of get a grip on the situation at Stuyvesant School, see what's going on. I did.

We set up security. We set up -- they pretty much had a treatment area set up. There was, you know, doctors, nurses. What wound up happening, with the help of Dr. Gonzalez, we put a stop to all the supplies going up to the front, first of all, without anyone we knew. We tried to get a grip on that.

We set up security in the Stuyvesant

building, because there was a couple of problems with reporters and cameras and all that kind of stuff. It got to the point where I had to get -- I don't know whether they were National Guard or whoever they were -- they were military -- to set up at all the entrances.

We broke the teams, the doctors and nurses, into two, sent some of them upstairs to rest. There was a Dr. Rich Machette and a Nurse Jo. I don't even know -- who basically took control, and we brought -- one was as a leader for the day, one was the leader for the night.

They pretty much took control of the medical staff and with me. We pretty much got a grip on it. I had a half a dozen masseuses show up, who were willing to -- and they set up shop, and they were giving out massages to, you know, anyone, just send them over.

You know, guys had been there now for over 24 hours, and they were great, and a medical staff -- there was probably two teams of maybe 20 to 30 doctors and nurses, and some -- you know, we mixed them with our people.

Basically we had about six or eight, you know, stretchers set up, you know, for serious critical

patients, and there was a doctor and at least one nurse and one EMT at each stretcher. We had an eye wash area, and they really set up. I just kind of, you know, got it flowing a little better, but this guy Rich Machette, this doctor, and this Nurse Jo really were outstanding, and that's when supplies started showing up from everywhere.

I had a guy on a tractor trailer with 21 pallets. Said, you know, he was told to come down here. I didn't have the need here. I sent him back up to Chelsea Pier. I took a little bit of -- it was gowns, and gloves and that kind of stuff.

My main problem with the whole thing was the civilian medical people. I mean, doctors really had no idea. I had an anesthesiologist show up with a black bag full of drugs. I mean, like, you know, and he was going to anesthesize someone before he tubed them. He had no concept of the fact that our paramedics tube people all the time, and he really had -- I mean, he meant well.

I wound up asking him to leave because he became such a nuisance, you know. We kind of set up with Rich and Joe, so that I wouldn't be bothered with every little nonsense, and the guy just got to be such

a pain in the ass that I had to ask him to leave that we didn't need him.

Similar with physical therapists. Everybody wanted to be in on all the conversations and all that, and I spent a lot of my time, you know, blocking and screening people who you really don't have time to explain. These doctors and such are so used to being in charge, and they had really no concept of the magnitude, or incident command at all.

I think that should be something that someone should, in a general, or whatever or something to that effect, because I spent a lot of my time schmoozing doctors and trying to get them out of my way.

Q. Right.

A. I was there Wednesday until Thursday morning, eight o'clock or so Thursday morning. The whole time my radio was pretty much useless. I used my cell phone for most of the communications, and I lost that for awhile in between there.

I had received a couple of calls during the course of the night because of my nine year old had a nightmare that I had been killed, and around then was when the news of Carlos Lillo started spreading around that he was missing. I broke him in when he started.

He was a partner of mine.

Anyway, by Thursday morning, I had to go home and take care of my son. He refused to go to school until he saw me, so I went home, and I took him to school, and I spoke to the counselors at the school, tried to get a couple of hours sleep.

I came back. It was late Thursday, about four o'clock, somewhere around then. I was there Thursday, and I was basically with Captain Boyle helping him with logistics, and he was just exhausted so he went -- I don't know whether the ship was there yet or he went uptown to one of the hotels that were letting people sleep or whatever, and I kind of -- I was there with Chief Perrugia and Lieutenant Mann.

At that time somewhere during the course of the night Thursday, I met a Chief Smith. There was a frantic rush because he had misplaced a piece of equipment on one of our gators, and he was frantic over it. You know, no one would elaborate over the radio what it was or whatever, and when I finally tracked it down, it turned out to be a Scott pack with a piece of the skull still attached to it, and wound up being Captain Amato's, from Squad 1, Scott pack.

It was amazing to me. The chief was, like,

frantic and upset and on the verge of tears and all that. When I finally -- I didn't know what it was, and when I -- he opened it up. I brought it to him. He opened it up. He looked at it, and he handed it back to me and told me what it was.

By the time I, like, checked it out, and I was looking up to see how the chief was, because he was obviously upset and it was Chief Smith. He handed it over, and he did his job, and he was going back to work, and, you know, I had told him because when I brought him to the morgue, the morgue was, you know, barely set up (inaudible) and the marshals that were there, we kind of -- I kind of peeked over their shoulder while they were trying to figure out whose it was, the Squad 1 Position 1, which is the captain from Squad 1, and when I went back to at least give the chief some information, he was already gone back to work, you know, which was pretty moving.

By that time it started raining during the course of the night between Thursday and Friday. To be honest, I was pretty disappointed in how the movement of our personnel went out, was seriously lacking, you know. We had an academy staff that was there for, like, 20 hours, waiting, like, four hours for a ride

home, a ride out of there, and we couldn't effect it.

In my opinion, a lot of the -- you know, I'm in charge, I'm in charge, started taking place, and at that point, I had to pull myself, because it was difficult for me to begin with. Naturally, my family was not happy that I was there, although they understood as best they could that's where I had to be, but when, you know, that ugly stuff started showing its face, I knew it was time for me to back out of there, and I wound up leaving there. When I finally got a bus to take the academy staff out, it was when I left, and I pulled out.

Took a couple of days off, and I went back, and then I've been back there two weeks ago, and I went back a couple of days to work the morgue sector. I worked EMAP sector, and then the next week I was there for three more days, and now three or four weeks into it, and we still were not organized enough to get our people in and out of there in a reasonable fashion. Every day wound up being 16 hours, 17 hours.

Q. Of a 12-hour tour?

A. Right. Well, it was a regular tour for me. I went there on straight time.

Q. Right.

A. So it wound up being 16 hours, 15 hours.

Q. Right.

A. It's just the people -- this is my own -- the public -- had it not been for the public, I couldn't have done it. You know, as much as there were these incidents of the isolated assholes who acted stupid and this kind of stuff, you know, that happens all the time unfortunately. It brings out the shit in people as much as it brings out the good in people.

When I went back there Wednesday -- I was driving in -- West Street was lined, like, from the Chelsea Pier to, like, 59th Street where I came across town, or somewhere thereabouts, with the public. There were people walking around, you know, handing you sodas, handing you gloves, handing you cold drinks.

If it were not for the public and their support, I probably would not have been able to do it. When I came home that Wednesday morning, my pharmacist -- and I live in Commack, which is you know, 45 minutes from the city, you know, I explained to him, look, I need this prescription. It was for my eyes. If you can't do it right now, I have to leave, because -- he dropped what he was doing. He did it.

Thursday when I went home for a couple of

hours, I had seen my doctor because my feet were all screwed up. I broke a couple of toes. My feet were really bad. I wound up -- my doctor stopped in the middle of treating a patient, brought me in. He wound up giving me cortisone shots, because my feet were so screwed up. He wrote me scripts, called them in to the pharmacy, you know, and they are pretty far removed. They really didn't have to do all that, especially the doctor. He just like -- and that was -- that was far away.

Saturday and Sunday I stayed home, and although I would have liked to have just relaxed, there was a steady flow at my house of neighbors, friends -- neighbors that I'm really not, you know, close with and stuff that knew I had been down there that had seen some pictures, and it made a difference.

I think that's about my story.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right, Dom. I thank you for your story. The interview concludes. It's 7:09 a.m. Thanks again, Dom.

File No. 9110121

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROLAND DIAZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

R. DIAZ

TAMBASCO: Today is October 22nd. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. Interview time is beginning at 8:08, and our interview today is with…

ROLAND DIAZ: Roland Diaz Junior.

Q: Roland, tell us your story.

A: I remember on September 11th, I was going to post when I got a call for a plane that hit the World Trade Center. Me and my partner started heading down there.

Q: Who was your partner that day?

A: Chris Attanasio. We started heading down there towards Manhattan. We were at the Bruckner Interchange when I saw the second plane hit the second tower. So, we're rushing down there, we're fighting traffic. We go on the FDR, we get off. We got there between 10-15 minutes. We started pulling up on Church Street.

Q: Do you remember Church and what?

A: Church and Vessey.

Q: Great,

A: That was the staging when we first got there. On our approach we saw bodies on the floor. We go talk to the commander. The commander tells us to start setting up, start heading in. As we started getting on our gear, the Lieutenant came out and told us that they're changing staging to West and Vessey. So we pull to West and Vessey. We get our stretcher out. We're getting our gear. We go down and start walking

towards the building. There was so many people there, everybody was running around. It was more a thing of people running around like a chicken without a head. So before I started to go, I had this need to call my Dad. When I picked up the phone to call my Dad to tell him bye, I was in building….

Q: The North Building is One, the South Building is Two.

A: No, I was in building Five. I went into the entrance, they also had another triage set up in there. I pick up the pay phone, call my dad, I finally get in touch with my Dad. People start running, yelling another plane hit the building. So, one side of the building was all glass, when I looked at it, my first reaction was to run down into the basement. But then in my head I said, that would have been the wrong thing, I would have been stuck down there. So I start running towards West Street within the building, so I guess I'm running West. I found an exit. Once I stepped out the exit, a cloud of smoke with debris, the minute I stepped out, overtook me. It was so much debris that if you put your hand in front of your face, you couldn't see it. I started coughing. At the same time, I'm still trying to get to West Street, away from the tragedy. Me and my partner, we meet up. This gentleman from OME, Operations Emergency Management…

Q: OEM.

A: Yeah, OEM for New York City comes up to me and my partner. He says my Lieutenant is still in there, I need somebody to take us. So me and my partner, adrenaline is still rushing, we go to the ambulance, which is full of debris. At that time

everybody is running in all directions cause they didn't know what was going on. All they knew was somebody yelled that second plane hit the building, and later they realized that the building collapsed. So we run back to the bus. Luckily the bus starts. The guy from Emergency Management jumped in the bus, we started heading back towards tower one. We opened up the doors. We got as close as possible. A fireman came up to us, he had lacerations to his face, he had burns, he had respiratory problems. Another gentleman came up to us, he had a pacemaker and he had chest pains. A handicapped woman, on TV they mentioned, not everyone had seen it about this guy who said he was helping this lady down the stairs who was handicapped, brought her down into the lobby, didn't know what happened to her, and was wondering if she was alive. I happened to be, me and partner, the ambulance that picked her up. Everybody ran to us. We put on our masks cause we kept breathing in, breathing in. We transported at least 6 to 7 people. Cause everybody ran in, we closed the doors, and we took them to, I think it's Cabrini Hospital. The one thing that I really remember. When we pulled up it was a ghost town. All you saw was dust. The building wasn't there anymore. Everybody's running in different directions. Everybody's trying to find each other. After that, my partner and I talked and listened to other peoples' stories, and basically that's it.

Q: So you were already en route to the hospital when the second building came down then?

A: Yeah, I was there when the first building collapsed.

Q: Well, is there anything else you'd like to add to this for posterity?

A: Well, September 11th will be a day that I'll never forget. You know, it made me a different person to realize how precious life is and it gave me different aspects of how I see things now. And to all the families that lost members, my deepest regrets to them.

Q: Okay, well I thank you for your interview. This interview concludes at 8:15 AM.

File No. 9110122

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER CONSTANTINE

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

P. CONSTANTINE

MIKE TAMBASCO: Today is October 22nd, I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The time that the interview begins is 6:35 AM. The interview today is with EMT Peter Constantine of Battalion 20. Pete, just give me your name, ranks and assignment, then just tell me your story.

PETER CONSTANTINE: Peter Constantine, EMT, Battalion 20. I usually get off at 8 in the morning. That day we had a late call. After the late call, we came back to the battalion, when we saw that the Trade Center was hit by a plane. We were assigned to go down. As we started heading down the West Side Highway, we saw the second plane, we saw both towers on fire. There was nobody on the West Side Highway after the second plane, just us and the police following each other down. We went straight through all the way down. We parked the ambulance with a lot of other ambulances on Vessey Street and West. We basically started grabbing equipment and helping out people who were running out from the building originally. At that time it was just chaos, everybody going everywhere. We were helping any way we could. A lot of people wanted to help. At that time, I don't know what time it was, we heard across the radio the tower's gonna fall, the tower's gonna fall.

Q: You heard that on the radio?

P. CONSTANTINE

A: Oh yeah, it came across. And then all of a sudden, when you looked up, you froze for a couple of seconds, you saw these little pieces falling off. Then all of a sudden, everyone started to run. Then, you started to run, your helping people, helping them run. You saw it, it was amazing…like out of a movie, you know, the cloud's just chasing you. As you look back, you see it engulf people. After that was over, we all went back in.

Q: Do you know about how far up you got before you went back?

A: It had to have been a couple blocks. We also brought the ambulance too.

Q: Oh, you took the ambulance with you?

A: When we went back, and then we just started helping people. Everyone was covered in dust, everyone was breathing it in, we were trying to help them, cleaning them off, anybody injured. Basically at that point it was just a whole mess of people: a lot of EMS, a lot of Fire, a lot of Police, just everybody helping everybody, trying to do whatever you could, as much as you could in a fast amount of time. Mostly we were cleaning off the dust from your eyes and face. A couple of people needed to be transported, so we designated the busses to transport. Basically it was everybody trying to work together, get it together, cause it was chaotic too. And then, it felt like ten minutes, the other building fell. I read in the paper the next day that it was actually something like 30 minutes later that it fell. When that one fell everybody ran again.

Q: You must have been right next to it then when that one came down, right? Cause that was the North Tower that came down second.

P. CONSTANTINE

A: We were close, but when we ran, we ran enough fast enough, that we weren't as overcome as other people. We got out. But we still got covered. Then when the other tower had fallen, it felt like ten minutes, but it was like you said, a half an hour. Everybody ran again, then there was a gas leak they said, they pushed everybody way back to 23rd. So you had all these units, all these rescue people stationed at 23rd street, and you couldn't do anything. That was the most frustrating part, cause you were there, and you were helping everybody but you couldn't go back to go get them. So you had to just sit there, cause those we our orders. We had to just sit there. Which was smart cause it was such an unsafe scene. That was basically it, we sat there for a couple of hours, everybody, not knowing what to do or how to help. Then eventually we started getting different assignments. Then they sent us home, we spent the night at ---they set up quarters at the hospital, cause you couldn't go home. There were cars everywhere and they blocked you in. So me and my partner actually slept at the hospital in the dialysis unit that night. Then we came back, went back down, did a couple tours down there. It felt like we were actually doing something, helping when we went back down. It changed my life you know? I've only been on the job six months, and I saw something like that.

Q: You won't see something like that again.

A: I hope not. That's pretty much what happened that day.

Q: Anything else you want to add to it? Go down into the history? Anything?

A: It changed my life. I'm like, ready to get married and have kids. I don't know what's gonna happen. I'm too young though, I'm 23.

Q: Okay Pete, thanks for the interview. We'll conclude the interview at 6:41.

A: Thank you.

File No. 9110123

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VINCENT MARQUEZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 22, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with --

EMT MARQUEZ: Vincent Marquez, EMT, Battalion 20.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001. The time now is 0855, beginning of the interview.

Q. If you would start pretty much from when you were assigned to the job and how you got into lower Manhattan.

A. Okay. Basically what I remember is that day I -- that morning I was off. I was at home. I was on the computer, and I had the TV on. I heard the TV say that there was an explosion at one of the towers. I thought it was internal. I really didn't pay much mind to it until the second plane hit and I heard the news reporter say, "Oh, my God." I know what's going on now.

At which time I stared at the TV and

they showed the instant replay. When I saw the second plane hit, I immediately called the station. They asked me to come in. I came down, put on my uniform, and I grabbed Fermin. We jumped on a bus, and we were 20 Nora.

I remember en route there was like a lot of confusion on the radio, and I heard somebody screaming "Mayday!" The dispatcher apparently didn't hear them. As soon as there was a break on the radio, I got on the radio and said, "20 Nora, somebody is calling a mayday." The dispatcher said, "Who is calling a mayday?" The guy kept saying, "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" All of a sudden it was just dead silence, at which time me and Fermin, we looked at each other. We were like, oh, my God.

Anyway, when we got there, there was a lot of dust and debris just floating around. It was pretty hard to see maybe three, four feet in front of you. I jumped out of the ambulance, and I grabbed my bag and just started walking towards where I thought the smoke was coming from.

I distinctly remember hearing somebody like whimpering, and I started make may way

towards that sound. I couldn't see, but I was following it from what I was hearing. All of a sudden there was like this roar. I remember stopping.

It's funny because yesterday I was thinking about this and I remember Fermin screaming out my name and telling me to run. That's when I kind of like woke up. I turned around and just started running. As I started running, I looked behind me and there was this huge, black cloud just closing in on us.

Once it pretty much settled, I went back with Fermin to where I thought I heard this whimpering coming from, and there was nothing but silence, this eerie silence.

Fermin had the stretcher, and he was following me. I was pretty much just leading the way. We picked up people here and there, and we just started throwing people in the back of the ambulance. We dropped them off at Metropolitan Hospital and shot back.

We went back into the area, pretty much ground zero. It seemed like a nuclear bomb had hit. There were vehicles abandoned at the light.

There were vehicles crashed into each other, vehicles on top of each other. I remember seeing firemen walking around in a daze.

I think the second time around Fermin -- we got separated, and I met up with two guys from Battalion 17. I don't remember their names. They were out there doing the green ham thing. They had the EMS jackets with Green's name on it and stuff like that. They just grabbed whatever equipment they could and they just went out trying to find people.

I remember looking into -- because all the cars, everything was covered with dust and debris. We were lifting things and walking by the cars and wiping the window to see if there was anybody in the cars, stuff like that.

I think that what hurts the most is the fact that there was nobody to save. I don't know. I guess that's pretty much it, just trying to find somebody to save, but there was no one.

Q. When you were going down, responding down there, do you remember what routes you took, what streets you were on once you got down there?

A. I remember we went up Fifth Avenue,

because I remember seeing Central Park to my right. Once the park ended -- Fermin was driving, and he just started making twisting lefts and rights and stuff like that. So I really don't remember. I really don't remember where it was that he parked.

I know that there was a couple of ambulances already there when we got there. But it's like the ambulances were a couple of blocks ahead, and everybody was where we were at. I found that -- I don't know, to myself I said why are they here. That's when I grabbed my gear and I just walked by everybody and just started walking towards the cloud.

Q. Do you know was that still north of the Trade Center complex?

A. I don't remember that. I don't remember that.

Q. Aside from your partner, did you recognize anybody else that was down there?

A. Kevin Darnowski. He's one of the paramedics here. I remember seeing him down there. I don't remember his name, but when I first got on the job we had -- I had a partner.

I used to work in Manhattan. I remember seeing him. I don't remember his name.

I know that after all this -- after we finished looking and stuff like that, we went to the pier that was one of the triage areas. When I got there, that's when I --

Q. Chelsea Pier?

A. Yeah, that's the pier that takes you to the ferry.

When I got there, that's when I saw a lot of people from the station that I knew. They were there setting up triage and stuff like that.

Yeah, that's it. That's all I remember.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd like to add?

A. Yeah. I remember later that night I had gone to -- no, actually it was the second day, Wednesday. We had gone to actually where ground zero was at. I don't remember what it was that I needed, but whatever it was, it was at a makeshift morgue that they had.

I remember just seeing big body bags with little lumps in them. At that point I

realized that those were body parts in there, not entire bodies. I remember when I looked to my left someone was putting a leg or a foot in a bag, and they were just starting to zipper it. I just felt helpless.

I went down the 11th and the 12th. After that I didn't go back down anymore. When I realized that there was -- I think it was pretty much the second day, because myself, like everybody, was hoping that we could pull people out, there would be actually someone. But the second night I realized that there was no one to save, [redacted]

That's pretty much it. After that it was lack of sleep, the nightmares, which I'm still having.

That's pretty much it. That's what I can remember.

MR. RADENBERG: Just for correction, on the start time of the interview was at 0850, and the time is now 0902 with the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110124

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF JAMES MARTIN

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. TAMBASCO: The date is October 22, 2002. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're in the office of chief J. P. Martin at Battalion 20 in the Bronx. The time is 0655 hours and we're conducting an interview into the events that chief Martin witnessed on September 11th at the World Trade Center.

Q. Chief, if you'd be so good to tell us your story.

A. On the morning of September 11th, I was at home. I was notified by my aide that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. Having responded in 1993 to the initial World Trade Center bombing, I was pretty convinced that we'd be responding in.

I notified Citywide on the radio that I was available for response and awaited their dispatch not knowing what resources had been assigned already. About ten minutes after that I was advised to respond in. I called my aide back, advised him that we were rolling, that I would meet him at our Battalion, 53, and we would go in together from there. I got dressed, got in the response vehicle and responded in from home. I live in New Rochelle.

We encountered terrific traffic delays on the

way in. We found a lot of civilian vehicles were stopped in the middle of the highway at high points on the roadway where you could see Manhattan to watch the towers burn. So we had difficulty getting in. But on the way in I tried to develop a response plan for EMS.

I notified the Citywide dispatcher that, instead of responding directly to the site, that I would respond to the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge and establish a casualty collection point, and I directed them to have all Brooklyn and Queens units respond to that location in lieu of responding directly into Manhattan and we would from that point funnel patients out from there utilizing the Manhattan ambulances to ferry patients across the bridge and go right out from there. Another chief, Ellen Scibelli, heard my request. She was only a few minutes out from there. She said she would respond to that location and she did so and started to establish this casualty collection point.

Upon our arrival at that location, which was the intersection of Tillary and Adams Street, Ellen had already established the site. She had a number of ambulances there. She was also working with Lieutenant Joe Lugo. We noticed just hordes of people coming over

the Brooklyn Bridge covered in soot. I took a hydrant wrench from out of the trunk of the car and I opened up a couple of hydrants or I had a couple of hydrants opened so that people could decontaminate themselves at that location, and I got on the radio to try and establish radio contact with any other chief officers, EMS chief officers who were operating on the Manhattan side.

There was no response at that point. No one came over the radio, there was no voice conversation, and you couldn't see from all the smoke, but that was the point, I believe, that the second tower had dropped at that point. Like I say, no one was answering the radio.

I notified the Citywide dispatcher that I would assume command of the EMS operation until such time as they were able to contact any other chief officer, and I asked Citywide to do a roll call of EMS officers to determine who was operational and who was not. At that point I wasn't sure if people were alive or dead, and it was a very terrifying moment thinking that I had the responsibility for the EMS response to this incident.

I also was very concerned about going over

the bridge knowing, of course, that two airplanes had struck, that it was an obvious terrorist incident at this point, was there anything else involved besides just aircraft, were there chemicals or biological or nuclear components to this that would have affected anyone operating on the other side, and I felt that it might be more prudent to run the operation from the Brooklyn side and just await confirmation that there were people operating on the Manhattan side. I didn't feel it was prudent to send further resources over the bridge if there was an inferno or if there was a higher risk going on on the Manhattan side.

Several minutes later Chief John Peruggia came up on the radio. He said he was operational. I said do you want me to respond in to your location? He said yes and he gave me the intersection of Chambers Street and West to respond in to.

I did so. I traveled directly across Chambers Street after crossing the Brooklyn Bridge and the roadway was littered with a couple of inches of white dust. It almost looked like you were traveling through a snowstorm. There was a very strong odor of smoke in the air. There were some people walking around with paper masks.

We found a group of ambulances at Church Street and Chambers Street and an EMS lieutenant from the South Bronx. I'll try and think of his name later. I asked him to try and organize those ambulances and write down who they were and we would contact him on the radio if we needed those resources. I continued driving westward across Chambers Street to West Street, where I met up with Chief Peruggia and Chief Kowalczyk, and from that point we began to regroup all of the EMS resources at that location.

Within a short time, Chief McCracken appeared, Commissioner John Claire appeared, and we began developing a response plan for how we would manage the injured and we tried to regroup the officers who were there. Chief Basile came up. All of the officers who were there prior to my arrival were visibly shaken. They were really -- they were coping, but you could see that they were really visibly shaken by the incident. Kevin Howe, he's a lieutenant down at Lincoln, he was operating as safety officer. I believe he had responded in from home, and he was trying to ensure that people who were operating were operating in a safe environment and he was doing a real good job of that.

I stayed at the command post. Walter gave me the responsibility, Chief Kowalczyk gave me the responsibility of the communications officer, and one of the things that I had done prior to leaving the house, having responded the first time and realizing that we had limited resources, I filled the car up with several bottles of water and I brought my little portable radio charger. Knowing that the new 3500 radios were out there but we didn't have chargers for them, I threw that in. So I felt that, if we could find 110 volts, we could at least keep the radios charged for the extent of the event. So I had that with us and we found a source and we kept just exchanging batteries through the course of the day.

Between Chief Kowalczyk and I, we reestablished contact with all of the chief officers. He had all of the chief officers report in, regroup, briefed everyone on the operational plan, and he handled the planning component and I handled essentially the communications and the, I guess, the smaller scale directions for officers on scene and left the more major decisions to Chief Kowalczyk and Chief McCracken.

I recall seeing Chief Gombo at the scene as

well. I did speak to Chief Villani on the radio. He was down at the South Ferry. Chief Friedman I spoke to on the radio. He was handling the Staten Island side. He was prepared down there to transfer numbers of patients from the ferry terminal in St. George to Staten Island hospitals.

Chief Carrasquillo was also at the command post we had established at Chambers and West, and I had encouraged him to try and -- I gave him the number of my wife, who is a paramedic in New Jersey, and I gave him a number for their dispatch center to try and establish a casualty collection point on the Jersey side because I knew there were ferries going back and forth and we could coordinate with Jersey on distributing patients to Jersey hospitals. I don't know if that was ever accomplished or not. But I also know that we didn't see large numbers of patients. I think by the end of the day, we had only seen 100 or so patients, so all of the plans really were kind of unnecessary. People either walked away from it or they didn't, and those who did walk away sought out medical attention on their own.

Can we pause this for a minute?

Q. Sure.

(Pause)

A. The lieutenant I was trying to think of who was standing by at the intersection of Church Street and Chambers Street was Eddie Platt. He's normally assigned to Battalion 17. I had him collect the resources at that location.

Later on in the day, Deputy Chief Larry Mittleman arrived at the command post. I shouldn't say later on. It was probably a half hour to an hour after I had established contact with Chief Peruggia and Chief Kowalczyk. I asked Chief Mittleman to go over to Church Street and Chambers Street and make contact with Lieutenant Platt and determine what resources were at that location for deployment into the incident.

I don't really recall much other detail about the response component. I remained on the scene and operated as the communications officer until about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, when Chief Kowalczyk relieved me and asked me to come in the following day.

I recall looking at the dust that had come down and spread itself out over the area, looking at the fibrous component and thinking it was probably all asbestos. We somehow acquired paper masks and we were utilizing those for the duration of the day, and the

following day we had better masks to put on.

I don't know. I can't think of too much else at this point. A lot of the day is a big blur.

Q. Chief, anything else you'd like to add emotionwise, anything that you'd like to have recorded?

A. Emotionally, it was probably the most terrifying day of my life, not knowing if we were going into an incident that we may not come back out of. I recall hearing loud noises during the course of the day and not knowing if it was -- knowing that they had stopped all commercial aviation and not knowing if this was another aircraft that had gotten through that was heading towards us, if it was friendly aircraft or if it was a building collapsing, and there was constant tension the whole day, on top of that the constant decision making, one after the other, the radio was going the whole time, people were asking for direction and we were giving out direction.

Having responded, like I say, the first time, I was familiar with geography, so that I found was a tremendous aid, but it was very disorienting with the amount of debris in the roadway. You couldn't get through West Street, you couldn't get through Liberty Street, you couldn't get through Vesey Street, you

couldn't get through Church Street. All the surrounding roadways had collapsed so that our access was very much impeded.

The biggest problem was going north and south. You couldn't really go -- a lot of our resources were down South Ferry. We couldn't bring them north. Anything that would happen in the north we couldn't bring south. So we had to utilize some gators that we had brought in. There were some people who drove gators in from -- Tony DeGennaro, he's a paramedic out of Battalion 49, drove a gator from Elmhurst in. I don't know how he got there as quickly as he did.

But the gators were a godsend. They were about the only thing that was able to move through there. I think we had the first gators on the scene and they remained the only vehicles that could get around the site at all.

There were large numbers of volunteers that came to the scene and we tried to utilize them as best we could and keep our units available for the regular 911 response, and we had a large number of them staged just up the block.

I saw Chief Hart during the course of the day

along with his aide. Actually, I saw him with Grace Cacciola, who is a lieutenant in the EMS Division 1. Chief Hart had had two near-death experiences. I think pretty much everyone who was there from the beginning had not just one but two near-death experiences and these people were visibly shaken.

Chief Wells I saw later on during the course of the day. Chief Browne I did not see. I was told he was injured. There were reports that several people had been killed, several of the EMS officers, none of which, of course, turned out to be true, and all of this weighed heavily on us, but I think we still were able to make decisions, make prudent decisions, and make sure that all of our people were operating in as safe an environment as we could.

I think certainly Chief Kowalczyk, who organized the operational component of it, I thought operated extremely well in spite of what he's gone through this year. He really deserves a tremendous amount of credit for the effort that he put in.

I would say that's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right, Chief. I thank you so much for your interview. Thank you.

THE WITNESS: My pleasure.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview concludes at 0717 hours.

File No. 9110125

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMTD FERMIN MERRERO

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 22nd. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The interview start time is 0826 hours, and our interview today is with --

EMTD MARRERO: Fermin Marrero.

MR. TAMBASCO: And your rank and assignment?

EMTD MARRERO: I'm EMTD, I suppose it is.

Q. If you would, tell us your story.

A. Well, it was September 11th. I was at my girlfriend's house waiting for her to come back from taking my stepdaughter to school. I usually wake up at 5:30 in the morning to watch the news, but I had a three-day swing, so I just slept a little late.

So when I wake up, the first thing I do is turn on the news. All of a sudden I was just stupefied. I started thinking about it. When it first happened, I said it could be some type of accident. I remember in 1946 a plane hit the

Empire State Building.

Today you have ground control, you have satellites. But when the second plane hit, you know what's going on. Even though it was my day off, I jumped up. My girlfriend asked me where I was going. I said, "Honey, I've got to go."

I reported here. It was a madhouse, people running up and down, people grabbing equipment, grabbing vehicles. Somebody said, "We don't know what we're supposed to do." I said, "I know what we're going to do. They're going to send me down there. As soon as somebody comes, one of my boys, Vinnie Marquez came in. Me and him went out. I went home and -- I left my bulletproof vest there. I picked it up, and we were gone.

I want to tell you that when you go up on the Brooklyn Boulevard, you could see the World Trade Center burning. You could see both buildings. That's when we started praying. This has started to help me be strong and proper. Everything I did that day -- I know Vinnie is a good guy. He was in the military.

When we got there, they told us to

report to Fulton and Broadway. We parked our vehicle. We ran into Lieutenant -- her name is Karen. She's an instructor. She's a paramedic now. Tolingo.

Q. Tolingo, Janet, maybe?

A. Janet.

Q. Janet Olszewski?

A. That's it, Janet. That's her. She's a good person, a good instructor. She said just get oxygen out and water. So I said okay.

A lot of people were coming by, asking us for those masks, and we didn't have any. So we took sheets and we tore them into pieces and gave them to them. I started taking out the oxygen. Vinnie said, "I'm going down the block to see if anybody needs help and I'll bring them here." I said, "Okay. You do that."

Like ten minutes into that, right there at Fulton and Broadway, I hear this rumbling. Everybody is looking up in the sky. I said, oh, man. Really I didn't know the first tower is already down. Then everybody starts running. I said, no, this can't be. Everybody is looking to see where it's coming from. We started running.

Then I said I need to find my partner. That's when the smoke came zooming. It's indescribable. It's like as you see on TV when they're in an avalanche. It just came zooming out. It's like when you have pressure and everyone is running.

I said, oh, my God, my partner. I started running toward him. There was a point there that there was no visibility. It was black. It was hard to believe. It's like 9-something in the morning, 9:30 in the morning, and the sun hasn't gotten directly above, but (inaudible).

So I'm running toward my ambulance, and he comes. I grab him. I said, "Get in the ambulance, and let's move further up." I turned on my lights, my sirens, my high beams. I move a foot when this other ambulance comes out of nowhere. It says something Valley Hudson, a volunteer. I would have hit him or he would have hit me, really.

Then a guy said the second tower is down. I didn't know the first tower is down. It's impossible. It's impossible. I really said

that. I said, "This can't be. Here in New York, we (inaudible)." I said, "Let's bring the bus down as far as we can, bring out the stretcher and see what we're going to do."

So we brought down the stretcher, put all the oxygen on it. We did a favor we shouldn't have, (inaudible) the Port Authority. You know what I mean?

We started going down the block, and we ran into an old man and this guy that had a laceration on his arm. Vinnie took care of that. I took care of the old man. We didn't hardly do anything. So I find the police (inaudible). Yeah, here's two guys over here with some badges. I said take them, put them in the back. We didn't know we were going to be staying for a long time. I didn't have coffee that morning.

Then we come out with the stretcher, and these people were carrying this fireman.

Q. Do you know about where you were then?

A. Yeah. We were right here. Here's Fulton and Cedar, Broadway. Me and Vinnie came down to here.

Q. So you went south on Broadway?

A. Yeah, we went south on Broadway, almost to Wall Street. This is the bank here, I think. It was in this area here.

Q. Right around near 140 Broadway?

A. Right. We went all the way back up. Then we came down. We stopped over here in this area here.

Q. Right near City Hall?

A. Right, we were around City Hall, because they told us there was a fireman hurt there -- a policeman hurt. So this is where we went. I took care of him.

Then we came back through here. Right here is a bank. In the bank we found this lady who was hysterical. She was really breathing. She was upset. She was breathing. I said, "Vinnie, we've got to leave her."

So we came back down. At this point I went and got the ambulance and brought it down to here, right up to here.

Q. Back to like Broadway and Fulton?

A. Right. Then we found this fireman -- no, I think that's where we ran into some of our boys, Charlie from station 50. I forget his last

name. He was right there on Kings Bridge and Reservoir. And a medic. So we took him with us.

So then we decided that we were going to have to go back to the ferry. We went to the ferry. That's where we ran into Juan Burgo, Mike Negron, Charlie and the medic. I said, "Look, we're going back out. We ain't staying here."

So we come back down over there, and we're on Trinity --

Q. You came north on Trinity?

A. We came back north on Trinity. Right around here they stopped us, and they had this old man with a pacemaker having chest pains.

Let me tell you something, it was nothing about ego. Nobody was in charge. I know what they teach you at the academy about we're going to triage, we're going to do this, we're going to do that. One thing about it, everybody kept their head. Everybody worked as a team.

I said, Charlie, why don't you take O2 and stay with the old man. We're going to go straight up Trinity. Whatever we find, we'll come back down and pick you up with the old man and take him to the ferry. He said that's cool.

So he jumped out. When we got right around here, we found this fireman.

Q. That's around Cedar Street?

A. Yeah, right around Cedar, right here. Right here, in fact.

Q. Trinity and Cedar?

A. Trinity and Cedar. We find this fireman. He's like in shock. I'm 48, and I think I look pretty good. He said he was 48, but he looked like he was sixty that day. I'm telling you, he was walking around aimlessly. I said, "Come here, come here, come here. What's wrong?" He said, "Nothing. Get off of me." I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "I'm okay, just having a little chest pain." "Come with us. We'll take your blood pressure and give you some oxygen. That'll make you feel better."

So we walked him back up to the ambulance, and we put him in the ambulance and we went straight back down to right over here as far as we can go. We asked if anybody needed help. I said all we've got is our patient here. We're going to treat him. We went back to Cedar. We got up to here.

Q. To about Cortlandt Street?

A. Cortlandt Street, yeah.

Then that's it. Then we stood there and we looked at it. The metal part sticking up looked like a crown. I was going to walk in there, but Vinnie said don't go in there, it looks like it's gonna fall. I said, "Let's get the fireman and the old man out of here."

So we came back, picked up Charlie and the old man, and we came up to like -- by the exchange. I came across --

Q. And then went down Broadway?

A. No, no, we came across the exchange, and over here we ran into a lieutenant. "You can take them to Metropolitan." There was so much madness that we went up Broadway, kept on going. We kept on going up Broadway past all this madness.

Then we got across to Canal Street, we found this African-American lady on the ground. I think she was (inaudible). They stopped us. I said let's go on in there.

It was really funny, the fireman said, "I want to smoke a cigarette." I said, "Pop,

with all this shit, you want to smoke?" He said, "Listen, son." "But you have chest pain." "That building fell five feet away from me." I said, "You ain't going to die today, boy. You better smoke two of them."

So we took him in the ambulance, and then we had the lady. I stopped again. Then they brought this oriental gentleman. So help me God, he was covered, he was white; from head to toe, white he had a gash on his forehead. We threw him in there, gave triage to everybody.

We let the other guys off, let them could go back and help. We zoomed all the way to Metropolitan. The eeriest feeling in the world is to be on that highway and there be nobody else there but you.

We got to Metropolitan. We dropped everybody off. I took a broom. I swept the whole ambulance real quick of debris. We went up to Harlem to get another stretcher, but that was a bad move. So we had to come back all the way around the way we did, and go all the way back down around.

Then we went back to Liberty and Cedar,

and that's where we picked up Juan again and Charlie, the other medic, and Mike Negron. We went back up there hunting, so to speak, and we found four more people and we took them to the hospital.

Then by that time the sun was like overhead, like 12:00. You don't have any sense of time. My dogs are killing me. My dogs are killing me for two weeks. I have some things for my feet now. Really, I'm telling you, they're killing me for two weeks. I have to write a letter about that.

In all that madness, everybody kept their head. When we got there, when the sun was really out, then we saw -- let me tell you something, you can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch. I don't care what you say about this city. You can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch.

The guy from McDonald's -- McDonald's opened. He was giving out cheese sandwiches; he was giving out coffee. By this time -- we were out at 9:30. I woke up at -- the first building had been struck, and I was there to see the second building get hit from my house. I was all

the way down there at 9:30.

The thing is, there were people out there giving us food, giving us water. You don't think about it, but by that time I was like -- by 2:00 I was already beat.

We ran into this lieutenant. I forget his name. He had a whole bunch of people. So we went back to the World Trade Center -- I mean to --

Q. The ferry terminal?

A. -- the ferry terminal, told the lieutenant. We came back, but we couldn't find him. So we assumed somebody else picked him up and took him to where he had to go.

After that it was just like cut and dry. I can't say it was humdrum, because there was nothing humdrum about this. I got enough and I was working with a lot of good guys, Vinnie Marquez, Juan Burgo, Mike Negron. Charlie, I'm going to forget his last name, the medic, from Station 50.

Chief Basile was there. There was a point I said, "Chief, we can't stay because there's a lieutenant stuck up there and we know

where we're going." He just said, "Go, go." He didn't hold us back.

All that soot and stuff I breathed in. It's been bothering me ever since then. They told me I could go down there. They have medicine for you down there. I don't know.

It was also everybody. Even just a month later, I had to go away for like nine days to get myself together. I had a knee operation, so I just took nine days of R&R.

Other than that, you know, it was a horrible experience, but like I said, you can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch. I pray to God it never happens again, that we have to go through this again.

That's it.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. Outside of my dogs, my feet. Oh, and I lost an ambulance, but I brought back the de-fib. I want that for the record. Thank you so much.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview concludes at 0840 hours.

File No. 9110126

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH HENDERSON

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 22nd, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0814 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT HENDERSON: Henderson, Joseph, EMT, at Battalion 20.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20. This interview is regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. You can pretty much start with when you were assigned to the job.

A. I was assigned to the job approximately 8:30. We took the Bruckner to the -- I forget the name of it, the other highway to get into Manhattan.

Q. On the east side, the FDR?

A. Yeah, FDR, but the toll you pay before you reach the FDR. Anyway, FDR. There was heavy traffic, a lot of police cars, a lot of FBI cars. Traffic was finally clearing all the way down. We parked right across the street from Two World Trade Center.

Q. On the West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, on the West Side Highway.

Q. Just south of Liberty?

A. Yeah.

There were body parts all over the place. When we were going there, you could see the buildings on fire. When we pulled up, a lot of people were screaming, people running in and out of the buildings.

We were directed where to park. We parked, and we went to help two other medics. Then when we were coming back, we went to go to the staging area when somebody started screaming that the building was falling.

I looked up, because I went back to the bus to get the long board while my partner was waiting for me. I looked up, see all the debris, you hear the rumble coming down. I don't know which direction I took off to go. I took off from like this way.

As I was running, you feel a bunch of debris hit you and knock you down. After I got up, you couldn't see where you were going. You had a bunch of people screaming. A few of the

ambulances were exploding. You felt debris hitting you, choking, couldn't breathe, walking around, it seemed like forever.

Finally I was able to get inside of an ambulance that the lights on. We stayed there for a few minutes. But there was so much debris and stuff that you could hear hit the buses and stuff, like stuff was crashing on the bus around you. So we were able to get out.

There was a building on the side that we were able to go into. We stayed there for, I don't know, a certain amount of time. A female cop came running in and said, "One of your guys is on fire. One of your guys is on fire." When we came back out, that's when the second building collapsed. We were able to run from that one because we weren't too close to that.

I hung around there for -- we couldn't get to the other side and couldn't get back nowhere. We had no radios. We lost our radios. We lost everything. Somebody from the news was down there.

After a while we were able to get a bus to take us to Berkley Hospital, and from there we

were taken to the Bronx.

Q. When you were down here on west side and Liberty, do you remember seeing any other EMS people down there that you recognized, know their names?

A. Yeah, Jefferson. Jefferson was down there. He's a medic.

Q. Is he from Battalion 20?

A. No, I forget the station he's from. I think he's from Boston outpost.

Q. Do you know who he was working with?

A. No, I don't know who his partner was.

Q. What vehicle number did you use that day; do you remember?

A. I believe it was 265.

Q. 265?

A. Yeah.

Q. When you got down there, that was between the two crashes?

A. No, it was after the second crash.

Q. After the second crash. Okay.

Was Jefferson --

A. He was there before me.

Q. He was one of the two medics that you

said you guys were helping out?

A. Yeah, we went to help him at first. He was there before. Actually they pulled up right before us. We were behind them. When they parked, they jumped out. They were told we had a firefighter with a crushed face. They ran to the side, and we parked like right in front of them, because they were directed to pull in front.

Then we went to help them. Then still we had to go and build the staging area.

Q. Right.

A. When we were going there, that's when everything started to crumble.

Q. Do you know where they were treating their patient at that point?

A. It was Cedar.

Q. Over on Cedar?

A. Yeah. It was there. I can't remember -- they were pulling the firefighter out from somewhere; I can't remember where. It was almost black.

Q. Where was the staging that you were directed to?

A. The staging was on, I believe here.

Q. On West?

A. In the hotel.

Q. In the hotel?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you recognize anybody in there?

A. We never made it to there.

Q. You never made it?

A. No. We got to about the middle of the street, and that's when we heard the rumble, people started screaming that it's falling, and I ran this way. I'm not sure which way my partner ran.

Q. Was it between the collapse of the two towers that you actually were treating the patient? You said something about a burn patient.

A. We never actually got a patient.

Q. No?

A. No.

Q. After the collapse of the first building --

A. Oh, yeah, the burn patient was after the collapse of the first building, when the female cop that ran into the building we were in.

I believe it was this one. I don't know what building this was.

Q. You were down here at Albany and West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, after the first collapse. I was able to get in an ambulance. We were able to get out because everything here was being crushed. A few of the ambulances were on fire. You could hear some of them exploding.

So after we got out of the ambulance, we ran to one of these buildings. Then after we came back out, we got about this far, and then that's when the second building collapsed.

Q. So somewhere between Albany and Carlisle was the building that you went into.

A. Yeah.

Q. And got back up to about Albany Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. And that's when the cop --

A. No. She came in the building.

Q. She came in the building?

A. Yeah. When we went back out, that's when the second building collapsed.

Q. Do you know where the burn patient was

that she was talking about?

A. No, no. I believe she said he was in a bus. He was still one of these buses.

Q. He was in an ambulance?

A. Yeah, but we never got to him.

Q. Your vehicle, 265, was that destroyed?

A. Totally.

Q. That was?

A. Totally destroyed.

Q. Do you remember any other EMS vehicles over there?

A. There was a bunch of them. I don't remember the numbers.

Q. Okay.

A. But it was like an average of eight buses parked at an angle, because we would just jump out, run in the building, and they would like come back. It was easy access in and out.

Q. Right.

A. There were about eight ambulances. We were in the front, because there were other ambulances there before we got there.

Q. After the second tower came down, what did you do then?

A. Then I came out, looking to see if you see anybody that you know or contact anybody. Then it was a few of us that had hung together. It was me, Jefferson. I can't remember the other medic's name. We were just waiting around to see if maybe somebody would come get us. We had no radios. We couldn't call anybody. That's it. We were just waiting.

After a while a chief came up -- I can't remember his name -- and told us wait here, they'll send somebody to come get us. We waited. Nobody ever came back. Finally we got a lift to the hospital.

Q. Lonnie Penn was your partner that day?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know where --

A. Yeah, from what I heard, he ran this way to the water, and at that time there were a few guys there that had boats and they took him to Jersey.

Q. So you pretty much didn't meet up with him again?

A. Until 10:00.

Q. Back up here at the building?

A. Yeah.

Q. Any other thoughts or opinions you'd like to add?

A. There was another guy that was running with me. I don't remember his name. He was messed up pretty bad. I think they said one of the guys that was in the hospital, he had a punctured liver. But he had a hole in his back and a broken wrist and he was running.

Q. Was he from EMS?

A. Yeah, he was from EMS.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yeah. But I'm not sure what station. We were in the bus -- the same bus that we were in, we got him in. We were going to start to treat him, but there was just so much stuff falling. We took him out. That's when we took him in this building. After the first smoke cleared, some people took him out. That's when we came back out. That's when the second building collapsed.

Q. Okay. That's pretty much it, and I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 8:25.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110127

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALWISH MONCHERRY

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

A. MONCHERRY

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 22, 2001. The time is 22:12, and my Name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force, I am conducting an interview with the following individual…please state your name, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

ALWISH MONCHERRY: My name is Alwish Moncherry, I am an EMT with the Fire Department of New York, I work out of Battalion 49 in Astoria.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A: Of the events on September 11th, I would say it would have been about 8:30 or so (I'm not too sure about the time) I was at my 89 when we received the call. At first I heard over the radio, the towers had been hit. I didn't know what it was, I didn't think anything of it for a split second. Well, my partner didn't think anything of it, but then I told him, cause Kevin Barrett was my partner.

Q: Kevin Barrett?

A: I said Kevin, did you hear that on the radio? He said: hear what? Then I told him something happened at the tower. Next thing you know, five or ten seconds later, 9 Henry respond, please respond to the World Trade Center. Immediately we picked up and went. We didn't have time to write anything. Down 21st street, we

reached the 59th street bridge. Central tells us to stand by at the 59th street bridge on the Queens side, until further notice. We're the first ones there, the other units 49 Charlie, 45 Adam, and 49 Victor were also called. I think all of the units out of this station were called. We were at the front of the line, 49 Henry, to wait for conditions 49 to show up and tell us where to go. Everything's happening really fast. I'm looking from the 59th street bridge, you can see the towers, you can see the smoke. The buildings just look like a cigarette basically. When we get the call to go over the bridge (I'm not too sure about the time) when we're on the bridge there's plenty of traffic. That's when we noticed the second plane hitting tower two. I just couldn't believe that that happened. So everybody was just trying to get there as fast as possible, as soon as possible, no matter what. A lot of fender benders en route, not us, but a lot of other cars hitting. A lot of chaos on the highway, on the bridge. Finally we get over, and we head down to the staging area. I'm not too sure, it was a Lieutenant or captain at the staging told us--cause 9 Henry is a haz-tac unit, I guess they wanted them at a certain place. They chose to put us originally on Vessey and West.

Q: Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1 where your vehicle was parked originally?

A: On the corner of Vessey and West. While on that corner, I'm seeing people rushing out of the buildings. Most of them appeared to be burns and, it was just hell. I can't really describe it. People were just pouring out. Thousands and thousands of people just coming out. And everybody seemed to have been injured in one way or

another. Triaging patients, that's all we could do. We didn't have enough triage tags for everybody either. At the moment prior to the first building collapsing, I remember hearing popping sounds. One of my partners was saying what's that? I saw the people falling and exploding on the ground.

Q: What was exploding on the ground?

A: Human beings. They were just falling from the sky and exploding like that.

Q: How close were you to these people landing?

A: I would say about 100-150 feet. People coming out of the buildings half burned, the fuel must have spewed down and hit some people. A lot of burns literally down through the skin to the bone. I had two patients on my ambulance, vehicle 111. FBI Agents were telling us to move our vehicle from the corner of Vessey and West, cause there was debris from the airplane which they needed for evidence. I guess it was NTSB, they wanted the area secured. There was nowhere for us to move the vehicle, cause there was debris everywhere. I know I ran over some sort of evidence somewhere. Pieces of metal from the plane. I tried, we moved it. I think now I was closer to the building, I would say about 50 feet from the building prior to it falling.

Q: Can you indicate on the map with a number 2 where you parked your vehicle the second time? If you can recall.

A: Let's see…here.

Q: Thank you.

A. MONCHERRY

A: When this happened, the first tower starts to collapse. I didn't know this at first. My partner was on the corner, I didn't know his location at the time, cause I'm triaging. I have two people on my ambulance already. To my assumption, I thought, 49 Henry is a haz-tac, it's supposed to be there for a reason. I'm not haz-mat certified, but my partner is. All I had to do was triaging the patients. My first patient was going into shock and bleeding profusely. My second patient was an asthma patient, and her ankle and knee were messed up a little bit, but she was okay. I took care of her and she was okay after that. So I left the two of them in the ambulance and stepped out. Two other guys needed help, I'm not sure which unit they were. They needed some help to put the patient on the long board. As we're lifting her up, I notice people rushing towards us, and when I look up, I see the building coming down. It's almost hovering over my head in slow-motion. I'm like holy--- you know.

Q: You can say what you want, it's fine.

A: I just, I froze for awhile. I looked up and I couldn't believe when it started coming down. It was a decision that I knew I had to make, but it took awhile for me to do it. The building's coming down real fast, and it looks like slow motion. I had to leave. I turned around and I had to go. If I would have stayed and ran back to the ambulance, I don't know what would have happened. So as far as I know the people who were within that vicinity there, if they ran the wrong way, turned the wrong way, if they

looked the wrong way, something could have either fell on them at that moment, or after a long time, from all the debris piling up, they would have been dead. Definitely. So I just ran. I turned around, I thought about my kids. My daughter, 5 years old, Imani. And my son, brand new to the world, one month old. And my wife, we just got married in August. I thought about them and I said I can't leave them. I turned around and started running. On my way running, I found a lot of people, and I helped out a few that I knew needed help. If they could run, just run with me. Just keep on going. Now it's like a dead silence, it's still clear, but it's a dead silence. And soon all you could see was a black smoke coming from all sides of the street. It hit me in the back, it hit everyone, it just blanketed us. No one knew what to do, we couldn't breathe. I didn't have a mask on, we didn't have time to get all that stuff. While I was running, my helmet flew off, my mask, radio. I found radios, I found another helmet that was lying around, I picked it up and put it on. I feel some lady grabbing my arm, we're trying to run. She tells me she has asthma. I say just hold on to me, keep going. In the dark I saw a light. I started going towards the light. Holding the girl's hand, we're just going forward. We get to the light, it's another EMT….

Q: We're gonna stop the tape for a moment, the time is 22:25….Resuming the tape at 22:26.

A: Well, I'm holding the girl's hand, it's dark. I can't breathe, I can't see anything. All you hear is voices, everyone screaming and yelling for help. I saw the light and I started going towards the light. It's a fellow EMT, I don't know his name. All I know is he had dreads. He looked horrible, he couldn't breathe. I was telling him to

hold on. So I grab him. A few seconds later I hear shelter, shelter. So we all start going towards the voice, it was a bodega grocery store. We all went inside the store, they closed the door, gave everybody water and took care of them. Told everybody to not swallow, just gargle and spit it out. We waited a little while, treated as much as we could inside the store with whatever resources we had at the moment. Moments later, I'm not sure about the time, the smoke started to subside a little, just from the top you could see it clearing up a little, slightly. It was at that time that we heard police officers, I guess chiefs, telling us all, EMS units and fire, all you guys come on out, we gotta get the rest of the people out. So after helping out as many as we could in the store, I put my gear back on, whatever gear I had left. We ran back out, I had a tee-shirt, I forgot to mention, that's the only thing I had in terms of covering my airway. We went back towards the building, Tower One. I don't know where cause it's still dark everywhere. So, when I went back, I just started helping people out, any which way we could. I remember an African-American female, she had a four year old or a five year old daughter with her, and another child, I'd say less than a year old in the stroller. They're all covered up in stuff, in soot and everything. I'm looking at her, she's screaming, she doesn't know what to do or where to go. I told her, I just grabbed the baby that was in the stroller, and there was a police officer who was next to me, he grabbed the four-year-old, and we all started going towards the building. I think it was one of the court houses over there. We took her inside there. I was so…I guess it was the adrenaline kicking in, I just wanted to get her inside, out of that environment. I didn't even bother looking at the child, cause it was

sort of covered up a little bit, so I figured it was okay. I was like get in, get out. Take the baby in there, daughter's in there and she's okay. I didn't have time to look at the child to be honest with you, and look at her, cause there were other people there. I just ran back out to help some more. At that time I bumped into my partner. I heard his voice out there, and we ran into each other. We just started crying right then and there, you know. And a couple minutes after that, another one of our partners out of at the station, Luis Diaz, was found, we found him. Luis was not himself to say the least when we found him. He didn't have his helmet on, and he was down crying. I knew it was him cause he has a bald head just like me. He has a shiny bald head, but it wasn't shiny. We found him, I hugged him, and we just cried together right there for about five minutes. I don't know how long, but it was a long time. After that we said we still have a job to do. We have to go back out there and help these people as much as we could, and that's what we did. Now I guess the second tower started coming down. Just by looking, I would say we were about 300 feet, maybe a little more, maybe 400 feet away from it. But it came down, and the same thing. Everyone started running. At that point I just didn't know what was going on and why this was happening. It just wasn't good. We were stuck there for awhile, we stayed together Kevin Barret, Luis Diaz and myself. We started finding people along the way, co-workers. We later found a captain, I don't remember her name, but I know she works out of Battalion 50 in Jamaica. I think she's a Lieutenant. We found her and she told us where the next staging area is, and we headed

towards the next staging area. I don't recall where exactly it was. I know we walked a long way.

Q: Could it be here?

A: I think so, I think so. I know when the Lieutenant told us where to go, that wasn't the correct staging area, cause we were still too close to the buildings. They wanted everyone away from it. That's when there was a third building that collapsed around that time.

Q: Building Seven, which would be over here.

A: Okay, 7 World Trade, that one collapsed.

Q: 7 World Trade collapsed a little later.

A: Yeah, a lot later. That happened en route, while we were walking towards our unit.

Q: That happened at 5:25.

A: Wow. We stuck around there for a long time. I would say for most of the day and night. Later on that night we were told to go to Chelsea Piers. That's where the Emergency Room was, the make-shift ER. We went there, and we were trying to figure out who was missing. For a long time no one knew where we were. We were the guys missing, and everyone was down there looking for us. So at that time we formed a little group, from 10 to 15 EMTs, and we went out of this area to try to go back for the guys who were not accounted for. Like Carlos and Luis' partner Paul Adams.

That was one of the people we were looking for while Kevin, Luis and I, he was the next person we were trying to find. We finally got that Paul was okay, I think I heard his voice on the radio and I told Luis that he was okay. We didn't know where he was. We couldn't find Carlos, but there was nothing else that we could actually do. But I felt like we should at least try, you know? At least try and get him. That's something that not too many people know about until now I guess. And that was it. We stayed there for awhile, I'd say we were released maybe 20 hours later. I haven't been back since. The only thing I keep is my boots. I don't even polish them anymore, they still have the ash on them. That's the only thing I keep as remembrance. And the smell on the ambulance…

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add on the events of September 12, 2001 prior to approximately 12:00?

A: No.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 22:40 hours. Thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

File No. 9110128

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LUIS SANCHEZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 22nd, 2001. The time is 2256. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

EMT SANCHEZ: Luis Sanchez.

MR. ECCLESTON: Your title.

EMT SANCHEZ: EMT.

MR. ECCLESTON: And your command.

EMT SANCHEZ: 49.

Q. Were you working on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the details of that day?

A. Well, at the beginning of the day it was just like a regular Tuesday, just going to work, preparing for the day and everything for my tour, which was tour 2.

I'm not too sure what unit I was working, but my partner was broke in with someone else, and I had a new partner.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I think her name was Brandon. I'm not too sure if it was Brandon or not. I believe it was Brandon.

We started at 7:00. I think we started at 7:00. We just started at 7:00. We had a call for that day, which was a cardiac arrest. I think it was approximately 7:30. We went to the call, and everything went fine. There wasn't a cardiac arrest. It turned out to be an asthma attack. So we went in and helped the patient and everything. We took the patient to the hospital, and after that it was all clear.

We got cleared at about approximately 7:45, around there. I'm not sure what time it was. All I know is five minutes after we received a call saying that a plane just crashed into the twin towers, one of the towers.

My partner told me -- I looked at him like what's going on here? I thought he was playing around. He told me, look, it's serious.

We went to up to the park to get a good view of the towers. When I saw the smoke coming out of one of the buildings, I said, oh, shoot, it is real.

So he told me it's an MCI so we had to go to the command post and go along over the bridge to the place. The problem is after everything, we started heading up to the place, the towers, and there was about 20 units right behind us and police officers and firefighters, right behind us, right in front of us, everywhere. It was crazy, real chaos.

We just got there. When we got there, I didn't really know where we were at. It was one of the towers. I don't know if it was the front, back, side. All I know is there was a lot of people outside. People were hurt. People were yelling and screaming. We were right in front of it, about a block away from it, actually.

My partner told me not to get nervous, just stay calm, everything is going to be all right, it's going to be just like a regular call. I said okay. I asked him if we should stay

together, should we stay together. He said, just go and follow along with the patients. Just help whatever patients, who feels hurt, doesn't feel good. I said okay.

So I went out, and I was looking around for other patients, any patients that I saw to help out, because I had no experience. This is my second week on the job, and I had no experience at all.

I see patients coming out from the building, and I started, you know, just putting them in a safer place, which was a block away. I had a patient that had asthma. I had a patient that had a laceration on the forehead, and I was sitting him down and giving him O2 oxygen and trying to manage, do the best I can.

I was just looking at people. I saw EMTs helping out, and I was like good, now I feel more comfortable helping out. Finally I saw one of my friends who graduated with me. I saw him, and we started working together, which was good for me. We sort of had the same experience. We didn't know what to expect. So we're like, cool. We were both nervous and didn't know what to

expect helping out the patients and everything.

So all of a sudden we had this other patient come out of asthma, throwing up, vomiting, screaming and just yelling. She was just real nervous. We were just telling her it was going to be okay, it was going to be, don't be nervous, everything's going to be all right. We just gave her O2, and she seemed to calm down. But she was throwing up. We were trying to make her feel better, saying jokes, anything to make her feel good, better.

Five minutes later I just heard this loud noise. It was like an earthquake. It was shaking, and things was going down. I looked everywhere. There was nothing going on. I looked to the side, looked to my friend. There was nothing going on. When I looked up, I saw the top of the building floor by floor was coming down, collapsing. I was oh. (Inaudible.)

I looked at my patients. They were all there, just throwing up. They didn't know what was going on. I looked at everybody. They seemed like they didn't know what was going on.

All of a sudden I just looked up and

said this is for real, is this a dream or what? I'm like, what do I do? Do I run? What do I do? Pick up the patients? Call my partner? What I did was I screamed, I yelled. I said, "The building's collapsing. The building's collapsing. Everybody run."

What I did was just dropped everything I had the radio -- I had the radio -- and just ran, just ran as fast as I can before I get trapped between the buildings or anything. I just ran.

All of a sudden I see this firefighter who was helping a patient. They didn't know what was going on. He was looking down towards the patient. He looked like he was just like focused on the patient. She had a big laceration on her leg. He was right in front of me. I just pushed him to the side and just told him to run because the building was collapsing.

I just kept running. I just kept running for approximately 20 blocks after that, 20 blocks, kept running, until everything was cleared. There was smoke everywhere. You couldn't see anything. I just kept running until

everything was all clear.

Once I got there for about ten blocks, I was with police officers and I started to help them. It was about approximately 2:00 -- sorry, it was about 10:00 when that happened. I started helping out with the police officers. I bumped into one of my friends who is a police officer, and we just hugged each other. We were started saying, "Oh, my goodness, this is crazy. What's going on here?" We just heard about there's another plane that just hit Washington, D.C. We were getting nervous.

I started helping them out for about an hour, just directing the people, where to go, go to a safer place and not to panic, to calm down and everything. I was there with them for two hours. After two hours, I hooked up with paramedics. I was with them, they went to Bellvue Hospital, and I was helping out at Bellvue hospital, bringing patients in from the streets, for about two hours, approximately.

After that I was with -- we went south together. We went down to get more patients to bring to the hospital. We went down south. For

some reason I just couldn't find them anymore. So I saw some units from Brooklyn, some people that I know. So I hooked up with them for a little while, and they brought me over to Chelsea Piers. That's where we were just all stationed and doing triage.

From there on we just stayed all together. I saw more people that I graduated with and started helping them and just broke down. We both broke down and couldn't believe what we saw. It was just crazy, the things that we saw.

We never expected to see something like this, and we were never prepared for anything like this. We thought we were prepared for anything at the academy. In two weeks we just -- we wouldn't believe what we just saw that day of the 11th. It was really intense.

I was worried about my parents, calling them. I couldn't get in contact with them.

I got over to the station about 2:00 in the morning. I was working about 20 hours that day. I was exhausted, went home, just broke down. My mother broke down also. I said to

myself whatever God wants, if that's his will for this to happen, that's the way it's going to happen if that's the way he wants it. That's just the way it's going to be.

I tried to keep myself calm and everything. [redacted]

That's all that I saw that day, the things that I felt.

Q. Do you know where you were when the second tower came down?

A. The second tower?

Q. Were you in the area when the second tower came down or were you further away?

A. When we got there, I don't know if the first tower fell or not. What I know is when we got there -- I couldn't see the second tower. All I saw was the first tower. I don't know if it was the first or second. All I know is that when I got there there was a lot of people. It was one of the towers -- I can't remember whether

it was one or two.

All I know is approximately 15 minutes and the collapse, everybody just sprinted. Everything was a mess. I ended up -- people ended up in New Jersey, Queens, Bronx, everywhere. Everything was just all mixed up. From then on, I was with police officers and other units.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview in regards to the events that happened before noon?

A. Before noon? Not really.

Q. Okay. I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me?

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 2308, and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110129

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GEORGE J. DeSIMONE

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 22nd, 2001. The time is 1330 hours. I'm George Cundari. I'm with Richie Dun of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. George J. DeSimone, Lieutenant, Engine Company 224.

Q. Can you please state the events regarding the day of September 11th, 2001?

A. Sure. It was about 8:45 or so. We were watching the morning news in the firehouse, in the back room, and we saw the first plane go in or photos of the first plane hit the Trade Center. I said to the guys in the firehouse to get ready, I'm sure that we'd be moving on this, whether we were going to go to the fire or we were going to relocate to some other engine company in Manhattan. About two minutes passed, and I believe the time was 8:54 when we got the ticket to leave.

As we opened the front door of quarters, there were already papers and other kinds of debris falling outside on Hicks Street. We mounted the rig.

We went down Columbia Street. The guys who were looking north sitting in the rig saw the second plane hit. We were en route to the staging area at Hamilton Avenue. When we got there, I don't think we were there more than two minutes and we were told to head into Manhattan.

We went through the Battery Tunnel. When we came out of the Battery Tunnel, we were on West Street, very close to the Trade Center, and that was one of my problems with the whole setup initially. As we pulled close to the Trade Center, the tower, we saw airplane parts. We saw bodies. We saw body parts. What we did then was we decided to move a little bit further west on West Street to the furthermost point that we could.

Q. Was there a lot of commotion and chaos in the street?

A. At that time it appeared to be pretty quiet. There were a few rigs in the street around us. I couldn't even tell you what the numbers of those rigs were.

Q. What about civilians?

A. I really don't recollect seeing any civilians at that time.

As I said, we pulled west to get out of there

because I thought we were in part of the exposure at this point. No sooner did we do that, we went west, as I said, and just a little bit north to get out of that area, and there was a lieutenant in a white shirt, I presumed from Metrotech, who came over and he said to me, "Go up the street north and find a hydrant. You're going to relay water." I don't recall what company he wanted us to relay water to.

We went up to the first hydrant and there were too many vehicles around us, so we went up to about the second hydrant. He also said initially to make sure that we maintain an aisleway in the middle so that emergency vehicles could get to and from.

As we pulled up and got to the second hydrant, we noticed that there was transmission fluid leaking from our apparatus. What I wanted to do was make sure the apparatus was parked and out of the way of this little aisleway that they wanted us to keep. So we had to jockey through a few vehicles. We had to jockey a few other vehicles around so we could put our apparatus close to that hydrant and hook up.

In the meantime, when we saw the transmission fluid leaking on the ground, one of the guys, Firefighter Saulle, went underneath with a wedge and he

tried to put the chock into that, and he did in fact stop the transmission leaking to a great extent. At that point, I took my extra riding list and I went down back in front of the Trade towers, and I'm not sure if it was the north tower or the south tower, but I went to what appeared to be the command post.

At the command post I saw Chief Ganci, I saw Chief Downey and a bunch of other Fire Department bigwigs, and I gave them my riding list. We were on the apron of a building opposite the tower on the west side of the street, and it looked like it was going to be an underneath parking garage. We were on the apron of that at that point in time.

After that, I got out of there as quick as I could because the building was decaying. I mean, there was fire coming out of it, fire dropping down, and at that point I think we started to notice bodies dropping from the buildings. In that amount of time, and I can't tell you how long the frame was, maybe about a half hour, maybe 20 minutes, maybe two hours, we saw multiple bodies. I probably counted 20 bodies that had jumped from the windows.

As we got back up the street -- they had told me from the command post to just wait, that they would

tell us what to do. The next thing I know, we heard a little bit of a rumbling, and then white powder came from the first collapsed building. I thought it was an explosion initially. We got hit with the powder. We tried to run. We got hit with the powder. It took a few minutes to clear.

After that, we started triaging as many firefighters and civilians as we could. It was basically cuts, scratches and eyes that were irritated, and we tried to irrigate as many of those eyes that we could.

Q. Are we talking about a lot of firefighters and civilians? Was it a large group?

A. I would say those rigs that were parked in and near where we were, and I'd say we were maybe 200 feet north of that first footbridge, maybe 20 or 30 firefighters in and around that area, to include us, and maybe another 20 or 30 civilians at that point. They all looked like they had just come out of a snowstorm. We did that for the better part of a half hour or better.

Right after that, in my mind, I heard a rumbling, and it was almost as if it was the roller coaster at Coney Island. It seemed like a metal

clanging on metal sound. Then we saw a black cloud come out, and I told everybody to run. We ran as fast as we could as far north as we could. At that point we had gotten separated. We couldn't outrun a cloud.

As for me, I got knocked down. I thought it was the day I was going to die. I got knocked down and I put my mask on and it was full of debris in my face piece. When I started inhaling, I took a lot of stuff in from whatever was caught in my mask. I thought I was going to have a heart attack initially. I heard my heart pumping, and when you're encapsulated with the helmet and the mask and the face piece on, it was kind of horrible.

After that, I still thought it was an explosion. I thought it was some kind of thermal explosion where I'm either going to get burnt -- and I had kind of ideas that it was going to be something like Hiroshima where all this heat was coming at me and we were going to get burnt -- or if the heat didn't burn me, I thought that all the parts coming out of this building, the windows, metal, all the things like that, that I might be severed in half. It turned completely black. I was still on the ground at this point, and I just thought we were going to die at that

point.

Right after that, probably the better part of anywhere from five to 15 or 20 minutes, I don't even recall, it started to lift a little bit, and looking through my face piece it appeared to be like a dreary day that you see in a newspaper article or photo from maybe Rochester or Buffalo in the middle of the winter. Visibility was limited. At this point my concern was where were the rest of my firefighters?

It took me the better part of 40 minutes, 45 minutes, to regroup and find all of them. At that point, I found them someplace north of Stuyvesant High School but on the east side of Vesey Street. As we all got together, we shook off what we could and we assessed if anybody was really hurt to any extent, and we kind of just sat around for a point there. At times they tried to ask me, "Lieutenant, let's do something, let's get busy," this that and the next thing.

I found a command post again and that appeared to be north of that first footbridge, and I checked in with whomever. I don't even know at that point. It was a quasi command post at best.

Q. Were the radios working at the time?

A. The radios were working. At one point they

were very, very silent, and at another point it appeared that there was so much chatter on it that you couldn't decipher any kind of a message clearly coming through.

Q. Did you hear a lot of Maydays on the radio?

A. No, I did not. I did not hear a lot of Maydays. That's fact. There may have been stories of hearing a lot of Maydays, but I didn't recall.

Q. Were you on frequency 1?

A. Yes.

I checked in at the command post and said that we're available. They said just take it easy, sit there, and basically throughout the remainder of the next couple of hours, past noontime, I'd say, we were just hanging out, sitting together, and just scared as hell. We saw jets overhead, commercial airliner, military jets, Air Force jets, and we didn't know what the hell was going on.

Q. Between the first and the second building, the first one you only had the white smoke and the second building you had the black smoke?

A. Yes. I mean, the visibility was reduced the first time pretty much, but there was no visibility the second time. Absolutely none. We were in pitch

black.

Later, I'm going to say sometime around 12:00ish, 1300 hours, we heard them calling, "224 give me more water." Sometime in that interim somebody had moved our apparatus. They had hooked up on Vesey Street at West, and our pumper was pumping. Every time we heard 224, we thought they were calling us, you know, just the numbers of the apparatus, the identification numbers. So we made our way back to Vesey Street and we manned our own pump pretty much the rest of the day, and for the next two days our pumper operated at that particular site.

That's about all I know. More members of the unit showed up with the recall. I was able to make a phone call home to my bride, my mother, let them know we were all right. After that, there's nothing else that I can really tell you. It's just a bad day, a real bad day.

I don't think we understood the magnitude of what was going on. I was fearful that there were bombs in the building. That was my first thought, being the military kind of guy that I am.

Q. You knew right away it was a terrorist attack?

A. When I saw the second plane, yes. There was no question. The first one could have been an accident, pilot error, heart attack of the pilot or crew. The second one, there was no doubt about it. One horrible day. That's all I can say about it.

Is there anything you want to clarify or you want to ask me to clarify? That's how I saw it that day.

Q. So basically that was the end of the day?

A. That was pretty much it.

Q. Were there any other officers or any vehicles that you might remember seeing numbers while you were driving down that lane?

A. When we met the staging area, I honestly can't be sure if it was 202 or 204's apparatus. There was a truck company there. But, again, we were there, as I said earlier, no more than two minutes. I'm thinking more like 30 seconds that we were there. There was enough confusion going on and we were looking back north at the Trade Center from the staging area at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and just seeing volumes of flame coming out of multiple stories.

Q. At any time did you see a lot of civilians between the two collapses?

A. I saw a lot of disoriented civilians walking around. Most of them were holding their noses, of course, or their heads, not from any injuries, but I think they were concerned about what they were inhaling at that time.

Q. Can you just clarify on the map here where you parked the engine originally?

A. To the best of my recollection, I don't know if it was this bridge. I'm assuming this is Vesey Street somewhere here?

Q. Here is Vesey, right there. This is Liberty, which is the beginning, and this is Vesey. Liberty is closer to the Battery Tunnel. This is the first pedestrian bridge. This is the second pedestrian bridge.

MR. DUN: Here is the Winter Garden right there.

A. See, I have it backwards. In my mind, Vesey was sitting somewhere over here.

Q. So you actually were on Liberty?

A. We came up through the mouth of the tunnel.

Q. Yes. That's right over here.

A. Okay. We came right up in front over here, and parts were falling off. The building was decaying.

Q. So that would be Liberty.

A. Okay. We pulled then across here, west, the west side of West Street, and then we went north about over here, maybe Barclay, Vesey to Barclay.

Q. Right. Because Stuyvesant is over here on Chambers.

A. We ran like hell and we wound up -- there's a school over here on this side, too, I believe.

Q. Yes. That's the college.

A. New York City Community maybe or something?

Q. Yes. BMCC, right.

A. That's where we recouped, up that way.

The only other thing that really scared me was, between these towers this way, and there was another very tall building here, most of the forces were massed in and around here, between these two. My only thought was that this one on the north side is coming down, too, trapping any secondary forces that were still alive at that point in there, you know, it was a shitty day.

MR. CUNDARI: I'd like to thank you, Lieutenant DeSimone, for conducting this interview. The time now is 1345. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110130

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ELOY ALBUERME

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 23, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0603 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT ALBUERME: Lieutenant Albuerme, Shield 108.

MR. RADENBERG: Of EMS Battalion No. 8.

This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 8 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

LIEUTENANT ALBUERME: On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to an M.O.S. daughter who was sick at the school. Responded there. Before we responded there, I heard the call come down that an explosion occurred at the World Trade Center. Then I called my CO, and I advised him of such so he can respond.

At the completion of my assignment, I called citywide through my cell phone, advised the citywide tour commander that I was going to respond to the World Trade Center.

I responded into the World Trade Center southbound on 7th Avenue into West Broadway, which at West Broadway and Murray Street, I stopped to assist a unit that had eleven patients from -- that were injured

due to the incident.

At the completion of that, I then went down to Barclay street, which I made a right to West Street, which I made a right, which I also encountered a couple of units, a few units that were sitting right there on West Street and Murray.

I asked one of the medics to have all the vehicles turn around facing northbound and to collect a key and make that as a staging area.

At that time, one of the trade buildings collapsed, and I turned right -- turned left on Murray Street, using the District 37 building as my cover, which at that time I was screaming out to everybody to come my way to use the building as a cover, and then after that I assisted (inaudible) for the people to be evacuated, and then I don't know how I got to Chambers Street, but I went down on Chambers Street, and we just started setting up triage area at the Manhattan Community College, so in case we had to take any of the personnel, and after that I encountered a couple of EMS personnel that had their cell phone on them, which I used their cell phone number as a communication device in case -- so that way we can talk to each other, since all the radio communication at that time was down.

On my way to where the EMS command center was, I went over there and I tried to speak to an EMS chief that I have started communication, I had two different staging areas set up for ambulance to respond in case we need them.

At that time, I was told to go and see the captain. The captain then told me to go see the chief. The chief told me to go back to the captain, who told me I will be in charge of transport right at the Chambers command center.

After that, it just stayed there until 2:30 in the morning, return to the station, and I went home.

Q. The first unit that you met up with on Murray and West Broadway, do you remember what unit it was, EMS unit or a volley?

A. They were a vollie unit.

Q. A vollie unit?

A. Okay, they were a vollie unit, and then I had a 911 unit. I think it was ten charlie from -- sorry, from Lenox Hill, and I think one unit from St. Vincent's.

Q. And on West and Barclay, the units that were there?

A. All EMS units.

Q. All EMS units?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember which units they were offhand or --

A. No idea.

Q. Recognize any of the personnel?

A. I didn't recognize no other personnel. That is why I asked who was the senior man, and I had to put a senior man in charge of that staging area.

What I did ask was turn around and face north so in case they have to transport, they had a clear avenue to transport, and as they were turning the vehicle around, that's when the tower building came down. I don't know which building came down, but I know one of the buildings came down.

Q. When you were on Murray Street itself, by the D.C. 37 building, any other EMS personnel with you?

A. No, I was by myself.

Q. You were by yourself? They all went north on the Westside Highway?

A. They all went north on the Westside Highway.

Q. With the collapse?

A. Right, with the collapse.

Q. Do you know that chief and the captain?

A. There were a whole bunch of chiefs there. The captain I just don't remember his name, but there were a whole bunch of EMS chiefs there.

Q. And they were up on Chambers?

A. Chambers, there is -- yeah, they established command.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. Basically no. I think that we should start doing more drilling on an incident like this, as far as I think that we haven't done in many years because they're too comfortable. It's not only keeping in practice to have a lot of (inaudible) to make sure that everything is done correctly.

You have proper training, like the army had the war games and things like that. We have this command, this system. We should have that more often, you know, and in a city anything could happen.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0609 hours, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110131

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ARTURO GONZALEZ

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 23rd, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC GONZALEZ: Arturo Gonzalez at Battalion 8 and I'm paramedic 3675.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 8 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th. The interview start time is 0634.

A. We start with -- we received a call to go down to the World Trade Center. The exact time I don't know. It was about 8:40, 8:45, around there. When we responded down, we went down West Street. We saw building number one had fire on the top floor. You could see that right actually from 34th Street.

Upon arrival we parked at West Street in front of One World Trade Center. That's where we stationed at. We took our equipment. We stayed there at least 24 minutes, more or less, give or take.

The second explosion came in building number two, in that area. We didn't actually see

the plane, but we heard the explosion. We were told to go into that building, Merrill Lynch right there, the building in the lobby to set up the triage.

As soon as we set up triage there, building number two went down, and all the windows in the Merrill Lynch lobby, they were all out.

We ran out of that building, and we went to proceed to the next building that was across the street. I'm assuming that's the American Express building we ended up on. And we went in that building, and all the glass exploded in that building too.

So we went out of that building and ran into the park that's behind the Winter Garden, in that area. It was too much smoke coming out of the whole area.

We ran to the Stuyvesant High School, that I don't see in the map there. We stayed a few minutes there. People started running up West Street. Me and my partner that was -- we switched partners because my partner parted -- Rick Perez, we decided to go back and get the

MERV. The exact location should be right here. So I'm not sure which street this is, Merrill Lynch on the right side.

Q. South side of the Merrill Lynch building.

A. We picked up the MERV there because it was abandoned because of the collapse of the building. We proceeded eastbound to West Street, and we stationed at Vesey and West. We were told to stop and treat patients, because patients were coming out of the area.

From that location, we stayed there all night up till 6:30 in the morning, 5:45 to 6:00 in the morning to be precise, treating patients there and treating members of the service and all the departments. So during that time we saw -- mostly we saw maybe two patients, three patients.

Then from there by mistake I took a walk up to this building here. I'm not sure what this is, one of these buildings, and there were 154 elderly trapped in the basement -- not trapped but they wanted to get out. We had to relocate it back to my commander and see how we could get them out. We decided it was safer to

stay there.

Then we went back to the MERV and just kept on treating patients all night, just back and forth. If you're asking for the time frame between the period of the plane crash and the second one and the building collapse, we were from the location into this building, switched to another building, ran to the park and then ran to Stuyvesant High School. Then we relocate to get the MERV. That's a big vehicle we had.

When we were trying to proceed north, we were stopped at Vesey and West to treat patients, and we didn't move from that location all that time.

Q. When you arrived here on West opposite number One World Trade --

A. Right.

Q. -- aside from your partner, did you see anybody else there from EMS or the Fire Department that you recognized? Do you know the names?

A. Not Fire Department. There were some Fire Department vehicles there. EMS, there were about four or five units there at that location,

standing there.

Q. City units or privates?

A. There was only one city unit, and the rest were voluntaries.

Q. Do you recall what unit that was, the city unit?

A. I think it was 7 Charlie.

Q. 7 Charlie?

A. Yes. 7 Charlie was the unit that was there, city unit. That's the only one I remember as a city unit.

Q. Did you recognize the crew at all?

A. Yeah, one of the crew members. No, both of them. I remember both. They're working here today, I think. They both were on the scene, yes. The others were voluntaries.

Q. Any EMS officers that you recall there, lieutenants, captains?

A. Yes.

Q. Chiefs?

A. There was Captain Stone. Chief Carrasquillo was there, Chief Kowalczyk. That's all I can remember offhand. At that time frame, those are the three I remember at the moment. In

the evening I saw most of the other chiefs, like Chief McCracken, the captains and all that stuff, Pinky. Lieutenant Albuerme was there too. But then the time frame from the plane crash and in that time, those are the three I remember.

Q. When the building started coming down and you went into Merrill Lynch, Two World Financial, did everybody that was with you on West Street go in there, as far as you know?

A. I can't remember, because there was so much panic and running, everybody was spread. I don't think everybody entered the building. I think some people just went up West Street and some people went out the other direction. They all were separating.

We actually stayed about 20 minutes here watching people jumping out of the building. Actually they were jumping, landing on West Street. There was about 20 -- we watched about 18 to 20 people jump out of the building, and they were landing on West Street or right in front of the World Trade Center.

Q. The concourse?

A. Yeah. They were just landing in front.

We could watch them and that's it.

Then when the second plane crashed, the explosion, they decided to move us -- move further up. Somebody was screaming that another plane crashed. The next thing is we're in here but running out of all these buildings because of the explosion and the crashes that every building was creating and spreading all over the place.

Most of the units disappeared and went up. I think what happened -- we're the only one that came back and picked up the MERV then stayed there. We were the only unit there for a while, up to maybe them, they came back to us.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add, opinions?

A. No. I mean, we were not expecting what happened there. They caught us by surprise. I just remember that one of the officers took all the keys to -- usually you park somewhere and the officer takes the keys. That officer was never found. Most of these vehicles were left on the scene because the reason is they didn't have the keys.

Q. They didn't have the keys.

A. The officer that took the keys, we never found. I don't know who it was, but we never found them at that time period. Luckily Rick had a copy of the MERV, and we wanted to move slow but we had to stop because we were the only ambulance active at that moment, the MERV. They told us to stop and treat people, and that's where we stayed all night.

Q. Okay. I thank you very much.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0643. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110132

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSE PEREZ

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11th at the World Trade Center. We are in the lounge at EMS Battalion 8. The time is 6:04 a.m., and the interview is being conducted with --

EMT PEREZ: Jose Perez, emergency medical technician, Battalion 8.

Q. Jose, tell us your story.

A. From the beginning we were at 48th and Lexington or thereabouts when we heard it come over the radio that a plane hit one of the World Trade Centers. At first I just thought it was like one of those single-engine planes.

Then I guess because of all the excitement and everything we kind of just started to head down to some extent. I know all the south units were already down there. So we kind of UCA'd ourselves, and we ended up at 11th and seventh in front of St. Vincent's. We could see both of the towers. At that time when we got down there, they were both engulfed in flames.

At some point we just saw the first tower fall, and we were amazed. I was with my partner, Joe Valdivia, and we both were shaking our heads and were shaking. We decided to go down, and we took the West Side Highway. At some point we just couldn't go any further because people were starting to come up, so we threw it in park and basically just --

Q. Do you know about how far down you got?

A. I don't really remember. I think it was -- I want to say Bank Street -- actually it was further down, I think. I don't recall exactly.

Q. Okay.

A. So we just helped as much as we can with everybody that was coming out. Then the second building fell. I think for me it was just unbelievable, the whole thing. For the first few days it was something that I thought didn't really happen. I just had to convince myself that it did. I just had a good support system at my home with my wife and family. The people here, it was good to talk to.

I think initially the problem was

people who were coming out, some of us were missing. So we really didn't know what was going on with certain people here.

Q. A lot of misinformation. You had no idea?

A. Right. Especially after the first building fell because everybody was calling a mayday, and we didn't know who was actually close enough to be involved in all that. Luckily everybody from our station's okay. I knew by face certain people but not really personally. So it's pretty devastating all around.

I think that's basically it. It was traumatic. I think it was helpful being here for a while with everybody.

Q. I was going to say, were you working for like days after that?

A. Yeah, it seemed long for a few days afterwards, but it kind of diminished a little bit. We coped. We were able to help each other out and support each other.

That's basically it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to it at all?

A. No, just like I said, I think it was very unreal at the time. It seemed like it was a movie and it wasn't really happening. After a few hours, you know it's real.

Q. All right, Jose. I thank you for your interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview we're concluding at 6:08 a.m.

File No. 9110133

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NORBERTO TORRES

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 0545 a.m., again, on the 23rd of October. We're in the lounge at Battalion 8 conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The interview is being conducted with --

EMT TORRES: Norberto J. Torres, assigned to Battalion 8.

Q. Norberto, I just ask you to tell me your story.

A. On September 11th we had been on a job with a GYN. hemorrhage going into Bellevue when I heard over the radio that an airplane had struck the World Trade Center. We dropped off the patient, and as I de-conned the bus, I continued to listen to what the radio was saying, what was going over, the transmissions.

While we were still 81, I heard someone scream over the radio that another plane had struck the second tower. Then upon hearing this, me and my partner decided let's go buff the job.

We'll head down there. We'll see what's up.

We got assigned to the call, headed down there. As we approached, we saw the towers were -- smoke billowing, the towers engulfed in flame. We proceeded to where they assigned us to West and Vesey. Originally we parked at the end of the line on Vesey, which is further in front of the -- what is that place? The Tex-Mex place at the end on the right-hand side, we were right across from that.

Lieutenant Nevins at the scene informed me to move the bus, that he wanted it closer up so that we would be ready to pick up patients and head to the hospital if we're needed.

We moved all our equipment and got ready for whatever procedures that might be necessary, whether it's to send us further in or to set up a triage in front of AMEX.

As I moved the bus, we got closer to the zone. You saw people jumping out of the buildings. You saw debris everywhere, numerous injured personnel running towards us, everyone covers in ashes and soot.

We parked the vehicle, we got all our

equipment off, and we started heading towards the corner of West and Vesey. They were just throwing all the patients towards us, trying to get everybody out of the building.

We treated, as we went, numerous patients, putting them in the back. Those that couldn't walk, we carried those that needed to be on a stretcher while not -- we got them whatever help we could and got them far back.

The dust was intense, so I ran back to go get some masks, and we met -- there were chiefs and whatnot on the scene. One of the captains asked me to get all the masks from my vehicle and bring the masks to the personnel, the PD, whoever was there that didn't have a mask. I did that. I also went into other vehicles, got the masks, and gave masks to other people.

From there I was talking to J.R. Rivera at the time trying to get one of the chiefs a mask when the first building started to come down. All we heard was like a loud, thunderous roar. At first everybody was like, oh, no, another plane? There was all kinds of reports going on that there were numerous planes headed

towards the financial district.

You looked up and all you saw was a wall of debris blocking out the sky coming at you. We ran. I ended up in an outcropping of one of the buildings, just hiding until the debris blew past. It seemed like forever. It took maybe less than a minute or whatnot of just everything being blown past.

Around the corner where they had set up the new staging for West and Vesey, which was -- excuse me, I don't know the name of that.

Q. Probably westward, right, towards --

A. North End?

Q. North End?

A. Right. We were redirected there. They brought the MERV. One of the lieutenants asked for volunteers to go get the vehicles, so I volunteered. He described the car where he had placed the keys for the vehicles, because as you got there you were to turn over your keys. But since some of the vehicles -- a lot of the vehicles, the doors were locked, we needed a key. He described he had placed them on top of a blue Crown Victoria.

So I went back to the scene. Even though every car was gray, I found a Crown Victoria at the scene where he was. I started digging under the pile of debris that was at the wheel well. There was nothing on top of the car. We found the keys.

I handed off some keys to some fellow EMTs that were there, and we started to just bring the buses back around the corner. We got the majority of them back around the corner. There was only like one or two that were dead that wouldn't turn over.

As we did that, somebody called my attention -- as I checked one of the vehicles that was dead, I believe vehicle 470, it just wouldn't turn on, PD called my attention that there were a couple of injured people that were bleeding everywhere. They wanted some help bringing them around the corner.

I headed towards the corner of West and Vesey, and we started to lend a hand just bringing people around the corner, numerous injured. At that point I believe the second building came down. It was just another loud,

thunderous roar and everybody just running, scurrying. No matter what was wrong with the person, you just get up and run. If you can't run, I'll carry you, whatever.

We made it around the corner. We stood there. From that point Chief Kowalczyk, he came up to me and said they were setting up a staging at Chelsea Piers and he needed me to drive him up there. So I jumped in an ambulance with him and escorted -- well, I took him up to Chelsea Piers. From there we set up a staging area at Chelsea Piers with the ambulances that had been dispatched to that area over there.

Being that I felt I wasn't doing enough there by being at Chelsea Piers, I jumped on the back of the U.S.A.R. gator that was heading back towards the zone. From there I went over to the school where they said we had a command post. We had everything on Chambers and West.

I went there and informed the lieutenants that I was back, because as I had been told, I was presumed dead. Since they had a problem, they hadn't seen me for about a half hour. So I spoke to my lieutenants and told them

I was still amongst the rank and file. From there I was sent into the auditorium with all the other EMTs to prepare for whatever the scenario was.

We were in the auditorium of Stuyvesant High School for what felt like forever. It turned out to be like eight, ten hours. From there they just -- nobody basically knew what to do. This had never happened before, so nobody knew how to help or anything like that.

So they started to send out teams to go to the wreckage and to help with the morgue and to just basically search and see if there's still anybody down there. So we waited, and I managed to get on a team that was going to set up a forward triage in one of the hotels along I guess North End Avenue back there, River Terrace, maybe one of those hotels, apartment buildings.

Under the command of Lieutenant Eppinger, me and the fellow EMTs, we basically cleaned out an area, set up a treatment area for irrigations, cuts, bruises. We still expected we were going to get patients at that point. From there we just waited. We were there maybe five

hours. No patients. There was nobody coming out of there.

From there, being that I had been on the scene for like 22 hours, they decided to relieve people and send in fresh batches. So from there they just shipped me out. I came back to the station, took a shower, washed off all the soot, put on a brand-new uniform and went back down to the scene.

Q. Anything else you would like to put in?

A. No. I think I'll keep my mouth shut.

Q. Not a problem. Thank you so much for the interview.

A. No problem.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview is over at 0556 hours.

File No. 9110134

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DAVID BLACKSBERG

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 555 hours in the morning, and this is Richard Dun with the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, and we are interviewing --

MR. BLACKSBERG: DAVID BLACKSBERG, EMT, Battalion 31.

Q. Can you just describe in your own words regarding the events of September 11, 2001?

A. About eight o'clock in the morning, we were driving by the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, my partner and I, and we sat, and an ALS vehicle approached us. We were sitting by -- we looked up and all of a sudden -- we were ready -- we heard something, and we looked up because we were right across the water, and we had seen Tower 1 at that time was already on fire.

The paramedic unit that we work with approached us and said, "Let's go." We went, and we were able to get onto the Brooklyn Bridge and cross. We were at the intersection, I guess, of West and Liberty, a little bit -- a little bit further north of that, so we were right across the street of 1 World Trade. We got out of the ALS vehicle, and I -- we parked our vehicles right across the street. We got

out. We put our helmets on and our turnout coats.

We approached the building, and we heard some loud noise. We felt some rumbling, so we looked up, and there was another plane coming in. Went behind, I guess it banked around another building, so at that time we didn't really see it hit the building, but we heard it, and we felt it, and we saw it approaching.

We got to get back in our vehicles. So we got back in, and we only ended up going -- I guess it felt like a mile away, but it's half a block.

Q. Where did you first stop the vehicle?

A. We first stopped right on the west side.

Q. West Street?

A. Right on West Street, yeah, and Westside Highway.

Q. Right.

A. Right in front of 1 World Trade.

Q. Okay.

A. We were right in at the -- there's I guess what is it called, the median -- no.

Q. The walkway?

A. Yeah, the walkway in between the highway.

Q. That goes into --

A. No, the one that goes right in between the

highway.

Q. By the Winter Garden?

A. Yeah.

Q. That glass thing.

A. Right. We originally parked over there right on the highway, and we ended up parking -- moving our vehicles, and we parked underneath the pedestrian walkway going from Winter Garden to I guess it was 2 World Financial Center, over there.

We parked our vehicles there. We got out, and we had made our own staging over there at that time, because everybody was split up, and we had to split up once we got out of our vehicles, and we saw that second plane hit. We had to move, and when we moved, we wound up making our own staging.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos, commotion, people running?

A. There were a lot of people running all over the place and --

Q. Running towards you?

A. They were running away. Well, toward us, toward other vehicles and just away in general. I didn't even know until a couple of people told me later that there were a whole lot of people crossing the

Brooklyn Bridge, but I just knew everybody was scattered all over the place.

At that time, we had approximately four people approach us, and a fifth one was coming saying, "There's somebody coming that's really badly burned." I got the ALS unit ready, and I told them, and we had the person that was really badly burned -- I told them to get back onto the paramedic trunk, and they took care of him.

Q. Who was the ALS unit?

A. 32 Victor.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. Ellen -- I don't remember the last name -- and her partner. I don't recall. They are from Long Island College Hospital.

Q. Okay.

A. And so they took the burn victim while we were handling everybody else, and I had called over the radio telling them that we had formed a new staging area. I don't know whether they heard me or not, because there was a whole lot of chaos.

Q. Was this before either tower came down?

A. Yeah, this was way before either tower came down. This was right after Tower 2 had gotten hit,

within two minutes I believe, if that long.

So 32, they took the burn victim to Cornell, and we were by ourselves, my partner and I, just getting overloaded with a whole lot of patients, and we had no idea if there was anybody else coming. We stabilized them as much as we could.

People were coming down with minor bruises. They asked if they needed to go to the hospital. I said, "If you're walking and can tell what's going on, you can, you know, just keep walking away. There is nothing much I can do for you right now, because I have a whole lot of people."

I don't know, you know, a whole lot of commotion going on, so finally everybody is saying, you know, there's people coming or there's somebody down in front of the building. I'm approaching the building, but there's a whole lot of debris coming down, so I decided not to an approach, go into the building. Got as close as I could.

There was just bodies everywhere. We were watching them coming down. We heard them coming down, everybody screaming. A lot of debris. We didn't even know what it was. I guess it was metal, and papers and computers, I guess, we saw computer stuff on the

ground, and we just watched and heard people jumping.

Someone said, "There's somebody that's still moving. Somebody is alive." I also saw a dog that was tied up in front of the building, and I approached. I got hit with some debris, so I decided not to go, so I had a lot of people that were walking. I said let me take care of them, because I know I can help them.

I did that, and in a couple of minutes or so a couple of units started approaching, and I told them where we had set up staging because they were also lost, so I was standing on the corner of West, of Westside Highway, and I guess just over by 2 World Financial.

Q. Did you see any officers, captains, chiefs?

A. Not for awhile. Not for awhile. I didn't see a chief, and then a chief came -- I believe he was a fire chief. I told him what we had, and he just took off. He said, "Okay, I'll notify whoever." I said, "Okay fine." Then another chief came, an EMS chief.

Q. Who was that?

A. I don't know his name. I don't remember. I took so many names down, and then it was just so busy. It was really chaotic. When the chief came, I told him what I had, and what was going on and what I had

already done, and I already took down all the names of all the vehicles that had approached, and he didn't seem really to care what was going on.

[redacted]

Finally, we said -- okay, we parked our vehicles, and everything was clustered, and people everywhere, so finally we got some water.

Q. That's when I showed up.

A. Yes, that is when 32 boy had showed up, right when we started to get our vehicles set up.

Q. This is after the first building collapsed or --

A. Still before.

Q. This still --

A. Still prior to the buildings coming down. We were still there watching and hearing people jump, and patients were still approaching. We had cleaned up, you know, staged our vehicles by the water, so that if an emergency did happen that we could take off or we could take as many patients as possible.

There was, I guess, a fire started getting really bad, and a lot of stuff -- well, it was already

bad, but we just stood by and watched people jump. Pretty much that's all we could do is just watch and listen, listen to our radios and see what would happen.

Q. Radio communication was okay? There was no problem with that, other than the chaos on the radio?

A. There was -- it was -- I guess it was all right because once they decided what was going to happen, because they -- finally they said that all -- all bosses would go on to citywide and everybody else goes onto Manhattan South. I was finally able to hear that, but they obviously didn't hear me say anything about where I was setting up staging, or didn't want to hear it or anything like that, and so we were overcome with so many people.

Once the vehicles were all set up for, I guess, a new staging area that we had set up over there, it was all set up. We just sat and watched, had people coming to us, and next thing you know, we started hearing -- just actually, there was a lot of rumors that a third plane was going to come in, so we were standing by looking up, listening. There was no third plane. The building started coming down.

Q. Was your vehicle still on the pedestrian walkway?

A. It was actually half a block up now.

Q. Close (inaudible)?

A. But I -- everything from when I was parked across the street from One Liberty, right? When I was originally parked from One Liberty to when I finally removed it and cleaned up for the staging, there was only a block, block and a half, so it really wasn't that far. It was right across the street.

We started hearing the building, and we saw it tipping. It was just leaning.

Q. You saw it leaning?

A. Well, I looked up, and I thought I saw it leaning. Later on it was confirmed that it was leaning, and it was starting to come down, and so we just started booking. We ran as fast as we could, wherever we could. Everybody scattered all over the place. Nobody knew where anybody else went.

I looked -- I ran, and a whole lot of people, we were all running together. I looked back, and it was like it was this cloud of smoke, but it was like an avalanche, because you could see the smoke and everything tumbling right at you. You couldn't see up, you couldn't see back, and no matter how fast you ran, you couldn't out run it, and it overtook us, and

finally I found my partner.

We grabbed hands, and we just ran, and then the next thing you know, we had people grabbing my arm. Then they split up us, got my other arm, and my partner, Juan Rios, they grabbed his arms and said, "Where are we going?" Because it was so cloudy and smoky, dusty and everything else that we really didn't know where we were going. We just kept on running.

Everybody was panicking, and I told them to -- we had babies crying, kids crying, adults not -- lost not knowing what to do, where to go. People are walking back. People are walking in circles. My partner and I, we were the only EMS people, fire people or anybody that we could see of, even PD. We didn't know where anybody went. Calling on our radio to find out where everybody is. Nothing. Everybody is over the radio, so you couldn't do anything.

Finally, we told people to cover their mouths with the T-shirts if they had, cover their mouths with their arms. People just wanted to sit down and do nothing. There was papers and the smell and everything else that was in the smoke that we didn't know about, you know, and the dust. We had them cover -- keep their heads down. People were closing their eyes while

grabbing onto us. We had a whole chain link of people.

Q. All this chain link, was it all EMS people?

A. It was just my partner and I that were EMS, fire or PD. Just the two of us, and we started talking to people, trying to calm them down.

Q. Civilians?

A. They were all civilians, and actually quite a few of them were from 1 World Trade. They were from -- I don't know. One girl was telling me she was from the 63rd Floor, and another one was telling me she was from the 84th, and then there was other people, too. I don't remember what floors they told me from, but I remember these two, and they told me that they ran down, and I see they were still wearing high heels. How in the world are you running with these shoes on? So you kind of had to joke around a little bit, even though it wasn't really a joking situation, but you had to calm everybody down. Especially myself, you know. So I kind of used that to calm myself down and everybody else, joking around as we were walking now, because once you ran and the smoke and everything caught up to you, there was no use running, because it's already caught up, and you're already breathing the stuff in.

Q. Did you get blown into something, or did you duck under the buses or --

A. We had finally found a couple of city buses that were just parked just before Battery Park.

Q. Battery Park City?

A. Yeah, we ran. Well, it felt like a lot anyway.

Q. This is going towards the Battery Tunnel

A. Okay, so we are down here by the park. We ran all the way down to the park. I can't tell you what you route we took, because we just --

Q. I don't think you really care.

A. Because we just kept going around, no.

We went by Battery Park, and we saw two city buses there, and I told them to get on, and they said, "Where are the buses going?" Everybody's asking where the buses are going. I said, "Doesn't matter, as long as, you know, you're sitting here, and you are away from everything else. Doesn't matter where the buses are going. Right now, doesn't look like they're going anywhere." Everybody is worried about where they were going. I said, "Well, the air is cleaner in here. It's going to be dirty, but it's cleaner in here than it is outside."

At that time, we still didn't have masks. Nobody had masks. Finally we sat everybody in there. My partner and I went back out trying to find more people. A lot of babies, a lot of kids, adults. We told them all where to go. We were directing as many people as we could find that were lost.

Finally, we found two more EMS people, but they weren't working for the Fire Department. They worked for a private company. I think it was Cabrini, but I'm not positive.

Q. Building 2 still didn't go down yet?

A. At that time, we had no idea what was going on, because we were running, and we just heard the first building coming down, so I lost track of time of when the second building was coming down. It sounded like one big rumble, and then it just sounded like it just continued, and I was -- I wasn't really paying attention. I was looking at the sound. I was looking at the smoke and everything. I was listening to the people that were screaming. I didn't really hear another building coming down, so we ended up going into the park, getting people to come down and standing by the water, because there was a little bit of a clearing down there, and everybody standing by the water. We

were standing by the water.

We were trying to go over our radios trying to find out if there was another staging area near us. I don't know how much longer that we found out, but it was quite a bit longer, a couple of hours, and now it felt like a couple of minutes, but now I know it was probably an hour or two.

We found out that there was staging right at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, which was half a block away.

Q. That is half a mile away.

A. When we started walking, it felt like it was closer, you know. I was just happy to see other people, I guess.

Q. That's good.

A. When we were still at the water, at the park, we flagged down a fire chief. Actually ended up being an EMS chief. I don't know his name. I don't know.

Q. It's okay.

A. I wasn't really thinking about taking down names, and we just set up over there, and there was carts inside, inside the park, the vendors that sell the water, and food and everything. Everybody was just taking water, trying to wash out their eyes, wash out

their throats.

Nobody could breathe. Everything was stuck in their throats, and their eyes, mouths, faces and everything, so we were taking water, washing everybody as much as we could, because we didn't have any equipment, my partner and I, and there was no ambulance there, nothing, except for the command vehicle, and they didn't have much either. So we took whatever we could. A couple of boats started to show up, and we just put people on the boats, and everybody was worried about where they were going.

Q. You took injured people or --

A. Injured, noninjured, all civilians, but both injured and noninjured, both going onto the boats. Everybody was worried about where it was going.

They were going to Ellis Island, Jersey City and Staten Island. Those were the three places I remember the boats going. We were putting people on the boats. I told them it didn't matter where it was going. You'll always find a way home, and people were saying, "I just live a block away." I told them, "I guarantee you, you are not going to be allowed to go back in your apartment at least for a day, two days. If you are lucky, it will be two days."

Finally we started kicking everybody -- not really kicking them, but telling them, pushing them onto the boat and telling them to go. I told them they had no choice. There really was no choice for them. They had to go, so everybody was going on. I said, "Where do you live?" This is the closest one. Brooklyn would be the closest. Staten Island would be the closest, or Jersey City, wherever they lived, just get on.

Finally, people started getting onto the boats, and we were actually trying to find another -- another EMS person, and I -- he worked for the Fire Department. We went and found a fire truck, took the fire hose and a wrench, because we thought we had seen a hydrant, but there was none, because we were trying to get some water to wash the stuff down and try to clean up, but there was nothing there, and next thing you know, everybody was walking -- there was another -- somebody had gone back and got an ambulance, so at that time there was a fire chief, no lieutenants, and about six EMTs from the Fire Department, and we were pretty much doing everything down at the water over there.

Then we walked over -- once we found out -- once we got everybody onto the boats, cleared that

whole section off with the pedestrians and civilians, we went over to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. That's where we found out that a lot of people were going, and that was one of the main staging areas.

They started setting it up like a makeshift hospital there. People were coming down from the Trade Centers, being transported, and then we triaged them over there, and they were put onto the Staten Island Ferry and shipped over to Staten Island where I guess there was more EMTs over there.

Finally, there was really nothing much going on. People were coming in, but not steadily, and my partner and I felt useless. We were like, what are we doing here? There is nothing going on, nobody coming now. At that time there was nobody coming for maybe 20 minutes, it could have been longer. I lost track of time the whole day. The whole day felt like it was five minutes long.

We said there is nothing going on here. We made sure our names were on the list, because there was a lieutenant taking names on a list.

Q. EMS lieutenant?

A. EMS lieutenant at the Staten Island ferry, so I made sure our name was on the list. I wanted

somebody to know that we were all right, you know, that were there. We started walking up and found out that we were -- that we saw some of the EMTs handing out masks to people that were still walking away.

There were still dust and clouds. Everything was in the air and like that for a couple of weeks. We started handing out masks. We were walking up handing out masks. It felt like we were doing something because we -- you know, we're just sitting in there doing nothing. We walked up and we ended up -- it was a -- there was an ambulance from Midwood, and they were going -- they said that they were going to go up to ground zero.

At that time, we didn't know what it was called, but they were going to go up to the area, which is now ground zero. We said, "All right, can we hop aboard with you?" And he said, "Yes, absolutely."

We took the bus right up, took the ambulance up there, and we found out that staging was now at One Liberty, and Juan and another EMT ended up walking back. My partner Juan, he walked back. Rios walked back, and I stayed up there, because I knew Juan, and I knew the other guy that he was with, that also works at the station, they were walking back, so I knew that

they would be all right. They were partners, and they saw me going with the lieutenant and other EMTs, so we had split up. My partner and I split up a lot, but we ended up finding each other somehow. At that time he walked back, and I stayed.

I had a radio. My partner lost his radio and his helmet, everything at the same time, so it didn't matter, but I knew that --

Q. Fine.

A. I stayed up there, and I had a radio, and I was calling making sure everybody was all right. I had a cell phone on me, calling back and forth, and next thing you know we were on the rubble digging and getting fire, and PD and everybody else that was getting hurt. Meanwhile, some of us were hurting.

Q. And this point was it towards the end --

A. This was actually about -- I don't know. Maybe three o'clock in the afternoon. I had already gone into overtime for me. I ended up staying until the next morning. I stayed. It ended up being about 25 hours that I was there.

I tried to get a half-hour nap, but you can't, because you couldn't breathe. Anyway, we had some mess. They were like paper.

Q. How did you ever get back to the station?

A. Well, I found another EMT, and in the morning when we just said that we were exhausted and ready to come back, he said, "You can walk to the Brooklyn Bridge and come back" and I said, "Well, I know that there is a vehicle down at the Staten Island Ferry, because that was mine." Somebody had moved it earlier in the day, and I had the key, so I said, "If we're lucky, the ambulance is still there. I know I still have my key on me."

He said, "All right, let's try it." We got down there, and the bus is still there, but there was all this soot and papers and everything still on the vehicle and inside. We were wearing or masks inside the vehicle. I was driving maybe three miles an hour, and everything is blowing all over the place, and we finally made it back, and the next thing you know, I had lieutenants and everybody telling me I was missing for nine hours.

I called them. I spoke to them, but I guess in the chaos, nobody really knew where I was or what was going on, but I ended up making it back, and I'm all right. We still felt like -- I mean, I still feel like I didn't do enough. I know I did a lot.

Q. A catastrophe like that, I don't think anybody can actually feel they did enough, you know, so much going on, so, you know. You were there for 25 hours.

A. We were hands on the whole time. We were doing something, or we walked around or we were helping out whereever we could. We had those power bars that ended up making their way up. Next thing you know, I know people were having hot meals. I don't think I could have eaten at that time. I wasn't able to eat anyway for a long time.

Q. We want to thank for you your cooperation in this.

A. Thank you.

MR. DUN: The time is 6:18, and that's going to be the end of interview.

File No. 9110135

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FRANK PASTOR

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 6:25 a.m. hours, and this is Richard Dun of New York City Fire Department, working with Marissa Abbriano. We are conducting an interview with --

MR. PASTOR: FRANK PASTOR, EMT D, from Battalion 31.

Q. At this time, we would like to -- of the New York City Fire Department. At this time, we'd like you to describe the events on September 11.

A. Okay. September 11, that Monday morning, I reported to work. I came to the station, and let me just say this, the lieutenants here still break my chops, because that morning I came in, and I said to them, "I think we are going to be busy today." And they said to me, "Why?" I says, "Well, it's going to be 9-11," and from thereon -- I remember our normal routine in the morning, go get our breakfast, and we go sit and we cover Red Hook, so we had the view of the city. We were sitting there, and we were looking at the city. All of is sudden my partner says to me, "Frankie, that plane seems to be low."

Q. What unit were you working that day?

A. We were working 32 boy in Red Hook. We had

the view of the city, and she yells out, "Frank, that plane just hit the building."

Q. Who is she?

A. My partner is Mala, Mala Harilal, and I look up, and I can't believe what I'm seeing. I get on the radio, and I said, "32 boy, if you need us, we're available. We can go right through the tunnel." As soon as I seen this, I got on the phone, and I dialed the number to call my wife to let her know what's going on. We were standing there in awe. We can't believe what's going on, and she says -- and I remember my partner, Mala, saying again to me, "That other plane is low." I don't know how much time, 10, 15 minutes, and we seen the other plane hit.

Q. You're still in Brooklyn?

A. We were still in Brooklyn. They haven't called us. Now they say, "32 boy you're going." I back up the vehicle. We start heading towards the tunnel. We hit the tunnel. In the tunnel, we're stuck, and I can feel the tunnel vibrating. I'm aware it's already chaotic.

We don't know why we are stuck in the middle, but in front of me there is a big ESU truck. I look behind me. There is an ESU truck behind me. They are

blowing their horns. We can't see nothing, but we were in a standstill. What's going on? The problem is that you have the three lanes coming out or going in, and only one coming out. They're stopping traffic so we can get through.

As soon as I get on the other side of the west side -- I'm the driver. I come out of the tunnel, and I just see -- I told my partner, "I just saw somebody's torso on the floor," and my partner said, "No, you're kidding." I says, "It's not a dog." I thought it was a dog, but I saw a torso with no arms and no legs, just split open on the driver's side.

I go through. Guys are flying by. Emergency vehicles are flying by, so I see that -- I see which is 31 David's ambulance over towards the west side. I pull over, which I believe is going to be the first staging area. We didn't know at the time if it was or not.

I remember pulling over to the left. I saw that they're underneath this walkway, and I put the ambulance -- I saw their ambulance underneath the walkway, which at the time it seemed to be a good idea, because there's debris, there's stuff falling. I remember seeing a computer coming out the window and

hitting the ground, breaking the windows.

We don't know what's going on. I pulled the bus over behind them, and I look up, and I'm saying -- you got this gut feeling saying we don't belong here. We're too close.

Q. The two buildings were still standing?

A. The two buildings are standing. There's flames coming everywhere, so I said, "You know what?" I told my partner, Mala, "Let's get suited up," and we gotta go.

Q. What do you mean suited up?

A. Get our equipment.

Q. Turnout coats?

A. Turnout coats, everything. I remember putting on my bulletproof -- I have the outer carrier on the bulletproof vest. I remember putting that on, and I remember putting my helmet.

I saw 31 David. They're treating somebody in that first area underneath the walkway. There is stuff hitting the overpass, and I run over to them. I said, "Guys, I'll be right back. We're going to have to move these vehicles. We got to get out of here."

I remember running back to where we think -- they're parked underneath this walkway here at this

time.

Q. Liberty Street walkway?

A. Liberty Street -- or no, I -- yeah, this one here. There's debris falling on it. The windows are shattering. So I said, "I'll be right back. I'm going to go find a commanding officer, and we have to get out of here."

I remember seeing a lot of Hatzolah ambulances. There was a couple of EMS ambulances, a lot of private ambulances gathered in that corner. So I turned around, and I ran over. I remember seeing Captain Frank D'Amato. He was the one -- I said, "Captain, we have to get these vehicles out of here." He's looking at me, and he says to me, "You're in charge of taking all these vehicles and getting them out of here."

There had to be 10, 15 vehicles. I says, "Okay." Now all the equipment is out. Everybody has all the equipment out. Stretchers are out. We have to put everything back in. What it seems to me eternity, we moved the buses another half a block up.

As we moved the buses up, I'm coming back. He said, "And make sure everybody comes back with the equipment. We're going to start a staging area."

Seems to me that they're going to start detouring us towards the building, going closer towards the World Trade.

It must have took us, I would say by the time we moved the last vehicle, half an hour, 40 minutes, would have seemed to me, pulling the vehicles down and getting all the equipment. That's when we hear, "It's coming down. It's coming down." We didn't even have a chance to turn around.

The cloud is coming down, and we get buried. I remember being in the dark on the floor. I remember getting on my Nextel, calling my wife back, telling her I'm okay. "I can't see. I can't see my hand in front of my face, but I'm okay."

We must have been in the debris -- it didn't clear for about half an hour, 45 minutes. I remember running into Battery Park in the -- everybody is running, people falling. I remember falling down. I remember I lost my helmet. I didn't know where I was.

I remember running into a lobby in the financial district somewhere. I was the only EMS personnel in there with a bunch of women and children crying, and people saying to me, "Help me, help me. We can't breathe." I had no equipment. All I had was my

pouch. I remember I had a bottle of water with me, and I had it in my pocket, and I remember doing this clearing my face, people are coming up to me in the lobby, saying, "Help me, help me. I can't breathe. I can't breathe." I'm looking around to see what I can do.

I remember opening up this door. There was a slop sink. There was clothes hanging. I took the clothes, and I started soaking the clothes, wetting them, started cutting out strips, giving it to kids, giving it to the mothers. I must have ripped everybody's clothes that was hanging from people that work for the maintenance department. I remember being those gray shirts, those uniforms, cutting them all up. I found a watering -- a plant. What do you call those?

Q. Watering can.

A. People were coming to me, dousing everybody. I'm taking control of the bathroom, because it's chaotic. I can't let nobody in there because it's going to be -- they are fighting for water. They're lining up for me. I'm cleaning them off, giving them rags, cleaning them off.

I'm looking at the door. You can't fit

nobody more in the lobby. There had to be 500, 600 people in the lobby.

Q. What lobby are you talking about?

A. I remember running. I'm in here, so we were -- at first we were here. I moved the buses down the block here. When we moved the buses further down in here somewhere --

Q. Gateway Plaza?

A. Yeah. These guys were here at one time. Then we moved them here. Then we finally got them all down like another block and a half away. This is, I think, Albany Street and South End.

Q. South End Avenue and Albany.

A. Okay, somewhere in here, and the reason I know that because I've gone back to ground zero a couple of times and I remember saying this is where I ran. This is where I remember running.

In here somewhere I remember going into a lobby. That's where we started soaking the people up and giving them stuff. I must have been in the lobby half an hour. Everything seems to me like half an hour, an hour. I remember people gathering around me because the radio is still on, and that's the way they can hear communications. Safety, I guess.

They were all gathering. I said let me lower this, and I have to try to get out of here. As I tried to get out, they were blocking the door and said, "You can't leave us." I finally managed to go back out, and I'm walking back towards the green. Everybody is coming. I don't see no EMS personnel still.

Q. Did you see fire personnel?

A. When we started going, I lost my partner. I remember running into three fire zebra, a unit, and they had Scott packs. The HAZ-TAC unit, and I know the guys. I remember seeing Joe, and I seen Eric, and I said to Joe, "Joe, give me some --" He gave me some oxygen. I was covered completely.

I remembered taking my helmet off and putting the flaps down when I was running, but I remember stuff hitting me, but then I lost my helmet, so now I got my head full of plaster, after doing all this. I remember running into the guys. They gave me oxygen, and as I'm walking back, I see on the floor stumbling Chief Grant. He's got a non-rebreather on, no O-2, no nothing. He's just stumbling on the floor, and I grab him, and I pick him up, and he says to me, "What do I tell these people?"

People are still running. The flames are

still coming around that bend. When you walked down Battery Park, there seems to be a bend. It seems to be like when you're going to walk back towards the World Trade Center. He said, "Keep them going. Keep them going. Keep them walking," but it seems to me we were walking back towards the area.

I remember telling him we can't go that way. He says, "What do you mean? What do I tell these people?" I says, "We're going to have to stay here." We were in a grassy area. I remember being on the grass, and I look over, and I thought it was an ambulance.

I lost my footing, but it's a fire boat with the lights on coming, and these Liberty shuttle, whatever you want to call it.

Q. The ferries.

A. The ferries. They are yelling out, "I can take 75. I can take 200." That's when we started putting the people on the boat.

I lost Chief Grant. I lost his aide. I lost my partner. These guys, I don't know where they were. I walked back towards -- when I'm walking back towards the building, that's when I ran into more EMS personnel.

Q. This is after both buildings came down.

A. Well, we didn't know it was two. We didn't know that both of them came down. We remember hearing the rumble, and it seemed like it was a continuous rumble, so we didn't know if it was one, or two or three. We didn't know.

We found out that it was both after when we walked back towards the area that we didn't see nothing standing, just the mountain of dust and debris.

Just walking back towards the area, now you start seeing personnel. I remember seeing people coming back with water, EMS equipment, and that's when we just got together and started walking towards the ferry, and that's where we spent the whole day.

That's pretty much the whole story.

MR. DUN: I want to thank you for your interview, Frank, and your cooperation.

At this time, the time is 637 hours, and this ends the interview with Frank.

File No. 9110136

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BRIAM SMITH

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 813 hours.

I am Richard Dun, New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also New York City Fire Department. We are conducting an interview with --

MR. SMITH: BRIAM SMITH, EMT, 5480.

Q. Brian, can you describe the events or things that happened on September 11?

A. Yes. Tell you the story now?

Q. Right.

A. You want me to follow this thing?

Q. You know, just go through it, and if you remember things, you know.

A. Initially, we -- like I said it before, we had gotten off of duty at quarter of nine. I was going out to my vehicle to drive home, and we -- my partner and I saw the -- right after the first tower had been hit, and so we came back inside, and we told them. It hadn't even gone over the radios yet, because initially he didn't -- he thought that we just --

Q. So you actually saw the first plane go in?

A. I heard the explosion and looked up, and then I saw it start to billow out.

So I came back inside, and I told my lieutenant, Lieutenant McCarthy -- he was the desk lieutenant -- and I told him I was going to go inside and get changed, put my uniform back on, because I was in my civilian clothes, and that we needed an extra unit, and we need to go back out, and, like I said, he initially didn't believe us, but then a couple of seconds later they came over the air with the announcement, you know, "Units, an MCI has been announced the Borough of Manhattan," so on and so forth.

So I went inside. I got changed into my uniform real quick, very quickly and very sloppily, I might add, but we went back into the office. I grabbed keys. My partner was outside. He was checking the back of the ambulance, because he was going to be teching, he's not evoced, so he was in the back, and he was going through all the stuff to make sure that we had what we needed just to get out on the road. Went in and logged on the computer right away.

Before I left, my lieutenant told me that we were going to be 31 Mary, and if they needed us, they'd call us, so we got on. I logged on right away and told them that we were the next unit available if they

needed us, and they told us to proceed to the MCI in Manhattan.

So we left the parking lot, and we started going over the Brooklyn Bridge, and we made it down that -- it was heavy traffic, but normal Tuesday morning traffic, but right by the foot of the bridge, it was pretty congested, but with vehicle traffic. I guess because they -- the police had shut down all the vehicle traffic going over -- to allow pedestrian traffic there, I guess going over the bridge, so everybody was bottled up, but I was able to drive up on the sidewalk a little bit and make my way to the bridge, and they just waved us right through, so we were going over the bridge, and when we were -- when we initially left out of the station, central gave us a cross street to stage. They gave us a spot where they said they were going to have EMS staging, but again, like I said earlier, I'm not very familiar with lower Manhattan. I don't know the street names or, you know, it's not like upper Manhattan where there are numbers, and that's easy. It's a little tougher down on the low side if you don't really know your way around.

So my partner was trying to look at the Hagstrom's and trying to figure out, you know, where we

were going, and, like I said, going over the bridge there was no other traffic besides us, and the both of us were, like, looking out enroute to the alarm. We see the -- at this point only the one tower was hit, and there was all kinds of stuff coming out of it. Looks like paper, and it's smoking, and we were going over the bridge, and again, like I said, my partner, he couldn't -- we couldn't figure out exactly where we had to go once we got off the bridge, so there was an unmarked police car coming up behind us. He had the light going, and I said, you know, just follow this guy. He's got to be heading to the same place.

So we -- so I said all right I'll just follow him in. I followed him in. I got off the bridge. We circled around, and we started heading in this direction, I guess west. I don't know what street we ended up on, because I don't really know where it drops you off when you get off the bridge, but all I know we ended up somewhere down, like, I guess, in this vicinity because where we initially stopped when we were heading south, you could see down here.

I mean, it was -- you know, there must have been a crossing somewhere, because you could see there is, like, a foot bridge or something somewhere around

here, and you could see the tower. No, it was right here. I think it was Cortlandt or one of these streets. I don't really know.

So we had stopped because you could tell once you got close there was thousands of people in the street, you know, like they were everywhere.

Again, I mean, all we wanted to do was find out where we had to be staged and where they were going to set up the EMS staging, and we got flagged by a MetroCare unit, and they said that, yeah, some guy's having a heart attack. He had like a self-defibrillator, and it's, like, you know, it had defibrillated him six times, and I guess they thought that we were an ALS unit, because I told them -- I said, "Listen, we are just another BLS unit. You know, we can't do anything more than you guys can. We can't tie up two ambulances and four EMTs with one guy having a heart attack. I mean, you know, who the heck knows what the heck is going on over there."

While all this is going on -- and again, I only know this because of how many times I kind of replayed it and trying to fit everything into the time of events.

The second plane has to hit either as we are

getting off the Brooklyn Bridge or just as we are meeting that throng of people, because by the time that we get down to Liberty Street, the second tower is already hit, and, like I said, going over the bridge, only the one tower was hit. So, I mean, it must have happened in just, you know, that minute or so that we made our way over to Manhattan.

Like I said, there were a lot of people, and we could see the trade center. Again, like I say, I'm kind of confused by the whole layout. As many times as I look at this map -- this is actually one of the best maps that I've seen so far, but we start making our way down, and we ended up a couple of blocks away from the trade center when there was -- like, it looked, like a court building or something on the right-hand side as you are going down Liberty, and because there's steps going up, and there was some police there, and there was a fire truck.

Q. Maybe that was Liberty Plaza.

A. It might have been. I don't know.

Q. Liberty Plaza is right here.

A. That might have been it. Do you know if there were steps over here?

Q. Yeah, there's steps. Black marblite, a dark

color building?

A. Yeah. I think that's it. Might have been this.

Q. So you were on Liberty and Church, Trinity?

A. Liberty and Trinity.

Q. Which turns into Church.

A. Right. So we are -- like I said, I'm kind of guessing, but we were basically, like, right here, and there is a -- I think it was a sergeant or a lieutenant, I don't recall, but he was directing some kind of traffic. I think he had a helmet on, but I stopped, and we asked him. I said, "You know, sergeant, do you know where they are setting up staging?" And he tried calling on the radio, and he tried, and it was so much radio traffic at that point.

Like I said, it was bedlam, you know, at that point. It was just, you know, crazy. Nobody really had a clear sense of what the heck was going on. In fact, when we were going over the bridge we were hearing reports on the radio that after the first tower had been hit, we heard that it was a plane that hit it. We heard that two planes hit at the same time. We didn't know if a bomb went off. We didn't know exactly what was going on. It wasn't like you could see a wing

sticking out of the building. You know, it wasn't anything obvious.

So we went to -- we were there, and the guy said to us -- he said "Listen, I don't know where they are setting up staging, but I haven't seen any ambulances down this way, and I know that there is -- that they have some people that are hurt at the 10-10 house," and he said, "No ambulances or anything down there, so, you know, maybe you could do something over there."

So I said, "All right, we'll go down there." So we went down. We went up to the 10-10 house. As soon as we got there, we backed in the engine bay, like you guys have seen where it is, so if you are looking at the front of the building it's the engine bay on the left, and there was a captain there, one of the fire captains. He wasn't in turnout, but I said to him, "Cap, listen, you know --" because, like, he was captain at the house there. I don't know if he was from Ladder 10 or from Engine 10, but we backed it in, and the guy said, "Yeah, we got a bunch of people injured in here, seven or eight people, some of them hurt pretty bad. If you guys want to grab a couple of people and run."

I said, "All right. Let me get out a take a look," and the guy said, "Just make sure you back it all the way in, because there was a lot of debris, and there is a lot of stuff going over the building."

Like I said, by this point, Two World Trade Center is on fire. You know, like you can look all the ways up to the top, you know, I mean, there's quite a bit of damage up there. Like I said, the second plane had already hit it.

Q. People jumping at that point?

A. Not when I first got out of the ambulance. They were plenty of jumpers to come, but not at that point. If there had been, you know, like I said, I didn't notice.

Q. Was there a lot of debris when you were pulling up into the firehouse?

A. Yes.

Q. You saw a lot of debris?

A. A lot of debris on the street. All the ways over here.

Q. All the way up to Church?

A. Yeah. I mean, I wasn't crazy. It wasn't like I had -- I mean, I could drive through it, but, I mean, I had, you know, to kind of go around a couple of

bigger pieces of debris.

So we backed into the firehouse, and we got out, you know, after a quick assessment of how many patients were in there. I kind of guesstimated by how much time had passed from the initial incident. I mean, again, like I said, coming over, only because I'm not really familiar with the way the things are set up, I thought that this tower right here is the tower that I saw burning on the way in. I don't know that it's this tower burning, because when you look at the bottom and you look up, it's tough to get a sense of where it is in proportion to the top of the tower.

So I figure maybe 20 minutes went by, 15 minutes. Like I said, it's kind of hard to tell, because time is kind of like -- it was like in slow motion, but we got out. I got a quick assessment of the amount of patients in there, you know, immediately, and, like I said, some of them were pretty bad, so I said to the captain -- I said, "Cap, listen. I haven't seen any ambulances over here either, and what we are going to do is, being that everyone is going to be familiar with the firehouse over here, you know, we are just -- we will take this station over, and we are going to -- my partner and I are going the set the

station up as a triage station, and I'm going to radio out to dispatch, and we'll let them know what we are doing, but I need a few guys to give us a hand," and the guy's -- you know, he was, like, whatever you need, you just let us know. We will do whatever we got to do. And I said -- I asked him if he had anybody there that was medically trained. I figured there was an engine company there that maybe they have some CFR guys. He said, "I don't have anybody, no CFR, nothing." He's like, you know, whatever you got, you got.

There was a volunteer firefighter from Commack on Long Island. He worked in the trade center. He came over, and he's, like, you know, trying to offer his services, I guess, and, you know, so the captain gave this guy to us to help out. He said the saying thing, like he wasn't medical or anything. Like he knew CPR or something. So I don't know what his last name is. I just know his name was Rob, but --

So I said to the captain -- I said, "All right, listen. Again, we are going to take the station over in the name of EMS" and I don't recall how I told him we were going to commandeer the station, but like I said, he was pretty willing to go with it.

So I said to him -- I said, "I need every chair in the station, you know, whether kitchen chairs, chairs like this, you know, chairs in someone's office, rolling chairs. You name it. I need every single one. I need it set up behind the ambulance. I need it to look like a movie theatre. It's got to be nice and neat, because that's for the walking wounded as they start to make their way into the firehouse."

I said, "I also need every pillow, every blanket and any of the mattresses that you can get from any of the bunks upstairs. No metal frames or nothing, just mattress, and we are going to take the entire other side of the engine bay and just lay them on the ground. It's got to be nice and neat, and that was where we were going to start putting unstable patients and our critical patients."

My partner and I are going to start MCIing these people. We are going to start triaging them. So we did. Like I said, some of the patients were -- some of them were, you know, hurt not too bad. I mean, you know, like, injuries that were significant, but nothing life-threatening. Some bad lacerations, some --

Q. Walking wounded.

A. Yeah, walking wounded kind of stuff. There

were some that were worse. There was one lady who was burnt up pretty bad. She had her shoulder -- all the skin off her shoulder was burnt off. Parts of her arm, her leg, her hair was all burnt, and I remember her fingers were burnt also, and, like, when they swell up when you get burnt real bad.

In fact, the guy, Rob, I said to him -- I had to show him how to use a ring cutter, because I had to cut the woman's rings off because they were swelled up so badly, and she was, like, in shock, you know. She was just sitting here like this while we were cutting the rings off, and I know it had to hurt, but she didn't -- she looked like she didn't feel a thing, and the plasma was just, like, dripping just off her finger, you know. It was -- she was burnt pretty good.

So we dressed her wounds, me and this guy Rob. My partner -- there was an Oriental guy. His name was Fu, and this guy had a broken hip, at the very least a dislocated hip. He had a pretty significant hip injury.

Q. Were there a lot of people coming into the firehouse looking for help?

A. Yeah, there were a lot of civilians. There

were a lot of civilians that was still just kind of near the front of the firehouse that weren't triaged yet. Like I said, we -- I mean, between the two of us we must have maybe got six, seven, eight triage tags written out, and, you know, the MCI tags, and put on people. I mean, name, injury, and then we rated them, pulled the tag off at the bottom.

So we went to -- while we were doing that, like I said, this guy, the Oriental guy with the broken hip, I showed my partner real quick how to immobilize it with a KED, so he immobilized -- he started to immobilize the fracture with a fireman. The other fireman set up the chairs behind the ambulance, started setting up the blankets and everything else.

Q. At this time, the buildings were still standing?

A. Yeah, they were still standing, and it's a shame. If the buildings didn't come down, you know, I know that some, you know, some EMS captain or chief would have walked by and said, damn, this is a nice triage station. I mean, it was looking pretty sharp.

So to answer, I guess, next question. That's where we parked our apparatus, and we didn't really get too much in the way of civilian reports, but, like I

said, I spoke initially to that captain. He gave us some firefighters to work with. He was sending guys outside, and at this point is when I started seeing jumpers, because the civilians that were still out by the front were screaming, "Oh, my God, my God," and then I walked out to the front of the firehouse, and then they were just, you know, hit, you know, just coming off the building, and, you know, hitting the ground maybe 20 feet away, whatever it was.

So I said all right. I got to go back inside, and I told the captain also to let any of the firemen know, because they were all up and down the street. They were everywhere, and I said to him, "Cap, listen, just tell your men, tell anybody else that walks past the firehouse that the 10-10 house is being set up as a triage station. This way, if they run in to any civilians out on the street, they can direct them this way. We can at least triage them real quick and then, you know, once they start rolling ambulances and stuff, we can start getting people taken care of."

So they started letting everybody out on the street know that the 10-10 house was going to be set up as triage, and we -- and shortly thereafter, there were a couple of firefighters that came into the station,

and they said that there was a brother that was hurt out on the street pretty bad. He had been hit in the head with a piece of falling debris, and that he was -- you know, that he was in bad shape, and they -- initially the guys weren't -- like, I guess, word of mouth was just getting around, and they didn't know where he was, so that the captain was like, all right, let's figure out where we are going to send you guys, and once they -- once we had a general vicinity, they just kept pointing down Liberty, like down in this direction.

Q. To the west?

A. Yeah, to the west. That captain said, "All right, you know --" again, we were just trying to get a sense of where it was. So I grabbed two firefighters. There was a Stokes basket laying on the ground. I said, "Guys, grab the Stokes. Come with me."

I grabbed my tech bag, told my partner that I was going out to go get this guy and initially, like my partner, he got kind of frantic. He was like, you know, I'm not leaving you, I'm not leaving you, but I said, "You know, just sit tight. I got to go out, and I got to see if there is somebody out there. I'm going to bring him right back in. Don't worry about it.

I'll be all right."

So I went out and I started heading down west on Liberty, and again, like I said to this point, I don't know anything as far as, you know, plane or anything else.

Q. Did you ever try communicating to CB that you were doing this at the 10-10?

A. Yeah, yeah, central dispatcher, yeah.

Q. You notified them?

A. Sure, sure. I let them know pretty much every step of the way.

Q. Okay.

A. I called them up, and, I mean, I didn't tell them that I was going on the street, but I told them, you know, I told my partner that I was heading out and, you know, I let them know we were setting up the triage station at the 10-10 house.

So we -- I started heading down West on Liberty with two firefighters, and again people were -- people were still, you know, leaping out of the building 20 feet away, whatever it was, and they were -- you know, you had to walk like this, because they were landing so close, and there was still a lot of stuff falling from the building. There was a lot of

debris on the street, but, again, like the whole point I don't really see any -- there is not a big wing or anything hanging out. For all I know, someone, you know, hid a bomb on the 80th Floor, blew it up, and, you know, I'm just seeing the remnants of everything that's going on. We don't have any specifics.

Q. You don't have to follow that. Just keep going.

A. Okay. So we started heading down trying to find this guy, and, again, like I said, there was firefighters all over the street, there were guys everywhere, and the first indication that I had that it was a plane crash, I remember -- because I'm color blind so it's hard for me to distinguish different colors, especially when everything is gray, because it had -- really had kind of a gray look to it, because of all the dust, you know, but there was like a bank or something here, and there's like a fountain, I guess, right in front of the bank.

I'm trying to remember everything in that 20 seconds I'm going past it, but I remember there was life jackets everywhere, the yellow in-flight life jackets, and that the contrast of the yellow against all the gray, you know. It stood out. It was easy for

me to pick it out, and I remember thinking as I saw that, you know, I guess it must have been a plane crash, because where the hell else would you get a bunch of yellow life jackets in the middle of Manhattan, you know.

So, yeah, and I looked on the ground to see if there was anything around, and I didn't see anything, so I thought, you know, maybe it was an empty plane, who knows, but we started going a little further down. Like I said, it was a long walk before we started getting to where this guy was. I've been down there since, because I went down there on one of the family trips the Fire Department had, and I tried, you know -- they got that platform up there?

Q. Yes.

A. I tried to see from there to where the 10-10 house is, and I'm trying to figure out how far down I went, because, like I said, I tried --

Q. Did you go into the Westside Highway?

A. No, no, no.

Q. That's a big multiple highway, so --

A. Okay. No, no, no. I definitely never left Liberty Street. I just don't know how far.

Q. You went down a block or two maybe.

A. I went down maybe a couple of blocks, and I remember that you have to kind of cut back a little bit. You have to cut back a little bit, and because there was a lieutenant on the street. I asked him where this guy was, and he said that, "He's, you know, down that way aways, but, you know, stay under the awnings. There's a lot of stuff coming down."

And then I started walking, and I slipped, and I looked to see what I slipped on, and it was this guy's head. It was like a mush head, you know. It wasn't solid like a head, you know. I guess it was from the explosion or whatever. It was like a mush head. I could still see it was someone's head, and at that point, I took -- I tried to take note at what basically was on the ground around me, and then that's -- there was a lot of body parts there at that point. I mean, it was -- I mean, it literally carpeted the sidewalk. You couldn't tip toe through it like a mine field or nothing like that. You couldn't, like, you know, like you are dodging dog crap or something. I mean, it was -- basically just it was everywhere, you know, and I remember I -- again, I took a couple of seconds to take notice of what exactly it was I was looking at, and some of it you could tell what it was

you know, some of it was identifiable and some of it, you knew it was from a person. You didn't know what the heck it was. I mean, I seen a lot of dead in MVAs, dismemberments and stuff, but some of it was just, you know, I just had no idea. I mean, just from the explosion and from the fall and everything else, it kind of, you know, turns people to mush.

I don't know if you -- you need to know about the details of the bodies and stuff right?

Q. So did you ever get to the firefighter that was hurt or not?

A. When I started get to go that stuff, I saw down where the guy was. They pointed down to him maybe a hundred feet away. He was -- four firefighters picked him up on a long board. I mean, you could see his head. His head was, you know, was in bad shape. I don't know if this guy lived or whatever, but from where I was standing, from my perspective it didn't look too good for him, but he started running down the other way. He was heading down towards the Westside Highway on Liberty.

So at that point I said to these two guys -- I said, "Listen, I don't know where he's going, if they have something set up down there, but let's get the

hell back inside the firehouse." I said, "There's just too much shit falling down. We are going to get -- we don't want to get killed out here."

So we started making our way back to Liberty, back to the 10-10 house down Liberty. We stopped at this corner because there were two concession stands. You know, the little carts that got the donuts and stuff in it, coffee trucks?

There were two there, and I said to these guys, I said, "Hey, listen. I want to get out all the liquid stuff, all the water, the juice, ice tea and all that. I want to set up a rehab station inside the firehouse also, and this way we will have it set up for the firefighters that are going to be working there."

I mine, when I was setting up this thing in the 10-10 house, I was expecting to be there like for 24 hours. I was anticipating setting something up for a long-term operation, and, you know, I certainly had no idea that all those plans would be spoiled shortly thereafter, but -- and the thing is, like, with city firemen, these guys are funny, because it's like they have, like, two main things, you know. One thing is they just love to get like an order, like, you know, they just need like someone to tell them do this, do

that, and so after I said this, they -- like one of the other favorite things they love to do is break stuff, and they -- both these guys put their hands on the cart, and they are, like, let's knock it over.

I said "Hey, guys, whoa. There's enough stuff destroyed out here." There was a lock about that big on it, you know. Don't you have bolt cutters or something in the firehouse? They were, like, yeah. I said,"Let's go get the bolt cutters," I said. You know, I don't want to break anything more than is already broken out here. Let's, you know, let's just, you know, relax, try to be a little calm about this.

So we went back in the firehouse, saw my partner. You know, he said, "You know, how bad is it? Is it bad out there?" I said, "Yeah,, it's pretty bad." From the time that I saw the first jumper to that point, there was like six, seven jumpers, plus all the stuff.

Q. Your partner's name?

A. Brian Gordon. You want his shield?

Q. Yeah.

A. Shield No. 5548. I know what it is, but --

Q. We just got a name to clarify that.

A. Brian Gordon.

So these guys grabbed the bolt cutters, and we ran back out to the concession stand, and it was the concession stand on the west side of Greenwich, I guess. It was right here. Like this is where the 10-10 house is, because it was on -- there was like a street, because the 10-10 house is, like, on the corner, whatever it is, so I went back out there, cut the lock off the cart, opened up the door, and there was some milk crates in with butter and milk and stuff, and I threw out the milk and the butter, and filled it up with ice teas, Snapples and waters and stuff, gave it to the one guy that was with me and I said, "You know, take this into the firehouse. Put it against the wall. I'll set it up when I get in there."

So that guy split, and I started doing the other one, the same thing, emptied it out, and started putting some stuff in there, and I heard this sound, and, you know, it wasn't until -- it wasn't until I saw the news, it wasn't until I'm able to replay events and where I was and what exactly was happening, because, like I said, as far as I know, there is only one plane that's hit at this point. I mean, it sounded like a plane coming in. It sounded like a jet engine getting ready to land on my head, you know, and I remember I

started to hear it.

I looked at the guy, and I said, you know, like, run, and we started hauling, and we started running down towards the 10-10 house. There was guys all over the street, all these guys. These guys were history, because --

Q. Civilians you are talking about?

A. No, firefighters. There weren't all that many civilians. I mean, they were out there, but when we started running into the 10-10 house, I mean, from the time that I hear that first sound, to the time that the eventual concussion hits me, it couldn't have been more than four seconds, but, like, as I go through this, it's like slow motion, you know, like everything got slowed down.

And so we started running, and the firefighter was ahead of me. I don't know if he was from Engine 10 or Ladder 10. He was from one of the 10 companies, because he had it on his helmet, and when we -- by the time we got into the engine bays, they were completely clear. There was nobody in there. They all ran to the back of the building, like the kitchen area in there.

The only guy that was still in there was the

Oriental guy Fu, because he couldn't get up and walk, and this poor bastard was crawling his way to the back of the building, like an animal that gets his hind quarters run over, you know. It was horrible, and I remember the firefighter was running, and he ran past him, and I remember I thought to myself -- I said, oh, man, you know, now I'm going to have to stop and try to grab this guy, and as the sound is coming, getting louder and louder, you know, it really feels like it's about to fly in the front door of the of the fire house.

Q. Talking about the second plane crashing?

A. Not the second plane crashing. This is the building coming down.

Q. Okay.

A. To me, it's the second plane crashing. That's what it sounds like.

Q. That is why I wanted to clarify that.

A. Yeah. Again, like I said, I only know this because at the time I'm watching on the news and everything, afterwards. From where I was, you couldn't (inaudible) so we started running.

I stopped. I picked up Fu. I grabbed him by the KED that we had on his waist and his hip, grabbed

his shirt, and I started to drag him and looked behind me, and then it was just like "bam," and it came so fast. It was like a bomb went off, you know, and it just hit me so suddenly, you know, and it picked me up, picked me right up off my feet and threw me a good 30 feet through the air, because now you can imagine where the ambulance is. I'm on the other end of the bay side. Ain't nothing blocking the -- you know, between the street and me, and it just hit me and sent me flying and sent me closer to where the gear racks were. They moved them since, because I've been down there, but the gear racks were set up on the left-hand side behind where I set up all the chairs.

It sent me past that part, and I got to the back of the gear racks and hit down face first, and then I felt the rush of everything coming behind me. I felt things coming by, hitting me, and it was just a sound, like whoosh, and I liken it to being hit by a wave on the beach, you know, because that's kind of what it felt like. I mean, the stuff was so heavy I thought I was being buried.

I thought I was going to -- it felt like people were just dumping, you know, dirt like it was shooting at me, you know. It was so thick and heavy,

and at that instant, I really felt like I was going to be buried, like that's how I was going to meet it, you know, and I took a breath, and then the blast came, and then there was -- you know, like I said, that wave of crap and everything else that hit us, and then I opened my eyes, and I couldn't see anything. It was just black. I mean, black as you can imagine. I mean, you can't close your eyes and get that black.

And I stood up, and I thought to myself I have to -- I said I can't take another breath. You know, the next breath is it, you know, and it was just, like, kind of like a quick silence right after it happened, and I'm a volunteer firefighter out on the Island for seven years, and, you know, like, firefighters stuff started kicking in, and I thought to myself I got to get a Scott pack, you know, I got to get one, because I can't breathe. If I breathe, I'm going to die. I had one breath. I could hold it for you know, a good 30 seconds or so, and I got to find air.

First thing I thought was, okay, I'm going to go out to my unit, because I work for a Haz-Tac unit. It has two packs on it. I run out to grab a pack, and I said, oh, I'm on an extra unit. So I'm in a

firehouse. There's fire trucks here, and at that instant, I pulled my shirt up over my face, and I got ready to take my next breath, and I remember as I was doing it I thought to myself, you know, this is going to be the last one, you know.

So I was breathing in, and my entire inside of my mouth, my nose, my throat, anything that was wet inside down the whole way down was instantly dirt, you know, like I was hacking and coughing, and it was horrible.

So I tried to make my way towards where the back of the firehouse was. People at this point started screaming. People were trying to push past each other. You couldn't see anything, but you could feel people, like, grabbing on to you and trying to push you out of the way, and I found there was -- I think it was a Port Authority cop. He had a white shirt on. He had a white shirt on, and he looked like he was walking with a purpose, so I figured I think I'll follow this guy, because I was -- you know, kept saying, "Does anybody know where the exit is to this building?" Because I thought maybe all that crap was just in the firehouse. Little did I know that the back of the building is blown out, and the street is right

behind it, and, you know, it's just as dark out there, but, I mean, when you can't see your hand in front of your face, you don't know what's going on, you know, and, you know, just survival stuff is kicking in, you know, and I remember I followed this guy into like a corner of the kitchen, and he turned around, and, I'm like, what are you doing? He said, "I don't know. I'm trying to find a way out."

You know, I -- I remember thinking a lot of things, you know, and I thought to myself, my hopes got kind of dashed. I thought maybe I was, you know, heading, you know, to a final way out, and I pictured it was like -- I felt like I was on the Discovery Channel, you know and they show stuff, like, the concentration camps [redacted]

That was when I was picturing. The people are screaming, and there's complete chaos. You can't see anything. You can't breathe, and I didn't know how

many more -- I mean, I know I couldn't keep breathing this crap, but eventually it starts to calm down a little bit.

My partner was -- I heard my partner screaming my name, and I grabbed him, and he was just -- you know, he was beside himself. He was pretty upset. I said, "It's all right, Brian." I said, you know, "We are here, let's try to figure out what's going on. Let's try to relax a little bit," and actually he said -- we got separated again, because he went out towards the engine bay again, and I'm in the kitchen, and I tried walking back out to the engine base, and I heard on my radio, because I think we already switched to Brooklyn North again, because initially we were on citywide. You couldn't get on the Citywide frequency to your save your life, so congested going over the bridge. It was nuts.

So I remember hearing him screaming on the radio, you know, 31 Mary, 31 Mary, just, you know, yelling a Mayday, saying that we were trapped in a building, you know, that it was -- you know, there was rubble. We couldn't breathe. We were injured. We took heavy casualties. You know, that basically we were taking a pretty solid beating, and then when I saw

him again, I was getting ready to radio. He said, "I already called them." I said, "Yeah, I know." I said, "You can't give these guys a message like that." I said, you know,"We will have to figure out what we can figure out here, but, you know, you're screaming like that, somebody else is going to come running in here trying to get us out, and they are going to get killed out there, too. Let's just let everybody try to figure out where they're at right now. Let's take it, you know -- try to think this through."

So I pretty much relayed the same message, but in a -- you know, in a much calmer fashion, you know, for the sake of everybody else that was out there, and there were people that were screaming. Like I said, the dust was starting to settle a bit. You could see. I mean, not all that well, but there were a lot of people that got hurt, that got broken legs, and a firefighter that just -- he got a tibia fracture.

A lot of people (inaudible.) So I grabbed my partner, and I walked to -- you know, we were in, like, the engine bay area, and I said to him, "Brian, listen, before we do anything else, we got to kind of figure out whatever -- I need to know where you are at, we are on the same page here, you know."

I said to him -- I said, "Basically this point we have two options. Option No. 1 is there will be -- salvage whatever we can out of the ambulance, because at this point it was in bad shape, but I mean, there was still some stuff that could have been taken out, so we can salvage it, pick our way through the rubble, try and find our way out of here and just run to Brooklyn and don't stop until we hit the water, maybe swim back to the battalion. Whatever it takes, we got to get the hell out of here.

I remember it was pretty funny, because I remember he looked at me, and he said to me -- he says, "There is only one option. We are getting the hell out of here. I'm not dying with these people here." He's, like, we are going to get killed. I said, "Well, let's -- let me just go through Option No. 2 before I make a decision."

Option No. 2 is that we stay, that we treat every patient that we have, because there is no EMS. There is nobody here. I said, "You know, if there is anybody that was out in the street, those guys got wiped out." I said, "There is nobody else here to help them." I said, "I can't, you know, in good conscience leave these people." I said, "I'm staying, and, you

know --" I said, "I can't leave anybody behind," and he said, "All right, I'm with you," and he's like, I'm not leaving your side.

I said, "All right. Now that we have a plan, let's go implement it." We went inside, and we splinted the guy's leg. We got him -- he was on an long board. Like I said, things started to settle a little bit. There were firefighters inside and outside the firehouse.

I went into the kitchen area where there were civilians, everybody kind of congregating and did like a -- you know, everyone had three seconds to do their thing. I said, "I don't want to hear your history. I don't want to hear what kind of medicine you are taking. What hurts? You know. My arm is cut. What hurts?" You know, and I went through the whole thing, 20 people, 30 people, whatever it was.

So at that point, we started to assign people to pick people up that couldn't walk, pass them out the window, assign people that, you know -- that couldn't walk, but, you know, without help, but could basically kind of carry some of their own weight. Okay, listen, you two guys help him, and let's go out the back door, start walking down the street. Walking wounded were

getting -- I mean, everybody was making their way out.

Fu was still in there. He was out by the back exit. I remember because I went upstairs to check to see if there was anybody up there. I went past him, and he was pretty worried that we were going to leave him, but I assured him that we weren't going to.

So we went to -- we went upstairs. There were a couple of more people up there, got them out of the building, and we basically -- we emptied out pretty much the whole building. I mean, there were still some scattered guys there, firefighters and stuff, and one of them, Gordon says, he is one of the captains. I didn't make the recognition. He was wearing turnout gear, so I didn't really got to see who it was, but this guy Gordon and myself walked back out to the engine bay area, because, like I said, there was a lot of debris out there.

I didn't know if people were buried. I said okay, before we leave the house, let's get a shot out here. Is there anybody out here? We're screaming, and just waiting and listening, you know, to hear if anybody responds, and nobody responded, so I said, "All right. There's nobody to dig out here." I said, "Let's get the hell out of here," you know and that's

when the -- we started to hear the sound of the next tower coming down, and again, it sounded like a plane.

When we were in that house, and we started hearing it coming down, I thought that this plane -- I'm thinking the third plane is hitting, you know. Little do I know that the first plane already hit, and the second plane hit, and the tower came down, and I think the towers are still up, and I remember consciously thinking there is no way that this tower came down, because when I was out there before, and I looked up, I mean, I thought to myself, all right, the collapse zone on the structure fire is one and a half times the height of the building, which puts me somewhere back to Brooklyn. I said, "That thing comes down, we are all dead. You know, nobody could live through that. You know, it's crazy."

So like I said, after that, you know, what I think is the second plane, but was really actually the tower coming down. I mean, there is no way in the world for me that I'm thinking that this thing went down because of the damage I figure it would cause, so I think it's a plane, and again, when the Tower 1 comes down it sounds just like a plane, and it was so loud. You know, the energy of all the steel and the concrete

and everything else giving way, and I guess the rush of air.

We started running, and we ran into the bathroom just behind the apparatus bay, so we started heading to the back of the house on the left-hand side, and the three of us ran in there, and we got in the corner on the floor, and the three of us were praying. I had the firefighter on my left and my partner behind me, and we were just kind of like huddled on the ground real low, and then it hit, and, you know, we kind of got, like, pushed into the wall, and the same thing with the smoke and the dust and everything else.

You couldn't see. You couldn't breathe, and it lasted awhile, you know, and eventually it starts again. It starts -- the blast part of it is over, and, you know, like things are starting to settle down a little bit. You can hear there's a lot of noise outside, stuff falling, stuff falling apart, whatever it was, and I remember I was laying there on the floor, and I heard water running. I thought it was weird. I thought, you know, we were in the bathroom. I thought someone was taking a leak, you know, and I said, "What the hell is that?" I said -- you know, and the two -- the other two guys, I mean, they were -- they were

shaking. They were really upset, and they were crying, and I said, "Hey, is someone taking a leak in here or what?" And these guys, they were laughing. What are you talking about?

I said, "Listen, I hear water running," and I got up, and there was a sink above my head, and it was weird, like I think about it now, but I leaned forward, and I turned the faucet off and the water stopped, and I said -- I remember, I talked to the guy (inaudible) hey, guys, listen, you know for whatever reason, we were spared here. We still got work to do. Let's go.

And we got up, and we just got back into the mode again and just started getting up and running to do our next thing, you know.

So we went to -- we got up. We started -- again, we made another sweep of the firehouse. Nobody was left in there. Went to the back of the building. Fu was on the ground, and there was a couple of firefighters outside, and then they are, like, looking at us, you know, you're EMS, and they were, like, can we pick him up. We need a back board, you know. I said "You guys are worried about immobilization? You're crazy. Let's just pick this guy up and get him the hell out of here." I said, "What are you worried

about? You going to make him a paraplegic? He's going to be buried in here. You guys got to be kidding me."

So we picked him up, and we tried doing like a soldier carry with our arms on each shoulder, and it just wasn't working out, because he wouldn't let go of his briefcase, and he was whacking us in the face with it, and no matter how much we tried to make him let go of it, he wouldn't let go, you know, and we come to find out the guy has like half a million dollars in cash in his briefcase, you know, and really it was a lot --

Q. It was one million cash.

A. It was like the mafia movies. You flip the briefcase up and you see all the hundreds stacked in there. I was, like, holy cow, you know, he wasn't -- he would not let go. Because we offered. We said, "Look, we'll carry it if you want us to." He would not let go, so eventually we were, like, what the hell are we going to do with this guy?

So we just picked him up and carried him on our shoulders, like legs over here, arms over here and basically just took turns trying to carry him.

Now, we come out, I guess from this map because the bag of the firehouse is blown out. I guess

this is Cedar here, so we come out onto Cedar, and we tried going back and forth, and everybody out there is telling us that all these intersections are blocked off with debris, you can't get through, but eventually we make it out to -- I can't figure.

Q. Thames.

A. To Thames, I guess, because we start heading in the direction of Rector.

Q. Thames.

A. So eventually we get down that way. I don't know if we make our way back to Greenwich or to Trinity, get down in that direction. To be honest with you, I got very turned around, 1983 -- wherever 10 Rector is -- you know.

Q. You know, that is not really important. You made your way down.

A. In that general vicinity. We get down there, and we carried Fu down that way, and we get into this building, and I remember the reason why we stopped in there was because there was clean air. I mean, there was so much garbage and debris on the street, you can't see a damn thing, and our eyes were burning, and I said, "You know, we're going to get killed out here walking through that crap," and it wasn't like you

looked up and said, oh, you know, the towers are gone. You couldn't see two feet in front of you, you know, above, below, whatever it was. You couldn't see your hands in front of your face.

So, we stopped at this building because a guy at the door, he opened the door, and I remember looking inside, and there was clean air in there, and I said, "We got to get in there," and I said to the guy, "How many stories in this building?" He said "27 stories."

I didn't know whatever became of Fu, but he's like the comic relief in this story, but anyway -- so we make our way down to Rector Street. We get in there and, again, like I said, I mean, it was kind of like a toss-up. Do I go in this big building or stay out on the street? And I was like, I get to get some air. I can't even see anymore. My eyes felt like Mace, you know.

So we went inside, and there was a security desk right in the middle of the lobby. It was a big lobby, you know, and we went in there. We put Fu down, and there were people in there, you know, like maybe 20, 30 people, and, you know, I said to the guys at the security desk -- I said, "You know, are there still people in this building?" The guy's like, there's

hundreds of people in this building. We told them to stay at their desks, and I said, "Jesus Christ. We got to get these people out of here, you know. They -- these people are going to get killed. You know, I said, "We got to get the hell out of Manhattan." I said, "We got to try to get as many people out as we can," so I radioed out to dispatch.

I told them the address we were at, and I said, "Central, this is 31 mary. You know, my partner and I made it into this location. I need directions to send these people out to give them -- you know just tell them which way to go, you know, and I need directions as precise as -- I'm in this building. I'm walking out the front door. Do I make a right or a left?"

I said, "Central, I can't see street names. I can't see signs. I can't see anything." I said I need rights and lefts, you know, and they said, "10-4 one Mary. We'll call you back with directions." I said "Okay." So --

Q. Did they ever do that?

A. Yeah, they did.

Q. Okay.

A. And yeah, it was a Brooklyn North

dispatcher. The craziness of everything, I don't know, you know, who it was, but people were coming up to me and saying, you know, are you all right? Are you hurt? I'm, like, yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry. Like, no, you're bleeding real bad, and I had on a paper mask, and I pulled it away it was full of blood, you know, and I thought that I broke my nose, because there was blood coming from my nose, blood coming from my face. I was cut up, and I said, "I can't feel it, you know, so whatever it is isn't enough to worry about. You know, we'll deal with it later on. At this point I mean, this whole time is just --" is all adrenaline, so we were in the building, and we started making announcements over the PA system.

My partner goes into the stairwell. He goes upstairs, and my partner went upstairs, starting clearing out some of the floors. I was downstairs trying to get a handle on things, and eventually the central dispatch called me, Brooklyn dispatch calls me with the directions, and I was with that volunteer firefighter from Commack, this guy Rob.

Like I said, he worked in the trade center and he was familiar with the area. I said to him -- I said, "Rob, do you understand what this is? What she's

telling me? Because I don't know what the hell she is telling me." You know, I mean I know make a right, but she was giving me street names, you know, and I said, "Rob I don't know what the hell she's talking about."

He said, "I know exactly where she is sending us. I know exactly where I am, you know, no sweat. You know, I can handle it." I'm, like, all right, great.

So I cleared all this crap off the desk. There was maybe like a hundred people in the lobby at this point, and I got up -- like I was, you know, like a public speaker in ancient Greece or something, and I said, "All right, folks. Everyone has to pay attention. You have to pay attention to what I'm saying explicitly. Nobody -- if anybody doesn't want to listen or want do their own thing, be my guest."

I said, "You know, your blood is in your own hands at that point." I said, "If you want to go home and see your families, I have directions. I will get you to your family."

Meanwhile a lot of it was, you know, was BS, because I don't know what happened to some of these people. I don't know if they know exactly what's going on. I'm sending these people to their deaths or

anything, but they don't know -- you know, these people were just looking for a voice to tell them which way to run, you know.

So basically I said to -- you know, I got -- listen, we're going to be walking out of here. We're going to be walking out of here single file. Stay arm's length away from the person in front of you, because if you do anything more than that, you are going to lose sight of them and get lost out there.

There is not going to be any running. There is not going to be any cutting, no pushing, no shoving,. Basically if we start doing this, people are going to get hurt. If you are walking out of here and you think you know a better way than what my dispatcher is telling me, and you want to make a left when everyone else is making a right, you are going to get hit by a plane, a building is going to fall on you, some debris is going to fall on you, trip on some crap out there. You are going to get hurt. I said, "I promise you, no one is coming to get you for a long time, because I just came from that direction, and there ain't nobody left over there, so you have to listen to what I say to the letter" and I could hear a pin drop. You know, a hundred people in the lobby, but

the echoes when people talk, and nobody said a word, you know, and I was going through the whole thing, keep a mask on your face, breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth, try to squint, everything to try to, you know, instill in these people that I kind of knew what I was talking about.

People were, like, who do we follow? I don't know (inaudible) because initially I pointed to the guy Rob. I said, "You follow one person and one person alone, and that's the person in front of you. You don't stop following until you get to the water."

I spoke with this guy Rob afterwards, and he said to me -- he said, "You know, Brian, when we got down to the water," he said, "Its' funny, because as I was walking, I felt like the Pied Piper, you know, because we'd pick up some stragglers along the way, and I'd be, like, get in line with everybody else.

Just, you know get in line with everybody else, and he said that once he started getting to a spot in Manhattan where it started to clear out a little bit, he said, you know, behind him was -- like, I mean you could run a laser beam down it, a straight line. These people followed it right to the letter, you know, and they all got out of the building, and my

partner, you know, he was like -- are we going with them? And I'm, like, you know, we can't leave yet, there is still more people in the building, and we still had Fu.

I mean, I don't know what the hell to do with this guy. I said, "I can't carry this guy back to Brooklyn, you know."

So we did the same thing again. This time I went up on the floors. We cleared out the rest of the people in the building. Some of the people were hesitant. They were, like, we were told to stay at the desk. I said, "Listen, if you want to stay by your desk and get killed in here, it's your business."

I said, "You want to go home to your family" I said, "I got -- you know, I can give you the way." And nobody stayed behind their desk, you know. Everybody left.

So we went to -- down the lobby. Same thing again. Filled up the lobby, a hundred people, 150 people. It was a bigger crowd than the first time around. Gave the same speech again, and we didn't have any paper masks to give anybody. I know Gordon started -- he had the button-down uniform. Started taking it off and cutting it into strips so people could put it

over their face, and like I said, again, the same speech.

There was an off-duty police officer there, and he approached me and said -- I gave him the same directions. He knew exactly where I was talking about, and so --

Q. So you were going and making your way down to the ferry, right?

A. No, I never left the building.

Q. You were sending the people in the direction of the ferry?

A. I guess. Like I said, I don't know where the hell central sent them, but the people who were familiar with the area, who were the leaders of this group, they knew where they were going.

All I knew was they made it right out of the building. After that I couldn't see them any more, you know.

I have to stop for a drink of water. My throat is getting a little dry.

So anyway, we evacuated the building again. At this point, there's nobody left in the building. Fu was still in there, myself and Gordon. There was another guy, older guy, and his foot was mangled. He

couldn't walk on it, and he said to me his name was Cribby or Crippy, or something like that. I mean, I don't know if he was making a joke because he was, like, being crippled or whatever it was, but I know that when this group of people had left, my partner was, like, you know, are we leaving with this group? And I'm like, listen, we could try to manage to carry Fu the hell out of here, but this other guy's got to weight 250 pounds. I'm not made with that kind of strength. I said, "I can't carry that guy." We have to wait until eventually vehicles start coming in, because this whole area -- and like I said, I don't know where the hell I am in -- you know, in relation to the trade center, and all I know is I can't see a damn thing.

I mean, it's not black outside, but it's dark as hell. You can't see anything, and I said eventually a vehicle is going to start coming down this way, and when one does we will try to flag him down and, you know, throw a patient in there.

So we waited there for awhile, and I know that the whole time that we were in that building I was scared, because I thought that -- you could hear planes and stuff around flying outside. I mean, eventually,

like I said, once I get out to -- once I get into the hospital I realized that they're the fighter jets, but, you know, I don't know what the hell is flying around. Like I said, I can't see anything.

To me, every time one of the buildings fell down, it was a plane coming in, and then I saw -- I'm thinking to myself, you know, how many -- LaGuardia and Kennedy. I mean, there's got to be dozens of planes out there. I'm waiting for the next one to come in any second now, you know, and I know that my impulse was just to run like hell, and I wanted to get out of Manhattan in the worst way, and we were listening to -- they had a clock radio in the -- by the security deck, and we were trying to listen to it. It was very staticky, but we could hear reports of there were -- planes were hitting Manhattan, that they were going -- that they hit Pittsburgh, that they were trying to do something to Chicago, that they attempted something at Camp David, that they hit the Pentagon, and I'm thinking Jesus Christ, how many -- there's going to be a million planes up there. We are under a full-scale attack, you know, and, like I said, I wanted to get, I mean, I want to go back out to Long Island, way out east where I live.

I don't want to be anywhere near the city. I want to get the hell out of here, you know, but we stayed there, you know, because, like I said, you know right from the 10-10 house. I mean, I could have walked away, but, you know, I don't think I could have, you know, lived with myself if I walked away from people that, you know, are going to be stuck in there.

It's nice to be able to walk away. These people didn't have that luxury, so we waited in there for awhile, and eventually I could start to hear emergency vehicles outside, and I went to -- I went outside to see if could flag down. Eventually I flagged down an RMP and, you know, just a regular -- regular precinct, you know, regular police unit, and I said to him -- I said, "Listen, I got two patients inside that can't walk, and need to go to a hospital, you know. They're hurt pretty bad, and, you know, they -- would you guys be able to take them out of here?

And they were like, yeah, all right, so we went inside. We carried the two of them out to the car, threw them in the back seat of the car, and I remember they were -- Fu was like, you know, I never forget you, I never forget you. I said, "I know, Fu. Get in the car. Get to the hospital." And whatever

hospital they went to, I mean, I don't know. I told them go to any kind of hospital.

So they sent those guys on their way, and at that point, I said to my partner -- I said, "Listen, there's nobody left. You know, there is nobody left to treat, or to carry or to save or anything else." I said, "Let's start going home, and let's do what we can to get back to Brooklyn."

At that point, we started walking down. Like I said, when we started taping again, down towards Wall Street. I remember because as we were walking down, Gordon and myself, we reached the bull. That's where we meet up again with Murray.

We were with him in the 10-10 house, but we got separated when we left, and we eventually -- like I said, we meet up with him again, and as we start heading down towards Wall Street, and we walked down there, and his vehicle was parked somewhere around there. I mean, I don't know where the hell it was parked, but I know it was definitely in the line of fire, because his vehicle took a beating.

He was, like, listen, my car is not too far from here. I'm going to run down and get it. You know, because my partner -- he had a sprained ankle.

He couldn't walk all that well, and, like I said, I'm starting to feeling the pain now. I could feel the back of my neck was all swollen. My head was splitting, you know, a real back headache. I was bleeding, you know, I was sore, and the adrenaline and everything else was starting to wear off.

I mean, I don't know what time of the morning it is at this point, but, I mean, I hadn't had anything to eat since dinner, three o'clock in the morning, the tour before, you know.

So we went to -- so this guy is, like, I'm going to be gone. Hang out here, I'll be back to you guys and see if I can get as far as the vehicle and see what we could do to drive out of here. He left, and my partner and I were waiting down in the street for a while.

Eventually Murray came back. He got us into his car. I had to sit on my helmet, because of all the glass from the windows were blown in, and the car was full of debris. There was so much dust on the street you couldn't see anything. In fact, I gave him my sunglasses so he could see while he was driving, but the windshield was gone, and he -- we started driving, and I don't know where the hell he was driving us, and

I said to him -- I said, "Listen, all we want to do is get back the Brooklyn, because all I want to do is get in my vehicle back at Battalion 31 and just drive --" I knew we had to go to the hospital. I told him let me drive out to Long Island. You know, a Long Island Hospital, because I'm imagining like these war stories, you know, like, being on the stretcher in the hallway in some hospital with the lights flickering on and off, and I'm looking like this, and, again, like I said, we're expecting the next wave of assaults coming in. I'm, like, the last thing I want to do is be in -- I don't want to be anywhere near the city. I want to get the hell out of here, and so we started driving down -- started driving down Wall Street, and we made a stop at 100 Wall Street. I remember the address because we saw a conditions truck, and I remember stopping, and I said, you know, let's -- you know, maybe it's a Brooklyn boss. You know, if it is, we'll hook up with this guy, because he's, like, let's go back to Battalion 4, and, you know, we'll go to the hospital. You guys get checked out.

I said, "Listen, I don't want to go anywhere in Brooklyn. I mean, in Manhattan." I said, "I want to get back to Brooklyn." Whatever it takes. I don't

know care if I got to walk over the bridge and carry Gordon the whole way. I said, "I got to get the hell out of here."

So we went to see where this guy was a boss out of, and we got out, the three of us. We walked into the building 100 Wall Street, and, like I said, it was dusty as hell. There were emergency vehicles going this way and that, and the lieutenant comes out. Hey, how you doing, lieutenant, you know, we're a Brooklyn unit. We are trying to see what we can do to try to get back to Brooklyn, and ended up this guy was -- he was a [redacted].

The guy was an idiot. I mean, I don't know what his name is, but this guy was -- I'd really like to meet him, because I'd really like to know where the hell his head was, because, I mean, if you could imagine, I mean, my partner and I, we got our asses kicked in a really serious way, you know, and I'm bleeding, and we're covered with dust, and my partner can't even walk, and he sees the two of us come strolling up on the building, the three of us, and he says, "Oh, good. I'm glad you guys are here. I have a patient inside, and I need you guys to hang out with her, you know. I got a few other calls I got to run

to."

What's wrong with the patient, you know? He says,"Well, she's -- she fainted and she's feeling a little weak, a little dizzy, a little nauseous, and, you know, just the excitement of everything has got her a little frightened, and she's a little lightheaded."

I said, "What, are you kidding me?" You know, and the guy is, like, don't worry about it. I called an ambulance. They should be here in a couple of minutes. Just hang out with her for a little while, and I said, "All right."

You know, this guy gets in his truck and leaves us there, you know, and I remember there was -- you know, we must have looked like the two biggest jerks in the whole city, because here we are -- I mean, beat to hell, and I'm literally laying in the floor of this lobby. This woman is on a chair with -- he didn't even leave his oxygen.

I said, "Can you leave your oxygen?" No, I need that for my calls. Here, here is some information about her vital signs and stuff. I said, "We don't have any equipment. We got nothing. Technically we are off line. They have us off line, because we are injured."

And he said, "Don't worry about it. Just kind of hang out with her and keep an eye on things.".

Murray was pissed off, who the hell is this guy, because the two jerk lieutenants -- I mean the two jerk EMTs are sitting on the ground like this. We couldn't even stand any more, and we were like, do you have any allergies to medicine, going through, like, I'm going to treat this woman. Like, we couldn't do anything if anything ever happened anyway.

Stupidest thing. I mean, again, like, we were living through it, you know, I mean, it didn't seem -- I mean, it bothered me. I said, like, "All right, you know, whatever."

Now, this guy is a jerk, but we were there for over an hour waiting for an ambulance, and I remember thinking to myself, what the hell is this guy kidding me? If an ambulance actually did get dispatched, could you imagine an ambulance getting a call for a syncopal episode and dizziness at 100 Wall Street. Who the hell knows what's going on down by the trade center, what other kind of crap is coming in.

This is a joke, and what are you guys kidding me? And eventually this knucklehead comes back, and I mean, I don't know what, you know, whether any of this

gets archived or anything else --

Q. Don't worry about it.

A. You know, the guy was an idiot, you know. I don't -- I'm not out to get anybody in trouble. Maybe the guy just couldn't think straight either, because it was hectic, so give him the benefit of the doubt, but he came back, and he said, "You guys are still here? The ambulance didn't come yet?" What are you an idiot? Murray was saying the whole -- he was mad as hell trying to -- he was, like, get up, see if you can find when this guy is coming back. When is the ambulance coming, and we kept calling, and we didn't get shit, and we -- you guys -- like I'm going to flag down somebody. I'm going to get you guys out of here, and he eventually gets a police van, whatever it was. It was a van of some sort, and the guy -- I mean he said to me -- he was, like, all right, listen, we are going to take her to Beekman. I want the two of you guys to go with her. You got to escort her to Beekman.

I said,"What, are you kidding? What the hell is Beekman?" He said, "It's a hospital in Manhattan." I said, "Listen pal," I said, "wrong borough." I said, "I'm going to Brooklyn." I said, "I stopped here to see if we could help you out."

[redacted]

He said, "Well, like, as long as you guys make sure you get to an emergency room. You guys are hurt really bad." I said, "Yeah, no kidding." So we -- and I remember that Murray was kind of -- he was trying to convince us, too, to go to a hospital, go to Battalion 4, and maybe we could hook up with a ride from there, but, like I said, I was -- like I told him, I said, "Listen, we will meet up with you again."

I remember when he first told me he was a lieutenant from BITS, too, because he was a lieutenant, but he was wearing, you know, stuff like you guys. I don't know what the hell he was a lieutenant of. So for a minute, I was, oh, EMS. I said, "Oh, what battalion?" He goes, "I'm with BITS," and I remember I started laughing.

I said 31 Henry, Tour 1. 31 Henry, Tour 1. I said, "Don't forget it. If you catch us sleeping

remember us," but I said, "You know, we are going to hedge our bets, and we are going to try to walk down to the ferry, and we're going to see if, you know, we can hitch a ride over back over to Brooklyn, and we get down to the ferry, and we have -- there was a surgeon that was over there that looked us over.

We spent a little bit of time at the dock trying to figure out, you know, what ferry was leaving for Brooklyn, and eventually they got us on a ferry, but then they took us back off because they had -- they got us a ride with harbor patrol.

All this time is, you know, hours are going by, you know, and we -- eventually the NYPD harbor patrol takes my partner and myself over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, because they said, you know, "Where do you want to go in Brooklyn?" I said, "Anywhere, wherever it is. I'll walk the rest of the way, get a cab, whatever, who cares. Just get me back out there."

They took us in the Navy Yard, which is pretty close to here, so I was pretty happy, you know. I said, "This is great. If I have to, I know I can walk to the station."

So we -- there was a security guard. I mean, there was a -- you know a small entourage of

firefighters on that side that met us. They walked us over to a van, and a security guard was there, and the security guard gave us a lift back to the station, and we got into the station, and I remember he pulled up, and, man, I was really hurting at this point. I was sore as hell, because I remember every bump that he hit going down Park and coming down, and I was, like, I'm going to murder this guy because he hit some big potholes, and we get into the station and Gordon and I, I mean, dragging ourselves with whatever we had left.

I don't know what time it was. I'd have to look at my ACR's that people wrote on me, but I remember we came inside, and people were like -- they gave us, like, a double take, because they, you know, they all thought we were dead, because when we were radioing out, the guys were in the lieutenant's office listening to the radio, because we were on Brooklyn North, and all they are hearing is us, you know, going through these transmissions. We are buried in here. We can't breathe, you know. The building came down us. We are trapped in the rubble, and these guys are all in here crying, thinking they are listening to us die.

Meanwhile, you know, four hours later or five

hours, six hours, whatever the hell it is, we come stumbling into the engine bay that -- the garage there, and, again, I mean, we must have looked pretty awful.

I mean I know I felt pretty awful by that point, but we got into the station, and like I said people did a double take. They were, like, oh, shit, you guys are alive, and they came in and like immediately like -- it was just like ants jumping on us, and, you know, sat us down, and got us some Gator Aid, took my boots off, and then started going through the, you know -- blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

You know, we have to take you to a hospital. I'm, like, I don't want to go to the hospital. Who cares what you want, that kind of thing. So it was kind of weird, you know, being on the opposite end. People -- what is your date of birth? What is your Social Security number? I'm, like, those are my questions. Don't be asking me that crap.

So we went through the -- we went through the whole rigamarole. We were boarded and collared and did the whole nine yards and they took us over to KCH, and we went in there, but that was like the -- as badly as I was beaten up at the trade center, these guys, they were -- they murdered me.

[redacted]

[redacted]

BRIAM SMITH

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

He wasn't working. They called him in. He's working right now, but he's okay. It's just your father. No one has heard anything from him.

So I called over to HazMat, and I was able to get through, and I said, "Listen, blah, blah, blah, take a message, and I'm trying to find out. What's the story?" Well, who's calling? I explained to him who I

was, where I was, and I remember the guy was crying.

He said like, we lost them all, and after I got discharged from the County, I came back here, got changed, did some paperwork with the lieutenants, because I had the uniform here. I got changed, and one of the lieutenants here, one of my lieutenants -- one of the tour one lieutenants gave me a ride over to Haz-Mat 288 in Maspeth in Queens, and I went in there, because I figured maybe these guys would have, you know, some more news and what have you, and I went in there, and the captain pulled me in the office and basically went through the thing.

He's, like, listen, you know -- because I told him. I said, "You know, don't beat around the bush with me. You know, I'm MOS." I said, "You know, other than the fact that I'm his family, so be straightforward with me."

He said, "Well, the last radio transmission we had from your father, he was on the 11th Floor of Tower 2, and then it came down, so we haven't heard a word from him since, and to this point, no one has heard anything from him since, so he's, you know -- they haven't made any kind of recovery or anything like else like that, but, you know, from there I get picked

up.

One of my fire chiefs from my fire department on Long Island, a friend of mine came out to -- because they were only letting emergency vehicles in the city at that point. They shut down the expressway. So he came in. He picked me up. Went home, and the rest is, as they say, is history, but that's pretty much, you know, soup to nuts, I guess.

Is there anything I missed on the question sheet?

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with BRIAM SMITH. The time is 934 hours.

File No. 9110137

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY CHIEF CHARLES R. BLAICH

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CASTORINA: The time is 0910 hours. We are conducting an interview. We are at the World Trade Center Task Force on Duane Street. I'm Ron Castorina.

MR. McCOURT: I'm Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: Sir, your name and your title.

DEPUTY CHIEF BLAICH: Charles R. Blaich, Deputy Chief.

Q. Chief, can you tell me on September 11, 2001 the events that took place that day.

A. Yes. [redacted]. I received a call from my brother that the World Trade Center was burning. His wife drove both of us to the ferry, Staten Island Ferry. We live on Staten Island obviously. And we got a boat that departed approximately 0930 hours in the morning. On board that boat were various police detachments and vehicles and a number of volunteer firefighters taking the boat over to volunteer.

At some time off the Battery, off the Whitehall ferry terminal, the first tower collapsed and then it appeared after that the second one collapsed and in between that time frame, the boat finally got

into the slip. We worked our way off the boat. My brother went to the east side to try to work his way up Broadway to get to the Duane Street fire house to get his gear.

Q. Who is your brother?

A. William.

Q. William Blaich?

A. I worked to the west side with the people from Staten Island who had volunteered. We stopped for a few minutes. There was a traffic supervisor that kind of directed us through the subway at Whitehall Street to see if we could work our way up north that way and there were just too many non-answers. We decided to proceed to the west away from in the dust cloud as much as we could. We worked our way up around the Battery.

In that route, we bumped into -- the first Fire Department activity we bumped into was a mobile command post, which was -- apparently had just come out of the Battery Tunnel and was trying to set up, I guess Battery Park Plaza there, that street just north of the Battery.

I went on board that vehicle and received a radio, tried to find out what was going on. There was

really little or no information. I got my volunteers together. We had a contractor giving us an assortment of shovels and picks and whatever and we proceeded further up to the west. I bumped into Dr. Prezant, who looked like he had just been put in a bag of flour and shaken up and down several times. He was very disoriented, but he was able to give me a little bit of information of what was going on. We commandeered, or we asked actually, one of the volunteer ambulances that were there, gave us some face masks to wear at that point.

We grabbed a pile of those and proceeded further north. I eventually arrived at Liberty and West Street, where basically I was -- Rescue 2, whose rig was there. There was an engine company behind Rescue 2, although I don't remember the number of it. That was on the north side of Liberty Street and on the south side there was a commercial van of some sort.

I grabbed a Lieutenant Ryan, who I believe works in the -- he used to work in the Medical Division and I believe is in Staten Island now. I designated him as my aide and we attempted to establish a command post. We were attempting to establish it on top of the roof of the van. People were coming in asking

directions. The scene at that point where there were numerous fires burning through the pile. We were tentatively directing the volunteers to start fanning out on top of the pile to see if we could make any spot rescues, if anyone was alive.

At the same time we were informed that there was no water in the hydrant system and what engine companies we had that were still remaining, they were back towards the west end of Liberty Street there, I guess sometimes called the South End Avenue or South End Street, were reporting they had no water.

At some point during this, the difficult part was people were trying to make rescues of victims that they could see in the pile and we had to force them away because people had I beams through them and things like that. We just didn't have the time to invest in bringing out dead bodies. We were trying to find live bodies. We were getting reports, to the best of my knowledge, they were caught like that, I believe it was 58 Engine. They were reporting their officer was missing and they were digging themselves out from Cedar Street, which is that street just south of the hotel.

And I kept hearing 65 Engine, but I'm not sure where they fit into this. I never did confirm

where they were. We did confirm we had lost the 58 Engine officer, because some of their people came out. I was informed that we had gotten word that people had got up and gotten [redacted] My aide, we kept attempting to make a list of where we were putting these casualties.

I know it was at that point that Ladder 131 members were being thrown on a boat and either sent to the Statue of Liberty or to New Jersey. There were some ambulance rep there who said we couldn't move ambulances north or south and the only way out was by boat.

At some point there, Chief Hayden came on the scene with basically slits for eyes. I tried to tell him to go to the ambulance, but he remained on the scene and we attempted to operate a command post. He re-established it on the back of the pumper. Kevin Cully from OEM surfaced at some point. He also looked like he had been shaken in a bag of flour. Then we attempted to establish a command post.

At that point a member of the Fire Department, in a blue uniform, informed me that the

fire boat Harvey was on the scene. I stopped in disbelief, half knowing that the Harvey was sold a while ago, but he said it was here, had no equipment and an hour's worth of fuel, so OEM attempted to get fuel but apparently the fire boat flagged down a passing oiler and got fuel.

We were able to get a couple of engine companies back in service and they stretched from the fire boat. That was our only source of water at that point. I was also informed at that point that there was a fire, of all hands proportion broken out in the south end apartments. All I could dispatch was one group of firefighters to work on that.

Chief Mosier from Staten Island, 8th Division, arrived on the scene. This is how we established the sectors at that point. I looked as far north as I could see and called that the Liberty Street sector. I believe Chief Visconti was somewhere on the other end, on the north side of that pile in the middle between West -- on West between Liberty and up to where that bridge had collapsed up further and we said, all right, you will be the Vesey Street command. At some point Chief Haring came on the radio and he designated himself as Church Street command. He had numerous

fires going on his side. We had a tower ladder. For some reason, 15 truck was still in service, but without water. When the boat finally got the water going, we hooked up the water to the tower ladder. We stretched several hand lines, proceeded to search the pile in even more detail.

Chief Mosier's building now, the twenty story, number 90 West was becoming fully involved. He had approximately 40 firemen without any equipment. I believe Marine One eventually supplied water to him and that's what he operated. That was a sector, sort of an adjunct sector to the Liberty command post.

I proceeded to direct operations. At some point Chief Hayden was removed, I believe to try to get some sort of first aid. I remained in command until approximately midnight and I was relieved by another Deputy Chief, who I relieved the next morning when I came back and that just sort of flip flopped back and forth till Friday.

That's basically what I recollect. Somewhere during the -- time was totally condensed here. I don't remember exact hours. We received several reports. One from Ladder 6, reporting talking to Chief Cruthers, but he was calling Car 4 Charlie and I realized there

was no command above the Sector Chiefs at that point so I answered and asked him what his situation was.

The Captain was reporting that he was trapped in the B stairway and I said we are noting your position. What is your situation. He said, well, we are here. We have a civilian, but did he have any immediate danger, people crushed. He said no. I said I have no access to help you. I said I have noted where you are, as soon as I get some help, we will try to work on that.

My brother came on the radio at some point. He was up at Vesey Street, trying to work his way one way or another into the Trade, probably into a garage or something. He had, I think, 43 Truck or somebody with him. I relayed that information. I don't believe he ever got the 6 Truck. I believe 6 Truck eventually got themselves out.

The only other report I got was there was some confusion. They thought my nephew Peter was a fireman in 9 Engine and located him, and they told me that.

That's all I have to say, unless you have any particular questions.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. The time now is 0920

hours. Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110138

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF JOSEPH PFEIFER

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McCOURT: This is Tom McCourt. We are at the World Trade Center Task Force on Duane Street.

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Joseph Pfeifer, Battalion Chief, Battalion 1.

Q. Sir, on September 11, 2001, could you tell me the events that took place that day?

A. Okay. I was working the night before in the 1st Battalion, and sometime about 8:15 or so in the morning we got a call to Lispenard and Church for a gas leak in the street. We were there for a while checking on the gas leak, and then we heard the loud roar of the plane come over, and we turned around and we looked and we saw the plane coming down, heading south towards the Trade Center, and made a direct hit on the Trade Center.

Q. You actually saw it hit?

A. I saw it hit. Within about ten seconds after that or so I gave the first report on the radio and transmitted a second alarm for a plane into the Trade Center, and then shortly after that, the units I was with, I told them all to start in to the Trade Center, and shortly after that I found a radio to transmit the third alarm. I told the dispatcher this was a direct attack on the Trade Center and we had the second alarm

coming in on the north tower and to stage the third alarm on Vesey and West.

I pulled in front of the building. I looked up and I saw no fire coming out, no smoke coming out, which would have been the west side of the building.

If I can back up, as we went down the street after the initial explosion of the plane hitting, we saw there was somewhat of a hole, from our position, certainly, maybe three or four of the stories, three stories I think I said. Again, there was no fire coming out. So, when we got there, there was no fire and on the west side there was no smoke. But there was an obvious hole in the building.

I went into the lobby. There were people injured. I went into the lobby and tried to gather information, where the plane hit, what floor, and the best we could get is somewhere around 80. As the units were coming in, we checked for the elevators to see if we had any elevator service. There wasn't any. Then what we did was I started to send people up to perform a rescue because we knew there were people trapped above the fire and we were getting reports in the lobby people were trapped in the elevators and people were trapped, and I believe we started sending units up.

Q. You were the first highest ranking officer on the scene?

A. Correct. Shortly after I was there, the division came in. They started out the same time we were rolling. So they were there very quickly, and I briefed Chief Hayden on what I knew at the time, which was an approximate floor and we believe we had people trapped. Then we kind of went through a high-rise operation to try and get people up there. We paired the engines. I know I told engines, half the group to take hose, the other half not to, at least early on, and started their way up. Also, I saw my brother, who was a Lieutenant in 33, and we spoke a little bit and then he went up also.

By this time all the Chiefs in the world and the Commissioner and everybody else was there and I was just in a support role of the operation of the lobby command post in the first tower.

Then the plane hit the second tower, the south tower. At that point Chief Donald Burns and Battalion Chief Orio Palmer went into the second tower and I took command of that.

Right before that we discussed the operation of the radio. Any time in a high-rise building,

communications is difficult. We tried to get repeaters to work. The Trade Center had a repeater. We tried to get that to work. That did not work for some reason, and there were problems with the repeater in the car also. So communications from the onset was difficult and both Orio and myself tried to get that to work. We tried it numerous times and we couldn't get the repeaters to operate properly, so we had to rely just on handie-talkie communication, which is at best hit or miss in any high-rise.

At one point I was asked to get the operations with the helicopter into motion. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I could not get ahold of the dispatcher to do that. One of the citywide radios got moved around and I couldn't grab that, and there were no phone lines. The phone lines were out and nobody was picking up or the lines were busy to the dispatcher, so I couldn't get through to them on a landline or a cell line.

We weren't getting good reports from the police at all. There was one point there was a possibility of a second plane coming in and somebody said something and I turned around to try to confirm that and we couldn't confirm that. There was also

later on the possibility of a third plane. Again, we just heard somebody say it and we tried to confirm it. We could not confirm it with any law enforcement people. We all ran out at that point. So that was the difficulty we had.

At one point after the second plane hit, I think, I'm not positive of the time line, I know Chief Callen asked over the radio to come down to the lobby. But with difficulty with communications, that didn't happen. It didn't fully happen. I'm not too sure who heard that or how many people came down. There was no way of really telling at that point.

But right before the south tower collapsed, I noticed a lot of people just left the lobby, and I heard we had a crew of all different people, high-level people in government, everybody was gone, almost like they had information that we didn't have. Some of them were moved across the street to the command post.

Q. Who were you with at this time?

A. You name them, they were there.

Q. With you?

A. Yes, in the lobby. They were moving the command post. So, I guess, after that companies were

coming in and we were listing them on the command board so we had an account of everybody. Unfortunately, the command board is not around any longer.

At one point the Fire Safety Director, Mike Hurley, asked us if we wanted the building evacuated. I'm not too sure if he meant both buildings or he was just talking about this. In either case, I believe he was talking about both buildings. I turned to Chief Hayden and said do you want to evacuate the buildings? He said yes. I turned to Mike and I told him evacuate the buildings.

So there were definite communications back and forth that we wanted the buildings evacuated. I forget what stage that was at that time. Again, I can't put that on a time line. But it was before the second building collapsed for sure because Mike wasn't in the lobby with us. So it was sometime before that.

Then in the lobby we heard the south tower is collapsing. I'm not sure, like I said before. I get mixed up with south and north and two and one. But right before the south building collapsed, we heard a loud rumbling noise, and those that were left in the area, we knew something was collapsing, and I noticed in the lobby area where you go around the corner to an

escalator that leads up into the Customs Building, and as things were collapsing into the lobby of the north tower, I pushed everybody around the corner. I knew where I was so I pushed people around the corner.

There was my aide, Chief Hayden, Chief Callen, an EMS Lieutenant, Father Judge, I think Chief Villani, and there might have been a couple other people, a Lieutenant, I don't know his name, a Fire Lieutenant, and maybe a couple other people. They were just pushed around a wall literally and then the whole area went black. We heard things collapse. There was debris falling in and everything was black.

At that time I went around to Chief Hayden and said I'm going to evacuate the building. I got on the radio and I called up to the Battalion Chief upstairs, which I got an acknowledgment to evacuate the building for a number of times.

Q. Do you remember what Chief that was?

A. I don't know what Chief. But I did get acknowledgment, like I said, a number of times firefighters said they heard me and that's why they got out. And that was just in the blackness where at that point we didn't even know our way out.

Then Father Judge was there and he was lying

on the ground and I went over to him, took off his collar, I opened up his shirt, checked for a pulse, and I knew at that point that he didn't have any.

Q. Where was he?

A. He was with us in the lobby all the time.

Q. In the lobby?

A. Right. He was saying some prayers and he was very anxious in the lobby. I could watch him. He was very concerned, very different, Father Judge, as I know him. Apparently, what it was, it was a heart attack. We didn't know at the time it was a heart attack. We thought he was hit with debris.

Q. He didn't have any obvious injuries?

A. He didn't have any obvious injuries. Then again, we're in black with just a couple of flashlights. So at this time we had to figure out how to get out of here now. So I kind of had an idea where I was going in the building.

So I went up the escalator and now some of the other guys are taking Father Judge and they're carrying the body up and out to the top, and then there was a bridge across, and I told them, I told Chief Hayden and a whole bunch of people, hey, listen, let me see if the bridge is still here, whatever, and let me

go across and I'll let you know if we can get out this way.

Again, I had no idea. At this point we had no idea that the whole south tower had collapsed. No idea. We didn't hear any reports. We knew something collapsed, part of the building came down, elevators collapsed. We knew we had something but no idea.

MR. CASTORINA: Meanwhile, the building you were in was evacuating; you gave the word already?

MR. McCOURT: In other words, the firefighters and everybody were starting to come down?

A. Well, I gave an order to evacuate and it was acknowledged and there were reports that people heard that and they were coming down to the extent, again, communication was difficult. It was difficult. I was glad somebody heard it.

Q. Did you see Commissioner Feehan there at all?

A. He was there in the lobby earlier along with Commissioner Von Essen and OEM.

Q. And Chief Ganci?

A. I didn't see Chief Ganci myself. But everybody had to come there first.

Q. The bridge was intact, that footbridge going across?

A. The footbridge that went across, pretty much you couldn't see out of any of the windows and everything and it was like fire. Everything was smoky so you couldn't see anything. So I walked all the way across the bridge and found out that the bridge was intact. I radioed back to tell them that you can come across the bridge, that everything is intact, you can get out this way, and I was getting no answer on the radio. I called a number of times, a number of times.

I went across with four guys. So the four guys I was with walked all the way back across the bridge again and I tried to contact them, and I was able to contact Chief Hayden, who took a bunch of guys out, like out a window onto the side plaza. So I knew they were out and it's not exactly the area I wanted to go because things were falling down and people were jumping. So I took the group I was with back across the bridge, my third trip across the bridge.

Q. Where did that lead you to? Where did that come out?

A. It came out to the World Financial Center. We got out there and then we were standing under the bridge trying to see what was going on. I couldn't see what was going on. Everything was covered with smoke.

I couldn't see what collapsed. Our eyes were full of garbage.

We wound up walking out into the street on Vesey and West pretty much standing in front of 1, the north tower, or hopefully the north tower, just north of the bridge, and I met up with Chief Cassano at that point and then I think Chief Hayden came in a little later.

Again, the timing, it felt like seconds but I imagine it was a little longer than seconds. But things were happening very quickly. We're standing on the street and still not knowing the full implication of what took place because you couldn't see. It was all smoke. It looked like a fire. But it was the buildings. So still I didn't know the whole thing collapsed. I knew we had a big collapse but I had no idea. What people saw on TV I didn't see and nobody told me that's what had occurred and I didn't hear any radio communications of that either.

But standing out there, at one point, we just heard a loud, thunderous, rumble sound, and that's when people really were saying run, run. I must have had my back to the building or was talking to one of the Chiefs because I never saw it. I just heard the sound

and ran about 50 yards west up Vesey Street towards the river and got about half a block at most and dove behind a car or between cars in the street.

Q. The smoke and the rubble was coming at you?

A. Yes. Everything was coming at us, and as it started to turn brown, we dove behind the car, and then the whole street went black and at that point I thought that was it. When the whole street goes black in the middle of the day, that's not a good thing. At that point it was real difficult to breathe. You couldn't see anything now with the debris being under a lot of force.

Then after a while it started to clear. Actually, I was with a civilian. Actually, I was laying over him because he had no helmet or anything. Then we got up and we couldn't see, but it started to clear to like a brown, cloudy smoke, and I hear pop, pop, pop, which sounded like gunfire to me. Then right after that I hear people screaming get down, get down. It's not normal. I worked in the ghetto long enough that you get down.

Q. Of course.

A. Because it sounded like gunfire and I've heard gunfire before. It could have been something

totally different. I have no idea. I grabbed the guy I was with and told him, hey, we have to get down, we have to get some cover.

Then it started to clear again a little better and we got up and I looked down the block and I saw some law enforcement taking a guy away in handcuffs and he was very agitated.

Q. Would that be on the other side of west?

A. On the west side of West Street.

Q. Towards the river?

A. Towards the river.

Q. Did you ever find out what he was --

A. No. But the cops were real agitated and it was early on. I couldn't imagine what they would arrest somebody for. Again, it could have been almost anything creating that sound. I have no idea. But I figured that was three strikes at that point. And then I came back to the scene and tried to figure out what took place here and what we had.

Q. Did your brother make it out?

A. No.

Q. I'm very sorry.

A. That's the toughest part. And that's the story.

Q. You answered all the questions. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 9:00 o'clock. That concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110139

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF PETER HAYDEN

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 23rd, 2001. The time now is 0805 hours. I'm Ron Castorina.

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: This is an interview with -- your name, sir?

CHIEF HAYDEN: Chief Peter Hayden, H-A-Y-D-E-N.

MR. CASTORINA: This interview is taking place on Duane Street at the World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Chief, can you tell us on September 11th, 2001, the events that took place that day?

A. I was the on-duty deputy chief in the first division. I was in my quarters at the time of the events. At this point in the event, I heard a plane passing overhead extremely low. I ran to the window to see what I could see. The building line obscured my vision, but I did hear a large impact. And right away I suspected that a plane had hit somewhere in lower Manhattan.

Very quickly thereafter there were alarms transmitted and a report that a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

I responded from quarters with my aide. We responded down Broadway to Canal Street. We went west on Canal Street to West Street and stopped on West Street at number One World Trade Center, which is the north tower.

Visible in the sky you could see at that time a heavy amount of smoke obscuring other portions of the building. I really could not see any indication at that time that a plane had hit it, but certainly it appeared some catastrophic event had occurred.

When I got into the lobby -- or let me back up a little bit. I heard the transmission file to respond. It was a third alarm transmitted by Battalion 1 Chief Pfeifer. He also established a staging area at West and Vesey, which is standard procedure.

He transmitted a 10-60, which is for a major mishap, such as an airplane crash. We brought collapse units and additional units over for a mobile third alarm assignment. We asked for additional rescue also.

When we responded in, I entered the lobby. There were a number of people outside of

the building who were burned and in need of assistance. There were people jumping from windows. It was very chaotic.

When we entered the lobby, there was a lot of damage in the lobby, broken glass, tiles dislodged and laying on the floor, you know, the decorative panels all around the walls. But it was rather calm in the lobby.

Chief Pfeifer was in control. We responded in. We tried to gain control of the building systems, meaning the communications systems, the elevators. None of the building systems were working. The elevators were all out of service. The communication lines were not working.

The initial orders were to try and get the elevators in operation. We met up with the fire safety director from number One World Trade Center, Jim Corrigan, who is now deceased, and we told him of our problems, what we needed to do, what we needed from them to gain control of the building systems. He put his engineers to work on that.

We set up the command board and the

command post. As the companies were coming in, we were giving them assignments based on at that time, mostly the distress calls. There were numerous distress calls coming in from the dispatcher and also coming in directly to the lobby of people trapped in elevators, people burned in different areas of the building, people needing wheelchairs and unable to get downstairs. There was one report of a blind woman. So there were numerous distress calls and numerous people in the area in need of assistance.

We were sending the firefighters up and giving those assignments as they came in. As the units came in -- I guess you want to know what we saw in the lobby?

Q. Yes.

A. It was Chief Pfeifer and his aide, a number of -- Chief McGovern coming in. He was in the 2nd battalion. I can't necessarily recall the order of these arrivals and response. Chief Ryan also came in. Chief Palmer came in from 7th battalion. And Chief Ryan was in the 4th battalion.

They all came in, and they were all

given assignments, as were the company officers and the firefighters. In the initial stages it wasn't chaotic. It was under control, very calm. Certainly we were very calm.

Shortly thereafter a number of the uniformed and civilian staff of the department arrived in the lobby, Commissioner Von Essen, Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Commissioner Feehan.

The tour commander, who was Joseph Callan arrived on the scene. I spoke with him very briefly. He came in, and I kept him apprised of what happened thus far. He asked me at some point in time if we were thinking of collapse. I said yeah, we have to, a plane just struck the building. We also said we're pretty sure this was a terrorist attack. Everybody recognized early on that this was an intentional act.

Q. This is after the second hit?

A. Yes, this is after, oh, yeah.

So the potential and reality of -- or possibility of a collapse was discussed early on. But we were at a level of commitment. We also received numerous distress calls. We realized we

had a lot dying and fire up there. When the civilian staff arrived, then Commissioners Feehan, Fitzpatrick and Commissioner Von Essen, we discussed strategy and tactics.

I specifically remember telling Commissioner Von Essen that we were not attempting to extinguish this fire. It's just strictly a search and rescue operation. We were not trying to put this fire out. We had thousands of people coming down the stairs, and that was our focus, to answer as many distress calls as we could and complete whatever searches we could. That was the focus of our strategy there at the time.

At one point in time, there were numerous bodies coming down, and I really lost track of time there. There was a discussion that we had to get out of the lobby. It was not a good place to be.

We talked about setting up the command post across the street outside the building at West and Vesey. I remember saying we can't go out into the street because of the numerous bodies that were coming down. It was actually

dangerous to try to enter or exit the building onto the street. We said let's go up and cross the escalator through six and cross the overpass at West and Vesey and come down and set up a command post on West and Vesey. They left the building to establish a command post over there.

I heard Chief Ganci on the air at that time. At that time the Chief and -- that was in the lobby. It was Chief Callan. He was running that. Chief Ganci was over there, and I imagine Commissioner Feehan and at one time Commissioner Von Essen. When they left the building, that was the last I ever saw of them, although we did have radio communications with their car 3 about what was going on.

There were numerous discussions in the lobby. The chief of safety came in. He discussed his concern about the collapse. His advice to us was to let the building just burn, you know, get the people down and get out. We said that's exactly what we're planning to do. He said okay, do you want to get some of the apparatus moved back. I don't think that was ever accomplished.

I really didn't get involved with that because early on we realized that a number of the companies were coming in and were not reporting to any staging area we established. So we were losing some control of the companies coming in.

There was also some communication problems later on with companies coming in, units responding to the second alarm after the other plane hit. They weren't sure which was World Trade Center One and World Trade Center Two. So that became confusing.

Of course off-duty members were coming in, and they were reporting directly upstairs. So at one point in time -- I want to say that Chief McGovern was still in the lobby -- we had to account for everybody that was going upstairs. It became a critical issue.

We discussed with Chief Downey the operations, and that continued for a while. We were making a concerted effort to get the elevators down and answering all the distress calls. We were working with the engineers.

We were working the intercom in the lobby between the elevators, trying to get an

idea what floors they were on. The engineers told us we have people on this floor, that floor, 66th floor, 71st floor, stuck in the elevators. We answered as many of the distress calls as we could.

We concentrated on trying to get some type of hand line hardware communications. We attempted the repeater system. The repeater system was not in service. The repeater system wasn't working. So we were at a distinct disadvantage because we had none of the building systems to work with.

(Interruption by FF.)

A. Where was I?

Q. Communications problems.

A. Throughout, of course, there were communication problems. All we had to rely on was handy talky communications. Once you go up several floors in the towers there, you have poor handy talky communications, and that's all we had.

At some point in time -- you know, we continued with the evacuations, thousands of people coming down the stairs, answering the

distress calls, making assignments to the companies as they would come in, whoever reported into the lobby command post.

Then at some point in time we were told there was another event. We were in the lobby of the north tower. We weren't sure exactly what it was. We were told another plane hit the south tower.

Shortly thereafter we met in a little conference, myself, Chief Callan and Chief Pfeifer. Shortly after that discussion, we started to evacuate the north tower. We started telling everybody come on down. That was repeated a number of times. However, we didn't get a lot of acknowledgment off of the handy talky communications.

The latest report -- the last report we had from anybody at all was that there were people that were heading up around the 48th floor. That was several minutes prior to this collapse. So we had people as high as the 50th floor while we had communications. I think that's about as far up as anybody got.

We were calling people down on a number

of occasions, but we weren't getting -- except for the lower floors, companies coming down, they weren't coming down. They were being directed north.

In the lobby at that time were a number of the Port Authority people and a couple of Port Authority cops. Members of Ladder Company 20, I remember were standing by. I remember remnants of the hazmat unit standing by and off-duty members coming in. We had them standing by there.

Companies there, I don't really recollect what exactly the companies were in the lobby area there. We lost the board after the collapse, so we couldn't go over the assignments.

My aide was there and Battalion 18 was there. Chief Karletta was there. So there was about at one point at least a dozen people in the lobby there. Some of them even left. Father Judge was in the lobby.

Then suddenly the -- we didn't know what it was. We found out afterwards. There was a violent impact and the south tower collapsed while we were in the lobby of one. There was a

tremendous dust cloud and debris field thrown at us.

I was told that later on by the Port Authority people I met and we really couldn't see. It was pitch-black in the lobby after that. We gave an order to evacuate the building. Everybody in the north tower was ordered out.

We found Father Judge, who was dead. We moved out of the lobby. We went up the escalator to the -- I guess that's the concourse level up there, worked our way through six, around the outer part of six. Then we proceeded down a stairway and escalator down into the -- this is on the Vesey Street side. We proceeded down to the street level. We were at West Broadway and Vesey.

We turned father Judge over to EMS. Then we proceeded south on Vesey towards West Street to find a command post. When I arrived at West and Vesey, I met up with a number of chiefs. There was Chief Stack, who is now deceased or among the missing, Chief O'Flaherty and Chief Cassano who I ended up talking with. We discussed some issues there.

We directed everybody north. Then Chief Cassano and I started to go south, looking for the command post. We were just north of the north bridge overpass when the second building came down. I crawled under a fire truck, a fire pumper. I'm pretty sure it was a pumper. I'm not sure which one it was. To this day I don't know.

I just had my helmet off and just laid down underneath that. I was told later that Chief Cassano did the same thing. After the second building collapsed and the dust settled, I came out, and I'm here talking to you.

That's about as much as I can give you. If you want specifics, I'll try to answer questions.

Q. That's fine.

A. Like I said, I don't remember -- I'm sure you probably saw a tape floating around. Did you see a tape floating around?

Q. Which tape?

A. A tape going around regarding the fire?

Q. A videotape of it?

A. Yeah.

Q. No.

A. If you see that, that might be able to help you out. You know, showing the plane hitting the building.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. As far as recollection of actually, the chiefs I remember more so than the firefighters that were assigned from the command board. Chief McGovern and Chief Ryan were there. Chief Cassano was another one and Chief Barbara.

Chief Burns was in the lobby also. I remember after the first strike we were talking. After the second plane hit, we conferred. It was Chief Callan, myself, Chief Pfeifer, Chief Burns and Chief Palmer. Over what handy talky frequencies we were to use so that we didn't interfere with each other's communications because he was going over to handle the south tower.

Q. Where?

A. They went over to the south tower, Chief Burns and Chief Palmer. So we worked out who was going to be on what frequencies so we wouldn't interfere.

Q. What frequency were you on?

A. I think I wound up on 1 and 6. I was the primary tactical and 6 was the command channel. I can't be sure what they went to, but they went to other channels as a tactical or primary. It was because Chief Burns brought up the issue that the last time we had the terrorist attack there, they had trouble with communications. I remember that discussion.

And they took off for the south tower. That was the last time I saw them.

Q. Did you see Chief Ganci or Commissioner Feehan?

A. I never saw Chief Ganci there, in the lobby. I heard him on the radio. Commissioner Feehan was there. In fact, I discussed a number of the issues that were going on at the time with Chief Feehan, Commissioner Von Essen and Commissioner Fitzpatrick. Commissioner Feehan, Fitzpatrick, Deputy Commissioner Tierney were there. Ray Goldbach, their exec, he was in the lobby. OEM representatives Kevin Cully was there. He was alive. Richie Schirer was in the lobby. Who else? There were a lot of people.

Q. Anybody else?

A. Well, a lot of people I guess should not have been in the lobby, in retrospect. You know putting all your eggs in one basket is another issue.

There was awareness there that certainly this was a serious operation. Certainly the awareness was there of the possibility of collapse.

Q. Chief Downey, was he there?

A. Yes, Chief Downey was there, sure. In fact he was there relatively late into the operation in the lobby. I don't know where -- he was there earlier on and then left and came back. So he was in the lobby there. I assume at one point from conversation that he was going to the command post.

Once we talked about establishing the command post on West and Vesey with Commissioner Von Essen, Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Commissioner Feehan and Chief Downey. I was under the impression they all left and went over there. Obviously Commissioner Von Essen did go there when he was with Chief Feehan. I was told that

on the way over there Commissioner Von Essen was there and was interrupted by the Mayor. They went off in another direction, very fortuitously getting out of harm's way there.

If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Q. No, Tom -- no, that's it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 8:25. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110140

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS GABY

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. The time is 10:16. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're doing an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center and our interview today is with...

FIREFIGHTER GABY: Tom Gaby, aide to Chief Cassano, Firefighter First Grade.

Q. Would you be good enough, Tom?

A. Okay. Prior to the date of 9/11, on 9/10, I worked as an aide to Chief Burns on an overtime tour. The morning of 9/11, I was having coffee right outside Chief Ganci's office, speaking to the secretary, Lisa DeFazio. Chief Ganci came out of his office and yelled out that a plane had struck the World Trade towers and that Chief Nigro should look out his window. With that Chief Burns, standing by the commissary kitchen, said come on, Tom, let's go, and we were off.

We went down the elevator with most of the staff Chiefs, Chief Barbara, myself, Chief Ganci, Chief Ingram, Chief Burns, and we went down to the C1 level. We got in our cars and proceeded to the Brooklyn Bridge heading towards the World Trade Center. I believe and I'm pretty sure I was the first staff car in line. Chief Ganci was driving with Chief Nigro. Steve

Mosiello was driving both of them.

As we were going over the bridge, Chief Burns said to me, it doesn't look like the sprinkler system is working too well and kind of jokingly said that to me. I said, yes, I guess maybe it's too much fire, and we kind of laughed about it and proceeded to go over the bridge. As we approached the World Trade Center, we got there pretty fast. I don't think there were that many companies there at that time.

I pulled up as far as I could under the north bridge in front of 1 World Trade Center. I believe that was the north tower. With that I opened the trunk for Chief Burns. He proceeded to get his gear out and I -- well, basically he said to me, his last words to me were, Tommy, I don't want to get stuck here. Park the car far away. With that I took the car and made a U-turn and headed north on West Street. I parked the car on Chambers, on the corner of Chambers and West.

Looking back towards the scene as I was leaving, I wanted to see if I could find Chief Cassano's car because my turnout gear was in his car because I normally drive Chief Cassano. I proceeded heading towards Chief Cassano's car, walking back towards Chief Cassano's car, and Chief Ingram grabbed

me and told me he wanted me to alert Field Com with setup in front of I think the Financial Building, on the West Street side, World Financial Center.

Q. The Merrill Lynch Building?

A. Right. The Merrill Lynch Building. That's where our command center was for the outside. Basically, that's what I did for a few minutes, even before I went and got my gear. I proceeded to look for the car again and then, spotting it, I came upon Chief Callan's aide.

Q. Who was that?

A. James Migalia. He came up to me and said he had no gear in his car; could he use my gear. I told him, here, take my gear, the key for the car was in the gas cap, there was a spare key, and I would get something else. With that Chief Ganci was yelling at me to get the rigs out of West Street, on the West Street promenade. In other words, he wanted all the rigs cleared out of the area. I ran back and forth a few times doing that and then left to get my gear.

Actually, what I did was I went up back to Chief Burns' car and took Kevin Glock's gear, which is Chief Burns' normal driver. His helmet doesn't fit me, but I had it. So I got his turnout coat and just his

helmet. I took the -- which I had the radio on, I also took the cell phone with me, headed back towards the command center outside, and believe it or not, somewhere in between there the plane had hit, the second plane.

Q. The second plane?

A. I saw it coming in, I heard it, and bang, it hit. I proceeded to try to call my wife to tell her to stay home on the cell phone. It didn't work. I went into I believe the American Express Building and called her from there. I left a message at work for her to go home if she could, and then I went back towards the command board. I didn't know exactly where Chief Burns was, but watching all the outside activities going on, I was trying to get a feel for where he would be. I looked at the board and it was kind of like in disarray at this time. So, basically, I was just trying to help out and see if I could listen.

At some point I was able to ascertain that I think Chief Burns said that he was in 2 World Trade Center, the south tower, and I said, well, let me see if I can make my way down there. So I walked along the buildings on West Street, on the west side of West Street, because people were jumping and the stuff was

falling out of all the buildings.

At that point I saw the bridge. I went under the pedestrian bridge to cover myself and I made kind of a dash for the Vista International Hotel. I couldn't tell what time it was. Like I said, this thing here, it seemed like it was just minutes, but I guess it was longer than that.

When I got into the Vista, I was looking to see if I could find somebody who knew exactly where Chief Burns was. So I went up to the Chief that was in the lobby of the Vista, which is, I guess, the Marriott, and I asked Chief Galvin if he had seen Chief Burns, and he said he did not see him, but he said that he might be in the south tower. So I said okay.

Having gone in through the side of the Vista, I noticed that there was a restaurant there and I felt this would be a good time for me to take a leak, and I just happened to go into that restaurant because I knew it was going to be a long time before I got a shot at it, and I was up since 7:00 o'clock. So I figured let me go now, I'll have a shot, and then I can go see Chief Burns, figuring that once I got inside, I was safe, to be honest with you. That was my primary thing was to get inside. Having spotted the restaurant, like

I said, I knew if I'd walk into the restaurant there would be a rest room there.

I walked into the rest room, went to the bathroom and was just about ready to come out and I heard a rumbling sound. Now, having heard on the radio previously that there was a possibility that the elevators were letting go, I was hoping that that was what it was. As it proceeded, which seemed like a long time, but I'm sure it wasn't -- when I look at it on television, it doesn't seem to be -- I could tell that it was much worse. In my mind, I thought it was the north tower, part of it was coming down, and I felt like let me sit down, get low. I might be okay here. As it turned out, after the roar, I had absolutely no damage in that bathroom. There was no damage, there was no smoke, it just was black as night.

I initially tried to get out and the door was jammed. I couldn't tell how it was jammed or why it was jammed. I had no flashlight. I didn't have my turnout coat, so there was no flashlight in there. I proceeded to give Maydays on every channel. I had the mobile radio, so I had every channel. I heard absolutely nothing. It was completely dead. I started to think that maybe I'd be okay there for a while

because I could breathe, there was no fire, and I didn't seem to be hurt in any way. So I felt, well, at least I'm okay at this point. But the silence, the eeriness of having no mobile communication with anything made me feel a little uneasy. So I felt, well, maybe what I should do is try to get out of here. I eventually forced the door open. Just by banging it and pulling hard, it opened in, and not being able to see, I kind of just walked into what was like a wall.

Q. That wasn't there when you came in?

A. That wasn't there when I came in. So then I started to get a little nervous and I said let me sit down and calm down. I gave Maydays again on all the radio channels and I heard nothing. At this point I tried to use the cell phone that I had and there was no cell phone. That was probably the only light I could see. I really couldn't see much. I was a little bit nervous but basically still not aware of really the gravity of the situation. So what I thought was, well, you know what? Let me sit down and calm myself down, and then I thought, well, you know, I'd be better off if I could get out of here.

So I opened the door again and felt for a way

I could get out and somehow, through whatever divine force there was, there was a void low in the left-hand corner. I wasn't able to get out with my helmet on or my turnout coat, but I could fit through that crack. So what I did was I took the helmet and I pushed it ahead of me. There was all sorts of debris and stuff there, but it seemed to be moving. So I said, well, I'll go as far as I can. Maybe I can just see a light or whatever or yell to someone, and luckily I just was able to push it far enough that I could see that there was an opening all the way down.

I got maybe six feet and I could see to my left the entrance to the restaurant was still in good shape. Although covered with everything, I still could see. So I said I know I'm getting out of here now because I could see daylight, and I said, okay, and I just kept pushing ahead. It didn't take that long, maybe five or six minutes, and I was able to get to the point where I could stand up in that area of the restaurant.

I put my turnout gear back on and I proceeded to run outside, and I couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on because it was still smoky, kind of like a dense little fog kind of thing. There was a guy

from rescue out in the street yelling to people to keep running, and it was all rubble all over the ground, a couple bodies and stuff like that. So I immediately just tried to run. I tripped a little bit, he held me, and then I ran across the street. Believe it or not, I ran across the street and I was looking for everybody and it didn't seem like I could find anybody. It was kind of eerie. It was almost like I was the only person around.

My immediate thought was let me call my wife, and I tried to call her to see if she went home, but I couldn't get her, but I left another message telling her -- and I listened to it later on at some point. I forgot I called her back up. But she saved the messages. I said I was a little dusty but I was okay.

So with that I heard on the radio for the first time a voice and it was Chief Ganci talking to Steve asking for truck companies. So I felt, oh, okay, I'm back in the game here. There's somebody around. But I still couldn't find anybody. I looked for Chief Ganci and I don't know -- some people say that I was on the south. I thought I headed north, but maybe I got turned around. Anyhow, I wound up talking to Chief Galvin again in the middle of the street, on West

Street, someplace on West Street, and with that I said to Chief Galvin, I don't know if anybody else is around, but I'll stay with you because, you know, this way I'll know I'm helping somebody.

So he yelled to me to get the guys from across the street. There were car fires all over the place. He said get those guys and bring them over here. So I started getting guys who were trying to put out car fires to come across the street. Apparently Chief Galvin must have known about the other building. I had no idea that the first building was down to be honest with you. Because I couldn't tell. You still couldn't see it.

So basically I just told the guys come across the street, and guys were like stretching lines, I was trying to help a couple of guys that were hooking up the hydrants, I was yelling to them, come on, the Chief wants us over here, and what seemed like maybe ten minutes or whatever of trying to get the guys across the street, which we got most of them across the street, I heard a tremendous roar like I've never heard before and it sounded like a jet engine was like right over my head, like I was on a runway with a jet engine just taking off over my head.

At that point I kind of looked up in the air because that's where -- and I was looking for a plane. I couldn't see anything, but I saw people running. So I said, well, this may be a good time to start running. I wasn't sure which way to run, but I watched them run and I kind of went to my right and I started running, and then there was a complete -- a blanket over me and I banged and fell down three or four times, and each time I got up, I got up with more stuff in my mouth and it was becoming more increasingly difficult to breathe. I was trying to breathe through like the jacket part of my coat and just try to filter some of the crap that was coming in my mouth. I heard somebody yell breathe through your nose and I was trying that, but I wasn't getting enough air it didn't seem like. Now I wasn't running anymore. I fell down three or four times. I said, well, I can't even see. This is ridiculous to run. But I felt, well, you know what? Maybe I'll just kind of walk and try to head in the direction of the sounds of people that I heard.

There was an ESU cop and he had some kind of water bottle on his back with a bite ball, and he came up to me and said bite into this, flush around your mouth and spit it out, and that's what I did, and I was

able to at that point clear out some of the crap in my mouth and I felt a little bit better. He had a towel or something and he said we'll share the towel and we'll start breathing, and at that point that's what I did. I started breathing through the towel with this guy. There was like three of us on this towel.

We got up to -- I don't know what street even. Somebody told me it was down on the west side by Albany Street and there was a hydrant open with very little water pressure and we kind of cleaned off there. Chief Lakiotes was there, a couple other firefighters and a couple other ESU cops and stuff. But we just kind of cleaned up, and at that point I started heading back to where I thought maybe people would be.

Guys were coming in from -- I guess from all over at this point now. I saw regiments of guys coming down the highway, and even training, they were coming from training, because I noticed a couple Chiefs, Santangelo and Chief Idiart from training that I've known and I saw them and they all started heading down towards the buildings, and at that point I somehow ran into Steve Mosiello again and he was looking for Chief Ganci. So I said, well, I'll help you look for Chief

Ganci because I knew that, you know, that was his boss and, if I could find him, maybe we could find out what's going on, still not really knowing.

I felt kind of like, I don't know, but I wasn't being really aware of what was going on, but I was very lucky. It's bizarre, but through no really desire of my own, I was able to survive this thing, and it really -- it was just a matter of where you were.

Q. Basic dumb luck.

A. Dumb luck. Really basic dumb luck. Because the odds would be, even after the first building came down, I wasn't aware of it, and when the second one come down, I wasn't even thinking about that one coming down. So, I mean, it sounds crazy, but at this point I was just trying to hook up with somebody during this whole thing to help, you know, to get back into some kind of order of where we could find guys and do things, and it just never seemed to come about.

I went with Steve. We looked for Chief Ganci. He was very upset. Then we heard the command center was all the way up on Vesey Street. Then we went up that way and then it was like further north towards the park and we started heading up there, and we got a ride with the Commissioner's driver and we

wound up with the Mayor up in 23rd Street by -- I guess that was where they made the command center for OEM.

Q. Right.

A. Steve wanted to tell the Mayor that Chief Ganci was missing and that we lost a lot of guys, and that was basically what we did. Then we went back, we hitched a ride back to Police Plaza to tell the Police Commissioner exactly what was going on, and we wound up getting some clean clothes there. They gave us police uniforms. So we wound up there and then they took us back towards the scene and we looked for Chief Ganci.

As we were going back down the West Side Highway, Chief Cruthers, we wound up seeing Chief Cruthers and Chief Butler, he was at the command board at Vesey and West, at Chambers and West rather, and then they said they found Ganci and Steve started running towards where -- Steve knew basically where Ganci was, and what I failed to say is, when we found Steve, when I found Steve, we actually went back to look for Ganci before we went up to the command center.

Q. Okay. From where he had last figured he probably was?

A. Yes. Because Steve had an idea because when he had talked to Steve on the radio, he had said that

he was going to be -- I didn't know what he had told Steve, but I heard him ask for truck companies, and he must have told Steve that he was going to be south of where the command center was, and when I came out of the building, that was my first thing was to look for the command center, I remember that, and basically, when I saw where I thought the command center was outside, where the command board was, there was an airplane tire. My immediate thing was that another plane had hit. So that's what I said.

Then I went into what was, I guess, the World Trade Center -- the World Financial Center and Merrill Lynch and I made a phone call to my wife again. That's where I had left the message. So that's basically where I was at that point, and then I did hook up with Steve and we did go back to look at right around in that building there. He knew where Ganci was, but he was covered with rubble, I believe.

Army was there at that point, too. I don't know how much after, but there was Army there. That was after the second building I remember. The Army was there because Steve told a general that this is what happened, this is where our Chief of Department was, and they had a couple of bulldozers going there

already.

Q. Already?

A. Yes. There were a couple of bulldozers going there. So, basically, I guess, wherever they got them from, they started picking up some of the rubble. Basically, that was all I can remember. It's kind of strange, but I saw the second plane coming in. I remember that vividly. I remember hearing it and thinking why is that plane coming so close to that building after it got hit, but thinking maybe it was an Army plane or just a plane coming in to observe what was going on, and then when it hit the building, to be honest with you, from where I was standing on the west side of West Street, it looked like it kind of glanced off the back of the building. You couldn't tell the damage it had done.

So, I mean, that was my recollection of that and, you're right, I mean, some of the things seemed like they took a couple of minutes, but other things seemed like they took a long time. Basically, that was it. I mean, I guess being very lucky was in it for me that day. One more minute and I'm probably in 2 World Trade Center. The weird thing was, like I said, it wasn't like I had a pressing need to go to the

bathroom, but I just thought that eventually I was going to have to go.

Q. So it would be smart to do it now.

A. To do it now. Chief Cassano had told me he had done the same thing. He had gone to the bathroom just previous to that. So it was weird because we both picked the same bathroom to go to and just a series of events that happened that I just happened to be in there and that was -- believe me. I go back there, a couple times that I've been back there, I look at it, and it's amazing to me how nothing happened in that bathroom. That bathroom was perfectly intact. So when people say things were meant to happen, I just think --

Q. It's your day or it's not your day?

A. Yes. It's absolutely true, I mean, and never more vividly than that day. I wish I could say I was -- I guess the only good thing I did out of this whole thing was being able to extricate myself because I felt that, you know what? I could be here for a couple of days and that was an uneasy feeling. So I figured let me try to get out of here. But like I said, I was completely okay. There was no heat, no fire, no smoke, my body was okay. It was just that I felt uncomfortable being in this kind of like this

six-by-six-foot room.

That's it. I don't know what else I could say. If I could answer any questions, I'll definitely do it.

Q. No, there's nothing else that I need to ask you. That's it. If there's anything else you just want to put after this, feel free.

A. Actually, basically, I think that most of the things that I said were just off the top of my head because that's all I can remember, but if I could remember any more, I would definitely give it to you. Except I'm very lucky. Thank you very much.

MR. TAMBASCO: That being the case, this interview will conclude at 10:40 a.m.

File No. 9110141

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL STEVEN MOSIELLO

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 23rd, 2001, 1134 hours. We're with Steven Mosiello. And I'm also joined by --

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Assistant Commissioner James Drury.

Q. Steven, we'd like to just draw your attention to September the 11th and ask you to provide us with any recollections you may have of the World Trade Center attack.

A. At approximately 8:45 that morning, maybe 8:50, I heard Chief Ganci, whose offices are three offices away down the hall, call out to Dan Nigro that a plane just hit the World Trade Center. He was looking out of his window at the time. We all jumped up, ran to Chief Ganci's office, myself, Chief Nigro, and we looked out the window. And the World Trade Center was on fire.

At that point the Chief said a plane just hit it, and we responded. It was myself, Chief Ganci and Chief Nigro in the car, and we responded over to the World Trade Center. While

we were on the Brooklyn Bridge, some five minutes later or so, Chief Ganci gave a fifth alarm for the World Trade Center due to the amount of fire and smoke we saw from our position on the Brooklyn Bridge. We were on the center of the bridge at the time, I remember. Chief Nigro said to Chief Ganci that it's probably going to be one of the worst days of our career.

With that we responded in. I believe I went down Chambers Street and wheeled my way in to where we parked. We parked on the corner of West and Vesey on the sidewalk. I gave Chief Ganci his gear. I took my gear. And we were setting up a command post, I believe it was in the street at that point, and somebody said -- I don't know who it was -- go over here by those two garages, where we eventually wound up setting up our command post in front of Two World Financial.

Somebody mentioned -- I don't recall who -- that this is our area of refuge should something happen, meaning the two garages, which during the course of the day did wind up being our first area of refuge when tower number two

collapsed.

Q. Excuse me, at that time were the garage doors up when you were in the sloping driveway? Is that where the command post was?

A. They, yes were. Looking at the buildings, both garage doors were up. We were set up, looking at the building, to the garage on the left, which would be the south garage. And on the north garage there was a red van from communications. I believe it was where their communications vehicle set up.

Q. How many planes had hit at this point in time?

A. At this point there was only one plane. I was told by somebody that we had an eyewitness who happened to be an off-duty firefighter who told me that he saw the first building get hit and it was hit by a prop jet, which I think turned out to be the wrong information, but everybody sees things differently. But he said he was an eyewitness. I gave him to a fire marshal. I never got his name personally.

At that point we were set. This was our command post, and everybody was stopping in

before they went to locations. You saw so many faces of guys that are dead today that were going into these buildings. They'd stopped by, how you doing, where do you want me to go, they went to their location and they went to work.

At that point we're standing there -- I remember a gentleman who worked in number One World Trade, a maintenance worker, who was talking to Chief Ganci, and asking him if he wanted to go into the building to check and see what pumps were working and how high the water was being pumped in the building, and I don't recall what the outcome of that was. I believe Chief Ganci sent a company in with him to go check these pumps. I don't remember what the company number was or anything else.

At that point the Mayor shows up. I was standing away from the command post, and the Mayor showed up. And one of his aides asked where the Fire Commissioner was. I remember the Mayor being with Commissioner Kerik and himself and a lot of their aides and escorts or whatever. Somebody said the Commissioner was in One World Trade Center, north tower, that was hit already.

I said go up and get him. What was I thinking all the jumpers and everything else.

I believe at that point when I went over to get the Commissioner, that's when the fireman of 216 was killed by a jumper when a jumper landed on him.

I went to the building, looked for the Commissioner, and they said he had just left. So now we've crossed each other's paths. I came back to the command post across the street at Two World Financial, and the Commissioner was there talking to the Mayor.

Q. Can you describe what the plaza and the area outside looked like at that point in time?

A. Outside number One World Trade, there were jumpers. There was a tremendous amount of bodies on the ground. They were hitting at a rate of probably one every 30 or 40 seconds onto the glass atrium that was there, which is a distinct explosion-type sound when they hit, as was -- I think you can close your eyes and you knew when a jumper hit the ground over there. It was very distinct.

After you saw enough of them, you just

stopped looking. You knew what it was. I think this is a quote from somebody else: If it stayed the jumpers and the fire in number one, then there would have been a real bad day, not worse.

Q. Stopping and stepping back for a second. You were driving I assume on Vesey to the corner of West. Did you see any debris or anything in the street at that point?

A. I don't recall -- and I don't know if I came in on Vesey. I believe I came Chambers to -- no, I came over the Brooklyn Bridge. I came past City Hall, wheeled my way through I think that first street there -- I think if you make a left at Broadway going straight across may be Park. I'm not sure. We wheeled in in that way. And I came down maybe a street or two north of Vesey, and then we got in. I don't recall if I came down Vesey Street. I draw a blank on that.

Q. You left off with the statement about if it was left with just the jumpers and that one tower.

A. At that point I don't know exactly when the Commissioner and Mayor had left. It was

pretty soon after they had left that Richie Zarillo, who works with EMS -- I believe he's an OEM liaison -- came running up to me. I was not on the ramp at this time. I was like almost at the sidewalk location.

He said Steve, where's the Chief? I have to tell him, you know -- I said tell him what, Richie? These buildings are in imminent danger of collapse. I said how do you know that, you know? So he ran with me. I ran over and grabbed Chief Ganci and said Chief, these buildings are in imminent danger of collapse. He looked up at me --

Q. Had the second plane hit at this point?

A. Yes, yes, the second plane hit. We saw the second plane hit -- if you want me to go back to when the second plane hit. I was told by Chief Ingram, who was a terrorist and hazmat-type guy, that we've got to be careful of secondary explosions or secondary devices. Who knew that the secondary device would be another plane.

People actually saw the plane. You heard it, the closer it got. It just got louder and louder. I say that he throttled up as fast

as he could. That's what it sounded like, but I think he became more in earshot of us. And he just came in and put the plane into the building.

As I'm looking up at this stuff that's going on up there now, I just like -- I'm saying to myself I've seen this in a movie. My whole recollection is going back to a movie or something I saw. I just saw this before. It's like before my eyes. I don't know if I ever did or didn't, you know, in a dream.

Then at that point within a few minutes, Richie Zarillo came up to me. I'll go back to that. He said that these buildings are in imminent danger of collapse. I went right up to the Chief because I was a few steps away. I said Chief, these buildings are in imminent danger of collapse. And he said to me who would would tell you something like that?

And he looked at me and he had that determined -- I have to say probably scared look on his face, who would tell you something like that. I said Richie, come over here and tell the Chief what you just told me. He got the words out of his mouth. I think it was maybe 25, 30

seconds later, maybe, the building came down.

Q. Did Zarillo ever say what he based that opinion on?

A. I believe the Chief said where did he get that from? He said from OEM. We were trying to determine exactly how he got it. In retrospect, how did he get it? He was walking towards us. Was he coming towards us anyway and he got it over his radio? I think he told me he got it from Peruggia. There was like a relay type of thing, which maybe we should have and didn't have our OEM radios on at the location. There was a lot of havoc going on.

I believe you were there, Jim, and you saw it also.

So at that point the building comes down. I believe Chief Ganci said what the hell's this or what the fuck is this, looked up, and then we all just bailed out simultaneously into garages. I don't remember who went into the left garage and who went into the right garage.

I remember going into the north garage, which was on my right. There was a booth, if I remember correctly, between the two garage ramps.

I went behind the booth and into the garage. There was a lot of people in there. We wound up running into the garage, running to the right, and it dead-ended where there was like storage space behind doors, behind locked doors.

Q. Do you remember seeing Commissioner Fitzpatrick at that time?

A. No, I don't.

Q. He also went down there?

A. There were so many guys I saw. One guy I distinctly remember is Mike Donovan. We were all searching for a staircase or some way out for tools. I think a few people screamed for tools: Who's got tools, who's got tools. They found a staircase that led out.

At this point you're being choked out, totally choked out. I thought we were going to die in there because we couldn't breathe. There were low ceilings. Nothing was lifting. The dust wasn't lifting. It came in and just stayed.

Q. Stepping back for a minute, Steve. Had you seen Chief Feehan and Chief Downey at that location moments before the collapse?

A. Yes, yes. I recall seeing Chief Downey

I believe before the second plane hit. He was talking to Chief Ganci. I believe the firefighter already had gotten struck by a jumper, and Ray Downey was telling the Chief that he'd like to start bringing companies over via the north walking bridge and that that would be a safer avenue to get into the building.

Q. So this is after the first building came down, they were still planning --

A. No, no, this was before the first collapse, before any buildings collapsed.

Q. After the second plane hit, but before the first building collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Got it.

That firefighter, by the way, just for the record, is firefighter Suhr, S-U-H-R, who was hit by a jumper.

A. Right.

I was on my way out of that building when he was hit by a jumper. There was a company coming. I don't know the company. They were walking next to the building, and I yelled at the lieutenant to get in the street with his men

because look what just happened. There were jumpers coming down. He probably wasn't very aware of it at the time. Probably like everybody else he was scared and he wasn't thinking either.

Q. So you are in the garage now and there's no air and the dust is in there and you're trying to find a way out?

A. Yes. I was checking some doors, and I heard somebody yell hey, Steve, we found the staircase. I got to the staircase and there was a lieutenant there named Mike Donovan who worked for us up here that day, and he said we found a staircase. And Mike said I want you guys to start getting out and I'm going to stay here until everybody's out of the garage. I remember that. I have a book at home. I wrote his name down, what he did. I thought that was quite heroic that he wouldn't leave that location.

Most of us from headquarters -- nobody had masks. The only people who had masks then were possibly companies standing by waiting to be assigned, which at that point I don't think we had that many, because the second tower -- the first collapse was the second tower, so we were

putting as many men to work as possible.

At that point I recall going up the staircase, turning a few ways and we wound up back on West Street, I think just north of the north walking bridge we came out. At that point I saw Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan. I don't recall if I saw Fitz at that point, Commissioner Fitzpatrick. I saw Tommy McDonald limping. Tommy was walking with us.

Commissioner Feehan had kind of a limp to him, and I was standing on his right side. So with my left hand I went to grab his right elbow just to help him along. Arrogantly, the way he was, he pulled his arm and said I don't need any help, Steve. Thank you anyway.

We walked up to the corner. Chief Ganci said he wanted to move a command post and staging area as far north as possible.

Q. You said the corner. Is that the corner of Vesey and West?

A. Yes, Vesey and West.

I don't know if we all just realized exactly what happened or were confused. Glad to be alive, probably. I think maybe something

clicked in Chief Ganci's head at that point that he had men in that other building and he knew that, and he started walking in that direction with Commissioner Feehan. I said Chief, where are you going? He said Steve, I'm going to take a walk down here. Go get me two trucks.

I went to -- I believe our staging area was around Barclay. I'm not exactly sure. I remember the Chief I spoke to was a Chief Mike Keenan from 46 Battalion.

Q. Barclay and West?

A. Yes.

We were on West Street then. And I asked this Chief Keenan for two trucks. He said okay, Steve, I'll go get them for you.

At that point Chief Ganci called me back on the radio and he must have seen something because he said Steve, I want two of my best trucks, rescue squads, two of my best trucks. He must have gotten to where he was going or in that direction and he saw something, possibly people who needed some kind of help.

Q. Can I ask, when you last saw them were they back near the Two World Financial Center

garages where you had initially set up or were they farther down?

A. When they left me, we were all on the west side of the north walking bridge. That's where we separated. They went south. I went north to get the trucks.

Q. By the way, did you notice on West Street, either before the first collapse or after the first collapse when you came back around, the number of rigs that were on West Street?

A. There were a tremendous amount of rigs, because I believe those rigs saved my life during the second collapse. A tremendous amount of rigs.

On my way after I asked for the two trucks, I saw a fellow I rode up with and who I worked with years ago. His name was Lieutenant Wilkinson with 238. He was obviously in the first collapse because -- he was right near a fire truck. I don't know what fire truck it was. But he was obviously in the first collapse because I believe he had dust and stuff all over him. We talked, how are you doing, how's everything. And then I was still waiting for the

trucks at that point.

I believe that was on the west side of West Street his rig was parked, or wherever he was. I'm going to say just south of Vesey but not as far as the walk before.

So I have the trucks -- the Chief calls me and tells me he's gathering up the trucks and going to send them down to me. I told him where I was. This is Chief Keenan. And Chief Ganci called me back and said Steve, I want you to bring those two trucks to me. He said stay on the westerly side of West Street. I'm 50 feet or 50 yards -- I forget exactly -- south of our last command post, which told me he was south of the garage.

Okay, Chief, I have the trucks coming. I'll be there in a couple minutes. The next thing, the second tower came down. I'm calling Chief Ganci: Car 3A to car 3, car 3 -- he never answered. I kind of knew something happened there.

At that point, as we know, the walking bridge was collapsed in the street. You couldn't get through that way. So I probably went into

shock, knowing that my best friend was seriously injured or dead. I presumed the worst, obviously. And I went back to Chambers Street -- at this point the collapse happens.

And now we're running opposite of the collapse, obviously. I'm running north on West Street. I'm running in the southbound lane of West Street on the east side of the lane. There was rigs parked all along that curb, and I stayed in the street next to those rigs.

Q. This is at the time of the collapse?

A. At the time of the collapse. I heard the noise. I looked up. I saw the debris flying. And believe it or not, I never heard another thing. I did not hear another thing after that.

Same thing with the first collapse. After the initial rumbling, you look up, my ears shut right down. I heard nothing. Speaking to people, they say you probably thought you were dead, you were just shutting everything out.

So as I was going north on West Street, I stayed next to the rigs. And I don't know if I ran for a block or two. I'm not embarrassed to

say we ran away from the scene. We had no choice. And I thought I was going to choke to death again. I was totally choked up. I wound up going to my knees -- I don't know at what location -- just saying this was it. Somehow I picked myself up and started moving again.

At first I thought I could outrun it, but it came so fast and furious. Like I said, I think I just kept walking after that. After the collapse was over, I just kept walking and walking. Of course this dust was rolling down and kept pushing towards you, but you couldn't outrun it. Eventually I think I saw a clearing somewhere around Chambers Street. There was a glass overpass there or something.

Q. Probably Stuyvesant High School and Manhattan Community College.

A. Right, right there. That's where it started. You started seeing it clear, clear up.

And that was it. And then I saw some faces and I kept calling Chief Ganci and kept calling him. I tried to get Dan Nigro. I thought he was dead. He wasn't answering.

At that point I went into a panic. I

don't know exactly when, but I saw Chief Turi. I saw Frank Carruthers and I told him I think I know where Pete is and that I want to put together a couple teams and go down and see if we can search for them.

I grabbed Al Turi. I know he was in the military and he's a real trooper. We got a couple companies together. I believe they gave me ladder 144, the second section, if you will, and ladder 136. I believe it also was the second section there, the ones that we recalled, I believe.

Also now a bunch of guys wanted to be involved -- I forget who else -- a few captains, a few chiefs, whatever. Chief Turi took them on the side and told them we were going to search for Chief Ganci and probably First Deputy Commissioner Feehan and that this was our mission and they were to stay together and follow up.

We went to Vesey Street. We made a right. We went through Two World Financial off of Vesey because you couldn't get through down West Street, wiggled our way around, came out, came to the other side. You didn't know where

you were, didn't know what direction you were anymore. The whole place was a complete disaster zone.

I grabbed a chief who looked like he recognized the scene. I don't remember who it was. I told him we were looking for the spot where the garages were. He said I think it's over here but the only way to get through it is through the garage, you have to go back in the building.

Somehow in all this confusion I lost the guys. I go back to the building and went over and spoke to somebody on the radio. I don't know who it was. Because Chief Turi's radio was dead at that point. They said they started the search.

At that point I went back to the command post, which was now set up at Chambers Street, and I believe it was Chief Carruthers who was there, or Chief Fellini -- I'm not sure -- and I told them I think I should go tell the Mayor and Commissioner I believe that Pete Ganci is dead, that we need lights here, it's going to get dark in a few hours and we need to find him.

Q. You said the command post was now at Chambers Street. Is that Chambers and West?

A. Chambers and West, yes, Chambers and West. That was the west command post at that point. I know there were other command posts set up at Broadway or over at Park Row. We never saw anything that was going on on the other side of the buildings, on the east side of the towers, because we were always on West Street. I heard some horror stories over there.

Somehow the Commissioner's car was around. There was a vehicle there or something with a driver. I said take me to the Commissioner. They told me he was over at the Police Academy. So they brought me over there.

I went and talked to him and told him what had happened and that Pete's probably dead. He told me calm down, Steve, you're thinking the worst, maybe he's not. I said I'm pretty damn sure. I'm talking to him one minute and the next minute I couldn't raise him on the radio.

I knew everybody was in good hands searching for the Chief and stuff. Don't ask me why, but Chief Ganci and myself had a very close

relationship with the Police Department also, Chief Esposito and Commissioner Dunne.

And on the way back we were passing One PP, and I said maybe I should stop and tell Joe Dunne what happened also, and I did. At that point I just went and said Joe, I'm really sorry. I'm pretty sure this is the way it's going to play out, but Pete's gone.

Q. Hadn't Joe Dunne also had a close call?

A. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. This is the first time I saw Joe Dunne, I believe. But either way, I've got to go back to the scene.

Q. Can I just get a clarification, Steve. Were they still looking for Chief Ganci --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and Commissioner Feehan when you left to go to the Police Academy?

A. Yes. There was a very large pile there. There was a lot of steel. I knew this was going to take more than a 15-minute rescue. This was going to take time. And it did. It took a couple of hours.

I remember when I was talking to the Commissioner, babbling, I was very upset. I

wasn't upset with anybody in particular. It was a bad day. I said Commissioner, it's 1:00, I cannot go home without his body. We have to get lights here. Because I looked at my watch. It was exactly 1:00. I said we have six hours of daylight left. We need lights. I cannot go home without his body.

We live across the street from each other. We've been best friends for many, many years. I often think to myself should I have stayed and dug with the guys and stuff. I didn't think that was necessary at the time. We had to get command and control of this whole scene. It was utter chaos, in everybody's eyes.

I went back to the scene. I don't think I was there 15 minutes. They called me on my radio, asked me to come down to the building, where they found Chief Ganci. They were just going to put him in an ambulance, for me to come down.

I went down there, and they put his body in an ambulance and off they went.

Q. Can you tell me with as much specificity as you can recall, where they found

him?

A. Yes. They found him -- it was probably more like I would say 75 to 100 feet south of the first command post, which was on that ramp. I know exactly where they found him. I knew exactly where he was. It wasn't a surprise we found him first, him and Commissioner Feehan, because he had just told me on the radio where he was. He couldn't have moved that far in that time frame.

Q. Were you informed that they had found Commissioner Feehan too at this point?

A. I don't recall. I don't know. I honestly don't know. I know they told me they were 15 feet apart. It was actually on the sidewalk area. They were maybe 25 feet from the building, from the building walk. That building, if you remember, it juts in and out.

Q. The building being the Financial Center?

A. Two World Financial Center. It has different characteristics. This part was set back a little bit, about 25 feet from this part.

Q. There's another walking bridge down

there; is that right? North?

A. They were so far north of that. They were just about, I was going to say, 75 feet -- 75 feet sounds like a lot. It's not. They were 75 feet south of exactly where our first command post was.

Q. Right. The south bridge is actually south of Liberty Street, so they were well north of that.

A. Oh, well north, absolutely. Well north of that.

Q. Literally only 25 yards south of where the command post at the Two World Financial was?

A. Yes, yes.

At that point I went to the ambulance. Henry McDonald was sitting in the ambulance.

Q. Henry?

A. Henry, Henry. My memory's pretty good. Henry was sitting in the ambulance.

I viewed the body. [redacted]

Through this whole course of all these

events, I had a cell phone that was working and not working from time to time. I did get a couple calls out to my wife during a couple courses of events, such as a collapse or afterwards, whatever, to let her know that I was okay. I left a voice mail message on her work phone. She's a computer girl, so she would send me back on my beeper that she received my message and love you and all that.

Now I had to go back and tell Mrs. Ganci. I went to the command post at Chambers and West.

Q. Stop you there. Had they recovered Commissioner Feehan's body at this point, to your knowledge?

A. I don't know. I don't recall. I honestly don't recall. But I know they were recovered very close in a timely fashion to each other.

Q. So you made it back to the command post.

A. I'm back at the command post. I told Chief Carruthers -- I think Chief Butler was there also -- that we found Pete and I have to go

tell his wife. He said go do what you have to do.

I grabbed I believe it was Chief Hale of the NYPD, told him I wanted a police car to take me out there. He said do you want to go by helicopter? I said absolutely not. I need to think of what I have to say to this woman.

[redacted]

[redacted]And I asked Al Turi to go with me.

Chief Ganci and I also have a personal friend, Dennis Conway, who is retired from the Fire Department who was at the scene helping there. He's still a big, big buff. He was a fireman for 30 years. He worked for Pete for many, many years.

So he went in one police car, and we went in another and we drove out to North Massapequa to tell Mrs. Ganci. There were some fire marshals there that I knew. I asked one of the chiefs if they could go and find Chief Ganci's son who was a fireman in Ladder 111 and

pick him up and bring him to the house. Actually I told him to wait down the block and we'd all meet at that location.

Subsequently when we got there, I forgot all about this kid. They weren't there. We pulled in. I just kept going and told the wife. I felt bad about that, left the kid down the block.

[redacted] Then I came back to work that night. [redacted]

That was basically it.

We went back that night. They were moving cars and doing all sorts of things. They were digging out, trying to get equipment in there. It was pretty chaotic. Well lit. I remember there was a lot of lights.

I saw a police tow truck and asked him to tow our car out of there. It has been crushed by some debris. The trunk was popped open; I don't know how. Steering column was all ripped out; I don't know why. To this day I don't know why the column was disabled like that. They towed it to the corner.

I found a department tow truck. I asked them to tow the car to one of the shops, and I rode with the tow truck with the car and saw Tommy McDonald. That was probably around midnight. I asked Tommy for another vehicle. He said he didn't have any but I could have his.

[redacted]

Q. You said earlier that after the first

collapse but before the second collapse you had seen Tommy McDonald limping.

A. Yes.

Q. The next time you saw him, was that fleet services when he gave you his car?

A. I don't recall that. I don't recall that. I remember him sitting on a rig, on the front of a rig or on the back of a rig. I don't recall if it was after that first collapse or after the second collapse. I remember seeing him on a rig sitting down resting.

I said Tommy, let me help you. He said I'm all right. I don't recall at what point that was. I guess that's the only cloudiness in a lot of this stuff. You saw faces. So many of these faces I saw.

I saw a friend of mine from when I was in high school, Bruce Gary, who was on the median. He said Steve, when are we going to retire? Every time I go into Manhattan, I always see Bruce Gary. He has been with 40 engine for 20-something years.

And he died. I was really surprised at that. I didn't notice that for probably a week

or so. I really didn't keep up with the list of names. I was, you know, in denial, probably.

Q. Did you ever see Chief Burns?

A. Burns? Yes.

Q. What about Chief Barbara?

A. Yes. Both of them were at the command post before the second plane hit the second tower. I saw them both.

Q. I don't have anything further. I don't have any follow-up questions. Do you have any other recollections or observations?

A. No, I mean, I think most of that stuff is exactly the way it happened. I wasn't cloudy on any of this stuff. It's just a bad day, a bad day in my life. And hopefully we'll all get through this and go forward.

Q. Thank you very much.

MR. McALLISTER: We're going to conclude the interview. It's now 1207 hours on October 23rd, 2001. Thank you.

File No. 9110142

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF ALBERT TURI

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McCOURT: The date is October 23rd, 2001. The time is 1445 hours. My name is Tom McCourt, New York City Fire Department. Currently I'm with Assistant Commissioner James Drury and we are in the process of conducting an interview with Deputy Assistant Chief of Safety Albert Turi.

Q. Can you just identify yourself, please?

A. Yes. DAC Al Turi, Chief of Safety.

Q. Chief at this time, you know the subject matter that we're here on, September 11th, and we would just ask you if you could tell us what you saw, heard and did that day starting with when you first found out that a plane had hit a tower at the World Trade Center.

A. Okay. I'll start right at the beginning.

At approximately maybe about twenty of 9:00, quarter to 9:00, we're sitting in the Command Center, Chiefs Barbara, Callan and Cassano, and heard a large thud, which I thought at the time was somebody dropping a case of books on the floor above us, and I made a little joke that I'd better go up and take a look; somebody may have gotten hurt. What that thud was as it turned out to be was the impact of the first aircraft hitting the north tower.

About 30 seconds later, a report came over the radio of a plane hitting the Trade Center, and I'm not sure if that initial report said a plane or a propane explosion, but they said the entire side of the Trade Center was on fire. Chief Callan immediately got up. He was the citywide on duty and he left the office immediately. I continued listening to the radio for a few more seconds and it was pretty obvious that something catastrophic had happened.

So I left the Command Center with the intent of responding and I saw Donald Burns coming down the hallway and he stated that a plane had just hit the Trade Center. My aide was on vacation, so I grabbed Lieutenant Chiafari, who was assigned to Safety Command, and we went down to the garage and we were responding.

At some point when I was going over the Brooklyn Bridge, I could clearly see the tower and I started counting what I thought was how many floors were involved in the fire, and from that vantage point I thought we had somewhere between six and eight floors of fire, floor areas that I would consider to be fully involved in fire, and I said to Joe, Joe, this is no accident. It's a clear day. No one could hit this

thing by accident. This is something intentional.

Q. And Joe, chief, is --

A. Joe Chiafari. He's a lieutenant that works here. Then I further stated that we do not have the capability to put that many floors of fire out. I knew right from the start that there was no way this Fire Department could extinguish six or eight floors of fire fully involved in a high-rise building. It's just not possible because we don't have the means to do it.

So we were responding in. We parked the car on the corner of Fulton and Church. It was on the extreme east side of the Trade Center. I got out of the car, Joe got out, went to the trunk, and I was starting to don my bunker gear. I was putting on my pants and boots when I heard something similar to the sound of a jet aircraft taking off, and when I looked up I saw the impact of the second plane hitting the south tower and immediately an enormous fireball erupted that actually masked the entire upper half of the building and part of the north tower. It was so enormous that even from that great distance I could feel the radiant heat on my face. Within seconds we had to turn and run east on Fulton because debris was falling actually where we parked the car, even at that

great of a distance, and there were it seemed like hundreds of people in the street running in every direction.

I ran about 50 yards and my hearing was telling me that the debris has stopped falling. I turned around to assess the situation, and the fireball had pretty much dissipated, and what I actually thought at that time, and mistakenly so, was it's not as bad as it looks; most of the fuel was expended on the exterior of the building. That's what I originally thought.

So we ran back to the car and laying right in back of my car was a large object which I thought was probably part of one of the aircraft turbines. It was laying about ten feet away from the car and it was still on fire, smoking and fire. I finished putting on my gear and Lieutenant Chiafari put on his gear, actually he put on my aide's gear, and we walked north on Church. As we were walking, I could see multiple jumpers jumping from Tower 1. I'm going to guess about probably ten. We turned left on Vesey and we headed towards West Street.

We got to West Street and I looked back up and now I could see the other part of the tower, more or less the north and west side, people jumping on that

side, and I decided to enter the lobby of Tower 1, and I was pretty much looking up most of the time. I didn't want to be killed by someone falling on top of me.

We entered the lobby and I saw Commissioner Von Essen, Commissioner Fitzpatrick was in there, Bill Feehan, Joe Callan and Pete Hayden. Those are the people I immediately recognized. I went over to the Commissioner and informed him that the second plane had hit the south tower. He already knew that. I then said, you know, this is an absolute terrorist attack. They had already surmised that. I said you'd better put in a full recall. We're going to need all the help we can get. And we briefly discussed the recall.

Q. For the record, chief, would you explain what a recall is?

A. A full recall would mean we would call in every off-duty firefighter.

Then we briefly discussed how we would accomplish this and I suggested staging areas like Shea Stadium, Penn Station, Grand Central, where we could get large numbers of people and move them down by subway, because there wouldn't be a need for apparatus; it would be a need for manpower for relief purposes.

Then I went over to talk to Chiefs Callan and Hayden, who were the incident commanders, Chief Callan being the incident commander, Chief Hayden being the deputy chief in the 1st Division who had responded, and I stated to them that there is no possible way that we could extinguish this fire, and they were certainly in agreement with that, and that it should strictly be an evacuation procedure and to get as many people out of the building as quickly as we can, and I remember being extremely concerned that we would have a lot of our people up in the building and a third aircraft would then strike it. I was deathly afraid of another inbound aircraft coming in and hitting the building while our people were up in the stairwells.

Then there was a brief discussion about, since we had two towers going, that the lobby of Tower 1 would not be a good place for a main incident command post. I didn't know at that time that Chief Ganci and Cassano were already setting up something on the median of West Street. So I told them that I would go across on West Street and find a suitable place. As I left the building, I heard a body hit about 15 feet from me, but I never turned around and looked.

When I hit the median on West Street, the

command post was there. It was in the process of being moved fully across West Street. I went across West Street. They had just set it up on I believe the building is 2 World Financial Center.

Q. Let me stop you there for a second, chief.

When you were in the lobby of 1 World Trade, can you describe the interior and the condition of the lobby?

A. Yes. I was surprised that all the glass was mostly out. I wasn't sure how it got out. I didn't think we took it out. I just assumed that it was the vibration of the aircraft hitting it. And I did notice some pieces of marble that looked like it was dislodged from the core area.

Q. Can you describe how many civilians you might have seen at that point?

A. I can talk about that because that surprised me. There were very few civilians, very few, which just led me to believe they had already left, the people that could get out on their own, or they were exiting another way out I couldn't see. But usually during a high-rise fire, and I've been to 20 of them in my career, there's usually so many civilians in the lobby that it becomes a problem, and that was notably

absent.

Q. Just for the record, again, this command post inside the lobby faced out on what street; West Street?

A. Well, it's the lobby command post and it was closest to West Street. That's where the fire command station is for that building. That's where the lobby command post was being established.

Q. Was there any discussion at that point in time, before we get back to your story, with anybody or any of the personnel that worked in the World Trade Center about the condition of elevators, whether they were working or not?

A. Not to my knowledge. I'm sure it was done. I mean, in fact, I know it was done because I've seen the video, but not when I was in there, and I really wasn't concerned about it at that point.

Q. Did you later find out whether they were operational or not?

A. I believe they were not operational. That's what I believe.

Q. Okay. So you left off before I interrupted you about the command post now being moved over to 2 World Financial Center.

A. When I reached there, let me see who was

there that I remember. Let's refer to these notes.

(Pause.)

A. When I got there, the people that I remember being there were Chief Ganci and Chief Cassano, and there were other personnel who I just don't remember who they were. And I said to them that even this place was not a safe position for it.

So I looked about 20 feet to my north and there was a ramp going to an underground garage and I told them to move it to that ramp for fear that flying glass would scale hundreds of feet and we would at least have a place to duck in and get away from it if it should happen, and that was done immediately. We did that immediately. And then I had a brief discussion with Chief Ganci and I told him that, Pete, we're going to lose some people here. It's inevitable. It's too tremendous. We're probably going to lose some people.

Then we were trying to establish communications with both towers trying to figure out what commanders were in what tower. We were trying to set up the command board to place units, where we had assigned them or who had been previously assigned before we got there, and the handie-talkie

communications were very poor at best.

Q. Just stopping for a second, chief, when you said that to Chief Ganci, did he respond in any way?

A. He just nodded in agreement. We were looking at two large bodies of fires that neither of us in our 33-year careers had ever seen anything that enormous. So it's pretty much, you know, I thought we would lose a company or two possibly. I didn't think we would come out of this unscathed at all. It was just too enormous.

So we were trying to identify the companies and place them, we were trying to get units on the proper radio. We had chosen different frequencies for different buildings. We were not very successful contacting all the units or all the commanders.

Q. Do you know over what frequency you operated on?

A. No. And I started writing this all down on a clipboard, which I later lost, so unfortunately I don't have that record.

I knew that without communications there could be absolutely nothing that could have been done safely there because in every fatal fire that I've looked at where firemen have lost their lives,

communications always plays some part in it, either a lack of or missed communications. It always plays a part in a firefighting fatality and I was really concerned about getting the proper communications network set up. And here is where I probably lose a little bit of my sense of time. I'm not sure how long we were trying to do that. I'm going to guess 15 minutes or so.

Q. Had you seen Chief Burns or Chief Downey at all up to this point?

A. No.

Q. What about Father Judge?

A. I hadn't seen him. He was probably in the lobby when I was in there, but I don't recall seeing him.

And I thought to myself that, based on other high-rise fires that had burned out of control, that we would probably have some type of localized collapse up on the upper floors, especially in the core area of the building, which I mistakenly thought was block construction. After further investigation, of course, after the fact, it wasn't block construction. The elevator cores were encased in sheetrock actually.

Q. For the record, would you tell us what block

construction is?

A. Yes. Block is usually like a four-inch cement block that's laid and that's what encloses elevator shafts. In the construction of the Trade Center, due to the high speed and the travel distance of the elevators, they used a sheetrock construction over steel so there was more give for the wind forces created by the elevators. They felt that it would probably have knocked the block over. So I thought we would be pretty good for about three hours. Three hours is usually what the fire walls are rated for in high-rise construction. It's usually a three-hour rating. We didn't have any indications of any structural stability at that time.

Then Steve Mosiello, Chief Ganci's executive assistant, came over to the command post and he said we're getting reports from OEM that the buildings are not structurally sound, and of course that got our attention really quick, and Pete said, well, who are we getting these reports from? And then Steve brought an EMT person over to the command post who was I think sent as a runner to tell us this and Chief Ganci questioned him, where are we getting these reports? And his answer was something, you know, we're not sure,

OEM is just reporting this.

And within ten seconds of that conversation, I was writing on my clipboard -- can I use foul language on this?

Q. Absolutely. That conversation, by the way, took place in the ramp driveway leading into the garage?

A. That is correct; right at the ramp. The ramp was still on the exterior. We were not in the garage. Maybe 20 feet from the opening of the garage.

The next thing I heard was Pete say what the fuck is this? And as my eyes traveled up the building, and I was looking at the south tower, somewhere about halfway up, my initial reaction was there was a secondary explosion, and the entire floor area, a ring right around the building blew out. I later realized that the building had started to collapse already and this was the air being compressed and that is the floor that let go. And as my eyes traveled further up the building, I realized that this building was collapsing and I turned around and most everybody was ahead of me running for the garage, and I remember thinking I looked at this thing a little bit too long and I might not make this garage. But I did.

And I got about 20 feet down the ramp into the garage, I'm going to estimate 15 to 20 feet, when all the dust from debris blew into the garage like it was a hurricane force wind and I ducked into some small alcove. Most of the remainder of the people were in the garage deeper than I was because I was still on the ramp. I could feel the incline. And you could hear heavy objects falling outside and I said to myself, well, if this building doesn't collapse around me, we'll probably survive this. Then the dust got so thick and it became so black at one time I thought, wow, 33 years under some terrible conditions and I'm going to smother in dust and die. I didn't like that thought.

When I stopped hearing objects hitting the sidewalk, I knew where I was, I could still feel the incline of the ramp, I decided to exit the way I had come in, and it was so dark, I could hear other voices around me, there was also other people coming out that same way, but it was so pitch black that I did not know I was outside of the garage until I walked into a tree on the sidewalk, and I actually felt good about that. At least I knew I was outside. I was extremely concerned that falling debris would block my exit out

that way and then I would have to go back into the garage and find another way out.

Q. Let me stop you for a moment, chief.

How long do you think the debris was coming down for, guesstimating?

A. I'm going to guesstimate like a minute.

Q. And when you went back out, can you describe the type of debris you were walking around or over?

A. I stepped over stuff, I was tripping on stuff, I stepped over probably some pieces of steel, and I just waited until the dust lifted so I could see what the hell happened. I mean, I knew what happened. I just wanted to see how bad it really was.

Q. Was there anybody else with you at that time or within close proximity?

A. There were people but I don't know who. I could hear voices but I could not see. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.

Q. And the debris went all the way up the driveway ramp?

A. Oh, yes. And I've got to regress a minute because I forgot something.

When the building started to collapse and I was outside, actually, the first thought that went

through my mind was, my God, we just lost 250 men. That's something I'll never forget.

So I think I stayed out in the front for about I'm going to guess five, ten minutes tops, as the dust lifted, and Chief Ganci came around the corner. He had gotten out through a stairwell in the garage. And we regrouped at my position where the original command post was and I said, Pete, that building just collapsed. Get everybody out of the north tower. A collapse is imminent. If it happened there, it's going to happen here. We've got to get everybody out.

I heard him give that order over the handie-talkie. But not mine. Mine had ceased to work. Maybe it had dust in it or whatever happened. My handie-talkie was no longer working. I heard him verbally issue that order more than once. I could not hear if it was received or it was acknowledged.

And there were a lot of people mulling around in the street, people who were in shock.

Q. Firefighters, not civilians?

A. EMS personnel, firefighters and some civilians.

Q. Let me backtrack for a second.

Chief Feehan, do you know if he ran into the

garage with Chief Ganci and was he back out on the street with Chief Ganci?

A. You know, I don't remember. I don't remember that. My main concern at this point was to move all the people that were milling around in front of Tower 1 somewhere else. I was still very, very concerned that there would be another aircraft coming in and it would hit one of the other tall buildings, and I remember looking up West Street thinking that I've got to move everybody almost up to Chambers Street because there were no high-rise buildings taller than about six stories there. I was looking for a place to stage a triage.

And I ran to the middle of West Street and I was screaming at people to move, move up north, move up north, and I saw an ESU vehicle, Emergency Services truck, and I saw Chief Garcia standing up there on West and Vesey and I asked him, Louie, look in that truck, see if you can find me a bullhorn, which he did. He gave me a bullhorn and I was screaming over the bullhorn for people to move three blocks north of my position. And Chief Ganci had been a little bit north at that point of that crossover that eventually collapsed with the collapsing Tower 1 and I thought he

was coming towards where I was and I kept screaming over the bullhorn. I believe it was somewhat effective. There were people now listening to it and starting to move, and I saw a battalion chief coming up who was evacuating the area that I just was trying to get evacuated. I gave him the bullhorn and said continue this. Get everybody out of here. They've got to get three blocks north.

And I started walking south on West Street to find out where Chief Ganci went when I heard this enormous roar. It was the same roar I heard when the south tower collapsed and I knew that this was collapsing. I didn't even look at it this time. I turned around and I started running north on West Street. I probably ran a half a block before the dust was so choking that, if I continued to run, I thought I would die, and I laid on the ground and put my coat over my face. And there was a young firefighter next to me who said we're going to die here, we're going to die, I can't breathe, and I remember saying to him I just went through this 20 minutes ago. You're not going to die. Just calm down. We're going to wait here for ten minutes, whatever it takes, and we'll be fine. We're not dead yet. I could hear pieces of

metal falling in the area but nothing really close that concerned me.

Then within about five minutes I pretty much peeked out of my coat and realized we could get up and move a little further north, which we did. Then I remember seeing firefighters coming from the Chambers Street area towards me and I saw Chief Nardone, who I know personally from the 9th Battalion, who was arriving on the scene, and I requested that he set up a staging and triage area up towards Chambers Street and to separate all the people that were coming out of the area versus the fresh troops who were coming in and to hold them all there; don't let anybody in. Then I saw Chief Fischler, who I also know personally, and asked him to assist Chief Nardone with that task.

Then I saw Commissioner Fitzpatrick and we were trying to get all the fresh troops on one side of West Street, all the walking wounded on the other side, and then my eyes were so irritated that I just couldn't see out of them anymore. I sat down on the median and someone brought me a bottle of water and I was trying to flush my eyes out. Then I talked to some news media people at that time. I'm not even sure what I told them. But I did talk to some news media.

Once my eyesight got a little bit better, I returned south on West Street to approximately Vesey, and I can't remember exactly who I saw there, but I knew that Chief Ganci was most likely dead because I had seen him going a little bit south after I had left him. The next thing I remember clearly is that I thought I might be the only staff chief left alive. I didn't see Chief Cassano. I thought Chief Ganci was dead. I had no idea where Chief Barbara or Chief Burns were, although I assumed they were in the south tower and I assumed that they were dead. I did not know Chief Callan made it out of the north tower. I thought he was probably dead.

Q. Chief Nigro?

A. I did not see Chief Nigro at all. I don't even remember seeing Chief Nigro when I first got there.

Q. Stepping back for a second, chief, when the command post was set up in front of 2 World Financial and after the first collapse and as you were coming back down the street even after the second collapse, can you describe what was in the street on West Street in terms of rigs, ambulances?

A. Well, I'll tell you the truth. I can't

remember. I mean, it was just horrible. At some point after that -- I can't remember exactly when I met Chief Cruthers. I think it was probably very shortly after at that point. Chief Cruthers had made his way to West and Vesey and I saw Chief Nigro come in at that point from somewhere and my impression was that Dan was pretty much in shock, and I remember saying to Chief Cruthers, Frank, you're going to have to take charge of this. I don't think either of us are in any condition to do anything right now. And he acknowledged that fact and he then became the commander at that point.

Then I asked for two volunteer companies to come with me. I was going to go try and find Chief Ganci where I last saw him. Two companies came with me and we were poking around in the rubble, stepping over, climbing up. I looked up at the top of I guess at that point it was 3 World Financial Center just north of the Winter Garden and I saw large pieces of brickwork and building flapping, so I abandoned that search. I could not put those men in danger.

Q. How many men are we talking about at that point?

A. I had about twelve men with me from two companies. So I abandoned that. I said this is too

dangerous. I can't get anybody hurt looking for one person. So I returned to the command post that Frank Cruthers had set up, asked him what I could do for him. This probably took a half an hour I'm thinking, somewhere around there, and at that time he said to me if I could find my way to the south end of Vesey Street, because the north bridge had collapsed in the street and you couldn't pass, if I could get down to the other end and take command of that sector.

So probably I went through the building at 3 World Financial Center, went through part of the atrium that was still standing of the Winter Garden, went around back by the river and came out somewhere I believe on Liberty Street, and Chief Visconti had responded. He was pretty much running a search operation with about five or six companies looking for victims. I made my way over to Chief Visconti and I actually told him that, Nick, I'm going to assume command here, but mentally I'm not in the best shape to do that and I would appreciate it if he would continue operating and taking charge and just keep me informed of the status reports.

About 15 minutes later, there were a group of firefighters searching the pile who yelled over that

[redacted]

We put him in a Stoke and then we carried him -- let me see what building it was. We carried him through 2 World Financial Center. There was a doorway to the building. We carried him through there and through that same atrium I had come through before to an ambulance on Vesey. I'm through pretty much with that.

Then I saw Steve Mosiello and told him, I remember saying to him, Steve, I told you I wouldn't leave here without Pete. He's in the ambulance dead.

[redacted]

[redacted]

So Steve and I took it on our own and got ahold of a high-ranking police official and we got a car to take us out to Pete's house to notify his wife. And that's what we did. We went out, notified his wife, and I got a police vehicle to take me back to my home in Queens and I took a hot shower, change of clothes.

Chief Nigro, who does not live too far from me, he lives about a half a mile from me or a mile, I got ahold of him on the telephone. He told me he was home also and I said I'm going to go back but I don't have a car, you know, don't worry about it, I'm going back as soon as I just clean up, he picked me up and we went back to the site.

Q. What time was this about, chief; daylight?

A. No, it was dark. I'm going to guess it was 9:00 o'clock at night.

Q. Had you heard anything about First Deputy Commissioner Feehan at this point?

A. No. My memory is vague and I almost swear that I saw Bill with Pete pretty much on the north side of that bridge and, again, my handie-talkie was dead

and I could see Pete on the handie-talkie and he started heading south and I think Commissioner Feehan was with him at that point. Later on I think what happened is there were probably dozens of Maydays transmitted and I'm sure that he was going back to address some of these, what he thought he could do, you know, when the second tower collapsed.

Q. When did you find out that he was missing or had been killed?

A. Well, after I started trying to set up that staging area, that triage area, you know, I was asking people, have you heard from him, have you heard from him. I saw Steve. He couldn't raise him. And I knew from where he was heading, unless it's a miracle, he was crushed down there. I pretty much knew at that point; in my heart I knew that I'm never going to see him again.

Q. Describe the debris you saw when you finally got down to Liberty Street in attempting to do the rescue with the other squad.

A. I guess the debris was steel and dust. Steel and dust, in some spots two stories hight, in most spots ten feet high covering the entire West Street.

Q. West Street entirely covered?

A. Rigs buried. I don't even remember seeing rigs. I remember seeing a crushed rig on the north side of the bridge, but I don't know what rig it was, and the debris was equally high there. I remember saying to myself this is not a survivable collapse, that any survivors that survived I can probably see. I didn't think there would be anybody else. Fortunately for five or six of our people, I was wrong and people were rescued out of a stairwell sometime later.

Q. You're referring to Ladder 6?

A. Yes, Ladder 6 and the 11th Battalion, Richie Picciotto, Jay Jonas. I didn't think there would be any survivors.

When we went back, Chief Nigro and myself, we pretty much just kept walking around the area looking in disbelief, looking at the operations that were going on, and then we came back here. I think we were here about 4:00 o'clock in the morning. We sat down and started making some notes so I would remember some things. There were some priorities that I thought what we had to do. That had already happened. I mean, priority? I thought the Department, at that time, I mean, we've got to man the units. We've got to provide coverage for the city. That's what was really

important at that time. I didn't think this was going to be the end of it by any means.

I tried to lay down about 5:00 in the morning for about an hour. I couldn't sleep. Pretty much the rest of that day is a blur. I don't know what the hell I was doing.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: I think this would be an appropriate point to end this interview then, chief. I want to thank you very much.

The interview was concluded at 1527 hours.

File No. 9110143

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL CAHILL

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 17, 2001. The time is 1236 hours. My name is Christopher Eccleston. I work for New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command in the New York City Fire Department as of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Michael Cahill. I'm a Lieutenant, I'm assigned to EMS Division 6.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. In your own words, can you please tell me the details of the day.

A. Absolutely. Absolutely. We did what we could to see to it that we were not stuck in the office buried under paper that day. You hang around 14 years, 11 months and 29 days, waiting for the big one and I thought Clifford Avenue was a big one. Then we went to Happy Lands. I thought that was the big one. We made a point to kidnap who we had to kidnap and get everybody in the Division office down to his job.

One of the guys in the office made a good

point. He said if he or I were driving that day, we would be dead. But as the person who was actually operating the vehicle didn't know Manhattan. He's a vacation relief ALS coordinator. Good guy. First time I think he ever chauffeured the Chief around. He was driving very very carefully, as he should. He was using the directional signal and all that kind of stuff, which is funny with lights and sirens. You don't see that.

As a result, we didn't get there as fast as we initially would have liked to. Just around the time we pulled up, stopped the vehicle, actually we were getting out of the vehicle and the first thing I became conscious off of when we were stepping out of the vehicle, was a police officer was flying in our direction, yelling and screaming for everybody to back up and leave. There were a few thousand civilians, evacuating, going past us. About 30 feet maybe from the command car, a piece of what looked like the facade, looking at it now, not that I ever paid too much attention to those buildings before. It had to be two stories or three stories hit the street about 30 feet away from Chief Stone. Like that.

The cop -- it missed that cop by -- I don't

know how many feet. He was probably standing right underneath it, which explains him yelling. We jumped back in the vehicle, figured it was a good idea to since we were mobile, move us far away as we could. We had no idea what was going on. We went there for a plane into a building, a fire. That's what we went there for. Now we show up and this big thing hits.

We got about 10 feet when all the people who were fleeing, there were still you know, some civilians and some rescue workers and some cops, were running in front of the vehicles. We couldn't really take the vehicle any further and we decided very quickly we will abandon it. We pulled over as close as we could, jumped out of the vehicle and were trying to organize getting helmets out of the trunk and those kind of things.

This cloud that had to be three stories high rolled right up on us. Like it was nothing. Stevie was very very anxious to get us away from that thing. As he was walking in this direction, it was unbelievable. It was black sort of, mostly gray, you couldn't see through it, and it was moving faster than any of us could run. No matter what we did.

We only got maybe half a block before it

covered all of us. There were a few ambulances who were already parked there, with some very confused and frightened people sitting inside. All we basically did was duck behind one. There was really nowhere to go. I mean, we were completely disoriented, really. When you first get there, you know, you take a breath and look for somebody else, somebody else from EMS and the assignment, we knew where it was going. There were about 30 Chiefs assigned. What anyone's assignment was going to be we had no idea.

So we were still in that scene survey type mode and all of a sudden these bricks started falling around you. I don't even know how to describe it. Everything got black, nobody could breathe. After a while everything got gray again and then you could sort of breathe. We kind of mustered up our forces.

At that point, I found Amedegnato, the L.O.D.I. Limited person in our office. Sounds foolish, but we didn't know of any other command post that was still extant, that was sitting around there, and we knew, we hadn't seen any other supervisors or Chiefs at that point. We could barely see anything at all, very strange. Really eerie. Like being underwater at night. You know, you sort of -- total sensory

deprivation. You are not sure exactly where you should go. There is so much noise. There is things you feel on your feet, just, you know, pieces whatever, hitting the street.

We weren't sure what to do next. What I was going to try to do is just do a fast head count of the people that came to me. I was going to try to find out where my two medics were and my APs were and my Chief. Some of the guys, some of the people who were in the ambulances started coming out of the ambulances, things started to settle.

The Chief popped up. I was telling everyone to stay exactly where they were. People were getting out of the ambulances. They were wandering, or trying to. I said stay right by your ambulance right now till we get a head count, find out how many people are here. You couldn't really see halfway down the block. It's sort of hard to describe. A handful of ambulances with us, we thought there was a MERV a little further down the block but we really couldn't see.

Chief showed up, and we kind of --

Q. Which Chief?

A. My Chief. My Chief showed up. She showed up. We kind of sort of came up with a very fast plan.

At the time, we had no -- this is going to sound absolutely bullshit, but we had no idea that we were about a block away from the building when it dropped. We really didn't know what that was. It sounds stupid, but it didn't enter my mind or I think anybody else's mind at that moment that there was any idea that that building was going to fall.

When that big piece or whatever it was hit the street, I thought it was a part of the building. That's what I thought. We knew that planes did substantial damage and you could see that as you were driving down the highway to get there. You could see it on TV before we even left the Division. It didn't occur to me that that was the entire building. And that's what all that dust was from. It didn't even cross my mind. It didn't occur to me that the second building would fall. I thought we were perfectly safe where we were.

So we set up ALS on one side of the street, BLS on the other side of the street, gave Amedegnato a clipboard and told her run up and down, start tracking people. We need to know what units were there, their shield numbers, who was doing what. Then we were going to set up a staging, triage, whatever else we had. A

few people wandered up. A few EMS (inaudible). One very emotionally upset young lady, an EMS person I had never seen her before. Short little blond girl, probably from Manhattan. She definitely wasn't from the Bronx. I'd know her.

She was upset about her son who was in Queens in school. The whole situation. She was completely -- she was totally not functioning. I put her in the back of one of the ambulances and gave her a BLS unit to sit with her for a little while. I'd check on her occasionally.

Found the MERV, once things settled up a little bit, and saw there was a little further up the block, there was already activity taking place, people already triaging, people who were already working on transporting people. Basically got back up. We tried to find masks. There weren't enough masks to go around for everybody. Basically the only masks we had at the time was whatever was in the back of the ambulances that were there and there was about ten of them there. It wasn't enough to go around.

Treated a couple of cops. Treated a couple of firemen. Mostly walking out of the dust. We had to walk into the dust and pull somebody out. Things kind

of happened quickly. We were just sending them towards people, towards vehicles. Getting things organized. At one point or another, I don't know the address of the building. There was an interior triage being set up. That was sort of underway. There was a very well meaning EMT waiting over there who was completely confused by the triage procedures, even though there was a relatively large amount of patients in one place at one time, including a lot of EMS people, who weren't quite sure what they were up to at the moment.

They were trying to find a bathroom in the building so they could wash up. Not being terribly verbal, I mean I was finding -- I came across Captain Rivera, who is a senior guy. He used to work in my Division, just, I think two days before he transferred out of the Division. Good guy, good guy, good boss. But a lot of people were sort of not quite sure how to proceed.

We were reverting back to these are the tags, tear off the tags, didn't really seem to matter at the time. That's what was going on. I don't know how to describe it. When you didn't know what to do, I guess you revert back to what you sort of understand.

That's what we were seeing. Well meaning

EMTs, but messing up the triage. Tearing off the wrong side of the tag. We found a lady who was relatively badly injured. We scooped her, put her on the side, put her on oxygen. There was a fire Chief, I don't know where he came from, he had a fracture, I believe in one of his arms. Took a nice knock in the head. He was very concerned about where we were. He kept looking from where we were to the skylight and he kept saying we need not to be there.

Steve was (inaudible) Chief Villani, Captain Rivera, Chief Pascale, I understand, was in the area at that point. I guess she went in to find a ladies room and a place to wash up. All this happened within a few minutes. All this really happened within maybe 10, 15, 20 minutes.

Steve was concerned about what this fire Chief had said, Steve is a very nervous type.

Q. Steve who?

A. Steve (inaudible). Sorry. (inaudible). From the time we got out of the car, huge cloud (inaudible). He came up to me and he said you need to hear what this Chief has to say. He went and found this fire Chief and he said we shouldn't be here. This area is not secure. He kept pointing up through the

skylight. Sure enough, he was absolutely right.

Not too long after that I went outside to give an assist to -- the tracks on the MERV. They were trying to set the tracks up on the back of the MERV so that they could roll stuff. They couldn't get it straight. I walked past and was giving them a hand. All of a sudden somebody gave an alarm. I don't know who it was, that it was time to evacuate this area now as quickly as possible. Ambulances peeling out. MERV peeled out. People left their ambulances taking off on foot. People were confused. They didn't know, some of the folks who were assigned over there, knew where to report, but didn't know anything else about Manhattan, so they didn't know where they should go first, or where to report to at this point.

That's when the second collapse started to come down. All kinds of noise. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, very loud. Nobody knew what it was. Everybody stopped when we heard it. Everybody took it very seriously when the firefighters started running. When they start running, it's like maybe time to catch up, before you even ask a question and we didn't know if that was --

We started hearing the first building had

come down completely. Initially we heard there were like 5 or 6 stories that were still standing. Then we heard that it was gas mains or cars going off. That's what we thought the thumping was initially. But I think it turned out to be the second building coming down, because right after that there was this monumental cloud. It was worse than the first one.

Looked for my guys, my medics were gone. They took off. One, I understand, headed into an ambulance. Neil tried to help somebody and he got behind the building. Didn't know where my Chief went. Lost Chief Villani completely.

Found Amedegnato. I was banging on the ambulance telling people just take off, head down as far as you can go until you hear the word stop, because nobody knew where to tell everyone to evacuate to. All everybody knew the second building was coming down and we were -- I think we finally decided I think the building we were in was probably 3 World Trade Center. I think that's where we decided we eventually ended up.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A. Yes, the interior triage building, whichever building it was. It's still standing I understand. It had a nice terrarium lobby. That was the first triage

area. As far as entering actually one of the World Trade Center buildings?

Q. Yes.

A. There was enough to do outside. It sounds stupid. Eventually I had no doubt at all that we would eventually just wander on over there, but at that point nobody knew exactly how many Lieutenants were around. How many units were around. We were still trying to do the basic stuff.

How many people are here. Where are we going to send them. I had no radio. I actually -- no, I'm wrong. I did sign out a radio over there, but at that point it was lost. I was waylaid by an ATF guy, who was in such a -- in his exuberance to leave where he was, he took off like a linebacker, knocked me clean off my feet and I wasn't the only one.

He hit my watch. He knocked my watch off, knocked my watch off. Somebody found it in the rubble. Turned it in to Metrotech. Actually that's like --

Q. That's nice.

A. Absolutely, absolutely. So I found that little EMT who was hysterical, people were taking off, including the crew that was supposed to be taking care

of her. They took off. So I stopped her for two seconds, because I knew she was with somebody. She couldn't tell me who her partner was. She wasn't able to tell me where her partner was and she (inaudible), it's hard to describe. She pulled away from me and ran into the dust where some of the ambulances were parked.

I turned around and I started heading off after her. People running this way and I'm running that way after this EMT. Ambulances going this way, ESU trucks flying down the street, cutting through the dust, people ducking out of his way. Absolute panic, absolute panic.

Then I saw Amedegnato. She was heading this way. I was going to tell her to stop and wait because I was concerned where everyone was. Sounds stupid. I was worried about where my little group of people were.

She was following two police officers and some ATF guys and some non-uniformed personnel, but I wasn't sure who they were. Who -- there was a -- I believe it was a construction trailer. They looked like construction trailers. Could have been a police trailer, that was half a block further up the street.

Basically what we were trying to do at that point was trying to get away from the dust. It's hard to describe. It's like somebody puts a black cloth over your face. You can't even breathe. They might see but you can't (inaudible) -- like that. Then it sits in your mouth. Like you couldn't even take a breath, couldn't even take a breath. Like I said, it was coming so fast. It was coming from this side, it was coming from that side. As far as you looked, there was more of it. It just like --

Q. (inaudible)?

A. You couldn't outrun it. You absolutely didn't have that. Everybody was heading in that direction. The ambulances were taking off. One or two stayed behind, stayed where they were. I headed towards the trailer with the idea of at least getting behind it, because I had took the attitude of somebody else that they were around building one when it came down. They started running. They got about a block and then they realized that they couldn't outrun it, and they should stay exactly where we were. Whatever was gonna happen would happen.

I figured I'd get as far as the trailer. I'd duck under it or beneath it, just follow the rest of

the cops and firemen to see where they are headed. We managed to get in it just around the time the cloud hit. Everything got pitch black. There was no power. Stuff rained off it, banged off it left and right. It got pitch black, because when the cloud hit it was like nighttime. It stayed that way for quite a while. It stayed that way for quite a while.

I did a fast head count there. The only person I could find was Amedegnato. I didn't know where the Chief was. I lost Villani, didn't know where the medics were. There were no other units with me besides she and I, who were in that trailer. There was a couple of cops and some firemen, and whoever was the occupants of the trailer.

Found some water in the trailer and do what we can to irrigate some people in the dark who had some real trouble with what was in their eyes. I went outside while it was still kind of sort of coming down. The blackness was gone. Everything was sort of gray, looked like snow, with the intention of looking for everybody. I sort of felt responsible to know where they were. Nobody was around. It was dead quiet. The ambulances looked like they were covered with gray snow, the rubble on the ground, just looked

like mounds of like gray -- just like clouds, because you couldn't even see. The dust was so thick you couldn't see a sharp edge from a smooth edge.

Eventually we left the trailer. I located Captain Rivera. Amedegnato stayed with me. We needed to find as many EMS people as we could, because really at that point there were no EMS people floating around. A lot of firemen, a lot of cops, still some civilians oddly enough who were staggering around, some plainclothes people I didn't recognize.

Most of the ambulances had evacuated except for the few who were sitting there and nobody was moving in those. Some of them were running, some of them weren't. Didn't think anyone was in them. Couldn't see anybody. Asked her to hang out, stay here and you and I will try to get some EMS people together to find out where to stage. We will find out exactly where we are supposed to be. I turned my back and she was gone. No idea where she went. We didn't find her till the end of the night. She turned up at one of the hospitals, not hurt, but at a field hospital.

Located Captain Rivera. Asked him if he was aware of any sort of command post, anything. He was absolutely unaware. He had no idea of what was going

on. Figured we would stay together and set something up.

Then I looked around some more, saw Chief Pascale. I don't know where she ended up or where she went. She asked me what I was doing there. At that point I found a couple of firemen. I said well, there's two firemen over here and they need attention. See those ambulances? We need to find out who belongs to those ambulances, if they are still running. She is giving me orders. I said okay.

So I went looking, I found Neil, found Steve. So then it was me, Neil, Steve and Captain Rivera. Somebody, it was either an operations officer or a Chief, who I didn't recognize wearing white, had a white helmet, but it wasn't marked. Everybody was covered in dust. Couldn't identify. I was looking to him, we were looking to him to see where we should set things up. Somebody had to have a radio at that point. Most us didn't anymore.

We walked a block further up. We got some bottled water. There was bottled water amongst the rubble. Grabbed some bottled water, put it on the stair chairs we had and we were dragging it up the block. We figured Stuyvesant High School was where we

were sending most of the ambulances to evacuate, go over there. A couple of ambulances were there.

Nobody had any clear idea what was going on. Nobody had any idea what was going on, I mean, at that point. Where is the command post, where is staging, we had no radio. We couldn't get in contact with anyone. Went into Stuyvesant High School because it was open. The Police Department was in there. They had set up sort of a command post. They were starting to set up the command post.

We walked back and forth. They had a gymnasium. Looked practical. They had an auditorium, looked practical, school guards, who were being very helpful. They had bathrooms, they had water. I said this is a good place to set up. It's not that far from where we were. It's right by the water. So I got ahold of J.R., Captain Rivera. I said this is where we should be. This is where we should do it.

I mean we should be inside this high school right now. He said, good, good. He's trying to get people at home on his cellphone. Steve is trying to get people at home on his cellphone. Cellphones really weren't working. I told Neil and Steve, go ahead and throw some water on your face because there was water

in there. They were throwing -- they had glasses of water set up, the school staff did.

No sooner did we get in there, Neil was looking for a bathroom. He went into the bathroom. Steve was directed by me -- go over by the water. I was heading towards the auditorium because I talked to the school security guard and they said injured people had walked in already and they were kind of pointed in that direction. So I was heading towards the auditorium when a bunch of cops came running up the street yelling there's a gas main leak.

So everybody as a unit just left. We took off out of that place because they were evacuating, the school people, the injured people had to be dragged in. We just tore off the oxygen masks. They flew as fast as they could go. We evacuated at the rear of the building. At that point it was so completely disoriented, because now we heard from a lot of people, because you couldn't see in there. I don't know how to describe it. You couldn't have seen even half a block.

The dust stayed in the air. It was so heavy. You looked where you thought the building should be and if they were there, you couldn't see it,

because the dust was so thick. Nobody knew what was going on. I mean you really didn't. (inaudible) second building came down. While you're trying to absorb that and I'm sitting there. They are saying there is a gas main leak inside this high school. We have to evacuate this building.

Under those circumstances, there is very little -- because I mean I have been -- we have been in the city for 40 minutes and I was already -- I had already seen my third skyline in 40 minutes. Three different skylines in the same square footage. I said, well, this is certainly possible. Everybody took off.

On the other end we were taking off down by the water. Nobody had any idea where we were going. We were just getting away from the building. I found a few EMS people that were just wandering. Had nothing with them. They were not Bronx people. They weren't with their vehicles. They had no helmets. They had no equipment. They were just covered in dust.

I spoke to one of my medics, you know what we should probably do, because we were still swamped with civilians. Let's get the EMS people here and at least stay in one spot or move as a unit, because we already lost two guys, okay, and he shrugged. That didn't kind

of work out. That didn't work out too well. I'm sure people have other priorities in life. They only half heard what you were saying. I ran into one of the paramedics over here who when I was a Lieutenant, was a new recruit, Darnowski, whose brother also works in the system, who, his wife worked in the building. He hadn't been able to contact her. He was virtually useless.

Actually what happened, a lot of people couldn't find their partners. There was a lot of disorientation going around. People were not in a position to follow orders. No matter how nicely you put it, you are not going to order them, you must do this or you must do that, but people were not in any kind of position where they were going to follow any direction other than what they thought was most important at the moment.

Darnowski was out of it. I put him with his -- put him with his partner and then sent them on their way. Said you need to do this, you need to do this. Other people not so much. So it was definitely like a breakdown in discipline sort of. I'm not saying that to be critical. It's just that at that particular moment, nobody was paying attention. I wouldn't even

have thought it myself. I felt I was sort of responsible, because at that point, there were no officers. We lost J.R. outside.

This person, he was probably a Chief, he was nowhere to be found, so I didn't see anybody else who was around. We walked up about half a block and I ended up being I think they said it was North, West and North, I think was the cross streets.

Q. North End?

A. Manhattan College.

Q. Okay.

A. There were a few EMS people. There was a Red Cross truck there that had shown up already. There were a couple of confused and lost looking fire people, and confused and lost looking EMS people. So I said, this looks like a good place to gravitate to, because we are confused and lost too. We kind of sort of took over the intersection. Again, nobody had a radio, nobody --

Q. Do you know about what time this was. It's very hard to --

A. So sorry. I lost my watch when the ATF guy blocker tackled me. I did. About an hour maybe, possibly. Bumped into a Lieutenant, who I never met

before. His name was Pinky. Don't know what his last name was. He was a little character. He was giving orders, yelling. He didn't need a radio because you could hear him two blocks away. I said what's your name. He was keeping his head. He was doing all right. He said his name is Pinky, he worked in Manhattan. I didn't see him again. I was with him for half an hour and he kind of wandered off. This is at the point where everything I think, literally before the smoke cleared, people were doing sort of, a lot of free-lancing going on. There was a lot of -- whatever looked interesting is where people were milling towards.

Whatever people didn't want to go anywhere near, they would go in the other direction. It was hard to get control of people. Really was hard to get control. There was a group of people there one minute and you say you know what guys, hang over there, we are going to get filters for you. The Red Cross is floating around.

We were trying to set up an infirmary in Manhattan College. We are trying to -- hang there, hang there. Jerry Santiago, Lt. Santiago was there. Me, Jerry and Pinky were the only Lieutenants in there

at that point. And a few EMTs, and a lot of law enforcement. Jerry Doyle, a former Chief's aide from Manhattan came in his car. He showed up and he saw me, because he recognized me.

He came up, and we decided every Lieutenant there, since only one Lieutenant turned out to have a radio, was going to get one EMT and keep him as a partner. We were going to try to establish something at this point because we didn't even know, was there a command post. Somebody said they thought there was a command post set up at one of the piers. At least that was where some of the Chiefs said they were going.

The Academy bus showed up with a bunch of people who were students in refresher. We ran into a little problem with some of them. Some people ran into a little problem, because one or two of them got off and kind of assumed this was -- they were going to assume command. This is what they were waiting for and you can tell the people who weren't actually there, because they came out in clean shoes. Everyone else was the same color gray.

Pinky is sitting there spitting stuff out between his knees. One or two guys looking exhausted sitting on stretchers on North Street. Right after we

evacuated for the third time. I'm sitting. I had an oxygen tank on. I lost my nitro. I was sitting with an oxygen tank. I'm waiting for the pain to go away. One or two EMTs were totally confused.

[redacted] had just shown up and he thought he lost his car. He couldn't reach his wife, who worked within a few blocks away. Nobody was in a state for this. And this mook, who has more bars than me, he said men, we are mobilizing a task force. I need a bunch of you. We're going to go back there and get in those vehicles, because there was a few vehicles. If he would have understood. Didn't get much from us at that moment.

I hate to say it, but most of us were just too tired and a number of them had been absolutely petrified. I mean they were still like this, totally out of it.

Q. Oh, yes oh, yes.

A. And one of the Lieutenants with me stood up and said clearly you have been nowhere near that spot, because if you were, the last thing you would be asking us to do right now is walk right back in there to get an ambulance. You're kidding me. He said somebody hurt in there? I said we are not going back in to get

a vehicle. We just left it.

I mean all of us were covered. Forget about it. Stuff in our eyes, cuts, bruises, equipment lost. Half the people we came with were lost. There were still people saying I can't find my partner. This guy was going -- very strange, very strange stuff. He took off. The Chief grabbed him by the ear and said get in my car, we are gonna take a look at something.

Where this guy ended up, but we never saw him again. He is the first Chief we saw at that point. Kind of talked to him. He said why don't you guys stay right here and I'll go a little further ahead, we'll find out what's going on and we will decide what's up with this. There were a few people showing up at that point that had radios and could talk to somebody and find out what was going on. Half the people without their vehicles didn't even have portables.

Sounds stupid, but you realize how important communication is at a time like that. In a situation like this, you are dealing with word of mouth. An ambulance, any ambulance, a voluntary ambulance rolled by, and you stopped them and said where are you coming from. We are coming from -- who did you speak to down there, EMS people, what did they say, where are they

sending you. That's how we were running things. Okay, there are people down there, they are sending one block up this way, so they must be setting something up over there.

That's where we found out where the initial command post was, because a bunch of ambulances came out of nowhere, in a motorcade, and the city bus came with people from Brooklyn. We just jumped on the city bus and came down. They saw me standing there. At that point I was the only white helmet standing there. So they stopped in front of me and said where do you want us? I said well, I have 30 ambulances from Jamaica Hospital, some voluntaries on this corner. I got about 10, 15 EMS ambulances on that corner. This is the infirmary.

I got one Lieutenant who showed up off duty. He didn't have a radio. There was another Lieutenant who I walked over there and met. I don't know where he was from. He showed up with a radio. He was probably actually assigned, who was taking care of that end over there and the transport on that side that nobody knew was there. We transported about 30 people in our vehicles and nobody had seen anybody over there. Very disorganized.

They reported to me and said well, where did they tell you to go. They said, well they told us to go about a block that way. We saw you guys here. That's when we found out there was something going on a block down. I took Neil since there were two Lieutenants there now. I took him and I walked up a block. I had a fireman who had come over on the ferry. He gave me a business card with a radio frequency. He said, that ferry captain was over there. We were a block away from the ferry. All we had to do is go through a gate to the ferry.

He said, that Captain over there says he is ready to go. He would take people over to Jersey, but nobody is calling him, nobody knows he's there. This is his radio frequency. This was a fireman that came from home. I said absolutely. So I did a head count. How many paramedics and EMTs I had. How many voluntary ambulances and how many municipal ambulances I had.

We had had a city bus show up with doctors and nurses, PAs. The cops had opened up Manhattan College and they did a great job setting up a hospital in there. Kind of a M.A.S.H. Somebody showed up with a tractor trailer from Duane Reade, and we had all the batteries, flashlights, and orange baskets we could

handle, work gloves. They were handing them out to anybody.

There was some people in that building, a Fire Marshal retrieved, transported. A lot of it was done verbally. I had kept eye contact with Neil. In the basement over there, there is a Fire Marshal. I told Steve, go over there. There is a guy holding his neck. Everything was like aye, aye, and verbal. I had my frequency, two Lieutenants and 3 ambulances. I was in charge. No one kind of knew we were there.

I ran into Joe Cahill. I saw him. I think he was kind of wandering around. I don't know who he came there with, but I don't think he was actually assigned to anybody at that point, because I turned around and he was backing up a voluntary ambulance to Manhattan College. I walked over and asked what are you doing here? He said I just went inside and talked to those doctors and they said they had no transportation. So I figured I would get them an ambulance.

Everybody at that point was a little bit -- they weren't looking at the big picture, because at that point the DOT was coming up to haul all the cars off the street so we could keep that block open. All

sorts of bizarre little things went on. I walked to up to what turned out to be a command post about a block away. Saw a Captain who I didn't know at the time. Now I know who he was. He was in this little saw horse area. There were a few Chiefs.

Q. Who was it?

A. Captain Musto. I had never met him. I went up to him and I gave him the frequency. And he's on the radio -- Lieutenant so and so, Lieutenant so and so. This is where we are. You cannot see us. But we are a block and a half over there. Where do you want us. Where do you want these people and by the way there is a ferry parked over there waiting. I'm waiting. I walked up to him, he says what's your name and shield number. He gets my name, Neil's, Steve's, because he was with me. He asks how many people did you bring from the Academy?

I'm not from the Academy. I'm from Division 6. We came with a small group of people, but now we have -- just then, one of the Chiefs walked up to him and stuck a finger in his chest and said "I told you, no one but Chiefs behind that line." He looked at me like this and the Chief turned to me and said sorry out. I'm sorry. So (inaudible). Took the ambulances,

(inaudible) radio frequencies. I don't know what they did.

These guys were besides themselves. Everybody was. I don't fault them. If he was the it man, if he was the guy that everyone was going to see, I don't know if I'd be in a good mood. Eventually all those people got organized and they got filtered in wherever. We stayed with them for a little while. There became an overabundance of people reporting in that area.

We got a radio, I found a van with a medic from the Academy. He was designated our runner because the one radio we did have among us went dead. So he was doing the running. They established another command post at one of the piers. There was another one further up the block. We decided we were going to take some of our resources. Lieutenant Trainer, I think was his name, showed up from Brooklyn. From Brooklyn with a couple of people. I don't know how he got there, in a van or a regular bus, they were on foot with their gear.

We established communication and they were asking for people here and they were asking for people there. So things were getting a little bit more

organized.

Q. Do you have any idea what time frame we are in now?

A. Had to be twoish I guess, somewhere in that ballpark. We were there for a couple of hours. We were there for a couple of hours. Maybe even longer. By the time I left there there had to be 30 or 40 doctors at Manhattan College. Food had been delivered and it was being dispatched. We transported 20, 30 patients. Tracking was being done. Whichever Lieutenant was standing there without the radio is the one (inaudible).

Couple of guys showed up and said they told us to report here and set up a temporary morgue. So somebody knew that we were there. So as things got a little more organized, people started dispersing a little bit. Two other Lieutenants remained there. I walked up with Neil to the command post, because that was at the point where we had firemen working in the rubble.

All of a sudden the patient count stopped. We didn't see anybody. Then more and more free lancers started showing up. People identifying themselves as EMS employees who used to be on the job but are no

longer. They were showing the old HHC I.D. card. All kinds of bullshit is going on.

We went up and we reported over there. I reported to Captain Nahmod. He was setting up (inaudible), Captain Rivera, he had set up a MERV and some triage, very close to building 7. They were setting things up as close as they could, because there were still people working in the area. Nobody was sure exactly how many people, because at that point there was so many free lancers showing up.

Somebody said they found a female that was on maternity modified on the pile. They took her off. (inaudible) showed up. Nobody knew how many people was actually there. The Academy was telling everybody, they said come up to the school, which is right around where the command post was being set up at that point.

Building 7 came down.

Q. Building seven came down I believe around 4:25?

A. Makes sense. At that point I had -- not St. Barnabas New York, but some out of state St. Barnabas ALS units with a Chief show up. They were good enough, when we set up. They wanted me to set up five stations, ALS, BLS, et cetera, outside the MERV. The

MERV is going to be separate. I was going to be here. Nahmod was my boss. These guys were ALS guys. They brought tons of equipment they set up. I had a couple of EMTs. They didn't have a home. We set up very nicely and we were waiting. The building came down, we were still waiting. And waiting. We didn't see anybody.

Occasionally an EMS person needed a little irrigation or like that. We stayed until Chief Pascale showed up and took us off the line.

Q. Okay. Do you have anything else you want to add to this in regard to the events that happened prior to like roughly noon?

A. Meaning what? I'm sorry.

Q. Anything that you feel that you forgot to mention as you were talking. Sometimes things pop into our head, oh, I should have mentioned this. If you don't, that's fine.

A. Under the circumstances, a lot of people, you know, performed very very well. In a case like Darnowski, who was very concerned about his wife, was still functioning, able to follow whatever direction I gave him. The direction was basically get away from here because he would have done what any one of us

would have done, walk up to the rubble, which other people had done for the same reason. They had spouses or whatever inside of the building. People performed very very well. I saw people who for 14 years I thought that the sun rose and set on them collapse.

I saw other people that I hadn't thought very much of at all, walk right into the situation and take control. Do what I thought at the time was exactly what they should be doing at that particular moment or at least the best that anybody could possibly hope to do at that particular moment, because the first couple of hours we were there, I don't mean in terms of free-lancing. The first few hours that we were there there was not much -- people would congregate in one space and a building would fall down and we scattered. Then smaller groups would get together and nobody was really sure who was in charge and I saw very few people walking around looking like they were looking to duck something.

Most people were okay. Most people were doing exactly what they should be doing at that moment. Very impressive. I didn't see anybody shaking any fingers at any voluntaries. I didn't see anybody do anything like that. You see that constantly. I'm a

patrol boss out here. Conditions 18. I used to work with Barnabas units all the time. That was not a problem down there that day. Truly was not.

Communications was bad. The rumors were out of control. People who were showing up from Brooklyn and Queens, from outlying areas, a couple of hours after, came. I heard Chief McCracken and Chief Gombo were (inaudible) all day. That didn't help. We heard after we had already set up like a little hospital at Manhattan College about the Pentagon. That was the first time we heard it. I mean, we would normally hear WINS or something like that. That didn't help matters any. There was nothing you could do about it.

A big part of people's issues were their own families. You'd be surprised how many people who live and work in Manhattan and that was their primary concern. And while some of them cut out, because they couldn't reach home, a lot of people stayed right there.

My son goes to school in midtown and my mom works a little further uptown and I couldn't -- my cellphone was useless. Steve's cellphone was useless. Finally got an EMT that was good enough to give me a cellphone and I got through to his school that

announced that they would not release him from school unless someone came to pick him up. I said well you just need to understand where I am right now. I can't do that. I'm doing the single parent thing and I can't leave right now. They said well, then he stays the night.

A lot of people stayed. Some people took off and some of us stayed right there. I mean it was a difficult choice for I'm sure a lot of people. Jerry (inaudible). Couldn't find his mother-in-law on the phone and when he did, he was told, I don't know, she was in the building, that's all. He stayed right where he was and did his job. Very impressive. I don't really have much else to add. Sorry.

Q. You gave us everything we wanted. Very helpful. Very very helpful.

A. (inaudible).

MR. ECCLESTON: That's what we are looking for. I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 1318 hours.

File No. 9110144

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MARY MERCED

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 23rd, 2001. The time now is 2312 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I'm with the New York City Fire Department. Tonight I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, your rank and your assignment.

EMT MERCED: EMT Mary Merced, Division 3.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: What's your rank, Mary?

EMT MERCED: EMT.

Q. Can you please give me your account of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. On September 11th -- well, let me go back. I work with Deputy Chief Goldfarb, and we were working 6 Charlie the night before. We had a meeting at 7:00 in the morning which exceeded our end of tour time.

Once we left the meeting, I was monitoring SOD and I heard a police officer yell there was an explosion in the World Trade Center. It came in broken up, but I made it out. I told

the Chief, "Did you hear that?" He said he heard what I heard, but I had to repeat it. The police officer gets back on again and says about an airplane but didn't complete the word. I said, "Oh, shoot." I said, "An airplane crashed into the World Trade Center."

I quickly lit up the vehicle, and I'm heading towards Manhattan.

Q. Where were you coming from?

A. We were coming from -- we had a meeting here.

Q. At the division office?

A. At the division office, the Division 3 office, right.

I'm heading towards the Battery Tunnel, and all the while it's being confirmed, we're hearing it over EMS citywide and the PD radio and fire radio. When I was heading towards the Battery Tunnel, you could see the smoke on one of the towers. It was unbelievable. Initially I thought it was an accident.

So we proceeded, made our way in heavy traffic into the Battery Tunnel. The second plane must have hit while we were in the tunnel,

because as soon as I came out, both buildings were on fire. I just looked up in awe. I never thought that I would ever see this.

It's ironic to talk about premonitions or stuff like that because two weeks prior to this -- I'm always talking about it. I always say that we're not prepared, that hazmat doesn't have enough training. I've got other training outside of here. I'm a WMB technician, I got the national certification from Jersey City Medical Center and stuff like that.

I'm always saying I learned more and I know that when I was taught in hazmat, they thought me this much is not enough. Chief Goldfarb, the funny thing when we started our 6 Charlie tour that Saturday night prior to this happening, he said, "Mary, you know what? I'm going to check all the MERVs and the LSU trucks because if something happens then I'll be sure we're prepared." It's funny, Saturday night, Sunday night and Monday night we did it. You wouldn't have thought that he would be right.

Anyway, we got to the scene. A bunch of fire trucks and police, fire equipment,

everybody you can think of who was there were getting there or trying to get there. We got out of the vehicle. We grabbed the command board, something we seldom use. We used it one other time on a job.

I parked on the West Side Highway between Albany and Liberty Street, number one X marked on the map. We proceed up the West Side Highway towards the south tower. I see Chief Goldfarb is on the radio and I believe he's talking to Chief Gombo who is in the south tower.

Chief Goldfarb says, "Come on, Mary." I said, "Where are we going?" He said, "We're going into the south tower." It's customary we set up treatment and triage in the fire building. I look up and I said, "Chief, we're not going into this building. I said, Chief, the fucking shits going to fall," never anticipating the whole building but I just thought the floors up there.

I said, "This is not an ordinary fire." I said, "[redacted]." He said, "Mary, calm down." He probably thought I was being hysterical. He was thinking I was

being hysterical. I was just putting my foot down. [redacted].

He gets on the radio. I don't know what he spoke to Chief Gombo about. He said, "Come on." I said, [redacted]

I said, "We have off-duty people here. We have units here, they need supervision, they're running around. He looked at me. I don't know what he told Gombo. We collected people. I took this off-duty guy -- I don't remember his name -- so he could help with the command board.

We also had Kevin Darnowski. He was off-duty but in uniform. He was on the way home when it happened, and his wife worked in the north tower on the 90th floor. He told me that his wife was in that building. I gave him a hug and I told him, I said, "Don't go in that building. You stay with me because she may have gone out."

All the time we saw debris falling, people either jumping or falling.

Q. Where did you set the command board up?

A. Okay. We went to -- fire had a command post across the street, right about here.

Q. By Two World Financial?

A. Maybe between here.

Q. On the West Side Highway, somewhere near Two World Financial?

A. Off the West Side Highway. So we were there. I set up my command board right by Fire, behind their's. There was an underground driveway right behind them. That's where we were, outside. Then the chiefs were there. (Inaudible) so they can see what's what.

Chief Goldfarb after a while, he says, "Mary, I want you to take everybody and move back into the entranceway to the underground driveway." So we did that. I'm over here trying to get units down. As a matter of fact, we had units down, that I put down on the command board that's still not erased.

After a while he said, "You know what, I don't like the way this looks, Mary." He said,

come, Mary, everybody, we're going to go." We went up to Vesey and West. We went up to Vesey and West. That's where we saw a lot of supervisors and units.

All the while I'm like holding Kevin Darnowski's hand, because I didn't want him to go into that building. I knew if I let go of him, he would be gone.

I look up at the north tower, and I see see colors all the way up there. I'm thinking to myself, geez, I said, is that clothes? I thought since the airplane crashed there, I'm thinking about maybe it's the clothes from the luggage or something. Then I see something else drop. Then I look. I see debris drop. And I look, and it was people. I could tell you almost every color clothing all the people that I saw fall had on, how they fell, if they tumbled, if they swan-dived.

There was this one woman. She was dressed in white. [redacted] by this time, he was in shock, almost catatonic. He said, "Mary, do you see that woman falling in white? He said, my wife had the same clothes when she left this

morning."

[redacted] I had to look because I knew we were close to the buildings and some of the people falling, debris was falling, and I had to watch out for that. And the noise of the people hitting the ground.

We were about ten yards from and the fire apparatus that was there, firemen and the ESU truck was there. We had set up a staging area with the buses on Vesey Street facing south.

ESU, anyway, they threw us out of that intersection. They said, "We want everybody out. This is a tactical area." I didn't understand what that meant at that time, but I soon found out they expected some ground attack of some sort.

The chief told us to go over in front of the American Express building, everybody set up their equipment and everything else in case we had any patients coming to this side.

Q. When you set up by the American Express, you were still on the West Side Highway

side or you were on Vesey Street?

A. We were here. The buses were here.

Q. On Vesey.

A. Facing south on Vesey, for egress. The chief had everybody go in front of the American Express building with their equipment, stretchers and everything, you know, the usual stuff. After a while the chief says, "You know what? I want everybody inside the building. I want everybody inside. I don't want anybody outside the building."

As a matter of fact, Lillo was in our crowd initially. I'm thinking to myself -- I knew his wife was in there, probably (inaudible). Quinn was a friend of mine too.

Anyway, everybody went inside the building, and I took it to Captain (inaudible). He works at Metrotech. He was with a group of supervisors. The chief and I, we were on West Street. We came back over this way. I tell you, all this time I don't hear any radio transmissions or anything. It was looking and doing automatically. I wasn't even so much concerned for my safety. We just do what we've

got to do.

All of a sudden, that's it, you hear the rumbling and it's getting louder and louder. I'm like, oh, shit. He said, "Mary, run!" I'm thinking, oh, shit, the building's falling. He's saying, "Mary, run!"

We turned around and ran west on the West Side Highway.

Q. You ran north?

A. I'm sorry, this is north? I'm sorry.

Q. On the West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, so then the buses were facing the --

Q. They were facing east or west?

A. They were facing west.

Anyway, we were running north. We got around the corner on Vesey Street, and there was an ambulance, like the last ambulance in the staging area, with the doors open. The chief jumped in there. But I had passed him, so I was like in front of the bus. I remember he said, "Mar." I turned around, and I'm looking at this --

I can't even explain this. Everything

is like in slow motion, like time stood still and it was slow motion. But I knew I couldn't turn back and go to the bus, so I had to keep on running.

So I'm running, and I'm worried about the chief, that he's there. Nobody expected those buildings to implode. They were thinking, it's going to topple. When it's falling, you think it's going to topple. Where is it going to go?

So I'm running, and people are running in front of me. They stop. They turn around. I think everything's over with. So I stop, all of a sudden the thing is coming at us. It was like in dark hell, like a nuclear blizzard. I couldn't explain it. You couldn't see in front of you. You couldn't breathe. You're inhaling. You're coughing. You're running. You can't see anything.

Once the building fell -- because you could hear it -- you couldn't hear anymore. Everything was silent. It was like if I was in a desert. I turned around and police officers are telling me, and other people, that we can't go

back. I said, "I'm going back." I said, "The chief is over there, and I've got people over there and I've got to find them."

So when I went back, the first person I saw like through this cloud is Danny Rivera from Battalion 31. I looked at him. We both were in shock, of course, like everybody was. I said, "Are you okay, Danny?" He said, "Yeah, Mary, I'm okay." I said, "Where are you going? Don't go back there, Danny." He said, "I've got to find my partner." Everybody was concerned about finding their partners. You know how it is.

I'm on the radio trying to call the chief. He's not answering me. In the mean time I'm thinking about chemical and biological secondary devices or if it was there. There was a Hazollah bus, and I said, "Danny, come, we've got to get masks." We got masks. I was handing out masks. Whatever they had there, I gave them out to people. I don't know.

So I'm calling the chief. He finally answers me. I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "Yeah, I'm fine." He asked me where I was. I had made it back up towards North End. They had

I believe it's the Embassy Hotel Suites. We were there. Chief Kowalczyk was there, Mike Ober. He helps as an EMT at Battalion 39. Chief Villani, the guy in the MERV. Police officers, firemen, hacking, coughing. I had my water. I was sharing my water with the firemen, with civilians.

Chief Goldfarb finally came. We just started taking care of patients. We just turned the lobby of the Embassy Hotel Suites into a treatment triage transport area or whatever. We had I think it was a fire chief who had a dislocated shoulder. We had burns to legs, people in shock, minor injuries, leg, arm, smoke.

I remember they brought Gary Smiley from Battalion 31. They brought him on a stretcher. I believe he on -- he threw himself under one of the apparatuses when the building fell. I think some people got hosed down, so they brought him in. He was in shock, all wet and everything else.

He wanted to quickly get off the stretcher to go back. I'm saying, "Gary --" Gary is hyper anyway. "Gary, you're not going

anywhere." "No, I've got to go back." I know he's not thinking clearly. I said, "Gary, you made it out alive. Don't go back and do something stupid." I said, "Stay here. Regroup. You don't know what's going to hit next."

It's a funny thing, because I forgot to mention when Danny Rivera and I made eye contact there was an airplane overhead. You couldn't see up in the sky. You couldn't see anything. Danny, myself and I'm sure everybody else, we were ducking like trying to see where it's going to hit. All the psychological games that come after all of this. At that time you didn't know whether it was going to hit or not.

I remember during that time as well the only radio transmission that I heard was Captain Deshore's. When she said she was heading towards Jersey and she was injured along with some other M.O.S., she was in need of medical assistance and they were taking a lot of people over there. That's the only transmission I heard. Anything else, everything was dead.

Chief Gombo was with us, with other chiefs as well, at the Embassy Hotel Suites.

They don't know what's going on, what's going to happen next, rather. So we had some people transported off the scene to hospitals, and the chiefs, they met and they discussed what their next plan was going to be.

I remember the chiefs were in front of the Embassy Hotel Suites, and I'm there. I said, "Chief, I hear the rumbling noise. The other building's going to fall." He said, "I don't hear anything, Mary." I said, "Chief, the other building's going to fall." The other chiefs are looking at me like I'm going crazy. I said, "Chief Goldfarb, you know I have a keen sense of hearing. The other building is going to fall."

Sure enough, another 30 seconds later, it got louder and louder. Then everybody is going to run, because we didn't see where the building toppled because we didn't know it imploded because you couldn't see anything.

So now we're running, and we go back inside the building here and you couldn't go past the Embassy Hotel Suites because you could see the World Trade Center from there too. It's a big open area on the other side. So we ran back

in there and moved everybody to the left of the lobby, because they have an atrium there on the right, in case it topples on top of that building.

So we were there, and it fell. Of course more smoke, more stuff, papers everywhere. We got a little bit more patients. The chiefs, they do what they do, and I'm helping people, as well as the other medics, EMTs. Then some of the chiefs disappeared. I don't know where they went to.

Then we heard that there was a gas leak in the hotel, so we had to evacuate there. So we evacuated there, and we headed north on North End. That's when Chief Gombo -- they decided Chief Goldfarb would go with Chief Gombo to 1 PP because there was no more -- 7 Metrotech, because there was no more OEM over there.

So that's where we went. We went along with Lieutenant Terranova. That's his name; right?

Q. Ross Terranova?

A. Ross, yes, Terranova.

Q. I noticed that you said 7 Metrotech,

but you meant Seven World Trade -- right -- where OEM is?

A. Yeah, I'm sorry.

Q. That's okay.

A. I'm sorry. Good thing you picked it up. I didn't realize it.

We went to 1 PP, Chief Gombo along with Chief Goldfarb, made decisions and stuff like that. So that's where we were. We didn't sleep. The chief and I went back -- that same night we went back to the site. There was an EMS operation.

Q. At Vesey and West?

A. No.

Q. Chambers and West?

A. Chambers and West. Yeah, at Chambers and West. We were there like every day. Then we hear that people are missing. They had the chief and I missing. Then the frustration not knowing who's missing, who's here, who's not.

It happened, and I was down there yesterday. I know it happened, but it still hasn't registered. I'm pissed at my job for the lack of support. Just the fact that everyone

(inaudible), my family, everyone's family, I'm sure. I mean, we've seen how much support we've gotten throughout the United States and the country, which is great.

[redacted]

It's ironic because during this whole incident I wasn't even concerned about my safety.

I'm here now and I'm not like -- while I'm lucky to be alive, I had a brush with death, you know, I don't even think about it that way. We all did what we had to do, everybody down there. I've gained respect for many people, many people, and lost some for some.

It's going to take a while for everybody to heal because the scars are what's going to remain. [redacted]

[redacted]I never, never take my cell phone with me on the job. I always leave it in my purse or in the car. This day I took it. I didn't even think about it.

My ex-husband called me on the phone. He said, "You're there, aren't you?" That day he had to pick up the girls for his visitation. He said, "You're there, aren't you?" I said, "You cannot believe what I'm looking at. You won't believe it." I said, "You know what? Tell the kids that I love them. I don't know when I'm coming home."

I knew it was going to be a long operation. My family didn't hear from me until that night because the phones were down, the cells were down. Even my childhood friends called my mother, and my daughter who lives upstate, she was frantic.

But I thank God that decisions that were made that day, even by Chief Goldfarb, putting those people in there. It would have been worse because we had 50 people easy. It would have been much worse.

[redacted]

But support that I've seen. I know everybody -- who knows, maybe everybody gets television, especially something of this magnitude. But, you know, the dust has settled. We should get better, but I don't see that and I don't feel it and I don't feel support. I really don't.

[redacted]

By the way, [redacted] wife, she was safe in Brooklyn Hospital. He was a wreck. Unfortunately Lillo went in the building. Aside from that, he was working. As you saw in the pictures, he was working anyway. Quinn, a buddy of mine, that's how he is. I would have done the same thing. I would have done the same thing. Even though I was on light duty, I would have done the same thing.

(Tape ended abruptly.)

File No. 9110145

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF ZACHARY GOLDFARB

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 23rd, 2001. The time is 2318 hours and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001, with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank, and assigned command.

CHIEF GOLDFARB: Zachary Goldfarb, EMS Deputy Chief assigned to Division 3.

Q. Chief Goldfarb, were you working on the morning of September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me the details of the day?

A. Yes. We were actually working starting from the night before. We started working on the 10th at 2200 as car 6 Charlie EMS Citywide chief. I had a relatively uneventful shift and we stayed here in our office in Division 3 at the end of the tour for a little while. We were in a meeting with some staff

people here. We left here somewhere around 0830 and were heading home, basically, heading off duty.

As we were heading out on Linden Boulevard, monitoring police special operations frequency, we heard someone scream over the police radio, Central, a commercial aircraft just hit the World Trade Center. Immediately I picked up the EMS Citywide radio and told the dispatcher to assign us to the job. I don't even think they knew at that moment that there was a job because it was just instantaneous and we spun around and started heading out Linden Boulevard.

Do you want to know our route of travel or any of that?

Q. Sure.

A. We headed west on Linden Boulevard from -- we were just about at Pennsylvania Avenue, so we headed west on Linden Boulevard from Pennsylvania Avenue. I was anticipating morning inbound rush-hour traffic to begin with let alone a problem with the Trade Center, and then I was anticipating that the Battery Tunnel would probably be open and clear for us to get through. So I said to my aide, Mary Merced, I said let's go out and take the streets down to the Battery Tunnel and we should be able to get through the tunnel

and stay off the highway because knowing from how these types of events unfold that the highway tends to get messed up.

So we went west on Linden, continued out, hit the traffic circle by Prospect Park, went around, got onto the Prospect Expressway westbound for about two exits because we could see it was blocked up, jumped off down to the streets and worked the streets down to Hamilton Avenue right down into the mouth of the tunnel. We made really good time, I think, given the distance and the circumstances.

As we got to the Prospect Expressway, that was where we saw the first sight of the towers. At that point my impression was that the first plane had hit but not the second plane. As best as I can remember, there was one tower burning and you could see a huge volume of fire and a lot of damage, and our immediate assessment was this was going to be a major event. Actually, we used some other words, but I don't want to put them on tape.

During the course of our trip, my feeling was, I was the Citywide chief and I was still logged on as the Citywide chief. I didn't know what other chief officers might have been on duty in the morning, but

clearly this needed some heads-up activity. So while Mary was driving, I was on the phone with the Citywide dispatch supervisor giving him some direction, and among the direction I gave him was to set up task forces in each borough consisting -- I believe I told him ten ambulances and an officer in each borough for a total of 50 and to mobilize them at two crossing points but hold them fast because I didn't know what we were going to need.

I have to tell you that at this point there was no thought at all given on my part to this being anything other than an accident of some sort. Despite training and I think a very high level of consciousness about terrorism and things of that nature, it didn't occur to me at that point in time that this was any kind of an attack, just some sort of an event where a plane hit the building.

It was an absolute beautiful day. The sky was just a perfect blue and not a cloud in the sky. Heavy smoke plumed up coming off the north tower. So we came by Hamilton Avenue.

As I was saying, I was on the phone with I think it was Larry Tobin, who was the Citywide dispatch supervisor, and I was giving him some direction. I

broke off with him, then I called him back. I told him to activate our regional mutual aid agreement with the Office of Emergency Management. I told him to activate our agreement with the Private Ambulance Association and mobilize all our mutual aid agreements and get everybody moving because it was obvious that this would be a very large patient-producing event. Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. Actually, it did work out that way. Anyway...

But those were the things we were putting in place on the way in. Now, I don't know what other direction anyone else was giving. Among other things I told him was everybody off the radio. I just wanted EMS officers on the radio and nobody else. So, again, I don't know what other direction he might have been getting, but he was certainly listening to the stuff I was telling him, and Larry and I work very well together.

So we got to the tunnel. There was already a line, a whole procession of emergency vehicles lined up trying to get into the tunnel. My aide is very good at dodging traffic, so we kind of wove our way around and drove right into the tunnel, and we got about halfway through the tunnel and traffic was stopped. We were in

the Manhattan bound lane, but it was two-way traffic. We tried to get around them into the oncoming lane, but there's really no wiggle room in that tunnel, it's very tight, and everything was stopped dead.

One thing I remember is that everybody had their sirens on and, of course, the tunnel is not a place for a siren and nothing was moving, so it was very noisy in there. So after seeing that we were stopped dead for a couple of minutes and there were police officers out on foot in front of us, I felt that we were really kind of close to Manhattan.

So, as Mary knows, I have no tolerance for sitting in traffic when I have somewhere to be. So I said sit here, I'm going to get out and pull the traffic, and it was my intent to find my way to the front of this line and pull it so that we can get out of that tunnel because we needed to be out. Also, while we were in the tunnel we were off the radio, so I didn't know what was going on.

So I walked up somewhat to where there was a police officer and he told me that traffic was blocked up because of the blockage on West Street and they're working on it but we weren't able to get out just yet. So at that point I sort of had to acknowledge that I

guess we weren't moving very far for a few minutes and I walked back to the car, and on my way -- actually, on my way up to the police officer in a car a few car lengths in front of us was one of our off-duty medics, and I don't remember his name right at the moment, but Mary will know in a second and she's probably telling Christine right now.

He rolled down his window very panicked and he was like chief, chief, and I recognized him. I just can't remember his name at the moment. Darnowski. One of the two Darnowskis, Kevin or Jim, one of them. I'm like what's up? He said my wife is in that building. I got to get to her. I said listen. Try and relax. We'll be out of the tunnel in few minutes. When we get out, follow me in to the job, stay with me, we'll find your wife. Very unnerving kind of situation.

Then, as I was walking back from the police officer, a woman runs up to me and, again, we're in the middle of the Battery Tunnel here. A woman runs up to me and the woman is completely hysterical and she's screaming. You've got to help me. You've got to help me. I said what's the matter? She said my son is in the car and he can't breathe. What's wrong with your son? Her son had a tracheostomy and she said it was

clogged, and I look toward her car, which was a few car lengths behind us, and I can see that there is a boy, a child in the back seat of the car in his car seat, and he's awake and breathing but maybe he looked like he was in a little distress.

I'm thinking to myself I need to be at this Trade Center. How can I drive away from this little boy? We're stuck here in the tunnel anyway. Maybe I'll take Darnowski and tell Darnowski to go help this little boy while we pull out of the tunnel, and even as I'm having these thoughts, traffic opens up and now we have to move because we're in the column. So I said to the lady, we're moving out of the tunnel now. Keep going out of the tunnel. As soon as you get out, make a left and drive around to the hospital. She said okay. Apparently she was on her way to the doctor or to the hospital at the time. So I was like all right, that's one less thing to worry about.

So I told Darnowski get in his car, follow us. Traffic moves up. We pull out. We pull out onto West Street and this is like -- it's funny because it's almost like you thought it wouldn't get worse. Of course, we've seen it got a lot worse. But it was real bad. A lot of apparatus. At this point the second

tower is going. Huge fire. Huge. You know, in retrospect, I look back and I say we should have thought those towers might not hold. There was a huge volume of fire. But, you know, it was so far up that it's almost away. It's like you can't really get a measure of it. So there was a lot of fire, there was debris in the street, body parts in the street, people all over the place, and you kind of tunnel in a little bit, you know?

So we're driving down and I'm thinking of all the stuff I want to bring from the car out to the scene. Mary, as she always says, where do you want me to stop? I'm like, all right, just keep pulling up. We're now going northbound on West Street. Let me refer to the map. So West Street is a divided street here and we're in the northbound lanes going north and we're weaving away and the cops or traffic folks, whatever, they're doing a pretty good job of moving traffic along.

At some point, I want to say probably around Albany Street, I guess, we cross over. There's a break in the median and we cross over, so now we're going northbound on the southbound side. There's stuff coming off the building. So we stopped -- I think our

final stopping place was south of the pedestrian bridge. I'm trying to get this right. Maybe somewhere around Cedar Street, but we're on the west side of West Side Highway parked up against the curb facing north, and we're south of this pedestrian bridge. The staging area that they had transmitted was Vesey and West, and there was no way we were going to get up there and there was no way to walk around it, and it was a good stopping place and there were plenty of other people and, quite honestly, if the building hadn't collapsed, I'm sure it probably would have been fine.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map where you had parked your car? To the best of your memory.

A. I'm want to say somewhere like here.

Q. Okay.

A. Something like that.

Q. Okay.

A. So we get out of the car and there's stuff coming off the buildings. There's people coming off the building. We go around and we have a routine. We always try and do everything by routine because my feeling is, when you do everything by routine, then when there's a real crisis, you just follow the routine. I mean, I teach a lot, as you know. People

do in a crisis what they do every day. So even in our routine, garden variety MCIs and responses, we always follow the same protocol, take the same equipment. We approach everything in the same way, very standard. So we pulled on the scene, we gave an 84 on the KDT. We got out of the vehicle. I said, okay, we're going to take the command board, we're going to take the vests.

The funny thing about the vests, because we've been carrying these command vests, I've been carrying them for years, since before we merged, and we had them made over after the merge and they said FDNY on them, but we have never deployed them, and when we set up the new car the day before, Mary was like, why are you carrying these vests? Why do you keep carrying them, chief? You'll never need them. I said, well, you know, one day there will be a big job and then we'll really wish we had them, so we're going to keep carrying them. Then here we are the next day and we needed the vests. So it's very strange.

Another strange little vignette I'll tell you is that when we started our 6 Charlie work that week, which was Sunday night, Saturday night, Sunday Tour 1, I said to Mary, I think -- she said do we have any plans for this week? I said I think what I want to do

this week is I want to do inspections on all the MERVs and LSUs and I want to prepare a report for Chief Gombo of what their hardware stock levels are because I just somehow have a gut feeling that they're not at a level that we think they are, you know, ready to respond to a big event.

So on Sunday Tour 1 we went to Bellevue and checked Manhattan's MERV and LSU, inspected it, documented it, I'm sorry I'm off by a day, on Monday Tour 1 we went to Manhattan. On Tuesday Tour 1, the morning of this event, we were in Queens. At 4:00 a.m. I had Mike Sheridan out of his office and we got the LSU running and checking all the stuff. In fact, when I saw Sheridan a couple weeks ago, he said, boy, you had a premonition? I said you know what? I have no idea if I had a premonition or not, but just something was nagging me about those MERVs and LSUs.

So anyway, we pull up at the scene, get out of our car, we start to gear up in our safety coats and our helmets and stuff, which is just routine for us, we take our radios. One of the things that was interesting was that, thinking independently, you know, we have our department cell phone and usually we get out at a scene and she takes the cell phone.

Independently, both of us opted to take our own personal cell phones with us. In my mind, I had been thinking, I know the Department cell phone is on AT&T, which isn't always the most reliable, mine is on Verizon, if something big is going on at the Trade Center, you know, I might need the one as an alternative to the other, so I grabbed my private one and she apparently thought also of taking her private one. So we both left the car with three cell phones between us as well as all our standard radio equipment. We went to the trunk, took out the command board and the vest set, and the command board is a big thing, so we're dragging this thing.

Okay. So we get out of the car and we start making our way over to the Fire command post. I have to tell you that I can't for the life of me tell you how I knew where it was. I just don't remember. But we weren't dodging around. We went straight forward to the Fire command post, maybe we just saw it, which was in -- there's a parking garage that I think is right here. I'm depicting just south of the north pedestrian bridge, which would be between Winter Garden entrance and 3 World Financial Center. I think that there's a driveway. I think this is the placement of it, but

it's somewhere in here between these buildings. But I think the driveway is here. It's like a divided driveway to an underground garage and that was where Fire command post was set up.

So we walk along here and make our way to the -- you know what? I'm thinking maybe it was here. One of these two places. You can go there and look where it is, okay? But wherever that Fire command post was, that's where we went. It's one of those two places. So we're walking along and along the way Darnowski hooked up with us and said he was coming with us and we picked up another I say stray because there was a lot of this going along. We picked up another off-duty member who we recognized, Mary probably knows who it was, I don't remember, and told him to come with us. So our jolly band of paras went over to the command post.

We got to the command post. Chief Ganci was there. There was no EMS representation at all at the Fire command post. Nobody was there. A Field Com was there. They had set up the table. Now, I knew at this point that Chief Gombo was on the scene and I think I was under the impression he had taken command. So I told Mary -- again, we have a standard approach to

this. So I told her all right, set up the command board, let's start documenting who is here and get the information, start setting up command. I knew there was command on the scene and I wasn't trying to take command but rather just get the information to support command. I called on the command frequency to command and I think it was Ross Terranova that answered the radio. I think he was working with Chief Gombo, and I said we're on the scene, we're at the fire command post, what's your pleasure? So he said stand by, and then he came back at some point and said report to the lobby of building 2.

Then in the meantime, during this lag of time, I said a couple words to Chief Ganci. He was being very frustrated about his radio. I remember this. He was like what's that? What channel is this? Am I on the right channel? Goddamn it, the radios aren't working. He was very frustrated about his radio. Chief Ingram, Bob Ingram, was there and I talked to him briefly. Chief Burns was there and the Field Com crew, a bunch of other people, no EMS people. So I said okay, I'm here, you know, I'm reporting and I'm here, whatever you guys need, and they basically didn't have anything to tell me, I

guess. So I had Mary set up the command board and start documenting who was on the scene.

So she started doing that. She had the two tagalongs helping her, and I'm looking out at the scene and there was stuff coming down. In fact, when we got out of the car, there was a lot of stuff coming down and I have to say that I was a little bit fearful that we were going to get hit with something coming down, you know, there was debris, there were I guess what I later learned were pieces of people coming down off the building. We got out of the car and Mary was like transfixed. She was just staring at this thing.

One of the things that I've learned over time is sometimes it's better not to look at stuff because sometimes you don't want to see things, you know? You see them, you start thinking about them, and then you can't do your job. But, of course, the downside is sometimes there's stuff that you don't see that you need to see. So anyway, Mary is just transfixed and I remember I had to tell her about five times, you know, we're prepared, let's go. She was just -- I don't know. It was like, come on, Mary, let's go, and so we went, we proceeded on.

So as we're standing at the Fire command post

looking at that stuff, you know, we're looking at what's going on, I told her and the other two guys, I said get in under the mouth of the garage. Everybody else was on the tarmac almost like at the curb -- not at the curb but kind of midway between the garage entrance and the curb where they were operating, and I said get under the overhang of the building so that you'll be shielded from stuff coming down. So they went down there and did that.

So I call command, as I said, and they tell me the chief says report to the lobby of building 2. So I called down to Mary. I was standing at the command area and Mary and the other two were down under this overhang and I called Mary and said come on, get the stuff, we're going over to the lobby of building 2, and I start to walk out to the street and my aide, who certainly earned her living watching my backside that day, looks up and sees stuff coming off this building and me, I mean, I don't know how far I actually would have gone, but I was prepared to follow orders and charge across the street and she was like, chief, you can't go across the street, there's debris coming down, I was like, come on, Mary, let's go. We've got to report to Chief Gombo, and she got upset with me. She

was like, listen, you can't go across the fucking street, there's fucking debris coming down, and at that point, I guess, I looked up and I realized that she was right. There was like a shower of stuff coming off this building.

I have to tell you that standing below this building where we were standing looking up at a fire that was -- I don't even know what floor the fire was on, 80 or 50 or 70 or something like that. We didn't appreciate the extent of damage to the building that you would have appreciated if you were standing in Brooklyn or Jersey City looking at it, and in retrospect -- and I think about this day and night, but in retrospect, I think it's possible that the command, personnel in command, if they could have seen what you would see from Brooklyn, might have had a different assessment of the hazards of the building than what you could see from the street because you're basically looking straight up a vertical cliff, two vertical cliffs, and you're seeing the bottom of some smoke and fire and you see debris or whatever, but I don't think you had a full appreciation of the extent of damage, how many floors, the size of damage. Now, they may have had other sources of information for that. I

don't know. But this is just my own assessment and I have no other source of information.

So anyway, I heeded my bodyguard and I called command back on the radio and said we're not able to make it across the street at this point. I'm at the Fire command post. There's no EMS representation here. Do you want me to take a liaison role here? He said okay, ten four. So I do that. So I come back to -- I guess a deputy from Division 1 was there and I just said okay, I'm here as your liaison, tell me what you need, and in the meantime my team was working on getting an assessment of what we have on the scene and they started writing up the command board, which is still downstairs written up and everything.

We were there, I don't know, five or ten minutes and then Chief Kowalczyk reports to the command post. As we had left Brooklyn, as we were heading out of Brooklyn, I called him on the phone, he was here in the office, and I told him, I said, Walter, big job, World Trade Center, we need you, come on out. But he was already moving. I think he heard the second alarm transmitted and he was already moving. So he reported to the Fire command post and I briefed him on what I had known, the little information I had at that point,

and he said okay. He said go down to Vesey and West and take command there of operations on Vesey and West.

I have to tell you that at this point, up until this point, I'm saying to myself, I know this job. I've been here before. I was there in '93. I was the south tower commander in '93. I've seen this building in peril, I've seen a thousand patients. I mean, there's nothing freaky about it. It's just a big job. Okay. We've done big jobs. I do this. So I think that -- maybe I'm projecting now -- many of us were thinking that kind of thought. So he tells me go down to Vesey and West and take charge there. Okay.

So I leave the Fire command post and I proceed now north on -- I take my little band of warriors and we proceed north on West Street up to the corner of Vesey and West. We're in the southbound lanes of travel walking. We encounter probably about, right around here, we encounter about 40 or 50 EMS providers with stretchers and equipment and all sorts of stuff just standing, basically, not engaged in anything, just standing by waiting for instructions right here in the southbound lanes of traffic just along the median.

I see Jace Pinkus is there with them and I think Howie Hahn, who is a lieutenant, I think it was Howie Hahn he was with, and the scene over here was basically these streets were kind of clear because there was stuff coming down. North of Vesey on West Street were lines of ambulances and apparatus parked here or staged here or trying to get through here or stuff like that and there were all these members on the street, and they weren't treating patients. There were no patients apparent at that point in time. So I called all the officers together, which I think it was Pinkus and Hahn and I'm not sure of what other officers there were. It was just sort of a motley crew. There were EMS guys and voluntary guys and Hatzolah guys and numerous other people that looked like they were part of an ambulance team.

I called them together and I told them that I was taking command of Vesey and West and that I wanted to set up a triage and treatment area, and I told them to set it up in front of, that is to say, on the east side of 3 World Financial Center, on the street there. There's a pretty large, open kind of climate over there. I told them I wanted them to set up over there. I told them I wanted them to clear the street

and I said be aware that there was debris coming down from the buildings, so hug the building as close as you can, 3 World Financial Center. I told Captain Pinkus to make sure he had accountability of the people who were in this area, all of these people are now his, so you've got Hahn and whatever other officer might have been there. I said go over there and establish accountability and prepare to set up to treat patients.

My strategy at that point was that we would be getting patients probably coming out of 1 World Trade Center trying to evacuate and the injured there, we would handle them there. At this point I was not thinking of triage and treatment in the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. I didn't feel that it was safe to be operating on West Street, you know, on the street or close to the front of the building, so I wouldn't have committed anybody at that point. Remember I had already made the decision not to go first to 2, so we weren't going to go across to 1. So I pull them up against the building.

Charlie Wells comes in and he wasn't really reporting to me. He was kind of moving past me, I guess. I think he had already some other marching

order. But he had came in from the north going south and he stopped at my area. I told him -- maybe we talked for just a minute and I sort of exchanged information with him and said do you have a mission? He said he was reporting to the command post or something like that and he continued on. Commissioner Von Essen came by that way and I saw him and I talked to him just for a second and he went on to the command post.

Then I called Pinkus on the radio and said -- no, wait. Before this I think Chief Villani came down and -- let me back up. Wells came down and said he's here with a number of ambulances, he's got a bunch of ambulances staged north of Vesey Street on West. So I told him, okay, have the crews report here. We're setting up triage and treatment. Then he went on to the command post.

Then the next person I saw was Villani. Chief Villani reported to me and I said do you have an assignment? He said no. I said okay. I said would you do me a favor? Recon to see if we can stage on Vesey Street off of West heading west and if there's a way to get out so that we can cycle our rigs out of there without having to recommit to West Street because

West Street was getting blocked quicker. So he went to recon and ultimately he got back to me and said yes, we can go out North End Avenue, there are already some rigs up there, and he was going to set up that staging for me on Vesey to North End and that would have been the egress route for those rigs so you'd be clear of West Street debris.

Along the same time frame, I called Pinkus on the radio and I tell him I don't like the looks of things coming off the building. I said recon the lobby of 3 World Financial Center, see if we can set up triage and treatment in the lobby there for a casualty collection point. So Pinkus reports back to me that, yes, we're able to do that. I tell him okay, get everybody inside the building under cover, everybody in the lobby, let me know when they're starting to establish accountability for the people. So he goes ahead and does that.

So now basically I'm on this corner and my recollection is that the street was kind of -- it wasn't like hugely packed with people. It was kind of empty, some cops and some firemen and us, and a cop comes over wearing heavy tactical gear and starts shouting at us, this is tactical area, clear the area.

What I found out days later was that the sergeant on 6 Truck, his name is Sullivan, I think, he was on TV, had at some point made a determination that this was a terrorist attack and began to think what if there's ground troops also, I don't know, if this is supported by some kind of a ground attack and here are all these cops in heavy vests clearing the streets.

So anyway, he starts shouting at us this is a tactical area, clear the area, and not just at us but everyone that was there. So we had actually moved onto Vesey. We were really right at the corner of Vesey and West. Pinkus calls me back and tells me everybody is under cover, they have no patients, all the people are accounted for, there's plenty of space in the lobby, they're back from the windows. So I felt comfortable with that. So at that point I have accountability for what's going on. They have no patient contact. I'm really starting to wonder where the patients are.

We're standing on the corner and I'm standing here and Mary is here, the MERV is here, there was a line of ambulances here that are staged pointing west and we're about a car length apart from each other and I was looking up Vesey Street and she was looking at the building watching people coming out of the

building, and all of a sudden I hear her say, oh, my God, chief, it's coming down. I turn and I look up and the building was coming down, and all you saw was this huge cloud. I mean, I didn't see the building coming down. I just saw a cloud of (inaudible) coming down, just a big black cloud. So I was like, let's go. I knew the people in my area were clear, but we were just near enough. So I'm like, let's go, and she was just transfixed. She's like, oh, my God. I'm like, Mary, let's go.

So we start running west on Vesey Street and she outdistances me, and as we were running, I saw -- remember I told you this was a beautiful day and it's like suddenly dark, like a thunderstorm brews, you know, suddenly it's like big, gray clouds, and it's almost a feeling that something is overtaking me is I guess the way I would describe it. Mary runs past me, but I guess we're kind of running together, and all of a sudden I look up and I see an ambulance in front of me, back doors open, no stretcher, kind of saying hop in here. So I did. And I'm calling to Mary, come on, thinking there's some shelter there. She had already come around the side of the ambulance, so she was already past me when she heard me. She just decided

she was going to keep on going. But now I'm committed to the ambulance.

So I jump in, slammed the doors. It seemed reasonable at the time. I have no idea actually how I got from the street into the ambulance because obviously I made it inside, but my legs were hurting for two days after or three days. So I must have projected myself somehow. I don't know.

So now I'm in the ambulance and I hear stuff, you know, debris hitting the roof and stuff coming down on the truck and you look out the window and there's just swirling clouds of gray and it's getting darker. I'm like this is pretty cool, I've got a little shelter here, and then I realize there's stuff starting to come into the truck. So I'm like why? I closed the door. This is kind of just going through my mind. I was very calm about this whole thing. So I look up in the cab, and it was a voluntary ambulance and I know it was because you could walk through into the cab, which is probably a good thing. So I look in the cab and I see that both windows were rolled down, power windows. Hey, the truck is running. So I powered both windows up and that stopped it somewhat, but it was coming in through the vents and I realized the AC was on. So I

shut the AC off. So now the windows are up, the AC is off, doors closed, and it was better. But I'm coughing already, you know, there's stuff coming up. So I'm like this is not good.

A good question might be why didn't I think to just drive the ambulance away? I never thought of it. But what I did think of was, hey, I'm in an ambulance. If there's oxygen, I'll put a mask on, then I'll be able to breathe no matter what comes around the ambulance. So I got an oxygen mask out, I started looking for the valve to turn on the oxygen, and I'm looking for something thinking, if something comes crashing through the roof, I know it's only a sheet of aluminum, maybe this wasn't such a bright place to be after all, I'm looking for a back board or something to get under, but there was nothing in there.

I look out the window and I'm thinking should I try and make a run for it or run further? But there's all this stuff going on outside like a nuclear snowstorm. It was unbelievable. Unbelievable. Stuff like da-da-da-da-da pounding on the roof of the truck. So I just kind of scrunched up on the floor with my oxygen mask under that arch between the cab and the walk-through thinking that might be the strongest roof

point, and I just kind of scrunched up there and I had protective gear on and I said, you know, I hope I'm able to get out of this. I remember it was really quiet. There was no screaming on the radio. There was really nothing going on on the radios. It was just -- it was quiet.

So after some period of time, I don't know, minutes, seconds, I have no idea, after some period of time it sort of lightened up outside. So I said, hmmm, it looks like I can get out. So I got out of the truck. There was a lot of stuff floating around, but I could see and get out. So my next thought was -- well, you know, before I even got out of the truck I was thinking of Mary and she was contacting me, she was calling me on the radio, and I called her. I said I'm okay. Are you okay? She said, yeah, I'm okay. I said where are you? She tells me she's up the block. I said okay, good. I said I'm going to regroup, try and get our treatment area back up, if it isn't up, in the lobby of 3. So then she tells me or we discover that one of the buildings we think had collapsed. You really couldn't tell because there was just clouds and smoke, but it was like it wasn't there. I can't begin to tell you how weird this thing was and what a strange

feeling this was.

So I go into 3 and I find Pinkus. I think I talked to him on the radio first and then I find him and he tells me everybody is okay, we're all accounted for, no problem with that, and I'm saying, my God, if I hadn't taken these guys off the street, they would have all been under this thing. That still freaks me out. That still freaks me out. It would have been an awful lot of guys. So thank God they're all okay.

Q. Good command decision.

A. Lucky command decision.

In fact, he did tell me, when I saw Jace a couple weeks afterwards, he told me that -- I can't remember. I think he told me Quinn had been with our group at one point and then afterwards wasn't there anymore. Quinn's wife was the one who worked in Tower 1, I think? Maybe I'm confused. But he had apparently left the group to go strike out after -- to try to find his wife at some point, and that was the one member that we didn't have accountability for after.

So anyway, the lobby of 3 World Financial Center kind of wraps around the building here. So originally they were operating here. Now everything is full of -- there's windows broken and there's debris on

the east side. The structure seemed like it was stable. So we decide to pull everything over to the west side of the lobby around the corner.

The strangest thing, because they must have been having been some kind of reception in the lobby of this building, they had tables lined up with bottled water. Go figure. There were cases of bottled water, and it was just what we needed was bottled water and here they are, cases of bottled water. So people were coming in and there was plenty of bottled water to wash your eyes or get them a drink and people are coughing and choking.

So I tell Pinkus get his people and start moving them to the west side of that lobby. Am I talking too much?

Q. No. You're doing great.

A. The next thing I remember is Mark Stone comes in completely covered with debris, completely freaked out, coughing. He's like, he said, Kowalczyk's trapped under there. I said what do you mean? He said Kowalczyk was with me, he said, and when the thing came down, we started running and I looked back and he was gone. He's trapped under there. I was like, you know, on the one hand I was like I really don't need you to

tell me this right now. On the other hand, it's like, okay, so here we are at the doors to hell and you're going to tell me Kowalczyk is trapped there. What are we going to do about it? So he was like, let me take a couple of guys and we'll go back and dig him out. I said listen. If he's trapped under here, you're not going to dig him out with a couple guys. We need to get to the command post and get a team and go after him. I said are you okay? because he was coughing, and he was like I'm okay, I'm okay. I said okay. I said can you make your way to the command post?

I have to tell you that I'm not sure what happened or where the command post was at this point. I didn't know -- see, this situation was like war in that, you know, you've heard the expression the five of war? Too much stuff happened sometimes too quickly for you to sort it all out and make logical decisions based on what's real, so you just sort of -- you don't have all the information. You try and make the best decisions with the information that you have, which is flawed, and you kind of go from there because you have no alternative. You don't have enough information and the information that you do have, including stuff that your own senses bring you, you can't process it.

So my thinking is the command post is still where we left it. I don't really know at this moment, this is like two minutes post-collapse or five minutes post-collapse, I don't know what's collapsed. In fact, I mean, it was clear that something made a big mess, but I don't know what it is or how bad it is. I was not able to get around to recon it. My first priority was to make sure my men were okay, my people were okay, which they were. My second priority, as I understood it, was to carry out my mission, which was to have a casualty collection point there, and so we were doing that.

So when Mark presents with the idea that Chief Kowalczyk is lost, my direction to him was to go to the Fire command post, take another man with him, go to the Fire command post and get help for Chief Kowalczyk, lead them to where he is. So I gave him that direction. Fortunately, as we later found out, Chief Kowalczyk wasn't trapped at all. But, again, sometimes you don't have all the information.

So I had Pinkus trying to get things organized and something is nagging at me. It's clearing up outside, it's clearing a little bit, you know, you start to see a little sun. I talked to

Mary. She was up on the corner helping them with some transports and some patients, some resources. Something tells me I want to find another exit out of this building.

So someone was with me. I can't remember who it is at the moment. Someone was with me. I said let's go recon another way out of this building. Let's see if we can get out toward the water in case we have to retreat from where we are. So we go out through the back warrens or through the back lobby of 3 World Financial Center and we find like an exit corridor that leads us to an exit door which actually takes us out, I guess, right onto this promenade here. So that's pretty swift. The time sequence is just kind of jumbled. I'm not sure how -- the sequence that you gave me, what time did the south tower collapse?

9:55. Okay. And the north tower collapsed at 10:20.

Q. 10:20.

A. Yes. So figure 9:55 that collapses, figure at 10:05, 10:10, something like that, we're in the lobby, we're looking for this exit pathway. In fact, my strong sense is that it was Stone with me again, like maybe he had reported to the command post, come

back, maybe we had found Kowalczyk by that point, something like that. I think Stone was back with me again, and I remember Chief Carrasquillo came through here and we gave him, because he was coughing and choking, we gave him some water. We were starting to get a few patients, not a lot. It wasn't like 100 patients.

There was a lot of trouble getting through to the command post on the radio. Previously there had been a couple of frequencies in use. When we got on the scene, we were on command. Then we were trying to use tact 2. I was using tact 2. When I set up Vesey and West, I had Pinkus go to tact 2. We were using tact 2 to communicate so it would be clear, and we do that, Mary and I do that all the time, so we know how that works. We routinely at events do that. So I was on tact 2 with Pinkus and she was on Citywide command talking to the MERV.

At some point a decision was made, actually before I left the command post, to start switching this whole incident onto Manhattan south so it would have its own frequency and that was underway, and that was a great decision. In fact, that should be standardized. We should just do that. That was a great decision

because it gives us a complete clear from everything frequency to use. But anyway, that was underway.

So here I am -- I know I'm jumping around a little bit, but I'm just trying to give you the pieces.

Q. You're doing great.

A. So I come out and I see there is this promenade over here, you know, it looks so beautiful down by the water, it's sunny and bright and clear, and I see some people over there and I see the ambulances over here and the street is just covered with stuff, and something tells me -- I call Pinkus on the radio and I said listen, get everybody together and get all the equipment, I said, and proceed -- I said I'm going to send someone back to show you the back way out. Use the back way out, get everybody out here, we're going to relocate on North End Avenue, the whole triage area.

Q. That would be North End and Vesey?

A. North End and Vesey. We're going to move to North End and Vesey. And you know, I can't tell you why I gave that order other than maybe it didn't feel safe being in that building. I don't know. I can't tell you why I gave that order. Something made me do that. So he acknowledges the order and I move down to North End and Vesey.

Here's the corner of North End and Vesey, and right here on the northeast corner I encounter Chief Gombo was there, Basile, Pascale, Kowalczyk, my aide, their aides, a bunch of people, and we were just trying to get a handle on whatever it was the hell happened because we're not sure. Pinkus is pulling these people out of here. They pull out and we take over the -- we move the treatment area into the lobby...

(End of tape side A.)

Q. ... interview with Chief Goldfarb.

A. So we're on the corner. We moved the treatment area into the Embassy Suites Hotel.

Q. Do you want to take a break or go on?

A. You know, I've told this story 10,000 times, but to tell it with the level of detail that you want, you have to walk through it, and when you walk through it, sometimes you remember things you'd rather not remember. But I'll deal with it.

Q. If you need a break, just let me know.

A. Thank you.

So what was interesting about the Embassy Suites is that, when you come in, there's a huge atrium area here, high, very high, lofty ceiling with glass, plexi, whatever. So we go in there and then off to the

North End of that lobby is a covered area. I remember seeing a covered area because the building was above. So we go in there and we have to be sure that we're clear of that atrium. So the team moves in there and they start setting up a treatment area in there, and we're out on the street. Now we're getting patients. Patients are coming in to us.

Suddenly, my hero, my heroine, and I say that just out of total respect for her, says chief, the other building is coming down. I hear it. I'm like, Mary, try to stay calm. The other building is not coming down. Again, in retrospect, I mean, it's funny, you know, you just weren't processing this. Who could absolutely process the idea that a tower of the World Trade Center has collapsed and when you look you don't see it? Who could process that?

I'll tell you that to this minute I have no idea, no concept whatsoever as to what the injury count or the impact on us, operationally, organizationally, peoplewise, was of just that discrete event of the one tower coming down. I know the total picture. I mean, I don't know if you have any idea what that is, but I have no idea.

Q. No, I don't.

A. But I have no idea. I don't know who was trapped, I don't know who was lost. I mean, we lost eight EMS people. I don't know if they died in the first tower, the second tower or in the middle. I have no idea. I don't know if anybody knows that.

Q. I don't believe that's known.

A. But anyway, she's like no, chief, I hear it, and she said you know I have very keen hearing. And she does. She said you know I have very keen hearing. She said that building is coming down. So we -- and we're standing with a bunch chiefs -- we say all right, you know what? Let's just move into cover. So we clear everybody off the street, we get everybody in under the sheltered area of this hotel inside, and you can't believe it. The second tower comes down. This was just a day of such mind-boggling stuff.

So the second tower comes down. Huge clouds, huge -- the same thing. It's like, hey, I've been here already, you know? Just horrible. The strangest thing is I don't remember noise associated with it. You would think that would be a very noisy kind of thing, and I just remember quiet. I don't know if like your ears disconnect or something? I don't know. I don't remember ground shaking, noise, any of that stuff, and

I was right there. Much too close.

So this comes down and now we have a much larger area of debris outside and the cloud and stuff everywhere, and we're in the lobby and we're treating patients. I'm not treating patients, but the teams are in the lobby treating patient and now we're getting more patients. We had moved around a table in the lobby, the chiefs, to try and plan a little strategy here and it was just too chaotic, so we decided we're going to pull back. We go into like a back corridor here at this Embassy Suites Hotel, and it's Gombo, Terranova, myself, Kowalczyk, Basile, Pascale, and we're just trying to have a little bit of a strategy session, and I think all of us are like just kind of blown away by what was going on.

But we had a very rational brainstorming session where we reassessed, number one, we were under attack. Number two, we've probably taken a huge impact on this. Number three, we're not winning. There's no success in our staying here. We don't know what's going to collapse next, blow up next, get bombarded next, the next thing coming, whatever. We don't know if we got nuked. We just didn't know what was going on. So we acknowledged that we were shy a lot of

information and we decided to take three strategic decisions, all of which I think are important.

Number one was we knew that there were other resources on the scene and okay and working because we could hear some of it on the radio, but we weren't able to get through. We were having a lot of radio trouble. We couldn't get through on the cell phones. We were just having a lot of trouble getting through. So we knew there were players on the scene doing stuff on the scene. We decided that our best immediate strategy was to pull back clear of the scene, try and regroup, not bring more resources into the scene because we didn't even know how big the scene was at this point. We didn't have a definition of where the scene began and ended.

So we decided to set up two mobilization points, one north and one south, direct any further response into those points, and try and pull back whatever forces we could to those points so we could regroup them, and basically we decided to leave the scene in the hands of the people who were there while we tried to get a little better picture. We were also mindful of the fact that we didn't know what else was going on in the city, we didn't know what else might

get hit in the city, another target or something. We knew we were under attack of some kind by somebody, but we didn't know the status of any of our operating forces. We didn't know the status, we had no picture. We just -- again, no information.

So we decided to activate these two mobilization points. We chose Chelsea Piers on 23rd and West, which was my choice because I knew it was a big spot, big open space, that there's plenty of room in there to set up casualty collection, staging, really anything you want, it's huge and sort of right there. It's a little further away maybe than you would like it, but then again, that's not necessarily a bad thing, it wasn't far. The second place we chose was the ferry terminal, the Staten Island ferry terminal on the Brooklyn side -- no. The Staten Island ferry terminal on the a Manhattan side.

So we tried to get through. There were a couple times I was able to break through to Citywide dispatcher, and we tried to get that information to him that we were setting up those two points. We tried to see if there was an unaffiliated chief or someone who hadn't been committed to this thing already that we could send to each of those places to set those up. I

don't think we were successful in doing that.

So Walter Kowalczyk and Frank Pascale went north to Chelsea Piers. I'm not sure who we sent to the ferry terminal. I don't think we were able to send anybody from there to the ferry terminal. I can't remember at the moment what the task was Pete Carrasquillo and Chief Gombo and myself were going to go to -- we decided we had to go to -- it was clear that we had to get a citywide command center up because we had a citywide problem. It was also clear that 7 World Trade Center, which was the OEM command post, was not going to be accessible.

So Chief Gombo suggested Police Plaza is the place to go, and he was actually on target, a totally right suggestion. So we decided that Gombo and myself would go to Police Plaza to set up the big picture and Kowalczyk and Pascale would go to Chelsea Piers and work the scene picture and the evacuation piece of it and we would try and get someone over to the ferry terminal, and that was our strategy.

So we broke up from that. I think Basile might have just stayed there on the scene working the scene. I can't remember what it was that he was supposed to do. So we broke from that and -- I'm

sorry. I said Basile but I think I mean Pasquale.

Q. I believe Basile went over to the ferry terminal?

A. All right. So we leave there. As we're coming out of our little brainstorming session, the lobby is now full of patients, lots of patients, some of them our own people, our people helping other people, a couple of ESU cops came running into the lobby and they start shouting everybody out, we've got to evacuate the building, we've got a major gas leak in the building, everybody out of the building right now, right now, everybody go. And you're like what else? Are we going to get like frogs also? What else is going to happen here? So we start helping get people out of the lobby and, you know, it starts to get spooky, like you think, gee, is this building going to blow up as I'm trying to leave it or something? It became very strange.

We get out to the street. I can't find Mary. I'm calling on the radio. She's not answering. She was two blocks up helping another ambulance. But we finally hook up. So Gombo and Terranova and myself, when we catch up with Mary, start proceeding north on North End Avenue to get out of there. Like how are we

going to get to Police Plaza? Well, we're going to walk. There's no other way to get there. This stretch here, this North End Avenue, this is like a wasteland. I mean, not normally, but it was like a wasteland. Everything was covered, vehicles skewed every which way, injured people, people helping other people, rigs that won't start, and I felt like a refugee fleeing some war-torn country.

As I thought about it later, it was the first time in my life that I ever felt that an incident beat us. You know, we go into an incident to control it. That's what we do. If you're a control freak, that works for you even better. You go into a scene, you take command, you assess whatever the problem is and you manage the incident. That's what we train, that's what we do, and here we are going into an incident that is beating the shit out of us and has actually pushed us back and chased us away and we're leaving behind our wounded, we were leaving behind who knows what, we're leaving equipment, we're abandoning equipment. We took all the people that were with us, but we were abandoning the equipment, some of the equipment, and we were just trudging out through the dust like just a defeated army. That's how I felt. It just felt

terrible. It just felt terrible.

We get up to like Murray Street and we look back and where there used to be those two beautiful towers -- and I'm a New York born my whole life. I mean, I watched those things go up. I always lived with those there, you know? Where there used to be those two beautiful tours, and all you see is the sunshine and a huge cloud, a huge cloud, and I said to Mary, turn and look at that because you'll never want to forget that. She just looks at me with these eyes and she was (inaudible). I will never forget that.

She told me later how she was watching those people falling out the building, which makes me think, I read this thing in the Times a few days later about a class that was evacuating from one of the schools and how one of the students turned to a teacher and said look, teacher, the buildings are on fire.

So we proceed up North End Avenue, met up with some crews with some patients and we're just all kind of walking in this direction, and we turn back and there's huge clouds of smoke and dust and everything and we had stuff, our masks on, I popped my hood out, covered my face. We had surgical masks, stuff like that, just to keep all of the stuff out. It was so

surreal.

We go up I guess to Chambers. We walk up to Chambers Street and then over Chambers by the school and then we start walking north on West Street and we still have -- Mary still has these two guys in tow that have been with us all along, Darnowski, and Darnowski is convinced that his wife is dead. In fact, at one point Darnowski and Mary were standing there watching these people falling out the building and a woman jumps and whatever she was wearing, maybe all white, and he turns to Mary and just like blank and said my wife is dressed in those clothes today. So Darnowski is just in shock. He's just catatonic. He was just tagging along with us, he and this other guy. When we get to West Street, I tell Mary we've got to leave Darnowski with somebody else because we have another mission, find somebody that will take care of him and we need to move on.

Some of this decision making really feels like combat decision making, and I don't have war fighting experience, but a lot of these were like decisions you make in combat, you know, cut off the foot to save the life, stuff like that, leave this behind, abandon equipment. It was just stuff that we

don't do and train for. It's just unusual decision making.

Our plan is we're going to go north on West Street to like North Murray -- is it North Murray Street? I think it was North Street and try and work our way around and get to Police Plaza. So we're walking and all of a sudden I notice Mary is not beside me and I look and she's like 40 steps back and she's like hang on, chief, and somehow, I don't know where she conjures this stuff up, but a good aide does this kind of thing and she is absolutely the best. But she find a cop an a golf cart in the midst of all this insanity and tells the cop you need to take the chiefs to Police Plaza right now, and this cop just sort of says okay and all of a sudden pulls up next to us, there's Mary with a golf cart saying everybody pile on.

So Gombo and Terranova and myself, Mary, got onto this golf cart and this cop takes off, and there we are driving a golf cart with dust swirling around us and everybody just kind of -- there was not enough seats for all of these people, so everybody was just kind of holding on for dear life and this guy just drives us through the streets. I will never forget.

Everything was covered with this schmutz, ash, dust, and everybody is in shock, just all of the people, everybody was just freaking aghast. I swear to God, this was the most unbelievable experience. I can tell you what time that was. This was right around 11:15. So when did that second tower come down? 10:30 the second tower came down? So the time fits very nicely.

So right around 11:15 we finally pull up at Police Plaza, give or take, I'd say give or take 15 minutes, we pull up at Police Plaza, and as we -- the guy drives us right to the front door and with cops all over apparently there were M-16s out, I mean, MP-5s. They were ready for war over there. We just pulled right to the door, get off, brush our stuff off, you know, and walk in. As we get off the golf cart, Jerry Gombo said something that I will remember forever because it showed really true leadership on his part. He turned to us all and said, okay, first order of business, find phones and call your families and let them know you're okay, and that was just -- you know, Jerry spends a lot of time inside and I think he did a good job under fire. So I think he earned some respect on the part of some people.

Q. It says a lot about the man.

A. So we go upstairs trailing our cloud of dust like Linus in the Snoopy cartoon and we get there and Police Plaza is busy and -- well, how far do you want to take the story?

Q. Roughly noon, somewhere around then.

A. We walk in. We were the first Fire or EMS representation there. We were probably among the first people to actually come in from the scene covered with dust and everybody was looking at us like, oh, my God. They were watching on monitors and stuff. It used to be the old OEM command center. That's now the police operations command center.

So we report in, tell them we're here, they make some space for us, then we all get to the phones and call significant people, let them know at least we're alive, and then we set about big picture coordination, and what we did for the next eight hours was large-scale disaster stuff. A lot of it centered around ordering federal resources, USAR teams, EMAT teams, planning how we were going to deploy them. We planned to set out three casualty collection points. All the strategy came from us when we were in that command center. We planned to set up three casualty collection points one at Javitz Center, one in the

Brooklyn Navy Yard, one in the Staten Island ferry terminal, at the Yankee Stadium, at the new Staten Island Yankee Stadium, and we pulled down some extra resources for the casualty collection points, not using EMS assets because we didn't have any.

We had a tremendous problem communicating. The phones there weren't working. They were intermittent. The cells weren't working. The radios weren't working. Very, very hard communicating out from there. There were some resources that were up, but we didn't know about them, like Verizon phones and stuff like that, not Verizon, Nextel phones, but we didn't have a Nextel phone. So we just really had a lot of challenge in terms of getting that up and running, but here you have a huge disaster, an improvised command center and a lot of infrastructure stuff like phone lines and switching stations damaged. It was probably surprising that we could accomplish what we did.

We set up a separate emergency operational center for ESFA, Emergency Support Function Aid, which is from the federal response plan, health and medical assets, I'm pretty well versed in all this stuff and I've been doing this kind of planning, you know me,

I've been doing this kind of planning for 20 years, so I knew what needed to be done. Bill Connelly was there, the State Health Department's regional disaster planning guy, and I knew him personally, and when he showed up, I told him exactly what I wanted him to do. We got space from PD and set up the ESFA operations center. We briefed them on the information that we had and on what we anticipated, which at that point, early in the day, was thousands of patients, and we made out a concept of operations for them and told him what kind of resources we were looking for, helped them get organized. We got reps in from Health and Hospitals, Greater New York Hospital Association, Nassau, Suffolk Hospital Council, Nassau Health Department, City Health Department. We tried to get Nassau Health Department. I don't know if they came. City Health Department, State Health Department, later on in the day a FEMA rep joined us and started planning for deploying EMAT teams.

So we got all of this up and running. We coordinated a zillion bizarre requests, and I have a log that goes from 1130 until when we stopped writing about 1900, just things that were going on. I see my first entry at 1130. New Jersey had sent Bob Resitar

from the University Hospital, he's one of their assistant directors over at University Hospital System, they had sent him, in fact, they were there before us, and Frank Goodstein from the New Jersey mutual aid, and they were there before us. So they greeted us and I have a log entry at 1130 and they tell me they had 4,000 patients between Ellis Island and the Hoboken PATH station and various shore points on New Jersey that all these people were coming over by boat and landing.

So here we are coordinating mutual aid and we told them don't send us any mutual aid from Jersey. You guys work your thousands of patients and we'll get the mutual aid elsewhere because obviously you're stretched. I'm not sure what they ultimately ended up with. I think that number crunched to like 2,000 or 1,500. But it's still huge numbers.

The SEMA rep was there. The State Department of Health rep was there. We told the SEMA rep we wanted to activate the regional mutual aid plan, and we ordered five task forces of ten ambulances and an officer at each point from the east, Nassau and Suffolk, and one from the north, Westchester and points north, and we had a plan for this. I mean, I don't

know how many people really knew that this plan existed, but I knew the plan existed because I was working on the task force. Gombo didn't know it existed.

So we ordered that would have been 100 ambulances, 50 into a staging area on Randalls Island, 50 to a staging area at Shea Stadium. Again, we weren't sure what we were doing with them. We didn't want to commit anything more to the city until I had a sense of what was going on and you really couldn't get any good (inaudible) at the scene. We didn't really know what was going on there. So we figured, okay, let's order 100 trucks, at least that will give us a jump and we'll see what we need to do from there. So we were able to communicate to the point where we had highway patrol and an EMS supervisor at each of those sites waiting to catch this mobilization as it came in. Then we started fielding buffers and supplies, shipments of stuff coming in. So my decision was to send all that stuff to Randalls Island where I figured it could at least be secured, checked and secured with some accountability before it gets deployed someplace. We spent basically the next eight hours running the command center, fielding decisions. At the outset we

were doing the Fire side of it, too, because we were the only reps there, and then a couple of chiefs arrived in a little bit of time. Tom Galvin got there and Ed Kilduff from the Fire end of it.

What's funny is that a few months ago Tom Galvin and I were in a course together on weapons of mass destruction, incident management, and during one of the breaks in the course he and I were having a conversation about the World Trade Center bombing because in the course, among the course material was the FEMA U.S. Fire Administration report on the first World Trade Center bombing, which included a section written by Steve Kerr and myself. So we were talking about that in class, that I had written that.

So Galvin and I were talking about it and now it's after the merger and how would we respond, and I told him that, for reasons I won't go into now, that the response would be very different if we had to relive this thing, different not necessarily in a positive way. So here we are four weeks later and we were actually living it. It was just sort of one of those strange ironies in the world, and the Fire guys, I mean, there were Fire deputy chiefs, but they weren't emergency management experts, they weren't prepared to

really look at the big picture emergency management issues, so we were helping with that as well.

We stayed there and -- mind you, we had been out since 10:00 o'clock the night before. So we were with that until about -- my log logs off -- I mean, you can see how may handwriting deteriorates. I guess I was getting tired. My log logs off at 1900, and we went to try and find a place to sleep. I remember that. So we couldn't find a place to sleep. We ended up taking some blankets and laying out on -- there was a little strip of grass like two feet wide alongside the stairs that went up to St. Andrew's Plaza. So we laid these blankets out and then we just laid down. We didn't know if we were going to go to sleep. Every noise I would just like jump. It was so weird. It was so weird.

So after about an hour of tossing and turning, Jerry and Ross come by and they said that we were relieved upstairs by Captain Connelly and that we could go. They said they were going back to the scene. So we said, oh, okay. So we went upstairs to get our personal equipment and come back down. So we set off for the scene Mary, myself, this guy Bob Resitar from University Hospital, and along the way we

pick up nine or ten off-duty members who were on their way in to the scene to be of help.

So we take this little procession and march up to Chambers and West and do what we can at the command post at the back of the Suburban, and Chief McCracken and Chief Kowalczyk and a bunch of other people were trying to get a handle on things and we ended up -- we tried to sort out the leadership manpower so that some people could go home and be fresh in the morning. So then we decided, Kowalczyk and myself decided we would stay the overnight shift. So at 6:00 a.m., I think, while some people went back and got some sleep so that we could get a fresh relief in in the morning and then start another 12-hour cycle. So we stayed there.

During the course of the night we got in two field communications trucks from New Jersey, our mutual aid brought them in and set them up, so we had like a real working command center because we don't have any assets like that for EMS operations. So we got those trucks from Jersey and we put the full ICS structure into place with a planning section, logistics section and a coroner operations section, a finance administration section that was contemplating how we

were going to structure that. So we developed an incident action plan for the morning, which I actually have a copy of here somewhere. (inaudible) an incident action plan so that they could get started in the morning.

Do you want me go on?

Q. Just go on until you feel you don't want to go any further.

A. I guess the story is close to the end of this day.

Q. Okay.

A. So we work through until like -- I'll just keep going. So we work until about 6:00 in the morning. This is now Wednesday morning. We started relieving. So now we get relieved at 6:00 or at 7:00, we get something to eat, and we decide we're going to go find our car. So we get a Gator. Whoever ordered the Gators, that was just an absolutely wonderful decision. I mean, those were so needed there and it was just the perfect tool for this job and still is to this minute. So we catch a ride on a Gator and we ride over to south of where we had parked the car, as close as we could come, and then we continued on foot through this just unbelievable devastation, and when you go on

foot, you couldn't even recognize the street to know which block face it was. I was like a block north of where we were and Mary was like, no, chief, we weren't that far north, and I'm like, yeah, I think we were. But we weren't. She was right.

So we're finally just kind of peering around the rubble pile and we see the car, and the only way we recognized it was that it looked like it had some molten light bar on the top, not that it was recognizable as a light bar, just a little heap of molten something that maybe, you know, you could say that once was a light bar. We look inside and actually the car is not crushed or anything, it's just burnt. The only thing that was left in that car that was recognizable at all was the metal piece of a stethoscope and some melted chips from my Palm Pilot and that was it.

We lost, aside from the vehicle, which had 93 miles on it when we pulled up at the Trade Center, we lost the vehicle, we lost thousands and thousands of dollars worth of Department equipment. Mary lost her pocketbook, all her personal effects and her license and ID and badge and everything a person carries in their pocketbook. Of course, when you work like we

work, your car is like your locker and everything is in it, and we certainly had everything in that car and it was all gone. Laptop computer, my Palm Pilot, everything, personal clothes, everything. So we brushed ourselves off. Our ride had left us. It was like what else is going to happen?

So we walk over to the Staten Island ferry terminal figuring we'd catch a ride from there, and we catch a ride from there on a supply truck that was dropping off supplies. He gives us a ride to Maspeth, and I was hoping to get back our old car, the '95 car, which we had just turned in the day before to get the new car, but they had already given that out to someone else. So they give us an old Suburban, which was fine. So now it's like 10:30 in the morning on Wednesday. Drive home. We were due back there on Thursday morning. We were the 6:00 a.m. relief on Thursday morning.

So you'd think you would be able to go to sleep after this, right? A long long time before sleep. I guess that's the end of the story.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. I think a lot of people did an incredible job that day and in the days since. I think that this

isn't over. I think that the people that are looking at this event as, you know, horrible tragedy, World Trade Center, kind of like it was an earthquake or a hurricane or something and now we're recovering and we're having concerts and we're burying our dead and we're trying to pick up the pieces, number one, are forgetting that we're at war, and I think that this was only act one, and I think that we're dealing with a very evil adversary who has a completely different value set than ours. I think there will be more acts of war like this. I hope they're not in my town. But I think that, if we fail to prepare for them, we're foolish and naive, and I think that we've got a lot of work in front of us.

I think there's a tremendous amount of resources in this organization to be applied to that stuff if it's used appropriately. I think there are a lot of good lessons to be learned from this that we should try and learn. I think we did a lot of things right and I think there were a lot of other things that we could do better or opportunities for improvement, as they say. I think we'd better fasten our seat belts because I don't think this is over. No thinking person could think that this is over.

The other thing is that we keep talking about the losses on this job from an EMS standpoint and we say there were two, Carlos Lillo and Ricardo Quinn. There were six other EMS professionals that died in this incident on our mission, and it's not their fault or anybody else's fault how we let this EMS system, it would be a hodgepodge of voluntary hospitals and voluntary ambulances and commercial ambulances. But you know what? They all came in to do our mission and I think that they need to be recognized as such and I think it's a disgrace to us that we're not counting the names of these six dead people who were just as heroic and just as dead as Quinn and Lillo on the same mission. I think that's a real shame. That really bothers me. It really bothers me. End of report.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is concluded at 42 minutes past 12:00 on October 24th. Thank you very much, chief, for conducting this interview.

File No. 9110146

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT IMMACULADA GATTAS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

I. GATTAS

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17, 2001. The time is 1229 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department on the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at Division 6 to conduct an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assignment?

A. EMT-D Immaculada Gattas, shield number 1443.

Q. Your assigned --

A. Assigned to Division 6.

Q. Today we would just like you to recount the events to the best of your ability on September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. That day started with a beautiful day and we were just talking about that, how beautiful, sunny and warm it was, until someone from next door from the Division came running toward us, told us to turn on the TV. We turned on the TV and we started watching the news, saying that an airplane had just crashed against one of the World Trade Center towers. We were like oh, my god, what a horrific accident and we were just watching on and off until we found out there was another one on its way and it crashed against the second -- it crashed against the second tower.

That's when the Chief, Chief Pascale, told us to stand by, because we couldn't just rush into the scene. We needed to be requested first. So then she was called in, she told us to get our gear and radios and stuff and just get ready and go on to the vehicle. That's exactly what we did.

It took us a few, 15, 20 minutes to get downtown. We took the West Side Highway. It was packed with cars and a lot of roads were blocked by NYPD and maybe that's what saved our lives, because we were supposed -- we were riding with Chief Pascale. It was, in fact, Chief Pascale, Lieutenant Michael Cahill, Steve Pilla, which is a paramedic, ALS coordinator, Neil Sweeting, ALS coordinator and myself. I'm an emergency medical technician.

We were supposed to go with Chief Pascale to the command center, but because we were stuck in traffic, we got there a little bit later than we were supposed to be, and as soon as we start parking we start seeing people running our way and we were about -- we were very close to West and Vesey and we saw people running and running and telling us to get out of the way, that -- to run for our lives. We were like -- we would try to drive away from that area until we

could no more. It was close to 20 feet, those 20 feet, then we just parked and hid until everything subsided.

Q. Where did you hide?

A. I guess buildings and vehicles and stuff like that.

Q. You got out of the car and you just ran?

A. Yes. We just ran.

Q. You got separated?

A. No, not at this time. We were not running together, but we were running toward the same area and at the end we just managed to find each other. We went around the corner where we were, I'm not sure exactly where that was, we were running along Vesey Street after the first building collapsed. I think that it was West Street heading south from West Street. That's where we finally -- we got together, Chief Pascale, other staff members, and then we went out inside one of the buildings.

Q. Do you know which building that was?

A. No, I don't know the name of that building, but we were doing patient care there. I was also doing patient tracking, just writing down their names, where the patients were taken, writing down the name of the unit numbers, and they were coming from private

ambulances or EMS ambulances or municipal ambulances, you know, stuff like that, so I was tracking all that information, and I remember going inside this building again and as I was tracking this patient information, they told us run away, you have to evacuate immediately, because the second building is going to collapse.

We were like oh, my god, it can't be possible. Patients were already hooked into their oxygen lines and their masks. They were strapped into long boards and all that kind of stuff and there was too many of them, so we had to unstrap them, removed their face masks and just assist them as good as we could, because there was too many for us. We are doing this or just let them die there. Believe me they run. As soon as we let them go they just disappeared, as we did. We started running and running and running and I just remember, I think Lieutenant Cahill running next to me. He was just -- it just -- we were just running as fast as we could and I remember one second or moment looking back and seeing the cloud.

First listening to this sound, this thundering sound and then silence after that, like eerie silence, until the cloud caught up to us and

surrounded us and you could see no more. Then it was silence and it was thousands and thousands of millions of particles hitting our skin. It felt like something was hitting my skin like glass and I couldn't see anything, nothing.

I remember feeling a sharp pain on my left arm, but I didn't see blood or anything like that. I just kept running. Could hardly see, you could hardly breathe. I put my face inside my shirt. I had my helmet on. I didn't have any protective breathing devices on. I didn't have my turnout coat with me at that time. I only had my helmet, so I pulled the shield, the eye shield down to protect my eyes a little bit, but not that much, and covered my face with my shirt and just kept running and the only thing I was able to listen was to my breathing. I mean it was -- oh, my god, it was such a weird feeling. It was just like hu, hu, hu. Slow motion like in a tunnel. You are just running, running, running, followed by firefighters and EMTs and police officers and members of the media.

I saw this member of the media falling on the ground, picking up his equipment, running again, crashing against the fence. All of us running at like,

I don't know, like a stampede of animals and just looking behind and running and running until we could see no more. Suddenly this crowd of people split. One went to the right and one went to the left. I went towards the left. I followed this group of people. I couldn't see where I was running or where I was going. I just followed this group of people until I saw an opening.

I didn't know where I was getting, where I was going, but I saw this opening, and I said these people are going inside that place, that's where I'm going. We all went inside. We squeezed inside this area, big guys, short people. I mean it was incredible, and as soon as everybody got in we closed the door. Total darkness, everybody, some people were crying, some people were coughing, some people were just completely -- in complete silence. It was like the end of the world, my god.

At that second when I was running I just couldn't think of anything. Just running, something in my mind -- my brain was saying run, run, run or you are going to die. This building is going to fall on you. I didn't have any idea of how far or how fast I run, I knew I had run.

I. GATTAS

I went inside this building or this thing that happened to be a construction trailer. After our eyes got adjusted, adapted to the darkness, that's when we were able to see each other and we start -- people from the construction trailer handed out paper towels with water and we used it to clean other peoples' arms and faces and noses and it was spitting out dust and that's all we were doing for a long, long time. We were just spitting out and this lady said oh, my back was hurting and we just helped her sit on the floor against the wall.

Just for a while, I don't know for how long, we stayed in that trailer in darkness, until one of us said okay, let's open the door. We have to open the door. We were scared to death to open the door. We didn't know what we were going to find. So we opened the door and we saw this oh, my god, everything covered by dust. Everything, a cloud, everything was surrounded by dust. People walking like zombies, covered in dust. Just like we were, but walking like zombies.

We tried to pull some of them inside, cleaned them, and we helped them as best we could until it was safe for us, for everybody to go out again. It's like

this trailer, this is where I managed to go inside the trailer with one of my Lieutenants, Lieutenant Cahill, and after he got out and I got out, we got separated again. I think we met one more time, because we were just walking in circles, met again and another place where someone, another EMT helped me irrigate my eyes, because I had contact lenses, so you imagine me running in this cloud of dust and who knows what, couldn't hardly see, hardly breathe, hardly do anything, just run for your life.

So this guy held me. I took off my contact lenses, irrigate them, put them back, check my arm, which was okay, and then just go back again until someone said that we had to run again because there was going to be a manhole explosion. We had to run again.

Without thinking of anything -- really my only thought was during the -- before the second collapse, after they said the building was tilting, just take care of the patients, get them out of the building so they could run at least and save their lives. I see some of them just run because everybody got separated, all the members of the Division got separated. The patients disappeared in the darkness. We disappeared in the darkness.

After they told about the manhole explosion, then everybody got separated, and I went a separate way, I don't know, I was completely disoriented. I encountered patients or people just running scared to death, people that were disoriented as I was, trying to find a way out of that area.

I kept on walking, running and walking, and running and walking, until someone saw me and picked me up. It was an ambulance that was picking up emergency personnel. They were picking up paramedics and EMTs and police officers and firefighters. They took us to the -- drop us at the bus terminal, somewhere on the West Side Highway.

From there, we were taken to the Chelsea Piers. EMS people were taken to the Chelsea Piers because they didn't want to us stay in that area. It was too unsafe for us. We were told that at Chelsea Piers were going to be used as hospital -- different sections were divided. One was getting ready as an operating room, the other one as a critical area, the other one like for first aid and stuff like that.

We started getting busses with hundreds of doctors and hundreds of nurses and members of the clergy from different denominations and medical

equipment and all these areas were completely staffed and completely ready for what we were expecting we were going to get, which was patients, which we never got.

We got approximately 150 patients, but this was after 7 o'clock p.m., 7 p.m., but before that we were expecting hundreds and hundreds, which never showed up, because almost nobody made it out of that collapse of the buildings, which was so horrific, because you go there thinking you are going to be able to help, thinking you are going to be able to, you know, assist someone, and after the first collapse we were able to help people, we were able at least, you know, people that had chest pains, had difficulty breathing and broken bones and things like that. We were able to help them, but after the second collapse, the only ones that survived were the ones that were able to run, and the ones that were able to run that made it out of there were disoriented and went back. I got disoriented. I didn't -- no idea, the slightest idea where I was, which was very scary. You couldn't see. You didn't know where you were, you didn't know if you were heading back because at the end you were just kind of walking in circles. I guess God was with me and I made it out of there and had to, you know,

deal with frustration and guilt because I had to go through that because you are trained to save lives, not to just witness a horrific destruction and no bodies found, nothing found, just dust. Just dust.

That dust, I'm telling you Christine, it was so freaking itchy. I was itching for hours and hours and hours. It was like glass stuck in my skin. I went -- I don't know how many times I went to the bathroom to wash. It was like, like I had to get this thing out of my body and I cleaned my nose and my face and my arms and that thing, that dust, that stuff and when I went home, I took two baths and I still couldn't get that stuff out of my skin and I was coughing and spitting up stuff for days after that.

When we went to the Chelsea Piers, we just got ready and we were like working at a frantic pace, just trying to get (inaudible) and equipment and oxygen tanks and face masks and non-rebreathers and all this stuff to set the tables, because we had tons of tables lined up with all the basic equipment in the critical area and the other one, the operating room had lights and surgeons and everything. We had pediatricians and surgeons and we had-- anyhow, it was incredible, and also we had in the ice ring, we had an area that was

already set up as a temporary morgue, thinking that we were going to be able to locate bodies and send them at least to the Chelsea Piers.

So everything was actually set up and ready, so as time passed, we became so -- oh, my goodness, so upset and so frustrated because we were not getting anybody and the doctors that were there were more and more worried and upset and wanted to go to the Ground Zero area. They wanted to help and I think some of them managed to get authorization from EMS command to go to the Ground Zero area. That's what -- a group of them went with equipment.

I stayed there until probably not that late, until probably 7, 7:30 after that. The Chief told us that we had to go because we had to come back early the following day. And we left.

Q. Anything else you want to add to the events that happened prior to 11 o'clock in the morning?

A. 11 o'clock. I just couldn't believe when I saw the first -- I heard about the airplane crash and I said oh, my god, what a stupid mistake this pilot made, how could he miss the tower. After the second one I knew it was terrorism. I knew. My husband, he works at One Police Plaza and he called me and he said I'm on

my way. Did you hear about the news. I said yes I heard it. I said I'm on my way to work. That was the last that I heard of him until I was able to call him again earlier after 2 or 3 p.m. that afternoon. He was also stuck underground for a couple of hours and so I was worried about him. He was worried about me. My son was in school and he was very worried about us.

Q. How old is your son?

A. He is 12. He was very worried. I just still today -- I can't believe this, I can't believe this happened, but I think that we as a team proved. We got together, we got closer, we were afraid, but we were not afraid. We never thought about dying, we only thought about helping other people. Just got really frustrated because we were unable to do that. We tried to do our best. We just couldn't do much. We just, you know, it was horrific and I can't -- I know I said this many times, and I cried a lot since then.

I cried with my husband, I cried with my son. [redacted]

When I saw -- after I got home and I saw those pictures and I saw the people falling, oh, my god, that was when

I realized how bad it got.

I was there, but I really didn't realize what was going on, but after the second collapse I didn't really knew how close we were, but after we saw the map and we realized that we were just a block away, we were around the corner and that we were supposed to be there and just fate kept us away. Just fate that we are here telling our stories because God was looking after us and I still remember this and I know I will never forget that day.

I don't know what else to say. I don't think a lot of people have a lot to say about this. Just about the pain and the sorrow and the guilt. I felt guilt so many times, regrets. I believe we should talk to a lot of people. [redacted] It really showed the extent of the destruction, the full blast, what the collapse made of [redacted]

[redacted]. I think that we were just as affected as everybody else, as any other members of any agencies involved and we should be given the same treatment and the same attention in terms of psychological stress and medical treatments, because we were very concerned after that.

The fact that I felt all that itching and all that pain and I was so -- I'm telling you I was so exhausted for days and my legs hurt so much from running and coughing for a couple of days and I got a huge hematoma on my arm, which I don't know how I got it. I know it happened after the second collapse, something hit me. It went away eventually, but (inaudible).

I was very happy that I made it out and that all members of my Division made it out. That's all I have to say.

Q. Thank you very much.

A. Thanks to you for coming and for listening to my story.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This interview is now concluded. The time is 12:53.

File No. 9110147

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER THOMAS McDONALD

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 24, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina. Your name is?

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: Time now is 0810 hours. We are conducting an interview. We are at the central repair shop in Long Island City. Your name sir?

A. Tom McDonald.

Q. Your title?

A. Assistant Commissioner of Fleet and Tech Services.

Q. Can you tell us on September 11, 2001, on that particular day, the events that took place?

A. I started my day at headquarters at 6:15 a.m., with a meeting, a weekly meeting with Commissioner Thomas Fitzpatrick. At the conclusion of the meeting, I then subsequently had a meeting with Steve Rush and Robert Scott, in Steve Rush's office. We were conducting the meeting. We heard a lot of running in the hallways. I then got beeped with a notice of a third alarm at the Trade Center. I came out of Steve's office, saw Bill Feehan and found out the events. We went into Ray Goldbach's office and we visually inspected. We could see how one had been hit

and the size of the hole in the building. Realizing that it wasn't a small aircraft, that it was a larger aircraft.

They prepared themselves to respond. I responded with Pete Guidetti, who was the driver. Commissioner Feehan, Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Captain Ray Goldbach and myself, all in Commissioner Feehan's car. We crossed over the Brooklyn Bridge, came off the bridge, went our way on to Broadway, pulled over on Broadway, approximately between Liberty and I believe Cortlandt Street. As we were getting out of the car, the second plane hit. Would have been 2 World Trade Center. Literally had to duck behind the car because metal had flown from the building to Broadway.

Guidetti, Tom Fitzpatrick and Commissioner Feehan donned helmets and their turn out gear. Ray Goldbach and myself went with them. I believe we went down Dey Street to Church. We visually inspected and sized up the buildings. We needed to stay close to the side line of the building, due to debris falling. We saw numerous people coming up out of the subway at the corner of Broadway and Dey and running up the block. Everybody was running away from the building. We crossed over Church Street, went down Vesey, went up

the side escalators, and saw what I believe to be a Port Authority police officer, who told us we were unauthorized to come in there. He wanted us to have helmets and turn out gear. We identified ourselves from the Commissioner's office. We couldn't enter the building.

We came back down the escalators, and for the life of me I can't remember how we entered the building, but we entered what, I believe 8 World Trade Center. We came up, tried to find our way into the courtyard area and we hugged the side of the buildings and it was an overhang that we stayed under. There were several body parts. We noticed metal that looked like it came from the plane, in retrospect.

Q. Was debris still falling down at that time?

A. Yes, sporadically there was debris falling down and there were people jumping from the building.

Q. You made it into the lobby?

A. We made it into the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. I believe we came off the courtyard and the windows were blown out nearest the West Street side and inside the lobby there was a reception area or a control panel area for the Port Authority. I remember seeing Chief Hayden there trying to get a handle and

set up a command post.

We met Commissioner Von Essen there. He spoke to Commissioner Von Essen. He informed Commissioner Von Essen that his first priority was to evacuate the building, that he was not going to attempt to extinguish the fire at this point. That his main priority was to get the people out of the building. I borrowed Commissioner Feehan's phone, tried to call my office. I tried to call NAT service, so that I could get them to respond and to get my supervisors in the area and get some road side assistance into the areas. You knew it was going to be a prolonged operation. I felt the need to have back up from Fleet and NAT service there.

At some point Commissioner Feehan, Commissioner Fitzpatrick and myself crossed over West Street, went over to, I guess in front of the Merrill Lynch building where the ramp was, where the two garages were, to a staging area. I remember seeing Bill Feehan, who was with us, Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Commissioner Von Essen, Peter Ganci, Chief of the Department, Chief Nigro, Al Fuentes, Ray Downey.

Q. Father Judge?

A. Father Judge, I don't recall visually seeing

him myself. I remember seeing a good friend, Timmy Stackpole. He was with Dennis Cross and Bob Ingram, Chief Ingram. At one point Commissioner Von Essen turned to me and asked me to clear West Street, to move apparatus out of the middle of West Street so that we could have an open lane to move emergency vehicles in and out. Commissioner Drury was with me, along with firefighter Ken Wagner. I deployed them to the north side of West Street, asked them -- we took some immediate apparatus right in front of the staging area and packed them closer to the median so that we could open up the middle of West Street and they started to work their way up West Street.

I got to the corner of Vesey and West, where I was looking for a Mask Service Unit that I had seen earlier. I wanted to get that closer to the staging area to deploy bottles as needed. I found them a little bit further up Vesey towards the water. I had gotten help from a Sergeant Sullivan from ESU. I backed him out of the street. He then informed me that the Pentagon had been hit. I backed the MSU truck out with their driver. I rode on the running board of the truck.

We headed then back down West Street in front

of the staging area. I got off the running board, I was running across West Street, was just about where the red Field Communications Truck was when tower two collapsed.

Most people were running into the garage area of the Merrill Lynch building. Standing next to me was a Fire Department mechanic, Pat Murphy. I pushed Pat forwards and we ran towards, I believe the Winter Garden or it may have been the Merrill Lynch building, but we wound up in the Winter Garden. There was a canopy overhead. There was debris coming down before we entered the building. We got into the building, maybe 50 feet, got behind a pillar and then got on the floor. A cloud of dust ensued around us. We couldn't see anything. All the normal stuff, we were choking and filled with debris.

Q. This is you and the mechanic?

A. Right, there were other people in the lobby area. I couldn't identify them by name or by unit. After that, a firefighter came in turn out gear and said that we could go out the other side. I sent Murphy out the other side to go through the Winter Garden. I went back out the way I came with the firefighter who informed us of another way out. He and

I found three firefighters laying in the rubble outside. They seemed to be dazed, didn't know where to go or what to do. We told them to get up and come into the lobby and go out towards Vesey Street, which they did.

I then realized that I had an injury to my leg. I had a lot of pain in my left leg. My right ankle. I then left the area and went back out through the Winter Garden to Vesey Street. I didn't try to go back out on to West Street.

I walked out through the Winter Garden to Vesey Street. Working my way through that lobby, I ran into Commissioner Fitzpatrick. We both exchanged a hearty hug and glad to see you to one another. Fitzpatrick helped me get a bottle of water and I came out on to Vesey. He stayed with me until we got on to Vesey and then I don't know what direction he went.

There was an EMT on Vesey Street, he washed my eyes out, it might have been a lady. I sat down in a chair. I felt a lot of pain in my leg. I hobbled up to Vesey and West. I met Father John Delendick. We exchanged some hearty greetings and some prayers, then I don't know where Father John went after that. I worked my way north on West, went about a block. I sat

on the front bumper of a rear mount to rest my leg. And the next thing I know is I heard that roar again. I looked up and tower one was on its way down.

Q. How far were you from tower one at this point?

A. I believe I was somewhere around Barclay and West. I ran as much as I could and I dove under a Police Department tow truck.

Q. Was the debris going up that far?

A. Yes, we had a lot of debris coming by us, crashing around us.

Q. Who were you with at this point, were you by yourself?

A. Yes, I was by myself. There was someone else with me. I couldn't identify the person. We got under the tow truck and stayed there. The bottle of water Fitzpatrick gave me helped me get through it because I was choking and I was so glad to have that with me because I was able to keep rinsing my throat out. I got out from under it. It was still - it was like midnight. Pitch dark. I just continued to try and find my way, walking north and everybody else was running or walking north on West Street. I remember it started to then lighten up a little bit as far as

visibility. I continued to walk north. Some people were helping me walk because my leg was in a lot of pain. That's about it.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No, I can't think of anything else.

MR. CASTORINA: Time now is 8:25. That concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110148

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL D'ANGELO

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. Time is now 0845 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Michael D'Angelo, EMT, badge 5645, assigned to Division 1, Battalion 4 of the EMS command, New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting the interview in the Division 1 conference room. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Michael, would you?

A. I work tour one. I was working tour one, 1 Adam that day, which actually sits at the Trade Center. I got off at 8 o'clock in the morning. I returned to Battalion 4, changed into my civilian clothes, hung around for a few minutes and left approximately, little after 8:20. I proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge towards home. I wasn't paying attention to the skyline on the BQE, but I'm sure if I was I would have seen the first plane hit. I was wondering why there was so much traffic.

Making my way through traffic, I got into the area of the trench in Carroll Gardens between the Brooklyn Bridge and the Battery Tunnel when I received

a phone call from a family member saying that a plane hit the Trade Center. I then noticed numerous papers flying about in the air. First thing I did was I called up Battalion 4, I notified them I was returning to work. I then called my family and notified them what I was doing.

Then as I made it through traffic and I was going over the BQE extension to get back on to the Battery Tunnel, I looked and I saw the second plane hit the building. I then made a round, I made my way into a line of fire trucks using my identification and went into the Battery Tunnel. I followed Ladder Company 132 through the tunnel. It took a few minutes to get through to the other side. When I got through to the other side I parked my car on West Street, right around near, right about, right at the -- almost to the exit of where the Battery Tunnel empties out.

I proceeded to run down West Street until I found an EMS Chief, Chief Goldfarb. He informed me, he says -- I told him I was off duty. He said okay, stay with me and my aide and you are going to assist us in setting up a command post. At first we were right next to where the Mayor had set up his command post and the original command post of where the Mayor was standing.

I was actually standing next to Chief Ganci before he ran in the building. I remember that distinctly.

Then we moved it down. We moved down into the front of the American Express building. He wanted me to go inside and check out the inside of the American Express building to see if we could set up a triage area there, see if there was enough room. There was enough room, but we still weren't sure of where we were going to set up. I had a little bit of a table and everything set up outside with the command board and everything and we were just going through the steps of taking in units and we just weren't really sure if we were going to stay there right that second or -- so that went on for numerous times.

As I watched the building burn, people jump out of the building, I can't tell you how long that was. Then I began to hear a rumble, I turned around and saw debris flying everywhere, the building came down. I ran up West Street, across Vesey and the whole street was blocked with emergency -- there was all trucks, but luckily there was a small Sedan command car, which I jumped over the hood and then ran up the block, up Vesey Street, then I got engulfed in a large cloud of --

Q. So, on Vesey you were going towards the water?

A. I ran in front of here. I ran across the street here and I ran west down Vesey Street. Then that big cloud of smoke hit you. At first I was -- at that point I didn't see Chief Goldfarb. I thought he was gone because he was standing on West Street at the time. I thought he was gone so I just -- I began by directing ambulances around, up North End Street, North End Avenue, because then they had set up, I believe they were about to set up a triage area in the back of the theaters, the Embassy Suites, I believe is what it was.

I remember going back outside and I began pulling -- bringing firemen that were walking around covered and blind. I was just breaking out the water, cleaning out their eyes, cleaning out as many guys, seeing if anybody was hurt. I would just grab them, give them a quick pat down on their bodies to see if anything was broken or anything. A lot of them were just in shock, not sure where they were.

I made my way down towards the water, where they were -- where those New York Waterway ferries were bringing over water and such. I was leaning over and

bringing that up. Again I kept cleaning eyes out. Something I noticed from when I was standing in front of the Embassy Suites at the time, I saw that the US Secret Service were bringing somebody, an Arab man in a suit, covered in soot, walking away in handcuffs. I remember that distinctly, because the guy looked right in my eyes.

From there I remember just -- I don't remember treating, exactly treating guys, I was more like just seeing how severe people were. I mean I helped put guys in stair chairs, but in this time I'm not in my uniform. I had a T-shirt on and jogging pants. So I am just -- I remember assisting -- I moved Chief Cassano from one backboard -- one stretcher to another and I helped them put the collar on him, but around at that time it was a little bit fuzzy.

Then we decided, me and somebody else -- I at this point, thought most of my Battalion was wiped out, until I started seeing a few faces. I only saw like 5 or 6 faces and at least I knew they were okay. But then I decided to throw an extra -- I threw a few, I threw a few oxygen bags over my shoulder. I began running up Vesey Street again, not knowing that the second tower was going to come down as soon as I

reached the corner again.

So I had to rip the stuff off my shoulders and run back up Vesey Street. I believe I dove into either the back of the American Express building or I dove into the 4 World Financial Center. Just dove into the doors and in the corner and then I realized this isn't exactly smart. I don't know how this building is coming down. So I ran out again. Ran down towards the water. Then I stayed upwards around the area, like I said, just continuing to grab people to see if they were okay, how bad people were, treated. I just remember I had one guy with just a laceration on his elbow. I just said to him, just go, go somewhere else. You will be okay, you can walk, leave the area. That's what I told any civilian, I said -- that wasn't hurt, run north, go north. I remember also after maybe the first tower fell, I skip around --

Q. That's okay.

A. I remember hearing the F 15s flying overhead and that was scary because we thought they were flying more planes. I didn't know what was going on. I thought the guy brought 15 planes and were just going to fly them into the area, so I remember the F 15s flying overhead. I remember the big, big cloud of ash

that just -- it didn't make it towards the water really. For some reason it stayed away from the water, I remember that.

But -- that's basically what I kept doing. I was directing traffic and I didn't really like sit down and bandage anybody or nothing like that, but I was really just giving people on site triage. I found firemen that I knew and asked if they were okay. That's basically what I was doing. I was just checking them. I mean I was just taking bottles of water and cleaning their face and cleaning the soot out. I made them lie down on the ground and irrigate their eyes. I did that for, like I said, an unknown amount of time. That's what I did there until about probably 11 o'clock.

Q. Okay. Do you remember where on West Side Highway you met up with Chief Goldfarb?

A. Right about the pedestrian bridge.

Q. South one?

A. Yes, right before the south pedestrian bridge.

Q. Between Cedar --

A. Right around there I saw him and I got his attention.

Q. Okay. And --

A. My car was like really at the exit to where the Battery Tunnel. That was my car.

Q. From when you met up with Chief Goldfarb, you came up here to --

A. No, first we went here. We were going to set up a command post at where the Mayor was. That garage there at first we were setting up. Then we were told to move down to here and set up a triage area inside the American Express building. That's where we started massing units, like I remember numerous ambulances just parked in the street here. Fire trucks lined the block. ESU trucks up the block here. The MERV, I remember the MERV almost hitting me in the back with its ramp. As I was running away they had the ramp still down.

Q. Okay. Do you remember aside from Chief Goldfarb any other people from EMS that you encountered that morning?

A. Let's see, who were the guys I found? I had one guy that worked with me. He was off duty too. He met with me. Brian Cirillo. He was with me until the second -- he was with me almost, like in and out until we ran back up the block for the second collapse. Then

we ran back and then I lost him for the day. I didn't see him for the rest of the day. I saw the unit of 2 Boy on North End Street. That was Mike Mejias.

Q. An EMS unit?

A. Yes, EMS unit. EMS. Another guy, Garfield Gray, he was driving -- he was running back in and bringing whatever undamaged vehicles, ambulances back down around the street, because they had lined up on North End to do their jobs. I remember that.

I remember -- actually I remember one guy. He is a paramedic. I don't remember his name. I remember it distinctly because he met up with us at the first command post. And he had like maybe a -- something with wolski I think. He was a paramedic off duty, but his wife was, he said his wife was up on -- I don't know, I don't know the name. His wife was I believe at work at one of like the hundred and something floor in one of the buildings. I think it was the north tower. I remember that distinctly because he just -- he really was just very emotionally broken up. He wasn't able to work.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't see him after that either. I don't know what happened to him. Obviously he is alive,

because I'd hear about it. Like I said I don't remember the last name.

I saw who I thought were gone -- was my -- 1 Adam, the unit I work with, tour two guys. You see that 89 is Church and Fulton Street. So I thought they were the first ones gone. They managed to get out because they took the first people out. They pulled the first people out of there and I managed to meet one of them, one of the partners down here, down in front of the Embassy Suites.

I remember too, the cars started to explode inside the parking lot. I mean, the cars started cooking off, they started going off, boom, boom, boom, boom. I remember that.

Q. Do you remember the partner's name from 1 Adam that you met on --

A. Yes. Frank Puma.

Q. Puma?

A. Yes. So that's -- like I said, I remember seeing a Chief running across the street. I remember that distinctly. I remember seeing the Mayor distinctly. I remember seeing the Commissioner arrive and make his way to the command post.

Q. Commissioner Von Essen?

A. Yes. I don't remember seeing any deputy -- Commissioner Feehan. I remember seeing numerous people jump from the windows. I remember that distinctly. I saw numerous people jump. Then actually when I found my car, I found my car like later, later on in the day, but I left it there, because it was not able to be moved because it was covered. There was an airplane tire about 10 feet away from it. I remember that.

Q. Right.

A. So yes, basically I just stayed and I did as much as I could as long as I could, you know. The one thing I don't know -- I just didn't have my uniform on me. I would have liked to have my uniform and a helmet on my head because that was -- but then again maybe I'm lucky I didn't have a helmet on my head. Like I said, I just didn't have my equipment on me. Now I keep it with me at all times. I keep everything in my trunk.

I was running around in a pair of jogging pants and a white T-shirt until I finally actually picked up an EMS turnout coat I found. That's what I did. Actually the only thing I did have -- no, yes, that's about it. That's about it. Yes.

Q. Any thoughts or comments or opinions you would like to add about the morning?

A. About this? It was -- at the time I just -- adrenaline was so high. I just -- I just did what I -- like I was -- like I'm not sure what guided me to do what I did. I don't know what kept me from -- maybe seeing that Chief is what kept me from going into the building, maybe not having my equipment on. I don't know. Maybe I wouldn't have done it even then. But like I said, I was there at quarter to eight in the morning on Fulton Street. So who knows. I don't know. But I did the best I could. That's all I could say. I wish I could have done more but I did what I could do at the time.

Q. Okay, thank you.

A. No problem.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0902. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110149

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL MEJIAS

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0917 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Specialist Michael Mejias, badge 5737. Battalion 4, Station 11.

Q. We are conducting the interview in the office of the Division 1 conference room, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Michael, if you would --

A. All right. My partner and I were driving along South Street getting pretty close to the station. It was around maybe 8:45 to 8:50, when I noticed that a wave of ambulances and EMS crews and ESU and PD and Fire Department are racing down South Street to go to the downtown area. Said to my partner that that has got to be an awesome job, downtown somewhere, big job.

Then as we continue on, we were only like a block away from the station, I see people looking up in the sky. Finally my curiosity gets to me. I told my partner stop the car, because we drove in together. Stop the car, stop the car. I got to look. I get out and I see the World Trade Center with a gigantic black

hole in the building, on fire. So I go to my partner, Jody, Joe, let's run. We run into the Battalion 4 station. I said Jody, this is a big job. We got to go, go, go, go. We got an the adrenaline rush and by that time, Battalion 4, my supervisor, Bill Melarango, says get changed, get changed, grab a radio, go sign a radio, grab a bus, go, go, go, go.

We go upstairs to change. My partner, he was already in uniform because he was driving in with his uniform. He already grabbed his bags. He went downstairs from the locker room. I was getting changed, I grabbed my stuff and I ran down there. I grabbed vehicle 240 and a radio. I proceeded down there. My partner had already left because they sent him with another extra person that was standing by. He got changed before I did.

I got into vehicle 240. I raced down there behind, with my supervisor, he was in the command car behind me and I stopped on Broadway and Fulton was my first stop. I had -- there were people coming on to me in hysteria, and I remember there was one lady who was hysterical and I just grabbed her and I told her listen ma'am, you got to be calm for me, you got to be strong for me. What is happening here is a really horrendous

thing, I don't got time to deal with you right now. We got a lot of seriously hurt patients. She was with her girlfriend. She goes yes, I understand that. She said just go save somebody. I told her and her girlfriend to walk towards north. Get out of the way.

Then there was a crowd of people there on Fulton and Broadway, and I was screaming at them, listen, get out of the way, go to north, go north. A lot of shrapnel and a lot of stuff going on there. Things falling off the building, I didn't want anybody to get hurt. Then this other lady comes up to me and she just looks at me and she said I have dust in my eye. Could you look at my eye. I told her listen, can you see me. She says yes. I said listen, your eyes are fine. I put a green tag on her, triage tag, and I told her Beekman Hospital is two blocks away. Just walk straight down Fulton Street and seek help there. I gave her a little 4 by 4. She had a little cut on her finger.

Then this kid comes up to me. He is around 20 something years old. He said he is an Army medic and that he wants to help and I didn't have a partner at the time so I took off my hat and I said you are my partner now. I gave him my EMS hat. We both got into

the ambulance together. We road up Fulton to Vesey and as we are driving up Vesey past the Trade Center we see a severed leg. We run over that severed leg and I stopped at West Street.

When I stop at West Street and Vesey, there was a Lieutenant there who was setting up the staging I guess for the ambulances. He said let's move the ambulance towards the water. He just probably saved me. I don't even know his name, but I would recognize his face. He said move the ambulance towards the water and I parked it in between West Street on Vesey and North End.

My partner had already set up a triage, triage center by the World Financial Center there, on the side, by Vesey. So we had like three or four or 5, maybe 5 patients. Two of them were walking wounded. I think 2 or 3 of them were burned, second degree burns.

As we are working up the patients and we are trying to get organized, there is rumors that there is a second plane coming. I thought nothing of it because you go on jobs, sometimes you get hysteria, people thinking there's more than what is going on. Shortly after that, the second plane came. I hear a big rush, like a low flying jet and I see a massive explosion.

Now I'm getting a little nervous because now I know it's not an accident. Now I know that the first plane was deliberate and the second plane is deliberate. Now we got a problem.

So I'm thinking to get these patients out of there. The nurses in the triage area by the World Financial Center, there was nurses over there. I didn't even know where they came from. They must have came from the buildings that have nursing clinics. Some of these buildings downtown, they have nursing clinics in the centers there.

Q. Excuse me, this was in front of the American Express building?

A. Yes. Right on the side of Vesey, North End, World Financial, whatever it is, in the middle of the block. There was ambulances parked and we had no officer to give direction at the time, because it was like we were trying to organize. So I was the senior guy there at the time. My partner was there with me and another guy from station 13. I forget his name. He told me that you guys interviewed him already. He was there.

There was an ambulance crew in an ambulance and I grabbed the crew and I said listen, we got to get

these people out of here. It's dangerous. So we put the lady who was burned in the stretcher, put her in the ambulance. Then I had the guy that was burned on his back, put him in the stair chair, wheeled him over to the ambulance and told him listen, I know it's going -- you are going to have to sit, sir. I know it's going to be painful for you but I got to get you out of here. It's not safe. He goes no, that's all right, guy. Get me out of here, get me out of here.

So I put him in the ambulance. The lady was in the stretcher. Her husband was a walking wounded, I sent him and then there was another two, I don't -- can't remember. All of them had triage tags. I told the crew listen, don't even worry about an ACR. They got triage tags, get them out of here. Take them to Cornell. That's what I was thinking, ship them to Cornell, but they didn't listen to me. They took them to somewhere like St. Vinny's or somewhere, because with a thing like that, forget about the burn. You have to get as many patients as you can out.

Then as we are trying to get this other lady, who was HYS, you know, she was in the stair chair, I'm trying to calm her down. I was waiting to get another ambulance to get her out of here, but she was on

delayed status because she was just HYS, there was nothing really wrong with her. She was hysterical like the rest of us, you know.

The building started collapsing, the north tower started collapsing. It tipped down first and then the thing fell within itself. It was an amazing sight to see. It was really unbelievable. I thought I was watching a movie with special effects.

Then from there people were rushing towards us. We ran all the way towards the water, as far to the water as we could go, on Vesey past North End towards the water where the park is. It was like a mushroom cloud of dust and debris coming towards us and everything. But it didn't really -- we were safe because we were surrounded by other buildings. If the tower would have fell towards West Street instead of imploding on itself, we would have had a problem, but, you know, it just came within itself, just tipped.

We waited there till things calmed down. There were a lot of firemen coming towards us with eye problems, like irritating of their eyes, irritation of their eyes. We were throwing water all over them, trying to irrigate their eyes. Trying to clean them up best we could. Nobody really seriously -- serious

trauma, but there was one guy, he had a real bloody nose. We cleaned him up best we could.

There was equipment strewn all over the place because everybody was running. EMS equipment. So we had a stretcher, I don't know whose stretcher it was. We grabbed the stretcher, told my partner, listen, we got to get back in the game, man. So we loaded the stretcher with all the equipment that we could find. My bus, 240, was parked on North End, right behind the logistics truck, Alan Cruz, our supply truck, and I was heading back to my ambulance because I was going to put the stuff back, but they told us to go to the hotel on North End, I forget, Embassy Suites, I think it is?

Q. Yes.

A. They already set up a triage there. So we brought all the equipment that we had, that we found, over there. Shortly after we get there, they want to evacuate us out of there, because they are worried about gas leaks, they are worried about integrity of buildings, you know, because the front of the building by the movie theater, that little space there was on fire. So now they were worried about gas leaks and all the other stuff.

We evacuate, we go to Stuyvesant, Stuyvesant

High School from there. I don't know even know what street that's on. Chambers, it's a little side street, but it's not Chambers, it's a different name. Anyway, where Stuyvesant High School is. I don't know where that is.

Q. Okay.

A. So we go over there. We evacuate all the patients that we have there, we have like walking woundeds in the area. Only a few. We got them out of there, out of that hotel. We grabbed as much equipment as we could. We evacuated and walked down to Stuyvesant. We loaded as much as we could on ambulances and walked down. They were setting up triage there. I didn't even go in. I stayed right there outside. Then they started saying there is a gas leak over there and they are worried about something happening over there.

Finally they make a decision to evacuate all the emergency personnel to Chelsea, but my ambulance is still on North End and Vesey. So I give my keys to the equipment truck guy, Allan Cruz, because he was gathering up all the ambulances, because we had all the equipment now in front of Stuyvesant High School. So I gave him the wrong set of keys. He didn't have the

ignition key.

So he came back and said Mike, you gave me the wrong set. I said okay, I will get the bus. So I ran back in. It was like inches of soot, it looked like snow. It was incredible. I went back there and I grabbed the ambulance. It was still in good shape. Didn't get hit with any debris. I went back and I carted as much stuff as I could. I still have this kid with me now. He was with me, me and my partner, then we put all the stuff in the -- Chief Carrasquillo told us to go to Chelsea.

Put as much equipment as we had in there and as we are driving up West Street to go to Chelsea, we are picking up all kinds of medical personnel who were walking, because everybody got evacuated to there, so we could set up a staging and a triage and a MASH unit, which they did an awesome job. It was incredible. I don't know if you were there.

Q. No.

A. It was awesome. I was in the military as an Army combat medic, not war time, but I had training in that. It reminded me, everything was perfect man. It was like a MASH unit set up in there, in like a warehouse. We had ambulances lined up in rows and we

were all waiting for that call to go down there to save some lives and that call never came.

That was the most saddest thing about it, that with a job this size, this magnitude, I was saying to myself there is going to be numerous injured and we are going to have to really depend on our skills. Not a call. So that was the biggest thing. So I waited and waited and waited, me and my partner and this kid.

Finally I told the kid, I said listen, there is nothing you can do here. It's already done. Me and my partner go thanks, guy, thanks for coming in. He left and we brought the equipment that we had in the ambulance, we brought it in to the triage, the MASH unit that they had, because they might need equipment. So we just kept our base equipment for the bus.

That was it. I ran out of gas so what I did was I told the Lieutenant, listen, I'm going to be going to -- I'm going to get gas. He said when you get gas, go to 911, go back to the 911 system, because there was no patients. Then, you know, I will admit I cheated a little bit.

When I went out getting gas, I went down to Whitehall Street, because I knew they were setting up a MASH unit there and I wanted to be where the patients

were. We waited there. The Lieutenant said I need you, come in here. We went there. We stayed there another eight hours, waiting and waiting and waiting for patients. No show. It was like -- I think that was the toughest thing, is that a job that magnitude you would expect thousands and thousands of patients. After the first wave, nothing. There were no survivors.

That's about it. I probably missed a few things. There was a package, when I -- this is like a funny story about this job too. There was a package that when I came back to the ambulance with all the equipment, it was open, my ambulance. I had both keys. I said, what's this package here doing in my ambulance? After all the building collapses and everything else, I didn't even think about it again.

I put the equipment in there. We went to the hotel and then we went to Stuyvesant, then we went up to Chelsea is when I realized. I said there is a package, I don't know how it got there. So I took it out. Now I'm getting a little nervous. That's what I was just -- relax. It's not an ordinary Tuesday any more, so paranoia set in. Because at the time I really didn't think about it because there was such chaos.

So I go to my partner and I go Jody man, there is a box, I had both keys and this box was found in my ambulance. What should I do with it. He goes get that out of here. What are you, crazy man. So I was going to throw it in the garbage can, but I said that's unsafe because what if somebody came and left another device.

So what I did I put it in the island on West Street at Chelsea, and I flagged down a PD and the FBI and I told them and they had the bomb squad check it out. It wound up being a wedding present or something. It was addressed to Norway, but there was nothing we could have done about that, you know. It was chaotic there. You started thinking about things that might possibly happen. (inaudible) just waited.

Q. Okay. When you got to Broadway and Fulton, who was the supervisor? You said that he moved you over?

A. On Broadway and Fulton, my supervisor was behind me. He left, he went towards the building somewhere. I don't know even know where he went to be honest with you.

Q. Who was it?

A. Bill Melarango. He was behind me in the

command car. He did his administrative stuff. I don't know where he went. I was there with me and this kid after. When I got to West Street, West Street and Vesey is when the supervisor, I don't know who he was. I seen him before. I don't know his name, but he might have saved my life, because I was parked at West Street and he told me listen, I want you to move that ambulance towards the water.

Q. Right, right.

A. So that's when I went from West Street and Vesey to North End where the supply truck was. I parked behind there and I walked to the triage area in the middle of the block. There was already ambulances set up on Vesey between North End and West Street, right in front of the movie theater, you know the movie theater.

Q. Yes.

A. Right over there by the -- in the middle of the block. So I grabbed an EMS crew and we got rid of the patients that were happening over --

Q. The crew that you helped with the burn patients --

A. I see them before, but I don't know their names, but when I see them I'm going to give them a

good hug tight, because they got those people out of there.

Q. Do you remember their vehicle number or anything like that?

A. You know, I seen them before, I don't know if they were from Queens or Brooklyn or 15. One of them had a -- the older guy, he is a veteran because I have seen him before. He wears glasses and he has like a lazy eye that goes with (inaudible). His partner is a short guy, an Italian guy. I seen them, I know that they are both veterans. But I don't really know their names. They are not really from my station. But when I see them I'm going to congratulate them. They did an awesome -- they got those patients out of there and that's the main objective.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments on the day that --

A. I remember, this is where I -- as you notice that nobody from our station, Battalion 4, got killed. Seriously, we should have lost half our people, because we are taught, when the job, when the World Trade Center job comes over, it gives you a whole bunch of pages on where to set up, what to do, have you ever seen --

Q. Yes. Pre-plans.

A. The pre-plans. The pre-plans always say go to the concourse to the triage. Because we were the first wave and we got so many patients, that technically you are supposed to do triage and the patients had to wait until you get them out of there. But we got such a big wave of patients, we were taking them to the hospital, weren't really doing what we were supposed to be doing, triage, and setting up. That's what saved our lives believe it or not, in my opinion.

Because technically we were supposed to set up triage, no patients get transported until we triage them out. Then we go to the concourse and set up triage there and then we would go to various levels, after we get organized, go to various levels of triage on various floors. Because we didn't have a chance to organize because of the attack, because it turned out to be an attack instead of an accident, you know, that's what saved us. By the grace of God, I think that's what saved us, that we didn't really have a chance to organize.

It was so chaotic and debris all over the place. Because I know -- my own set-up would probably be in the building too. You know, so I think that's

what happened. It was a fuck up, but it really was -- it saved our lives, this little miscue. We didn't really go procedure wise. That's why we were saved. Some rules are meant to be bent, broken, right.

Q. Yes.

A. That's about it. I'm just glad everybody survived. I get a little teary-eyed when I see all these funerals, all these people, they have young kids. It's amazing, but that was about it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. I will first thank you for your time. The time is now 0936 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110150

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN RAY GOLDBACH

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 24, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg, Fire Department City of New York. The time is now 1047 hours. Also present is Assistant Commissioner James Drury. We are conducting an interview with Captain Ray Goldbach, executive assistant to Commissioner Von Essen. This interview is being conducted at Fire Department headquarters in relation to the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

Q. Captain, for the record, would you identify yourself?

A. Captain Ray Goldbach, executive assistant to the Fire Commissioner.

Q. Captain, directing your attention back to September 11, 2001, can you tell me what time you became aware of a problem in Manhattan and where you were when you became aware of it?

A. I believe it was sometime between 8:30 and 9 o'clock. And I was in my office. I received a phone call from Joe Higgins in communications, who told me that a plane just went into the World Trade Center. And they dumped the 1060, which is a radio signal for a major emergency. [redacted]

[redacted] But I walked back into my office, looked out my window and I could see a plane had gone into the north tower of the building. With that I got Bill Feehan. He came into the office and took a look. We went and got Tom Fitzpatrick. Tom Fitzpatrick came over, came into my office, looked over and I had said to him I believe a small plane went into the Trade Center. He said it's not a small plane. It's a commercial airline, look at the size of the hole. I couldn't see that far so I didn't know.

[redacted] The girls in our office were all starting to cry already. Tom McDonald, Assistant Commissioner Tom McDonald, who was I believe in a meeting with Tom Fitzpatrick, was there at the same time. I went down and got Peter Guidetti, the office manager out of his office. And the five of us went down to the garage. We all got into Bill's car. We went up out of the building, we went down Jay to Tillary, up Tillary and over the bridge. The police already had the bridge shut down. We got over the bridge pretty rapidly. We went down around City Hall. We got behind the police ESU truck that was on, I believe it was Broadway, going downtown. We followed

that truck all the way down to, I don't know whether it was Broadway and Dey or Broadway and Cortlandt Street, where I remember telling Peter pull over, let us out. Thousands of people running up Broadway at that time. We got out of the car. Feehan went to the back and got his coat, his helmet. Fitzpatrick had his helmet. I didn't have any gear, nor did Tom McDonald.

The four of us got out of the car, we started to cross Broadway, and the second plane went into the other tower. I don't know what time it was, but Tom McDonald yelled something like holy shit, oh, fuck. He hit the ground out on the street. We all got up. We kept walking. I believe we went down - I don't know whether it was Dey or Cortlandt Street. We walked down that block. It was littered with airplane parts, pieces of the building.

We went down and I don't know whether it was 5 or 7 World Trade Center. We tried to go around to get up into a building. There was a federal cop there who wouldn't let us up the stairs. We went up the stairs any way. We told them who we were. He let us up. We tried to go across the plaza. There were a lot of people jumping at that time, on to the plaza.

We initially went back into the building,

then we came back out again because we were trying to get into the command post, which was at 1 World Trade Center. We walked across the plaza back into whatever - I think it was, might have been 5 World Trade Center. I'm not sure.

Q. When you say the plaza, are you referring to the concourse?

A. The concourse, yes, where the big fountain was there. We saw a lot of people jumping at that plaza. Went back in, worked our way down around to the front of 1 World Trade Center and went into the lobby, where at that point the command post was established. The Fire Commissioner was there when we got there. It was chaos. A lot of units reporting in and trying to organize units and give them different assignments and send them up there, but there was hundreds of people running around inside of the lobby. The Port Authority was completely overwhelmed, I believe, in their ability to cope with this at that time.

A lot of their phones were out, some of their systems were down, I remember seeing them trying to get their vests on so they could identify themselves and get in their positions.

At that point, Commissioner Feehan and Tom

were talking to Chief Hayden, and Chief Callan, about what we were doing, where we were setting up our units. I don't recall seeing Chief Ganci in 1 World Trade Center, nor Chief Nigro for that matter. But Tom told me, the Fire Commissioner told me to try to get some people from headquarters to get some radios and to come over to see to try to beef up our end of the command post once we got it set up.

I had a very tough time trying to make telephone calls to the office here from the phones there as well as using the cell phone. Eventually I got ahold of my wife, who was in her office on 55th Street and asked her to call the EOC down here and tell her to send some people over there if they could find them. That would help us man the command post.

At that time, somebody had come into 1 World Trade Center and told us that the Mayor was looking for the Fire Commissioner. I left with Tom, went out through one of the windows that had broken in 1 World Trade Center. We crossed all the way across West Street. We are now where Ganci and Nigro had set up the command post on West Street in front of the Winter Garden. I believe we were probably over there for at least 20 minutes at some point. Saw a lot of members

of the Department over there that are dead. Lot of companies reporting in. We moved as many apparatus as we could. The Commissioner wanted the apparatus removed off of West Street to the sides of West Street so we could establish a path to start running ambulances from the south to the north to the victims.

So I remember talking with Tom McDonald and working with Tom McDonald and several other people, including company officers that came in, telling them to move the apparatus that was blocking West Street to the curb so that we could establish a lane. Like I said, what we were going to try to do is start - we were going to start bringing the ambulances in, turning them around down past the south tower, loading in the people, shooting them back out up north.

Then Manny Pepea from the Mayor's office came over to us again and told us that the Mayor was looking for the Commissioner and they were on Barclay Street. I walked with him and I believe it was a fire marshall, I think it was Mike Owney. We walked over towards Barclay Street. I didn't even know where Barclay Street was. We were walking towards that direction. We went over there, we couldn't find the Mayor or his group. I said to the Commissioner let's go back to the

command post on West Street, I will find out exactly where we have to go, then we will make our way there.

Before we got back to the command post, somebody told us that the Mayor's group had now gone to 7 World Trade Center to the OEM command post. We went from where we were at that point, it was somewhere around Vesey or Vesey or something like that. We got into 7 World Trade Center, we took the escalator up to the second floor, then we were going to take the elevator. I think it was John Peruggia from operations, but I'm not sure, at that point told us we had to get out of that building. Everybody was evacuated in that building [redacted]

We walked out of 7 World Trade Center, now following the whole group of people from City Hall who were somewhere ahead of us. I think we were on Washington Street near Greenwich Street, when the north tower started to collapse. I remember running and I think it was down Greenwich Street with John McLaughlin. We lost the Commissioner and the guy that he was with, the marshall. We got caught like in a

white out, like a blizzard, and like dust, felt like insulation. Myself and John stayed together. We were trying to get down next to - we got down on the street and on our hands and knees crawled to the curb. I remember thinking to myself I thought we were going to get run over by a car. We didn't know whether - I thought I saw the building collapsing, but I didn't believe it. I saw it disappearing into a cloud, but I thought maybe a couple of floors had fallen off.

At that point we made our way about half a block up till we could eventually see. We got ourselves together. I said to him we got to make sure we find the boss. We went back into the cloud again, myself and John, and we walked around in this dust cloud. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. Probably a couple of minutes, just calling the Commissioner. Eventually he and the marshall he was with called us. They had got across the street from where we were and into a doorway.

At that point I think we walked further up Greenwich Street and somebody brought us into another building where the Mayor's whole staff was. Everybody was tremendously in panic at that point. They decided that they were going to try to stabilize the situation

in some way. They had to get away from this. We started working our way, I think it was up Broadway, I believe. Stopping at several places where the Mayor was looking for a place where we might be able to set up some type of - I don't know whether it was a command post or a place just to talk, and he was giving news reports as we were walking on the street. Every couple of minutes he would stop and give an update on whatever he had. Just what was going on as we were walking uptown.

We walked all the way up to 5 truck in a panic and haste situation. We just about forced our way into the fire house and we set up the - I guess the initial operations point from the Mayor's office at 5 truck. We were there for -- prior to getting to 5 truck, the other tower fell down. I remember telling Tom the other tower fell down. I saw it disappear into a cloud again and he didn't believe me, because he was continuing to walk, but I remember telling him that, at some point during the walk while we were going uptown.

Q. You were referring to Commissioner Von Essen?

A. Yes, Commissioner Von Essen. We were in 5 truck for what seemed like a long time.

Q. Where is 5 truck?

A. I think it's in the village, so it was a long walk. I don't know exactly where it is, but it was quite a long walk. I bet it was a mile walk. We were probably there for what seemed like at least an hour while we were trying to coordinate resources from the state, from the federal government, Fire Departments. There was a lot going on at that point. John McLaughlin had left us before we started to walk uptown. I remember telling him to try to get the car, so after the first building collapsed and before the second building collapsed, I told him we were going to be -- I didn't know where we were going. Try to get the car, get around the battery on the other side and then call me and tell him where we were going so he could meet up with the Commissioner.

Q. Tell us for the record who John McLaughlin is.

A. John McLaughlin was the Commissioner's driver that day.

Q. He is a firefighter?

A. A lieutenant, he was driving the Fire Commissioner that day. We stayed up at 5 truck for, I don't know, an hour or couple of hours. At that point, I talked to John once or twice, getting tremendous

amounts of phone calls and pages. Everybody wanted to know who was dead, who did you see, who we didn't see. Tom was alive. We left. John eventually got the car, got all the way back up to 5 truck, met us up there with Danny Lynch, who is a firefighter and another one of the Commissioner's drivers, who had secured another vehicle, and met us at the fire house there.

At that point, I guess the Mayor had made the decision to move the City Hall group, the operations command to the Police Academy. We left from there. We went to the Police Academy for again, I guess several hours, trying to set up some type of Fire Department command post at the Police Academy. We had the phones. We were looking for phones, we were looking for people, we fielded a whole bunch of phone calls up there. The police officers - we got set up - I believe it was in the library at police headquarters. We were there until sometime late in the afternoon.

At that point I had told Tom I was going to go back down to the site to try to see what was going on and I would call him back. I went down there with - I believe Danny Lynch drove me back down there. I went to the Fire Department operations post, which was at that time all the way up by Stuyvesant High School on

West Street. I spoke to Chief Carruthers about what resources we needed. He gave me some instructions about trying to get us - I don't even remember what it was, whether it was more units, more ambulances or whatever it was, but I passed that information back on to our people at the Police Academy at that point.

[redacted] At that point, this was now late in the afternoon. I'm going to guess it was after 3:00.

Q. At that point in time had you heard anything about First Deputy Commissioner William Feehan or Chief of Department Peter Ganci?

A. No, we knew they were both missing because I had inquired six or seven times throughout the day as to their whereabouts. Everybody had said we couldn't find them, but at that point they had not been found. I was probably down at the operations post there by Stuyvesant High School for about 20 minutes when - it might have been Steve Mosiello, it might have been somebody else, came over to me and said we think we found Bill and Pete, Commissioner Feehan and Pete Ganci. I then walked down a couple of blocks back to the site. We were north of the Winter Garden at that point. It might have been - it was Vesey Street. We

walked all the way back down to Vesey Street. There was a big discussion going on at that point about pulling all of our units out of 7 World Trade Center. Chief Nigro didn't feel it was worth taking the slightest chance of somebody else getting injured.

So at that point we made a decision to take all of our units out of 7 World Trade Center because there was a potential for collapse.

Q. It was on fire, correct, Captain?

A. Yes, it was on fire at that time. Then they said it suffered some form of structural damage. These things were going on at the same time. The fact that we thought we found Ganci and Feehan and his place at 7 World Trade Center. Made the decision to back everybody away, took all the units and moved them all the way back toward North End Avenue, which is as far I guess west as you could get on Vesey Street, to keep them out of the way.

At that point --

Q. Vesey or West?

A. It was as far west as we could go.

Q. I see. Okay. Near the water?

A. Near the water. At that point we are still hearing information that we found Ganci, we found Bill

and we thought we had them and there was a lot of discussion going on. They thought they had Ray Downey. I remember talking to the Commissioner on the phone and him telling me make sure we know what we are talking about. I called him back a little while later after I had spoken to Chief Nick Visconti, who told me he went back. He did have Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan. Next half an hour or so, we were sitting down and sent him around, how we were going to bring their bodies out, where we were going to put them. I think the Commissioner had requested that the two of them go to the morgue in the same ambulance. We were tying to set that up.

Apparently they had taken Ganci's body out towards the north side of the World Financial Center and Feehan's body out through the south side of the World Financial Center. So I was with Henry McDonald at that point on Vesey Street and they had brought Ganci's body out and put him in the ambulance. Then we were waiting quite sometime for them to find out what was going on with Bill's body. Henry had taken a walk down to the other side of the World Financial Center, went through the World Financial Center, through the Winter Garden, out past Moran's Restaurant, around the

back there to find out what the story was with Bill's body, if they were going to transport it by itself, they were going to bring him over to us. That was probably another 20 minutes.

At that point I had met Michael Regan, who is now our First Deputy, and a good friend of Bill Feehan's too. We decided we would take a walk over there, try to find out what was going on to try and get this straightened out. While we walked through the 1 World Financial Center, or 2, whichever one, I don't know which one. We went into the World Financial Center. We went through the Winter Garden, back outside again.

At that point somebody had passed by quickly there with a body. I remember saying something like I think that's Bill. He said no, Bill is in an ambulance. [redacted] He says everything is screwed up over here. No one knows what's going on. That was Bill's body. They were bringing him back. 15 minutes, 10 minutes later, absolutely no conception of what time it was, 7 World Trade Center collapsed. I remember hearing the building collapse and seeing the dust go up into the air. Myself and Michael Regan walked back over to

Vesey Street. At that point we had Ganci, Feehan in the same ambulance. Chief Nick Visconti had given me possession of Feehan's helmet. He had a front piece from Chief Ganci's helmet. He gave that to Steve Mosiello, and [redacted].

Q. For the record, describe what a front piece is.

A. The front piece is the identifying marker on the front of your helmet. Has your assignment on there, or in case of the staff, it has -- Ganci's helmet says Chief of the Department. Bill Feehan's helmet said First Deputy Fire Commissioner on it. Commissioner Feehan's helmet was pretty much completely intact. Once I got the two of them into the ambulance, Henry McDonald went to the morgue in the ambulance with Commissioner Feehan and Chief Ganci. I then went to the morgue with Michael Regan. We had gotten up there actually before the ambulance arrived there. Pretty much had a horrible scene up there too, it was - they didn't really have any people yet, but it was chaos already up there too. I guess they were trying to get set up, because they had a refrigerator truck set up

outside. There were hundreds of people on the street and inside. I remember them asking everybody to leave, that they didn't want this to be a circus.

Q. Was it now nighttime or still the afternoon?

A. It's about dusk now.

Q. Do you know where they found Commissioner Feehan's and Chief Ganci's bodies in relation to West Street and the World Financial Center?

A. I believe anecdotally from people that pulled them out that they were found outside of the Winter Garden, which is where I know Commissioner Feehan was and Chief Ganci was. They were both on the driveway where they had set up the command post on West Street and Tom Fitzpatrick was with them when the second tower collapsed. I think he ran a different way than they did.

When we went back there, the next day, the day after, there were markings on some of the walls down there marked with orange paint and arrows that said body and body. I don't know if that was them or not, for like a week, that's where they found the two of them. After we stayed there until they brought in Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan and made sure that the marshalls were going to be there with them to make

positive identifications on them and at that point, we got back into the car and came back to headquarters.

We spent the rest of the night trying to plan for the rest of this catastrophe.

Q. Okay. I just have a few follow up clarification questions. When you said you looked out your window, just to clarify, your office is on what floor?

A. My office is on the 8th floor.

Q. Of headquarters?

A. Of headquarters.

Q. You said you drove over the bridge in Commissioner Feehan's car?

A. Yes.

Q. As you were going over the Brooklyn Bridge could you see the towers?

A. Yes.

Q. At that point only one tower had been hit, correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. When you were in the lobby of the 1 World Trade Center tower, did you see any other Chiefs in that lobby, like Chief Burns or Chief Downey?

A. I didn't see Chief Burns. I didn't see Chief

Downey. I saw Chief McGovern, who was the Battalion Chief down there, who is dead. [redacted]

Q. Who was that, Chief McGovern?

A. No, Battalion Chief Pfeifer.

Q. Did you notice any damage to the lobby of the building?

A. Lot of broken glass in the lobby. There was a lot of stuff crashing down inside the lobby. Several of the windows, had to be 20 feet tall, were already broken out. There was stuff knocked over in the lobby at that point. Some of the trees. It was just - you could look up and see literally hundreds and hundreds of people running back and forth on the next level up from where we were. We were at street level. There was escalators. People were actually much more orderly than we expected at that time.

Q. But there weren't many civilians down there where you were in the lobby on West Street, near West Street?

A. There was some. The ones that were down there were not looking to hang around. They were

coming down and trying to find a way to get out. We were trying to not let anybody out of the doors on to West Street because there was quite a few jumpers at that point. Jumping on to West Street. People jumping from tower one.

Q. Did you happen to see Father Judge there in that vicinity at that time?

A. I believe I saw Father Judge in the lobby of 1 World Trade Center at some point. I don't know when it was. I don't remember having a conversation with him. I just have a recollection of seeing him. There were several people there. I have a recollection of seeing him, but I did not have a conversation with him or recall that I was speaking to him.

Q. Just a couple more questions. Obviously you at some point had to cross West Street to get to the other side, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You were obviously very wary of jumpers, cautious leaving 1 World Trade Center?

A. Tell you the truth, I stepped outside through the glass window, I looked up and I made it as hastily as I could away from the building without trying to fall on the glass. The street was just littered with

glass at that point.

Q. There was a firefighter who was hit by a jumper in that vicinity named Suhr. Did you happen to see him when you were leaving the building?

A. No.

Q. 5 truck, when you arrived up there, were there any firefighters there or had they all left to go down to the site?

A. There was nobody in the fire house when we got there, because cops were panicking at that point to get into the fire house. They were trying to jimmy the lock with a knife. I just said give me a minute. I will get you a combination for the door. They tried to break the window with an oxygen bottle. I called EOC and I got the combination of the building at the fire house. Then after 15 minutes of being there, a guy showed up.

Q. EOC is what?

A. Fire emergency operations downstairs on the 7th floor of the headquarters. They have all the combinations there of the fire house.

Q. When you were walking from the vicinity of City Hall up to 5 truck, did anybody inform you of any updates regarding planes hitting any other facilities

such as the Pentagon?

A. No, but I remember while we were on West Street, I remember hearing Chief Callan, I believe it was him, on the handy talky, saying to evacuate the building. That was 1 World Trade Center. Get everybody out of the building and then the piece after that was something to the extent that there was a third unidentified aircraft coming towards New York City. The plane did not identify themselves. That was when he called for that Mayday to evacuate the building, get everybody out of the building.

Q. How long after that Mayday did the tower collapse?

A. Approximately, I would say probably between 15 and 20 minutes. Because I remember hearing somebody on the radio saying they were on the 41st floor. They were working their way down.

Q. You mean a firefighter?

A. It was a company officer, yes.

Q. At some point did you lose radio communication, either before or after the first collapse?

A. There was a dead silence after the first building collapsed, for a period of time. Then the

radio traffic even after that was somewhat subdued. I believe that's because most of the people on the radios were probably dead at that point.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: I have nothing further Captain. Thank you very much. The time is now 11:17 and we will conclude this interview.

File No. 9110151

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALEXANDER LOUTSKY

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0632 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. EMT Alexander Loutsky of Battalion 4.

Q. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Alex, begin with when you were assigned to the job or --

A. Okay, well, what happened was I had just exchanged vehicles at Battalion 4 around, a little after 8:30 and I was in vehicle -- I was reassigned to vehicle 219. As I was going back to my area, which is a few blocks from the World Trade Center, I was talking with my partner, Hank Ramos, and saw in front of me while we were about, I would say around Pearl Street, we had a view of the World Trade Center, which was only a few blocks away and I stopped him and I said to look at that plane, that it was flying extremely low and that it looked like it was about to hit. A few seconds later it did hit.

After that, we were both kind of shooken up. I picked up the radio and I transmitted a priority signal to let them know that it was an EMS confirmation

that a plane had in fact hit the World Trade Center. After that, the dispatcher acknowledged it, but the radio then became flooded with so many different signals that we weren't able to really let him know we were headed there.

We were just a couple of blocks from there, so we did, we headed there and we were -- we went to Church and Fulton Street, which was right by the Millennium Hotel. We actually were right by -- actually, originally I should say we were more close to the St. Pauls cemetery, we were parked right there.

When we got there, we noticed that there was a great number of people that were streaming out of the World Trade Center. They looked terrified. They were panicked. Some of them had various degrees of injuries. Many of them were just running wounded, as it were, but they had varying degrees of injuries, but they were running, so forth and so on. We were basically inundated.

We couldn't radio -- I was operating the vehicle that day, so I was supposed to be making the radio transmissions and I just found it impossible to do it because it was just -- inundated, just jammed with so many signals that I wasn't able to. We had so

many victims that came up to us that -- some of them my partner was attending to, others I tried to make an attempt; however, it was a vain attempt at having a triage and trying to line them up and tag them.

There were just too many of them and many of them were asking questions and some of them were in such shock that their questions seemed, you know, just a waste of time. Like should I go back in and get my wife or something like that. We tried our best that way.

Then what happened is the second unit came behind us, I believe it was 2 Boy. It was David Timothy and I can't recall offhand who he was working with, oh, Jai Zion. I believe he resigned. They then came and together we tried to do the same thing. Then at that point, a fire truck came through and we started -- then we started to realize that with the amount of people swelling, that the area was going to become difficult for further emergency resources to get through. So we tried to make room and so forth and so on.

Then I guess just about that time, if my memory serves me, it was Lieutenant D'Avila, he came on the scene and we were able to at least have some

semblance of a command. When that occurred, he had ordered us to go -- to proceed with him to West Street, really in between Vesey and Liberty, more like where 1 World Trade Center was. We had a number of victims who became our patients, and we were successfully tagging them and I would say less than 10 at the time, you know. Many people were just running with their injuries. The ones that were willing to receive help, you know, probably had, for whatever reason, they took our help.

At any rate, what happened at this time was we were trying -- Lieutenant D'Avila said that our -- 01 Charlie, which was our unit, that my partner and myself were staging officers and that we were to focus solely on that and not to get sidetracked by other things. So we did that.

Our duties separately were to try to help get the people in ambulances and out of there and to try to get the ones that were -- had injuries that were not so life threatening, to get them out of the borough so that they don't inundate hospitals and to do the best we can in terms of getting names or what ambulances went where and so forth and so on.

Around that time, I didn't at the time

realize it, but from where we were at, which was right in front of the World Trade Center on the West Side Highway area, there was an explosion and a lot of debris started coming down. Apparently that was the second plane that hit. We lost all of our patients in terms of them running away. They -- the noise and the debris scared them all away and they ran off. We didn't have any left.

We went into our vehicle and Lieutenant D'Avila went into the command vehicle and we started proceeding towards the direction of Liberty in our ambulance and there was a tremendous amount of debris coming down in that area. We just took a turn up Liberty this way to do a U turn, because this was like destroyed.

Q. Okay. Towards the Hudson.

A. Right, so a lot of things were raining down. We knew we had to get out of there. We turned around and we went back on the West Side Highway, made a right turn on Vesey and then made a right turn on Fulton and Church and we were at the Millennium Hotel area once again.

There we were under -- we had more resources, more emergency medical command resources arrived and we

were still functioning as staging officers as Lieutenant D'Avila directed us to be and it seemed like that was going very successfully in terms of evacuating people out of there. In front of the Millennium Hotel, that became a triage area. It was effective. It was -- people were tagged, it seemed very organized. It was good because there was so many people, so many people coming out of there, and some of them weren't able to ambulate, so they were being carried out, so forth and so on, so we were able to assist in that way. So I assisted numerous times, helping people, like taking them from civilians, so forth and so on.

I did what I was instructed to do in terms of trying to get people that were at least the least amount of injuries out of the borough. We had a number of ambulances and we tried as best we could to put as many people as we can, as possible, without causing any kind of danger to them or anyone else. So we were successful in trying to get a maximum of 6 patients per ambulance. The more severe cases, you know, like the burns, the third degree burns and so forth that went to Cornell, we tried to keep patients of that kind, of that condition, together, or if they weren't burns, at least something that was -- that needed a trauma center

or something like that.

We did that. I only had a little confusing time when I had certain -- you know, I had my instructions given to me from Lieutenant D'Avila, but there were at times, I was sidetracked by various Captains that were trying to give me different orders that were -- a few things that kind of sidetracked me and I didn't think it made entirely enough sense, but I tried the best I could to obey it.

But it was very crazy there at the time. Like one of them wanted me to get every single patient's name and it just was not possible. There was so much screaming and it just seemed like the worst question to ask in the middle of an ambulance while people are suffering and screaming. It just didn't work out that way.

I did my best you know, in terms of that. But I, you know, I just continued to do and keep my focus as Lieutenant D'Avila told me to do, just to focus on what I was doing, because I know that if I started getting sidetracked, then nothing was going to get accomplished, so that's why I just stayed stuck with what I was doing.

So then actually, right around that time when

I had that little confusion in my mind because I was told to do something that just didn't seem to -- it just seemed like certain brass in my mind was like -- maybe they just had, like they really didn't have much street time or something. If you don't mind me saying that. They were like in an office so much and then they are asking me with their authority to do something that's not going to be productive, but I can't question it, but do you know what I mean?

Q. Yes.

A. So I was in that little quandary at the time, because I'm saying well how -- I'm trying to get the names, but the person is screaming in agony and they want to get them out of there. Then another person is screaming. I can't even hear them, you know. I'm trying to comply with this, you know, but what was mostly more important was evacuating them, getting them treated and transported out of there. Because even though I didn't, and I didn't think that anybody thought that the buildings were going to collapse, we knew it was not a safe scene. There was debris. There was all kinds of things that could possibly happen.

We knew we weren't necessarily in the hot zone, but we were in the wrong zone. So the risks

increase. So we just wanted to, you know, rather than deliberate too much on one thing like that, but anyway, at any rate, I -- at that time, I heard a rumble, you know, and then it was, you know, really like, almost like an earthquake.

Then what happened was I heard people screaming and running and then it seemed like they were going to -- it was like going to be a trampling. It was just like bedlam. Of the patients that we had that had any ability to ambulate or maybe didn't think they did, had, then had the ability to.

Q. Found it.

A. Then I started to run for safety too, because I looked up and I saw that the building was going to come down. We were right across the street from it, you know, so I -- at first I -- there was so many people, I thought they were going to trample me, that I went by the Millennium Hotel, there is like a driveway with one of those automatic lifting gates, steel gates that roll up.

I went there. There was a cop there, he was kneeling down, looking, trying to get cover and I was above him and I said there is no security here. There is no place to go, you know. I was under a truck for a

second or two, because, well, I ducked down, you know, because there was so many people and there was -- they were just going to roll, you know, trod me.

So what happened was I -- suddenly, I was near that garage area, the sky as it blacks out, and then all of a sudden, it just came down. There was no place to go. There was nothing you could do. You were just thoroughly overcome by the particulate matter. It just went totally black. You no longer heard anything. It was like your fingers were in your ear, everything was just numbed out. There was so much particulate matter that it covered every orifice. You couldn't take a breath in. You couldn't see. You couldn't anything.

I was just kind of like putting my hand out and I didn't even know where -- I didn't know exactly which direction I was facing any more. I didn't know if I was -- I knew that I was on -- I knew that I was on Fulton Street, just off of Church, because I ran up to like here, right on the side of the Millennium Hotel, across the street from St. Pauls cemetery. But I didn't know if I was facing the cemetery. I didn't know if I was facing the Millennium Hotel. I didn't know if I was facing Church. I didn't know if I was

facing Broadway. I was totally blind and discoordinated in that and I couldn't hear anything.

More importantly, I couldn't breathe at all. I was kind of panicky about that. Then I thought maybe if I dug a hole in the cemetery and put my head in it or something. Or if I -- I didn't know what to do. I was very scared, because I knew I was going to die at that point. There was nothing, you know, I thought and I had some thoughts like I thought well, what if this is biological now or rather chemical. What if this is a bomb actually that went off after the plane crashed and now maybe there is something chemical. Then I said well, maybe the heat would have destroyed it.

But that was real quick thoughts but it never really stayed with me because I was panicking, I was starting to panic and I didn't want to panic because I figured then I wouldn't have a chance, but then I thought I didn't have a chance anyway, because there was -- this particulate matter that was just causing total blackness and you couldn't even use any of your senses or breathe, wasn't going to settle, wasn't going to settle quick enough for me to catch a breath, so I kind of like realized that that was the situation, but it was hard for me to accept it entirely.

So I kind of like was feeling around me and I was using my radio and I was banging around, and I was banging around. I knew when I touched a solid material, but because the particulate matter was so thick I didn't know what the matter was. I didn't know if it was concrete, wood or what, but what I did do and I hit it with my radio, was I heard glass crack, so I put my hand inside and then I put my head in and it turned out to be a van, which I didn't know fully at the time, but I figured it was a vehicle of some kind, because I felt a chair and stuff like that.

So I put my head and half my body and I kind of went in and my head was down at the bottom and I was -- I had it covered with my jacket, but still the particulate matter was so dense and the pressure, as soon as the window was open it pushed it in, but it gave me enough where I just calmed myself and just told myself to just don't be greedy and take short breaths. I was under there and I was just taking short breaths, short breaths, and calm down so you don't require so much. It was hard to do that though, but I tried my best, you know.

It worked. The particulate matter was settling a little bit. I mean it was like a fog and I

started getting out of there. I came out, I was half in the vehicle. I came out of it and I could see now that it was a van and I could see Broadway, but everything was like a dense fog but I could know that that's where I was. I knew the hospital was down, a couple blocks down from there. So I started in that direction.

I still couldn't breathe well, you know, because the particulate matter was still there, but I could see and I could take short breaths and I would cough a lot and stuff like that, but I tried my best and it did work and I got to the hospital, they gave me oxygen where I was standing and then they cleaned me up in the sink. They put my head in there and they took a pulse-ox of me while I was standing and stuff and you know, cleaned my face because it all caked and stuff like that.

Then after that it was just -- a few minutes went by and I told them I'm done and I have to go back. They told me to stay and I said no, I told them I was fine, but I wanted to go back because I felt like I might have abandoned my post. I got my partner there and that was where I belonged. So I started going back, you know, and I was coughing and hacking a lot,

but it didn't matter because I felt a lot better. I was just, you know, getting it out.

So I went back and when I got back, I saw on Broadway, some of us were there. I saw men with Lieutenant D'Avila. He was getting -- jumped on me and hugging me and crying and everything. So I asked him where my partner was, where Eric is and they didn't know, you know.

So I went back and that was on -- where I met them was on Fulton Street and Broadway, right here, so I just went back here where I was and I saw that it was -- it had collapsed, the north tower had collapsed. My ambulance was right over there.

It was in flames and I met a firefighter there, Alex Santoro, and this police officer, I don't remember his name, and the three of us were, you know, we had gone through it. I didn't know they did. They didn't know I did. We wanted to try to find our people. I said where is my partner and the cop said I don't know where my partner is and stuff like that.

So we decided to stick together rather than separate and try to see who could find anybody, you know, in this mess -- especially our people. So that's what we did. Then we were like right around here on

Dey Street, like right here.

Q. Dey and Church?

A. Right, right across the street from the south tower and then the south tower, we heard a rumble and we didn't even look. We ran, okay. We ran. I tell you my legs were sore for three days after that, just that jog that I took. We ran from here, which is on Church Street and Dey. Okay. Right across the street was where the south tower was.

So we were on, on Church and Dey Street, right here, right across the street, again, from the World Trade and when we heard that rumble, we didn't even look. It was like instinct, the three of us, without even looking at each other, just the beginnings of that rumble, we just sprinted out of there and we actually made it up Dey Street. We crossed Broadway and there was right in here a little chocolate candy store, okay. Now there is no way you can beat that thing when it collapses. There is no way at all. That I can tell you. So when we heard that rumble, that thing came down and the whole thing went black the second we went into that candy store.

We slammed the door and as we slammed the door all of the particulate matter with the pressure

that it had was billowing inside that chocolate store, but not enough to overcome us, you know and we were in there.

We didn't know -- at this point there was a radio going on at this time. I remember it saying the Palestinians are taking responsibility for this. I don't know how accurate at that time that was, but it came off of that AM radio so we were kind of like looking at each other and -- I mean we didn't know what to make of it. We thought that maybe we were at war. Definitely we were at war, you know. I thought we were at war, because I didn't think that the plane to my knowledge, from what I understood, that the plane was enough to do that, you know.

I thought we were at war. I didn't know if there was going to be any chemical stuff being used. I didn't have any -- I felt ill equipped in that respect. I didn't feel that I had anything to protect me with respect to that.

We just decided that what we were going to do was -- we reaffirmed the fact that we were going to stick together, the three of us. We didn't know what was going on. We didn't know if we were going to get out of there. We didn't know that necessarily the

World Trade Center was fully collapsed or if it was going to collapse in the fashion that we now know it did, because there was an (inaudible) open. Might have fallen over.

Q. Toppled.

A. It was tall enough to crush where we were at without a doubt. So we were safe from the particulate matter, but we didn't feel safe in terms of us going to get crushed.

We put that aside and Alex Santoro, the firefighter, he said well, Alex, let's just start saving up water, because the water main is going to go probably, more than likely. Because of the situation, they may shut them down.

So I started to -- because it was a candy store, the old chocolate, big chocolate, you know, and it had these big glass jars, I started emptying them out, the chocolates put in a pile because we might use that as food too. I take the canister and clean it out and start filling it with water and then the other Alex, the firefighter, he would seal it with plastic, so he sealed the tops. That's what we were doing, because we didn't know how long we would be there, la-la-la, so that's what we did.

We did that for a while. Seemed like a while. I got this -- I had a cellphone then that I had just got like two days before. I thought well, let me see if I can call somebody and see if anybody is around. If it's more extensive than we think, if I could give a message to my mother or my family or something like that. I couldn't get through. I tried a few numbers. One of them actually went through. It was an answering machine and I left a message on the answering machine, you know. It was a friend's friend that I really didn't know too well, but I left a message, you know, the last will and testament kind of thing, as if in fact they weren't going to be affected by it. So I did that.

Then afterwards -- the cop was saying stay away from the doors, because if there is any frantic police officers out there they'll use their guns, so I remember that. Then I think there was also some civilians that we were able to get inside that were, you know, straggling, one or two of them. Couldn't breathe out there, and we wanted to get them in, but we had to do it quick, because the minute you opened that door, the whole thing would get filled, flooded.

So anyway, we did that for a while and then

as the thing started to settle, outside looked foggier instead of black. So we all decided let's go out and let's go find survivors. You know, so that's what we did. We started on -- let's see -- where did we go? I don't think -- yes, we were on John, but did we go down John. Yes, we went down John Street and every building side to side, we would go to. We tried to get in and see if there were any survivors and we found that there were quite a few buildings where people were hiding in the basements. We asked them if they had water or access to water.

Me and Alex, we got big pipes that we had used, that if we needed to break into storage to get water, or food or at least have access to so they could get to it. Because at this point where we are at, it was such destruction and what we experienced was so horrific, we didn't know that we were at war and it was more prolific. We certainly were acting in a way that I think was sound and Alex led us in that respect, because we wanted to make sure that the survivors, you know, had water and so forth and so on.

That's what we did. We went from building to building, going all the way down John Street. As we went down John Street, at some point we reached Water

Street. At Water Street, things started to look less horrific and there was more people, you know, emergency personnel, and there was Chief Vlicharz. He is a Battalion Chief at Engine 4 on Duane and Broadway, our area, where 1 Charley is from.

He said to me -- he knew me and he said to me that I should go right away to Engine 7, which is on South Street and Old Slip. That's about 5 or 7 blocks from where I met him and to go register there, because I'm missing and presumed dead. He said go over there and register there so they know that you are all right. Okay.

Then he -- after that, I was supposed to go with a firefighter and we were supposed to go back to the World Trade Center and help get people out of there, you know. So I went to the fire house, my radio wasn't working all this time, by the way. So I went to the fire house, I registered over there in the logbook and the Captain is there and he asked my name verbally again and so forth. Okay, don't worry about it. He says, okay now. Go back to the World Trade Center and go help out over there.

So I wasn't entirely sure what I was supposed to do, because I didn't know -- I didn't see anybody

from my unit. I didn't see anybody that was -- I saw Chief Vlicharz. I didn't know where everybody else was. It just seemed a natural thing was to just follow direction from the Fire Department personnel, you know, and I -- they couldn't tell me where EMS was at the time. It was too crazy at the time and everybody was absorbed in their duties, which is understandable.

So I started signing in and talking to the Captain as I say. Then my radio was working. I heard a command center at the ferry terminal was talking to someone else. I'm touching the radio you know, trying to hear better and putting it louder and stuff like that. So I told the Captain listen, it sounds like they have a command center at South Street ferry terminal, which is not far. The Chief directed me to go to the World Trade Center with him.

Is it all right if I'm relieved of that so I can go and seek out, you know, my command. He says yes, go ahead. So I went and I went to the ferry terminal. I met up -- there was a couple of Chiefs out there. They just told me to direct, to help direct civilians that were being evacuated at this point. I believe the city was -- Mayor had made a directive to that effect I believe.

What I was supposed to do is direct them to -- so I was directing them into various ferries. They had ferries going to Brooklyn, they had ferries going to Staten Island, ferries going to New Jersey and so forth and I was helping direct them. I did that for a number of hours, just getting them you know, where they are supposed to be going, so I assisted in that.

After hours of doing that, it became night fall and I was upstairs helping them in the triage area. Then I guess after -- I was almost there for 16 hours. Then there really wasn't anybody left in terms of victims. It just seemed like at that point we were saying that well, it looks like you are either dead or you are a walking wounded kind of thing. So I was told by a supervisor that since I live in Staten Island, just a boat ride away, just go home, refresh yourself and come back in the morning.

That's what I did. I went home after 16 hours. I tried to sleep, I couldn't sleep. I actually came back 3 hours later because I was very hypersensitive to sounds

[redacted] They dissipated over time.

Basically that's the story.

Q. Do you remember where -- when you saw the first plane go in, do you remember what streets you were on when you saw?

A. Yes, I saw exactly where I was in my mind, but I'm trying to tell you the name of it. It is --

Q. Off the map?

A. Yes, it's right in this white area. But I will tell you, it was City Hall park, like right around -- I would call it -- right by the Brooklyn Bridge and Pearl Street.

Q. Okay.

A. Right around the Brooklyn Bridge and Pearl Street. You got a view of it. It's like right in front of you. I'm sitting at the light and he is talking to me and I'm saying right, right, wo, look at that. It's going to hit. It's going to hit and that's when it hit.

Q. When you first came into Fulton and Church, coming down Fulton, from down Church --

A. No, I came -- what I did was -- let's see,

Pearl, went down -- sorry, went down by the Brooklyn -- where is the Brooklyn Bridge here?

Q. Brooklyn Bridge would be up about here.

A. Really. Let's see.

Q. This is the top edge.

A. At any rate, I will just say this. I came from Fulton Street. I went from Fulton Street, from where the Brooklyn Bridge would be here. I went down like this and went down like that. That's how I did it.

Q. That's westbound on Fulton.

A. Right.

Q. All right.

A. Is this westbound? Yes, you are right. Forgive me. Yes, this is westbound.

Q. Put a number there. This is your first stop?

A. Right. I was actually parked right inside here.

Q. Inside of Fulton Street?

A. Right over here we were parked, right here. Then we moved it over here.

Q. Right. When you got around to -- in front of 1 World Trade Center, it was you -- 2 Boy, I think it was, you said, 2 Adam?

A. No, 2 Boy came here.

Q. Did they follow you around to --

A. I don't recall, I don't recall, I suspect, but I can't say for sure. I kind of was like -- we were very close to the Lieutenant at that point and I think most of the -- I don't recall seeing them, but I don't recall, sorry.

Q. No problem. When you came around to West Side Highway, do you recall aside from the Lieutenant, any other EMS units there?

A. Well yes, there was a couple of paramedic units that came from hospital vollies. I recall a couple of Fire Department units there. I don't remember their designations. There was Lieutenant D'Avila and there was a Chief that came and there was some Lieutenants, Chief or something like that there, you know, that came, that were in that area with us. We had our patients right over here. Here.

Q. Right.

A. We were sitting down -- like over here, you don't see it in this picture, but over here, there is like a big wall that separates from World Trade Center, you know.

Q. Right.

A. Like that.

Q. Yes.

A. It was very protected because it was like an overhang, so nothing could affect anybody from that -- from that -- you know, from that. No one thought the building was going to come down, that's the whole thing. That's when it caught everybody in a surprise. I've heard people argue all different things, like what we could have done.

Like -- I think we did very well, in terms of what we were trained to do. I think it worked very well with what our expectations were, because if we knew the building was going to collapse, you would have to be a quarter mile away from that place, because that building was going about a quarter mile high, so how far could you have been. You still would have been in danger, you know. So -- and it's part of our job. We don't want to be injured or killed because we want to be able to assist people, but we are in the warm zone and there is a certain risk involved. That's part of the job.

But I think that we acted with due regard in a sober fashion. I'm very happy. There is a lot to learn I'm sure, and you guys are probably going to

bring that out. But I think that everything -- I'm glad that Lieutenant D'Avila was there and the others that led us in the right direction, you know. So. That's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, thank you very much. Time is now 0711 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110152

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF RANDALL HIRTH

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0820 hours and I am conducting an interview with Chief Hirth, Commander, Division 1, EMS, Borough of Manhattan. This interview is being conducted at the Division 1 office.

Q. Chief?

A. All right. We were at the Academy in refresher and the page came over that there was a problem at the World Trade Center. Lieutenant Cacciola was with me and I told her that we really need to respond. We got into the car. Lieutenant Roger Moore came out and requested transportation to go with us, so he jumped in the car with us and we proceeded to respond. We notified Citywide and proceeded to respond to the World Trade Center.

En route there we could see that -- while we were en route a second plane hit the building, but we didn't see that, but we heard it over the radio. But we saw both towers burning. We came down through the Midtown Tunnel down to the FDR Drive and around to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. When I got to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, I decided that we should leave the car there and walk in the rest of the way. I didn't want

to block other emergency vehicles, particular fire trucks and everything else. So I left my car at Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and proceeded to walk to the World Trade Center down the West Side Highway.

As soon as we got out of the car and we took our first few steps, we noticed the body parts in the street and I believe that's what we realized that this was going to be ugly. We proceeded to walk down the West Side Highway and we were trying to locate the command post, which was opposite the Trade Centers and in front of the World Financial Center.

We walked up to the command post. That's where we left Lieutenant Roger Moore, at the command post, and Chief Kowalczyk requested that I respond to the north side of the second tower because they were having a lot of problems there and he asked if I could take command of that area over there. I agreed to do that and Lieutenant Cacciola was going with me and she suggested that we make our way, instead of down the West Side Highway, over to the Trade 7 tower because there was stuff coming off the building, debris and some people were still jumping at that point. So we decided to go through the World Financial building, down the corridor, come out the other side and be on

the north side of the tower.

En route through there, she also suggested that we call our family members, make a quick phone call so they knew that we were safe, and I thought that was a good idea being that this was going to be an extended operation. So halfway through the corridor we stopped where there was a phone there and I called my wife and told her that she was going to see this on the news but not to worry, that I was safe, and I got off the phone. It was a quick conversation. I didn't have time to talk to her. Then she proceeded to call her mother and her sister.

While she was telling her sister that she was safe, what I perceived to be the building started rumbling, the one we were in, and it was my impression that a third plane hit the building we were in. I had no idea that the first tower was collapsing, which we couldn't see at that point. But we looked down the hall from where we came and we saw the building starting to come down, and it was actually the roof of that building, but we thought the whole building was coming down.

She dropped the phone and we proceeded to run to go out through the corridor into the Winter Garden

and try and run out the back way that way, out through the Winter Garden, but when we got down at the end of the hall and into the beginning of the Winter Garden, we saw the whole roof of the Winter Garden coming down and we knew that we couldn't make that an escape route. So we turned around and headed back into the corridor, and that's when it looked like a tidal wave of smoke was coming down the hall and it was just about to engulf us.

So it was my impression at that point that the whole building was going down, that a third plane hit the building, and that we were probably going to be dead at that point. So I just yelled to her to dive into the corner of the hall, that possibly we could have some protection, and she dove into one area and I dove into another area. The rumbling, the building was rumbling, and we thought the whole building was coming down, people were screaming in the hall, the smoke engulfed us, we couldn't see, and there was just a loud rumble, a jet rumbling, alarms started going off and we actually thought we were going to die at that point.

I don't know the time frame, how long that was going on for, but at one point everything went silent except for the alarm, a very, very loud alarm in

that building. Then we realized that the part we were in didn't collapse and then I got up and I had no idea where Lieutenant Cacciola was and I started to head back into the collapse here a little bit to see if I could find her, and that's when she yelled that she was behind me and she kept yelling and then I went back and through her voice I found her.

Then I knew we had to get out of there because either it was going to collapse some more or the smoke was going to kill us. So we started to try and figure out a way to get out back this way somehow, through the Winter Garden again, and people were coming by us, they were running hysterical, and someone came by with a flashlight and pointed to go in some direction, and we just kept going in that direction until we saw an opening and then we just climbed through some rubble and wound up outside.

At the point we got outside, I met up with a bunch of EMTs and a lot of people were injured outside, and it was still my impression at that point we were still under attack and a third plane hit our building. I still wasn't aware because when we got outside the whole area was covered with white smoke, thick white smoke that you couldn't see more than five feet in

front of you, if that much. I directed a bunch of EMTs to help whoever they could and leave the area and go where it's safe, and I had no idea where that was at that point because I was turned upside-down. I told them, I said, wherever they thought was safe, that's where they needed to go, and try and get these people out of here and that was it. I said they couldn't help anyone else at that point, they had to save themselves and just get whoever could out of there and that was all we could do at that point.

So they started to go and we started to get a few of the injured people up that were laying there. We were telling them they had to get up, even though they're injured, they couldn't stay, that we would have people to help move them and they had to just help themselves and, if they laid there, they probably were going to get killed. So most of them got up and started walking even though they were bleeding and whatever their injuries were, and we pointed the direction which way they should go. There was too many of them for us to treat by ourselves, plus we didn't have equipment at that point. So they left and kept going.

Q. You were sending them north on the West Side

Highway?

A. North. We were telling them to go north because we knew we were on this side, the north side of the tower and you couldn't go south. So we were sending them north and figured somewhere they would meet up with responding units coming in and they would receive aid and help. We were going the same way because we had to get out of the smoke because we still couldn't breathe, and I guess we turned, and I'm not positive of this, but maybe on Vesey Street and made our way down to North Avenue. Somewhere in that vicinity we saw a trailer, a parks restoration trailer, that's what I remember reading on the sign, and we saw people in there.

So we knocked on that door and they opened the door and let us in, and there was no smoke in there, so we were able to breathe a little again and they let us wash up, they gave us some water, they let us use the facilities, and then we tried to make some phone calls from there to see if we could get Citywide or whoever, but none of those calls were going through. Then we were able to get through to -- I was able to call my wife again, but for whatever reason, it wasn't letting calls go into Brooklyn. So on those

calls, I don't know why, but I was able to call my wife and no one else.

Then someone knocked on that door of the trailer and said the second building was going to collapse and it was probably going to collapse onto this trailer and you had to get out of here or you were going to die. So we came back out and there were scores of people still running north and we just got in with them and we started running with them. I guess we were going north on North Avenue and probably on Murray Street, instead of following the crowd north on North Avenue -- and I'm not positive but I think we turned on Murray and we went down to the driving path or whatever, the walkway on River Terrace, and that's where we watched that whole building collapse and we realized at that point that both towers were down and we thought we were still under attack at that point.

There was a large group of people with us and we started going north again on River Avenue until we came up to the school, and after the school is the West Side Highway to turn and go north again. But what happened at the school was there was a major gas leak coming out of there and PD came to us and said that this building was going to blow up and we had to get

everybody out of here, and at that point the school itself started filing out. So you had the large crowd from the North Terrace and then you had all the school emptying out.

So rather than keep going, we decided to help PD, because there was only a few of them, to try and get the school and these people out. At some point across the street there was some gunfire and the people started running back towards us and we knew they couldn't go back that way, so we formed a wall on North Terrace and we were getting almost stampeded but trying to turn these people around to make them go back to West Street, West Side Highway, and go that way. When we finally accomplished that, myself, Grace and the police officers doing this, we were pretty confident that that building was going to blow and we probably were going to get killed at that point again, and it was hard to rationalize that we were going to stand there and wait to get blown up because people didn't want to listen.

But we did that and we finally got everybody turned around and the building didn't blow, and then we went out to West Street and then we made our way up to a little further up West Street, and that's where we

turned out of the crowd and went into a golf course where there was a -- next to the golf course there was a ferry dock.

Do you want me to continue on that?

Q. Sure.

A. We were at the golf course. We tried to get our bearings together. I'm pretty sure both of us were pretty much in shock at that point and we tried to figure out what was going on. Then we left the golf course and we worked our way a little bit further west to where the ferry was and we directed people in how to get on the ferry or where the one ferry was docking, to get on and just go wherever it's going and get out of here because some people were a little hesitant. One woman wanted to go back to the Trade Center because she left something in the building and we tried to tell her it wasn't a good idea. We watched people get on the ferry, helped them on the ferries, and then we went into the shop where the guy that supposedly runs the ferry was there and he let us wash up and have a drink. I don't know how long we stayed in there, and that's when we decided do we keep going north or do we go back? We finally decided that we had to go back.

We came out of that shack, we went back to

the towers, as close as we could get, and at that point we realized that there was no one there, that anybody that was there was probably dead. There was no one. No one injured, there was no injuries, there was just devastation. There was nobody to help at that point. So we then left the Trade Center again.

This whole time we were out of radio contact with anybody. The radios didn't work, the phones didn't work. So we had no communications. We had no idea what plans were being made. So we decided to head north again on the West Side Highway, and at some point we met up with Captain Stone and Richie Zarrillo. Once we met with them, they had a little more information than we had, that there was a staging area set up at Chelsea Piers, which I guess was another two miles down the road, but at that point, I don't know how many hours we were there at that point, but we were in no shape to walk to the Chelsea Piers.

So we got a police van to turn around and take us. We lucked out because they were under a different direction, but I kind of like commandeered them and they took us to the Chelsea Piers. Again we refreshed ourselves, tried to get our thoughts together and tried to find out exactly what happened.

Do you want me to continue with the whole thing?

Q. That's good.

A. Cut off there?

Q. Yes. That covers the period that we're looking at.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or opinions?

A. Thoughts or opinions. Well, my thoughts are that, which has been since this happened, that both myself and Lieutenant Cacciola along with probably a lot of other people will have a lot of trouble sleeping and stuff, but my thoughts and opinions are that we felt that we were very helpless back at the scene, a building the size of the World Trade Center falling down and you can't do nothing at that point but run, and it was very frustrating that there was no one else after the buildings went down that needed help. Everybody was gone and that was very frustrating.

I don't know. That's it. We were convinced three different occasions inside of probably a two-hour period that we were going to die, once from the first building that we were in, then when the second collapse, then the gas leak. So it's a hard thing to

try and do your job and kind of be pretty sure that you were not going to survive. I guess that really messed us up and knowing that we lost everybody that we lost in the Trade Center that we know that didn't come out and we know that they were in there and it was very frustrating that they were in there and there was nothing we could do about it.

I guess there's nothing else to say. It's just that we were very frustrated that we couldn't do more than we did. I guess we were just happy to be alive, but it was a very frustrating experience.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thank you, chief. The time is now 0836. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110153

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GRACE CACCIOLA

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001. The time is now 0727 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Grace Cacciola, Lieutenant, Division 1.

Q. This interview is being conducted at the Division 1 office and is regarding the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

A. I was at the bureau training. I was in refresher. We were on a break when Chief Hirth came in to me at approximately 8:50, between 8:50 and 8:55. He said he was just paged that a plane had hit the towers or one of the towers. We assumed it was a small plane; however, we did think there were going to be numerous patients, only because of the time of the morning and the usual rush hour traffic. He said he was going to call RCC and Citywide to get details, because we may be leaving, being that he was that Division commander. We may be leaving to go help out in Manhattan, to get my stuff ready.

We went and made the phone calls. I went to the car, put everything in the car. PD SOD was chaotic. Citywide was starting with get very busy with air traffic. We got in the car, we called Citywide and

said they didn't need his response as of yet, but to stand by. Two seconds later, he said you know what, it's my borough, we will go in.

As we are driving out the second tower was hit. We realized at that point this was no little accident. Got into Manhattan. I would say -- actually I didn't look at the history, 15 minutes. We parked by -- actually Roger Moore was in the car with us also. He came with us. He was in refresher with us. It was so it was Chief Hirth and myself and Lieutenant Roger Moore. We parked by the mouth of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We got out of the car, first thing we saw was a severed torso, like 10 feet in front of us. There was a cop guarding the torso.

As we were walking up to the command post, people were still jumping out of the towers. There were body parts and fragments and blood all over the place. Mass chaos. Both towers were still standing at this point. We went over to the command post and at the command post we saw Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk, EMT Richie Zarrillo, Lieutenant Ross Terranova, Chief Ganci, Chief Sal Cassano, and then all aides, chauffeurs and what have you from the fire side.

Chief Gombo asked Chief Hirth to respond to

the north side of the north tower. They were getting numerous calls for numerous patients on that side. We said okay, we were going. We told them we would leave Roger Moore with them at the command post because Roger has problems walking, with his knees. So we left Roger Moore at the command post.

As we are walking, debris and people were still coming out of the towers so we were hugging the wall on West Street, but across the street from the towers, so we got -- I believe it was 2 Financial Plaza. I was very confused. It has to be 2 Financial Plaza when I look at this. I said to Chief Hirth, my cell phone had gone off, my family was frantic whether we were all right. He said how about we cut through the building. I said really fast just let me call home and tell them I'm all right, because my cell phone wasn't working. He said all right. That's a good idea. This way we were away from the debris. We can come out of 2 Financial Plaza up by Vesey Street. He says it will actually be safer so we aren't in any debris' way.

We walk in. Chief Hirth called his wife really quickly, told her we are here. It's chaos but we are safe. Don't worry about it. Then he handed me

the phone and I called my sister. As I was on the phone with my sister we heard the rumble. I screamed oh, my god and my sister thought I was dead, because she heard the rumble and the white cloud as the building came down, collapsed into -- again 2 Financial Plaza. We were chased with the white cloud.

We started running and we had to stop at one point because now the whole area filled with black smoke and the Winter Garden atrium collapsed in front of us, because we were going to go into the Winter Garden to cut outside but we couldn't do it, because we had the collapse of the front of 2 Financial Plaza into us and then the atrium coming at us from the other side.

We hit the ground, we just waited. In fact, I'm not sure -- we had a couple of cops with us, we had a couple of firemen. There was a female security guard from the building, and someone from maintenance, a male, from maintenance in the building. Somebody screamed we are just going to die here. Everybody just get on the floor. We got on the floor and it was pitch black and I believe it was Chief Hirth said we can't stay here. Then one of the firefighters screamed we are going to suffocate. We need to move now.

So we all held hands and we were climbing over the debris and I'm not sure, I think one of them had to have a little flashlight, because we really couldn't see where we were walking. Then the janitor had said I think the back is this way. If we walk this way we will find the back somewhere.

So we walked, and again, time line is so hard. You don't know if it was 2 minutes, because when we got up you actually didn't know what was up, what was down, if you were actually on the floor, on the wall. We finally saw light that led us outside. Once outside, we started treating people because there were people hurt all over the place, covered in the white dust, coughing, cuts, so we started helping out people there.

PD started screaming at us we need to move from here. We need to move. So we started funneling people with us that were hurt. There was a little trailer that they were using to fix the park, you know, they are fixing that whole area, that park.

Q. Right.

A. This was one of their facilities where -- their administrative trailer. So first they locked the door on us and PD ordered them to open the door. We

got inside. The people in there started cleaning us off and helping us. One of their workers came in totally covered in white soot. We took care of him, when, again, I think it was PD came screaming, we need to move from here. There is a threat of a gas line leak, I think they said at that point.

So we started moving from there. We started funneling people with us that were hurt. We still had all the injured with us. Tower two collapsed.

Everyone started running again. We started having people go toward Battery Park, you know, the pier, right down there by the ferry. We told everybody to start going there. So we are funneling people to run in that direction.

When we got to Stuyvesant High School, PD is now screaming confirmed gas leak. They were letting the kids out of school, kids were all frantic. We helped them evacuate the school. Again we were funneling them on to West Street going north. Then there was a gun shot across the street and supposedly, this is just what we were hearing over the PD radio, somebody had shot out one of the windows and I think it was Manhattan Borough Community -- is that what is directly across the street? I'm so bad. Another

school across -- directly across the street. They had shot out one of the windows to open the door, to put people into there. So when the kids heard the gun shot, everybody started stampeding back towards us, so we had to calm them down and get them to start going north again.

We got them going north. Once they were evacuated, we went back to the pier and started putting people on private ferries. Ferries were coming in and in fact, there was a little shed there with one of the ferry people and we asked him to start calling whoever he could on the phone to get more ferries here. He said he has been trying to do that but no one is answering the phone up north. We said you have to do whatever you can. Get on the radio. We need more ferries.

Ferries started coming in. Again we started funneling people on to the ferries, telling them to go into Jersey City. We met a lot of resistance. A lot of people didn't want to leave Manhattan. That's like where are they going to take us. We were like, does it matter? You really need to get out of here right now.

Everyone left on ferries, then we finally started to hear radio communications again, because we

had no radio communications that whole time. We met up, while we were walking, we met up with Richie Zarrillo again, and he says they want everybody to go to the Chelsea Piers. So we started walking towards the Chelsea Piers and then we met up with Captain Stone and EMT Gregg Brady and I think at one point it was Commissioner Gribbon.

Q. Gribbon?

A. Commissioner Gribbon, yes. We started walking towards the Chelsea Piers. Captain Stone was complaining he had trouble breathing at this time and shoulder pain, so when we made it up to the pier we had asked that he be transported to the hospital, so they gave us a command car. We actually took him to the hospital, dropped him off at Bellevue and went back to the site.

When we went back to the site, we actually went back to Ground Zero. Chief McCracken was there and I saw Chief Peruggia and they were trying to formulate a plan for the on going events of that night into the following morning.

They had asked us -- now it was like maybe 5 p.m. at this point. 4 or 5 p.m. He had said he needed us to probably go home so this way we can be back by 4,

5 a.m. the following morning. We said okay. Now in order to walk back, we had to go around to -- what's that street in Battery Park City, the first street.

Q. South End?

A. South End, yes. We had to go around to South End Avenue. While we were walking, they were removing Chief Ganci's body. Lieutenant Scullion was there. And we stood with him as they were removing Chief Ganci's body. They had just put him on the bus and now they were going to go remove Commissioner Feehan's body. They wanted him on the same bus.

We walked with -- the bus drove around the corner and we followed the bus around the corner. When we got around the corner they said it was going to take a few minutes because he was still stuck in the hole. So they were trying to get him out. Father Delendic was there. Chief McFarland and I believe Captain Pineda.

So while we were standing there, one of the firefighters from SOC came over and I thought he had said he had a bag and he said [redacted]

[redacted]

Then I think he sort of got a little upset by it and then John McFarland took it from him and then he placed it in the bus. It was going to be prolonged to get Commissioner Feehan out, so Chief Hirth said you know what, they told us to leave. Why don't we go back to the Battalion to make sure the rest of Manhattan is running and all the units are in place, because we have to come back early in the morning.

We came back here. Chief Hirth spoke to the units downstairs and spoke to the units at Bellevue. Made sure everybody was all right and accounted for at that point. Then we came back the following morning and were assigned to the ferry terminal.

Q. Okay. When you parked at the mouth of the Battery that was the Manhattan side?

A. The Manhattan side.

Q. How did you come up to the command post, do you remember? I know you said you walked, but do you remember what route you came?

A. We were on -- are you considering this north and south or vice versa?

Q. This is north.

A. East and west.

Q. South. West.

A. Okay. We were on the east side of West Street, where -- up until -- we were by -- we passed the torso. That was like 10 feet in front of us. Debris was still falling and actually debris was actually reaching that far down. That's when Chief Hirth said let's get away from that side of the street and we crossed over and then we were on West Street, on the west side the whole time up.

Q. Okay. Where was the command post?

A. The command post was set up in the driveway, again, I believe, of 2 World Financial Plaza. Wasn't it somewhere along here? I'm really bad with maps and directions. That's why they don't let me drive.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a little ramp and that's where they had set up, right in front.

Q. Then after the collapses you continued up?

A. We stopped here at the command post. We got where we needed to go. We cut through here so we wouldn't have to walk on West Street. That's why we walked from here. We were going to come right out here to go to Vesey Street. While we were in here is when

the first collapse occurred.

Q. Okay.

A. Then we cut out this way around the back.

Q. Around the back.

A. Then we went through the Winter Garden after it had collapsed, because we had to wait for all the glass to finish coming through. That was the only way out for us. We ended up outside on Vesey Street and West, but actually on Vesey.

Q. Here?

A. Right. Then we walked, I believe it had to be North End to Stuyvesant, because then we came up and around.

Q. Where were you when the second building came down?

A. When the second building came down we were, I believe on North and Vesey. Then we went back to -- that's when we walked to Stuyvesant. We were still funneling the people northbound, but we actually stopped them at Stuyvesant High School, then we went back into Battery Park by the piers.

Q. Any opinions or comments?

A. No. There was no way -- there is no way to ever critique or Monday morning quarterback what

happened. There is no way, I feel, I personally feel, any of us could have been prepared for what happened. All the training in the world. I mean we could be going to the academy every single day. Nothing could have prepared us for what happened.

Q. Right. Okay. I have two quick questions on names you gave. Richard Zarillo?

A. Yes.

Q. He is an EMT. Do you know where he is assigned?

A. Operations.

Q. Gregg Brady?

A. September 11 he was assigned to Division 1. He was a Chief's aide. Currently he is at Battalion 4.

Q. Okay.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thanks again. Have a good day. The time is now 0744. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110154

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF OF THE DEPARTMENT DANIEL NIGRO

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: I'm Assistant Commissioner James Drury. I'm present in Chief of the Department Daniel Nigro's office on October 24, 2001. It is 3:54 p.m.

As I said, we are in the Chief of the Department's office on the 7th floor in headquarters. I'm here to conduct an interview as part of the World Trade Center task force.

Q. Just for the record, would you identify yourself?

A. Daniel Nigro, Chief of Department.

Q. Chief, at this time I'm going to direct your attention to September 11 of the year 2001, and direct your attention to the incident at the World Trade Center and ask you when you first became aware that there might be a problem at that location?

A. I was in my office at somewhere between 8:45 and 8:50 on Tuesday. I heard Pete Ganci yell from his office, which we are sitting in right now, look out your window, a plane just hit the World Trade Center, because the north tower is clearly visible from the Chief of Operations office. That's how it began for me.

At that point, Chief Ganci and I, along with

his executive officer Steve Mosiello, took the elevator down to the C-1 level. My aide for the day, Adam Vilagos, took my car with two officers from Engine 91 to assist at the command post.

Q. Is he a fire fighter?

A. Fire fighter. We responded there. Our car was right behind a car in which Donald Burns was traveling. He was the off going city wide tour commander, and the Trade Center was clearly visible for the whole ride, especially from the Brooklyn Bridge. We took the Brooklyn Bridge. At some point as we approached Manhattan, Chief Ganci got on the radio as we discussed what we were going to do when we got there and transmitted a fifth alarm.

Q. For the record Chief, what does a fifth alarm mean?

A. It was already a third alarm assignment, which would be approximately 14 engines and maybe 8 ladder companies. The fifth alarm would give us a couple of additional chiefs, 8 additional engines and 6 additional truck companies. We continued over the Brooklyn Bridge, past City Hall, across Barclay Street. We could clearly see that people were actually running forth from the scene and both Church and West

streets as we continued west and we parked our car somewhere on approximately West and Vesey. I believe field com was in the process of setting up a command post in the middle of West Street, where there was an island that runs up the street, which we felt to be too close to the building because of debris that was already falling and had fallen in the street and we moved the exterior command post across West Street to the garage entrance in front of, I believe the address would be 2 World Financial Center.

At that point, also, on the scene, to my knowledge, were Assistant Chief Burns, Assistant Chief Barbara, Assistant Chief Cassano and Assistant Chief Callan. Chief Callan was placed in command of the lobby command post of the north tower where the plane had hit, and he left the exterior command post to go into the lobby to join the first division that was already there.

At some point after our arrival and after we had moved to the west side of West Street, I heard a loud roar of a jet, looked up and saw the second plane impact the south tower. At that point it was clear to me it was a terrorist attack. Earlier I didn't know what it was. I assumed it was an accident. I turned

around and saw the Mayor, with his large group, including the Commissioner and I went back to speak with him for a moment, regarding the fact that I believe this to be a terrorist attack. When I got back to business at the command post, I noticed the Mayor had left that area and that was the last I saw of him until that night I suppose.

Chief Ganci and myself directed Chief Burns and Chief Barbara to the south tower, along with Chief Ray Downey. Ray took, I think all of the companies that were assembled behind us at the command post to the south tower to assist in the evacuation of that building. At that point, I told Chief Ganci I was going to quickly walk around the perimeter of the Trade Center to assess the degree of damage to the two towers, because our vantage point on West Street only allowed us a view of the west side of the building. I took my aide with me. We walked east on Vesey Street, stopped in front of 7 World Trade Center to speak to EMS Chief Peruggia, who gave me a quick update about victims on that side of the building.

Q. What was that update if you recall?

A. He told me how many jumpers he felt had hit the plaza, which we knew we couldn't help and that the

people that were already injured were being removed to where the ambulances were staging, which was north of the Trade Center on West Street. I don't recall him giving me any number of people injured.

We stepped over small airplane aviation parts, on Vesey, continued west, continued looking at the building. I looked up at the south tower and could see that it was more heavily damaged than we could tell from our west vantage point. That the second plane had - although it hit from the south, it also did a great deal of damage to the north part of the building. As I got on to Church Street, I walked south on Church towards Liberty, where I was going to turn right. I looked up at the east side of the south tower and found that to be also very heavily damaged, which we couldn't see. I was going to report that information back to Chief Ganci.

I was stopped briefly by a person who used to work here in headquarters, whose name escapes me, Gabe Delapena, who used to work here until a few months ago, who was very very - I wouldn't have stopped, but he was very very concerned that his wife worked on the 92 floor of the south tower. I just recall telling him that hopefully she came down when the first plane hit

and that maybe she was in the area. That's the last I saw of him. He survived and she didn't. After I spoke to him we proceeded south, heard a loud noise, knew it to be the building coming down, looked up, saw the building coming down on us. I grabbed my aide as he was going to go south and I took him east on Dey Street, and we got as far as we could until materials started crashing down and took refuge in a doorway of a building just east of the Millennium Hotel and survived in the doorway.

When all the noise stopped and all the dust stopped, and we were able to get out of our position, we started walking east. We couldn't see if anything was left standing because of the dusk and the darkness that was created. You couldn't see at all from that vantage point anything maybe above the second story level, or more than 50 or 100 feet ahead of you.

So I decided to go east and then south and come back around on to West Street to get to the command post that way, which proved to be a good decision because at some point, east and south of - I don't know what street we were on, we heard the noise again and knew that it was now the north tower coming down. Same huge dust cloud enveloped everybody. We

waited out the dust cloud for a few minutes. We had handy talkies turned to a few different channels and we heard a few messages, but very little, especially after the second collapse. More people calling in car 3, which is Chief Ganci, or other people that would be at the command post and not getting an answer.

At that point we didn't know -- I knew a very very large number of people were killed, but I didn't know about the command post. I was worried but there was no way of telling yet. As we continued around to get back to West Street, we got over just south of - I guess it would be south of Rector on West and found the large communications tractor trailer vehicle with two dispatchers that were set up there and they had Dr. Prezant and Dr. Kelly with them and two members of engine or ladder 10 and that was it.

I asked them, we wanted to get back to the command post, where was the command post now set up, because they were communicating with both a dispatcher and whoever was at the scene and I was told that the command center was now at Barclay and Broadway at the tip of City Hall Park and Chief Haring was in charge, Deputy Chief Haring, division 6, which was the first mention of his name, that message. I felt that

everyone else was killed, everyone else that was a ranking member of the Department, if that was the case.

We walked up to that location. Dr. Kelly, Prezant and two members of engine 10 and my aide and myself walked up amidst the dust and the paper, got there and found out that -- the first semi-good news, that another command post was indeed operating at West and Chambers and that Assistant Chief Carruthers was in charge up there. I left Chief Haring in charge of his operation. They were putting out fires in the Trinity Church area and in the area around 5 World Trade Center, Fulton Street. I went up to the other command center, found Chief Carruthers, Deputy Assistant Chief Michael Butler, and started to find out who was missing and who had survived. So Chief Callan was there and alive. I was told Chief Cassano was taken to the hospital. Chief Burns and Barbara were missing, as was Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan and numerous other people.

At some point after I was briefed, I took command of the operation from the Chambers Street post and was told that Chief Fellini was at the forward operations post at West and Vesey, from which the

search, rescue and extinguishment was being directed of what was left of the complex.

Steve Mosiello and Chief Turi told me they had been looking for Chief Ganci. They thought they knew where he was, unsuccessfully, and they were going back to - I walked back down to the area where he was and sometime after that they found Chief Ganci. He was like the first person that I knew of that they found in the rubble. He was somewhere across West Street from the Trade Center. The most important operational decision to be made that afternoon was the collapse had damaged 7 World Trade Center, which is about a 50 story building, at Vesey between West Broadway and Washington Street. It had very heavy fire on many floors and I ordered the evacuation of an area sufficient around to protect our members, so we had to give up some rescue operations that were going on at the time and back the people away far enough so that if 7 World Trade did collapse, we wouldn't lose any more people.

We continued to operate on what we could from that distance and approximately an hour and a half after that order was given, at 5:30 in the afternoon, 7 World Trade Center collapsed completely. I continued to operate at the scene until probably somewhere around

8 o'clock, at which time I borrowed Chief Meyers' car, because mine was destroyed and went home to say hello, shower, change my clothes and came back to work at approximately between 11 and midnight with Chief Turi.

That does it for September 11.

Q. Just a few questions, Chief. Were you actually on Liberty when the south tower started to come down?

A. I was on Church.

Q. Near Liberty?

A. Probably between Dey and Cortlandt and I went back a few paces and then ran east on Dey and that's where we ended up. I think if I look at this map, the building we took refuge was the Dey Street side of 195 Broadway.

Q. As you were doing the tour, did you have any further communication with Chief Ganci over the radio as you observed the --

A. No.

Q. Did you notice civilians evacuating through the concourse on Church Street which I guess had an exit from the north tower?

A. They were exiting everywhere, but I don't recall if I could see where they were coming out of.

Q. Did you happen to see any triage centers set up by EMS on Church or Vesey?

A. I thought Chief Peruggia told me they were triaging at 7 World Trade Center, where he was. I didn't see any other that I can recall.

Q. So there was no radio communications between you and any of the command posts as you were coming around doing the tour?

A. I don't believe so.

Q. After the first tower collapsed, I think you mentioned you might have heard some calls over the handy talkies?

A. Yes. I heard someone trying to contact car 3 with no answer. Maybe I thought someone was trying to contact car 2 or one of the 4s, and again no answer. Not much else.

Q. Did you ever make it into the FDNY command center that was inside the lobby of the north tower?

A. No.

Q. What about the command center that I believe you said Burns and Barbara left to set up?

A. No, Chief Burns and Chief Barbara were going to 2 World Trade and I didn't make it into any of the buildings.

Q. Can you tell us if, as you started your tour, if you noticed rigs and ambulances down West Street or on Vesey or anything like that?

A. We were set up on every street. I know before I started, before I started, I directed a couple of officers, I think one of them, was it, was the Captain of 290 engine, Sudnik, he is a Chief now, to insure that the rigs didn't block West Street so that ambulances could get in and out. Because we have a tendency to, when we have that many rigs coming in for a fifth alarm, close the streets. If we needed to take away many injured people, which we were hoping we would be doing that day, we would need a clear path up and down West Street. So I know I directed him and possibly another officer to make sure the rigs on West Street parked to the curbs so that ambulances could get between them. I took off east on Vesey.

Q. Stepping back for a moment to when you were coming over the Brooklyn Bridge, could you make a determination based on a visual from that distance how involved or fully involved the fire was and how many floors?

A. It looked to me like it was involving about 10 floors of the building, and the way it was burning,

I stated to Chief Ganci on the way there that I didn't believe we could extinguish the fire.

Q. That was based on what?

A. The number of floors I think. The volume of fire on the number of floors. To my recollection, we had never put out a fire that involved that many floors in a high rise building in this city before. I think more or less the direction of - in both towers ended up, evacuation was the main, the initial concern. Get as many people out of the building as we could.

Q. Did you ever hear any communications over the radio before the first collapse that OEM thought the buildings could collapse and to get out of the area?

A. No, I heard later from an individual that somebody came over from OEM to the command post after I left and told Chief Ganci the building was unstable and that was moments before it came down. The only thing I do remember and I didn't hear it over the radio, I don't think, was that a third plane was heading in the direction, I assumed was heading in the direction of the Trade Center, that there was a third plane, then a little later on somebody told me about the plane that hit the Pentagon. I don't know who told me that. The third plane was -- I don't think it came over the handy

talky. I think somebody walked up to me and told me, somebody of some credibility, that it wasn't just a person on the sidewalk, but someone either with us or the police or EMS that I knew, because I recall taking it as a serious issue.

Q. The last point where you saw Chief Downey was at the command center on West Street?

A. Yes, after the second plane hit, he told me I want to take all these units and start evacuating the stairwells in the south tower. I said okay, good. Take them. And Ray gathered all those units up, however many there were, and marched them across the street. I don't know exactly how he got there, because we were concerned with the jumpers that were coming down out of the north tower at the time.

My assumption was he was going to take them south and go across through to the hotel to get into the tower.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: We are going to end this now Chief. The time is 4:20. I thank you very much.

File No. 9110155

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROBERT BROWNE

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 24, 2001. The time is 2140. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, title and assigned command area.

A. ROBERT BROWNE, deputy chief, Division 4.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present?

MR. KIMBALL: Robert Kimball, EMT, chief's aide, Fire Department.

Q. Chief Browne, were you working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was working that morning.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Could you please in your own words tell me about the events of the day?

A. I had logged on at eight o'clock in the

morning, and I was enroute to the division office, and I got to approximately about 164th Street and the Grand Central Parkway when I heard the first radio reports there was possibly an incident going on at the World Trade Center.

I made a quick phone call to the Division 4 office and spoke to Sal Sangeniti and asked him what did it look like, you know, did he have anything more on it, and he said, "You better go. It sounds like it's a big one."

So I said all right, and I started heading into the job, and as I was -- naturally, as I was heading down the Grand Central Parkway, more and more information was coming in, and it sounded like it was very serious, and the reports from citywide radio were pretty chilling, and I knew that we would be going to work and having a busy day, so just trying to put my thoughts together, thinking back to '93 of what went on in '93 when I was there, and trying to get as much information as I could.

I actually put on 1010 WINS on the radio in the car, trying to get more information, because a lot of the information was being drowned out on citywide with all the numerous units coming up and stuff, and I

guess I made it down onto the FDR. I went over the Triborough, down the FDR Drive. The FDR Drive in spots was partially closed by police officers, and I started to make some good time, and I guess as I got around down by the U.N., they were reporting over the radio that a second plane had hit the second tower.

Swung around west -- I swung around the battery, and I came up on West Street out of the tunnel from the east side, and there was an officer standing blocking my way, and he was -- he was trying to direct me over out of the way because there was bodies scattered along West Street all the way back as far as the tunnel at that location, and I was in amazement. I couldn't believe it.

I pulled up a little bit further onto -- by the Downtown Athletic Club on West Street there, and I pulled over, and I parked my car at that spot.

Q. Can you indicate on the map where you parked your vehicle?

A. Yeah. Probably -- let's see. Probably somewhere in this vicinity right here, down here.

Q. Do you know what vehicle number that was?

A. 792.

Q. 792?

A. Yeah.

Q. Also chief, on that day, were you working with somebody?

A. No, I was by myself. As a matter of fact, it was my first official tour as a deputy chief with the department, and I did not have an aide at that time.

As I pulled up, I parked my car, grabbed my gear out of the car, and at that point, Chief Carasquillo and Sal Sangeniti had pulled up alongside of me with, I believe, Jason Katz, who was Billy Day's aide, and Billy was out, so I yelled over to Pete, would it be all right if I take Jason and keep Jason with me, and he said yeah, sure, no problem.

And I reported to the command post at that point.

Q. Where was the command post?

A. The command post was located on West Street, basically almost right in between Tower 1 and Tower 2 on the west side of the street over by the Winter Garden. That's where I -- when I got into the command post, Chief Gombo, and Chief Kowalczyk -- and Chief Kowalczyk appeared that he had just pulled up there himself, because he was just putting his coat.

I reported in and I asked them what they

needed of me, what assignment they had for me, and they told me they wanted me to go to Liberty and West Street and run the operation at the corner of Liberty and West Street.

So with that I grabbed my aide, Jason, and we started heading back towards Liberty and West Street. We were walking back. We just left the command post. There was a lot of debris coming down off the building, and I turned around to Jason and I told Jason, "Make sure you have your chin strap on you your helmet. Don't just have it sitting on your head. Make sure you secure it to your head," and with, that a large piece of debris was coming down, sailing off the building. I remember looking up watching, because I was afraid that we were going to get hit with something, and it had to be almost the size of a Volkswagen car, a sheet of metal almost the size of a Volkswagen car, and it was -- it was burned. It was glowing red, and it just landed in the street in front of us, maybe 20 feet in front of us.

I turned around to Jason and I said, "Look, man, you got to be real careful. This is bad." I said, something -- you know, so he said, "All right," and we headed off to West Street down to West and

Liberty. I got to the corner of West and Liberty, and on the east side -- on the east corner of West and Liberty, just underneath the foot bridge that crosses over, there were probably about three or four ambulances parked there, and all the personnel were out of their rigs with their equipment, but they were standing more towards the corner of -- they were more towards the Liberty Street side, just off of West, and they seemed to be like all in amazement. They were all standing there, staring up, looking at what was going on, and none of them had helmets on.

A couple of them were Metro Care units. There was a voluntary unit there, one of our units, and we had units on the west side of Liberty, as well, standing there. Some of them had some gear on. Some of them had some helmets on, and I remember saying to Jason, "Jason, do me a favor. Let's take a piece of paper out, go over there, and identify who those people are. If they have helmets, make sure they get them on. If they don't have helmets, let me know." I said, "We need to get them out of here, you know, put them into an area that's back a way and little bit further."

Timewise, I'm not real good with the time frame, but I might have been there maybe ten minutes,

and I don't know if I heard it over the radio, or if I heard it over somebody else's radio, or if somebody else just yelled, and they said, "Watch out! The building's coming down."

And with that, I can remember turning around, and I was standing right on the corner of West and Liberty, on the east corner of West and Liberty, and I can remember turning around and looking up at the building and seeing a very, very large section of the building just coming -- coming straight down at us with a sound like I have never heard before in my entire life, that it -- I had thought for a moment that another plane had come, that had hit the building. That's how loud the sound was.

I remember turning to everybody and looking and just telling them to run. I told them all just run, run, and that's pretty much what happened. I mean, I got -- it was basically a free-for-all, I think, at that point for everybody.

I ran, and I could feel the -- I could feel the air changing behind me, and I just said to myself that I was going to -- that I was going to run as far as I could until I felt something either hit me and knock me down or until -- until it knocked me down.

I probably got about 20 feet or so, because I thought I was going to be able to get pretty far, but I only managed to get from the corner of West and Liberty to underneath the foot bridge, which was probably maybe only about 20 or 30 feet. I don't even know if it's that far, and I got hit in the back of the head with a small object, which startled me a little bit, and then I got struck across my back with a larger object, which knocked me to the ground, and at that point, I said, "Well, I guess I'm just going to stay right here," and I can remember grabbing my chin strap and holding onto my chin strap on my helmet, and just hoping that it didn't come off. I was afraid I was going to have a head trauma or something. I didn't want to wind up a vegetable after this thing, and I can remember praying, asking Him not to take me, and if He was going to take me, please make it fast.

At that point, it was like -- it got totally pitch black. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't breathe. There was a wave that was -- I don't know if you're a beach person, but if you're a beach person and you ever been in the ocean, and you have a large wave come over you, and you can just feel it keep coming and coming. It's like the debris just kept coming and

piling up and piling up, and when it finally did stop, I wasn't sure if I was alive or if I was dead.

It was pitch black. I had something very heavy across my back. I had something across my legs, because I remember trying to move my legs, because I was stuck under whatever, this debris, and I wasn't able to move.

I can remember reaching for my radio and calling out a Mayday for the corner of Liberty and West, and nobody answered. There was no answer. It was just dead quiet, and I just assumed at that point that everybody was gone, and I wasn't -- I couldn't -- you know, I didn't call out any more.

Then as the thick black, black smoke and blackness around me started to clear a little bit, and it started to get a little bit grayer, kind of like got to a dark gray, and then it got like a lighter gray, I could hear -- as it started to get lighter, I could hear people from the distance yelling for help. I could hear people saying, "Help me, I'm over here," or "Help me, I'm over there," and I started doing the same thing.

I started calling out for help because I was unable to free myself from where I was, and I called

out several times, and then finally I heard somebody answer, and they said, "Relax. We can see you. We're going to get you. Just take it easy. Just stay where you are."

And probably a couple of minutes later they got some of this debris off me, and they managed to get whatever it was that was on my back -- I believe it was a chunk of concrete or -- I don't know what exactly, a piece of metal. I'm not sure even sure exactly what it was that was on my back, and I had a large piece of metal across my legs. That's why I couldn't move my legs, but these two guys that got me out were like amazing. I couldn't believe it.

It was a guy from a react team and a Hatzolah paramedic, and when I got up from the pile, I guess I kind of just dusted myself off a little bit and tried to regain my composure, and I started looking for Jason, who had been with me, my aide, and I couldn't find him, and I assisted this paramedic from Hatzolah and the react guy in removing a couple of other people that were trapped in some debris out of that, and then all of a sudden Jason appeared, and he was hurt. His hand was hurt. He was a mess, and we sat him down.

I was trying to find Chief Wells. I had just

prior to -- two minutes before the building going down, I had had a conversation with Chief Wells, and he had told me that he was going into the building with 18 Charlie, and he was much closer towards the tower than I was, and I was unable to find him.

Q. You need to take a break?

A. No, I'm all right.

Q. If you do, it's fine.

A. No, I'm okay.

So we tried to gather up as many people from that area as I possibly could, tried to put some sort of semblance of a team back together to see what we could do at that point, and I can remember Chief Wells coming up out of the middle of the pile over on -- over close towards the tower, and it was like I was just so relieved to see him at that point, you know, a special place in my heart. Charlie and I are good friends. It was devastating to think that he was gone at that point.

So we gathered up, started to take care of some of the people that were injured. We collected the people, and we kept them underneath that foot bridge there on the very west section by the World Financial Center there, and we bandaged up a few people, tried to

get them together. There was no radio contact.

I didn't know where anybody else was, and then I don't know how much time actually transpired between the time that we took care of some of our members that were injured, and the next thing I know, the north tower collapsed, and again, that horrible sound, and we all just ran. We all ran again.

I didn't want to take my chance out on the street again that time. The financial center was there. A large window on the ground floor had been blown out from the first collapse. I was able to jump through that window with Jason and Chief Wells, and I didn't know if I should go completely through the building or if I should stay in there and whatever. Like I said, it was a coin toss.

I went in the building. I ran to the left as I entered the building. I found a bakery that was there. At that point, I lost Jason, because I think Jason went straight through. He ran straight through the building. I lost Chief Wells.

I ran into the bakery, and when I got into the bakery, there was a back room. I ran behind the counter and went to the back room, and there were two large freezers in there, and I went in there and I

knelt -- I knelt in the corner facing the freezer as the debris was hitting the building, and the windows blew out in the place, and all that -- all over again. Relived the whole thing over again, with all that black, thick, choking smoke, unable to see, the fear that -- whether or not that building was going to hold up, and, again, I don't know how long I was in there, but I was in there with -- there were three other gentlemen in the room with me when it started to clear. One guy was a photographer for the Daily News. The other guy was a transit worker or something, and I think the other guy was just a regular Joe, just a civilian who followed us, you know.

I hope he didn't follow me because I thought I knew where I was going, because he'd be shit out of luck if he did, but we all stayed in there.

I can remember it starting to clear a little bit once again, checked with them to make sure that -- checked with them to make sure that they were all all right, and I remember telling them, "Come on guys. We got to get out of here. I don't know if this building is going to hold up," because so much debris hit the building, I didn't know what kind of shape it was in, and I certainly didn't want to get caught in there,

because nobody would have known we were ever in there. We could have been in there forever.

So we tried to make it out on the -- tried to exit out of the West side of the building to South End Avenue, and there was a whole bunch of debris blocking the doorway for our exit out, so the four of us stood there and grappled through the debris enough so we could climb up over some of the stuff and exit out onto the avenue.

When I got out onto south end avenue, there was an ambulance sitting right there, perfect shape, no problem. It was running. I said, oh, troops. Somebody else is here. That's so good, and I went running up to the truck, and naturally it was locked, just running, sitting there, but I was -- I was pretty stunned at that point, and I think that's the first time when I heard what appeared to be or what I thought in my mind was that we were going to be bombed, because I heard a fighter jet overhead, and when I heard the fighter jet overhead, Jason had come out of a store across the street on South End Avenue, and we looked at each other, and I said, "You all right?" He said, "Yeah, I'm okay. I can keep going."

I said, "Okay, good. Come on, we got to get

away from here." I said, "I don't know what's going on yet." I said, "We got to get away from here. I have no communication with anybody." I said, "Let's just move away from here."

So I gathered anybody that was on the street there at that point, because people were starting to straggle out of the stores and stuff, and I told them, "Come on. You got to keep moving, keep moving." And I made it to the -- again, I heard that jet and I thought we were going to be bombed, and I started to run, and there was a cop that appeared on the corner, and he says, "Don't run. It's one every ours." He says, "It's one of ours. Don't worry."

And that was quite a -- quite a moment of relief, knowing that it wasn't, you know, whoever had done this horrible thing to us, that they weren't now going to just be bombing us.

I got to the corner of Albany and South End, and I encountered four firefighters carrying a firefighter with Commissioner Gregory and Dr. Kelly, and they needed an ambulance, and I looked down -- I looked down the block at the river promenade that runs along the Hudson River on Albany Street, and there were four ambulances down there, so Jason ran down there,

got one of the ambulances, brought it back up.

We loaded the firefighter in the ambulance, and they took him off to the hospital. So with those three ambulances that were down there, I said, "Come on, let's go down to the water." And Commissioner Gregory had mentioned that the fire boat was going to be coming up to that location, so I went down there, and there were probably five or six, seven EMS personnel. I couldn't tell you who they are, what the names were, who they worked for, but they were there, and I think one crew was from Flushing Hospital, and there were hundreds and hundreds of people just running down that promenade.

All kinds of boats were pulling up. The fire boat had pulled up and docked. Several other boats -- a police boat. There was a tug boat there. There were civilian boats pulling up, willing just to take people, hand them off over onto the boat, and they were going to take them off on over to Jersey for us.

I got together the crews there, and we kind of put a little makeshift triage area together, and we would evaluate people before we put them on the boat to see which ones -- because we wanted to put all the noninjured people on one boat, and we wanted to put the

injured people on another boat, and, again, I can't tell you how long I operated at that location. It must have been an hour and a half, maybe two hours. I'm not even sure. But we loaded hundreds and hundreds of people onto those boats that were there.

At one point Charlie Wells just appeared again out of the blue, and it was a great moment. I was so happy to see him, because I had lost him in the second collapse again. I remember we hugged each other, and we said, you know, to each other, "You all right? You all right?" And he said "Yeah," and he says, "I'm going back. I'm going to do some stuff. You stay here, do what you got to do," and he took off.

Probably about 15 or 20 minutes later, Chief Villani walked up the promenade and told me that they were setting up a major area down at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and that I should make my way down there with whatever resources that I had, so that's what we did.

We gathered up the people that I could gather. We confiscated one of these little golf carts that somebody was using up and down the promenade. We took that from them, and I loaded all these people on that, and we started heading down towards the Staten

Island Ferry Terminal.

I got probably about two blocks away, and I encountered a paramedic from Battalion 57 -- I don't know the kid's name -- running in the opposite direction that we were going, towards us, and he was screaming at the top of his lungs. He was in a panic, and he was yelling, "There's a gas leak! There's a gas leak! There's going to be an explosion. You have to get out of here. You have to get out of here."

And he was really -- he was wild. He was real wild, and I jumped off the cart, because he ran right by me, and I jumped off the cart, and I chased him down, and I grabbed him, and I put him against the wall, and I kind of shook him, and I told him, "Look, relax. You're going to be okay. Everything is fine."

I told him who I was. I said, "Come on, you're coming with me," and he was like in this panic, and I told him again, "You're going to be fine. You're coming with us. You're going to be okay," and I convinced him. He calmed down a little bit. He was shaken. He started crying.

I put him on the cart, and we headed down. We got around the vicinity of the North Cove Marina, and they were doing major evacuations into Jersey out

of the North Cove Marina, and there was a police lieutenant and a police sergeant standing in the middle of the roadway, not allowing anybody to proceed past there, because he said there is a gas leak or there is a report of a gas leak. He says everybody has to evacuate lower Manhattan.

So at that point, we got on a police launch and went to Jersey. As I hopped on the police launch, this buddy of mine that I fish with all the time, who works for harbor, he said, "Are you all right? Is Chief McCracken okay? You know, what's the deal? Did everybody make it from Rockaway?" I said, "Look, I don't know." I said, "I couldn't tell you anything," and we made it over to the dock in Jersey in a matter of minutes, maybe five minutes or so. Scooted us right over there.

I got off the launch. One of the EMTs that was rushing with us from Flushing Hospital, she started having like an asthma attack or something. She was having some sort of reaction. I don't know what it was, and I made sure that all of them stayed there and went up to the medical treatment area up there to get seen.

At that point, I turned around with Jason. I

said, "Jason, I got to go back. I can't stay here." I said, "I can't stay here and just receive victims here." I said "I need to go back."

Jason said, "Okay, I'm going with you." He says, "I'm still all right," and I yelled to my buddy, and he told me -- he says, "I'll be back in five minutes." He said, "I'll take you back with me next trip."

And in the interim, another police boat pulled in, and when the police boat was getting ready to pull out, I just hopped on that boat and got back, and I made it down to -- I got back into the North Cove Marina, and I made it down into the spot in Battery Park where the Indian Museum is. It's right by the launch for the Liberty Island thing, and there was probably maybe five or six ambulances parked there, and Chief Mark Stefans was there in charge of that operation. He was told to go there, and that's where he was, and he had several EMTs there.

They weren't seeing any patients. It was that same frustration that I think that everybody felt that whole time after the first initial patients prior to the building going down. Everybody was just kind of just standing around in wonderment, wondering where are

all the victims, and he was there, and they took care of me there.

I was having a lot of trouble with my eyes. I couldn't see really well. I could hardly open my eyes at that point from all the stuff that was in my eyes, and I don't really think that I was feeling anything yet as far as injuries or anything like that, because I was kind of just running on adrenaline, and all I could remember was that I wanted to call home to let them know I was alive. I was unable to get out. I couldn't reach anybody.

I probably stayed there with Mark Stefans probably about 25 or 30 minutes. Again, I don't know. It could have been and hour and a half, it could have been two hours. My time line is horrible. I'm sorry, but we were there for awhile, and I turned around to Mark and I said, "Mark, we're not doing anything here." I said, "Everybody is just, you know, maybe a half a mile away at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Maybe that is where we should take all these resources. Let's pack them up. Let's go down there, and we'll shut this thing down and go down here. We are not seeing anybody here."

So that was what we did. We talked about it

and he decided yeah, okay, we'll do that, and we got everybody together, packed up all our stuff, got the ambulances and all, and sent them down there, and Chief Stefans and I walked from that location down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and as I walked into the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, I guess I had reached my point where I could probably no longer function, and I walked in, and I can remember seeing Dr. Richman's face, and Dr. Richman took one look at me, and he says, "Bobby," he says, "You got to lie down." So I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right."

He says, "No, you're done. You are not working any more." He said, "Lie down. Let us take care of your eyes." He says -- you know, and that's when I tried to lay down, I couldn't lay down. I realized that my back was injured, that I had something wrong with my back, and I couldn't lay down at that point, and they flushed my eyes. They took some vital signs, and the next thing I know, I was getting in the back of an ambulance and going off to the hospital, and I believe I went to the hospital sometime in the vicinity around three o'clock or 3:30 in the afternoon, so, again, my time -- what areas where I thought I was only for like 15, 20 minutes, it could have been a lot

longer, and so somewhere along there all that time transpired, but that's pretty much my story of that day.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview? Anything at all?

A. No.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is concluded at 2212 hours.

File No. 9110156

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DAVID TIMOTHY

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0648 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT TIMOTHY: EMT David Timothy.

MR. RADENBERG: Of EMS Battalion 4. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. David?

A. Well, I guess at approximately 8:48 when everything started my partner and I were sitting on I believe that was Madison and Henry Street, if I'm not mistaken. No, Catherine and Henry, which is about a block away from our 89, our unit's 04 Boy.

What happened was a civilian had approached -- in fact, let me just start that over. A transmission came over the air about something hitting or some sort of explosion in the World Trade Center. Secondly, a civilian walked up to our ambulance and said, "I don't know if you guys heard about I, but they're

bombing the World Trade Center."

Okay. We decided, all right, let's just take a slow ride over there and see what's going on. As soon as we started moving off and we had the Trade Center in view, my partner of course made some expletives and he got on the air and said he saw what happened right now, put us on the assignment.

I guess after that it probably took us a few minutes to get over there from our location. Basically it's quick to get around Manhattan from where we were.

We got there and we were -- we took a route down Fulton Street and ended up behind at one point 01 Charlie, directly behind them. Not to block the street because there were other engine companies coming in, we pulled up in front of them. I would say we were between Fulton and Dey on Church.

Of course at this time the south tower was engulfed in flames. There was debris everywhere. People were running out of the buildings. I guess people started coming towards us asking for help. A lot of people were

directing them to just get away from the buildings if they can.

There was one individual, he had glass all over him. He said he just got thrown through some glass. We put him on our ambulance, and we continued to try to get like a few people as well in the ambulance.

The next thing I heard was a loud like an engine roar. I looked up, and the next thing I knew I just saw -- I don't know if it was the tail end of the plane or what, but I saw something. When I looked up, I heard "boom." I'm sorry, the north tower was the first one. The south tower then got hit when we were right there.

My partner was actually trying to put someone in the ambulance at the time. I grabbed him and kind of like pushed him in and closed the doors, and I like ran back up Fulton into a little bit of like I guess a cul-de-sac. It was a big garage door. There was a bunch of people in there. I ran back towards the ambulance, and I moved the ambulance around to Fulton and Broadway.

My partner instructed me, he said, "Listen, let's just get these people to the hospital, you know, Beekman." We went to Beekman Hospital. Actually we went up to Dey and back onto Fulton and Broadway and went to Beekman Hospital.

There was probably about five or six people. We dropped them off. There was one guy with a broken ankle. This one guy was having an asthma attack right then and there. The guy -- we actually long-boarded him. There were like two other civilians. Really I can't remember what was the extent of the injuries. So we took them to the hospital. We left.

Now, when the explosion hit I don't know if -- it actually took me off my feet, because I fell. I actually got cuts and stuff like that all over my hands and whatnot. My partner, he wanted to take me off service. I was like, "No, no, no, I've got to help someone. Let's just do what we've got to do and get back and try to give them some assistance."

We took him back and for some reason I kept hearing on the radio something about a

staging area at Vesey and West. It was so blocked up, you couldn't really travel around it. So we ended being back at the same location that we were before, which was Fulton and Church, of course once again still parked in front of 01 Charlie's unit.

Lieutenant Melarango, he came up to me and he basically said don't move the bus. Leave the bus where it is. Just before that actually Lieutenant Medjuck had instructed the same thing. He said don't move the bus whatever.

The next instructions from him were whatever you do don't leave. What we're going to do is give you -- I can't remember if he said six or eight, whatever, like six patients. The next instructions were to take these people to Brooklyn, take them as far into Brooklyn as you can, go as far as into Kings County. I said, "All right. Not a problem."

So more or less now it was more like a stand and really wait kind of a show. At this time both towers of course are engulfed in flames. This is when to me the worst of it really started beginning. Now you see the people

jumping out of the buildings. There are body parts everywhere. It just was a mess.

So my partner and I were just waiting there. I think we just started to get the first of the few people, and now I'm like wondering, all right, what am I supposed to do? I'm driving, so I guess I'm going to have to wait.

So my partner now -- I think he's just getting one person on board and just started hearing I guess like -- to me it sounded like the 8:45 from Jamaica station going to Atlantic -- to Flatbush Avenue, the Long Island Railroad, just some big train just right over your head, like a whole bunch of locomotives just running right over your head.

I looked up, and the building just tilted and started coming down. All I could say was run. That's the only thing I could remember from them is just saying run. I could have sworn my partner was behind me, and I'm running.

I'm running actually down north on Church and made like a quick right on Vesey where the Stage Deli is I guess right here. To me it looked like it was open. I ran straight to it,

and it was locked.

At this time it just got totally black. All I could do is think of right then and there was just to crouch and just try to get shelter, because things are hitting me. Something started hitting me in my back.

There was a whole bunch of people in front of me, and everybody's like -- I don't know. I guess the last person they saw was me, and people are like, "What are we going to do? What are we going to do?"

Out of nowhere this person grabs my shoulder and happened to be a cop. I said, "Have you got anything heavy on you like your night stick or something?" I grabbed him and threw him right in front of me. I said, "There is glass right in front of you. Start breaking it, because that's the only way we can get shelter."

So he started breaking the glass, and we went in. I instructed everybody to get in there. People were coughing, respiratory problems, whatever the case may be. I started telling everybody, "Listen, there's water. I'm sorry, but just start cleaning your face off,

wash your mouth off." Guys were coming in with irritated eyes. I said, "Wash your eyes out." It's a deli, so there are sinks and everything. I said, "Wash your face off, whatever."

The cop was like, "Where do we go from here?" I said, "If anybody comes in here that can walk, let them get as far away as possible." It was so weird.

A woman actually came up to me and asked me how to get uptown. I mean, basically she wanted to know if that train station, the A train, which was I guess Fulton Street train station, if she should take it to go uptown. I didn't even know -- I said, "Ma'am, I don't even know what to tell you, to be honest with you. I don't know what to tell you." I said, "I don't even know if they're running."

After that we probably stayed -- time, don't even ask me time. I don't even know what time it is by this time. If I had to make an estimate, we probably stayed there probably a half hour, if that much, after the first building collapsed.

Let's see, the first building

collapsed -- the first one collapsed, oh, 9:55? Wow. We probably stayed there like not even a half hour, probably like 15, 20 minutes, until all the smoke cleared a little bit.

Then I walked back outside and I started looking for my partner. At this time the deli is cleared out. I started looking for my partner and couldn't find him. The first person I bumped into was Alex Lousky. I always remember that. He said he couldn't even find his partner. I told him I saw James right behind me. I said, "Have you seen him?" He's like, "No." All right.

Now, the thing was I didn't even know where my ambulance was at this point. Even though they said it was still there, I didn't even think about checking.

Now, at this time I started walking back on Church going south, and I got back to Fulton Street. There was a bunch of rubble and stuff right around here. This building was -- I don't even want to talk about that building. You couldn't really see much down this way anyway. But I walked here and I walked back up Fulton

Street. This is where I saw Alex, right around in the middle of Fulton.

Q. Okay, between Church and Broadway.

A. Right.

I walked back up Fulton Street, and I saw Jay right in front of -- I guess this is The Chase Manhattan Bank right here on the corner. Of course I gave him the biggest hug I could ever think of. I just asked him, "Are you okay?" He said, "Yeah, I'm --" He asked me the same thing.

He said, "Listen, the bank told us we could come inside and we could start bringing people in. We were in there, and of course everybody else was like just in a daze. There were people in the bank, there were people crying. The one thing that was kind of great is that people actually had access to phones.

I think what happened is at this time I lost -- I couldn't even find my radio. Jay had his. So I got on the radio and said, "04 Boy, all present and accounted for. Where is staging?" He gave us two locations. The one that was closest was the South Ferry.

Jay said, "Look, let's just stick

around here for a while, see what we can do. Let's just not leave just yet. Probably more people can come in." At this time I think I walked back out. If I'm not mistaken, I walked back out of the bank and I saw one or two lieutenants and one other guy. I think they were walking in the direction of Fulton Street.

The next thing I knew, I'm standing outside and this woman asked me, "Where do I go? Where do I go?" I said, "Usually you get as far away as possible from here or you go inside the bank and just try to compose yourself, because I don't know what to tell you right about now. It's not like -- I'm not saying I don't want to tell you something. It's like if I tell you go north and something happens up north, I don't want to tell you --"

Q. Right.

A. So I just told her, "Listen, get as far away from the area right now." The next thing I knew, you started hearing more explosions. I guess this is when the second tower started coming down.

This time I was like, you know what,

what else? What else? I almost thought I had died the first time. I thought, what else is there? I walked back in the building and said, "Jay, the second tower is coming down." He said, "What?" He said, "Everybody just get down on the floor and just get behind something."

The same thing happened to the second tower. I'm looking from the window, just coming down. It was like, well, oh, well. I'm like, why am I standing in front of this glass, because there's glass right in front of me. I'm like, am I nuts? So I just walked away I crouched down behind a desk.

The one thing I did is a looked behind me, and the revolving door was spinning. From the force of the wind it just started turning. Of course it just got pitch-black again. What can you do? You sit there and wait it out.

It says here I guess the north tower collapsed at 10:29. So we started off -- we had an elderly Jewish man. From the time he got there, he was on a stair chair. We had water and stuff like that, so we were giving him water to drink and telling him to try to relax. People

were calling loved ones.

We got an ambulance, and we took the old man to the ambulance. We asked if anyone else wanted to go to the hospital. We told them, "Listen, if you're not going to the hospital, you can't stay in the bank. Get as far away from here as possible. Start heading towards the bridge. Do whatever you've got to do just to get away from the area."

All right. So I said, "Jay, listen, of course the other location is up by Chelsea Piers. We can't go up there." We're on foot. For some reason I think one of the guys had found a ESU tech bag, a really big one, and they brought that in. We started trying to see the inventory to see what we had. Let's just grab it and let's just start heading out to the South Ferry.

We grabbed the stuff. I took the bag on my back, started heading down Broadway, and walked to the South Ferry. And that was it, at least for us.

Q. What's your partner's last name?

A. Zion.

Q. Zion?

A. Yeah. He actually quit.

Q. Yeah, I heard that.

The ambulance that took the man from the bank, was that a fire ambulance? Do you know who it was?

A. No. I have a feeling it was a Brooklyn ambulance, because the unit that drove it, I don't know if they're from Manhattan it could have been Brooklyn or whatever else. I don't know. Then again, it could be all the way uptown. I don't know. I only know the guys from Queens and this Batallion, 4.

Q. After you lost your partner with the first collapse, were you with any other ambulance people?

A. Yeah. I was standing with one of the lieutenants, I think it was Medjuck, at one point. You know what, I really can't truly remember, but I knew I saw someone with a blue shirt, a light blue shirt, that is.

We didn't really lose each other because, you know what, because I knew exactly where he was when the first tower collapsed. Oh, I'm sorry, no. I'm thinking about the first

plane crash -- or the second plane crash.

When the first building collapsed, no, I wasn't with any lieutenants at all. I didn't see any lieutenants. I only saw lieutenants after I found him.

Q. After you found Jay?

A. Yeah.

Q. At the bank?

A. Yeah. I think there was Melarango and someone else. I knew it was one and one. Then one EMT was with him. It was a group of people, and they were heading down Fulton Street, if I'm not mistaken, back towards the Battery.

That's all I can remember. A lot of that day is just like a big blur, believe it or not. I mean, I did what I had to do. I tried to keep that much composure. But when you try to formulate a time line, the only thing you can remember is like the events. You don't remember like at 9:56 --

Q. Right, yeah.

A. As far as I'm concerned, time just stood still for a long while. It was interesting.

Q. Any thoughts or comments on the day?

A. Let's just hope it doesn't happen again.

Q. I agree with you on that one.

A. I can't think of anything else.

5:25, I didn't know that was the time it fell, Seven World Trade.

Q. Yeah, it was later in the afternoon.

A. Like I said, that's as much as I remember. It was bad.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0708 hours, and the interview is concluded

File No. 9110157

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RICHARD BRODERICK

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 25th. The time is 6:52 a.m. my name is Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. Our interview today is with --

EMT BRODERICK: Richard Broderick, emergency medical technician, Battalion 10, Manhattan.

A. I responded to the World Trade Center. We were at St. Luke's Hospital when we heard it go down. The police officers were with us. We heard it go over their radio as a level 3, which I didn't understand what a level 3 was, but they said that it was a plane into the towers but they didn't know what type of plane.

So we took our patient to St. Luke's Hospital, and my partner came out and said we were going to the World Trade. I said, okay, fine. So we started to head down the West Side Highway, and the more we approached the scene, the scenario, we saw the towers and we saw the smoke bellowing out of the first tower. It was

pretty scary.

When we pulled in, we pulled in to West Street and Vesey, which is supposedly the staging area for EMS units and other emergency vehicles. I saw Mayor Giuliani walk in front of us, and I assumed that was before he got trapped in the Trade Center himself in the bunker.

So they told us to go up the street, which I think is Vesey. I pulled into the spot, and the next thing I know, there was a third emergency medical technician who came running over to us and said he was from Queens General. He took the train up. He said he worked -- his name was Santiago. I don't know his first name. Spanish kid, young kid, very nice kid.

The next thing you know, they were handing us five burn victims. I don't know what they looked like because I was still in the driver's seat. I didn't even put the thing in park. My partner said, "We've got five burn victims. We're going to Bellevue Hospital." I said, "Okay, fine."

We pulled out, and I swung around -- I don't know the street, but I swung around the

block. The next thing, I was back on West Street. When I was coming my partner yelled -- can I curse?

Q. Do whatever you want.

A. He said, "Oh, shit." I said, "What's the matter?" I looked in the mirror and all I saw was clouds, dust. I put my foot down on the pedal. When you're driving, you're like with your foot all the way down and you're still trying to push the vehicle to get it going because you think you're not moving.

I just took off. I flew up West Street all the way up to 34th. From then on -- we got to Bellevue, and we disembarked the patients. I didn't even get out of the vehicle again either. The doctors and the nurses were all there.

Q. They were grabbing them out of the bus?

A. They were just grabbing them out of the vehicle with my partner and the young guy that was with us. They told me to get out of the emergency room bay. As I swung out of the bay, the next thing I know my partner is coming running back with a stretcher and everything and he's telling me, "We're going back down. We're

going back down."

We flew down to the FDR Drive, and I got off at Pearl Street. We came up the ramp right by One Police Plaza. I couldn't believe the scenery. It was like -- I don't know how to explain it. People were just full of dust. It was like snow. It was all over the place.

People were in a daze. They were just -- they looked like zombies. The word was zombies. They were walking. They were confused. I had to go really slow through the streets or I would hit them. You couldn't see anything anyway it was so full of dust.

We wound up going down -- I don't know what the streets were, to be honest with you. I remember passing the Federal Reserve Bank.

Q. Maiden Lane is the Federal Reserve.

A. Because I happened to see the marshals and everybody out with the shot guns and machine guns. I noticed the area right away. The next thing, we saw an ambulance flying. So my partner said, "Follow them." It was a private ambulance. It wasn't an EMS unit. It looked like a New York Hospital unit. I said, okay.

So we started following them. I don't know what the street was, but we got to Greenwich. He made the left and was moving to the devastation. My partner is saying, "Follow him. Follow him." I said, "I'm not following him. I'm going to go away from the scene."

So I made a right onto Greenwich. Don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking my partner. He wanted to help. I understand that. You know what it is? I've been a lieutenant. I've been through the staging courses that they give you and the management courses. So in my head I'm clicking as a lieutenant actually or whatever that you get a safe area, because your no good to nobody unless you're safe.

I pulled in. We found a spot on Harrison and Greenwich, clear as a bell. Nothing was going on. I said, "We're stopping here." So we parked the vehicle, put it on an angle. The next thing you know, an elderly woman came up to me and said she was having chest pain. So my partner and the young guy, Santiago, took her in the ambulance.

Meanwhile I'm trying to notify the

dispatcher exactly where we were, in case something did happen they would know where we were. Next thing you know, here comes another lady walking up saying she's having an asthma attack.

Meanwhile a paramedic unit pulls in, an EMS paramedic unit. One guy I know -- I don't know his last name. His name is Joe. But I know he's out of Bellevue. And Eddie was his partner, a bald-headed gentleman. They took care of the asthma patient.

Meanwhile I had -- no exaggeration, I had 25 people come up to me and volunteer. I didn't know what to do with them. I gave them all little stupid things to do just to keep them occupied. I'd say, all right, take this gentleman's name, take this gentleman's name, take this one's name, you know, just to keep them -- you can feel they wanted to do something, and there wasn't much they could do.

Next thing you know, I see a man walking up the street, dragging up the street. So I run down to him. I grabbed him, and I look at his collar, his suit, and it was a WTC

employee, World Trade Center. I don't know if he was a security person or -- I remember his face, I just don't remember -- I remember looking at his ID. I remember his face, but I don't remember his name. This guy looked like a tiger got at him. His shirt was all ripped up, pale, sweaty. I sat him down.

Meanwhile at this time St. Vincent's medics pull in. The medic from St. Vincent used to be my partner, Phil. So Phil comes running over. I said, "Phil, I've got a World Trade Center guy here." Okay. He starts listening to his signs, started giving him oxygen, put him in the truck, put him in St. Vinnie's truck.

The next thing you know, the police are running up the street. It wasn't 10, 15 minutes; we were there for a good hour. You figure by the time we dropped the patients off at Bellevue and went back to the scene, when I got to Pearl Street it had to be around 11 a.m., quarter to 11, 11 a.m.

So the next thing you know, cops were coming up and we were giving them respirator masks. Then they gave us things because we

didn't have things. We were treating the patients. The next thing you know, the police officers started running up the street and they said, "We've got to get out of here. We've got to get out of here. It's going to blow." There was supposed to be a gas leak.

We just threw everybody in the ambulance, just threw everybody in the bus. The volunteers, the people that were so willing -- I had a gentleman come up to me and say, "I have a gentleman stuck in the elevator on the fifth floor right across the street." I said, "Sir, I can't do anything. I'm busy. Tell a police officer."

Q. Right.

A. I'm really busy. I can't do it. He said, "Okay, no problem." I don't know where he went. We just threw everybody in the ambulance and just raced up about three blocks. There was a staging area there. I don't know whether it was -- again, everything was going so fast, I don't remember the streets.

Lieutenant Remz was there, Lieutenant Maria Santaromita. I know these people from

working at Woodhall Hospital many years ago. They are lieutenants now. I told them what we had, and they said no problem. Then I said we had numerous back boards because we found a vehicle unmanned, so we took their equipment so we could be prepared. We didn't know what else was going to happen.

I think what happened was when we left West Street and Vesey, I assume that is when the second plane hit the tower. I was told that later on, the second plane hit the tower, and I saw it on TV for the people with cameras.

From there on, then we went to Chelsea Pier and we sat there for two hours. I was getting bored. I'm here to do what I'm supposed to do. I don't want to get hurt, but I'm here to help.

Then from there we left and we wound up at North Moore and Greenwich, where we assisted Lieutenant Dave --

Q. Restuccio?

A. Restuccio? My partner Mike was his assistant getting the paperwork. Again, what we're taught in EMS is when you're the driver of

the vehicle you're to maintain your vehicle so no one will steal it. So I stayed with my vehicle.

When we were there, some kids -- we didn't know they were kids at the time -- started throwing something from the roof of the building off of -- and it was hitting the ground hard. Everybody started running, started panicking. The police went running in with their guns out. The next thing you know, they had tons -- I'm exaggerating, but we had like a dozen cops in riot gear standing in front of us.

Then a gentleman was trying to get by with a bike, and the police officer started getting -- you could tell he was there. He had dust all over him. He was drained. The guy was pushing. The cop was getting annoyed.

Anyway, from there on we just sat at North Moore and Greenwich. I saw building seven go down. I saw it actually go down. It was a couple blocks away from us. From there on we just sat there till -- I just sat there until 10:30 at night and didn't do anything. I just watched everybody else going into what they call ground zero now. I was like, what are we doing

here? I want to go. I want to get in there. I want to at least help, do something. That's what I'm trained for.

From there on, again, from 2:00 in the afternoon to 10:30 at night, we just sat at North Moore and Greenwich. Of course at 1:00 in the afternoon I finally got a chance to phone my folks to let them know I was fine. Of course my house phone was busy.

I called my father at work, who is now a security officer in the Marriott on 48th and Lexington, so he was very happy to hear my voice. He said, "I figured you'd be there." I said, "I just want to let you know I'm alive. I'm okay." I said it was really bad. It was the worst I've seen, and I've seen a lot in 22 years, going on 22 years. This is the worst of my career that I've ever seen. It blew me away.

I only went down there twice. I went down there the day it happened, and just about two weeks ago I was down at ground zero. We did family escorts. So I had to go back. There really was nothing I could do after that. The next day all I did was come to the station and

clean the vehicles to get them all ready that were down there.

So again, we got assigned to go down there. I was saying I don't want to go down there no more. It took me two weeks just to get over what I saw the first day. So all right. We go to ground zero. No problem. We go to staging. They told us we're going to be going on the boat. I said, "Oh, great. I'm a real boat lover." I am.

They were very nice. I couldn't believe the politeness. They were so nice,the state troopers there, which was scary when they're wearing their dark sunglasses.

Okay. We did our first family escort on the boat, which wasn't too bad. That was my first time down since that day, and I could not believe the devastation that I saw, the hole.

So we did one trip. One woman got nervous. She was crying, a British woman. A family member, I think her husband was in there, so I escorted her and another gentleman. We took her back to the boat and stayed with her, with the police officers guarding us like we were the

president of the United States. Really, unbelievable.

The guy, the correction officer, he was excellent. He helped us out great with taking our equipment and putting it on the car for us, following us wherever we went. He said, "We are here for you." I said, "Great. Thank you."

Second trip, no problem. People were upset as usual but very nice. They were thanking us.

The third trip, we went to ground zero. My partner says to me, "Look, I see a picture of a paramedic on her blouse." I said, "Let me go look." I'm curious. I go look. When somebody says something to you at the same time the name, I said Carlos. She said at the same time, it was his mother. She said, "You know Carlos?" I said, "Carlos, I used to work with him in Woodhull."

It was funny, I ran into him August 5th. I know the date well because I ran my sister into the emergency room for emergency surgery, and he knew my sister. They were talking. Actually the last time I saw Carlos was

August 5th.

Anyway, I met his wife, very nice girl. I heard the story that he went there to get her out and she was out already and there was no way they could reach each other. It blew me away. It blew me away again. I was dealing with it, but when it comes close to home, like everybody else that's involved in the situation.

I stayed with them. I stayed with them through the whole tour. I even told the lieutenant, the police officer that was involved with the job of escorting the families, I said I'm staying with them. She said no problem. I stayed with her crying on me. That's what blew me away, I think. The only thing I kept thinking of is that could have been me that day, and I was hoping that somebody would be doing that for my mother.

Then when we were up on the podium, [redacted]

Then they started showing pictures two minutes before he was missing. It just blew me away. It tore me apart, it really did. [redacted]

[redacted]

We escorted them back to the boat. We even escorted them back to the staging area. The police officer that was involved with the family escort thing said they couldn't believe how great we were.

So we got back to the station, and I heard the phone ring and Lieutenant Giblin was on the phone and he said, "They're standing in front of us." I said, "Oh, what do we do now?" I thought we were in trouble. He said, "No, that was the Mayor's office called OEM, OEM called EMS, and they want you guys back tomorrow because they said you did an excellent job." I said, "Well, I'm not going back. I can't."

It blew me away. As a matter of fact, I didn't come to work the next day. I took the day off. No, I did come to work, I'm sorry. I worked with somebody else. I couldn't take it. It just blew me -- I'm strong, but it caught home.

That's about it. I don't know what else to tell you. Again, it was the worst thing

I ever seen in my whole career.

Q. And hopefully ever will.

A. Again, I've seen people decapitated. I've seen people dragged by tractor-trailers, and it never bothered me. Now I guess maybe because I'm getting older or it's just that I've seen so much that it's enough.

But I still love my job. I still like taking care of people; I really do. I love taking care of the elderly. I go the nine yards. I don't care how long I'm on the scene, I go nine yards. That's the way I am.

I don't know what else to tell you. That's about it, Mike. I don't know what else to really -- unless you have questions.

Q. No, nothing else. It's just anything else you might want to say; if not, Rich --

A. I just feel real bad about the people that died. It's sad. It's unfortunate. I really think that's what caused the firemen and cops -- did I tell you I knew eight people. I knew four emergency service cops, three firemen, and that's really about it, the only seven people I knew.

The emergency service cops were from here, Truck 2. Truck 2 in Manhattan, ESU 2, I knew the three guys very well, because my friend is an ESU sergeant, which thank God he was on vacation at his new home in New Winster. I know him; he would have been in. It took him two and a half hours.

When I saw him three weeks -- I just saw him last week for the first time, and we're like buddy-buddy. He said, "Rich, I was worried about you. I thought you were there." I said, "I was." I said, "You know what? I'm glad you weren't there." It was like, I know him.

But anyway, the officers that died, I knew them. I knew them. Pappageorge, I knew him from here. I didn't know him that well, but I knew him from here. I didn't know he was a firefighter. I didn't know he graduated and went to firefighter.

Who else? Oh, a buddy of mine, my other friend, his brother's missing. I just ran into him last Saturday and he gave me a big hug and he said he was going to get in touch with me for the memorial service. I knew his brother

Carl. He was a firefighter. He's been missing. He just got married seven months ago.

So all these poor people that died. It's just sad. I was hoping somebody would talk to me about this, because it really has been eating me up. I'm pretty strong, but this has hit me hard.

Q. This is something that nobody's ever seen before. That's what it is.

A. I'm glad they're doing what they're doing right now. I hate to say it like that, but I'm glad they're doing what they're doing. We have to, because we're going to live in terror for the rest of our lives.

I feel like I'm a prisoner now. Not too much, but just being stopped just to look at my ID to see if I'm getting on the bridge all right and letting the taxicabs get on for nothing. That's wrong. But that's how I feel.

That's really all I have to say, Mike. I don't know what else to tell you, again, unless you have something else to ask me.

Q. That's about it, Rich.

A. I can't think of anything. All I can

remember -- I met some nice people out of it from the volunteers that were helping. They were very nice. I couldn't believe the people that wanted to help. They were unbelievable. Actually 25 people came up -- I didn't know what to do with them. I was lost. I'm trying to say, okay, you do this, you do that.

One was a volunteer fireman. "I'm a volunteer fireman." "Take care of that World Trade Center guy." That was before the St. Vinnie medic came, like two minutes before they pulled in. I said, "Take care." I'm running around doing this, doing this, helping the cops, giving them masks.

I mean, it's part of our job. I understand that. I felt good that I did something. I felt bad that I couldn't do more. I sat at that staging area all night. I really got bored. I was getting tired just standing there. I really wish I could have done more, but I did what I had to do and I feel good about it. Unfortunately it happened when it did.

That's about it.

Q. All right, Rich. I thank you so much

for your interview and your feelings.

A. I hope it works out.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview will conclude at 712 hours.

File No. 9110158

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JONATHAN MORITZ

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0715 hours. I am conducting an interview with...

EMT MORTIZ: Jonathan Moritz, M-o-r-i-t-z, EMT, Battalion 4, Unit 04 Henry, Tour 2, Shield No. 2698.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jonathan, if you'd begin.

A. We had just signed on to the unit, we were heading to our 89 status, and my partner realized he had forgot a piece of his personal equipment back at the station. We immediately turned back around, came back to the station, retrieved the equipment. On our way back to our 89 status, we reported to the corner of Clinton Street and Madison Street. We were approached by about upwards of 75 to 100 people pointing and just extremely hysterical, and when we looked down Madison Street, it was a straight shot into the World Trade Center complex and there was a crater taken out of the upper floors, there was a heavy smoke and fire condition, debris was still coming down, and with that

the radio transmissions started to come in from other units with the priority message. Being the HAZTAC unit, we felt we needed to respond in on the scene. So we immediately went to the 63 status, tried to advise the dispatcher as best as possible. There was a lot of radio traffic.

We proceeded down Madison Street to where it comes into Pearl and then Pearl Street comes down and around the back side of the World Trade Center on the east side and turns into I believe it's Water Street. It runs into Water Street, if I'm not mistaken. We were coming across Water Street and I remember there was a Fire patrol vehicle No. 3 in front of us that we followed in to the scene.

When we got down around the ferry terminal, because we were trying to get into the staging area set up by the conditions boss, it became apparent that it was impossible. Traffic conditions were extremely tight, there were people everywhere, and we proceeded north, I believe, the wrong way, if I'm not mistaken, on Broadway, got up to about -- I want to say Dey Street or one of the side streets, very small street, ducked down to Trinity Place and proceeded north on Trinity Place to Church, and we parked somewhere

between Dey Street and Fulton Street. It seemed like the safest area at the time considering where the building was, where we had the most amount of patients. They were all exiting heading away from the Trade Center complex. We tried to get in touch with our conditions boss to let him know where we were, but radio traffic and patient care was making that relatively impossible.

I remember there were many units on the scene. I don't remember who exactly was there. I remember we were treating several patients immediately. There was a burn patient, a jumper patient, a lot of trauma. I had gone back to my unit to get, I believe, the second oxygen tank or another piece of my personal protective equipment when we heard a second explosion, and when we looked up, the second Trade Center had been hit. With that, my partner, I believe, took off running away from the debris north on Church Street and I took off running down Dey Street and I was assisting people because it was quite chaotic.

We were picking up people who were getting trampled on Dey Street, or least I was and I believe a police officer was, and we got halfway in, we stopped,

and my partner, I believe, was with the unit and he was down Fulton Street somewhere. We both -- I think it was a police officer and I. I don't remember his name or his shield -- ran back down the street and with that the patient count had tripled, if not more. There were more people coming up to us, more people injured.

With that we received a police officer with a very serious arm injury. He was almost amputated by a piece of shrapnel. With that we also received a burn patient, a lady who had walked down from the 78th floor, believe it or not, with third-degree burns head to toe. I don't know if I could stand as badly as she was burned and she was walking. We had a lady who was complaining of chest pain and chest discomfort. Some vital signs indicated she had some sort of cardiac event transpiring, and I believe we had one more soft tissue injury patient. We proceeded in loading them up, transporting them, providing the best care possible.

I made the decision to go to Cornell Hospital. There was a burn center as well as a trauma center. It was also not as close to the hospitals that would have been overrun. So to try to space out patients, I took them uptown. I remember when we got

to the hospital everybody was on standby and waiting. We off-loaded our patients. I transferred care to the best of my ability.

I was monitoring the radio and they said that the No. 2 tower had collapsed. With that I expedited my ER time tenfold. I started heading back down the FDR towards the scene when I heard the second tower had collapsed.

Q. Do you remember how far down you made it on the FDR?

A. I remember we had just gotten off by the 59th Street bridge, if I'm not mistaken. We got onto 59th Street, right there by the Queensborough Bridge, went southbound on the FDR. We were coming down underneath the underpass right there where you get on the FDR and you have I believe there's the Hospital for Special Surgery, if I'm not mistaken, over the top of you at that particular part.

When we came up the FDR, all we saw was the smoke, of course. We proceeded down the FDR to South Street. We got off on South Street and tried to make it into the -- one staging area we had heard was in Battery Park and that's where we were heading for.

We got to the Brooklyn Bridge. It was myself

and two other units. I think they were just skeleton units thrown together when this all transpired from our station. We got as far as the Brooklyn Bridge and we were enveloped in the cloud of settling debris.

With that they transmitted the message that everybody was going to report to Chelsea Piers. We turned our vehicles around and we proceeded back northbound on the FDR to 34th or 42nd Street, crossed town and staged until later that evening, when we were (inaudible).

Q. When you got up to Fulton and Church, do you recall who else was there?

A. I don't. I don't recall. There were so many units there that, in so short amount of time that, you know, you were seeing people. As far as people who are missing? Everybody that I saw at the scene I've seen later on. I saw a Cabrini crew that I've worked with later in days transpiring after this. We really weren't on scene as long as we should have been. We got overwhelmed with patients immediately and we transported before we could really get into the operation of the MCI.

Q. Any thoughts or comments that you'd like to add, like odd event that stands out in your mind?

A. No.

Q. Opinions?

A. You run very fast when buildings have airplanes crashing into them.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0724 and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110159

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER HAYDEN

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0541 hours. I'm conducting an interview with...

EMT HAYDEN: Peter Hayden, EMT, Battalion 4.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Peter, if you'd begin with when you found out about the assignment.

A. I had a day off and my brother had woke me up to show me the news, and I had saw the news and what had happened and right away I grabbed my equipment, got dressed and went in to work. I got into Manhattan about 9:30 and I was looking for the EMS command post, which I was told was on West and Chambers. While I was walking over there, World Trade 2 began to come down, and I ran away from the scene and got caught in the dust cloud that put a darkness over us and it was hard to breathe. We helped people into buildings, after that onto buses down to Battery Park, and there was nothing really to do for the patient except get them water. So we were just retrieving water for them.

A half hour later, a couple of EMTs and I

decided to go back and help some more people back into the buildings of the New York Downtown Athletic Club, and people started running again because 1 World Trade began to come down. So we ran again and the same thing happened, darkness, cloud of smoke, people were having trouble breathing, get them inside, onto buses, putting them down to Battery Park. From there we just kept getting water.

From there I walked up Albany and I ran into another off-duty EMT from this battalion. I'm not sure of his name. What we did was we heard over the radio that there was staging down at Battery Park, so we had emptied a couple of ambulances of the equipment and put them into one ambulance and drove it over to Battery Park. I stayed there for a few hours and just waited and we were giving water to firefighters and police officers that had ventured over, and that was basically my role for the day.

Q. How did you get into Manhattan?

A. I had driven to the tunnel, the Battery Park Tunnel. A lot of us left personal cars and I pulled over and I hopped into a Suburban, a Fire Department vehicle, and they had transported me through.

Q. Do you remember the number of the vehicle or

anything like that?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Did it have a battalion number on the side?

A. No, I don't remember.

Q. But it wasn't an EMS Suburban?

A. No, it was Fire Department.

Q. You came through the Battery. How far up towards the Trade Center, if you remember, did you get when you got out of the Suburban?

A. I think they let us off at West Street and Albany.

Q. West Street and Albany. Okay.

You said you'd heard command was up on West and Chambers?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you coming straight up the West Side Highway?

A. Yes.

Q. While you were on the West Side Highway, do you remember approximately where you were when the first tower came down?

A. I was in between Albany and Cedar. I hadn't gone very far because I was asking around where the staging area was.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't see any other EMS personnel around.

Q. When the first tower came down, do you remember where you went?

A. I ran straight south on West Street, and I guess I had reached about a block, I guess around Carlisle Street, whatever this is, and I had jumped next to a divider. I made it to the Downtown Athletic Club, where there were dozens upon dozens of people with several problems just trying to breathe. The most we could do for them, because nobody really had tech bags with them, was just get them water and we were just handing out bottles of water and that was the most we could do for these people.

Q. When you came back up towards the site, you said you had basically stripped down a couple of ambulances to get one stocked?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where that was?

A. No, I'm not exactly sure where that was, but it was maybe between Washington and Greenwich. It was outside of a Chase Manhattan Bank. There were a few abandoned ambulances and they were locked. So I saw somebody breaking into the ambulance. He happened to

be an EMS personnel from this battalion. He said, help me, we'll get all the equipment onto this bus, there's keys in it, and we'll take it over to Battery Park because we heard over the radio that there was staging down there. So that's what we did.

Q. Do you remember what vehicle number it was, by chance?

A. I don't remember, no.

Q. With those vehicles, it was just you and the other EMT?

A. And there was a guy from New Jersey who said he was an EMT from over there and he helped us.

Q. Do you remember who the other EMT was from the battalion?

A. His first name is Walter.

Q. Walter. Do you know his last name?

A. No.

Q. When you came back, you got that ambulance down there, and was it while you were down at Battery Park that the second tower came down?

A. No. I had taken the ambulance after the second tower came down.

Q. After the second tower came down. Do you remember where you were when the second tower came

down?

A. I was around the same area.

Q. Still in the same area? Okay. Do you recall seeing any other EMS officers?

A. Not officers.

Q. Or EMS personnel --

A. Yes.

Q. -- that you know the names of?

A. No, I don't know their names. They weren't from this battalion, I know that. We all started helping. There was a bus and we were helping civilians get onto the bus.

Q. An ambulance or a city bus?

A. It was a city bus.

Q. Okay.

A. We were getting people on there so they could transport them down to the ferries.

Q. All at that point minor injuries?

A. Yes. I didn't see any injuries.

Q. Nothing?

A. Just people complaining, you know, thirsty from dust that they were breathing in.

Q. Does anything anything stand out in your mind as just an odd event or something like that that sticks

in your head from that day or any comments or opinions you'd like to add about it?

A. No. I mean, I didn't even actually get to look at the towers collapsing because I pretty much heard them, looked up, saw it and turned around and ran, and it was just get people water and get them on the bus and get them out of there.

Q. Okay. That's pretty much it, unless there's something else you'd like to add.

A. I spent the rest of the day looking for my father, who is a fireman.

Q. Did you find him?

A. Yes.

MR. RADENBERG: Thank you, Peter.

EMT HAYDEN: Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0549 hours and the interview is concluded.

PERUGGIA

File No. 9110160

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS DIVISION CHIEF JOHN PERUGGIA

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 25, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina conducting an interview. The time now is 0835 hours. Your name?

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: Also sitting here on the interview.

Q. Your name sir?

A. John PERUGGIA.

Q. What is your rank and title?

A. EMS Division Chief, in charge of planning for the Chief of Department's office.

Q. Can you tell me on September 11, 2001 what took place that day?

A. At approximately 8:50 in the morning I was on my way in to work in my assigned Department vehicle. At that point in time I was on the Staten Island Expressway, just before the Verrazano Bridge. I received a telephone call from one of my staff people, EMT Richard Zarrillo, on the Department cell phone. He indicated to me that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center. The Chief was leaving the building. Chief Nigro, my immediate boss, was leaving the building, along with Chief Ganci and he asked me for some direction. I told him and told him to tell

the rest of the staff that was in headquarters, just to stand fast. My ETA was approximately 10 to 15 minutes and that we would just wait a little bit and see.

Shortly thereafter, maybe a few minutes, I was on the Verrazano Bridge approaching mid span. I was able to see visually the World Trade Center and the extent of the damage and fire coming from the tower, which was struck. At that point I realized that it wasn't maybe just a small private aircraft that may have struck the building, but something much more significant and this had the potential to be a catastrophic type incident.

Being familiar with the World Trade Center complex and the extent of chaos that could occur during a tragedy, as I was present shortly after the bombing in 1993, I called EMT Zarrillo back on his cell phone. I directed him to round up the rest of the staff, which consisted of a Captain and two Lieutenants, Captain Abdo Nahmod, Lieutenant John Nevins and Lieutenant Brad Mann and tell them to start making their way over to the World Trade Center. Whatever it was that hit the building from what I was seeing at my location, I knew that their assistance would be needed.

At that point I hung up the phone, put my

emergency lights on the vehicle, got behind an ambulance or between an ambulance and a police car and our entire little package was now en route to the incident.

Moments later I got a notification on my Department pager to call the fire operations center. I immediately called them. They advised me that the Office of Emergency Management had been activated. I am the person in operations who is responsible for staffing OEM or the Police Department's command and control center. I told them that I would respond in. I gave them directions to notify the fire First Division to have them start out a fire rep. I also asked them to page Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo and have them redirect themselves to OEM.

I pulled my car over to the side, when I got off the Verrazano Bridge. I grabbed my Department radio from the trunk, turned it on to the frequency and advised the dispatcher that I was responding. I continued then in on my response. As I was passing through the Battery Tunnel, probably around midway through the Battery Tunnel, I heard the report come over the radio that a second plane had struck the second tower. At that point I realized to myself that

this wasn't just an accident, but more than likely some sort of terrorist event.

I came out of the Battery Tunnel and as soon as I came out, I parked my car immediately on the western side of northbound West Street between Rector and West. I'm going to mark that on the map with a number one. I put my boots on. I put my EMS safety coat on, my helmet, grabbed the radio and a pad and began to walk my way up West Street. My initial intent was to pass through the site, make contact with the Chief at the command post and advise them that I was en route to 7 World Trade Center, the Office of Emergency Management, to provide staffing, as it was now activated.

Q. As you were walking into the scene, the second plane had just hit --

A. Just moments.

Q. What were you observing?

A. It was very chaotic on the street. There were lots of people running around. There was heavy fire and smoke emanating from both towers in the World Trade Center, the upper floors. As I walked up the street, I was being passed by police and firefighters heading in both directions, some towards the site and

some away from the site. I passed over some pieces of what appeared to be aircraft wreckage, fuselage, whatever, some body parts and bodies in various states, either people from the building or the airplanes. You couldn't tell. They weren't intact.

As I approached Albany Street, I crossed over to the southbound side of West Street because there was debris coming down from the building, people were running from the building and also it was very dangerous. So for my own safety I crossed on to that side and proceeded to walk northbound on West Street. As I made it to in front of what would be 1 World Trade Center, I'm going to mark that number 2 on the map, maybe just south of the north bridge, there was the inter-agency command post or at least the Fire Department command post. I saw Chief Ganci, I saw --

Q. Inside the lobby?

A. No, this was on the southbound side of West Street, you know, in front of like the World Financial Center, across the street from the building. I saw Chief Ganci, I saw Chief Nigro. There were a number of other people. I really wasn't paying attention. I made a verbal contact with Chief Ganci and Chief Nigro. I advised them that I was en route to 7 World

Trade. OEM was active. I had already given directions to two of the staff to respond there, as well as a representative from the fire First Division.

I told them that if any of them had appropriate protective gear with them, once we got settled, I would release as many people from there as necessary to maybe help support the operations. We didn't need lots of stuff up there.

At that point I made contact with Captain James Yakimovich. He's a fire Captain who was detailed to headquarters with us for a little while. He was on a special assignment. He was in personnel on Washington Street. He was writing the fire Lieutenant's exam or whatever. He was in civilian clothes. He came out to the site when he heard what happened. He has experience at staffing OEM. I have used him on a number of occasions. I said Jimmy, you don't have gear with you. Why don't you come with me to OEM and if the First Division rep has gear we will release them.

So both of us were preparing then to leave the command post and make our way northbound on West Street to Vesey and then we would go to OEM. At that point Chief Ganci placed his hand on my shoulder and

told me that I should be careful walking over there because there was stuff falling off the building. I told him not to worry about it. I was a big boy.

I reached 7 World Trade Center. We walked into the lobby and we were going up the escalators to the main level. I checked in at the security desk. As we reached the top of the escalators, there were lots of people running down the escalator on the promenade. I spoke to one of the Deputy Directors and as I was speaking with him, I believe it was Deputy Director Rotanz, who is a Fire Department Captain on detail over there, Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo approached as well. They had indicated that the building was being evacuated.

I questioned as to what the nature of the evacuation was. I was told that it was not because of what was occurring across the street. No one feared that the building was in any danger as a result of two airplane attacks and subsequent fires, but that there were reports of a third plane that had been hijacked. It was unidentified, the location, and they thought it may be coming in for an additional strike. Therefore, they were evacuating the building.

We proceeded down to the lobby where the

various agency representatives were present. We collectively started to set up in the lobby and try to think of strategies to where we could move the inter-agency cooperation effort.

At that point, I also had a face to face discussion with Battalion Chief Mike Maggio from the First Battalion. He was the person who was sent up to be the rep at OEM. Mike is someone who assists us on lots of our event planning. He was detailed there. He didn't have any gear with him. He was a light duty Chief on administrative assignment there. So I told Captain Yakimovich that we are not going to send a Chief back. At that point he indicated that he was going to run over to 10 and 10 and secure gear and then report back to the command post and assist the Chief there. I told him that would be fine. I didn't need a lot of people inside. They needed more help outside.

As we were having discussions in the lobby as to what to do with OEM, a number of people came in the lobby as patients. Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo started to look at them, put them off to the side and talk to them. At that point I stepped outside. I was going to request some EMS resources and I had face to face contact with Captain Mark Stone of the EMS 8

Battalion.

Q. What kind of patients were you seeing?

A. There was two or three people who had smoke inhalation. There was another person who was bleeding significantly from his lower leg and unable to stand. He was trying to limp and crawl.

Q. They came from outside?

A. Yes. Later it was determined that he had a fracture of his leg, so we put him on a chair and the other people, we put them off to the side. I ran into Captain Stone. He had, I believe it was two EMTs with him. I told him that -- he was in his full gear and radio. I directed him to respond over, report into the EMS command post and I told him that I put Captain Nahmod in charge of whatever little treatment sector that we would establish here in the lobby.

Q. Where was the EMS command post?

A. I don't know where the EMS command post was at that time. Again I didn't hear much. There was lots of stuff going on the radio. My mission at that time was not that of an EMS Chief responding to the operation. My mission was, as the Chief of Planning for the Fire Department, to respond in to handle the agency liaison stuff.

I told Captain Stone he could respond over to the EMS command post so he could take a field assignment or whatever, since he was appropriately dressed. EMT Zarrillo and Captain Nahmod responded from headquarters without turnout gear, helmets or -- EMT Zarrillo had his helmet with him. So Captain Abdo Nahmod established a treatment center. I requested over the Citywide radio for two BLS units to respond to my location at 7 World Trade Center where we established treatment.

At that point I continued to liaison with my counterparts over at OEM. A short while later, just maybe a few moments, Dr. Asaeda, Office of Medical Affairs, and the EMT or paramedic that was with him, showed up. I told him we were seeing a number of people. In other words, more than 3 at that point in time, but again I wasn't directly involved, so I couldn't tell you the number. He said fine. He said he would stay over at our location and work with us there. We were in close proximity to the building. If you are familiar, I'll mark it with number 3 on the map, in front of 7 World Trade Center.

Directly across the street there are some escalators that come down from the promenade. There is

also an overhead pedestrian walkway that connects the World Trade Center plaza to the lobby of number 7. There was people coming down both exits. So it was a good position for us to find people who may require medical attention and get them into a secured area of the lobby. I didn't have any EMS people working out on Vesey Street proper, because it was not a safe location. There was people jumping out of the windows of the World Trade Center. We were witnessing that. There was debris falling down from the north tower and making its way on to the street and promenade where we were located.

A few moments after Dr. Asaeda arrived and started talking to Captain Nahmod about the patients, a gentleman from the building identified himself as a security person or a security director. He asked me if there is anything that we needed or he could provide me with regard to the EMS. We questioned him as to the ability to open up the loading bays which are associated to number 7 World Trade Center. The entrances are located directly under the pedestrian foot bridge. I figured it was protected there, so debris wouldn't fall down. He said he would do that. I directed Captain Nahmod to move the patients into

that area. Again, the lobby of number 7 is all glass facade. I was concerned that if something should come off the building, go through the glass or hit the glass, we would have an extraordinary amount of patients in addition to what was already being seen.

Further we took everyone from OEM and moved them to what would be the most southeasterly corner inside that first floor entrance of the 7 World Trade. There is a big granite or marble security desk and we started to establish around that as we were trying to figure out what we were going to do.

At that point again, I went out front to see what was going on and where the ambulances I had requested were. I had a face to face with Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen. He was there with his driver. He was wearing his protective gear and his helmet. He questioned me as to -- I told him I was there for OEM, operating in the lobby, that the building was being evacuated and the nature of that. He indicated if I knew the whereabouts of the Mayor. I told him that as I was approaching OEM and coming up Vesey Street, I saw a large contingency of gentlemen in suits exiting down Vesey Street proceeding north on West toward Barclay. I recognized some of the people

in that group as staff and TAs for the Mayor. I told him more than likely that was probably the direction the Mayor went.

He asked me what was going on. I told him what was going on. I told him where the command post was and that Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro and I had just spoken a few minutes earlier at that location. He said okay and he proceeded then westbound on Vesey towards West.

Q. Who was he with, was he with some of his aides?

A. He was with his driver or somebody again, I don't remember exactly who he was with. Time proceeded. We were listening to the radio for updates of what was going on. Our patient count was probably a half dozen to a dozen at that point. We had maybe three or four EMTs working under Captain Nahmod with Dr. Asaeda. We had a whole treatment center set up inside those bays. They got folding chairs from the building security.

They had back boards, they had oxygen. It was working out real nice. Everyone was stable so there was no rush to start screaming for additional ambulances. I felt at that point we were in a fairly

secure location in those bays. That was one less concern that I needed to be worried about at that point.

Several minutes passed by. I then encountered Chief Nigro in front of the building.

Q. What building was he in front of?

A. In front of 7 World Trade Center. He indicated he was in the process of doing a perimeter survey of the complex to get a good grip on the extent of damage in the fire. I guess he would then bring that back and he and Chief Ganci were going to discuss strategy. We spoke for several minutes. I briefed him on everything that was going on, where the Fire Commissioner had gone, that the Mayor was out and the building was evacuated. Told him about treatment. Told him that I was the liaison. Told him that I would keep Chief Ganci abreast of any significant information that was provided.

He thanked me and told me to be careful. He continued westbound on Vesey Street towards Church. He continued his perimeter search. Shortly thereafter, I noticed three firefighters operating on the southbound side of Vesey directly underneath the pedestrian promenade, between the pedestrian bridge and the

escalators. One of them signaled over to me. I went over to talk with them. I noticed they were without an officer. They told me they got separated from their officer when they were operating up on the plaza. I don't recall what company they were from. I do remember that at least one, if not two of them, were probies, by the orange plates on the helmet.

They indicated that there was lots of people on the plaza, that they thought were dead and people were jumping out and said you know, what should we do. I indicated to them that if people were jumping out, more than likely they were correct, the patients were dead. There was nothing that anybody could do for them and that in light of what was going on, operating on the plaza wasn't safe for them.

I further went on to tell them that since they were separated from their officer it was probably a good idea if they were to proceed eastbound on Vesey towards Church. There were some several companies, I noticed, operating up on Church and Vesey. I told them they could hook up with one of those companies or officer. At least this way they would be with a group, they would be accounted for.

They were in the process of securing a

hydrant and then they said they would move on. At that point I went back into the building. I was in a discussion with Mr. Rotanz and I believe it was a representative from the Department of Buildings, but I'm not sure. Some engineer type person, and several of us were huddled talking in the lobby and it was brought to my attention, it was believed that the structural damage that was suffered to the towers was quite significant and they were very confident that the building's stability was compromised and they felt that the north tower was in danger of a near imminent collapse.

I grabbed EMT Zarrillo, I advised him of that information. I told him he was to proceed immediately to the command post where Chief Ganci was located. Told him where it was across the street from number 1 World Trade Center. I told him "You see Chief Ganci and Chief Ganci only. Provide him with the information that the building integrity is severely compromised and they believe the building is in danger of imminent collapse." So, he left off in that direction.

Q. They felt that just the one building or both of them?

A. The information we got at that time was that

they felt both buildings were significantly damaged, but they felt that the north tower, which was the first one to be struck, was going to be in imminent danger of collapse. Looking up at it, you could see that, you could see through the smoke or whatever, that there was significant structural damage to the exterior of the building. Very noticeable. Now you know, again, this is not a scene where the thought of both buildings collapsing ever entered into my mind.

I was there in 1993, 14 minutes after the bomb went off. I operated some 16 hours at the building and with all the post-incident critiques and debriefings with various agencies. We were always told by everyone, the experts, that these buildings could withstand direct hits from airplanes. That's the way they were designed. They went through all of this architectural stuff, way beyond the scope of my knowledge.

It was hit by an airplane. That's okay. It's made to be hit by an airplane. I mean I think everyone may have believed that. We were all told years ago it was made to be hit by an airplane.

Some amount of time passed by, probably not long, again, I wasn't checking my watch. Actually we

were just really disgusted, maybe we were going to move what we were going to do and how we were going to try to coordinate. Things were hectic. We didn't have the tools that we normally have to communicate with our agency, you know, cellular phones were not working properly, radio was very difficult to get through. I work for the Chief of the Department, I don't have a fire ground radio, so I had no direct communications with my boss at that time, which is one of the reasons I needed to send EMT Zarrillo with that message, which I felt was very significant, to the command post.

Just moments before the south tower collapsed and, you know, when it happened we didn't know it was the south tower. We thought it was the north tower. There was a reporter of some sort, female with blond hair and her cameraman, an oriental fellow. They were setting up outside 7 World Trade Center, just east of the pedestrian bridge. I told them it would probably be better off to be set up under the bridge. At least it was protected. I was just about to enter a dialogue with her when I heard a sound I never heard before. I looked up and saw this huge cloud. I told him run. I grabbed the female, I threw her through the revolving doors of number 7. We were proceeding inside. She

fell to the ground. I helped her out, I pushed her towards the direction of where we were all in the south corner and there was a little doorway behind that desk which led into the loading bays.

Everybody started to run through that. Never made it to that door. The next thing that I remember was that I was covered in some glass and some debris. Everything came crashing through the front of number 7. It was totally pitch black.

Q. Were you injured?

A. Yes, I saw some stuff had fallen on me. I didn't believe that I was injured at that time. I discovered later on I was injured. I had some shards of glass impaled in my head, but once I was able to get all this debris and rubble off of me and cover my face with my jacket so that I could breathe, it was very thick dust, you couldn't see. We heard some sounds. We reached out and felt our way around. I managed to find some other people in this lower lobby. We crawled over towards the direction where we thought the door was and as we approached it the door cracked open a little, so we had the lights from the loading bay. We made our way over there. The loading bay doors were 3 fourths of the way shut when this happened, so they

took a lot of dust in there, but everyone in those bays was safe and secure. We had face to face contact with Chief Maggio and Captain Nahmod. They told me -- I said do whatever you need to do, get these people out of here. Go, go towards the water.

They proceeded to evacuate that group along with some secret service people.

Q. How did they get out, did they go out the loading bay?

A. I believe what happened was they opened the bay and they went out and they proceeded south on Vesey. The phone building is the next building adjacent to the east on Vesey and that had an exterior scaffolding set up on it and overhead protection. And I believe that's the way, speaking to Captain Nahmod later, that they moved the people. Again I didn't go with them. Myself and Phil Parr, the Battalion Chief detailed here to headquarters, I don't know how he ended up.

Q. At this point the south tower is down?

A. We didn't know that, but it was the south tower that was down. Phil Parr, Battalion Chief, again he had no protective equipment whatever. I'm not sure how he ended up there. I think he was detailed here to

headquarters and he made his way over there. He used to be a Deputy Director of OEM. So he made his way there. I didn't initially see him, but when it was all over, me and Phil found one another. We grabbed some hand lights from some Port Authority guys.

Q. What did you think had happened?

A. I thought that part of the building or the facade of the building had collapsed. You know, it was too dusty to see outside, so we didn't know what happened, but I knew something real bad happened. I knew that everyone that we had in the lobby, or we thought everyone was accounted for. Again, there was a lot of rubble in the lobby, probably a few feet. The facade was all broken. Me and Phil grabbed some hand lights and the people who were still there at ground level, we directed them to the door where there were guys who were going to lead them out. Some Port Authority and some secret service, you know, they were housed at number 7. Captain Nahmod and Battalion Chief Maggio, they were going to lead that group of people. Probably in excess of 30 or 40 people out of the building.

Me and Phil then proceeded up the escalators. We walked up the escalators with our

lights, even though we couldn't see anything with the lights that we had acquired. We reached the top of the escalators. We ran into another Port Authority officer who had a light. We told him to stand fast at the top of the escalators and just keep waving his light, you know, back and forth in a side to side motion, and that we were going to perform some search of that mezzanine level, I guess would be best to call it, or concourse level, whatever.

You know the level where the foot bridge connects, whatever. We found maybe a half dozen or so people out there. We told them to cover their heads and their faces with, you know, their shirts or clothes or whatever to help them breathe and to walk towards the Port Authority light. A few minutes after we were unable to see --

Q. Was that building already evacuated for the most part?

A. When we got there it was in the process of evacuation, so for the most part, with the exception of some rescuers that were still upstairs doing evacuation, it was fairly empty. We didn't see anybody else or hear anybody else on that level. We told the Port Authority cop that he could make his way down.

Just make sure that everyone else had got out. He being most familiar with the building, you know, the Port Authority complex.

We made our way to the doors which led to the pedestrian bridge, both myself and Chief Parr, as I said, I'm talking about both of us. We were able to force the door open and kick some debris out of the way. We made it to the overhead walkway and we started to walk south towards the Trade Center plaza. It became a little easier to breathe. There was still a tremendous amount of dust cloud in the air. But, at least it was open air, you know.

We looked left and right, could see the devastation on the street. We saw a couple of rigs collapsed and cars and again still not realizing what the nature was. We reached the plaza. We were underneath.

Q. You still couldn't see up if it was the building?

A. Correct, correct. We were walking underneath number 6 World Trade Center. If you have seen the pictures or are familiar with the way those buildings come, they come up and then they angle out so there is like a covered walkway path. We were there. We ran

into a few firefighters. We told them that we were going to try to make a chain of people and if we found anybody we would get them out. There were lots of bodies on the plaza. A couple of firefighters and police officers that we saw in the rubble that we were able to get to and get out of the rubble and direct towards the people, they got out. There were a few people in the rubble that were dead, both firefighters and police officers and civilians that we knew we couldn't do anything for.

Q. You had some alive, also?

A. Yes, we assisted them out. There were pockets of fire everywhere. At that point I noticed it was unusually lit in the plaza, considering the event that happened. I looked up and saw this big gaping hole where the south tower used to be. That's the first point that I realized that the south tower had collapsed. Maybe ten or 15 stories high left of it. Probably most of it being a pile of rubble.

The fire was still engaged, lots of smoke coming out of the north tower. I was like holy shit, I can't believe that this happened. Maybe if I would have known that I wouldn't have went up on the plaza. I don't know.

At that point I was up there with Phil. We were just searching for people. As we reached the corner of the 6 World Trade Center, the customs building, like in the plaza area when you walk in and then the building, the corner of it, we turned the corner and we saw this large mass of people. We called out to them. Phil ran to them. I rallied some ESU officers and firefighters who were down near the Vesey Street side. Told them we had a bunch of people. Some guys should come down. The rest should be able to direct them. We proceeded to evacuate several hundred civilians.

Q. Where were they coming from?

A. Most of them were coming -- it appeared they were coming out of like number 6 onto the plaza, but some were also coming from number 1 World Trade Center on the plaza area. Again, we directed them to cover their mouths with their clothing. Some people were just walking in a daze. We had to grab them and push them on their way or rip their shirt and give them something to cover. Told them not to look at the bodies that were there, not to worry about the fires or people. Just tried to focus them on getting them to the corner. I'm going to mark that number 4 on the

map, so then they could proceed northbound along the edge of number 6 and then go down the escalators. We had some guys posted. Get them on the escalators and head them towards City Hall. Get them out of the scene.

We got several hundred people out. A few people were obviously injured. We told them they would get help when they got downstairs. Even though I knew I didn't have anyone down there, I figured at some point they would run into somebody. Their injuries weren't significant enough that they required treatment nor were we able to provide treatment. My Department radio was not working at that time. It was clogged with dirt and dust. I couldn't get it to work so I couldn't talk to anyone. I was not able to get through on my cell phone to anybody either. So we were sort of operating independently and our point at that time we were just to try to evacuate these terrified individuals.

There were one or two people who couldn't walk. We were able to get some police and firefighters and take pieces of building debris and make like little makeshift carry things and they carried some people off.

I ran into a former Fire Department employee who used to work with me, Nick Cagliuso, who used to work in the Office of Medical Affairs. He was one of the people we evacuated. I didn't have an opportunity to talk to him. I think he worked in number 1 World Trade. I'm not sure.

There were some people we saw more towards the center of the courtyard that appeared to be trapped. One of them looked like it may have been an Emergency Service officer. We directed two firefighters and an ESU cop to go and help them. The last I saw of them they were in the process of removing that person from the rubble. I then ran into James Basile, EMS 2 Division Chief. He was at the end of this group of people.

He indicated that he was in the lobby of number one and that there were some people still in the lobby, that there was a number of fire Chiefs in there. His aide was in there and that they were making their way out another way. He had made his way out from this location. He said you know we should not be here. We have to get out of here. I said there is no one else here. Let's do that, but on the way out, I said we are going through number 7 again. That's right

on the way there. I explained to him the story. I said I'm sure the dust has settled somewhat. I just want to do another visual to make sure everyone that was with me and that was in that area downstairs was truly out.

So we went through the foot bridge again. At that point, I got separated from Phil Parr. Me and Jim proceeded over the pedestrian bridge back into number 7.

Q. How did you get separated?

A. I didn't -- I was talking to Jimmy and I saw Phil head off one direction. I think he headed down the escalators more toward Church Street. I said I'm going back into number 7. I was going to head back towards the command post, knowing that it was on Vesey Street. We went into the lobby. I was upstairs in the mezzanine lobby and there was no one there. We even checked the little snack store there. Everyone was out. No one was hidden behind the security counters.

We made our way down the escalators, I looked around the lobby, everyone was out. Then we went into the loading bays, which were relatively clear now and dust free. We saw all the EMS equipment scattered all over the place, but there were no signs of any people

in there. There was no debris in there so I knew that everyone in there was okay and had safely been evacuated.

We walked on out to Vesey Street under the foot bridge and we continued westbound on Vesey towards West Street, walking underneath the scaffolding of the Verizon building. When we reached the end of the scaffolding, Jimmy started to continue on to the command post. I was talking to a fire officer and I asked him if he saw a group of people with some EMS officers. I was concerned about the location of Captain Nahmod and that group of people he was treating. He said he saw a bunch of people. He saw them come out and headed north on West Street.

At that point, I believe it might have been Pete Hayden from the First Division that was operating on that corner with a number of companies. We had people hurt, we had people in the rubble. There were some ambulance crews that I saw staged on Vesey and West on the westbound side adjacent to number 3 World Financial. I guess I could mark that on your map number 5. I saw a Hatzolah ambulance and voluntary hospital ambulances. I found two or three ambulance crews scattered. We began to grab some of those people

and move them towards the water on Vesey Street.

I said let's get them and move them with the help of some firefighters, those injured people we had moved. All of their vehicles that were right there on the corner were rendered useless, as were a number of fire apparatus. I know I saw a collapsed unit on the corner over there that was crushed and dilapidated. There were some other vehicles over there.

Again, I couldn't get through on the radio. I was standing on the corner of Vesey and West. I was about to make my way towards the command post. I noticed that the north bridge, I believe the north bridge, was still intact at that point. Again, you know, at this point things get a little cloudy. I was on Vesey and West. I looked up, I saw the north tower fully involved. I saw number 6 World Trade Center fully involved with fire. I started to make my way to the command post when I heard that horrible sound again, you know, that whining screeching jet engine.

I looked up and at that point I knew the north tower was coming down. I made an immediate about face and I started to run as quick as I can.

Q. Where were you standing exactly?

A. West and Vesey, just south of Vesey Street on

West. Maybe north of the pedestrian bridge, a couple of hundred feet north of the pedestrian bridge, right at the corner.

I turned around and started to run north on West Street. My focus was run as quick as you can.

Q. Were you there by yourself at that time?

A. I was by myself at this point. I said this is it. Run for your life.

Q. Couple of minutes earlier you saw Chief Hayden. Was anybody else there when you saw him?

A. Couple of fire officers.

Q. No other high ranking people?

A. No, because everyone else, when I last saw them was still down at the command post, that's the direction I was headed. I was concerned about Zarrillo, Ganci and all those people, but at this point I turned off and I ran. My focus was that area two feet wide in front of me and 6 feet down. Nothing in my way. Nothing I'm going to trip over and run as fast as I can.

I made it maybe a couple of hundred feet and I heard someone scream out, Chief, Chief. I turned my head to the left, I saw a firefighter, he was signaling me over. There was an engine and a ladder parked on

the southbound lanes of West Street adjacent to the curb; maybe midway, probably around Barclay Street, midway between Vesey and Murray on that side. Probably around Barclay Street. So I ran in his direction. There was an opening maybe a foot and a half wide between the two apparatus. He pushed me in. He was behind me. He said, "We got to get under, we got to get under. Quick, we don't have time." He threw me to the floor, began to crawl under the rear, from under the rear step of the engine. I believe it was 23, but it could have been 22, the apparatus.

Then I saw him dive to make his way underneath the rear of the ladder, at which point everything went black. The thunderous roar continued, for what seemed like five minutes, but it was probably just seconds. I was unable to breathe. I was unable to see. The dust was in my eyes, I had them shut. I couldn't breathe, I took my helmet, pulled it over my face to give me some confined breathing space.

Q. Were you under the engine?

A. I was up under the rear step of the engine, when I heard screaming from the direction of where the firefighter was. I heard some other muffled sounds and then everything was just still and quiet. At that

point I realized I was trapped under the engine. I didn't think that I would ever get out. I thought that I was dead. I thought I was buried under a hundred stories of rubble under some fire truck.

I was able to move my right leg, but I was unable to move my left leg. I felt a lot of weight on it and I couldn't really move much. All the dirt and dust came under, debris, so I was sort of pinned like this with the helmet. I tried to control my breathing. All sorts of things go through your head at that point.

Several minutes went by. Again, I couldn't tell you how long. I felt some tugging on my leg. Next thing I know, I was pulled out from under the rig, it was a firefighter and an ESU cop. He said you all right, you all right. I said "I'm okay, I'm okay, how about you guys, are you okay? " I couldn't really see or breathe and I was choking. I walked around the side of the rig and popped the CFR compartment. It was open and I just sort of felt in there. I felt some sterile water bottles. I threw it on my face. Threw a couple of swigs to spit out all the dirt and then I realized I was okay.

I realized that, I looked down and saw the

devastation, the pedestrian bridge collapsed, the north tower collapsed, people just all over the place.

Q. How about the other firefighter?

A. We looked under the truck. There was a lot of rubble under there. We didn't see him. We didn't see any sign of him. So I don't know if he was all the way under buried. I did read a report later that they found some guys under trucks that were dead. I don't know if that was him or not.

I started to walk north towards Murray Street and then I said no, let me turn around and head back to the command post.

MR. CASTORINA: Before you go any further, why don't we switch sides on the tape before it stops running. It's almost over. Why don't we just flip sides.

Time is now 9:15. This is side two. The interview continues with Chief John PERUGGIA.

A. So, I got out of there, cleaned up my face. I was able to see and breathe. I offered water to a number of firefighters and police officers that were in the area. They all took some of the water and cleaned off their face a little. I went back to the CFR compartment, grabbed some more water. I threw it to

the guys, grabbed a pair of gloves for my hands and also grabbed some 6 inch cling, wrapped it around my face to give me some breathing protection.

I started to walk north towards Murray Street, maybe ten or 20 steps. I said, you know, let me go back to the command post instead of wandering around helplessly. I'm sure that things are chaotic now. I made the turn, I started to walk south towards Vesey Street and saw that --

Q. How heavy was the rubble at that point, in that location?

A. It was pretty significant. Actually it was like the more south I proceeded, the more and more rubble there was. Huge amount of fire, smoke, saw the pedestrian bridge collapse and at that point I had no idea where the command post now was. If there even was a command post. I turned around and started to walk north. I noticed, on the northbound direction of West Street, a Suburban. It was running because the lights were on, couple of hundred feet north of where I was. So, I figured let me make my way over there. Maybe there are some radios I could use and talk to somebody.

Q. At this point the whereabouts of OEM were?

A. Everyone was scattered.

Q. Last they were by 7?

A. We were all in there. I knew that they all got out. All the people that were there with us.

Q. At this point Chief Ganci, you had no idea --

A. I had no idea about Chief Ganci. No idea about him. The last time I saw Nigro he was on the other side of the complex. I didn't know where EMT Zarrillo was. I know that my last direction to him was go to Ganci. I was clearly concerned about him. Besides the fact that I directed him, he works for me. We are friends for some 15 years and I am friends with his wife longer and I was really concerned about him. I didn't know where Captain Nahmod was. Again, I had directed him and again we were friends and I had those concerns as well.

I started making my way towards this Suburban vehicle. It was an EMS Suburban, the star of life was on the rear window. I ran into Mike Butler, Chief of Fire Prevention. He was making his way south. I said Chief are you all right. He said yes, how about you. I said fine. I said where is the command post, because everything down there is destroyed now. He said the command post is wiped out; everyone is gone. He said we need to set up a command post. It's just me and you

so let's get started.

At that point we proceeded north to Murray Street. He was on the fire radio. I ran over, grabbed the EMS Suburban, pulled up to Murray Street, was trying to get through on the radio. I finally got through when we decided that we were going to set up the command post on Warren, bring it one block north. I got through on the radio, I asked about the command post. They said they had no communications with anyone. I told them I was on the scene and proceeding to set up a command post on Warren Street.

I don't know if that message got through, because after we got on Warren Street, we ran into Joe Farrell from the New York State Health Department, EMS Bureau. He said, "Where are you headed?" I said, "Well this is the command post." Then the Chief says, "There is a gas leak, we need to go north one more to Chambers." I said, "Come on Joe, we will drive up there." We drove up to Chambers Street, right under the little Stuyvesant High School bridge. I parked the Suburban there and determined that that would be my command post. Chief Butler came up and there was a fire car that they had over there. He started setting up. I was trying to get through on Citywide. There

was a lot of activity.

At some point I heard an EMS Chief officer, later to find out that was J.P. Martin and he was here on the Brooklyn side on the Brooklyn Bridge and he was assuming command of the operation, directing units staged in Brooklyn. I guess his impression was that no one was talking to them. They thought everyone in the Trade Center was wiped out. They didn't know what was going on. I was able to cut in on Citywide. I asked him to hit the alert tone. I remember asking him to hit the alert tone several times to clear the frequency.

I indicated to them that unless there was a higher ranking officer than myself that they were in contact with, I was on scene at the World Trade Center and was establishing the EMS command post adjacent to the Fire Department command post at Chambers Street. So they sent that message out several times. I told them that any officers that were operating on the scene should immediately be directed to report in to Chambers and West. Any ambulance crews that they had contact with that were operating in the vicinity, I asked them to have them respond in to West Broadway and Chambers, which was two blocks to the east of where we were

located.

They sent that message out several times. Further, I tried to get them to conduct a roll call of the Chief officers so I know who was accounted for, where they may be and what types of operations. I also remember asking to them if they had contact with any officers or ambulances that were operating, to get them identified and where they were. I wanted to try to get some sense of scope on what sort of management people and/or supervisory people were on the scene, where they were and what people were doing. Again, there was tremendous disaster area down there. It was out of control and we didn't know what was going on.

Some time went by. We were trying to collect resources. Some ambulances showed up. I directed them up there. A couple of supervisors arrived and I directed one up to staging. I sent two people, I don't remember who they were, I asked them to just make their way down to Vesey Street and no further and if they saw anyone operating around there to get them up, get them out of there. I know there were people operating on Vesey Street prior to the second collapse. I said, "I want you to go down there, do a quick survey, your safety obviously first. If you find anybody get them

up here. Let's get away from the site and let's regroup and we will go in there." Chief Butler I think was trying to do the same thing for fire.

I started to get some sense from Citywide. J.P. Martin had a group of people in Brooklyn. There was a group of people at South Ferry, I think it was Chief Steffens and I don't remember who else was down there. They told me that there was a group of people up at Chelsea Piers with Kowalczyk and Pat Scaringello. This was are time progressed.

I ran into Pete Carrasquillo, maybe after about 20, 30 minutes. He was down near the water on Chambers Street. He heard me on the radio and he said he made his way down towards Vesey Street. I said, "Pete, maybe you can make your way down there, get a forward seat and see what's going on." J.P. Martin eventually made his way to me. I made him then become the communications person for the operation post. I got in touch with Kowalczyk, maybe an hour or two later, to see if I could get him down.

I knew I was hurt. There was blood dripping down the side of my face. I was a little dazed and confused and I hadn't spoken to my family since when I first started responding in. I was concerned about the

two guys who worked for me that were my friends as well as other people and I said I have a task in front of me, but I just needed some help. I reached out to Walter to get him down. It was a while before Walter got down. We continued the operation. We started to set up some sectors and started sometime shortly about maybe one o'clock or two o'clock or whatever. Both of us said, "You look like you are shot." He said, "Do you want me to do command and you do operations? " We then switched roles.

At some point after that we found out that McCracken was okay. He made his way back up towards, we started to regroup and implement some sort of operational plans about how we were going to do the operation.

Q. This whole time, did you see Chief McCracken?

A. I didn't see Chief McCracken until much later, maybe one or two o'clock. It was evening, and it was dark so I don't know what time, as time progressed we set up sectors. I had John McFarland go down to Vesey and West Street, with a team of guys to do forward triage. I got a communication from John. He called me on his cell phone, indicating that they found Ganci and Feehan's bodies.

I relayed that information to Chief McCracken. We got out of our command post and I walked over and relayed that to, I believe it was Chief Nigro and the Fire Commissioner, who were at the fire command post at that point in time. At that point, you know, I was really concerned about Rich Zarrillo. I hadn't heard --

Q. Still you hadn't heard?

A. Right, and I knew he was there. I ran into Abdo at some point. He didn't know where Rich was.

Q. When did you finally find Rich Zarrillo?

A. Probably around 6:00. I didn't see Richie till after. Chief Hirth and Lieutenant Cacciola made their way down or way up from South Street at some point in time. They said that they saw Richie and he was at Chelsea Piers. At that point I knew that he was okay.

We continued the operation. I was there until 8:30 the next morning.

Q. Did you see Father Judge at any point?

A. I never saw Father Judge. The only ranking people I saw were Ganci and Nigro at the command post, the Fire Commissioner, who I briefed early on and obviously saw later on.

Q. Okay. Anything else you want to add?

A. I just marked the map number 6, the location where I guess I was underneath the fire truck. Somewhere between Vesey and Murray around Barclay.

Q. On the second collapse?

A. Right, it was either 22 or 23 engine, I don't remember exactly, and some truck company.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time now is 0926 hours. Thank you, Chief PERUGGIA.

File No. 9110161

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RICHARD ZARRILLO

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CASTORINA: Today's date is October 25th, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina conducting an interview in the office of BITS. Your name --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: -- is also accompanied with me conducting this interview.

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Richard Zarrillo.

Q. And your rank and title?

A. I'm an EMT working in fire operations as the special event coordinator.

Q. Can you tell me, on September 11th, 2001, the events that took place that day, whatever you can remember?

A. Sure. While sitting at my desk, probably just after the first plane had hit the tower, Chief Ganci had come running across the hall yelling something about a plane hitting the twin towers. Most of us thought he was joking until we looked out the window and saw one of the towers had flames coming out of it. I placed a call to Chief Peruggia to ask him his location. He told me he was just coming over the Verrazano Bridge about to get in the HOV lane. I told him maybe you want to start heading to Manhattan, I'll

meet you in the city, this way we could hook up and do whatever we needed to do. At that point he thought I was joking. He cursed at me and hung up. Captain Nahmod was sitting next to me and he said we need to get some equipment, find out who's going, who's not going, try and make our way there.

I spoke with Chief Peruggia. He called me back and said maybe you and Abdo, Captain Nahmod, need to head into the city to be part of the command, runners or administratively, whatever we can do to help out. I was able to locate a helmet from one of the people in RCC. Captain Nahmod and I tried to find a car to get into the city. Chief Ramos was bringing us downstairs to get a pool car, so I think Commissioner Drury happened to be walking in at the wrong time and we asked him to drive us into the city.

I'm not sure of the exact time, but I believe as we were coming over the Brooklyn Bridge was when the second plane hit the second tower. We parked -- I want to say it's on like Broadway right off of Vesey Street, between Vesey and Barclay. Captain Nahmod and I started heading down Vesey Street towards where we thought the command post would be. At that time we had received a page per Chief Peruggia to go into OEM at

No. 7 World Trade and activate our post in OEM. Captain Nahmod and I were running down Vesey Street stepping over airplane pieces, several bodies and whatnot.

Q. Can you describe how much debris was around?

A. There was what looked like the front wheel assembly of an airplane. Unknown the size of the plane that had hit, it just looked like it was one pair of wheels on an assembly, pieces of metal with rivets in them, a few body parts scattered around.

Q. Was debris still falling?

A. Debris was falling. It looked like birds. There were people falling from the towers or jumping, whatever it was they were doing. Abdo and I went into No. 7, activated OEM, placed calls to EMS Citywide, RCC, to tell them we were there and we were activated.

Maybe five, ten minutes, not even ten minutes later, a rep from OEM came into the main room and said we need to evacuate the building; there's a third plane inbound. That was the only thing I really heard because I said, Abdo, we've got to go, and we made it down to the lobby of the building, street level, met up with Chief Peruggia in the lobby of the building. He said that there was no third plane but we needed to

re-establish OEM right there so we can coordinate what was going on. He had already been to the command post, so he told us, and he was trying to release people back to be operational. He was looking for the Fire guy to go back in. He was there with Captain Yakimovich. In OEM with Captain Nahmod and I was Chief Maggio, who is now retired, and another firefighter from the 1st Division. We were really trying to establish OEM and a treatment sector in the lobby of the building because there were people coming around us.

Again, times are a little fuzzy initially for me. A few minutes later, John came to me and said you need to go find Chief Ganci and relay the following message: that the buildings have been compromised, we need to evacuate, they're going to collapse. I said okay. I went down Vesey Street towards West.

Q. You were by yourself?

A. I was by myself, me and my helmet and my radio. I got to the corner of Vesey and West. I found some EMS vehicles. I think I saw Chief Gombo there. I'm not really sure. I mentioned to the EMS people there, again, not knowing who they were, I said you need to get away from here, the building might collapse, we need to leave this spot.

As I was walking towards the Fire command post, I found Steve Mosiello. I said, Steve, where's the boss? I have to give him a message. He said, well, what's the message? I said the buildings are going to collapse; we need to evac everybody out. With a very confused look he said who told you that? I said I was just with John at OEM. OEM says the buildings are going to collapse; we need to get out.

He escorted me over to Chief Ganci. He said, hey, Pete, we got a message that the buildings are going to collapse. His reply was who the fuck told you that? Then Steve brought me in and with Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan, Steve, I believe Chief Turi was initially there, I said, listen, I was just at OEM. The message I was given was that the buildings are going to collapse; we need to get our people out. At that moment, this thunderous, rolling roar came down and that's when the building came down, the first tower came down.

The command post was situated right in front of 3 World Financial, the American Express Building. The garage was open and as that rumble started and we saw it was coming down, the firemen that were in the command area, I believe most of the chiefs, we all ran

into the garage of that building. It became dark, hard to breathe. Nobody had any equipment because most of the firemen dropped everything as they were running. It became an obstacle course to get into the garage.

Again, it's sketchy with time, but it may have been anywhere from ten to 20 minutes by the time we found an emergency exit to get out of the building. It was dark. There was no light.

Q. Who were you with at this point? Were you by yourself?

A. I had two firemen. What I did was I took about ten or 15 running steps into the garage and hugged into a corner of a wall, an indentation, and I felt like two or three guys get in behind me and actually made it a tighter huddle. The dust, the cloud came rolling in. It got dark. As the dust and the noise started to settle, we were all tapping up to see where each other were.

I met up with Chief Cassano at the stairwell, and I believe Chief Carrasquillo was around there. I know I met up with him outside on the lobby of Vesey Street from that building, when we got out. Lots of firemen, you know, faces, no names I could really identify, except for Sal.

We made it up the staircase into the lobby, I believe it was 3, it may have been one of those little cross lobbies that were there, and got out onto Vesey Street. I met up with EMT Mike Ober, who had been driving Chief Kowalczyk. He was his driver for a while. I met up with him. I found Chief Carrasquillo, who was with Chief Cassano, a few others, you know, faces, again, that I found, and we were walking around trying to make -- what happened? It was still cloudy, that very fine but heavy dust that was in the air.

Once I got out of the building, maybe ten minutes from there, that unforgettable rolling started.

Q. The same sound you heard earlier?

A. The same sound I heard earlier.

Q. Where were you at this point?

A. I was on West and Vesey, probably in the middle of the intersection, trying to find people that I knew. At this point I didn't know where John was, where Abdo was. I don't know what happened to No. 7. I knew the building was coming down. I watched it come down on us, but I don't know where anybody else is.

As that roar was happening on the second time around, I was running down Vesey Street towards the water with a few thoughts in my head. One, if I hit

the water, I was swimming home, or just getting into the water for cover, if necessary. The marina was right there. I ended up making a right on North End Avenue and there was a building -- EMS, again, I know Chief Villani was there. I saw Chief Pascale later on. I believe Chief Kowalczyk was in there also. The MERV was stationed on North End Avenue for a while and I remember emergency service was on the southbound side of North End near Vesey for a while also. We made it into that building as the second one came down. Again, the clouds and all the other debris.

Q. You were protected in that building?

A. In the building.

Q. Which building was that?

A. There was a building right there on the corner. Maybe 15, 20 feet off the corner, there was an entrance into a building, and that's where -- it was mostly glass windows and we were concerned that the glass was going to implode.

Q. Did that face the river?

A. It faced the river and that was protection in my view.

Q. About a three-block distance?

A. It's actually one city block, but still that

cloud came over and passed and --

Q. Did it get black there, too?

A. It got really dark. Most of us were looking for cover, trying to avoid anything else that was coming down. While we were in that building, we were told -- again, I don't know where anybody is.

Q. You had no radio, right?

A. I had a 400 radio. I couldn't get through to anybody.

Q. Were you hearing anything, Mayday, anything on the radio?

A. No. The 400 -- I was on EMS Citywide and I don't know if my radio was clogged or the batteries. It could have been a hundred different things.

Q. Can you just mark on the map where you were? Just roughly.

A. We were right about here.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't know where John was. Outside of the job, John, Abdo and I are old friends and that was my concern, you know, how am I going to tell these guys' wives, we all live near each other, that I followed his direction and now I can't find either of them.

While we were in this building, we were told

that there was a gas main rupture or a gas leak and we needed to evacuate that building.

Q. Who told you this?

A. It was just somebody, a security guard or somebody. But then Chief Villani and all the other chiefs that were in there said we need to gather all of our equipment because they had set up a treatment area, there were ten sets of equipment with stretchers from ambulances, and we all took all that stuff out and started heading down North End hoping to find -- or maybe it was down toward -- no. Down North End Avenue to try and find another place we could go into.

Again, at this point there was a lot of disorientation. Nobody really was fully aware as to what was going on. The radios had gone silent, you know, guessing, because the repeater tower went down. Nobody knew what was going on. I thought I heard a helicopter. There were a lot of people running, lots of patients or would-be patients running past us.

Q. Where were they headed?

A. Anywhere they could get away from. The water.

Q. Heading away from the buildings?

A. Running north on West Street. I went into --

there was a school not too far down from here. I meet up with Mike Cahill from Division 6 and Gerald Garcia. They were down there. The MERV had already tried to find another place to set up and was moving down North End Avenue. I think it was Garcia. We went into a school. I wanted to just wash my face off, use a bathroom, and as we were in that school building, we were told we had to evacuate that building because, again, a gas rupture. That came from one of the school officials, a name I couldn't tell you. Face? Probably not now recognize.

We made it back on to West Street, I don't remember what the cross was, and we started heading -- I heard people saying we're going to Chelsea. I heard Chief Pascale say she was going up to Chelsea Piers, we were going to try and re-establish up there, you know, do a count and try to run the operation.

When I went to that other building, I lost most of those people, except for Cahill, and then when they told us to evacuate that building, I just had to get out of there. My thoughts were that I needed to get home, get my wife from midtown and just get home for my daughter.

I got onto West Street and met up with

Captain Stone, Greg Brady from Division 1. I found Chief Hirth and Grace Cacciola and they said we're all going up to Chelsea, let's go re-establish our command up there, again, not knowing where anybody else was. You see the plumes of smoke, the dust cloud that was coming down, but we just really wanted to find a safe place for that. Probably about ten blocks up West Street you heard the jets flying overhead, so lots of thoughts running through people's heads, what's happening to us here?

Q. What kind of jets?

A. Military jets.

Q. Military jets?

A. Yes.

Q. This is --

A. This is right after the second collapse.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. Well, if I say 15 minutes from the time we got to that school building and started walking towards Chelsea, maybe ten, 15 minutes had passed by the time that --

Q. Half an hour?

A. Again, I do apologize for that.

Q. No, everybody has that problem.

A. Time wasn't --

Q. There's no perception of time.

A. It's still very surreal. There I was talking to Chief Ganci and relaying that the building is going to come down and then it came down on us. It's very bothersome.

We hitched a ride with a police van up to the Chelsea Piers. Chief Kowalczyk was there, Chief Pascale, a slew of ambulances. There had to be 50 non city ambulances up there from everywhere. I saw Captain Boyle there. I met up with Captain Pinkus. Captain Stone, myself, Brady, Chief Hirth and Grace went into the -- there was some restaurant on the edge of the Chelsea Pier area, you know, to try and clean up a little bit, use the rest room, which I needed to do a while ago. I met up with a lot of my counterparts from the Secret Service because that's where their fallback was becoming. All their agents from the building were in there.

Mark Stone said he felt his shoulder was hurt and Chief Hirth was looking to get out of there to go someplace else. He wanted to check -- I honestly don't know what was going through his head. He said I need to go away from here, I need to go get a car, I need to

go to the division or a hospital. Whatever the case may have been, they took Captain Stone to Bellevue to be treated. He was treated and released.

Chief Pascale and Chief Kowalczyk were establishing their command, and doing this for -- you know, between chiefs and what I do now, I fell into that command structure to say, okay, I'm here, let me help you with this, and I handled staging and some other logistical issues with them for about two or three hours, and then I made my way back down to the command post. Probably within an hour of us getting up to Chelsea, Chief Kowalczyk said to me that John is okay, he heard him on the radio, and that he was going down to the command post that's been re-established to either help out or take over from him.

Then, like I said, a few hours later, Lieutenant Nevins and I made our way down south back to Chambers Street where the other command post had been established. That's really about it.

MR. CASTORINA: I think you've covered virtually everything. The time now is 1202. The concludes the interview.

File No. 9110162

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JULIO MARRERO

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 25th, 2001. The time now is 1849 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work with the New York City Fire Department, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at Battalion 14 to conduct an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, assignment and shield number.

EMT MARRERO: My name is Julio Marrero with the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 14. I was assigned to 14 Charlie that day, tour 2, and my shield number is 5376.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Mr. Marrero, on the morning of September 11th can you recount the events that took place that day?

A. Sure. I was sitting on 161 and Grand Concourse approximately about 9:30 in the morning

when a call came over on my KDT to respond over to Barclay and Church for a cardiac, most probably related to the World Trade Center incident.

As I was heading down to the World Trade Center, I saw a massive amount of people walking away from the building, and I saw smoke coming from both towers. I knew that one tower was hit, never knew that the second tower was hit.

I responded over to Barclay and Church where I came around and I couldn't actually get around to Barclay street because the roads were so closed off because of the amount of people walking in the streets. We couldn't actually make our turn on Barclay to get over to Church, so I went down a few blocks. I can't remember exact blocks that I went down; I would say two to three blocks, because everything was blocked off.

I finally got over to Church. When I saw Church Street, I looked up, and both towers were in flames. At this point we realized that something was terribly wrong. I looked down the block and saw that there must have been more than

three dozen ambulances, fire trucks and police cars on the street and a massive amount of rescue workers, firefighters, EMS, police officers, trying to get these people away from the buildings.

Also I was told to pull my ambulance over by one of the lieutenants so I could help to start triaging with the casualties and stuff. I was trying to explain to the lieutenant on the scene that I was trying to get to a call, an actual call that was on Barclay and Church, and he told me I can mark that a 93 because there was too many amount of buses, ambulances, to even worry about me trying to get over that way. Actually all the street was closed because of so many rescue ambulances and stuff. So it was kind of hard.

In that process of him trying to explain to me to pull my ambulance over, I heard a loud bang. We looked up, and we just saw the building starting to collapse. I looked over and started to scream at my partner, which he was inside the vehicle.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. My partner was Naomi Nacional.

I was screaming from the top of my lungs, and I must have been about ten feet away from her and she couldn't even hear me, because the building was so loud, the explosion, that she couldn't even hear me. I just saw everybody running; and she saw us running, and she took off behind us.

Q. You left your vehicle right there?

A. The vehicle was left there.

Q. Do you know approximately where it was?

A. The vehicle was approximately between I believe -- I would say between Liberty -- I'm not sure. Between Liberty and Dey, somewhere in that vicinity. We're talking about two blocks. I can't remember exactly because I was trying to actually make my way up to Barclay and Church.

Q. Would you just indicate on the map with the number 1 approximately where you remember leaving the vehicle when you got out to run.

A. I believe it was maybe over here. I think I ran down Dey. I think I ran down Dey. I'm not sure if I ran down Dey because, like I said, I couldn't move my vehicle anyway because

there was so many vehicles in the way that we couldn't move our vehicle. This happened in such a split second that the only thing we had to do to react was run for our dear lives.

I saw fire trucks. I saw firemen. I saw firemen walking in the building as this horrific --

Q. You want to pause?

(Pause.)

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The interview will be continuing the time now is 1856 hours.

Q. You left off you left the vehicle and started to run.

A. We started to run. I remember running either down Dey or Cortlandt. I'm not sure which street it was. It happened too fast. I can't remember.

In the event that the building was coming down, I also saw a massive amount of people running. The dark cloud hit us. I thought I was going to be dead. I thought I was going to die when that smoke hit us. I could see debris flying, and I started choking from the smoke because I couldn't breathe.

I fell down some subway stairs. Somewhere I had just started walking towards -- I knew that there was a building on my right as I was running, and I knew that I had to find a void in the building so I wouldn't be hit over the head with any debris as I was running.

I was crawling on the side of the building, and I felt a void. That's when I took a step into the void, and there was actually steps. Because you couldn't see your hand in front of you, it was so dark. A thick cloud of concrete, debris, smoke, airplane fuel. It was just massive thickness.

I remember there was a void, and I stumbled down the stairs of this void. That's when I broke my foot. I broke my foot, and I did feel some pressure on my foot. My boots were kind of tight on me, and I felt them getting tighter.

All I was thinking at that moment is how am I going to get out of this situation. That was my first concern. I had to worry about myself because of my safety. This is one of the things that they taught us at the academy is try

to worry about yourself first so then you can help other people. So I was really worried about trying to get out of the situation I was in so I could get out and start helping people.

I didn't really feel my foot as much as I felt my back, because as I fell down the stairs I sprained my lower back, mostly, and that was even more. At the bottom of the stairs, I just waited a little while. I could hear people screaming inside the subway station from a distance. It was horrifying. It was really horrifying. The screams I still hear at night.

I ran out of the subway station to get help. As I ran out of the subway station, I ran down to about -- I believe the street that I ran down was to Broadway. I'm not sure -- I believe I was on Dey, but I'm not sure if it was Dey or Cortlandt, because a lot of the signs were also full of dust. So I really couldn't see that well.

I had contacts on that day, and my eyes were full of dust and they were irritated and I was completely head to toe in this dust and concrete and God knows what else we were exposed

to. I was really worried about my breathing, because I had choked up a lot of that dust and stuff.

Miraculously I saw my partner walking towards me. We embraced for a moment, we were just so glad to see each other. Once I turned around -- I was on the corner I think of Dey or Cortlandt on Broadway. I remember Broadway. I looked, and it was just an amount of overwhelming people that needed help, and I didn't have an ambulance. The ambulance was left back on Church Street, I believe, or Trinity, Church and Trinity turns into that, I'm sure.

This is where I then started to help people to the best that I could. And I felt that I needed to go back and try to get my ambulance. So my partner and I started to work towards the collapsed buildings, and this is when I saw the chaplain. I believe it's Father Judge. I believe he was there. There was another chief with him. I can't remember who the chief was. But I remember looking at the chaplain because he had his coat on, and on the bottom of the coat it said "chaplain." That's how I remember it was

the chaplain.

I saw them walking towards the collapsed building, and that's when me and my partner decided to walk behind them to see if we can go get our ambulance so we can start transporting people to the hospital.

When I really got this really deep sick feeling inside of my stomach, and I said, "Look, I don't think we can go back and get the ambulance. I think that ambulance is destroyed." As we were walking towards there, we just saw so much fire and smoke. It was a horrifying scene, and I really felt that the scene was not safe for me to go back towards that way.

So we turned around and headed back to help people. So we were making a triage right in the middle of -- we made a triage right on the street of Broadway and I believe it was Dey. Broadway and Dey, we started helping people right there on the corner. We started setting up a triage area right there.

There were no bosses. There was no one. There was just me. Then a couple of ambulances pulled up, and we just started loading

people into the ambulances. It was mayhem. From that moment on, it was just mayhem, everybody walking up to us and they were hurt some way or another.

Then we were helping these people, loading them up to the ambulance, when I heard over citywide -- I had my radio on. I heard over citywide that the second tower was leaning south, to start heading people north, it was about to go.

So as soon as I heard that over the radio, my partner was inside an ambulance trying to help people with the other EMTs, and I was trying to work with the people outside the ambulance.

When I heard that, I had told my partner to get out of the ambulance, to start heading people north, and you could tell north from south by looking at the tower that was still standing and you knew more or less where you were. Because if you were on Broadway and you looked at the tower, the north tower, you wanted to run behind it.

I started telling her to start telling

people to start moving north, and we both started -- and I realized that the ambulance, they were still in there trying to work on people. So I ran towards the ambulance, and my partner ran away from the ambulance, telling people to run north, because they were all walking toward the ambulance, because there was only one ambulance in the area and everybody was needing so much desperate help that they were all working towards the ambulance.

We started telling them to move north. She ran to tell them to move north, and I ran towards the ambulance to get them out of there, because they had no idea what was going on.

When I got to the ambulance, I told them to leave because they just said over citywide that the building was about to collapse, the second collapse. They just got out and moved. They moved that bus. I have no idea which way they went.

At that moment I just heard the second building coming down. When the second building started to come down, I started to run. Approximately I'm not sure what street. I must

have ran down Fulton Street about a block, and then I know I cut down another street. I made a left. And I just started cutting between streets like a snake in order to avoid any kind of debris or anything trying to hit me. I ran into one of the buildings that was open about two blocks down.

At this point I was in extreme pain from my lower back. My heart rate was over 200. My adrenaline was very high. My blood pressure, I have no idea how high it was, but it was extremely high. I was very nervous. I felt that I might have had -- was going to experience a heart attack.

As I opened the building door, I just saw inside the building there must have been about 30 or 40 people inside that building hiding. There was just a lot of fear. And when they saw me in uniform, everybody was like "Help me." I was like, I'm trying to help myself right now.

There was another police officer in the building also. I believe he was a bike cop, because he had his little bike uniform on and I

could tell the police officers that have the little bike uniform on. It was just me and him trying to calm the people down inside the building and trying to get them away from the collapse.

We just waited for the smoke to clear some. We got them out. That building had an exit on the other side from where I came in. We opened that exit. We got them out of the building, and we all ran to safety.

I ran over to Beekman Hospital, where I practically collapsed. I needed oxygen treatment at Beekman. I can tell you that at Beekman I saw police officers and firemen coming in, and they were -- some people were beyond recognition.

I was in Beekman Hospital on a stretcher for some oxygen treatment when I saw a cop friend of mine from the 44 Precinct come in, and he had his head busted wide open. I realized that this cop needed a stretcher more than I did. There were no stretchers. So I jumped off and I said, "Put that police officer on my stretcher."

I jumped onto another ambulance going to Bellevue Hospital, from Beekman, because they

needed to transport a patient who was in severe head trauma, severe head trauma, intubated, going from Beekman to Bellevue. I took the opportunity to help those EMTs transport this patient from Beekman Hospital over to Bellevue Hospital.

This man must have weighed about a good 450 pounds. He had massive head trauma. I don't think -- this patient was pretty much close to death when we transported him. I helped them load this patient, with a bad back, with a broken foot. My adrenaline is still going.

I never even thought about going back towards the building. I didn't want to go back towards that way, because I knew I was injured and I needed to get out of the area.

We got that patient over to Bellevue Hospital, and they treated him. The EMTs, they told me that they didn't want me going back to look for my partner because I was injured, and they wanted me in. As soon as I got to Bellevue Hospital, they grabbed a lieutenant and told them what was going on with me.

That's when I just broke down and cried at Bellevue Hospital, because it was just so

overwhelming. I just knew that what happened was horrific. It was a bombing. It wasn't an accident. I didn't know what was going on. I had no idea, no clue that two airplanes had hit the building.

I was responding right after like -- I would say after one plane hit the building. I wasn't even listening to a radio, but I was only listening to my EMS radio, not listening to 1010 Wins or anything like that, you know, where you can get information. I had no idea what was going on downtown. I was responding to a call.

That's basically my story.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview. The time is 1910 hours.

File No. 9110163

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHARLES WELLS

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 26, 2001. The time is 1118 hours. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also from the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with Deputy Chief CHARLES WELLS.

Q. Sir, would you give us the story of what happened on September 11, 2001.

A. I logged on, I guess, approximately 8:30 in the morning. I was proceeding westbound on the Southern State Parkway in the vicinity of the state troopers barracks in Valley Stream when the citywide radio started becoming extremely busy with radio traffic, Brooklyn and Manhattan units coming up into the citywide radio, saying 1063, but after a few minutes I realized they were going to the World Trade Center.

Immediately got on the radio and requested permission to respond, and I was -- I received permission to respond and proceeded north on the Cross Island Parkway to the westbound LIE, where I approached what used to be the Elmhurst gas tanks area. I was able to view the Manhattan skyline to see a tower involved in fire on the upper floors.

Went through the Midtown Tunnel. When I exited the Midtown Tunnel, at that time a radio message came over that a second tower had been struck by an airplane.

I proceeded through midtown traffic, got over to the west side, and parked my car on the southbound side of West Street at Barclay. There were numerous ambulances parked nearby there, numerous marked fire sedans, and I got out, I put on my gear and started walking toward where I believe the command post was, at Vesey and West.

As I was walking down the street, there was numerous apparatus. I did see Ladder 118 parked at that -- on West at Vesey. I then proceeded south of Vesey on West toward the command post, where I reported in to Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Basile, at which point they directed me to go to the southwest sector of the complex at Liberty and West Street and establish some medical treatment triage center.

As I was walking down, numerous people on the upper floors were jumping, jumping in pairs, holding hands, jumping, and they were landing -- they were landing on the ground, and then on -- also on top of the Vista International Hotel.

I got down to Liberty and West. When I arrived there, there were approximately 15 EMS units -- excuse me. Approximately two to three department EMS units, numerous fire apparatus and approximately 10 or 12 Metro Care ambulances, all right up against the southwest corner of Liberty and West.

I immediately told them to re-establish on the west side of West Street, not under the pedestrian bridge, but north of the pedestrian bridge as close to Liberty Street as possible. They immediately responded to that.

Debris was falling. I immediately told them to don hard hats. Only the department EMS personnel had hard hats at that point. Metro Care, they didn't have any hard hats. I then interacted with Deputy Chief Robert Browne of the EMS command, who was directed to the same site. He directed the units over to the west side of West Street on -- on West Street by Liberty for these units to re-establish themselves in a more safe location.

As the units were driving around, they did it in a pretty quick fashion. As they were exiting their vehicles, a firefighter, assigned to OEM, a Firefighter Tim Brown, I see him exiting the Liberty Street area of

the complex running towards us. He came up, and he said, he said, "Chief, I have ten people on the ground floor of the 2 World Trade Center, the south tower in the lobby. They somehow managed to get themselves into the elevator and got down to the lobby, and they all have fractured legs. We can't get them out. Could you come in and get them?"

So I said, "Okay, fine." I turned around and I said, "Let me have six personnel and bring the stretchers and the back boards, and we are just going to put them on the back boards, and we will do fracture management when we get back to treatment."

Of the six that came forward -- I asked for volunteers. I said whoever wants to come in with me. Six people immediately came up, but only two had helmets, and that was the crew of 18 Charlie 2, EMT Conzo and EMT Truoccolo. I may be pronouncing his name wrong. The other four were Metro Care personnel. They had no turnout jackets. They didn't have helmets, and I said, "No, you guys stay back here and just when you see us come out with these people, you immediately take them and give us your empty stretcher, and we'll do a round robin, swapping out the equipment to get the patients out."

I told Bobby Browne what I was doing. He said, "Okay, fine." He was going to remain there and wait for us to come back out and see what we have. We took the crew of 18 Charlie, and they had Firefighter Brown direct us to where he wanted us to go.

We entered Liberty Street from West Street, and we started walking down the sidewalk. We got to the point of being in between the Vista Hotel and the World Trade Center, at which point we heard a -- we felt a loud -- a very strong vibration, shaking, and a loud noise like a subway train coming through a station at speed, like a jet engine at full throttle. It was a roaring sound, and he wanted to continue down Liberty Street, and I grabbed him.

I said, "Tim, we can't go down there," and then things started to get dark, and we just ran, and there is some doorway around here, some doorway, and we ran into this doorway. We got in about, I don't know, a number of feet, and the wind velocity took us off our feet and just threw us, and then we started getting buried with debris.

Q. It threw you further into the building or --

A. Right, into the building. Actually, it actually threw us. The wind was coming from the east,

from the east to the west, so we got into this doorway, got into something, and it just pushed us and just knocked you off your feet, like a wave hitting you at the beach, and you get stuck in the wave itself.

So we are trapped up in there now. We are separated. I'm yelling to the other guys, but you're buried in this.

Q. I know you are Haz-Mat trained. Did you have a Scott pack or no?

A. No, and then I don't have my Scott pack any more. When they disbanded ERS, the ERS unit relinquished all their equipment back to Haz-Mat operations.

Q. Okay.

A. I had my helmet on. For some reason I had my strap on, and thank God that was on, as I'll tell you later on, and I had the EMS bunker pants, and my jacket on, so it took like about 10 minutes, and I was able to dig myself to the point where I was falling down, because it turns out I was suspended off the ground. It has debris and dig, dig, dig, and you drop, drop, drop, and you dig, dig, dig, and finally I was able to burrow out of -- like about a couple of minutes like moving ahead. Couldn't breathe. Choking.

There was oxygen, but you were breathing the dirt right in, you were eating it, so you had to keep moving around. Finally just pulled your jacket up over your face and tried to breathe inside your jacket, and then I hit a wall, and then I started to -- and I was able to stand up at that point, and the debris is now about waist level at that point, and then -- now the smoke and debris is clearing, and the whole -- you can see right out to West Street at this point or Liberty and West. You can see in that whole area, and it was, like, I don't know, about a hundred people.

Everybody's heads were all popping up now. Everybody is digging out, so I ran into a couple of firefighters and I said, "Well, you know, what the hell happened?" Some kind of an explosion, he goes, and that's what I thought it was, because it was like coming at you sideways, so we looked out, and we're getting the people out, and as we are getting people out through this debris onto West Street, I'm looking at the medical treatment area, and all the fire apparatus, and all the ambulances were on fire, and nobody is around. You know, where is everybody?

So I got back out into the street and got everybody out, and we directed them. They wanted to

know where to go. We said just go to the water. Just go to the -- get on the boat, get the hell out of the city. And as I crossed West Street, I'm looking north, and I'm looking south, and nobody is around. Nobody is around, and I walked over to where the ambulances were burning, and one by one all of a sudden people started to appear. You know, the Metro Care personnel, other EMS personnel.

After about a few minutes, Bobby Browne's aid, Jay Katz, he shows up, and then Bobby shows up, so I said, "Let's get all the -- move the equipment out of the back of the ambulances that are in bags before they burn up and the oxygen and let's re-establish over by this building."

This building turns out to be the World Financial Center directly across the street from Liberty, you know, on the corner of Liberty and West so we got -- there is like a knoll there, a grassy knoll, whatever, concrete knoll. Vehicles have flipped over, on fire, and we get a lot of stuff, and we put it right in front of this building, and now we were going to figure out -- we'll move down towards the water or move north to West Street, and we were trying to figure out where we should go. The radios weren't working, and we

hear this noise again.

This is 15, 20 minutes later. I don't know the exact time frame, and we hear this noise again, and I turned, and I could see Bobby Browne and Jason Katz. They were like about 20, 30 feet ahead of me, and they disappeared into the world -- they ran into the World Financial Center, so we start running, and we get to within, I don't know, five feet of it, and we get blown through the plate glass window with the wind velocity, so then we get trapped up in here, and we get buried again, and I'm on, I guess, like the left side of where -- I got pushed in and slipped to the left, and you got pushed into, you know -- got crashed into a wall, so when -- then that noise went on like a minute, minute and a half, and then it stopped, and we got buried again, but now there is somebody under me, and it's a fireman, there's a Scott pack, and we're wiggling around, and this turns out to be Lieutenant Stan Rybak of Haz-Mat operations, and we started buddy breathing with the Scott pack. I was able to get some air.

So we started moving around, and moving around, and then we ran into Firefighter Jeff Borkowski of Haz-Mat operations, and then we ran in to

firefighter Phil McArdle of Haz-Mat Company No. 1, and the four of us just moved around the room trying to find a way out, and we couldn't find our way out, but we knew we were in the lobby floor, at least we thought we were.

After -- I don't know seemed like forever, but all of a sudden I could hear Phil McArdle yelling, "Over here, over here," and we crawled over, and we end up in this -- back here somewhere around here, and we come outside, and it's like a morning fog, a morning heavy fog. There's light, but you can't see very far, and I couldn't breathe very well at that point.

I was wheezing a lot, and everybody else was too, and our eyes -- we couldn't see. Our eyes were on fire with this debris, so we were able to see a deli across the way, so we run into this deli, and the window had been broken out, and we go up to the refrigerator, and we started just powering shit, you know, soda, club soda, whatever we could find, just trying to clear our eyes, and they leave.

For whatever reason, they left, and I'm there by myself, and I hear this voice behind me, "Buddy, can you please help me?" So I turned around. There is a guy on the floor, you know, covered in this dust, and

he's got an angulated tib fib fracture, so I said, "Yeah, sure, brother, I'll help you out," and I threw him some water. I said, "Take some of this, start washing your eyes out."

So he goes, "Are you CHARLIE WELLS?" I turned around, I said, "Yeah, I am." I'm looking. It turns out to be a friend of mine, Dave Hanchu, who's a Daily News photographer. I'm sure you guys have seen him over the years, and I go, "Dave Hanchu?" He says, "Yeah, Charlie." I said, I go, "Your leg's broken," and he goes, "I can't get up." I said, "Okay, fine, I'll get you out of here, but we will be moving fast. I don't know what the hell happened."

Still, I don't know what's happening. So he starts moving with me, and he says to me -- he goes, "You know that one of the towers has collapsed." So I go, "No, no I wasn't aware of that." He says, "Because I took a picture of it as it was happening. That's how I got caught up and then got blown around."

So I go, "All right." So then I began to understand the enormity of what was going on, and I dragged him out of the deli and got him onto the side to the sidewalk, and now we went west, which was a right turn, and we go right to this North Cove Marina,

and there between where I was dragging him and the North Cove Marina, another fireman and a police officer come up to me and said, "Can we help you?" And we picked him up, and we carried him to this Fire Department marine unit, and we get him out.

So then I walked back now toward North End Avenue, and now I'm trying to figure out -- no, I'm sorry. We -- I then leave the marina, and this esplanade is a walkway. I start walking down here and trying to, you know, re-establish where the personnel are. Nobody is around now, but people are walking this way. You know, civilians. I'm all telling them go down here, because word had it that there was a ferry over here, so I walked down here, and I ran into Commissioner Gregory, and a couple of seconds after that Jason Katz, a couple of seconds after that, half the crew of 18 Charlie, who was Joe Conzo -- Truoccolo ended up getting hurt. He got trapped up under a car, and he got numerous avulsions and lacerations, and they took him to the hospital, so now I know that they're alive, and then I ran into Bobby Browne, who I hadn't seen in about an hour, and he's alive, so -- but he was -- we were all banged up.

So I said, "You go down to the ferry and

establish a triage point over there. If you need transport, we will see what we can get. I'm going to look around for ambulances and personnel and see what we can find." The radio wasn't working. The transmit button on the speaker mike was jammed.

So I turned the radio off, and you can clear it. Turn the radio on, and I tried to transmit, and I reversed direction and went the other way, and over here I ran into about 12 -- about 6 or 8 ambulances, about 10 personnel, and we were able to start to -- one of the things I learned about this is that the face shield of the helmet is absolutely useless. You need goggles. And we can't lock the ambulances any more.

In fact, once you got a confirmed MCI, you've got to leave them open, because they were running and locked, and the voluntary units, not only were they running and locked, when you broke into them, no, the ignition, somehow they were able to override, when you turn the ignition off, they can turn it. They can either take the key out and then lock the steering wheel, but the vehicle is still running, so you couldn't use the vehicles.

On all the department ones, we broke the driver's side window, the butterfly window, and then we

could get in, and then we got about eight ambulances running and personnel, so we get over here, and over here there is like a little deli -- I'm sorry, it's a restaurant. We got into the restaurant, and when we got into the restaurant, you know, behind the bar, we were taking the bar spigot, you know, the soda spigot, and we were pouring the water and the club soda in our eyes to clear our eyes, and the phone is ringing.

Pick up the phone, "I can't talk right now," hang up, and then I picked up the phone again, and I tried to get through to citywide, and I couldn't get through to citywide, so I quick tried my house, and my wife picked up the phone, and I said, "You know, it's me. I'm all right, I'm okay, but it's going to be a long time before I get home, but I'm okay, love you," boom, I hang up the phone.

Come back out here, get up to West Street, and now there is a lot of personnel. Everybody is starting to come -- it's starting to all come together. Got back all the way over here to -- excuse me, over here to Vesey, and there is like a big parking lot over here, and all the cars were on fire, and I get back over here, and there is more EMS personnel, so I said all right.

We started to set up a medical triage center over here now, Vesey and West, and then I was able to get on the radio at that point, and I got through to citywide saying that Car 631, Deputy Chief Wells reporting in, and with that they said go up to Broadway and 85 at the command post.

So now I had to walk -- I think I came down here, and I came down West through, you know, the gateway over here, and I came back up through here and took Albany Street, Thames, Trinity, and got up to Broadway, and I don't know what the intersection was, but it was 225 Broadway, a corner building, and there is a huge contingent of firefighters, about 15, 20 EMS personnel, and Dr. Kelly and Dr. Prezant, and they come up to me and they go, "Chief," he goes, "We are trying to set up" -- they wanted to set up a medical triage sector, treatment sector outside.

I said, "No, no, no. Let's go into this." There was a corner building, which is 225 Broadway, and inside there is huge hallways that had side elevator banks, and I said, "No, let's go in here."

The custodians of the building said, "Do you want us to bring desks down? You can use them as treatment tables." That's what they did, and then

within about 15, 20 minutes, we had a well-established medical treatment center there with physicians from area hospitals, who they just showed up.

There was a drugstore nearby that was accessed, broken into, and we started bringing out all the wound care stuff, and within about 15 minutes started receiving patients, most of them respiratory, a lot of them eye injuries, and they had pulmonologists there, they had ophthalmologists there, they had emergency physicians there, Dr. Prezant, Dr. Kelly, and in fairly quick fashion we were able to get this thing ramped up and operating.

At that point, I was there for about an hour, you know, leading that, and what I could see, nobody wanted to be transported. They just wanted to be patched up to go back to work, so we had like four ambulances there, four department ambulances.

Lieutenant Kevin Haugh, Captain Jeff Race, Lieutenant Roy David, Lieutenant Steve Lincke, I believe Lieutenant Jack Sullivan, and there were a few others, all operating this area, quickly making sure that the patients are getting in, getting treated and getting moved back out.

After about an hour, I get a message from the

command post from Chief Kowalczyk to report to the command post. Now they had established a command post back up here at West and Vesey, so Lieutenant David said, "I'll get you over there," because I couldn't see at that point now, very, very blurred vision, and I was having trouble breathing, and even with the eye treatments and them washing my eyes out, I couldn't see very well, and I wasn't breathing -- you know, just, you can hear yourself wheezing, but everybody was having this problem.

So we moved -- Roy gets me all the way over to -- at that point a couple of blocks away from the command post, and Dr. Al Cherson and somebody's driving him, and his car is -- all the windows are blown out, and, you know, like, five, six inches of dust. It was like, wild, and the things moving, and I just jumped on -- Roy and I just jumped on the trunk of the car, and we leaned in, and I said, "Could you just get us over to West and Vesey." That's where I'm going, Chief, no problem.

And we went over there and reported in, and at that point Chief McCracken was there, Chief Goldfarb, Chief Kowalczyk, Chief Basile, Chief Tramontana. There was a huge EMS contingent there with

an operating medical sector, and immediately Chief McCracken, and Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Basile brought me over and, you know, said, you know, "You are going to the hospital." And I go, "No, I'm fine." They go, "Well, you are going to the hospital, but we want you to brief us on what you did," you know, so I gave them a briefing just as I described to you, and fairly, you know, quick order, and I got put on the M.E.R.V., and at that point I got more eye treatments and got brought over to St. Vincent's, spent about an hour and half at St. Vincent's, felt a lot better, and they released me, and I got dressed and hitched a ride back to the command post, and now that's 5:30, six o'clock in the evening, and at that point, I never re-entered any building, and I was never -- I was never above street level in any building.

Q. So basically after St. Vincent's you went back down there. Did you do any more ops?

A. No, they wouldn't let me do any more ops.

Q. Okay.

A. I just, you know, basically sat there and -- oh, what I did do operationally, was -- they were able to access and have response to that medical sector, the EMS operations post, the use of things like three, or

four or five U.S.A.R. paramedics, and I started giving them a briefing on what I would expect them to do over the next few days, start ramping up, in the event they activated or accessed the U.S.A.R. equipment, that I wanted them to be with search teams, and I gave that report to, you know, Chief Tramontana, Chief McCracken, Chief Kowalczyk, who was standing there, and after about an hour of that briefing, that was basically the conclusion of my operational role at that site, so, you know, for a day, got a few people out, you know, was able to establish a couple of medical sectors, and miraculously, never had a fracture, you know.

That was it, and they said, you know, "Try and find your car," which I knew was on West Street, and they said you know, "You may not find it, you know, or severely damaged."

So I walked up, and there it is. Nothing is wrong with it, except it's covered in about six inches of, you know, soot, and that was it. I got into the car and somehow, you know, made my way home, and then I was out on medical for two days, which was Wednesday, the 12th, Thursday, the 13th, cleared back to work by the ophthalmologist and my primary physician on the 13th and then reported back to the site on the 14th.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with Chief Wells. The time is 1146 hours. Thank you very much, sir.

Continuation with Chief Wells, for clarification.

THE WITNESS: The latter medical treatment on West Street with the- EMS operations command post where I reported back to after being released from St. Vincent's was located on Murray and West, on Murray and West, I believe, not Vesey and West.

It would have been too close into the site, because I was able to visualize the collapse of 7 World Trade Center as I was looking south on West Street, looking slightly east, and you could see the tower just disappear behind the other buildings, which would have been Barclay.

File No. 9110164

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SEAN CUNNIFFE

Interview Date: October 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. DUN: Today's date is October 26th, 2001. The time now is 8:17 a.m. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, City of New York. I'm working with Marissa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

EMT CUNNIFFE: Sean Cunniffe, EMT specialist, Battalion 31.

MR. DUN: This is in regards to the date of September 11th.

Q. What do you recall?

A. It started off like any other day. I went in, got our truck ready, went to stop for breakfast on DeKalb and Flatbush, 99 cents bacon, egg and cheese, can't pass that up.

While we were ordering, we heard a lot of commotion on the radio. We turned up the radio a little bit louder to see what was going on. Heard what was going on, ran out to the truck, got in. 48 David put us on it, 48 David go.

We went. While going we were a little bit excited, it was going to be the job of the

century.

Q. When you got the call were you able to see the twin towers?

A. No, no, not from there. But en route as soon as we hit like Tillary Street, the Brooklyn Bridge is when we could see it. We could see the damage. It didn't look like much. We said -- we were thinking to ourselves, me and my partner, it's like, ah, some knucklehead with a private jet got too close or one of those little fighter planes.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Jarjeam Felton, 5148.

We were a little bit excited. We were like, this is gonna be the job of the century, the job of a career. We were going there, lights and sirens blasting along with I don't know how many other emergency vehicles over the same bridge as us. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We got off the Brooklyn Bridge at Park Row, went up Church Street, I believe -- not Church Street, Chambers Street. We heard there was two staging points: One was on Church; the other was West Street. My partner said to go to

Church Street, and I said, "No, we always go to West Street." So we went to West Street.

We got there. I don't know the supervisor's name, but we pulled up in front of Six World Trade, West and Vesey, and we parked our truck pretty much under the pedestrian bridge and waited for further instructions.

We grabbed our equipment and got out and this and that. We were waiting there. That's when the scope of the whole incident unfolded before us, because as we were waiting there, we started seeing people falling from the building.

Q. When you were driving to Chambers Street, did you see debris flying around?

A. Yeah, yeah, not much but all that glass falling and papers and smoke.

Q. Was there a lot of people running, chaos?

A. I really didn't pay too much attention to it because I was too busy trying to get to the staging point at West Street. When we got there, when we got set up and we actually had a minute to actually stop and look and see, we were like,

oh, shoot.

Q. That was just the one tower that was hit at that point?

A. Yeah. The second plane hadn't come in yet.

We were lined up on West Street, west side, right by the pedestrian bridge, between six and one, over here somewhere. I don't remember the supervisor's name, but they had us line up, put our stretchers and equipment on it. We were just waiting for further instruction.

As we were waiting there, counting the people jumping, that's when we saw the scope of it. We counted 39 people. It was sad. That's when it stopped being exciting and reality kicked in and we were hanging out.

The second plane came in. It was the biggest noise I ever heard in my life.

Q. Did you see the plane?

A. Yeah. We saw it, we heard it, we felt the heat from it, the debris. We ducked under a truck, Fire Patrol 3, I believe it was, parked right over here. Just before -- because we started running. It was just before the

pedestrian bridge at West and Vesey. It was parked over here. Debris was falling and people were running and panicking.

We came out. A supervisor on the scene I believe said get all the vehicles around onto Vesey between North End and West in between here. So I went, got the vehicle, brought it around. My partner stayed there with the staging people.

Q. The officer, was he a male? Female?

A. Male, EMS lieutenant.

As we were standing there, we saw Von Essen, Judge, run by us. We saw the Mayor come out. Just a lot of people were there: 31 Victor, 31 Young and 31 Adam and 40 Charlie was there. A whole bunch of people from the neighborhood we know that work over here in Brooklyn.

I went, parked the vehicle over here. As I was returning, I had just turned this corner and everybody was running into American Express.

Q. American Express building?

A. American Express building. That was our next staging point, in the lobby there. We set up (inaudible). Everybody was bringing

stretchers, all the equipment in there, supervisor were in there. Everybody was waiting. That's when I got separated from my partner, because he went to try to find a phone to call his family.

We were waiting there. We really didn't know what was going on outside because we were inside. We couldn't really see from this point that far over. That's when everybody just started running. The rumbling started and a big cloud of smoke came by the windows and started breaking the windows.

Q. Now we're talking about the south tower collapsing?

A. Yeah, it collapsed. I'm sure it was some significant time in between. It seemed like ten minutes, the whole job.

Q. You lose time.

A. Yeah. I guess it's almost an hour later, 9:55.

From that, the building started collapsing. I just remember looking up at it and it was like, ah, that's not supposed to collapse. It's supposed to stay up. People were just

running, and someone kicked me and said, "Run, you stupid ass, run."

So we started running. We were running through the hallway, like the lobby is a big lobby, the hallway on the north side of the American Express building with the emergency exit, and we were packed in there like sardines trying to get away.

Stupid things you remember, like I remember telling people just run, get the hell out of the building. It's coming down right on top of us. The windows were already breaking in the front.

I remember seeing this woman. She was about maybe 5-5, close to 250. She was hobbling. I looked at her. She had a broken leg. I wound up grabbing her, putting her arm around me and just dragging her out of the building, because she was slowing too many people up.

As soon as we got I'd say in between these two -- the Merrill Lynch, that's when I decided to start going back, because I heard the maydays on the radios and all of our friends screaming. I heard 31 David screaming, 31 Mary

screaming, Chief Brown I believe was screaming on the radio.

I just stopped and tried to go back. I made it right back to the corner, and that's as far as I got. I couldn't see anything and couldn't do anything. So I decided to come back around here. The MERV truck was here. We were saying we'll stay with the MERV. We'll set up over here.

I don't know how long we were there, but we were trying to set up the MERV. We were getting vehicles pulled off this street.

Q. North End Avenue?

A. Yeah, because --

Q. Vesey?

A. Vesey. That's where they had us park. 31 Adam was dead. We were trying to boost it. It was like forget it, just leave it. This all happened approximately the same time of the collapse also. It was like forget it, just leave it.

There was a whole bunch of us standing over here by the MERV truck on North End Drive, River Terrace, I'm not sure. It was either here

or here. I'm not sure.

Q. This is still with the first collapse?

A. Yeah, still the first.

Q. Did you see the fireball come yet?

A. No, I didn't even look up. I just remember hearing like the helicopters. Everybody was just running wild, and I pretty much couldn't see.

We were setting up, and we said, okay, let's go back. We were on our way back, and we made it again to pretty much the same corner of West End and Vesey. I guess we were standing right in the middle of West Street when we heard over the radio that tower one is leaning, everybody evacuate, evacuate, evacuate.

We were just trying to get as many people out of there as possible just telling them to run. As soon as one started coming down, that's when we started running. I didn't stop until I got to the water.

Q. River's edge?

A. Yeah. I jumped over the wall and just kept going and kept going. I didn't know which way it was going to come. You don't know if it's

coming straight down, if it's going to tilt all the way down. There's too many things going on in your head at the same time.

I got to pretty much the water's edge and started running up this way.

Q. That would be north?

A. Yeah, started running north. The cloud came over. It wasn't too bad over here, the dust cloud. So we started -- we stayed pretty much between River, by the park between -- I think we made it as far as Murray maybe in between these two blocks here and the water.

That was pretty much it. We hung out there. There were a lot of police officers around. We saw a friend of ours from -- Officer Torres from the 76th Precinct. He was crying on the steps behind Stuyvesant. We stayed with him because he said he just lost his partner. (Inaudible) and caught up in that. We consoled him a little bit.

We were trying to figure out what kind of instructions we were going to get. They started saying go to Chelsea Piers up on the west side. We stayed there for, I don't know, maybe a

half hour.

There was a pay phone there, and the line for the pay phone was like 12, 15 people long. So I said I've got to call my wife just to let her know I'm okay. I waited on the line. I met up with Felton again -- from the lobby, which is when I got separated from him. But as I was running, I saw him pass me by. At least I was relieved.

I had a lot of things going on. My sister works in two. I didn't know if she was still in there, if she got out.

Q. Did you ever make that phone call?

A. Yeah, yeah. I waited on that line, and I waited. As soon as I get up there, I asked somebody for a quarter, because I didn't even have a quarter. Trying to get a line, it took eight or nine times just to get a phone line and dial tone. Go figure, as soon as I dial the number and waste the quarter the line is busy, because she is calling here, probably. So it took me a while to get through, but I finally got through.

I asked her, "Did you hear from my

sister?" Her uncle works there also. She didn't know anything, and I didn't know anything. It was just "I'm okay and I'm going to come home."

At the time I was on the phone, Felton was in front of me on the phone. He made his phone call already. He started walking back. I kept yelling at him, "Don't go back there. Stay with me." Because he's only here a year.

It was kind of funny. I was nervous for him, because he wasn't even listening to me. I said, "Stay here with me. We'll go back together. I don't want to be separated from you again. I can't get a frigging line out on this phone." But he kept walking and walking. I was like, where the hell is this kid going?

So about 15, 20 minutes later, I finished my phone call and I start heading back towards Vesey, towards North End. I guess it was like up here. That's when I saw him with this big cloud of dust turn the corner, with his head sticking out of the vehicle saying, "I've got the vehicle. I saved the vehicle." It was like" Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a piece of crap. It dies on us twice a week. You should have let it

be buried. Maybe we'll get a new one."

We got in the vehicle. We started collecting -- there were a couple firefighters down there. We were helping them collect some equipment. There were a lot of firefighters that just dropped their packs. They were going around in a little golf cart. Some civilians had Scott packs and said, "Somebody left this." We were throwing them in the back.

We were heading back towards west side, and I guess we made it -- I don't even know where, to tell you the truth. We had to make a U-turn in an empty lot. I guess it was like Vesey and North End again to this corner, and we saw -- do you know Abdo?

Q. Yeah, Abdo.

A. What is he, a lieutenant?

Q. Yeah. He's a captain. He's a captain.

A. Is his last name Abdo or his first name?

Q. His first name. Captain Abdo Nahmod.

A. I know him from Lutheran, but I didn't really know what his rank was. I saw him a couple times over here on Myrtle. But Abdo was

there, and he was telling us to make a U-turn because there was a main, gas main, leaking or something. We just tried to circle, find a way. We circled back to the west side.

We picked up some people on the West Side Highway, and we went up to Chelsea. That's it. Chelsea, we stayed there for a while, just doing circles when the troops came in. We got a little bit bored and said, screw this, we're not wasting our time. There's people down there that need help and we're sitting here.

So we went back down and picked up an officer and a construction worker, went with them to staging, went back down, picked up more police officers and firefighters, brought them back up. We were doing transport between, say, Vesey and Chelsea, back and forth. We got somebody with an MI, a construction worker with an MI.

Q. Did you transport him to the hospital?

A. Yeah. There was a staging point somewhere on the west side. It wasn't as far down as Vesey.

Q. Canal.

A. No, it was below -- it was between the

tunnel and Vesey Street. There's a staging.

Q. Chambers.

A. Yeah. I don't know who the supervisor was. There was an EMS supervisor. Any vehicle pretty much that passed him he stopped and he commandeered everybody's equipment, like throw it here. He had a curb full of tech bags, oxygen bags, de-fibs, software. So he pretty much stripped the bus.

We had the patient with the MI. He gave me a paramedic; I forget his name too. He took my partner, Felton, off the vehicle. So Felton got off, me and the paramedic, we transported one to hospital 02.

From there there was a place to restock your vehicles. We dropped him off and restocked the vehicle as much as we could. We went back and got held up at the staging at Chelsea Piers again. That was pretty much -- from one staging point to the other. From there they said, "Okay, we need two vehicles to go down to South Street staging." So we go down there. "We don't need you here." We ended up going to the Greenwich area staging, the command post staging. We

pretty much stayed there the whole night with Chief Wells.

That was it.

Q. Thank you.

A. Time-wise.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview. The time is 835 hours.

File No. 9110165

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROBERT COOK

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. DUN: Today's date is October 25, 2001. The time is 0848 hours. I am Richard Dun with the New York City Fire Department working with Marisa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview with...

THE WITNESS: Robert Cook.

MR. DUN: Shield?

THE WITNESS: Shield 3719.

MR. DUN: Of Battalion 31.

Q. Robert, in your own words, just please describe the events leading up to and after September 11th.

A. Up to it? Well, we were getting fuel at Ladder 118 when people were coming up to the firehouse, it's right over on Midagh Street and Henry, telling us that a plane hit the World Trade Center. We took ourselves off the pumps, drew up to the corner. A bunch of firemen came out of the firehouse, went to the corner. You could see the first tower on fire. So then we were available, they assigned us to the call, they said to switch over to Citywide.

We proceeded over the bridge. Once we got over the bridge, the second plane hit. There was an explosion. We didn't know it was a second plane. We

thought it was just exploding from the first plane. Then over Citywide we heard people saying it was a second plane and it was deliberate.

We proceeded down west on Chambers Street, made a left on West Broadway. Coming down on West Broadway, we were flagged on the corner by a state correction officer. There we observed a female laying on the corner and several other patients standing around stating that they were injured. We had a private ambulance also there on the scene. They assisted us with long boarding this female and splinting her leg with a tib/fib fracture.

Q. At this point, what part were you there? Were you there for the first collision or the second collision?

A. The second collision.

Q. The second plane went into the building?

A. As we were on Chambers Street.

Q. But the buildings were still standing?

A. Still standing, yes. They were still standing. The whole time we were in Manhattan, they were still standing and you could feel the heat coming all the way over to there.

We proceeded to get about five patients into

the ambulance. We notified the supervisor that we had five patients. He said he'll check to see where we could transport the patients. He told us that he was ordered to have us, if they were not in extremis, to be transported out of the borough. So we proceeded to go to Long Island College with five patients.

On the way to Long Island College, going in to Long Island College is when the first building collapsed, and then the second building came down also while we were still there getting the patients out. We were tied up a little bit at Long Island College because we had police cars coming in and transit cars coming with patients, so we had to assist them to unblock us, get all the patients out.

Out of Long Island College, we got the stretcher back into the back of the truck and we were going to proceed back over the bridge. We had hit traffic all over the place in downtown Brooklyn trying to get back to the bridge. By the time we made it back to the Brooklyn Bridge, there was a chief there, an EMS chief, I don't know who she was, and I met up with Lieutenant Lugo and we were starting a triage post there. There was another unit, 32 Charlie, I believe, was also there. So we had about, I believe, four EMS

units and we commandeered about, I'd say, seven to eight private ambulances and we had a triage system going on there, and I was designated to be transport officer, which means that anybody coming in, anybody needs to be transported, I would tell which ambulance they would go in.

We were held there for about I'd say maybe two hours before they released us back to 911 and they left the private ambulances there. So then we proceeded back to the station, BBP'd the ambulance and went back out as a 911 unit.

Q. So both towers were still up the whole time that you were there? One tower went down --

A. When we were going to Long Island College. When we were at the College, the second plane came in.

Q. The second tower?

A. Yes. So that's basically it. We never made it in to the forward command post. Then we went back and we couldn't make it over the Brooklyn Bridge because of all the pedestrian traffic coming across, and that's when we all set up the triage there and we triaged patients. Then Victory Memorial had a big MERV set up there and also they said they had a triage system set up at the Marriott Hotel.

That's about it. That's all. I know it's nothing spectacular.

MR. DUN: Okay. Well, this will help because now we know some patients and things like that.

This concludes the interview with Robert Cook. The time is 0852 hours.

File No. 9110166

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF BRIAN DIXON

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CAMPBELL: Today's date is October 25th. The time is 12:41 p.m. This is Patrick Campbell, fire marshal of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview regarding the events of September 11th. I'm here with Battalion Chief Brian Dixon in his office. Also present is --

MR. STEPONAITIS: Fire Marshal Stephen Steponaitis, Fire Department.

MR. CAMPBELL: You can identify yourself too.

CHIEF DIXON: Battalion Chief Brian Dixon.

Q. Chief, we're conducting an interview, just like I said, regarding the events of September 11th. What we're looking for is from the time that you became aware of the incident up until any time during the day. We're looking for people you'd seen, just what you noticed around you. You can just go on on your own.

A. I was in the office that morning. If I refer to the time line now I received, it was right after -- I guess as soon as the plane hit.

Someone came into the office and just told me that a plane had hit the World Trade tower. I assumed it was a small plane, an aviation accident, and I thought he was kidding also.

I went out to the main press office to look at it. I think by then the TV was on and it showed it and I could see the tower. I grabbed the car. Mine was in the shop, so I borrowed one of our spare vehicles and just responded out. I grabbed a vehicle and went downstairs and responded out to it, figuring it was a press event, obviously, of magnitude.

I started over the Brooklyn Bridge. I kind of got into a -- I'm not sure who it was. It could very well have been 207 and 110, because I came across and picked them up partway going across the Brooklyn Bridge. I think by that time -- I can't remember whether the bridge was shut down yet or not. The police were waving me on.

I came across the bridge and could see the north tower, thick black smoke billowing up from the upper floors. It's hard to tell what floor, but it was way up high. So it looked like

it had hit ten floors below maybe the top. I'm gauging ten to twenty floors below.

I see the smoke and I hear the radio reports that it penetrated the skin. At some point coming across also I hear the radio reports also that they had confirmed they had jumpers. That's early on, before I even get off the bridge.

I sort of wound up in a convoy with the battalion. I'm guessing I think it was 207 or 110. I wound up with the 31. They responded over also. I got in with them. I went down Broadway and parked facing southbound, on Broadway southbound. I parked on Broadway and Liberty.

One of the engines pulled in right behind me, because there's a hydrant right there. So I pulled past that engine. I think it was 110. I think the truck turned up the street. Rather than drive down Liberty, I think they turned up it to come down.

I just pulled up to the street there, just put the car in gear, in park, and hear this horrendous boom. It shook the car. I figured

somebody in the north tower exploded. Then like a Godzilla movie, everybody that had been standing in that little park there across from One Liberty Plaza and had been just looking up and watching the north tower burn just started running eastbound like they were being chased by someone.

I jumped out of the car. I looked up and the south tower -- that must have been the time that the plane had just struck the south tower. Now I see the south tower also. Somebody was saying there's another plane.

At that point I assumed you can't have two -- it can't be an accident to have two planes. So, I don't know if there's planes or missiles or what but something was hitting this thing. You saw debris was falling down.

Since I didn't have my vehicle, I had no gear. So, I started down the block. Then the 31 Battalion actually pulled into the -- I'll look at the map -- they were on -- where was I? I was on Liberty. They were probably on Cortlandt. They were parked on Cortlandt and Broadway.

I asked him if he had any gear. He said no. I started halfway down, and he caught me and yelled back he did have some extra gear in the car. So I grabbed a coat and a helmet.

I continued down Liberty. There's stuff I'm stepping over. 10 and 10, I just looked in. They looked like they were triaging, a few people sitting -- everybody was out of quarters already, but there was somebody in there sitting on a seat. Someone was being treated at this time. There were police in the street waving people the other way. Most of the people had already fled. As I walked down, there's nobody there but the PD, and they were running people out of there.

Debris was falling down but not at any great point. By the time I started to pass by in front of 10 and 10. As I got down a little farther, there was what looked to be a piece of the cabin of the airplane, I guess. It looked like a piece of it about maybe six foot long. It looked like the windows.

Q. This is on Liberty?

A. This is on Liberty and just west of 10

and 10, whatever that next building is there. Now that I think back, I guess it could have been -- I don't know if it was the windows. It actually looked like the rounded cutout of the windows of the cabin of a plane.

I continued heading down Liberty towards West Street. When I passed by the Marriott, I see the aide from the 31 Battalion was in the lobby of the Marriott. He came running out yelling to me: You have about 40 or 50 people in there in the lobby. I said let's get them out and we'll go run them across the street.

He took them out. I think there was a police officer helping him too. That guy, he came out and he just started moving them south on West Street.

Q. The Marriott Vista?

A. I call it the Marriott. It's the one on the corner of Liberty and West. So that would be --

Q. Vista International. It is the Marriott.

A. Yeah, the Vista International.

On that side door, that side door on Liberty, the entrance to the hotel there, he was in the lobby there. Everybody in the lobby just came out. I saw him as I was going past, so I started ushering them out. There were police and people on the other side by the south bridge, so they ran them down there and across the street, because there was a parking lot on the corner opposite there also. There were cars burning in there as we passed by. There were a couple of cars burning in that parking lot already from the debris that had fallen down. He ran them out.

I continued across West Street. I can't tell you why I continued to cross, if you go sort of to the front of the building. I made my way down West Street. I'm not sure at what point I saw Gribbon. He might have been walking down the street. I'm trying to remember now.

The command post must have been set up because in my mind I'm looking for the 8 command post. I remember I didn't look in either one of the towers for it. So they must have been there because I just walked on West Street across and over to the command post.

What vehicles I passed on the way I can't really tell you. I mean, the people were in already in the one tower.

Q. Were there any rigs along --

A. I don't remember any being in front of the Vista or anything yet in front of -- that would be tower two. Tower two is set back. On West Street in that area. That's the south area towards Liberty, and in front of the Vista, I don't remember any rigs there. But there's a lot I don't remember.

I got over to the command post. I got hooked up with Frank and went over to the command post. I'm trying to think of who was there. I'm at the command post in front of -- it was already set up, so it's not like -- they had been there. They were set up on that ramp leading down to the underground garage by what looks like the booth. There's a booth out there too, I think, on that ramp.

Q. Right, we saw it on the video, that videotape.

A. Yeah, they're set up out there.

Who was there at that point? I'm

guessing Pete Hayden was there. I'm trying to remember exactly who I was standing next to. I looked around. I was just looking at the time for cameras. I see rigs in front. I couldn't tell you who. Obviously there were rigs all over in front of one, the north tower, in front of that.

At some point the decision is made we should clear a lane, because everybody's parked in all the traffic lanes on West Street. They're parked in a circle. The rigs are parked in that circle, but I don't know -- I just assumed it was 10 and 10. That's just based on the fact that they are right there. They would have come out of quarters. Their normal routine is for them to go into that circle. There were definitely rigs in a circle close to the entrance of One World Trade. There were other rigs in the street, police vehicles all over.

At one point we wanted to move some vehicles, so we started looking for chauffeurs. I know Tommy McDonald took a rescue rig or a hazmat rig, one of the rigs, and drove it right up on the lawn next to the Financial Center on

the grass there, which is either One or Two, I'm not sure. It's the American Express Building, over there.

Q. That's Two World Financial Center?

A. It's probably American Express. It would be just south of that north bridge, the northernmost bridge. You had a lawn area there, and he just drove it straight up in there to get out of the way. They were looking for other people to move things.

Ganci was at the command post. I'm pretty sure Feehan was at the command post with us. I was there when the Mayor came over with his people, his security people. He stood out front and was watching. There were other companies too kind of staged there.

The Mayor came over, and we were trying to find Von Essen for him. I'm guessing now at that point that, I think we heard someone say they thought he was in the tower, he was in one. Somebody went to get him so he could hook up with the Mayor.

Ganci briefed the Mayor, I believe, because Ganci was at the command post. So he

went over and briefed the Mayor. Then the Mayor and his group walked away.

There was a reporter there from ABC, I know, and a guy with a camera. I was somewhat concerned, but then I figured there's not much you can do to stop the guy in the street. Where are you going to push him to? He was back just photographing. It wasn't too bad.

But then at some point we're standing there and then we started to see a number of people jumping. There had to be a dozen at least, jumping and just thumping. There were a couple companies standing there.

I guess there was some debris falling down from the other one, nothing that seemed to hit our side of the street. At one point one of the chiefs said why doesn't everyone move back off the board here and stand in the watch way of the garage there. Some did. Some still stayed up on the ramp.

It was a frustrating and helpless feeling. You could see the guys -- every time a body jumped, you just heard this thump, thump. So a lot of them were turning away. There wasn't

much you could do.

At that point still from that vantage point actually looking up -- I'm looking at the tower, at one, and two is set back. Obviously the south one is set back farther. I don't recall a lot of flame from that vantage point, from looking up from the west side of West Street. People were standing out there.

A lot of smoke drifting up, a lot of dark black smoke drifting up on tower one from the lowest floor of fire, obscuring the top somewhat. I didn't see a lot of flame coming out of windows or anything.

The thought crosses your mind: How are we going to put this out? You know you're sending people out. I remember Ganci asking for two fifth alarms, a fifth alarm for one tower, a fifth alarm for the other, and he wanted more for staging.

We were going to change the staging area too. I forget when that happened. I guess I was standing there for quite a while and saw -- I went in at one point to make a phone call, and that I guess was while the people were jumping.

At one point I broke off to go -- I went up the ramp and walked out to the sidewalk. There was a railing there so you couldn't just make a left and walk into the building. So I had to go out to the street and back around.

I went in the building and found a phone at a fire command station. There was a phone there, and I asked one of the people to use the phone. Just to call your office and update them on what was happening here, tell them I was there, tell them we had two planes.

They kind of told me about the Pentagon being hit at that point. They had that information too. So they told me that. I just explained to them we're here and what the operation was going on there. I knew they were getting bombarded with phone calls from the press.

I walked back out to the command post. I believe Feehan was there at that point too. We were all kind of around the board, walking back and forth. Again, time-wise I don't know when it was I came back there, I was standing there and just listening and paying attention just in a

sense buffing at what they were doing at the board.

Ganci was just figuring out where they were putting people. I was watching the fire, watching the people jump and hearing a noise and looking up and seeing -- it actually looked -- the lowest floor of fire in the south tower actually looked like someone had planted explosives around it because the whole bottom I could see -- I could see two sides of it and the other side -- it just looked like that floor blew out.

I looked up and you could actually see everything blew out on the one floor. I thought, geez, this looks like an explosion up there, it blew out. Then I guess in some sense of time we looked at it and realized, no, actually it just collapsed. That's what blew out the windows, not that there was an explosion there but that windows blew out.

The realization hit that it's going to fall down, the top's coming off. I was still thinking -- there was never a thought that this whole thing is coming down. I thought that that

blew out and stuff is starting to fly down. The top is going to topple off there.

Somebody yelled to run. We turned around and somebody yelled -- a guy said get back into the garage. Not that I thought that was a great idea if this thing fell on the building, but there really wasn't that much time to go back out in the street up and around again. It was one of those whoops, here it comes.

So we turned and went down the ramp. Everybody that was at the command post I believe went down the ramp, Ganci included. We turned around, went down and there were probably two companies at least there, it seemed. They went down and in.

There was a cop there who fell down in front of me. He fell down, so I stopped to pick him up and get him up there. I didn't get all the way back. As I just got in under the entrance there, I got just a little ways back and it was just like -- you hear the noise, a boom, and then a blast of air. It just kind of threw me against the wall. That's where I decided to stay. Since it blew me there, I just hung on the

wall.

It just drove everything, all the dust and debris and everything down into the garage. I didn't know what the hell was happening. It just got totally black. It was not stratified like smoke, so from floor to ceiling is just totally black.

You just think, well, I guess this is how it ends, this is it, not knowing what the hell had happened and just start choking and gagging. I lost track of time. I don't know how long it was. It was very quiet. It got black, then it got a little less black and it got more brown or gray, just a little bit. I was still not seeing much. My eyes were burning and I was inhaling all kinds of shit and just coughing up everything.

It was quiet, and then you start to hear people. I realized there were two other people near me in a little cutout there or something. There was actually a mask there with no face piece on it. Then two guys said we're all right. There's nothing laying on us. We're okay. I don't know what is back up the ramp, but

we're all right.

Then guys were sort of like assisting, they went past me and I said all right, all right, calm down, we're all right, nothing yet. I saw a lot of dust and everybody coughing. Then somebody said follow the lights. I sort of saw a flashlight back in the distance there.

In my mind I know, all right, there's got to be a door from the garage back up into the building. Nothing's laying on us. I'm assuming whatever fell off this building could have come down and crashed into the front. I don't know if it's blocked, the ramp, or not.

So I started back that way. These two guys had passed me and were moving slowly. For some reason I didn't follow that way. I looked back and it just seemed like a little crack of light.

I said all right, wait a minute, you can see up the ramp. It's not blocked with anything. So rather than go back through the whole thing, I just kind of made my way back up the ramp. I wasn't that far down it anyway. I could see.

Q. They were still with you, the command post guys?

A. It seemed like that was the only guy that went that way. As I say, they all seemed to go back the other way. I don't remember anyone coming back up the ramp with me. But I went back up and peered out. I'm expecting to look up and see that the top of the building fell into the street.

I look and what I see is about 20 stories left of a building and jagged edges on the south side. It was like 20 stories, maybe, or so and on the north side of that tower down to about maybe 10 or 15 stories on the south side of it.

It's like I can't believe the whole building is down. I was dumbfounded. There was paper and ash and everything out there. I look back now and I must have been in a state of shock, because the only thing that stopped me really from going back the other way with anybody else was I said I guess I should call the office and tell them what happened. So I went back up the ramp and back around because I knew there was

a phone where I had made the phone call before so I went back in the building.

Two firemen came through. I don't know where they were from. They were truckies. They were looking at me saying who are you? I had on a suit and shirt and tie with the turnout coat over it holding my helmet and I'm covered with frigging dust.

As I looked afterwards, I was just covered with the shit, you know, choking and gagging. They wanted to take me somewhere, take me out the back of the building. They said, "Come out the back." I said no, I'm all right, it's okay, I'm all right. They said, "You don't look all right." I said no, I need to make a call.

I go to the phone. The phone has been knocked off the frigging wall. The lines are out. I walked back outside. I convinced them to leave me alone and walked back out of the front of the building again.

I don't see anybody at this point, even to the point of a cop saying: "Do you guys have anybody in the building?" I told him no, we

don't have anybody in the building. There must have been at least a second alarm in the building. I'm realizing where the hell is everybody? This thing fell down. Did people get out of there?

I saw one other guy there. Again, faces and front pieces I don't know. I just said to the guy, "Where is everybody who was in there? What happened to the people who went to" -- he said, "Everybody who went into the garage got out. Everybody's all right." I said, "All right, that's us. But I don't see anybody."

I thought at that point that I actually saw Feehan, but I'm thinking that I'm mixed up and it might be that I just saw him in the beginning, walking down the street in the beginning. That was probably before the towers came down that we were talking and he was walking in the street. I probably didn't see him at that point. I didn't see Ganci. At some point -- again time frame I'm wondering -- I see Turi, Al Turi, coming down. He said we're going to move the command post north to Chambers Street, we're moving north to Chambers Street, let's get

everybody north. So, whoever was standing around, all right, we're going north. He walked down a little more and he had a bullhorn and told people move down, we're moving the command post, we're moving the command post. He moved folks north -- it was very quiet. I don't remember seeing anybody else except him. There had to be other guys around there. But I just don't remember. I think I was in a state of shock.

Q. Do you remember hearing anything or any kind of transmissions coming over?

A. No, I wasn't wearing a radio, unfortunately, and I wasn't near anyone with a radio. There was nothing on the guys' radios, the two guys in the building that found me, the two guys that were inside the building when I went back in to use the phone, which I never got to use. I don't remember anything coming over their talkies either.

So I'm out in the street and it had to be half an hour because I'm there when the second one comes down too and I'm not far north on Vesey when I hear the same noise again and look up and realize oh, this one's coming down.

Q. Where were you when that happened?

A. Probably just on West Street north of -- north of the bridge, probably just a bit north of Vesey Street, actually, because I had stayed down there. I can't remember even seeing that many people. I was just saying okay, we're moving the command post north. I was just trying to figure out where is everybody. I'm not seeing anybody.

When that one came down, I heard the rumble on that. That started to come down. Now I know I'm not alone. All of these people I see were running up West Street, and I just started north on West Street running. I don't know how far I got. I heard a boom behind me, I looked back and I knew I had to outrun the debris. I saw like 150 feet of the cloud. I figured I didn't outrun it the last time and I don't think I'm going to outrun it this time either. So I got caught up in that again, the thick cloud.

I actually at one point jumped into a -- it was one of the parked cars. I just jumped into one of the vehicles or sedans, something, farther up. I jumped in there. The

door was open. I jumped in. This car had electric windows and it was half open. That's when the black cloud came rolling down West Street. I just stayed there, caught my breath and figured I don't think I want to stay in here anyway, so I jumped out, just ran a lit farther. It cleared by the time I got to I guess Chambers probably before it cleared or the block before Chambers. So I stumbled down there by Stuyvesant, the bridge at Stuyvesant High School.

Q. Was anybody in the rigs that you passed on the way up there? There were rigs parked along there?

A. Most of them were sedans, actually. There was one truck, but that was parked pretty far up now too. I thought that was a flashlight and walked into it. But that's in the cloud, so I don't know what it was, I really don't. In that sense, I don't have any better information than that. No, who was up there? I guess it was Turi. I wandered the rest of the day. When they relocated the command post, I stayed up there, I don't know how much longer it was. I kept asking where is Feehan and Ganci, all the people that

were at the command post, where are these people? Nobody knows. Where's Nigro? Does anybody know where Nigro is? He came out later after about half an hour or so, because I thought he had been caught in it too. He came around to the command post. Callan was at the command post at that point. Probably Turi. Turi was there.

Q. Did you ever see anyone, Burns or --

A. No, no, I never saw. I never did. For some reason I never got -- I was walking around in a pair of loafers, so I was useless in the rubble. No, I just walked up and after a while got a shower and cleaned my eyes out.

I didn't get back down there. At this point when the north tower comes down, walking down there, everything is kind of like -- you can't get to the other side where I think most of the people or the digging was going on initially was happening --

Q. South.

A. -- south.

Q. The bridge.

A. At this point when the bridge came down, the north bridge came down, I was stuck

there. I think it took Nigro a long time just to get around to get back to where we were at Chambers and Stuyvesant, probably a block south of that, actually, initially when we were at the command post. That's where we said we were moving to, Chambers, I'm not so sure that's where we were. Maybe we were up there, because at that point they were talking about secondary devices. Stuyvesant High School, at some point later they talked about that. I stayed by the command post, really, for the rest of the day. I walked down a little bit.

I look back on it now, I think I was in a state of shock, because I'm not noticing people around me. I'm telling this guy first there's nobody in the building. As soon as he walks away, I said nobody in the building? Jesus Christ, where are they?

I was standing at the command post and trying to figure out -- that is when we started to figure we have to get some idea of who we have, who's here. There's been tons of firefighter companies. How are we going to figure out --

Q. Who's missing?

A. Yeah, we have to get the riding list for them. There was a discussion about that, how we are going to get to every fire house and get their journal for the roll call and figure out who was working, who we're looking for.

But yeah, as far as seeing rigs and things like that, like I said, I went into the command post there because they had the command post set up across the street. I wasn't looking at as I would operationally. I'm looking at it from a media perspective. That's where they all come to, so we'll chase them when they get here.

Q. So after that you were mostly north?

A. I was north, yeah. Like I say, I would guess only because -- only because I went in before to use the phone. There were so many jumpers. I had to tell them what was going on. I hadn't spoken to them since the second plane. So I told them we have two towers burning. Give New Yorkers an update so they can get some information out.

Q. You never saw anyone else from the command post?

A. After we all ran in, I didn't see them again. So they had to have made that move south maybe when I was in the building. They went deep into the garage, found the stairwell and then they might have come out farther south, come out of the World Financial Center or the Winter Garden, I don't know where they came out, but they came out a different way. I went up the ramp and into what is I guess is one, maybe the American Express -- the north side -- north of the garage. Under the bridge, actually. Under that north bridge I went in. The fact that I was in there and there were two firemen trying to make phone calls, that's probably the only thing that stopped me from heading south, because I would have headed south with them if I saw them. When I got back out, I didn't see anyone. So I didn't know where anybody was. I didn't have a radio. I didn't have my car, so I had nothing. I opened my trunk and had absolutely nothing, no bunker gear, no radio, nothing.

Q. Do you have anything further?

A. It's like my eyes weren't open.

Q. That's all right. Everybody says it.

I don't think --

A. I can compare it because that kid before, Brian Kearney, that was blown out of a window in the Astoria fire, and I responded to that from home. When I got there, everybody's walking around, we think there's three guys missing. How come everybody's out walking around? It's because the whole first line assigned was blown out of the building and they're still dazed.

I was asking myself why was I walking around. I was stunned. I can't remember rigs or -- I don't remember companies that were standing at the command post. I don't know the names. It's like I was standing there, and they were walking by but I'm not really -- I'm not too familiar really with the lower Manhattan companies to begin with. It's not like any of the officers came up there that I knew. The field com. van was there. Other than the field com., a spare motor vehicle was nearby, by the lamppost. They were there. Hayden, Ganci. As far as the companies, as I say, there were a couple companies there, people, but nobody -- I

can't remember who they were that were standing there, waiting for assignments.

Q. All right. That's good. Thank you.

A. Not helpful, but that's all I have.

MR. CAMPBELL: The time is 1:15. This concludes the interview. Thank you very much. p

File No. 9110167

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANK GRIBBON

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CAMPBELL: Today's date is October 25. It's 11:30. We are in the office of Francis Gribbon. This is Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal, of the New York City Fire Department. We are conducting an interview with the following individual, with the Fire Department, regarding the events of September 11. Present in the room also is --

MR. STEPONAITIS: Fire Marshal Stephen Steponaitis.

MR. CAMPBELL: And --

MR. GRIBBON: Frank Gribbon, Deputy Fire Commissioner, Public Information.

MR. CAMPBELL: We are trying to -- fact finding -- trying to memorialize the events as they happened on September 11.

Q. Starting from the time when you were aware of the attack at the World Trade Center, we want to know where you were, how you became aware and just tell us your story.

A. Okay. At about 8:55 a.m. actually, I simultaneously received a page and a phone call from my office that a plane had struck the Trade Center and that Brian Dixon, the Deputy Director, was responding.

David Billig from my office called me just as I got the page of a third alarm. I was on First Avenue in Manhattan. I got on the FDR Drive and I headed south. I responded obviously.

At about somewhere north of the Manhattan Bridge, I could see the smoke and as I approached the bridge, you could see several floors of fire. I had the same reaction as everybody did, I'm sure, when they saw it. It was just a certain horrific sight. Knowing that all the -- what was happening there. I got down to the end of the drive in the tunnel, which brings you around the Battery and you come up. There was some traffic. I was down there with some other emergency vehicles trying to get through. It was backed up a bit. When I came out, the two towers were now going.

So apparently that second tower was struck while I was underground there in that tunnel. When we came out, a bit more traffic. I made the first left I could, parked my Department vehicle on one of the side streets in the Battery Park City area, took out my bunker gear, helmet and responded to the incident command post that had been set up at -- on West Street, on the west side of West Street, opposite tower number one, or the north tower.

At that location were several dozen members of the Department. There was a command post being set up or had been set up by Chief Ganci. There were several other people on the scene. Chief Feehan I believe. I couldn't place the times for those people, but there were a number of Department people there. I know that Ganci was there and soon after the Mayor and his entourage arrived, with the Police Commissioner, they stopped and spoke to people at the command post, including Chief Ganci. They subsequently left. So a few minutes after that the Fire Commissioner came and was told that the Mayor was looking for him and he left that location. In the meantime more crews from the Fire Department, units, were reporting into the command post. It was first located out towards the street and was moved back I believe twice. At the direction of somebody in the safety division, somebody just said we should move it back and they moved it back.

Subsequently there is some videotape, which I showed you guys just now, which I will provide to Chief Garcia or the Marshals just to give you an idea of how many people were there. There were numerous faces and people that I can identify. But that command post was drawn back into an area that sloped down a grade into a

parking garage and loading dock for 2 World Financial Center. A lot of people -- I was in there for some time, briefly with several other dozen members of the Department that were staging there, subsequently being the PIO for the Fire Department. There was a news crew that showed up, N.J. Burkett from Channel 7, was on the sidewalk close to the street. I went up and spoke to him. I told him he should get back. I took his crew as well as one or two photographers, I think one guy from the Post. I had them all stay against the facade of the building there, 1 World Financial Center, I believe it is. The entrance was near the north bridge there, what they call the north bridge connecting the Trade Center and the World Financial Center. So that entrance was underneath the bridge. They were standing just outside of that to the south.

He shot some footage, I showed you guys the footage, which shows when we're standing there -- and it is at some point -- I get there probably maybe sometime between -- around 9:12 to 9:15. So I'm there for about 45 minutes, standing at the command post inside that underground thing. Then I come out and now I'm standing on the street grade level, entrance, with the north bridge, not the sloped tunnel into the

garage, when tower two collapsed. I heard shouts of run for your life. I was with a number of other people that were standing at that location, probably two dozen or more, we all fled into or ran into 1 World Financial Center. We -- because the entrance remained intact at that point, we were not whited out like everybody else was. We were not in a cloud of like choking pulverized concrete and all that. There was some of it coming into the building. We all walked through the building to the west and came out the rear of the building, on to - I don't even know the name of the street there. I went out there, there was some mustering of EMS personnel, fire personnel, who had escaped this. I remember seeing Commissioner Fitzpatrick, who must have gotten through the garage and came out that way.

After a few minutes I walked back through World Financial Center to go back to West Street. I came through those doors and walked out, you know, into the debris. There was what I would describe as a moderate amount of a smoke condition. You couldn't see across West Street. But on the west side of the street where I was, there was some visibility. It was a bright sunny day, but I recall it being overcast now. It wasn't overcast, it was just overcast from the cloud

of smoke which was hovering around the whole area. It appeared that it was a cloudy day now. I remember that.

I walked out to that area, I remember seeing Chief Ingram and I remember seeing -- I went into the garage to see where everybody had been. There was Roger Moore, who was an EMS guy, on the ground. He couldn't move. His two legs were -- I thought they were broken, but I subsequently found out he ripped all the muscles or something, tendons or ligaments or something like that. He couldn't move. I spoke to him, I told him to stay right there, that I would get a crew, because I knew there were ambulances on the street, so I went back up. That garage was smoked out too. It was still -- it was still like a smoke condition in that garage. So I went the way I came.

I went back to the World Financial Center, through that building and came out of the rear side. There were people being triaged there. It may have been at this point that I saw Commissioner Fitzpatrick.

Q. Is this on West or behind --

A. Behind the building.

Q. Maybe the map would help you figure it out?

A. Yes. This is it.

Q. West is over here. Financial center?

A. North Street I guess it is. North End Avenue, it's actually.

Q. You went through two buildings?

A. I went through -- this is the pedestrian bridge. I went through 3 World Financial Center, American Express building. For the record here, I'm looking at your map, according to your map, I go through 3 World Financial Center, through this and through 4 World Financial Center and come out on North End Avenue where the Department members are sort of triaging there, if this map is correct. It was a long walk, so it's likely that that was the case, that we went through two or three, interconnected buildings.

Q. Was it like a winding hall?

A. Yes, it was like a Winter Garden type, I remember that. All glass enclosed with a restaurant or mall type area.

Q. It's between 3 --

A. That's exactly it. We go through 3, through that glass enclosed mall area and through 4 and out on to North End Avenue. At that point there are Fire Department members, there are a lot of EMS crews that are sort of staging back there. There is some injured

people. I remember some secret service guys were there. Actually secret service happens later.

I go on back out to West Street. Roger Moore is injured. I come back, he can't be moved, he has got to be either carried or - I will get to that part of the story. I'm on North End Avenue. People are being triaged. I said I got a guy, I got an EMS guy, he can't move. He is on West Street. We got to go get him. Two paramedics with a stretcher, I don't know what their names are. I get them, then I said come with me, I got to get Roger Moore. They said all right, okay, all right. They come with me.

I got them, we go back through 4 World Financial Center, through the glass enclosed connection, through 3 World Financial Center. I basically traced my route back to the pedestrian bridge on West Street. We come through those doors. I don't know who I see, but now I know, because I've seen videotape. I have seen videotape from the French guys, quote/unquote the Jules and Gideon (inaudible). Et cetera et cetera. There they are filming, because I have seen this. I come through with the crew. Chief Pfeifer from the First Battalion is standing there because I catch it on the video. The two guys with the

EMS, myself and then the two guys with the stretcher.

We go back to the location where Roger Moore was, Roger Moore was gone. A subsequent phone conversation with him informed me that some guys carried him. That's exactly where I went to get him. I knew it took them an awful long time to get him out. He is a large heavy set man and some firemen carried him. I think he could give you the rest of his story. He was gone.

So I told that crew, two paramedics, or EMTs with a stretcher, I said let's get out of here. Let me get you guys back. We go back the way we came through, 3 and 4 World Financial Center, back to North End Avenue. At that point, there is a group of guys in suits that start walking south on North End Avenue. I asked them who they were and they said they are secret service and they are looking for one of their guys. I called out to some firemen because they are wearing rubber gloves. They got suits on. I'm like these guys don't even have helmets and gear on. I'm geared up. I said let me try to get some firemen to go with you guys.

So a couple of firemen came with me. We start walking south and we get to - I couldn't name the

street, but we walked south and then we start walking east and their guys, they either - they found their guys or they are okay. They said, all right, we are all right. So now we start walking back towards what has become sort of a staging area for fire personnel, EMS, cops and everything else.

Q. Which is --

A. North End Avenue, behind four. Sometime over the next few minutes the other tower came down.

Q. You were --

A. I was back there walking down, actually starting to head up Vesey Street to approach that way, the site, when tower one comes down. Tower one comes down. Then I head that way now and now it's just the whole corner is filled with rigs, all the rigs are destroyed, there are car fires all over the place. There are some injured guys coming out. EMS crews were helping people come out. We start working towards that area there. To say the least, it was like chaos.

There were some firemen who were trying to man hose lines. We had no water pressure. We are searching for anybody we can there. I did not have a handy talky radio. Time kind of gets a -- it's a little fuzzy right now. We were kind of numb and in

shock at this point. There were people working there. I got -- I went to a rig and I took out a saw and I cut -- there were about - seemed like 40 car fires going to the left in a large lot. That smoke condition was bad. There were explosions of windows and gas tanks, whatever, and it was -- it wasn't a priority the car fires. After some time, trying to get assembled with the Chief, again I see Chief Ingram at the scene at this location now. He was trying to get a game plan together, you know, what are we going to do here.

There were various hose lines all over the place, but there was no water pressure. We tried to put out the various car fires. I took a saw out of the truck, I don't know what it was. I cut the fence so that we could open up a way to get in to put those car fires out.

I talked to the Chief about drafting water. He said yes, the boat is coming. So I walked down to the river. I sort of commandeered a running ambulance with some other - there were some other guys. We used the ambulance to stretch the five and a half inch hose from the pier. We got in the ambulance and drove it. I didn't drive. I was in the passenger seat this time, but I took the ambulance and backed it up to the site.

I got out and some other officer got in and drove it. I sat with him. Guys in the back stretched that line up to approximately a couple of hundred, two hundred yards or so from West Street to the supply water.

Then I was screaming at news crews. I had to go back to my PIO title. Now I got reporters and photographers all over the place. More fire personnel start to assemble at the corner of Vesey and West there. There are some Chiefs. I remember at some point in the day, Fellini was there and Visconti I remember seeing. There while they are talking, I saw Mike Daly from the Daily News was there. I remember talking to him. I lot of this stuff is blurry.

This went on for hours. You are there, you are doing things, you are not doing things. They are worried that number 7 is burning and they are talking about not ceasing operations. I basically for the day stayed at that location. It wasn't until later that night that I walked around, all the way back around, to see what was going on at the other site. That is really where a lot of the rescue efforts were going on on the south of that collapsed north bridge. We couldn't get past the north bridge.

Q. You are mostly on the north?

A. I'm basically -- the majority of the rest of the day I'm at Vesey and West at what I believe is the command post. I'm trying to keep the press away as much as I can. They're assembling up on like a mountain of dirt that is located in that lot where the car fires were burning.

Q. Next to the fires, right?

A. At some point we got the boats draft water and it supplied a manifold and they started getting a few hose lines going. They got a tower ladder going. I'm not engaged in firefighter operations so much any more. I started watching the press, I started talking to the Chief. I made a few trips inside to use the phones to call here and to call my wife. There was no cell phone service down there. It was difficult to get a hard wire phone.

So there was -- the thing I needed a lot was communications and I don't have any really. Other than keeping the press at bay and asking the Chiefs if there is anything that I can do for them. I think Fellini, I remember at some point later in the day sort of takes control of this. I remember seeing guys from 65 engine that were working there that I know. It was just -- you are half dazed and half numb but I tried to get

back to what my job is, which is press, so I'm keeping them at bay, but I'm there until like one o'clock in the morning. I was trying to get some communications back to here to my office. Talking with the Chiefs about what -- that's essentially it, the details, the fine details of everything that happened say from the afternoon on. I remember talking to some people.

Q. Did you ever make it back to the original command post where it was set up?

A. Other than that time that I went back for Roger Moore, no, because the second collapse destroyed that whole area. I mean if you look at pictures of when I was out, we all would have been killed if that had come down. I don't know about underground, if they would have been safe. But I know, I did at some point go back to where I was because I lost my cell phone when we all fled. I went through what I remember was a revolving door and it was like you know, thinking about holy shit, trying to run for your life and you are going through a revolving door. But I lost my phone, so at some point I went back there through that building to that exact location and that whole front of that building was crushed. It was a total collapse. It was all debris. I couldn't get back to that

location the way I had come originally.

Q. How far was that from the north bridge? That was the north bridge?

A. Yes. That was all collapsed, collapsed into the building, you know, the interior of that building was crushed. I don't know at what point, how much debris there was or how much from the facade was collapsed. All I know is I traced my steps right back and at some point, I guess close to the entrance, was all crushed. I couldn't get back out that way.

So as I said, I mostly stayed on West and Vesey. At some point in the night I went all the way around the site to the location, which I guess would be -- I'm going to say would be the equivalent of somewhere around Dey Street or Cortlandt Street. Opposite where the Vista Hotel was and 3 World Trade Center. That location, you know.

Q. Vista is 3 World Trade Center?

A. Vista is 3 World Trade Center, okay. So that's where -- I'm thinking about that site. I don't know if you -- you know, there were various points on the site now that we are all aware of. That's the one between -- here's where I am. At some point I came back around. I came through I guess the Winter Garden

or whatever, or maybe through 2. I came back, I guess, here. I guess it would be right here, which is opposite Dey Street, if you go all the way to the east.

I'm there at night and I remember throwing an ABC crew out that had that gotten in with Pataki. I told them to get out of there. They were with the Governor and I said it doesn't matter. You've got to get out of here. There is no press here. I remember seeing Brian Dixon from my office, who was also there. The press had all been pushed back to beyond Chambers Street, north of Chambers Street, and he had been with them up there. But I stayed at the site, just to -- the lack of communications was a problem for me, communicating with my office. I told them in several conversations to give nothing out. We had no information whatsoever for any of the media that were calling about it. Basically, I stayed on the site. I remember trying to -- I came back the next day and virtually did the same thing, stayed at that site and tried to communicate with my office. At some point I went back to see where my car was. It's covered with debris but it wasn't crushed or anything like that. I don't know. I mean the days ran in. I was there for,

I think three days. The next day I was there again. I would start working, trying to get hard line phones there. I talked to Chief Pfeifer about trying to set up a tracking system for bodies, Fire Department personnel. That was sort of the original thing that we had set up just so when we had confirmed deceased, that they were coming through him. He had an office set up on like the third floor in 3 World Financial Center. A lot of it - unfortunately, the days ran in together.

I remember that night talking to Chief Fellini, who kind of had control of the site I think that first night. I got involved in a couple of logistic things. People were coming in. They wanted to deliver food. I'm telling them go see the Red Cross. Another guy has got a truck with -- this is probably day two now.

You are more concerned with day one -- okay, so the -- that that's probably it for day one. But like I said, once the two of them had come down, I'm at that location. I remained for the most part at that location. I remember talking to some of the restaurants. I made contact at some point with the guy from Ratner's Hotel there and talked to him about logistics and phones. There were no phones. It was a

big problem. I spent a lot of time trying to set up some kind of communication at the site to no avail.

But Dixon had the people to the north. I sort of stayed at the scene to sort of keep the press at bay, because we were concerned about pulling our people out and having them capture it and all that. I didn't want them to get that, to let them get something like that.

Q. I know you said you didn't have a handy talky, but do you remember hearing any kind of radio transmissions or handy talky transmissions while you were there?

A. Yes, I remember the Ladder 6 stuff. I remember, as a matter of fact, I was with - I seen - I remember seeing Danny May from 43 Truck, I think. And there was a group of men. There was discussion among Chief Visconti and Ingram and other Chiefs on the job who were west of Vesey there and they were discussing people trapped and -- it was Ladder 6. Someone wanted to try to get a crew over there to help and I remember them saying that they got them, they got them, Ladder 6.

And I remember a whole bunch of guys heading from where we were around the Winter Garden to that

site between the two bridges. You know, through the Winter Garden, right. Again, I went up Dey Street to approach the site from the west there.

About 20, I believe there were 20 firefighters who went on that mission to try to help with Ladder 6. But I remember them coming back and being told they got them a short time later. So I think they dispatched a whole bunch of guys but the rescue attempt, I guess it had already been in -- the operation was kind of going on at that time. They sent all these extra guys, but I believe they were getting them out, as they were sort of assigned to go help out.

Q. Anything else?

A. Other than that, I didn't really have any conversations with too many people at the command post. You know, we were all standing there watching. We saw about 20 people jump. It was horrific. The sound of them hitting was like a gun being fired or something. Their bodies exploding or whatever. It was just really horrific. I guess we weren't, a lot of guys were assembling there. Thank god there weren't more guys being sent there. We would have lost more guys, you know.

So I really don't have -- one thing I left

out, for the record I guess. The one thing, I talked to Ray Goldbach and Tom Fitzpatrick when I got there and I looked up at them and I said do we have a collapse potential here. I remember them saying no, they are made to withstand a hit from planes. But I guess none of us really thought. I don't know what that originated from.

Q. I don't think they figured on jet fuel.

A. Terrorism, yeah. A plane hit the tower, which is, I guess what everybody thought when they heard a plane hit the tower. It was not what they had in mind when they talk about a plane. It was built to withstand being hit by a plane, not by a plane being driven into the towers loaded with jet fuel. But that was the one conversation I had with anybody really at the command post. It occurred to me. I thought at least we had chance of a partial collapse, after some amount of burning time you know.

Q. You mean the top falling off?

A. Something like that. Actually my car, I parked it. I pulled up on one of these streets down here, maybe like, in other words, I'm going to guess it was somewhere near West Street. It was like the first left turn I could make. I don't think it said Rector

Place here. There are other streets south of here. That's where I parked my car. I remember when I pulled it over, thinking to myself, shit, these things are big buildings, you know. I parked it close to West Street, then I pulled it over up the block. Something that struck me. Was I thinking about the building coming down? I certainly knew it would be bad and I thought we would have at least debris and stuff like that coming off of it, if not some partial collapse or something like that. So I pulled the car all the way up the block, and I was right. I mean just if the vehicles were closer to West Street, the damage. Mine was covered with about 3, 4 inches of that powdery, pulverized concrete, whatever it was, but it was not destroyed. Other vehicles up the block were damaged by the debris that fell that far. You know.

Q. Did you see any, as you were walking, did you see any plane parts or anything as you were walking up West Street or anything?

A. No, I saw them on the video, that it appeared there was some, but you don't really know where they were located on that video.

Q. What the --

A. The plane parts and such. Looked like there

might be some plane parts in there, but I don't know where that was. I will get you a copy of that. As a matter of fact, my video unit, I will get you everything we have. Because they have been asking for all the footage from all the stations and stuff like that, you know, whatever we can get. We will give it to you. I guess that's it. Unless you have anything else. It was not a dramatic kind of thing. I was lucky I was able to -- I wasn't that close. I was able to get away without -- unlike all the guys that had no shot. That's my guilt complex.

Q. That's what a lot of people have.

A. Yes, because I could run and guys couldn't. If you were in there -- all right?

MR. CAMPBELL: Time is now 12 o'clock. The interview is over. Thank you very much.

MR. GRIBBON: Thank you guys.

File No. 9110168

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

Interview Date: October 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. TAMBASCO: We are at Battalion 4 in the lounge, and the subject of the interview is Lieutenant Rosario Terranova, assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

The time is now 1330 hours.

BY MR. TAMBASCO:

Q. If you would be good enough to just tell us what happened.

A. Okay. Well, on the day of the events, I was actually still assigned to the Chief of Department's office, so my response to the incident actually was from headquarters, and I had been at work already. We were sitting -- I was sitting in my cubicle, and I heard Chief Ganci make a statement. You know, it was kind of like a screaming thing from his office. Said, "Come on, Danny. We gotta go right away. There's a plane that hit the Trade Center," and that, of course, was referring to Chief Nigro.

So at first, to be honest with you, in the office it was kind of -- people thought maybe he was full of shit, you know, he was kidding around, because he's like -- he was a jokster kind of guy, you know, but you could tell right away from the way he was moving around and people were starting to scurry that

something was happening.

So I ran to the window. From headquarters you actually can see lower Manhattan, and, sure enough, you could see in the one tower there was this huge, you know, black void and smoke coming up, so we realized there was a serious issue, but, you know, at the time to be honest with you, nobody thought what was going on. We thought it was just some kind of fluke accident and a plane had hit. People started scurrying for stuff, but I ran right away to get Chief Gombo, because even though I was assigned to the chief of the department's office, something like this I wanted to get him involved right away, so I informed him of what was going on, and I suggested that we go together to the incident.

So we gathered up our stuff, and everybody was rushing down the elevator banks. We got into our cars in the garage. Then we kind of went over in this, like, convoy, maybe four or five of us that followed. We were following Steve Mosiello, who was Chief Ganci's executive assistant, and Chief Ganci was in the car with him, Chief Nigro, Commissioner Feehan was in line with Commissioner Fitzpatrick, a couple of the other chiefs were there from upstairs. We all proceeded over

the Brooklyn Bridge. On the way over, we could see a lot of debris and stuff falling from the buildings. When we got down into lower Manhattan, we swung around City Hall Park, around Park Row, and then headed across to Church Street. From there we broke off a little bit.

Most of the convoy began to head down Vesey Street. Chief Gombo and I swung south on Church Street, and we wound up parking on Fulton Street, heading east about a hundred feet east of Church Street. The reason we chose to stop there is because there was a significant ambulance presence there.

We noted several voluntary hospitals there, and we saw some treatment going on the sidewalk. We decided that we would initially stop there and see what we could assess. We really didn't have any information. It was very early on in the incident.

We came to find out afterwards, in looking at the unit histories, that we actually were on scene within six minutes of the initial call to 911. There was no reporting place or command post that had been established yet, so we opted to stop there and at least get some kind of idea of what we were looking at. After we parked the car, we initially ran into a crew

from New York Downtown Hospital. I don't know who they were, but they were beginning to treat patients on the sidewalk.

There was a couple of patients who were walking wounded, a few patients that couldn't ambulate. I remember clearly the sea of people coming out of this lobby, you know, and all we could do was encourage them to just to keep going, keep moving away from the incident site. You know, people were asking us, "What's happening? What's going on?" We really just didn't have any time. Just respectfully as we could, told them keep moving, keep moving north, just get away from the incident site.

We remember saying over the radio make sure everybody was their helmets on, this is a hard hat op, because we were starting to get hit with stuff. We didn't know what it was. It was mostly just soot and paper, but, you know, it wasn't really clear what was happening. About this time we heard like a little bit of an explosion. I guess it was secondary to the crash that had occurred, and we immediately told everybody let's retreat. We tried to take patients with us, but those who couldn't ambulate, we had no choice but to leave them there. We actually retreated across the

street back by the cemetery, which is right on the corner of Church and Fulton. It's part of St. Paul's Church there. We had some debris falling from the building, some larger objects and some objects with mass. Those patients that were unable to ambulate, they, unfortunately, became further victimized by the event. After that initially stopped, we made the decision to bring that treatment area back over to this side of the street, the east side of the street, and to have people as best they can use real extreme caution.

I remember running into two people from headquarters there, which was Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski, who are both assigned to the EMS command, and Chief Gombo gave them direction to assume the responsibilities for that area, and he was going to assume command of the EMS operation. At my suggestion to him, we began to head west of the incident down Vesey Street.

We had gotten information that the fire command post was being established in the lobby of the No. 1 tower, so I expressed to him, and I thought because of the magnitude of the incident that's where he needed to be. That's where all the fire super people would be, the super chiefs would be, so that

would be the best position.

Anyway, we left Captain Olszewski at that location. We left our vehicle where we had initially parked it, and we began on foot to move forward, and we started accepting radio transmissions as command for the event.

We had established a staging area on the west side of West Street at Vesey Street being the cross. We instructed additional ambulances responding in that they should take that location as their staging location. We also ran into Captain Stone from Battalion 8 at that location, and Captain Stone was going to begin to coordinate those efforts. He wasn't necessarily assigned the role of staging, but it was his job to assume that an officer was placed in charge of that, and that began to come to fruition.

Chief Gombo and I began to proceed into the lobby of No. 1 tower, which is where fire had established a command position by the side command center. It was clear on the west side of the building that the damage, physical damage, to the building wasn't as extensive as it was on the east, but still we had a lot of debris, visible flames. We -- our path was, you know, was obstructed by some bodies that were

on the scene. I remember saying to Chief Gombo how horrific a scene this really was. You know, there was a couple of spots where we recognized by clothing that there were body parts, but we couldn't even recognize male or female. You know, it was just horrific.

So anyway, we decided to proceed into the lobby, which is where they had established the command post, and it was a very hazardous location to begin with. I mean, there was a lot of glass on the floor. A lot of the window panes from the lobby had been already broken. I can't tell you if they were broken intentionally by fire personnel for venting or if they were broken as a result of the incident, but we began to establish command there.

We saw many people there. We saw Father Judge there. We saw Commissioner Feehan there. We saw Chief Turi there. We saw -- who else? I'm trying to think who else was there. Anyway, if I come back to the names, I'll try to remember, but there was a significant number of people there. It was clear that that's where the initial command post was being established. We began to -- we began to speak and discuss about the long term, how we're going to attack this operation. I could see the mezzanine level -- I

don't know if you are familiar with where that lobby was, but there was a mezzanine level above you, and then there was like a vestibule in there that you could go up a set of escalators to the plaza or into 6 World Trade Center. We could see at the mezzanine level there was a significant number of people being evacuated out into the plaza area from the mezzanine. I commented to Chief Gombo I thought it was so amazing how people were really moving, you know, very organized, very coordinated effort.

We remained at that location for a little while. Chief Basile came in, and he was there. They began to discuss strategies and what was going to occur. A couple of times really we were frightened by what we thought were additional explosions. We kept hearing these large boom, boom, and actually what it turned out to be -- what it said in the Times, it actually was people jumping and hitting on the glass awning that was outside the lobby there. We then decided that -- Chief Ganci had left, and he was actually establishing a fire command post across the street on West Street, south of Vesey Street. I would say the best landmark would be in front of the Winter Garden or, actually if you look at the Winter Garden

dome, it would just be almost just north of that spot. There was -- the best way to explain it is there was a driveway to a loading dock to that building, and it was established there at that location.

Q. Which I guess probably was the American Express Building.

A. That's what it is, right. There was a loading dock off of West Street for 3 World Financial Center, which is the American Express Building, and that is just north of the Winter Garden, and that's exactly where it was. This pedestrian bridge that existed on the map, if you look at it as reference, just north of that is where this driveway was. We could -- so that's where we decided to proceed, we would move to that location, and we did so.

We did so, I would say, probably about ten minutes after Chief Ganci had left to go there, and still at this point the second building, the second building had yet to be affected, and there was some question about this. There was a video that I was privy to see, which is being kept confidential in nature, held by the chief of safety, and it was taken by an amateur photographer who was doing some training with the first battalion. I don't know if you are

aware of the tape, but anyway it's really helped me -- seeing that helped me get this frame of reference. I'm very sure of my times on this, you know.

So anyway, Chief Gombo and I decided to proceed out of the building. We left Chief Basile at the building to coordinate resources there. Now, we moved out of the building back across West Street. We kept on staging again to see what was occurring. We had a few people that were standing south of Vesey Street. We corrected that situation, moved everybody north again on Vesey Street where we wanted to stage, and, you know, our mentality about staging is always -- especially now, since we're working with the Fire Department, to get further away, because we know that they're coming with additional resources, and we don't want to lose any assets behind them.

So again we moved them, and then we proceeded to the command post. Now, at the command post, I remember seeing Chief Ganci there, Steve Mosiello, Chief Burns. I remember speaking with Commissioner Feehan. Commissioner Fitzpatrick was there, and it's funny, because Commission Feehan asked me, you know, what about the patient count, how many patients we got? I said to him, "Listen, Commissioner, with all

due respect, it's a lot." You know, and we kind of giggled. He said, "I know, I know, but I have to ask the question." It's kind of sad to me because it was almost in a jovial way. I mean, that was his personality. Anyway, we began to establish our situation now, and we heard a little -- all of a sudden we hear a huge explosion, you know, and in looking up, you could see the second tower being hit by this second plane, you know, and it was at that -- it was at that very moment that everybody there realized that we were -- you know, that this was clearly a planned act that this is --

Q. No accident?

A. This was no accident, you know, and it was a terrible feeling to say, oh, my God, you know, this is something that's really bad that's happening. You know, just on a personal note you started to think, I wish I could call somebody or do something, but there was no time for that kind of stuff. We had to put that away.

So we initially began discussing the need for resources, retreat of resources, where we could move people to, if we had to. What are going to be some of our evacuation plans? We started to discuss what

further acts we could anticipate. Is there something else that's going on in other places of the city? Should we anticipate additional problems down here in the financial center?

It seems like it happened very fast. I mean, the time went actually longer than that, when you're involved in it, I'm sure you understand that, you know, it seems like these things are happening, and there's no real time frame.

While we were discussing this, I remember hearing Chief Ganci say, "Oh, shit," you know, so we all looked up, and you could hear this rumble coming. We looked up at the south tower, which is the No. 2 tower, and all of a sudden we began to see like a pancake. I mean, it's as simple as that. If you could imagine you had two cards in your hand, and you just clapped your hands, and they just closed on each other. That's what it looked like, like a toy, and we began to see the pancake, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, one floor after another, as quick as you can imagine it.

At the time I was standing looking at the building in front of the fire command board. To my left was Chief Gombo and to my right was -- to my right

front was Chief Ganci with his aide, Steve, and right directly to my left was Roger Moore, Lieutenant Roger Moore. Directly behind him to my right was Commissioner Feehan, so I remember Chief Ganci saying, "Go, go, go, go."

Everybody decided which way they were going to go. Some people went to the left. Some people went to the right. I decided -- I looked behind me, and I saw a few people were heading into this loading dock. The loading dock bay was actually open. I thought to myself, I don't think I could -- I don't think I can out run this, you know, and maybe I got a better chance getting into safety, so I said to Gombo, "Come on let's go."

I went about three steps, maybe three or four steps running, and I turned to see and he wasn't -- Gombo wasn't there. He was still kind of standing, looking at the building, so I ran back to him. I kind of grabbed him by the neck like a -- you know, the best way I can describe it is like a kitty cat. I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, and I pulled him with me into this building.

When we got inside the bay, we could hear it getting louder. You know, it's getting loud, and it

was getting dark, so I had to him -- you know, I said to myself, maybe we should -- you know, it's an odd thing, because even though you certainly were running for your safety, there is an odd curiosity, and you want to see it. You want to see what's happening, so everybody was run to go what they thought was safe, but still not getting as far away from the door as they probably should have. I said to myself, you know what, this is not how I want to check out, so I said let's go , and I grabbed Gombo. I was going to run down further into the bay, and then -- I don't know. It's very strange, but in the loading dock, right against the wall very close to the door was a white van, and it was just parked there, and I said, "All right. We are going to grab refuge behind this van."

We went to the back of the van, and we got down on the ground, and we heard this huge, thunderous, loud sound, and then it was completely dark and completely silent. It was like the sound of death. It was so strange, because there was all this commotion, and people screaming, run, run, run, go, go, go, and then I guess at the point -- at that point the debris hit the bay, and it was just complete silence, an eerie silence. I'd be amazed that people who were in that

garage don't describe it the same exact way, that eerie silence. I took a second and realized -- I mean it was dark. We had a few lights down at the end of the garage, the end of the loading bay, but it was very dark.

I took a second to realize, okay, I'm not trapped. I can move everything. I had Gombo. I wouldn't let him go. I could feel his shirt. Then I went to take a breath, and all I got was dirt. It was at that point I said to myself, did you make a bad decision not running? Because now, you know, maybe you didn't get buried in this crap, but are you going to be able to breathe? Are you going to suffocate here?

But anyway, the long and the short of it is we took a second, and within a minute or so the dust started to settle a little bit. You could breathe through your clothes. People began to scream. I remember Jerry saying, "Ross," and I said, "Jerry." We had each other. He had a little flashlight. He had the flash on, and we were trying to see did we see anybody else. Then I thought to myself -- I thought of the thing about the '93 incident when they had this Ryder truck full of explosive, and now I realized how strange it was that this white van was parked in this

loading dock. I started to think to myself, God, did we step into the wrong place here? So I said to Gombo, "Look, we gotta get out of here, because we don't know --" I didn't know the integrity of the building we were in, what fell on us, how much we're under, so we tried to go back and look, but it was too dusty. I couldn't see anything.

There was a couple of firefighters in the building, so we proceeded to the back. Everybody proceeded first to the back of the garage. We saw Terry Wynter there, who was from OEM. He was in the garage with us. I saw a couple of cops and, you know, Jerry started asking me "Where's Feehan? Where is Ganci?" We didn't see them, so we believed, him and I believed, that they were buried as a result of that. Then he said, "Where's Roger?" He thought Roger was behind us, and we couldn't find Roger either. So we just assumed that these guys had been buried.

Now, it was strange, because -- I'll get right back to where I am, but we didn't realize -- we didn't find out until Friday of that week that that's not where Ganci and Feehan perished. That was mostly because we spent so much time working at the scene the next three days, we didn't have any time to talk to

anybody else and find out what really occurred. Anyway, they were able to evacuate by running. Then we also found out that -- we also found out from Roger that, in fact, he had injured his leg, actually both his legs, but he actually was in that garage. He actually made it in that garage. We felt -- or I can speak for myself -- Chief Gombo may say otherwise -- but I felt profoundly upset because, you know, it was afterwards that I found this out.

I thought, man, I abandoned him, you know. I should have gone back to him and looked for him, but, like we said, we didn't have SCBAs. It was very -- breathing was very poor in there, and we asked some firefighters to go back and see if anybody had survived that had been buried or trapped. It turned out that those firefighters are the guys who helped carry him out of that garage.

Q. Right.

A. Yes, so Roger, that's correct, so in a sense, I guess -- while I may feel personally bad for not doing it myself, I guess in a sense we sent somebody to help him, so there is some resolve there.

I'm sorry. I know I'm a little long winded, but I hope it will help you.

Q. Not at all.

A. We -- so we were in this little garage office, which I guess was intended for the attendant. There was a telephone there we were trying to get out on. We couldn't get an outside line. As a matter of fact, somebody called in looking for somebody, and Chief Gombo said to them, "Look, you know, he's not here, but if you can call somebody, tell them that there are people in this place, and we don't know if we have a way out."

Anyway, one of the firefighters that was in there decided that they would take the stairway to see if there was an access point above us. While he did that, we waited. We sealed the doors and put some towels down to try to lessen the smoke situation and the dust situation in the room we were in.

I would say maybe about five, ten minutes went by, and the firefighter came back to us and said, "Look, I found an access." We have to take a stairway about maybe two floors up, and then we needed to walk towards the back of the building, and then there was a door that emptied into the courtyard of the back of the building, 3 Financial on the west side of the building or directly against -- directly north of Battery Park

by the water line.

Q. Right.

A. We were able to evacuate the building in that fashion. We got out of the building. There was debris and dust everywhere. If you need an explanation, the best way to try to describe it is take a vacuum bag that you should have changed two weeks ago.

Q. Right.

A. Then open it and just throw it up in the air. That's what it looked like, the dust and shit flying everywhere. So we said okay -- now that we're out, let's try to get on the radio and make some communication. We were able to get on the radio, let them know that we were all right, and try to get a status for the operation.

It was difficult to -- it was a difficult situation to try to get back in charge of, because we were out of commission for probably about 30 minutes.

Q. Right.

A. In our absence, things had already been going in place, so it seemed senseless to take that role back over. What we opted to do is we opted to try to move back towards the incident site and see who we could get ahold of.

Q. Right.

A. So we began to -- let me find my bearings here. We began to move -- yes, we began here on North End Avenue.

Q. Right.

A. We began to head up North End Avenue and then to Vesey.

Q. And then east across Vesey?

A. Then we tried to go east across Vesey. Now, what wound up happening was we encountered a lot of ambulance crews that were operating between 3 and 4 Financial Center, on Vesey Street, which is between West and North End Avenue.

On North End Avenue, north of Vesey Street, there's a hotel there. What we started to do is we established a treatment area in the lobby of this hotel. I'm sorry. The name escapes me, but we began to establish a treatment area in the lobby of this hotel off of North End Avenue. Like I said, there were crews operating here on Vesey Street, and there was some crews operating south of Vesey on North End Avenue, as well.

We actually met up with Chief Basile there. We met up with Chief Pascal there. Chief Gombo

actually called a meeting with the chief officers there because we were unable to make any contact with Chief McCracken. We were -- we knew he was there, but we were unable to contact him. We weren't sure if he had perished in the incident. There was, of course, rumors flying all over the place, this one is dead, that one is dead, so we did our best to figure things out.

Chief Goldfarb was there with us. Chief Villani was there. What we decided to do is we decided that we would continue to maintain this treatment area. I suggested to Chief Gombo that there's going to have to be a spot where the agencies are going to start to get together, and the only logical place we could think of, given the proximity at the time of OEM to the incident, we didn't think that they would be at their offices in 7 World Trade Center. We decided that we needed to make our way to One Police Plaza, which is all the way on the east side of Manhattan. We thought that -- Chief Gombo and I said we're going to proceed over to that location. That was our initial plan, and right around this time again we had some commotion. We stopped our meeting, and we went out again where we were treating patients, and we were out on the street when we heard the rumble of the second tower

collapsing. I remember specifically myself going up Vesey Street again towards --

Q. Eastbound?

A. Yes, heading eastbound up Vesey Street to try to wave people down. Come on, come on, let's go, let's go. There was one guy, he didn't want to leave his patient. I said, "Come on, you have to leave her. You gotta evacuate that location."

I remember seeing the rubble, seeing the rubble fall and actually start to chase down the street, and, you know, it's strange because you wouldn't expect -- you wouldn't expect debris to do that, but it literally traveled, like, you would see these movies with like a tidal wave that flows through the streets and hits down any path it can. It literally traveled that way. I began to retreat myself, begging people to come with me back onto North End Avenue. Then I took a position against the building on North End Avenue just north of Vesey Street.

Q. With the building between you and the --

A. Right, like, I put myself up against the building. I was -- I stayed as close to the edge as I possibly could, because I wanted to try to be able to

grab people or just pull them off to the side, because I was afraid people would keep running straight and put themselves still in the middle of the road.

There was some people on the south of Vesey Street that refused to come over. They were fine where they were. Then, just like I described, there is this huge puff of dust to my left through Vesey Street, and then to my right through Murray Street. The percussion of it was so much it actually pulled me off the building, you know, so I can't -- there were a couple of people who I remember seeing on Vesey Street who I couldn't find again.

Q. Right.

A. Oh, I want to mention this. I forgot to mention this. Going back to the command post.

Q. Right, the original command post?

A. Original command post in front -- on West Street. One of the people who I had lost sight of was Sam Harris. He's an EMT. He's Chief Digg's aide. He happened to have been there with Captain Pincus that day. He was working with us to start some communication, and he broke off from us to head up into the Winter Garden building to try to make some communications. It was at that point when that

building collapsed.

Now, I bring it up only because I met up again with Sam Harris and accounted for him back at the hotel at North End Avenue.

Q. Right.

A. So we -- he at least was accounted for.

One of the people we couldn't account for at that time was Chief Basile's aide. His name escapes me, but I know we were looking for him. We couldn't account for him. He was later accounted for, thank goodness.

Anyway, after the second building collapsed, here we were again consumed with this debris shield, this dust shield, you know. There was some people who had taken refuge underneath ambulances. But anyway, we started to recoup things a little bit, and I said, okay, now we really have to think about what we're doing. So we were back in the lobby, and actually stepped away from the windows. Everybody started to get very paranoid of what was going to happen next. We were establishing our plans for the operation, who was going to be responsible for what sectors, and all of a sudden I noted -- I saw a lot of cops running north past the building. Even some firefighters, and I was

too curious, saying, "What are these guys running from?" So I went outside I said, "What's the story?" They told us that as a result of the collapse, the building that we were in had had a gas leak breach on the opposite side of the building. So I went back in, and I said to Chief Gombo, "Look, I think we need to -- have to just abandon our operation here and move everybody north as far north as we can and get a handle on this," because we need to make sure all our people are safe. Of course he was very frustrated at the time, too, and he said to me, "How far north do you think we should go?" I remember specifically telling him I think we should walk north until you don't see any stuff any more. Just keep going north.

So anyway we decided -- we started proceeding north on North End Avenue with a convoy of personnel. It was about Murray Street that we actually encountered Chief Callan, fire Chief Callan. He was --- I don't mean any disrespect to him, but he was completely dazed and out of it. He was just in total shock from the event, just walking in circles, you know. I grabbed him, I said, "Chief Callan, are you all right? Are you okay." He just said to me, "Hi, how you doing?" I said "Chief, come on. Why don't you walk with us. We

have to start walking forward. Why don't you get all your people to come with us. We have to move north."

That kind of snapped him a little bit out of it, and he started to give the order to his people, let's move north, let's move north, so we did. We moved, I would say, a couple of blocks. I can't tell you exactly where we stopped. Probably somewhere around Warren Street. We began to -- there was a police officer from the Police Department chief of department's office, who actually had a gator out. They must have had them at headquarters and used them to transport people over. We explained to them what we were doing, and he said, "Come on, chief, I'll take you over," so we went, Chief Gombo and I, Chief Goldfarb and his aide. We went to One Police Plaza.

When we got there, we went upstairs to the command center. The command center had already been completely activated. I mean, there was a flurry of activity going on, and it was there for the first time that we began to see some images on the television of what had occurred. I remember saying to Chief Gombo what a good decision it was to come there, because it was -- we now had the landline capability. We were able to call headquarters. We were able to establish

some interagency communications. We still didn't have a fire rep with us, but anyway we decided this would be a good spot. We made contact with headquarters. We made contact with fire operations to say that this is where we are, and we think it would be an excellent idea to have a fire rep there.

The choice to bring Chief Goldfarb with us was a superb choice, because he had a vast knowledge of mutual aid and interagency communications. He was able to start establishing contact with FEMA and with state EMS and begin to put plans in place immediately for mutual aid.

He also had a very intricate knowledge of the Oklahoma City bombing. So he was very influential on telling us this is what we should anticipate in 24 hours. This is what we can anticipate in 48 hours. I tell you, I got to give him a lot of credit. He was a hundred percent on the money, because, sure enough, he was right. I mean, the amount of supplies that came in. Just for example, as an insight, one of the first things he said to us that we had to consider doing is find warehouse space.

At least, we both looked at him, like, how could you think about that now, and he said, "Trust

me. You are going to want to think about that because in two days you are not going to be able to move." He was a hundred percent correct. I mean, this battalion here, Battalion 4, simply by nature of its proximity and the logistics of the station became an absolute warehouse. It wasn't till last week that we just got rid of almost 200 cases of food and clothing that we sent to shelters because we had no need for it. We were completely overwhelmed by generosity.

So anyway, we spent a large portion of the rest of the day, I would say realistically we were there. We got there around one o'clock, and we spent the day there until about ten o'clock. About ten o'clock we decided that we would --we wanted to head back over and see what was happening. Captain Connelly, who was on duty, he just came on duty. He was sent to the trade center, to the command post at One Police Plaza to take over for EMS liaison. We decided we would rotate. We built a schedule for continuous manpower there for staffing. Chief Gombo and I, along with Chief Goldfarb and his aide, decided to head over. We decided we'd walk over on foot, and we were able to do that.

First thing we did was we wanted to go and

see what kind of condition, if at all, Chief Gombo's car was in. Because that was our mode of transportation. As it turned out, amazingly, because of the way the building fell, his car was not hit by debris, although the driver's window had been broken. Of course, the car was filthy and dusty inside, but other than the driver's window, we started the car, and it was fine. Interestingly enough, there were a lot of other cars with the windows broken like that. We thought it odd that just one window would have been broken, and we surmised later on from speaking to people that actually it was not broken as a result of the incidents. It was broken by people after the buildings fell to try to get in and get some fresh air, which I suppose it's a small price to pay for a window.

Anyway, once we realized the car was all right, we left it there. We were able to get it out. We had to come over some hose lines and stuff, but there was a path to get through. It was filthy in the streets. There was inches and inches of dust and muck. By the time we had gotten there, of course both the buildings had fallen. This one building -- I'm trying to describe exactly which one it was. I guess

it was 5 World Trade Center had kind of been gutted out just like a picture out of a movie. You wouldn't even believe it.

So we started to proceed north on Church because, of course, you know, the command center -- by the time we were done with this, the EMS command post had been established at Chambers Street and West Street. That's actually across from Stuyvesant High School. Ironically, that's where we remained for several weeks after the incident, as far as the command post was concerned. We began to walk up Church Street in an attempt to make our way over to West Street. We were going to go down Vesey Street, but it was completely blocked by debris.

Then we decided we'd stay north of Chambers Street. We ran into a couple of different people we knew. I ran into this guy, we call him Yack. His name is Jimmy Yakamovich. He's a fire captain. He was a good friend of Chief Ganci's. Everybody knows Yack. Most people know him by now.

Anyway, we ran into him, and he was there. He was there in some somebody else's bunker gear and helmet, and he was telling me -- we were talking about -- he goes, you know -- you know, Ganci is dead

and Feehan is dead. They can't find Burns or Barbara, or -- you know, the list just went on and on, Fanning. It was hard to believe. I mean, Fanning, and Downey. I mean, these guys who had all but made the department in the last 40 years, all of them gone in one shot. I mean, people began to think about how we going to move on from here, you know. We were glad to hear at the time we knew Nigro was okay, Cassano was okay. I knew Callan was okay, because I saw him myself, although physically okay at least. So we -- you know, we wished him well. We made our way over to Chambers and West Street. That's where we ran into -- Chief McCracken actually was there. He looked beat up, but he was in good shape. He was in complete command, as always, of what was going on with EMS. He had established a very good plan about how we were going to do things. He began to say to Chief Gombo, at least for the next few days we need to -- him and I need to -- him and I meaning Chief Gombo and Chief McCracken need to be on this rotating schedule. One of them always needs to be there. So we decided that we would -- Chief Gombo and I would head home.

It took us about midnight by this decision. We would head home and then come back in the morning to

relieve him. Chief McCracken would stay own, and then we would go on, like, this twelve-hour thing for the next few days. So we did. We made our way back to the car, and we headed home. That particular night I stayed by Chief Gombo. We went home for a couple of hours, and we headed back in on the 12th.

So that's my recollection of September 11. I mean, I have some other stuff that we did subsequent to that, but, I mean, it doesn't --

Q. No, that's pretty much -- other than anything else you may just want to add. I mean, you know, feeling wise or anything like that, that you'd like to have added into this, that's -- I can't ask for much more detail than you have given me.

A. Well, I tried my best to lay it out, because, I mean, it's helpful for me to talk about it. I mean, it was difficult -- it was a difficult week, you know,. I mean, a lot of stuff went on to establish things there. You know, in the subsequent days, we worked with Jersey City Medical Center, who had lent us a command post to use.

Q. Right.

A. Something that should be on the record, should be that EMS needs to have a command post so we

can operate the long-term operation. I mean, we used to have the field com, however inappropriate that vehicle might have been, but we still had it. The truth be known, fire communications has vehicles, but they are fine for fire communications. When we need to set up something like this, we need to go outside and say could you help us, because we don't have -- and that's a kind of silly situation. But that's a personal feeling, not a professional one. We took the time to go to the ME's office and see their operation there. I have to tell you, it's horrific.

They were doing -- I mean literally doing autopsies right on the street underneath tents. I give a lot of credit to the guys who worked sectors in the next coming days. One of the hardest sectors to establish was the morgue sector. It was hard because there were a lot of -- tensions were running high, let's just put it that way.

I mean, we had some run-ins -- when I say we, I mean Chief Gombo and I. We basically were married at the hip for the remainder of the week, you know. We had some run-ins with Chief Butler and Chief Cruthers, which were later ironed out. Of course, they were just nothing more than people being so profoundly saddened

by what had occurred. It was important to us, and, of course, it was important to fire suppression, as well. We needed to establish a very clear, well-maintained morgue sector. So that one, of course, we could account for all our lost, both PD, fire and EMS, but mostly so that we could ensure that the remains of the Fire Department personnel would be returned as quickly as possible to their families. That was something that was difficult to do, but I'm proud the way that worked out.

And, you know, we went on. I mean, things have somewhat come down to normal at this point, or at least started to establish a long-term basis, you know. We -- right after the event, we established 24-hour coverage of headquarters and a staffing person at OEM a staffing person at police headquarters, and, you know, staffing people at the command center. For the first week or so everybody -- you couldn't pull people away if you tried. Everybody wanted to be there. They couldn't do enough, but it had to come to a point where you had a decision to make that this is going to be a long-term operation. This stuff is not going to go away tomorrow. The debris is just not going to clear. We are going to have to be into this

for six months or a year and still you need to establish a long-term plan because you can't run out of people in six weeks, and that's where we were headed.

So to our credit -- I mean, I think that things are proceeding okay now. I mean, I think it's good that people are volunteering to do overtime down there, and that the 911 system is back in place the way it was, although, in my opinion, of course, I don't know how much -- how long you could ask people to do overtime in that kind of scenario. I think it's a very difficult thing to do.

I mean, I have my ideas about how we could do it also, but we will leave it at that. I'm glad to -- in a sense, I'm glad to have survived it and be able to contribute to this collection of information. I think it's important to document historically what's happened in the department.

You know, from my perspective, I've encouraged everybody I know to speak to you about this, to speak to investigators about this. You know, there's an unfortunate stigmatism that comes with your office and your organization and, you know, what are they looking for? Are they looking to fire people because they put in for comp. packages and they

weren't there.

I mean, of course, you know, to be honest with you, if people are performing inappropriately, they need to be discussed with it, but I -- so they don't expect that that's the meat and potatoes of this investigation. I don't -- I didn't approach it that way. I hope my information has been informative to you.

Q. It certainly has been, and just keep in mind that -- actually think about it 30 or 50 years from now when somebody wants to look back and this and get more of the personal stories.

A. You know, I tell you why I think it's a good idea, I'm offering these things up, because maybe it will come up for further discussion.

One of the things we used to at EMS prior to the merger, we used to do post incident summary reports. This was something that Chief Cross was a stickler for when he was the chief of operations for EMS. Any time we had a big incident -- I mean a big -- certainly not relative to this, a big, you know, a plane crash, a building clamps, along those lines, we always take the time to do a post incident critique. What we would do is we would print the CAD and gather

all the ACRs and create a time line and a table of organization and speak to those in charge and have narratives written, and this information would be put in chronological order and stored on paper so that we can learn from the lessons we had. I think back on the World Trade Center event, which is an event that we did not do a post-incident summary about, largely because of the magnitude.

Q. Right.

A. But I think back on that event, working in operations as I did, and working with the chief of department's office as the correspondence liaison, I received on many occasions inquiries from people who wanted to learn from our department. It was a standard joke when anybody would call about the '93 bombing they would be switched immediately to Chief Seretta, because Chief Seretta was one of the command officers. Then when Chief Seretta retired, they switched this person immediately to Chief Burns because Chief Burns was also one of the ranking fire chiefs -- but unfortunately there are no more rank and file chiefs that were in '93. All their information, and history and expertise has been lost. That's a real shame, so I hope that -- I hope that this will pave the way for other future

considerations for reports like that when we have these types of -- it's important history, and you're doing an important thing here.

That's all I have.

Q. That's about it, Ross. I thank for you the info. It certainly was quite detailed.

A. I hope it's been helpful to you. Thanks a lot, Michael.

MR. TAMBASCO: We conclude as 1415 hours on October 26.

File No. 9110169

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LYNN TIERNEY

Interview Date: October 29, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RIGNOLA: Assigned to citywide special investigations unit. I'm here with my partner, Cliff Krug. It's October 29, approximately 1345. I'm here to interview Deputy Commissioner Tierney about the events that happened on September 11, 2001.

Q. Commissioner, would you like just to tell me how you became aware of the fire and how you got there and what you might have seen?

A. I saw the first plane go into the tower on television. I was at home, and I was getting ready to come in to the World Trade Center. I had an 11:00 appointment on the 67th floor of the World Trade Center, tower number one.

So I saw the first plane go in on television. I called Ray Goldbach and said there's a plane into the Trade Center. Then I said I'm going in there.

So I got in my car, and I came -- I live in Brooklyn in Park Slope. So I started to go down Ninth Street, and I was going to turn right onto Fourth Avenue, because I figured it would be better for me to go in over the Brooklyn Bridge, because I would be trapped in traffic if

I tried to go through the tunnel. Then Rescue 2 came by me on Ninth Street. So instead I tucked in behind them. I went straight down to the Battery Tunnel in behind Rescue 2.

We got about four-fifths of the way through the tunnel and we were stopped in traffic. They had an emergency lane. We went against traffic in the north tube of the tunnel, or it might be the west tube. I don't know. It's the side of the tunnel.

We went against traffic in the lane. We got about four-fifths of the way through the tunnel. Officers were in the tunnel for the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority trying to pull traffic out. At this time it was probably -- I think it was about maybe 7 to 10 minutes after 9:00, because I had just seen the plane go in and then we got stuck there.

My AM radio worked in the car, so I was listening to the AM radio. We sat in traffic and we didn't move and we didn't move. Eventually two members of Rescue 2 got off the back of their rig and came to my car and stood at the side of my car.

I can't identify them. I may be able to identify them at some point later if I see close-up pictures of them. I'd like to identify them. I'd like to know who they were. But everybody had full equipment on. They had their hoods on. So it was a little hard to tell who they were. It wasn't somebody I was immediately familiar with.

So they were actually standing by my car at the time that we heard the radio broadcast that said that there was a second plane into tower number two. So I think that puts the time at about 9:17. I think that's approximately when the second tower got hit. I'm not sure.

So at any rate, they just -- those two guys got back on the rig, and the traffic inched forward a little bit. Then I looked in my rearview mirror and I saw firefighters coming through the tunnel. It was the members of Squad 1. Their rig was stuck in traffic. I couldn't see it, it was so far back. It must have been at least four or five vehicles behind me.

One by one each member of Squad 1 came by my car. They're my local fire house. They

knocked on the car. They signalled me. They said hello. Lieutenant Mike Esposito and Dave Fontana went by. I recognized him.

What they did was approach through the tunnel. They came on either side of my car. They were wearing full Scott packs. They were fully equipped. They had their tools with them, as I recall. They rolled up onto the walkway.

Underneath there's a railing, and then there's a space underneath the bottom part of the railing. They had to sort of roll up on that to get up on the walkway because they had their tanks on and they couldn't just crawl. That's how I know they had their tanks. Members of their company have asked me if they had their equipment and I know they did because I saw it.

So then Mike Esposito, the Lieutenant, stopped at my car and said hello to me. I wished him good luck. He told me that he wanted me to be careful and take care of myself and to make sure I wore my helmet when I got in there. I said I would.

Then he walked forward. He walked beyond the rescue rig, probably, I'd say, maybe

three or four cars. At that point the traffic broke and we had a clear shot to get out of the tunnel. So the members of Squad 1 boarded Rescue 2 and they rode in to the scene on Rescue 2.

I believe their rig, as I said, came in behind us. As we came out of the tunnel, we proceeded straight up West Street right behind Rescue 2. I came in right behind Rescue 2. We turned on Liberty Street and Rescue 2 pulled up a little bit more north than I did.

Q. You made a left?

A. We made a left, went across the West Side Highway to Liberty Street. Rescue 2 pulled up here, and there is a hydrant right here. I backed off so we didn't block the hydrant. So I was actually right back here. I was probably actually three-quarters of the way up the street. There was a taxi loading zone there. Rescue 2 pulled up a little bit.

Q. So that was between West Street and South Avenue?

A. Correct. It was just north of the pedestrian bridge but -- that's where we pulled in.

So then I got out of my car. The members of Rescue 2 were getting their equipment. I got out of my car and put stuff in my back seat. I went into my trunk, and I got a jacket that identified me and got my radio. I did not take a helmet.

I started to walk across the street. I shut my trunk. They were already moving across the street, Rescue 2 was. We started to walk across the street into the lobby of building number one. So we had to walk across the divide and then we came underneath the awning -- it's not an awning. It's a big super structure out in front of tower number one.

As we were coming across there, I literally stepped across body parts and airplane landing gear and airplane parts as I was coming across the street.

Q. This is at building one?

A. This is walking across -- I walked up West Street and walked across to building number one.

Q. Rescue 2 and Squad 1, did they go into building one too?

A. Yes, I believe that they did. I have to say, in all honesty, I can't place Squad 1 there. A member of Rescue 2 put his arm around me as I was coming across the street and told me to be careful because there were people jumping.

I can't place with a great deal of surety Rescue 2 in the lobby of that building. But I believe Squad 1 came with them across. However, I don't know, maybe the rig pulled up right behind us and maybe they went back to the rig to get some equipment. Maybe they went someplace else. I'm not sure. But I think they came in right behind us.

So I went into building number one. I walked through the window, walked through the door, walked through the broken window to building number one. The first person that I saw that I recognized was the Commissioner. I spoke to him. I spoke to Chief Feehan.

Before joining the Fire Department, I worked for the Port Authority as the public affairs director. I was there the last time the building blew up. So I knew all the guys from the Port Authority that were there. I spoke to

several of them, including Doug Corpela and Mike Hurley, the fire safety director. We went behind into the fire command center back there.

Q. On the first floor?

A. It's right there. It's right in the lobby. When you come in the lobby, there's a desk and stuff right there, right facing you in the lobby. If you went over to the left, there was a fire command center station. We were all in front of the fire command station.

As I say, so many people from the Fire Department were people that I remember seeing and being with like the Commissioner, Bill Feehan and Tom Fitzpatrick.

At some point police officers came in and said that they had a confirmed report of a third plane coming into the building.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. No, (inaudible).

They said we have a report of a third plane, everybody out, you've got to move everybody out. Chief Hayden came in here. They had command boards set up. We had command stations set up. Chief Hayden came in here and

had a discussion with somebody. I don't know who it is. I think it's probably Joe Callan, but I can't -- I know that from other people telling me that. I didn't recognize him that day or I don't know that.

But I did see Pete Hayden. Pete Hayden said we've got to move this command post out of here. There's a report of a third plane. We don't know what's going on here. At which point Bill Feehan, Tom Fitzpatrick and I went to find a place where we could move a new command post.

Q. This was all before tower two came down?

A. This is all before tower two came down.

So Bill Feehan, Tom Fitzpatrick -- Tom Von Essen walked away from us. I believe he walked straight out the windows and straight across the street to West Street, over to these other buildings. Bill Feehan, Tom Fitzpatrick and I walked through the lobby of building number one, up the stairway which was an escalator, which was off, into the pedestrian walkway. We walked across the pedestrian walkway.

I said to Commissioner Feehan is this a

good idea to be in here with these bodies falling around us? He said probably not. We stepped it up. We kind of -- we were walking very quickly. We weren't running, but we were walking very quickly through this walkway.

Three-quarters of the way through, we met some security people from Merrill Lynch. We said you better get out of here, and they said no. We're with the building. We said you better get out of here, you better just move back, get everybody out of here and just move back. So they did.

Then we went down the steps into the Winter Garden, and we came out into the corner of the Winter Garden, right over here. We went down the steps and came over to this corner. Bill, Tom and I stopped and said, you know, this is not going to work as a command -- we can't think about putting it here with all this glass. It was pretty obvious of what was happening outside in terms of people jumping. I don't know if somebody could make it that far to us, but clearly debris could fall.

So we exited the building, the three of

us. We walked along the back here and stopped about here in the corner by the corner of North Cove.

Q. By the Merrill Lynch Building?

A. Yeah, the three of us. We just stopped there. This is the Trade Center. The scene in front of us, both buildings were fully engulfed, the top floors. I said to Bill, you know, I can't believe this. Now what's going to happen here? Bill was just very concerned. We kept walking. We walked right straight through here and walked through the gardens here and came up the stairwell and came back out to Liberty Street. We walked across this lawn, back north to, I guess we were just on the lawn here.

We came right back up through to where they eventually set up a command post. We found where they were. In the driveway that went back down into the garage, into the underground garage. Chief Ganci was there. I saw Timmy Stackpole. I saw Ray Downey. I saw Bill Feehan, Tom Fitzpatrick and my aide Paul.

Q. They were all in front of The Winter Garden?

A. No, this was all right where they set up the command post. Right where they had had -- they had set up. They had moved the command post from the lobby of number one while we were walking around. They set it up it right here, and it was on the edge of the driveway. You know there's a driveway that goes down in there. I can point it out. It's right about here.

Q. The Merrill Lynch building?

A. Right.

So also at this time Dr. Kelly raised me on the radio and said where are you and then she said she was in ten and ten. I told her we were directly across from the canopy of number One World Trade Center. That we were setting up a command post there and she said I'm going to come there. I said okay, that's where we are. She said who's with you? And I told her who was with me.

Then my aide Paul was here. I saw him at the command post. So he came over and said what do you need, boss. I said we should probably get helmets out of the car. I had everything in the car and the car was just parked

right there.

Q. On Liberty Street?

A. On Liberty Street.

You know, when you think of the time, when I heard the second plane go into the tower in the tunnel, so now all this time has passed. We took this huge long walk. We came back here. Paul went to my car, put some equipment in the car, got some equipment out of the car, came back to me.

I gave Tom Fitzpatrick my helmet. He didn't have a helmet. I gave him mine. I figured I was going to be doing press stuff or something. I didn't need it as much as he did. We were all still standing here.

At this point John McLaughlin, who is the deputy director of OEM, came over and said -- to the Commissioner -- Father Delendick was here too. Father Delendick was extremely concerned about the men who were staging back here. There was a huge pile of people staging here. That's where I saw Timmy Stackpole they were waiting to be ordered in. Father Delendick was very concerned about them witnessing people jumping,

because at that point it was quite graphic.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. So at any rate he -- John McLaughlin came over and said the Mayor wanted to see the Commissioner to do a press briefing and they were going to do it at Park Place and Broadway, which is right here.

So the Commissioner, Ray Goldbach and John McLaughlin started over that way. I said to Paul, we might as well go with them because I figured I was of no use over here. So we walked this way.

Q. On Park Place?

A. Onto West Street. We walked right here to the corner of West and Vesey.

Q. That's where I was. That's where I saw you.

A. Okay. So right here at West and Vesey. I met up with the senior officials from the Port Authority, Chief Bill Hall, Jeff Green, who's the chief counsel, and Chris Ward, who's the chief public relations guy.

Because I had been press spokesperson for the Port Authority before, I said to the

Commissioner I'll catch up with you at Park Place and Broadway. I'll go this way with them. I'll find out what they have.

To the best of my knowledge, he and Ray continued up this way to Barclay. I started this way with Paul and those three guys from the Port Authority.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. No, he went towards Barclay. We turned on Vesey. I left him at that point because Paul and I were here.

Were you there?

Q. I was right at Vesey and West because I remember seeing you. I saw the Commissioner go past Vesey.

A. Right. So we went this way and we were right here, right at this corner of Washington and Vesey, when that building fell.

Q. That's number two, building number two?

A. Building number two. We started to hear this rumble and luckily there was a loading dock. We just dove into the loading dock. The whole thing came -- you know, the whole thing came down. People crowded towards the back of

the loading dock and they were trying to shove into Broadway.

I went up the steps of the loading dock. Everybody was running. We went into this doorway that was off the loading dock that led into the building, but the door was locked. There was a cop at the edge of the door. Everyone was shoving and shoving and shoving into it. So I stepped back. I didn't want to be shoved in there too much. The Port Authority police inspector had his arm around me. We were pushed up against the wall. Paul was right behind me.

Then the building came down. It went completely back and the entire space completely filled with debris. Not debris, not big pieces of concrete or anything but stuff.

Q. When you left the command center, Chief Feehan was there?

A. Feehan, Ganci.

(Radio interruption.)

A. So we went in the loading dock. Everything came down. Everything turned black. All this stuff came down. It was totally black

in there. I called out for Paul, who was near me. We inched our way down the steps. We couldn't see anything. You could barely breathe. I'm sure you experienced the same thing.

So then we got low and eventually stuff lifted enough so we could make our way down the stairs. There were big pieces of equipment and different stuff on the floor. We managed to get around that. Then we made our way towards the front of the loading dock.

Q. The loading dock was --

A. The loading dock was in the basement of seven. It was on the street level of Seven World Trade Center. They had set up as a little triage area.

So we eventually made our way up. There were like three bays of this loading dock. We inched our way along. You couldn't tell if you were inside or outside because it was pitch-black.

Q. I'm sorry, you were with?

A. Me and Paul from the Fire Department. There were no other Fire Department personnel that I'm aware of.

We eventually made our way out and made our way up Washington Street. We went back. We were calling for people to follow us because we knew we had the way out, because we could see a little bit lighter air around. I didn't see people following us. I don't know if people followed us. We go outside and we saw no one in the street. We saw nothing. It was like a snowstorm had happened.

Eventually a cameraman I remember had run in there with us, and eventually I saw the cameraman emerge. We asked if the other people were out. He said they're getting out. Everybody's all right. So we just kept going, because now I was concerned about what happened to them, because we didn't know what happened. I didn't know if this building fell down or that building or whatever.

Q. Did you have a radio on at the time? Because, I tell you, I didn't have radio communications. My cell phone wasn't working.

A. I had a radio with me. I never thought to use my radio for the dispatcher. I was trying to use this Nextel. I wasn't even trying to use

that then. We made our way this way.

I was going to try to meet up with the Commissioner. I just kept trying to find him and wanted to make sure he was all right. So we went up to here to Barclay. Then we went up one more block to Park Place. Then I said we're supposed to go to Broadway, and we went up this way, because there was just no people on the street. It was a very strange thing. There might have been a few people and more and more emerged from these doorways.

Eventually, Paul and I stayed together and made our way to City Hall. When I arrived at City Hall, I went inside City Hall. I thought I might find Tom in there, but the whole thing had been evacuated. So I saw Beth Hatton, Terry Hatton's wife, who was the Mayor's assistant, and several people from City Hall that I knew. They evacuated all of those people out of City Hall.

Paul and I remained there with Larry Levy, who is the chief counsel to the Mayor, and Matt Mahoney, who was an advance guy and two of the Mayor's security people. I met one of the Mayor's senior advanced security people. I said

is he all right? Is Tom with him? Do you know where they are? But people didn't know where they were.

So we tried to get on the phone. We kept getting intermittent phone service. I would say we were there probably, I'd say, ten minutes before I got a call on my radio. It was from Ray Goldbach, telling me that he and the Commissioner were all right, they were with the Mayor and they had made their way up to the fire house. It might have been 15 minutes that we were here with no communication and we didn't really know what had happened.

I called. I got a telephone line. As I said, it was intermittent. We called the National Guard. On Larry Levy's direction, we called up the National Guard. I think we called the governor's office. We got in touch with Katie Lapp and told them that we needed to get in touch with the National Guard. That someone at the Mayor's command post had asked for them.

(Radio interruption.)

A. I'll just tell you, we remained at City Hall and made several phone calls. We found out

where people were going to be operating out of. At some point while we were there, I would say there were about six of us at City Hall. The rest of the people had been evacuated.

At some point the second building collapsed. A huge cloud came towards us at City Hall. We ran under the stairs in City Hall Park. We went under the stairs right in City Hall. Then the dust settled.

Q. After the first collapse you were only with Paul?

A. Yes.

Q. When you first got to the scene, you saw Rescue 2 goes in the tower?

A. Correct.

Q. You're not positive of Squad 1?

A. Correct.

Q. When you left to go down to Vesey, Commissioner Feehan and Chief Ganci were still at --

A. As I left here, I gave Timmy Stackpole a high-five. I touched him. I can place him there. Pete Ganci turned to me and --

Q. Feehan?

A. Chief Ganci spoke to me. I was with Commissioner Feehan. I was with Tom Fitzpatrick. I was with Father Delendick.

Q. Tom Fitzpatrick left with the Commissioner?

A. No, Tom Fitzpatrick did not -- no, Ray Goldbach went with the Commissioner, Ray Goldbach and John McLaughlin.

Q. So before the first tower collapsed, you were all at the command center --

(Commissioner Tierney had a meeting to attend and had to end the interview abruptly.)

File No. 9110170

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CURTIS JACKSON

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 30th, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina from the New York City Fire Department conducting an interview at Battalion 31 with EMT Curtis Jackson. With me is...

MR. DUN: Richard Dun, Fire Department.

Q. Sir, can you tell me your name, your rank, your title and your assignment?

A. Curtis Jackson, EMT.

Q. EMT at battalion--

A. Battalion 31.

Q. Can you tell me, on September 11th, 2001, on that particular day, the events that took place?

A. Sure. We came out of Brooklyn Hospital, me and my partner that I was working with that day, and as we went 98 --

Q. Who was your partner?

A. Decosta Wright.

Q. Okay.

A. We hit the 98 button and got in our vehicle, tried to head to our 89, and we heard the dispatcher sending numerous units over to Citywide. So we wanted to find out what was going on, so we switched one of our radios over to Citywide and we found out the World Trade Center was on fire. So we started to head over

into that direction towards the bridge and we asked the dispatcher to give us that assignment.

MR. CASTORINA: Excuse me. This interview is conducted at 0615 hours.

Q. Go ahead.

A. As we requested to be placed on that assignment, the dispatcher gave us the assignment, we went 63 to the World Trade Center. We shot right over the bridge in about five or seven minutes and we pulled up in front of One World Trade Center behind numerous emergency vehicles, fire trucks and EMS vehicles that were already there. At that time we were just told --

Q. At this point what had happened; the first plane had hit?

A. I'm sorry. The first plane had hit already.

Q. That was the start; when you got there, the first plane had hit?

A. The first plane hit.

Q. The tower was on fire?

A. Right. The tower was on fire. At that time, as we were there, we were told to set up triage right in the area where we pulled up at. During that time I saw numerous people just coming out of -- dropping out of the sky, I mean, actually jumping to their death,

landing all over the place, crashing through glass, crashing right on vehicles, on the street. We were just told to set up triage and wait for patients to be brought to us, but nobody brought us patients because there was nobody to bring out.

I tried to use my cell phone, but I couldn't get any transmission. So myself, Decosta Wright and EMT Felton started to head over to the building across the street from where the towers were on fire. As we were heading over there, that's when I heard a big explosion. I didn't know what it was. We turned around and saw the second tower on fire and we started running inside the building and we just ran. It was like a maze. We didn't know where we were going.

As we were running around in there, Decosta and I had scaled a fence inside there because everything was closed off inside, and as I scaled that fence, I turned around to see where Felton was. I couldn't find out where he was. So I turned back and ran back to see where he was at to make sure he was all right, and after that, I grabbed him, we all found an exit out of there. We went through some stairways out to the rear of the building.

Q. Which building were you in, do you remember?

A. I'm not even sure.

Q. It was across the street?

A. It was across the street. We ran out through the other side, and as we exited that building, we were told to move our emergency vehicles from the front of the World Trade Center around the corner.

Q. Who told you this?

A. It must have been the Deputy Commissioner or something.

Q. Was this on the radio or --

A. No, this was in person, physically.

Q. Okay.

A. So as we were moving the vehicles around the corner, like I said, I still kept seeing bodies jumping out of the windows and landing all over the place and glass and everything was flying all over the place, and we moved our vehicles around the corner and at that point we were told to move our vehicles further around the corner. I don't know what street that was. As we were moving our vehicles, my vehicle wouldn't start, it was down, mechanical, because the lights were on but the engine was shut off, and at that time all our keys were collected, so I wasn't able to move the vehicle.

Q. Who had your keys, do you remember?

A. Somebody with a white shirt took everybody's keys.

Q. Staging officer, I guess.

MR. DUN: Was this still before the second plane hit?

EMT JACKSON: No. This was after the second plane hit. The second plane must have hit when I heard the explosion when we were running in the building. We started moving our vehicles again and everybody else moved their vehicle. I tried to get a jump from another unit to move my vehicle. At that time the tower came down, was coming down, and at that point I just started running and everybody was ahead of me and I just started running, following them. When I looked back, you see the big -- a cloud of like dust and buildings. It was like it was a giant mutation of something just chasing me. Everybody ran towards the water. I ran towards the water. Half the people ran downtown and half the people ran uptown, as you hit the water side. So I ran uptown and everybody else ran downtown -- no. Half ran uptown, half ran downtown, and I was just following the crowd.

Q. You ran uptown?

A. Yes. I was just following the crowd.

Everybody --

Q. Did that dust catch up with you?

A. No, the dust never caught up with us. I saw people getting caught up from behind me who were slow, who were running slow or just didn't make it. After that point, we waited for the dust to clear, and then I went back to try to see if I could help anybody who needed help, and at that point I was met with another white shirt, an individual from the Fire Department EMS command, and I was told to join another group to set up triage downtown by -- there were two staging areas.

MR. DUN: South Ferry?

EMT JACKSON: South Ferry.

A. There was one uptown at Chelsea and there was one at South Ferry. I was told to join the group down at South Ferry. At that point the second tower came down, so we started running again, and this time I ran downtown and not uptown. But this time I was further away from where the collapse happened.

Q. When it started coming down?

A. Yes. And the same thing again happened, I mean, you seen a big cloud of dust again. But I was nowhere near that. I went down to South Street to help out with other EMTs, set up triage.

Q. Were you hearing any radio transmissions?

A. I heard a lot of radio transmissions.

Q. A lot of radio transmissions?

A. Especially when the first tower came down. All I heard was Mayday and 1013, 1013. I heard a lot of commotion, a lot of screaming, a lot of yelling, help, you know, a lot of calls for help.

Q. Then you ended up you were at triage and were you receiving any injuries, people coming in?

A. We didn't receive any injuries. The only thing, people kept asking was can they hold a face mask, a mask for the dust. That was about it.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. I stayed there until 11:00 o'clock that night.

Q. You weren't injured in any way; you were okay, breathing and everything?

A. Yes. I just lost all my equipment, my radio.

Q. And your vehicle, I guess; that was under the rubble?

A. The vehicle was under the rubble, but they got it out like a week later.

Q. Your partner was okay?

A. My partner was okay.

Q. All right. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to add?

A. I try to forget.

Q. I understand.

A. There's nothing else I could add or want to talk about.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time is now 0627 hours. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

File No. 9110171

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BRIAN GORDON

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today's date is October 30, 2001. The time is 0820 hours. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department working with Murray Murad. We're here interviewing Brian Gordon.

Q. Please state your title and your shield.

A. EMT, 5546.

Q. Can you give us the story or your account of what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001?

A. Me and Brian Smith had just gotten back from a late job and we were -- we had come in and dropped off the vehicle, changed over vehicles because we were 31 Henry, Tour 1. We had come into the station, did a few things, dropped off our equipment, and Brian -- we were leaving and we were walking up the ramp out here. We got into the parking lot and Brian said did you hear that boom? We had heard just a boom and we looked over and we saw a big ball of fire coming out of the tower.

So we ran back down here and we said somebody just bombed the tower. So Lieutenant McCarthy gave us ambulance 217 and he told us be careful and go over, sign on, but be careful.

Q. So your lieutenant told you you were going to be an extra unit?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. I came out and checked out the ambulance real quick and Brian came out with all our equipment and I signed us on. As soon as we signed on, we said we're available, do you need us to go to the staging area? And they said yes. So we left from here and went into Manhattan and we were coming down --

Q. Which way did you come into the city; over the bridge or through the tunnel?

A. Over the bridge.

Q. Okay.

A. I think we were coming down Church Street. I'm pretty sure we were because this is where Brooks Brothers is, right?

Q. Right.

A. Because I remember going past Brooks Brothers. Actually, like City Hall Park up here? We came down that way.

Q. You came down Broadway and you cut across one of these streets.

A. Yes. I think it was Dey Street.

Q. Okay.

A. There were people over here bleeding and stuff. We came down Broadway to Dey Street and --

what's that private ambulance company?

Q. Metro?

A. Metro Care. They had a patient here having an MI and they're like we need you guys to take care of this patient, and we were like, you know, we're BLS, too. We can't do nothing. Wait for medics.

So we went down Dey Street to Church Street and we were coming down Church Street and I remember seeing like -- we were in front of Brooks Brothers, little steps there. There were like briefcases and people's breakfast and shoes we saw laying on the stairs and stuff. We had already gone past the intersection of Liberty and a police officer or somebody, it was either you or a police officer was up at the intersection. I can't really remember.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: It wasn't me because --

EMT GORDON: You were down in the firehouse.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I was at the firehouse. PD had requested an ambulance to respond to the firehouse for a couple injuries.

A. Yes. That police officer flagged us here and said we need you down at 10 and 10; there's people coming out of the Trade Center and they're hurt pretty bad. So Brian had to back up, so I jumped out and I

ran, grabbed my tech bag and ran.

Q. Towards?

A. Towards the 10 house on Liberty.

Q. So you ran west on Liberty to the 10/10 house.

A. I fell outside of 10 and 10. I stepped on a leg and I fell. There was debris just from the first tower all over there and everything. So I got up and I went into the 10/10 house and I saw Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Murad.

A. -- Murad. Then Brian backed the ambulance in and we started taking care of patients in there. Can we go into like what kind of injuries they had?

Q. Yes. You know your stuff. That's the purpose of all this now.

A. Out on the street, I remember I saw a little shoe that still had a foot in it, a little girl's shoe, and I could see body parts everywhere pretty much. We went in and there was a little Chinese lady and she was severally burned and Rob, that fireman from Commack, I don't know his name, he was already in there, too, and there were firemen from 10 and 10. I didn't see any guys from 10 Truck in there. I remember seeing guys from 10 Engine and I think --

LIEUTENANT MURAD: 10 Truck took off already.

A. Yes.

Q. So you saw the engine, but there were a lot of guys that were still coming in?

A. Yes. I don't remember really seeing any guys from 10 Truck. Actually, I did. I saw one guy. He came in and just grabbed his gear and ran out. So that guy, Rob, told me what we had, and then Lieutenant Murad told me we had a guy in the back that was hurt pretty bad, had a broken hip. So I went back there and a little Chinese guy named Foo -- I can't remember if that was his last name or his first name -- was sitting in a chair and he wouldn't let me touch him and he wouldn't let go of his briefcase. I mean, I couldn't even take his vitals because he wouldn't let me go near him. So finally I basically forced him to move his hands so I could cut his pants and check his injuries.

Then a fireman, he identified himself to me as Paul Pansini from 10 Engine, came and helped me put Foo in a KED. I put it upside-down with the head down here, to stabilize his hip, and he helped me hold him up and do all that. Then, as he was leaving, I said be careful out there, and he's not here with us anymore.

So we got him in the KED and he still wouldn't let me anywhere -- he was guarding his chest with his briefcase. So I told him, I said, look, I've got to take your blood pressure. So he said hold on, hold on, and he snapped open his briefcase and he took a wad of hundred dollar bills, it must have been four or five inches thick, out of his pocket and threw it in there, and I looked in the briefcase and it was already full of hundred dollar bills, stacks of them, all the way across, with plane tickets and passports. There must have been $500,000 in there at least, if not like a million. He took two wads out like that and threw it in the briefcase. So I cut his sleeve off and took his pressure and he was stabilized.

So Brian was working on the other patients. We started doing the triage tags. Then I went up towards the front of the building and I heard a loud sound and the second plane, I guess, had hit the Trade Center. I ran outside with Brian. We were looking and we were just like holy shit, you know, this is really, really bad. There was pieces of the plane falling, and I don't know if it was the plane or the building or whatever, but something hit the ambulance, too, in the front of the ambulance and like spiderwebed our

windshield and everything and kind of caved it in a little bit. I don't know what it was, but I was told that it was a piece of the engine from the second plane. I don't know.

So we went back in and kept working on our patients. I started doing all the triage tags and I went to work on the little lady, the little Chinese lady. The firemen had come back in, a bunch of firemen, and I guess went upstairs and stripped their bunks and brought down all blankets and pillows and stuff and rearranged some chairs and got everybody who was going to come, who was there, stabilized and whatever. I don't even know how long it was, but it was a while.

Q. Did you get a lot of patients while you were there?

A. I'd say between ten and 15 patients. It wasn't that many. I remember seeing a guy out in front of I guess it's 4 World Trade Center? Isn't that the one that was like -- or was that Tower 2?

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I think that was Tower 2 maybe.

EMT GORDON: Because there was a man like trying to get in the doors of Tower 2 and I remember

you or -- we were both yelling at him.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Right. There were the cops and we were all yelling at the guy to get away from there.

EMT GORDON: Right.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Even the detectives that were over there.

EMT GORDON: Yes.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I remember that.

A. We were yelling to him get out, get away from the building, come over here, come over here, and he wouldn't leave. He looked like he was trying to get back in. Lieutenant Murad said there's nothing you can do, come back in here.

So we were in there working on the patients some more, going around making sure that everybody that was in there was stable, taking vitals and wrapping up the little Chinese lady. It was a while after the second plane hit and firemen are coming in and out the whole time and there was a Captain, I think he was from Engine 10, he was in there most of the time. Actually, I remember, when we first got in there, the Captain from 10 Truck was in there just for like a minute and then he left, too.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: No.

EMT GORDON: It wasn't him? I remember seeing some Captain from a truck company.

Q. So you were in the house. You were treating patients.

A. There was like no more patients coming. There was like nobody coming in. Nobody was -- I expected there to be thousands of patients.

Q. Right.

A. So I went out, you know, I stepped out of the bay and I was looking up at the towers and it was like raining paper and it was burning real bad and I started noticing people jumping. Then I went back in and I was tending to the patients some more and we get a report of a fireman down on Liberty Street west of the firehouse, and Brian told me to stay with the patients and he was going to go check on the fireman.

So he went and checked on the fireman and then he came back and he said we're going to set up a rehab. He said we're going to go break into the snack trucks and take their Snapples and waters and stuff, and he went back out, and then like maybe a minute after he left, I heard the tower fall. The tower started to fall. It was like real loud, like the No. 4

train going over your head. They came running in and everybody was screaming the towers are falling, the towers are falling, run.

So basically all the patients started getting up and running to the back and so did I, and the tower hit and it was like it picked me up and threw me. I had somebody land on me, a couple people landed on top of me, and I hurt my shoulder. It was like black. You couldn't see, couldn't breathe. My first instinct, I started screaming for Brian, my partner. I was really scared that he was dead because I knew he was outside. But he answered me and we found each other. He had a cut on his face. He was bleeding.

It was just -- it was like being in hell. You couldn't breathe at all. You tried to get low to the floor and you couldn't breathe. So everybody got into the kitchen, in the kitchen of the 10 house.

Q. That was in the back of the firehouse?

A. In the back of the firehouse in 10 house, and there was a fireman back there screaming. He'd broke his leg. Brian was back there with me and there was a couple firemen and an officer. He was the Captain at Engine 10. I know that. Brian told me what we need to do is splint his leg, get a scoop stretcher, go out and

see if you can get anything out of the ambulance.

So I went out to the ambulance and all my gear was inside the ambulance up in the passenger's seat. I'd lost my helmet and coat. So an officer yelled at me, told me to grab a coat and helmet off the rack and put it on, so I did, and I got out to the ambulance and the dust was like over my ankles. There wasn't any big pieces really in there, but like the doors --

Q. So after the building collapsed, you were able to move about inside the house?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So I got into the ambulance and I opened up the back. I was able to get into the compartment where they hold the long boards and stuff. I grabbed the scoop stretcher and grabbed some splints and some cravats, found my tech bag and...

Q. Just treated patients?

A. Yes. I started to treat the patients again. But after I got all that stuff, I set it down and I went to see if the radio still worked.

Q. Did it work?

A. Yes. The radio was still going in the

ambulance, but it was pretty fucked up. The whole thing was full of dust and it was crushed down in the front. So I radioed a Mayday.

Q. On the portable?

A. No.

Q. On the vehicle radio?

A. On the vehicle radio.

Q. Okay?

A. So then I went back in and Brian and I started cutting the fireman's turnout pants off of him and his boots and tried to get his leg as straight as possible, splinted him up. There were a few other firemen that were helping us with the scoop stretcher and moving things back so we could get around him.

Q. Were there a lot of civilians in there as well?

A. There was -- yes. All our patients were in there.

Q. So you had a lot of civilians and some off-duty MOS?

A. Yes. The guy who was hurt told me he was a cadet. That's all I remember. I don't remember his name or anything. The back window was blown out and everything and by now there were more firemen and

stuff. Not everybody was in that kitchen as far as firemen go. They were going in and out through the kitchen and into the doorway on the left. It looked like there was a stairwell in there. There was like a whole company of firemen showed up at the window, so we were passing out patients through the window and then we passed the fireman through the window.

Q. Now, the second building was still up?

A. The second building was still up.

Q. Okay.

A. Then I don't even know how long it was, it was a while we were doing all this, and then the Captain, he was the last one in there with us and he told us we've got to check the building, make sure we don't leave anybody. So I went out into the bay, checked the bay, make sure there was nobody out there, and that's when I heard the second tower start to fall. So I ran down the hall and Brian came out it looked like from the stairwell area and the Captain was there with him and we went into the bathroom and laid on the floor in the bathroom while the tower was falling. That was it. I said we're dead.

The tower fell, it got black again, but this time we had cling wrapped around our faces as masks,

and we weren't dead, it was just black. Then it started to die down a little bit and we got up and we said that's it, everybody out of here because the building, it sounded like the building was groaning. I don't know if that was the building or what was outside or whatever. But we jumped out the window and there was Foo right underneath the windowsill with Rob, and the Captain came out and I had grabbed a hook because somebody left a pole in there, and the Captain started going off with the other firemen, so I gave him the hook and I said, here, you might need that and waved good-bye.

I had managed to grab my tech bag, too. So we made our way, me, Brian, Rob and Foo, up Cedar Street to, I guess --

Q. Trinity?

A. Trinity? Is this still Church Street?

Q. Yes.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Church turns into Trinity.

A. Okay. So it was Trinity Street, then. We walked Foo -- with his frigging briefcase, you know, he couldn't walk, so we had to carry him. We tried to carry him one arm over each other and he had that

frigging briefcase, it hit me in the face. So I just said, Brian, let go of him, and I fireman carried him for a little ways and I put him down and then Brian did it and we took turns.

We made it up to 2 Rector Street and I noticed there was people in the lobby in there and the lights were on and it was clean in there. So we brought Foo in there and sat him in a chair. They had the radio on and everything in there and we were hearing reports of hijacked airplanes and this, that and the other thing over the radio, and then the Pentagon got hit, and the security officer at the desk or the fire safety officer, whatever he was, said that there was somebody on the 7th floor having chest pains, and he said there was nobody up working above the 7th floor. So I ran up to the 7th floor and there was just an older guy in there and he was having it looked like an anxiety attack or something.

Q. Were the elevators working in that building?

A. Yes, they were working. But I didn't know if the building had been hit with debris or anything else, so we told the safety officer to turn off the elevators, lock them down in the lobby. I came back down and I met Brian in the stairwell and he said,

look, he said, we've got to get these people out of here. This was on like the second floor. So we came back down to the lobby and we told the guy to put an announcement over for all the people in the building to come down to the lobby.

So people started coming down the stairs and we went back up the stairs and we were checking the floors. So all these people were standing in the lobby, there must have been maybe a hundred in the first group, and Brian jumped up on the security desk and was like giving them orders, directions and stuff. We gave Rob our stuff.

Then there was cops outside and they came in and they said just come out the door and go straight and head towards the light, you know, that's the way out of here. So we had Rob go with the first group out and we waited for more people to come because there was still more people coming. We were waiting. We couldn't carry Foo anymore. So we waited, and then a cop car pulled up outside, so we went out and stuffed Foo in the cop car. Then we came back in and another cop came in and there was like probably about a hundred people in the lobby and they didn't have anything to cover their faces with, so I took off my shirt and

handed a lady my knife and I said make some dust masks out of it.

The cop led that group of people out, and we made one last announcement and we waited like five more minutes and nobody else came down, so Brian and I went outside and that's where we met with Lieutenant Murad again. I thought he was dead. I lost him after that. I didn't see him again. But seeing him was like seeing Santa Claus. I was happy. He told us he had a car just a couple blocks away.

So I don't even know which way we walked. I know we walked by a church.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: We made it down to Pearl.

A. Pearl?

Q. (Inaudible)?

A. Yes. We walked and we walked and walked and walked and then walked some more, and my ankle was really hurting. So I told Lieutenant Murad, I said, I can't walk anymore, you know, I need to sit down for a minute, and he said, all right, you two wait here and I'll go get the car. So we waited there and we sat on a vendor's table, a guy selling belts, and Lieutenant Murad came back with his car, it was all fucked up. The back window was smashed in, it was full of dust and

debris, it was all crunched up in the back.

Q. It looked like a Rolls-Royce, I bet.

A. Yes. It was like a Sherman tank to me. I didn't care. So we got in and we drove and we got to 100 Wall Street and we saw a conditions boss, an EMS conditions boss, Conditions 55.

Q. You don't know his name, do you?

A. No, I don't. Brian would remember his name. We talked about him this morning. He had braces. He was kind of a dork.

Q. Okay.

A. We identified ourselves as EMS and he told us, well, good, because we've got a patient for you. So we went into 100 Wall Street and there was a lady in there, she was having a legit anxiety attack, you know, there wasn't nothing wrong with her. I mean, we didn't have any equipment. He took his oxygen. He was like, all right, go take care of this patient, but he left us with nothing. I was like whatever.

She sat there and she was talking to us and she was more concerned about us. I don't know, we sat there for it must have been an hour, hour and a half it seemed like. Brian kept using his portable to radio out, 09, we need an ambulance at this location, what's

the ETA? All I kept remember hearing is there'll be one there when it gets there, basically.

So an NYPD traffic van pulled up outside and Lieutenant Murad was outside and I was like, we need to get back to Brooklyn. I don't even know what time this is. This is maybe an hour or two after the second tower fell. I'm not even sure. But we were hurting pretty bad. So we wheeled this lady in her chair out and they put her in the traffic van.

Then Conditions 55 pulled up again and he's like, I'm ordering you to go to the hospital with the patient, you need to go to the emergency room. I was like, no. Me and Brian were both like, no, we need to go back to our station, and he was like, I'm ordering you, and we were like, basically, what I'll do is (inaudible), you can kiss my ass. I'm sorry I may get a CD out of that but --

Q. It's okay. Listen. In times of crisis, all bets are off.

A. Exactly. So he said whatever, just get back to Brooklyn then and make sure you go to an emergency room. So, you know, yes, sir. He said go that way to the pier.

Q. Which was South Ferry?

A. Was it South Ferry? It's right down from Battalion 4.

Q. Probably South Ferry.

A. Probably. I know it was on the East River. We made it down to South Ferry. There was a ferry slip there and there was like thousands of people there. It wasn't too far we had to walk, but it seemed like miles. There was a bench down there at the right end of the ferry slip, and we sat on the bench and cops saw us sitting there and so they all ran over and they were like, oh, are you guys all right, are you all right? People were handing me cigarettes because my cigarettes were in the ambulance. A priest came over and he gave me my last rites. So at this point I'm thinking, damn, I must be pretty fucked up. Do I got something sticking in me or something?

So the cops basically carried us, escorted us up to the ferry to Brooklyn. They called it back because it had just left. We got on the ferry and --

Q. The PD boat, right?

A. No. We initially got on the ferry and people started running up to us, clapping, cheering, crying, giving us water bottles and water and everything. Then PD came back on and took us off and brought us to the

end of the slip there and the harbor patrol boat came over. I guess it's harbor patrol.

Q. Yes. PD boat.

A. PD boat. They put us on the PD boat and brought us to the Navy yard. We got off at the Navy yard and I remember looking back across the river and just seeing a huge billow of smoke and dust and it was horrible. Then some guy in a van --

Q. You ended up in Brooklyn?

A. Yes.

Q. Where in Brooklyn; by the Navy yard?

A. In the Navy yard, where the Fire boats are.

Q. Okay.

A. There were no Fire boats there, but that's where we got off. There were the firemen all there from -- I guess they were from the boats and they helped us off the boat. A guy -- I don't remember where he was from. I think he was from Cumberland Hospital, in a Cumberland Hospital community van or something. He picked us up and he brought us down here to the station.

We came in the station and everybody saw us and started like freaking out. Not freaking out, but they were like are you guys all right, are you guys all

right, giving us 02 and making us drink saline. Somebody gave me a thing of saline to drink and I almost threw up. So our superior officer, Captain Fried here, ordered us to go to the emergency room. So they long boarded us and collared us and the whole nine and put us in an ambulance and brought us to KCH, and they took care of us at KCH.

They admitted Brian. They released me. I told them I wanted to stay with Brian because the whole time when we were at the Trade Center and everything, I kept telling him -- he's like, oh, I've got to go out here to do this, I've got to go out here to do that. So I was getting mad at him. I was like, you're my partner. I ain't going to leave you. I'm coming with you. He's like, no, you've got to stay with the patients. So my partner was fucked up and I wasn't going to leave him. Some doctor was like, well, no, you can't stay with him, you've got to leave, and I basically told him go fuck himself, started getting in an argument with him, and that Captain -- what's her name? Red hair.

Q. Gloffke.

A. Gloffke. She pulled me aside and talked to that doctor and they're like, all right, you can stay

with him. So they brought me back here and I took a shower and I went back and I stayed with Brian overnight, and that's when we were actually watching CNN, watching the towers fall, when the plane hit it, over and over and over and over again, and that's when his mother-in-law called him and asked him if he'd heard anybody from hazmat, and that's when he realized his father was there. So he called hazmat and his father was missing and he was pretty upset. I feel bad for him. I knew his father for years and years. He was a good man, wrote the manual on 288, hazmat. Good man. Basically, they released him the next day and we came back to the station and we went home.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Okay. That concludes the interview and --

LIEUTENANT DUN: Just one quick question. When the initial call came in, were you operating on Citywide?

EMT GORDON: Yes.

LIEUTENANT DUN: From the beginning?

EMT GORDON: Yes. When we logged on, we were on Brooklyn North, and then we said we're available, do you need us to go to the staging area? They said yes, we do, switch to Citywide, so we switched to Citywide.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Okay.

LIEUTENANT DUN: The time is 0910 and that concludes the interview.

File No. 9110172

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JAY SWITHERS

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today is October 30, 2001. The time is 14 hundred hours. I'm Murray Murad with George Cundari of the Fire Department of New York City. I'm conducting an interview with --

MR. SWITHERS: Jay Swithers, Captain of the Bureau of Health Services of the Fire Department.

MR. MURAD: This is being conducted at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials regarding the events that took place on September 11, 2001. Go ahead.

MR. SWITHERS: On the morning of September 11, which happened to be my 40th birthday, I was hanging out downstairs in the Bureau of Health Services down on the second floor, having a donut and coffee. My pager went off, indicating there was a plane into the building in the World Trade Center. At that point I looked into the lounge area where they have a television and I saw the gaping hole in the north tower.

At that point, I prepared my equipment, I changed into my urban search and rescue uniform, including boots, EBU pants and work shirt and carried my equipment, all my equipment down to my office. I then went up to RCC to see if they

implemented or contacted the Urban Search and Rescue medics, to see if there were any orders given at that time. There were no orders given. I looked for transportation to get to the site. When I returned down to my office where my equipment was, I was told that a second plane had hit the south tower.

At that point, I picked up all my equipment, big duffle bag and started to run to the bridge. I was prepared to run over the Brooklyn Bridge; however, I was stopped by a police officer who told me to wait and that something would be coming over the bridge to drive me over. I was picked up by a city car, black unmarked, Crown Victoria with lights and sirens, which came to a skidding halt in the third lane of the Brooklyn Bridge and the man opened up the door and said get in.

I opened up the back door, threw my equipment into the back seat. He asked me who I was. I told him I was a paramedic and he proceeded to drive across the bridge. As I got to the other side, he got on his PA and was screaming get out of way, I have a paramedic on board, all the way down to the World Trade Center.

Q. Was he a police officer?

A. I don't know. He was a guy in a suit. He dropped me off at the corner of Vesey Street and Church, where I was able to see a small triage center set up one block away on Church and Fulton, directly in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Q. Who was there?

A. Janice Ocheski. There were also the paramedics from the Bureau of Health Services. Corey, what's Corey's last name. I don't know.

MR. MURAD: Romanowski.

A. Bonnie.

Q. Regan?

A. Regan. And Carlos Lillo was there with us, and one of my employees who works light duty, Farouk Mohammed. There were a lot of other people there but those are the ones that I remember.

Q. At the triage center?

A. Manny Delgado was there, Dr. Cherson was there, and about 20 people all together in the contingency. While I was there, my primary goal was to try to find Chief Downey, because Chief Downey is the Chief of Special Operations Command and that's who the USR paramedics would report to. Nobody could tell me

where he was. Most of the EMS people didn't know what special command was or who Chief Downey was.

I realized they were overwhelmed and I proceeded to help them. One particular person that came to mind was a very obese African American woman who came out of the building and was being assisted by other people when she sat down on the wall in front of the Millennium Hotel. When I went over to her, they said that she has asthma. She was hysterical. I listened to her lung sounds. Her lung sounds were clear. I prepared to calm her down and was giving her oxygen. When I was giving her the oxygen, setting up the tank, you could hear a loud rumble. Somebody said run for your life. I turned to see who was yelling run.

At that point I looked back and most of the people who were triaged in that area with the triage tags on them got up and ran. I took a quick glance at the building and while I didn't see it falling, I saw a large section of it blasting out, which led me to believe it was just an explosion. I thought it was a secondary device, but I knew that we had to go.

When I looked down at my patient, she was no longer there. She had already ran and I started to

run. I ran eastbound on Fulton Street, but I only got to the loading bins of the bays of the Millennium Hotel. At the loading bays of the Millennium Hotel, there was a large truck backed up to the bay door, which was closed. I dove into the back of the truck and you could see everything getting real real dark and the sound of large pieces of metal were falling all over, making loud pinging noises, just all over, all around the vehicle. I managed to crawl up to the garage door and cupped my hands in front of my face, between my face and the door and at that point it was like a major storm had hit; continuous blasting of debris hitting my face, hitting my body. It was like a major storm.

I had my helmet on and the only thing I could breathe was if I was just breathing dirt. I was breathing dirt and for the few moments I was breathing dirt, I prayed that if I was going to die I wouldn't suffocate and I prayed that if I was going to die - the large I beams were falling and I could hear them - that one of them would hit me and not let me suffer. I had no clue what had happened. It became very very dark and I just struggled to breathe. At that point thoughts went through my mind such as I should have

stayed in the office.

Also the fact that I was going to die on my birthday was horrible and that I couldn't remember if I actually kissed my kids in the morning or last night. Numerous thoughts.

When the sound had stopped, my ears were ringing. It was so loud and it was real real black and I felt somebody grab my helmet and say we have a firefighter here. He could help us out. I didn't tell him I was a firefighter, but I didn't know if I could see or if I was alive. I said is it real dark or am I blind. The voice came back and said it's just really dark. The group of people said what do we do. They were hacking and coughing. I didn't know what to say, so I said we need to know how many people are here. Count out loud. The first person counted one. The second person counted two. The third person counted three. I was about to count four when somebody else counted four. I was again about to -- and this went all the way up to nine. I didn't realize there were nine people there.

Q. All in the loading dock area?

A. All in the loading dock area. They cried what do we do. We stayed there a moment and nobody was

really trapped. We were able to see a little orange with about a foot between the top of the truck and the dirt and we realized we weren't trapped. Everybody pushed their ways through into the orange and they were able to see just enough to get out. Everybody had dirt and soot all over them. Some of them were bleeding, but they took off up the block. I remember getting out and being really confused and turning back and looking at building number 5 and just seeing orange and feeling heat, not knowing what was going on, or if it was on fire.

I started walking east. As I walked east I approached a Fire Department command car, a Suburban with the lights on and the engines running. I saw someone who I figured to be a police officer, take his gun out of the holster and start whacking the drivers side window. I said stop, what are you doing, he said we are just trying to get out of here. I said don't do that and he wandered off. As I walked up the street I tripped over a television camera for a television network that somebody had dropped. I proceeded up to the corner of Broadway and Fulton, where I found Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck. Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck had a radio, which I didn't have. We decided we were going

to regroup. We saw very few EMS people. The only EMS people I remember seeing at that point was Lieutenant Patrick Scaringello, and he insisted that we should try to salvage a vehicle that was on fire on Church Street.

I told him there was no reason to try to salvage a vehicle. We didn't know what had happened and he sort of wandered off. We agreed that we were trying to regroup. Patients were just coming out of the woodwork; some badly injured, some being gathered, carried by citizens, some being carried by civil service workers. We decided to put them into an ATM on that corner, at the corner of Fulton and Broadway, where there was an ATM machine, a little area that we could put people. We started to place them into that area.

Within a few moments, I regrouped with Bruce Medjuck and I asked him to tell them on the radio to send us MTA buses to get people out. That didn't happen. But one thing that did happen was an ambulance pulled up which was very clean. So I assumed that the vehicle had not been in the - what I thought was an explosion at the time, but was the first collapse.

When the ambulance pulled up, two EMTs jumped

out. They gave out simple face - dust masks to people and people started to charge the ambulance. One man was actually brought over in a wheelbarrow. When the people started to charge the ambulance, they started to climb in. There had to be maybe 5, 6 patients in there, when the original African American, heavy set black woman came to me and she was once again crying. I was actually happy to see her because I knew that she had survived the collapse and I knew she was the one person that I was primarily responsible for. Although later on, and I knew at that time, that there were people in that triage area that probably did not survive because they were not able to get up. I knew that one person did survive.

I wasn't able to lift her because I didn't have the strength, but I helped her get up on to the back step of the ambulance and pushed her into the back of the ambulance while the EMTs in that ambulance were crying no more, we are full, we are full, no more. I pushed her and she wound up laying on the floor of the ambulance. I was just about able to close the door of the ambulance by pushing her feet in a little further. I had to push her feet in and close the door. At that point, I asked Bruce Medjuck do we have tracking on

this ambulance and he said tracking, it's like the end of the world. This is a major disaster. Just get them out of here. I agreed.

While standing there once again trying to figure out what to do next, I saw car 33, which is the medical car that is the doctor's car, Crown Vic from the Bureau of Health Services that the doctor drives around. The Bureau of Health Services pulled up just behind the ambulance. Inside that car was Dr. Ortiz. She is a female doctor that works in the Bureau of Health Services, a driver and 3 firefighters were sitting in the back seat of the Crown Vic, one of which I know very well. She had only opened up the window maybe 3 quarters of the way and she was holding her jacket in front of her face not to get the debris or dust that was in the air into her airway.

I told her that many people died, a lot of people from the Bureau of Health Services seemed to be dead, I don't know where they are. They seemed to be missing. I don't remember saying there was a collapse. I remember saying I don't know what happened. It's real real bad. At that point they had told me we will pull over and help you. I told them we were regrouping. They said they were going to pull

over and help. They turned the vehicle left so they were facing east on Fulton and pulled over. When they started to get out of that vehicle, which I didn't see, but they told me later on, that that's where the second building, building number 2, the north tower, started to collapse.

I immediately just started to run, first north and then east on to Ann Street. As I was running I was looking over my shoulder and I heard the rumbling and I saw the cloud chasing me very quickly with debris. Once again falling. I saw a bunch of people standing in a loading bay with the door halfway down saying come in here, follow me in here. When I got there the man said let's pull down the door. There had to be ten of us trying to pull down the door. As we were pulling down the door the cloud and the thrust of the cloud knocked us all down to our knees and it continued to blow continuously into this bay door.

The people in the back were screaming. I managed to get back up from my knees to my feet and grabbed the door and looked over and there was maybe only three or five guys left trying to pull the door down. As we continued to try to pull the door down, the door actually started to go up. I didn't realize

it was going up until I realized I was off my feet. I said I had to let go. I anticipated landing on my feet but with the continuous thrust of the air coming through, I actually wound up face down on my helmet. I was stunned and confused, why was I down. I didn't know if I was dead or what was happening, once again taking in a lot of the dirt. I didn't know what to do. Somebody grabbed the back of my collar and dragged me down the loading bay to safety.

At that point I didn't need their help any more and they were strangling me and finally let go of my collar. I could get up. We entered down into the main hallway of the building. We got into the building and another group of people found the door into what seemed to be Genovese drugstore. We went into the Genovese drugstore and a large group of people pushed for the Poland Springs water that was on the shelves. A security guard that didn't know what was happening in the store said stop, what's going on, are you all crazy. A police officer pulled out a gun and pointed it at the security guard. These people need the water. Don't you understand what's happening. The security guard said he didn't know what was happening. He said it's quite all right. Have all the water you

want.

I was confused. I didn't know what was happening. I looked out the windows of the store. Complete blackness. Not knowing what was happening. I started to walk through the store and realized there were a lot of things that people could use in the store. I found small duffle bags. I took three or four of them off the shelf. I was stuffing water and Band-Aids, some things as ridiculous as Tampons, making goodie bags for people to take out with them and for myself.

I prepared the bags and the people then rushed the door. There was a police officer standing in the doorway and said nobody will leave the room, nobody will leave the store. At that point I figured maybe I will call my wife. I picked up my cell phone and I managed to get through. My wife picked up the phone. She was hysterical crying. I told her I was okay. At that point I asked her what had happened. She told me that they are gone. They are not there. I couldn't imagine that both the buildings were gone.

I said what are you talking about. Are the children gone? What you are you talking about. She told me the buildings are gone. I said what buildings

are gone. She said the World Trade Center is gone. I said how do you know. She said I have seen it on TV. She was watching regular TV and switched to CNN because she lost regular TV. She told me not more than two floors of that building could be there. I was stunned.

At that point somebody yelled that there was a bomb in the building that we were in. The police officer opened up the door and let people out. I asked if there was anybody left in that building. They said there were a couple of people maybe in the basement. So I ran down into the basement, maybe three floors, and there were a couple of maintenance workers who apparently didn't speak English. I told them they had to leave the building and there was probably a bomb. They looked at me and said that they had to clock out first or check with their supervisor.

I said I'm telling you to leave. I'm leaving. You can stay as long as you want, but I'm leaving. I ran upstairs and I left the building. There was no bomb in the building.

When I got outside I met up with EMT Farouk Mohammed, who happens to be an Islanmic Muslim, which I didn't know at the time. He happened to work light

duty with me in the Bureau of Health Services because of a shoulder injury. He was walking with two men and had a plastic garbage bag and was giving out water and rags to people in the street. He approached me and gave me a big hug. He asked me if I was okay. I told him I had ringing in my ears but I seemed to be okay.

At that point we met up with Manny Delgado and Dr. Cherson and they told us that the people were grouping at South Street Seaport, which was east, so we started to head east. While we were heading east, Farouk was able to hand out water and rags, but we had no other equipment available. People said to us what do we do, what do we do. I told them it was in their best interest to run northeast, to get out of there. We had no medical equipment.

When we got up to, I guess Pearl Street and Fulton Street, a man came to us and said that he had an OR available in one of the stores, I guess a clinic. All we needed was equipment and people. I said that we didn't have equipment or people, but I would keep that in mind. We walked another block east, right up to the edge of South Street Seaport where the plaza is and that's where I saw car 33 up on the curb. It looked like it had crashed into a pole or something. It was

sitting there. Nobody was in it. These were the original people I saw.

We waited there for 2 or 3 minutes. We couldn't figure out where they went, so we continued. When we got to South Street Seaport, somebody told us that's not where they were. The people were regrouping at the ferry terminal. Farouk Mohammed and I walked to the ferry terminal and started helping with a triage center with very few patients. It was at that point that we got separated and I was asked to go up to Chambers and West for UCAR responsibilities. I got a ride from a Lutheran Medical Center ambulance as far north as possible to that area.

I walked up there. That's just about my story.

Q. Did you have any portable radios or radio contact with anybody?

A. I had no raido contact except when Bruce Medjuck was standing next to me at the -- well, I had radio contact through people while we were doing triage in front of the Millennium and following that the only radio contact I had was through Bruce Medjuck, who got on the air and said I have Captain Swithers with me and we are trying to regroup.

Q. That was at Citywide?

A. I don't know what it was done on.

Q. You never saw EMS Chiefs or Chief Downey?

A. Thank god I never had the opportunity to see Chief Downey. I didn't see any EMS Chiefs until I regrouped at the South Street Seaport and that's where I saw Chief McCracken for the first time and Chief Vallani.

MR. CUNARDI: I would like to thank you Captain Swithers. The time is 1425 hours. This now concludes the interview with Captain Jay Swithers.

THE WITNESS: I saw Chief Vallani and Chief McCracken at the ferry terminal. Just a correction. I said South Street Seaport.

File No. 9110173

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VERONICA JACOBS

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 30, 2001. The time is 2155 hours. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, title and assigned command area regarding September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Veronica Jacobs, Battalion 58. I'm an EMT.

Q. Also present at this interview is?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Veronica, were you working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. Well, when I got home from walking the circle with my son and my neighbor told me that a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. So I went inside to watch TV to see what happened and I called my

Battalion to see if they needed to me to come in. I spoke to Lieutenant Hoover who told me yes, come into the Battalion and work overtime.

So anyway I took a shower, got dressed and jumped in my car and proceeded to come from New Jersey to Brooklyn. When I got to the Goethals Bridge there was a checkpoint with state troopers and police officers who were checking vehicles and stopping everybody and checking ID. I told them that I needed to proceed over to Brooklyn to work overtime for the World Trade Center and they told me you are either going to the World Trade Center straight from here or you go home. So I told them to lead the way.

I got a police escort from the Goethals Bridge to Beekman Hospital, and I parked on the sidewalk and they parked next to me on the street and we walked with my thumb out to the World Trade Center, at least towards the blackness, the darkness. We couldn't see anything. There was so much debris and dust everywhere.

We went inside Beekman first and I got a couple of maps, I tried to call the Battalion and tell them I was in Manhattan instead of coming to Brooklyn, but the phone was busy, so I proceeded with them to try

and find the EMS command, wherever that could have been, because we couldn't see street signs.

When we got I guess about two blocks from the World Trade Center, I couldn't tell you what street we were on.

Q. Do you know about what time this was?

A. It was about 9:05.

Q. 9:05?

A. Yes. There were people running towards us and telling us they needed help down that way and pointing behind them, so we proceeded to go down that way, hoping there was EMS or somebody there.

When I finally realized where I was, I was standing in front of the building that didn't come down yet, the tower that didn't come down yet, not even knowing that the first one came down. I didn't know what it was that they were running from.

I look up and I'm like this looks like the World Trade Center. I think we should just back up and start looking for my command, and the trooper was like okay, let's start walking. All of a sudden a large rumbling and people were running and jumping and hitting the floor next to me and it just got black and gray and I couldn't see and I was running for my life

with my hands in front of me, because I didn't know what the hell was happening.

We tripped and we fell and I lost the troopers and I don't know where they went, but they are alive, I ended up finding out, because their car was gone when I got back. So I assume they are alive. Their car is gone, so somebody got it.

When I finally got out of the dust, tripping several times and crashing into telephone poles as I was running, because I couldn't see, it cleared up about 10 minutes later, but as I'm running I'm trying to help people who needed help to run or to walk or just to breathe, trying to cover them with my shirt or whatever I could do, because I had two masks on my face from the hospital.

When I realized what happened, we walked around, I guess Vesey Street or something like that. That was the only street sign that we could see. I don't know how far that was from the World Trade Center, still to this day. But we walked around the corner and I could see the first building that fell and they were telling me this is the building that fell, a couple of firefighters, and they said how they lost their people in the first building and I was like well,

what did we just run from. I guess we went almost back to Beekman, halfway back to Beekman, and we met up with some firefighters there. I'm saying we. It was me and a couple of firemen that made it out I guess.

They said the second building came down. I was like oh, my god, I just saw people standing in the lobby, fire engines, everybody was pulling up still and I saw a bunch of firefighters going in and I am like well, why are they going in. Why would they be going in there you know, it's just not safe. You know, can't they fight the fire from above. When I got there and boom, it started falling and I was like, I know they didn't come out, you know.

Anyway, I start walking around trying to find anybody that looked familiar, because you couldn't tell who was who. Everybody was full of soot and dust. As I'm trying to find the EMS command or whoever I could find, we were saving people, pulling people from rubble and there were private ambulances everywhere. They were the only ones up front. So as we are pulling people out of the rubble or walking past we are just throwing them into ambulances, on the floor of the ambulances, two people on the stretchers, anywhere we could.

We pulled out this obese man. He had to be like four or five hundred pounds and that's the only thing that saved his life. They pulled a beam off of him. It took 20 firefighters to pull this beam off of this guy. We threw him on the stretcher and we had to carry the stretcher everywhere. Because the debris was so much, you know. It was just horrible.

After several hours of saving people and pulling people from the debris and still walking, every time I tried to leave to find EMS, they needed more help, so I couldn't just leave, you know what I mean. I just kept doing what I was doing.

I guess it was about 4 hours later, maybe about one o'clock, I finally walked back and they told me several blocks back there are some EMS people. Maybe they are your bosses that you are looking for. These are totally different people now. Like I met, of course, several firefighters and -- okay.

I'm a spaz since then too. I hear noise, you know. Holy shit.

Well anyway, I ended up, there were fire engines set up with those spouts of water, little eye wash spouts of water, off the side of the trucks and I'm washing my face and my eyes are burning and I can't

breathe good and I'm full of soot. Some firefighter blew me off with a compressor so that I could actually see and wash my face.

I finally ran into some academy people. It was Gio.

Q. Pineda?

A. Yes, Pineda. Rolando. Paramedic EMS Rolando. Him and a -- it was all paramedics. There were about 5 of them.

Q. Rolando Gardon?

A. He was the instructor. I don't remember his last name. Well, he was a paramedic instructor.

Q. Big Asian guy?

A. Yes, with glasses. He looks Hawaiian. Yes, so anyway, I ran into them and I told them what happened. They are like okay, just hang out here. Do you need any help. I'm like I just really need to sit down and get some water. They got me water and we were just waiting, I'm like you guys got to go in. You know, there's people in there that need help and you are just standing here and there is private ambulances in there that just can't handle it.

They don't know what to do. There is no supervision. Everybody was killed that was

supervising, or at least knew what to do. You need to go in there. They are like we can't go in there. They were just standing there. You have to stay right here. What? I'm like what do you mean. Go a couple of blocks in, they need help, they need ambulances. I'm telling you there is people laid out in the street that need to get the hell off and they can't move. Their legs are broken. Their arms are broken. They can't move, they are trapped, they are pinned and these people will be salvageable. Let's go.

Oh, we can't do that. I'm like, okay, so I'm going back. If you don't want to, I will. Just give me some shit, give me some oxygen, and some equipment. I will go back in. I don't care, you know. They were like you can't do that. You have to stay here or you are going to be relieved of duty. I'm like relieved of duty. I just fucking worked 4 hours by my god damn self. If you relieve me now I don't give a shit, you know what I mean. I will go back in on my own. I don't care. I worked without any equipment. I had no equipment on me. No helmet, no nothing. I came from home to come here.

After about an hour and a half of sitting there like assholes, we finally got the word that we

could go up closer, which is Ground Zero now, and the triage area, I set that triage area up. We had the morgue inside the building. I set all that up the first day. They are still utilizing it today.

It was just wild, you know. It was just wild. All the bodies and people. It was really -- I mean, do I want to add anything. Probably not, but I could chat for days about this shit. It was so disorganized and there was no help, you know. I was there until one o'clock until the morning with not a sign of relief in sight.

I come back here. I finally left on my own. I told them look, I can't stay here any more. I need to leave. I worked 10 to 6 the night before, went home, walked my son, took a shower, came back and worked all day and all night again. It was one o'clock in the morning. I couldn't work any more. You know, I was on the my feet the whole time. My heel is killing me since then. I don't know what happened to my heel, but I finally left and they wouldn't even give me a ride to Beekman Hospital.

I had to walk from Ground Zero to Beekman Hospital to my car and I didn't even know which way to go, where to go, who to see. You know, I'm asking all

these Captain and Chiefs who are standing there hot shit trying to look cute, how do I get back to Beekman Hospital. Can you get me a gator or anything. I don't care what, a crane, anything. Just bring me to Beekman. I'm exhausted. No, you have to find your way. I'm like okay.

So I walked all the way back to Beekman and I got in my car and I had to dust it off, because there is like a foot of debris on it. I came back here, because I couldn't go home like that. I was so filthy and disgusting, I had to shower before I went home in case I was exposed to something.

I got back here and everybody was sitting here. 50 people in there. I'm like what the hell are you all sitting in there for. Oh, well, we are waiting to go to Ground Zero. I'm like what? What are you waiting for? Well, there is a bus outside, it's empty. A city bus sitting outside empty, waiting to leave with people with their equipment and they are on overtime sitting here watching fucking TV. When I just worked damn near 24 hours straight and I'm so tired and so sick and so exhausted, and there is more people that need help with no relief in there and they are sitting here.

So I asked the boss, do you know what's going on, why aren't they going. You know, oh, well, we are not allowed to. What? Again, stupidity. What do you mean you are not allowed to. What are they supposed to do there, just sit there and just keep working without relief and they are like, well, that's what we were told.

They are pissed off and they are all asking me what happened and my side and I'm like, you know, I need some food. So Joe Michel went to McDonald's and got me a couple of Big Macs. I put my feet up and I got a massage. I ate a Big Mac and I told everybody how it was there and they were like wow, I think I was the only person that went. Maybe Greenberg went later. I know he wasn't there in the beginning. I didn't see him at all there, and I saw every EMT and EMS person that was there that day. I didn't see him. Where the hell he could have been I don't know, you know.

That was a fucking experience. Fucking. I hope they like my language. It was definitely an experience. So to this day I'm a spaz. I hear noise. I'm like okay, where is it coming from, you know. There was thunder, I will never forget. I was home I

guess the week after that, and thunder, there was this horrible storm that came through and I'm at home and I'm finally in my bed and I'm like okay, I can't sleep, everybody is knocked out and all of a sudden this big kaboom. I was in my bedroom and I have a ranch, a long ranch. My room is here, my daughter's is here and my son's is here and my son was sleeping with my daughter that night.

I got out of the bed, that boom, ran and scooped the two kids up and jumped on top of them. They are like, ah, what's the matter? I'm like what was that? My husband is like holy shit, you need to see somebody about that. I'm like I'm okay. If they are okay I'm okay. I'm like a spaz, you know. I just scooped them up and I'm laying on them. They are crying, what, what, my daughter is like oh, my son is like oh, I'm like shh shh shh shh. It was horrible.

And I still do that, you know. They are demolishing buildings over by where I live to build a new mall. I'm like, what was that, you know, like commando on the floor. Come on baby, let's go. You know, it's wild.

[redacted]

Q. Who?

A. I don't even know. [redacted] We thought it was (inaudible).

Q. At work you mean?

A. Yes, at work.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. I don't know. I don't know. It's just weird you know. But I don't really have anything else to say. I guess I'm done.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. No, [redacted]

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 2210 hours.

File No. 9110174

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT TRINH DINH

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today is October 31, 2001. The time is 705 hours. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with?

A. Trinh Dinh.

Q. Battalion 44, and what is your shield and your --

A. My shield is 5423.

Q. Could you please state in your own words what happened on September 11, 2001 of this year?

A. Okay. I start my shift at 8 a.m. in the morning. That day I was working with a different partner, who has been on the job for 11, 12 years. We had our first job somewhere in north Brooklyn.

Q. Who was your partner's name?

A. Ronald Coyne. I don't know if he shows up on your list. We were on our way to the hospital with our patient when his cellphone rang and it was his wife telling him that she saw two planes crash into the World Trade Center on TV.

As soon as we got to the hospital, my partner said he was going to call Brooklyn central to see if

they needed to send us down to Manhattan. As I just got taken care of the patient as fast as I could so that if we were sent, that we could just leave.

I took care of the patient. He came back and told me that Brooklyn central definitely said yes, to head down to Manhattan. They specifically told us to arrive at Church and Vesey. So my partner was driving. We just -- I believe we took the Brooklyn Manhattan Bridge.

Q. There is a Brooklyn Bridge or Manhattan Bridge.

A. The Brooklyn Bridge. Yes, I believe that's the route we took, but we pretty much got down there in probably less than 10 minutes. On the way up there we saw the two towers in flames. They hadn't collapsed at the time. They were still in flames, the top one third of them. Just a lot of commotion. A lot of cops in the streets directing traffic. I don't think we ever made it to Church and Vesey.

Somehow we made it probably right before the second tower collapse, I see at 9:55, the first tower, excuse me, the first tower, at 9:55, we went up to the West Side Highway to the entrance to the underground of the parking lot. As soon as we pulled up there, we

just saw this cloud of black smoke coming our way and we just stopped dead in our tracks to where we were. We didn't even just drive any closer. We just stopped and let the black smoke just come over our vehicle. We sat there for maybe like two or three minutes in the blackness.

Q. Was that the first collapse?

A. That was the first collapse. As soon as we pulled up that's when the black cloud just came over us so we just stopped. As it cleared up a little bit, we started to see people like in the white dust. They were just kind of like walking towards the vehicle. At that time, we just kind of walked out of the vehicle and just started telling people to come to the ambulance and just sit there for a little bit, if you needed any oxygen. If you wanted to clean your eyes out and just -- all of a sudden just all these people started coming out. A lot of people.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and mayhem going on through the streets at this time?

A. I wouldn't say mayhem. I think people were mostly walking out. They weren't really running out. They were just walking towards us. They were all covered in white dust.

Q. Did you see a lot of debris when you were pulling up to the site?

A. Yes. That's exactly why we just stopped where we were, because it just came at us so we just stopped. There was a doctor in the back of our vehicle. We picked him up on the way.

Q. Department doctor?

A. No, it wasn't a Fire Department doctor. She was some kind of, I don't remember what kind of doctor she was or who she worked for, but she just flagged us down and asked if she could come with us. So we let her in the back of the ambulance so that while me and my partner got out, she was in the back just kind of helping the patients.

We were telling her where all the -- we stocked everything, all the sterile water, how to use the oxygen. We just told her, you know, give whatever they need and stuff like that. At that time, me and my partner were kind of going back and forth from the vehicle to the building. My partner was actually inside the building, I believe, and I was just kind of going back and forth between him and the vehicle, because every time I went up there, he would always tell me go back to the vehicle, get me more oxygen. Go

back and get me more of this, get me more of that, more of that. So I was kind of running back and forth.

I guess maybe half hour, 45 minutes must have passed. I went back to find my partner because he hadn't come back to the ambulance for a while. I guess he just wanted to stay inside the building and help there and as I was going to the building to find him, everybody started saying turn around, the second one is going to fall. Of course I wasn't paying attention. I was just like well, where is my partner, I got to find my partner, I got to go, you know, find where he is in the building.

I just kept going, I just kept going and then all of a sudden everyone just started running the other way and I just kept going forward. Then I saw another cloud of black smoke coming my way and that's when I turned around and started running back to my ambulance.

Q. Did the cloud catch you?

A. Oh, yes, the cloud caught me, but then I went in the back of my ambulance and we sat there for a few minutes and it was really thick. This one somehow was just thicker than the first one. This one really made me choke, even in the back of the ambulance.

I was back there taking some oxygen with some

of the people. I waited a few minutes for it to clear a little bit. Then I walked forward, more towards the building and I just started asking firemen and people, you know, did you see my partner and this and that. You know, nobody was really answering. They were just kind of all in their own little -- you know, doing what they were doing.

Q. Did you ever move your ambulance?

A. I never moved my ambulance from where we were, because when we first got there the black cloud came over us and we just stopped.

Q. That was on West Street, like that underground parking?

A. Uh-huh. So I always wonder, if we had just shown up a minute earlier, we would have just been right up there in the front where the other ambulances were, because when the cloud cleared and I went towards the front, I saw all the ambulances parked like not even a hundred feet, maybe closer than we were and they were all torched and destroyed and nobody was in them and fire trucks destroyed and I was like oh, my god, we were just like not that far back and we could have been this close.

It was perfect timing for us I guess. I just

kept looking for my partner and in the midst of it, everyone kept saying, you know, can you help this fireman, can you help that fireman. Even though I lost my partner I guess I just continued to help some of the firemen that needed it. You know, I mean, there was this one fireman who had a fractured femur. They kept saying bring your bus over here so you can take him in the hospital. I said okay.

So I went back to get my vehicle and my vehicle was gone. My mistake was leaving the vehicle with the keys in it running. So I guess --

Q. That's not a mistake.

A. I mean at that time, I guess -- I mean when I needed it, I didn't have it.

Q. Yes.

A. But I guess someone else just decided to take it for their use and another EMT probably took it for their use and took off with it. So I didn't have an ambulance for my fireman. At this time I didn't see any other EMTs around. I guess they all just took whoever and left and I was the only one left.

Then all of a sudden this volunteer ambulance came up the ramp and I flagged him down and I asked him if he could take my patient to the hospital with me, so

we took our fireman to Beekman.

Q. Do you remember the name of the Firefighter?

A. I just remember his first name was Kevin. That's all I remember. Then somehow, some medics came and they came with us too and we took him to Beekman and as soon as we went to Beekman, I actually ran into a medic that I know who works right here in Brooklyn for St. Marys. I ran into him and I was like, I lost my partner. He said yes, I lost my partner too. He said let's work together. He says I have an ambulance.

So at that point I wanted to call my Battalion to tell them that I lost my partner, that I don't know where he is, that I'm fine, but they said that none of the phone lines were working because, you know, no reception, nobody's cell phones was getting any reception. My cellphone I left in the ambulance, okay. All my equipment was in the ambulance. Everything that I had. That's why I don't have any equipment right now. So I couldn't make any phone calls to the Battalion.

So I just went out with this medic, Roger, he is English actually. So we went out to his bus and we said what do you want to do. I said let's just drive

around and see where we can help, you know. So we just drove around and just kept driving and I don't know exactly where we ended up, but we ended up right there in the middle of the rubble, where Ground Zero is, where everybody is working at right now.

We just ended up there, there was no other EMTs or medics there at the time.

Q. Was the radio working?

A. Yes. You know, I don't even remember because you just don't even think. You are just like in there in the midst of everything and you are just kind of like continuing to do what you do. So we just stayed in the rubble and we tried to set up a triage there because nobody else was anywhere giving us directions or telling us where to set up triage because nobody else was in the middle of the rubble but us.

So we just left our ambulance there and we just pretty much just watched until some of the firemen decided they needed their eyes washed or they needed oxygen. They would, you know, take turns coming in, going into the rubble, cleaning it out and then coming out and getting their eyes washed and getting oxygen, getting cuts cleaned up, and then eventually as time went on, more EMTs and more medics started coming to

where we were and then we just started setting triage there.

We just laid everything outside around the ambulances. Everyone was just working from there. Then I saw my partner. This is like three or four hours later. We were so happy to see each other. He got out okay, which is good. Then we all just stayed in that level for a couple of hours, helping pretty much firemen, you know, just pretty much firemen was all that we were really helping.

Q. So nobody tried using the radios to get directions?

A. Well, I know my partner had lost his radio, because I believe he was in the building and whatever happened I'm sure that he lost his radio. My radio, the battery, I believe had died. Because from 8 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that's a lot of hours. Usually you kind of change batteries during the day, but my battery had died eventually and then eventually the cell phones started working, so then I started using other people's cell phones to call home to tell them that I was okay.

But I never called the Battalion because at the time, when everyone started coming to the rubble,

they had Lieutenants there who set up a triage center and they told everyone to sign in with their unit. So that's what me and my partner did. We went to the Lieutenant, we gave him our name, our shield and bus number.

Q. What unit were you that day?

A. My unit is 38 Eddie. I'm always 38 Eddie. So we were 38 Eddie that day. We signed in so we thought everything was clear. Everything was good, you know. Unfortunately, because I guess of the catastrophe and just all the chaos, somehow they never seemed to tell my Battalion that we had signed in, so by the time I got back at the end of the night, everyone had thought I had been missing all day.

Q. There was a lot of miscommunications.

A. A lot of miscommunication. I mean it upset me, because if I had known it would have been such bad miscommunication, I probably would have thought to call them myself since the cell phones were working.

Q. You did the right thing.

A. Yes, so we stayed at our station doing what we did all day long. After a couple of hours we said let's just take a break. We went over to Beekman Hospital and we just kind of sat outside on the

sidewalk for a little bit. That's when you kind of start like looking back at everything that happened, because when you are in the middle of the rubble, you are kind of just kind of like, you are not even in shock about everything.

You don't know what's going on in the outside of the world. People are coming back with these rumors, like oh, my god, they got the Sears tower in Chicago. Oh, they got the Pentagon. Oh, they got the White House. Everyone is thinking, you know, all these crazy attacks and you really don't know the truth because there is no TV, there is no radios. You are just kind of listening to what people are saying and so you just don't know what else is going on out there.

You are not really shocked at that point. Then like when you step back away from the site, Ground Zero, you just kind of think like oh, my god, did this really happen, like, look at us, we are like covered in white dust. We look like crap, we look like we just went through a war, you know.

Then at that point it was like bad timing. All of these news people and newspaper reporters just kind of came up to us, I guess because we looked the dirtiest, you know, because we were the only ones

covered in white and they just kind of all just kind of came to us and just all of them just started interviewing us, like what happened, were you there, you know, did anyone live, did you see any of this. Blah blah blah.

So we just gave them a little bit of, yes, this happened, that happened, we were here and we were there. This is what we think about it. You don't really want to say too much. You really haven't collected your thoughts to really give a story or how you really feel. You are just kind of like yes, it was unbelievable. Yes, so a couple of those reporters came and started talking to us.

After a while we went back to the rubble and at this point there were many EMTs and medics in the triage station and pretty much nobody was really doing much, you know. I mean there really wasn't much to do. Like I said, all we were really helping were the firemen and they were little minor injuries, like washing out the eyes and stuff like that, so I mean, there really wasn't much to do, so by the end of the day, say around 9, 10 o'clock, we just looked at each other and said we are tired, there is not much we can do. There is no one here we can really really help.

So we just decided to head back and my partner and I, my original partner and I, said to the medic that was working with us all day, could you drive us around and help us look for our ambulance. At this point we had no way to get back to Brooklyn.

So we just drove around the hospitals and streets and miraculously we found our ambulance in front of the Staten Island Ferry terminal. I don't know. They had used it for equipment, water, soda, I guess, like, you know, refreshments, just drive back and forth to people and it was destroyed pretty much.

It was covered in white dust. All my equipment was gone and the battery had died, so the bus didn't start anyway. We couldn't get it started so we just asked the medic to drive us halfway to Brooklyn. He lived in Manhattan, borderline Brooklyn and so he drove to us his place and we called our station at that point to say can you get somebody to come pick us up at his house.

They sent, you know, a Lieutenant to come down and pick us up by car. They took us back to Battalion 58. I met my Captain and all the other Lieutenants.

Q. By Woodhull?

A. No, it wasn't the hospital, Woodhull. It was another station here in Brooklyn. It was either 57 or 58 where they were all stationed doing whatever they were doing. It was probably around 11, 11:30 at this point and the Captain and some of my Lieutenants were like, what happened. We thought you were missing, you are on the missing list. We didn't hear from you all day.

The Captain said, but then I saw you on TV so I knew you were alive. I go okay. They made us go to the hospital to get checked out, to Kings County. I had my eyes irrigated for like half an hour. My partner had really bad asthma so he was admitted overnight.

You know, basically that was it. I was just really tired. I just wanted to go home. I don't think I got home until like 2:00 in the morning. It was just a really tiring, really tiring. That was basically all we did all day. The excitement was obviously in the morning, but after that all happened, it really wasn't much more we could do. We just pretty much hung around and did little things.

I mean during the course of the day, we started going to pharmacies and they were giving us

medication for free, so we kept bringing back eye drops and you know, Excedrins and Advils and burn cremes, and little medications like that that they were giving for free, so we just kept stocking up on it and just kept bringing those back.

Then you had some volunteer, I guess they were just normal pedestrians who were coming back and forth giving us bottled water and whatever, Gatorade or little candies, stuff like that, but by the end of the day, you had trucks of Poland Spring pulling up and all these other foods and, you know, the Coast Guard bringing up food by the water.

At that point at the end of the day, everybody was getting stocked with supplies by each company. So that was nice. That was it. That was just a really long day. Really long day. I mean I just slept all day the next day. All day.

MR. DUN: This ends the interview. The time is 723.

File No. 9110175

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOHN MENDEZ

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 31st, 2001. The time now is 1012 hours. My name is Ron Castorina from the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with John Mendez, Lieutenant Mendez. With me is Thomas McCourt.

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt, investigations and trials.

Q. Sir, can you please for the record state your name, rank, title and your work assignment?

A. Lieutenant John Mendez, Bureau of Health Services, Immunization unit.

Q. Lieutenant Mendez, on September 11, 2001, can you tell me the events that took place on that particular day.

A. Around a quarter to 9, maybe 8:30-ish, I went up to the seventh floor to get milk for the commissary on the second floor. When I got up there, Chief Ganci came running out of his office saying that a plane had hit the building. He told everybody look out the window.

So I went to the window on the seventh floor, and I observed the Trade Center on fire.

I stood there for a while, and there was a lot of people at the window, firefighters, civilians, chiefs. The next thing you know, we saw another plane hit the building. A ball of flame came out, and actually the concussion shook our building. We felt the concussion from it.

At that point I came back down to the second floor to see what was going on with the staff down here on the second floor. Most of the people had already gone over to the site.

Q. "Down here" being?

A. On the second floor.

Q. Where?

A. The whole floor.

Q. At Nine Metrotech?

A. Nine Metrotech, yes.

I wanted to go over there, but I wanted to make sure everything was okay on the second floor. I checked in with Mary T. McLaughlin to tell her I was going over there, and I hooked up with Dr. Ortiz. She's the medical doctor that was assigned to the floor for the day, and Jerry Finnegan is her driver.

Q. Jerry Finnegan is a firefighter?

A. Is a firefighter here. He's a light-duty firefighter assigned to her.

So the three of us, along with Charlie Dalton, another firefighter from the sixth floor, took some equipment and got in the medical car and started driving towards Manhattan.

It felt like we left right away, but evidently we didn't, because as we drove over the Brooklyn Bridge we actually picked up a probationary firefighter with his gear walking over the bridge. He got in the car. So now the car had five people in it.

When we got down on the other side of the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan, the building had collapsed, although we don't realize the building had collapsed, because there was just so much smoke we couldn't see anything. We didn't know what it was.

I thought I had left Metrotech maybe 15, 20 minutes after the planes crashed. Evidently it must have been an hour, because the building collapsed an hour later.

We made our way through the debris or the dust --

Q. When you got there, one tower had collapsed?

A. One tower had collapsed, the first tower.

Q. The second tower hadn't collapsed yet?

A. No. We were going towards Broadway, heading past City Hall towards Broadway. It just took us a long time to get there because the visibility was bad. We were going to head down Vesey towards the command post. We knew there was a command post somewhere towards West and Vesey, in that area. So that's where we were going to head.

I was in the back seat, and I saw Lieutenant Swithers. That was around Fulton and Broadway. So we were going to head up Vesey towards the command post. When I saw Jay, we made a left near him. He was covered in ash and dust. He looked to me like he was disoriented. So we stopped to help him out, because he works with us on the floor.

Q. This is the EMS lieutenant?

A. EMS, yes, captain.

Q. Captain?

A. Captain. He just got promoted at that time.

He told us that the building collapsed. He thought that the building collapsed and that a lot of people were injured or dead. He was trying to reorganize.

So at that point we made a left. We told him to hang out, we're going to make a left, park the car. We made a left away from the Trade Center down Fulton street. We parked right on the corner.

We got out of the vehicle, we got our equipment, we walked to the back of the vehicle, the smoke was clearing. We could see one of the buildings was down and the other one was still standing. But then all of a sudden that building started to collapse.

We just walked back into the car or ran --

Q. How far were you from the building?

A. We were one block away, according to this map.

Q. You were on Fulton?

A. I was on Fulton and Broadway, Fulton

Street and Broadway.

Q. When it started collapsing?

A. Yes.

So we got into the car, started it up, and this huge wave of debris caught up to us as we were driving away, and everything went black. We actually stopped the car. People were running by us at that moment. They disappeared. We didn't know what happened.

It cleared a little bit. The driver just kept driving straight, very slow. Eventually we ended up stopping at the South Street Seaport. That's where we ended up, on the sidewalk there.

We got out of the car, and we just hung out and hugged each other. Incredibly the other medical car -- we're in 33. 32 came from the west side when the building collapsed. They actually almost crashed into us.

Q. They came to the same spot?

A. Same spot. It was like a miracle.

Q. Who was in that car?

A. Dr. Garvey and Firefighter Velker. He was a light-duty fireman, Pete Velker.

We stayed there for a long time, because there was really no visibility and we didn't know what to do.

Q. Were there any radio communications?

A. No, not really. The radio was on, but really we were all shaken up. A guy told us the phone was working, so we decided to call our families and let them know we were alive, because we knew a lot of people were dead. That's the first thing we did.

We got back in the car, and we drove as close as we could to the Trade Center, probably back to the same location on Fulton Street, and parked it there. We parked away from the building so we could get access to the car and drive it out.

Q. Your visibility was bad at this time?

A. Yes. It looked like a giant snowstorm. There were all particles in the air and there were six inches of dust on the ground, and there were millions of pieces of paper blowing about. Buildings were on fire everywhere in the Trade Center complex.

Then we met Dr. Kelly and Dr. Prezant.

They were wandering down the street. There was a Duane Reade drugstore on the corner of Barclay and Broadway, and we cut it open. The firemen cut it open, and they made it into like a medical -- actually it was the Woolworth Building. It was a Duane Reade next to the Woolworth Building.

We cut the Duane Reade open to get supplies, and we set up a surgical area because there were doctors that were coming to the scene and they were going to do operations right there like a MASH tent. The only problem was over the next 12 hours they didn't get one patient because there was no one left.

From that point, after helping them set up -- I don't know how long that took -- me and Firefighter Finnegan, we just sort of toured the site to try to help out. We walked around the whole World Trade Center complex several times in 15 hours.

The only body I saw was Chief Ganci. We ended up in the back of the atrium as they were pulling his body out. A fireman was carrying his remains down the stairs, his head,

and the other firefighters were carrying the rest of his body in a basket. Chief Turi was there. We start crying. They placed his body on the ground, and we all kneeled around it and prayed. They took his body to an ambulance and they took it away.

At that point all the other chiefs converged at Vesey and West, Chief Turi, Chief Nigro, Chief Callan, I think Chief Fellini, and they sort of organized how they were going to fight the fires and organize the men who were left.

I didn't stay there. I just went back. I kept checking in with Dr. Kelly. Then I would walk around again and kept checking in with her, making sure everything was okay.

Eventually later in the day we had to evacuate that site because number seven collapsed. Prior to its collapse, we evacuated all the supplies, the doctors, and moved over to Pace University into the lobby, and they set up another medical area. Most injuries we treated were eye injuries from the debris, basically cleaning out people's eyes.

From there it was nightfall, 8, 9, 10:00. I don't know what time it was. Eventually I escorted Dr. Kelly and Prezant back to the medical office, and we stayed there all night.

That's it.

Q. Anything else you can think of or want to add?

A. I can't think of anything.

Q. Okay.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 10:25. This concludes the interview with Lieutenant Mendez.

Thank you, Lieutenant Mendez.

File No. 9110176

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT EMILIO PEREZ

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 31, 2001. The time is now 0603 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Emilio Perez, Battalion 14, shield number 3132.

Q. Okay. Mr. Perez is an EMT. We are currently at EMS Battalion 14. This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Okay, Emilio, if you begin with when you were assigned to the job?

A. Okay. The morning of September 11 we were at a restaurant called Sunlight located at 149 Street and Walton Avenue. We were ordering breakfast. At about 9:35, about 9. It was 9, about 9:10 when the first tower was struck. We realized it on the television as posted. We noticed that everyone was watching. At 9:10 the plane flew in through the second tower. We were assigned to the assignment from that time on, from 9:10 on.

We responded to the incident via Central Parkway, down Broadway, came across Houston Street, turned left on Greenwich and started approaching the scene. When we approached, we could see the towers in

flames. We got closer, we made a right turn on Barclay Street. Parked on West Street off of Barclay at about 9:35.

One of the officers told us to approach the scene, park the vehicle and just set up. My immediate supervisors requested to find out where the triage site was located and I mentioned to him where it was located but he told me to respond to it and I refused to. I set up triage at that area where (inaudible) should be.

We started unloading the equipment to set up for the incident and I think it was about 5 minutes after we set up the equipment, we started approaching to try to assist those injured, we saw the building collapse. Plenty of firefighters reported in. We were following them and as a cloud of soot and smoke started approaching us, we turned around, abandoned the equipment and started running. We ran for our lives, as far as we could. We kept looking back, looking back.

We noticed that the cloud was so thick and deep that we were overcome by it, so we started to turn around, walking back to try to help people, but there was so many people to help, so many firefighters. They

were full of soot.

Initially in our area was plenty of firefighters and that's all I could see. They all wanted to find out where all the men were. So our initial response there was to treat all of them that were injured, coming towards us. Their eyes were burning, they couldn't breathe. So we were using saline, we were using the little bit of equipment we had. Saline, we were dousing them. We were able to open up the back of the vehicle to try to get more access to equipment, but we were overcome.

We realized that -- I realized there wasn't going to be enough water to help the firefighters for cleaning the soot and debris from them. What I did was I approached one of the fire Lieutenants and started screaming to him, I need a wrench, I need a wrench.

The men were going right back in. So he stopped them and like two of them just dropped. Got me the wrench. I started opening up as many hydrants as I could in that area. I opened up like a good, a good 11 hydrants.

Then I was directing all the firefighters to go on into the areas where I was telling them to go douse down, this and that, but they were concerned for

the firefighters, so I says to them, listen, all your friends are all over there. All your men are right there by the hydrant. Just go over there. You will find them. Just by me directing them in that direction and being -- using the tone of voice that I did, it helped them because they approached -- but they didn't find the men they were looking for, they were being taken care of.

The FBI was there. The CIA was there. Guys with suits there. They were telling me who they were and I was directing and grabbing them and all I could do was just grab them and direct them to water. So then after I realized that, we just kept helping, kept helping, kept helping, we tried to make another approach to go back to assist those that were underneath the collapse.

So when we tried to make that second approach is when the second tower came at you. The Engine Company that had gone into the right side was just wiped out. As the second one collapsed, we just started to turn around again. It was here we go again, start running. This time we were engulfed with the stuff. People were behind us. We started running as far as we can again. Now we couldn't see much. This

was like about a good, a few minutes after the first building had collapsed.

There is a whole lot of things were going on, you know, people were running out of there. There was firefighters with police officers and firefighters just trying to set up. Some of them, it just overcome. As these guys got cleaned up and they were ready to walk right back in. They were like let's go. Some were in groups ready to go in and once that second building collapsed, and then people started running, more firefighters were coming out filled with the soot. People were running, so this time we started running so far that the cloud was still following us, you know.

There was a building over there. I think it was the school. I think it was Stuyvesant. They said run inside, run inside. So the clouds kept coming closer, we just kept -- I stopped, my partner stopped, we just kept directing people into the building. I think to Stuyvesant Street, Stuyvesant High School.

So I remember the last person I ran into was an oriental. I told my partner at the time, go ahead, check inside, see how many people in there. He told me there is thousands of people inside the school. I stayed outside. I kept running back trying to help

more firefighters, I felt like hours -- there was no help for them back there. So I just kept grabbing them and directing them to all the hydrants, kept washing them down, you know.

Then about a good 10 minutes or 15 minutes after the whole incident, my partner came out of the building. I didn't know where he was at. I started going back to the ambulance to see if he had moved it. After the first collapse I went back to move the ambulance to a safer location, brought it back a little further, when I realized that I found him and I tried to make an approach.

Then again, this is like about the fourth time after carrying everything. I grabbed an O2 tank. I told him grab a tank. We put masks, we took the non-rebreather masks that we keep as equipment. I threw an O2 tank on my shoulder. We took the stretcher, full of soot and all that. We was trying to make an approach toward the building.

I was overcome because I knew that alot of firefighters were caught under there. I didn't want to say they were dead because I had hopes for them. I didn't want to just count them out just like that. So we started walking in. There was a fire Captain, he

stopped us in our tracks, got a few feet going north towards the towers.

He says where are you going with that stretcher? I says we are trying to help. He says you can't help anybody down there. He said don't go in there. He turned us around. That's when we just abandoned everything, you know, hell with it all.

I was so full of soot. I was trying to wash up and everything. Then I had it in me to return back and the ambulance was like -- it was just -- if you could see the amount of debris that was on the ambulance. I'm surprised I drove the vehicle, I just -- that I had it in me to get out of there. Then I get the keys and moved it back a little. As I parked the vehicle after we moved it again. Three or four times we moved the vehicle.

We went to one of the immediate supervisors that worked there, just saying what are we going to do. He says oh, well, just stay there. At that time someone came running out of left field. I don't know who the hell it was. Must have been a police officer. He said there was a gas leak. He said there was a gas leak. Man, there was like about three or four police cars that just took off. One took out a private

ambulance's door. The other ones just was diving into the car and going.

I find that at this time, you know, there was all -- there was too much chaos going and the only thing I could think of was to board the vehicle, but at all times I was monitoring the radio. We weren't able to transmit at all. The only transmission I made was when I requested additional units, because we had plenty of firefighters that were injured. I think I was the only one that made the call. Might hear it on the tapes, might hear it on the radio, when you listen to 14 David, was the unit.

I requested additional resources, because we had many firefighters that were injured at that site. I was calling from Barclay and West. That was the only transmission I made. We really weren't supposed to make any transmissions, so I made the transmissions and then after that it was all silence. You didn't hear nothing.

Then after this guy comes screaming about gas leak, I jumped on the vehicle, all sooted and everything, we just started driving up Broadway. We drove up Broadway, we stopped. My partner was too -- you know, he was worried, he wanted to contact his

family. I just continued driving. You could just see the smoke and the soot just flying off the ambulance. I'm surprised it drove. Parked. Here were people trying to take the stuff from the ambulance, can we take stuff from it. They were collecting from it, grabbing cups, you know. We stopped at a store to get some water.

We stopped at a store that was -- some gas station over on Broadway. I walked in to try to get some water. You know, and what really hit me was that, you know, you would think that after the ordeal, somebody would just say here, take the water, go ahead. No, I paid for the water, you know. I don't want to mention of what nationality I purchased this water from. So I continued from there on.

We had heard over the air, they said respond to Chelsea Piers. From there on you would get further info. We drove up there, there was a good hundred ambulances. We were at the tail end. I got out of the vehicle and started walking around. I was in a trance. I was, you know, nobody asked me anything.

People could look at me I guess and say you know I guess I was in hope. I have pictures there of how I looked when I returned here. So then I

approached -- we were there for hours. The ambulance -- you could see the ambulance. We were still collecting soot from the top of the ambulance while we were parked by Chelsea Piers. People were putting stuff in their pockets and walking away.

I had fellow co-workers that they wanted a piece of the World Trade Center as a remembrance. So I said, to hell with it. We waited, we waited for hours. Then I approached one of the supervisors and he said, it's impossible to be relieved from the scene so (inaudible). They disregarded our request. Within the lines, the front lines they started moving units, so when we approached our turn, I spoke to Lieutenant Nevins. I said can you release us from the scene? No, join the party. Just park over there.

I didn't get that. People make remarks, but for me it wasn't that kind of remark to be made. After what I went through, I didn't want to hear something like that. I wanted to hear you know, man, thank god you made it or something to the fact that what happened, just somebody to listen, say let me tell you my part of the story.

Okay. You can return back to your Borough. I took the ambulance right from Chelsea Piers, drove up

the West Side Highway with all the soot spraying everywhere. I told my partner, Maximo, you going to do this? Everybody was going, you don't know what's in this stuff.

You know what, if I stayed there, if I did not made the approaches I did, I would have been looking, considered missing. I could have left the vehicle stranded. I could have abandoned everything, but there was something in me that just drove me to come back here. They always say, I remember when I was growing up, you get in trouble, you always run home.

So my first thing was to come right back home. I brought the ambulance back, drove back to here. When I got off here and they said, oh, you was down there. People were very fascinated by the ordeal and knowing that I returned back with the vehicle.

Then I was here for hours, you know. I didn't know how to take my uniform off. I showered here and I had worked overtime that day too. It was an overtime shift, thinking I was going to be in the slowest unit that morning and it just so happened it was that call. Then when I ended up, when the whole situation happened, then I come back and recollect, you know, for a few extra dollars I could have lost my

life.

You know, when you start analyzing things you see it differently, but in the heat of everything, I never had such an ambulance ride in years, because I work midnight shifts now. Driving down there through Broadway, and hearing all these emergency vehicles, you know, I realized that my skills are there, I mean, but I have to pull them out the pocket. The way I drove down there through cars, through cabs and through people. As you see the people on Broadway, how they were approaching, get out of the way.

You could see something major had happened, because the people in the streets were just like clearing the way, go ahead, you know. Something that no matter how many times you speak about it, it's always something that comes back to mention, because there were so many things that happened in that incident. I can recollect more as I continue to go on.

Driving to the scene I only wish I had a camera, because when I parked right in front of it, I could see the flames and the fire and I realized I was so close. That's when I knew that I had to make a move, being so close, so that's why I made that right

turn and parked there, Barclay.

You know, when the supervisor -- I'm not insubordinate, but when the supervisor told me -- asked me where was the triage area, I mentioned to him. I says Rector and Vesey. You have to go there. I said no, I can't. I got to set up right here. Look at these firemen. Look at all of them. There is about a good hundred of them.

There is no -- there was somebody standing back there with cameras and things, walking back and forth. There was one guy who followed me throughout the whole incident, snapping pictures, videotaping, back pedaling. Every time I looked he was right there. But, you know, these guys are -- I am so into my job. My job is not law enforcement, so I just look to help whoever is coming over.

So as I was helping the next fireman, this guy was snapping pictures, so I think for every firefighter that I think that I was helping, this guy must have had many photos of me and that's the only thing that I keep recollecting, that if I can only get this guy to get me a copy of this picture to see myself going through this whole deal, because I (inaudible).

I see the photos of the chaplain when he was

being carried out and it was similar. When I look at that photograph, I did that for a lot of firefighters. I mean I tried to come back with -- my only concern at the time too when the first building collapsed, is when I was really with my partner.

I held him tight, I ran with him and I told him -- he kept looking back, and I told him look, just don't trip. Told him one time, don't trip. I was holding him in the back and as we kept running, I mentioned that statement. Had he tripped I know I was going to leave him. Because there was concern for my life. I was worried about me.

From then on I just -- what I'm going through now is being reborn. I find myself to be more in the gym. I'm working a lot. I'm not normally a work horse, but I tend to try to ignore it totally. This incident with all the anthrax and all that, I don't even want to hear about that. It just started then. After that I returned back the third day.

I knew -- I had hope, but I sensed that there was a lot of dead people. I didn't want to return. After the third day, then I went down there and I returned back to Ground Zero to an area called the hole. I guess my first approach in realizing what they

were going through, the rescue phase of it.

At the time I could see there was just -- I found out that there was a makeshift morgue and just being there for the first time and pulling out one body, I says, you know, I said I seen enough. At that time we went out on our own, because we was having problems with being used properly down in that area, as EMS employees.

So we went on our own time and realized that -- tried to help as volunteers instead of being on a unit or assigned by staff. They would allow us to go down there and do what? Issue water, set up flashlights. Come on. There were better jobs to do. We tried to go down to rescue. We tried to help. At the time, I was devastated and I told my two partners, you know what, let's turn away from here because there is nothing we can do here. The greatest feeling of helplessness was there. Everything had to be done because they have to do the rescue and all that, but personally when I had that feeling of helplessness, that you can help nobody, the best thing is to retreat.

After that third day I didn't want to return down there. Not even for all the money they wanted to

pay me. They were giving 15 hour shifts. I didn't want to go back.

Q. After the first collapse, you had your bus still on Barclay and West. Do you remember where you moved it to?

A. I moved it back -- I moved it back to around Murray and West Street. After we moved it from there, that's when the second collapse came. I moved it back some more. After the second collapse we ran. As we were running in the second collapse, that's when I started directing people into Stuyvesant High School. Up West. Up West.

Q. Okay. When you arrived on Barclay Street, you said that an officer told you to park there. Was it an EMS officer, fire officer?

A. No, there was a highway police officer.

Q. Highway?

A. There was a highway police officer. That guy was unbelievable, how he handled that situation in that area. He alone saved a lot of lives, because the way he set that spot up. He was directing people. He told me listen, don't park over there, because I parked there and he said move it back. Give them some space, give them some space so we can get out, so I backed it

up. We parked it, we parked it across, right on Barclay facing toward the building. I had to back in facing towards the building.

You had to back in facing towards the building because I wanted the back of the vehicle to be open in case we had to treat the people and the equipment was out, so we had the back open. Back side facing towards the tower.

Q. Do you remember when you first got there seeing any EMS officers around that --

A. The only officer that -- I was happy to see him, was Lieutenant Albuerme. He is from Harlem. Then he was like over there, I know him for years on the job, his daughter attended the same school that my daughter attended. Holy Cross. He is the first one I saw.

Q. Okay, who was your partner that day?

A. My partner that day was Delgado.

Q. Do you know your vehicle number?

A. Vehicle number was 138.

Q. Okay. Any other EMS people around that you remember seeing?

A. There was another Lieutenant along with Lieutenant Albuerme there, I just can't recall his

name, but I have known him for quite sometime, because I have seen him on the job. He was there with me. As a matter of fact, after the first tower collapsed, we thought he was missing, because we could see him when he made the approach towards the initial tower had collapsed. We didn't see him after the clouds came back. I didn't see him thereafter.

Then I think after the second collapse and everything was said and done, now we was trying to help, I guess, we had this instinct where we tried to -- I realize that we tried to find our men and the only thing I could think of was make sure my partner was okay and find out where the Lieutenants were at the time.

Albuerme came back, we were able to -- I found him. The other Lieutenant was with him also, hugged each other and we couldn't believe. Then they started giving me directions on where to set up again. We were just trying to adhere to their demands as best we could.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. Well, you know, what I have to say is that I'm very fortunate. Like I said when I got back, I am

alive, so I must live. I survived through the twin towers collapse, so I'm fortunate. It wasn't my time.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, thank you. The time is now 0628 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110177

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FREDDY BURGOS

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

F. BURGOS

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 31, 2001. The time is now 0719 hours.

Q. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York conducting an interview with --

A. Freddy Burgos, emergency medical technician for the Department of Fire.

Q. Of EMS Battalion 14. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 14 and is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Freddy, just begin with when you were assigned to the job?

A. We got assigned to the job. We were responding from the Bronx, down the FDR Highway. As we approached, we see the two burning buildings. Apparently both aircrafts had already crashed into the building.

As we got downtown, we went through traffic to try and find the staging. We finally get to arrive at our staging area and we pull up. To my right I see one of the towers, I believe it's the first one that came down. In front of me on the other side of the street, there is numerous ambulances there.

So I decided I didn't want to put myself right in the middle of it, so I backed my ambulance up to the opposite corner. Just then a rumble was heard,

F. BURGOS

and then after it goes black and pieces of metal and so forth and so forth started falling on the ambulance. It goes completely black.

Thereafter, once it cleared up, I told my partner once it clears up we will get out, get the equipment and we will get out of the vehicle, because we were still in the vehicle. We were actually a little too close. That's where we wanted to go. When the first building came down, after the dust lifted from that one, in front of me, the other ambulances, most of them not Fire Department, private or some other ambulances, burning. I witnessed one vehicle crushed. I witnessed a limb inside the vehicle. There was obviously a person must have been dead inside it. The driver of the vehicle I believe it was.

What else do I say. Me and my partner, Karen Lamanna, get out of the vehicle. We put our equipment on the stretcher. We come down walking, or actually running back to any open buildings, where we could go inside with our equipment. People were in there and set up a little triage area. Little bit of that stuff. Not much thereafter, prior to the second building coming down.

Fire Department personnel and PD personnel

running into the building saying it's safe. Other people in there, including ourselves, were evacuated from that building and moved further away from the incident. As everybody was moving away, we are getting everybody. You could see obviously the body parts that were right next to us.

My partner goes one way. I go back to the ambulance to pick up some more O2 tanks and just prior to getting to the bus, I hear the rumble and I drop everything and I run out. As I'm running, I take a look back, see the cloud of dust coming at me and I go into one of the buildings with a little walkway type of deal and ducked in there and see everything come by, it goes completely black. I waited a little bit before I came out. Come out and I'm walking to find Fire Department personnel.

I started walking towards the water. I guess I figured if anything else came down, I'd go in the water. I walked alongside the water, until I wound up at one of the -- West Street or Chambers, I'm not exactly sure where it was. I walked over. I spoke to a Captain. I forget which Captain it was. I think it was Captain Rivera. He was looking at me and I'm all dusty and I'm white and so forth, and he says well,

where is your partner, I said I think she is dead.

He takes me to the MERV, puts me in there and from then on I stood there. Not too long before I walked up to -- caught a ride actually, up to the Chelsea Piers where everything was being stationed at. Before you knew it, that was the whole day. From there we got shipped back here. That was about it.

Q. Okay. When you first got there, were you on the West Side Highway, West Street?

A. I was right along the West Side Highway, parallel.

Q. Somewhere around Liberty?

A. Right.

Q. Okay. When the building came, the first building came down, after you got your stuff out of the bus.

A. My stuff was still in the bus. When the first building came down, we were in the bus when the first building came down.

Q. After that, when you got out of the bus, okay, did you come across West Side Highway, did you head west, do you remember?

A. I think I went down -- these buildings along this side here. We got out of the bus and we came

down, down south into one of the buildings in there. That's where we set up our staging area. That lasted about 15 minutes, before somebody else came in and said it's not safe. We came back out and I went to my bus real quick to get more O2 tanks and everybody was going south. That's the last I saw of my partner, by the way.

Q. She was heading south?

A. If I remember correctly, she was heading south on the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay.

A. I got caught up, because I went back to get more O2 tanks.

Q. Do you remember any -- when you first got there, any other EMS personnel that you recognized down there, officers?

A. Not officers, I saw a couple of people that were there. I remember I saw Patterson, I forget his first name.

Q. Patterson?

A. One of the workers that was there got hit by something coming down and he hurt his arm. That I remember. Somewhere along the way, there was another EMT, I don't remember who he was. We helped him, he

helped us with all our shit. I don't know where his bus was. I don't think he did either. That was -- the point we came down, when I came out of that building, after the second tower came down, I was alone here.

By this time, when building number two came down, I was alone. I didn't know where anybody was. I commenced going before the second building came down and jumping into one of these buildings. I remember falling on my face a couple of times. I kept tripping over body parts. Like they were covered by dust, so I couldn't see where I was going.

After that I came out and I started walking towards the water. I kept looking at the water because I kept saying to myself, if something else comes down, I'm going to jump in the water.

Q. You could see the Hudson from where you were on the west side?

A. I knew it was there. It was partially blocked, but I knew it was there. My wife works at World Financial Center. So I knew the water was there. From then on I met up with -- as we were walking along the water, I met -- started to see people, bump into people. A couple I knew, a couple of people. Joey Conzo, that was it. Until I finally got

to the (inaudible) from.

Q. Once you reached the Hudson, you went north towards Chambers?

A. Started walking up towards Chambers where --- somebody said something about Chambers as far as West Street, or whatever that street was, as far as the first safety area. So that's basically where I kept heading, along the water. Basically kept heading that up that way; rubble, mess, shit like that, body parts everywhere.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. (inaudible).

Q. Do you remember offhand what vehicle you were in, the vehicle number that day?

A. I think it was 448, but I can't be sure.

Q. What was your partner's name?

A. Karen Lamanna. She was ALS. I was working overtime that day. I wasn't even supposed to be working. I was off that day. I came in for overtime and that was my first job.

Q. Okay.

A. (inaudible).

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments?

A. We were too close, we were too fucking

close. It wasn't just EMS. It was the entire system. Too close. That's about my only opinion that, too damn close.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, the time is now 0731. The interview is concluded. The interview date was October 31, 2001, not as previously stated August 31, 2001.

File No. 9110178

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

SUPERVISOR FIRE MARSHAL BRIAN GROGAN

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

FIRE MARSHAL RIGNOLA: I'm Sal Rignola. I'm here with my partner, Cliff Krug. I'm on the eighth floor at Nine Metrotech, Fire Department headquarters. The day is October 31st, 2001. I'm here to interview Supervisor Fire Marshal Grogan about the events that happened on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fire Marshal Grogan, can you tell me how you responded, how you became aware of the incident that happened on September 11th and how you proceeded to the location.

A. I was working a Brooklyn base. I heard on the department radio -- I'm pretty sure it was Chief Barbara. He was calling for every available ambulance that they could get. It was kind of strange to hear something like that, like what was going on.

I jumped out of the chair, and I heard the guys in the squad room pointing to the TV. They were yelling, "Look at this. Boss, come over here. Take a look at this thing." I looked up, and the Trade Center, tower one, was hit. We didn't know how or what or what was causing it,

but you could see the fire.

When we looked out the bay window on the side of the building, you could see the tower clear as day. There was black smoke billowing out of this thing.

What did I do? I was sitting there. I think my wife called, and I told her to turn the television on, take a look at what was on TV. Then with that, we got a call from headquarters. I assume it was headquarters. I don't know who it was from at this point. Somebody was telling us, everybody get down there, everybody had to turn out to this thing.

So I was in the office when that call came in. I went back out to the TV. As I was getting the guys together, I looked up at the television and I saw the explosion of the second tower.

Q. The second plane coming in?

A. I didn't see the second plane, because the picture that we had I think was from the north view of the south tower. You could see that big explosion, that gas that exploded out I guess it would be the north side of the tower.

Got everybody together. I think it was at that point I heard the total recall, or it may have been before that, on the radio. There was so much traffic on it.

Q. You're speaking of the department radio?

A. The department radio, yeah.

So we got our stuff together, threw it in the car. Everybody left.

Q. Were you by yourself?

A. I drove with I'm pretty sure it was Stevie Heavey. I'm pretty sure he was with me. It was just him and myself.

We went down past the Army terminal to get onto the ramp of the northbound BQE. We went around a cop car. We got up onto the ramp, and there was a motorcycle cop right in front of us. He was going down the left lane. It just opened up. It never usually opens up for you, that road. It just happened to open up. Freaky thing it was.

We made it into Manhattan. We had the full view of the two towers the whole time, the whole trip in, which took only about five

minutes.

Q. How did you go to Manhattan? Through the tunnel? Brooklyn Bridge?

A. We went through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We went through the tunnel, and as soon as we came out onto West Street, I pulled the car over and just parked right there.

Q. Do you recall --

A. Where is it on here? Here's the tunnel. Right here. As soon as the tunnel ends and it ends right on West -- see this isn't quite right. But I pulled underneath here. You had the structure over the top of us.

Q. As soon as you came out of the tunnel, you parked the car?

A. Parked the car. We suited up, put our Fire Department gear on, what bunker gear we had, and we started walking up West Street. I don't recall if the other car was directly behind me at that point, because there was different squads working with us that day, the other supervisor.

So I was walking up West, and I noticed the first block we passed I noticed in the street right at the end of where the Jersey barriers are

that split up the road before you go into the tunnel -- I guess it would be Carlisle -- I saw the first body or parts of a body, upper torso, no head, no arms or legs. I saw another one across the street.

Q. These are from the people that were jumping out of the building?

A. No, I don't believe so. I believe it was from the airplane, people in the building and the airplane coming through and it blew these people out into the street, because you couldn't have jumped that far. It's impossible. Some of them were burnt. Some of them were just a big bag of bone and meat.

We walked up further, and we saw other things. I saw hands, I saw feet. We got up to the pedestrian bridge --

Q. Which is near Liberty Street?

A. It's right on the corner of Liberty and West. We started to stage some of our guys. As they were coming out of the tunnel, they came up to us and we pulled them over to -- we were going to go over to the command post at that point. We could see the command post from the other side of

the pedestrian bridge, the south bridge.

Q. At this time was the command post in front of the Winter Garden?

A. I don't know if that was a command post. I think it was actually in front of the Merrill Lynch building, because I saw some of the brass standing over there. I saw the big mask service unit pulling in, and I remember telling the guy to stop because there was some bodies in the street. I told him to stop and go around them. Then I saw a guy from Rescue, Ray Phillips. He had walked up to me.

Q. Which rescue?

A. He was in Rescue 3. I don't know if he's in a tack unit or something right now. But he walked up to me.

With that we turned around, we looked across the street, and we saw the first few people jumping out of the buildings. At that point it started raining people. You just stood there and watched it.

We were looking at the south tower, and somebody had come up to me and asked me if they thought that they were getting water on the fire.

We were right across the street from it. You saw this white smoke. You couldn't tell if it was a line actually hitting the fire or not. There was a lot of black smoke above it. So it appears as if somebody was in there hitting it.

Then our chief came over, Chief McKay. He wanted us on the other side of the bridge, the pedestrian bridge.

Q. At Liberty?

A. The south pedestrian bridge. I don't know if that's Financial four. I think it is.

We were staging there, trying to keep everybody together to see whatever orders we were going to take, to keep the guys right there. We just kept watching bodies jumping out, people jumping out of the buildings.

At that point I looked up, and it was Joe Pasquarello grabbed me, and he gave me a pull on my arm. He said, "Get the fuck out of there." I looked up --

Q. Were you still on West Street at this time?

A. Still standing there. The building just started coming down. It buckled.

Q. Are we walking about --

A. Two World Trade Center.

Q. The south tower.

A. It started coming down. We ran up the little hill that was in front of the building. I remember him yelling to me to follow the building south. So we ran up on this little grassy hill here, hit the front of the building. I remember Dr. Kelly just passing me. Before she did, she was going north. I don't know where she went after that.

We hit the front of that building, and then we started crawling. By the time we got to the front of the building, you couldn't see anything. There was absolutely nothing --

Q. You're talking about Dow Jones?

A. It says Dow Jones here. I don't know if that's the building or not that's there now.

We started crawling, feeling the building until we got around the corner. It's a different shape than this. That's not the building. It cuts in like this.

Coming down the across the front of the building, and you get hit with stuff. It's

getting heavier and heavier. You make the turn. There was a bunch of people. There had to be about five or six people in here. We came around here. We were going to stay there. We didn't know where else to go. I didn't know the building went down inside like this.

So we all piled up, and I heard Joe yelling to go down the ramp. There's a ramp down here that goes down to Albany Street.

So I grabbed the two or three people that were in front of me, pulled them down to the ground, and we started crawling. I hit something blocking my way. There was a fence here, something right across in front of me. I kept turning, right to around it, but I kept hitting the fence. It was a foot high or whatever.

I turned around and went back to the building. I could feel the building and felt over the top of this thing and just crawled over it. I grabbed the guy that was behind me, and we continued south on that ramp. We made the right on Albany, and there was a cutout in the building for a garage. It was a setback.

Q. So at this time you're between West

Street and South End Avenue?

A. Right. We're heading towards the water going west on Albany. We were still on the property here of that building. We crawled into this garage area. The outside of the building and the garage itself was maybe eight to ten feet, and then there was a rolldown gate.

It was the first time you could see anything from that whole trip from the front of the building around to the side. You could actually start to see here.

But as we're in there, cops were coming in. We had all kinds of people with us. We couldn't get in through the rolldown gate. We were all choking and throwing up and whatnot and trying to collect ourselves to some extent.

We decided we couldn't stay there. I was telling Joe Pasquarello -- he just got in there. I said we've got to get out of here because if you could actually see parts of the building laying in front of us, landing and whatnot. So I figured we were going to get buried in there, so let's just get the hell out of here and start heading towards the water.

So we left there, and we went down the sidewalk. We went down over the next corner. You couldn't even tell that we crossed the street. We went down as far as we could on Albany towards the water and went to the first building that we could get into. There had to be 50, 60 people following us in there. It would be the Hudson Tower.

So we went in there, and some EMTs and whatnot came in after us. They had some water with them. We stayed in there for a short period of time -- I don't know how long it was -- 15 minutes. We figured we couldn't stay in there. The cops that were coming in were saying the second tower was coming down. We had no idea what was going on, and I wasn't going to doubt anybody at that point.

So I went out the door to find the water, because we still couldn't really see the water. It was only a matter of maybe 100 feet from there. You couldn't really see the waterfront.

So I had a flashlight, and it actually started to work in that area. I found the water.

I just turned around and waved to Pasquarello and told him to come on down towards the water. We saw the fire boat was sitting right there.

So we got to the water, and that's when the second tower came down and you couldn't see again. We started crawling or running or just trying to get out of there as fast as we could down south on the esplanade. There were police boats and whatnot picking people up.

We made it all the way around the battery, right to the battery at the end of West Street. The smoke was still coming and the dust and whatnot, because it was all heading south on us.

We had a roll call down there, trying to circle up our guys and find out who was missing and who was where. The only one we came up missing was Ron Bucca.

We stayed down there. The assistant chief came down and told us to stand fast until we had further orders. Then they relocated us again into Battery Park. The chief fire marshal met us there and told us that -- he made his way down there and told us that the command post was

gone and Father Judge was gone.

That was pretty much the end of our --

Q. You never made it to the command post; right?

A. No.

Q. You know it stood at the south pedestrian bridge.

A. We had a view, though. We could see where the command post was on the other side north of the south pedestrian bridge. But as far as what people were there, I couldn't tell you.

Q. You didn't see anyone going in?

A. I just saw guys going in. You couldn't see who it was. It was crystal-clear when we were there. There was nothing blocking our view, but afterwards you see anything.

FIRE MARSHAL RIGNOLA: Thank you very much. The time is approximately 1042.

Thank you very much.

File No. 9110179

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF FRANK CRUTHERS

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RIGNOLA: This is Salvatore Rignola. I'm here with my partner Fire Marshal Cliff Krug. Today's date is Wednesday, October 31, 2001. The time is approximately 9:50. I'm at 9 Metrotech, 7th floor, speaking to Chief Cruthers, who is the Citywide Tour Commander. Chief, I'm going to ask you some questions about the events that happened on September 11, the year 2001.

Q. Tell me when you initially received the alarm and how you responded and where you went.

A. That morning I was off duty. I was at home in Rockville Centre, and I was having breakfast with the TV on and the news break came on that the Trade Center had been hit by an airplane. I immediately went upstairs to get dressed, to respond. As I was getting changed, I got a phone call telling me that - the same thing and I said that I knew and then was informed that the call was regarding the second plane. So I was still in my house when the second plane hit. I then get in my car and I drove myself directly to the scene.

Q. So you had no aide, you went on your own?

A. Right. I know that I came on the Southern State Parkway and the traffic got very heavy and I got off and came through the Brooklyn streets, and as I was

coming, I was still debating which route to take. I believe I came in the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. I came out of the tunnel on to West Street. I turned to the right and I parked pretty close to Rector Street. In the middle there were some angled emergency vehicles parked, angled into the median on West Street. So I parked there.

Q. West and Rector?

A. Pretty close to Rector. I got out of the car, got my gear on and walked north on West Street. As I was walking north, I contacted Chief of Department Ganci to find his location so that I could report to the command post for assignment. I also heard Chief Barbara on the handy talky --

Q. Do you remember the time you arrived about?

A. No, but that will become evident to me in a couple of minutes. I got to the corner of Albany and West Street. There was a pumper on West Street at the northwest corner of the intersection. I got a look at what was happening. I stopped at the pumper, opened the officer's door, I threw my shoes and my bunker pants into the officer's seat and put my boots on and my coat. And then once again started to proceed north on West Street.

There were some units there, along with a Battalion Chief and I gave them some instructions as to what to try to do. And while I was still in that immediate area, the south tower, 2 World Trade Center, there was what appeared to be at first an explosion. It appeared at the very top, simultaneously from all four sides, materials shot out horizontally. And then there seemed to be a momentary delay before you could see the beginning of the collapse.

At that point, I turned and ran west on Albany Street, okay, in an attempt to get beyond the corner of this building on the diagram marked Dow Jones. I got a ways down. As I was running down the street, the cloud kind of overtook us, then the air seemed to be filled with a lot of very light material. Most of it appeared to be paper. At that point, I dove on the ground on the south side of a car that was parked on the north side of Albany Street and there was some other firefighters there.

Q. Chief, that was between West and South End Street?

A. Yes. I told them to stay there. Some more debris came down, a little heavier but it didn't seem to me at that particular point there was any really

heavy stuff. Couple of people - after the cloud cleared, which took some minutes, there were a couple of people who were injured. I reestablished contact with Chief Ganci after the first collapse.

Q. The first collapse was at 9:55, so you figure around maybe 15 minutes before that?

A. That I arrived?

Q. Yes.

A. It's hard to tell. Time was -- like I say I know all the things that I did, how long they take I don't know. It all just tends to run together.

Q. After the first collapse --

A. After the first collapse I spoke to Chief Ganci again on the handy talky. I never heard Chief Barbara's voice after the first collapse. I was again making my way north and West Street was strewn with heavy debris. As a means of getting north without traversing the debris field I went into one of these buildings. It's a building where they had an entry on the southeast corner of the building. It's a grade level entrance and when you go in that entrance, there is an escalator that runs from southeast to northwest to the next level.

I had been in the building before and my

recollection was that if I went up that escalator, that it was a rather circuitous route to get from the south side of the building to the north side of the building, which is where I wanted to go. So I took a look around in that lobby, grade level lobby to see if there was access to continue more directly to get through the building and out the north side to get to the command post.

While I was doing that, I heard more rumbling. I took refuge on the west side of the escalator corner. Once again there was a tremendous cloud. It was pitch black. I waited again until the cloud began to lift. I made my way back around to the same entrance that I had come in, and then -- from that point, I don't remember what route I went by, but I made my way north up to Vesey Street.

Q. This is after --

A. After the second tower came down. I had given direction to some units working there. At that point, I was told that the command post had been drawn further back north up around Chambers Street. I made my way back up there. I met Chief Fellini. We exchanged what we knew about who among the command structure had been - who we could account for. Chief

Callan was up at that command location. And Chief Fellini asked me if I had seen Chief Ganci or Chief Nigro. I believe I learned from him that Chief Cassano had been moved to a hospital and we set it up that I would be the incident commander at the command post and Chief Fellini would be the operations officer, and would go forward, back down to the - closer to the site, set up an operations post and let me know what he needed and we would try to start getting up and getting organized.

A short time after that I believe, Chief Turi showed up at the command post and some time later, Chief Nigro arrived. I believe he had been over somewhere on the east side of the complex and came down and made his way back to where we were.

Q. So Chief, you'd never seen Chief Ganci, you only had radio contact?

A. I never saw him that day. I spoke with him on the handy talky, both before and after the first collapse. After the first collapse I was unable to get any response.

Q. Did you ever talk to Chief Barbara?

A. Chief Barbara I heard his voice. I don't remember whether we spoke directly or not, but I never

heard his voice again after the first collapse.

Q. Where was the command post set up that you were heading to?

A. My understanding was Albany - that the command post was somewhere in this area. Between Vesey and Liberty, but closer to Vesey.

Q. Near the Winter Garden.

A. From then, we continued to operate and we got word on the handy talky traffic that there was another group that had formed over on Church Street and Chief Tom Haring from the Eighth Division, now he's down in the Sixth Division, had set up and was operating on that side. We set up a staging area further up. Eventually we moved once things got going, and moved up closer to the staging area down a little closer to the actual operation.

Early on, there was concern that 7 World Trade Center might have been both impacted by the collapsing tower and had several fires in it and there was a concern that it might collapse. So we instructed that a collapse area --

Q. A collapse zone?

A. Yeah -- be set up and maintained so that when the expected collapse of 7 happened, we wouldn't have

people working in it. There was considerable discussion with Con Ed regarding the substation in that building and the feeders and the oil coolants and so on. And their concern was of the type of fire we might have when it collapsed. They shut down the power, and when it did collapse, the things that they were concerned with would have been. That's about it.

Q. Do you want to add anything?

A. No.

MR. RIGNOLA: Thank you Chief. It's 5 after 10, and that's the end of this tape. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110180

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FAROOQ MUHAMMAD

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is November 1st, 2001. The time now is 1035 hours, and this is Monty Feiler of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is Farooq Muhammad. I'm an EMT. Presently I'm on light duty at BHS. I normally work at Battalion 58.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the BITS office regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Could you go ahead, beginning with when you first became aware of the incident?

A. Well, I was going about my normal daily routine. I was driving along to work. I was actually driving along Flatbush Avenue, and what I saw was a lot of smoke coming from the direction of lower Manhattan. I didn't know what it was. I just saw that people were actually looking at it. I thought some building was on fire. I didn't know exactly what it was. Eventually, I made it to this parking lot where I sometimes park the car if I do bring my car, and I went inside and

these two gentlemen are talking and they're saying how terrible it is about what just happened. I go what happened? And they tell me that two planes went into the World Trade Center and I was shocked.

So what I did was I just left my car there and I ran across the street into the Fire Department Headquarters, where I work presently, and I looked at the TV in the waiting room for BHS, and I see that two planes had struck the World Trade Center. I was shocked, dismayed. My first reaction was to get there or to speak to somebody who was going there, see what the deal is. I knew I was on light duty, but I wasn't really concerned about that. I just wanted to get over there.

So what happened was I tried to find Captain Jay Swithers, who was my supervisor, and I found that he had already gone. He wasn't there. So I couldn't ask him and there wasn't anybody really to ask. So what I did was I teamed up with a few other EMS members. They were actually all paramedics. I remember the names of William Tier, a paramedic by the name of Bonnie, another one by the name of Roque Torres, another gentleman, I forget his name offhand. We decided to go together. We just left the building

and we started looking for an ambulance. We just basically flagged an ambulance and it happened to be a private ambulance. I don't even remember the name. I think it might have been Associate. But we flagged them down, they stopped for us, we jumped on and we went over the Brooklyn Bridge and we ended up in that part of town, lower Manhattan, where the incident occurred. But we weren't right in front of the buildings yet.

What happened was we met up with some other EMS people and we started to decide how we were going to work the situation. There was just pandemonium there. People were running around, people didn't know where to go, people were shocked, people were just frantic. Eventually, an EMS lieutenant said that we should -- I guess they set up triage across from the towers.

Q. Do you know which lieutenant it was?

A. I forget her name offhand.

Q. Okay.

A. It was the first time I ever saw her.

So we said fine and we together -- we decided we weren't going to split up. This was the initial thing, we weren't going to split up, and these are the

paramedics that I went with. We told each other let's stick together. So together we went in front of the tower and we found that there were other EMS members there that had already set up triage and they were triaging people who had asthma attacks, burns and stuff like that. I saw Captain Jay Swithers there, I saw Manny Delgado, I saw Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck there and -- actually, prior to even going there, I did see Ricardo Quinn. I did run into him and speak to him briefly.

Q. Where did you see him?

A. This is somewhere in that part of lower Manhattan, around there, somewhere around Broadway or something like that, somewhere in that area. I don't know exactly which street it was, but I did speak to him briefly. He had come in, from what I remember, an ambulance with somebody else, and after that I didn't see him again.

Anyway, we ended up in front of the tower and we were triaging people. We were giving them oxygen, giving them nebulizers. We had made a plan. There were ambulances out in front. We decided we were going to start transporting people, this is what we were going to do, and before you knew it, we heard a loud

noise, you looked up, and the tower was collapsing. So we started to actually run for our lives. The debris caught up with us. We couldn't see, we couldn't breathe. It was just horrible. I was actually suffocating. I thought I was going to pass out and die. I mean, at first I thought something was going to hit me because there was debris that was coming. There was just stuff falling everywhere. I covered myself.

Actually, while I was running, I fell because there were so many people running and I got trampled a little bit, but I got back up and started running again, and then all of a sudden I just couldn't run because I was suffocating so bad, I couldn't breathe, I couldn't see, and all I thought was, oh, no, here I am going to die now because I can't breathe, I can't see anything. So I started screaming a little bit, as much as I could. I decided to see if -- I was like is anybody here, anybody around me? All I heard was keep running, keep running. I heard a voice. So I just kept running.

Eventually I made it to -- well, actually, before the debris came, while the building was still collapsing, I was actually telling people to run because there were people who were frozen, like

civilians, people that were just frozen. They weren't moving, women. I remember mostly women standing there and not running and I was telling them run, run, run, you know, because they were like frozen. They wouldn't move. I guess I encouraged some of them to run because I made eye contact with some of the people and I started yelling at them to run.

So we started to run, and when I looked back, I actually saw the cloud coming, and so you couldn't outrun the cloud. It was just coming so fast and it was like, oh, no, here it comes, and then whoosh, it just passed us, and this was where it was like darkness and it was like breathing in like thick, thick dirt. That's all it was. It was just like every breath you took, it was like you were just suffocating because it wasn't oxygen, it wasn't air.

But after falling and getting up again and then just having the will to just keep running, that's what I did. I ran and luckily somewhere this door opened up. I didn't even know what it was. I ran inside. It happened to be a store. It was some kind of like fabric store because I saw a lot of like fabric stacked up while I was downstairs in the basement. There was a police officer down there. Somebody from

the Buildings Department was down there. I actually think I might have his name because later on I took his card. One second.

Yes. His name was Michael Carbone. He was down there, one police officer, another law enforcement officer, I don't remember his name, but he did have a firearm and a shield on, but he was in a suit. What we did, there was some water down there, so we were like clearing our throats. There was like thick stuff coming up. For a good ten minutes all we were doing, we were just coughing and trying to breathe. But a lot of debris was coming downstairs into there also.

But after I regained myself a little bit, I spoke to this gentleman, Mr. Carbone, and the other law enforcement person, and I said I want to get back out there, see if I can help people, and they agreed. They were like let's see what we could do. So the three of us got together and we went back outside, and when we were outside, it was just so thick still, the debris. It was like so thick. We were right close to the tower that in that area the debris was so thick that after running a little bit, we decided to go into this other building that was some kind of like not-for-profit organization. I don't even know the name.

We go in there and, once again, there we are coughing and trying to get water, and we had some people that were there. We started washing them off, helping them to clean themselves off. There was a woman down there who had broke her leg. We carried her downstairs and put her in a comfortable chair because she was very frantic. She was screaming. We told her to calm down because we didn't want her to excite the other people that were coming in. So we took her downstairs, we propped her leg up, made her comfortable, told her to relax, calmed her down.

Q. Do you know her name?

A. No, I didn't know her name. None of the phones were working. We tried to call our loved ones. I have loved ones in Manhattan who worked on Liberty. I have a loved one who worked on Liberty and Broadway, another brother who was in midtown Manhattan. I couldn't reach anyone. I didn't know if they were okay or not. But luckily, thank God, I found out later on they made it out okay.

So while we were in this place, we were helping people clean themselves off. People were coming in like totally covered. You couldn't even tell what color they were, if they were black or white,

because they were all covered in this debris. Everybody was like one color. Then they couldn't breathe. It was in their ears, eyes, and we were cleaning them off, and the stuff was like burning. It was like burning your skin. The stuff was really bad.

What we decide to do then was to get out of this building now and try to go back outside and help people. So what we did was we got these garbage bags and a bunch of these people that ran into the building that we were in gave us a bunch of wet rags -- I mean gave us a bunch rags that we wet. We asked for rags; do you have any rags? They found some rags and they gave us the rags and we soaked them, we put them in garbage bags, and we got a bunch of bottled water and we put those in bags and we were going to go outside.

But right before we were going to go outside, the next big, loud noise comes and here comes another big, thick cloud of debris. So it's like we opened the door and we see the debris coming and now people were running and we were like trying to let as many people in as we can. We're like okay, come on, get in, get in, and before you knew it, we had to shut the door because otherwise the whole place was going to be filled with it. So we shut the door, and at one point,

you could see through the windows, and when the debris came, it was pitch darkness again. It was like you couldn't see anything outside. You didn't know what was going on with the people.

After that cleared a little bit, we let more people in and we helped clean them off, and then we finally went outside. I grabbed the bottles of water, and Mr. Michael Carbone from the Department of Buildings, he and the other gentleman, they grabbed the rags and we went outside and we started giving rags to people and bottles of water to people, like here. Everybody was like more than willing to take it. They really needed it. People were covered in the stuff, they couldn't breathe, they wanted to clear their throats. So we were giving it out.

I walked one block and then I saw -- I didn't see any EMS people at this time. We were outside. I don't see any EMS people. I see police officers but no EMS people. But then after walking a couple blocks, after like ten minutes, I see Captain Jay Swithers and I was so happy to see him. I ran up to him, I gave him a hug, I'm like I'm glad to see that you're okay because we were like so close to the tower that I was sure that a lot of people got hurt or lost. He told me

that he was over there, he ducked under a truck somewhere eventually and that he was okay and I was happy to hear that. I told these gentlemen that I'm going to stay with him and they decided to move on.

So me and Captain Swithers, we started to just try to figure out what we're going to do. We started walking around. In the meantime, I was giving everybody water. I had cups also that I took because I knew that eventually the water was going to run low, so I wouldn't give people bottles, I'd put it in cups, and that's what I was doing. When the water was running low, I started putting it in cups, giving it to people. People were running over to us and asking us where do we go? What do we do? All we could tell them was go to the Brooklyn Bridge, go over the bridge and go to Brooklyn, you know, just stay away from that area, just go towards the bridge and try to go to Brooklyn, try to get out of Manhattan. That's all we could tell them. We didn't have any other advice to really give them.

Finally, we kept walking. We made it towards South Street Seaport area and we started walking along that and we were like trying to figure out where to go, and we were both like concerned. We didn't know if the

next building was going to come down, there was another bomb, you know, it's like one of those tense feelings, it's like a war zone. There was the thick debris, it was like three inches on the ground all over the place. It was like walking in the snow. People were covered in this, people who had no shoes, people's clothes were ripped. It's just a horrible scene.

Anyway, a whole group of police officers were walking by and we asked them, do you know if anything is going on, any kind of like treatment area? They said, well, we hear there's something going on at South Street Seaport, South Street ferry area, Staten Island Ferry. So we walked over there. We kept walking and walking, and when we got there, we saw that they started setting up some type of triage and we helped set that up. There were IV lines and all kinds of equipment set up in the lobby of that area. Just then a whole like large group of firemen arrived from Staten Island and everybody was cheering them and they went about their business.

So I remained there doing triage, but Captain Swithers, he eventually left because he was part of the USAR team, Urban Search and Rescue, so he had to go do that. So I stayed there and I helped treat a lot of

people who had lacerations, they had sprained ankles and stuff like that, and I helped put them in the stair chair. I helped wrap them up, treat them, put them in the stair chair and wheel them to the ambulances and put them in the ambulances and the ambulances took them. I didn't do any kind of ambulance driving or anything like that. I remained at the South Street ferry.

Q. Do you know who was supervising that area?

A. Chief...

It's on the tip of my tongue. I forget his name offhand.

Q. Were there any other EMS people there that you recognized that you may have come across?

A. Timothy, a gentleman by the name of Timothy, who was at BHS also. That was his first day full duty again. I saw George Gatt, EMT. There were some Metropolitan people there also. I forget their names offhand. Bruce Medjuck was also there at the time. He ended up there. So did Manny Delgado. One of the people in the ambulances for doing transport.

Q. There was a Fire Department car there, too.

A. Idris Bey. I eventually saw Idris Bey.

Q. Who is that?

A. He's an EMT for the Fire Department.

Q. How do you spell that?

A. B-e-y is the last name. I-d-r-i-s. We sort of gave each other a big hug and everything because he's actually a black Muslim and I happen to be a Muslim and we both like were just shocked at this because why would anybody do this in the name of any religion, you know what I mean? Just a horrible thing that people were actually looking at Islam as the enemy, not just those people who did that. So it was good to see him and actually just talk about it for like a good five minutes, just reminding ourselves that there's no way that we could ever accept anything like this as being Islamic, you know, ever, because we know from the Koran that this is an evil thing and Islam never teaches this.

Also, I had another EMT friend there, Stephen Valladares. Joan Hillgardner was there. Hillgardner. She was there. She's part of the union. She was just doing a lot of good work there, she was doing a lot of triage, she was giving a lot of people emotional support. Just a whole slew of EMS people there. We were treating a lot of firemen. It was just a very emotional thing. Eventually it started catching up

with you, what's going on. So we did a lot of treating there. A lot of firemen came in with eye injuries and sprains and strains. We had cots and everything set up and we were treating them.

It was hard. We were running out of masks, nobody had any face masks, so everybody just kept breathing that stuff in because nobody had even the disposable type masks. We really needed the heavy-duty ones, but we didn't even have the disposable ones. Ambulances were like completely finished. Nobody had any. It was like people who were part of hospitals eventually would come by and say, look, you need masks? I have a few. It was like that. It was like we had no masks. It was just terrible.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to add before we conclude, anything that you think is important, that you want to reiterate?

A. Well, I'd like to reiterate the fact that, as a Muslim who works for the Fire Department, that I can say that, as far as my family is concerned, as far as my friends who happen to be Muslims are concerned, that this is no way, you know, this no way reflects Islam. Islam does not teach this. Islam is a religion of peace and it teaches brotherhood amongst all people and

races. Regardless of what religion they are, you're supposed to treat them with respect, just like you would treat your own mother or father with respect. What you would want for yourself, that's how you treat them.

I think not only was this an attack on the United States, but the people who did this also attacked Islam because now here you are with millions of people in the world thinking that Islam is something that's of violence, when really it isn't, when really it's these people who chose it as a means to get their -- whatever they did, you know, to get that done, not to actually portray the true Islam. It's just something that they tried to use to manipulate. That's what a lot of people do, unfortunately, and a lot of people out there who claim to be Muslims do manipulate people into thinking that killing innocent people is good when Islam clearly teaches you that it's something that's not tolerated by God and never will be and it shouldn't be tolerated by any Muslim.

So I'd like to let people know that, hopefully, I just hope that people could realize that. People could just do some research on their own instead of just listening to somebody who says that, oh, no,

Islam teaches hatred or violence. Hopefully, they could research on their own and find that, no, it's the opposite. It teaches peace and love for all humanity, whether they're Jewish or Christian or Buddha or whatever, rich or poor, men, women or children. It actually teaches respect for the most vulnerable, for the weakest, poorest people. You treat them equal, as you would anyone. There's no like you're better than me or I'm better than you because I'm Muslim. It just doesn't work that way.

It just hurts me that this happened, just like a slap in the face, that's how I see it. For good-hearted Muslims who follow the true message all over the world, I feel this is like a slap in the face, and as an American, I hope that as a nation we could conquer this terrorism, I really do hope that, because my family came here many, many years ago for a better life, to live the American dream. I was born here, raised here. I'm an American citizen. This is my home. I plan on keeping this as my home for as long as I live. I mean, I'm an American. Where am I going to go? This is my home. I truly hope that together Americans can overcome this and that peace could be a part of our daily lives instead of having to worry

about getting on the train or traveling or driving in your car worrying about some kind of terrorist attack, or opening your mail, worrying about getting sick.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Okay. On behalf of the Fire Department, I want to thank you for participating in this. Can I just get the time, please?

A VOICE: 11:00.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We'll conclude the interview at 11:00 o'clock. Thank you.

File No. 9110181

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PAUL ADAMS

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: Today is November 1st, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0647 hours and I'm conducting an interview with...

EMT PAUL ADAMS: Paul Adams, Battalion 49, Shield No. 2212.

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: We're currently at EMS Battalion 49. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you could start with when you were assigned to the job.

A. Yes. That morning we got the job at approximately 9:00 o'clock in the morning from Elmhurst Hospital. We came down Queens Boulevard. We saw one of the towers had been hit, engulfed in smoke. We got across the Midtown Tunnel. We went in the tunnel, came out. We came down Second Avenue south, got over to Broadway. We got to the site at 9:15 at Church and Vesey Street, where we parked the vehicle. We walked down to Fulton and Church where they had a triage set up in front of the Millenium Hotel. At that time the second plane had just hit, just prior to our arrival.

We were asked if we had our triage tags by our Captain. At this time I just turned around.

People were walking out of the buildings. We grabbed one patient who we found out later had 70 percent burns on her body, second and third degree burns. We took her, a couple other people, and shot out of there, went up -- I can't remember the street we went up, but I ended up going to -- it was the wrong way facing Broadway in front of St. Vincent's. Me and my partner, we got her out with some other people.

Then we went back in, back to the site, back to the same area, the triage, and about five minutes later, we looked up, we were screaming, I looked up, I see one of the buildings coming down. I ran about 30 feet. I found out later on I went up against -- I tripped over a fire hose. I lost sight of my partner, Mous Diaz. I got up and went up against what I found out now is the Millenium Hotel's parking lot garage gate. It was closed. It had like a foot overhang.

I was with this FBI agent and I put my helmet over my face and just stood against the gate and took a quick look and here comes the debris from all the building. It lasted for about ten minutes. I couldn't breathe. My lungs were filling up with this stuff. I don't know what it was. I thought I was going to die, either the building debris was going to hit me or the

building I was under was going to collapse or my lungs were going to collapse. I was hyperventilating. I just thought to myself I've got to slow my breathing down. I did that and that's the only thing that saved me.

About close to ten minutes later, the dust starts dissipating. I grabbed the FBI agent and I started another vehicle that was like 20 feet away. I put him in it. I said I'll be back in a minute, went around, got six, seven, eight other people, put them in the truck, and then I went back to the site looking for my partner, Mous. I looked around for a couple minutes. I didn't hear nothing, no reaction. So I shot out of there. I had the windshield wipers on for about four, five blocks. It was still cloudy out, dust.

I dropped these patients off at St. Vincent's and then went back in. In the process of going back in, No. 2 came down, and by the time I got, there they had already completely, totally -- you know, it was collapsed. I just went back in, got like another six, seven, eight people out. I had them in the front seat of the vehicle. I had one guy riding on the hood of the truck. I got them to St. Vincent's, dumped them

out there. I know it's a shitty word to use, but that's just what it was, just get them in and get them out. I didn't take no names or nothing, except for the original, first one, the burn patient. There was just no time to be filling out paperwork or anything else.

I went back in again afterwards, looking for my partner, looking for Carlos Lillo, and he's gone now. I found my partner about four, five hours later, and I went over to where they had another triage area on West Side Highway and I believe it was Vesey, by the pedestrian bridge. I was checked out in the ambulance over there and I was fine, came back out, and about five hours later I went to Mount Sinai Hospital, where they kept me for like four hours, did tests. I had bruises on my knees, my shoulder was hurt, killing me, constant cough, and that's it.

Q. When you first got there, you parked your vehicle up on --

A. Vesey.

Q. On Church and Vesey?

A. Yes.

Q. It was at that point, roughly, that the second tower got hit, right as you pulled up initially?

A. Which are you talking about; the first one?

Q. Yes. When you first got to the scene.

A. The second tower got hit, I learned, I believe, as we were under the Midtown Tunnel.

Q. Oh, okay. All right.

A. It was about 9:11 or something, 9:12, the second one, the second plane hit?

Q. Okay. When you got over here into Church and Vesey and Fulton, any other EMS units over there?

A. Yes. We had the medics. They followed us. I forgot to mention that. They followed us from Elmhurst Hospital. We got the jobs together and we both went.

Q. 49 Victor?

A. 49 Victor, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Carlos Lillo, who's now gone. We both followed each other in all the way through from Elmhurst right into downtown. When we got off at Vesey and Church, we parked the vehicles right there. As far as other vehicles at the time? I think there was like a private ambulance company there, numerous fire trucks. I really didn't see any other people.

Q. Any EMS officers around that you recognized in the area?

A. Yes. There was a Captain over there. There was Bruce Medjuck. He was there. He's a nice guy, good people.

Q. Do you remember the Captain's name?

A. [redacted]

Q. Okay.

A. Her first words out of her mouth were where's your triage tags? Where's your triage tags? There were people walking around with their green tags on and I just looked at her and I said are you kidding me? I said these people should be just getting out of here. Get out of the site. The buildings didn't come down yet, but it was still debris and everything else coming down in the area from the plane and fuel. So we just grabbed our first patient.

Q. The burn patient?

A. The burn patient, right. That was the first one that we grabbed with her friend that walked down the 83, 84 flights. I feel they're going to find a lot of people with triage tags on with greens on them that because of so-called people following protocol that was basically made for, I think, just like a regular plane crash somewhere in a field, somewhere in the ocean.

But I don't know. Like I said, you're going to find a lot of people dead with green triage tags around their neck.

Q. After you got the burn patient to St. Vincent's, do you remember what route you came back to the scene on?

A. Yes. Broadway.

Q. You came down Broadway?

A. Shot down Broadway, yes, down regular Broadway.

Q. Do you remember where you came west back into the site?

A. Yes. I'm not sure exactly. I did some fenagling to get -- you know, I like went up one block and down another just to get back to the same site again.

Q. Back to Fulton and Church?

A. Yes.

Q. That's when the first building came down?

A. Yes.

Q. Right as you got back down there?

A. About five minutes later, when we started treating some other people. There was one person that sounded like she was having an MI because she had

walked -- it was an elderly woman. She had walked down 80 some flights also. We had just put her on the stretcher, actually, and that's when people looked up and started screaming and we looked up and that's when the first one came down. We pulled the stretcher as far as we could with her on it, you know, get her out of the way. Then we found out later, though, that she was all right. She got up out of the stretcher also. She seen God, I guess, seen the light.

Q. So after the first collapse, you took another load of patients up to St. Vincent's?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you come back the same way, down Broadway again?

A. The same way again, yes. I was stopped by a Chief. I forgot to mention that, too. But he asked me to -- this is the third time I'm going in. The second one I just came down. He asked me to pull over to the side. He was setting up triage. It was like five blocks away. He had three ambulances at the side. I said how many patients you got? He goes one. So I kind of cursed him out, and I said what, are you nuts, and I just drove right back in.

Q. Do you remember where on Broadway that was?

A. No. I have no idea.

Q. Do you remember who the Chief was?

A. Some young guy. I'm not sure.

Q. When you got over to West and Vesey, any idea what time that was? That was after the second --

A. Yes. That was about an hour after that because I was looking around for my partners.

Q. About an hour after the second tower came down?

A. Yes. Then I was just physically exhausted and I had problems seeing, coughing, my knees were killing me.

Q. Okay. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. No. I've pretty much said everything. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: Thank you. The time is now 0659 hours and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110182

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM QUICK

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. McCOURT: The date is November 1, 2001. My name is Tom McCourt, Investigator, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview along with Murray Murad, Investigator, New York City Fire Department. We are interviewing Firefighter William Quick.

Q. Mr. Quick, just identify yourself please.

A. Firefighter Quick, Ladder 134, badge number 12123.

Q. Can you describe the events that happened on September 11, 2001.

A. September 11, 2001 started with for me putting my children on a school bus at 8:30 in the morning. After that, I walked into my house. I was getting a box of tank top Fire Department shirts to bring to the fire house from my volleyball tournament. I was driving in my car towards Queens. I heard that a plane hit the World Trade Center. With that, me being a firefighter through and through, I just started heading towards the World Trade Center. I'm one of these guys that always carries his gear in his car and a fire extinguisher, just in case of an emergency.

As I got on the Van Wyck and as I got up to about the Grand Central Parkway, I met the NYPD and I

followed NYPD all the way into Manhattan on their tail, as fast as I could. I drove with NYPD and met up with another madman ESU truck and he got me down to Church and Vesey Street, where I parked right on Church and Vesey. Right behind I think was Engine 21. I'm not even sure. I'm not too sure. They were parked right on the corner there.

Q. What was the scene when you got there?

A. When I got there the buildings were still on fire. As soon as I parked my car and got out it was mass hysteria. There were people running every direction imaginable, screaming and yelling. People were running past me with blackened smoke faces and people just running with terror in their eyes. No coordination or anything going on down there, anything like that. I started donning my fire fighting gear that I had in the car.

With that Lieutenant Eddie Datri, from squad one, came running up the street and he was getting dressed while I'm getting dressed. He looked at me --

Q. He was off duty?

A. I think he was off duty too. I think he must have just came from the fire house because he was still in uniform. He looked at me and he said Billy, can I

put my sneakers in your car. I said yes. He said all right. I will meet you up on the fire floor. I said I will be there. That's the last I saw of Eddie D'Atri. He ran from Vesey to Church right between, I think, building four and five, right there. That would be this building here. This is the fire building, right, yes, this is the fire building. I was parked here on Church and Vesey and he ran down this way and of course the building is right here so I'm sure he ran right between these two buildings.

Q. Which buildings?

A. Between four.

MR. McCOURT: Between four and two.

A. And five, but he ran between four and five. I'm sure he ran to the closest building, knowing him. He was a great firefighter. With that he left me and I donned all my gear. I started going across Church Street and when I went across Church Street, I saw the door open on building 5 and a police officer yelled to me. He said I need help, I have people trapped down in the subway. They won't move. Like that. So I was like all right, I'm here to help. You know.

I think this man saved my life really.

Q. You went down there?

A. I didn't go down into the subway. I went in, and as soon as you go in this entrance, there is like either four or five escalators, I can't recollect, right there. What it was was all these people were bunched on the escalator. They all had darkened faces, smoke, bleeding, injuries, but they were in mass hysteria. They were like --

Q. Where were they coming from, do you have any idea?

A. What I think this policeman did is, I think, he took them from the north tower, maybe the north tower or the south tower or what have you because of falling debris and I think he huddled them into this building and walked them through the subway. Because they all had blackened faces and that's why I feel they were from the building. So what I did is when I got to the top of the escalator, you know, I have been in a rescue company. I'm pretty quick to adapt to situations like this. I just yelled out really loud Fire Department. All of a sudden they all stopped and looked up at me.

Q. Took command of the situation?

A. Right, and I just said there are ambulances outside to take care of you. Just walk out these doors

and go to your left and go towards Vesey Street. When I ran in, I saw like, you know, two or three ambulances as I was running in. So I just -- but the cop, he said to me I can't get these people to move. I said all right. With that they all started moving.

I said look, you lead them out. So the cop led them out and they kept on going. There was like around 50, 60 people easy. I looked at every one of their faces as they went by. They were all blackened, bleeding, with different injuries, and so they all got out and all of a sudden I looked down at the bottom of the escalator and there was a guy there, an older gentleman. I said pal, come on, let's go, you got to get going. All of a sudden the guy looked up at me, and he was really bleeding profusely from the head. So I ran down the escalator stairs, I grabbed the back of his belt and I ran him up the stairs. Now I got back outside. He was the last one.

There were ambulances there. These people just I think, scurried, I don't even think that they went to the ambulance. I carried the guy to the ambulances and said here you go, to the Fire Department EMT. I said you will be all right. I turned around and when I started running along --

Q. Where were the ambulances parked, do you know?

A. The ambulances were parked like on --

Q. By your car?

A. Yes, by Church and Vesey. Yes, there were police cars and an emergency service truck right there, a couple of police cars. The ambulances were right there. When I started to run back, all of a sudden I heard the rumble. Now all of a sudden I see people running towards me. I said all right, maybe part of the plane fell off in the building or a section. I had no idea that the whole building was coming down. So what happened was there was by Fifth Street, there was like a doorway. It wasn't really a doorway. It was just like an I beam. These I beams -- this is four and this is five building. These I beams are right here. This is where I stood for the first blast and the entranceway was a little further up from the subway.

I stood here and with that, gray smoke came and all of a sudden, black smoke came. When the black smoke came it was such high heat that I had to get down on one knee. The heat was so intense that I laid on my stomach. I laid on my stomach. At this time I was laying on my stomach, my head was hiding inside my coat

and I was saying to myself, you have been on the job 20 years. You have been through every tough fire in every situation. You have survived. You know what to do. Just hang in there. You know, I'm breathing inside my coat, breathing inside my shirt and my T-shirt. I'm just, you are out in the middle of the street, just stay alive.

With that, someone steps on me and the guy said "Who's that." I said Fire Department. The guy said: "I think I'm burnt." I said pal, I can't even see you. I said just stay next to me until the smoke rises. I will see if I can take care of you. It took a good ten minutes. It was a beautiful clear day. I explained this to other firemen, like I was in a bedroom with a mattress fire. That's how intense the smoke was. And for me to hide inside my coat and not be able to breathe is pretty intense. The high heat. This guy thought he was burned.

Q. Did he stay with you?

A. Yes, he did, yes yes. He was a Fire Department EMT. Then after a good ten minutes, the smoke lifted where you could see each other. It was just snowing out from the dust and the soot and everything like that. This guy had 3 inches of hot

soot on top of him. So did I. I stood up and brushed my eyes off and got all the stuff out of my mouth. He started shaking. He was wearing a short sleeve shirt.

Q. He didn't have a -- he probably didn't have his jacket on?

A. He didn't have a jacket on. The EMTs -- you know, it was a crystal clear day. I brushed off his arms and everything and he kept looking at his arms and he said: "Oh, man, my arms are so warm." From what I could see it doesn't look like any burns. Maybe you have like a sunburn or something like that. I said "Are you all right." He said "Yeah". I said are you okay to walk and everything. He said "Yes". He just left. I never saw him again. He went on his way.

After that I stood there. I looked around and it was like the night of the living dead. It was like it was snowing out still. Everyone had the thousand mile stare on their eyes, like coming out from where they hid, walking across Church Street and just looking. I had full fire fighting gear and I stepped out and I just looked around. Then I walked across Church Street from the fire building and looked up at the building and saw that it was still burning. So I was like, all right, I don't think I have to go into

the building because I got a feeling there are more people in the street hurt from the collapse.

So I started my search down Church Street, checking all the vehicles. They were all wrecked with debris on top of them, everything like that.

MR. McCOURT: Continuing the interview with firefighter Quick.

A. At this time I walked across Church Street. I saw that the building was still burning and I felt it was my need to stay in the street and look for victims from the first collapse. As I went down the street, I checked out every vehicle.

Q. Describe the terrain --

A. The condition of the street, everything was covered with 3 to 5 inches of soot. Debris in the street, it was everywhere. Papers, things from the office building. Further down towards Liberty, you could see parts of the building and everything like that, but I didn't get down there yet, by the Millennium Hotel. I wanted to make a diligent search of the area.

Q. Did you find a lot of people?

A. I kept zigzagging back and forth and checked out all emergency vehicles on the street. I kept

looking on the Church Street side of the -- between four and five building and kept walking down and looked between four and five and I didn't see any people. People started coming out and looking like what has happened just now. Everything like that. They were all emergency workers and some were workers from buildings and everything like that. In fact, there were two guys that came out, and there was an engine parked probably on Dey Street or something like that, and there was an ambulance on fire.

So these two civilians started -- you know, to grab a hose to put it out. I walked off and searched the ambulance that was on fire and looked around. I looked up at the building and I was like, you know, the first one collapsed, maybe the second one could collapse.

I said listen guys, forget this ambulance. It's in the middle of the street. It's not a priority. I know you mean well. I said just look for victims laying in the street. They put down the hose. I said just look around for people. Everyone had this look of disbelief on their faces.

Q. Did you see the second building?

A. I could see the second building still

burning.

Q. The other one, it was totally gone?

A. Totally gone. The smoke cleared up, just smoke laying over the rubble, over the ruins. I kept walking down. I kept zigzagging on the street, kept going back and forth. That way I wouldn't miss anybody across the street or on the other side. I was like, I would say I met those two guys on Church Street and I met maybe another three or four people on Church Street as I was walking down.

Q. That was it?

A. That was it. People coming out of the woodwork, just looking, you know. I kept walking back and forth, like I said, making searches. I made it all the way down to the Millennium Hotel where I just got in front of the Millennium Hotel. When I got in front of the Millennium Hotel, all of a sudden I had my back to the towers. All of a sudden I heard the rumble again. This time, I figured, I just started running up the steps of the Millennium Hotel. And all the windows were taken out on the bottom.

Q. They were already out, right?

A. They were already out. What it was was a men's clothing store in there. I remembered the old

football thing. You know, if you are getting chased by a guy, don't look back because it wastes time. So I was just like I'm not looking back, I'm just running. I had surgery on my left knee, so I'm still a little injured. I'm still not hundred percent running. So I just kept running, running, running, and dove into a building. I looked at the building and there was two gigantic pillars in the building. I went right behind a pillar and as soon as I went behind the pillar, darkness set in again.

Q. Same scenario?

A. Same scenario. This time I'm in the building all by myself. I am in there and pulled my coat up and get behind the pillar. Covered, same thing. Having a talk with myself. Come on, you can survive. You know, hang in there. Breathe, breathe in your coat, breathe here. I'm coughing a little bit. This time --

Q. Did you feel that intense heat this time too?

A. I didn't feel the intense heat, but this time the smoke lasted longer. Maybe because I was inside the building or what have you, but the smoke lasted more than ten minutes and I was down on the floor. I would say at least 15 minutes. Like that. I kept looking at my watch, like how long can I breathe and

everything else like that. I kept going for breaths in the armpit of my arm and breathing in there and breathing through my hood.

The smoke finally cleared. When the smoke finally cleared where I could see stuff around me, I walked out to the steps and it was still charged, still smoke. All of a sudden a guy came up to me, I think he was a fire patrol, because he had a red helmet on. He said "Who are you? " I said Billy Quick. He said "I have heard of you. I will stay with you. I have a good chance of staying alive with you." So I was like all right. Stay with me. I stood on the steps of the Millennium Hotel for 25 minutes because the smoke was so heavy and it took so long to get out, for it to get out of the street and everything.

From the steps of the Millennium Hotel, the wreckage that I saw was right across. These are the steps, that's the handrail and this is the wreckage that I saw. Famous wreckage there.

Q. That's all that was left?

A. That's all that was left.

Q. Pile of rubble on top.

A. There was heavy smoke all through this area. I just stood there. I then, like, I was like oh, if I

go in the pile and start searching for people and they send another plane I can't move out there, I'm a sitting duck. That's why I waited on the steps for 25 minutes. In that 25 minutes I overlooked everything. Same thing, you know, people just coming out of the woodwork very slowly, very cautiously. You know, looking around, looking for people.

Finally after that, I remember looking at my watch. It was like 12 o'clock. So I guess I stood on the steps a little longer than what it really was. It was 11 o'clock. It was like the top of the hour. I set off and walked across the street. I walked on all these ruins, all the way to Liberty Street and I came back to Church. In the middle of Church, all of a sudden a black fireman from 10 engine came walking up. This guy had the thousand mile stare. He was just like -- I said, how you doing. He just, he couldn't say anything. I said all right, listen, stop, open up your coat, okay, open up your bunker pants, okay, do you know where your company is? He just shook his head. I go all right. I was like, all right. I said from here, do you know where your fire house is? He said "Yes". I said I want you to go to your fire house and just stay there. That's all I want you to do. He was

a young guy. He was black and I could tell from his helmet that he was pretty new but he wasn't a proby. That was the last I saw of him.

So then I just went from -- I stayed on the Church side and I went from building four and I searched in building four and was going into offices looking for people. The building started -- was on fire, and the building just started getting engulfed in flames. I was making searches just as the fires were starting.

Q. Where were you in the building?

A. First, second, third floor. I made it up through the rubbish into the building. I started looking for people in there too. The place was so vast. I figured I would just stay on Church and just work that area. Go back from four to five.

Q. Did you find anybody?

A. Didn't find anybody. Not in the buildings. Not in the middle of these two buildings. I got to five building and I went inside and yelled for people. No people at all. I kept walking back. I finally left about 6, 6:30 that night. Just like totally exhausted. My car was parked here, Church and Vesey. My car got totaled. It got wrecked. Windows were

smashed out of it, the front grille was all smashed. My insurance company totaled it. They were like that's it. So I lost my vehicle.

Q. Did you come across anybody after that time while you were, you know, for those couple of hours --

A. I didn't come across any civilians, any victims, any body parts.

Q. -- any supervisors or anybody else?

A. No --

Q. Independent pretty much?

A. Independently just going around searching. I was the first one on this pile looking for victims. I know that for a fact, because I was the only one walking out there. Then all of a sudden ESU cops came and they started towards the outskirts like that. Then after that when I left them, I just walked out and I said I bet nobody searched these buildings. That's when I went in the building and I started searching four and five.

I had been through a lot and it was pretty late. After hours of being there I just sat down. I had been through the mill here. I said I'm on vacation. So I guess I will head home now. I called my wife from inside. There were other people inside

the clothing store with me at the Liberty hotel there, Liberty plaza. Millennium Hotel. The security guard, he was like do you guys want to call home, tell them you are all right. I says yes, please. I got in touch with my wife and I said I'm okay.

From there I just worked nine days straight down there. That's --

Q. Did you touch base with your officer at 134 at all?

A. I came back and I told him I was down there for the collapse. In fact on my cell phone I called my wife saying listen, I'm going in, there was a plane hit. I have to go in. She goes you are on vacation. I says yes, well, that's the way it is. That policeman saved my life. The one that came out and said I need help here. I said I'm here to help. I don't care who it is. That was a big factor right there. I would have been around the corner in this area too, going towards the building, just like every other man. That's the way it is gentlemen. I hope your news is good news. I hope that helps you a little.

MR. McCOURT: Time is 8:45. Concluding this interview. For the record the interview started at 8:20. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110183

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ORLANDO MARTINEZ

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today is November 1, 2001. The time is 740 hours. My name is Richard Dun from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Working with?

A. Fabiola Quevedo from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with?

A. EMT Orlando Martinez, Battalion 4.

Q. Shield?

A. 2815 shield number.

Q. In your own words, can you describe the events leading up to the events of September 11, 2001?

A. Early morning, about 8:40, I was parked down at Church and Barclay, regular normal routine, getting our breakfast. While inside the deli a few minutes later, there was a large explosion. We went outside, the building shook we were in, looked up and we saw the top half of the World Trade Center on fire.

My partner ran to the vehicle with me and as we were running he called over the air for an explosion at the World Trade Center. I'm not sure if it was the first transmission, but it was 30 seconds afterwards. We were a block away.

Q. What was your unit designation?

A. Unit 01 Adam.

Q. Tour 2?

A. Yes, that's our regular unit. We got in the vehicle. We drove one block to Church and Vesey in front of World Trade Center 5, in between 5 and 4, right on the corner. We opened the doors up. As soon as we opened the doors up we got overwhelmed by patients just coming over to us for help. People were bleeding, tripping, minor injuries, some major, we had some second degree burns run up to us initially.

We continued to call for back up. About 4 or 5 minutes later, we finally got the first back up; that was the medics.

Q. When you first pulled up was there a lot of debris on the ground, what was the scene like?

A. No, no debris. Not where we were at. We were parked on Church and Vesey. Later on there was a lot of debris, but most of the debris was, I think inside the courtyard of the World Trade Center, not so much on Church and Vesey, not yet anyway.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and panic at the time?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. People were running --

A. Well, they were running towards us, asking us for help, asking us for help, asking us where to go. A police officer came up to us in plain clothes and told patients in the ambulance -- we were packing the ambulance, we couldn't kick anybody out. Usually we have a triage outside sitting on the sidewalk. We just couldn't stop everybody. He told people in the ambulance it was a plane accident. It's not a terrorist attack. Once he said that, a few minutes later the second plane hit.

After that everybody -- they didn't believe him any more. Some people jumped out of the ambulance, some stood inside. Once the second plane hit, the shrapnel from either the plane or the building started hitting the top of the bus and the area around us. Anybody who was near the ambulance ran inside the ambulance and ducked for cover.

We closed the doors. People inside the ambulance were screaming. We were trying to calm them down, telling them to relax, including my partner.

Q. What was his name?

A. EMT Frank Puma.

He was calm though. For the most part. We did our best. About a minute later I told Frank we

have to get out of here. It's not safe to be on this corner. So I jumped out of the back, went to the drivers seat and put the vehicle in reverse and went forward down Vesey Street towards Beekman Hospital.

We had a second degree burn patient with respiratory problems, so we needed to get him out of there. For our safety and to just transport at least, the busload of patients.

Q. At this time, both buildings were still standing?

A. Oh, yes. Once we started taking off, I guess 30 feet in front of us, there was a lady on the ground by the curb and she was just waving her arms. That's all she could wave. Her legs were crushed. Apparently she got hit by part of the landing gear, one of the tires of the airplane. There was a large tire next to her.

The person who was next to her, I guess worked with her, said something hit her. It may have been the landing gear. It was a large piece of metal that was so sharp it slit her whole back open, buttocks. Her legs were exposed, bones. I told Frank, jump out of the back of the bus, get the stretcher. So we took the second degree burn patient out of the

stretcher, threw him on the bench. We placed him on the bench. We took the stretcher out, took the long board.

Q. In your words.

A. Yes. We boarded her as fast as we could. There was nowhere to grab her. She was too slippery, so I grabbed the hip bone. That was exposed. We just kind of picked her up, put her on the long board and we strapped her up, put her on the stretcher and took as much flesh as we could. It was just hanging all over the place, put it between her legs. Put her in the ambulance and rushed her to Beekman.

From there we dropped off the first seven or eight patients. Came out the ER after we dropped everybody off. Actually we dropped the first patient off, the lady with the -- that got hit with the landing gear. When we got back to the ambulance a minute later, it was empty, so I guess the doctors outside took everybody out of the ambulance. I don't know what happened.

Went back to the ambulance, there were purses, wallets, people's personal belongings in the back of the ambulance. I grabbed everything I could, go into the ER, dropped it off, told the nurses here's

everybody's belongings. I guess they sorted it out.

We cleaned as much as we could, whatever we could on the long board, not the long board, the stretcher. So we just wiped it down. No sheet. Went back over there. Went back to -- we tried to go back to Church and Vesey, we knew there were a lot of people there, but we saw most of the ambulances going up, I believe it was Barclay Street toward West, there was a new staging area.

Dispatch said to go to the staging area, so we rediverted to the staging area.

Q. Buildings are still standing?

A. Still standing, yes. Very swift, still within half an hour, we had to be out there. We started going towards the staging area. We got flagged down by Hatzolahs. They had critical patients by the Church, so we rediverted one block and we treated a few more people injured there. Hatzolah had three busses, so we let them take care of them. They transported and we went back to the staging area.

We never made it there the first time. We attempted the second time. We got there. We parked on Vesey and North End, with all the other ambulances. Once we parked there, they told us stay by the bus and

wait for further instructions. We stayed by the bus and waited, and I realized that we had almost nothing left in the ambulance. We depleted most of our resources.

I told Frank stay with the bus. I have to go to the LSU, Allan Cruz. It was half a block away. I said I will be back, don't worry. He goes all right. I went over to the LSU, got some water and some more supplies, restocked the ambulance. After I got all the supplies I started walking back towards the ambulance and dispatch on the radio goes everybody run north, the building is leaning. So I started running towards the bus. I didn't see him. I said maybe he left already.

So I ran this way towards Stuyvesant High School on the right. I went up Vesey, I made a right towards Stuyvesant High School. My partner Frank went to the left towards the water. He's a good swimmer. I'm not.

They said some people jumped into the water. I'm not sure they did. Anyway, I ran to the right. He ran to the left. After that I didn't see him for two hours after that, maybe an hour and a half. I presumed he didn't make it out of there. He presumed I didn't make it out of there.

Q. This is the first building collapsing?

A. Right. There was an explosion and after we started running, I was able to make it to Chambers and West, where I only saw one EMT, EMT Vega. She is new here. She was the only EMT I saw from the station and with all the cops and everybody else running, rescue workers. I grabbed her and I said just stay with me. We will try to get out of here.

So we made it to Chambers and West, which is about 4 blocks from Vesey. We stopped, looked up, waited a few seconds for further instructions. The new staging area was Chambers and West Street at that time. We waited there I guess about 10, 15 minutes. That's when we heard the building collapse. That's when they told us to run again.

We ran again, up north, as fast as we could. We made it to the -- I made it to the St. Vincent's garage, I think it's on Vestry. I ran two marathons in New York. When you got to run, you run.

Q. (inaudible).

A. Yes, it is. We made it up there. Waited for further instructions. Nobody knew what was going on, nobody knew where to go. They told everybody stay out of the World Trade Center area. Don't go back in.

It's not safe. So I was looking for my partner about an hour and a half. I still couldn't find him. I presumed he was missing. He presumed I was missing. An hour and a half later an ambulance comes full of soot. It's all covered in white and he is in the driver's seat.

Q. Was that your vehicle?

A. My vehicle, my partner made it out. I don't know how he did it, but he did. He was able to get out. He had one EMT on the right-hand side on the passenger side of the ambulance, D'Angelis. He was off, he just came out of his shift, midnight, and I guess jumped in the truck and he came down to help.

Q. Who was that?

A. Actually he came down in his personal vehicle to the World Trade Center. D'Angelis. I forgot his first name. He came in his personal vehicle. He drove to the World Trade Center, parked it by the World Trade and started helping out and he met Frank Puma there. They both jumped in the vehicle and they drove up West Street. I met Frank by the St. Vincent's garage.

After that we stood there for about, I guess another half hour, 40 minutes. Time is a little flaky, man. I can't really remember too much. Everything

seemed like it went so fast. I guess half an hour. We all convened, we all got together. We met everybody we could and then started calling the station. Every time we saw somebody, we would call the station and we started making our list of who saw who.

Half an hour later they told everybody the building's leaning again. Everybody run north. Everybody got in their vehicles. My vehicle was packed with EMTs and paramedics in the back. Like a can of tuna in there. We jumped in the vehicle and we just gunned it to Chelsea Piers, the new staging area. That was the third one we went to.

Q. You are talking about the second building collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. The first building hit?

A. Right, the first building, it was already collapsed and after I guess the second building, they told us to start running again. That's when we took the ambulance to Chelsea Piers. I'm almost positive. I'm not sure. So we are at Chelsea Piers. We parked there, just waited for further instructions. We parked the vehicle facing south, so I made a U turn. Parked by the pier facing south. Went to the nearest officer

who was there. The highest rank was a Lieutenant; no chiefs, no captains.

Q. Who was that?

A. May have been. It was a Lieutenant, I think Miller. I'm not sure that's his name. I don't know if you know him. Went up to him, saying we are 01 Adam, we are here. He goes okay. So we just stood by the bus and we just waited. We just walked up and down a little bit, staying as close to the bus as we could and started looking for our members, anybody we knew. That's what everybody was doing, just looking for somebody they knew.

There were too many Maydays already. We couldn't get through on the radio. People -- Mayday, help, trapped, can't get out.

Q. But the radios were working?

A. The radios were working. It was just very hard to transmit.

Q. Anything else? Any other people that you saw down by the site, like officers, Chiefs, things like that?

A. Chiefs. I saw Apuzzo, Captain Apuzzo. He finally came with a van full of people.

Q. Was that during the collapse or after the

collapse?

A. That was at -- Chelsea Piers? I believe it was at Chelsea Piers. It may have been after the collapse. It was probably. That's about it. Most of the tour 2 I guess we saw there. Some tour one came over that worked the night before and were still lingering around came over. Tour 3 came a little bit earlier. They showed up.

That's about it. As far as names and who I saw, there was a lot of people. I can't remember everybody. That's basically it.

MR. DUN: At this time the interview is finished. It's 755 hours.

File No. 9110184

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT GREGG BRADY

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today's date is November 1, 2001. The time is 10:20 a.m. I am Richard Dun in the New York City Fire Department working with.

Q. Fabiola?

A. Quevedo, of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with --

A. Gregg Brady Battalion 4, EMT D.

Q. Gregg, in your own words and description please describe the events of September 11, 2001 this year.

A. Okay. I reported to work normally as I do, reported in at 8 a.m. At the time of the first crash, I was sitting in our office speaking with the ALS coordinator of Division 1, Esther Coarse, when we heard a loud bang, we both thought it was a sanitation truck, either dropped something or they crashed. Never thinking it was a plane.

At that time, we heard a lot of talking on the radio and I got a call from Captain Mark Stone saying to load up vehicle 849, a Suburban, and be waiting for him downstairs. As he arrived, we proceeded down to the north tower of World Trade Center. As we were proceeding through the Battery Park

tunnel, as we came out, we saw the second plane hit the south tower. At that time, traffic was very dense and it was very hard to get through.

Q. Was it dense because there was debris on the ground yet?

A. Yes, there was a lot of debris on the ground. There was a lot of people looking up, watching, a lot of people not knowing what to do.

Q. Was it chaotic or anything like that?

A. Yes. Very chaotic, people, they were evacuating busses and stuff like that. I managed to make my way through and I parked vehicle 849 across the street -- across from the south tower on the West Side Highway. At that time, me and Captain Stone met up with Chief Gombo, and Chief Gombo and Captain Stone proceeded on talking on what courses of action that we should take.

After meeting -- after their meeting, Captain Stone proceeded to ask me to instruct 3 units to follow us into the north tower's lobby and set up a triage area. At the time, as we were going through, it was very chaotic. A lot of jumpers. Had a body laying about 20 feet to my right.

Q. Were the radios working at that time?

A. At that time radios were working, cell phones we were having a lot of trouble with. We proceeded through a broken window that the Fire Department broke to lead access into the south tower. We proceeded to set up a triage area. At that time plans changed and we transferred the triage area over to 7 World Trade Center, in the lobby.

From that time, I proceeded with Captain Stone back into the south tower to meet up with Chief Gombo again. Chief Gombo proceeded outside, so we went outside and I found myself standing underneath the south tower.

Exact place, I believe, was across the street near a toll booth. I remember a toll booth. At that time, as they were speaking we heard a loud rumble and we look up and we saw that the south tower was coming down. We all turned around to go run and all we saw was a building. I pretty much thought I was dead. I didn't see anywhere else to run. Although we saw a bunch of firemen running into an underground parking garage, so seeing that, I followed them into the underground parking garage and huddled against the wall waiting for the debris to come in.

Q. Was Captain Stone in --

A. Yes, Captain Stone proceeded in. At that time, we lost each other. After all the debris stopped from coming in, I turned around and I couldn't even see my hand in front of my face. I had no clue where I was, I was breathing a lot of dust and concrete dust. It and was all globbing up in my mouth and I tried to spit it out and a bunch of firefighters turned on flashlights and started yelling come towards the light.

We found an exit, the way out. We found an exit, the way out. We came out a side exit. Came out through a stairwell, a side exit of a stairwell on the bottom floor. Came around and proceeded around to the front of the second building. Actually --

Q. The first tower?

A. The first tower. We were standing right over here.

Q. The parking lot and the driveway is over here.

A. There is an underground parking lot somewhere over here, right?

Q. Right here.

A. Okay. So we ran over here.

Q. You came out in the Financial Center?

A. Yes, we ran underneath 2 World Financial Center and we came out in front. I don't know how we came out. There must have been a side exit out. When we came out in front it was just as dark as it was out there. You know, we came outside and I thought -- I didn't even know we were outside it was just as dark as it was inside.

From there, at that time I still lost Captain Stone, I hadn't seen him. I met up with Chief Carrasquillo. I met up with him outside. I know him from being Chief Ianarelli's aide. I met up with him. We proceeded to 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building and we -- they set up a plan of action. They set up a triage area in that lobby.

Plans changed again. I met up with -- I saw Captain Stone in that lobby. They moved the triage area to -- I'm not sure what the building is called.

Q. North End Avenue?

A. North End Avenue and Vesey Street, there is a building right on the corner. At that time we proceeded into the middle of West Street directly underneath the north tower. At that time, I had a very tight feeling in my stomach, just experiencing what I went through with 2 World Trade Center, being that

close. I didn't feel at ease at all.

We were standing underneath and Captain Stone was speaking again. We heard -- I heard 3 loud explosions. I look up and the north tower is coming down now, 1 World Trade Center.

Q. Did you see any fire Chiefs or anybody like that?

A. I saw two fire Chiefs. I don't recall their names. I saw two fire Chiefs, Chief Basile, Captain Stone and I don't recall who else was over there. We were standing in a circle in the middle of West Street. They were talking about what was going on.

At that time, when I heard the 3 loud explosions, I started running west on Vesey Street towards the water. At that time, I couldn't run fast enough. The debris caught up with me, knocked my helmet off. I tumbled and then eventually I started running again. I made it behind a building on North End Avenue. I set up a triage area in that corner building and at that time I started treating patients.

I was standing around and I saw a whole bunch of patients coming in. I started treating -- I do remember treating a 3 star Chief from the Fire Department. He was on a backboard and we put oxygen on

him, we are bringing in equipment. They were setting up ambulances outside to get them out. Was treating regular pedestrians, regular civilians.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos at that time?

A. A lot of chaos. Inside the building was Chief Gombo, Chief Pascale, Chief Basile, Captain Stone and a Lieutenant that I'm not sure -- I don't recall his name, from EMS. They were talking over a strategy of what else was going to happen, what they should do. At that time I left and I started treating patients again.

After that, I left with Captain Stone to the West Side -- we left to go to the West Side Highway. I'm not exactly sure why or --

Q. Did you happen to go north or south?

A. We went north on the West Side Highway, after they talked about what strategy. We started walking towards Chelsea Piers, because they set up a triage area up there. From what I remember, Captain Stone was injured during the second tower coming down, and we met up with Chief Randy Hirth and Lieutenant Grace Cacciola, and Captain Stone was transported to Bellevue for an x-ray on his shoulder. After he was released, we returned to Battalion 8 for about 20 minutes and we

proceeded back down to Ground Zero.

After that, we were -- I'm not sure. I believe we went up to Chelsea Piers and we started --

Q. With Chief Hirth?

A. With Chief Hirth, Grace Cacciola and Captain Mark Stone.

Q. So Mark came back?

A. Yes, Mark came back.

Q. You all went back to Chelsea Piers and that's where you stayed the rest of the tour or the remainder?

A. We stayed up there for maybe I would say maybe half an hour, 40 minutes, then we proceeded back down to West and Chambers where they set up the command post for EMS, where Captain Stone met up with Chief Basile again, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Pascale and Chief McCracken. They started laying out the plan for --

Q. Long term operations?

A. Yes. For long term operations and from there I met up with Chief Steffens. At that time I was acting as his aide because Chief Ianarelli is out on medical at this moment. We were instructed to head up to Chelsea Piers and Chief Steffens was to take command of Chelsea Piers. At that time, I acted as his aide,

recovering information as well.

Q. Okay. So that's --

A. That's basically my experience.

MR. DUN: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time is 1030 hours.

File No. 9110185

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DANIEL LYNCH

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. TAMBASCO: I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We are in the main conference room on the fourth floor at Metrotech in BITS. The time is 1632 hours.

Q. The subject of the interview today is?

A. Firefighter Daniel Lynch, assigned to Ladder company 7. I'm presently detailed to the Fire Commissioner's office as an aide to the Fire Commissioner.

Q. Would you be good enough to just tell us your story right from the beginning.

A. On the morning of September 11, I was on my way to the medical office. I was not on duty that day. I live on Staten Island. I was just about at the Verrazano Bridge when I heard a radio report that there was a fire at the World Trade Center. I changed radio stations to a news station, at which point I heard that there was a plane crash and they were interviewing civilians that had witnessed it. There were several different accounts; small plane, large plane, so on and so forth.

It became apparent that it was a large plane. By the time I got on to the Verrazano Bridge, I certainly could see that there was a large fire going

on at the World Trade Center. There was a large amount of smoke coming from that area. I was continuing on to go to the medical office, which is at Fire Department headquarters.

At some point in the radio broadcast they had mentioned that another plane had hit the other tower. I could visualize that from where I was on the Gowanus. Traffic was starting to build up. I got off the Gowanus and was taking the side streets. Along the side streets I remember not only traffic being heavy, but large amounts of people coming out of the subway stations. Everything seemed to be kind of quiet. Kind of an amazing thing. I guess I imagined that it must have been like it might have been years ago during war time, you know.

Obviously after the second plane hit it was obvious to me and apparent to the news outlets that I was listening to that this was some type of a purposeful terrorist attack. Sometime in that trip I had heard over the radio that there was a total recall of all Fire Department personnel. I was on my way to headquarters anyhow, so there wasn't anything different that I would have done. I can recall just getting to the back of Metrotech. There is a -- on Flatbush

Avenue. A van in front of me stopped, a fire officer got out of the van because I believe it was Engine Company 236 was en route down Flatbush Avenue, towards the Manhattan Bridge. A fire officer waved the Engine Company down and asked if they could wait for him to get on while he parked his van. They said they would wait. He parked his van behind Fire Department headquarters, grabbed his gear and got on.

I checked into it in the next day or two and it was Lieutenant Edward D'Atri assigned to Squad one, who was lost in the World Trade Center. When I finally got into the building I went upstairs to the 8th floor, asked what to do, what we should be doing. Basically the only people that were left on the 8th floor were some of the secretarial staff with the exception of Mike Vecchi. Mike was not aware of anything in specific that we should be doing right now other than let's sit and wait and find some direction as to what might happen.

A short while later, somebody had said that the first building had collapsed and certainly was very much a surprise to myself and anybody else that was present. When that building collapsed we had not heard from any of the staff on the scene, anybody from Ray

Goldbach, the Commissioner's executive assistant, to the Commissioner, to the First Deputy Commissioner. Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, anybody that I could think of that we would have heard from on the 8th floor they hadn't heard from yet.

I had made a determination that we needed to try to contact them in some fashion and I was in the process of getting a list of Nextel phone numbers so we could start to call them on the Nextel phone number. We didn't have the Nextel available to us to just beep them on the walkie talkie portion of the Nextel so I wanted the phone numbers.

In the process of procuring them, I ran into a Firefighter Patrick Cleary, who works in the press office. He was going to go over to the scene. Bear in mind that both myself and Pat Cleary were dressed in sneakers, shorts and T shirts. He said -- he asked me if we had any gloves around. I found a couple of pairs of work gloves in the Commissioner's office. I asked one of the secretaries up on the 8th floor if she could try to call as many people on the Nextel list as possible and has she got in contact or has anybody contacted her to start to develop a list of those people. At least we would start with some type of

tracking point for senior staff, I guess was the thought in my head. Pat Cleary had in mind that he had to track down Commissioner Gribbon, who was his direct supervisor in the office of public information, who he had also not heard from.

We took the Commissioner's spare Suburban and headed over towards the towards the site. As we crossed the Manhattan Bridge, there were numerous people walking across the bridge, obviously had been involved in the collapse of the first building. Some people with no shoes. Some people with -- certainly everybody was in disarray.

We drove down along Bowery to Park Row South and as we got closer to City Hall, it started to be the development of the dust that was still floating around. We got to the end of City Hall Park. There was certainly some traffic problems, some increased dust condition. There was some firefighters in different areas starting to muster up in the area and head down towards the World Trade Center plaza.

Traffic caused us to go north on Broadway to Murray Street. We attempted to get masks from several different ambulance services and finally on the corner of Murray Street and Broadway there was an ambulance

there that had a couple of extra masks for us.

Just as we got the masks and were trying to figure out what we were going to do next as far as head in what direction, we started to hear a rumble that was about a thousand times more intense than the sound of the subway that runs underneath the ground, but something similar to that. Like I said, a thousand times more intense. With that, somebody came running around the corner and I always make the comment that I don't think his feet were touching the ground. To me I would assume it was a police officer. He had a badge around his neck. He was holding a handkerchief over his mouth and he was saying run run run, the building is coming down. There were some other people behind him. The dust cloud was right behind them. We dove back into the Suburban. By the time we got the windows rolled up and the doors closed there was already a dust condition inside the vehicle and then it just was like several minutes of I say black snow, because the debris and the dust just kept coming down on us.

We really had no idea what we were going to do. Even if I had decided to drive the vehicle, if I knew that I was going straight up Broadway, then maybe we could get further away from the building, but there

was a vehicle blocking me and I couldn't do that, so it was just a matter of let's wait and see what happens. Afterwards, several days later I asked Pat Cleary what we did. For the most part we were just like oh, shit what are we going to do.

When the dust settled, we got -- proceeded to go down Murray Street across Church Street, across West Street, sorry that's West Broadway.

Q. West Broadway?

A. I think at one of the intersections of West Broadway possibly or possibly Greenwich Street, there was a fire truck there and we came up with the idea that maybe we could use some tools from the fire truck. It was Ladder 124's rig.

We got off. There wasn't much left on 124's rig because they had obviously taken a good portion of their own tools with them. But we did take one or two axes, there was a flashlight. We took a Herst tool. We took an oxygen bag and thermal imaging camera.

At that point I also ran into a Firefighter that I know from 4 Engine, who I believe was the MPO of 4 Engine that day. His name was Bob Humphrey. Bob was rattled to say the least. He mentioned that he thinks his rig was crushed. He thinks his guys were crushed.

He is not sure. He didn't know where he was going. I just mentioned to him make sure that somebody knows where you are, wherever you go make sure somebody knows that that's where you are.

We continued down in the Suburban down to West Street. When we got to West Street it was like a movie type of scene. There was about a foot half deep of paper and dust and any movement created more of a dust cloud. The first people we came across were several firefighters and Chiefs. The one Chief was Chief McNally, who I believe is a Deputy Chief. He was in the process of trying to set up a command post. We walked down further towards the site, which would be Barclay or Vesey Street. I think on the intersection of Vesey Street and West Street I saw Chief Hayden, a Deputy Chief from the First Division. Chief Hayden was aware of who I was because I know him, but certainly was also obviously rattled. Both of these two Chiefs were covered with dust, so they were certainly part of whatever happened.

We decided to continue down to look for anybody, the main mission being the senior staff, although anybody that was found. I had had the thermal imaging camera. I had looked around, there were fire

trucks crushed, fire trucks on fire, cars, trucks, not all on fire, but several on fire, large pieces of steel. I guess some of the sheathing from the building, I don't know if it's aluminum or what, but other types of metal. The foot bridge was down, which I think was considered the north foot bridge.

We had turned on the thermal imaging camera, made a pass underneath some rigs, underneath the walkway that was crushed down. I can remember looking under the walkway and seeing a crushed fire truck. I don't know what company it was, but the lights still being on even though it was crushed down.

At one point I ran into a firefighter -- a Fire Lieutenant I think from Rescue 1. Name I'm not sure of. At that point he had started to climb over some rigs and go into another area underneath that foot bridge and being that I didn't have any equipment at that time, I thought it best that I hand off the thermal imaging camera to him and go and try to procure equipment if I was going to stick around the scene any longer.

I do recall somebody being, I think what it might have been the top floor of 6 World Trade Center, which was also looked like it was from a movie set the

way it was devastated. From the top floor window, which would be the northwest corner and I do believe there was somebody with an apparatus making an attempt to possibly get a ladder up to that person. I don't know what the end result of that was.

When I walked back towards the corner of West Street and Vesey Street, I saw Commissioner Gribbon and Lieutenant McLaughlin, who also works in the Fire Commissioner's office. I proceeded to go inside what I guess is 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building, make a phone call on a pay phone to Fire Department headquarters where I told them that I had accounted for Commissioner Gribbon and Lieutenant McLaughlin and I was also informed by them that Commissioner Von Essen and Captain Goldbach were at the quarters of 24 Engine. I told the girl who answered the phone, who was Sandy, to make sure that she reached out to their wives and let them know that we had accounted for them.

I had also questioned them if they saw anyone else, such as Commissioner Feehan, Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro or Commissioner Fitzpatrick or Commissioner Tierney. They had said that they had seen them but they weren't quite sure whether they saw them after

both buildings had come down or not. I didn't make the assumption that they were accounted for at that point.

I was heading back up to Murray Street where the Suburban was parked and at that time I think told Lieutenant McLaughlin that I was going to go to 24 Engine and see what the boss was doing and see what he needed. At which point I walked back up to Murray Street. There were some more firefighters starting to gather at that point. Chief McNally was still there, I think a Chief, Mark Ferran was there, several people, Louis Garcia was there, Chief Garcia. At that point I said I'm going to go up to 24 Engine. I got in the vehicle and made my way up West Street to 24 Engine's quarters.

When I got to 24 Engine's quarters, the Mayor's people were there. The Fire Commissioner was there and his executive assistant, Ray Goldbach. They were having a little bit of a meeting behind one of the offices. I acknowledged them through the glass window. When he came out, he asked me what was going on. I told him what I had known, what I had just been previously said and that I had a vehicle here for him, what did he want to do. He said well, just stick around, let's see what we are going to do. There was a

brief press conference.

We went from 24 Engine's quarters to the Police Academy, where we started to set up a temporary command post or a command center I should say. Also with us at that time were 2 fire Marshals, Fire Marshal Mike Owney, who is now promoted to Lieutenant, and Rich -- I'm not sure what Rich's last name is. Somewhere along the lines they had come across Commissioner Von Essen and they had said to him if nobody is with you we will stick with you and be secured and he agreed to that and they did that.

At the command center on the 6th floor of the Police Academy, we had gotten some phones that we could utilize and we were starting to do whatever we possibly could as far as get information from the scene, get information from headquarters, kind of regroup in a way.

There was many meetings that the Commissioner and the Mayor had in and out of offices. I guess at one point the Governor showed up and some additional press conferences. I guess at one one point, some additional staff came, such as some of the other Commissioners' drivers and at one point when we first got there, being that I was in the shorts and T-shirt

when I first dropped the boss off and found out where we were and what we were doing, I told him that I was going to go get a uniform, so I stopped by my own fire house, which is Ladder company 7, a few blocks away from the Police Academy and I got my bunker gear and some work duty clothing.

Then I also went to Engine 39 where we parked the Commissioner's vehicle and I got my uniform and proceeded back down to the Police Academy. One thing that I noticed when I was going to 39 Engine, which is on 67 Street between Third and Lex, the New York City blood bank is on 67 Street between First and Second and there was a line all the way around the corner of people to donate blood. I felt that this thing had just happened minutes ago and I was kind of amazed at that, you know.

We went back down to the command center. Probably spent the next several hours going back and forth from the site to the command center for several different reasons. The possibility of some recoveries, to get information, to get some communication set up, whether it was by cellphone or by 800 megahertz radios. Communications I know it was a difficult situation in the beginning.

I believe it was about 10 o'clock at night, we were back down at the scene along with -- I can remember Chief Fellini being there and the Commissioner. It seemed like they were trying to gear up for whatever the tasks were going to be for the overnight. Lighting was an issue, we were getting some lighting, heavy equipment was an issue. That was coming in. I remember earlier in the day there was a meeting and I don't recall exactly who was there or where it was at, but we talked about how it was going to get dark fast and we needed equipment.

There were many issues about the amount of people that were there and how we could control them and the amount of apparatus that was there and how we could control that and certainly seemed to be a monumental task in the late hours of that day, but the early stages of the whole operation.

That's pretty much a good synopsis of the first day. I think by the time we finished up that first day it was probably around 2 or 3 a.m. By the time we dropped the Commissioner off and tried to get some semblance of what we needed to do from our standpoint of view as the Commissioner's aides. Picked them up the following morning at 6 a.m. and that became

a routine for about seven days. I think that's pretty much it as far as that first day.

Q. Anything else you would like to add to it, just --

A. The only thing it's something that I'm sure many people have said and I just recall that those first -- those first minutes from the time that sound started, the rumbling started to occur and the dust started to fall and then stopped to get gear and equipment from the fire truck and then continue down to West Street and getting there and seeing the crushed fire trucks, crushed cars, vehicles on fire. It was like a movie set.

It was amazing and the people that I did see and I didn't see anybody that was hurt physically at least serious. But all the people I saw certainly were rattled, understandably rattled, but because might not have been able to get the answer that you wanted out of them, you know, but understandably.

As time went on we had heard of some of the fatalities and we were hopeful in many cases about certain people that unfortunately didn't pan out. I guess Father Judge and Commissioner Feehan and Chief Ganci were the first three majors that came across and

what can we say about that, you know. It was obvious from early on to us that the toll on the Department, whatever the numbers might have been at that time in anybody's head, it was going to be heavy. Certainly knew that it was something that the Department, nobody could have ever believed was happening. Oh well.

Before September 11, yes, yes, sure, that will never happen. After September 11 I think we all know that anything can happen.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right then. I thank you for your interview. The interview concludes at 1656 hours.

File No. 9110186

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MALA HARRILAL

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CASTORINA: Today is November 2, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina from the New York City Fire Department. We are here at Battalion 31 conducting an interview.

Q. With me is?

A. Richard Dun from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Your name, ma'am?

A. Mala Harrilal, Battalion 31.

Q. What is your rank?

A. EMT-D.

Q. The time now is 0540 hours.

On September 11, 2001, on that particular day, could you tell me the events that took place that you remember?

A. Yes, about minutes to nine o'clock I heard on the radio, a unit was saying that a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center and both me and my partner drove down by the water in Red Hook. That's my assigned area and you could see -- we saw the smoke. There was a second plane circling the building and I kept saying why is he so near the building? Within minutes, before even talking about it, he just like slammed into the second building.

We got on the radio, called the dispatcher. She said fine, we were assigned to the job. Took the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We were stuck in the tunnel for a couple of minutes and as we got out of the tunnel on the West Side Highway, there were cars crumbled and crushed all over. There were body parts on the street. I saw something that looked like a helmet, but it wasn't a helmet. It was a head.

We made the left, right on to Liberty Street, where we saw the other units. Within minutes there were like Chiefs. I saw Chief Grant, Chief McCracken, and they were all setting up the staging area where they told us, the command center in fact, where they told to us move the busses and park. Stood there looking at the building burning, saw within 5 minutes, I thought that like 16 people jumping off the building.

Q. Who were you with, who was your partner?

A. Frank Pastor. At one point I couldn't take it again, because I would keep yelling can we go help them, can we go help them. But he is like you can't, because the scene wasn't safe. So there was nothing we could do.

Q. How far back from you from the scene, where were you from the building? Were you like a block

away?

A. Like two blocks away, two blocks away, where we were parked, so I can't even tell you where exactly. We were a little by Liberty State Park, to the side. I saw a couple of the crew members that I knew on 31 David and some medics from Woodhull. I told my partner, I said if you need me I will be standing right by my ambulance.

As I turn around and I'm coming back, all I heard was don't turn back, just run. I look up, saw the building coming towards you. Keep running, I couldn't see anything, I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see anything, just that jet sound. Everybody was like pulling people inside stores. I just like -- while running, stopped to help this EMT from Jersey, I think, she fell down and broke her arm in like 3 places. Picked her up like three times and kept running.

Somebody pulled me into a store, pulled us both into a store, some of those Hatzolah guys. Got into the store and just keep yelling, where is the back, where is the back door, where is the back door. There was no back door. We look around, all you could see was alcohol. It was a liquor store. At that point in time, the debris got lighter.

Chief McCracken ended up coming in and yelled get out of here, this is not a good place to stay. So at that point, I was just getting out --

Q. Who were you with in the store, you and your partner or --

A. No, my partner and I were split up.

Q. You were with some civilians?

A. Yes, mostly Hatzolah guys and civilians. They gave us water. It was just to wash your eyes and keep running again. We ran so far, I mean my last resort was jumping into the water. At that point in time I think that's when we saw Chief Grant, Chief McCracken and I ended up with my partner. People were just yelling, please help us.

Q. How many injuries were you seeing, the ones that were running?

A. Mostly they couldn't breathe and their eyes. The Hatzolah guys were running out with medics from Maimonides, medics from New York Cornell that were injured. They had them on long boards and stretchers and they were just running with them. So when the people started screaming, Chief Grant got -- Chief Grant and Chief McCracken, they both got on the radio and asked for boats. Within 5 minutes boats were

there. Circle Line, New York Waterways, even tug boats were there.

At that point in time, we couldn't do anything but help the people get on to the boats. So we first started with the kids, then the parents, then, you know, basically got everybody off that area. I guess at that time it was just like us alone there, us and the cops. There were a lot of under cover cops, a lot of detectives, and we kind of basically got out of that area, because at one point they were talking the building that we were standing by was burning, was -- fumes, gas fumes.

So we got out there and that's where we met everybody else from -- all the guys from the academy, all the other Lieutenants. They brought back our ambulances. Then we drove down -- further down near the Battery Tunnel, I guess, to meet everybody else.

Q. This was the first collapse, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Then what happened, then the second collapse came, you weren't there for the second collapse?

A. No, no, it was the first collapse and by 2:00 we were dismissed from there. Because we had -- when we got back our ambulance, there was no equipment in

the ambulances. My ambulance was blown off, the windows were blown out. Even my cellphone was gone. We had nothing. We were totally wiped, covered.

Q. Initially when you were there and the first building came down and you ran and all these events took place, then somewhere in that time frame like an hour later, the second building --

A. The second building came down.

Q. But you weren't involved with that part, because you were already out of the area, you were by the boat loading people?

A. Right, because we heard the explosion. We wasn't there.

Q. Right.

A. It was just like -- I think the second building, I could be wrong, but the second building that fell crumbled. It's the first building that fell. It actually came down, so -- I really didn't witness the second building at all.

By 2:00 we were dismissed from the scene and went to the Battalion.

Q. Were you injured in anyway or your breathing --

A. I have asthma. For the first week I was

fine, the second week I started coughing. By the end of the second week I started wheezing.

Q. How were your eyes?

A. At first my glasses were messed up, I had to go get new lenses and I have been taking the pump ever since.

Q. How is your partner, your partner made it out of there okay?

A. Yes. He is fine.

Q. Anything else you can think of that you want to add?

A. No, I felt -- I mean what was bothering me the most is that that's what we are there to do, to help people and at that point in time, there was no way of helping anybody, but to help yourself, to run for your life, and that's all I kept saying and praying, Lord help me, I'm not ready to die yet. I'm glad my partner is safe.

I saw Chief McCracken and Chief Grant. They were okay. I don't know. I'm glad to be alive. So it felt good, me going back Tuesday, because I wanted to go back ever since, but there was really no time to go and then at one point when I figured -- you know, thinking about the smell of the place and everything, I

might have a hard time with it.

So I finally went back on Tuesday and it was fine. At least I knew I was there for 14 hours, 12 hours, 12 to 14 hours, to help people who needed to be helped.

Q. Right, the other day?

A. Yes, last week. So I felt much better.

MR. CASTORINO: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time now is 0550 hours. Thank you.

File No. 9110187

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC EDGARD SUAREZ

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time now is 0625 hours. I'm Ron Castorina, New York City Fire Department, at Battalion 31 conducting an interview. With me is --

MR. DUN: Richard Dun, New York City Fire Department.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Edgard Suarez.

MR. CASTORINA: What is your rank and title?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Paramedic.

MR. CASTORINA: Paramedic? Where are you assigned to?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Battalion 31.

Q. On September 11th, 2001, what were you assigned to that day?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. What unit were you assigned to?

A. I was working 31 Victor Tour 2.

Q. Can you tell me on that day the events that took place that you remember?

A. I stayed for a double tour, and about 8:30 or 8:35 we were assigned to the World Trade

Center. When we got there --

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with Paramedic Cherrington, Andre Cherrington.

Q. Andre Cherrington?

A. Yes.

We crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, and we arrived at Broadway between Fulton and Cortlandt Street. We were sitting right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Q. At that point the first plane had hit?

A. That was right after the first plane had hit.

Q. After the first plane had hit?

A. Yeah. We hadn't seen the second building on fire.

We were triaging in that area. There were many people requesting ALS, so we were triaging people, people having chest pains.

Q. This was in front of the Millennium Hotel?

A. Right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

People were coming to us with lacerations, bleeding all over. We were trying

to do our best. There was two firefighters brought this guy with about 85 to 90 percent burns, major burns, first degree and third degree burns. So we started taking care of this guy. We started an IV on him.

There was a female lieutenant that wanted us to stay to take more patient with us. This guy was in such severe respiratory distress.

Q. You had him on your ambulance? You were getting ready to transport him?

A. Yeah, he was on board. He was ready to transport. So we decided to start moving. We were about one block away when the first building collapsed. People were running toward us, banging the ambulance, "Open the ambulance." We just couldn't do it.

Q. Were you able to get out of there and take the patient?

A. Yeah, we got out of there. We were pretty lucky.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. We went to New York Cornell Burn Center.

Q. Then when you were done with the

patient, did you return back to the scene?

A. Yeah, we went back. We were assigned to the West Side Highway where they had --

Q. At that point when you went back, had the second building collapsed or first building collapsed?

A. Yeah, the second building.

Q. Both buildings were collapsed already?

A. Yeah, we were listening to the news when the second building collapsed.

Q. You went back there to triage?

A. Yeah, actually we were sitting on the West Side Highway when we hear that there was like a gas leak. There was so much panic, everybody running. We were a couple feet away from the ambulance. So we actually left the ambulance behind. When we came back after everything settled down, I guess it was.

Q. In was what, the second time when you came back, you're talking about, the gas leak?

A. Yes.

Q. You were down by where?

A. That was the West Side Highway.

Q. And where; do you remember?

A. West Side and about Murray Street.

Q. Murray Street and the West Side Highway?

A. Yes.

Q. There was a triage area there that was set up?

A. Yeah. Actually there was like a staging area. There was many ambulance, many PD cars. We were there waiting for hopefully going to help somebody. When the news came that it was a gas leak, everybody started running.

Q. Everybody left their vehicles and left?

A. Yes, we actually left our vehicle behind. When we came back for it, it was gone.

Q. What happened?

A. We just couldn't find it. Somebody took it away or -- I don't know.

Then we went to --

Q. You had left the keys in the ambulance because of the staging area?

A. Yes. I have the extra key, and the other key was in the ignition. My partner was driving, so he left his key.

Q. Was the vehicle ever found later on?

A. Yes, the vehicle showed up.

Q. Somebody must have just pulled it out of the area?

A. Yes. We saw it later that day like seven, eight hours after. They had it at the morgue moving bodies.

That's about it.

Q. Okay. Anything you want to add?

A. No.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 0627 hours. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110188

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LAURA SIEBUHR

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with --

EMT SIEBUHR: Laura J. Siebuhr, EMT 5478, Battalion 45.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Laura, if you would begin with when you first became aware of the incident.

A. Okay. My partner and I were actually getting coffee first thing in the morning. We were within our 89, which is our cross street location. We noticed there was fire in the distance. From where we sit in our 89, we have a whole view of the skyline, and obviously it's fairly close.

So my partner said exactly, "Holy shit, Laura, that's the Trade Center on fire." I told him to shut up, no way. He said, "Well, let's take a closer look to get away from all the trees and everything." So we drove up closer. My

partner Patrick said, "Oh, my God, Laura, that is the Trade Center on fire," and I agreed.

He called central and said, "This is 45 David. Central, did you know that the Trade Center was on fire?" Everything was completely silent, I would say for maybe a good 15, 20 seconds. Everything was just completely silent. There was nothing on the air, which was highly irregular, because there's always activity going on over the air.

I remember the silence. I don't remember who was dispatching at the time, but they started dispatching units out, and 45 David was one of them, which was my unit. They told us to transfer over to citywide and report to I believe the 59th Street Bridge. We were very close at that point. We were told to continue to I believe West and Vesey or Church and Vesey. I'm not clear. I have no really working knowledge of Manhattan.

We did as we were told. As we were getting closer, you could see that it was just a horrific sight. Going over that bridge I'll never forget. It was bad. Actually I didn't

really know too much when I went in to work, being that I had never been to an MCI before.

We saw other ambulances on the opposite side of the bridge trying to get through, but for some reason we were flying and we were bypassing everybody. I don't know why, I don't remember how, because this was so much traffic. For some reason we just had a straight way.

People were just getting out of our way so quickly that we got there I believe within less than eight minutes from where we were, which should have taken us a lot longer than that. I guess because at the location where we were trying to see, we were pretty close, even to the bridge.

We got there, and there was a lot of people running out of the building. I didn't see any other ambulance units there other than Hazollah. I didn't even know where any Manhattan units were. I guess the thing had just hit, so within that span. Everybody was within traffic. Everybody was trying to get in there all at once.

My partner and I got out. Being the other unit was there, Hazollah was there, we were

making a make-fast triage underneath the second tower, the next tower over. I get them confused, tower one, tower two. I don't know, just everything happened so fast.

As people were coming out of the first tower that was hit, we were bringing them over and we were triaging them. Those people were pretty bad. We were basically sectioning them off and tagging them who goes where, the most critical and the least critical.

We would section them off, and we were putting them on buses, not ambulances but regular city buses, so they could transport them out because there wasn't enough units there. We couldn't leave because there was too many people. People were very, very bad, very bad.

I was so geared to working on the patients and trying to focus -- you didn't have time to think. You did not have time to think about anything. People were hurt so badly. I remember just hearing a very low hum, I guess because I was focused on what I was doing with the patients.

But I do remember hearing a very low

hum in the background, which people will probably tell you different, but this is what I heard; and then just a massive explosion, and that was loud, because I was standing right underneath it when the second plane had hit.

My partner ran and grabbed me by my arm and started yelling at me to run. So he was actually holding onto me and making me run quicker. Still I didn't know what was happening. I didn't know it was a plane. I just thought it was an explosion from the other tower. I didn't know a plane had hit. So I'm pretty much oblivious on what's really going on at this point because everything is happening so fast.

We ran and we got maybe less than a quarter of a block, less than half a block, maybe. I don't really remember. But I remember we were still right there. Within minutes later, over the radio or somebody had said, "Oh, my God, the Pentagon got hit and this is war, we're at war." [redacted]

[redacted]. You couldn't breathe because when the second plane hit, all that debris, it was like cement. It just filled up your throat, it filled up your lungs, you could not breathe. You were actually spitting out huge particles. It was like it manifested itself in your mouth because it was so small and it filled up. You couldn't breathe. It was just caked in your throat.

My partner says, "All right. Listen, stay with this unit." My unit was directly in front. He said, "Stay with the unit, and I'm going to go back." [redacted]

Maybe within -- I don't know really time frame. I don't know time frame. But there was a command or somebody had said the units had to start moving. It wasn't that long after. I was sitting in the back of one of the units, and I don't remember what unit it was.

I said, you know what, I'm not going to go with these units. I've got to go back. I've

got to find my partner and make sure that he's okay. I didn't really feel threatened at this point. Some time had passed, not much but some, to where I was able to gain some composure about myself and I wanted to find my partner. I needed to find him. It was very important that I had him and I knew where he was.

So I started walking back. The next thing that I know, I was just about there, and a firefighter, which I really wish I knew who it was. I have no idea who this person was, but a firefighter started running and he said -- this is another one he actually grabbed my arm. He said, "Oh, my God, Honey, run."

I looked up, and it looked like the tower was leaning. I was almost underneath it, so it actually looked like it was leaning. So you didn't know which way to run. You just saw a lot of firefighters and police and EMS and all of the major people that were down there to try and rectify the situation before it got any worse started running, and I didn't know why. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think that this was going to come down.

So he grabbed my arm and he said, "Honey, run," and he started running with me. I said, "Oh, my God, are we going to die?" He said, "I don't know. Just keep running." Then the loud rumble, and then that thing, that monster, just started coming down.

They teach you in the academy about the feeling of impending doom a patient might feel. I have never had that feeling up until that day. I knew that this was it. I knew that this is how I'm going out. The only thing that ran through my mind was -- other than saying the "Our Father" as I was running, "God, please don't let this hurt." I thought it was going to hurt. Just "God, make it quick."

I was running, and the fireman had let my arm go. He had gone one way and I kept running. I remember there was a building on my left-hand side, and I don't remember what building it was. I remember not being able to run very fast because of fear, and my radio and my helmet was weighing me down. So I threw off my helmet. I threw my radio, which was found, by the way. It was unbelievable.

I just remember I couldn't run, the fear was -- you could not run. You're just stricken. I just remember just heat. I felt the heat and the smoke just eat me up. But right before it did, this building to my left, I remember approaching it, wanting to say, well, I've got to get some kind of cover. I got sucked in by that huge cloud. Not sucked in but I guess --

Q. Enveloped?

A. Yeah. Then I really couldn't breathe and panic and disorientation.

I came up to the building, and the doors, they slid open from side to side. They were electric. That I remember because I couldn't find the handle, and I'm banging on the door. I couldn't breathe. You just could not breathe. Whatever you did, there was nothing to do to get away from it. You just could not breathe.

I was banging on the door, and somebody had -- a girl or a woman had got the doors open for me, and I just kind of fell in. All I wanted to do was just breathe, get my lungs -- you know,

I couldn't catch air.

Then I got into this building, and I paced and paced and paced, and that's all I did was pace. I was so worried about my partner. I was crying a lot. I wanted -- I needed to find him, because I didn't know anybody. I didn't have anybody with me. I was alone, except some of the people in the building. I didn't know if we were going to get hit again. It was bad. It was really, really bad.

During that time in the building, I didn't know that the second one had gone down. I had no idea the other building -- I didn't know. About a half an hour later I was looking outside. It got to the point where you could actually see your hand in front of your face. Things started lifting.

The only thing that I had on me was my phone, so all I'm trying to do is call my family and tell them get in your car and go east, because I didn't know. I just wanted them to get out of harm's way, you know.

Then I wanted to go outside, and some of the people said, "My God, don't go out there."

I still needed to find my partner. I was very adamant about it, and arrogant I was, because I was panicking and just "Don't touch me. Just leave me alone. Just let me think." I didn't have my radio on me. I had no radio contact, and I was freaking.

Some old woman gave me a wet scarf to put around my face, and I went out, which I thought was very sweet. I went out and I started again heading back to the Trade Center. I wasn't far. I mean, I was just not even up the block. It was not even a block, that I can remember.

I can't even recall what building it was; I can't. I don't know which one it was. I had gone there repeatedly and tried to find this building I was in when I do the Trade Center and do my overtime there, because I've been back there twice a week every week. I do the overtime and stuff. And I can't remember.

I started making my way back to the Trade Center. When I got there I saw a lot of people. I didn't hear anybody talking. The only thing I heard was those loud tones. That's all I heard was those tones. I guess it was the

firemen looking for their own. That's all I heard was those tones and me looking for my partner, calling, "Patrick."

A fireman came over to me and said, "Make your way back to the peers, or start going to the peers. Just get out of here." I was at the corner, so I wasn't like -- there was so much stuff everywhere, so much. It looked like Armageddon. Everything was just gone [redacted] We started making our way back to the piers. I still didn't know anybody. They were all unfamiliar faces.

About an hour and a half, two hours later, I see my captain, and there went my professionalism [redacted]

[redacted]

Finally after about an hour and a half, almost two hours that I can remember, in a fireman's jacket and an SCBA on his back and a hood, I thought I saw him. This person came closer, and there went my professionalism again, and I knew he was alive. And cling, held on tight to him. I was so relieved that he was alive.

Even now I get emotional because to lose him, I would be losing such a big part of my life, because since I got on this job and came to this battalion, he has taught me everything that I need to know. He also saved my life by putting me in somewhat of a safe spot to where if I wasn't at the ambulance and him pulling me and running with me after the second plane hit and putting me in a safe place, I probably would have

been gone and would have followed him because he went into the building.

I probably would not be here if it weren't for him, and I hold a lot of respect for him and I love him for it, because he let me go home to my daughter, which a lot of people didn't.

Q. Right.

A. We started making it to the piers. The calvary was there. Everyone was there. And I got to go home that night.

That's all I can remember.

Q. What's your partner's last name?

A. Richiusa.

Q. When you first got down there to the Trade Center, do you remember seeing, aside -- you said the Hazollah ambulance. Any other kind of EMS personnel?

A. Yes. You know what it was? There was a lot of people there. I remember nurses being there. I remember doctors being there. I remember people saying that they were nurses and doctors. I remember people saying that they were EMTs and paramedics that were off-duty. I

remember a lot of ununiformed people were there, a lot.

Forgive me, and I could be wrong but the only other ambulance that I saw at that moment was Hazollah. I could be wrong, but that's what I remember.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember pulling up and thinking -- I remember actually thinking, my God, we came from Queens and although we made it here so fast, where the hell are the Manhattan units? Where are they? I remember seeing fire trucks, a lot of them, but I don't remember seeing FDNY ambulances. I don't remember. I could be wrong, but that's what I remember.

I remember thinking to myself where are they, and I just remember seeing Hazollah. And how I remember that -- I don't even know if I'm pronouncing it right, but I just remember seeing the curls on the side of their heads. I think they're Hasidic.

Q. Yeah.

A. I'm not clear on it. They were awfully nice. They were so nice. And we did work

together. I believe it was four of them and Patrick and I. I remember directing the people that would come out of the first tower that was hit. They were so bad.

I mean, people did not -- people were coming out and didn't have any hair on their bodies and on their heads and on their faces. I remember facial hair was so singed off and badly burned and them saying that they were several floors underneath. I don't really know how it works when a plane hits. I know nothing about it.

But I remember a lot of screaming, and I remember people falling out of the buildings or jumping. I remember seeing it. I remember just a lot of smoke, a lot of crying, a lot of people going into shock, a lot of talk about elevators inside the building.

I just remember people talking about elevators, that they weren't working or that it fell -- it felt like it fell several floors and hit a specific floor hard and people were complaining about back pain and skin hanging from their bodies and being in a lot of pain. A lot

of pain. Everybody was just -- there was a lot of pain. It was very heartbreaking.

Me only coming out of the academy nine months, ten months. I knew nothing except just keep bandaging them up, keep oxygen on them, and put them on where they need to go. Next. It was fast and furious. You didn't have time to think.

That's all I really can remember, and just feeling very badly and very scared. I never in my wildest dreams ever think those buildings would come down, never, never. When I saw my partner, he was badly hurt. He got stitched up on the scene, with a leatherman tool, no less, his own tool.

A doctor, he said he's never done it with a tool, but I think he got 13, 15 stitches, some on his back, some on his shoulder. He didn't have the correct tool to do it with. Pat whipped out his tool and he said, "Well, you can use this." He actually started sewing him up without anything, just a needle and thread, and showed him up with his leatherman. And he blew out his knee, which I believe he had to get surgery for.

And that's all I can really remember, and just being extremely happy that I was going home to my little girl and able to tell my family that I was alive, because my mom knew that I was down there and my sister actually in Colorado knew I was there and saw it on TV and knew I was there. So they knew that I was gone. They actually thought I was gone. I was just happy to be home.

That's the best of my recollection moment to moment. I mean, it's also two months later.

Also actually what I do remember, one thing that I neglected to say, that on the way there, there were two priests that were begging to stop us. They were saying, "Please take us with you. There are so many people down there that need their last rites." So I said, "Get in," and we took them.

Whether that's against the rules or not, I don't know. But you know what? There were people down there that needed it. And whether they made it out of there alive, I don't know. I hope they did. But I thought that was

the right thing to do. My partner and I both agreed on it.

I basically threw these old men in there. I threw them in, "Get in," not even thinking of any kind of repercussions of anything, because I didn't know what we were going into. I just knew that it was a huge MCI. I didn't know that it was a plane at that point. I just knew that it was big and that there were more than likely hundreds of casualties because of what it looked like, not knowing what caused it.

We picked them up and we brought them in, because I knew that there were going to be people that perished in whatever happened. And we did, we picked them up and we brought them over there.

Q. What's your 89 location?

A. My 89 is -- oh, God, Metropolitan and Forest, which gives you a complete view of the whole skyline.

Q. Right.

A. You're not far at all. It's like an arm's length away. You're looking and you're

like, wow, you can see the whole entire skyline.

That's basically all I can remember that day, that disgusting day.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd like to add?

A. [redacted].

With that said, I'm done.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0658, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110189

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN HOWARD SICKLES

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time is now 0526. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with.

CAPTAIN SICKLES: Captain Howard Sickles, commanding officer of EMS, Battalion 45.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Captain.

A. On that morning I was assigned to the battalion because I didn't have a command vehicle. I was running the ambulance station as I normally do. A call went out, and I see notification that there was a plane into the building at the World Trade Center.

I went outside. The TV was on, and I saw the devastation from the first plane hitting the tower that was broadcasted on CNN.

I sent messages to Howie Hahn Lieutenant Hahn -- he was on patrol -- to pick me up, and we started out to the Trade Center. I called the tour commander to let him know that we

were going and did he want us to go to what location, because they were staging ambulances around the city. He advised me to go directly into the site.

On arrival we staged at Church and West, and I walked down to the command post, which was in the first floor or the lobby level of the north tower of the World Trade Center. Chief Gombo was there with Ross Terranova, and I believe Chief Kowalczyk was at that point also there.

Things were a little confusing. They were trying to put an operation together. The windows of the north tower on the ground floor were blown out, were broken. I don't know if they were blown out, but they were most certainly broken. There was a lot of glass. That was actually how I entered; I walked through one of the windowpanes, or where there would have been a window, into the building and started going through the doors.

I saw there was really no command post set up. It was a little haphazard. Commissioner Feehan was in the lobby. I asked him if there

were any spare command boards around. He told me there should be outside. Any chief car that pulls up should have one.

I went outside. I believe it was the Division 6 car was just arriving. I told him I need his command board and I had Commissioner Feehan's permission. I got the command board from him.

Actually as I exited the building, I thought somebody hit me from the back, tapped me on my back. I turned around and didn't see anything. Somebody pointed to my feet. I looked, and there was a body on the floor. So apparently he's what brushed against me, hitting me in the back, because it wasn't there, it was behind me. I had just walked there. So I knew that body fell. So I'm pretty lucky I wasn't hit then.

I walked over to the chief's car. I got the command board. I walked back into the building, and Chief Kowalczyk said, "Let's go." And I took 49 Henry with me so we would have an ambulance crew there with us. Chief Kowalczyk said, "Come on, let's go. We're all out of here.

We're going across the street."

We went across the street and we set up in what would be, I'm assuming, is Three World Financial Center. We were in the garage -- we were in the throat of the driveway. We put up the command board. We started drawing the towers, putting this all together, and we decided -- I told him, we need to put this all onto one frequency because citywide's too congested and we need to have a point-to-point frequency and a dispatcher to come to.

I went inside. I spoke to Chief Diggs on the telephone. I told him what our needs were. He was a little argumentative. He didn't want to do it because of the high call volume in Manhattan south. I said, "You can give us any frequency. Manhattan south was just a suggestion."

He put me on hold. I said, "I'm not waiting here all day." I left. I sent an EMT back inside to call Chief Diggs and to wait. We were at command post operations. We started to set things up.

We sent Chief Brown to the south side

to the south tower to see what was going on there, to give us a reported. He took a package which included Captain Deshore and a couple of ambulances, and some of them were volunteers.

Ambulance crews were showing up at the command post. Maimonides Medical Center showed up with an ambulance with a transfer truck of their's with a couple of paramedics on it and a supervisor. We sent them back to go north, and they ended up not taking the direction. I saw the ambulance later on and it was crushed but there was nobody in it. So that worked out well but they didn't listen and they didn't take direction.

We were at the command post. We had assigned Lieutenant Medjuck along with Captain Olszewski was on West and I believe around Church Street, there on West and Vesey, at first West and Barclay, in that neighborhood. I don't remember exactly where they were, but they were in that neighborhood, on that side of the operation.

Chief Brown was to the south. We had nobody on Trinity or Church that I was aware of.

He actually may have been around Vesey and Trinity -- Vesey and Church. I don't remember the exact location; I just know he was on the north side of the operation with Captain Olszewski. We were trying to divide it up and get everybody assets in order that they can handle. Chief Goldfarb was down at staging.

We heard a rumbling. We thought it was another plane. We looked up, and you actually saw the towers just starting to roll down at you. You saw the building portions coming down. I stood there and couldn't move. I just couldn't move. I couldn't believe what I was looking at.

A couple seconds later I turned around and started to go. You just saw a sea of humanity. Before that we were at the command post. Chief Nigro and Chief Ganci were behind me, and they just couldn't believe the human devastation of watching people jumping out of the upper floors. They were hitting the ground and because of the force of hitting the ground, they would break open and blood was splattering and body parts and you could see them hitting the ground and bouncing and parts bouncing up.

They were just like, "Oh, my God, oh, my --" and they couldn't believe the devastation; nobody could. Everyone was sort of standing there in a little bit of awe, trying to get this under way and just watching people jumping for their life.

To go back to where I was before, everybody went through the building. Lieutenant Moore was in front of me. The building had a grating for water run off as it goes down so it doesn't go into the garage. He apparently tripped on that grating and fell. I was right behind him. I fell over Roger, and we tumbled maybe some 20 feet into this garage. We really didn't get anywhere.

Q. That was in Three Financial Center?

A. I believe that was Three Financial Center. That's where we were, just across the street. I'm not sure if it was three or two, because we were directly across from the tower. I'm not sure which one is directly across. It might have been Two World Financial Center. It was directly across. It may have been two. It's hard to tell from this map.

Q. Right.

A. I don't remember whether it was the American Express building or two. But looking at it more closely, it's probably Two World Financial Center, right across the street, because we weren't very close to the pedestrian bridge. So I would tell you it was probably Two World Financial Center. I have to change that. I believe the garage was Two World Financial Center.

Q. Okay.

A. So we were directly across the street. Everybody ran into the building. And Roger and I fell over each other. We made it like maybe 20 feet into the building.

You just heard a rumbling and you heard things, and it got very black. You couldn't see anything, nothing. There was no light. I couldn't move my legs. I couldn't move myself. I really thought at one point I was dead. I couldn't see my hand. I couldn't think of anything. I was in no pain. I just really thought I was dead.

It was dark. You couldn't hear

anything. There was no sounds. There was nothing. There was no sound in the background. There was nothing, no noise. Beforehand there was noise because there were fire alarms going off -- not fire alarms, the pass alarms from the SCBAs. They were going off early, because I had said at the command post can we shut those stupid things off. They were going off early. I'm sure they were going off when we were running down the hill.

After the first collapse, it was dark, it was black, it was just deadly silent. I really thought I was dead. I started talking to myself, and then Roger Moore, in a couple of seconds, moans and tells me to "Shut up. You're not dead."

So I still couldn't move, and I was telling him, "I can't move. I can't move." He's telling me he can't move. A couple of firemen came by, and I don't know who they are -- I didn't know who they were. They lifted off what looked like to be a desk later on, because they showed us with a light. They had hand lights with them, and it looked like to be the top of a

desk. They lifted that off of us and they moved some other debris, and I was able to get up.

Then they helped Roger out. They told me just get out of the building, and I went back up towards West Street. I didn't go into the building. I told them they were coming to West Street, and they went into the building further. They figured they would come out on what would be North Road or -- I think it's North End, the back end of the building. They figured they would come out on North End and it would be safer.

I went out straight. I got out of the building, and you couldn't walk. There was so much dirt, dust and debris, it looked like it was snowing out. It was still falling, the ash. It was snowing. I couldn't believe what I saw. What was once a command post where there were 50 people standing, there was nothing, there was nobody. It was quiet. The area was dead. There was no noise, no noise, nobody around, nothing. You couldn't hear anything.

There was a communications van from the Fire Department, an old Chevy van, a low top, not one of the big rescue looking communications

vehicles, and it was just dead. There was no noise coming out of it, nothing. Everything inside was gray. Everything was covered. There was just nothing. There was no noise. There was no noise on the EMS radio. There was nothing. It was just dead silence.

I got my wits about myself, and I tried to remember where everybody was. And then I was trying to call people on the radio and there was no response.

A few minutes later Chief Ganci came walking up the street and he told me to go north. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going south" I told him to go north, and he just continued south. He said, "Just go north."

I stood there for a couple more minutes. I had to sort of get my wits about me. I started calling people on the radio. I got Bobby Brown on the radio, Chief Brown on the radio, and he was telling me that he's okay, he's not injured badly. The building collapsed around him. They're trying to figure out where they were. I told him to go south.

I got a hold of Bruce Medjuck, and he

said he was okay. I couldn't get anybody else.

Goldfarb came up on the radio and asked what was going on. I said to him, "There's nobody at the command post. It's just me. I don't know where anybody is or whether anybody survived," because I didn't know what went on inside the basement of that garage.

I got onto Manhattan south, because we already had the frequency. I told him we had a major collapse and they need to start sending more units; send south through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and send north units from the bridge and they really shouldn't go past Chambers until they get here. I told them twice, twice, because the devastation is just unbelievable.

Before I got anywhere, I was walking up West Street. I just wanted to get out of there at that certain point. I was walking towards Goldfarb at Chambers. Before I could even get far, the second building came down. I know when I walked up West Street just a little bit, maybe just past what would have been Vesey, I really didn't get that much further. The second building came down, and I was pushed. I actually

flew like 40 feet.

I was covered in debris a second time -- oh, no, before that happened I saw one of my EMTs, Pat Richiusa. I saw him on the street, and he told me his partner was missing. I said, "Go west. Just go north and let's get out of here and we'll find her. We'll find where everybody is." And he disappeared.

Then I went up West Street. The second collapse happened. I was knocked down. I was covered in debris again. Again, dark, very scared. Again, no flashlight with me whatsoever. I waited. I just sat there. I got up after the debris, and I started going north. I went north. I got up a couple of blocks, maybe just past Vesey, and I went towards the water.

I saw Chief Carrasquillo there, and we went into the Renaissance Hotel. We set up a treatment area. Chief Gombo was in there, Chief Carrasquillo. Chief Pascale was wheezing away. Chief Kowalczyk I believe was there. We were just trying to put things together.

I even yelled at Chief Gombo because nobody was listening. I knew Bobby Brown was

injured. I knew where he was, and we couldn't find him. I knew where Bruce Medjuck was prior to the collapses, and we couldn't find him. Nobody could tell me that they found them.

We were operating in there. Chief Cassano was there. We had to put him on a back board. We sent him off to the hospital because we had neck and back pain. We must have sent about six or eight people to the hospital from that point.

Then we had to evacuate because they said there was a major gas leak in the area. We went to the water side. We went up to river end. We walked up to River Terrace up here somewhere, probably closer to Chambers. There's a nursing home over here or a senior residence. We went to use that. We couldn't use it logistically.

We went into the school. They started operating in Stuyvesant High School, so it was around Chambers. I guess it was closer to Warren than Chambers, the nursing home, north terrace or River Terrace, and we had to leave there. Actually I think it was North End, because then we went to River Terrace, and we had to leave

there.

Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Pascale, they just went north. They went as far as the piers, and that's how we ended up taking the piers for the operation.

I went up to Chambers, and from Chambers and West, Chief Peruggia was there. I ended up in the command post with Chief Peruggia, Chief Cruthers, and I forget the other Citywide Tour Commander. Butler, Chief Butler. I worked in the command post with them.

It was eerie because they looked like they got mad at me. When they were talking about what assets they would need because they were going to go into an OEM meeting at Police Academy -- they were sending another chief down there to go and let them know what our concerns were.

They were talking about rescue tools and rescue operations and DMAT teams. I said with a very straight face, "You need to order DMORT also. What's DMORT? Disaster mortuary response team." They looked at me like I had two heads.

I turned and I looked behind me, and I said, "You really need this DMORT team here. It's going to be more than we can handle." It took a couple of seconds, and then Cruthers and Butler agreed. They both told this guy, "Get that DMORT thing also."

It was eerie because I don't know if they didn't want to believe it, but it was very hard because they're theory is everybody is always alive until proven otherwise. You just didn't need any proof that there were going to be people dead there, just knowing the devastation. Operations sort of commenced.

Then there was the funny things that happened by history. They didn't have any command board of sorts. They took a white car, like a fire safety car they use, the fire education car, the little Chevys or the little Fords. They wiped off the hood of the car, and the guy had a grease pencil and, lo and behold, the hood of the car became the command post.

So wherever the hood is now -- I don't know where it is now, but you have to get that hood for the archive. I'm sure it was washed off

by now. But they used the hood of the car, and that was the command post for hours upon hours.

When we actually moved down towards Vesey Street, they drove the car down towards Vesey Street and they used it as the command post. It was a command board. There's a little joke out of everything, but you have to have it. That's what we used, the hood of a car. So it's actually a pretty interesting thing.

Later on, a couple of hours into this, Chief Peruggia turned white as a ghost. He grabs everybody and tells them that they found the Commissioner and they found Chief Ganci and they were both killed. We couldn't get body bags. We were talking to corrections, and we kept telling them where to bring the bags. Not hard.

You couldn't understand why they couldn't figure out where it was, because there was no street. There were no street signs. There were no markings. The bridge took everything down, the walkway. Apparently he was near the walkway. I never saw him. I never got down there until much later on that evening. You couldn't do it. You just couldn't get around.

That night I walked around with one of the chiefs. I think it may have been Chief Butler. We went a couple of blocks in every direction, and you couldn't believe the devastation: big fire trucks crushed, ambulances crushed, vehicles crushed. The amount of devastation was just unbelievable.

We had a fire marshal with us and they were marking stuff where they saw it on a map and trying to writing down where things were, and you just couldn't believe where things were and what they looked like.

We went up to the third floor of the World Financial Center, and we had a command post there the first night. We were looking out over it, and it was amazing to see these big backhoe vehicles coming in to move things. You watch them at construction sites. But to pick up a step van that used to be a hazmat support unit, pick it up and just drop it off to the side; pick up what was an old EMS Chevy -- they're white and gold now -- pick up the Chevy and just drop it into a container truck, into a container, a garbage container.

It was amazing, the devastation that was there. Rescue trucks just covered. You knew that all these people were gone. Sitting in the corner of the room, the back corner, were two firemen. I don't know if one was an officer or not but there were two firemen calling companies and just trying to figure out who was missing and who was not missing, a list. They must have had like 500 names in the beginning. It was just unbelievable.

I was collecting names of missing EMS people. I was just writing off the names that this kid had written on a list because he was told to give it to me. Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Gombo, my name was on the list, Chief Kowalczyk. Chief Peruggia's name was on the list. Bruce Medjuck's name was on the list. Karen Deshore's name was on the list. Roger Moore's name was on the list.

Nobody knew where these people were. The list was long. There had to be 30 names on the list that he read off to me. I'm scratching off the names, and I realize I'm Captain Sickles. I wrote my own name. The guy said, "No, no, no.

Captain Sickles is a big fat guy. I met him once before." "No, no, it's me. Thank you."

It was comical at one point, but I knew where most of these people were gone already. I knew Chief Gombo. He went up to OEM. Chief Carrasquillo was standing there. Chief Peruggia was standing there. Chief Pascale, they made her stay up north because she was wheezing away, but she was around. Chief Kowalczyk was around. We didn't know where Karen Deshore was for a long time. We didn't know where Bruce Medjuck was for a long time. We didn't know where a lot of people were for a long time.

Chief McCracken's name was on this list also. We didn't know where he was for a long time, and he showed up. As a matter of fact, as I was writing the list, maybe five minutes later he came walking up the block. Scratched his name off the list.

Then the list got smaller and smaller and smaller. Nobody knew who was on the New York Hospital ambulance, but we knew they were missing. Two from Cabrini were missing. Carlos Lillo, we had his partner. We didn't know where

he was. We had Quinn's partner. We didn't know where he was.

The list, very early on we were actually able to narrow it down to like ten names. Then we found out Karen went to New Jersey and Roger was in New Jersey somewhere, so we were able to get them off.

We whittled it down to -- we didn't have on that list the person from Hunter or the person from metro care that was from Albert Einstein. We didn't have them on the list. We didn't know about them. The Hunter guy, they're just not in our system. We have no way of tracking them.

The Albert Einstein person, I didn't know about that -- I wasn't doing it anymore when we found out. We were trying to do patient tracking. There was no patient tracking. It was very annoying. You called communications, and you just got put on hold, they couldn't help you, no one could do anything.

I know hundreds and hundreds of patients went to hospital, but we had no patient tracking, we had no victim tracking. So we had

to start sending -- from the command post we sent what supervisors were available to area hospitals, and fire marshals, just tracking down firemen and EMS personnel and police officers, and that was their goal.

The command post wasn't worried about civilians. We couldn't track them all. There were just thousands of people. But they wanted to find out so they could identify who was missing from public safety. It was tough.

So that information was hard getting it back and forth. There was lack of communication, but because radios were down. The Fire Department communications vehicle was down by City Hall originally because it couldn't get closer. It died. We had no command post vehicle. We couldn't get one in. We couldn't get an operational one. So they got that up and running, and that showed up much later on in the event.

It was just hard. Anything that you tried to do, it was just very hard. Things weren't going smoothly. Things weren't going the way they should go. It was very hard getting

people up and operational. Everyone had concerns about everything. They were just wanting to call for 30 seconds. It was very, very hard.

Some things were annoying. One guy walks up and says, "I have to go home. I volunteered for my community tours for the month. I don't have to stay all the time here. I want to go home now." I just looked at him and I said, "And?"

I couldn't believe what was coming out of some people's mouths. It was just amazing. The personal toll it had on me, I don't know. I don't know if I was the last one to see this poor guy Chief Ganci was alive. How do you tell his wife that your husband died a hero, trying to get everybody to safety?

He was with Commissioner Feehan toward the end. Why the two of them didn't go off to a command post and try at the first collapse try to put this back together and try to put organization together, the first thing this guy thought of was to walk further south, trying to get people to safety and figure out what was going on.

I saw him -- I don't know what was going through his mind, but it was perceived as he was just looking to get people to a safe area. How do you tell that to somebody? People don't understand that. I think I'm the last one to see this poor guy alive, and he was killed. [redacted] I don't know the condition of Chief Ganci, but I understand he was pretty much in the same condition.

It's just amazing the amount of devastation. When you look at this day after day, it's amazing. I don't know what else to say.

Later on my missing personnel -- I told you earlier I saw Pat on the street and he told me his partner was missing. When we got to the River Terrace, she was standing there. Everybody's gray because they were all covered in soot. She was clean. She was clean. She was absolutely clean. That was striking.

Walking up Vesey when we went to the North End when we went to the Renaissance Hotel, I saw my command car. The vehicle next to it was no windows, no nothing. I said, "Dan --" my car

was clean. There was dust. The vehicles on the other side of it, nothing, clean. I couldn't understand. Was there a wall that just stopped it?

It was just pretty funny. You walk up and you -- and that's why my car was stolen. What's his name, [redacted]I was there for 24 hours. I want to go home. I have no way of getting home.

Oh, 844 is up at staging. [redacted]

I was on site for 25 hours. I had to see this devastation, what was going on. When you walk away, there were some funny stories. But this girl was absolutely clean. Laura was clean[redacted] She clung to me. I couldn't get her off of me. I put her in an ambulance, a Cabrini truck, I think it was,

and I sent her to the piers further north.

At a later point I actually hooked up -- when I had a chance to call the station, the first thing I said is "Have we heard from Richiusa or Seibert? Did they get back together?" "They're here. They're together. The truck has a broken window." "I don't give a flip about the truck. Are they alive?" "Pat has a knee injury. He's cut up, but he's okay." All right. That was it.

I was happy. I didn't lose anybody from here. Everybody got out safe. A lot of my people showed up. There was one of my guys that was on jury duty, Smith. I turned around, and I don't know what time he arrived there -- we were at the command post -- and there he is in uniform. "I'm here, Cap, ready to help out. What have you got for me?" "Aren't you on jury duty?" "I got canceled" "Oh, good." That's how he found out about this; he was in the car on the way home.

It's just amazing what goes through your head when you were there: "Why are you here? You're on jury duty." It was amazing.

I'm standing here looking at this map, and it's not here anymore. It's just not there. It's just amazing.

Unless you have anything else. That was it. This was the first two or three hours that I was there.

Q. I just need to make some notes on the map itself. When you went into Manhattan after the first crash, once you got closer downtown, do you remember what route you took to actually get down to the incident?

A. I think we came across Chambers. I think Vesey was the first staging area. I don't remember if Vesey was the first staging area. I don't remember if Chambers-- it had to be Vesey. Where's Stuyvesant High School?

Q. Stuyvesant is off the map.

A. Stuyvesant is up here by Chambers?

Q. Further north, yeah.

A. So the first staging area was up by Chambers. When I arrived I walked from Chambers down to the Trade Center. No, where is the Renaissance Hotel? The Renaissance Hotel is off of Vesey. The Renaissance Hotel is off of Vesey.

Q. Yeah, Vesey and North End.

A. The first staging --

Q. The movie theater?

A. Right. The first staging was somewhere around Vesey. Here's the Renaissance Hotel. The first staging was somewhere around Vesey. Howie Hahn dropped me off at Vesey and West, and I walked up to the north tower, where I met Chief Gombo. Then we went across the street, which would be Two World Financial Center, and we evacuated that. So I was over there.

Arriving on the scene we came down Chambers to Vesey. That's how we arrived on the scene. We came out of the Midtown Tunnel, we came downtown, we zigzagged a little bit around traffic, and we came across Chambers.

Q. Okay. Do you remember the second plane striking the tower?

A. I don't know if we were on the scene. I believe that's when we were inside this tower, and that's when we evacuated this tower and went outside.

Q. And Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski?

A. They were on Vesey. I don't know if they were over here by Vesey and West.

Q. This is actually West Broadway.

A. West Broadway. I don't know if they were by West Broadway or they were by Church, but they were in this neighborhood.

Q. Right.

A. I tend to believe they were closer to West Broadway than Church. Actually I left it at home. I have all my notes from the first day and the days coming. I have it in one reporter pad. I left it home by accident. They were over here. They were on Vesey in this neighborhood.

Q. Okay. Any other thoughts or opinions, comments?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0557, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110190

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JEFFREY WARNER

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time is now 0745 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT WARNER: EMT Jeffrey Warner, badge number 2933, Battalion 45, Queens.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 and is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jeffrey, if you would please start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We were assigned the call 10:11 a.m., and we responded from north Queens over the 59th Street Bridge. We went over the 59th Street Bridge. My partner was driving. I was in the passenger seat. We came down Broadway. Somewhere on Broadway we picked up an auxiliary fireman. He jumped in the back. We proceeded down to the corner of Murray Street and West Broadway.

At Murray Street and West Broadway, we believe that's when the second collapse occurred.

The amount of dust in the air became a lot more thick. We heard of course a loud rumble. We didn't see it collapse; we just heard it. From discussion and the time line, it pretty much seems after the second collapse occurred.

We weren't able to safely drive the vehicle any further because of the dust in the air. There were burnt pieces of paper falling all over the place like a ticker tape parade.

We loaded up our stretcher like we would for any kind of standby, and we just started making our way as far as we could down Murray Street. We made a left on West Broadway Street, where we eventually came to Barclay Street.

At Barclay Street, which now I'm told the building that we came upon was number Seven World Trade Center, we noticed that there were people trapped who were unable to get out at that time or unaware of how to get out -- I'm not sure I want to use the word "trapped" -- on what appeared to be the eighth floor from the outside.

Myself, my partner, an off-duty fire lieutenant, somebody from OEM, who was also with

the Port Authority, and a female police lieutenant made numerous attempts to get into the building from the parking area. We finally found a door that was somewhat open on the Barclay Street side near the parking garage where there was a regular door.

We entered the building. There was some kind of an emergency escape ladder in the parking garage that went up. Myself and the off-duty fire lieutenant went up the ladder, and we were met maybe a story or two up with a Plexiglas trapdoor that was padlocked.

The fire lieutenant told me that it was padlocked, and I remember that the OEM guy had a Halligan tool. I told the boss I was going back on the ladder to get the Halligan tool and I was going to bring it up to him.

He made numerous attempts to try and open the lock; it failed. We were alerted to evacuate the building by Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Frazier of the former ERS.

We came out of the building, and we gathered all our equipment. We were met with -- we had already been with but we had more

equipment that was brought over to us by the carpenters union.

We left the building. My partner and I went to get our vehicle. We got our vehicle back down eventually to where our equipment was, loaded everything up, left the area and went over to Chambers and West Street. There was an EMS staging area set up there.

Everything seemed to be organized from then on. We spent most of the afternoon parked over there.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Nicole Ferrell.

Q. Nicole Ferrell?

A. Nicole Ferrelo, F-E-R-R-E-L-L.

Q. The equipment that the carpenters brought over --

A. Yes.

Q. -- what kind of stuff did they bring over?

A. The carpenters brought over lots of jugs of spring water from spring water machines. It was a self- contained suffocating breathing apparatus, but it wasn't a Scott pack. I think

was like made by MSA or something. They had like really old, long cylinders of oxygen. I think they may have had one of those MASH-style stretchers, the folding stretchers.

The corner where we had left our equipment initially was where they started putting more equipment. It almost became like a small depot, but it wasn't -- it only remained that way like 45 minutes, because we ended up taking all our equipment and heading over to that staging area on Chambers and West Street.

Q. From the time you arrived on scene in the area other Broadway and Murray until you met up with Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Frazier, any encounters with any other EMS personnel or officers?

A. Yeah, there was the off-duty MOS. He said he lived in Jersey. He came over in his own vehicle. He had like a non-issue tech bag, but he had a uniform on and a coat on and a helmet on. He was the one who gave me the cartridges for my mask that I had gotten from the Port Authority van when we arrived down there.

Q. Do you know who he was?

A. No. I think he was either from Battalion 4 or Battalion 8. He had a goatee, in his like late twenties, early thirties, really nice guy. We had a couple interactions with him. He was just there to help. He worked there without a unit.

We had seen that one guy who was assigned to OEM that worked for EMS and telling him where we were coming from. He was in civilian clothes. There was the one paramedic that started getting real bossy. I'm not even sure what his name was. I know there was that one EMT or medic dressed like a lieutenant, but he started giving orders and we realized he was only one of us. We're like, you know --

As far as interaction down there, more civilians or guys from the unions, electrical workers, carpenters. And off-duty firefighters were down there.

Q. Any patients, walking wounded, anything like that that you encountered?

A. Initially when we arrived down there, my partner treated a guy with either an arm or a shoulder injury. She gave him a sling and a

shot, and he ended up just running away.

Q. Sorry, that was --

A. Yeah, that was outside. I failed to mention that. That was initially when we initially arrived on Broadway and Murray. I wasn't even aware of that until afterwards because I hadn't known my partner had done that until I saw the in the newspaper.

Like I said, I was loading up the stretcher with equipment. I guess she just sat him down on the back bumper and treated him, and he just kept going north. Like I said, there was a huge exodus of people just going up north.

We encountered some reporters and stuff. We were very careful about what we said to them. We weren't even really sure who we were talking to. We were like, "Yeah, we're from EMS," and just left it at that.

That was really it until we got over to Chambers and West Street until we saw more EMS workers later on that day.

Q. Any thoughts or comments or opinions on what happened that you would like to add?

A. No, just -- when we got over to

Chambers and West Street, that's when it seemed like things started to get really organized. You really couldn't get on the radio at all. Every radio was jammed up. It was impossible to talk on the radio. Communication was zilch. I think a lot of people got on the radio and they just kept talking and talking.

Other than that, organizationally until later on that day when the boss knew who we were, what we were doing there, and got us all in the staging area by BMCC. That was really it as far as being down in this area right here by Seven World Trade Center. As far as that's concerned, we were kind of on our own down there.

That's really it.

Q. Okay. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0755 hours, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110191

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL RICHARD McCAHEY

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: The time is now 11:10. This is Pat Campbell, Fire Marshal of the Fire Department, New York City. I'm here conducting an interview with Assistant Chief Fire Marshal McCahey in the conference room on the 6th floor of 16 Hooper Street. Also present in the room is --

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Fire Marshal Michael Starace.

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: And --

CHIEF McCAHEY: Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Rich McCahey.

Q. We are here to get a history today of the events that happened on September 11. What we are interested in is that from the time you became aware of the attack until the first plane hit the south tower until after the second tower had collapsed. Just go ahead and tell us everything. If we have any other questions, we'll ask them at the end.

A. Okay. Tuesday, September 11 was Election Day. I remember when I got up, I called the bases like I do every day. I checked with each of the commands, how the night was before. On my way in to work I stopped to vote at McKee High School. I guess it was

probably maybe 8 o'clock, five after 8, along those lines. It was the wrong place to go so I was directed to go to another place to vote. So I went to that place. New Dorp High School. I put my vote in.

As I was leaving, I remember as I was leaving the high school after voting, my beeper went off, a page for 722-2900, which is up here on the fifth floor, which I assume is Murf. My car was probably 15 feet away and I said I will wait until I get into the car and call him. As I put the key into the car door, that's when I believe the first page I got was 33 for plane crashing into the World Trade Center, a third alarm.

So I didn't think -- I didn't know what it was. I'm thinking maybe a small aircraft. I get into the car, I call Murf, asked him what's going on. He said have you heard it, yes. Plane crashed. No, at that point I believe he said looks like it was a big big crash and I think he said at that point he also told me that the second crash had just taken place. He said it looks bad. They were watching it from the windows at Hooper Street. I told him okay.

At that point I said, reach out to Bobby Burns and all the FIU, and have them respond right

there. I said reach out to Brooklyn base, have them respond there. Reach out to the fire senior and have him respond. Reach out to -- basically everybody. I wanted everybody to the scene. Notify the Chief Fire Marshal that I was responding at that point. I started heading up Hylan Boulevard towards the Verrazano Bridge and then past the 122 precinct, I believe it's the emergency service truck number 5 was pulling out lights and sirens.

Figuring that's where they are going, I got behind them. I figured they would open a path, which they did. Coming down Father Capadanno Boulevard, there was debris, papers and just ash and I got my first glimpse, as I was getting on to the bridge of the towers. I could see it was bad. I called Murf again, basically asked him if everybody was on their way. He was reaching out to us and I told him keep the radio open, keep your cell phones open and I will be getting back to him.

I followed ESU 5 up the Gowanus. It was clear sailing through, I believe it was the buff lane, so we were moving. We got to the tunnel. They had already cleared the tunnel, so I was followed by maybe one or two other emergency vehicles, but it did seem

like it was us two. I followed them through the tunnel. At that point I just received a phone call from Murf who said that it appeared it's a terrorist attack. He even thought that the second one was a missile. He said it looked like a rocket from there, but he feared, if it was a terrorist attack, just to let me know. My mind was -- not going through the tunnel was a good move. Anyways, we went through the tunnel. I remember coming out at the other end of the tunnel. I think they were directing us. There were probably tunnel cops there. I followed ESU. We went up, made a right up West Street, looking at your map here. We went up West Street, things were going well. Actually I remember in retrospect, I remember seeing what I thought was one or two, maybe two or three bundles on the side of the road from the tunnel, up until around Albany.

Later on I had found out they were body parts. I just thought it was a couple of dogs. You know, a couple of dogs got hit. Your mind plays games. I pulled up at Albany and West Street. They waved ESU. There was a police officer there, they waved ESU into the opposite lane to get up more in front of the building. That's, I guess, where our

command post was. I was right behind ESU. They stopped traffic. They stopped me right there. As ESU went up, the cops who were waving, I believe maybe another rig or two were coming. I sat there for probably 30, 40 seconds. I said you know what, the hell with this. I made a right. I went over the divider at Albany. There was a cut in it anyway, so it wasn't a big deal. I pulled right on to the corner on Albany, off the corner of West Street facing towards the water.

I got out of the car, I let the Manhattan dispatcher, I think I did, I can't remember, I usually do, that I'm on the scene. I definitely let Hooper Street know that I was on the scene. At that point I started walking up West Street in the direction towards Vesey to locate the command post, which is where I usually report in to at a scene like this, where the highest ranking officer are found. On the way up there I remember seeing Dave, the buff car parking on West Street from Brooklyn base, and in front of him was, I believe it was Harry Meyers, I believe Steve Gregory was there, maybe another individual. I believe Jerry Barbara was there. They had their trunk open, maybe they were putting their gear on. I just stopped and

asked them, kind of half joking, is this the command post, I'm on my way to the command post. They said no. I said do you know where it is. I think Harry said, I think it's up there, so keep going.

I continued up and at this time, I was just in a suit and tie. At this point I continued up West Street. I went under the first overpass. I guess that's around Liberty Street according to the map. I go under the first overpass and I cross Liberty Street and as I get maybe 15, I'm looking at the sky the whole time. I try to keep my eyes up.

Again, like I mentioned before to Mike earlier, in '93 one of our big problems was falling glass. There was a lot of glass falling in '93, so I was conscious of that. I didn't have a helmet on at the time. I was looking up. Everything looked good. The sky was blue. I looked down for a brief second. About 3 feet in front of me a piece of metal maybe 6 inches by 11 or 12 inches hit the ground about 3 feet in front of me. I didn't see where it came from. There was a firefighter to the right of me. I remember looking over at him, he said wow that was close or you were lucky or something like that.

At that point I said you know what, I'm going

to go back and put my helmet on. Again, I was probably halfway towards the command post. I just passed maybe 50 feet on Liberty Street. I turned around, walked all the way back to Albany and West, opened up the trunk of my car, got my helmet, and at that time I put on my windbreaker to identify myself, who I was.

As I closed the trunk, I believe the first group of guys I think I saw were Brooklyn base guys coming, Brian Grogan was the supervisor. He had about three or four Marshals with him. I can't remember all of them, I think Masser, Pascarella, something like that, you know, those guys. Nobody had gear on.

At that point I stopped them and I said I want everybody to go back and get their fire gear. They were like biting at the bit to get up and see what was going on. At that point though I was stern. We may have even had -- to make a point, I even -- at one point I even told Brian, I want gear on, and I pointed to the front of 1 World Financial Center, which was across the street and I said this is where our command post is going to be. I wanted everybody to get gear and report back to there. That was just short of the overpass, the south overpass. We were right there. 1 World Financial Center, between Dow Jones and

Oppenheimer, right there.

I put them up there, right in front of the door, but I watched them later on as they creeped up towards the foot bridge. But they didn't go past there. I grabbed Brian Grogan, who was supervisor, you are in charge of keeping everybody there. You know, anybody goes by here Brian, you know, we're gonna fire them, or something like that, in jest, but I wanted to get the point out. I didn't want anybody going past here.

At that point I believe Jay, Supervising Fire Marshal J.D. Lynn, I saw him coming from across the street, where the hotel was, whatever that construction they are doing over there. Right about here, to whatever that building is over there. Coming from like Cedar, he was coming from across the street. Again I believe he had a windbreaker on. I stopped and I said, "J.D., don't even think about it. Go back and get your gear." I believe he acknowledged me. Again at that same point I believe Bobby Burns showed up, and some of the guys from FIU. Again, I relayed the same information, go back and get your gear. I didn't want anybody going past there, and we'll maintain a command post where I had already said.

I believe I probably had one -- as I was talking to Bobby, I remember one of the Marshals going holy, whatever, pretty loud and I turned around and I noticed these black figures that were in the corner of my eye were actually bodies. They seemed like little tiny black figures. I saw one or two of them. I remember turning to the Marshal and telling him relax. Then he went again oh, my god, somebody went oh, my god, another one. I remember turning to the Marshal and saying listen, we are the professionals here, we got to compose ourselves. Relax, don't be screaming that out. We got a job to do, okay. Again, everybody go get their gear, okay. I think at that point we probably turned around and watched maybe 2 or 3 people jump. I remember standing there just watching. I remember one guy coming down. One guy was coming down on his back, his hands up. One guy came down with a white shirt. It looked like he was waving it. Probably after that I think we all saw one. He hit like a light post or a fence, and basically just went to pieces.

At that point, I was going to start my way again back to the command post. I think Bobby Burns showed up with a helmet or a bunker coat. After making

sure that I had all the guys, I told them we want to stay here. I will go up there, find out what they need. When I come back, again, I want everybody to be here. I don't want nobody going anywhere, okay.

I had turned to start and at that point I remember looking up at 1 World Financial Center, to the best of my recollection, I remember seeing Mike Starace, but I also remember seeing Dr. Kelly and she was with a firefighter or an officer. He was a guy with a helmet and turnout coat. I think he was a Lieutenant or Captain. I think his front piece was white. I'm not sure. That distracted me. I went to see what was going on.

I walked up sort of an incline, walking up right here. So I walked up the incline, I think I got to the top, I don't know if it was like, hey, what's up, or what's going on. I don't know what came or how much we got until somebody -- I heard a roar and somebody said, whatever, it's collapsing, it's going and everybody started running. I don't think I looked at that time. I just started running down, back down the incline. I think when I got to the sidewalk area, turning to go to make a right back towards Albany, I looked over my shoulder briefly and I could see this

big cloud of dust. It looked like it was coming pretty good.

At that point, thinking fast, I had a few options. When I got to the corner of Albany, that's where my car was and I was thinking about either -- my first thought was actually, there was a fence, a chain link fence, it was covered in green. I actually stopped there briefly and I crouched down and when I leaned against it I realized it was chain link and that probably wasn't going to be a good place to be. Some of the stuff started coming. I thought briefly about going under the car. But I figured I go under the car, if it doesn't, with my luck the car is not going to be completely crushed or half crushed, then you are stuck under the car.

So at that time I had no choice. I went maybe another 15 feet, 20 feet, and there was a brick wall, which I thought was the side of 1 World Financial Center and I figured since it was a tall building, so I was pretty safe there, which I later found out was only a one story back of the garage. But I basically put myself as flat to the brick wall as I could. There were people around, I don't remember anybody. I don't know. I know Mike said we bumped into each other. I

didn't remember that actually until we talked. I remember bumping, going like hi, like in a cartoon, where you are trying to go right but you are going left. I don't know where anybody else went.

While I was against the wall, I could hear the stuff coming and I remember looking over my shoulder and I saw the stuff going past me, nothing large. I saw small debris going past me. I remember thinking, what's the chances of something coming straight down the building. That's all I was worried about. So that went on. At that point I figured maybe we will luck out, and then a couple of seconds, I don't know, the stuff seemed to be coming back. It started pinging off the wall. It was like it went that way and then all of a sudden it whipped back. Again, nothing big, I didn't see any big chunks. A lot of dust, a lot of little things. Started pinging back off the wall. At that point I got down on the ground. I went down to maybe my knees, and then the dust came in and then the black came in.

When the black came in I thought, at first I thought that it was smoke coming down there. I saw an orange glow, I don't know where it was, a small orange glow. I believe it was to -- I was disoriented. It

looked like it was to my left. I'm thinking maybe people; now I'm thinking that jet fuel, the thick black smoke and I'm down on the ground. I got my face, my teeth to the concrete at that point, completely flat, just using what I was taught, you know. Get low. At that point I figured, I kind of thought this was -- my only thought was this is where they're gonna find me on the street corner. I thought I was in -- I it was in a smoke area. I figured like I said it was diesel or jet fuel. It's not going to do any kind of, whatever. It gets inside your lungs just like an oil burner fire.

Anyway, at one point I'm down there and I'm not covering my face. I'm just breathing slowly, I'm pacing my breathing, I'm not panicking, trying to keep everything nice and calm like we are supposed to. I heard some people screaming. Some people like I can't breathe, I can't see, stuff like that. Sporadically, not a lot, very sporadically. Maybe two or three. Somebody, which actually helped me, I don't know who it was, after somebody said I can't breathe, somebody, I don't know which direction it came from, screamed out don't panic or relax, relax. It's not smoke. It's just dust. Just relax.

At that point, that's when I started to

realize my mouth was filling up with like a sand ball. All of a sudden I realized when whoever said that, now I'm starting to pay attention to my surroundings. I realized there was no heat, you could breathe. Stuff was going in your mouth but it was like a cool air coming in when you breathe it, so I said maybe he was right. You couldn't see, it was gritty.

So at that point I took my jacket and put my jacket around my face. I remember hearing a mask go on, somebody turning on their scott pack. Then I heard the breathing start. I was choking. I was spitting up at that point a little bit. Still not sure what's going on. I remember standing up half way, maybe crouched now, and feeling what I felt, the turnout coat. I remember tapping the guy and asking him if I could -- pal, can I have a hit of that. Whatever. I remember sounding stupid. I said can I have a hit of that and I don't think he heard me.

Anyway, at a certain point while it was still black, previously to that I saw this orange glow before, let me backtrack -- before this guy had said it was dust, I saw an orange glow. I had decided that I think I was going to try to make my way toward the orange glow, figuring again, I've been out of fire ops

for so long, that it was taking in oxygen from the flame. If I get close to the orange glow, I stay low, maybe I will get some oxygen off that, if things were getting bad. That was going through my head prior to realizing what exactly the environment was.

At a point I started moving and I started moving fast. I didn't know where I was, I actually thought I may have been indoors. I took about maybe 3 steps, I was disoriented. At one point it was dead silence and it was pitch black and I thought I was indoors.

So I started to move. I was moving at a good pace, not running, but I think I started a good brisk walk. I banged my knee. It must have been a car. I hit another car. After I hit like two, banging my legs and I hit my shoulder against a car. Something fell on my head. I don't know what the hell it was. It wasn't heavy. I remember thinking it felt like sheetrock and I know it couldn't have been sheetrock. I realized if I start running blindly I'm going to be running into things. So I walked slowly and I saw another glow and when I got up to the glow it was a white SUV. I remember that, because I could see it when I got right up -- you had to get right up on top of it to see it

was white. He had his headlights on. He must have been in the middle of the street or whatever. I don't know. So I continued going, because I remembered when I parked the water was straight that way. So I thought I was going in the right direction.

Probably a couple of minutes later or very shortly after, I saw the green go to red or red go to green up in the air. As I kept staring at it I could see it was a street light. As I am staring at it, I remember seeing a branch, like branch, looked like it was only about 3 feet over my head. So I figured, I knew I was outdoors. That made me feel better and I just kept going very slowly, eyes squinted, and it started to clear up. As it started to clear up I remember I could see I was on the corner, I guess it was on South End Avenue and Albany. Because the light I think I saw was on South End and Albany right there and then there was a store over here. I made it down South End Avenue. I had no radio. I lost my radio, I had lost my cell phone, which was on my belt. I realized that was gone. My radio was gone. I had no communication.

I wound up going all the way down to the esplanade, I guess. I started to walk by the water,

that's all I know. Everything was white, everything was dust, there was nobody around. One or two firemen I may have passed. When I got down to the esplanade it was like vacant, and the dust was starting to lift and my eyes are like this, and I got here and I run across a female, she had her shirt up over her head. No under garments. Quite a sight.

But she was going, walking back towards Vesey Street, I don't know where that is, north. She was walking north. So I remember grabbing her and telling her, "You are going the wrong way. Come with me." She was kind of hysterical. She said no no no. She said "How do you know." I said I know because I just came from there. I remember she was grabbing around my shirt and she felt my patch on my windbreaker. She said are you a cop or a fireman. I said I'm from the Fire Department, so she spun around and started walking south and nobody was there.

At that point some young kid, tall kid, with his shirt wrapped around his face, blond hair, I remember he comes popping up and again, going north. I grabbed him and said, "No, let's go this way." At that point we saw a -- I remember seeing a baby carriage from the back. I couldn't see if there was a baby in

it. I went up to it, spun it around and there was no baby in it. I remember somebody, I don't know who it was, somebody said let's go into one of these buildings over here. He said -- I have no idea where I was at that point. Somebody said the building is open. So whatever it was it was a back door to one of these buildings along the esplanade.

We went up there, we go through there. It was like a triage center with people screaming and panicking. As I walked in I had a windbreaker on. It said Fire Department, Fire Marshal. It was like a magnet. A well dressed older gentleman grabbed me immediately and said, "You are with the Fire Department." I said "Yes." He said, "Well, I'm a doctor, is there anything I can do." I asked him are there any other police officers, firefighters, in this lobby area. He said, "I think EMS, I think you have EMS here. They are in the back." So I went back to EMS. There was a baby there. A small baby, and the lady was going hysterical. The baby looked okay to me. The doctor thought he was okay.

I went into the back room and they were not EMS. They were in uniform, they were park police, I think, if I remember correctly. Park with the green

uniform. It was a female. She was trying to calm people down. At that point I was having trouble seeing. There was a desk there and a doorman and I remember asking if the phone's working. He said "Yeah," and I said, "I'm gonna use it." He said, "You can't use it." He was a black gentleman. I think I told him we need the phone basically, and I used the phone. I don't know what happened. He moved out of the way and I used the phone and I called headquarters.

I called Chris Tempro. I said Chris, do you know what's going on, I mean I have no phone, I have no radio. Yes, blah blah blah. I said listen, do me a favor. Then I think I said forget about it. I wound up calling Hooper Street, because I know Hooper Street has their radio, they would answer, so I got Hooper Street, and I got, I don't know who I got, I got Murf or somebody. I was looking to move, I'm getting confused. I think at that point I was just trying to get the guys moved back. I don't remember where the first move was going to be. I just wanted everybody that was on West Street to fall back, south. I kept saying go towards Battery Park. I wanted everybody moving towards Battery Park.

At that point the doctor came over and he said you better wash out your eyes, blah blah blah. I went into the bathroom, somebody gave me some water. I washed my eyes. I was having trouble keeping them open. At that point I looked outside. I hung up. I think I called my house and I called my wife to tell her I was okay. I went back out. I remember the doctor saying, "Where are you going." I said, "I'm going to go back out. I got to find my guys." He said fine. Everything seemed to be okay. It was kind of lifting up. I had given the address, so I gave the phone to the doorman and I said give him the address. Send EMS, or whatever, he was talking to. Then I went back out and I guess I walked back to Albany and up Albany.

As I came across Albany, there was a, I think I ran into Lane, Lechter Lane, yes. There was another Marshal there, I ran into somebody else. I'm getting confused with the second collapse now. Time flies by. I know we definitely had Lechter Lane. There was some sort of bodega or Gristedes or something there. And we went into there, went there to the door. It was locked. I remember knocking on the door and I remember seeing a girl and guy. They weren't going to open the

door. I took my shield out and knocked my shield against the glass. Open the door. Then she opened up. She didn't know who the hell we were. We went in there and their phone worked. So then I called Chris again and I said we will make this a command post. I have a line going in and out. I believe we took some water. There was other guys that were firemen in there. I can't remember.

Anyway at that point, I believe I asked Lane to stay there. I gave Chris that telephone number. I think I took somebody's radio and I was trying to get people on the radio. I remember getting Jack McCauley and I wanted the guys moving back to Battery Park. We were going towards that way. Somebody said that's like a mile away. You know, back and forth. Now I'm -- I don't think we moved back to Battery Park until the second, it was after the second collapse, right, when we actually got to Battery Park.

At this point I'm a little confused -- where now -- I was there, I think I went back up South End Avenue, okay. That's correct. I'm trying to think. We did move back to Battery Park after the first collapse.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. Yes, I was back there by the water. The water was right to my back. I remember going back and forth. I had somebody's radio, going back and forth about moving to Battery Park. I think we did. We moved to Battery Park. I think that's when I met you again, right. That was after the first collapse. Okay. Was it after the second collapse?

Okay, that was after the second collapse. Then I got in the truck and drove back. I'm confused now. All I know is we were here. And I may have left Lane. I can't remember who I ran into, okay, whatever. I know I had left Lane on the phone. I spoke to Chris, gave him the address where we were. Okay, now I remember. I was in contact with Jack McCauley and Jimmy Kelty, but he couldn't make it. He kept telling me, he wasn't sure where he was. I think Jack probably wasn't sure where he was and I wasn't exactly sure where my location was at that time. I don't know that area down there. But that was it. We had a lot of radio traffic. Once I got the radio, a lot of radio traffic with Jimmy Kelty, who was supposedly trapped up by 10 and 10. He said he had a bunch of guys with him. Okay. He could not meet. He couldn't get to the West Side Highway. Jack was

basically telling me it's too far. But I put him in charge. I think he was on up on West Street.

At that point, I don't know how I got, but I remember walking back up the west side. No, no, that was still after the second collapse. No, it wasn't the second collapse. It was on West Street. That's right. On West Street, as I started going to Battery Park, I believe that's when I ran into Chief Nigro. I believe it was Chief Nigro and -- Chief Nigro was by himself. Chief Nigro asked me if I -- I asked Chief Nigro, "Do you know where the command post is, is there a command post?" I said, "I'm thinking about putting my guys back on Battery Park." He asked me if I saw Chief Ganci. I said, "No". I think I asked him again. I said, "You know, I am having the Marshals move back up towards Battery Park. Do you know where our command post is going to be?" I think again he asked me if I had heard or seen from Chief Ganci, if I could find out if anybody.

I think I went over the radio. I got McCauley. I said, Jack, have you seen Chief Ganci. Wherever Jack was. With the guys. He was -- I don't know if anybody was with Jack. Wherever Jack was I can't remember, but I asked Jack because he was the

only guy that answered me and he didn't see Chief Ganci. I told Chief Nigro no. At that point I believe he started walking back towards the Trade Center.

I think I ran into Andy McCracken, Chief of EMS, and that would have been probably around Rector Street, between Albany and Rector. I don't know what we talked about. He mentioned something to me and I can't remember. At that point I wanted to go back to my car, I figured, to get my -- I told him that I had my car keys, actually my house keys were in my car and it seemed like everything was settled down and everything was that way. I remember I needed my gear. I needed a helmet, I needed my bunker coat. I started walking back down West Street again. There was pretty much nobody there. It was kind of empty. It was weird, with the dust. It was like a ghost town.

I remember getting back to right at the same spot where my car was parked and standing in the middle of Albany Street it was covered with dust. There was a tire in the middle of the street. I ran into Commissioner Gregory, Steve Gregory. Evidently they had sought refuge over here but I'm not sure. I can only remember talking to him. Now this whole trip, I don't know how long it took, 15, 20 minutes, I'm going

down, going here, stopping there. And coming back, going back. I guess it was about 15, 20 minutes. I remember standing there and reaching for my car keys to open up the car to get my stuff out and then I started talking to Commissioner Gregory. I asked him if he was okay. How you doing? Do you believe it? We were looking up at the thing like it was normal stuff.

I heard that roar again. Sounded like a big jet plane and my back was facing. I was talking to the Commissioner, and I could see the look on his face. I turned around and all I saw was that mushroom coming down. I turned around, I don't know where Commissioner Gregory went. I thought for a second of running across the street because I figured there was something over there, but, because I hadn't been there before, no way, I didn't want to get caught. I just wound up going back, right back to the same spot. Basically, it was like deja vu all over again. Same routine, except I knew what to expect.

Q. Was your car smashed already?

A. My car, the first time the windows blew out. The first time, yes, that's true. When I got back to my car, the passenger's side windows were out. There was a little bit of debris on it, but I remember the

passenger side front and rear window got, the back window I think was broken. I can't remember when the hood -- the hood, I think that was after the second. Mike might have a picture of that.

I went against the wall, there was a little nook. It was like being by yourself this time. I knew there was nobody around. I went through the whole thing, what's the chance of something coming straight down on you, the whole nine yards, so at least I knew what to expect. After everything blew over and it got dark, I remember there was a fireman. Again, I could hear his mask. He wasn't too far from me. He had a flashlight, he had a light. He was there. I started to move. I moved -- I started to move out a lot faster than I did last time. I didn't wait as long.

Again, I don't know, I didn't feel as much coming out of the sky. The black came in. I remember he was leading the way with a flashlight in his hand. I was holding on to his -- I had asked him for the flashlight. He said, nah, nah, I got it, and I said well, I know the way out of here. I remember telling him, you know, been there, done that. But he held the light and he had his hand on the right wall and he started moving slowly down the block and I had his mask

and the back of his cylinder. He started going to the right and I knew going to the right was going to go into the building, into the garage. I told him go left. And he said basically, no. I think I just wound up going off to my left in to the middle of the street.

At that point it was still fairly dark, but you could see the street light up the block. As I made it up the block, I wound up - my eyes were bad that time. I couldn't even -- they were hurting, they were hurting, okay. I couldn't find, believe it or not, I couldn't find the Gristedes we went to the first time. I don't know why. I thought it was right there. I thought the store was in like a cove of some sort. Again somewhere back here, I may have been on the wrong corner the first time.

So I went straight back, all the way back to the water again. Made a left, started walking, doing the same thing again. I believe I ran into Mike Kane. Mike Kane is coming this way. He is walking up from Battery Park, direction south, walking north. I am coming this way. I couldn't see him. I said, "Hey Mike, what's up?" He said, "Where's the guys, where you going?" I guess we had some small talk. I said

hold up a second. I said, "I know there is a store with a phone, I just wanted to find it, but I couldn't. I had to take a break."

So I went to the marina someplace here where the boats are docked. I could have been that far over.

Q. There's only one marina.

A. It's not. There's something over here. There is something over here. You don't have it. It's got to be right around here. I went down these steps on to the marina. I remember seeing two guys taking off on boats. I know boats, I figured there is a hose, there has got to be a hose. I don't know where he has the hose. My eyes were bad. Even Mike said that I couldn't open them up. So I went down there, not a freaking hose. Not -- so I went over to the corner. I just pushed the water out of the way. I remember sticking my head, put my head right into the Hudson River, cleaned my eyes. It felt good. It really did help.

Now when I came back up, I think -- I don't know if I lost another radio, or Mike had a radio or we used the same radio. Again at that point I think that's when I started asking everybody to go to Battery Park. Not towards Battery Park. I said I wanted the

command post, I want all the Marshals to Battery Park. Again I remember getting Jack McCauley, I remember the guys at Hooper Street answering me, and asking them to relay it. I wanted the command post back at Battery Park. I think it was Jack, who said it's a mile to Battery Park. I don't remember who said it, but I want everybody at Battery Park. Jimmy Kelty, we found that he could not make it to Battery Park. I had Mike with me.

Somehow we wound up coming up one of these side streets. I got Mike into the -- we wound up in this space I was in before, this little supermarket. Okay. I don't think Lane was there, and I was a little upset. As it turned out, that's why I left him in charge there, so we could have an open line with a radio, for the radio and the phones. If I needed, I could call up Lane and he could call on the phone. But evidently, nobody knew where he was and evidently it turned out that he -- somebody got hurt. He wound up helping somebody so he wasn't there. Lechter was gone with the radio and there was no Fire Marshal present. So it was me, myself and Mike. We took over the phones again. We did the phone things. I don't know what else we did.

I think -- I can't remember if there was another Marshal or two that showed up in there. What I think was I asked the guy for two box cameras that were hanging up there. I took two box cameras off the thing. I gave the guy my name, I said thanks. I remember last time, what had happened in '93 was we had one of the first initial photographs. Timmy Marr got a lot of photographs that nobody had, the press didn't have. Today everybody has cameras, so it didn't help, but I took both box cameras and then we went back out.

I started walking towards Battery Park. Took a weird route there. I can't remember. I was with Mike so Mike may remember better. I think we hit the back roads. Then we ran into another dead end and we had to go down again. But Mike said he knew because that's the way he came. We made it eventually, we made it back -- we made it to Battery Park. Okay. I may be missing things here because I should have wrote this down in the beginning because between both of these and being in the same place both times I'm getting confused, but I think I'm pretty much right on that.

We made it back to Battery Park, and I remember the first guy I saw, I remember seeing Mike, you sitting there with a bunch of guys sitting there.

I remember Mike looking like a war zone. Guys were covered, disheveled, beat up, you name it. But I saw a lot of guys there, so I was kind of happy. I didn't know if my message -- who was getting it through there as far as moving back to Battery Park. If Hooper Street was working. I don't know if Jack did it all by himself. I remember reaching out to Bobby. I might have even gotten Bobby once or twice. All I remember Jack, we had a lot of dialogue on the radio. He seemed to be the only guy who was getting back to me. So somebody had it.

I remember walking up there and seeing who we had, if everybody was okay. The usual. I grabbed the supervisor, I guess it was Jack. I remember Bobby there and Jimmy Devery. John Grogan was there. So I asked is everybody here, everybody okay. Looked like everything was okay.

At that point I turn around and I see Dr. Kelly and Dr. Prezant were coming up the street and I remember the first thing - I said hello to Dr. Kelly. She was right by me. I remember she just went and asked everybody is everybody okay. She went there talking to the guys. At that point Jack McCauley came over to me and he said something to the effect that

Chief, we are missing a couple of guys. Who are we missing. I did a roll call. We are missing Ronnie Bucca. I said, "Who is the supervisor? " He said Jimmy Devery. I said send Jimmy over. Jimmy came over, I said, "Jimmy, where's Ronnie?" He says, "I think he was in the building. I'm not sure." I probably got a little upset with him. You know, what do you mean you're not sure? He's either in the building or out of the building. He said, "I think he's in the building." I think I might have asked, "What was he doing in the building?"

At that point I don't know what I did, I just walked back over there to Jack McCauley and Jack goes calm down, I said okay. And then it dawned on me and I had Jimmy come over and I asked who is his partner and I think he said Andy Difusco. I said, "Where is Andy Difusco? " He said, "I don't know." Now I'm thinking we are missing two guys. I think we -- I think Jack somebody. I may have had someone go on the radio, ask around, are they here, are they there, are they there.

At that point we had the mobile command post parked there, the big trailer. I remember walking into the trailer and only seeing Chief Nigro sitting in there. Wondering where everybody was. At that point

we had gotten in touch. I think -- I think I started asking Louie again, because I had a radio. I remember Louis, Chief Garcia, was over on the other side. He was asking if I could come over to his command post at Manhattan Community College. That's where his new command post was. You know the Fire Department command post.

So to make a long story short, I grabbed the crime scene unit, Mickey Shadwicke. I spent probably the next 20 hours with Mickey. That truck was great for getting through the streets with the lights. So I got in there and had Mickey wheel me over to the Manhattan College, Community College command post, where I hooked up with Garcia.

It was at that time that Garcia told me that Chief Ganci was dead. I believe Chief Feehan was dead. Father Judge, I was in total amazement -- at that time, even with all that I forgot that people were in harm's way.

From there the Chief wanted to know where the Marshals were. I said I had the Marshals at the command post in Battery Park. I think while we were there, I believe Jack McCauley moved in farther into the park, because there was still dust and debris.

Chief Garcia wanted to go to the command post, so we walked back.

At that point I had the camera, they were taking pictures. It was a scene of devastation, just walking back, cars were turned over.

Q. You had said to me you were north of the south bridge?

A. Yes, for the first time, yes. After we left the Manhattan Community College, we just walked back and we got to the north bridge there. We couldn't get by there. We just walked and walked and then when we left, when we got to here, I took him back down to where the store was. I called the Marshals. I had somebody else in there. I know we just all walked together. We all walked together back to Battery Park. Nobody was there. We started walking. Jack said keep walking. We have to move farther. You guys were like by the restaurant. There seemed to be more guys, a couple more guys than the first time.

Basically we took stock of what we had to do. We told everybody we were moving up to the Manhattan Community College. I don't remember much. My eyes were killing me so bad Louie did all the talking. I think I just kept dumping water bottles on

my eyes.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. At that point after Louie gave me the directions, we jumped back into the crime scene unit. I believe it was myself, Garcia, and maybe, I don't know, maybe Bobby, maybe not. I can't remember. We went back to Manhattan Community College, where we pretty much set up our command post the remainder of the night.

During the course of the night they walked in early on in the evening, they walked in with this guy that was wearing fire fighting gear. Somebody had seen him at the pile. They brought him in. We had him in another room there, Intelligence was notified, I believe it was Inspector Arnett showed up from Intelligence and we turned him over to them. I believe it was at that time I had my first contact with Andy Difusco, who showed up, looked like Lil' Abner. Basically just a T-shirt, pair of ripped pants, I don't even think he had shoes on. I didn't know that he was -- I didn't know how much he was involved in this collapse. I didn't put two and two together, why he had no clothes on. I never realized till later on.

He was basically talkative, he was active,

doing his job. We had a lot of Marshals starting to show up. I had all the supervisors in there. I started delegating different jobs, you know. I gave -- I broke up the Marshals regardless of who their squad was. I assigned to get some coverage going. I assigned -- somebody marked to be supervisor, so we had some control. I believe for the most part that's what we were doing right at that point.

We had some contact going in. Guys were coming back and forth. I don't know -- not much more for us to do. At one point later on I then took a break, again going back to my original why I went back to the second collapse. I needed to get my gear. At that point, it seems like it's probably going towards the afternoon, 3:00. The recovery effort was on, I grabbed Mickey Shadwicke, I said, "Mickey, I want you to take a walk with me."

First we were going to drive, we couldn't get the truck down. I needed to get in my car. All my gear was in the truck, my duffle dug, my bag, my briefcase, my keys, so Mickey and I walked all the way back to Albany, the back route to Albany and at that point I noticed there was a pole, a six-foot long pole through the back window and then right through the

front. It looked like a curtain rod. It was round. All the windows were blown out, the hood was semi-dented. My trunk was up. No, my trunk was closed. I opened up the trunk. It was covered with ash, with white powder, I couldn't figure out how it got in there.

Later on Mike had showed me a picture that he took after the second collapse of the trunk of my car. My trunk was open. Somehow it popped open and somebody must have closed it. That's what it was. I couldn't figure out how I had so much stuff inside it. I loaded up all my stuff, my 400 pounds of bunker gear and me and Mickey trucked it all the way back and threw it into the back of the crime scene unit.

Q. Were you parked near any companies, any fire companies?

A. I remember parking, I remember that when I pulled up. When I made the left on Albany, there was nobody else on the street. Right behind me pulled up a black Crown Vic '93 behind me, because I know what it is. Three guys got out. They looked like police types. That car -- I'm trying to remember -- that car was gone. The car was gone when I went back with Mickey. I remember saying I don't know if it was

totalled. My car was gone by the second day. We went back the second day, because I remember, I was actually going to try to move it down the block, because I remember I said I will get in, stay hunched over and I can get this started. I walked with the key and when I got there the car was gone.

The only car left on the block was a blue Crown Vic, which turned out to be down the block, which turned out to be Dr. Kelly's car. That was down the block. Well, that's it. If you have specific questions, go ahead.

Q. Prior to losing your radio, do you remember hearing any transmissions?

A. Nothing. All I remember is the verbal part, the collapsing, and then like most guys said, the dead silence. Again, not panic. Like maybe two or three people, saying I can't see, I can't breathe. I can't see. That was it. Like one or two, and whoever the guy was, I don't know. Something tells me it was a Marshal. The guy that said that it's not smoke, relax, it's not smoke, it's just dust. That actually got me thinking.

Q. It wasn't Bobby Burns by any chance?

A. No, it wasn't Bobby. Brian Grogan said it

was one of his guys. I think he said that. I'm not sure if he had a name. I don't know where Bob was. You were even close. I didn't even know you were that close.

Q. Right after I bumped into you. Chief Barbara, you said you saw him when you reached the scene?

A. Chief Barbara, he was talking.

Q. Was he parked?

A. There was a car parked there. Now there was a trunk open. That would have been Albany before I went under the underpass, so right from Albany, what, he was parked on West, maybe they were on West. I don't know whose car it was. Somebody's trunk was up. They were on -- it was Albany. It was on West Street between Albany and Liberty. It was probably in front of the World Financial Center where we had the command post. That was when I first got there.

Q. They were walking?

A. No, they were talking. I believe it was him. Harry Meyers. Steve Gregory and maybe Sal Cassano. I'm not sure. That day I remember saying I'm getting confused. People were telling me they were over here, over there. Again it was well before the

first collapse. It was almost like they were just getting their stuff together. They were at somebody's car getting their stuff. I remember thinking maybe that was the command post and asking them if it was the command post.

No, I remember to myself because I thought it was unusual that both Barbara and Harry were there, do you know what I'm saying, because (inaudible). That's it. No, that was the last place I probably saw him, when I was walking up West Street.

Q. Anything else?

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: Time is now 12:01. Thank you very much, Chief.

File No. 9110192

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN KARIN DESHORE

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

INVESTIGATOR TAMBASCO: Today is November 7. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We are doing an interview with Captain Karin Deshore of Battalion 46 into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. Interview time is beginning at 0549 a.m.

Q. Captain, would you be good enough to tell us your story?

A. Okay, on 9-11-01 I reported for duty as usual, at 0500 hours. Lieutenant Spiro Yioras was sent from Battalion 49 to be Conditions 46. He arrived here roughly around 0615 hours. Mr. Keller, who became part of the persons responding with me, arrived for duty at 0630 hours. I don't know the exact time, but I was sitting behind my desk when Mr. Keller came into my office and told me that an airplane had just hit the World Trade Center.

Because Mr. Keller is a prankster, I told him to leave me alone, and get out of my office. Then he said to me it was really true. I looked at his face. I got up and sure enough there was smoke coming out of the World Trade Center building. We had the television in our lunchroom.

Thinking it was a possibly accident of a

Cessna or something hitting the World Trade Center, I did become concerned, but at that time I didn't have a command car. I didn't respond. When it became apparent that a commercial airliner had hit the World Trade Center, the first hit, I called Lieutenant Yioras in from patrol. He came here and another one of my employees, Mr. Prue, also called and asked did I want him to come in, since he lived right around the corner and I advised him, come on in. When Lieutenant Yioras arrived, Lieutenant Yioras, myself and Mister EMT Keller, who is here on restricted duty, but I still felt he could respond with me, if it was just as a matter of being my aide or carrier or assist and Mr. Prue responded in command car 825.

It is my recollection that we drove Northern Boulevard to the 59 Street bridge. At the beginning of the 59 Street bridge, the second airliner hit and we witnessed it. Mr. Keller later on told me that we were still at the office here, but I remember it hitting when we just hit the 59 Street bridge on the Queens side. People were just standing on the 59 Street bridge in total disbelief. No traffic was moving. Traffic agents were trying to clear the way to get us over the bridge. We could see the smoke coming out of

the buildings, explosions, you know, dark smoke coming out of both buildings.

We made it over the 59 Street bridge, made a left on Second Avenue and we took the rear end of a caravan of police vehicles, Fire Department vehicles, black cars with sirens and we just followed them, because there was just no other openings. People were standing everywhere on Second Avenue and just looking, because you couldn't see the twin towers, but you could see the smoke coming, you know, above the area.

I was not driving, Lieutenant Yioras was driving and somewhere we made a right turn. In the meantime, I notified communication, was told to switch to Citywide, which we did, and I told him who was all responding and I was advised that I was cleared to respond even prior to that, because we also heard EMS employees on the air advising that they were on the scene of the locations and there were no supervisors and they didn't know what to do, where to go or who to await.

So they were told by communications to go to various staging areas. We were told to go to West and Vesey. I have no idea where West and Vesey is and we just kept following the caravan of emergency vehicles.

We arrived on the west side and I believe it was West and Vesey. We couldn't go any further. It was in front of -- just prior to one of the twin towers, and I believe it is number 1 twin tower. All right.

Just as we got there, Chief Charlie Wells was there trying to set up an area with all of the ambulance crews that were just standing there and really didn't have anybody to give them any directions. He saw Lieutenant Yioras and myself and he basically asked us to keep in touch with him and be part of his contingency.

Most of the individuals that were there were Hatzolah volunteers, maybe 3 and 4 to a bus. I had one Flushing paramedic unit and I remember it was Al Touro on the paramedic unit. We also had a student that was his first day riding as a paramedic student. He, of course, had no helmet. I had another BLS unit from Flushing. I don't know their radio designation, but the two ladies' names are Jen and Bonnie and I really didn't know that they were ladies either.

Later on I found out a react unit and one of the gentlemen was Orlando Rivera I believe. They were told basically to respond with myself and Chief Wells to the further part of the World Trade Center

buildings, the southwest corner of building number 2.

I left Lieutenant Yioras in charge of all the ambulances. He was to collect the keys and as the units would get patients, they would come back to him, get the keys and then respond to a hospital and then come back to him or whatever they were told to do. I was with Mr. Keller and Mr. Prue. This is funny, but Mr. Keller told me that I looked like an ass and I told him it was really unprofessional for him to say that. I said to him why would you say that. He said to me I had my helmet on backwards. So I put my helmet on the right way. Apparently I was a little excited at that time, because I was trying to get everybody as close to the west side as I could because of the falling debris and the bodies kept coming down.

I spoke with paramedic Charl from Flushing and I said to him did you see that, he said what. I said just look up to your left. Here the bodies kept coming out of both buildings. Some of them were on fire. Some of them were moving, others were not moving and the worst part was as they hit the ground, they would go like a splush sound. You could just see the whole body would just disintegrate into pieces and splatter all over and the sound and I saw a couple of

them do that, was just enough to just make me tune out to that.

I became more concerned with everybody in my contingency not getting hit by falling debris. I had the rear. Chief Wells had the front and all the volunteers were in the back. I was trying to keep them moving and trying to move left, because once I got them out from underneath the buildings, they weren't getting hit by bodies, but the debris just kept coming out, and the billowing smoke and as people kept pouring out of the buildings, there was total chaos. They were coming in our direction and before we could do anything for them, they would turn and they would go back in.

There was no organization, anybody saying hey, just keep going in this direction. People just would not listen to any kind of advice, suggestion or demand you made of them to keep them safe. My concern at that time was basically all of the volunteers that I had who had no helmets. So as we got over to the furthest end of the World Trade Center building, which was now building number 2, the southwest corner, Chief Wells said to me Karin, give me one unit to go in with me. Go on the command frequency and when I need another unit, I will call you. Then you know that the

other unit has a patient and gone back to their bus, which at that time I felt saved a lot of lives instead of us just all go into the building. His decision was an extremely wise choice.

I didn't know that the two people I chose were two ladies, they were Jen and Bonnie, because they were the only ones with helmet. In the meantime I am yelling to get everybody else underneath a pedestrian overpass over the street, because again they had no helmets and the debris, there was no longer danger of them getting hit by bodies, but the debris was just coming down. It was unbelievable.

Charlie Wells, my last recollection of him was going towards the building and Bonnie and Jen. I told them to follow Chief Wells with their helmet on, but they didn't have a long board so I said to -- later on I found out they were ladies. Don't you think you should take a long board with you and they didn't have one. Somebody went and grabbed a long board from someplace and they had their stretcher up, they laid it on the side of the stretcher.

As they are walking now they are tripping on the straps, so I told them -- again, I told them this is not right. You are going to fall and hurt

yourself. You won't be able to help anybody and they took the long board and put it on top. My last recollection was of them going towards the building.

I asked at that time -- everybody else was with me still and I kept pushing them back and back and back, because I said what is this, a subway at the end of the overpass, because there is fire coming out of the ground. I didn't realize that that was a car already on fire over there.

All the ambulances were parked right there in front of me also, underneath the overpass, just neatly parked towards the buildings, all of them. There must have been at least two rows of ambulances, maybe 10 of them. Of course cars parked everywhere else.

Apparently, my last recollection like I said, was Chief Wells and the two ladies going towards the building. I didn't know that Chief Wells made it out of the building and apparently my delaying their entering the building, Jen and Bonnie, might have saved them all, because they also survived. My back was towards the building, trying to push everybody up. Grassy hill was there and up underneath that overpass, when somebody just simply shouted and I have no idea who it was, it's blowing.

I had no clue what was going on. I never turned around because a sound came from somewhere that I never heard before. Some people compared it with an airplane. It was the worst sound of a rolling sound, not a thunder. I can't explain it, what it was. All I know is -- and a force started to come hit me in my back. I can't explain it. You had to be there. All I know is I had to run because I thought there was an explosion.

I ran about 10, 12 feet up this little grassy hill and by then this force and this sound caught up with me already. I threw myself behind the last support column of the pedestrian overpass. It became pitch dark. The sound got worse, the force just kept passing me. At times I thought it was like an orange light maybe, coming past me.

I was unaware what was happening. I thought it was just a major explosion. I didn't know the building was collapsing. I was sitting with my left side towards the support beam, total darkness, total noise. I felt beyond alone. I felt desolated. I felt like, all I could say was people think about their families and whatever. All I kept saying to myself within me I don't want to die, I don't want to die, I

don't want to die.

I can't tell you how long it was before it died down. I just felt like the darkness the loneliness and being alone was the worst thing I ever experienced in my life and not being able to breathe. There was no air. Whatever this explosion was simply sucked all the oxygen out of the air. You couldn't breathe and the feeling of suffocation, I can't explain no further on that.

I don't know how long it took. All of a sudden it was all over and the silence set in. Nobody cried, nobody talked, nobody made a sound. There was nothing. Absolutely nothing. You could open your eyes, it was pitch black. Breathing became a little bit easier but I just sat there. I didn't know what was happening and I just sat there. Again, I can't give you time periods, 5 minutes, 5 seconds or however long it might have been.

Somehow over my right shoulder I hear this male voice, "is there anybody out there." I didn't know at first should I answer, should I not answer. Then I just said I'm over here, please don't leave me. The man said I'm over here, I can't see. That's when I opened my eyes. I said I can't see either. He said

okay I'm going to talk. I said I'm going to talk and we will find each other. That's exactly what we did. We found each other. We kept talking to each other. We found each other. Nobody else answered, nobody else said a word. I was unaware that there were people from my unit laying all around me. They described it later on where they were.

I had a police van in front of me, about 6 feet that I remember being there. I saw a picture later on, it was totally destroyed. Two feet to my right there was an overturned car, which I saw later on the pictures also. I had steel beams all around me.

Like I said I found this gentleman and we held onto each other like little kids. By then we were coughing, vomiting, spitting. It was just -- we were trying to breathe. It was total darkness. We couldn't see anything behind us at all. We found about 5 or 6 more people and we held onto each other. Like little kids, we walked, as I found out later on, towards the water. Since I didn't know any of the location I didn't know there was a marina. We just walked in a direction where we could walk. We held onto each other. We were all coughing, vomiting. Some of us fell down. We would pick each other up. There might

have been 6, 7, 8 of us by now. There were dead bodies laying everywhere, obvious signs of death.

I had no ambulances. I had no medical equipment. We had nothing, just the way we were, that's what we had. Towards our -- as we kept walking down a street, I have no idea what street it was, halfway down that street, two ladies came out of a building. They brought us some water. We started to rinse our mouths out and we started to -- I at least, I know I irrigated my eyes because I had whatever it was in my eyes and that made it even worse. Now I apparently created mud in my eyes. As I was told later on, we had granulated cement and jet fuel mixture all over our uniforms and our bodies.

It just got worse. We now picked up a fireman that was severely severely injured. I had some female police officers that had severe cuts and lacerations and people were just bleeding, by now maybe 10 of us. We were just -- I didn't have any obvious signs of injuries that I could see on myself, but other people were bleeding.

We went into this location of business where the ladies came out and found out it was a distribution place for napkins and table cloths for restaurants. We

used their napkins to bandage people up. Somebody found a long board and we put the injured fireman on. He was severely injured, bleeding from the rear of his neck or occipital area in the back of his head.

Police officers now came in. Again, maybe by now we were 12, thinking I was Fire Department and had the Fire Department helmet on, I was chosen to run the outfit there, because I kept telling them bring all the wounded in here that you can find. We started bandaging them up and so on. The officer said do you have any ambulances. I said I have nothing. We had no equipment whatsoever.

Somebody apparently found some face masks and we attempted to put them on, but they hindered us from breathing even more and we just couldn't breathe. It became a little lighter out. By now it was grayish. The officer saw that there was a little marina. They went across there to try to get the boats that were docked there started and they couldn't.

After I bandaged everybody up and everybody was sort of calm in the location. Like I said, maybe 10, 12 people now. Now I also had two elderly females that were a part of that business there. So we had maybe 12 individuals. I went outside to see what I

could do, when I saw the second building of the World Trade Center, still unbeknown to me the first one had collapsed.

Somewhere around the middle of the World Trade Center, there was this orange and red flash coming out. Initially it was just one flash. Then this flash just kept popping all the way around the building and that building had started to explode. The popping sound, and with each popping sound it was initially an orange and then a red flash came out of the building and then it would just go all around the building on both sides as far as I could see. These popping sounds and the explosions were getting bigger, going both up and down and then all around the building.

I went inside and I told everybody that the other building or there was an explosion occurring up there and I said I think we have another major explosion. I don't know if we are all going to be safe here. I told them I can't force you, but I don't know if we are going to be safe here. I'm going to try to get as far away from this building as possible. Unbeknown to me, a half a block down was the water.

Now we are picking up this injured fireman.

It took 4 to carry him. We are picking up all the injured. We took the two elderly ladies from the building with us and now 10, 12, of us, 14 of us, are going out of the building and further down, only to get down to the water.

Down at the water was one EMS person. I saw his Fire Department uniform, with his hands over his ears, yelling I can't find my partner, has anybody seen my partner and he is just running back and forth. He wouldn't stand still long enough for me to even speak with him. I had another EMS person, later on I found out he is from Battalion 20, his name is Kemp, the last name is Kemp. There were two ladies there that apparently had been jogging up and down this East River or west river, whatever you want to call it, and they were in little jogging shorts, jogging in circles. You couldn't stop them. I tried to stop them. I tried to find out if they were injured or anything. I couldn't stop them.

So here these explosions are getting bigger and louder and bigger and louder and I told everybody if this building totally explodes, still unaware that the other building had collapsed, I'm going in the water. I said I can swim. I'm taking somebody with me

and hold them, because it was maybe a 6 foot drop.

Just then, a small Jersey boat, it was Jersey police officers as I thought, entered this little marina. By then the darkness had turned to gray and there was light on the other side, but you couldn't make out that light. Maybe because my eyes were that bad I couldn't see that good, but there was light and the boat came in. I don't recall that I had to go down some stairs to get to that boat. I saw that later on when I went to visit the site about a month later.

We went down, we carried everybody down. The elderly ladies got on. The fireman was put on board and the police officers and the EMS person, maybe 10, 12, 14 people got on the boat. I had not got on the boat yet. There were 3 officers, two officers and one sergeant, what I thought was a sergeant. As I'm standing at the door to the boat, the sergeant yells at me and pardon me for my language, what the fuck are you going to do now. Are you going to come or not. I'm still standing there trying to figure out what my next move should be, when the same sergeant says fucking shit, it's coming at us, and that's a quote.

Again, I didn't see what was happening behind me, but knowing of all the explosions I thought here

was another explosion coming and this sound again and this wave of this force again. I just jumped on the boat, closed the door with my left hand and just sank down to my knees. Here whatever it was just came right at us again. The sergeant is yelling at the one officer. The second officer was in the back with some of the people that had been in the back of the boat. I had no clue what was going on back there. The sergeant is yelling at the second officer, get the fuck out of here, get the fuck out of here. I'm sorry for using that word repeatedly. The poor guy behind the steering wheel is saying I can't go any place, we are tied on.

That is about what saved our lives, because this force came at us and hit us with everything. The boat was attempting to overturn and it kept hitting in the back against the pier. Again, I was just -- by then I was resigned to die. I didn't mind dying because I was with other people, you know, and the guy behind the steering wheel just sank to his knee and the sergeant just stood at the other door. I have no clue how long that lasted. I was -- my back was towards it and as I'm sitting in this corner there I was just resigned, this is it, it can't happen to me a second time. We were -- this time was a difference. We were

capable of breathing and I was with somebody.

When again, I don't know how the window didn't get broken or how the boat wasn't overturned, nothing happened really, but when all of it quieted down again, the sergeant opened the door and he got out and he untied the boat and by the time this starched individual with the starched uniform came in, he was covered with everything. He told us this guy who -- officer who finally got off the floor, just get the fuck out of here now. He said I can't see where I'm going. He said just turn the boat to the left and every time you hit something turn it to the left and turn it to the left and turn it to the left till you get out in the open water and when you get out, just keep going. That's exactly what this officer did.

As we finally got out of this small opening of that marina, you could see the light in New Jersey, because he apparently was by then was going in that direction. I got up from there because I appeared to be in the way. I got up from there and I went down into that small cabin that was down there and he was -- they apparently had taken, thrown the fireman and long board down into that cabin. The fireman had come off the long board and was just laying there. He was

still bleeding profusely.

I went down there and I straightened out his leg. The long board was laying half way going up the stairs and people were just sitting and hanging there and by then they had gotten back on to the top of the boat and the back. I straightened out his leg and -- sorry -- he had all the stuff coming out of his pockets and I said to him I'm going to empty out your pockets because you got -- they looked like hose connections, metal and everything in his pockets and his turnout coat and I took everything out and I threw it to my right. There was like a bench or an area there. I just threw it. He still had his helmet on. He was laying in his own blood and he says to me just I'm all right. My name is Bob. So I said to him my name is Karin and we just held hands. So we just held hands till we got over to Jersey.

When we got over to Jersey they told me to get the hell out of the area and I said I can't get up right now. I just couldn't get up. I didn't have the strength to get up. They came and got Bob and they put him on the long board. I saw them turn him over to my side. They put the long board and the 4 of them got Bob up and I still couldn't get up. They came and they

physically stood me up. I couldn't get up. I did walk up those about 3 stairs up and I got to the top of the boat and they weren't ready for us in Jersey.

We were the first boat to get over there. There was nobody there. The cops kept yelling, there were cops there. The cops kept yelling, just give him your hand, give him your hand, put your foot up. I can hear all of this. I couldn't react. I know I didn't do it, but I could hear them. Somebody finally took my right hand and gave it to somebody and they took one of my legs and they put it up there and gave it to somebody. I mean they put it up and they pulled me up and they pushed me up. Then somebody came and just assisted me and they put some sheets over on the pier and they put me right there. I don't know what happened to anybody else. They started coming in, medical teams, and I don't know what happened to Bob.

So we were just laying there and again they gave us water and they irrigated our eyes and it just made it worse. By then, we were vomiting. Some of us were vomiting blood and so on, but I appeared to be one of the better ones off, because they had triage tags and I started making out triage tags and putting it on everybody, just their names and Ladder company or

Engine and EMS and civilians and I made triage tags up for everybody.

Maybe 45 minutes to an hour later they got not ambulances, but some vans to take us to Jersey City medical center, 4 of us. When we got there they had just set up some kind of an auditorium or whatever. They took us into the auditorium and they proceeded to treat us with -- I got albuterol treatments and I got an injection. They got an ophthalmologist and they cleaned out my eyes and my ears were just, I don't know. I couldn't even hear any more, probably from all the noise.

My problem was I refused to give up my helmet. I would not surrender my helmet because I didn't know when the next thing was going to come. Somebody dropped an oxygen tank and 4 of us hit the deck. I mean I just got out of that wheelchair and I threw my self on the ground looking for someplace to hide. I can remember that.

But the most unbelievable thing is that when I looked down, my right foot had no sock on. I found my sock in my pocket. To the best of my recollection, as I child I was always told by my grandmother, if you ever have to jump in the water take your shoes and

socks off because it will pull you down. I think in anticipation of jumping in the water I started taking my shoes and socks off and then saw the boat come and put my shoe back on. That's the best I can remember.

After treatment, we were taken up to a conference room where they had gathered all fire, PD and EMS people. I saw some really traumatized individuals. By then, I had this only survivor syndrome. I hadn't heard, seen or anybody from my unit. My feeling of sending Charlie Wells and those two ladies into that building, because by then people said that both buildings had collapsed and I had figured that everybody was in there. It just took a total mental toll on me until maybe sometime in the afternoon, around 4, 5 o'clock Al Touro was brought in, the paramedic from Flushing.

We saw each other and we just stood there and we hugged and we cried. We just cried. I had been unable to get any kind of message to my family because the phones were out. My husband works over at Battalion 47 in the Rockaways. The last transmission from me was that I had lost all of my people, that I was with individuals and I was trying to evacuate them. After that there was no more transmission. Even

that apparently didn't get through to people.

Lieutenant Gleeson here went to the command center here. He initially had me declared missing, then missing and possibly dead and then definitely confirmed passed away. That of course, reached my family and they had a very hard time trying to figure out what had happened.

My husband left work that evening at 5 o'clock after doing 12 hours tours. He immediately caused an accident and totalled the car. He had to be picked up by one of my children Danielle, and she brought him here and that was about 8:30, 9 o'clock that evening when I reached them for the first time and told them I was alive.

By 10 o'clock that night a minister from Jersey got a bus from somewhere and because the city was closed down, we got an escort from the Jersey City police and we were all brought back to somewhere in New York where we wanted to go. I reached here at 10:30 that night. That was for the first time my family really knew that I was all right.

We were allowed to take showers at the medical center because by 1, 2:00 in the afternoon all that soot that was covering us had created a total rash

situation. I think I stood under that shower for, I don't even know how long, but I couldn't get it off. I found debris inside my clothes that was just unbelievable how it got there. It just can't be explained. My uniform was totally gray. It was covered with a soot that I can't explain what it even was. My visor on my helmet was cracked, but I think I was one of the better ones that got away as far as injury was concerned.

I'm alive. Anything else I can tell you?

Q. Quite a story. Quite an experience.

A. Well, it hasn't left me. Yes, people came here to give us counseling. After a while, while I felt they had the best of intentions, after a while I just simply had to tell them please don't come here no more, because if you come here and you sit like you are sitting across from me at the desk and ask me one more time how do you feel. Do you want to talk about it, I will go off the deep end.

The only people I want to talk to is the people that were there with me. What has really helped me was to know that nobody in my unit got killed or seriously injured. The most they had were fractures. Rabbi Birnhack confirmed that all the Hatzolah

volunteers survived. I spoke to all of the other people that were with me and they all survived. I was so grateful that Charlie Wells survived. He was the first one from my unit into that building.

I have a problem with the whole situation still. I wish the Fire Department would come around with professionals and not people that are from a local counseling service or whatever -- excuse me for a moment. My concern really was that no one from the Fire Department made any kind of effort to even find out how we were doing. I didn't get a phone call. I didn't see my Chief until Saturday a week after that, which is 10 days later.

I even received a phone call from Mr. Velez, the executive director of Elmhurst Hospital at my home, but no one from EMS contacted me to find out how I was doing. There was great concern here about some other people, which after I had gone through all the problems I had to handle, because again nobody was available to handle anything at the facility here concerning the other individuals that had gone through this trauma.

To this day I have not been asked do I need any counselings from some certified people or do I wish to participate in counselings with a group. Elmhurst

Hospital has offered me counseling services, which I will accept, but I feel more of an effort should have been made by the Fire Department or the EMS command to assist us that went through this.

Anything else I can help you with?

Q. No, ma'am, unless you have anything else that you would like to add.

A. I'm retiring.

Q. May I say congratulations on that.

A. Thank you.

INVESTIGATOR TAMBASCO: Thank you for your interview Captain. This interview concludes at 0633 a.m.

File No. 9110193

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JANICE OLSZEWSKI

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today is November 7th, 2001. The time is 8:45. My name is Murray Murad.

MR. CUNDARI: I'm George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

CAPTAIN OLSZEWSKI: Janice Olszewski, captain EMS operations.

MR. MURAD: The location of the interview is at Nine Metrotech at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is regarding the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Captain, can you just tell us what occurred on that day?

A. At what point do you want me to start?

Q. From upstairs when you heard what happened. Where were you, from the beginning?

A. I was sitting at my desk here at Metrotech on the seventh floor, and the pagers came over that there was a plane into the World Trade Center. So I went down to the end of the hall to look out the window, and you could see

that it had happened, the first plane into the building.

So I went with Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck in my sedan I was using, a marked sedan, down to the site. So we grabbed a few radios and went down there. We went across the Brooklyn Bridge and arrived at Vesey and West. I don't remember exactly where I parked the car; I really don't. It might have been right at Vesey and West. I'm pretty sure, but I'm not too -- I think.

So we got out, and we were in the vicinity of One World Trade. We were close to One World Trade at that point, and we went over and we bumped into Chief Gombo, Bruce and I. He asked us to go to the other side. So we ran down Vesey and got to Vesey and Church. I left my car where I had originally parked it.

We met up with Lieutenant Davila in his suburban, and he was already starting to set up at Fulton and Church, a triage area, right next to the Millennium Hotel, across the street from the Trade Center, the towers. So that's where we assisted in setting up the triage area for the people being evacuated out of the buildings.

Q. This was still the first plane had hit?

A. By the time we got there -- en route the second plane had hit. First plane had hit. We were on our way. When we got there we looked up and saw now the two holes. So by then the second plane had hit. Somewhere while we were driving there, it hit.

So now they both had hit, and we went over to the other side to start patient care over there. So we set up the triage area over there in front of the Millennium Hotel at Church and Fulton.

Q. Church and Fulton?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. You had a good view of the towers?

A. Yeah.

People were being evacuated, and units started to come in, from all agencies, as well as more supervisors. So as more supervisors came in, we were assigning them to each sector. We set up virtually all the sectors we can set up, and we started to get going with triage with triage tags, setting up areas where people were more badly hurt than others, telling other people

to just keep going if they were relatively all right.

Q. A lot of people in that area?

A. Yeah, there were. What we're talking about here, the time line for me being there in particular was something like 30 to 35 minutes. So we weren't able to do too much. We were going pretty good for what it was, though. We were starting to set up those sectors. We were setting up the sectors, staging treatment, transport, triage.

The people were pouring out of the buildings, and a lot of them were coming over to our area. I cannot estimate how many. It's impossible. They were all over the place. They were on the corner. We were trying to keep them corralled in our area, but other agencies were breaking off into other little triage areas. I think there was another one over on Liberty and Church, another section there we heard, around the corner.

So there were things sort of happening all over. So it's kind of hard to get an estimate of how many patients were in that area.

I can say in our area it was starting to become overwhelmed, that corner. There were starting to be so many. I figured we're going to have hundreds of patients coming out and we're going to have to have alternative areas to have them go, because it was too small. Right at that point the first building collapsed.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower, yeah.

So as we heard it start to collapse and as we saw it collapsing, we or I, a lot of us, ran east on Fulton to get away. Then the cloud caught up, and we all just scattered and did our best to get out of there. I ended up on Broadway and Fulton and went north on Broadway, kept going north on Broadway.

I set up an initial -- well, actually ambulances start to come down now south on Broadway that weren't involved in the collapse. These were fresh people coming in already, all kinds of units again coming south on Broadway. I met up with a few of them at something like Warren, Warren and Broadway.

I walked down that far and was not --

anybody who would listen to me, I didn't want them to go towards the area yet. I didn't think it was safe. I didn't know what was going on. I thought more could be happening down there. I didn't know if it was an explosion. I didn't know it was a collapse at that point. I thought it was an explosion or a secondary device, a bomb, the jet -- plane exploding, whatever.

So I didn't know what was happening, so I was attempting to stop people from going in until we could get somebody back on the radio, reestablish a new command post and know that it was safe. So I was telling them not to go down. Some still went in; some didn't.

Q. Were there radio transmissions at that time?

A. I don't remember because I didn't have one at that point. I was pretty shocked and stunned and was choking and covered with dust. I was dazed and don't remember that. I didn't have a radio, so I don't know.

So at that point you heard that the second -- I heard the rumbling again, and that was the second collapse. So now that's about

what, 10:30. That was about 10:30 now. Then I heard it again. You still didn't know what was happening, but you couldn't miss the rumbling sound. So you knew something else was happening.

So I kept going north on Broadway again. I turned around and saw the cloud coming down again, so I started to run away from that cloud again. I got a little further north up Broadway. Now more ambulances are coming south. One of them stopped. I waved, I flagged one down. One of them stopped. I got in, and I said, "Turn around and just go north, because I don't know what's going on down there. It's too dangerous. Let try to get a little further north."

So they drove me north to White, Broadway and White. There the cloud had not come that far. We got out of the cloud and the mist, and we set up a patient collection area there. About five more ambulances stopped there, and we set up and were treating patients that were coming out.

Now I started hearing things on the radio, because there were radios around me now

and I borrowed one from somebody from OMA. It was the frequency that supervisors were on. I heard Chief Kowalczyk, and he started saying that there was a new command post at Chambers and West, as I remember, to be the new command post.

So I figured, okay, it's safe. We have something reestablished over there. He was asking for supervisors and units. They were asking for units on citywide, I guess. I don't know if there was citywide. But I know they were asking for units to come back.

So the five or so units that were with me wanted to go back in, so I said, "Okay, go ahead. Go in." They started heading over. I left one unit there to keep treating the patients that were still trickling out. By then there weren't really many, and they were fine. They were pretty okay. So I left one there.

I jumped in one of the ambulances going over and said, "Can you take me to the command post?" They said, "Sure." As they drove me over -- we got as far as about West and -- I know there's Chambers on here, but I don't see it.

Q. Whatever you recall.

A. Whatever. I don't remember. I don't see it. Is it further north?

Q. Chambers is here.

A. I don't think I got -- I didn't get that far. I got stopped on West around here somewhere. There were so many emergency vehicles trying to get in, there was a little bit of a backup. So I only got about there.

I got out of the ambulance, and I bumped into a chief officer, who insisted I go to the hospital. He just basically pushed me into the ambulance and said I needed to go. So I went to the hospital at that point. I was taken over to NYU Medical Center to be treated.

When I got out, I made my way back here. I hitched a ride back here with another some sort of city vehicle, and I worked here over night until 6 in the morning.

Q. Basically after the collapse you didn't see many patients?

A. Well, the patients I saw --

Q. While you were there?

A. Oh, you mean before the collapse.

Q. After the collapse.

A. After the collapse the patients I saw were basically on White and Broadway coming out of the collapse and cloud that needed to be treated for whatever injuries, smoke inhalation, they had. We treated approximately 30 patients -- again I don't know -- for that sort of thing, while we were waiting to hear somebody come back on the radio and let us know where we should go.

After that, like I said, I went to the hospital, so no.

Q. On the original collapse, you just saw the cloud start coming at you or you saw some of the top of the building start coming down?

A. I wasn't facing it. Some people say they saw it tilting and going. I wasn't facing and I wasn't looking, so I didn't see that. But I did hear it, and then I turned around. By then the cloud had obliterated the building, so you couldn't see it going down.

Not that you were standing there waiting and watching; you were running. The only chance you had to get away was to run. So there was no watching. I just heard it, saw the cloud,

knew something catastrophic had happened, and tried to get away.

Q. Anything else?

A. No.

MR. MURAD: This concludes the interview. I'd like to thank you, Captain, for participating.

The time now is 0855, and this concludes this portion of the interview.

File No. 9110194

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT BRADLEY MANN

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today is November 7th, 2001. The time now is 1047 hours. My name is Murray Murad, M-U-R-A-D, with Richard Dun, D-U-N. We are currently sitting with Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT MANN: Bradley Mann.

MR. MURAD: And your rank?

LIEUTENANT MANN: Lieutenant.

MR. MURAD: Where do you work?

LIEUTENANT MANN: Chief of Department's office, planning unit.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at the Fire Department Headquarters at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is in regards to the tragic event on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Lieutenant Mann, will you give your account?

A. I was working the day tour. Approximately 10 minutes of 9, I was sitting in my cube with Captain Abdonahmod. The window in my cube overlooks Manhattan.

As we were speaking, I thought I heard some type of noise. Abdo and I turned around and

looked out the window and saw thick black smoke billowing from the top of the World Trade Center.

I got up, I walked around the corner to Chief Nigro's office, told him to look out the window. I walked down the hall to Chief Ganci's office and told him to look out the window. Chief Ganci told me to get everybody together, get as much equipment as we could find and we would meet in Manhattan.

I grabbed Lieutenant John Nevins from the document control unit. We went to the EMS command where we secured about six radios and as many helmets as we could find. We went downstairs to the street, waited outside the building, and we got into a vehicle with Chief Cassano, the Citywide Tour Commander, and we responded into Manhattan. That was approximately 10 minutes to 9 when I first looked out the window. I would say that we left headquarters probably about 9:05 a.m.

We drove into Manhattan. We crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, from mid-span on the Brooklyn Bridge, from what we could see, it looked like just about everything from the 70th

floor on up was on fire.

Chief Cassano was making some phone calls, and Lieutenant Nevins and I were discussing some things in the car as to what our role may be seeing as we didn't know what officers were already on the scene.

We arrived in Manhattan. We came over the Brooklyn Bridge, went down Park Row and drove across Murray Street to South Broadway. Chief Cassano parked his car on the corner of South Broadway and Vesey.

We exited the car. We put on our helmets and our turnout coats. Lieutenant Nevins and I made a right turn and headed west on Vesey Street between WTC 7 an WTC 2. By that point already, debris was falling from the towers. I actually was hit in the back by an unknown body part. I don't know what it was.

We headed west on Vesey Street to the intersection of West Street. At that point I saw Lieutenant Davila from battalion 4, who at that point was the EMS command officer. I asked him what he needed, and he asked me to assist him to set up the EMS staging area.

At that point Lieutenant Nevins and I established an EMS staging area on Vesey Street between West Street and West End Avenue. We had approximately 50 to 60 ambulances on the street at that point, and we were in the process of organizing them and keeping track of who was there.

As time went on, more staff chiefs arrived. Chief Gombo arrived. He took command of the incident. We spoke with him as to what type of action he wanted us to take, and he told us as soon as we had a count on how many units we had, ALS and BLS, to let him know and he would request resources as he needed them.

I would say probably about maybe a half hour or so later all of a sudden we heard a roar. And I looked at Lieutenant Nevins and he looked at me, and we looked up. And the next thing we knew there was another plane, and it crashed into the other tower.

We were in the staging area the entire time. Shortly before the first tower came down I remember feeling the ground shaking. I heard a terrible noise, and then debris just started

flying everywhere. People started running towards the staging area.

By that point we probably had 70 or 80 ambulances and vehicles in the staging area. People were jumping in their vehicles, trying to drive away from the scene. And Lieutenant Nevins and I instructed everybody to leave their vehicles and run west as far as they could until they couldn't run anymore.

The rationale behind that being is if everybody tried to get out in a vehicle at the same time, obviously the street would be clogged and nobody would be able to get out. And as it turns out, a good majority of the vehicles that we told people to leave were crushed on Vesey Street just west of West Street.

By the time the debris settled from the first collapse, we started to walk back east towards West Street, and a few minutes later -- I really don't remember the time frames because we were so busy in trying to account for who was in the staging area and who wasn't -- we basically had the same thing: The ground shook again, and we heard another terrible noise and the next

think we knew the second tower was coming down. And again we were running for our lives on Vesey Street.

We ran as far as we could, turned the corner at West End Avenue and took shelter in the lobby of an office building, where we meet met up with a lot of the other chiefs -- Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk -- and we discussed some further actions plans as to what we were going to do, seeing as we knew we weren't operating in a safe area. And we decided that we were going to establish a north staging area at Chelsea Piers.

At that point myself and Chief Kowalczyk and an unknown EMT responded in an ambulance. I believe it was a Jamaica Hospital ambulance. We got a ride up to Chelsea Piers where we began to set up a staging area. I stayed at Chelsea Piers for the next three or four hours, organizing units and having resources ready to be called south.

And then sometime in the afternoon, probably 2 or 3:00, I was requested to report back down to Chambers Street, and I was put to work on the command report. And that's pretty

much it. We just started doing shift work at the command post from about 3:00 p.m. on the 11th for the next about two and a half weeks. And that's really it.

MR. MURAD: Rich, any questions?

MR. DUN: No.

Q. Were you operating with radios?

A. We did have radios. I don't even know who I got it from, to be honest -- oh, I'm sorry, I remember when I took it. We were on citywide. I was the staging officer. And until Chief Gombo took over, I was communicating with Lieutenant Davila.

MR. MURAD: Any other questions?

Lieutenant Mann, I appreciate you giving the interview. This concludes the interview, and the time now is 10:55 hours. This concludes this portion of the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110195

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT CHIEF JOSEPH CALLAN

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Today's date is November 2, 2001. The time is 1440 hours. This is Michael Starace, Fire Marshal, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with Chief Callan.

Q. Could you state your command and - assigned command and rank?

A. Assistant Chief Joseph Callan, Citywide Tour Commander.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Also in the room is --

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal.

Q. Chief, going back to September 11 from early on, how you became aware of the first plane hitting until after the second collapse.

A. At 8 o'clock that morning, I relieved Chief Donald Burns as the Citywide Tour Commander. Shortly thereafter while monitoring the radio, there was a second alarm transmitted for a fire in the World Trade Center. And on the radio I heard a report of a plane crash into the World Trade Center. I immediately proceeded to leave the office and respond, and responding at the same time with me was Chief of the Department Ganci, Chief Nigro, which was the Chief of

Operations at the time. Chief Cassano, Chief Burns and a few other Chiefs.

Shortly thereafter, we arrived at the World Trade Center. Chief Ganci assigned me to take command of the north tower and he assigned Chief Donald Burns to take command of the south tower. Getting out of my car, putting my gear on, I then went and did a reconnaissance of the exterior of the north tower. I saw we had numerous floors on the upper levels on fire, approximately eight floors with fire showing. As I was going around the far side of the north tower, I then saw the second plane hit the south tower. I immediately went into the lobby of the north tower to take command of operations. In the lobby of the north tower, in command was Chief Peter Hayden, and Chief Joe Pfeifer.

I took command and we started assigning additional units to the upper floors. I gave them instructions that we are not going to be extinguishing fire. What we were going to do is assist in evacuating the building. Numerous units arrived. They were sent up and put to work. Joined at the time - I was in the lobby. We had very little communication via handy talky during the time I was in the lobby with the units

on the upper floors, because of the building construction. The elevators were not working, nor were any of the building communication systems. So we had very little control or contact, communication wise, with the units that were on the upper floors.

Approximately 40 minutes after I arrived in the lobby, I made a decision that the building was no longer safe. And that was based on the conditions in the lobby, large pieces of plaster falling, all the 20 foot high glass panels on the exterior of the lobby were breaking. There was obvious movement of the building, and that was the reason on the handy talky I gave the order for all Fire Department units to leave the north tower.

Approximately ten minutes after that, we had a collapse of the south tower, and we were sort of blown up against the wall in the lobby of the north tower, and we gathered together those of us who were still able to. Chief Pfeifer gave the order for everybody, Mayday for everybody, to leave the north tower and we then proceeded to try to find our way out of the lobby of the north tower.

Approximately ten of us, visibility of zero, proceeded up the escalator from the lobby up to the

mezzanine. We got up to the mezzanine of the north tower and we proceeded via an exterior walkway to get to the adjoining building, then down from the adjoining building into the street. Shortly after we got on to Vesey Street, the north tower collapsed. That was the end of the story.

Q. It's hard to believe that that's 30 minutes. Everybody that sees that and myself, I was there too, you can't believe it's 30, 34 minutes. Chief, you had not much, you had said, not much transmissions on the handy talky?

A. Minimal transmissions on the handy talky and I think that was because of the building construction. The handy talkys generally don't work great in those type of buildings and we relied many times on alternate types of communications and the building communication system. In this particular operation the building system was out of service almost immediately. So that was not available to us. So like I say, because of the lack of communication, we had very little control of units on the upper floors and that to me was a very large problem. Since the fire was burning for close to an hour, I thought it was time to get our units out of the building.

Q. Do you know what units you had there?

A. Chief Pfeifer and his aide had a command post set up in the lobby and he was tracking the units, so we had a handle on most of the units that did go above the lobby.

Q. How many were there, about how many units?

A. I wouldn't want to guess. I wouldn't want to guess because many of them were assigned prior to my arrival and units were assigned while I was discussing strategy with other Chiefs in the lobby, so I wouldn't want to guess how many there were.

Q. Is this in that command post on the northwest corner of the building?

A. That's where I believe we were.

Q. When you arrived you said you were there a few minutes before the second plane hit?

A. I was on the outside of the building making a reconnaissance of the exterior before I went to the north tower and as I got into the rear or side of the north tower, I saw the plane go into --

Q. South side of the north tower?

A. Yes, that would have been it, the south side. That's when I realized this was not an accident, because up until then I don't think anybody knew that.

Q. Where did you park when you got there, do you remember?

A. I think it was on Vesey Street, but shortly after we arrived, my aide moved the car to a safer location away from the north tower.

Q. Do you remember who else was in the lobby as far as Chiefs?

A. When I got there it was the two Chiefs there. That I can remember was Chief Pete Hayden from the first division, Chief Joe Pfeifer from the first Battalion and also I think Chief Steve King, the safety Battalion Chief was there. I know the Commissioner was there with me for a few minutes. Pretty much the only ones I remember.

Q. Any thoughts?

A. No.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: We are concluding this tape at 1450 hours.

File No. 9110196

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL SALVATORE RIGNOLA

Interview Date: November 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. STEPONAITIS: It is November 5th, 2001. The time is 16 hours and five minutes. This is Fire Marshal Steponaitis of the special investigations unit of the Fire Department, City of New York. We're conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assignment.

FIRE MARSHAL RIGNOLA: My name is Salvatore Rignola. I'm a New York fire marshal. I'm assigned to citywide special investigations at 16 Hooper Street, which we are right now, on the fourth floor.

MR. STEPONAITIS: We're conducting an interview regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Also present in the room is --

MR. BURNS: Supervising Fire Marshal Robert Burns, special operations command.

Q. Fire Marshal Rignola, please give us the events that occurred that day from the time that you were notified until the time that you left the scene.

A. That day I was out in the field in Queens, and I received a radio call to respond to the World Trade Center. I had my regular radio on and heard that a plane crashed. While on my way responding to the World Trade Center, I'm going over the Queensboro Bridge, the second plane crashed into one of the towers. I know there were two towers there.

I proceeded to Manhattan. I drove down the West Side Highway. I parked my vehicle around Murray Street. I walked down towards the Trade Center. Around Vesey Street I saw Chief Fire Marshal Garcia. He asked me if I had a radio. I said yes. He asked me to go on in and call the other members of our bureau which were assembled near the telephone building on Vesey and West Street. The radio wasn't working properly, and we never made contact with anybody.

So while we're there on West Street and Vesey I saw Fire Commissioner Von Essen pass by. Fire Marshal O'Mara was with him. I saw also Deputy Commissioner Tierney pass by because she went up from West to Liberty Street.

I'm just standing under the first

pedestrian bridge near Vesey Street, and I see my old fire company 131, I see 101 from my battalion, a couple of the companies there. I'm over there standing and someone starts yelling: There's an explosion. All of a sudden you could hear some weird sound like crumbling. All of a sudden everybody starts running.

So I went to the corner of Vesey and West, and there was the ESU truck. I went against the ESU truck, and all of a sudden everything got black. The wind blew by. Material flew by. About two minutes later it cleared up that I was able to see.

Then I saw Chief Fire Marshal Garcia again. He asked me to get on the radio and try to assemble everybody and get all the fire marshals assembled near West and Vesey, but the radio wasn't working.

I started checking 131's rig to look for a mask. There was no mask there. I tried 101, went through the rig looking for a mask. Then I saw Supervisor Fire Marshal Devery. The first thing he asked me: "Did you see fire marshal Bucca?" I said no. Then Devery

proceeded up West Street north.

I was still trying to look for masks, so I did a little search in the building. I still didn't believe that the tower came down, because when you look towards that south tower, you couldn't see. It was dust.

I tried using my cell phone. That was dead. I went to a pay phone. I called my house to make sure my wife doesn't go anywhere, get the kids home.

While I'm standing up near the north pedestrian bridge, the few people around start running again. They said the tower is coming down. While I'm standing there you could see now the north tower, World Trade One, you could see it starting to come down. While you're looking up, you could see it come down.

So I went to the middle of the street on Vesey and West. I went into a truck. I think it was Ladder 21. I went in the officer's seat, rolled up the window and you could see the stuff coming down. I covered myself. Debris hit the truck. I waited about five minutes, came out, and just started up --

Q. Did anything come through the truck?

A. Stuff went through the windshield but on the driver's side. Nothing hit me. The windshield got broke, but I didn't get scratched.

Right before that, about two minutes before that, I remember seeing Chief Garcia was talking to Lieutenant Sheehan. He used to be an A&E with the PD. They were at the corner of West and Vesey. That was like five minutes before that.

After I left the rig, I started -- it was almost like a ghost town. Then people started appearing. We started searching over some of the debris. The north pedestrian tower actually collapsed, but it collapsed on 101. So you could actually walk underneath the tower to get on the other side.

On the other side of this tower, there was like 15 feet of just debris. I remember seeing other fire marshals and everybody saying all the marshals start assembling at Chambers and West, I think it was.

I went to Chambers and West, and more and more fire marshals came there and we just

stood over there for a while and that's about it. On that night I went back down, tried to maybe look around, couldn't see nothing. That's about it.

MR. STEPONAITIS: Thank you, Fire Marshal Rignola.

That concludes Fire Marshal Rignola's statement. It is now 1609 hours.

File No. 9110197

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY CHIEF THOMAS GALVIN

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. DUN: Today is November 7th, 2001. The time is 1600 hours. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

DEPUTY CHIEF GALVIN: Deputy Chief Thomas Galvin, division 3.

Q. Sir, at this time I'd like you to give a brief description of the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. When the first plane hit, I was in my office, watching it on TV and basically stayed in the quarters because my quarters were quarters 421. Basically now I'm the acting Citywide Tour Commander after the fifth alarm was in.

And then when the second plane hit, that's when I knew no matter what, I was going anyway. So I left quarters with Carl Asaro, who was the division firefighter, and battalion Chief Dennis Devlin, who was the special events coordinator here. He wanted to come down to give Carl a hand if Carl needed a hand with the command board.

As we were leaving quarters, that's when the dispatcher informed me there was a fifth

alarm for the south tower and I was the incident commander for the south tower.

We responded down the Henry Hudson Parkway and we got along down to West Street, and we parked the car on Vesey and West. We parked on the south side of West Street on the island between -- that separated West Street there. There's an island that separates it.

So we're parked just south of West Street on the left-hand side of the southbound lanes. What vehicles were parked in front of me -- we parked right there. I got out of the car, told Chief Devlin and Fireman Asaro to get the command board together and I'll meet you in the south tower.

After I talked to Chief Ganci -- Chief Ganci was at -- I could see him down the block at the command -- I saw him down in the distance. I went over to them because I wanted to find out what channels we were going to use in the south tower and to go over communications with them. That was the last time I saw those two guys.

Q. What channel were you working on or did you work on?

A. In the south tower we were going to work 5 -- channel 5 was going to be the command channel. It's the same command channel as the north tower, but we were going to go to secondary tactical 3 for the south tower.

Later on I know Ladder 5 was on the northbound side and Rescue 1 was right in front of them. Any other rigs, you know, I wasn't paying attention to the rigs. I was really looking up because there was just stuff falling out of the sky, debris falling down.

I continued down West Street to go to -- because the command board was actually in West Street in the street, and I was going over to the Field Com officer, who I think was Lieutenant Regan.

I was asking him what channels we were going to use. He wasn't too sure. Chief Ganci had just walked up. I brought it up to him, told him why I was there. We were going back and forth for a short time to square away the channels. That's where we settled on 3 and 5.

The next thing I remember, Chief Cassano comes up and said let's get the board out

of the street. So I had to stop and carry the board with Lieutenant Regan, and we put it up on the sidewalk in front of the financial building there with the garage.

Q. With the underground parking?

A. Where that exact location is, I couldn't tell you anymore.

Q. It's the underground parking.

Was there a lot of debris falling at the time?

A. No, there was debris by the building across the street. You could see things coming down. It was parts of the building, maybe parts of the plane. And there was really no bodies on that side of West Street.

But there was debris coming down. My interaction with Regan and Chief Ganci probably lasted around three to five minutes where we were going back and forth on the channels.

Chief Cassano comes along. I probably spent about three to five minutes because as I was walking away from the Field Com officer, I said: "Do you know what companies I'm using in this building?" He said: "I didn't know you had

a fifth alarm." Then I had to sit down and I had to write out the whole assignment for him so he was aware of who was being assigned to the south tower.

So after that period of time, I told him okay, I'm going to go into the south tower, and they had already told me that Chief Barbara was already in there and I think they said Chief Burns -- Burns I'm not too sure. They told me that Chief Barbara was already the incident commander in the south tower.

I had to go south a little bit to swing around to get on the other side of the island. The safest way to get into the towers was to go through the -- I keep calling it the Vista, but it's the Marriott now.

When I got into the Marriott, we had about ten companies in there. And I remember hearing a report about people being trapped in the Marriott or there was a problem with the Marriott.

So when I got in there, I grabbed the fire safety director and I said: "Listen, do you have everybody out of this building?" He said

no. So I got bogged down in there, and I assigned 23 engine. It was given -- they normally designate a command post company. They run the elevators.

So I had David there and I said listen, I need you to run the elevators, find bank elevators we can use. You will run the companies up and down. I assigned Ladder 13 -- now, what floors I gave them, I can't recall.

It was Ladder 13 that was in there, 2 Truck, 54 Engine, 65 Engine. Those are the only companies I can really recall. Because I know the officers, so I remembered speaking to them. It was a 22-story building.

I gave each unit like three or four floors, go up, search, get the floors evacuated. I remember coming in -- you had to constantly tell people go to channel 3. I considered that part of the south tower operation. I wanted to make sure they were all on the right channel and not interfering with the north tower.

That probably took eight to ten minutes to get that all straightened out in the lobby and get that going. I'm getting bogged down now in

this hotel. I really didn't think that much about it because I knew I already had Chief Barbara in front of me in the other one.

Q. At this point the buildings were still standing?

A. Yeah, the buildings were still standing. Yeah, the buildings were intact.

So then Chief Cassano came into the building, because he said to me, where's your aide? I said they're in there. I told them I would meet them in the south tower but I wanted to get the units to clear out the hotel, the units that we had here.

Let me start moving to the south tower. And now hindsight's twenty-twenty when you see the layouts of the buildings. I wasn't aware the Marriott directly interconnects -- even this picture doesn't give it to you. It directly interconnects into the north tower.

I remember saying to somebody how do I get into the tower, not realizing that this interconnected with both. And the guy actually sends me to the north tower. And I remember going through the atrium and hugging the wall,

because when you come out -- you had to go north in the lobby for about 100 feet and make a dog leg to get into this area. There was stuff falling down. I remember hugging a wall.

When I got in there and I'm looking for the units and I'm saying where is everybody? So I grabbed somebody and said where's the fire command station, where's the chiefs? Oh, they already went outside. Why would they go outside already? What I didn't know is they had already made the decision to take the command post from the north tower out into the street.

Now I'm making my way back into the thing. I don't think at that time I realized I was in the north tower. I just said something's wrong here. It just doesn't seem right. I remember coming back and there was more debris that's falling down into the atrium. I'm calling it an atrium, but it's just an open area.

Q. Concourse?

A. An open area, the concourse.

I ran now into a couple more units. I knew they were assigned to me for the south tower. I said make your way to the south tower

and just start getting -- I said I'm trying to find my way to the south tower too.

I remember running into Tommy Jensen, who was a Chief in the 8th battalion -- I'm sorry, Tommy Deangelis, D-E-A-N-G-E-L-I-S. I said listen, find your way to the south tower. Chief Barbara was in there. Just take the upper floors as best we can. Just figure out what floors you have to take, and I'll get units to go into it.

Because what was happening was the safest way to come in from the West Street side or come from the south end, everybody seemed to be coming in through the Marriott, and there were a lot of companies in there.

I said no, we have to move to the south tower. Number 22 Truck had just gone by me. That was with Jerry Riley. The next Chiefs I remember talking to, Freddie Scheffold from the 12th Battalion and Chief Joe Marchbanks. Because I remember saying why are they both here, quick in my mind. I know Scheffold worked the night before, so I figure he buffed it. And I told him I was working the south tower and I just wanted

to get these units moving.

I would say from that time maybe a minute later, two minutes later, is when the hotel just started shaking. Everything came down. I ran south down the lobby, and that's when I got caught in debris in the lobby there. There was just dust, debris coming down all over. I got knocked to the floor with a lot of people.

You hear somebody say okay, the rumbling stopped, and you hear somebody say the rumbling stopped, we're all right, we're all right, everybody's okay. Let's just find our way out of here. You really could hardly see anything.

I remember we came up to a metal roll down gate. I said let's get this up. I need help. There was like four of us who pulled the gate up. And there were like eight civilians on the other side, and they were looking at us the same way we were: What are you doing on this side of the gate? Somebody told me later that was the gate that separated the lobby from the restaurant.

I said relax, keep looking, everybody

keep looking. Somebody said we have a way out over here. I got over -- what direction -- where I think we're moving now is continuing moving south in the lobby towards Liberty.

And I remember seeing clear daylight where people were sort of going up a little incline and getting out that way, and somebody said we can get out over here. And I went in that direction. There was another way we went out these doors, down some steps.

And I was going out, and there was a fireman there. He had a life-saving rope and a search rope. I said give me the search rope. And I hooked the search rope up to a pole where we were, and I ran the search rope back into the lobby. Come this way, come this way and follow the rope.

I got about another 50 feet back in the lobby, about 50 feet, and I ran into two guys from 58 Engine. I said let's get out of here. They said no, we've got our officer -- there's a guy Bob Nagel, who's a lieutenant from 58 Engine, he was caught in debris. He said he wasn't pinned.

We were talking to him like we were having a conversation just like this. I said Bob, we'll get you out of here, Bob. I said is there any way you can go back? He said no, I can't go backwards.

I remember going to the right. There were elevator shafts, and we just couldn't get around them. It just was me and the two firemen. I said listen, I'll tie the search rope here. I'll get you help back in.

I worked my way back outside, and ran I into Ray Brown and the guy from 113 Truck. I ran into them about 60 feet outside the building. I said Ray, we've got this guy, he's alive. We've just got to get tools to clear this area out. Grab whatever air bags off any of the rigs around here.

I said go, you'll see 65's pumper, you'll go up a few steps, you will see a search rope, just follow the search rope. I figure I've got him being taken care of. Unfortunately it never happened because -- I'm getting ahead of myself now here a little bit.

So I kept walking outside, looking to

see if there was anybody else outside. I saw all these ambulances turned over. Half of them are on fire.

The next guy I remember running into is Chief Carruthers. I think he just came on the scene. I told him whoever could get out of the hotel got out of the hotel. I said but Nagel and I have guys working. We couldn't even find our way back to their location. There was just so much debris and smoke and dust in the air. We couldn't even see 65 inches, approximately. We must have swung out a different way or we just couldn't backtrack.

So he left. Carruthers left at this point to go back to the command post where it was set up originally. And I started making my way back to the Marriott just to see if I could find a way back in. And that's when the other tower came down, and I got caught in the street with all that dirt and debris.

That's when I thought that these guys didn't get out. Forget what they brought in. What I found out later on was they all got knocked down in the debris but they all got out.

Ray Brown got taken to a hospital in New Jersey. Two other guys got taken to hospitals elsewhere. But the only guy that really -- aside from Asaro, was Nagel, and they still haven't found him.

I remember now getting caught in the dirt -- more the dirt field, all the crap that was falling down from the building. After that settled down, I remember now the next guy I ran into was Artie Lakiotes, one of the safety Chiefs. It was just me, him and a few other guys showing up.

I remember guys -- Jimmy Marketti, he was battalion chief and captain of 176 at the time. He was in civilian clothes. And I said what are you doing here, Jimmy? It popped out, because guys were just showing out through the clouds.

So I figured, Artie, what are we going to do here? We have nobody to work with. The next thing you know, Nick Santangelo, Chief of training, he showed up with about 25 guys. Now we're trying to get a water supply. I told Artie Lakiotes: Artie, you have a supply here because I've got to get back to the command post. We've

got to organize this thing better.

From there I made my way down to Vesey and West, and that's when I ran into Chief Carruthers, who has now taken control of everything. He was now with Chief Fellini and Butler and Chiefs Callan and Turi sitting on the island, and they were just like covered in debris. You could see that they were mentally out of it.

I was probably mentally out of it because Carruthers gave me a few things to do and find out, things that were going on with the Special Operations Command, the people at the FEMA system, tools and equipment. He knew that I knew what he was talking about. So he put me in charge of getting that to the scene and getting people to get that equipment. I got on the department radio, and hazmat operations said they were going to take care of that.

The next thing Chief Carruthers said listen, we have no communications with Police Plaza, so he sent me to be the liaison between the Fire Department and the Police Department at One Police Plaza.

I left the scene. I was there for about four or five hours, and I was back at the scene and basically just helping them -- when I got there, that's when they pulled everybody back completely and were doing a roll call.

So I gave a hand to Chief Visconti and Chief Fellini with that. That was like at -- I think that's just south -- it's like Vesey and West, just west of West Street was where they were forming it. They were forming up in there.

And then I just gave them a hand for the next couple hours, just getting the interchange, getting the companies out of the way and getting the equipment out of the way so we could get the heavy cranes back in.

Basically I made my way back here around midnight and basically spent the next two days here just getting the division back in shape, because the amount of people and equipment that we lost. I really didn't go back down there until -- it happened on Tuesday; right?

Q. Yeah.

A. I was back down there Wednesday night because I had to deliver some drawings. And I

operated down there Wednesday night into Thursday morning, down at Liberty and West, in front of -- that would be in front of where the Marriott Hotel is, clearing out that area with a bunch of units.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview at 1616 hours. Thank you, sir.

File No. 9110198

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF JOHN SUDNIK

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. KRUG: We're doing an interview with Battalion Chief John Sudnik on November 7th, 2001, at approximately 1900 hours, regarding the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Chief, if you can just tell me what your actions were and how you responded.

A. You want me to go in order of this?

Q. However you got there and where you went.

A. I responded from headquarters, from the seventh floor headquarters. I responded in Chief Nigro's car. I guess we followed Chief Ganci's car. Chief Nigro was in Chief Ganci's car. We stopped the car probably on Fulton Street and I guess what's that, Trinity Church?

Q. Right.

A. That area there. Maybe it was Broadway. We walked up to Vesey, I believe, the best I can remember, and walked over to where the command post was being set up, which was opposite One World Trade Center, directly in front of -- I guess that's the rear of or the side of Two World Financial Center.

At the command post I was operating with Chief Nigro, Chief Ganci. I was trying to help out in whatever manner I could. Chief Nigro gave me an order to go back to his car, find his driver and to bring his turnout gear for him. I did that and went back the way I came down Vesey Street. I guess I was around two-thirds of the way there and I ended up running into his driver who had his turnout gear.

At that point that's when the second plane hit. I heard the noise of the plane coming in, and I heard the explosion. I looked up and felt the heat from the fire ball and everything like that.

I made it back to the command post, and I was just operating at the command post. At that time we had two planes, one into each tower, and units reporting in. I was helping out. At some point I was working along with Chief Downey. He was giving me orders to stage units in the driveway area behind the command post.

I was trying to get accountability of how many units we had on the scene. I responded to an order from Chief Downey to get five truck

companies to report to him, and I guess he gave them an order to go to tower two. I don't know which ones those were. It was kind of crazy at that point.

The best I can remember, we were just operating there, trying to help out and do the best we could. Then we heard a loud explosion or what sounded like a loud explosion and looked up and I saw tower two start coming down. Crazy.

So after tower two started coming down everybody really pretty much took a beeline into the garage area where we were operating. Anybody who was operating near that command post or at the command post, most got out. I didn't see where everybody went, but I know a lot of guys took cover down below, because I know I did, underneath that garage area.

I got about 15 feet into the garage area, and there was a cutout. I was anticipating a lot of debris coming into the garage area, and I just wanted to try to get out of the way. I know a lot of guys had gotten in there before I did. There were units probably already staged in there.

So I jumped into the cutout and just waited there. There were two people next to me. I don't know who they were. It just went black. I just hung out there until the noise stopped. I said to myself -- I totally expected to be blocked in there by debris or trapped in there. I found I didn't have any turnout gear with me. I didn't have a mask or anything on me. So I just figured the best thing -- I had to get out of there at some point because I couldn't breathe.

So I just waited until the noise stopped, and I just said, all right, I'm going to try to go out the way I came. I heard a lot of voices towards the rear of the garage area. I assumed at that point that they were looking for a door.

So I went out the way I came. There was some debris that I was able to get over. Before I knew it, I was walking up the ramp again. I kind of assumed I was outside, and I kept walking and I walked into a tree. That was it. I got out there. There was nothing. It was total silence, no sign -- I mean, you couldn't

see anything, but there was no sign or anything being around there of what was left of the command post.

I heard some voices I guess to my left, which was north, so I figured I would try to find out who that was at that point, if it was somebody I was working with at that time. I kept walking off, and the dust got a little bit lighter as I kept walking. Eventually I walked out of what was the heaviest part of the cloud.

There were a couple of firemen that were there. Guys kept coming out of the cloud the way I came, a few guys. Then I saw the majority of the guys who I guess were at the command post. I remember seeing Ganci's driver, Steve Mosiello; Mike Donovan, who responded down to the command post with me in Chief Nigro's car. I saw a couple of guy's from the Commissioner's office from the eighth floor. I saw I believe it was Fitzpatrick. I think I saw Frank Gribbon at some point. That's all I recognized.

Somebody gave me a bottle of water. Actually it was a bottle of seltzer. I was able to wash the stuff out of my eyes, out of my

throat, out of my nose. I ended up throwing up a couple of times.

I was just trying to grab guys and just wait around until the guys I was working with came back out or whatever, try to regroup, get some guys together and start maybe going back and making a search, trying to get some command staff back together.

I was telling guys, the firemen that were coming out of the offices that were walking out of the cars or out of the building -- I guess the building that they were walking out of I guess was Two World Financial. They ended up going through the back of the garage and going through a stairway and out onto to Vesey Street.

I was trying to get them to stage up on the next block north, and that's when the second building came down. There was a little bit of a dash to get away from that one too. Because I didn't have a radio, I ended up trying to stay near a couple firemen, guys with turnout gear, guys who seemed like they were -- they seemed okay but they were shook up.

We ended up walking up around probably

along the river up a couple blocks. I don't know what street we ended up coming back around, but I know there was a fence, an orange fence, along the river here. So we ended up coming up, back around this way, north a couple blocks and back east. They wanted to get back to -- they were anxious to get back to the quarters of 8 Truck. They got back to 8 Truck.

I came back to the scene to try to find out where the command post was. Somebody said it was set up on West Broadway and Vesey Street, I believe. So I walked back down that way. At that point there was nobody from the command post that I could recognize that I was working with at the command post.

I don't know how much later this was or how long it took me to get back over there. I would assume it was probably anywhere from a half an hour to 45 minutes by the time I made it back around down to where the new command post was set up. At that point Chief Haring from the 8th Division was in charge of the command post.

I hung around that command post waiting to see if I ran into Chief Nigro or Chief Ganci

or Chief Downey. Nobody knew where any of them were. I just hung around there and tried to help out the best I could with whatever I could.

That's about it. It was an awful experience.

MR. KRUG: All right. Thanks, Chief.

File No. 9110199

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY CHIEF PATRICK McNALLY

Interview Date: November 8, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is November 8, 2001. The time is 1550 hours. I'm George Cundari, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an individual with the following individual.

DEPUTY CHIEF McNALLY: Patrick McNally, Deputy Chief, 14th Division.

Q. Can you Please tell us the events that happened on September 11, 2001.

A. I had just finished working the night tour in the 14th Division. I was about to go off duty. We had the TV on and we were watching the events as they unfolded. We had seen one. We didn't see the first plane crash. We just saw that there had been a plane crash into the Trade Center. We saw the second plane crash and at that point I decided to go down to the Trade Center. I changed back into my uniform and myself and Firefighter Mike Laskowski, who was one of the division aides and I, took a division van with a couple of masks and went down to the Trade Center, via the LIE, Midtown Tunnel and the FDR Drive.

We arrived at West Street approximately, I would say 2 blocks south of the Trade Center and I reported to the command post, which was on West Street

across from the Trade Center, approximately 50 to a hundred feet south of the Winter Garden I believe. In the area of the Winter Garden. I'm not exactly sure on this map. There was a bridge across, there was two of them.

Q. Who was at the command center when you got there?

A. A number of staff Chiefs. I remember speaking to Chief Cassano. I reported and he said stand by for a minute. I will give you an assignment. I would say approximately within five or ten minutes, the first tower collapsed and we retreated into a parking garage down a ramp, which was directly behind us at the command post. I went into that garage area.

Then I came out after the collapse; myself, Firefighter Laskowski and Chief Downey came out from under the rubble. The entrance to the garage was not blocked. We were able to walk right out. I understand there were two doors. The other door was blocked with debris, I was told later on, but we were able to walk right out to West Street.

Then I believe I spoke to Chief Turi, met him out in front here on West Street and he directed me to try to locate another command post further north. I

went up to the area between Vesey and Murray and set up a command post in that area there.

A few moments later, I was talking to Chief Cassano, and we decided go back down south to look for Chief Galvin, who we thought was missing. We were between Vesey Street and Liberty, closer to Vesey than to Liberty, when the second tower came down.

Q. Were you speaking with Chief Cassano via radio?

A. No, face to face. In this area here. I would imagine we were north of the bridge, in that area there. The second tower came down. I was able to make it to the building on the corner of Vesey and there was a cut out in the building. I was able to get in there and get out of the way.

After that, we regrouped again and I spent the rest of the day on Vesey, working between what would be West and Washington, I believe. I worked with Chief Fellini, Citywide Tour Commander. I worked with him, helping him direct rescue operations until approximately 8 o'clock that night.

Q. You were never in the World Trade Center itself, never got inside the towers?

A. No.

Q. Was there radio communications at that time, were you on frequency one?

A. I don't recall what I was on. I'm assuming I was on one. We grabbed two spares from here. I don't recall hearing any radio transmissions.

Q. Were there a lot of people going towards you when you first arrived there?

A. No, from what I understand, they had moved the command post from inside the building to across the street. They were assigning companies. I remember I saw Chief Hart and I believe he was the communications coordinator, the Battalion Chief. I recall seeing Commissioner Feehan in the same area, Chief Ganci. They were just directing operations, but I only just got there probably no more than ten minutes before it happened.

Q. Were there a lot of injuries when you got there at all?

A. No. The only thing that I had heard on the way down is that there were jumpers and that they had been warned about that, that people had jumped out of the building. I heard that on the radio on the way down on the FDR Drive.

Q. Did you know the tower was collapsing or you

just knew something was happening?

A. At the beginning I thought that maybe the area from where the plane hit from above, had collapsed. I wasn't aware the whole tower had collapsed.

Q. How long were you in that parking garage before you got out?

A. Couple of minutes.

Q. Still clouds of smoke?

A. Right.

Q. Could you see?

A. You could see up close. I remember talking to Chief Downey. I could see him. I could see my aide and Chief Downey stayed. Chief Ganci was behind him, but I never saw him again.

Q. You went north?

A. I went north. I don't know where Chief Downey went either. Chief Ganci was discovered south of that walkway, that bridge. Later in the day we discovered him, so I'm assuming he went south of the area in front of where the command post had been.

Q. When you went north, were there a lot of firefighters going north with you?

A. There weren't many people out on the street

at that point. Just a few. I don't know where the rest of them were. In other words, this area, I was setting up here for another command post. There were not a lot of firefighters up there, only a couple. I left my aide up there and then I went back down south.

Q. Where did you park your van?

A. We parked the van south of the towers on West, I would say approximately 2, 3 blocks south of the towers.

Q. Were you able to get the van out later on?

A. Yes, we were able to drive it back. It had one broken window and it was covered with soot, but we were able to drive it.

Q. Anything else would you like to add?

A. No. I wish it hadn't happened. That's all.

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for your time.

DEPUTY CHIEF McNALLY: I told them earlier, it wasn't much. Like I said I barely got there.

MR. CUNDARI: Before everything happened.

DEPUTY CHIEF McNALLY: So I wasn't aware of what they were trying to do. As far as the radio goes, I don't recall hearing many transmissions. I'm assuming I was on channel one, but I would imagine they would have had a command channel and

maybe one or two tacticals by that point, but I'm not sure.

Q. After the collapse you heard a lot of Maydays then, right?

A. Not really. Very quiet after both collapses. Unusual.

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for your time. The time is 1555 hours. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110200

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH FORTIS

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0717 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT FORTIS: Joseph Fortis, EMT 1376.

MR. RADENBERG: Joseph is assigned to EMS Battalion 20. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Joseph, if you would begin from when you were assigned to the job. You can pretty much take it from there.

A. Me and my partner Mike were at the station here. We first put all our stuff in the vehicle and we attempted to log on, and there was a computer problem with our ambulance. We heard the dispatcher start screaming for units. We volunteered.

"3 John, put the job on the screen," and we couldn't log on. He just said, "Head down to staging. Start heading down there. I'll give you some more information." We attempted to log on a few times on the way. We went on the

Bruckner southbound and started heading down towards the incident.

We went down the Bruckner and through that Brooklyn Battery Tunnel underpass, the Battery Park underpass. We were on our cell phones at the time, and I was talking to my mother and so was Mike. They told us a plane hit the building. We couldn't get the job up on the screen. We couldn't log on. So we were getting our information from our family.

We went down the Bruckner to the FDR, and then we jumped on the FDR and they closed the highway. We had maybe like 15 cop cars and highway cars and 3 fire trucks and like 5 ambulances. We headed down there. We came out, and we didn't know what was going on. It was just an accident at the time. We came out through the tunnel.

When we pulled up onto West Street, the whole world was pretty much blocked in front of the towers. So we actually went into the oncoming traffic. They had it closed down. We proceeded north. They told us staging was at Vesey and West.

We got there and we backed our ambulance -- I was, and Mike was teching. We backed the ambulance in. Whoever the captain was there at the scene asked us to just grab all our equipment and stay with our vehicles and we were just placed in front of the vehicles at the time. So we did that and lit up a cigarette and waited to see what they wanted to do.

I believe at that time -- I can't even tell you the time frame. We actually heard like the engines I guess for the second plane coming in, and it just got louder and, boom, the second plane hit the other tower. We stood there and we watched. I guess like a fireball cloud came down. We were all standing on the corner I guess by the pedestrian bridge off the corner there with our equipment. We were just amazed in awe.

Everybody was running at us saying evacuate and we're under attack kind of thing. Then the light went on to run. We turned around and started running west on Vesey Street, and we made it just past the American Express building.

It was just coming too fast. We couldn't get away from that cloud per se, and we

ducked into the lobby of a building there. I believe it was between -- it might have even been the American Express building on the corner there.

Q. At this point it's the collapse of the first building now?

A. No, no. This is just when the second plane.

Q. Okay.

A. The buildings were still up. So it was just a blast from I guess the second plane, I think, came in, and the dust cloud just came. We were on the corner there, and you just felt the heat. Our back and all our eyebrows were all singed and everything. We had a little flash burn because we were right -- I guess when it were came were we right on West off the corner of I guess where six was, if that was it, if this is West Street here.

Q. Yeah.

A. We were actually right by the pedestrian bridge, because when we -- the bridge is there, and we were actually over here and the ambulances were parked off the corner.

Q. South of the pedestrian bridge?

A. South of the pedestrian bridge, when I guess the second plane came in. So we ran. Everybody was running down Vesey west, and that's the way we went. After that incident and everybody composed themselves, a couple minutes later everybody was just like -- it was just chaos.

One of the people who worked here at the station, I believe he just finished dropping off his girlfriend or his wife at the Trade Center. She worked there. So we were actually trying to keep him calm and keep him from running into the building. It actually took like three of us to stop him from running across, just running back into the building. He wanted us all to go with him. They were like stay here, so we stayed there.

Then everybody composed themselves, and we were back on the corner of -- back on Vesey and West where the staging was, and they were like, "Stay right here. Stay right here. Nobody go towards the building."

All of a sudden we started -- they

wanted us to go towards whatever building that we were going to do triage in the lobby of -- I don't know if it was one or two, but we were supposed to set up a triage there. But they weren't too sure yet. They were waiting for a confirmation or something. We had all our equipment, and everything was already singed from that point.

Like I said, we started ahead like halfway across West Street with our stuff, and the ground started shaking like a train was coming. You looked up, and I guess -- I don't know, it was one that came down first or two? Which one?

Q. The first one to come down was the south tower, number two.

A. Two? We were standing on West Street, and the ground started to shake. You looked up, and it looked like a ticker tape parade off the back of the building, because all this stuff started coming down. We thought it was just like all papers and everything. Like I said, there was pieces of body parts all over the place.

We came halfway across the street, and

the building was coming down. Everybody was running out of the same evac, the building's falling and ESU and everybody and everyone's screaming "Get back! Get back!"

We dropped all our stuff and started running again, west on Vesey, headed towards Vesey and West. Then we went west on Vesey. We just made the turn on I believe on North End Street. Just as we got to the corner, I guess the debris from the cloud came up Vesey and up Murray and then up and over that building that's there. So we actually stood up against the building here.

Q. Vesey and North End?

A. Right, right. The lobby is like right there. They didn't want us to go in the building. Actually everybody -- it was just chaotic. That cloud came, and we just leaned up against the building and it was just -- no one could breathe or anything.

Then after that we -- an ambulance came by from I think it might have been Cabrini's ambulance, and they stopped right in front of that building on North End Street. We all jumped

in the ambulance. Like I say, you could just see the cloud coming up and over the building. We waited and the ground was shaking and all that. We waited like two, three minutes. We got out of that vehicle and proceeded I guess east on Vesey towards the buildings again.

At that point there were -- all the ambulances on the corner there, I believe like the first three or four off that corner were destroyed. We were maybe the seventh or eighth ambulance off the line. So our vehicle was -- we left it running, so it was still running at the time. The windows were open and all that, and a couple windows blew out.

I jumped in the ambulance, and we pulled them on -- we headed westbound and parked them in front of the building there on North End Street. Then I went back and we grabbed Cornell's bus and grabbed like three other vehicles that were all running. I think it was like Cabrini, Cornell and then our ambulance, 429. At that point I didn't know where my partner Mike went, because he went one way and I went the other way.

After that we actually went towards the buildings there, and we were just taking people from -- I guess from right off the front of Trade Center one, all these people, and we would bring them over to the ambulance and they would go. And we would go back to almost the stairs of building one again and just help people straight across the street, and back and forth.

Then everyone was screaming that it's unsafe and everybody had to pull back. Meanwhile everybody was still taking people from -- helping people from the sidewalk in front of the towers across the street almost to Vesey and West, and from there they were going to an ambulance or they actually set up a triage in the American Express building, I believe it was, on the corner there.

We went across to the sidewalk like two, three times, and then when we came back the third time they told us to stay here. We were going to do like -- make that like a forward triage, this American Express building.

It was me and my partner and Steve Pilla and a couple other people from the station.

We had like those multiple oxygen mask trees on like a big tank, and we were just bringing them to only firemen and cops. We didn't have any civilians whatsoever. We had a couple chiefs. Everybody was just like minor cuts. Nobody was life-threatening.

Everyone was hacking, so we actually had like maybe 20 to 30 police and firemen on like the non-re-breathers. I think it was on in the American Express on the corner there.

A few minutes after that, after we had everybody we were treating, they were shipping them down the block. ESU came in and said they thought the gas lines were going to blow for the building or something and we needed to evac out of there immediately.

So we just grabbed all the stuff again and piled them on the stretchers. Actually all the firemen and cops were ripping off their oxygen masks and running out of the building. As we got out the American Express building on the corner there, we started running again westbound, because everybody was just screaming, "It's going to blow! Run, don't walk, and just leave all the

equipment."

I guess the next building came down. Again we were like halfway up the block, and it just came and annihilated the triage area. I believe two other firemen and a cop were killed or something over there or whatever it was.

So after that again we went back to that building on North End and Vesey Street, the building on the corner there. We set up -- they wanted to do it there, set up a forward triage there instead. Again we set up everything again. There's an atrium there, and we had everything underneath the atrium with the glass, we had to move everything over.

After I guess the second building came down and that cloud came again, again nobody could even breathe. We had a line with breathers on in the back of the ambulance because the windows were missing and the cloud was just devastating.

After that then everybody split up. I don't know where Mike, my partner, went. He wound up I believe on the opposite side almost over like at Trinity and Church, because we got

separated. He ran left, and I ran right. He got to the other side.

Then after everything was kind of calmed down a little bit, it must have been after 10:30 then. We were just doing, again, just firemen and police officers. We didn't have any civilians whatsoever. They were all just like respiratory problems and minor cuts. A couple people were kind of critical. So we would take them and throw them in the ambulances.

Then after both buildings were down, we were actually going from right to where the sidewalks used to be and just trying to move things with everyone who was there and put people into ambulances or direct them, throw a gauze pad on their head and tell them to keep walking north on West Street, just keep walking north.

That's really about it. We did that, and then time just passed. The next thing I remember was I guess when the third building came down. We were right in front of -- I don't know if that's a school. We were actually still on Vesey and West but just north of the pedestrian bridge on the corner there. Everybody stood back

right off the point where the water starts. I don't know where that is. Is that right there? Wherever the water is, there's like a little --

Q. This would be the marina behind it.

A. We were here. I thought there was another -- like here where the boats pull in. I don't know if we were all the way over here. They actually had a couple tugboats there.

Q. I know it's just in behind the Winter Garden.

A. Right. On the other side of the building here there's actually -- where's the high school from here, Stuyvesant?

Q. It's further north.

A. When the third building came down, that's where we were. We were actually -- they pulled us all back.

Q. Yeah, Stuyvesant is all the way up here just north of Chambers.

A. They had some boats over here. Actually they pulled us all the way back that far at the point because they didn't want any -- they didn't want us anywhere near it. Everyone was just running around. When the third building

came down, we were on that corner in front of the school, and everybody just stood back.

They pulled us all back at the time, almost about an hour before it, because they were sure -- they knew it was going to come down, but they weren't sure. So they pulled everyone back, and everybody stood there and we actually just waited and just waited and waited until it went down, because it was unsafe. They wouldn't let anyone next to I guess the two piles, we would call them, where one and two was. We stood back. We waited.

Then after the building came down and the dust and everything settled, everybody actually went back. Everybody was just moving things, and we were actually picking up a lot of body parts and putting them in red bags and just having them shipped to the morgue and this and that. We did that for a couple hours, and it started to get dark.

The next thing I remember, I was down -- it must have been about 10:00, and they had like a whole bunch of people from our station were right in front of the school, Stuyvesant,

and they were all holding hands praying. I walked over and slapped them five. I was like, "What are you guys crying -- it's all right, you know, things are going to get better."

They had me, because Mike was on the other side, and I guess at 12 he talked to someone and said "Where's your partner?" They're like, "I don't know. I think he was at -- he was supposed to be --" we were just taking people from the stairs of the building. We weren't going near the lobby. They said it was unsafe. They weren't too sure.

They said, "We think the building's safe, but don't just go anywhere yet." They wanted to do triage in one of the building lobbies, but they said hold off a few minutes and we'll see how it goes, and then things rolled from there.

When we split up, he said, "They told us to go to the lobby." So he thought I was in the lobby of the building at the time. It was about 3:00 that afternoon, and our cell phones finally went on so I called my house. I talked to my wife and told her I was fine.

From there, like I said, I was talking to the guys at the station and Lieutenant Sullivan smacked me in the head and we were laughing. He said, "Thank God you're okay, you moron. We had you down because you were supposed to be in the building." I was joking around with him, saying, "Well, you know it takes a unique person to be a firefighter. I don't run into burning buildings that people are running out of."

When we were there, even my partner, we were like just to watch all those regular people jumping out the windows was -- we saw maybe like 10 or 12 people jump out the windows. That was the thing, when we get to almost the stairs when the buildings were up, we just looked up just to make sure, because you couldn't help but look up, just to make sure everything wasn't coming down.

What else can I say? After they found out at 10:00 that I was okay, I told Lieutenant Sullivan I wanted to go home. He just gave me the keys to an ambulance that was off the corner that was destroyed. I boosted it, and it started up. It was destroyed. I got in, and I drove and

I drove back to the station.

I dropped a fireman off halfway up off the West Side Highway. I dropped him off somewhere. I don't even remember who he was. I dropped him off. Then I came home by myself. I pulled into the garage of Battalion 20. That's when everyone found out I was okay. I was on the missing list and all this.

Supposedly my mother was here at 12. I was on the phone with her at about 10 to 9, 5 to 9, saying I'm on my way down. She works in Brooklyn. Like I said, they were telling us what was happening. So when the phone went dead, she came here to the station from home. It was 12, 12:30.

Whatever transpired here, they said, "Well, we can't get in touch with everybody, but we think everyone's fine," this and that. They're like, "He's not even down there." She's like, "Don't tell me he's not down there. He told me he was in front of it," because we weren't logged onto the computer, so it didn't show that 03 John was there. That's how that started.

Q. What was your partner's last name?

A. Negron, Mike. He doesn't want to talk about it.

Q. Okay. No problem.

When you came out of the Battery Park and coming up West Side Highway, did you park on West Side Highway or --

A. I parked right on Vesey right off West Side Highway. There was maybe one, two, three, four ambulances off the corner, and then, boom, we were the fifth one right there, because we were directly in front of the entrance of the American Express building.

Q. Right. Then you staged down just south --

A. Just south of the bridge.

Q. -- of the bridge, on the west side of the street?

A. Right. Then as people were coming out and were having difficulty coming out down the stairs -- because they really didn't want us to cross the median. That was kind of like, "Guys, just don't cross the median for a few minutes."

Everybody wanted to help, but they

really had it under control. I've been here ten years, and there was a reason for them to tell me to stay there. I pretty much followed the rules.

Q. Right. When you arrived at West and Vesey, do you remember seeing EMS officers down there, other personnel that you recognized?

A. When we came up -- when we were coming north on West Street, we had the windows open. It was so funny, I remember Mike looking out the window going, holy, you know, look at that shit. He was looking out the window, out the passenger window. There were so many vehicles parked from Liberty all the way to Vesey on the north side of West Street, heading north on West Street, that you just couldn't get by.

I always like to leave myself an out. They told me to get to Vesey and West anyway, so that's where I was going. There's like a little island there, a little sidewalk. It must have been just south or actually over here by wherever we came out on Cedar. I came into the southbound lanes, because it was shut down anyway, and just drove all the way up to Vesey and West and backed the ambulance in right there.

So when we came by, we saw all the -- there was a couple I think it might have been like Cabrini and a Metro Care ambulance, a lot of the private ambulances and the fire companies were all right in front of -- right on the north side of West Street there, and we just drove right past all of them, because we were supposed to be on Vesey and West, because you always leave yourself an out.

Q. Yeah.

A. All those vehicles were parked there. I don't remember who it was, but we saw I believe there was Deshore from the academy, from EMS.

Q. Captain Deshore?

A. Captain Deshore. They were heading towards -- everyone was running across in front of us, and we were still going to Vesey and West. It looked like her and a bunch of other EMS workers. There was someone else from -- I believe his last name is Joseph, one of the other new guys here. I thought I saw him go by and one of the medics from the south. I only know his first name is Joe. They were all going towards the site. We were still trying to get to Vesey

and West at the time.

So we just backed the vehicle up there and, like I said, put our equipment in the front. Just as I was ripping tape to put 03 John on the windshield, I guess that's when we heard the turbines or whatever.

Q. The second plane?

A. The second plane per se. We didn't even know it was that until afterwards, until days after.

Q. Right.

A. The people you were with, it was Chris Attanasio and Roland. They were like, "Oh, no, dude, that was" -- the first thing we heard was the plane coming in, because then we were there for the other collapses. I didn't even realize it because it was just chaos and everybody was just scared, to be honest with you.

Like I said, when that blast came out, everybody got this little sing. Even like the little bands on our jackets just melted right off, the reflective bands. We just dropped everything when the cloud came, composed ourselves, and went back to the site again.

Then the rest of the day between whatever, 4 and 10, after I guess the third building went down, they said it was okay. Everybody was really on like the bucket thing and on the pile, just moving debris for a couple hours.

Then when I went to go get a soda, then I was relieved. They sent me home.

Q. After the second hit, you came back pretty much to the same area south of the pedestrian bridge?

A. Yeah, after the second plane hit we ran to North End Street and Vesey and waited until the blast went by, went back to where we originally staged and moved all the ambulances back around the corner. Then we went after that and just with our equipment in the stretchers stood over here and waited because they wanted to keep the vehicles out to the side. They were just like, "Grab whatever equipment you can."

Q. You were back down on West, south of the pedestrian bridge?

A. Yeah, by the bridge. Actually just north of the bridge, because the bridge was

annihilated at that point.

Q. When the treatment area was set up in the American Express building, that was after the first collapse?

A. After the first collapse. We must have been in that building for not even like -- it probably was a while, like 10, 15 minutes, but it just seemed like for a minute or two. I guess the big one's an H tank. We had the multiple trees, and all I did was rip off the non-breathers and people just coming in, just policemen, firemen. We started doing our thing.

Like I said, all of a sudden ESU came in and said the building was unsafe and we needed to get out of that building because they thought that the gas lines were going to go.

From there we moved again back to North End and Vesey in whatever building that was there. That's where we started to do another triage, forward triage thing. There was a little construction there, and the water's right there. So they said, okay, maybe it's not safe there. One building was still up.

What happened was everyone was just

taking vehicles and taking people and heading northbound. We stayed there for a few. It was me and my partner -- not my partner, Steve Pilla and a couple other gentlemen. I don't even remember who they were. Everyone was just throwing equipment into that location from all the other vehicles that were destroyed. They would just salvage the equipment and bring it right to there.

They determined that that was a little too close still, and they wanted us out of that building. We to go north. When the second building was coming down, we must have been like on Murray and North End, and the cloud was coming from the second building. So we actually went back into this one here just to avoid the cloud. Then after that passed, that's when we returned back to actually ground zero or whatever then.

Q. Any thoughts or comments, anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

Q. Okay. I think we covered this, but when you first arrived at staging do you remember the officers that were there?

A. I can't remember his name, but I see him regularly. I believe there was a lieutenant there, a captain, and one of the chiefs was just going by. But I don't even remember who they were. As a matter of fact, I saw him maybe down there another time, and he was like, "I'm glad to see you're okay," and that kind of thing. I don't know him by his name. It's always like, "Hey, what's up," that kind of thing.

Q. Right.

A. That's really about it.

Q. Okay. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0749, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110201

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN FELIDI

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0756 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. John Felidi, Battalion 20, 2985.

Q. Okay. Mr. Felidi is an EMT. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

John, begin with when you were assigned to the job, where you were, et cetera?

A. I was at the station in the morning when we were watching the news and they were showing pictures of what was happening at the World Trade Center, that a plane hit the tower. At that point, Chief Basile came in and said John, take the LSU truck down to the World Trade Center. So, that's what I did. Took the West Side Highway all the way down.

I got to about the West Side Highway, between Barclay and Vesey Street. I couldn't go any further, so I parked the vehicle there and spoke to Chief Villani. I told him I couldn't go any further, due to the mass of emergency vehicles that were down there. So he told me go down, to take the vehicle and put it on the other side of the West Side Highway, which is

the west -- the west side of the highway there. So I did. I went down to -- took the West Side Highway back to Murray Street, made a left on Murray Street, came up North End, came down Vesey Street and I parked approximately right in this area here, which is the West Side Highway and Vesey Street, right here.

Q. So, right by like 7 World Financial Center?

A. Correct.

Q. The American Express building?

A. Right near there. We were doing some triaging, triaging a couple of patients, here and there. We were ordered to evacuate that area. They didn't give me a reason why. So that's what I did. We pushed down to North End and Vesey. At that point in time we were also doing some triaging. We -- now we are down there. We heard a rumble. I heard the rumble and looked in the back of me all I seen was a monstrous -- I can't even describe it. A cloud. Looked like debris, dust.

We ran down to North End between Murray and Vesey Street. There was a -- I think there is a -- I thought there was a hotel and office building right there. We ran in there. The cloud was really really bad. So we ran in there and we waited until it

subsided. That was about like 10, 15 minutes went by. I was down there, I lost track of time so I really can't -- even speak about time.

So after that happened, we found out that the second tower that was hit collapsed. We went back out, started triaging again. We asked a fireman that we had, a Captain from one of the -- actually, I don't even know what his name was -- what Battalion or whichever he was at. We were triaging there. There was so much debris down there, like you were covered.

At one point while we were triaging again, we were told to evacuate the area because the other tower was about to collapse. At that point in time I tried to jump in the vehicle and the only thing I remember is getting into the vehicle. I didn't even have time to put the key in the ignition and that was it. That was so -- I mean I think I was closer to that tower than this one.

Q. Yes, number 1. The north tower.

A. Right, that's the one. That it was so dark down there that I couldn't even see in front of me. I tried even moving the vehicle about two feet but I couldn't do it, because people are running everywhere. We had EMS personnel in the middle of the street. We

had the New York City Police Department running. I seen a couple of firemen running by me, so all I did was get in the vehicle, stay there until -- actually it came to a stand still.

That was about a few minutes. That was a while. The first time I got covered with it. The second time we knew that it was going to collapse. We were told to evacuate the area. That was it. I got into the vehicle, put the key in and I couldn't even go anywhere.

About 15 minutes went by. We started triaging in -- I don't remember, I think the Ambassador or the Embassy.

Q. Embassy?

A. Yes.

Q. Embassy Suites?

A. Right. We started triaging in there and we were getting hit heavy with patients. About -- I'm giving you a rough estimate because I really don't remember the time. About 20 minutes to half an hour went by, we were told to evacuate that area due to major gas leaks in the area. At that point in time I started putting some of the equipment that I had. I left a lot of equipment down there because in the 21

years I have been there, I have never never seen anything like this. Never.

We were told to evacuate the area and we were told to proceed down North End to Chambers, take the West Side Highway up to Chelsea Piers, 23 Street. At that point in time I think, I picked up Chief Pascale. I put her in the truck and I think there was also a Lieutenant and her aide, because they needed a ride up to the Chelsea Piers. I even seen Dario Gonzalez, Dr. Dario Gonzalez. I seen him down there. I seen numerous people from the Battalion down there.

There was one point in time that we were scared shit. What scared the shit out of me was we were down there and all we heard was another aircraft coming, but it turned out to be, I don't know, an F-15.

Let me tell you something you never seen anybody stand still, because you didn't know where to run, honestly. We evacuated that area and went down to Chelsea Piers. I started setting up a triage area down there and at that point in time I stood there until I was relieved. I came back to the station.

Q. Okay. When you got to west side and Vesey and you saw Chief Villani, do you remember seeing any other people down there that you recognized?

A. I remember -- after the collapse I remember seeing Chief Basile. He was covered in debris because he was one of the Chiefs that I believe I think was in the pedestrian walkway when it collapsed. Also I saw Louie Cook down there, who was the ALS coordinator next door, in the division. They were covered in -- full of debris.

Q. Do you remember where you saw them?

A. About right here when we were down by triage, in this area.

Q. By North End and Vesey?

A. Yes, the hotel down there.

Q. Yes, that's the Embassy I believe.

A. Yes. In fact I don't remember the name of it. I know it's right here.

Q. All right. Do you recall anybody with Chief Villani when you first arrived?

A. I seen a Lieutenant, but I don't know his name. I really don't know his name.

Q. All right. Other EMS ambulances down in the area?

A. I seen one of the new MERVs from Manhattan. I know it was Manhattan because it was one of the new ones. One of the last ones we got in. I seen people

getting triaged in the MERV, but I couldn't tell you who they -- what their names or anything like that.

Q. Okay. No problem. Heading up to Chelsea Piers, you picked up Chief Pascale and her aide?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember roughly where you picked them up? Was it somewhere over here on North End or --

A. No, I think it was near West Side Highway. I think around or past Chambers Street.

Q. North of Chambers?

A. Yes. I think -- she was -- as a matter of fact, I seen her when we were triaging in that building. But then after the second collapse, everybody scattered and I didn't see her until -- up in that area. Like Chambers and the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay. When tower one came down you rode that out in the LSU?

A. No, that one, what I did was --

Q. Tower one was the second tower to fall.

A. Right. When the second tower fell I was right here in this area here. I heard the rumble. Sorry, that was the first tower that fell. I heard the rumble. We were in this area here.

Q. Right. West Side Highway and Vesey?

A. Right. So when that collapsed, I felt a tremor and I ran towards North End, but we had a cloud following us, so I ran around the corner to try to avoid it. It came down Vesey Street. Then it came down also Murray, so I was stuck right in the middle of that area. The only thing I could do was duck and ran into that building, but I got covered in debris because by the time I turned the block here, it caught me.

Q. Right.

A. When the second tower fell, that one we were right here in this area here again. That one was more, like I would say more powerful, because I was closer to it. That one I got full of debris. Also, that was when I jumped into the LSU truck. I didn't get a chance to put the key in, you know.

Because the first time, I believe it was the first tower that fell, the LSU truck was here and I ran. I left the truck. I ran around the corner, but when the second tower fell, I never forget that sound. It sounded like a freight train passing by. I never forget that sound, never forget that sound. Like a freight train.

Q. Okay. Anything else you would like to add, thoughts or comments or anything like that? No?

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. John, I thank you very much. The time is now 0708 hours. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110202

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KEVIN DARNOWSKI

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0934 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC DARNOWSKI: Paramedic Kevin Darnowski from Battalion 20, shield 3103.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Kevin?

A. Regarding the events of September 11th, 2001, my story is I was dropping my fiancee's son off at school in Brooklyn on Fourth Avenue. After dropping him off, I was heading northbound on Fourth Avenue, and I looked to my left and I see the north tower of the World Trade Center burning. My fiancee works in the north tower on the 98th floor.

At that time I proceeded to call Lieutenant Guzman here at Battalion 20 and question him as to whether or not he had a job in the system for the World Trade Center. He told me that he had reports of a fire on the upper

floors of the World Trade Center.

At that time he asked me if I wanted to continue to work or go down to the scene. I opted to go down to the scene, as I was on my way to work anyway. And in uniform, I opted to go down to the scene at that time.

As I headed down towards the scene, I was trying to call my fiancee in her office, and there was no answer on the phone. It just kept giving me a busy signal. I tried her cell phone, and there was no answer on her cell phone.

I was approaching the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Behind me was EMS Chief Goldfarb. In front of me was a couple of tower ladders and rescue companies and engine companies that were going through the tunnel.

Right before the tolls on the Brooklyn side heading towards Manhattan at the Battery Tunnel, we were sitting in traffic and we watched United Flight 175 hit tower two, which was the south tower of the World Trade Center.

At that time everybody was just in shock. The firefighters and I were just really trying to get through the traffic when the plane

hit, and we were just standing there in like awe of what was happening. Finally we ended up getting into the tunnel,and we ended up sitting in the tunnel for about another 10 minutes, 10 to 15 minutes, trying to get through the traffic.

When we finally got through the tunnel to the other side, I parked my car on the corner of Carlisle and West Side Highway, West Street, and I proceeded northbound on West Street towards the command center or what I believed to be the command center at that time.

I went along the center median, meanwhile looking up at the towers in disbelief and basically sheer awe at what was going on. None of us at the Battery Tunnel knew what was going on until the second plane hit. Right then we knew it was a terrorist attack.

So as I'm walking up to the scene, I see droves of firefighters running towards the buildings, but nobody's coming out on the West Street side. I questioned one Fire Department official -- I believe he was a captain; I don't remember his name -- as to why there was nobody coming out on this side. He told me the Port

Authority had locked the doors on that side of the building and was having everybody come out on the Trinity side by the church, like Trinity and Fulton area for easy evacuation.

At that point I met up with EMS Chief Goldfarb again and his aide Mary. We were over by Three Financial Center. At that point we were standing with numerous amounts of firefighters and fire supervisors and police officers, and we got a report of another incoming airplane. So we proceeded to go into a parking garage that was in Three Financial Center underneath.

Shortly after that we realized what was flying over was the armed forces F-14s flying over, and we got a confirmation from the FAA -- over the police radio we got a confirmation from FAA that all airports had been closed and there were no planes flying within the New York City area at that specific time.

So we all came out of the garage, and Chief Goldfarb started setting up triage on the corner of West and Vesey with the ambulances going towards North End Avenue, facing West Street along Vesey, along Three and four

Financial Center.

At that time we weren't getting that many -- we ended up putting -- I don't know what this building was over here.

Q. Vesey and North End.

A. Yeah, there was a building on the --

Q. Embassy Hotel?

A. It might have been The embassy Hotel.

Q. There's a movie theater also.

A. Right, right. There was a parking lot in the front on West Street. We ended up putting triage initially in Three and Four Financial Center.

At that time Chief Goldfarb and -- I had explained my situation, that my fiancee was up on the 98th floor of tower one and I would be as much help as I can. He told me regarding patient care-wise that don't bother with patient care, just with moving of patients and equipment.

So we went back over to the pedestrian bridge in front of Three Financial Center. We were standing under there with the Fire Department command center. We were attempting to set up a command center there, when one of the

firefighters starts screaming, "Look up!" Everybody looks up, and we were watching the people jump out of One World Tower Center and hitting the overhang in front of World Trade Center where the taxis would let people off originally.

At that time it was just -- the best word to describe it was pure chaos. Nobody really knew what was going on other than the firefighters going in to try to put out the fires.

Chief Goldfarb instructed me to go back to the MERV, which was sitting on West and Vesey. I went back over to the MERV, and I met up with one of my coworkers from Battalion 20, Chris Attanasio. He put me in the MERV, because he knew my situation, and he tried to calm me down and just told me to sit tight and relax and just hope for the best and just things like that. He was trying to calm me down and stuff. I just had to get out of the MERV. I had to be outside on the street watching what was going on.

At that point Chris Attanasio took me and he told me we were ordered by -- he didn't

specify any -- to go over to West Street just south of the north tower right at the base of the hotel over there, because we were getting patients from Two World Trade Center that they were bringing down the stairs from Two World Trade Center down to West Street. We were going to be getting patients over there.

So I proceeded with him and his partner over to that area, and we started loading patients, firefighters and civilians, in the back of the ambulance. At one point we had five patients in the back of the ambulance, and he was standing and he asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital with him. I told him no, I needed to stay in the area. I wanted to see if Chief Goldfarb needed me for anything. So he said okay, and he started to leave. He proceeded down towards like Albany Street, like Liberty and Albany, to go to one of the area hospitals; I don't remember which one.

At that time I started walking back up towards Vesey Street. I heard three explosions, and then we heard like groaning and grinding, and tower two started to come down. To the

firefighters and the cops that I was standing there with started running northbound on West Street and we made a left on Vesey and ran again towards North End Avenue where we were having EMS triage, and we stopped over there.

Down that specific street on West Street, there wasn't that much debris and smoke coming down because Two World Trade Center is more or less blocked by the hotel and a couple other buildings. It did come down like Liberty Street and towards Two World Financial Center and towards like the Winter Garden area.

We ended up just staying there for a while till the smoke more or less cleared up. We started putting our masks on and stuff like that at that time.

Shortly after that Chief Goldfarb told us to go back down towards where we had the ambulances staged on Vesey Street and start moving the ambulances back more and a little north in case tower one fell.

At that time I encountered Chief Larry Mittleman, Chief Fran Pascale, Chief Basile from Division 2, and ALS coordinator Louie Cook from

Division 2. I encountered them all at the EMS triage we had at North End and Vesey.

They were at that point -- Chief Goldfarb explained my situation to them with my fiancee being in tower one, and they were just trying to calm me down. I was helping move patients.

We went back to Vesey and West Street and started moving the ambulances back towards North End more, and then we started going northbound on North End towards Murray Street. We were moving the triage because we got a report of the parking lot in front of the building we were in, some of the cars were on fire, and we got reports of gas lines that were blown and the fire were starting to get to them. So we ended up moving the triage initially, and we just started heading northbound to Murray Street.

We got up to Murray Street, and that's when -- Murray Street and towards West Street we ended up putting the triage just for temporary purposes. Then shortly after that tower one started to come down. Captain Fenton, I believe, was on the scene. He said at that time to just

get in the ambulances and whatever vehicle you could get in and just head northbound on West Street until you get to Chelsea Piers.

That's how the triage ended up at Chelsea Piers. Everybody just started heading northbound. They started -- we were getting over the radio, EMS radio, that they started having the ambulances staging at the Chelsea Piers.

Captain Fenton told a lieutenant from the Bellevue station that was on the scene to take me back to the station, because I could be of no use patient care-wise given my situation. He told him to take me back to Bellevue station. They removed me to Bellevue station.

Just while I was at Bellevue station, I was acting as a liaison between the station itself and the emergency department with a couple of the other lieutenants there. I'd just seeing a couple of the injuries -- I saw the firefighter they brought in in cardiac arrest that was hit by a civilian that jumped out of one of the buildings.

At that point I still didn't know what was going on with my fiancee. I was calling her

sister, calling her mother. Nobody heard anything at that point.

That whole time I had no idea what time of day it was or anything like that. They removed me to Bellevue station at about 3:00. From 3 until 5:30, as I said, I was acting as a liaison between the emergency department and the station.

My twin brother is also a paramedic at Battalion 20. He brought in a patient to Bellevue, so I was talking to him for a while. I went back to the station. I called my house to see if there were any messages on the answering machine, and there was a message from a nurse at Brooklyn hospital saying my fiancee was at Brooklyn Hospital. She was okay. She was being kept for observation.

At that point I called her sister, and her sister was already on her way over to Brooklyn Hospital to see her. So then I approached the desk lieutenant at that time at Bellevue, and I told him the situation. He was going to try to get me a ride back to Brooklyn, but he said obviously it wouldn't be any time

soon since the events were still unfolding down at the World Trade Center.

I explained to my brother what had happened. He said fine. So they just told me to continue what I was doing and they would let me know about a ride over to Brooklyn. So I was continuing acting as a liaison.

At one point I brought the firefighter's equipment that had died back over to the emergency department from the station because his coworkers from the engine company were there requesting his equipment.

While I was standing outside in the emergency ambulance bay, I was talking to my brother and another EMT -- I don't recall his name at this time -- and I started experiencing some chest pain and chest tightness, and I was brought into the emergency room. I was treated for angina and anxiety. I was subsequently admitted to the cardiac care unit over night in Bellevue, and I was released at about 6 in the morning.

Just that's what happened to me on September 11th.

Q. When you got in to Manhattan and you parked down by Carlisle and West, do you recall seeing anyone outside from Chief Goldfarb? Do you recall seeing any other EMS personnel around there that you recognized, or fire personnel?

A. Offhand? Not offhand initially, not down at that time. There was a torso of a human that was down over by the hotel by the front of Liberty Street that they had blocked off, and I saw a couple of police crime scene units there. I saw a couple firefighters; I can't recall their names or what engine or ladder company or battalions they were from. I didn't start seeing EMS people until I got up to West and Vesey Street.

I saw NY Cornell ambulances in front. I saw Long Island College Hospital in front. I saw some Fire Department ambulances in front of the hotel and tower one on West Street. A whole bunch of fire apparatus and police vehicles. I saw what looked like a Fire Department command center. I don't exactly know who was there.

Everybody had their turnout gear on. So at that specific time, it was kind of hard to

differentiate who had white shirt, light blue shirts, you know, who was just wearing turnout coats.

Like I said, I ended up seeing EMS people from up here, Battalion 20, from New York Hospital that I recognized, some names being Craig Viscuti, Chris Attanasio and Roland Diaz from up here at Battalion 20, Joe Fortis and Mike Negron from up here at Battalion 20. I saw an EMT by the name of Steven Hess. I believe he's from Battalion 57 or the old Woodhall station down in Brooklyn.

At that specific time, I don't remember seeing any EMS lieutenants or captains, just Chief Goldfarb at that time. Other than that, I really couldn't tell you any names.

Q. You've basically covered everything we were looking for. Any thoughts or comments you'd like to add, opinion?

A. No, not really. In that type of situation other than the word "chaos" describing it all, all in all everybody more or less did what they were supposed to do. The firefighters did what they were supposed to do. They were

supposed to go in the building and try to rescue the people from the fire floors, extinguish the fires as best they can. EMS people staging outside, some in the lobbies of tower one and tower two; I knew that.

I mean, other than the chaotic scene that was going on, I would have to say everybody more or less did what an emergency action plan recommends with regards to a mess. Obviously nobody thought the buildings would fall. That was unexpected.

What was expected was firefighters were going to go up to the floors, rescue civilians, as many as they can, extinguish the fires, then we would treat and transport. Basically that was the emergency action plan that was in effect, and was what everybody expected to happen. Nobody expected the towers to fall.

So other than that, basically everybody did what they were supposed to be doing. With the chaos, I'm actually surprised. I was the only one that was actually a little bonkers.

Q. How's your fiancee?

A. She's okay. She's doing good. She's

hanging in there. She hasn't gone back to work yet. Her work actually relocated, but she hasn't gone back to work yet. But that's okay.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0954, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110203

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LONNIE PENN

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is November 9, 2001. The time is now 0851 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with --

A. EMT Penn, first name Lonnie. Shield 1296.

Q. Lonnie is currently assigned to EMS Battalion 20. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Particularly on that day, I was working the unit 20 David, Tour 1, and approximately two minutes after the first plane hit, I was assigned -- basically the route I took was down the Bruckner to the FDR all the way downtown. I must have been around 23 Street when the second plane hit. Shortly, within another 5 to 10 minutes, I was in the mix. I got waved all the way in to the front of the staging. Immediately got out, and proceeded to put on my helmet, pulled out a stretcher and prepared for an MCI.

After that, I helped one lady out of the front of the Marriott entrance, I recall. I was on my way back. I had actually brought her to the Hatzolah ambulance, because they were carrying her, and a few other people and I assisted with her. Then on my way

back to the entrance, I felt the ground shake, I turned around and ran for my life.

I made it as far as the Financial Center, like right before it, behind the last Hatzolah ambulance facing the Trade Center, when the collapse happened, and I mean it was just -- I can't -- it was sheer hell, but hell fire passed me and all the rubble, at least 10 feet of rubble had passed me. The only thing I was really scared of was dying of respiratory distress at that point.

When I got up and looked around, my ambulance was obliterated and gone. I looked for my partner. I didn't see him. I was worried for him. Basically I only saw two other people alive on the block that I was at. I got myself together and then started heading through towards the water and I saw two other co-workers from station 22. We all hugged and I saw Captain DeShore and then a boat came in from New Jersey police harbor patrol and Captain DeShore was ordering us to get on and two of us did and one stayed behind.

While I was in the mix of helping people get on, the second collapse proceeded. We got covered in all of the smoke again, all of a sudden and we just escaped with our lives. It was close, very close.

I just got to say I thank God for living. Basically that's it.

Q. Okay. Do you remember where you staged?

A. Approximately -- would this line right here be the barrier that was there? There was a barrier in the middle of the street.

Q. Yes, the black line. This is West Street and then the West Side Highway.

A. I was more or less right on this corner.

Q. Right on Liberty and West?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Who was your partner that day?

A. A rookie gentleman by the name of Joseph Henderson or Henderson Joseph. Basically, we got out and we passed a lot of body parts. I mean it looked like Beirut to me. That was from the debris of the two crashes. My rookie partner, he was in shock, he couldn't believe it. He froze. I just you know, I couldn't stop, I couldn't even watch. If you looked up and you see people jumping, we saw a few jumpers. I couldn't look no more. I had to act. I went to the front. That was where I went over to like the Marriott front.

I assisted that lady to the Hatzolah

ambulance and was on my way back when we felt the rumble. My partner actually came sort of like running up to me but not all the way. What should I do. I just said go get a long board from the ambulance and that was the last I saw of him. We felt the ground shake. You could see the towers sway and then it just came down and I never looked back once I started running.

Q. When the collapse started you ran north on the West Side Highway?

A. No, I jumped the barrier and I must have made it right over to where this second line is here. Because I was -- there is like -- it was a little high, I remember where I was it was 10 feet of rubble had passed me.

Q. You were pretty much in front of like 2 World Financial Center?

A. Yes, that's as far as I got.

Q. Right. Then --

A. I actually saw a police officer shoot the window out to get through.

Q. To get through 2 World Financial Center?

A. Yes. Because he was ahead of me. I could see him. He shot the glass out and jumped through and

I had later saw him in the hospital in Jersey.

Q. When you reached the yacht harbor behind 2 Financial, you said Captain DeShore was there and two other people from --

A. Two other EMTs from Boston Road.

Q. Do you know who they were?

A. My friend Conzo and Billy -- I can't pronounce Billy's last name. Truoccolo, yes.

Q. Okay. So you were all pretty much back here for the second collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. At the harbor. Who got on the boat?

A. Captain DeShore. We assisted a fireman that had possibly a broken back. This guy, they already had him on a long board and was carrying him over. I assisted to help get him on the boat. There was about two other police officers and I think two civilian ladies, two ladies, I think they were civilians. We assisted them downstairs into the boat. I came back up and it was me and Conzo, Truoccolo was very hurt, his leg was gashed. He had a load of glass all over him, over his neck. He was cut up. I guess his adrenaline just kept him going.

Q. Right.

A. Basically at that point it was me and Conzo on the deck and Captain DeShore was saying get on this boat and Conzo says to me, are you going to Jersey or what? I said -- I could just hear Captain DeShore screaming out again, get on this boat and then all of a sudden we hear the second collapse coming and that was it. I jumped on it, Conzo stayed and thank God later that night I heard he was okay.

We all got treated very nice as soon as we got to Jersey. The people from Day Tech were the best. The firemen were there, on the other side of Jersey. They hosed me down, all that soot. I was coughing, throwing up. I had soot in my -- my eyes were burning, they were sheer burning. I can't forget that.

When I was running from the first collapse, I must have got hit by a body part because I had carcass like on the side of my leg. It was stuck to my pants. Basically minor injuries as far as back spasm after that and my leg had a bruise. I had a bruise from getting hit from some debris. That's basically it.

Q. Okay. Billy Truocollo got on the boat?

A. Yes.

Q. And Conzo?

A. Stayed.

Q. He stayed back?

A. Yes.

Q. When you arrived at the staging area, do you remember who was there as far as EMS officers, personnel?

A. The last known must have been -- it was a Captain or somebody of ours had a vehicle over here between Albany and Carlyle. There was someone in that vicinity that I recall passing one of my bosses. Otherwise it was strictly Fire Department personnel, fire trucks just waving me in. I had got waved in, I remember I passed this bridge here and I was coming in on this side and then I made this turn, right here was the turn where I made and I parked it right here because I was on that side.

Q. You turned around the barriers, the Jersey barriers?

A. Yes.

Q. By the Marriott and then parked on the east side of West Side Highway so you came up this side on the west side.

A. That's when I got waved to turn.

Q. Turn around.

A. Like I said as soon as I stepped off the ambulance I mean I was just -- I felt like I was in Beirut. All I saw was debris and body parts. I recall a little girl's foot. It was like a pink sneaker. It was tiny, around the age of seven, eight or so, because I have a daughter that size. I mean I just saw so many body parts, it was unbelievable.

Then I look up and see people jumping. Really bugged me out, because I couldn't even watch them land. It was just -- I just couldn't understand jumping. I mean I just couldn't fathom it. I would rather take my chances and ride it out. But these people were like I would rather jump than get burned. That's how I thought of it afterwards. I don't know what else to say.

Q. Anything else you would like to add, opinions or --

A. My opinion was that staging was way too close. I got waved all the way into the front. Where it was unnecessary that personally there was nothing I could do to help anybody from what I saw you know, as far as -- evacuation yes, but that's not my job. So I mean I still assisted in that sense. I just had to act. I couldn't watch these people jump off any more.

I had to do something. That's when I went to the foot of the Marriott entrance and just assisted the first lady I could help. They were all leading them to the Hatzolah. There was a line of like Hatzolah ambulances I recall, at least 4 or 5, and we were helping them.

Q. Okay --

A. That was actually on this side where like two, it was over there.

Q. On the west side?

A. Yes, that's where --

Q. The Hatzolah?

A. Yes, they were faced with their ambulances backed up right there.

Q. Right.

A. So then we had to go -- it was actually by the turn, that's how I remember too. It was by the turn, where I did my turn was across there. We had started walking up over here, me and my partner, I guess we were like right on this corner here.

Q. On Liberty and Washington?

A. Yes, and that's when I saw somebody jump on this side of this 2 World Trade Center on the top on this corner. I saw a man take a leap. I mean I have done a lot of jumpers down, but this one was live in

your face. I must have stopped watching when he got to around the 30th floor. I just put my head down and said lord take care of me and I reacted. That's when my rookie partner, and there was two other medics from Boston that showed up. Joe Jefferson and I forgot his partner, but I heard his partner fractured his shoulder and it was just one bad day.

It was such a beautiful day. Nobody expected this. I had a funny feeling in my gut that once those planes had hit, that the World Trade Center was going to collapse. I had a feeling it was coming down. I just didn't think so quick. It was within minutes.

Q. One last thing. The last time that you saw your partner, he was --

A. He was at the ambulance.

Q. Just prior to the first collapse?

A. Yes, yes. He was getting a long board, he was like what should I do? I said I -- it's like telling a husband and I'm helping his wife give birth like, he don't know --

Q. Go boil the water.

A. I just said go get a long board. That's what he was doing. Basically after the first collapse and I look back to where my ambulance was parked, it was no

longer there. It was gone. I couldn't even see it. It was obliterated. Thank God it was one of the spare vehicles. That's what -- everybody at -- like the bosses, said ah, it's a spare.

I got to thank the New Jersey harbor police. I mean they -- he did a hell of a job getting out of that situation blindly during the second collapse. He got it backed up, did a little bump, hit the wall and then swung it right out. I mean blindly, because you couldn't see anything. The soot was hitting us already from the second collapse. Just covered the boat. Fortunately we made it out of there.

I remember on the boat at that moment, though, I had to grab a fireman on the long board down the stairs. I just hope I didn't hurt him any further, but I just reacted so quickly.

Q. You pulled him down into the cabin of the boat?

A. Yes, he was on the deck and I pulled him down. There was a little bump.

Q. Right.

A. You know, otherwise he would have died of respiratory distress, because he couldn't move. He was definitely temporarily paralyzed from the legs down.

The Jersey City harbor guy didn't realize when he drove in, he tied it up, so during that moment in a split second, I mean this guy did it like a real naval seaman, he spun it and we got out of there.

Him and his partner were frantic. You could see the panic in him when we couldn't see anything in the harbor. All the dust was just covering our faces. My shirt was already gone, because I couldn't even breathe no more from the first collapse. I took it off. Just took my shirt off. It was -- couldn't do nothing for me any more.

I remember I went into the bathroom after I helped the fireman down. I went into the little bathroom cabin and it got full, full of smoke and the soot and what was on my mind then was I just thought, just prayed to God this wasn't chemical warfare also.

When I got to Jersey, like I said, I was throwing up black soot, chunks, chunks. The firemen hosed me down. By then I practically just had my pants tucked in my boots. Oh, man. I don't know what else to say.

Everybody at Day Tech was great. I mean they were there. They had tons of water, food, whatever you wanted. I was just devastated sitting there, watching

you know, it just burn, dying. It was 10 o'clock in the morning and I was on the Jersey side and we're right there watching it burn, I just couldn't believe it.

Sat there for about two hours in shock till a guy came over to me and he don't know me, didn't -- you know, just gave me a hug. It was really a touching moment. He gave me a hug. I didn't expect. Just a lot of support on that side. Then we saw the F 16s coming and fly overhead and stuff like that. Then the Jersey City harbor police did a phenomenal job. Back and forth and we were assisting -- I was helping assist them.

We were all walking people also from -- as soon as they landed from the harbor patrol pier -- the plane, one piece there, helping people get off the boat until about 12:30, when a lady from the hospital came up to me and said you are crazy, you got to go to the hospital already. She said I seen you down here since you got here. You just don't stop. I said all right. I was like you know, I guess my adrenaline was wearing down now.

I finally went to the hospital and I saw Captain DeShore a few hours after and she had a burnt

cornea, something was wrong. We just happened to see each other in line. I mean even at the hospital they were excellent. They treated us like we were -- any complaint. Each one by one, a specialist came over.

It was just one crazy day. I mean I kind of say it's all in a day's work, but that you will never forget. This is a time line in history.

Q. Yes.

A. We all have to endure.

Q. One last question. When you were on the Jersey side, aside from the people that you went over with, after that, the subsequent trips by Jersey harbor, do you remember anybody else from EMS or the Fire Department being brought over before you went to the hospital yourself?

A. Actually no. I don't recall seeing anybody that I particularly knew from EMS. The rest of it was none of our guys. It was other civilians from the area you know, the financial area, and some civilians made it. They were over by the water. After, it just kept going. It kept going back and forth. It was the only way to get out of there. I mean if I could have I would have swam right up the Hudson all the way to Co-op City where I live. I wanted to go home, but I

got to say, what's this guy's name, from the Police Department, New Jersey, what do you call it, the chaplain, he arranged a charter bus for us to get home, me and Captain DeShore. We dropped off people throughout the boroughs, going back once. This was late at night already.

Then you know, we got a police escort. They were really good. I just thank God again for me living. It was a tremendous tragedy. That's about it Paul.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: All right, thank you. Time is now 0916. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110204

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-D CHRISTOPHER ATTANASIO

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 8, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0631 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Christopher Attanasio, EMT-D, 5303, Battalion 20, Division 2.

Q. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Christopher, start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We signed on to the KDT approximately about 8:30. At approximately 8:48 or 8:50, the dispatcher came up and said I need whoever wants to go to the World Trade Center, I have something going on. Just switch to Citywide. So my partner and myself switched to Citywide with vehicle 85 and proceeded to go down to the World Trade Center.

We took the FDR Drive south. There was a lot of traffic on the drive going south. We decided to get off on 96 Street, which would cut across to 2nd Avenue and we took 2nd Avenue all the way down.

Upon arrival, towers one and two were both ablaze. The second plane had hit the second tower already. Both towers were totally engulfed. People

were jumping out of the buildings. There was airplane fuselage and landing gear around the site. Body parts, victims' remains on the floor. There were some injuries on the street. Some cars were on fire.

I pulled over. I was directed to stage at Liberty and West, where I saw Captain DeShore, Chief Villani, my partner Roland Diaz, 03 John, Joey Fortez, and Mike Negron. Different agencies, voluntary agencies, ESU, Fire Department, Customs, Secret Service, Port Authority people, Hatzolah, and we were staging and Chief Villani had told us to get our equipment out of the vehicle because they were going to go into the first tower that was hit, because they were getting reports of casualties.

So we proceeded to the ambulance, put on our turnout gear, helmet and turnout coat, and as we were taking the equipment out of the ambulance, the second tower -- the second tower, started to come down. As the tower was coming down, we ran. I ran, I guess it was west to the West Side Highway. The tower came down. I grabbed my partner, we ran.

When the tower finally came down, there was a white cloud of smoke that hit us, knocked us to our feet. It was very hard to breathe. We inhaled a lot

of white powder, whatever it was, dust, concrete, whatever it was.

After the building fell, I remember seeing Chief Pascale, her aide, her name is Immaculada, Gattas is her last name. I remember running with her. Total chaos from the scene. An ESU guy coming out covered from feet, head to toe, bleeding from his head. We treated him. People started just -- we were able to -- after the building fell we went back and rescued our ambulance. Vehicle 85, which had been struck with pieces of the building, had a broken left mirror, broken windshield, debris on it. We cleared it off.

We went back to where they were staging by Battery City and we went back, I went back to the tower that had come down, but a gentleman from OEM, who is a black male, that's all I remember, a very big black male, he had told us that his boss was in the building. We proceeded to go back to the tower that was already down and when we pulled up, we saw burnt vehicles, fire balls, smoke, debris, dust, bodies.

When we went in front of the tower, I remember a Chief saying on his bull horn, all Fire Department personnel, abandon your vehicles. I looked up, tower one was still burning, but tower two was

already down. I told my partner Roland Diaz, and I had another paramedic in the back, Darnowski, Steve Darnowski, was in the back of vehicle 85. As we looked around, we saw nobody. It was a ghost town, everybody had left.

I put the vehicle in reverse, people started coming out of the woodwork. We had an injured firemen, we had a lady, a guy having a heart attack. We had another fireman with an avulsed face. We had some paraplegic lady that they had carried down, all the way down, and they left her on the street, but she wasn't injured. She just needed transportation out of the site.

We had a total of 13 patients in the back of the ambulance, ranging from cuts and burns and scrapes and bruises, to some lady having -- she was having an MI, blunt trauma, a lot of people with difficulty breathing, so we notified the dispatcher. I was 3 Ida that day, that we had injuries in front of tower two and asked for direction on what hospital to go to.

The dispatcher came back and replied take your patients to Columbia Presbyterian. I acknowledged and as I was leaving the site I picked up a rider, some gentleman that just wanted to get out of this. I put

him in the front of the bus. As we are going up the highway, as we are going up 9 West or whatever you want to call it, the patient's condition started getting worse in the back, the fireman, he was really bleeding now, so we diverted him over to hospital 19, which is St. Clare's.

When we got there, we were met by several EMTs, who took very good care of us and took all the patients out. We restocked the bus and went back down to Ground Zero. We just went past Chelsea Piers. We had gotten a couple of more patients and took them to Beekman Hospital. Same thing, cuts, bruises, scrapes, respiratory problems.

After coming out of Beekman Hospital, we reported to the Chelsea Piers. Basically that's the best of my knowledge that I can remember.

Q. Okay. When you got down, coming down Second Avenue, when you got into the neighborhood of the Trade Center complex, do you remember what route you took to get to Liberty and West?

A. Right. I definitely went right by City Hall, right where J and R Records is, and I cut across. I was following another EMS ambulance who knew Manhattan, because he was zipping in and out, so I was just

following him. I was directed when I came, I came all the way around, and I cut this way.

Q. Again, down Church and Liberty?

A. Church, and I guess I'm making a right on Liberty, and these are where the busses were, on this side.

Q. Liberty and Washington roughly and the West Side Highway?

A. Right, right.

Q. Do you remember what the number on the vehicle you were following by any chance?

A. No, I don't.

Q. There wasn't anybody following --

A. FDNY.

Q. But it wasn't from Battalion 20?

A. Negative.

Q. When you got to Liberty and West, you said you saw Captain DeShore. Chief Villani was down here?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. At the site?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Do you remember seeing any other EMS personnel or officers down there?

A. Officers, no.

Q. Any fire personnel, Fire Department personnel that you recognized?

A. Joe Truocolla, he works 18 Charlie, tour 2. He got injured, I think he works out of Boston. 22. I'm not sure. Who else did I see down there. I can't remember.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't remember. I don't remember. Just my partner Roland Diaz, Joey Fortez I remember seeing. Mike Negron. Chief Pascale. Oh, Steve Pillar. I saw Steve Pillar too.

Q. He is the ALS coordinator?

A. Coordinator for Division 6.

Q. Okay. When tower number two started coming down, you said you ran west across the West Side Highway?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where you wound up in that area?

A. It was right before Battery City. It was right -- let's see -- I ran this way. We ran all the way. I couldn't tell you. I don't remember. I just -- it was -- I couldn't recognize anything, the wave of white. I couldn't see. I don't remember.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't remember.

Q. No problem. You said you had come back after the dust settled a little bit?

A. We went back to get the ambulance.

Q. To get your vehicle?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where you moved the vehicle to at that point?

A. The vehicles were staged on Liberty, so we went to West Street, where I picked up that gentleman I told you. We went back, because he said, he worked for OEM. I remember that much. I remember that. We went back and I don't, you know --

Q. You got out somewhere on to West Street, West Side Highway and then --

A. After getting the vehicles and going back to the downed tower and coming back I had proceeded north on West Street, on the West Side Highway. I know that's how I got to the hospital.

Q. Okay. Do you remember approximately when you came out of St. Clare's the first trip?

A. What time?

Q. Do you remember approximately or do you know

at that point had the second tower --

A. Had fallen.

Q. Tower one had come down?

A. Tower one? To what I believe, I believe that while I was in the hospital, that's when the second tower fell. I wasn't there for the second tower. I had already picked up injuries from tower two, which was the first tower that fell. That's how I would have to believe it. Because I never saw the second tower fall. I never saw it. I only saw the first tower fall.

Q. When you came back from St. Clare's back down to the site, did you come down the West Side Highway?

A. I went all the way down the West Side Highway and I made a left. I just cut across and I was just following some emergency vehicles. I think it was ESU or Port Authority ESU, and I just went back and we just picked up some more patients. There were just patients everywhere.

Q. Do you remember where in the area you got to?

A. I think it was down as close as maybe Church and Rector, if that's possible. Maybe. We just -- we were getting flagged down by people and we were just piling them in the ambulance. There was no -- we

weren't told. We were just coming back. As we were coming back down, I think I made a left and cut across somewhere, and we just started getting flagged by people walking that were covered in debris during the towers.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. Thoughts and comments? No, I was just -- I just -- you know. I have been through a lot of stuff in my own personal life, but I never seen anything like that. I am a Persian Gulf War veteran and I have never seen anything like this before in my life, and I still to this day can't believe it. I just can't believe it, that it happened. Basically that's all.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 0644 hours. The interview is concluded. Thank you Chris. Point of correction. This interview is conducted November 9, Friday. The time is correct.

File No. 9110205

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN MICHAEL DONOVAN

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is November 9th, 2001. The time is 1350 hours. I'm George Cundari working with --

MS. QUEVEDO: Fabiola Quevedo.

MR. CUNDARI: -- from the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

CAPTAIN DONOVAN: Captain Michael Donovan. I'm presently assigned to Division 14. At the time of the incident, I was a lieutenant, Engine Company 290, assigned to operations.

Q. Captain, can you just tell us the events that happened going to that tragic day of September 11?

A. Yeah. On that morning I was assigned to operations. I was on the seventh floor of headquarters. We were writing a bulletin on accident prevention and apparatus accident prevention.

At the time that the first plane hit, we were in an office on the seventh floor.

Another lieutenant came in and said that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. So that would be at 8:48. We went to look out a window, and as we were walking one way down the hallway on the seventh floor, Chief of Department Ganci, Chief of Operations Nigro and Staff Chief Cassano were walking the other way. They were heading to their cars to respond to the World Trade Center.

They grabbed a couple of the officers, myself and Captain John Sudnik, and told them to come with the command staff and be assigned to the command post. They were looking for help in the way of aides, administrative aides.

We took the elevator down to the basement garage. We got into Chief Nigro's car, John Sudnik and I, along with Chief Nigro's driver. I think his name was Adam. We got in the car.

Quickly we were on the Brooklyn Bridge, left Metrotech down on the Brooklyn Bridge. We could see the north tower on fire. The wind appeared to be blowing south and west, blowing the wind eastward and north. It looked to me eight ten floors of fire, heavy black smoke. We

tried to size up the building on the way across the bridge as to how you would approach this fire.

We came over the Brooklyn Bridge, down Park Row, made the turn onto Fulton Street, and then we parked on the corner of Church and Dey, I believe. I'm not completely sure on this. I have memory blanks. But we were on Church Street, either Dey or Courtlandt.

We parked on the corner. I asked the driver if he had -- being we were responding from headquarters, I had no firefighting gear. They went into the truck. I was hoping they had a spare set of gear. My only real thought was to get into the building one way or another, because I didn't want to be stuck at the command post. They had no gear.

We started to walk down Church Street in the direction of Liberty. We were at the corner of Liberty and Church just below Four World Trade Center when the second plane hit.

Q. So you saw the second plane coming in?

A. We heard the second plane. We couldn't see it because it was blocked by the buildings.

We were actually still on Church Street. We heard the plane briefly, the earth shook, the buildings shook, a tremendous fireball overhead. I thought there was a bomb or an explosion. A tremendous fireball, flaming debris, pieces of the airplane, fuselage, landing gear, pieces of the building.

People started running. We started running down one of the streets.

Q. You're still with Chief Nigro at this time?

A. No. Chief Nigro was in Chief Ganci's car. Captain Sudnik, myself and Chief Nigro's driver. We started running down one of the little side streets, Courtlandt or Dey. There were people dead in the street that obviously you couldn't help them. There was flaming debris coming down all over. It was just a matter of who got hit with the debris.

I made my way to Broadway, came back around the block. I knew I had to get to the command post. I knew I had to get firefighting gear. When I got back to Church Street, instead of heading to the south and across Liberty to

West Street -- at that point we knew the post was being set up over on West Street. So rather than go south around the Trade Center complex, I went north up to Vesey Street.

On the way around, I saw a bunch of rigs hooked up to stand pipes. At the time they appeared to be abandoned. I didn't see chauffeurs, at least two rigs. I was able to get different gear. I was able to get bunker pants. I was able to get a mask. I managed to get a bunker coat at some point.

Q. Did you have a radio?

A. I got a radio a little later on. I got a CO meter, carbon monoxide meter.

When I got I believe over to the corner of West and Vesey, I saw a chauffeur. I think it was Engine 21, but I really don't remember. The rig was on the corner of West and Vesey. I told him I needed gear. He gave me some of his gear, with the idea that I would return it later on.

I saw a high rise unit, a Field Comm. unit, whatever it was. I was able to get a radio from there. So by the time I got to the command post -- I went under the pedestrian bridge, the

north walkway bridge. At that point I had a full set of gear, a carbon monoxide detector, a radio and a mask.

I reported into the command post and asked to be put to work. At this point both buildings were burning. They were setting up a command post. Chief Ganci was there. I saw Chief Downey. I'm trying to think. At one point I saw I believe the Fire Commissioner.

Q. Was this the command post by the Winter Garden?

A. It was by the Winter Garden, right.

The command post was set up. There was underground parking garage, and there were two ramps leading down to the parking garage. There was a guard booth in front of the parking garage. The command post was set up in those ramps, in that area, directly in front of the entrances to the two parking garages.

Companies were starting to respond in. I remember seeing Eddie Geraghty, Chief Geraghty. I remember seeing a lot of other people. I asked to be put to work. I wanted to go in. Basically Chief Ganci told me he had other jobs for me.

Chief Cassano gave me a job to do. Chief Cassano was the first one -- and this was early in the operation. He said: "Mike, if these buildings come down, we're in a terrible spot. We're right under these buildings." He said: "What we've got to do is get one of these buildings, one of the World Financial Center buildings, open." He said: "Find me a building with a large lobby and a view of the World Trade Center, but we've got to move this command post." That was early on. That was one of the first jobs they gave me to do.

I found some building personnel. On the facade of the building it said Deloitte & Touche. I don't know which building that was. I kind of think it was Two World Trade Center, but I'm not sure. It said Deloitte & Touche on the face of the building.

I got a guard. It took some time for the guard to go around with the keys and open the lobby. In the meantime the jumpers started jumping. Companies were responding in. Finally the building personnel came around, opened the doors.

I went back to Chief Cassano and said: "Chief, I have a building. I have a building for you." Chief Cassano said: "Great. We're moving the command post."

We went over and spoke to Chief Ganci, who was heavily engaged in deploying men. Chief Ganci looked around. He saw that there were companies in the process of staging. He had, I would say, between 30 to 50, maybe 60 men there.

John Sudnik was organizing the engines in groups right in front of the parking garage entrance, trucks on the other ramp in front of the parking garage entrance.

Q. These are all face-to-face communications you're having?

A. Yeah. I talked to Chief Cassano. Chief Cassano went over and speak to Chief Ganci directly. Chief Ganci saw that there was no way we were going to be able to move the command post. There were just too many people. It just simply wasn't going to happen. He turned to Chief Cassano and said: "No, we're not going to be able to do this."

Chief Cassano turned to me and kind of

shrugged like it was a good idea and it was something we should have done, but it just wasn't going to happen.

With that I looked for another job to do. I ran into a man who was in charge of all the building systems in the World Trade Center, and he was in the staging area, the command post area, with us.

He made the points to me that -- he was in a green shirt, fifty-ish. He made the points that if we were going to make an attack on this fire to actually fight the fire, there were certain building systems that had to be controlled.

He said that the high-pressure steam system would have to be shut down. That was at B6, basement level six or basement level two. He also said that we would have to do something with the eight track systems. He said he was capable of doing that from the basement of the World Trade Center.

I offered to do that job with him, to go into the basement with the radio, shut down the building systems. Somehow we got lost in the

shuffle on that as far as -- that never happened.

With that I'm still trying to get into the building.

Q. You're still at the command post?

A. I'm still at the command post. I'm trying to get into the buildings, but I don't have a company with me.

I saw my friend Timmy Stackpole. I worked with Timmy for five years in 290 and 103. Timmy was driving with Dennis Cross, a chief from the Bedford Stuyvesant section. I asked Tim if he was going into the buildings. He said yes. Chief Cross was getting his orders. He was over at the command post. He said: "Mike, that's fine with me, just go ask Chief Cross, just let Chief Cross know."

I went over to Chief Cross, and he said: "I'd like to have you come with me," but he would have the nozzle if we went in. He made a little joke. With that he said: "Come on, we're going." He had just gotten his orders. He never really got to tell me what his orders were. I think later on I found out that he was going to Two World Trade Center, the south tower.

So with that we started walking off, and Chief Ganci called me back and said: "Mike, don't go with them. I have another job for you." And off Dennis Cross and Captain Stackpole went. Unfortunately they went to their deaths.

Chief Ganci gave me the job of monitoring all the radio transmissions in the south tower. Because the operation was so big, he needed people to listen. So he had me take my radio, go to Channel 3 and monitor all radio transmissions.

Q. Were you able to hear the transmissions on the radio at that time?

A. Briefly. I say only briefly because I had to get a list of all the companies operating in the south tower, and then I had to start writing down all the critical information, responding to when they called the command post.

That gives us automatic time frame thing, because I only did that for about two minutes when the south tower started to collapse. So I was standing at the guard booth in front of the parking garage monitoring radio transmissions.

Q. You were around the Winter Garden or Two World Trade Center?

A. Right, just south of the pedestrian bridge where the ramps for the parking garage is under the buildings. Whether it was the Winter Garden, Two World Trade Center, I'm not sure what building.

Q. Who was with you at that point?

A. At that point John Sudnik was there, Chief Cassano, Steve Mosiello, Chief Ganci and all the companies that were staging, all the companies that were lining up to go to work.

Anyway, with that I was listening, and there was an incredibly loud rumbling. I never got to look up. People started running for the entrances to the parking garages. They started running for the entrances. I started running without ever looking up.

The roar became tremendous. I fell on the way to the parking garages. Debris was starting to fall all around me. I got up, I got into the parking garages, was knocked down by the percussion. I thought there had been an explosion or a bomb that they had blown up there.

The Vista International Hotel was my first impression, that they had blown it up. I never got to see the World Trade Center coming down.

I got into the garage, knocked down, buried by the debris, buried in the dust, laying there in the parking garage about 40 feet in and just waiting for the roof of the parking garage to collapse on top of me.

I would say there were about 40 or 50 people in there with us, because all the people that were staging were there. After a minute or two, we all started to get up. We dug ourselves out of the dust and the debris. We thought we were buried alive in there because there was no light. There was no visibility. We thought that the entrances had been sealed and that we were buried alive.

Somebody said these are parking garages under a building. So we came to the conclusion that there had to be a stairway out, that there had to be an escape there. So we started searching for that. I called for a set of tools in case we found doors that had to be forced open.

Q. You still couldn't see down there; right?

A. You couldn't see anything. You could just barely make out a flashlight from about two feet away.

Somebody found a hallway. The hallway led to a staircase. The hallway was lit. Guys were fumbling around. This is all the staff chiefs and everything and all the companies staging, fumbling around all parts of the garage.

I had the mask, I had the CO meter, so I was able to take hits from the mask. I could see that the CO readings were relatively low. They were only 34 parts per million. I decided I would stay there and lead as many people out as long as I could stand it rather than have them bumping around in the dark and the dust. So I had the advantage of having a mask and CO meter. I led out I would say 20 or 30 people.

Q. So you were communicating with the people in the garage?

A. I was yelling in: "I have a way out. This is the way out." I would say 20 or 30 people came by me.

When I thought we had gotten everybody out, I went up the stairs. Somehow we ended up on Vesey Street. I don't know how that quite worked out. We were on the corner of Vesey and West. I headed back to where the command post had been under the pedestrian north walkway bridge. It was still standing at that time.

I went back to where the command post was to find a deserted stage and all the debris. I could see that the parking garage entrances hadn't been completely sealed. It was just that the dust was so thick. We could have walked out the way we walked in. It was so dark that you thought you couldn't go out that way.

I got back. Nobody was there. It was in complete disarray. There was no command board. There was really nothing there.

Shortly thereafter Steve Mosiello, who was Chief Ganci's executive assistant, came to me and said they couldn't find Pete. They couldn't find Chief Ganci, and they had to go back in the parking garage to look for him.

So I started back in the parking garage to look for Chief Ganci. He was on his way out

as I was coming in. Chief Ganci was on his way out. He was very disoriented. I brought him over to Steve Mosiello.

Chief Ganci made a remark that we had to move the command post north and we're in a bad place because that was the south tower that came down. After the north tower came down, we were almost directly under it.

Q. So you knew the south tower came down? You knew it collapsed?

A. No, you couldn't see it. I thought the Millennium Hotel had been blown up. In fact, it took me a long time before I could accept the fact that even after you could see that the tower wasn't there you said it had to be there somewhere. You couldn't believe that it had come down.

So Chief Ganci made the remark we're moving the command post north. Almost immediately everybody that had come back to that place had started north to West and Vesey. When we got to West and Vesey, there was a tall blonde hair -- I believe was a chief. I don't know who he was. He said we were re-forming down by the

river. We were going to re-form -- we were going to walk west on Vesey Street and regroup by the river.

Q. North End Street?

A. Yes.

Q. North End and you go to the river there.

A. With that we started walking down towards the river. When we got all the way down to the end of Vesey Street, there was really nobody there. There were none of the command chiefs there.

We turned around, started walking back, got about halfway between West Street and North End. So it was between three and four. That's when the north tower came down.

Q. Who was with you at that point?

A. At that point I think there was Jimmy McMahon -- he was a captain also -- and John Sudnik, but basically we were straggling along.

Again, I was able to duck into a doorway. The dust cloud, the debris, came past us.

Q. Is that the same thing, the rumbling?

A. Yeah, the whole thing.

Then after that, after it settled a little bit, I made my way back. I was trying to go back to where the command post had been. When I got back to West Street, I saw that the devastation was incredible. The north pedestrian bridge, the north walkway bridge, was down. There was a tremendous amount of debris on West Street. You couldn't even make out that West Street was a street.

The strangest thing was that area south of Vesey Street between the pedestrian bridge and Vesey Street, that area was completely deserted. There was heavy dust in the area. It was like after a blizzard when there's nobody out and everything is very quiet and you can't really see. The visibility isn't good.

Q. You really didn't see any civilians going by?

A. There was nobody. There was nobody. It was like Hiroshima after the bomb, not that I know what Hiroshima was, but just a eerie stillness. There was nobody. I said I have to start searching this area.

I saw one guy from 41 Engine, and he said we have to start searching this area. He was as disoriented as I was. The two of us, we went into what I believe was Three World Financial Center. All the windows were broken. We went in and we started searching in there. We didn't find anyone.

Then he went off one way, and I continued searching the street area on West Street from just south of Vesey to the pedestrian bridge. I searched there for, I would say, 20 minutes to half an hour, and I didn't see anyone. I found a lot of masks and equipment all laying on the ground. Rigs were buried; rigs were destroyed. Cars were on fire. Buildings were on fire.

I searched there by myself for about 20 minutes, half hour. Then a couple cops started showing up, and then a couple of photographers started showing up.

Q. Were you able to do any radio transmissions or was any radio transmissioning you or did you hear anything on the radio?

A. No, I didn't. I really didn't. I

think something happened on my way there because it never worked properly after that. I would get certain transmissions. I had been on Channel 3. Channel 3 was the south tower. I think most of those guys were dead, the guys that were on the same channel with me. I never thought to turn it back on until later on. The radio never really worked well again after that.

I searched there for a long while. Then I saw Patty McNally show up. I saw Chief Cruthers and another chief. Chief McNally was running the operation at West and Vesey. What struck me about Chief McNally was he was the only one that seemed to really have his head on straight.

Chief Cruthers told me that they had formed another command post up on Chambers Street. At this point there were a couple of floors burning on Seven World Trade Center. Chief McNally wanted to try and put that fire out, and he was trying to coordinate with the command post up on Chambers Street. This is after searching for a while.

He had me running back and forth trying

to get companies to go into Seven World Trade Center. His radio didn't seem to be working right either because he had me relaying information back and forth and Chief Cruthers had me --

Q. So everything was face-to-face? Nothing was by radio?

A. Yeah, and it was really in disarray. It really was in complete disarray. We never really got an operation going at Seven World Trade Center.

Then at some point after that -- a bunch of things happened after that. I just can't remember what happened. I ran into people that I knew that were missing, knew that they had family in there. I saw Jimmy Boyle briefly. I saw Mike Hampton from 290 whose son was lost, Jimmy Richards. I started doing different errands like that.

Then later on I had a chief ask me -- they found Pete Ganci's body, and they had me go out in the ambulance with his body. They didn't want any photographers. Chief McCann, who might be good to talk to too, he and I guarded the ambulance so that none of these photographers

would take a picture of the chief of department's body in the ambulance. We did that for a long time because they weren't going to take him to the morgue until they had gotten Commissioner Feehan's body out. So we guarded the ambulance for a long time.

Then after that I tried stretching hose lines. I hooked up with a friend of mine from 54 Engine and tried to stretch hose into the pile so that we could protect guys that were searching the pile for survivors.

Then about 10:00 at night I went home. I had to go home and see my kids.

Q. At no time you called home or anything?

A. What happened was when I was searching this area and the photographers, I remember the cops telling the photographers they had to leave the area. I offered to escort them out of the area, with the idea that I knew they'd have a cell phone on them, the photographers.

The one photographer tried to place a call for me and couldn't get a signal out and then took my number on her arm and called from wherever later on and told my wife -- I guess

about 11 or 12:00 she told my wife I was alive. I was able to call later in the day at different points.

As bad as the destruction was here, it was ten times as bad like south of the pedestrian bridge. When they talked about ground zero, I always thought they were talking about this specific spot because this was just the absolute worst.

And that was it.

MR. CUNDARI: Any questions?

MS. QUEVEDO: No.

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for having this interview with us.

CAPTAIN DONOVAN: Okay. Good luck. Pretty overwhelming; right?

MR. CUNDARI: It's 2418. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110206

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

SUPERVISING FIRE MARSHAL ROBERT BYRNES

Interview Date: November 14, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is November 14, 2001. The time is 1320 hours. I'm George Cundari. I'm here with Murray Murad, Fire Department, City of New York. We are conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. Robert Byrnes, B-y-r-n-e-s. I'm the Supervising Fire Marshal and I'm assigned to the Bureau of Fire Investigations Special Operations Command.

Q. Sir, can you tell us the events of that tragic day of September 11th?

A. Okay. Originally I was scheduled to have a vacation day. I happened to be in the area. I am assigned a beeper from Skytel which gives information regarding the job. I got a beep in my personal vehicle that there was a plane crash into the World Trade Center.

I happened to be on I think the intersection was Bedford and Flushing. I thought that somebody was actually playing a joke because you can type individual messages in here. I said you got to be kidding me, right? I happened to look up in the sky and I saw a plume of smoke crossing I guess it would be south, away

from Manhattan.

I immediately rushed to my office. I went upstairs to the fourth floor, my offices. The phone was ringing off the hook. My boss was on the phone. He said, Bobby, can you get over here right away? We've got a plane crash.

I looked out the window. I could see the smoke blowing off the World Trade Center. Several moments later I noticed a second plane and I commented to myself, look at this nitwit, he's so close, and before I realized it, he had crashed into the side of the south tower.

At that time I ran downstairs. I grabbed some fire gear. I got a department vehicle and I responded with Mike Kane, who was my tech services guy, and Michael Starace, who is another Fire Marshal who works in my command.

We got to the location. We came over the Brooklyn Bridge and went south on the FDR. We came up West Street and we parked just outside the entrance to the Battery Tunnel. I'm not sure of the name of the street, but we pulled the car in right behind the building. From that point we started to walk up to the command post where Assistant Chief Fire Marshal McCahey

was. On the way up there I noticed parts of bodies, legs and feet with shoes on, and I realized that this was more than just a small aircraft that hit these buildings.

I checked in at the command post at that time and decided to go back to the vehicle with Fire Marshal Kane. He wanted to get a camera. I also wanted to get my blue windbreaker which identified me as a Supervising Fire Marshal. We walked back to the vehicle which was parked on West Street and whatever street is just outside the Battery Tunnel.

Q. Trinity?

A. It may be Trinity.

Q. Trinity Place?

A. Right at West and Trinity.

I grabbed my jacket. Mike Kane got the camera. We started walking back north on West Street towards the original location, which was right under this pedestrian bridge in front of the World Financial Center.

As we were walking up there, I was around between Albany and I thought it was Carlisle or Cedar. We were right in the middle of the street and I happened to be looking up at tower number two and

thinking to myself, how are they ever going to put this fire out? It's probably just going to be a rescue operation until the fire burns itself out.

As I'm looking up at the building, I hear a loud noise and I see the south side of the building collapse. I see the south upper third of the tower start to pitch in my direction. At that point I yelled to Mike Kane, Mike, it's coming down. I turned around and I ran south on West Street.

I actually ran towards the building line so that I could get adjacent to the building because I figured it would protect me from any falling debris because in my mind I thought the building was actually toppling. I didn't realize that it actually tilted and then came down straight. My perception was it was toppling southward.

Q. So you ran south you said?

A. I ran south on West, but I ran adjacent to the buildings figuring it would protect me from any falling debris that may come this direction.

Q. This is the south tower collapsing, so the first collapse?

A. Right.

I ran until I could no longer see and I had

to slow my pace down. The cloud of smoke and the debris was coming around me. There was a lot of dust. There were little pieces of debris coming down that were bouncing around me, glass, small pieces of concrete. Nothing hit me.

I don't know how far I went, but I was able to find a bus. I got into the bus and we were able to breathe in the bus because the bus had fresh air. There were several civilians in the bus. There were two or three windows that were open in the bus as well as the ceiling vents. I remember walking through the bus closing the windows and pulling down the ceiling vents. I got back to the front of the bus and the bus driver asked me, should I start the bus and try to drive away? I told him, no, don't start the bus. Let's just stay put and hope for the best.

I stayed in there until it got dark. You couldn't see. It was pretty dark in there. A few moments later it lightened up. At that point I came out of the bus and I started to walk back up on West Street. As I'm walking back on West Street I'm thinking to myself that I'm going to see the bottom two-thirds of the building still standing there. I'm thinking that just the top third came off. But you

couldn't see up because the cloud of dust was still there.

As I'm walking back up West Street, I'm seeing lots of papers. There had to be maybe several inches of debris in the street, like dust and powder, a couple little fires I saw burning, like papers and stuff burning. I hear a rumbling again. I realize that this is the other tower coming down. At this time I turn around and I make my way back down West Street. I wind up down in Battery Park, where I ran into I believe it was Dr. Prezant.

I had my Fire Marshal 800-megahertz radio. I was trying to reach out to people. There were no communications. I could hear some radio transmissions between the Fire Marshals, but for some reason I couldn't transmit. I think my battery had gone low by this point.

Myself and Dr. Prezant were down by Battery Park at this point. There were several firefighters and several other Marshals around. There was a mobile command post there. I went and I spoke to the communications worker and I asked him what's going on up there? He says, absolutely nothing, and I have no communications going on. I'm getting no feedback.

I was able to change my battery at this point in time. He had some spare batteries. I was with Dr. Prezant and he and I basically tried to get that mobile command post to move further away because we didn't know what else was going to transpire. We didn't know if there was still going to be additional attacks or anything.

There was a police -- not a scooter but one of these little I call them cop-in-a-box. Those little square boxes. It was right in the road where we were trying to get the mobile command post to move down further into Battery Park. Me and several civilians tried to lift this little cop-in-a-box out of the way and it was much heavier than we thought. We could only move it several feet and it dropped to the ground again. It was locked and the keys were locked in it. There was no police officer around.

Pretty much that's it. At this time I was able to reach out to some other Marshals and we decided to mobilize down at Battery Park and from there draw a battle plan. Pretty much that's it.

Later on we made our way up north to I believe it was Manhattan Community College and we established a command post up there.

Q. Your original command post that you went to, who was there?

A. Originally, I went to Assistant Chief McCahey, there were several Fire Marshals, I don't remember specifically who. Fire Marshal Kane and Starace were with me at that point. When I returned to the car, it was only myself and Fire Marshal Kane.

Q. And then you saw a lot of victims coming down the street?

A. Well, there were a lot of people coming down the street. I mean, when I ran, I wasn't really looking behind me. There were other people in the street, and I basically ran until I couldn't run any more or I couldn't see to run. Then I got into a bus and I was able to breathe. Actually, that helped us breathe and get some fresh air for a period of time while most of the debris came down. Fortunately, nothing large came down in that area and nothing large hit the bus.

Q. After the first collapse, did you hear firefighters around you or paramedics?

A. I was in the bus. After the first collapse, I made my way down West Street. I couldn't tell you if there were other firefighters. I was basically running

south on West Street. When I got into the bus, there were no other firefighting personnel on the bus. It was myself and maybe four or five civilians as well as the bus driver.

Q. So it was very quiet around you after the collapse?

A. Well, there were people coming down. Some people were running past the bus. Other people got on the bus. Then you couldn't see outside the bus because it got to the point where it was just really dark and you couldn't see what was going on outside, and we basically weathered the storm in there until it got brighter again.

Q. When you switched batteries to the 800 radio, was there any improvement in communications?

A. I was able to transmit at that point. If I remember, it was intermittently. There was a lot of radio traffic. People were stepping on one another. When I talk about the 800-megahertz radio, that's specifically for the BFI. That's not for the field units on that frequency.

Q. I just want to check. It was Mike Kane that was with you?

A. Yes.

Q. And who was the other Fire Marshal?

A. Mire Starace.

Q. How does Mike spell his last name?

A. S-t-a-r-a-c-e.

MR. MURAD: That's it.

MR. CUNDARI: I'd like to thank you for coming and conducting this interview with us. At this time it's 1330 hours. This is the end of the interview.

File No. 9110207

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER KERRY KELLY

Interview Date: November 15, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MS. ROM: Today's date is Thursday, November 15, 2001. The time now is 1630 hours. This is Patricia Rom of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm here to conduct a World Trade Center interview. I'm conducting the interview with the following individual: Dr. Kerry Kelly, Chief Medical Officer assigned to the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. What we'd like to do, if you can tell us when you first learned about the World Trade Center disaster and then describe the events afterwards therefrom.

A. I was at Staten Island University Hospital making rounds on my patients and I got on my beeper that an airplane had crashed into the World Trade Center. I was in the room with a lady by the name of Mrs. Murray. When I saw the beep, I thought, oh, this is going to be bad. I didn't want to frighten her, though. So I just said, oh, all right. Have a good day. I've got to go. Then her neighbor in the room said, oh, my God, a plane hit the Trade Center. And she said, oh, my goodness, my sons are firefighters. I said, oh, they'll be okay. Don't worry. They'll be fine. I said have a good day, and then I left the hospital right away and jumped into my car and headed

for Manhattan. I made great time getting in because I had the emergency lane. So I got in and through the tunnel, I would say, before 9:30 in the morning.

As I came up West Street, I went and turned left on Albany Street and I found a place to park. I was so happy that I got a place to park. So I got out of the car and I looked back, and on West Street there was this molten car there that had just been burnt and was just sitting there. I thought, oh, my goodness, this is bad. These cars are just being destroyed.

A fire captain came up to me, Captain Hank Cerasoli, and he said you've got to take care of yourself. He said there's stuff falling down here. Where's your helmet? I said I have my turnout coat, which I put on, but I can't find my helmet in the car. So he said, well, we'll go over to Ladder 10, they're right around the corner, and we'll get you a helmet. So I said okay.

So we walked up by West Street and Liberty Street, and as we walked along Liberty Street there, it was just awful. I mean, people were coming out windows and there were just body parts all over on the ground and it was just a horrible scene. You could see the smoke billowing out of the tower.

I don't think I was really aware at that point, because I hadn't checked my beeper again, that both towers were on fire and that there were two plane crashes. I only knew about the one plane crash. I didn't realize that there was more than one tower on fire. I really wasn't looking at it and I wasn't sure which tower was which.

So I went into the firehouse with him and there were civilians there who had been injured who were sitting there looking dazed. I talked to the captain there and said I've got to go to the command center. Normally my job is to take care of injured firefighters, and I would normally go to the command center to find the injured firefighters and direct where they should go or do some immediate treatment. So I said where is the command center? They said I think they're moving out of the towers.

I couldn't get through on my phone, so I tried to use the walkie-talkie part of my phone, the Nextel phone, and I was able to get ahold of Commissioner Tierney. I said to her where are you? I said I'm here at 10 and 10 and I need to find the command center. She said, well, we're leaving the tower and we're going across the street to the World

Financial Center. So I said all right. I'll meet you over there.

As we were leaving the building, and I had my helmet, we walked to the back of the firehouse. The captain said you can just go up there by the civilian bridge, and I thought, I don't want to go back on that road because I knew all the bodies were coming down and there were body parts and I thought this is too dangerous. As I came out of the back of the building, the television was on and they mentioned the Pentagon being hit, and that's when I realized that this was a terrorist attack.

So we crossed through a building and ended up on West Street again, and as we came out on West Street --

Q. "We" meaning?

A. The captain and I. The captain had stayed with me the whole time.

As we came out, some of the firefighters recognized me and they said, doc, come over here. There's a guy injured. I went over and it was Danny Suhr, and he had been hit on the head and his whole head and skull had been sort of crushed and he was bleeding profusely.

So we got him onto the ambulance and we started to do resuscitation of him. And he clearly wasn't doing very well. So I said all right, let's get the ambulance going. Just get him right to the hospital. There's nothing more we can do right here. Let's get him to the hospital. Some of the firefighters said are you going to come? I said no, I've got to go to the command center. I said a few of you go with him, but get him to the hospital.

So I got out of the ambulance and continued to cross the street, and I was crossing the street then, so I'm now on West Street between, I guess, right around Cedar street there. As I crossed West Street and came up, it's like a little grassy-type hill, I see what looks like the command center to my left with the white table with a few of the guys there, and I end up seeing a patient of mine. I said I'm looking for the command center. I said what are you doing here? He said you'd better watch out. You're going to get hurt. He said take care of yourself or whatever.

Then I could see people start to run, and the captain says come on. The building is falling. I said what building is falling? And I looked back and I could see sort of the top of the building and it looked

like there's a lot more smoke.

So we stood in the facade of 1 World Financial Center. There's like a little, tiny facade there and he pushes me in, and the two of us are like hugging each other. I pulled my helmet down and my coat up, and I just thought I was going to die. I mean, everything started coming down and it turned black and there was just this noise of everything coming down. I was pretty closed in, and the back of my left leg was, I guess, a little exposed, so I could feel stuff hitting the back of my leg. I just thought, I'm going to die. I thought this is it.

You just sort of waited to die. You think of things like Timmy Stackpole always used to say 40 and out to get out of the job, and a lot of people would leave after 20 years. I would think that's not the right attitude. You should stay. And I thought, I have 20 years. What am I doing here? Then I thought, no one even knows I'm here. This is so strange.

Then it just seemed like, as each sort of second or moment passed, I kept thinking, well, I'm not dead yet, I'm not dead yet, I'm not dead yet, and then there was silence and it finally stopped falling. But it was pitch black and there was all this stuff in the

air, and I thought, oh, now we're probably buried. This will be the final thing. You'll survive but you'll be trapped.

Then we waited a few minutes and waited a few minutes, and then it got a little bit lighter, so you could see that you could at least put your foot out. So we went out and there was a thick layer of debris. Again, it's still pitch black and the air is just thick with paper and materials and you cannot see more than a foot or two ahead of you, and we're just covered with all of the stuff.

Then the captain says we have to find Gerard and Chris. These were the two firefighters who had been with us. He said we have to find them. We have to make sure we find them. I said we still have to find the command center. So we headed off and he's calling Gerard and Chris and we're walking along. Again, it's like going through a snowstorm, and I have sandals on, so my feet are like I just can't walk in these sandals.

So as we come around Albany I said, look, I've got to --

Q. Did you see any people around at that point?

A. No. Because you could only see like a foot

or two ahead. You hear maybe some muffled sounds, but it's a really silent kind of feeling, like after a snowstorm. But you know how in a snowstorm everything is illuminated and bright? This is a snowstorm where everything is black and dark, so it made it extra dark. I mean, you would think it was the middle of the night in the middle of a blizzard, and it's still going on, because the air is just so thick with material and papers.

As we're walking, I said I've got to go to my car. I have got to get sneakers. I cannot walk in these things. So I see my car there, which is covered with stuff, and I pull open the car. The captain says we've got to find Gerard and Chris. I said don't worry. We will find Gerard and Chris, but I cannot walk in these sandals.

I have now a blue shift dress on. So I said I have just survived death. I'm just changing on the street. I've had it. So I put on shorts and a top, I put on my sneakers, and I put my coat back on and my helmet, and I said okay. I think I got rid of my pocketbook at that time. I can't even remember.

Q. Where was the last place that you saw Gerard and Chris?

A. They were just ahead of us as we started running. So they must have made it further around the side of the building.

We now see someone on the street who is injured and someone says we need help. So we take this person and we help carry him around, and there's like a parking garage on Albany. It's right off of West Street on Albany. There's a parking garage right here, I guess, right in here.

So we put this person in the garage to at least be out of the debris and everything, and he is bleeding and he's complaining about his abdomen. He's complaining about his right lower abdomen, and it looks like part of his finger has been sort of sliced off, and he's really complaining. I said we've got to get him some help because he might have some sort of an injury to his abdominal cavity, a perforation or something, so we've got to get him some help. Let's put him here until we can find some help.

Then there's another guy who comes around who is bleeding from his head. So we put him in there, too, and we said sit down, and I think we got some water. One of the guys, Mike Sheppard, takes off his shirt and he dipped that in water and we put that on

the guy's head for the bleeding, and we had the other guy lay down. We were able to find sort of a -- it wasn't a gurney exactly.

Q. Mike Sheppard came from where?

A. He just sort of came. He was there.

Q. Is he a firefighter?

A. He's a firefighter. He's a firefighter who was off duty. He came in to help out.

So we then said we needed supplies. We needed to see if we could find an ambulance to help transport this guy because I knew he had to go to the hospital. So I come out on the street again. Now, again, I'm on Albany Street.

Oh, I saw Chief Lakiotes around that time, too. I think when I was changing I ran into Chief Lakiotes. He was looking around for people.

Now, across the street I could see people coming out of like a garage underneath the World Trade Center, but I couldn't make out who they were because I could just see forms in the distance.

So we go into this office building, again, that's off of Albany to get supplies because there's a dental office there. So I go in there to see if we can get some supplies thinking they might have bandages or

something to help this guy, and the place was locked up. So we come out again onto Albany Street and we're walking.

Now we're on Albany by Washington Street and all of a sudden there's like another loud noise, and Mike Sheppard says something about the building falling and he drags me in, I mean, pulls me in to a revolving door, and a bunch of other firefighters jump in there, too. So now there's about eight us of in the lobby of this building, and you hear the whoosh of everything going by the street, and the second building has now collapsed. But, again, you don't really realize that's what it is. You just know another building has fallen.

Again, more black stuff coming down the street and visibility is bad or whatever, and we are now in the lobby and there's no electricity. So it's pitch black in the lobby and you can't see outside because everything is pitch black. So we open up a door and we find all these civilians that are like hidden away in like a stairway of the basement, and we're looking for lights or flashlights. We can't find anything. Still no supplies. So I go out again in the building and the captain is there, and he says where

were you? I was worried. I lost sight of you. I said, no, I'm okay. I said Mike here helped me.

So we're now able to go around, and now you're like so jittery because you're saying what is going to happen next? How many more things are going to fall here? We were able to get an ambulance. So we were able to go over, and I don't know if we got a gurney. What did we get? We went over and got what was almost like a coat rack on wheels. We went over and got him on that and moved him over to this ambulance. We then got this guy whose name was Kevin Shea. This is a firefighter who has been injured. I remember the name because at the last World Trade Center, one of the men who was severely injured and ended up retiring from it was Kevin Shea. The name of the gentleman or the firefighter with the scalp and head injury I can't remember at this point. But we get him on the ambulance and then we close the door of the ambulance, and now we start heading over toward the river.

As we head over to the river, it's amazing. It's like light. You can see that it's daytime and you realize that it is still a blue sky. We walk over by the river and now the police boats are coming up, and

the same ambulance that we put the guy on has turned around and is now going to unload the same people we put on, this Kevin Shea and the other guy. So now we help with the gurney and get them on the police boat to put them on.

I said where are you taking the guys? He said we're taking them over to a staging area, I think they said on Ellis Island, and I thought to myself, they're attacking our country. The next thing they're going to do is attack the Statue of Liberty. How can we send people over so near what could be the next target? But they were taking them off.

So we walked down by the river. As we walked down by the river, I came by the Brooklyn Battery area. I asked several people, I said, do you know where the command center is? Do you know where the command center is? No one knew anything and nothing was working. My radio and my phone weren't working. I had nothing on my beeper. So I didn't know what was going on.

So I go to the Brooklyn Battery, the park there, and I see Chief Nigro, who I was so happy to see, and I saw Dr. Prezant, who I was so happy to see, and I saw this Fire Marshal, a Supervising Fire

Marshal. I'm trying to think of his name. Brown hair, tall. What is his name? I remember his wife's name.

Q. Brown hair, tall.

A. McCahey.

Now, there is an operations command center there, but none of their phones are working. There's no communication now. So we said we've got to go back up to the World Trade Center area to find the command center. So we head up, a group of us.

Q. Who is with you at this point?

A. Chief Nigro, myself, Dr. Prezant. I think McCahey was with us. He had a few aides with him, Chief Nigro. And it just felt like we were the last survivors because there was like no one around. As you head back up, you've left the daylight and you're heading back up to this dark area again because it's still pitch black up there.

As we're heading our way back up, most of the other people are kind of leaving the area, the few people that you see, the civilians, and you still can't make out anyone's features. They're covered with the white and the chalky material. My eyes, everything is just burning and you're still choking and I just could not see. My eyes were so irritated.

So we get to a flower shop that's there, which is open for business like nothing has happened. It was one of those Korean grocery things and they're putting everything out like business as usual, and I'm thinking are these people crazy? So I took their hose and I'm like hosing down my face and my head just to get free of all the debris.

Now, as we walked our way up, there is a little hardware store that says phone calls and bathrooms. We said we've got to go to the bathroom and we've got to use the phone. So we went in and I was able to call my mother and say I'm okay, I'm alive. Tell my husband. Tell the kids I'm alive. Tell Dr. Prezant's wife. We gave her the number. You know, we survived, we're okay.

So then we headed back up. They now have a new command center set up right below City Hall Park on Broadway. Chief Haring is there and he is bringing the new troops in to go back into the World Trade area. There is a Duane Reade right there that we took over and made a triage center. So we were able to sort of take over that place. There was a little smashing of windows and stuff, doors. But we were able to put together supplies to set up a triage center in that

building.

Then the other medical officers showed up. Dr. Ortiz was there and Dr. Feirstein showed up and Dr. Maloney was there and Dr. Garvey was there, who are our medical officers, plus other doctors who we didn't know showed up and some nurses and all. So we were setting up equipment in the Duane Reade and the neighboring area thinking all the injured would come in.

Then someone came over and told me that Father Judge was dead and that he had been brought into the church right around the corner. I guess it's St. Paul's or St. Peter's right around the corner there. They said that he's on the alter there of the church.

So a few minutes later some of the friars from his rectory came because they want to now remove his body. I said I don't know if you should be removing it right now because he's in a safe place where he is and I don't have available gurneys because I'm expecting all these injured to come. And, of course, no one came. We didn't really get any injuries. We got a few eye irritations but really no injuries, and we're still expecting injuries to come from the field.

When you'd walk outside, you'd see faces that you knew of different firefighters who were coming in from home or other units arriving and they were pulling people together, and you were just so struck, too, by the lack of communication. In order to talk to people, they would have to send someone, you know, give them a message and say now go run over there, tell them, and then come back with the message. So it was like this primitive means of communicating. Then we heard that this Duane Reade was a problem. It was an unsafe area.

Oh, I know. We realized at this point, when we're in the Duane Reade, that this was actually the building of the UFOA, the union building. So one of the girls came down and said do you need to use a bathroom. So we went upstairs and got cleaned up a little bit and told the people who were there what had happened and then went back down.

Then we had to move because the Duane Reade, they said, wasn't safe because building 7 was really roaring. So we then found a new triage center over in Pace. We went into the Pace auditorium and took that over and set up a new triage center there. We were there most of the day and, again, there were no

injuries coming in. Very few. Eye irritations. So about 9:00 o'clock at night, maybe 10:00, we decided it was silly to keep the place open.

In the meantime, people are starting to arrive telling us about who had died. We found out about Chief Feehan dying and Chief Ganci dying, and we were starting to understand that more and more people were missing and presumed dead. So there was really the feeling of sadness. That's why we weren't getting any injuries because people were essentially dead.

Q. Did you see Chief Ganci or Chief Feehan while you were on the scene at all?

A. No. I had not seen them.

Oh, I know. I saw Steve Gregory. Commissioner Gregory was there. He helped us out in the garage. I was happy to see him because he was a familiar face, too.

It was funny. It was just, when you saw people you knew, you were so happy they were alive. There really was a sense, when you saw people, of thank God, they're alive. There was a feeling of happiness that, you know, I felt very happy to be alive.

Q. And Gerard and Chris?

A. Oh, we found them and they were fine. That

was good.

Q. Where did you find them?

A. Somewhere along that street, I believe. I know. When we were over by the river, we found them over by there, if I'm not mistaken. We were putting people on the ambulance.

The captain was one of the people who went back up with us to the command center, too. He really was great. He stayed by me, by my side, and then throughout the day he would come back and check on me to see that I was okay. He also helped out Dr. Manner. The orthopedist had come to help out and he made sure she was okay. He checked on her.

We were just so lucky to see people that we knew and that took care of us. I can't complain. I'm lucky to be here.

Q. The command center that you thought you saw when you were first on the scene, where did you say that was and what did it look like? Was there anybody that you could make out who was there?

A. Let's see. It was in front of this 1 World Financial building, and there was like a big, green fence, and it was in front of a green fence. I mean, the command center, it's like a card table sort of.

Not really. But it's a card table with a white board like that and then on the board they put the different companies that are there.

So I think Steve Gregory was at that command center, and I think he's one of the people that I saw out of the corner of my eye prior to everything falling, and he's certainly the person I saw after. Chief Lakiotes might have been at that command center, too. I don't know. But those are the two that I saw after the event. I think that was the command center for tower 2. I never found the 1 World Trade Center command center.

When you go to these events, you don't even know which World Trade Center is which. I didn't really know that the two planes had hit both buildings.

Q. You said you had a radio at some point. What was that radio you were using when you were able to get through to Commissioner Tierney?

A. Well, I have a phone. I have a Nextel phone, and one part of it is a regular phone and there's another part that's a walkie-talkie. I'm always terrible at technology, so I usually never use the walkie-talkie because I've never quite mastered it. That day I was desperate because I couldn't get the

phones to work, so I got the walkie-talkie to work. For once it worked and I got hold of Lynn Tierney and she answered back to me that she was there and where she was. So it helped me at least know to go across West Street.

But when I heard World Financial Center, again, I didn't realize there was a 1 and a 2 World Financial Center. So I was heading across the street and ended up at 1 World Financial Center, and I gather she was up by 2 World Financial Center.

Q. During your time there, did you notice where fire apparatus vehicles were or where anybody was lined up?

A. Well, I knew on West Street there were a lot of ambulances around there and I saw fire engines there, but I don't really notice those numbers too much. I just know when I saw that first car that was just molten, I thought, oh, my God, if something happens to this car, I am in big trouble. This was a brand-new Department car and I kept thinking they're going to kill me if something happens to this car.

Q. This car you saw was a private vehicle, the car?

A. You couldn't tell.

Q. You couldn't tell?

A. You absolutely couldn't tell. But it was sort of like that was the first sign that this was not an ordinary day. When you look across and see this car and your mind goes from great parking spot to, oh, my goodness.

Then I think seeing the bodies and seeing people coming out of the buildings, that was really one of the worst parts, at least visual-wise, that was one of the worst parts of the day. Then the feeling that you were going to die was a terrible part of the day. But then once that had happened, everything was so covered over that you really couldn't see anything after that. Your vision was so limited. It really was like a winter snowstorm. That's how it felt. It was as though all the weather and all the summer, everything was shut off, and it was suddenly a snowstorm blanketing all of Manhattan, only a black snowstorm. It really was.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to include as part of this interview?

A. No.

Q. I think you summed it up.

A. I probably did more talking than I should

have.

MS. ROM: All right, then. I'd like to thank you for your time.

THE WITNESS: Thank you. This is wonderful.

MS. ROM: Thank you for taking the time to do this. I'm going to conclude this interview. The time is now 1700 hours. It's still Thursday, November 15, 2001.

File No. 9110208

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF STEPHEN KING

Interview Date: November 21, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. McCOURT: The date is November 21st, 2001. The time is 1142 hours. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. I am with --

MR. MURAD: Murray Murad with the New York City Fire Department.

MR. McCOURT: We're conducting an interview with --

Q. Give your name and rank, sir.

A. Battalion Chief Stephen King.

Q. What command are you with?

A. I'm with the Safety Battalion.

Q. Chief King, could you describe the events that took place on September 11th, 2001?

A. Okay. On September 11th, I was the Safety Chief on duty. I respond to all second or greater alarms for the entire city. I came into work about 7:00 o'clock that morning, and I was with the off-going Battalion Chief. We were in the kitchen having coffee.

Q. Do you remember who that was?

A. Yes. It was Battalion Chief Brian O'Flaherty. We came back around into the office. I work out of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. We respond out of the Marine Division building of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When we walked back into the office, we have a

picture window that looks right out on lower Manhattan. Chief O'Flaherty walked in the office first. I was right behind him. As soon as he walked in the office, he said, "Oh, my God, look at that." We saw the building was on fire, the Trade Center building. The north tower was on fire. I didn't know what caused it.

I was the Chief on duty. The second I saw it, I turned around to my aide, who was right behind me, Bobby Crawford, who is missing in the building, and I said to him, "Let's get going, Bobby." Normally we would wait for a ticket to respond like any line unit. I certainly knew that I'd be rolling in on that, so I didn't even wait for a ticket to respond. I told him let's just get in the car and get down there.

So we immediately went down to the car and proceeded to the site. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge. We were in there very rapidly, well before the plane hit the second tower.

When we pulled up to the scene, there was an awful lot of debris coming down from the north tower.

Q. Do you remember how far in you got, where you were parked?

A. Well, you know what? I don't know what

street we came in on. We got fairly close to the building. We were pretty close in. We stopped the car. There was so much coming down that it was falling around the car. There were some jumpers. There was a lot of debris coming down. We responded and we were not dressed in fire gear yet. We would normally get out of the car and put our gear on at the rear of the car. I was concerned that we could get struck in the street.

So I saw a building off to the side that had a construction shed around it, a sidewalk construction shed, and I had told the aide, Bobby Crawford, I said, "Bobby, pull the car over there so we can get out and get under the shed while we get dressed." So we pulled the car over to where the shed was and we got out and got dressed under the protection of that shed. There was, again, a lot of debris coming down. There were jumpers hitting the street. I literally had quite a concern that you could get struck just trying to run from where we were into the building, which I would say was about 100 feet away.

Q. Do you have any idea what street you were on?

A. You know what? I don't. I wasn't paying attention. Unfortunately, there was so much going on

with radio communications on the mobile radio that I was trying to take in and looking at the building that it was kind of overwhelming. I didn't pay an awful lot of attention to which street we were on when we pulled in.

Q. Were you aware of what happened, what the circumstances were?

A. No. I did not know.

Q. They didn't come over the radio with what had happened?

A. No. I've been tossing and turning with this for a long time. I don't believe that it was clear to me that it was an airplane at all. I certainly could see that I had a major event. I mean, it looked to me like there was fire on eight to twelve floors. I know in my own mind I thought it was some sort of an explosion, that to get something going that rapidly, you know, to cover that many floors, something dramatic had happened. But I don't believe I understood at that point that it was a plane crash.

We ran into the lobby. Literally, you had an impending feeling that it was not going to be a good day. As a matter of fact, I think I said to Bobby on the way in something to that effect. I said, "Bobby,

this is not going to be a good day." There was just so much happening. You could see right away that the magnitude of this event, though I never expected that a tower might collapse --

Q. You never thought that?

A. No, I don't think I ever thought that. I know I didn't think that, not understanding that it was an airliner full of fuel. It was so much easier watching on TV later and people telling there were so many thousands of gallons of fuel, et cetera. When you hear all of that, you can start saying to yourself this building could fail. But, no, I don't believe I ever thought about that. I knew I had a very serious fire and I wasn't anticipating building failure at that point at all.

Anyway, so we got into the lobby, and when I got there I saw Deputy Chief Hayden and I had seen Chief Callan. I don't remember if I saw him right away or when I came back to the command post. But I checked in with Chief Hayden and there was an awful lot going on. It was obviously extremely busy. The handie-talkies were almost overwhelmed with the amount of transmissions going on.

Q. Was there radio communication; it was working

at the time?

A. Yes, there was radio communication, handie-talkie communication. It was working. I asked Chief Hayden if we were using a command channel and he said we were using a command channel and I switched over to the command channel. I asked him what he wanted me to do.

Chief Hayden and I go back a long way. He was a Chief of Safety immediately before me, so we've worked together, and he knows a Safety Chief's job inherently because, like I say, he was Chief of safety for a couple of years.

He said, "Do me a favor, Steve. Just check out if we have any elevators that might be usable. Check out the stairwells. Just give me an idea what's going on." I said, "Okay."

I left with my aide. We walked around the lobby trying to get an idea if there were any elevators. There were no elevators. We just wanted to see if maybe something looked like it might be able to be put back in service somehow. We looked around at the elevator banks. Nothing was in use. We went around to the escalators. This is in the north tower. We went to the escalators. They weren't functioning.

We walked up to the promenade level, visiting level. I'm not sure what they call it. I'm not overly familiar with the Trade Center buildings. As a matter of fact, the last time I was in it was the '93 event.

We got up there. We started checking out the stairwell. When I say we, it's my aide, Bobby Crawford, and myself.

Q. Just the two of you; nobody else was with you?

A. No, nobody else was with me. We walked into the first stairwell and walked up one flight of stairs. There were people coming down. We were trying to get somewhat of an assessment of, you know, were there any panic situations, which one might be better for firefighters to access to go upstairs, et cetera.

Q. What was the demeanor of the civilians coming down; how were they acting?

A. I would say that there was no panic. Probably shock but quite orderly. I believe it was four staircases. I was in three of the four stairwells. They all seemed to be pretty much the same. I didn't see pushing, shoving, anything that resembled a panic. It seemed to be just people rather orderly coming down.

As a matter of fact, when firemen were going upstairs, the civilians coming down tended to hug to the right and the firemen were going up to the left side, passing them, and some of them were patting them on the back saying God bless you and that sort of thing. But, really, at least at these lower floors, and I was only at the lower floors, but it was quite organized and working very smoothly at those lower levels. I have no idea what the conditions might have been up higher.

Q. What was the condition of the stairwells themselves; smoky, hot, anything you noticed?

A. No. Once again, not at these lower floors, of course, remembering that the impact was way above that. At my level there was virtually no smoke. Everything was clear. There wasn't a problem with any of those sort of conditions at all.

Q. There was lighting? Regular house lights were on or were there emergency lights?

A. There were emergency lights that I recall. I believe they were the emergency lights.

We went to the second floor in the first stairwell. We actually went in the hallway. We walked down to where the elevators were on the second floor,

second level, looked around. Then we went to the next stairwell, checked out conditions. They were kind of similar. We walked around some more and went to the third stairwell and started going up to the third floor.

As we started going up to the third floor, people were coming down the stairwell. There was a large woman coming down the stairs, and I'm a big guy myself. When I was trying to pass her, she had bumped into me and caught me off balance. Anyway, I ended up kind of falling backwards. I put my foot down and caught a step about two or three steps down on my left foot. I popped something in my knee anyway at that point in time. I did something to my kneecap. It felt like I popped a ligament or whatever it might have been. I got like a piercing pain in my head.

MR. McCOURT: We're stopping the interview at this time for a second.

(Pause.)

MR. McCOURT: The time is 1154 and we're continuing the interview.

A. Anyway, I had done something to my left knee at that point and ankle. After that we started to go up to the third floor and it became very clear to me

that I could not do stairs very well. My left foot, between the knee and the ankle, was killing me. That woman literally probably saved my life as things turned out.

We got up to the third floor and I turned around to my aide, Bobby. I said, "Bobby, I can't go up the stairs. Whatever I did to my knee, it's done. There's no way I can go upstairs. We're going to have to end up heading back down."

So we start going back down the stairs. I get to the second floor level again and there's a woman there that's having a little problem breathing, having a little difficulty, and I stopped to talk to her for a minute.

My aide, Bobby, by the way, has like 31 years on the job. He's been with Safety Battalion since it was formed in 1981. He's a very checked-out individual. But anyway, he said, "Chief, I'm going to look in the hallway here at the second floor level again." I said, "Okay, Bobby." I said, "I'm just going to help her out for a minute."

So I was talking to her for a minute. She looked like she was just having difficulty breathing. I talked to her for a minute and I told her, "You've

just got like one more floor to go down and there's EMS personnel in the lobby and they'll be waiting to assist you." I said, "Go over to one of them and have them check you out. They've got oxygen. They'll take blood pressure, et cetera." There were people coming down the stairs and I had asked one man that was coming down the stairs, I said, "If you'd just assist her getting down the stairs." And he did. That probably took one or two minutes.

At that point I went into the hallway where my aide had just gone a minute or two earlier and I opened up the door and I looked in there. I didn't see him. I walked down that hallway, a very long hallway. There's no smoke or anything. It's completely clear. I'm looking for him and I'm calling out his name and I don't hear from him. The handie-talkie is kind of overwhelming to call him on the handie-talkie. I'm still on the command channel. He's on the tactical channel. But I'm not the least bit concerned. We're way, way, way below the fire. It's not even a problem. I don't see him.

So I'm kind of like, you know, I don't know where the heck he went. Did I miss him? Did he go upstairs? I literally said I'd better go up. Maybe he

went up to the third floor again. I went back upstairs, which was extremely difficult for me to do.

Q. Because of your injury?

A. Because of my injury.

I went back up to the third floor and I poked my head in that hallway. I don't see him at all. I said to myself, well, I know he's not going to go upstairs without me. He must have gone downstairs. I'm going to check the second floor.

I went back down to the second floor. I poked my head in again. I don't see him. I continued down to the lobby command post and I expected that he might well be down there by the time I got down there. But he often would take off on his own for a little bit and kind of look around, and it's basically what we do. He's a very checked-out individual. At an average fire, at certain times, like outside the building, normally we would split up.

Q. He would survey the area?

A. Yes. He might go around to the rear and survey, et cetera. In the building we tend to stick together. But this is a very different kind of building, you know, everything that's going on. In other words, you're not in any immediate danger at

all. We're way below the fire.

Anyway, I report back in. I see Pete Hayden at the command post and I said, "Pete, listen, my knee. I did something to my knee. I can't even walk." And he says, "Okay, Steve." They were by the command center. He said, "Just stay by the command board with me." I said, "Okay." There was a Battalion Chief there from the 1st Battalion, I think, Pfeifer.

Q. Pfeifer?

A. Yes. He was there and there were several others. There were probably six, seven, eight individuals there. I don't know them all. I saw a couple of EMS personnel. Chief Gabriel, who is an EMS Chief, I spoke with him for a second. I had seen Father Judge pretty early on.

Again, so many events are just confusing in that I don't remember the time frame. I think I might have seen Father Judge in the lobby before I left to go upstairs with Crawford. I remember at one point a fireman came in to the command post and he said, "Father Judge is dead." And I said, "What are you talking about? I was just talking with him," meaning five, ten minutes ago or whatever. And he said, "He's dead, Chief."

Q. Was this before the collapse?

A. Before the collapse. Definitely before the collapse. Absolutely. And I couldn't believe that. I was just like, oh, my God, I can't believe this is happening.

Q. When you saw him, how was he? Was he all right? Did you talk to him at all?

A. He was fine. Yes, we talked for a quick minute. He knows me. I know him. I said, "Hello, Father," and he said, "hello, Chief, God bless you," or something like that. It was a very quick conversation.

When I came back down, I know at one point I was talking to Ray Downey. Ray and I know each other for many, many years. We live a couple of blocks away from each other. Our kids grew up together and everything. I saw Ray at the same time. We talked in the lobby there. I believe that was after I came back down. But we talked in the lobby for a minute or two and he was running around doing his thing and that was the last I had seen of him.

Anyway, I'm around at the command post there. I was talking with Chief Pfeifer a little bit and basically just kind of taking in everything that

was going on, you know, listening to the transmissions. I talked with Chief Gabriel for a little bit about what his men were doing, his personnel. I didn't see Fireman Crawford. I was starting now to wonder where the heck he went. Now I'm getting a little concerned.

Q. This is your aide?

A. My aide, who, again, has been missing since that day. But now I had a little concern. I'm not worried about him being in danger. In other words, we're so far from the danger area. But now I'm just like, jeez, it's been a little while. I'm surprised he hasn't come back down here. It wouldn't be like him to just, in other words, be gone upstairs by himself. So I'm kind of wondering, wherever he went, I figured at some point he's going to figure out I must be at the command center. He knew I couldn't do stairs. You know what I'm saying?

Anyway, pretty much I'm at the command center and I had the Scott mask on my back all this time but, of course, I wasn't using the face piece because there wasn't any difficulty breathing. At one point I took the Scott pack off and I put it under the desk there at the command center because my knee hurts and I'm

lugging this extra weight around for nothing. So I put it under the desk.

Nothing much else I can remember, until at some point I hear a transmission about the building coming down. I don't even remember the exact words, but something, the building is collapsing or the building is coming down. I hear that. Now, I think it's my tower.

Q. Did you know there was any incident going on with the other tower at that point?

A. Oh, let me tell you. I guess I left that all out. Yes. At some point when I'm at the command post, I hear something about an aircraft has struck the other tower, the south tower. I'm at the command post at that point.

Q. You're in the north tower?

A. I'm in the north tower. I hear something about an aircraft just struck the south tower. And I don't know that a plane has hit the north tower.

Q. You still don't know that?

A. I still don't know that. I don't believe I know that. If I do, then I was in more shock than I thought. Even though I heard a plane struck the south tower, I mean, I didn't hear anything like an

airliner. It was just I heard a plane struck the south tower. I remember saying how is that possible? In my mind, I'm thinking it might be a news helicopter. I'm thinking that, you know, when we have an event like this in the city, how you get one of those helicopters in there very quickly. So, literally, although they said an aircraft, I'm thinking that maybe it's some idiot in a news helicopter circling, you know, filming this event in the north tower and somehow he plowed into the south tower. Or else, I'm saying to myself, if it isn't that, maybe it's -- I'm a pilot, by the way. I'm a commercial pilot for 30 years. I flew in the Navy.

Q. Fixed-wing pilot?

A. Fixed-wing. I've flown some helicopters. But fixed-wing. And I flew in the Navy.

But anyway, the other thing I'm thinking is what they call a VFR corridor that runs up the Hudson River right alongside the Twin Towers. It goes up the Hudson River. VFR, visual flight rule, private plane type, they can go up and down that as long as they stay under 1100 feet AGL, above ground level. So I'm saying to myself the other possibility is some light plane. But I'm never thinking airliner. I don't hear that at

all. So I'm saying to myself we've got a major thing going on in the north tower, something struck the south tower, and I don't envision this as a terrific event going on in the south tower. Anyway, that early, that's not what I understand. But getting back to where I was then, that's what I had heard.

I have to say one other thing. If I'm not mistaken, at some point after that I believe I heard -- and I'm not clear as to how I heard it, but it was at the command center. I heard something about there's a report of a third aircraft inbound, something to that effect, and I don't even know who said it.

Q. You don't know who said it?

A. I don't know who said it. I'm not even clear if it was on a handie-talkie transmission or if it was something verbally said at the command center. But I heard something to that effect.

When I heard that, then all of a sudden everything kind of clicked and I said, literally, holy shit. We must be under some sort of an attack. That was the first time that it registered, whoever said something about a third aircraft inbound.

Q. That was after the second aircraft?

A. Oh, yes. It was definitely after the second

because they said something about a third. And then I said, whoa, you know, we've been attacked or something. Something major is going on. That's the first time, at least in my own mind, that I remember it really clicked.

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

You had to be there to envision this. The noise becomes deafening. I can feel the ground shaking. I remember saying to myself that -- there's like a big archway behind me, more or less to the back of me, but when I was talking with Chief Gabriel, I was pretty much standing under it. And you know how you always hear this, I guess we're kind of trained, you know, look for an arch or something, if there's a collapse. I remember kind of instinctively running back there. As a matter of fact, I think I hollered out to the guys that were along with me, "Come back

here under the arch."

It's amazing what happens in a few seconds, but I remember going under the arch. I remember just hearing the noise. You know it's coming down. I mean, I know my tower was coming down and that this is it. It's all over. Absolutely got to be. I remember being under the arch and saying to myself this is a joke. I'm going under an arch. I've got 110 stories coming down. It's over, Steve. I literally remember that. And I remember having been in one of these subbasements in '93 with the other event, and in a couple of seconds, I just remember saying I'm going to get driven down to the eighth subbasement of this building and that's it. They'll be paving the street. I'm dead. There's not a chance in the world I'm living through this. And it comes down.

The next thing I know, I'm getting buried in debris. The windows are shattering. Again, I think it's my tower. I'm not exactly clear how it's coming down, but it's coming down. You can't miss the noise. You can feel the air pressure building up. I mean, literally, it blows the windows in.

Q. The windows were blown in?

A. I guess everything came in because the next

thing, we are covered in white. So you cannot breathe at all. I remember I had -- you know the hoods we wear? I had taken my Scott mask off, if you remember. Now, there's so much of that powder mixed in with smoke, I guess, but the second you took a mouthful or two of it in, it dried your mouth and throat and you were gagging. It was like holy shit. I remember now I pulled the hood over my face to filter out some of that. I noticed guys next to me were alive and I'm like -- I'm in shock.

Q. Do you remember who was next to you?

A. Yes. I'll tell you in a second.

I just remember kind of like I cannot believe we're alive. There's no way we could have survived this. But I'm alive. Now, I know Pete Hayden is with me, Joe Callen, Chief Pfeifer, and there were others, maybe a couple of the aides. I'm not sure of who all the people were. There was an EMS fellow there. I would say there were maybe six or seven or eight of us.

We can't even see each other. We're blind. We're kind of gagging. I know everybody is absolutely in shock. I mean, everybody was kind of quiet for a while. We're sitting there. I remember now saying I

can't believe that I've lived through this, but now I can't breathe. I mean, it's really difficult breathing. Now I'm like, oh, my God, we're going to get asphyxiated in here. We're going to die. I remember saying to myself, literally, that I would rather have been crushed to death instantly than the worst nightmare. I mean, I've done a lot of investigations, and the ones that run out of air, you just know that, you know...

Anyway, I have this vision now that, if I don't get out of here pretty soon, I may well asphyxiate in here. I remember there was a Port Authority cop that was with us somewhere in the area. Now I'm saying to myself which way is even out? I know where I came in and I don't want to go back out that way. I know it's a distance to get in. I thought there was a way to get out behind me more or less. I remembered that cop, and I said, well, he works in the building. I said, "Is the cop still around here?" And he says, "I'm over here. Yeah, I'm here." I said, "Which way to out of here? We've got to get out of here." And he said, "I think it's back here." I can't really see this guy, but he's behind me. And I said, "That's where I thought it was, that direction."

Q. Was it still smoky and cloudy in that area so you couldn't see?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Just a couple of minutes after the collapse?

A. Well, it wasn't very long. Yes, within the first couple of minutes, because we didn't hang around there very long.

Anyway, I got Pete Hayden and Joe Callen and we're holding onto each other's coats more or less. We can't see anything at that point. And I think I said something. I said, "We've got to get out of here before we suffocate." So we all started working our way in that direction, and I remember we came to the escalators.

What gets sort of interesting and confusing here is there's a videotape that was taken by, I guess, a department photographer that was in that lobby with us, and I had the opportunity to see some of that recently, I guess last week, and I'm in that videotape quite a bit. Some of the events I remember are a little bit different than when I'm watching myself.

To give you an idea, when I say that this has been a very stressful or confusing event for me, literally, if you would have asked me to do this

interview without seeing that tape, I would have said that I remember the escalators distinctly and that I thought I walked and continued past them and got out. However, on the videotape, we go up the escalator and I go up the escalator with them. Then at some point, when we get up there, I think, we separated and that cameraman stayed with Chief Pfeifer and they went a different direction.

Anyway, we work our way out of the building. I remember getting outside the building. There were definitely a few guys with me, Joe Callen, Pete Hayden and others. There was somebody that was unconscious that a couple of the guys were carrying with us. I don't know who that person was. He wasn't in bunker gear or fire gear. I don't know that he was a firefighter at all.

But we get outside the building. Now we're hugging the building, and I still don't understand that my building is standing. We were out in the street --

Q. Where did you come out?

A. I don't know. You know what? I don't know. But I believe it was by Vesey Street. For some reason I seem to think -- I don't see streets on here, but I believe it was somewhere along here.

Q. Vesey?

A. I ended up coming up here somehow. But I'm not even sure of that.

Q. Towards West Broadway, right?

A. Right. Exactly, yes. I don't know. Everything was white. I remember trying to find a street sign. But first we hugged the building. There was so much debris coming down and still jumpers and stuff, and I can only speak for myself, although I'd say we stayed together, in a single line, hugged the building and walked along the building for quite a ways. We were almost -- I'll speak for myself -- afraid to leave the building. Your chances of getting struck by something were good, and I could not run or do anything. I was having difficulty walking. There was no way I was running.

We stayed together for quite awhile, but at some point, and I don't remember any of the particulars, I'm by myself. Again, I'm not clear with a lot of this. I ended up walking up -- I believe I walked along Vesey and went to West Broadway and I was walking north up West Broadway. At this point I'm by myself. I do not know where everybody else went. I don't know how we got separated or what led to it.

A week or two later, I saw Joe Callan. As a matter of fact, it was at Chief Ganci's funeral. I saw Chief Callen and I said to him, "Joe, I don't remember how we got separated that day." I said, "I guess I left you guys. I'm sorry. I don't remember what was going on." And he said to me, "Steve, you didn't leave us." He said, "You couldn't walk almost." He said, "I ran." He said, "I did the 60-yard sprint for two blocks." He said, "I left you." He said, "At that point it was every man for himself."

Anyway, the next thing I know, I'm walking in the middle of the street. Everything was white. I'm sure you've seen pictures of it. I'm at least somewhat in shock. I don't think I had a very clear focus of what I was doing. I remember saying to myself I've got to get away from the building. I can't believe I'm not getting hit getting away from the building. There was a lot of stuff coming down. Keep in mind that I absolutely believed that I was in the tower that collapsed.

I'm walking north. I'm looking to see any sort of a fire truck, a Chief's car. I figured other units have got to be coming in. I'm going to see one sooner or later. As soon as I see one, I'm going to

kind of flag them down and say, you know, all right, what's going on, where's the command center, try and get reformed. I'm thinking about, did everybody get out? I haven't seen my aide. Now I'm really worried because, in my mind, he was in the building that collapsed and I know he's still in there.

I walk about I'll say two blocks north. I'm guessing. I don't see any fire units at all. So now I'm starting to say, well, wherever they're forming, they've got to be forming another staging area or command post outside the building. I said I'm going in the wrong direction. So I stopped and I turned around and I said I'd better start heading back down there again. So, literally, I turned around and I started going back towards the Trade Center.

I get about a block away. I'll say about one block away. So maybe I walked back about one block. Now all of a sudden I hear people are starting to run and scream. And I said, "The other tower is coming down." I looked up and the tower is coming down and I've got to get buried in the debris. I mean, it's like it's got to hit me. Now I'm back to the same thing. In a couple of seconds, I'm saying, holy shit. I got out of the first one and now I'm going to get

killed by the second one. I'm looking to see where am I going to go now?

There's a subway station right alongside me. I don't know what station. I dive down the subway stairs. I get down to the bottom of that first set of stairs. I turn the corner. I sit up against a wall on the floor and the building comes down. It goes down the stairs. I thought the sidewalk was going to collapse. I'm buried in that smoke again. I've got to pull the hood back over my face. I'm gagging. I'm going through pretty much the same things that happened to me after the first tower came down.

Q. Were you alone? Was anybody with you?

A. I was by myself. I kind of sat there. I don't even have any clue how long. I do not know how long. From this point on it gets kind of vague, I guess. I do get out of there. I don't remember coming up. I don't remember how I got out. I get up to the street.

At some point I was interviewed on TV, you know, a camera, not for very long. I have not seen this interview, but everybody in the entire United States has. It was on for two weeks straight every day. It was on America's Most Wanted. But I had

people from all over the United States calling me up. I sit on a lot of national committees, the NFPA and other things. But they're all calling me up, "Steve, I saw you on TV," and I don't ever remember speaking to anybody on camera at all.

I remember now, when I came out of there, I started walking away from the Trade Center again. I remember seeing a civilian in the street who said to me, "Are you okay?" I said, "I'm okay." He had a cell phone in his hand and I just remember telling him, "Would you mind calling my wife at the house? She's probably not home." I didn't know what time it was. She works but comes home for lunch. I said, "Just leave a message if you get an answering machine. Just tell her your husband is okay. I saw him. He told me to call you." And he said, "I promise." I remember for some reason he was from Detroit. I just remember he said, "I promise I'll call," and he did end up calling.

I know you don't want to go much after this.

Q. That's okay. I'm just checking the tape, that's all.

A. Anyway, I kept walking. At some point a doctor from St. Vincent's Hospital, I guess there were

ambulance teams dispatched out to the street, et cetera, but a doctor from St. Vincent's in a blue gown comes over to me and he says, "Are you okay?" And I said, "Yeah, I'm fine. I'm fine." I'm walking. I'm just going to leave him. I'm just walking down the middle of the street. And he says, "Hey, I want to check you out. Come over here." He says, "Take your jacket off. I want to check your blood pressure." I said, "I'm okay." He said, "Let me check you out."

Anyway, he checked my blood pressure and it was 100 over 90. I remember him saying, "100 over 90." I'm saying, "100 over 90? I never heard of a number like that." He says, "Let me check your other arm." And he does it and he said, "100 over 90," and he said to somebody, there was an ambulance by him, in fact, and he said, "Get this guy to the hospital."

There's something else. I left something out. At some point I went to a firehouse. I think Engine 9. When I'm walking the street, I end up at Engine 9 and there's guys there and I walk in and I was the only Chief around, I guess. I walk in and there's a lot of guys that are coming in from home and didn't know the things going on and they're kind of like, "Chief, where do you need me?"

Q. Where is Engine 9? Do you know where that is?

A. I think it's on Vesey Street. I'm not sure. Anyway, there's firemen, and there's a lot of activity and they're like, "Well, there's a Chief here. Chief, we're going to go down there. Where should we go? What should we be doing?" I said, "Listen, we can't have guys just running down there." I said, "Do me a favor, then." I said, "Get a clipboard. Get some paper. I want to know everybody that's here. I want to know their name, what unit they're assigned to." I said, "Let's get that done first so we know who we've got. If we're going to send a team down there or anything, I want to know just who is going in and then we'll try and do it somewhat organized."

At one point I remember Chief Blaich, Billy Blaich, 1st Battalion, come running into quarters. He was like in a panic. I know Billy for a long time. I said, "Billy, what's going on?" He said, "My son is working." He said, "He's in there. I've got to get down there." And he quickly grabbed gear and ran out.

Q. He came from home or he was somewhere else?

A. I'll assume he came from home, but I don't know that. It was so quick. He was obviously

extremely concerned. He knew his son was responding and was in there, and he ended up being okay. But anyway, I saw him quickly, he grabbed something and ran out.

I also remember, and I'm not sure of the sequence, but when I was walking down that street, there was a captain that came up to me, I'm pretty sure he was from 252 Engine, if I recall, and he was going down to the Trade Center. Again, he wasn't on duty. I don't know how he was there, whether he was recovering or not, but I'm almost positive he was from 252 Engine. He had all his gear with him, but he didn't have a handie-talkie, and he saw me and he said, "Chief," he says, "could I use your handie-talkie? I don't have a handie-talkie. I'm going to report in." He could see that I was just covered in white. I guess I must have looked like death to anybody that saw me. I think he saw clearly that I wasn't going back down there. Anyway, I said to myself, if he can help out, I gave him the radio. I gave him my handie-talkie. I said, "Here, take the damn thing." I said, "252, right?" Because I wanted to remember who I had given it to. Anyway, so that was that. I handed him my handie-talkie.

I think that's before I got to that firehouse. As a matter of fact, I totally forgot this until I'm doing this interview. Things still come back very little at a time. I was at that firehouse for a while and I think at that point, somewhere along there is where I saw that doctor from St. Vincent's.

The next thing I know, they transport me to North Shore University Hospital out in Forest Hills, Queens. I thought I'd be going two blocks away or something. But for whatever reason, they brought me out there. I think they thought there were going to be an awful lot of very serious injuries or whatever. I don't know what their problems were. But I got in an ambulance. I didn't know where I was going at all. I just remember the ride was like, where the hell are they taking me? I ended up at Forest Hills.

Q. Was there anybody with you in the ambulance or you were the only patient?

A. I was the only patient in the ambulance.

Q. Okay.

A. I got to North Shore. They were treating me for symptoms of a possible heart attack. I guess with that blood pressure they didn't know what was going on. I had difficulty breathing. I had ingested an

awful lot of that smoke/debris down there.

That's basically it. I was in the hospital I think five or six hours. They did cardiograms and blood tests and chest x-ray, knee x-ray, ankle x-ray, things like that, and later that day or that evening they released me. They took me. One of the ambulance guys that was off duty brought me back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, my headquarters, on his own, which was nice of him, so that I could get my car, and I got in my car and I drove out to Deer Park.

I knew Ray Downey was missing and I didn't even go to my house first. I went straight to Ray Downey's, the family house, and I went over there and I saw Ray's wife and the kids were all over and I talked for a little bit and I told them that I had been with Ray earlier and that I knew he was missing, and I know they knew and they were obviously extremely distraught. I remember his wife saying, "You know Ray's alive, Steve, right?" She said, "You know how smart Ray is. I know he's just waiting for us to come get him." I said, "Roe, I certainly hope so." I said, "I know if anybody could take care of themself, it would certainly be Ray." And it was just terrible.

Then from there I went home and that was it.

Q. Any further news on your aide, Bobby Crawford?

A. No. To date he's still missing.

Q. Anything else that you can think of? Anything you want to retract and go over?

A. No. I know there's things missing and it's frustrating to me, particularly having done a lot of interviews, you know, it's so frustrating when it's not clear, and it's the first time I've ever sat on this side of the fence. [redacted] I've been telling this story about 15 or 20 times and it seems like each time I tell it just little bits still come back. Like that captain I just talked about from 252. This is the first time that it ever hit me that I gave that handie-talkie to him, and I haven't said that yet. I had just kind of forgot about it until today. So it's different. It's still coming back in bits and pieces and a lot of it, unfortunately, is kind of chronologically difficult for me, maybe out of sequence, and time references are difficult. So it's frustrating to me.

Q. All right. If at any point you remember anything else and you want to get back to us, we could

always add to your interview. We'll make an addendum onto it?

A. I don't know if I'll get involved in doing some of these interviews myself, but you find out more, of course, as you talk to other people, and I haven't talked to an awful lot of the other people that were there. I've been almost avoiding it in a sense. But when you do, people remind you of things that you say, oh, that's right, I do remember that myself. So, obviously, that's part of it. I know when I viewed that videotape that I mentioned to you last week, I only saw parts of it, but it certainly looked a lot different. Some of it is different from what you remember. It's amazing. It really is.

MR. McCOURT: Okay. The time is 1227. As a matter of fact, we conducted this interview at 9 Metrotech on the 4th floor. Thank you very much, Chief.

CHIEF KING: Thank you.

File No. 9110209

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P KATHY ZARR

Interview Date: November 27, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 27th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg with the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0656 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT ZARR: Kathryn Zarr, paramedic, Battalion 22, Station 52.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is --

MR. SAMOJEDNY: Eugene Samojedny, Fire Department, City of New York.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 22.

Q. Kathy, if you can start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We're stationed out here in Staten Island, and when the first plane hit they mobilized some of the units to go out to Manhattan. I guess that's part of their preplan for MCIs.

While we were in the tunnel on the way there, the second plane had hit, and we didn't

know it until we pulled out of the tunnel and somebody had advised us later on that the second plane hit.

They told us to put our vehicle on Liberty Avenue right by West Street, right on the corner there, and set up a secondary triage area because they were expecting burn patients and everything else. So we parked our vehicle, and behind the building there was an alcove. We set up all of our equipment as far as a triage area.

So after that was done, we were just hanging out, waiting to see what was going to happen next or when we were going to get any patients.

I know Chief Grant was there from Battalion 22 on that corner with us. His aide was there. There was some units also here from Staten Island, but they were the voluntary units. I think one was from Bayley Seton and one from St. Vincent's, I believe, and a Richmond County ambulance, one of the private ambulettes out here. For some reason they sent a truck up there as well.

Once that was done, like I said, we

were just hanging out, not really doing much of anything. We were watching the buildings and watching the people jumping from the buildings. The next thing you know, we heard this rumble, we looked up and tower two was coming down.

We were able to run maybe half a block before we got overtaken by the debris cloud. I lost my partner and most of the other people there, and I got thrown into one of the alcoves of the building from the wave.

After a few minutes of hanging out in blackness, I figured I had to start walking to try to get at least oriented. I found a fireman. He was nice enough to give me a couple hits off a Scott pack to try to get some air at least. I don't know if you were there during any of this.

Q. No, not that morning.

A. It was like breathing sand. You couldn't catch a breath at all.

Once I got that, I turned around, found my ambulance again. I had to turn back, and you actually had to be on top of the truck before you could actually see any of the numbers. That's how black it was. You couldn't see your hand in

front of your face.

I took all the respirator masks we have M-95s. I took them all out of the truck, put one on myself and just went back out and trying to find everybody again and just pass them out to whomever you could find.

I found one captain. I don't remember her name. I started finding the people that we went down there with. Just handed out whoever didn't have a mask, handed out masks. As we were trying to find out equipment, get everything reorganized again, the next tower came down.

We got overcome by the debris cloud again, wound up at the end of -- I'm not sure if it's West End Street where the water hits it. I wound up down there with a whole bunch of civilians. I took out whatever O2 tanks we had from the truck, put it inside one of the buildings that they opened up for us, and just started treating the asthmatics or whatever else found their way down there.

Then they evacuated the area because of the gas leak, and they started dumping everybody on harbor boats.

Q. Right.

A. Well, they wanted to take us over to Jersey. I knew there was a triage area over in Manhattan, the ferry.

Q. Right, Battery Park.

A. Yeah. My brother happens to be a harbor pilot, so the guy was nice enough to transport me to the ferry instead of to Jersey.

So we made our way over there with whatever O2 tanks we could carry, and I wound up over at the south ferry, treating whoever came in over there. I don't remember what time I got there. It was well after the second collapse and after they started evacuating people for some sort of gas leak.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Mark Harris.

Q. Mark Harris.

When you went into Manhattan, you said you went through the tunnel. You went through the Battery Tunnel?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember how you came up?

A. We made a right-hand turn, and all you

saw was airplane parts and body parts in the street.

Q. You were coming up north on West Side Highway?

A. Yes. We made a left onto Liberty, and we ended up I believe it was right here, because I remember the street that we were on. They parked us on the corner on Liberty, but I remember the street we were on. We drove down the street to get away from anything else that might have happened as far as the debris cloud and stuff. It was a dead end. We drove ourselves into a dead end, and that's where the water was.

Q. Okay. That was probably coming down here South End Avenue?

A. Yeah.

Q. So your staging area was on Liberty between West and South?

A. Right.

Q. You said you had seen Chief Grant.

A. And his aide Mary.

Q. And his aide. Do you remember seeing any other EMS personnel at that triage area?

A. Yeah, but I don't know who they were. They left me to set up the area while they were doing other things, because it was a secondary area and they knew they had another one set up I think in front of the building or in the lobby of the building itself. So what they were going to do was use us as the secondary point. So they left me with --

MR. RADENBERG: The interview is paused.

(Interruption.)

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0827 hours. We are resuming the interview. All parties indicated at the beginning of the tape are present.

Q. So triage was here on Liberty between South End and West. When the tower collapsed or the first tower two collapsed, do you remember which way you went at that point, who was with you?

A. I had one of the girls from Richmond County ambulance with me. Where everybody else went, I have no idea. Everybody just started scattering. I had to stop because she had

fallen. I picked her up. As I did that, that cloud just came around the corner. So I think we were running on End Avenue. Which end?

Q. That's South End.

A. South End. We were running this way.

Q. South.

A. Right. I made it not even half a block before that cloud caught up. She wound up diving under a city bus, and there was an alcove. The pressure of the cloud pushed me into the alcove. So that's where I wound up.

Q. Do you have any idea where your partner was at this point?

A. None whatsoever. None whatsoever.

Q. When you first arrived on the scene and was setting up the triage area, was he still --

A. Yeah, he was driving that day, so he was positioning the ambulance and stuff while I was positioning all the equipment. I guess I had most of the techs from the different trucks, whatever the techs were that day. We were all setting up inside with the chairs and stuff. We were trying to set up in case we got a lot of patients and stuff.

Q. So basically as far as you know through the first collapse Mark was still at the vehicle?

A. Yeah, I had no idea where he was after that first collapse. I had no idea where he went. After the collapse, like I said, it took a minute for me to find where everything was. But I went back to the vehicle to get those masks, and there was nobody there. The back door of the vehicle, it was open. So there was like soot and debris and stuff all inside the truck and everything else.

But I had no idea where he was. It took a while for the dust to settle, literally for the dust to settle, for us to even see and to try to find everybody. After a while I did find him and see him and then lost him again when the second collapse happened.

Q. In between the two collapses when you found him, where were you?

A. Trying to find all our equipment. We were back to where --

Q. Back at triage?

A. Back to where the triage was. We went back to try to find all the equipment. Because

the first building came down, I didn't think the second one is going to come down. I don't know why we didn't think so. I guess we didn't want to believe it would come down.

We were trying to find everything to reset everything up, because now definitely there are going to be a lot of people hurt.

Q. Right.

So you found Mark back at the triage area. Was he injured at all?

A. No. None of us were. None of us were, which was a surprise. It felt like I had a sunburn. It looked like I had a sunburn from all the cuts, just the force of --

Q. The dust?

A. -- the dust and stuff. You felt like you had glass all over you. Everything was all itchy and stuff. It must have been whatever was in the cloud.

Q. Now, when the second building came down, do you remember which -- I guess you and Mark split up again or?

A. No, he jumped into the vehicle. He had a fireman with him in the back of the truck,

trying to get the vehicle out of there. We caught him just before we took off with the vehicle.

So I had somebody else who had escaped, one of the guys who had escaped from the first collapse. He worked in that building. He was also -- I teach EMTs out here on the island. He was one of my students, so I knew he was an EMT. He wanted to help. I said, "Okay. Stay with me. I don't know what's going to go on." He got into the back of the truck, and we ended up down by that water.

Q. This way?

A. Yeah, down here, which was only like two or three blocks. I didn't even realize it was a dead end. That's how much I know Manhattan. We ended up down at the end of the dead end.

Q. The south end of South End Avenue at South Cove Park is where it dead ends.

Mark was with you? He was driving the truck at that point?

A. Right there, yeah. At that point he was there.

The cloud caught up to us. There was no getting away from that. But I took whatever oxygen tanks we had there, and there was a building that they had, they were doing construction on one of the buildings, and the guy opened it up.

So all of the civilians and stuff that had congregated around there went into the building, whatever had to have their eyes washed. The guy was very nice. He just opened everything up for everybody. We threw some oxygen tanks in there. We had a couple of asthmatics that were having asthma attacks. We were treating them with whatever equipment we had left.

Then they started evacuating everybody because of a gas leak, and that's where I totally lost Mark and I don't know where he went. It was just weird.

Q. So it was from this area, from South Cove --

A. South Cove.

Q. -- that you got on the boat?

A. I got on the boat on the Manhattan side of the ferry terminal where the triage and

treatment area was.

Q. The firefighter that was in the back of the truck -- there was a firefighter with Mark?

A. Yeah.

Q. But you don't know who he was or what company or anything like that?

A. No, no.

Q. When you made your way down here to South Cove now, do you recall, aside from you and Mark, any other EMS personnel being down there?

A. Yes. There was a Staten Island University Hospital ambulance there. It was Mitch Powell and Danny Frazier. They emptied out their O2 tanks and gave them to me too. Like I said, we only had the two that were left from the truck because all our gear is buried now wherever the treatment area was all the way down by the towers. So they gave us whatever they had to try to help us out, and they were there. I don't know what happened to them after that.

Q. Going back a little bit, before you got the job, you had mentioned a female captain. EMS captain?

A. EMS captain.

Q. PD?

A. It was a female EMS captain. She was in that area. I don't remember her name.

Q. That was at the triage area when you first got there?

A. Yes, when I first got there and after the first collapse I saw her. I didn't see her after the second collapse. I didn't see anybody after the second collapse.

Q. Do you remember what she looked like at all?

A. I just saw her again too, and I don't remember her name. I'm bad with names. I don't remember her name. She was a blonde, I guess in her forties.

Q. Captain Deshore?

A. That's it. She was just at that function in Manhattan at the hotel.

Q. That's pretty much if for questions I have at this point. Anything else would like to add? Opinions? Comments? Anything of that nature?

A. There's no comment. I don't know what to say about this.

When did you guys start doing the interviews? Just recently you started with all this?

Q. A couple weeks ago.

A. Because I've only been back to work for two weeks.

Q. Yeah. A couple of weeks ago we started, probably about a month, actually, maybe a month and a half.

A. Yeah, because I was out sick. I was out sick for two months.

Q. Actually the beginning of October, somewhere around there.

A. I didn't come back to work for about two weeks.

Anything else?

Q. No, no.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0837, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110210

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT RICHARD SMIOUSKAS

Interview Date: November 27, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McCOURT: The date is November 27th, 2001. The time is 9:03 hours. My name is Tom McCourt, New York City Fire Department.

MR. MURAD: Murray Murad, New York City Fire Department.

MR. McCOURT: We're currently interviewing --

LIEUTENANT SMIOUSKAS: Lieutenant Richard Smiouskas, S-M-I-O-U-S-K-A-S.

Q. Lieutenant, could you tell me the events that took place from your perspective on September 11th, 2001, please.

A. Yes. I was in the office in the morning, and I was sitting at my desk doing TPRs when I received a beep.

Q. Where is your office?

A. The second floor of headquarters, Room 206.

I received a beep, and the beep said that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. I immediately turned around -- I had a TV set in the office, but I keep the sound off so I didn't hear anything. I turned around and

looked at the TV set and saw at least ten stories of smoke coming out of the World Trade Center. I said oh, my God.

I went to the back. I grabbed 20 rolls of film. There was a photo bag. I grabbed the photo bag, threw a couple cameras in there. I responded to the scene in a Fire Department suburban with lights and sirens over the Brooklyn Bridge. They had a lane open on the Brooklyn Bridge for emergency vehicles.

Q. Did you go alone?

A. I was by myself. We don't have anybody on duty in the forwarding unit until 11 a.m. So I covered the car from when I come on duty from about 7:00 until 11. So I was the only one on duty at the time.

I went, lights and sirens, over the Brooklyn Bridge. Just as I was reaching the end of the bridge, there was a loud explosion and I saw a fireball come across the sky, realizing that the south tower --

Q. Did you actually see the south tower?

A. Yes. I could see it from the bridge. I saw an explosion and fireball and thick black

smoke just going across the sky. Then I realized we were being attacked. I didn't know if it was missiles coming in or another plane.

I got to the base the Brooklyn Bridge. I made the turn that goes around I think Centre Street right by City Hall, and I took that to Broadway. I had to be very careful there because there were thousands of people in the street running across the street, streaming across the Brooklyn Bridge. There was terror on their faces. There was some people I noticed that were covered with black smoke. They were probably maybe in the building.

As I'm coming down Broadway, there were people running across the street. I almost hit a few people, by the way. I parked the car just south of Vesey Street on Broadway. I parked there because I knew this was going to be a long, involved fire, and I didn't want to get blocked in by other vehicles.

In my experience I go to fires, and parking too close to the fire building you get jammed in. So I knew this was going to be a long and prolonged operation. So I parked just south

of Vesey on Broadway.

I got my camera bag, and I went to Liberty that Engine 10 and Ladder 10 is on. So it was just south of Liberty Street.

Q. Liberty and Trinity?

A. I was about Cedar. That's where I parked the vehicle on Broadway, Broadway and just south of Liberty. That's where I parked the vehicle.

Q. Mark it on the map.

A. I walked across, and I'm looking up at the fire and taking some shots and photographing while I'm walking. As I got to the quarters of Engine 10 and Ladder 10, I glanced in there real quick. The apparatus were out. But I saw some guys putting jackets and bunker gear on.

I continued down about a couple hundred feet. I looked on the ground and I saw what I thought was a roasted pig. I've seen them at weddings and things like that, roasted pigs. I looked at it again, and it was actually a torso. I saw a rib cage. I looked up and saw body parts, feet, a hand with a ring on it, a face with a mustache and eyes and part of an ear.

Just a face, no head, just a face. I saw like the window of an airplane, one of those small plastic windows.

As I'm walking down, I'm looking up, watching people jump, I'm watching the fire. I get to just Liberty and West Street where I ran into Jerry Barbara, Chief Barbara. Citywide was talking to him. He turns around and said: "Richie, this is not good." I said take care. I took a shot, a photograph, of him with the building behind him. I believe it was Engine 279 the lieutenant came up behind us and asked the chief where did he want him, and the chief said just stand fast. I said: "Jerry, take care, be careful."

I left and made my way to the west side of -- I was standing right next to the hotel, just the hotel. I took a few photographs there. Then I made my way into the Two World Financial Center, and I tried to get to the roof of that building. There was nobody there that would allow me up to the roof. So I went into Three World Trade Center, and I found an engineer. We walked back to Two World Trade Center, and he got

me up to the roof.

I was photographing the fire from the roof. I had a long lens on the camera, and I had people in the windows. It looked like they were being -- they weren't actually jumping. One or two people I saw, they seemed like they were being forced out by the people behind them. There was half a dozen faces. In between the smoke you could see people.

I guess they were all trying to get air, and this guy was actually standing in the window, standing in the frame with each hand on each frame and he kind of like got nudged out. I'm sure the people were jumping -- I took about maybe half a dozen shots of people actually falling. I said that's enough of that.

I brought my way down the elevator. I went across the Winter Garden, and then I went over the pedestrian bridge by Vesey Street. That bridge goes directly into the Six World Trade Center. At the time I didn't know it was Six World Trade Center.

I went into the mezzanine, which is about maybe 25 feet north of the north tower. In

that mezzanine I saw Father Judge. He was praying. I looked out the window, these large 15 foot glass windows. I glanced out, and I saw the people hitting the pavement. I could still hear what I think was people hitting the roof. You could hear explosions or thuds on the roof.

Q. Overhead?

A. Overhead, landing on the roof of Six World Trade Center.

I turned around, and where the glass was clear I heard another explosion and I turned around and looked at the glass and there was just chunks that were splattered with blood. There was actually chunks of I guess human flesh was just dripping down. I looked and the person that just landed there just exploded like a watermelon. The largest piece I saw of the person was maybe a hand. They just splattered like a pancake.

I took a few photographs. I turned around. I told Father Judge be careful. All of a sudden there was this groaning sound like a roar, grrrr. The ground started to shake. Father Judge started going out the revolving

doors. I said don't go outside. The last time I saw him, he went out the revolving door.

I turned around and I started going back towards West Street. It looked like an earthquake. The ground was shaking. I fell to the floor. My camera bag opened up. The cameras went skidding across the floor. The windows started exploding in. I just rolled into the corner to protect myself from the glass.

The next thing I knew, it was pitch-black. You couldn't see in front of you. You couldn't breathe. Every time you took a breath, you were just swallowing -- you were gasping. I took my shirt off and wrapped it around my head so I could breathe.

It felt like an eternity getting out of that building. I was disoriented. I knew the general idea of where I was. I was actually thinking about going out the windows where the glass was broke, but I figured people were still jumping and I didn't know exactly what was going on outside. I'm thinking maybe the building snapped in half. I'm thinking maybe a bomb blew up. I'm thinking it could have been a nuclear.

I didn't know what was going on.

I went against the wall, and I felt the wall and I just kept going in the direction that I came in. I kept banging into things. I came to another wall, went through a revolving door, and I found myself back on the bridge, the pedestrian bridge. From there I got back into the Winter Garden.

Q. What was it like outside at that point?

A. Pitch-black.

Q. Still pitch-black?

A. Pitch-black.

Q. So you didn't stay in the building long; you just got out as quick as you could?

A. It felt like an hour getting out of there, but I would estimate it to be maybe eight minutes.

When I got into the Winter Garden, it was very clear in there. Just a couple pieces of glass were broken. They came crashing down. I was looking up and watching that. It was hazy, just a haze in there.

Then I went out the back door where the marina is, the North Cove Yacht Harbor is, that

area, and wasn't black, it was just like real, real hazy and dusty. I went south around Two World Financial Center, and I looked and what I could see is the north tower was still burning, the south tower wasn't there. I said oh, my God, the whole thing came down.

I went back around where I came, and I went a little north of the Three World Trade Center and went to the corner of Vesey and West Street. There was a lot of chaos. I'm looking up and saying this building's going to come down also. There had to be about a hundred people in the street looking up.

I remember yelling: The microwave tower is bending over. I saw it leaning over. I said the microwave tower is leaning over. The antenna was leaning over. At that point everybody started moving north.

Q. Did you see anybody that you recognized or anybody you knew at that point?

A. No. There were some cops, there was some firemen, there was EMTs, there was a lot of civilians, there was photographers, but nobody I recognized, no.

I don't know if I went to Warren Street or Murray Street. I went up the next block and went over to the West Street area. I was standing on West Street and Murray with a whole bunch of people, and all of a sudden the north tower started to come down.

Everybody started running north, and this huge volume like ten stories high billowing, pushing black smoke and like a glitter. I guess it was glass that was glitter that was in the cloud of smoke. I saw everything flying around. I looked back, and there was this thing flying, coming at me.

I started running north. I got to the corner, and it was engulfing all the buildings around, maybe 50 feet away from me. I tried a couple of doors, and then I went into a bodega on the corner and shut the door. There were maybe ten people in that bodega. I held the door shut and it just kind of blew by like a hurricane, all this debris and paper, thousands of paper in it. Then it got pitch-black again. It was midnight again.

I waited for a few minutes. I took

some water out of the bodega and was dumping it in my eyes. My eyes were burning. I started drinking water and spitting up. I waited a few minutes and went outside. There were papers burning in the street.

As I made my way back to the scene, there were cars burning, a bus was burning, it was dark. There were other buildings on fire. I made my way back, and there were people just milling about. I just saw the devastation, The carnage.

I went back around towards the south tower. There was really nothing to do. People were being helped by people holding other people. I couldn't even take any photographs. My cameras were lost in the building.

Q. You don't have the cameras?

A. No. I had shot about maybe eight or nine rolls of film of the initial events. I was groping around for the camera. I couldn't find anything, and I said let me get the hell out of here. I don't know what's going on.

Actually when I was in the building, I knew the building had a little overhang. So I'm

thinking if this building comes down, the way it overhangs and something hits it, I may have a void, thinking about a void.

Q. It was self-preservation?

A. Yes. If I have a void, it's better I stay in here than go out with the buildings falling down. I knew I had about six stories above me of that building. I felt I had protection.

Q. Did you get hurt at all?

A. No. Just rolling on the floor, my right hip was bothering me a couple days, like a little bruise or something. I felt painful for a few days, but that's about it, just getting up. I was coughing for about two weeks.

Q. Anything else you can think of that you want to elaborate on a little more or reflect on?

A. No. It was pretty horrible. Emotionally the terror on the people's faces in the windows. You could see the poor souls hitting the pavement. I saw maybe 12 people actually fall.

I remember digging out a little bit. Really there wasn't that much you could do

because the steel was these huge beams of steel 15, 10 stories high level. The steel was up two, three stories laying against the building. The north bridge that I had walked across on the second collapse, the north bridge was destroyed.

It kind of shook me up a little bit when you figure you were there maybe 15, 20 minutes before the collapse. I was just worried about getting out. That's all. My biggest fear was I was disoriented in the darkness, and it was a pretty big mezzanine to find your way out.

That's what my main concern was. I said let me find the exit so I can get the hell out of here. And I was afraid I was going to get lost in there and not know what was going on, on a personal note.

That was my story.

MR. McCOURT: The time is 9:20. That concludes this interview.

Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

MONTEL WILLIAMS SHOW INTERVIEW OF BC RICHARD PICCIOTTO

INTERVIEW OF

BATTALION CHIEF RICHARD PICCIOTTO

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2001

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Today we're going to dedicate our show to all those who worked so hard to help the many victims, the survivors of the attack on America. Our country should be proud because we have so many heroes among us, and I'm just in awe of the fact that I have the opportunity to sit beside a true, true hero. First please welcome at home the battalion chief from the 11th Battalion in New York City, Mr. Rich Picciotto.

These people at home that are looking right now, Rich, they see the dark glasses. You were originally up in your battalion headquarters? Where were you at?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I arrived way after the second plane hit, but we rushed down just real quick.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You were sitting in your office and someone came in and said to you, Rich, you need to look at this.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes, turn on the TV, a plane hit the World Trade Center.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And as a firefighter, and you've been a firefighter for what, 28 years?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: 28 years, yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So in 28 years, immediately your wheels start spinning, correct?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: My wheels are spinning super. I was one of the first firefighters at the initial World Trade Center bombing. I was there and I knew the building and I felt I had to be there.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: What did it look like when you hit the bottom of the two of the taller buildings in the world? You pull up. What did you see?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I rushed into the lobby. I see the commander, a chief higher than me, he's going insane. He's overloaded. So there's companies waiting to be -- you know, what do we need? What do we need? We don't just run in. It looks like we run in, but it is a command structure. And I get a couple companies to the side, I go to the chief in charge, what do you need? And he tells me what he needs. I take my companies and we go.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And when you say you go, you started running up those steps?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Not running. We start going. You have to realize, every fireman -- I have a light load because I'm a chief. I just have my bunker gear, my tank, a flashlight and a bullhorn, which is the first time I ever carried that bullhorn. It saved countless lives. The firemen have that plus an extra tank, hose, tools. I'm carrying, I don't know, approximately 50, 60 pounds. They're carrying an additional 30, 40 pounds on top of that. So we're going up the stairwell. We're not running up the stairwell. And at this point we're going up and people are coming down.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: People are coming down and, of course, you're trying to orchestrate that traffic flow.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Right. And that's where the bullhorn came in handy.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You made it up to the 21st, 22nd floor, correct?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: That was my initial assignment, people trapped on the 21st and 25th floor.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: I'm going to do this. I have to take a break, but before I take a break, there were some things that we talked about before the show.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Right.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: We want to talk about a couple of them. Let's do one right now and we'll take a break and we'll come back. You wanted to make sure everybody out there was aware of what?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Okay. A couple things that I want people to know. This is a massive tragedy for the Fire Department, for everybody, for the Fire Department in particular because we've been hit so hard. The formal organization that we usually use to take care of our members is not there, they're overloaded, the informal network also, the members in the firehouse helping their fellows in need is not there. Some firehouses are wiped out. The ones that are not wiped out, they're working, they're digging through the rubble.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So many firefighters in New York City have been lost that there aren't enough people to go around and see and counsel the wives and the families and there are a lot of people out there right now and it's not because -- just out of necessity, they're just not getting services that they need.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Right, exactly. We're relying on family and friends, go to these wives, stay with them, even though they say -- some of them are in denial. I've been visiting some of them. They're in denial. Oh, I know my husband is safe. I was in the building when it came down. As far as I know, there were eleven survivors out of both buildings. I'm one of them. We were trapped four hours. So I'm going to these people saying, yes, there is hope, but the hope is very slim.

What I need is just neighbors and friends who know these people, there's millions of volunteers and they would all go, but these wives and these families don't need strangers; they need support from neighbors. There's no support from the formal Fire Department, there's no formal support, very little, excuse me, very little support formally and very little support, especially the heavy-hit houses. It's very little support because the houses are decimated, the firehouses, and the people that are not missing are down there looking for the people that are missing.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: I'm with you.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Thank you.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Again, Rich, you and your team, you commanded the guys, you got up to the 21st floor of Building 1, you started getting people to move. Just tell me what you saw when you hit 21.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Okay. Basically, my initial assignment was 21st, 25th floor, there's people trapped in need. We got up there. There are already other firefighters there. Once our initial assignment was done, I told the command post that this is okay and I'm going further up.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You made it up to what, about the 35th, 36th?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Somewhere in the 30s. When I talk about floors and when I talk about time sequences, they're guesstimations.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Of course.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I'm up in approximately Tower 1 somewhere in the 30s and this rumbling starts happening. By this time all civilians – civilians stopped coming down when I hit about the 16th floor, 20th floor. Again, that's guesstimations. They were already mostly down. So the ones above that were just firemen, you know, cops, emergency workers, mostly firemen.

We hear this noise and everyone just freezes, and it's a rumbling, a sustained rumbling. I've heard many people describe it different ways. To me it was indescribable, you know, it was the first time anyone heard this noise.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: 50, 60 trains coming at the same time.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: The noise of ten tornadoes.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: And I go into the hallway. Everyone freezes and we're trying to -- what is this? The building is shaking. Now, this is the building that's not falling down. This was the other building.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Building 1 is shaking.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Building 1 is shaking. Building 2 was falling. We don't realize that. Sustained. You tell me how long it took that building to fall.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: I'd say 30 seconds.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: That's my guesstimation, 30, 40 seconds. And then it stops and there's an eerie silence because, like I said, we're all firemen up there and we're professionals and everyone is waiting. So it's an eerie silence. The radios stop. We have different channels. They stop and everyone is, you know, what was that?

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And you're thinking immediately, my God, we just lost a command center.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: No. I didn't realize that the building came down. I didn't know what that was. I'm thinking maybe elevators broke loose and elevators are falling through the -- you know, different things are crossing my mind. Maybe elevators. Maybe another plane hit. Maybe there was a collapse up above and it's just a partial collapse.

So I'm calling on the radio to try to find out what happened. Finally I get a response. The tower went down. That still doesn't compute to me. The tower went down. Was it a water tower? The radio towers? Because I can't see. And then someone says the building went down, the whole building. Now the people around me, the firefighters are looking at me and, you know, what are we going to do? So I'm trying to call the command post, I'm calling, I'm calling. I'm getting no response. No response. Everyone is looking at me. You know, at this point, if I said keep on going up, we're professionals, they're going to do what I tell them, keep on going up.

Then I'm thinking, when I know the building came down, no one is listening to me, possibly there I
is no one to give me directions. They may be wiped out. Like I said, basically there's no civilians left in my building because I reached them about the 16th floor. I figured by this time they're out. So the only people in building Tower 1 now are firemen.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And everybody in the floors above --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Are firemen. Our first priority is to save life. We define life into two priorities, civilian life first, and then, second, firefighters' lives. I have to save firefighters' lives also. I'm getting no response. So I take it upon myself to call for an evacuation. I have that bullhorn. I call on the radios, we're evacuating, we're getting out, drop your tools, drop your masks, drop everything, get out, get out, get out. My thinking was either -- I thought a bomb hit the other building and brought it down, and if there's a bomb in that one, there's a bomb in this one. At that point what I'm thinking of is this building is going to come down also, the second building, so I call for the evacuation. The evacuation, you know, it's an orderly evacuation. It's not --

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Chaotic.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: It's not chaotic. We're professionals. We're filtering up the building, everything stops, and now we slowly are filtering down the building because no one comes on the command channel to tell me otherwise.

As we're going down, now I'm hearing someone from the command post that is a voice I recognize, who ordered this evacuation? What's going on? Who's in charge? And I'm saying to myself I did the wrong thing here. So it's amazing. They give the order from the command post stand by.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Meaning stop the evacuation?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Stop the evacuation. I relay that order, and amazing as that is, these firemen, I can't say enough, we basically stop. Everyone is waiting to find out what we're going to do. Car 4 Charlie, who I think I know who that chief is, says -- time span I don't know -- continue the evacuation. This is less than a minute this whole thing happens, probably less than 30 seconds. And so the evacuation continues and now we're going down.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Rich, you had just gone and yelled up each one of the stairwells and you're hollering, and I've got to ask this question. There's so many people who have wondered this. When you looked up into those stairwells, could you see?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: No.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You couldn't see? It was all filled with smoke?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: No. I'm in the first building. The fire is above us. The first building that I'm in, I don't know, approximately the 90th floor that the plane hit. There's smoke filtering down, but I'm only on the 30th floor. We're treating burn victims that were there coming down, people coming down with their clothes burnt off, and we're removing these people. Some people are treating them and some people are going up. Sometimes you have to look at the bigger picture, you know, you have someone hurt but you have to literally almost step over them to get to hundreds of people hurt and hundreds of people alive.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Right. And these are just real raw, just realtime decisions.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Okay.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Basically, we're evacuating. We're going down. We get down approximately somewhere in the teens, 15, I don't know what floor, everything stops. Again, it's mostly firemen, you know, a few stragglers but mostly firemen. It stops. So I have the bullhorn, you know, what's happening? Keep on going. What's going on?

What happened was the two -- it's hard to describe. There's three stairways. The two stairways A and C are facing the south tower that came down. When the debris came down, it went all over, it went into the lobby, filled those stairways up. So people could get down but they couldn't get down --

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Into the lobby.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: -- into the lobby. So all of a sudden we started backing up in the stairways. A and C are clogged. I know the building layout. I checked the B stairway and the B stairway is clear. So now, again, this bullhorn was amazing, I'm using that and I'm directing everyone to the B stairway. We're going down floor by floor by floor, hitting every floor, until we get to one floor that all of a sudden I look at an office and there's a bunch of people sitting there. You know, what are these people doing here? I tell them we've got to get out of here.

What it was, was these people were the last people in the building. They were mostly -- well, they were wheelchairs, infirm, walkers. They were real slow getting down. Everyone else got down except them and the people helping them. There was approximately, I don't know, ten, twelve infirm people and, I don't know, 50 people helping them.

So I have a lot of firemen there. I tell the people who were helping them, you leave. Go. You have to remember that everything is clogged with firemen leaving now. Pull everyone to the side, get these people out. The firemen part the way, we're letting the people that could walk, go,

you get out, directed them to the B stairway. Then we take the wheelchairs because they're relatively easy, just roll them right out. It's the people with the walkers, the people very slow, very large, they're the people that we're having a bit of a problem with. I'm trying to get chairs, you know, put them in a chair. I'm running all over the place. So these people are walking with their walkers and chairs and I tell the firemen grab them, pick them up and grab them. And that's what we're doing. You can't carry them down -- again, I say the 12th floor. It could have been the 10th floor. I don't know what floor this was, but we're carrying them down slowly. We're getting these people out. Guys are relieving each other, you know, carrying them down a landing, a half a landing, then you take over, and then this other team goes back, and we're moving them, we're moving them. I basically have two teams on every person and everyone else I say go, you know, get the firemen out, we don't need 300 people doing this, we need eight people per person, four people carrying and another four. So everyone else I push out.

We had this one woman, I found out later her name because I was trapped with her for a few hours, Josephine. She was a big lady, a big African-American lady. We couldn't get a chair for her. All we could find were these little steno chairs with no arms, you know, nothing that we could sit her on and pick up. So she's taking up the rear, but we're having a slow enough time and guys are helping her. I'm basically taking up the rear and I get down to -- again, I don't know what floor. I tell people 7, you know. I know it was no lower than 5. It was higher than 5, but I say 7. I don't know what floor. And then that noise, that first-time-in-history-anyone-heard-that noise and I said it was a very unique noise? It starts.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You started hearing it again?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: So I hear it again. Our tower is coming down. Our tower was shaking before.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: The entire building was shaking.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: The building is shaking and, again, I was on whatever floor I was on, 7th floor.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Were you in the middle of the floor or were you in the stairwell?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: We were in the stairwell. Everyone was in the stairwell. We were in stairwell B and that's the only stairwell that could be used because A and C were clogged, and by this time everyone is filtering. It's just the tail end of the people that I got to. I mean, there were people above that probably never heard it, still were fighting this fire.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And that rumble got louder.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Louder. The rumble got louder and, as you see it, you know, I don't know, I know what I felt, I know what I saw, but I knew it was coming and I knew I was dead and I just said, please, God, please make it quick, you know, I want to die fast.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Because that building collapsed with you and a lot of other people in it.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And miraculously, Rich, you sit here after being buried for four and a half hours.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Well, yes. And it was miraculous, yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You know, I think half of my viewers at home, as I just said it to you right before we came up, I don't know what I would have done. I would have been out there trying to get people out, but if I had been in that stairwell and the next thing you know I started hearing that rumbling again, I don't know. The 7th floor? I might have figured out someplace to go jump. But then again, I don't know if the jumping would have done you any good.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: There's no place to jump.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: There is no place to jump.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: It happened so quick.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So it did happen so quick? So it happened so quick, next thing, you hear that noise, and then did something hit you in the head?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes, something hit me in the head, knocked my helmet off, knocked me down, knocked my helmet off, and I tell people -- the word I'll use is I was annoyed. I was super annoyed. Because I wanted to be dead. I just wanted to be dead. I knew I was going to be dead. I just wanted it to happen.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: When you woke up?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Even before that, I got up and then the landing I was on just gave and then I fell and that's the last thing I remember until I'm just laying in debris and black.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And you must have fallen at least five stories, possibly four to five stories.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Later on I found out I was on the 3rd floor, where the third floor was. There's no more stairwells. We're in the stairwells, but there's no stairs. There's rubble. Again, I try to just -- you know, I land on 3. I was anywhere from 5 to 7 when it happened. We were bringing up the rear, our company was with this woman, like I said, her name was Josephine. They grabbed her, we grabbed her, I mean, we tried to just beat it, trying to run out, you know, run down five stairways, seven flights, before I was hit. But literally I got hit, got banged, we got steps.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And you woke up on the ground and you realized my arms are here, my legs are here, I can feel them, it's okay, I'm here. Then what?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I really don't even know if I was knocked out. I think I was just stunned momentarily type of thing. I don't know. I'm coming to and it's black. I lost my light. I lost my bullhorn, I lost my helmet, and I'm just coming to, and a short period of time -- like I said, time sequences just...

Next thing I remember anyway, it's black. I say is anyone else here? Is there anyone else here? And in a short time, yeah. Almost like I can't see them but I know that he's -- I'm not buried. I'm covered, but I'm not buried. I'm covered with debris all over. So yeah, yeah, I'm here, too, and then there's another voice and then like two voices below me initially and then a

voice above me. So we're all just getting our wits about us and, you know, anyone have a light? A lot of firemen, thank God, you know, a lot of guys carry their lights in straps around themselves. One guy had a light. So he turned the light on and it's dusty and tremendous -- like if you saw that dust, we're in it. Talk about ground zero? That's it.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: But, Rich, I hear you talk and I know exactly how you did this. Now, having been with you for an hour, you didn't wake up and say I'm entombed, you didn't wake up and say, you know, holy you-know-what expletive.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes, I did.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Good. But then after you did that, it was still back on the case.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Where are the men? Who is alive? Who is here? Did you try to use a radio and call --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes, yes. Well, initially we tried to find out who was there, find out what tools, lights, you know, who's here, and then we started calling. We started calling. Nothing. No response at all. I know what happened. I knew the first tower went down. I knew the second tower went down.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And you knew you were in the one that went down.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: At this moment does it hit you, okay, wait a minute, I'm on the third floor and 107 stories are on top of me; there's 107 stories around me?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Montel, about two months ago, just a real quick story, two months ago three firefighters in Queens from Rescue 4 were in a building that collapsed. They were in a two-story building. They were alive in the basement. We had radio contact. I don't know if you remember, but they had the funerals. Harry Ford. They were in a two-story building that collapsed and we couldn't get to them in time. We just couldn't get to them. Because it's a hand operation, brick by brick. Even though I'm safe in the darkness, I know that there's 100 stories, 105 stories above

me. I don't want to sound like a pessimist, but there's no way anyone is going to get to us. My prayer wasn't answered for a quick death.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: I'm sorry, Rich. So you're entombed and during that period of time that you're there, you're calling through, nobody is answering. It is dark. It is smoking. There's a ray of light coming in.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Not yet.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Not yet?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I wish. I wish.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Tell us about it. How many people did you end up totally --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: We were in a void. That's what we call it, a void, you know, just a pocket, everything is falling and there's a little pocket. We're not all together, but we're in a little void. Eleven of us I believe it was. Amazingly, one whole company, Ladder 6, which I didn't know this at the time because they were above me. I couldn't even see them, although I could talk to them. Below me there was an officer from 16 and a fireman from Engine 39. Also, there was Josephine, the woman I told you about, and there was a Port Authority cop. I believe his name was David Lim. Some of us can see each other, some of us can't, but we're in this basically 2nd story to 4th story -- it's not open. There's rubble, debris all over.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Just a little area where people kind of --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Right. Exactly. And then we're trying to find out who's there. Basically, the people in our void were banged around, separated shoulders, concussions, but no life-threatening injuries. There's people below us that we can't get to. I mean, there is rubble, we just can't get to them.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You're still thinking about getting to people and you're stuck in a void.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: There's people hurt. There's people in trouble below us.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And you were hurt, Rich. You could barely see, right? Why don't we explain the fact that your corneas were scratched, burned, and you were still trying to figure out

you need to save.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Excuse me just for a minute. It's 28 years, you know, people call us heroes and it's always like we're doing our job, we're doing our job. And we are doing our job, but I'll tell you, every single fireman is a hero.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I mean, police officers, everybody there.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Absolutely. And maybe you don't want to accept the title --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I mean, we are doing our job.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: -- but accept our thank you. Accept the fact that there are guys like you that are doing this because there's a lot of other people out here who don't want to. Let's move a little forward. So you're in here in this abyss. Again. You're trying to call out, nobody is answering, walkies aren't working. Did you actually think that maybe the command center, which was right outside the building, or very close, could have been completely decimated?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Oh, of course. Of course. Of course. Basically, it had to be, and in effect it was. Our Chief of Department Ganci, you go through the list, Father Judge, I didn't know it at the time, but they were all wiped out. I mean, our whole command structure was wiped out. And the people that weren't and all the people that were injured outside, and there were a lot of people hurt and injured and killed outside, the people that weren't are helping the people that were. So no one is listening to the handie-talkie. That's our radios. No one is listening to them.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: But, again, you're sitting there, you're inside this abyss, and did you not think, okay, let's marshal troops? How do we get out of this?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Exactly. Exactly.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: But then my next question would be how do we get out of this? I'm sitting under 110 stories worth of what must be rubble. If I pull one rock --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Exactly.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: -- there's a void that actually could be filled.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Exactly. What I said once everyone started getting it, I told everyone, because we didn't see anyone, I said everyone don't move, stay where you are, just stay there, don't move because exactly what you said; a secondary collapse could have wiped us out in a second. Look around.

Look. Like I said before, we found a light and then we found another light. So look around, look around. Then you start taking your bearings. By me there was nothing. When we're doing the roll call -- I called a roll call, trying to find out who was there. 6 Truck, like I said before, is intact, the whole company. You know, who's here? Who's here? So two floors above me, or when I say two, I don't see them, but I hear a voice. A very, very good friend of mine, we studied together, Jay Jonas, he's the captain of 6 Truck. He was promoted yesterday. It's not a battlefield commission. He was on the list waiting to be promoted. I don't know if you saw the promotions.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Sure.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: He was promoted yesterday.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You heard him?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I hear his voice. Jay, it's me. Now we're having a conversation. Stay where you are. Look around. Let me know what you have up there. Because he's up. I have a light now and I look down and there's a couple of guys down there. I don't even know. Did I mention with the radios that I heard the guys? I don't know what I said, what I didn't say.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Originally you said the walkies didn't work. So you now they started working in close proximity?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Okay. I'll get to that in a second.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Sure.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Our first thing is we're calling, we're getting no one. There's a door down there. I can see a door. It's intact. There's rubble, I don't know, a foot, 18 inches high, but it's movable rubble. So I tell the guys let's move that, let's force that door, maybe it's a way out.

We get a tool from up above and we start working on this door. I tell them to stay there. I climbed down to them and we work on this door. We get the door open and it's just nothing. It's just, when I say nothing, it's everything, you know, it's all rubble, debris. We're not getting out that way. So I call up to Jay, Jay, any way out up by you? He says I don't think so. He looks around. There is nothing. So we're in here for a long haul. When I hit one channel, I'm hearing a voice calling Maydays also and he's hurt. I think I said that.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Yes.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: So every time I'm going through and I hit that channel, I'm trying to calm him down because I know he's not good and just every time I hit that channel I talk to him for a minute, calm down, don't call anymore, we'll call. He wants me to come get him. It's impossible for me to come get him. But I don't want him talking.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Right.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: He's confirmed. He's one of the confirmed. They recovered his body. I don't want to say the name.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Sure. Because you just couldn't get to him.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: So I'm doing the Maydays and finally at one point someone answers me, but then it goes away. I don't hear him. About a half hour later I'm going again through channels and another voice answers me. The Fire Department is a very small community, especially the chiefs' rank. Every chief just about knows every other chief. A guy answers me, 12th Battalion, the upper east side. I recognize the voice. It's a guy I consider a friend of mine, a good friend now, Mark Foran.

Mark, this is Richie. We're down here. We're trapped. I give him all the particulars. And I hear him talking to someone else who I also know but I can't hear him responding, so I'm hearing a

one-way conversation, and I hear Mark talking and he says I got a company, Ladder 43. He tells Pat McNally, Pat, I got 43. I'm going to get Richie. And I could hear the determination in his voice, you know, they know we're here and they're coming for us.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Right there you must have --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: It was reassuring, but also my mind is racing a thousand miles a minute. I also know there's 105 stories on top of us. I said even if they get right on top of us...

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Weeks.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: You know, they're not going to get to us.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Please welcome back the battalion chief of Battalion 11, the 11th Battalion of New York City's Fire Department, Mr. Rich Picciotto, to the show.

You know, yesterday, when we finished talking, and I think now all of America is sitting on pins and needles waiting to hear how come you're sitting here? A couple hours buried under 105 stories. Did it flash at you that maybe your wish you had of going quickly --

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes. Without a doubt. I'm thinking it's just physically impossible to get to us. Even though we're alive, it's physically impossible to get to us. One of my best friends, a guy I know for years, Jay Jonas, we still haven't seen each other, but we're in voice contact and he has his whole company up there. You know, a little bit, I see a couple of his guys, but I don't see him yet. But we're in voice contact and we're examining our options. We didn't have many options, but we're looking, you know, what could we do? What could we do?

And we could do nothing except call on the radio, and I contacted again, or he contacted me, Mark Foran, battalion chief, and he was coming to get us. And two hours, two and a half hours, I'm laying on my back, I can't look up because of the lights, but I'm laying on my back and it's black, because we're trying to conserve, and all of a sudden, I think it's an optical illusion, I see a little bit of light. I think I'm hallucinating and I yell to Jay, Jay, do you see that? And we're all going through the same thing. So all of a sudden, yeah, yeah. So I say what is it? And as we're looking at it, we're just staring at it, it's getting brighter and brighter.

What it was, was a small opening, but all that dust, that big cloud of dust that everyone sees, that hung there, and the smoke because the buildings were on fire. There was a small opening, but the dust and the dirt and the smoke was obscuring it. It was black for hours. But now all of a sudden --

MONTEL WILLIAMS: It starts to clear.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: -- the light shines. I mean, this is like a movie, but it's the truth. I say, Jay, you know, I call to Jay, Jay, do you think you could get to that? And his guys are banged up. But now I'm yelling to Mark, Mark, I can see light. I can see light. I'm shining my light out. The World Trade Center is a 16-acre complex. During the middle of the day, I'm shining a flashlight out a window. No one is going to see that. But my mind is going. I say great. Ten hours from now it's going to be dark, or eight hours, whatever, it's going to be. I don't know what time it is. It's going to be dark and then they'll see that light. So we're saved, you know, it's just a matter of time, but they're going to get to us.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So, Rich, the light is shining through, you've notified people on the outside that you were at least seeing light, so they are probably feeling a little bit better and thinking that, okay, we have men down, but there has got to be a way to get to them, or what did they say to you?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: I'm notifying one person. A lot of people aren't hearing this. So I start climbing up, and when I get to that light, I get out that and then it opens up to a lot. I mean, I'm looking out on the rubble field. I'm looking out at a big area, almost the size of a football field, and, hallelujah, we're out of here. I mean, I got hurt people, you know. So I called Jay up, Jay, get up here, you've got to get up here, you know, we're out. We're out.

We're out, but if you looked at it, it just looks like a pile of rubble. There's piles of rubble all over the place. We're just a pile of rubble, but we're in this pile, you know, there's piles all over the place. From the bottom of the rubble field, we're about, you know, it's a guesstimate, 30, 40 feet high. So now I bring my siren up again, my bullhorn, Mark, I'm out. Listen to this. Listen. So he hears it. I said come get us.

Fifteen minutes later, no one is there. Over an hour, hour and a half later, we're in contact and, I mean, I could see an area, like I said, the size of a football field.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: And nobody comes.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: And not a single person.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: When do they finally get to you?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Mark and 43 Truck go through I don't know if it was 5 or 7 World Trade Center, a building that also partially collapsed but was burning. Now, there's no lines on this building, nothing to put the fire out, but they're coming through the building to get to us.

Finally, on the other side of the rubble field, I see one guy and, you know, I'm ecstatic. But I climbed down. It takes a long time and I eventually get to the rubble field. Like I said, the building that they came through is on fire. They're getting called back. You've got to get back now or we're not going to get through. The guys go. A few minutes later they come back. We can't get back that way. The way they came they can't get back.

The expression out of the frying pan into the fire? That building, the fire is intensifying. We're out in the open but acrid smoke is hitting us.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Heat.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Burning my eyes. The doctor told me that there's burns like peppered, there's little holes burnt into the cornea. He says it's going to be fine; it's just a matter of time.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Your wife is here. Debbie, come up here.

We're going to welcome Debbie to the show. You can have my seat. Have my seat. This is Debbie Picciotto, who is Rich's wife. Guys, give it up.

(Applause.)

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Debbie, this entire time this is happening, you know this man.

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So you know he's going to be one of the guys that went running down there as soon as he found out something was wrong.

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: Actually, there's got to be something wrong with me. After 28 years of him being on the Fire Department, I have like this block and I don't think of him fighting fires. I don't know whether it's a protective mechanism or what. I think of him going in and being with his men and they're all friends, and I'm worried about my daughter, who goes to Pace down there. I don't worry about him. I think that he's not going to be there for a while. I didn't think that he would be there that soon. So I didn't know that he was trapped.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Did you try to call him?

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: No.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So during that whole four hour period of time --

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: I kept saying to myself --

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You're calling your daughter.

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: I was trying to call her. I said he must be very busy. He's directing people. I don't expect to hear from him. And she called me and said daddy's down there, and I said, no, Lisa. He's very busy. That's why he hasn't called us. You know, daddy's fine. But he wasn't.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: I would say I know you guys already recognize him as the hero that he is, do you not?

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: He's unbelievable. I hadn't been able to really listen to the story start to finish until about five days afterwards because I just kept getting up and leaving. I couldn't believe what he went through. He's definitely an unbelievable hero.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Please welcome Rich's family, his wife Debbie and his children, Lisa and Steven, to the show. Lisa, you contacted your dad, right, or how did that happen?

LISA PICCIOTTO: No. What happened was I go to Pace University, so I was down there, too, and one of my roommates, her father is also a fireman. She heard from her father and I didn't hear from my father. So I was just waiting and I was evacuated and I was put on a boat to Staten Island. So I was in Staten Island. So I didn't hear.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: But for you, just like your mom, I mean, he's a battalion chief. You probably thought in the back of your mind, well, he's just busy, he's just busy, or did you think there was something wrong?

LISA PICCIOTTO: There was no doubt in my mind that he was there. I didn't know to the extent that he was there, but I knew he was there. And to be perfectly honest, I thought he was the first guy there because that's just the personality that he is.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: So, therefore, when you saw the image of that building coming down, what did you think?

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Not the image.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You were there and saw it.

LISA PICCIOTTO: I was there.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: She saw the second plane hit and saw both buildings come down live.

LISA PICCIOTTO: Right. I think that my scariest thing is when I saw on the news they said 200-plus firemen are missing. That's when I just lost it.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Is that when it hit you too, Steven.

STEVEN PICCIOTTO: Well, I got sent home from school and I didn't know what was going on, and my mom was at work. So we were all in different places, none of us were together, and I was the first to find out everything. Someone came to the door and said that your father is out and he's okay and he didn't know anything else. So I was like, well, what do you mean, he's out? He's out of what? What happened? And he's like, well, I don't know the story. And this is at like 3:30, 3:45, and he's been trapped since 9:00 o'clock. So we knew nothing for that long. And I got a phone call from Mrs. Jonas and she told me the whole story.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: That's Jay, the guy I was with.

STEVEN PICCIOTTO: She told me the whole story, and then I called my mom at work and I told her.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: That's when you first found out about it?

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: That's when I lost it.

STEVEN PICCIOTTO: That's when she first found out.

LISA PICCIOTTO: So I'm on Staten Island and I still don't know because I'm taking the ferry over.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: You've got to ask her what she did before she went because I'm very proud of her.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: What did you do before you went out of Staten Island?

LISA PICCIOTTO: Well, the thing is, before we were able to get out of Staten Island, we were so antsy, we had to do something. So my roommates and I, we wanted to go donate blood, but the line was just phenomenal already and downtown was being totally evacuated, so they kind of turned us away and that's when we were pushed on the ferry boats.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You went ahead and donated blood later.

LISA PICCIOTTO: Yes.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Absolutely. It is a miracle that he is here, but I would venture to say America now realizes the hero that he was and is. I think, Rich, just your coming up out of that hole is what inspired so many people to keep working so hard because they realized there is a survivor, somebody survived, and I would say that's the double piece to your being a hero because there are people down there working so hard.

DEBBIE PICCIOTTO: So hard.

MONTEL WILLIAMS: Just because they saw you.

CHIEF PICCIOTTO: Yes. And I went to visit, you know, I lost guys in my company, I lost guys, I can't go to work because of my eyes, so I had to do something. So I'm going to visit these wives and all the wives out there, I'm trying to give them hope, you know, I survived, but realistically, you know, at this point, you know, there's still hope, there's hope, but I want people to be realistic that it's very slim. But you have to help these wives now. They need help.

File No. 9110212

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER DAVID PREZANT

Interview Date: November 14, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MS. ROM: Today's date is November 14, 2001. The time now is 1608 hours. We're here to conduct a World Trade Center interview with Dr. David Prezant, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the New York City Fire Department. We are located right now in 9 Metrotech on the second floor in the BHS conference room.

Q. Dr. Prezant, what I'd like you to do is if you could tell me how you first learned about the World Trade Center disaster and we'll take it from there.

A. I was at home doing some paperwork earlier that morning and on the TV heard that the World Trade Center had been hit by the first plane and then actually saw on TV that it was hit by a second plane. One of my roles as Deputy Chief Medical Officer is to respond to all major incidents where firefighters may be injured in a life-threatening manner and, of course, to assist EMS during major civilian operations.

So I immediately got into the car and drove down. I approached the area from the West Side Highway going south and came to the site and parked on West Street several blocks north. I would say, maybe four or five blocks north of where the command center was at that time. I then walked in my civilian clothes to the command center, which at the time was on West Street

across the street from the World Trade Center. I guess across the street from the north building, roughly, by that underground garage where they evacuated to when the first tower collapsed.

I reported to the command center. I told them that I was there. At the time I saw Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan. I believe I saw the Fire Commissioner's Assistant, Captain Goldbach. I'm not a hundred percent certain of that. I saw Commissioner Fitzpatrick there. I saw several EMS Chiefs.

After about five or so minutes, I realized that I was not being of any help to anybody. At that time no firefighters had been injured. The building had not collapsed. I remember overhearing several Chiefs saying that a collapse was not possible. I then volunteered to the EMS Chiefs that I could be useful in helping them.

So the EMS Chiefs -- I forget his name. I can't remember whether it was Chief Gombo or Chief Goldfarb. I can't remember. They suggested that I report to Chief Welch, who was immediately outside the south tower on West Street, and set up another EMS triage site for civilians and firefighters that would be coming out of that tower.

I reported there. It was only a matter of walking about a block and crossing the street. I remember both during the time of walking towards the command center and then walking from the command center to my new area of assignment occasional noise from falling debris. One of these occasional sort of minor noises from falling debris wound up being a civilian. A Fire Marshal who was next to me remarked to me do you hear that particular thud? That's the thud people make. That's the noise people make when people hit the sidewalk. That directed my attention a little bit more that some of this debris might be people. I saw one or two people hit the sidewalk, obviously dead, nothing to do for them, so I did not direct my attention towards them.

I continued to walk towards the south tower. I was immediately outside the south tower on West Street when Chief Welch -- it could be Chief Wells. I'm not certain how to spell or pronounce his name.

Q. What did he look like?

A. An older gentleman, about my size or a little bit taller. He knows that I was there, so if he is interviewed, he would know my name. It's a personality problem I have with names. But I believe it's Chief

Wells. Gray hair, cut short, I believe. He was in full EMS uniform, so it was hard to tell.

But he remarked to approximately six ambulances, most of them not New York City ambulances, that they should empty out their equipment and we would all walk to the middle of the West Street area, which is, as you know, approximately a six- to eight-lane street. So we were on the lane almost right near the sidewalk outside the south tower, and he said let's walk to the middle of the street. We'll get all of the ambulance equipment together. We'll pool it. I'm Chief Wells. I'm in charge of the EMS operation here. Dr. Prezant is in charge of the medical operation for this triage area.

As they were getting their stuff ready and we were all sort of walking very slowly to the middle of the street, I noticed that everybody in front of me all of a sudden started to run away from the south tower. We were not looking at the south tower. We were looking towards the river now because we were walking to the middle of the street. But everybody in front of me all of a sudden started to run. I remember the first thought in my mind was what a bunch of wimps. What are they running from? There's been a little bit

of noise ever since we've gotten here and there will be a little bit more noise and a little bit more debris and we've got a job to do.

But within seconds, they were running and I started to run. To this day, no matter how I stretch my mind and no matter how many firefighters I talk to, what I think most about is a universal concept that there was not a lot of noise with this collapse. A little bit of noise. I don't know why that is. Maybe because it imploded inwards. Maybe because the noise was dampened by other buildings around it. It was not a lot of noise. It was enough noise for all of these people to start running, but not enough noise for me to be all that concerned. I have to say I ran because they ran.

Q. Who were you with when you first started to run?

A. This group of EMS people that were setting up this triage area.

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. No. And I wouldn't because I would never know any of those people. Those were non-New York City Fire. They were volunteer ambulances or non-911 or private ambulances from hospitals and I can't remember

which hospitals.

Q. And you began to run in which direction?

A. So we ran away from the tower towards the river. We continued to run in the direction we had been walking in, away from the tower, across West Street towards the Hudson River. As we were running, I started to get hit by debris. I was hit time and time again by debris. A lot of debris fell on my head, on my back, on my legs, on my right leg, right knee and left hip.

As I was running, my goal now was to get across the street and to get underneath the most southern pedestrian bridge. There were three bridges that crossed West Street, one of them very north and then two of them right near the towers. On your map you only show the two that are near the towers. It was the most southern bridge, so I was outside of what you call here...

(Pause.)

A. I was on the corner originally of Liberty and West Street, not on Liberty but on West Street itself, right outside the World Trade Center buildings, the southern tower. Then I ran underneath that pedestrian bridge. By the time I was knocked to the ground, I was

nearly entirely across West Street and I was under the pedestrian bridge, but I had not gotten past the street. I was still on the street itself.

I was completely prone, lying down with stuff still falling on me. Some thoughts came to my mind, perhaps as I was running, perhaps when I was finally lying down flat. The first thought was that I had come here to help people and I had helped absolutely no one yet and what a complete, total waste of my time to get killed here. The second thought was that I wondered whether my wife would know whether I was here or whether anyone would know that I was here to find me. The third thought was that it was taking a long time to die and there was a possibility that I was not going to die and what I should do is to emulate firefighters.

I should digress for a moment to say that I'm not a firefighter. I have no experience with collapses. I'm not a mind worker, anything like that. But as a medical officer here, I often talk to firefighters and I speak to them about their smoke inhalation events.

Somehow, in the back of my mind, I have heard firefighters say that you really have to find an air pocket and that's a main goal. So I had this crazy

idea that I should create an air pocket and that, if I'm lying completely flat, there is no air pocket. So I used all of my strength to get up on my hands and knees in a sort of doggy position. I had this crazy thought, like I was saying, that underneath me in this area that I was protecting in this doggy position would be a pocket of air that I could then breathe off of.

Now, thinking back, this was a pretty stupid idea because construction material would be filling in that pocket, but that's the thought I had at the time.

So I worked to get into that position and things were still falling and I struggled to maintain that position. Then ultimately the collapse stopped and I was buried completely in construction material. Now my goal was to, obviously, get out of this position.

Unknown to me while this was happening but now obvious to me is that there were two large plywood sheets that had created a sort of roof above me. I was coughing tremendously. I was gagging. There was all sorts of particulate matter in my throat and in my eyes and my eyes were burning. My throat was burning. I was coughing. I was choking.

Then I felt or saw or pushed these two

plywood boards. Luckily, by moving them, I actually really did not have to spend much time digging myself out because by moving those two plywood boards I was able to have enough space so that I could get out of this debris and I could stand up. I was surprised that I could stand up. My right leg was hurting me a lot; my left leg a little bit. I had a lot of minor bruises on my back that were bothering me. I had like some bumps on the back of my head that I sort of felt.

But the main thing was that, when I got up, it was completely black. It was blacker than midnight. I could not see the sky. The air was like syrupy charcoal paste. Again, coughing, gagging, eyes irritating, hard to breathe, and the only thing that I could think of at the time that could explain this was that I was still buried. I felt that the street had not collapsed underneath me, so I knew I wasn't subterranean. But I felt that the only way that all this particulate matter could be creating this total blackness is that a roof had been created, so that maybe the collapse had created a tunnel above ground, a sort of mine structure above ground.

So I had one goal now, which was to walk in the opposite direction of the Trade Center, to walk

downtown. I had not lost my orientation. I knew when I stood up that, although I couldn't see, I knew that to the left of me was downtown and to the right of me would be north and behind me would be the World Trade Center and in front of me would be the Hudson River. I had a full sense of that orientation.

Q. Were there other persons around you?

A. I'll get to that.

So I got out of some more debris, I started walking, and my goal was that I would walk downtown, walk away from this area and get to wherever this tunnel ended and then I would start digging and making noise. I was 100 percent convinced that, if I made enough noise, firefighters would come and rescue me.

While walking, almost immediately after standing up and walking a few feet, I came across several individuals. I came across an EMT who was a New York City Fire Department EMT. I don't know his name. But he knows me and he's seen me since then and has remarked that we survived this. We found to the left of us a civilian with a broken leg. To the left of us would be a little bit towards the tower; to the right of us would be a little bit towards the river. To the right of us was a civilian with apparently an

injured arm.

Both of these people we found by accident. I'm not trying to say that we did anything heroic. It was we found them. We tripped over them practically. We offered them the assistance of helping to stand them up and to evacuate as a group rather than as individuals. So we focused their attention on following us and we helped them, certainly the broken leg guy to walk, but it was not our goal to rescue these people and it was not an act of heroism to rescue them. It was rather, we were walking out; we might as well take them with us.

We then came across, as we walked maybe a half a block or so, a hysterical civilian, an overweight woman, I think she was African-American, crying, screaming, wanting to sit down on one of the concrete embankments on the side of West Street that's closest to the river. Again, not doing anything heroic -- someone else might have stopped and comforted her -- I had my typical approach to her, which actually worked, but not to any credit of my own. I told her that she has one choice; she can get up and follow us or we're going to leave her behind. We had to remind her of her one choice on several occasions, but she

complied. As a group, myself, the EMT, the two civilians plus this third hysterical civilian, we were able to walk several blocks down West Street towards what would be the ferry.

Within a block or two walking, we came across a supervisory Fire Marshal. Again, I don't know his name. He remarked that he had survived by jumping underneath a car and that the car had been completely flattened, but he was able to crawl out. So now this group of three civilians, one EMT, one Fire Marshal and myself, we continued to walk. I was still under the concept that we would walk and make noise and firefighters would rescue us.

I can't tell you how many minutes. It certainly wasn't hours. It certainly wasn't 20 minutes. It was minutes. I can't tell you how many blocks. It wasn't ten blocks. I can't tell you the blocks. Two? Four? The black sky that I had only envisioned could be possible with a mine or a tunnel that had been created, the black sky became gray, and as we continued to walk it became less gray. It never turned to white, but it became gray, and it became obvious for the first time that we were never in a tunnel, a mine; that this blackness was just by the

collapse. It was that thick of particulate matter.

I haven't seen any videotapes on TV or any videotapes that the Fire Department has that have captured that. The videotapes show that gray cloud; sometimes it looks like a whitish-gray cloud. But if you were there, you saw that it was completely black. I saw one videotape that some doctor took on CNN. I don't know why any doctor would have a video camera with him, so I've always wondered about that. But anyway, there's a moment in that videotape where it goes black and you sort of think he dropped the camera. But having been there I know that, if you stayed at ground zero, you were completely covered in an area that looked black.

That's important to me as a lung physician, knowing what I inhaled, how it affected me and how it affected the members. If I can take anything positive out of this experience, it was being able to experience it firsthand and survive.

Anyway, we continued to walk down West Street and about halfway between -- and this is just an approximation, but about halfway between the collapse and the South Ferry, we came upon a mobile command unit, Fire Department, and they I believe had

approached from Brooklyn. None of their phones worked. Their radio barely worked with headquarters but not with any of the other command centers. I was convinced the entire command center was dead and was very worried that I would be one of the more ranking Fire officials left because I have no fire experience whatsoever and wouldn't know what to do or what to tell anyone.

But I did have good enough sense that this mobile command center should not sit where it was. So I directed them to follow us. Some of us got in; some of us continued to walk. I believe I continued to walk. We went down to the ferry hoping that we would meet other people.

We did meet other firefighters and officers, one fire officer, a captain. Again, I don't know his name and never will.

Q. Can you describe him?

A. No. Older gentleman. I really can't describe him. But he had grouped together maybe ten or 20 firefighters and told them that they would get whatever tools they could find and they were going to progress up West Street and find whatever they could and start to dig, and I thought that that showed a

great command presence.

He went and did his work. I stayed with the command center. Then civilians were all around the South Ferry area. Everybody was coughing, gagging, irritating, trying to get some water, rinse this out, rinse that out.

Then, from another direction, I can't remember where, Chief Nigro, Chief of Operations at the time, who we would find out later was the surviving highest-ranking Fire officer, approached this area. I can't begin to tell you the sense of total relief knowing that a high-ranking Fire officer had survived and that somebody would know what type of commands to give and what to do.

I also saw Dr. Kelly approaching. I can't remember whether she came with Chief Nigro or whether I saw her at the same time. There was a captain with her.

Q. They were approaching from what direction?

A. I can't really remember. I can't remember. It was great to see Dr. Kelly and find out that she had survived. I had not known that she was even there at the time because I had not seen her when I was at the command center. I had not seen Chief Nigro at the

command center. He had not been at the command center. He had been at the peripheral command center or had been walking around. I think he told me later he was walking around the towers to see it from another angle.

So once Chief Nigro was there, obviously, he's in command. He knew what to do. He told us that we would walk back to the Trade Center. He directed the mobile command center to go in whatever direction he told them to go in because their phones were still not working and their radio was barely working. We walked, Dr. Kelly, myself, Chief Nigro, his aide and the captain that had helped Dr. Kelly. We all walked uptown but not up West Street. We walked sort of towards the Brooklyn Bridge a little bit and then made a left and walked sort of almost up Broadway. In fact, maybe that's what we did do to approach the World Trade Center by Broadway.

As we did, we then made a decision that we, Dr. Kelly and myself, would set up a triage center. Interestingly enough, it was selected as being the UFOA headquarters, which I believe is 254 Broadway or 225 Broadway, something like that. But we decided on the lobby of that building because there was a pharmacy, a

Duane Reade, that we could use for supplies and to set up a triage center.

I've got to interrupt you now because I've got to go to this meeting. I have a 4:30 meeting. I have to go.

MS. ROM: Okay.

DR. PREZANT: I'm happy to restart again tomorrow.

MS. ROM: All right. What I'm going to do, I'm just going to identify myself as Patricia Rom from the Bureau of Investigations and Trials. We're going to conclude this interview at this moment so that you can go to your meeting. The time now is 1637 hours and we'll regroup and we'll redo this interview at your next earliest convenience and we'll just pick up from where you left off.

DR. PREZANT: I know this story well because I've given it several times. That's why it's so well rehearsed. So I'll know to start at the time we were at the UFOA building and started to build this triage center, which is an interesting story in itself. So I look forward to it.

MS. ROM: Okay.

DR. PREZANT: Thank you very much.

MS. ROM: Thank you so much.

DR. PREZANT: I'm going to apologize for having to leave.

(Interview adjourned to November 27, 2001, at which time the interview of Dr. Prezant continued as follows:)

MR. CUNDARI: Today is November 27, 2001. I'm George Cundari with Patricia Rom. We're here with Dr. David Prezant, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, for a continuation of the interview that they had on November 14.

Q. Dr. Prezant, can you just tell us the continuation of what happened that day?

A. So we had gotten to the point where we were setting up a triage center in the lobby of the building where the union, the UFOA has their headquarters upstairs. It wasn't selected because of the union being in that building. It was just an interesting concept. It actually was selected because there was a Duane Reade in the lobby, which we were able to open and utilize many of their supplies. Our concept at that moment was that we would be having a very minimal medical intervention, just bandages and that type of stuff, and then move them to whatever emergency room had not been overwhelmed by this event.

As the moments progressed, and it probably was within less than a half an hour, we were joined by several other medical officers, Dr. Garvey, Dr. Ortiz, Dr. Maloney, and within an hour, by Dr. Manner. These are all Fire Department Medical Officers who came in to

help out with what we thought would be an overwhelming number of injured firefighters, EMS, civilians, et cetera.

Also, within that hour, one of the advantages of New York City, at least on days like that day, is the tremendous number of physicians that tend to live and work in the area and nurses as well. Our goal had been to set up a very minimal, stabilize-and-then-move-on-to-an-emergency-room-type triage center. But happenstance would have it that there was a convention of surgeons a block away who then joined us and we wound up with, you know, estimated numbers, six vascular surgeons, four orthopedic surgeons, four general trauma surgeons and nurses.

So we had the staff to actually set up a true MASH unit, and we had no idea what we would be seeing. We had all of the surgical personnel, so it seemed like a waste to not utilize them. But we had no surgical supplies. We called one or two of the nearby emergency rooms, who, although they had not seen a lot of patients yet, were also worried that they would be overwhelmed. So they would not give up any of their supplies.

One of the surgeons who was there worked out of Special Surgery, which is far north of this event and which also doesn't have a very active emergency room. They tend to be a sort of tertiary care center. So he used a working cell phone to call that hospital and have supplies brought to the lobby. We sent an ambulance up to get them. The ambulance got back and we had tons of surgical supplies.

We then separated out the lobby into sections where we would have a surgery area, a psychological area, an area for cardiac events, and an area for eye irritation, asthma, smoke inhalation and that type of stuff. As doctors always do in these events, we set this up so that there would be a tremendous amount of room for surgery. You need a lot of room to do that stuff and very little room for eye irritation because how much room do you need and it's not really all that interesting. Dr. Feirstein, the psychiatrist from the Fire Department, joined us shortly and he was in charge of the psychological area.

It wound up that we didn't have many injuries at all and we, like many of the emergency rooms, all the emergency rooms, with the exception of the first few injuries, had no injuries. The reports that you

hear about on the radio and TV like St. Vincent's saw a thousand patients, they saw a thousand people with eye irritation, and we were the same way. All of the space we had for surgery was completely unutilized and the small, little area that we had for eye irritation was overwhelmed.

Q. How big an area was this in the lobby?

A. The lobby was not large because this lobby was really just a feeding area for the Duane Reade and for a series of elevators that took you upstairs and for a back restaurant. We converted the back restaurant into the psychological area and a surgery area. We used each one of the elevators, I think there were four or six elevators, as a separate patient examining room. Then we used the sort of feeding area in front of these elevators for the eye irritation and the smoke inhalation. There was a shoe store which we ultimately opened as well which we were going to use. It wound up we didn't have a lot of patients.

Q. Had the second tower collapsed at this point?

A. Oh, yes. The first and the second tower collapsed within minutes of each other. This evacuation that we did, walking down to the South Ferry and then meeting Chief Nigro, all of that was after the

second tower collapsed. Tower 7 had not collapsed. So this would be late morning, early afternoon. That's an important thing because that moves me to my next point of where we are.

We started hearing some noise. There were tons of firefighters, by the way, outside. They had set up one of their command centers, not immediately outside but maybe like a block away on Broadway. So there were tons of firefighters there. That's where they were doing a staging area where the recall was happening and firefighters were reporting there. But it was more than just that noise. It was some noise, some rumbling or something. There were rumors that were circulating. People, you know, the doctors and nurses would go out of the triage area to take a break, even though we didn't have a lot of patients, just to sort of walk around the street in front and see what was going on. So maybe that was a source for rumors.

But anyway, more to the point, a rumor started to develop that tower 7 was going to fall on us or nearby us. Having just lived through the collapse and having Dr. Kelly just live through the collapse with both of us getting buried, this was not a very pleasing feeling. It really does make me understand a

lot about psychological stress that can occur in these events because I would not have had the same worry about this if I hadn't just come through one of them.

We went outside to speak to the Chief, the head Chief. His name is Chief Haring. Great guy. But he said, you know, it's not going to be a problem. Tower 7 may collapse. It's not going to be anywhere near here. It's not going to be a problem. But we were really concerned about this.

On the other side of Broadway maybe a block or two north is this park by City Hall. So some of the doctors got it in their mind that they would not want to be stuck in this building if there was a collapse. They didn't quite believe that there wasn't going to be a collapse and it wasn't going to fall on us. I really couldn't prevent them because I was a little worried about this myself. They decided and we sort of all decided that we would take half the supplies and move out into that park.

By the time we were about done with this, we interacted with Chief Haring again. He basically was incredulous and said: "What are you crazy? You've moved into the collapse zone, and if this collapse occurs, the dust cloud is going to knock out that

entire park. You're going to be useless there. You've made it worse."

Q. Are we talking about the park by the Winter Garden?

A. I'm talking about the park in front of Pace University.

Q. So this is where you are, Liberty?

A. No. We're on Broadway now.

Q. City Hall Park is over here.

A. This is City Hall Park. It would be right there.

Q. At City Hall Park?

A. Right. That's what we moved into. Pace is right here. So we're somewhere around here. We moved into this park. We now found out that we've done a stupid thing, but we are too nervous to move back to that building. So we convince Chief Haring that he needs to assign us to a different building. He sent some officers with us and we found that a place that would be very useful for us would be Pace University.

So we got everything up out of our building and out of the park and we moved into Pace University. It actually made a much nicer triage area because, A, there was a lot more space, and, B, we had learned

about this eye irritation and so we gave more space for the eye irritation area. But these are all volunteer doctors and nurses that set up the first triage area, picked up everything, carried it themselves to the second area and set up the second triage area.

About midway into setting up physically the second triage area, hanging the IV bags and everything, a tremendous noise occurs, and it's so loud that everybody rushes to the rear of the Pace University building, all the doctors, all the nurses. When the noise was over, we went to the front. The dust cloud from tower 7, just like Chief Haring said, wiped out that park. If we had had any supplies there, any doctors there, they wouldn't have been killed. I mean, it wasn't that massive the debris that fell on the park, but they would have been useless. The dust cloud went all the way up to the door of Pace University, up the stairs, across the street, right up to the door, the lobby door.

We stayed there waiting for patients and very few showed up. Around 8:30 we closed up that area and then were available just going around in the car to see firefighters and et cetera. I'll tell you just one other interesting anecdote.

We're getting ready to close and a lot of doctors and nurses sort of -- one of the problems with these events is volunteers. I mean, they're fantastic and they really mean the best, but a lot of times they'd be better off going to their hospitals rather than coming to the scene. One of the benefits of a triage area is at least it gets them out of the street where they might be utilized and at least they're safer. We had a lot of people and it was really beautiful.

But anyway, as we're closing, a young woman in surgical scrubs comes rollerblading into Pace University, into the auditorium where we were, and she says I'm here. I'm ready. I'm ready to go. I said to her, I'm sorry you came all the way down here by rollerblades, but we're getting ready to close. There are unfortunately a lot of dead but not too many wounded. I'm happy to have you here and I'm glad you made the effort to be here, but there just aren't that many patients and I'm really sorry that you had to come down. I'm just trying to be nice to her because she's done all this effort.

She says no, no, no, no. You don't understand. I'm not a physician. I'm a veterinarian.

So in the back of my mind, and I'm certain she saw it on my face, I'm looking at her and I'm saying to myself, oh, this is some liberal nut job veterinarian who has come to save the parakeet and we've got thousands and thousands of dead people and she's here to save a parakeet. I need this like a hole in the head. But of course I don't say that to her. I say, well, you know, we're not in charge of the parakeets and we're closing and I'm sorry you came down here.

She said no. I'm not here for the parakeets, all right? This is a catastrophe. They have rescue dogs here. There's a federal mandate that, when there are a certain number of rescue dogs on site, there has to be a veterinarian present to keep them working for a long period of time; otherwise you have to take them off every whatever.

Now I felt like an idiot and I realized that she was of tremendous value and I sent her over to the ESU police force, who I'm certain were able to utilize her services.

Q. So, really, after you moved to Pace, you didn't see many civilians walking by you and not many people at all?

A. It was just like a few.

Q. A desolate area?

A. There were tons of firefighters and police officers and civilians, most of them coming in for an eye wash or to get out of the dust area for a while, but we didn't really deal with any wounded or any chest pain or any significant smoke inhalation. The same was true for the emergency room that was very nearby, which is...

Q. Downtown Hospital?

A. Downtown Hospital. They really were empty.

Q. So basically you were protected from the dust clouds?

A. No. I was buried.

Q. You were buried?

A. I was buried. You missed tape 1.

Q. Sorry.

A. No problem.

No, I was buried. I looked like a definite walking wounded. Definite. My pants were ripped to shreds, blood all over me. It didn't help my hairstyle, which is usually stressed to begin with.

Q. It sounds like a very good triage area you set up there.

A. Yes.

Q. It seems like you had everything going for you.

A. Yes. It's just...

Q. Unfortunately, there was nobody to treat.

A. Yes. Also, there was a very interesting triage concept when the building first collapsed, which was unknown to us, and I think, you know, I don't know, but I think unknown to EMS. That is that a lot of people were evacuated to Staten Island and to Jersey City, including many of our firefighters. So we had nearly -- I don't have the exact number in front of me right now, but 12 or 15 firefighters that were actually hospitalized at Jersey City Medical Center, two of them critically ill. They've both recovered very well now. The others with just fractures also are recovering well. There were tons of civilians brought to Liberty State Park, which then was manned by the Jersey City Medical Center, and to several areas in Staten Island because ferries were just picking up wounded and taking them and some fire boats and some police boats were as well.

Rather than taking them around the bend to Bellevue, which, if somebody was to sort of think about what would have been happening, that would have been

the way you would have thought boats would have been dealing with this; they would have gone around the bend to Bellevue or around the bend and then up the river to New York Hospital-Cornell. One would never have imagined them going to Staten Island or Jersey City. I believe that that was based on just the total concept of the city is being attacked. Manhattan may not exist for long.

Q. Besides a face-to-face with Chief Haring, did you have any radio communications with any other Chiefs? Did they know where you were?

A. No. We had the communications with the mobile center, which we were unclear of how much communication was going on from them due to technical difficulties. We had communication with Chief Nigro, who left us when we got to Chief Haring, and then our communications were totally with Chief Haring. But everybody knew that this triage center existed.

Q. It was known?

A. Yes.

Q. But most of your communication was face to face, not over the radio or anything like that?

A. The way Chief Haring communicated I'm not too certain.

Q. No. I'm talking about you.

A. Ours was all face to face.

MR. CUNDARI: I'd like to thank you for sitting in on this interview. The time is 1332. This concludes the interview.

DR. PREZANT: My pleasure.

File No. 9110213

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LINDA MCCARTHY

Interview Date: November 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is November 28, 2001. I'm George Cundari, working with Murray Murad. The time is 12 noon. We are here interviewing Linda McCarthy.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command for us.

A. My full name is Linda McNer McCarthy. That's my legal name. My shield is 2259. I'm an EMT and I work for communications as a dispatcher.

Q. Linda, can you please tell us what happened in the events of that tragic day of September 11.

A. Well, I had finished up my 16 hour shift at communications at approximately 8 o'clock in the morning. Then I went outside, said good-bye to some people, got a coffee from I guess the local little -- I always get a little coffee in the shed, the little hut they have there. I went over to Flatbush Avenue where my van was parked.

Now I don't normally go home when I'm doing mutuals. I stay in the city with a friend or wherever. Go over to my old station or wherever. So this day I was heading up to East 9 Street in Manhattan to park my van, alternate side of the street parking, and then figure out what I was going to do for the

afternoon.

I got there probably -- must have been about 9, in the area, maybe quarter to nine or 20 to nine. I'm not quite sure when, but I didn't notice any -- first I see the first tower was 8:48. I didn't see that going on coming over the Manhattan Bridge, so maybe it hadn't happened yet. I think I would have noticed it.

Q. You were going to Manhattan?

A. No, I was probably in Manhattan at that point, coming up Allen or whatever comes off the Manhattan Bridge, up to 9 Street and First Avenue. I parked my van and I puttered around and was waiting, you know, you can't just leave your car parked. I heard a boom. I said gee, that's a pretty loud manhole cover. I saw people on the corner looking up. I said that was pretty close. I can't really leave my van there. You are not supposed to leave it until you have moved it back to the empty side, whatever.

So I went down anyway. I saw the smoke. I said that looks like the World Trade Center area. Someone said that is the World Trade Center, a second plane just hit. I said oh, my god. I was still in uniform. I said I have to go. I have to go down

there. I parked the van on the -- where you are not supposed to park it until 10:30, 10 o'clock. They move it over. I just parked it and I said I'm going down. I just said oh, if they give me a ticket they give me a ticket. I'm going towards Second Avenue. Maybe I will get a cab or something.

I hitched a ride with a Beth Israel ambulance. The people on it I didn't recognize. I know LoriAnn Wienerman. I know different people. No, that's -- Beth Israel is 4 Charlie, but I didn't recognize these people. They weren't the young guys I see sitting by Tompkin's Square Park once in a while in 14, I think it is, 14.

I hitched a ride and a Firefighter jumped on too, still putting on his gear coming off duty. They drove us down there to Church.

Q. You can use the diagram to --

A. We climbed down off their ambulance at Barclay, yes, Barclay and that's not West, West Broadway, and ran down towards West Street. I don't know where the Firefighter went. He went off into the crowd, but we ran together down there. I stopped on the corner of West and Vesey. I looked at the burning buildings. I said I just have my uniform, my helmet

and my outer coat, you know the one with the shiny reflector. I said I don't even know where triage is in those two buildings. I wouldn't know where to go.

But I remember the last bomb when I was an office aide at Woodhull, before I became an EMT, I put on my little buff coat and went down and there was right across the street a triage. I said I'm going there, because I know there is probably going to be a triage.

Q. Upon your arrival did you see a lot of injuries, a lot of people coming up to you, was there a lot of activity going on around you, a lot of ambulances?

A. I was on the side street and I did see a lot of ambulances parked up on Barclay, when we ran down Barclay, a lot of -- parked at angles, but like Hunter and -- you know, different. It wasn't all FDs parked there. Right away. I saw people injured but not severely injured coming towards me and around there people were taking care of them.

There was a lot of bustling right there on that corner. I just had tunnel vision. I said I have to get to where I can get some equipment, so I went straight there into this building, which is 3 World

Trade Center. Right in the front door.

Q. By the Winter Garden?

A. Yes, right to the right of the Winter Garden. Right there in the front, there was a triage and I said I'm here off duty. I wanted to check in. First of all I wanted someone to know I was there and I wanted to be able to get an oxygen tank or a stair chair or something to help.

Some people were out front writing a sign. I guess they were putting triage or something. I heard within 3 minutes or something, this rumbling. Someone said the building is going to come down.

Q. Could you see the towers where you were? Were you able to see the towers?

A. I was right across the street from the towers. I couldn't see two, the south tower, very well. It was kind of blocked by one. Do you see like that?

Q. Uh-huh.

A. So when that one went down. I thought the plane was exploding, or another plane hit. I had no idea it was coming down. But I couldn't see it gone, because I couldn't see it really in the first place with all the smoke. But I saw debris flying at me like

a hurricane. So I didn't know what it was. I heard like an earthquake. I said run for your lives, run.

Everyone that was around me looked up and we all just immediately ran into the building. We were running through the hallways, afraid that whatever it was was going to blow through the windows and blow down the hall. I mean we didn't know (inaudible).

Q. Who was in the command post at this point?

A. Nobody that I worked with before.

Q. No Chiefs, nobody?

A. Chief, but there was no Lieutenant at that point. There were EMTs and paramedics right there. Because I was looking for one. Where is the Lieutenant? They said well, he's not here right here this minute. I'm like okay. What do I do. Count 4 by 4s. No, you just kind of like see what's around and see what you can do with it. Until someone gives me direction I didn't know where they wanted us to go.

So we ran through and we came out the side right here. There was -- oh, once I saw it wasn't flying through the glass at us, we had run down the hallway, I saw some people coming from the stairway, so I just kind of stood in front of the stairway and said to the right, to the right. I was like totally

petrified, but I was directing them around to the right to where the door was that we were all going out.

So there was a lot of people -- obviously there was a triage on the second floor in the front. They were coming down and this was about 20 people. So I took them out the side.

Q. When you said they, what do you mean, civilians or --

A. Civilians and EMTs. We had a triage on the second floor too. Then it turns out the door right here was open, but maybe it was better they were inside for the extra 3 minutes they were walking, because they were breathing fresh air, because when they got outside it was like snowing.

But the initial 5 pounds of stuff that came down, 5 inches or -- that was only -- they had a few extra minutes of breathing in the air that was inside. Then I was walking around here, Vesey and West. I had a stair chair, an oxygen tank and one mask. I had a little respirator I had put on. I was wearing my helmet. I was just kind of walking around, looking for patients to direct them up Vesey towards the river.

I don't know what happened here, but I just knew -- like I saw my friend Pedro, who is a cop at the

9th precinct, covered in dust. Covered-- Velasquez, Officer Pedro Velasquez. He had a partner in there too, somewhere that he was, somewhere near him, but it wasn't -- he just asked me where do I go. I said wherever you go, don't go towards those buildings. Stay away.

He said okay, so I think he wandered up that way, but you know, there was so many people running and I didn't keep in touch, so I was up here. I had a bunch of firefighters on the floor. I was cleaning their eyes with -- I had wheeled someone up to, you know -- someone else took over the 225 pounds of patient, going up this hill in this thick stuff.

Q. Just speak a little louder.

A. Okay. Then I was helping some firefighters rinse their eyes on the corner when I heard the next rumble. I said oh, it's happening again. I don't know what is happening. Run, run, run. So we all ran right in front of -- there is a building here.

Q. North End Street that you are pointing to?

A. Yes, there was a building but it's not there. That's what we ran into, this building, but we stood outside for a while, because there was a lady outside whose pacemaker kept kicking out, kicking off.

She said I have to go that way. She is pointing towards north, towards the school, the high school, and there is a big cloud of something coming around. I said Miss, I don't think so. You won't be able to breathe. In one minute that cloud is going to hit us, wrap us up where we are now. We should go right inside, don't you think. She said okay.

So we went right in the lobby here and other people came in and then they started -- then it was enveloped with this next cloud of smoke, debris and dust. But they started bringing in patients. That lobby, for us, became a triage area away from the front site. I don't remember names, but we had some triage tags, so I was -- eventually when we got all these people on the oxygen trees. They brought the 10 and 12 oxygen hook ups to it. Some people in them, some people rinsing eyes. We had a fire Chief in there with a shoulder and a leg injury. We had a journalist, who had -- I don't know, I can't remember whether -- maybe it was an ankle injury and a civilian that was helping her. A lot of firefighters and police officers. Maybe about 22 patients in there at one point.

Then they said the building is going to blow, the gas line. So everyone has to move on. They said

anyone that can walk has to walk, so these people (inaudible) got up, they were walking, we had to wheel the fire Chief. They were going this way, and we had one man that kept fainting. He said he had escaped being killed and the Firefighter next to him had died, was killed. He wasn't hit or anything, but he was, I guess it was psychogenic shock, because he kept -- even lying down he was fainting. He was syncopizing.

I ended up with just him on a stretcher, with him on an oxygen tank, nobody else, everyone was going forward and piling equipment on stretchers and giving oxygen trees to try and get more and they wheeled the fire Chief away and I had this one young man that just kept going in and out. I said I have to get him to the hospital. He won't last going up. I don't know what's going to happen to him.

So I called out to a paramedic from Cabrini. His name is Slice. I don't know what his real name is. I said Slice can you help, he said what's going on. I said I'm pushing this guy through this thick stuff. I don't have any help. We need to get him to a hospital. Can you help me. He said sure, I will drive, you tech, we will get him to a hospital. So we jumped in -- he had lost his partner in the commotion.

He didn't know where his partner -- his partner is Andy, big guy. Andy was lost, but this man kept fainting. I said please, I don't know what's going on with him.

So we took him and another patient we picked up on the way to Long Island College Hospital. I saw thousands of people walking across. I was busy teching when we were in the -- but coming back, I saw thousands with arm injuries and nothing like life threatening right there, but totally bewildered coming over the bridge. That was cool the way you just went across the bridge. I would have gone to St. Vinny's, the places I know, but it was right there. He said well, yes, that was the closest at that point.

We went back to the scene and we picked up two more, two Port Authority police officers that had been in the mall area directing people. It had been an hour, hour and a half since they -- but it took them an hour to get out. One had an arterial bleed on his arm. That was, you know, controlled or whatever. The other one was, I can't remember his injuries, but we took them to St. Vincent's.

Q. Just a question for you. You started with the rumbling. Did you actually see the north tower

come down?

A. All I saw was -- so much debris was just obscuring my view of the north tower. No. The north tower, I was up here, the second one, right?

Q. Right.

A. I was up at Vesey and I didn't even look up. I know it was the scariest thing. It was like an earthquake and I didn't take the time to look up to see it, because I saw all this debris again. I just said run, run. People were saying people are jumping. Well this little building on the end was obscuring my view at one point from the people jumping.

Once I saw a little something hanging over the side and it looked like a foot, but that's not something I wanted to see. But this building here actually obscured my vision from people jumping, because of the angle I was. It's an 8 story building. It's not a small building, so it was between the fire and that, I hadn't seen (inaudible).

Q. I'm sure it was a very long day for you that day.

A. Right. That's all I did. Around 11 o'clock is probably when we ended up taking the patients up to -- I stayed there all day and all evening too. That's

when we took the patients to St. Vincent's, the two Port Authority police officers. I guess that would be around 11, I'm not sure, approximately. He did find his partner, up at 23rd Street, Chelsea Piers.

Q. Did you ever notify anybody that you were actually operating on the scene that day finally at some point?

A. Yes, I did talk with Sammy, who works with Chief Diggs. This was in the afternoon though when I was trying to get back to do a mutual tour at 4 o'clock. Sammy made said no, you have been here all day, stay here and this will become a straight tour, so the next two tours became straight time for me, so I didn't do a tour 3 and a tour 1 the next night. I just did an all day tour 2 and tour 3 and went home or did what I did.

MR. CUNDARI: All right. Thank you for keeping this time for this interview. This concludes the interview. It is 1220. Thank you very much.

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File No. 9110214

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROGER MOORE

Interview Date: November 29, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. MURAD: Today is November 29, 2001. The time now is 1410 hours, and my name is Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT MOORE: Lieutenant ROGER MOORE of EMS Division 5.

MR. MURAD: This is regarding the events on September 11, 2001, and this interview is being conducted in the home of Lieutenant ROGER MOORE at 146 Sharet Road on Staten Island.

BY MR. MURAD:

Q. Lieutenant Moore, can you give us your events perspective on that day?

A. At that point, at approximately just five minutes before the job originally came in, we were all at the academy for a refresher, and I was with Chief Randy Hirth and Grace Cacciola, lieutenant. We had heard that there was something going on. It came over our pagers that it was a plane.

We went into the administration wing of the academy. Someone had a television on, and we saw it, and we said we should probably go. Chief Hirth was, like, why don't you come with me, because they are probably going to bring everybody from the academy

anyway, and this way they can use you, and we proceeded to get into his car and responded to the scene.

We went down the LIE through the Midtown Tunnel and up onto the west -- no, east side drive. FDR Drive, excuse me. At that point at 42nd Street the police had closed off, so we had to -- a free ride all the way down and could get a bird's eye view.

The second plane had just hit. We continued on, pulled up by -- came up West Street and stopped at the tunnel exit to the Lincoln -- to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We figured that would be the best place to park, because there were so many trucks we didn't want to get blocked in, and a lot of emergency apparatus still responding, so we parked there.

I got a helmet from his trunk and proceeded to walk to the command post, which was located at West and Vesey Street. While we were walking, we noticed three blocks away from the Trade Center that there were body parts scattered all over the roadway, and that there were police officers trying to safeguard the body pieces.

Q. Were they civilians or you think they were from the aircraft?

A. Unknown.

Q. You don't know?

A. I mean, you really had to look to see these -- these looked like hunks of meat. People were torn apart, so we decided to go across the street on the water side and continued up to the command post.

Q. Which was located where?

A. At West and Vesey, the EMS command post. I reported -- the chief, myself, and Grace reported to Chief Gombo, who was in charge of the command post. They had given Chief Gombo -- Chief Gombo had given Chief Hirth an assignment, and they took off.

I was waiting for my assignment. Chief Nigro came over and was talking, along with First Commissioner Feehan, and a few minutes went by. They said, "We are going to give you an assignment." I said, "Okay, I'm here ready to go." The next thing I know, I heard Chief Nigro yell, "Look out, look up."

We all looked up, and the building was on its way down, so we immediately dropped what we were doing and proceeded to run towards the water. That was -- there was a loading dock from the American Express building about 40 feet away.

As we were running, I managed to trip just outside of the loading dock and came down on the ground

and hit the curb, taking out my knees and my left elbow. I was now trying to crawl with one arm. I managed to roll a little bit, and a fireman grabbed and pulled me in. At the same time Lieutenant -- Captain Sickles landed on top of me, but at this time -- and the building was now hitting the ground outside --directly outside.

Essentially, I thought I wasn't in far enough, but at that point, you know, it was -- you couldn't see any more. It was a black, black night, and dust, and dirt and everybody was choking.

After approximately ten minutes went by, you could start to see flashlights and people starting to talk and moving around. They came over to me, and asked, you know, let me help you up, and I couldn't get up. Both legs and the arm were shot. I figured they were broken. They said, "Don't go anywhere."

Commissioner Frank Gribbon came over and said, you know, he was dressed out in his uniform, in his turnout gear, and he said, "I'm going to get a crew, I'll be right back." Two firemen that were there said, you know, "We're not going to leave you," and they saw a stretcher over here, let's grab the stretcher. They put me on the stretcher, and said, you

know, the best thing to do is probably go out through the loading dock into the building and out the back of the building where it's safe.

They said okay. So they wheeled me down to the loading dock, put me up on the loading dock into the building. Just as we are getting ready to get onto the elevator, we heard a high pitched whine and wind and heard thundering crashes. It turned out to be -- we thought -- we originally thought it was the building that we were in was coming down, but it turned out to be the other tower.

Q. That was the north tower?

A. Right.

At that point, the power went out in the building. They switched to their flashlights. After a couple of minutes, the emergency generators, I guess, kicked in or the emergency batteries. Some lights came back on, and they are, like, we need to get out of here, and I said, "Well, I can't walk." They said, "Well, we're not leaving you either," so they got on their radio and managed to get a couple of people that were upstairs. They came down the fire escape inside the stair building. I think it was Stairway F or G. The five of them carried myself and the hundred pound

ambulance stretcher up four flights of stairs.

They had said, you know, "My name is Steve and my name is --" the other guy's name is Gary, and, you know, "We are going the help you." Listening to them talk on the radio, I was able to come to the conclusion that they were from Truck 6. They were saying Truck 6 to whoever, and they were, you know -- those people came down.

They then proceeded to get me up the stairs. After about ten, fifteen minutes they got me up to the top, and they wheeled me out. There was a battalion chief there. I couldn't see his name.

They took me out the side door of the American Express Building and wheeled me down to the marina. The same time, there was a police launch pulling up, so they wheeled me down to the marina the rest of the way and put me on the police launch.

At that point, I was still basically in shock and sort of like in a daze, and they then took me -- took a few other people. They said, "We are out of here." They backed away, and they went to Ellis Island. I had asked them if they could take me to Staten Island, but they said, "No, no, no, we can't do that."

We got to Ellis Island. The New Jersey EMS was in the process of setting up their command post and their resources. They helped me. They carried the stretcher off of the boat onto the ground. They switched me on to a Jersey stretcher, put the other stretcher back in to go back and get more patients. At that point, I was triaged by the Jersey EMS, and they triaged me as a yellow and -- excuse me, as a red, because I was still having some difficulty breathing with all the stuff that I had inhaled.

They then put me into an ambulance and took me to Jersey City Medical Center. There they traumaed me and, you know, did the whole trauma workup, where I was then admitted, and so on and so forth.

Q. So they did the surgery in Jersey, right?

A. No, they did --

Q. Just stabilize you?

A. They stabilized me. [redacted]

[redacted]"But we are going to have to admit you anyway for the legs, because you can't move. The x-rays don't show any broken bones, however, it looks like you've torn the muscle. We are going to have to get MRIs to do it."

They then wheeled me up onto another floor that they had just opened to -- for this disaster, and I was medicated the rest of the afternoon.

That night, PD showed up. New York City PD was going around taking names and information from all the patients that were there. At that point, I asked one of the officers if he could try and contact my wife, and they were, like, well, the phones are out, so he says, "Let me try something."

He switched on his radio and was able to hit the Staten Island dispatcher, and they sent the car to my address.

Q. That was very nice.

A. However, she -- when she -- my wife saw the incident, she was off that day. She went in to work to help in the ER. So that night she comes home at about

11:30, not knowing where I am and knows that I always call and was quite concerned. She comes in, and neighbors come in behind her and tell her, well, you know, the police were here.

So at that point she finally got ahold of Division 5, and she found out where I was. My neighbors drove her and some other friends to the hospital at one o'clock in the morning, and then I saw my wife.

The next day, they treated me and ruled out the hip fracture that they thought I had, which I didn't. I said I really want to get to Staten Island because I want to be able to contact my wife. I couldn't call anybody because of the phones being restricted, because of the hospital, you know, policy. They only had two or one, so it was next to impossible for me to try and contact.

I had made it known, and the next thing I knew I was transferred that night, Wednesday night, around eleven o'clock. Jersey EMS took me to Staten Island Hospital, where I was admitted. At that point they took over my care, and my regular physician, Dr. Carl Andersen, along with orthopedics from Staten Island Associates, took over my case. They requested

MRIs of both my legs, and they continued treating my eyes, and my breathing, and my arm and what not. Then I had the surgery on both legs. They told me that the MRIs showed that my left leg was completely detached, the muscles completely detached, along with the ligaments and the tendons, and retracted. The right leg had a partial tear in the muscle and tendons. The tendons were torn.

So they reattached everything. They put my left leg into a cast that I had to have on for six weeks. They -- the right leg with minimal work, they put a removable splint on.

After a couple of days in the hospital, they then moved me in the hospital to inpatient rehab where I spent the next two and a half weeks. Then from there I was released on October 12. I came home, and I am now going to outpatient rehab at Staten Island University Hospital.

MR. MURAD: There is nothing really I need to ask of you, so at this time, this will conclude the interview.

I'd like to thank you, Lieutenant Roger Moore.

The time now is 1425 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110215

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH CHIAFARI

Interview Date: December 3, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 3, 2001. The time is 1355. This is Battalion Chief Arthur Lakiotes, assigned to the Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari, Safety Command.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Regarding the events of September 11. This is taking place at headquarters on the 7th floor.

Q. Joe, would you tell me what happened, where you were when you were notified about the World Trade Center and the rest of your day there?

A. Okay. It was the morning of the 11th, it was shortly after I reported to work that we realized what was taking place at the World Trade Center. I heard Chief of Department Ganci from his office yell out oh, shit, a plane just hit the Trade Center. From there a group of us left headquarters in passenger cars. I was driving Chief Turi that day when we left the building and we headed over the Brooklyn Bridge.

At first we thought it was a high rise fire, not knowing if it was valid, if the plane had hit it or not, but en route there, there was confirmations that a

plane did strike the building and there were several floors of fire that were definitely visible from the Brooklyn Bridge. It was a very clear day and you could see how much smoke was billowing from the building and visible fire coming from it.

Once we got at the scene, we got out of the car and started to put our bunker gear on when people from around us were yelling out --

Q. Where did you park the car?

A. Parked the car at the corner of Church and Fulton, alongside of the cemetery. People were yelling out that people were jumping from the building. We didn't visibly see that at first, because not seeing people coming down. Again, we are putting our bunker gear on to prepare for going over to the building itself.

We locked up the car, started heading across Church Street when we heard a roar of a jet engine, as if it was taking off in flight and we couldn't help but look into the sky to see exactly what it was and yes, it was a plane, just prior to striking the building and the engines were revved up fully. From that you saw it actually piercing the wall of the building with a large amount of fire coming from it. Of course, our

immediate reaction as well as anybody else's in the street around us was to run and get the heck out of where we were.

So we ran back into Fulton Street away from the Trade Center. At this point when we first turned around, we were pretty much at the center of Church Street and did an about face and headed back as the street was showered with debris from the building as well as from the plane. You could hear stuff actually landing into the street area. We took a position along the sidewalk area along where a group of stores were.

We waited maybe about a minute or two and then we headed back toward Church Street, again toward the building and you could see the aftermath of what was in the street, along with some airplane parts, which were definitely very visible and identifiable what they were. So we had to make our way into tower one, which is where the lobby command post was for the incident. Our best thought in getting over there was to walk along Vesey Street. We walked along Vesey to the front part of tower one area.

We kept, of course, looking up to see if anybody was possibly jumping down. Again, we didn't see any jumpers at that point, but being aware of

possibly people coming down. We came across some, again, some airplane parts that were actually smoking and it was very real to us what had happened. Still not believing what had happened, of course.

We were walking up the walkway to the front of tower one. We were met by a couple of firemen that said watch out, people are jumping, advised us that people were coming down the front of the building in the front of the building, and it was evident that at that point you could see body remains, not fully intact of course, they looked like hunks of meat, just laying on the walkway and roadway itself. We made ourselves quickly into the front of the building, wound up in the lobby.

There in the lobby command post there was Chief Hayden, who was in the Division that day and later we had Chief Cruthers there, along with the Fire Commissioner, Von Essen, Tom Fitzpatrick, Donald Burns was there. I'm trying to remember who else. Everybody was staging at that one point. We were trying to get an assessment of what had gone on. They were already aware that a plane struck the other tower. When Chief Turi and I went into the building, he advised them of such and they were very well aware of it. Richie

Sheirer, the Commissioner for OEM, he was there. He was making recommendations that maybe they move the command post into where his building was operating out of. I think it's number 7. He was telling us his place is up and running and he said move it over there because there was a discussion taking place that we have two buildings on our hands. We have to put ourselves in a place where we could monitor this whole thing, for what was going on. The decision had been made to move the command post to the west side of West Street, which we later took up space over there, to monitor both towers.

While we were in there, a pretty big concern was the condition of the elevator cars, whether they were operating or not, and that if the cables would fail, if they come crashing down into the lobby area and then blow out into the lobby where most people were congregating. They wanted to get everybody out of the lobby areas themselves.

I didn't know what it was at first. I thought it was guys venting from above, but it wound up being the breaking of glass taking place and you didn't know what it was and it wound up being the glass canopy out in the front of the building there. There were

actually people that were plunging through the glass as you actually were standing there hearing that taking place. So it was very evident that, what is this, you know, it was the walls of the building, the lobby area, which had tiled walls, a lot of it had been cracked off already from the vibration probably that took place up above and severely broke them off the walls.

Again, I was concerned about getting people out of the lobby area, even though that was the lobby command post for that tower. They wanted to move people out of that. So okay, what we did was Chief Turi and I then, after -- we were most likely in the lobby no more than ten minutes. At most. More than ten minutes. I should really state my arrival times.

From the time we left the building here, we left shortly after the plane hit, which was just about a little after quarter of 9. And we actually arrived at where we parked, again, it was prior to the plane crashing, so I estimate it's maybe just about 9 o'clock or a minute after nine when we arrived at the spot where we parked the car. From the time we put our gear on to the time we actually got to the lobby, it took us definitely ten minutes to walk around to the other side. Like I said, we were in the lobby itself for

approximately ten minutes, so here it is now maybe like 20 after nine. We are walking across to West Street to where we are going to set up the command post.

Again, not knowing who is up above jumping. You took a quick look, but our big intention was at that point, let's just run across the roadway and just hope we don't get struck by somebody. Rather than just looking up, because it was difficult to walk away and look up at the top of the building to see people, if they were coming down or not. Again, a lot of glass in the street. Actually, the car port area in the front. Pieces of people that were broken up. Of course, there were a lot the rigs out front that I couldn't readily identify who was parked where, but there were a lot of rigs out front.

So we went across West Street, across the roadway. Directly across from tower number one, which was a parking garage ramp. I believe it was part of the Winter Garden parking area. On the ramp where the command post was set up, field comm. had their van there. The board was already set up with the field comm. officer. Chief Ganci was there, along with Chief Downey. There were companies that were coming in to stage at that point, and expressively they were, I

think, very much concerned about where people were standing. Chief Ganci had mentioned that he didn't want anybody really standing on the sidewalk area. He made it a point that he wanted guys to stand at the lower part of the ramp toward the parking garage. He didn't want anybody to be struck by any debris that might have been falling down.

We were already just, again, we left the lobby, must have been around 20 after nine, so a couple of minutes to get across the roadway, so I would say definitely by 9:30 we are up and running. What's going on across the street. Trying to get a heads up of what's going on, but a lot of radio contact, guys trying to make their way up the stairs, having difficulty getting up the stairs because people are coming down the stairs.

One report was given that it took -- I don't know which unit gave it. That it took them approximately 30 minutes to go up ten floors, with the amount of people that were coming down. I think it was a single file, from what I understand, that was going up, but it took that amount of time, 30 minutes to go ten floors.

They were trying to make contact in there,

Chief Turi asked me what we could do. They had a tactical and a command channel already established, but because they had two buildings going and I think Chief Ganci's thought was let's get two tactical frequencies going. Let's get two command frequencies going and treat this as two separate incidents. I had conferred with the field comm., what available frequencies there were and gave them back my suggestions for two tacticals and two commands. He tried to put those into place depending -- and he announced them, but you got the staff Chiefs definitely on the command channel for tower two, which were at that point still coming in. Trying to let them know what was going on with that.

He expressed everybody to get on, with operating tower two, to get on to the new tactical frequency. I don't think there was really a verification of who actually switched over. At that point the Chief, he made it a point to verify what the air presence was. There were a lot of reports coming back of people trapped on the upper floors. Field comm. was getting them from the Manhattan dispatcher.

They were saying how people were reporting in a conference room. 30 people in a conference room on such and such floor, which was definitely above where

the fire floor was. Of course, we were just fielding those reports and we really couldn't get companies up in those areas to tell them where they were, just accepting that.

Visibly from where we were standing, I estimate that I probably saw about a hundred people jumping to their death. Some looked like they were in pairs, but most of them were singly, free falling, to such a degree that they were doing tumblesalts in the air and forcibly landing to the ground, or very impactly landing on top of that glass canopy, which seemed to be like almost like individual skylights that were -- they were breaking through. Very noticeably you could hear them like pounding, almost like a bomb going off, a small bomb, like paum, paum. And so there was a lot of glass breaking and a lot of hearts being shattered by watching that thing.

So again you seen that. From the location we were at, we were directly opposite number one, but you got a good visual on tower number two and you could see what was going on there. Later understanding that because of the wind direction, it was more noticeable, more impressive probably from the opposite side with the smoke that was coming out, even though you could

see -- you knew what the problem was, it was more intense from the opposite side of the street.

Again, it was a lot of fielding there of Chiefs at the command post. Again, it was -- at the command post was Chief Ganci, Chief Turi. It was Ray Downey, Chief Cross, he was acting Deputy that day from the 11th Division, along with, I think he had a Captain with him.

Q. Stackpole?

A. Stackpole, yes. Stackpole was in that day. He was at the command post as well. I remember they needed a command post company to help the field comm. out. I had grabbed the officer of Engine 34 and told them they could be used in the command post, even though they were not command post trained, but we needed an engine company to help the field comm. at that point, so we grabbed them and put them in touch with the field comm. officer and tried to work with them. Knowing what was going on.

There was talk about not knowing the stability of the building. I heard that being mentioned and not knowing where that report came from. It's like somebody was questioning the stability of the building. In fact, that was coming from Steve

Mosiello, the executive assistant for Ganci. I think somebody asked him and he mentioned to Ganci. Somebody mentioned about the stability of the building. That happened to be shortly before the building did come down. Like I said, we must have been at the command post a good half an hour at that west side of West Street, just standing at that one location doing all that.

There was a time where he did -- actually standing there, you heard actually what sounded like another plane flying overhead. I remember even asking one of the guys from Con Ed that was happening to stand there. I didn't know if they were blowing off any steam from the building or blowing off any residual gas or anything, but it sounded like the roar of a plane, and most likely we learned that that was like military jets that may have been flying overhead to monitor what was going on in the harbor area. But that was very noticeable and you couldn't help but look up again to see what was going on.

There was -- it must have been almost like instantaneously with your eyes focused on what was going on with the two towers that all of a sudden you start to see peeling away from tower two, the facade of

the building. That's what I really thought was going to be happening. I was thinking in my mind, gee, if the thing was going to collapse, how it was going to collapse. I was thinking more well, if it's going to weaken itself, most likely where it's burning at, it's most likely going to tip over and the remainder of the structure is almost going to like remain intact, so you had a good amount of like 20 or 30 floors that would maybe tip over on its side.

But what looked like the facade just starting to peel away from the building and everybody shouting out at that point watch out, it's starting to go, and everybody is like duck for cover, and we all as a group of us, you couldn't help it. Not like we had a stampede but a group of us all was running into the garage area down to the lower level of the parking garage from where we were first standing. It was good that the companies that were standing fast there were at the whole part of the ramp because they themselves starting to go in, because they were leaving probably a lot more congestion that we probably would have had if everybody was at the sidewalk area. We probably would have been trampling on each other trying to get through.

I did stare at that building briefly, curious about how, if it was collapsing, was it collapsing or was just the facade peeling away. I'm realizing that I'm watching both taking place. The facade is coming away and it looked like the upper part of the tower was starting to crash down into the other floors. I said -- maybe curious what it was going to look like, not realizing that the shit is going to start falling where we are standing, but I looked back and I said let me start heading down this ramp.

I'm about halfway down the ramp when you could start to hear stuff hit the sidewalk area. You could start to see behind you an envelope of dust start to come down the ramp itself. Not having with us any SCBA, we just had our bunker gear on and running down the ramp, I'm thinking, okay, here we are, we are going to a lower area and we are going to suffocate in here. We have no air, we are going to be suffocated by the fact that the dust cloud is just going to take us over.

I happened to go down to the lower area, down to the lower part of the ramp and it was very clear and visible there. I mean it started to get dusty. I wound up going into an office area, which was right at

the bottom of the ramp. Must have been the office for the garage. I don't know. At the moment I happened to see a telephone there. I picked up the telephone and I felt the need to make contact with my wife and just happened to call up and let her know my whereabouts. I think I was on the phone not even 30 seconds and just said hello and kind of like sent a little love and hang up the phone and get back to what we were doing. We were lucky that the whole area where we were, it was pretty visible. It was not overly taken like I thought it was, but it's like okay, let's find out what's going on outside.

This thing had happened. You could see that the top of the ramp there was still dark and everything was quiet. Everything had fallen already, everything was quiet, so you wanted to get up on the ramp, but it was dark and I'm thinking that because it was so dark that that area outside us was piled with debris. We weren't going to be able to get out. There were guys looking for an alternate way out, we were looking for a stairway to an upper floor, which some guys did go up. I didn't follow them. I stayed by the ramp area, thinking we are going to try the way we came back in, rather than trying to search our way through this

building and try to find another way out if it's not necessary.

Let them -- they found a way and maybe they will let us know about it. So I don't know if and what way they did finally get out, whether they hit that back courtyard or not. We made our way up the ramp. It looked as if when we first got out, it must have been a good five minutes I was down below. After those five minutes I came up to the top of the ramp.

Initially I was met by Chief Bob Ingram, and Steve Mosiello, those being two people that were at the command post when we first started this whole thing. It looked like -- the first impression I got -- it looked like winter. It looked like it had just snowed and the whole area just covered with white stuff all over the place. A lot of debris all over. The van for the field comm. was still on the ramp, although dented at the top, not crushed. One of the fellows that was working the field comm. that day was dispatcher John Traverso. I met him, he told me he remained in the van when everything came tumbling down. He said he crawled underneath the desk. He felt very uneasy of the whole situation not knowing if he was going to get crushed in the van or not, but he survived that.

Along with others, we started to almost like regroup what was going on. People started to reappear. I don't know if they were guys that fully made their way back up to the sidewalk that were in the garage area with us. I know there was, in fact, there was one dispatcher from the field comm. that initially we didn't know where he was. I remember somebody did ask me after the second collapse, they said to me, where was he. I said I remember him being in the garage area with me, but after that I don't remember where he was. He was later found along with a group of other people that wound up going on a ferry boat over to Jersey with a group of injured people that wound up in a hospital over on the Jersey side. So that was his last whereabouts. I saw him. Later found out he was okay.

So we were regrouping on the sidewalk. Again, the radio was very quiet. There was not a lot that I thought was taking place. I said this is too unusual or awkward. What's going on here. I heard some guys on the radio, one of which was a familiar voice, I heard the voice of firefighter Bob Crawford from the Safety Battalion. He made two notification calls to the Chief that was working that day. He

called -- he just very briefly. He didn't sound -- sound very calmly. Would not say he was in trouble. He just said, safety alpha to safety and he just said that twice and that's the last I heard of Bob Crawford, realizing he didn't make it out of where he was.

Again, I didn't make any radio contact with him. It didn't sound like he was in any kind of trouble. I guess I thought he was just trying to get the Chief.

I also heard one of the Lieutenants that I knew from Engine 217, Tom McGoff, who did get injured that day. He lost a couple of his members with him. I'm not sure their exact location, but I did hear him and he was trying to call his control man on the radio, who did answer him. He was trying to get him out of where they were, later found out that they were in tower one. I believe Tom told me he was out on the street and his control man was inside. They even told him I heard him. Heard him trying to get him out of the area. I think it was almost evident that realizing that tower two had came down, tower one was almost evident to come down, but not knowing when. It would have been understandable that tower one would have came

down first, being the first one to be hit, but tower two, surprised us very suddenly to come down.

There were people on the street, some firefighters being very disoriented of where they were coming out of. Some were parking themselves underneath the overhead ramp, not the overhead ramp, the overhead walkway that goes over West Street and I almost had to pull them out of where they were. I said listen, don't sit here. If this thing is going to come down, we don't know the stability of this overhead walkway here. If anything, just go down a block a bit and sit down below. A couple of guys were helping themselves down there.

There were some firefighters that were walking back south on West Street, looking for their company. A decision had been made at that point to evacuate anybody out of West Street, head them north. I had met up with Chief Turi and he said this is what we are going to do. Head everybody out of West Street, and start heading everybody up north and get them out of this area.

So I met a couple of firefighters, I directed them back up north. They later saw me after the second collapse and thanked me actually for directing them in

that direction, because they were looking for their company, who they didn't know what the full whereabouts of them were, but they later were intact, but didn't know.

I remember trying to direct a Lieutenant from Engine 65 who also survived this, but he was looking for a member of his company, which I understand was also found alive, but pretty wall banged up. I think he was a chauffeur. I think his chauffeur's name was Armando. I think he was all banged up, but he was looking for him. He didn't know where he was. I said, listen everybody is heading up north. I said it's a good idea for you and your guys to head up in that direction too. He says don't tell me, I'm going to look for my guy. I'm not going to stop. I said I got no control over that. I am just giving him a suggestion. Like I said, we tried to get everybody out.

Chief Turi having to commandeer a bull horn. I don't know if he had gotten it from one of the cops or who he had gotten it from, but he was making a very large announcement over the bull horn in the street, you know, having all people in the street head north of Murray, I think we were trying to get, because that was

a couple of blocks north of where we were. We were trying to set up another command post now at Murray and West. He wanted everybody north of Murray Street. That's what we were trying to do. Anybody we saw, we started heading them in that direction.

I had ran over to a rig that was parked in the middle of West Street, actually on the east side of West Street, probably just about even with Vesey. I don't know what rig it was. I got in the rig, the rig was running and I got on the PA and made announcements over the PA, the same thing. Any people in the street there start heading north, everybody get heading north and make an announcement that way to get them out of there.

I had found a -- this is when I had come out of the garage ramp. I had found a loose mask laying on the ramp. Most likely it was from the unit that was staging, from one of the guys that was staging and didn't grab his mask on the way out. I picked it up, not knowing if I was going to need it and took it along with me. We were trying to get people out of the area. Remember we were running into people in the street.

Briefly, Chief Turi was trying to look for,

you know, some of the Chiefs that were with us. I don't know if he made full contact with everybody. It was still very confusing what was going on. It was, like I said, the whole street was all littered, what was going on.

We got to pretty much to -- I want to say we got to West and Murray. I want to say we got to West and Murray. We parked ourselves right by a police car. I think this was where we were going to set up this command post. I felt comfortable at that location, so what I did was I took the mask off my back. It was -- I said let me take this thing off. I'm not going to need this right now. I don't think I put the mask down for all of 30 seconds when you start to see tower two peeling away just like -- tower one peeling away, just like tower two did. It was almost evident again that it was coming down.

Our best alternative what to do was to just keep on heading north. A bunch of us, not all together, of course, started running north and you ran until the visibility started to reduce itself. You didn't want to run into a parked car or a tree or whatever the case may be. You just ran to a point. I did run behind a parked car. I wound up being back

there with maybe like five other firefighters. I didn't even know who they were. I think a couple of them knew who they were.

We were all huddled and hugged together underneath -- behind this parked car. We were as low as we could be. Here comes the dust cloud. You know, it was almost like being in like a dust chamber. Your visibility was down to nothing. You are sucking this stuff in. You are choking, you want to hold on to something to filter the air but, you know, you're just trying to be light. We are in darkness.

I remember my throat, my nose, all being plugged up with this stuff and you just wanted to survive, that's all you wanted to do. You were hoping that you wouldn't -- you heard stuff falling down around you, but you were hoping not to be hit by anything. I didn't know what was coming down.

One fireman, we were all huddled together, decided to say the Our Father and I guess he got all of us saying the Our Father at that point, thought it was probably our last time on being together. We didn't know what was going to be going on. I think we were behind the parked car for what seemed like maybe four or five minutes. Stuff started to lift.

Again, the visibility in the street was next to nothing. All of a sudden you got some kind of resemblance of what it was. It started to almost look like -- sort of looked like a bad fire that you have been to, when the street was like all filled with smoke and you could just about make out what rigs are parked where. Or a real foggy day. It started to lift. Actually most likely, the stuff started to really accumulate on the ground is what was happening, the heavy stuff anyway, the dust.

We were looking around for each other. I'm trying to see familiar faces. Like I said I didn't even know the guys I was with. I still don't even know who they were today. After running twice from this whole thing, I think I had just about had it as far as what was going on. I think a lot of us did. We didn't know the structure of the command any more. Who was where, who was doing what. Later I did see Chief Turi again, who I was with. I found him again. I found him in the middle of West Street.

And then there was -- Chief Butler was there. There was some other people that he was conferring with. I think they wanted to get a sense of what had happened and how we are going to handle this

whole situation. I think we were more -- we wound up going almost more north of where we were. To get out of where we were, we almost wound up walking almost to Chambers Street, to where that overhead ramp was by Chambers Street.

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. We parked ourselves. We had to take a breather. We took -- I remember taking my bunker coat off, took my helmet off and it was amazing. That was not even my gear. I was wearing the other fellow that works with us, Eddie, who has a size 12 foot. Here I wear a size 6 shoe and I was wearing twice the size I normally do. I can't believe I ran in his shoes, but I did.

We took some time there. We were totally devastated by what had happened. We had to get our thoughts together. We didn't know who was where. Our concern was how many guys did we really lose. It was almost inevitable that we would lose a lot of people. Initial estimate was maybe we probably lost about 200 guys in those collapses. Nobody had heard at that point from Chief of Department Ganci. We didn't hear from Chief Nigro or Chief Cassano. It just seems like what happened to the structure of who was there

earlier?

There was very little radio contact going on. It started on the radio to hear Chief Cruthers talking. It seemed like he started to converse and get some kind of command going on again, but he wasn't at the location that we were at. I don't know where he wound up. I heard his voice on the handy talky a couple of times.

We were probably at that location, this is now after 10:30, after the second collapse had taken place. We were probably at that location a good 15 to 20 minutes, maybe more. I couldn't say. We definitely -- again, we were -- didn't know the whereabouts of where people were. I remember seeing Steve Mosiello there, who was with Chief Ganci right before the second collapse. He expressed that he didn't know his whereabouts and it was very important that -- we wanted to know where he was, his last location was known by Steve and he expressed that to Chief Turi and I think we were -- ummm -- concerned about let's try to find him and see where he might be, because we know the location where he was last.

We had gotten two truck companies that were staging at that point. Companies were starting to

stage. I think one of them was 144 from Queens. I don't remember who the second one was. We started to -- tried to head back on West Street, put our bunker gear back on. I remember there were two truck companies, Chief Turi, myself. We started to head back toward -- on West Street. Back to the collapse area.

We wound up in an area where we couldn't get too far and because of the debris, we knew where we wanted to get to. We wound up going into a lobby of the financial -- I think it was the Financial Center. Yes. We went into the lobby of the World Financial Center. Building number 3. I remember going through that and what we wound up doing is going out the courtyard of that building. Actually the entrance where we went through was between number 3 and number 4 I believe.

We went through the courtyard, into the back of the Winter Garden area. I remember seeing the harbor area there. We walked around the entire park. We wound up walking around side along where the number 2 World Financial Center. Where the Merrill Lynch building was. We pretty much wound up down along -- I want to say we wound up down by Liberty Street. Down by Liberty Street.

It was there a group of us couldn't go any further. There was so much debris in the street. The whole area was littered. Our intention was to get back on to West Street and the whole area was littered. I remember across the street from where we were, there was a high rise apartment building. I remember seeing a fire on the upper floor, the fifth or sixth floor that was burning pretty good inside the apartment building. It didn't look like anybody was there. There was a pumper that looked like it was starting to -- maybe if anything, hit it either with a deck gun from the street side, but nobody at that point was involved with the fire.

This is -- I mean at this point here I couldn't say exactly what time we were there. I remember we were trying to get our way on to the other side of West. It was just too littered. We couldn't get through. So what we decided do was walk back to where we were and we entered at -- I almost want to say we were in the World Financial building. We wanted to get into the parking garage to get us into the ramp to get us back into the West Street side. I think it was number 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch building.

We went to the courtyard entrance from the harbor side down the stairs into the garage area. We went up the ramp, but the ramp was littered with debris. We couldn't go any further. It was just too hard to get to that area. I remember there was a search line in place on that ramp. That ramp was filled with water. I don't know if it was from a busted pipe. There was just water flowing in from the street side or whatever. But that was pretty much flooded with water. I remember doing that and coming back out to the courtyard area.

Unfortunately, because of the size boots I was wearing my feet were aching me. I was getting blisters on my feet, trying to keep up with everybody and their walking. Everybody was pretty much tired too, from running and all. We took a short break. We were in the courtyard and we decided we are going to go back out onto West Street, back to where we were, back to Vesey and West and try to get into where Chief Ganci might have been from that point on.

A lot of what I was doing after that point was primarily spending time at the command post, because the way I was walking, I definitely couldn't have been no use in continuing in the debris area. I

felt it was not a good idea. I said okay, I'm going to go back to the command post and I'm going to work with field comm. Chief Butler was at the command post and we are trying to get some semblance of a staging area for companies that were already in and coming in. Trying to coordinate equipment coming in and trying to handle communications and helping them out.

Q. Before the first collapse, you said you saw Chief Cross and Captain Stackpole. When did you notice they weren't there any more or did you not?

A. I want to say it was -- these are people that aren't there now. Stackpole, Cross and Downey, they were at the command post. I want to say that shortly before tower two collapsed, is when they left the command post. I believe when Chief Ganci sent them, they were talking about going in to the -- I don't know if they were going into tower one or tower two, but they definitely left the command post. They went up to West Street. I don't know where they actually went.

That was shortly before. That was almost to -- they were at our presence almost five minutes before, maybe ten.

Q. Commissioner Feehan, was he there at all?

A. Commissioner Feehan, I saw him in the lobby

of tower one when we first had gotten there. I remember seeing Tom Fitzpatrick, Feehan, Von Essen, again in the lobby of tower one. It was almost like converging. I was alongside Chief Turi, but he was talking directly with Chief Hayden, Fitzpatrick, Von Essen and Feehan in those areas.

Q. You heard Crawford's transmission after the first collapse?

A. After the first collapse. I heard him, I want to say approximately a quarter after 10 is when I heard him. Again, very calmly, unknown where his location was. I almost wanted to ask him where he was and tell him what was going on out in the street, but because he was so calm about his transmission I felt he had a grasp of what was going on and realized what his need had to be done. I remember even seeing -- oh, here is another person I saw at the command post who later did not survive, a guy I previously worked with Ray York, who, from my understanding, he came from the fire zone over in mid Manhattan. I think he was on light duty. He saw me. I saw him. It was almost like a wave type of thing.

I'm saying in my mind, what is he doing here. I know he's not with a fire company, but I saw

him there and then later on realizing that he didn't make it. It's amazing how you see a face and knowing their whereabouts afterwards, that they weren't there.

Q. You saw him at the command post?

A. At the command post on the West Street side.

Q. Not at tower one?

A. No.

Q. On West Street?

A. Yes, in other words this is before 10 o'clock. This is, I want to say a quarter to ten, 10 to 10 that I first saw him. He was amongst people that were there that showed up at the command post. That was at the ramp. I can't think of anybody else that I saw initially that I know is not here, except, of course, first seeing Chief Burns, who I later knew went over to tower two, the lobby command post of tower two. He was in the lobby command of tower one.

Again, Chief Ganci, I saw him at the ramp, because he was with us up until the point of that collapse.

That's it.

Q. That's it. Okay. This concludes the interview at 1450.

File No. 9110216

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF LAKIOTES

Interview Date: December 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 3rd, 2001. The time is 1340 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, the Fire Department, City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with --

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Command.

CHIEF KING: This interview is taking place in the Safety Command office on the seventh floor of Nine Metrotech. There is nobody else present in the office during this interview, and we're speaking in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Art, you can begin.

A. Okay, Steve. I responded from home. Let me get the time line again to orient myself to when I got there. It was before the tower collapsed. The tower collapsed 9:55. I must have been there maybe -- oh, I guess 20 minutes, maybe half hour prior to the collapse. I got there about I guess 9:25.

I went through the Battery Tunnel. I

parked my car on the Manhattan side of the Battery Tunnel. I put my bunker gear on, walked up to West and Liberty. At West and Liberty I ran into a command post with Chief Jerry Barbara and Commissioner Steve Gregory.

I spoke with Jerry for a few minutes, looked at the situation. It was kind of weird, surreal, almost. Jerry informed me that it was going to be a staging area for Brooklyn companies coming in from the Battery Tunnel from Brooklyn.

He said to me stay here, take command of the staging area. He was going to go to the command post in tower two, in the lobby of tower two. He suggested I keep his aide with me until the 32 Battalion had come on the scene and then to send his aide with them. Jerry then left to go to tower two.

During the interim a few units came in. We kept them in the staging area, made sure that West Street was open to the Battery for ambulances. Steve -- Commissioner Gregory was taking information from I guess communications about the companies that were coming into this staging area.

32 Battalion showed up approximately I would think ten minutes before the collapse. I let them know what we had as far as the staging area situation. It was obvious that it was a very volatile situation with the towers burning and unfortunately people jumping out of tower one.

After briefing them I guess for about ten minutes or so, I turned to Jerry's aide, whose name escapes me right now, that he would tell Jerry that companies were coming into the staging area and to be in contact with us via handy talky for any resources he might need.

Before I could finish that sentence, we heard just a loud noise and looked up and tower two was starting to collapse. With that everybody just started running. I ran down West Street, made a right on Albany before it caught up to me. It knocked me down, blew me over. Obviously it was a pretty scary situation.

The smoke clears, we regroup and go back. I ran into Dennis Oberg from 114 who had come on the scene prior to the collapse. He started running roll calls on the units we

thought we had in the area. It was pretty chaotic.

I noticed one or two of the fire trucks and some of the ambulances were on fire. We thought about possibly putting them out. I don't remember the time frame except for this time line when tower one came down, and that was approximately a half hour later.

Most of that half hour was taken up running roll calls, orienting ourselves to what had happened. Probably it was a good 15, 20 minutes before the smoke cleared or the dust cleared where we actually could start operating again to some degree of efficiency.

Tower one now comes down. Same thing but this time some of us take off straight down West Street, because we realized later on, subconsciously we wanted to be near buildings. We all thought it was secondary explosives or more planes or whatever.

I went down West Street again. The blast caught us and I guess halfway down going through the Battery. Same thing: heavy dust, smoke, whatever. It took about 15-20 minutes, I

would guess, to have everything clear.

Again, regroup, go back. Almost all the rigs were on fire, the ones that were close to Liberty. I sat up stress lines and started trying to make rescues and run roll calls and do everything else for the rest of the day, really. That's about it.

Q. When you went back there, who were you with when you went back and regrouped the second time?

A. It's tough. It's tough. Without being out in the field for a while as far as knowing -- I think it was a chief and the name escapes me right now from Staten Island was there with me. The chief from 32 I know got banged up. I had seen him I don't know if it was before the collapse of tower one or after the collapse of tower one. He was banged up. He was going to go to the hospital.

I think almost everybody I saw in our area prior to the two collapses made it out okay, except certain people like Jerry who went into tower two or headed over in that direction.

It was just a matter of trying to get

yourself together the whole day and try to assess the damage to our units. I don't know how much more I can say.

Q. That's fine.

CHIEF KING: The time is now 1349 hours, and the interview is completed.

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File No. 9110217

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF FRANK FELLINI

Interview Date: December 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 3rd, 2001. The time is exactly 1700 hours. This is Chief Lakiotes, Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

CHIEF FELLINI: Chief Frank Fellini, operations.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Frank, would you tell us where you were as you were responding to the incident.

A. I was home. It was an off tour for me. My wife called me down to look at the TV. A plane had struck a tower, the north tower, of the World Trade Center. As I watched, the second plane hit. Almost exactly the same time, the phone rang. It was Pat Cotton, my aide. I told him, "Let's go." He picked me up. Prior to getting to the house, the first tower came down.

As we were responding, we were just about at the point where the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the Long Island Expressway meet, we saw the second tower come down.

When I actually got to West Street, Chief Callan was there, Chief Turi was there. I was told that everyone else was dead. At some point after that, Chief Nigro and Chief Cruthers arrived where the command post was. It was agreed that they would handle the command post and I would take over the operations post on West and Vesey.

The major concern at that time at that particular location was number Seven, building number seven, which had taken a big hit from the north tower. When it fell, it ripped steel out from between the third and sixth floors across the facade on Vesey Street. We were concerned that the fires on several floors and the missing steel would result in the building collapsing.

So for the next five or six hours we kept firefighters from working anywhere near that building, which included the whole north side of the World Trade Center complex. Eventually around 5:00 or a little after, building number seven came down.

We just started organizing things on the north side of the north foot bridge to remove

apparatus that was moveable and recover the bodies that we could locate and remove -- in the meantime the job was sectored with Chiefs Blaich, Visconti, Hayden and Haring, having different sectors of the World Trade Center complex. Blaich, Hayden and Visconti were all working south in the north tower, the north bridge. Chief Haring was by City Hall Park on the Church Street side of the operation.

At some point in the afternoon prior to number seven coming down, Chief Nigro, Chief Callan, Chief Cruthers, Chief Meyers, Chief Butler and I had a meeting in the auditorium of the high school that was located around Murray Street.

Q. Stuyvesant?

A. Yeah. We decided how we would break up and handle the situation as far as who was going to stay and who would go back and go home and return at a later time. That started the shifting and the way we shifted personnel at the command level at the World Trade Center.

All I can remember is speaking to one person every, it seemed like two minutes who had

a problem or wanted to do something or needed something, or had something to offer. It was just continuous for 15 or 20 hours at a time dealing with one individual after another.

At that time my major concern was to get through the north bridge so that we could unite the whole site along West Street and start working where we would support each other and the heavy equipment could move.

Fairly quickly, within a day or two, we had the north side of the north bridge cleared. By the end of the week, we were through the north bridge and had connected West Street. We could move equipment and trucks.

That was to me the key to the whole job was the trucks. If we could keep the trucks moving and take debris out of there and material was searched and removed, the site became that much smaller.

It was probably 48 when we started. We knew that the footprint of the World Trade Center was 16 acres. Within three or four weeks, we were within the footprint. Now the work was concentrated at the two towers, the bathtub area,

which was basically 200 by 800.

That's it. I can't --

Q. What you're saying is arriving after the collapse you have no knowledge of where anybody was sent or what assignments were given out up to that point?

A. No. I consider it a gift from God that I got there after the collapse, not just because of the physical aspects but because of what the people who were there earlier saw. They're going to carry some of this a long time.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview at approximately 1710. Thank you.

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File No. 9110218

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GARY WOOD

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4th, 2001. The time is approximately 11:20. This is Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT WOOD: Lieutenant Gary Wood, Ladder Company 131.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of September 11th, 2000.

Q. Gary, I explained to you the purpose of the interview. Just take us through your response and the events of that day as far as your experience.

A. We were in quarters, and we got a ticket to respond to the toll plaza of the Battery Tunnel. This is after the first building had been hit by a plane. Leaving quarters, we could see the building. Debris was in the air.

We went to the toll plaza along with maybe eight or ten other companies, and we were in the toll plaza when we saw -- some of my guys actually visibly saw the second plane hit the south tower.

At that time all the computers went

off, and we were directed to respond onto I think it was West Street and -- is Vesey the one that's on the corner of the north tower?

Q. Yes.

A. Vesey. West and Vesey.

We started to go through the tunnel. There was a delay in the tunnel due to a car with a flat tire, we found out.

We came out. After about five minutes, we went north on West Street. We were directed by officers in the street to continue to the pedestrian overpass that was just north of the north tower. We parked our rigs there. I remember parking right behind -- I think it was 101 I parked behind.

We got out and we were told to now walk back south on West Street on the opposite side of the World Trade Center. So we watched these people falling and saw the whole disaster unfolding. We went down to the corner of Liberty and West Street, and there was a battalion chief there. I don't know who he was. I never got his name. Dr. Kelly was there at the same time.

Apparently there was some type of

debris that was now coming off the building prior to the collapse. So they told us to move down Liberty Street on the west side of West Street. There was another building down there that has another overpass, and they wanted us down under that.

We went down under there. There must have been the chief, maybe a couple, three, four companies at that time. Whatever the condition was, it resolved itself. They said, okay, now cross West Street and go to the corner of West and Liberty opposite the Marriott Hotel; and look up, make sure nobody the falling, and run into the Marriott Hotel; and there's a battalion chief in there, deputy chief in there, that will direct you further.

We went across Liberty into the Marriott Hotel. There's a small restaurant called the Twelve Shippers Restaurant I think someone told me. Go in there, up two flights of steps, two steps of stairs, into the carpeted lobby of the Marriott. We came in there. The lobby is narrow and long. You could see it go up into the distance. It took a little angular

turn. There was a desk and bank of elevators.

When we first came in, apparently they had been setting up the staging area there for a long time. There were tables along the walls with bottles of water on them. Companies had already stacked up their extra cylinders and their hose links against the wall.

I talked to my guys just to wait right there. There was a little I guess you would call it a conference area, lounge area right there. Other companies were already there. I told them to just stay right there, I'll go down and check in.

I went down maybe 50, 60 feet, and I found a chief surrounded by another group of officers and told him who I was. He said either stand fast or stay put till you hear from us. I went back down the hallway, found my guys, was in the process of telling them to just buddy up, stay together and we're going to be used shortly, when one of my guys who was facing me -- I had my back to the window. One of my guys facing me said, "Look." I didn't get a chance to turn around, but apparently all the firemen out on

West Street on the other side, following the same path that we had taken, had now started to run because the building was collapsing.

There was no place to hide. We just hit the deck wherever we were. The windows on the West Street side all blew out. The sound was just like freight trains coming right over your head. Dust, smoke, debris falling from the ceiling. It lasted maybe 25, 30 seconds. It seemed like forever, though.

When it finally stopped, I got up, made sure we had everybody. We looked around, to the extent that we could, to see if there was anyone else. There was a couple civilians, a janitor, a woman who I believe was maybe a cafeteria worker or something. She had some kind of uniform on. It was hard to tell, it was all covered with debris.

We looked for our tools which we had placed down on the ground, and they were covered with debris and covered with dust. We couldn't find anything. We made another quick survey. We reversed ourselves to find the door that we had come in, and we found that an overhead door had

fallen. It was a door we presume was used to close off the restaurant from the lobby of the hotel. We don't know. A couple of my guys lifted it up. We got it up about four feet, where it stayed. We went under that, got out into the restaurant itself, which was pretty demolished.

We made our way through the restaurant -- it was a narrow restaurant -- and out into the street. There was a crater maybe 30 feet wide, irregular shape. We had to go down one side of that and up the other. The guys did it -- I did it on my fanny over pieces of steel and back and forth.

We got on the other side. I had another roll call, and I discovered that one of my guys, when he went through the crater, came up on the other side, had been grabbed by someone -- he doesn't even know who, it turns out; he's a fireman or policeman or EMT -- and put in an ambulance because we had abrasions to his eyes, which we all had but he had them very severe. They took him away.

He heard me calling on the radio, but

apparently he was going faster further than I could get him. So we thought that he had fallen back into the debris for a while. We couldn't find him. We looked and couldn't find him. Then someone had said -- I had sent one of the guys down to the corner. I said maybe the building's down that way. Go down to the corner.

So one of my guys had gone down, I think had gone on Liberty Street on the other side of West Street, where we had originally come from. He was calling for him on the radio. Nobody was answering. Nobody was -- there was nobody there. There was nobody left. But he said he had heard him briefly. He had heard him trying to get back to us. So now we were certain he was alive, but we didn't know where he was.

Right at that moment we heard the second tower start to come down. We had found a Daily News photographer in the interim with a broken leg, so we were dragging him with us. When the second tower started to come down, one of my guys said look in there, there's a doorway we can get through, a doorway to a deli or superette. We ran in there, hit the ground in

there. The second tower came down. We heard the debris hit the streets.

We got out of there, made our way south and east, tried to get to the water to get some air. You couldn't see, couldn't breathe. We made our way down maybe another quarter mile until we found an area where EMTs were treating people. We had them treat us. We had numerous injuries: back, eyes, everything.

Then two cops came running out of the building that we were in front of and told us there was a substantial gas leak and they were evacuating the pier. It's like, okay. We got on the boats, and from there two of us wound up in Staten Island, two of us wound up in Lutheran, and two of us wound up in someplace in New Jersey. We found Shawn Halperin during our trip too. We took him with us.

That's about it.

Q. That's it?

A. That's about it.

Q. Do you remember any of those chiefs that you ran into or any firefighters?

A. I don't remember anyone in the lobby.

Q. Do you know who was giving the orders to do what in the lobby?

A. No, never got -- his back was to me, so I never saw -- like I said, he was surrounded by other guys. I figured I would get his name off the back of his jacket later for the report.

Q. Was there anybody in that lobby that you might have picked up a name or anything that you know now did not make it?

A. No, I don't know -- this is strictly assumption. I assume that 279 was in that same building maybe a minute or two ahead of us. Maybe 101 was in that building maybe a minute or two ahead of us. I don't know.

The area where I had gone to check in with the chief was completely destroyed. There was a wall of debris there. So it was literally 30, 40 feet difference between what was left of the building and what -- I think 122 -- this again is conjecture because I didn't see them. Someone told me they were in that same area with us, although I don't know that. I don't know that for certain.

I saw the chief of department on West

Street shortly after we parked the rig. I saw Battalion Chief Grezlak maybe halfway -- equal distance between the World Trade Center, also on the west side of West Street. Just strictly saw him, but I recognized Joe from --

Q. 204.

A. Yeah.

Dr. Kelly was one of the individuals that was with us on Liberty on the west side of West Street under the overpass when they thought the debris was falling.

That's it. I really don't remember. There were names that I had gotten then --

Q. You don't remember. You didn't recognize them?

A. No, I didn't recognize anybody. There was a lot of confusion.

279 we think was in that building because their engine company was relatively close to that intersection of Liberty and West, because that's where we found the chauffeur from 279 later. Their rig was right on a hydrant right there. So we assume that they took that hydrant and went into that building, but we don't know

for certain.

Q. So you came out almost the same way you went in?

A. Came out -- we had only been in the building -- I don't think we were in the building more than five minutes.

Q. You went back past the south pedestrian crosswalk?

A. Yeah, right, we came out -- we had gone in -- we couldn't have gone further into the building than -- well, I went further than the guys did because I told them to stay put, stay in one place. The whole company as a whole when the collapse occurred, we weren't more than 20 feet into the building. So we knew exactly where the exit was and we went back out.

Q. You said there were a lot of guys around that particular chief that was in the staging area.

A. It was a chief.

Q. Can you give me a figure? 15? 20? Plus?

A. You couldn't get to him. You couldn't even shoulder your way in to him. So there had

to be about ten guys around him. He had about ten guys around him in a semicircle. He was facing them. He was in the process of giving one of them instructions, which I assume he was telling him to take a certain stairwell and perform a certain function. He was just about to talk to another one when I said, "Chief, 131, we're here, we're in the lobby." He said either stand fast or stay put or something.

I would say maybe eight to ten. They might have all been officers. There might have been a couple officers with their men. I don't remember.

It was hard to pick out anyone after the collapse. You couldn't tell the difference between -- you were there. You couldn't tell the difference between daytime --

Q. I can't remember if I saw you there.

A. When we came out of the building before the second collapse, we didn't know we were outside the building until we ran into a light pole that had a walk/don't walk sign on it. Then we realized we're outside. We didn't know. We didn't know.

Q. Fortunately the wind was blowing off the water and was clearing it up a little bit on the south side, on the west side a lot faster than it probably did up towards Church.

So I guess that's about it; right?

A. Yeah, I wish I could be of more help.

Q. No, no, no. You have been a lot of help, a lot of help.

So you were actually in the lobby of the Marriott in the staging area?

A. The lobby of the Marriott, right off the corner of Liberty and West.

Q. Right, the south side of tower two.

A. And they were using that as a staging area because there were cylinders, Scott cylinders, and hose links had been deposited there.

Q. So you came out the same way you went in?

A. That's correct.

Q. So that lobby or that west side of tower two was still intact after it came down, to some degree?

A. Right, after the first collapse -- now,

I'm not certain how many floors remained, because I only saw it up close maybe a week later when we went back. I know that at that point a week later only maybe two and a half stories remained.

Q. We don't know what the second collapse did to the Marriott.

A. You don't know. You don't know if there were 10 floors left after the first collapse, 15.

Q. I think there was a lot more left of tower two when it cleared, but there was a lot less after tower one came down.

A. I think that's probably correct. I know a lot of stuff hit the street. When we hid in that deli during the second collapse, there was a lot of stuff hitting --

Q. Where was this deli?

A. I'm not really certain. I think it was off of --

Q. Here's a map. You can orient yourself a little bit better, maybe. Now here's the Marriott.

A. Yeah, I see that. We came out. Depending upon what street we were on, I would

bet the deli was on West Street here in the vicinity of Cedar, I would think.

Q. Right, okay. There was nothing left here. This was all messed --

A. Maybe it was on the end street. I can't really tell you.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. We made our way out, and I guess we made our way down here somehow.

279 was right around here somewhere, right around Cedar, maybe Albany. That's where I think they were.

Q. Yeah, that's true.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. This concludes the interview. It is approximately 11:35. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT WOOD: You're welcome, Chief.

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File No. 9110219

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARK RUPPERT

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4th, 2001. The time is 11:45. I am Lieutenant Chief Art Lakiotes here at the command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER RUPPERT: Mark Ruppert.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- Firefighter Mark Ruppert regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mark, if you would, just take me through the time you got on the rigs, responded and what transpired during this event.

A. We got to the box about 10 to 9. We went to a staging area outside the Battery Tunnel with about five other companies that met us there, 101 being one of them, and 202 and 205.

We were watching the tower burn when the second one hit. We actually saw the second one hit and the plane burst into flames. Not even a minute later we were sent in to the box. So we went through the tunnel.

After we got through the tunnel, we pulled up right in front of the building, weaving

in and out of the other trucks. We got a spot out in front there. We got out and we said, you know what -- the chauffeur pulled the rig around the corner. There were so many rigs there already.

We went across the street, across West Street, and we were waiting there. As we were waiting there -- well, you don't want to know about the bodies jumping. You know all that.

Q. Whatever you feel like talking about, just tell me.

A. We were there for about 15 minutes, 10, 15 minutes. Then we got orders to follow up. So we went under the overpass. We crossed Liberty, went under the overpass and then proceeded into the lobby of the Marriott, crossing Liberty.

As we entered the lobby, we entered it through the bar area. Then we went into the lounge area which connected, from what I understand, to tower one and tower two.

We were told to get comfortable because we were going to be there a while. Some got real comfortable. I left my bunker pants on and took them off when I -- I think I left my coat in

there. I took my coat off because it was hot, took the tank off, put our tools down. I went to use the bathroom, got something to drink there. They had water set up. There was a lot of companies in the lobby there.

Q. What time was that? Do you have any idea how many guys were in that lobby at that time? 10? 20? 30? 40?

A. I would definitely say between 75 and 100, I would say. It was full. The whole lobby was --

Q. Full of firefighters?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Lieutenant Wood went to the command post staging area for instructions?

A. Yeah. Let's see. He took a walk down there, down the lobby, and came back and said -- actually when we went that way, he told us to go to the bathroom, try to use the phone, which I tried but I didn't get through on my phone call. We used the bathroom, whatever.

When I got back, he was back. He said, "All right, we're going to go down to --" I thought he said we're going to go to work. I

thought we were going to go relieve companies up there. He said we're going to go to a staging area down in the other tower, the north tower.

Basically just at that time I had my -- I got my coat back on. I had my mask in my hand. I was about to put it on my back and --

Q. You started hearing a noise?

A. No, no. Looking out the window -- I was facing the window, and I saw everybody running.

Q. Gary said the same thing. You knew something was going on.

A. I yelled. I said, "Everybody run. Something is going on." We were basically looking out and you saw everybody running. Then you look up. You hear rumbling. You hear something. So you look up and we saw the reflection of the building across the street. We knew something was coming down.

Then we just said hit the deck. Everybody was running towards the back of the lobby. We ran into an area where we were -- we were running kind of towards the bar area where we came in. So I guess instinct tells you to go

the way you came in, so instinct.

You felt it all coming. You felt the rumbling. You heard it hitting the floor. Then it was just that hit and the wind came and was blowing us. Back into the bar area is where it blew us. Somewhere along the line a rolldown gate came down between the lobby and the bar, and we realized that was the only way out after a few minutes of being in there. We didn't know what was in there. We lifted the gate up to get out.

What were you going to say? You were going to say something?

Q. I was running down Liberty. I was one of the guys you saw running, because we could see it actually happening. We looked up -- see, I'm surprised -- what was in my mind and I could never forget it is the noise it made.

A. Yeah.

Q. It was like a train --

A. A freight train.

Q. -- going over my head. When Gary said that you thought you heard something, it really was incredible. He didn't hear what we heard. We knew he was right under it, but we heard from

the outside.

A. Did you hear the snapping on that? Did you hear the floor snapping? After the first one came, we wound up going across the street. We wound up -- we were going where the windows were. We were going out that way. We didn't realize we were out of the building until we were in the middle of West Street, basically. There was a crevice that we were climbing down and all this steel --

Q. What was the visibility like?

A. It was very hazy, very thick. But you could see. You look back and you couldn't really see the building -- anything. But once you were across the street, you look and you see the structure, steel sticking up still.

Then when we were across the street -- as we were going, there was a guy in a bush. He might have been a reporter of some kind. David something. I grabbed someone else and said, "Let's get this guy." We pulled him across the street, and we took him with us into -- there was a deli over there. We put him in there.

Then as we said what are we going to do

now, what are we going to do with this guy, what's our next move, that's when the second building -- I guess 10 minutes later? 15 minutes later? I don't know. It seemed like that much.

But then we saw the other one coming down. Part of you wanted to keep looking because it was like holy cow. You could hear it going "kachoo, kachoo, kachoo." Now outside it's total hysteria, and you had time because it's this big building. You had -- I don't know, how long did it take? Looking at it we said we better get in.

We started running. We realized we've got to get cover. We all started diving into this store, pushing each other in, pushing a guy and he's pushing you. You get in there, and it's basically the same thing. That wind was blowing and debris messed that building up. All the windows were broken in the front of the building. We thought we were buried in there. Somebody started panicking, and somebody took over and told them to shut the hell up.

Q. That bad?

A. Yeah.

Then somebody walked outside and said

let's see if we can get outside. It was clear. You couldn't see anything, but we could walk out and we weren't buried. The dust was settling.

We grabbed that guy again and we pulled him down West Street to the water, and they took him in the boat. Then we walked along the water to where they were evacuating people. We got a bunch of people on. Everybody was standing around. Finally officers said, "You guys, we're going to go now."

That's basically it.

Q. You don't know how much time you have on the job? I asked your chief about it, but I don't remember.

A. I have like three years.

Q. Okay. So don't know of anybody you saw in the lobby except for your own company?

A. I remember seeing guys from 101.

Q. You do?

A. Yeah.

Q. At what point in time do you remember seeing them?

A. I saw them on the outside of the tunnel when we met there. Then we pulled into 101. I

know the faces. I think it was a guy from 122. I saw 122 in there. 101, I'm pretty sure they were down in front. We were in the lobby. They went down further, and we were on this side.

Q. You were more towards the Liberty Street side?

A. We were more towards Liberty, yeah, and they were in front of there. There was dozens of firemen. I don't know why at that point -- I know after we came down and I was walking out and I couldn't find my helmet and my tools. I was kicking a helmet, so I shook it off, I put it on my head, and I went out, thinking it was mine.

A guy when I was outside, he said, "You're from 58?" I said, "No, I just found this helmet." I didn't even know what number was on it. He said, "That's my helmet." So whether it was or not, he got his helmet back. So I know 58 was in there.

Q. You didn't see anybody from 101 after that?

A. No, no. After that it was who was with us there. Basically it was guys from our company. There was a pedestrian or two. That

was about it, really. I can't hardly remember. I know it was us from our company. There were a few other firefighters, that guy there from 58. That's it. I can't remember anybody else being with us there. There weren't too many with us. There were about 10, 12 guys there, maybe. That's it.

Q. Your memory is better than mine, believe me.

A. Part of you starts searching, thinking you're going to find tools, find my helmet, any other guys. It was just such a mess.

Q. How was the visibility?

A. They said we're going out, everybody out, grab people and we're going out.

Q. How was the visibility in the lobby of the hotel after the collapse?

A. It was settling. It was like a thick smoke. It was thick. It was a thick dust. You could see. It was settling. At first you couldn't see a thing. I was worried about breathing. I couldn't see. I had my hood over. Good thing I had the hood. I had that over my mouth, and I was breathing through that. You're

kicking a lot of dust and dirt and papers. Everybody looked like a statue. All you could see was the guys and the mouth.

Q. The eyes were all red.

A. Yeah. It seemed like everybody was going "blah" with their mouth and spitting. We went to the guy across the street and we kind of tried to towel up, get the junk out. It was bad, but you could see. It was like a thick fog. You could actually see to get to walk. You could see in front of you.

I wish --

Q. You did fine.

A. I'm pretty aware of when I go to jobs I look at different companies that are there.

Q. Sure.

A. I just wish I would have a little more --

Q. Let me tell you, it was traumatic for everybody that was there. A lot of us don't remember a lot that went on.

Okay. Thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is approximately 12:00.

File No. 9110220

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4, 2001. The time is approximately 11:10. This is Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS: Firefighter Edward Davis.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Who was assigned to Battalion 32. Regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Eddie, just take me through your response to the World Trade Center and what transpired after that.

A. Responded to the World Trade Center with the 21 Battalion. The 32 Battalion car was at the rock. Responded with them, arrived about 2 minutes prior to the first collapse, which I believe was the south tower. Upon that collapse, was upon the scene also for the second collapse, and conducted a search and attempted rescue from that point on.

Q. Did you see anybody else that was there that may have not made it, can you think of anybody?

A. Can't think of anybody that didn't make it. Ladder 101 was there, but I hadn't seen any of them prior to my arrival other than being in the fire house

before the start of our tours.

Q. Everyone you saw in that area, myself included, you saw afterwards?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. There is no way of telling where anybody was that didn't make it at that point?

A. That's correct.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay Ed. Thank you.

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS: Okay, Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview at approximately 11:15.

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File No. 9110221

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ERIC BERNTSEN

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4, 2001. The time is 1300 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Command. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BERNTSEN: Eric Berntsen.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- Firefighter Eric Berntsen regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Eric, would you just mind telling me in your own words, from the time you responded, exactly where and what and how the day unfolded for you.

A. Okay. We heard the explosions from the kitchen. We went up on the roof and got there just in time to see the second plane hit the towers. So we figured we would be going on that. So we ran downstairs. By the time we got down to the apparatus floor, we got the ticket. It was about five after 9:00. I jumped on the rig. I was an extra man. The dispatcher came over and announced to bring the extra man. I was supposed to be detailed to 205, but I called to quarters and they said they were out, so I jumped on the rig.

We went down to the Trade Center. On the way there, we experienced a lot of traffic. We went over

the Brooklyn Bridge, came down Church Street, made a right onto Liberty, and parked near 10 and 10's quarters, on the opposite side, on 10 and 10's side of Liberty. We grabbed the rollups and an extra bottle and walked down Liberty towards West Street. When we got to the corner of West Street, we made a right and I ran into the Marriott. We stopped underneath the pedestrian bridge where a lot of guys were using that for shelter, so we didn't get hit by anything coming down, bodies, et cetera.

We ran into the Marriott and stayed by the security desk there. The officer went off, got orders from a Chief, and we were told to go to the 74th floor of the south tower. He came back, told us what we were doing. We gathered the company together, started heading north through the Marriott. Then we made a right and went down the ramp to get to the concourse level.

We headed eastbound in the concourse level to where it first turns up to the left, where the mall turns up to the left, up north, and we got to that corner and the officer told us to wait there. Instead of carrying the stuff all around, he was going to try to find a staircase or the best way we could get up.

He walked away. He went west in the concourse and talked to a security guy. He was, I guess, about 100 feet away from us, maybe more.

That's when we heard the building start shaking. I looked up into the Marriott, because you could see up into it from where we were standing, and just saw black, like dust. I saw stuff falling off the ceiling and I saw just black dust coming down. I turned and I ran a couple of steps west, a couple of steps east, and then we turned up north, up into the concourse, because I didn't see anything falling in that area at that time. So I felt that was the safest direction to go. I jumped into a corner. The lights went out. I jumped into a corner under an archway. I thought maybe that might provide some better support. I just held my helmet. I figured we were going to get like a pancake collapse on top of us.

After the building stopped shaking and there was no rumbling noise any more, Vinny Picciano of 212 regrouped the company by saying 212, regroup, get back. 212, where are you? We all got back together. We all turned on our lights. We talked to the civilians, told them to keep quiet, to stay calm, don't yell or scream, everybody stay calm, we are going to

get out of here. We asked if anybody knew how to get out. Me and this guy who was with us, he said he knew how, but he couldn't really see too much. He looked like he was blinded by the dust. We just walked store to store. He was asking us what store do you see? We told him all the stores and we just headed north through the concourse and came out in between the PATH and the number 1 and number 9 line. There is an exit there that comes out into building 5. It comes out on the exterior of building 5, which leaves you off in the middle of Vesey Street, between Church and West Broadway.

We got out, myself and Jimmy Murphy, who was detailed to 212 from 220 Engine. We chocked the doors outside, went back in, told all the people this is an exit. We had about 50 civilians with us. We told them to exit out that way. We made kind of like a chain with lights, with flashlights, so they could see where they were going to get them out. Once everybody was out, we went back in and we started searching.

We tried to give a Mayday for our officer because our officer wasn't with us. We couldn't find him. We went back in and we searched the stores, searched the PATH. There were some more people still

in there. I remember a guy from the GAP. He was the manager. I asked if anybody was in there. He said no, he was the last guy to leave. So we got him out. We found a guy, probably in his mid 40s, bald head, or short crew cut hair, under the concrete. We picked him up, put him in a chair and carried him out.

When we got out on to Vesey, there was a Port Authority cop with us and he said that they were given reports that the second building was going to come down. So we made a decision we'd better leave. We came out of the door on Vesey Street. We were exhausted from carrying this gentleman who was pretty heavy, we estimated about 300 pounds, 275. It took six guys to carry him. We were all exhausted. We were changing. We didn't know if we could get him out of there before this building was going to come down, so we put him down for a second, took a breath, and made a decision to just go for it and pick him up. We made it a couple of steps and then we heard the rumble and we knew the second tower was coming down. Everybody let go of the guy and ran. There was no talking, no looking. You just went.

Q. What direction?

A. There was a cop, NYPD, I'm pretty sure it was

an NYPD guy, and Vinnie Picciano were in front of me. We were facing north. We didn't even reach the sidewalk. We didn't even get off the sidewalk in front of building 5. I saw them run forward, north, heading across the street.

Q. Up West Broadway?

A. Across Vesey Street from where building 5 is. Directly straight across Vesey Street towards the Federal Office Building, the Post Office. Vinnie and the cop jumped under a car. Vinnie Picciano jumped up on top of him. There was no room for me there and I thought I could make it a little bit further than that. So once I hit the sidewalk on the Federal Building, on Vesey, I turned right, which had me east on Vesey Street, and I started running. Then I looked up and I saw a dark cloud and I grabbed my helmet.

The force knocked me down, blew me. I don't know how far I went, but I went forward pretty far. It knocked the wind out of me. I got covered with debris and just kept my hands on my helmet. Something pretty big hit me and knocked my helmet off. I felt a blast and just a lot of pressure when it hit me. So I had no helmet. I put my hands back on top of my head and I felt debris hit me. I felt weight piling up on my back

and I figured I was going to be under what I thought was about 10 feet of rubble.

When it all stopped, I said what do I do now? I said, well, I can't breathe. Let me get my mask on. I got my mask out. I didn't realize my bottle wasn't on. So I couldn't reach it because I was face down, and I kind of gave up. Then I was still laying there. I said I can't just lay here. I said let me get out of here. Let me see how deep I am, see what I can do. I remember saying I have no radio, this fucking job, I can't get any kind of radio.

When I pulled myself out from this debris that was on my back and my legs, I was up against the wall of the Federal Building, and then I realized it was still pitch black. I said I must be in a big void because it was pitch black and I couldn't see anywhere.

Then, as it started lightening up a little bit, I started using my light. I was able to see over the top of the debris around me. I could see up the wall a little bit. I realized, holy shit, I'm free. I'm not buried. I got up. I took a step and just collapsed because I had no energy. I got up again, took two more steps and collapsed. Then a cop picked

me up and helped me walk up to Church. I made a left on Church and there was a car on fire on the corner.

Maybe 50 feet, 100 feet up Church, I saw Vinnie Picciano, who was under the car with that cop. He was stumbling around. He had a bad gash on the back of his head. There was blood coming out from the back of his turnout coat. He was a little dizzy and disoriented. He asked me to look at his cut. I told him it's all right. You will be okay. I didn't really think so, but what are you going to tell him at that point? I said you got a good cut, but you're going to be all right.

We walked up Church, made a right on to Barclay and dropped our masks and continued up to Broadway and got to I guess it was Park Place maybe and Broadway. We got into the back of an ambulance and got Vinnie's head checked out. Then we left the ambulance because there were secondary collapses. I was hearing secondary collapses and I didn't know how far away we were. I didn't know how much of the building came off. I said I want to get out of here, as far away from this place as possible.

We headed north and got to Duane Street. I said, oh, the 7 and 1 is over here. We made a left and

we walked into the quarters. Three guys that were in the company, Jimmy Murphy, Joe Galasso, Danny Walker, they were all standing there.

Q. What company are they in?

A. 212. Same company. Me and Vinnie thought they were dead because we were the only two that walked in. We only saw each other on Church. They must have came out before us, after us, you know. What happened is they ran back into World Trade Center 5. Me and Vinnie and the cop ran forward. So they were okay, but they got beat up with the debris. They got tossed around, blown off their feet. So we had everybody except the officer and the chauffeur. We didn't know where the chauffeur was because we were on the complete opposite side now.

We saw a Chief. We let the Chief know that these guys were missing. So we regrouped and from 7 and 1 we took an ambulance to Jamaica Hospital, Queens. That's most of my recollection.

Q. The Lieutenant and the chauffeur?

A. They were alive. The chauffeur got blown down I don't know what street. Somewhere.

Q. He was with the rig?

A. Yes, he was with the rig. The officer made

it out with some of the guys from 238. I don't know how they got out. I don't know which direction they went in.

Q. I'll try to get an interview with him.

A. Yes. But he made it out and he was with Lieutenant Glenn Wilkinson. They were trying to come back, to get back into the building, because he knew we were in there, and they were trying to get a mask. By the time they got masks for each of them, they lost it after the collapse. They were tangled and stuff. They dropped it. I don't know about looking for my officer.

Q. What was his name?

A. Neil Brosnan.

Q. Did you notice any other companies in the lobby of the Marriott when you were in there?

A. No, I didn't. The only person I saw that I recognized was Chuck Margiotta and he was asking everybody if they had an extra mask for a Chief.

Q. His unit is?

A. I don't know what unit he was working in that day. I believe he was assigned to 85 Truck, but I don't know where he was working that day.

Q. You saw him in the lobby?

A. I saw him in the lobby.

Q. Do you remember how far down in the lobby off of Liberty, off the staircase? A hundred feet down?

A. About 100 feet down. I saw him there, but then he left. I don't know how far he went, but I saw him headed north.

Q. Towards tower 1?

A. Right. Towards the north tower. I saw him headed that way.

Q. How many guys do you think were in the lobby at that point when you got there; 20, 50, 100, crowded?

A. At least 50. Probably over 10, maybe 15 companies, 12 companies, something like that. There were Chiefs. I saw a couple of Chiefs who were just kind of walking through. I don't remember who they were.

Q. What happened to the rig? Did the rig survive?

A. The rig survived. It got beat up, the windows blown out, a little fire damage, not that much.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. Very good. Excellent. This concludes the interview. It is now 1320.

File No. 9110222

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT MASSA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 4:44. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Vincent Massa, firefighter first grade of Engine 64.

Q. Tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. I was working that day. It was regular code work fire house. I saw on the news that the planes had hit, and about five minutes after the second plane hit they sent us to a staging area at 35 Engine and home with a rig. I had the control position. I had a radio.

We got on the rig, gathered everything we thought we would need, flashlights and extra clothes and stuff, because we knew it would be crazy and we'd be there at least a day. We went down Bruckner Boulevard towards 35 Engine, which is in Harlem. You could see the towers burning while driving down the Bruckner.

On the way down there, we were listening to the radio. I believe we switched over to the Manhattan frequency. As we were

going down the Bruckner, you heard the dispatcher -- it seemed like a Manhattan dispatcher, unless he had us on citywide -- talking to the units that were at the scene. You heard different things going on.

The dispatcher announced that elevators were dropping. I remember them saying at first to stay out of one of the elevators that serviced the 44th floor. Then less than a minute later they said not to use any elevators. This is as we're driving down the Bruckner, things we were hearing on the radio. He said to stay out of all elevators because the elevators were dropping. We knew that there was something crazy going on.

As we were approaching closer to Harlem, we got out of sight of the buildings. I remember hearing different things. I remember hearing "major collapse" on the radio. That's one thing that threw me about the whole thing was that when we got to the scene we didn't know what had happened exactly.

To jump ahead a little bit, when we got to the scene, we got there between the two collapses. We had no idea that the first

building was already completely down. All we heard on the radio was major collapse, and we figured the top fell off. So we heard elevators are dropping, then we heard major collapse, then we heard the dispatcher calling out for anybody and nobody was answering. A few minutes later we heard a chauffeur from one of the rigs screaming, screaming that he was trapped and screaming, and then it cut out. [redacted]

We got to Harlem, and we joined up on the ticket -- we went on the fifth alarm, one of the fifth alarms; I don't remember which one. We went with five or six other Bronx engine companies that were meeting with 35 Engine in Harlem. There was 35, us, 64, 83 Engine, 68 Engine, 94 Engine and 50 Engine. We all met up with 35 Engine. We were there. They were gathering tools up. We were waiting for the other engine companies to come in.

Once everybody got in, we started aligning like, it's a funny thing but we ended up leading the pack. It was a convoy. I figured 35 would end up leading the pack, but we ended up leading. Circumstances brought us to put our rig

in the front, and we ended up leading.

So we were waiting in house 35. You could hear everything that was going on. They were calling us. They were trying to get like a roll call of us, exactly what companies were there. They said they were waiting for other companies to show up before sending us and telling us where to report to down at the site.

Once everybody was there, they got everybody accounted for, we started heading down. It turns out we bought ourselves some time which probably saved our lives because our chauffeur was leading. Instead of going right to the West Side Highway, because he could have gone right around the block to the west side, we shot straight down. I remember him telling us on the way there that the west side was wide open. He had gone down Third Avenue and down through Central Park and through construction. It bought us like ten minutes.

Once we got down there, we got down to the West Side Highway. There were other companies behind us. Some of the companies split off and pulled ahead of us. We had a covering

officer that day. He told us to park in a certain spot, and it was maybe about four blocks north on West Street. We were to report to the command post on West and Vesey or the West Street command post.

We got all our stuff, got out of the rig and were getting ready. Our chauffeur didn't have a mask, so the boss told him to stay behind, to stay with the rig, in case he needed to move the rig to use it for anything.

At this point, like I said, we didn't know that one tower had come down. We were all there trying to see what was there, and we couldn't tell. We thought it was there, but we couldn't see it because of the smoke and the dust and everything. It turned out it wasn't there. The second one was still standing, the north tower.

So we got our equipment and we started walking down, and we got to somewhere between three-quarters to a half a block away, within a block, when the north tower came down. We were walking down with the companies we were with. 94 Engine was there. I remember seeing the guys

from 94 with us. They all made it out.

So as we were walking up, we had our rollups and stuff. I don't know what we planned on doing with them, but we figured we were going to go operate somehow. We were supposed to report to the command post.

As we got like a half a block away, you could hear a gigantic rumble. It sounded like a jet flying overhead. Everybody immediately looked up, and you could see just a big cloud of dust coming down to the ground. I didn't see the actual top of the building coming down, but you knew what it was.

So we looked up, and there was probably about a 30-story tidal wave of crap coming down West Side Highway. As soon as we saw it, everyone stopped, looked for a second, and it took everybody a couple seconds for it register what was going on and that we had to get the hell out of there.

We were standing there -- we were fairly close, not as close as other guys. We had our masks. I had a radio. We had our masks. I had tools in my pocket, what I thought we needed

to hook up with, like gloves, a monkey wrench, an adapter that was going to carry the whole thing up 80 flights.

We were standing there, and somebody yelled "run." We were all looking and whatever guys were in the street, it was like a sea of guys from all the companies that were down there. There were a few civilians down there. We just turned around and were just running down West Side Highway as fast as we could, running, looking over your shoulder. We were watching this cloud of shit chasing us down the street.

I hit the ground after running maybe a block, probably not even, maybe half a block. I remember I got past the last intersection. We walked a block, and I ran and I crossed through that intersection that was a block away that was in between there until -- I remember looking before it hit us to see where I was, and I was like close to another intersection.

I went to my knees, put my mask on, and the cloud of shit hit us, like little bits of rubble. There wasn't anything big at that point because we were far enough away, I guess. I had

stuff hitting my helmet, "dung, dung, dung." It just got pitch-black. It went from a sunny day to just total blackness.

I was wearing my mask. I figured I was going to make a right and go behind the buildings. I wasn't near anything. A couple guys jumped behind cars. I wasn't near any cars or anything. I figured I'd make a right. It was pitch-black. Literally your hand could be on your face and you wouldn't see it.

So I stopped, took a few steps, made a deliberate right turn and then started walking straight to try and get behind the buildings, wearing my mask. I got about ten paces after making the turn to go to the right, and another fireman kind of like jumped on me, screaming. He dropped his mask. I think he was from 9 Engine. I'm not sure. 9 Truck or 9 Engine. I think it was 9 Engine. He had forgotten his mask. He had dropped his mask, and he was flipping out.

So I grabbed him. We walked a couple of paces. I had my hand out in front, trying to find something, just to get down some kind of protection or something. I brought him to the

ground, and I started giving him my mask. We were sharing my mask. We were sitting on the ground, and I let him take what he needed, I'd hold my breath and he gave it back and we were just going back and forth.

I'd say after about maybe a good five minutes it started lightening up. As it started to lighten up, he got up and was like, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. What's your name? What's your name? Where are you from?" Blah, blah, blah. I was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." I had to go. I have to find the rest of my guys.

Everything was covered with gray, everybody. Two, three inches of dust and crap on the ground, papers everywhere. I don't remember hearing anything on the radio all that time, nothing at all, really. Going down there I'm trying to remember if I remember hearing anything while we were walking towards it. I don't remember. Nothing jumps out that I remember hearing anything coming over the radio.

Q. Did you see anything, like the building, anything that -- a sign that it might be coming down or anything like that or no?

A. As we were walking down?

Q. Yeah.

A. No. Some of the guys that were walking were looking up. As it was coming down, I must have been looking straight ahead or down. I heard the rumble. By the time I looked up, it was just a big cloud of shit. You saw a cloud of stuff coming down, and almost like it turned a corner and was coming down the block.

We stood there looking at it -- you look at it to judge to see am I too close, am I all right here. If you could see it diminishing, then maybe you'll be all right, no problem, I'll be all right. But it was just getting bigger and bigger. Everyone just like "ah," and ran.

There was a lot of chaos on the radio after the dust lifted and it started getting light out. I remember listening out, and I made some calls to my officer, because I remember which direction they went in. Before we ran and split up, we all ran in a general direction. We all ran north.

After a while I was monitoring the radio to hear from him, and I called him on the

radio. I heard other things, people calling other people. I don't remember exactly. Nothing stands out. We hooked up together -- he told me where he was after I got him on the radio. He was underneath the overpass at Chambers. There's that overpass on West Street. So we met up over there.

Once we all got together, we started walking back in because we all wanted to try to get in and do something and get to a command post and see -- we had no idea what had happened. We figured there was still a command post. We figured we would go to the command post.

As we were heading down, everybody dropped their shit. We dropped all our rollups. I dropped my gloves, my wrench, everything. I had nothing but my mask, my helmet and my bunker gear. So I was concerned about if we're going to go in and we're going to do something, I've got to get a pair of gloves on.

I was scrounging around. There were tools and stuff all over the West Side Highway. It was completely covered with tools and gear and shit just everywhere. I scrounged up a pair of

gloves. As we were going in, we passed some rigs, we grabbed some stuff. I grabbed a halogen. I found the search rope.

We were just grabbing everything we could get our hands on as we were heading back in, because we figured we were going to be doing something with all the work.

As we started walking down, we figured we would try to find the command post. I remember we were walking down and we got to almost where we were when it came down, like within a half a block away or so, and I think Stuyvesant High School is on -- as you're walking south on West is on the right side by the water there.

There were reports coming over the radio that there was a secondary device in Stuyvesant High School, that there was a major gas leak and to evacuate the area. Everybody turned around and started heading north again. We were like, Jesus Christ, what the hell is next? Everybody was shell-shocked. We figured this building is going to explode now, you know.

So we started walking north again, and

we were still concerned about finding a command post. We stood there for a minute or two and we were like -- I don't know, this is bullshit, and let's start heading back in.

We started heading back in. We changed our bottles on the west side. Another reason we changed our bottles, we were trying to find a command post and there was none. I remember the officers all calling, trying to find out where to meet up. But there was no command post, so there was kind of chaos. Nobody knew where to go.

As we were waiting on the west side for something to do, I remember two fire marshals came up the block. They must have been close. They were totally covered with crap. Their pants were ripped. We had a box of flashlights. We sat there with them and put batteries in a couple cases of flashlights for them.

I'm trying to think if there's anything else worth noting. I can't remember. We helped them. We hung out. Then they came up with the command post at West and Chambers near the underpass. So we started heading back there.

When we got back there, we hooked up

with -- they gave us an assignment to stretch a line from the water -- there was a marine boat on the water at Vesey Street. They wanted the line stretched -- I think two or three companies -- they were looking for engine chauffeurs. I'm an engine chauffeur. They were looking for engine companies to help stretch lines to manifold them to satellite off the boat close to the debris at the intersection of West and Vesey.

We rode with them. We took a rig. We drove down to the water and Vesey. There was already a rig backed in that dead-end street to the water, 3-something. Maybe 320-something. I don't remember. We had a spare rig that was like -- it was a spare rig or reserve rig. We stretched three and a half from there up Vesey to West, and we fed 33 Engine, I think. We supplied it to them. From them they fed it manifold, and they fed I think a satellite.

It was a mess. I remember thinking this is ridiculous. It's taking us forever just to stretch a line because everything was just chaos. There's lines all over the place. Nobody knew where this line ran, this and that.

Everything was all over the place.

There were a couple officers that did a good job keeping everybody together and saying hey, just do this, get this done. Everybody had their own ideas of what they should do, and everybody was doing what they thought they should do, and it was all different things. It was hard to accomplish simple tasks.

Once we did that, there was a long wait. We went in. We got that hooked up. We helped them. We were going to stretch some hand lines in, but they said to hang that. They kept backing everybody up and then bringing them in. Now at this point everybody was gathered on Vesey by West and wanting to go to work. Everybody was hanging out. This must have been probably almost an hour after the second tower came down.

We were over there. We tried to do what we could. Our officers tried to get us to work. We hung around for a while. I think they were more letting rescue do it and they were letting whoever had their rigs who was on the ends of any place supplying any kind of water. They were more interested in trying to supply

water, and there were some guys searching.

But they weren't letting guys too close. At this point Seven World Trade Center was going heavy, and they weren't letting anybody get too close. Everybody was expecting that to come down.

We hung out for hours. We went into the American Express building. We looked around there. We searched around for a while, but you could see guys were already in there. We pretty much did that on our own because we were right there and the door was there and we just walked in.

I remember later on in the day it was getting close that they were more concerned about seven coming down. We had no idea what was going on on the east side. We were all on our side. On the west side it was pretty clear. The wind was blowing from west to east, I believe.

I remember later on in the day as we were waiting for seven to come down, they kept backing us up Vesey, almost like a full block. They were concerned about seven coming down, and they kept changing us, establishing a collapse

zone and backing us up.

At one point I remember the chiefs gathered all the officers in the street. They put all the engines on one side of the street and the truck guys on the other side of the street, and they gathered all the officers in the center of the street to try to come up with some kind of plan, try and get some semblance of organization. They wanted everybody's riding lists. They wanted everybody to be accounted for to make sure that nobody was missing, just trying to get their bearings.

I remember being concerned about 47 Truck that went with us. They were relocated down to 6 Truck before we went down. So they were down there a lot earlier. Maybe their guys will tell you their story.

I remember trying to listen to the radio, hearing for anything on 47 Truck. I remember hearing the officers say something once, and I remember hearing 47 was on B call on 47's roof, but the roof not answering. We were concerned that some of them might be missing.

We had no idea what they were going

through on the other side or wherever they were, but we knew they were there because we heard on the radio. We were sure that they were there because they went back to 6 Truck, early.

After they got us in the street, I remember Chief Salka from the 180 was one of the guys that took charge. He kind of kept everybody in line. Him and I think Visconti had a plan of attack.

The whole time while we were waiting -- there were hours that went by. Seven came down after 5 in the afternoon. I remember listening to the rescues that were going on. They got 6 Truck out of the stairwell. I remember hearing all that, what was going on, Three or four different rope rescues going at the same time. Different chiefs talking to different crews, guys that were going in to try and get 6 Truck out.

Other than that, we were surprised that there wasn't a lot more going on on the radio. It was actually -- considering what was going on, it was pretty quiet. Plus it was like -- it must have been hours later when we realized both the towers were completely gone. It was just like

holy shit.

I remember somewhere during the hours of waiting there was a proby from 18 Truck that hooked up with us because he knew one of the probies that was with us. He didn't know whether he could find his company, so our officer told him just stay with us. So we latched onto another guy we had extra guys with us. I don't remember his name.

I know we were waiting in the street. You had the engines on one side, the trucks on the other, the officers were in the middle.

At that point I guess it was about 5 in the afternoon or so. That's when seven came down. Seven World Trade Center came down, and that was like two blocks away. As soon as it came down, everybody got up and tore ass west down Vesey Street.

Everybody was trying to get into this building. I remember there were 150 guys trying to get through two revolving doors with full gear. It was like (sound). Everyone is screaming. Guys were trying to smash the glass with their halogens to get through and ended up

freaking out. The stuff gave way and we all got out. You can laugh it off, like Jesus Christ. Everybody was shell-shocked.

That's when Salka came up and he said all right, now that seven was down you can start getting closer and down things. There was no collapse threat anymore. Salka wanted three engines and three trucks because he wanted to go into the Verizon building, which is on the corner of West and Vesey.

He wanted to search the Verizon building to make sure that there was no fire in there. He wasn't as concerned about people because he figured everybody was out by now because it was hours later. There wasn't much fire in there, but there was some. We didn't want to lose that building too. We're not going to stay away from it and let it burn because there wasn't much fire.

Everybody is jumping up. You had 300 guys that wanted to go to work, and he's looking for three engines and three trucks to go to work. Our boss got in there. He wanted companies that all had masks, companies that had radios, because

a lot of guys had radios because they came down alone.

It turned out because we scavenged we had our masks and we had radios that were working. We still scavenged in those hours for fresh batteries for the radios. I had that search rope. He needed a search rope. I gave Salka the search rope. He had gotten one.

So he ended up picking us to go. I'm trying to remember the truck company we went with. We went in with three chiefs. We paired up into teams, each one with a chief. I can't remember the truck company we went with. I want to say 13 Truck, but I don't think so.

Q. That's okay.

A. So we went in. What he wanted to do is we split up into three teams, and each team searched ten floors. We brought floor ropes with us in case we found fire. There was a rig right in front of the building. We each grabbed a length of hose and what we do to hook up, and we went in.

We had to force the door to the stairwell. We walked up -- I don't remember the

chief's name we went with. We went up to the tenth floor, and we searched from 10 to 20 looking for fire. We were looking for people too, but we were more concerned with fire. We had fire and there was damage, holes in the walls, big holes in the walls. Actually we were with 54 Truck. 54 Truck was there.

That was pretty much it. Then we came downstairs. By the time we came out, it was dark. We were shot. We were heading out. More people were showing up. There were hundreds and hundreds of guys there.

We came over to try and get another assignment at the command post. We saw 47 Truck there. And we picked up things that we were missing. We went to the command post. We saw Chief Didomenico to try and get another assignment. He took one look at us and said, "You guys been here since this morning?" We said, "Yeah." He said, "You better get the hell out of here." It was like 10:30 at night at this point. He told us to get out of there.

So we took our stuff and walked back down to the rig. We were trying to find our

chauffeur. Actually I remember as we were walking past 47 Truck's rig, there was a civilian going through it. He was wearing one of our guy's coats and one of our guy's helmets. I recognized the helmet. We grabbed the guy, "What the hell are you doing?" He said he was retired. He wasn't retired. We grabbed the stuff and told him to get the hell out of here.

We went back over and picked up our chauffeur and came back, back to quarters. We got back to quarters sometime shortly after 11.

That's it.

Q. That's pretty good. All right.

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's now 5:10 p.m. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110223

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WARREN SMITH

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is December 4th, 2001. The time is now 1523 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT SMITH: Warren Smith.

CHIEF MALKIN: -- Warren Smith of Ladder Co. 9 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present in this room is Fireman Michael Bosco of the Safety Battalion.

Q. If you'll speak in a clear voice and regular tone since we'll record everything and just tell me what you remember.

A. Basically, we received the alarm to respond a little before 9:00, right around 9:00, actually, and just before that we actually heard the first plane hit. We heard it go over, of course, and then hit the building. One of the guys ran out. Guys were yelling what was that, a sonic boom? Guys went down to Lafayette. A couple of guys ran out. If you look down Lafayette, you can see the World Trade Center. You could see what happened. They came back. Shortly after that 33 responded. Shortly after that we responded.

While we were on our way down Broadway, just about near the World Trade Center, there were reports that the other building was hit while we were responding and conflicting reports. You couldn't tell. The angle we were coming, we were heading south. The planes hit on the southwest corner, I believe. We were on basically the opposite corner. Then just before we got off the rig, I heard them transmit a fifth alarm, a second fifth alarm for the other building. I heard Hazmat on the radio say the building was hit. So at that point we did know it was hit. We still didn't realize whether or not -- you couldn't believe the first one, and when the second one hit, you obviously couldn't believe it even more, but you didn't really think that it was an attack at that point. It was just this is crazy.

So I parked the rig not directly in front of the building because I saw all the debris in the street. I told my chauffeur, I said, "Listen, there's a lot of stuff falling down." At that point I didn't know how much of that building was going to come down. Obviously not the whole thing. But we parked I believe at the cemetery and the church there. We parked over in that area. As it turned out later, it did save the

rig from being crushed. We lost the rig because it burnt up. Some debris came down and flew over there and landed on it and lit it on fire. But it didn't get crushed.

Anyway, we had to walk a couple of blocks to the entrance on West Street. We walked in there, went into the lobby, saw the lobby command post, reported to the Chief. Chief Hayden was there. The Commissioner was there. I recognized a few other faces. But basically all the Chiefs were there at that point.

We stood fast for -- time is difficult to comprehend at this point. After the fact it was hard to put everything together, how long everything took, but generally it was probably about 30 seconds maybe that we stood fast before we got an order to go up the stairway. I believe it was stairway B. No specific orders or anything like that, just go up, see what you can do, basically. I think everybody was pretty much overwhelmed at that point because just shortly before that the other plane had hit, so you could see the confusion and everything else at the lobby command post.

So we went up. I talked to my guys while we were standing fast. On the way in I told them to look

up. You could see the bodies were falling around us. I said, "Make sure don't get hit by a flying body when you look up," you know, "don't get hit," and none of us did. You could hear them landing.

We got into the lobby, stood fast for a short time. I paired the guys up. I said, "Listen, try to stay together. It may not be possible." But I paired everybody up. I tried to put seniority with less seniority and everything else.

Working our way up was slow going because we had civilians coming down. We were telling them to stay to their right, trying to calm them down, let them know they were out of harm's way, basically, and I'm sure all those people got out, unless they stood too near to either one of the buildings. For the most part I think all the civilians got out. A lot of civilians got out of the north tower. Working our way up was slow, again, because there were civilians, a lot of firefighters going up, catching up to engine companies with roll-ups, they're not moving as quickly. 33 actually responded a couple of minutes before we did and we ended up catching up to them. We got up to I guess about the 31st floor.

I also received reports while I was walking

up from an FBI agent that there were more planes up in the air unaccounted for. So I passed this on to my guys that were near me. Radios were very difficult to use. But I passed it on to everybody and I had to pass it verbally, actually, that there were more planes up in the air unaccounted for, stay away from the windows.

At that point we knew. He told us, "Yeah, they're attacking us." That's when we really found out that we were being attacked, and this was probably somewhere in the vicinity of the 15th through 20th floor, whatever.

We got up to about the 31st floor, I believe it was the 31st floor, and met up with Engine 33. They were hearing reports on the radio, jet fuel on the upper floors, odor. I was trying to get ahold of some of my guys on the radio. I finally got ahold of a couple of guys that were on the 25th or 26th floor, heavyset guys who weren't making it up as fast as we were. There was me and a couple of younger guys, thinner guys. So I said, "All right, let's regroup here. Let's get everybody together."

While we were there, I saw a Chief down at the end of the hall. I was making my way down to talk

to him to find out what we were going to do. There were a lot of guys on the 31st floor trying to figure out what was going on. Guys were resting. We were hearing a lot of reports on the radio from guys needing oxygen, firefighter down, just guys trying to go up too quickly. So as I was making my way to that Chief to find out what was going on, the other building went down. We did not know what it was. Because I had received reports from the FBI guy that there were other planes, I thought it was another plane hitting our building because it just shook like we were in an earthquake.

We were near a stairwell. The guys that were near the stairwell went up the stairwell. The building stopped shaking. The lights went out. The Chief was near me. I asked him, "What's going on?" He didn't have an answer just then, but shortly thereafter we got the order to evacuate. That was on the command channel, which I believe was 6. I heard them switch to channel 6.

We passed that order on to everybody that was with us on that floor. I know Ladder 8 was with us, Engine 5, some of their guys were in the vicinity, Engine 33. I don't know who the Chief was. Like I

told guys afterwards, if you knew the guy who you saw in that building that day, if you knew him, you didn't work with him, you just knew who he was personally, you remembered him. But if you didn't, with all the shit going on, you just couldn't put the face and then later on see the name. They just didn't go together. There was just too much shit going on at once.

So we started making our way out. The evacuation was orderly. There was no panic. We didn't get a report that the other building went down, just to get out. I've worked in Manhattan my whole career in high-rises and everything else. I worked in midtown. When you get the order to evacuate a high-rise building, you know something's fucked up beyond what we can handle. Usually we just regroup on a lower floor, sometimes just a floor below. So my sense of urgency was pretty good to get the hell out of there. But there was no panic. Guys were calmly getting out.

In retrospect, would there have been panic if they would have told us the other building collapsed? It's hard to say really. I personally don't think so. I would have liked that information because -- I don't know. I mean, I made a lot of decisions that day and five out of eight of us got out. But if I had that

information, would I have gotten all eight of us out? Again, it's really hard to say. I'm just glad five of us got out of there.

It was slow going on the way down. A lot of firemen we were picking up on the way down didn't know that the order to evacuate was given because I think, if you weren't near a Chief, from guys I talked to, you didn't get that order, at least not as quickly. I think it came over later. I didn't hear it myself. But the order to evacuate was given on channel 6, and channel 1 just may have been so bogged down that it may have been impossible to get that order through. I'm sure they tried. It was very slow going. Just doing the math, it was probably a minute per floor, because I know it took us about a half an hour to go 31 flights.

We got down to about the 11th floor and it just stopped completely. We were in stairway C at this point, and guys are like, come on, come on, let's go, let's go. Again, no panic. We found out later that the reason that that stairwell wasn't moving was because there was debris at the bottom, at the base of the stairs, because that stairwell was facing -- I don't know if you know the layout of the building, but from what I gather, that stairway was facing south.

That was full of debris that came into the lobby, and stairway B was facing north. We were basically pretty close to the door leading to the 11th floor and a firefighter -- I don't know if it was a firefighter. It was dark and I didn't shine my light up at him or anything like that, but he just said, "Let's try these other stairs. I think they're clear." That's basically what he said to me.

So I turned to all the guys that were in the vicinity of me. A few of them were my guys, a few of them were Ladder 8. I don't know who else. But the guys that heard me switched over and the other guys passed the order on to everybody else that was in that general vicinity. As I found out later, the guys who didn't switch at that floor -- because, obviously, if you're below and you're evacuating, you're reluctant to come up and go out. So they switched over at either the 10th or the 9th.

I actually spoke with Captain -- it begins with a T -- from Engine 7, who did speak with Engine 33's officer, Pfeifer, who did make it out on the 9th floor, and he said, just talking between the two of us, you know, the sense of urgency, he didn't see it as much in him as that he had it himself. That was the

whole thing. If you realized that you just had to get away from that building, it may have saved your life. I don't know. It depends on where you were in the building and everything else.

But there definitely were firefighters that we were picking up on the way down that had no knowledge, some that we gave them that knowledge that the order to evacuate was given, and they were like they didn't believe us. Guys were forcing doors and carrying roll-ups. We would say, "Listen, forget about that. Drop your roll-ups. You can get them later if you want. Just get out."

But like I said, I just felt like we had to get the hell out of there and all my guys were I knew on their way out. Like I said, if I knew that the other building went down, I probably would have made more -- it was difficult to stay together as a unit. There's no doubt about it. But if I had that knowledge, you know, I don't know. I don't know what would have changed. It would have been difficult to do, but would I have tried harder? I don't know. Because you just felt like, once you got on the lower floors, you were basically safe, you know, you had to get out.

So we did move to that other stair and a lot of guys came with me. It was difficult to tell who. I know a couple of my guys came because I could see them, but then I saw the other guys were passing that order on and guys did switch over at the other floors because, like I said, I spoke with Engine 7. He switched over at the 9th floor. It was slow going in that stairwell also, stairwell B, but not as slow. So we made better time going down that stairwell.

Once I got to the lobby, I saw the debris, obviously from the other tower, but you still couldn't fathom -- it didn't register that that building had collapsed. I was thinking maybe there was a partial collapse maybe above the plane. But there was no one there that said, "Get your ass out of here. The other tower collapsed." It was just we got down there and we saw the debris and we just went, "What the fuck is going on here?" basically.

When I stepped out of the lobby onto West Street, the sidewalk leading to West Street, there was a Chief out there with a bullhorn. Again, I didn't know him personally. I don't remember who he was. I don't know if he's alive today. But he basically was yelling at everybody, "Head north." Obviously, the

reason he was telling everybody to head north was because heading south you were going to come into a pile of shit. We didn't know that. The angle that we came out of, we were facing it. So I'm just looking around, but you really had to look around a bend to see the south tower anyway, whether it was there or not. You could see all the debris, obviously, but, again, it still didn't register that the whole thing went down at that point. But I knew it was definitely not just another plane.

So what we did was we were going to wait there for all our guys, but I knew that they were below me in the stair. Between that and the Chief saying -- you know, we were sort of like slowing down. He's like, "No." Basically, he was just telling us, "Get the hell out of here. Get away from this building." He didn't say this building is about to come down or anything like that, but you just saw he definitely had a sense of urgency about him. So I told my guys, "Listen, they were in front of us. Let's try to reach them on the radio. We'll hook up a couple of blocks away and we'll get everybody together and regroup and figure out what the hell is going on." At that point I'm thinking there's some sort of staging area or

whatever around the block.

So we start making our way up West Street. I got about two blocks. Two of my firefighters were sitting on the median, just sitting there, dazed basically, tired, confused. I said, "Listen, guys." I didn't see a lot of other guys around yet. I didn't see a staging area or anything yet. So I said, "Let's keep moving." Again, I don't know what really made me think that being two blocks away wasn't safe. I have no idea to this day what made me realize that. But all the debris I saw, like I said, you just knew you had to get away from it.

So they did get up and keep moving, and about within the next ten or twenty seconds, the building came down. I guess we were out of the building somewhere around a minute. It came down and even then, you looked back, all you see -- you know how fast those buildings came down -- all you see is the dust and the debris and, again, it just doesn't click that these buildings can come down. I mean, I wasn't working in '93, but I was there the next day and I saw what happened, the damage, and you just couldn't believe that those buildings could come down. You just saw everything and it's like, oh, my God, what the hell

happened? Did another plane hit? Did part of the building come down? What's going on?

But you knew you had to do something. I wrote in there that you had a few choices. You could either run into a building, dive behind a car, jump into a car, under a car, whatever. I still had my mask on my back. You could stop to put it on. That was another option you had. I said let me just run. I can run, I know I can run, that's what I'm going to do. One of the guys from my house was right near me. The other guys were slightly behind me. We were basically just running for our lives, not knowing what was going to happen in the next 20 seconds to a minute, whatever.

So I saw a clearing. I was in the middle of the street. I wasn't near a car or a building, so that definitely helped make my decision easier to run. I saw a clearing. I ran. I stayed straight. I didn't run into anything. The cloud caught me. It was pitch black. I kept running, obviously a little slow because you don't want to run into something, and I guess in about 20 to 30 seconds everything settled down, you started seeing some light, and I just kept moving. One of my guys that was right near me was still near me.

The other two weren't. We talked to each other. I grabbed a guy from Engine 214, Toby, who lost all his guys I found out later, or most of them, and we started walking up trying to contact guys on the radio, 33, Ladder 9. There were a couple of guys from Ladder 9 on the radio. At this point now the radio was pretty open because there weren't a lot of survivors really. Guys ran in different directions. It had a lot to do with the choices you made, which direction you ran, what you decided to do, how close to the building you stayed, your sense of urgency, all of those things.

When we got out of there, there were ambulances lined up along West Street, West Side Highway, people throwing water at us, giving us water, giving us cell phones to talk to people, and I said, "Let's just keep heading north." There were five of us that got out of there, and I either visually or verbally spoke with them as I was going up West Street. A couple of guys needed minor medical assistance, eyes. Our eyes were fucked up, but we just had water splashed in them and they weren't too bad. I just told my guy that did need the medical assistance that was with me, and we kept the guy from 214 with us, "Let's try to find the staging area."

So I'm trying to contact guys on the radio and, as you know probably from talking to guys or whatever, there wasn't any kind of staging area or anything at that point. It was just mass confusion. It was the guys coming in on the recall that were going to take control of the situation. I didn't realize that. Even at that point, I knew in my mind that firefighters were killed or injured in the last 45 minutes or whatever during what happened, but I still didn't realize the scope of it.

We got up four or five blocks at that point and I said, "All right. We can't get ahold of anybody on the radio." Except for the guys that I just mentioned from Ladder 9, nobody from 33, no Chiefs, I couldn't get anybody on the radio really. We may have started to get out of radio range as far as anybody right next to the World Trade Center. But seeing what just happened, we just knew we had to get away from there and try to regroup and figure out what the hell was going on. So I said, "Well, all right, we're not getting anybody on the radio. Let's go to the nearest firehouse."

Ladder 8 was the nearest firehouse. We went there. A couple of the guys from Ladder 8 that I

mentioned that were in the vicinity of the building with us were there. They were missing their officer at that point. They were shaken up just like we were. I said, "Well, what's going on?" We were listening to the department radio. I was going to call the dispatcher, but I was already in house watch. So I said, "Well, let's turn on our TV and see what's going on here." That's where we got a lot of the information, the fact that the buildings completely came down. You really saw the carnage then because obviously they kept showing it over and over again at that point.

So, listening to the radio in quarters, I heard that there was a staging area up at Ladder 20. Again, thinking that there were a lot of survivors, we're all going to get up there, regroup and do what we've got to do, you know, find out that all my guys were up there, you know, everybody got out. But that's when I started to realize how many guys were injured seriously or hurt, actually more guys killed than injured, talking about the Chiefs that were missing, because guys were coming up there and, like myself, we were outside the building near Chiefs and reporting that those guys were missing or whatever.

Basically, I just stayed there for a couple hours, a few hours, waiting for word of all my guys, and I sent one of my guys to the firehouse because I saw what Ladder 8 had done. They went to their firehouse after everything. I said, "Well, maybe they went up there. Get up there and see what's going on. I'll wait here." He called me from there and no word, and I just told him to stay there. I stayed at Ladder 20, Division 1 Quarters a few hours, and that's when we just got dribs and drabs of what was going on.

That was pretty much it. As the next couple of days went on, that's when you just realized the scope of it.

Q. So you lost track of the guys from your company on the way down? You had them all together?

A. Yes. Unfortunately, when the order to evacuate was given, when the other tower went down, I was in the process of gathering all my guys, because two of the guys who were a little heavy, they were not making it up the stairway as fast as we were. What was going through my mind was we're going to get up as high as we can get and we're probably going to come upon people who were burned, who were on the periphery of the crash, we're going to help them out. I didn't see

anybody put the fire out. I mean, you could see it from the outside. It was eight floors, whatever the hell it was. That wasn't going to be put out any time soon. Maybe you were going to put out fires in certain areas where there's other people on the other side you can rescue. Who knows? You just really didn't know. So that's why I said on the 31st floor we had 33 with us. I spoke to their officer. I said, "All right, we'll work together. We'll go up the rest of the way together."

Unfortunately, like I said, when the other building went down, all hell broke loose. I was able to contact my guys on the radio, the two heavier-set guys. They did know that the order to evacuate was given. They also happened to be near a Chief and they started working their way down. Between them and the guys that were with me, I knew that all of us had gotten the word and we were all on our way out. So that much I knew. Between the fact that we were five floors apart, other firefighters were jumping in on stairwells as you were going down, we were strewn out. Ladder 9 and Engine 33, in the process of evacuating, got spread out. You may have been like this at first, and then more guys jumped in and you just became more

and more spread out in the staircase. But, again, you just felt like you're going to get out of the building, you know, we'll regroup in the lobby. Once you got to the lobby and saw the damage, you knew you weren't going to stay there. At that point, then I said, "All right, we'll regroup a couple blocks away."

That didn't happen. For some of us it did, not for all of us. Like I said, I know 33 did have the knowledge to switch stairs. At some point they did switch stairs. They didn't do it as quickly as we did, obviously, or they hung around too close to the building, or they came upon someone that needed help and they helped them. You just have no way of knowing. That's what I tell the families. I tell the families that in all probability they came upon someone that maybe needed their help, firefighters, civilians, whatever, and they helped them. There's no way of knowing whether 30 seconds too long in that building was 30 seconds too long.

Q. Handy-talkies on channel 1; overloaded? How would you characterize traffic?

A. Very, very, very difficult to get a message to an individual. You were hearing messages on there. I was trying to monitor different things. A guy had

asked me if I heard Captain Brown from Ladder 3 gave word of a partial collapse at some point. I heard somebody mention that to me, "Did you hear that?" I didn't hear that. But I did hear lots of messages on the way up, definitely clogged with a lot of guys in need of oxygen, CPR, firefighters down. I saw a lot of firemen on the way up. Civilians were giving us water. I just told my guys, "Listen, you don't want to be useless when you get up there. Don't run." You're not going to run up the stairs with 100 pounds of gear on your back.

Q. Pace yourselves.

A. Pace yourselves. We tried to the best we could. That's why I wasn't going to try to urge those heavier-set guys along too much. They would make their way up at their own pace. Like I said, at 31 we were trying to get them to catch up to us, and at that point I think I was just saying to myself, all right, from this point on, we're going to stay together.

Q. By the 31st floor, you knew that it was going to be really difficult. It must have been really going slow. I know how I am with the bunker gear. I can get about five floors and then I'm really hurting, with a mask, and these guys are carrying roll-ups. So you

guys, by the 31st floor, you must have been dying.

A. Yes.

Q. And you knew you had another 40 or 50 to go if you were going to reach the fire, right?

A. Yes. You didn't know how long it was going to take you to get there. I don't know how long it took us to get where we did. I would guess, doing the math, we got there at 9:00 o'clock, probably got to the 31st floor at about somewhere between quarter to 10:00 and 10:00 o'clock, in that range. Because I guess the other building, the first building went down five to 10:00 or thereabouts, right?

Q. Let's look at the record. It's somewhere in that range. South tower collapses 9:55.

A. So that's pretty much what it took us, 55 minutes, probably 50 minutes to get 31 floors.

Q. It was a slow go.

A. Definitely a slow go. The guys, like I said, we even stopped on a couple of floors just to take a look and see what was going on and see if anybody needed our help, get water. Civilians were giving us water.

Q. The civilians that were giving you water while you were going up, these people were told to stay

in place, you think, on the floors, or they had no sense to evacuate themselves, that there was a need to evacuate themselves, or what do you figure your their attitude was?

A. I think that you had probably -- they looked like, if I had to make a guess now, I never really thought about it, but now that you mention it, they looked like probably fire warden kind of people who maybe they should be the last ones to leave that floor, like make sure everyone else is out of there. Because I didn't see too many people on each floor. I might have stopped on two floors on the way up. They definitely looked like responsible-type people who were making sure that their floor was evacuated.

Q. When you got down to the first floor, did you go through the lobby to exit or did you exit like directly to the street?

A. No. We went through the lobby.

Q. Who did you see in the lobby? What were the conditions in the lobby as far as the command post?

A. I remember seeing the lobby command post still standing. No one was manning it. The Chief I saw on the way out -- I didn't really see anybody milling about. I think once everybody got down to that

level and saw the damage, they just realized it was a good idea to get the hell out of there. That Chief was still there at that point. I don't know how long he stayed, but he was there when I came by.

That's pretty much it, unless you have any more questions.

Q. When you went through the lobby, had the windows been blown out in the north tower? You were exiting the north tower lobby. Was the lobby full of debris? Was it full of the dust from the south tower having collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you see your way out? Were things that bad or --

A. If I had to guess, it's hard to say. You could see your way out. There wasn't still a lot of dust or anything in the air. It was just a lot of debris strewn about. The fact that we walked to where the doors were would lead me to believe, thinking now, that the windows were mostly intact because we went around them. As you came out of the stairwell, you had this little lobby and then you'd come out and the windows were here and the doorway was over here. So the quickest way out, if the windows weren't there, we

would have walked straight through those. But we went over to the doorway, so that would lead me to believe that most of them were still probably not fully intact but at least to the degree where you couldn't go through them.

Q. Who did you see outside when you were going north on West Street? Did you see the command post? Did you see Ganci, Feehan, the chaplain?

A. No, I did not. No. The only one I saw was that Chief, and most of the firefighters I saw were listening to that Chief and heading north. I know some firefighters also headed west, because at that point I was making the decision should we go north, should we head towards the water, where would be the best place to go, and I just made the decision to go north.

Again, I don't know who that Chief was. I didn't recognize him personally. But him and that Chief on the floor with me and then whoever tapped me on the shoulder and told me to switch stairs, they had a lot to do with the fact that I'm sitting here talking to you, especially the guy that told me to switch stairs because, as it turned out, the guys who switched stairs at that level that he was at, a lot of them survived, as far as I can tell, and the guys who

switched below, it could have just been the time it took them to get from where they were below the 11th floor to the 10th floor and then switched over and were slightly behind us. I know guys who were like 30 seconds out of the building, Engine 7 being one of them. I can't remember who else. I can't remember if it was Engine 4 or somebody else down there who said that they were out of the building about 30 seconds and some of their guys survived because they ran this way and other guys ran another way.

I remember passing guys. I saw a guy's name on the list who was by his rig that was parked pretty close to the building, and I remember patting him on the butt because I knew him personally and said, "Come on. You'd better keep moving." I saw his name on the list as one of the firefighters. Definitely, the sense of urgency was a huge factor in your ability to get out of there. I don't know what you could attest that to. Experience? Knowledge of the fact that the other building went down; did you have that knowledge? I don't think a lot of guys did. A lot of guys I spoke with did not.

Some guys took the time to look out the windows to see what was going on. The fact that I got

the reports from the FBI guy that there were more planes in the air unaccounted for, I told my guys to stay away from the windows because, obviously, that's not the place you want to be. At that point, the two planes that I did know of hit on an upper floor, so once you got into the lower floors, the thing that's going through my mind is planes are hitting this building higher up. So once you got down to where we were, you just felt that you were --

Q. Probably safer.

A. -- relatively safe. The one thing that goes through my mind all the time is would things have been different if we knew the other tower went down? That's something, again, it's purely hindsight, but it's definitely something that goes through my mind, would that have changed things?

Q. Okay. That's an interesting point.

A. Would it have induced panic? It's really hard to say.

Q. That's an interesting point. Panic may be good because it's fright to flight syndrome.

A. Yes. Another point, too, is that there weren't a lot of civilians left at this point. I'd say, of the people I saw evacuating the building, 95

percent of them were firefighters at that point. They were out. Civilians were out. All the civilian casualties from what I can piece together were either people that hung around too close to the buildings or were in the south tower and they basically had no chance, because I know I've heard and I'm sure you've heard that they got the order to stay in place, and if they did, they died, and if they just disregarded that and had time to get out, they got out. But the people in our building, without a doubt, they must have gotten the order to evacuate because the stairwell was full of civilians. They were all orderly getting out because the stairwells weren't full of anything. Obviously, the lower floors were clear.

Q. Were the lights on in the staircases?

A. Lights were on.

Q. Were there any communications going on like building announcements or anything like that, any kind of supervisory announcements encouraging people which way to go or just to get out? Were there any loudspeaker announcements or was it just word of mouth that you recall?

A. I don't recall any. They could have been there in the background. I was trying to concentrate

on our radio as far as what kind of information I could piece together from there because, like I said, when we were in the lobby, you go up as an officer and you don't get an order to do something and both the towers just got hit by planes, obviously, I'm just thinking about -- at this point you're almost in a defensive mode, not quite, because you still want to get up there.

But like I found out from guys who saw it on TV, right away people on TV were speculating or themselves speculating these buildings have been attacked. This isn't an accident. So, if you're responding from midtown, you're already in a defensive mode. We didn't get into that mode really until we went to evacuate the building. So we were just doing what we always do.

The other part that's hindsight, too, something that I think about, and as a Chief you know that at regular fires you have that 20-minute rule. If this fire is out of control for 20 minutes, I've got to start thinking about getting my guys out of there because now, if the building collapses, it's going to become more of a factor than anything else.

Obviously, I think there was a little bit of

Titanic mentality because of 1993. Everybody saw the damage that was done and that building didn't go down. I don't know. You hear reports there were engineers down there that said, "No, these buildings won't go down." Then you hear interviews of good engineers on TV that weren't at the scene but who were watching it on TV and said, "No, these buildings are going down. I knew these buildings were going to go down."

So, obviously, I had no prior knowledge that these buildings would go down. No one did. I haven't seen an interview with Chief Dunne yet, I don't know if you have, as far as what he knew. That would be interesting to know --

Q. I haven't seen it.

A. -- what thoughts were going through his head when he was watching it on TV, because I don't think there's probably anybody more qualified than he is as far as fires go. But I didn't hear things like jet fuel burns at 2,000 degrees, I-beams melt at 1,500 degrees. It's hard to say.

That's the thing that I think about as far as the Chiefs go. Listen. Everybody did the best they could, and I'm not blaming anyone because I didn't think those buildings would go down. But you say to

yourself, God, I wish we just had that knowledge.

Q. But I don't know how they could calculate that. We know what things burn at and we know what things fail at but, number one, the life hazard comes into play, we're trying to save life, and the second thing is to what degree is the steel being affected, by how much? It's incalculable. You can't stand in the street with a calculator and know that. We can only guess at those things. Again, there's no history of these buildings falling down.

A. Hey, listen. I'm not blaming anybody. I know. But these are the things that go on in your head after the fact.

Q. Sure.

A. You just can't help it, just trying to figure out what the hell happened. That's the same thing that you were saying. The families of the victims, they want to know what the hell happened, that's all. They want to know where their son or father was when this happened, you know, why didn't he get out? They want to hear things like maybe he was trying to help someone. That would go a long way towards them living the rest of their lives.

Q. Sure.

A. It's important to us, too. I would love to know that Engine 33, hear from somebody, "Oh, they were helping somebody on the 3rd floor and that's why they didn't get out." Because I know they knew as well as I did that we had to get out of that building.

Q. Sure.

A. But they didn't make it. Did they not switch over quick enough? Because like I said, all it took was -- 45 seconds goes like that. It seems like an eternity sometimes, but in a situation like that, it's gone. If you were 15 seconds away from that building, you weren't living. Really. The odds were not good. We were a minute away, thank God, and the dust and debris weren't going to kill you. Things were pulverized so much that, the way that building came down, unless you were really close to it, you were going to get hit with dust and debris, which, like I said, wasn't going to kill you. It was going to scare the shit out of you, but that's about it.

That's why I think there was just so much death as compared to injury because, like I said, if you were two blocks away, three blocks, that was probably enough for you to just get hit with that shit, but you were going to live and you really only had

minor injuries. If you were too close, they're never going to find any piece of you. Then you hear about Ladder 6 and Engine 39 being in the building when it collapsed and you just find that unbelievable.

Q. How did they get out? I know Ladder 6 made it out, right? They were the ones that were helping that woman?

A. Ladder 6 and Engine 39. I used to work in Ladder 16, so I talked to those guys personally about it. They were in the stairwell somewhere between 2 and 4 when it went down. If you were on the first floor, you were crushed, but if you just happened to be where they were, because of the way the I-beams fell or for whatever reason, and they were all rescued within three to four hours. But they didn't get out on their own. You hear stories of guys who got out of debris on their own, lifted an I-beam off of themselves or whatever it might be, and other guys who were saved by other guys in the vicinity. I'm sure those were guys that were probably a block away or something like that who were hit with larger pieces than we were.

But like I said, the counseling unit was here before. It was good. We got a lot of information that we didn't have. Every time they come, we get a little

more knowledge. To me, the list that you have there of the survivors is a list that to me is important to look at for this job mental counseling as far as reaching out to them. Nobody's level of grief is higher than ours, besides the families of the victims. You see all these lists that are being put out. To me, families of the victims obviously come first forever, and then it's the survivors, and then it's the guys who went down into the pile too often.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Q. [redacted]

Q. Okay. Is there anybody else that you saw on the way out or on the way in that you can remember that we didn't talk about so far? Does anybody come to mind that you saw in the lobby or staircase? You mentioned 33 Engine. You mentioned --

A. Yes. Some of the companies I remember seeing were Engine 5. I know one of the guys was getting oxygen on one of the floors on the way up. Who did I see? Ladder 8.

Q. Also on the way up, that's where you saw him, in the stair on the way up?

A. Yes. Basically, I didn't see a lot of guys, and I'll tell you why, because the guys who were near me were my company and then some of the guys I just mentioned, and you're working your way up and you're just in that line of firefighters. So there could be a guy a flight ahead of you that you didn't see. On the way up, I only stopped at a couple of floors briefly. So, like I said, if you didn't know the guy personally, you really didn't remember him.

When I got to the 31st floor, that's when I started seeing guys. I saw Ladder 8 then. Engine 5 was in the vicinity I know, Engine 33. I saw the Chief who I didn't know. After the building shook, the

lights went out. So on the way down, you couldn't see anything unless you shined your light in their face. So it was difficult. It seems like an eternity that we were in there, but basically we got in there at five after 9:00 and we were out of there at 10:30. But you didn't interact with a lot of firefighters because we're all spread out through 60 floors. It's just a matter of when you were assigned to where you were assigned, and since we were assigned to go up the stairwell, you could only see five firefighters at a time, basically. So we didn't really come across a lot of guys. On the way down, I didn't stop at any floors, just crossing over at 11. That's pretty much it, I guess.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview. The time is now 1612 hours and I thank the Lieutenant for providing us with this information.

File No. 9110224

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK CAMPAGNA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 1431 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Frank Campagna of Ladder 11, and we're in the quarters of 28 Engine at this time. This is the fireman's statement.

Q. Where did you respond from?

A. I responded from quarters, came up the FDR, showed up to the scene. The fire was blazing out. The first plane had hit. We pulled up in front, and we headed inside toward the lobby. On the way inside you saw the usual stuff like everyone else saw, things falling and stuff like that.

We got inside the lobby and we waited to hear from a chief or whoever what's going to go on, wait until we found out what's going on. What wound up happening is they teamed us up with 4 Engine, I believe it was. What it was is they combined us as one hose team pretty much. So they dropped half of their rollups and we kept half of ours, we kept one standpipe kit, and we headed up together.

As we were going up, they said on the lower level the second plane hit the other building. Me personally, I felt it on another level up, so I think the timing was off between everybody.

We just kept walking up. As far as we knew, there were no planes or anything coming in. There wasn't even a plane that hit that building. We just knew there was a fire up there. Any other explosions that we felt from inside were maybe extra machinery or something like that. Those were the words that we were getting.

So we just kept going up the stairwell. We got up to about the 17th floor, and we felt another pretty big explosion. At this time about every two floors, every three floors you'd stop into an office, get some water, take a breather. Guys were pretty winded. They had equipment on and carrying everything.

We're taking a breather, and I believe that's when the other Trade Center went down and everybody felt it and they didn't know exactly what it was. Everyone headed towards the stairwell, thinking it was a safer place to be.

After that happened, the building was still standing, everybody kept going up. So we kept going up, still stopping about every two, three floors. People still coming down. We were just telling them to keep calm and walk on the way down.

We got up to about the 28th, 30th floor, and we were taking another break. There was an office or we had a whole floor full of people. A chief came down from a floor above with another company and said everybody evacuate, everybody out now. We had to switch staircases. I believe the staircase we were in, there was no way down it anymore on the lower level. There was word that it had been taken out; we don't know what from.

So we switched to a different staircase. We headed down. We let the civilians go first. We showed them towards that staircase and started heading down, letting the civilians go first, and we walked our way down. We were up there with a couple of companies. I don't know the exact numbers. I know 4 Engine was with us. Everybody went down with us.

We got down to the lobby, and there's a lot of guys down there in the lobby itself along with 4 Engine. Everyone is standing there, waiting to hear what's going to happen next, what's going on. Guys were just saying it's time to go, this isn't safe to stay in here.

So I believe we headed out along the wall of the Trade, and I believe 18 followed us out. That was it. It came down on top of us. That's all I remember of who followed us out or I heard who followed us out. 4 Engine obviously didn't make it out. They were with us the whole time, so I'm assuming they were still in the lobby at that time.

That's pretty much it from that point on.

Q. What did you see when you left tower one? Tower two had already collapsed.

A. I didn't see it. Tower two we didn't even know went down. I had no clue it went down. When we were up on the 30th floor, guys were banging out the windows, saying, "Holy shit, this looks like a war zone."

Guys were saying stay away from the

windows, something might come in, something might fall down and come in through the window. So I never got to see it. What they were talking about was the other Trade Center when it had gone down. The whole scene outside looked terrible.

On our way out when we left first World Trade, all we saw was -- it was like tunnel vision. All you saw was what was right in front of you. Things were still falling as we were heading out. The streets were all dusty. I was not really realizing that the other Trade Center had collapsed, because it was towards our left, I believe, which we were running towards the right. We were standing along the line, and it's just what's in front of me.

I wasn't really looking around to take a look. There's still stuff falling on top of us. So I still didn't know it went down. I actually didn't know until the other one fell down and I heard that the other one was gone while we were in there.

Q. Question: When you exited the World Trade Center, the north tower, you were going where? North on West Street? Which way were you

exiting the area? Running away from the buildings, which street were you on and which way were you going?

A. We were on West Side Highway and we were headed up towards --

Q. North?

A. Yeah, north, toward Vesey. We were right there. Our rig was parked on Vesey, so we headed up that way. We were right under the walkway just about, and that's when it started coming, about there.

Q. Did you see the command post? Did you see Chief Ganci? Do you know Chief Ganci?

A. No.

Q. Did you see the command post with the command board?

A. I saw the command post. Actually I don't know -- I just remember seeing like there was a bunch of people over there past the walkway towards the water. There was just a crowd of people. I didn't know -- in that intersection there, that's all I was looking at was in that intersection there.

There was nobody in the intersection,

nobody in the streets in general, everyone just saying come on, keeping coming, keep coming. That's when it went. I looked back. You see three explosions and then the whole thing coming down. I turned my head and everybody was scattering. From there I don't know who was who. I don't even know where my guys went. None of us knew where each other were at at that point in time.

Q. So you just kept running as it was collapsing?

A. Yeah, pretty much, yeah. Each and every person, pretty much.

Q. Then what happened? How did you regroup? Where did you go after that? Did you form up again or meet your guys again? What did you do after that?

A. After everything happened, we got engulfed by the whole cloud of smoke and everything, and guys were sharing masks inside that whole thing and trying to find our way out. We couldn't see anything inside there. I was right up on a cop van. My face was right against a headlight, and I could barely see that, because

the lights were on on it.

Once we got out of there, I heard Mike Kehoe yelling, "28, 28." I found him, and from there we went looking around and we found Roy. He was up getting IV up somewhere. Then we finally found our lieutenant and Jimmy Ippolito who both of them I guess had ran towards the water towards where all the guys were at the command post area. I guess they ran towards that way. We ran down the West Side Highway.

The other guy we didn't really know where he was was our chauffeur. He was still out by the truck, I guess, when everything was going on. I guess when the second plane hit, from what I understand, he got blown back a couple feet and he got helped out and he got taken to a hospital. So he's all right. That was the only one at that point that we didn't know.

Then we finally all regrouped and whatnot and found each other. Around that time guys were coming in bus loads before we know it, coming in to help search.

Q. Where did you park your rig? Where was 28 parked?

A. He dropped us off right in front, right in front of the tower we went in, which is --

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower, the second one that went down. He dropped us off right in front of there, and from what I understand he parked it right on Vesey Street. That's where we got off. It was right in front.

Q. What floor did you reach when you were climbing up? You said you were like on the 20th floor and then you decided to come down?

A. 28th or 30th floor, the 30th, around there, because we were going like every two floors. So it was around there. I remember seeing 28 on the wall, and then I think we went up again. I think it was around the 30th floor, we made it up there. From there that's when we went down.

Then a chief came down and pretty much said everybody evacuate, because nothing was coming over the radios, as far as everybody was still waiting. We were waiting with a bunch of guys at that point in time.

I saw one of the guys I knew from the

academy. He was in 4 Engine. Another one I knew from academy, he was from 10-10. They were up there with us also. I don't know if you got details from someone else, but I'm pretty sure he was from there.

Q. What floor did you say you were on when you think the south tower fell down?

A. I would say about the 17th.

Q. You didn't have a radio that day. Did you have a handy talky?

A. Me? No.

Q. You were with the officer when you were climbing?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what was on the handy talky when the south tower fell down? Was there a lot of screaming? Do you remember radio messages or anything like that?

A. No, nothing like that.

Q. There were a lot of guys in the lobby, you said, when you came down to the lobby and hooked up. You don't remember anybody specific, companies or personal people, individual people?

A. No, like I said, it was real tunnel

vision. I just wasn't being pretty much aware of anything around, who was around me and whatnot. Like I said, 4 and 18 are the only ones that stuck out in my head.

CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I'm thanking the firefighter for the interview. The interview is concluded. It's now 1443 hours. This concludes the interview and also the chief's aide in the Safety Battalion, Michael Bosco, sat in on this interview.

File No. 9110225

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BERTRAM SPRINGSTEAD

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is now 1626 hours. I am Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with fireman first grade Bertram Springstead, Ladder Company 9. We're in the quarters of Ladder 9, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is fireman Michael Bosco of the Safety Battalion.

Now, Fireman Springstead, I have asked him to relate everything that he remembers from the incident on September 11th.

Q. Okay, go ahead.

A. September 11th I remember walking into the kitchen about 8:30 in the morning, sat down, coffee, paper. A little while later, I guess it was about a quarter to 9, somebody came in and said they saw the plane coming over quarters and then they said they saw it hit the Trade Center.

So we all ran to the corner of Lafayette and Great Jones, and we could see the big hole in the building where the plane had hit.

So we all went back to quarters, started getting dressed. We didn't get the call right away. 32 went on the first ticket. We were all sitting in the house watching, bunkering up. Then it came on the TV, and we started watching it on TV, wondering why we didn't get the call yet and complaining that we didn't get the call.

Q. Sure.

A. It was about 5 to 9, I guess, or a couple minutes before 9, I guess, I remember saying to the guys, "I wonder if they're holding this ticket until after 9." Sure enough, the ticket came in 090014.

Q. Get out of here.

A. And I made a copy of the ticket, and I stuffed it in my pocket, because I was like, "This is bullshit. I'm calling the union when I get back." We were watching people jump on TV from the building. I said how can they be holding this ticket. That was what was going through my mind the first time.

We get on the rig. We're going down. The probie, John Tierney, he was off duty before we got out. Something wasn't right that day. I

knew something was wrong, and I turned to him and said, "John, do me a favor, don't take this run in. Just stay here. You're off duty, you're not getting paid, just go home, man, just go home." But who is not going to jump on the rig? So he jumped on the rig and he was sitting on a lap.

We were driving down, sirens the whole way down. We get there. We stepped off the rig, and I look up and I noticed that both towers were on fire now. We didn't realize at the time that another plane had hit. We didn't see it and couldn't hear it while responding. I just figured the other tower was on fire from stuff flying from the other building. So we really didn't know there was a second plane.

We parked on I guess it was the northeast corner of the Trade Center, which is right at Vesey and Church, I guess. Vesey and Church, Vesey and Church right there. We stepped off the rig, and there were plane engine parts and people yelling and screaming. We stepped off and noticed the two towers on fire.

We started walking down Vesey towards West Street. Our assignment was tower one, so we

would go into the lobby. Just as we turned onto West Street, we were coming towards the entrance of the Trade Center and we saw a jumper coming down. We were like, "Oh, man, look at this." They were smoldering, on fire, smoking. So we were like, "Oh, man." Just a tremendous thump. The noise was unbelievable.

Now we're looking up as we're going in, and we go into the lobby and there's everybody. Von Essen's there. The Mayor's there. Everybody's at this command post, everyone in white hats. We were standing there at the command post, waiting for our assignment.

The probie still didn't have a mask. He had jumped on the rig, so he was on somebody's lap on the way down there. So I walked over to the command post and took one of the aide's mask and gave it to him and said, "Put this on because we were going up now." Ganci took us over to the stairs and said, "Call us when you get there." That's all they said.

Q. Ganci was with you in the lobby?

A. He showed us to the stairs. Ganci showed us to the stairs to take. We started

walking up. I was taking my time, pacing myself, going nice and slow, taking it easy. Those guys were a little quicker than I was, and they kind of advanced a couple floors beyond me.

They were up a couple floors ahead of me -- I don't know how many -- and Don Casey waited for me I guess it was on like the 13th floor -- I forget exactly what floor it was on -- so that I wouldn't be alone. I was taking my time going up there. We were taking breaks here and there. I forget what floors we took breaks on.

There were a lot of maydays with chest pains on the radios and stuff like that. I don't remember who or what floor, but there were a lot of maydays. EMS was going all over the place with maydays with chest pains.

We got up, and then me and Don were kind of pacing ourselves. We pretty much tried to take a break on every floor that you had access to, because you didn't have access on every floor. So whatever floor you had access, we would go in, take a quick breather and then get going again.

I guess it was about the 19th or 20th floor when I said, "Don I've got to take a break." I was really hot. I said, "Don, I've got to take this coat off for a second, take a breather." They had water, and people had broken open a Poland Spring machine and there were bottles of water, so we would take a break. I took my stuff off, and I was pouring water all over.

5 Engine was there on the floor too. Derek Brogan from 5 Engine, he was miserable, miserable: chest pains, nauseous, on his knees. He looked terrible. So we were pouring the water over him. Real bad.

Then Don Casey, who I was with, starts staying his arm was tingling, he's getting numbness in his arm, in his left arm. I was like, "All right, sit down." EMS was there. Two guys from EMS were there. One was working on Derek, and the other guy started working on Casey with the oxygen and stuff like that.

I remember somebody said, "You think you're having a bad day? Take a look out this window." We looked out the Trade Center window,

and there was the Vista Hotel, I guess it was there. I'm not really sure what building I was looking at, but I'm pretty sure it was the roof of the Vista. There had to be 30, 40 jumpers sprayed out all over the roof. I went, "Oh, Jesus, what the hell is going on here?"

As I was looking out the window, which is a total of five seconds, another jumper comes by, kind of like clipped the edge of the roof and just vaporized. The guy just disappeared. There was no longer a body, just a big cloud of red.

Q. Wow.

A. I was like, "I didn't need to see that." A total of five seconds I was looking out that window, total.

So I go back, and I was with Don and I was saying, "Maybe we should take you down, Don. Maybe we should start working down if you're getting --" He said, "No, I'm all right now. I'm all right."

The EMS guy was yelling at him. He said, "You guys, I've probably seen this a thousand times. You might be having a heart attack." But Don didn't think so. He thought

his suspender strap was too tight, which turned out it was, because he was fine.

There was a time we were like, "Well, I don't know, Case, maybe we should take you down. Let's get out of here. How much farther? Are you going to make it?"

Then 5 Engine was there, the whole 5 Engine was there. Derek Brogan was miserable. He was terrible. He looked terrible. I was nervous about him. He looked really bad. So I turned to 5 Engine officer. They didn't want to leave him, but they wanted to keep going. I said, "Look, Lou, you want me to take down Derek?" I said, "I'm going to take Don down. Do you want me to take Derek down? I'm taking two," because 5 Engine didn't want to leave another guy behind. He said, "Yeah, maybe that's a good idea, if you're going down." I had a radio, Don had a radio, and this way they didn't have to lose another guy with a radio when it went up.

So maybe, I don't know, five seconds later, that's when tower two must have started coming down. The building started shaking, a tremendous rumbling. Light bulbs were falling

out. File cabinets were tipping over.

We were in that corner of tower one that's kind of close to tower two where they kind of like point at each other there. That's the corner we were in. I don't know what the hell was going on, but whatever it was, it was right outside the window that we were standing like five feet from.

Some guys were diving on the floor. Some guys were -- I just took off for the other side. I said whatever was going on was on that side. I said I'm getting to the other side of the building. I started running.

We got to that side of the building. I didn't see Casey, but he told me he dove on the floor first. Then when he saw me run by, he said, "That looks like a good idea. Maybe I'll go with Bert and get to the other side." Casey got him to the stairwell. He said, "Let's get the hell out of here." I said, "Hold on, hold on, Case. I don't even know what that was. Let's regroup here. First we've got to go back and get our stuff."

We had taken our coats off. We don't

have any tools. We don't have our masks. I said, "Let's go back, get our stuff." I said, "First of all, Brogan is still back there. We're responsible for him now." I said, "Let's go see if we can find Derek."

We get back there. It was dark. Most of the light bulbs had fallen off, so you really couldn't see much. I guess it was from the dust cloud outside there was no light coming in. We didn't know at the time. We just thought it was another plane or something, another explosion or whatever. We really didn't know what it was.

We got our masks and our coats, grabbed the halogen and started looking for Derek, couldn't find him, searched all over. He didn't have a radio. We couldn't call him. Then we got the word on the radio to get out of the building. I was like, "Case, I guess he's gone. There's nobody on this floor." We searched the whole floor. There's nobody there.

So we started going down. We made our way to the stair. Then it was just a slow walk down, as slow a 20 floors as you can walk. You took a step, you took another step, took a step.

You got to each landing, you opened the door, "Anybody else here? Let's go. Everybody out." You let a couple people in front of you, another step.

We just happened to be on the staircase with an FBI guy. He had an FBI jacket on. He turns around to me and goes, "We've got to get out of here." I said, "What are you talking about? We're getting out. Let's go. Everybody's walking out." He said, "No, you don't understand. There's more planes coming." I said, "What the hell are you talking about, more planes?" He said, "There's two more planes on the way for these buildings." "What do you mean, two more planes?" I didn't even know there was more than one plane at this point. We didn't know there was a second plane.

So then we started walking out. It didn't matter. You weren't going anywhere. It was slow walking. We got to about the 5th or 6th floor. It was getting a little smoky, dusty, whatever. Don started to put his mask on. I said, "Don, why don't you save it?" It wasn't that bad yet. I said, "Why don't we get down and

see if we need it to get out of here before we waste it up here." So we just started covering up, and we made it all the way down.

We came to the lobby, and the lobby was a disaster. It never registered that the other building had collapsed. We came outside, and we walked the same way we came in. We went back to the -- you didn't go through the doors. All the glass was broken on the ground floor when we came in the first time, I guess from the elevators collapsing or I don't know. All the glass was gone.

So we were walking through the plate glass along the wall. We slowly walked our way out towards the sidewalk, making sure that no jumpers were landing on us. I don't know what it was exactly, but I wound up seeing Lieutenant Smith. We just happened to bump into him.

I radioed to him on the way down that me and Case were in staircase B, I think it was, and we were on our way down. He said, "Okay. See you out front." I said, "Do we have everybody?" I forget what he said. I don't know. Everybody was with me on the stairs. I

don't see everybody.

But there were people -- there were guys all over the place. There were firemen everywhere, wandering around. So we started looking around to see if we could see the guys. I said, "Lou, they've got to be right here. So I'm going to go back inside and maybe they're in the lobby." He said all right, he's going to gather everybody up out here when I find our three guys. I said, "We'll get together up the street. We'll regroup and where are we going."

I still never realized the building had collapsed. In fact, I had my camera in my pocket, and I was taking pictures on the way out. Casey is yelling at me, "Let's get the hell out of here. What are you doing?"

Q. Did the pictures come out?

A. Yeah, they came out great.

Q. Have you got them here?

A. I have the negatives. Guys keep asking for copies left and right.

Q. I bet.

A. In fact, I get about six, seven copies made up at a time, and guys -- whatever it costs.

It costs me about $5 to get them made.

So I started my way back in underneath that foot bridge right on the corner of Vesey and Church, the same way we walked in. There were a couple rigs there. There was a guy with a bullhorn, a chief. I thought he was a chief. He had a white shirt on. I don't remember if he had a helmet on. But he had a bullhorn, a guy with a bullhorn.

He was yelling, "Clear the area. Clear the area." I really wasn't listening to him. I was kind of walking by. He stopped me. He grabbed me. He said, "You've got to get out of here." I said, "Chief, I'm missing three guys." He said, "Everybody coming out I'm sending this way. They're probably out already. Go up this way. Everybody is going up this way." I said, "Look, Chief, they might be right here." He said, "Get the -- out of here now." He had me by my shoulder and he kind of shoed me away.

All right. So now I'm doing the same thing. I'm looking around. There's firemen all over the place now. I'm looking at each guy and I'm going over to guys. It's not really

registering. The street is a disaster. There's stuff all over the street.

I was just by the other side of that foot bridge, I guess. You heard somebody, turned around and looked up, and I saw a big section of the facade coming down, straight down. I said, "Holy shit," and I took off up West Street, north on West Street, just ran as far as I could, which wasn't too far before the dust cloud took you out and stuff was hitting you and banging off your mask and your helmet and, geez, what the fuck's going on, you know?

Then the dust cloud started coming, and I turned around and the cloud was coming and I turned my mask on and put it on. Then it was just dust and dark for it seemed like forever, darker than any fire I had ever been in. There was nowhere to go. You could see it swirling around you. I actually had to push the face piece onto my face to keep it out. It was forcing its way inside.

Then it was just wandering in the dark north on West Street, bumping into cars and barricades and whatever else I bumped into. I

finally started coming out of the dust and finally started seeing a little light. I turned around, and now I'm missing all seven guys, the other seven guys that were with me. Now I don't know where anybody is.

So I started looking for guys again. The first guy I saw was the chauffeur, Warnock. He was miserable. He didn't have a mask on, so he must have dropped it and ran. I don't know what happened. He didn't have his mask on, so he was terrible. He couldn't see. He had stuff in his eyes. He could barely breathe.

I just scooped him up by his arm and dragged him over to an ambulance and was banging on the back. They opened up. I actually had to scoop stuff out of his mouth, it was so thick with dust and stuff. I told him, "Mike, make yourself throw up. Get rid of that stuff."

EMS was trying to hose him down and get the stuff out of his eyes. I was holding him down as they were squirting the stuff into his eyes to clean his eyes. They were clearing his eyes. It wasn't like dust; it was like rocks were in his eyes. It was bad. He was in a bad

way. They laid him down. EMS was there, so I said, "Mike, I'll be back." I said, "Let me go see if I can find anybody else."

The next guy that I saw was I think it was Smith and Casey. Casey was hurting too. He had his mask on the way out, but he said he lost it to run. He said he figured you moved faster. So he was hurting too. I dragged him over to where Mike was. Lieutenant Smith seemed okay. He is a pretty fast runner. I don't even know if he got caught in the dust, because he's a jackrabbit.

That was it. I didn't see Mike. Then the other three guys -- Mike Maguire, I didn't know where he was. Casey and Warnock were in the ambulance. I kind of asked them not to go. I said, "Why don't we stay together, guys. It's chaos. Why don't we stay together. I don't even know where they're taking us. Why don't we just stay together."

They weren't that bad; they were just -- they were okay now they got their eyes washed out. They didn't seem that bad. I said, "Why don't we stay together. One of the guys

said, "No, I just want to get away from this." They were like, "Okay, go ahead."

So that was me, Smith and I don't remember -- there was some probie there in an orange hat, and he couldn't find his company, he didn't know where everybody was, he didn't have a radio. I said, "Why don't you stay with us and listen to the radio." I don't even remember his name or his company. He stayed with us the rest of the day. He never hooked up with any of the guys in his company. I don't even remember what company he was. He stayed with us.

We walked around, and I started calling the guys on the radio, you know, "9 OV to anybody at 9 Truck." It was weird because there was no radio traffic. There was nobody on the radio. It's like I could clear as day call anybody that was on it. Nobody was answering.

Then I started with 33 Engine. Nobody was answering. I just kept wandering around. Finally Mike Maguire, who had the can, he answered me. He told me where he was. I forget what street. West Street and North End walk, something like that. So we had to walk a couple

blocks to get to there.

We never found him. I didn't see him again until nighttime. I don't know, it was like 10:00 at night the next time I finally saw Mike. But I knew he was okay, though, so I really wasn't worried. I was more worried about the other three guys.

I kept wandering around. Finally somebody said, "Well, everybody who's been coming out, they've been sending them to a staging area north on West Street. I said, "All right, let's go up there. Maybe they're up there." He said they were sending everybody north on West Street.

So we kept walking north. We never saw anything. We hitched a ride to 8 Truck, and then they said they would taking guys to 20 Truck, anybody they found were going to 20 Truck. I said, "All right, let's go to 20 Truck, see if the guys are there."

We still assumed that those three guys had gotten out. We had gotten out, so we were like where the hell are they? They must have gotten out. We went to 20, and they weren't there. Then I told Lieutenant Smith, "Lou, I'm

going to walk back to quarters. Maybe they'll try and call quarters."

I got back to quarters, and they weren't there. This was like 4 or 5:00 in the afternoon now, after we had been wandering down there for hours. Nothing. They never --

Q. Where did you last see those guys?

A. I saw them in the lobby going up in the stairs, probably the third floor going up. They were taking off. They were in much better shape than I was. They were flying up the stairs. I'm like I'm pacing myself. We've got 90 floors. I said I'm not going -- I'd be dead by the 20th floor if I ran up 20 floors. It was a nice easy pace.

I never saw those guys for the rest of the day. I was with Casey. I bumped into Smith and Warnock. When I saw those guys outside, it was right underneath that foot bridge. That's where I saw those guys. Then I turned around and went back in the lobby.

I saw Mike Maguire. I kind of just waved to him that, hey, be careful of the jumpers.

We were out there. He walked out and met up with those guys. Then everybody scattered when it came down. Guys went off in all different directions. Those guys were walking north on West Street when I went back towards the building to go back in to get the other three guys.

That's the last time -- I never saw Walz. I never saw Baptiste. I never saw Tierney. I never saw those guys. I figured they had to be in that lobby, though. I don't know, they must have made a wrong turn in the lobby or something or followed the wrong guy. I don't know. I didn't really see them, so I don't know what they did. I just figured they were in that lobby and I was going to go get them.

That was it. I got back to quarters. Answering the phone putting the family off then. That was pretty much it.

Q. Those three guys are lost?

A. Those three guys are lost.

Q. They never came back?

A. No. I thought for most of the night that we'd find them someplace, whether it was in

a hospital. They didn't know where anybody was. I just assumed they got out. I just assumed that those three guys got out. I miss them.

Q. Sure.

A. That's basically it.

Q. I just want to ask you a couple questions that I jotted down while you were talking.

What position did you have? Do you remember?

A. OV.

Q. You were the OV. Okay.

Did you get any sense that the elevators were running at any time when you got there or at any time was there any talk about --

A. The elevator doors were blown off.

Q. Blown off?

A. Yeah. You could see they were a disaster.

Q. Was there evidence of fire or smoke in that area? Did you get the sense that fire had been in that shaft or was in that shaft, the elevator shaft?

A. No, no, I never thought -- I just

assumed that they must have plummeted from being cut --

Q. I see.

A. The airplane just -- that's probably why the plate glass was blown off too. We didn't walk through the doors; we walked through -- all the glass in the lobby was out.

Q. Even when you got there?

A. Yeah. So we walked through the glass to get into the building.

Q. Wow. Oh, yeah, I could see that, the elevators coming down might do that.

How about the handy talky traffic? You were on Channel 1 the whole time?

A. Yes.

Q. You didn't switch over; right?

A. No. There was chaos, and then they said -- I remember somebody saying tower two switch to whatever number it was. I don't know what they switched to. But I was in tower one.

Q. Handy talky Channel 1 that you were on, was it chaos the whole time? There was a time that you were making some calls to people?

A. There were so many maydays going on.

Q. You did hear maydays, but what about getting through?

A. Maydays were left and right for guys with chest pains. There was a lot of guys with chest pains. After tower two collapsed, we didn't know it at the time but there was one radio transmission that came through that said the 65th floor just collapsed. But we didn't know what that was or who gave it. I heard on the radio 65th floor just collapsed. I don't know who gave it or for what building. It had to be our building, because we were on a different radio channel. That was it.

Q. At any time did you hear any announcements over like the PA system instructing people what to do, like the fire wardens making any announcement?

A. No.

Q. Did you get any sense? Do you have any recollection?

A. No, I don't remember hearing any.

Q. No.

A. Everybody was calm walking down. There was no problems. We were on the right. We were

going up on the right; they were going down on the right, patting us on the back, handing us water, "go get them, guys, you're earning your money today," all sorts of stuff like that.

Q. When you came downstairs, you used the words "the lobby was a disaster." What did the lobby look like?

A. Just like dusty and --

Q. Dusty --

A. The lobby was empty. I was going back towards the command post. I figured that's where everybody was going to be. The command post was set up in like that northwest corner of the building there. There was no chiefs in the lobby. There was nothing there. I'm like now where do we go.

So we just started filtering out towards the street, because that's where everybody -- there was kind of like a line on the stairs. Thank God we went the right way. If you went left, I don't think you were getting out of there. If you made the right, that's the way we went into the stairs, so that's the way I went out. That was the way I was walking back to the

rig, the same way I went in there. It was just a right lucky pick of the two.

Q. That's pretty much it?

A. Yeah.

MR. MALKIN: I want to thank you for your statement and cooperating. The time is now 1655 hours, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110226

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD SHEEHEY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 3:23 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from Safety Battalion from the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Edward Sheehey, fireman first grade of Engine 91. There is no one else present.

Q. Okay. Start your --

A. We responded after the second tower was hit by the aircraft, through voice alarm. I guess it took us approximately, on the fifth alarm, between five and ten minutes to get down there.

We got off the rig on West Street and Vesey, parked the rig. We noticed numerous jumpers coming down. There were firemen across the street that called us over to the command post. We went to the command post. We were standing fast at the command post with other companies, waiting for an assignment.

We were there approximately maybe ten minutes before we received an assignment to go into the south tower subbasement. We were on our way in with an engineer, and he told us that if

there was smoke in the building that he wasn't able to go. He had no mask, and he didn't have all the keys to the doors.

So a battalion chief, which I do not know who he is, stopped us and told us he was going to get us more men, and we sent the chauffeur back to the rig for tools, forcible entry tools. Within one or two minutes standing there waiting for him to come back, the south tower started to collapse, and we --

Q. Where exactly were you when the south tower collapsed?

A. We were proceeding across West Street. We were probably maybe 25 yards from the command post.

Q. South of the command post?

A. Straight across from it, going in towards the south tower. We were probably just at West Street, just at the street. Then the south tower -- we heard an explosion, looked up, and the building started to collapse.

We dropped all our tools and gear, and we turned around. There was a parking garage to the right of the command post, so we ran down

into the parking garage. After being in the garage about five minutes, we got out through a stairwell in the rear out into a rear courtyard.

At that time we started looking for rest of the members of the company. We found one other member, Joe Meola. We then proceeded to look for the lieutenant and the two other members. I guess we made our way around back to the front after about five or ten minutes looking for them. It seemed like five or ten minutes. We found Tim Hoppey.

That's when the north tower started to collapse. At that time we ran down Vesey Street towards the water and then north through a construction site and basically started looking for the rest of the guys that we were with.

About an hour and a half later we found our lieutenant, Lieutenant Casey. We just stood fast with him for the rest of the day. About an hour after that we found our chauffeur. We found out he was in the hospital.

Q. Did you hear any emergency transmissions on the handy talky? Did you have a handy talky?

A. No, I didn't have a handy talky.

Q. Did you hear anything being next to anybody?

A. I heard maydays. As we were at the command post, we heard maydays. I couldn't make out what they were for.

Q. Was this before the collapse or after?

A. Before the collapse. Then after the collapse I heard -- we looked for someone with a radio, and we found a captain from another engine company. I couldn't tell you what company he was from. He was looking for the rest of his men, and he had a handy talky. He said if he heard them calling for us he would let us know. I heard a couple of maydays on his handy talky but couldn't make out who was giving them or where they were.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No, nothing I can remember. That's what we did pretty much. That was basically our whole involvement in the collapse.

Q. Okay. Thanks for your help.

MR. KENAHAN: The time now is 3:28, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110227

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEITH FACCILONGA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: 5:38 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Keith Faccilonga, firefighter first grade from Engine 64.

Q. Go ahead and tell us what you remember from September 11th.

A. I saw the second plane hit the second tower on TV. I tried calling my battalion -- I tried calling my company -- (inaudible) after the second plane hit the towers, I got in my car. I called the company and then I called my battalion and I called my division, and there was no answers.

I had my firefighting gear at home with me and started getting the gear together, figuring I was going to come into work. After getting all the gear together, I made the phone calls again. Still no answer at all three places, including 47 Truck, who has their own department phone.

I got in the car and drove down. in live nx. I figured I was close enough

to get down there, report in to a chief and do something. I drove down on the FDR Drive. I was about halfway down -- I couldn't tell you where, probably in the mid 90s when I saw the first tower go down. I saw that from the FDR Drive.

I had my helmet in the window, and the police kept waving me through. I got down there pretty quick; I would say less than 15 minutes door to door. I parked my car. I pulled -- actually on the FDR Drive right around the Brooklyn Bridge, there was, I would say, thousands and thousands of civilians that were walking up in a panic, up the FDR Drive.

The smoke at that point was so thick that I couldn't even see, so I had to back up, make a U turn on the FDR Drive and get off, I guess underneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Somehow I made my way over to Park Row, took one look, parked on Fulton Street right next to the St. Paul cemetary.

I got out of my car. I got my firefighting gear on, my bunker gear, helmet and everything, no mask. I walked about half a block down Church Street and made a left. In front of

me was Five World Trade Center with fire showing out of just about every single window of Five World Trade. The building was fully involved, the whole entire building.

I made a left on Church Street, and I continued walking and that's where parts of the first building were all over Church Street and all in between Four World Trade and Five World Trade it was all parts of, I guess Two World Trade Center was the first one to collapse.

I made my way to the corner of Liberty and Trinity, and I found a bunch of firemen that had come in the same as I did, on their own, on their day off and were in the same situation. We were going through rigs looking for Scott masks. That was the only thing nobody had and the one thing that everybody needed.

220 Engine was parked, it looked like I think on the corner of Trinity and Liberty, and the truck was there and he was telling me he lost his whole company in the first collapse. So a bunch of us got together with a lieutenant from -- I don't even know what company. I don't remember his name anymore. We told him you're in

charge and he was going to lead us in and try to find the guys that the truck from 220 was telling us were missing.

We headed down Liberty Street towards the quarters of 10 and 10, and we made it just about that far. I would say somewhere across from 10 and 10 right in the plaza. We were making our way across the rubble, and it was real slow going.

We were crawling across the rubble, trying to find -- at this point I wasn't sure which building had collapsed. I know the area a little bit. We were trying to get towards Two World Trade Center, which was the building that went down already. We didn't know that. So we're trying to get in there, thinking that's where the guys are. We're thinking -- I'm not sure -- we figured we could find the guys.

So we're walking over there, we heard a big roar. Nobody really knew what the roar was until the chauffeur from 220 said, "Oh, my God, not again." We turned around and started running directly up Liberty Street away from the Trade Center, running east on Liberty. We crossed

Trinity. On the way a couple of guys bailed out and went into some of the buildings. Some guys hid in Burger King. Myself, I kept running. I tripped a couple of times. I got pelted and half buried along the way.

I got over to the corner of Broadway and Liberty, and there was a truck company parked on that corner. We hid behind the truck, and all the stuff came flying by. A couple of guys got hit by stuff and hurt by stuff. Even guys that were hiding behind the rig were getting hurt. I noticed some windows were broken.

At that point I couldn't breathe anymore. But there was an officer. I think he was from...I would have to say 20 Truck who shared a mask with me. I never found out really who it was, but I think it was a lieutenant from 20. He shared a mask with me.

After a good couple of minutes of pitch-black total darkness, it started to clear up a little bit and I could almost breathe again and maybe you could see your hand in front of your face. I decided to then go back, because on my way running away from the building I knew I

left guys behind that I really wasn't sure if they made it or not.

I made it back down there toward 10-10 where I lost guys. The rubble was so deep that there was no way we were going to dig something up. I mean, everybody knows it was real deep rubble, and we heard banging on the doors of Burger King. So we went over to Burger King. There were a couple guys in there. They thought they were buried alive because the dust and dirt were so thick on the windows. They couldn't see anything. So we pulled the doors open, and there were maybe, I would say around five, six, seven guys, maybe, came out of there, and they were surprised they weren't buried in a couple of feet worth of dirt. It was only thick on the windows. It made them think they were buried alive in there.

We all got together again and tried to make another trip to get in there. As we entered the plaza again the second time. Now, stuff that had fallen I guess whatever was...there big, hard pieces of, I don't know, big pieces that had been standing for weeks. Pieces were falling off

there and landing and we were kind of worried about some landing on us.

We couldn't pass there on Liberty, so we made our way south. I'm not sure if we went up Albany or Carlisle. I'm not sure what street it was. We went around to the west side, and along the way different guys were trying to do different things.

We hooked up with a couple of different chiefs, a couple of different lieutenants and captains, and different guys would attach themselves to those bosses and try to do something with them. Because the wind was blowing from the west, I thought the best bet was to go to the West Side Highway and try to make an attack from that side.

So me and a couple of guys from -- I don't remember what squad, but one of the squads, we hooked up together and we found an officer. We made our way to the West Side Highway, and we tried to make a push into the rubble. Actually while we were doing it, there were some fires that they were putting out. I took some hose line straps. We helped stretch some hose lines,

helped carry some pieces to the manifolds, some gates, stuff like that. We were carrying stuff along the way.

What else? At that point there were civilians up in one of the buildings. I couldn't tell you which building it was at the time. He was up in one of the buildings that was damaged but not knocked down. He was waving to us. We kept saying, "What the hell does that guy want?" It looked like he wanted to be saved originally, but then we realized he was pointing and he saw something that we couldn't see.

So we started walking. He was directing us towards the south pedestrian bridge. As we got closer to the pedestrian bridge, I saw something shiny so I called some guys over, and we started making our way towards where the pedestrian bridge came to the ground on the east side of the West Side Highway.

Right where the pedestrian bridge met the ground, I noticed a bunker coat. So I called everybody over, and we started digging frantic. Then we realized we found somebody for sure. We started finding that it was his whole entire

bunker coat and his hand was still in the bunker coat.

We were digging, and there was no response from whoever was buried. We got him buried out as much as we could, but there were three motorcycles that were pinned on him. It looked like a river of debris had come in. He had hid under the pedestrian bridge at the point by the ground where it meets the ground. He hid there I guess when the building collapsed. I'm not sure which one. At this point we didn't know who it was. Now I do know it was a chauffeur from 65 Engine, and we didn't know until we got him out of there, and I'll continue telling you how we got him out.

So he hid under the bridge where the forty-five meets the ground, and he got dirt from both sides of the bridge. Stuff just came running like a river and just buried him. There were three motorcycles that had toppled over, and they were pretty much pinning him to the ground even after we dug him out.

So myself and one other guy got as close as we could to the chauffeur. We grabbed a

hold of the motorcycles. He finally came to and he finally was talking to us. He told us he was the chauffeur from 65. He didn't know how long he was out. He was unconscious. He doesn't remember anything other than running and hiding under there and then waking up. I think he was out for at least an hour or two by the time we made our way to him. It might have been more. I'm not sure.

I was the closest one to him and I told him we were going to try to get him out of there. We picked up the motorcycles as much as we could, but it still wasn't enough. We got some more guys over.

There was some fire in the rubble pile that was getting pretty intense, and the heat was a lot for us. So they stretched more line to put out the fire while we tried to get him out. We got a back board in there, and somebody counted to three. On the count of three, about three or four of us picked up the motorcycle as high was we could. While another two, three guys pulled him out of the pile. He was still pinned. I think his leg was pinned in the pile.

So then I crawled underneath and tried to find out where he was pinned, his leg was stuck at. Probably his bunker gear was stuck under the motorcycles. So then we kind of finagled his legs. He was really tough. It was pinned pretty bad. The only thing we could think of was to pull him out. We got him free of what he was pinned under. We got a whole bunch more guys, maybe about five or six guys, to try and pick the motorcycles up on the count of three. I counted to three this time, and I told the chauffeur that we were going to pull him out on three. He was counting down and he was still pinned. I couldn't see where he was pinned. So we said we were going to do it and if it was too much, he was supposed to scream and let us know. On the count of three we picked up the bikes, and the guys pulled him out. They threw him on the board, and they got him out.

Let's see. After that I took a break for a couple of minutes. I got some water. I went and scavenged some equipment off of some rigs. I got a halogen, and I found a Scott pack off one of the rescue rigs that was parked right

there, very close to the pedestrian bridge where Liberty meets the West Side Highway.

I got one of the Scott packs, and I put that on. Pretty much for the next couple hours we were inside the rubble pile, mostly from the west side. Since, like I said before, the wind was blowing towards the east, and it was a lot clearer coming in from the West Side Highway going toward Battery Park.

I concentrated my efforts towards One World Trade Center and Two World Trade Center. On and off during the day I hooked up with numerous firefighters and officers from lieutenants all the way up to battalion chiefs. We would hook up with teams and work as much as we could until somebody needed a blow and then they'd go take their own break and come back whenever they were ready and then hook up with another group or the same group. It pretty much went on like that until around 5:00. Let's see, it was around 3:00 I decided to take a break, and I made my way back towards -- I headed towards the command post set up on Broadway somewhere near Park Row. So I was pretty much spent at

that point.

So I made my way over to Park Row where there was a command center where there were companies coming in. It was City Hall Park where I guess it was kind of a meeting point where people were coming in. I saw people coming in from "the Rock" I guess they sent their chauffeur school, that type of thing. They were all showing up there.

Checking in and I saw 47 Truck there, which is the truck that's in with the engine I'm assigned to. So I went over there and I reported to that officer who was Lieutenant Lowney. So I reported to him. I told him that I was going to be attached to him for the day. He's just about to sign in, I guess, and he was going to give my name. So I figured I would stay with them for the rest of the day. That was somewhere between 2 or 3:00.

At that point some fireman and some police were scavenging stuff from a hardware store, from a pharmacy for drops. My eyes were shot. I couldn't see anymore. We were putting drops in our eyes. We got some tools.

We finally got an assignment. We got on the rig maybe around 3:00 and drove around to see what was going on over by Six World Trade and make our way towards the rubble from that end. We were doing that for about two hours. Pretty much we couldn't get past the rig. So we carried as much food as we could. We made our way to the pile again. We were doing searches. Not much found. It was rough going.

At that point I was having trouble breathing. I couldn't even walk 20 or 30 yards without help. So they put me in an ambulance, gave me oxygen and they were talking about intubating me and they sent me off to St. Claire's Hospital. I stayed there pretty much through the night.

I got out of the hospital. That night I stayed at a friend's house in Manhattan. I came back down around 9:00 in the morning to get my car. My car was on Fulton Street. I got my car and went back up to the Bronx. I was supposed to be working that day and pretty much the rest was all responding with 64 Engine after that. You know after the first day.

So I guess pretty much that's my story. That's about it.

Q. Okay. Thanks a lot.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 6:05 p.m. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110228

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID MORIARTY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 5:17 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with David Moriarty, firefighter first grade from Engine 64.

Q. Please tell us the events of September 11th as you remember them.

A. On the morning of September 11th, I was working a mutual with Kevin Hansen. I was working a day tour here at 64 Engine. I was just finishing up getting shaved when we received from the news that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. I was looking at the television when we actually saw the second plane strike the World Trade Center while we were still in quarters.

Sometime after that we received a ticket to respond as an additional unit on a fifth alarm to the quarters of 35 Engine in Harlem, and we got on the rig and headed down to Harlem. While we were on the Bruckner Expressway heading down, you could see smoke rising from the area of southern Manhattan in the vicinity of the

World Trade Center.

We got down to Harlem, and Lieutenant Brendan Whelan was working in 35 that day. He got promoted out of Ladder 47 here. They were in the process of gathering extra tools and stuff for their apparatus, and he had us stage our apparatus around the corner facing I guess east.

We were there for a short period of time, and other companies came in. I believe 94 Engine responded in, maybe 50 Engine was there and a couple of additional engines. I don't remember exactly who.

We were in quarters, like I said, not that long and the voice alarm went off, and the person on the voice alarm asked Brendan to read out a roll call of all of the units which were currently at quarters there. Brendan did that, and he had to repeat it a couple of times. You could tell the guy on the voice alarm was probably writing it down.

Shortly after Brendan read it out to him, he said -- the guy on the voice alarm, the dispatcher, said respond forthwith to West and Vesey Street to the staging area.

So we got on the apparatus, and somehow we wound up pretty much like in the lead heading south through Manhattan. In the area of 81st and Central Park West -- I don't know if it was the traffic conditions or what, but we were kind of delayed right there.

I told the chauffeur that I knew of an entrance to the West Side Highway at 79th. So what we had to do was we went one block west to Columbus, went south to 79th, made a right all the way across and got on the drive there at 79th and West Side Highway and proceeded south.

It was while we were in transit there that the radio traffic picked up on the citywide, and somebody put over that there was a collapse at the World Trade Center. The thing was, they never went into the extent of the collapse. We didn't realize that the entire south tower had collapsed while we were en route.

That transmission was somewhat garbled, and immediately after that we heard a member over the citywide frequency screaming a mayday. You could tell by his voice that he was pretty bad. He was in bad shape. He said he was trapped by

debris, he was finding it difficult to breathe and "Somebody come and get me." The dispatcher got right back on and tried to calm him down and assure him that they had units moving towards his location.

Then pretty soon after that we arrived on West Street north of West and Vesey, several blocks north of the walk bridge that's at a college there or something. That's where our chauffeur found parking.

We got off the rig and we grabbed our rollups. We started walking south on West. Vinnie Massa, who had the control position, told us hold on a second. He wanted to just remove the basic items he'd need for a standpipe operation from the standpipe kit so he wouldn't be lugging the entire kit with him.

At this time there was units all over the place on West, guys walking south and throngs of civilians walking north. I mean, hundreds and hundreds of people were walking north on West.

Then we started sizing it up as we were walking. It was pretty bad. I mean, the north tower was burning pretty good. It was ripping on

the upper floors. There was all sorts of debris in the air. We could see there was a dust in the air that we didn't really understand what it was. We thought it was smoke and whatnot. People were still streaming north as we were headed south.

I started watching the debris, trying to see the other tower. The debris that was in the air and stuff, I was watching that, trying to see around the north tower to see the south tower, how bad did it look.

As I was looking through the debris was when I first started seeing people jumping out of the north tower. I had thought at first -- I was walking alongside my probie, Billy Horel, and we were both kind of looking up at the debris. It was like, "Did you see that?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Those are people jumping out of the building." There were enough of them that jumped while we were walking.

As we got closer, you could see debris, but there was a throng of firefighters and people still between us and Vesey. That's when I started noticing equipment on the roadway and masks and shit like that.

I had been looking up again, and suddenly somebody to the front of us -- I don't know if it was a civilian or firefighter or cop or what -- said, "She's coming down." We were within a half a block of the north tower.

It was my intention -- I was probably the senior guy on the back step that day -- that we report in to some command center down there. Our officer would report in and we would probably be going into the north tower or somewhere with an assignment for a high rise job.

But that shout went up, and the crowd in front of us suddenly surged towards us. Everybody turned and started coming back north. I looked up, and it appeared as if the north tower -- it almost appeared to be liquefied. The very top of it began to cascade out and down, almost in a rolling motion.

As I watched it, the street started to fill with this tremendous sound of just noise. It reminded me of a jet aircraft engine when a jet takes off. It was that loud. The debris started coming out onto West and down.

We turned. I yelled something, maybe

"Come on 64," or something. I grabbed my probie by his harness, and I took one last look. I could see now that the dust cloud was coming up at us pretty fast. We turned around and we started heading back north. We weren't running at a flat-out run, but we were walking very briskly.

I took a look over my shoulder. I realized we weren't going to outrun this thing. Still holding onto Billy, I said, "Come here." There was an EMS ambulance parked facing north in the southbound lanes. I said, "We've got to get down here." I got down in front of the bumper with Billy. I told him, "Mask up, mask up."

I looked, and I didn't know what was in this debris. I said to myself if there's any heavy stuff in this debris, we might not be in the best of spots, but at least we had some cover. Before I could get my mouthpiece, my face mask on, it was that quick. That cloud of stuff was up, on us, and over us.

I didn't know exactly where the other members of the company were, but I knew Billy was with me. He got his mask on. I cleaned mine out

a little bit. It was very difficult to breathe. Everything became kind of encapsulated. You couldn't hear people yelling. Things weren't as loud as they would normally be on the street because of this dust that was all around us.

What happened then was the EMS ambulance was running. It was on. The engine was on. It started whining terribly bad. I realized it was sucking all the dust. I thought maybe we're going to have a car fire here. I told Billy, "Billy, we're going to stand up and walk north together out of this thing." Basically that's what we did.

There were other people. We did bump into people that were standing. We didn't encounter anybody laid out or anything like that along our path north until we got out of that cloud.

When we got out of that cloud, we regrouped. It was a matter of minutes before all of the members were accounted for, we had everybody, and we turned around and headed back south now.

It was at that point as we closed in on

where the north tower had been that I really realized the extent of what had happened. There was a tremendous amount of equipment strewn across West Street, I mean partner saws and masks. I saw a case for a heat-seeking camera. I was clued in on that.

We passed a side street, and there was an engine. I think it was 16; I'm not sure. It was hooked up to a hydrant. There was debris burning around it, and it was a matter of I did a quick check, a cursory check, for the chauffeur to see if he could possibly be in among this stuff here.

It was on a side street away from like the heavy debris. There was all this stuff, and there were small pockets of fire burning around the apparatus. It was like is he around? We looked under the rig. We checked the interior of the rig. There was nobody by that rig, so we moved on. We moved south back towards the Trade Center.

We got to the corner of West and Vesey, and it was just very chaotic at that point. There was a lot of firemen there, guys looking

for stuff to do, doing cursory examinations of the pile and stuff.

Shortly -- I don't know how long. You know, time kind of speeded up and slowed down depending on where you were. What we wound up doing is we assisted members of 54 Engine. They had been ordered to draft water from a marine unit in the river.

We assisted them in positioning the rig. We got a manifold, and we had I think four or six lines. Like they were eventually hooked up to this manifold in the area of West and Vesey. Those lines were operating. We didn't operate off of it, but other companies had them charged.

There were guys that had put up portable ladders towards part of the World Trade Center there and were getting up onto I guess it was a mezzanine level and doing a search there real quick.

But the command at that point wasn't really organized at first. Then I remember seeing like a few different chiefs at the corner throughout the day. They became very concerned

about the condition of number Seven World Trade and where we were in vicinity to that. They kept announcing the collapse and who's moving, and we got pushed further and further west.

We took a blow in the vicinity of the American Express building. I heard that a police officer, the body of a police officer, had been recovered right where we were standing when we first got there to the corner. Guys were just making small examinations of the pile that was around us. But they weren't really getting guys get too deep into it because of the possible pending collapse of Seven World Trade.

We were staged there a good part of the afternoon until seven finally did collapse. It was shortly after the collapse of seven that -- Chief Fellini, I guess was the commander at West and Vesey. I know Chief Salka was at West and Vesey and there was another chief with them.

They wanted to get a primary of the Verizon building. They were asking for three engines and three trucks. That's all they wanted to commit to the buildings to do a cursory examination for possible victims and stability

and building damage. 64 Engine was chosen to do part of that search.

We wound up entering the building. Three engines, three trucks teamed up, one engine, one truck, per ten floors. It was 6 or 9 Truck that we wound up with, and we did floors 10 through 20. We did have structural damage to the building, especially to the east side, and small pockets of fire set back there, but no victims within the building.

We came out, and we took a blow on West Street, reported back to the command center. Basically we were told that it was time for us to leave. We wanted to stay. The chief that was on duty then, he asked us what tour we were working and so on. We told him we were there from the day tour. The chief said, "I've got a thousand guys here to help. It's time for you to guys to take up and go home," which we eventually did. That's it.

Q. Very good. Thanks for your help.

A. Okay.

CHIEF KENAHAN: This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110229

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY HOPPEY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 4th, 2001. The time is 3:39 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Timothy Hoppey, firefighter first grade, assigned to Engine 91. We're at the quarters of Engine 91 conducting this interview.

Q. Go ahead with any --

A. We cut through Central Park to get down there. Then we got over to the West Side Highway. The cops pretty much had it all cleared out for us, so we cruised right down to pretty near the World Trade Center. I believe we parked on West Street.

We got off the rig. It was myself, Ed Sheehy and Maureen Schulman on the back step. We took our rollups and started walking down West Street toward the command center that we were to report to, walked about 50 yards or so, and Maureen was actually carrying the standpipe kit and rollups. I went back and grabbed the standpipe kit from her to speed things up a bit.

We got down to the command post. As soon as we arrived at the command post, I noticed the jumpers were coming down there. I believe there were a lot more landing on top of the hotel, but some were hitting out in the street.

There were quite a few firefighters already assembled there. The chief of the command center told us to step back off of West Street so that we wouldn't actually see the impact of the jumpers. There was a parking garage there with a ramp. So by going down the ramp a little bit, you still saw and heard the jumpers, but you didn't actually see them hitting on the street. So that's pretty much where everyone was.

We took our masks off and dropped the rollups and stuff because we were assuming that we might be there a while waiting for our assignment and seeing how most of the other companies had done that also.

As far as the companies assembled there, I really only saw 34 Engine. I don't know. A lot of guys had their helmets off too and their gear stacked in specific areas.

While we were there, I went back into the parking garage, and one of the guys in the glass booth back there, I asked him where a faucet was. So came out and turned on a faucet for us so we had some water.

We were just hanging out there, waiting to be called, and eventually Lieutenant James Casey came back, told us to get our gear on, that we were going to head in.

So we went up to West Street. We were right by the command center at that point. We were kind of on the curb to cross West Street. Actually we were told we were going to go to the six sublevel. I'm not sure of what tower.

We were going to go in with an engineer who -- I guess they were having standpipe problems up there. We were going to isolate a standpipe or something. Not that we knew how to do it, but this engineer was going to tell us what valves to turn or whatever. As I said, I'm not even sure what tower we were supposed to go into.

We walked out into West Street maybe ten yards or so, and the chief called us back.

I'm not sure what chief this was. I know Peter Ganci was at this command center, but I'm not sure what chief this actually was.

The chief wanted to get a truck company to go in with us. He was figuring we would probably have to force doors getting down to these sublevels. At that point Lieutenant Casey had sent our chauffeur, Steve Connor, and Brian Russo, who actually had just gotten off the night tour but had ridden down with the rack unit, I believe. He sent them back to 91's rig to get forcible entry tools, rabbit tools or something like that.

In the interim while we were standing there on the curb at West Street, probably three minutes or so after he had told us to go in, that's when we heard the rumble. I looked up, and it was just a black cloud directly overhead.

At that point I was thinking it was a secondary explosion. It looked to me like it was much lower than where the planes had gone in. That was probably just a delay in looking up.

I turned around and looked to see what everyone else was doing, and everyone was running

right down that ramp into the parking garage. So I just dropped the rollup and standpipe kit right there and took off running and made it into the parking garage.

As I was running down the ramp, there was a pillar on the left. I jumped behind it. I was going to throw my mask on, because I was assuming at the time that -- thinking that the World Trade Center -- I thought the top half of the building was falling off, and I was thinking of it falling outward, not really imploding upon itself like it did. So if it was falling our way, we might get buried alive or trapped down in that parking garage.

I was going to throw my mask on, but as soon as I jumped behind the pillar, there was just a black cloud rolling probably five or ten yards away from me, so I just kept running. I didn't know if it was the building or if it was just debris. I had no idea what was in the cloud.

By the time I got to the rear of the parking garage -- it stayed pretty clear back there. It wasn't too bad. There was a stairway

up. There were a ton of guys on the stairwell. I know there was a delay in getting out the door. Whether they got the key or forced the door, I'm not really sure. I stayed down at the bottom there. I had my flashlight on directing people in there.

Once the door was forced or opened or whatever they did, everyone headed up and out the back of the parking garage. I went up there. We moved either a bicycle rack or some type of barrier to hold the door open up top.

While I was standing there, some captain -- I don't know what company -- he saw I had an orange flashlight on my jacket and he said, "Let me have that flashlight. I'm going to go down and search the parking garage." So I said, "All right." So I gave him the flashlight. I said, "I'm going to go down with you."

So we put on our masks and went down into the parking garage. He set up a search rope. The visibility was actually fairly good down there. You could see all the shapes of people. It seemed like everyone who had gotten in the parking garage was fine.

I walked back out to where the ramp met the air, but you really couldn't see too much at that point. You wouldn't see anyone walking around out there. I didn't really see much of anything out there at that point.

I went back out through the garage, back out into like a little park behind the garage. Walking around there, I met up with two guys from my company, Ed Sheehy and Joe Meola, who also had been relieved that morning but had come down.

We just started looking for our lieutenant and the rest of our company at that point. We walked through the park I believe to Vesey Street, and we were going to loop around to come back down into the Trade Center to see if our lieutenant and other members were down there.

I would assume we were on Vesey Street or West Street. I'm not even exactly sure. But a cop started screaming, "The north tower is leaning." We again started running. That came down a couple minutes after that. As I said, I think we were on Vesey Street at that point, but I'm not really sure.

After that it was kind of pandemonium. The U.S. marshals were saying a third plane was coming in. They said there were bombs in all the buildings around there. No one really knew where to assemble. Every time you tried to set up a spot, you were being told to keep moving further north. Eventually we ended up by Stuyvesant High School. That was pretty much it.

Q. Do you have anything else?

A. No, I don't.

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's now 3:48. This interview is concluded. Thank you.

File No. 9110230

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FATHER JOHN DELENDICK

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is December 6th. My name is Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're on the fourth floor of Nine Metrotech in the conference room, conducting an interview with Father John Delendick into the events of September 11th.

The time now is 1431 hours.

Q. Father, if you would just be good enough to tell us your story from that day.

A. I had just finished saying the 8:30 mass at St. Michael's in Brooklyn. The pager went off and said that a plane had crashed into one of the towers of the Trade Center. I called emergency operations center and said I was responding, and I left for the Trade Center.

I went through the Battery Tunnel. I parked my car as close to the Battery Tunnel as possible and walked to the Trade Center from there along West Street. I stopped for a few minutes to talk to Jerry Barber, who was opposite -- I guess we were standing on the corner of Liberty Street and West. I believe that's where I saw him. I then proceeded down

further.

He told me that the command post was on West Street down in front of the Financial Center. According to this paper, it's Two World Financial Center, Merrill Lynch. They were set up in front of there with two huge garage doors which went underneath the Financial Center.

I spoke to Ganci briefly, told him I was there. I saw Bill Feehan, said hello to him. I stood there for a while talking to Timmy Stackpole and to Chief Ed Henry, both of whom left a few minutes later.

And Henry picked up his tack and said to me: "I've got to go to work," and he went across the street to the Marriott. Timmy Stackpole and I continued to talk -- in fact, people started jumping off the north tower at that point. We were watching that. I said to Timmy I think we should go back to the office.

I should mention that behind us a lot of different companies were staging. That's where they were waiting to move in. I said: "Timmy, we should go back and remind the officers to look after their probies because I don't think

they're going to be able to handle this. I turned around with Timmy, and we both looked and then looked at each other, because no one was handling it, the probies or the veterans.

Timmy at that point took a group of guys -- I'm not sure who was with him -- and went across the street as well. I believe they went to the Marriott. Most people going to the south tower went to the Marriott and went through the Marriott to get there.

The top of the building kind of started to rumble, and we all looked up. It looked --

Q. Let me interrupt you for a second. Were you there when the second plane hit?

A. No. When the second plane hit, I was still in Brooklyn. I was trying to get through the tunnel on Hamilton Avenue. We saw the plane, but I never saw it hit. I remember saying to myself, boy, that guy is awful low in the pattern. I remember saying something really stupid like, you know, did he come down to see what happened with the first one? It never dawned on me that he was heading for the other tower, but that's where it was headed.

We heard a rumbling noise, and it appeared that that first tower, the south tower, had exploded, the top of it. That's what I saw, what a lot of us saw. We ran down underneath the Financial Center.

Q. The garages behind you?

A. The garages.

We were followed by that cloud, that dark black cloud. It was very difficult to breathe, very difficult to see.

I stopped running or I stopped going down when it leveled off. There was like a ramp that went down, and I stopped at the bottom ramp where it leveled off. Bill Feehan was next to me. Ray Downey was over there too, because they both started talking -- I knew it was them because they were talking, so I knew.

I remember asking Ray Downey was it the jet fuel that blew up. He said at that point he thought there were bombs up there because it was too even. As we've since learned, it was the jet fuel that was dropping down that caused all this. But he said it was too even.

Q. Symmetrical?

A. So his original thought was that he thought it was a bomb up there as well.

We then started walking up, back up. I was with Bill Feehan. I'm not sure where Ray Downey went. I understand Pete Ganci found a stairwell, went up a stairwell and went back to the lobby, back to the command post where we were.

Bill and I stopped a few times on the ramp going up. There were some firefighters who had fallen there. I don't know who they were. I didn't really get to see their faces. You couldn't really see much. You trip over them is how --

Q. You found them.

A. We would grab other firefighters to help them down further. They had apparently minor injuries. They were okay, but they had fallen or whatever. We got people to assist them to go down further into the building.

I remember saying to Bill at one point we had to be near the garage doors. I said we should be seeing daylight soon. Little did I know that we weren't going to see daylight. I

didn't even think. He said yeah, you're right.

Next thing we knew, we were outside. There was kind of -- I don't know what to call it, like an island between two garages on the driveway outside that had flowers in it. We were right next to it, so we knew we were outside, couldn't realize. Couldn't see anything.

We didn't know the building came down. We just knew the top of the building exploded and didn't know what happened to the rest of the building. You just couldn't see anything. Things began to lift a little bit.

Just to take a step back, when I got out, we discovered we were outside, somebody said to me there's somebody hurt down on West Street. And I started walking south on West Street. That's when I began to notice fire trucks that were damaged and ambulances on the side and cars destroyed.

I stopped and said where am I going? Where am I looking for this guy who is injured? I have no idea where I'm going. I turned and went back to --

Q. Where the command post was?

A. -- where the command post was.

Ganci was there at this point, and I stood there a few minutes. Pete started yelling, saying to everyone that we should start moving north and we're going to re-form the command post up on West and Chambers Street.

A whole group of us started moving north again. I'm not sure who I was with. We just started moving north. When we got to the corner of West and Vesey, we heard that kind of same rumbling noise. And someone just yelled run, and we all started running. Some people ran north. I ran with a whole bunch of people going towards the river.

Q. West?

A. On Vesey Street, west.

I remember a cop running along next to me. I remember this. This is great. We were running along, and a cop is running next to me. He says: "Father, can I go to confession?" I looked and said: "This is an act of war, isn't it?" He said: "Yeah, I believe so." I said: "Then I'm giving general absolution." I gave everyone general absolution, and I kept running.

Q. You're covered?

A. Also I ran into a bunch of guys from the Secret Service, about 25 or 30 of them, all in their suits. I don't know the name of the street that's behind the World Financial Center.

Q. It might be North End or --

A. It must be North Avenue. They were walking along North, crossing Vesey, and they were going down further. I stopped one of them and I said where are you going? He said one of our members is in the building and we have to go find him. I remember saying to him I don't think it's a good idea going down there right now. He said no, we've got to find him. I said fine, go right ahead, do what you have to do.

I kept going. I walked along the river, and a group of us walked along the river. We walked past the high school, Stuyvesant High School. There's an alleyway between the high school and --

Q. The river?

A. -- the river. I'm not sure what was there. I think the river was there. And we came up to -- back to West Street. Then at that point

we're all standing around. Where is everyone? Where's Pete? Where's Bill?

Nigro came a little while later. Apparently he had walked around I think he said South Street. He was down the other way, walked around somehow and found his way back to Chambers Street.

Things began to clear. We were looking, and we realized both buildings were no longer there. Many of us just walked back down West Street back to the towers to see what we could do.

Q. There was --

A. I learned Father Judge was dead, and I began to learn that so many guys were gone.

Q. Heck of a day, huh?

A. I found the worst part of the day was people coming up to me that I knew and there were guys who had sons on the job or fathers on the job or brothers on the job and they would be asking me: Did you see my brother? Have you seen my father? Have you seen my son? I had to tell them no. I didn't even know they were there. That made it very hard.

Q. Father, is there anything else you can think of that you might like to add just for the history, any feelings, anything else? Feel free. If not --

A. No, I think that's about it, I guess.

Q. In that case I thank you for the interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: And the time is now 1443 hours.

File No. 9110231

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM JOHNSON

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is 1315 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter William Johnson, fireman first, assigned to ladder 147, detailed to the research and development unit. I'm interviewing him at 59 Page Avenue, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Johnson, please tell me what happened while you were there?

A. The morning of September 11, I reported to the office of R and D, where on notification of the accident at the World Trade Center, we responded in the R and D vehicle. Along with Lieutenant Stein, Lieutenant Monachelli, Firefighter Stein and myself. We responded through the Midtown Tunnel en route to the World Trade Center. On arriving at Church Street and Vesey Street, we pulled our Suburban into the corner.

As we exited the vehicle, I noticed ESU units circling the area, who advised us to keep our rig closer to the corner, so in the process of backing our rig into the corner, as I looked up, I could at that moment see the first building coming down. In that

instance, we all started to make our way back up Vesey and at that point I spotted a doorway. I jumped into the doorway and stayed there as the debris and rubble came down from the first World Trade Center.

As it cleared, or started to clear, I noticed a few civilians walking around and we escorted them into the buildings. After escorting the civilians into the buildings, we exited, regrouped at the Suburban, donned our masks, crossed the street going toward building 5, where we encountered who we thought was Father Judge.

As they brought Father Judge to us, we examined him quickly, noticing that there was no pulse and we left him in the hands of EMS. As we made our way into building 5 we were notified that there were a couple of hundred people trapped in the subway below. In an attempt to try to go down there, the second building started to collapse.

Again heading up towards Vesey, making our way up, this time I was unable to get to cover. I was struck by the cloud in the middle of the street. We stayed in the middle of the street, for a period of let's say 5 to 10 minutes until everything cleared again.

Getting out of that cloud, we regrouped back at the corner of Broadway and Vesey, where Lieutenant Stein began the operations of a command post. I started my way back down Vesey Street again, to look for Lieutenant Monachelli, who lost us. We lost each other as a matter of fact. We regrouped. I found Lieutenant Monachelli on the corner of Church and Vesey. From that point we started to make a couple of surveys and searches of the area. Noticing Ladder 119's rig, and a couple of members from that company and that's about all I can remember.

For an hour or two we stood there searching and then I was taken to Bellevue Hospital. I couldn't see any more. I had pretty bad eye problems, so they transported me to Bellevue where I stayed for I believe an hour and a half. I was treated, released and the health team brought me back home. That was it.

Q. Okay, when you say you were -- you saw the people that were with Judge, any ID, any unit IDs on them?

A. I remember seeing a court officer, an OEM person with an OEM jacket on and an EMS driver, I think think it was, but that's about the only people I can remember seeing.

Q. Okay. Before the second building came down or subsequent to your arrival, did you happen to see any other Fire Department units that you could identify at any place?

A. I saw Engine 226. I don't know exactly where they were located right now, but I remember seeing 226 on the rig. I think they were on that Church and Vesey corner.

Q. Other than the vehicle, you didn't see any Fire Department personnel?

A. No, I didn't see any Fire Department personnel.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110233

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN MICHAEL STEIN

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF RONALD KEMLY: Today is December 5, 2001. The time is 12:45 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Captain Michael Stein of the research and development unit of the New York City Fire Department. The interview is being conducted at 59 Page Avenue at the R&D unit's location regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Captain Michael Stein, please tell us what you did at the Trade Center.

A. We responded to the Trade Center approximately 9:15 a.m. after loading our vehicle with life saving rope, belts, harnesses, rebar cutters, and other various tools, special tools that the units have. We arrived about 30 seconds before the first tower collapsed. We arrived on Church Street and Vesey Street, parked on the northeast corner opposite Engine 226. We proceeded to get equipment out of the back of our car when the first building collapsed. We retreated to a safe position, approximately hundred yards behind our car. I dove underneath the ESU truck that was parked behind us. The other members of

research and development were Lieutenant Larry Monachelli, Firefighter Bill Johnson and Firefighter Paul A. Stein, also retreated to a safe location.

After the building came down, we established some sort of chain to help civilians into the open building that we found, 30 Vesey Street. We regrouped back at the vehicle. We donned our masks and our bunker gear. We proceeded towards 5 World Trade Center, where we met OEM representative Kevin Culley, along with a couple of Port Authority police who were carrying who we believed to be Mychal Judge on a chair.

We immediately checked for some sort of pulse, found none. We called for EMS. They responded with a backboard. We put Father Judge on a backboard and then we were preparing to proceed into building number 5, where we were advised that there were approximately 100 people trapped in the basement.

As we approached building number 5, the second tower began to collapse. We then retreated down Vesey Street to Broadway. We got as far as Broadway and Ann, where I proceeded to buddy breathe with two police officers and a reporter. After the cloud settled a little bit, we were met by Deputy Chief

Haring of the Sixth Division. He responded acting the First Division, where I advised them that both towers collapsed and that we had set up a command post.

We set a command post up at Ann and Broadway and then he assigned me as a staging Chief, a staging officer, and I immediately set up a staging area at 225 Broadway for the incoming men, at which time I was met by Dr. Kelly, Dr. Prezant, who advised me that a triage had been set up in the Duane Reade on Broadway, where they assigned Dr. Garvey and Dr. Ortiz.

After reporting back with a list of all the responding -- the companies that were on the scene, I headed back to find my members, the rest of my members. I was with Firefighter Stein, Firefighter Johnson and we hooked up with Lieutenant Monachelli and we proceeded to do a search and rescue of the perimeter of the World Trade Center area. That's basically what we did.

Q. Prior to the second building collapsing and at any time before that, did you see any other units or could you ascertain their location? Even if you weren't with them, did you happen to see where they were?

A. No, we didn't see. The only unit that was on

there was 226 and their rig was there and it was just a chauffeur was there, or who I believe was the chauffeur. He assisted us by giving us some Scott bottles, but the officer and the other members weren't there.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. That concludes the interview. Thank you, Captain Stein.

File No. 9110234

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT LAWRENCE MONACHELLI

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 5, 2001. The time is 12:15 in the afternoon. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Lawrence Monachelli, Lieutenant, assigned to the R and D unit of the New York City Fire Department at the R and D unit's location at 59 Page Avenue, Brooklyn, New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Lieutenant Monachelli will now give a description of his actions on September 11, 2001.

A. I was working my normal shift at the R and D unit, when we saw on one of the TV channels that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. We immediately began loading some of our equipment; life saving ropes, some of our life belts. We have rebar cutters, some hurst tools and portable lighting, in anticipation of going to the World Trade Center. We were loading the van when the second plane hit. We immediately geared up and put extra Scott bottles and proceeded through the Midtown Tunnel, via Lexington Avenue to the World Trade Center.

On arrival at the World Trade Center, we were

putting our gear on, donning our masks, just about to walk over to building 5. We were on the corner of Church and Vesey, when tower two I believe it was, began to collapse. We ran up Vesey Street. I ran into the lobby of 20 Vesey Street and stayed there until the building came completely down.

After about 15 minutes waiting in the lobby, maybe 10 minutes waiting in the lobby of 20 Vesey, I went back to our vehicle, which was still parked on the corner of Church and Vesey, regrouped with the other members of R and D; Lieutenant Stein, Firefighter Johnson and Firefighter Stein, where we regrouped and immediately started to perform a search and rescue for members.

Some of the members didn't have their masks on. We went back and got bottles out of our van, proceeded to put our masks on and at this time, we were walking again down Vesey Street towards building 5 towards the tower, and the second tower began to collapse. We all ran for cover. I again went to 20 Vesey Street where the lobby door had been locked, but the glass was broken. Proceeded to go into 20 Vesey and waited until tower one collapsed. I was with civilians and a couple of police officers.

We stayed there for about 15 minutes again. Came back out. I couldn't get out that door. We had to go out a rear door because our entrance was blocked. We went out through the rear door of 20 Vesey and made our way down again to Church and Vesey, trying to look for some of the members of the R and D unit. We couldn't find anybody. I had a handy talky, but transmissions were -- it was impossible to get on the air at the time.

I proceeded down Church, where there were several reports of people trapped, but you couldn't find anybody. When I got to the Vista Hotel, there was a member asking for assistance with moving a Lieutenant from EMS in the basement of this hotel, which we went in. We found the member, he was a Lieutenant, again from EMS, I'm not sure what unit he was from. We put him on a backboard and carried him up the stairs and to a waiting police boat on the west side.

The police boat took him over to, I believe it was Liberty Island or one of the -- I can't remember what island it was at the time, but they had a hospital set up or a triage center set up over there. There was also a member of Ladder 10 on that boat. I took a ride over with the police to the other side and came back.

I proceeded up again west towards Church and Vesey where I met Lieutenant Stein and the other members of the unit, where we performed search and rescue, pretty much the rest of the day. We gave out as many search ropes as we could and rebar cutters and lights and lanterns and did whatever we could to assist in any search and rescue efforts.

We left the -- I guess the Trade Center about 9 p.m. that night. That's about it.

Q. This is Chief Kemly again. At this time I want to ask you some questions. When you say we responded from quarters, who did you respond with?

A. I responded with Lieutenant Stein at the time. Firefighter Johnson and Firefighter Stein, all assigned to the R and D unit.

Q. When you arrived you said you went to Vesey and West?

A. Vesey and Church.

Q. Vesey and Church. Is that where you wound up parking?

A. Yes, right on the corner there.

Q. Did you see any other units when you arrived?

A. I believe Engine Company 226 was on our corner. I'm not sure. We do have a few photos.

Q. Did you see any other units at any time besides that?

A. Not Fire Department units. Police units mostly were around us.

Q. Your actions before the second tower came down were basically finding your own men?

A. Looking for my own men and search and rescue, and anybody we could help out.

Q. Did anybody inform you as to where the command post was located to begin with?

A. Not at that time, no.

Q. Before the both towers came down, you had responded on your own and you didn't see any units other than 226?

A. At that time, no.

Q. What location did you see 226 at?

A. Right on the corner of Church and Vesey, opposite of Saint Pauls Church.

Q. Prior to the first collapse?

A. They had a hydrant, right.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: That concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110235

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK SULLIVAN

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 5, 2001. The time is 1:40 p.m. This is Firefighter Patrick Sullivan's interview from the World Trade Center. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion.

Q. If you would Pat, please tell me about what you saw or heard on that day when you guys responded to the Trade Center?

A. When I first saw the plane crash on the news, I was getting relieved. I was coming off a 24 and I was supposed to be going home. I was actually in my civilian clothes. After the first plane hit, they had a voice alarm announcement and ordered everyone going home to stay and every Engine would be riding with five men. I don't know how long -- I changed back into my uniform. I don't know how long it was after that, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, we responded. A little after the 48 went.

We went through the tunnel as we were responding. We were going over into the Gowanus through the tunnel, we were supposed to go to the staging area outside the tunnel and as we were going, you could see the building, you could see the fire, you could see the flames and you could also see the smoke

coming out of the building. There was also papers blowing as far as here, regular sheets of paper blowing through the air. I guess that's from when the plane hit.

We went to the staging area. We stayed at the staging area for maybe 5, 10 minutes until all the companies that were going on the ticket, everyone was there, they all grouped together and we went. I don't know all the companies that were there, but I know 201 was with us. I couldn't tell you what other companies were there at the time.

We responded and we went through the tunnel. We came up the West Side Highway on the right side of the divider and we were stopped by either a Chief or a police officer. We couldn't go any further because there was organic matter in the street and they were considering it evidence. There was a part of a body probably from when the plane hit.

So we got out of the rig and we started walking. We walked maybe 50 feet further and there was a Deputy Chief there. I don't know the Deputy Chief's name. He was there with his aide. He was an on duty Deputy Chief. He had an official car. There was another Deputy Chief there, I think he came in his

private car, because he was there with the other Chief, unless they were riding with 2, which could have been two. Maybe they both took the run in when they got it.

Anyway he told us drop our roll ups, that we were going to walk up, we were going to go to the 40th floor. I think there was another staging area on the 40th floor, tower two, the south tower, if that's tower two, the one closer to the Battery Tunnel. We were going to walk up. He said it's going to take 40 minutes to an hour to get up there, to drop our roll ups and start walking.

He said watch out for bodies, bodies coming down like leaves from a tree. They were coming down all over the place. He said God be with you and we started walking.

As we started walking, I was looking straight up at the tower and I saw the top of the tower coming down. I saw the black smoke, sort of like pushing out, and I saw debris starting to come out from the building, probably from one floor depressing on the other, blowing everything out and I knew it was coming down.

I turned around and I yelled to the guys that

were with me to run. They seemed to be just standing there, frozen. I don't know if it was disbelief or shock or what. But they snapped out of it and they turned around and started running. As we started running, we were right -- there's a, on the West Side Highway, there is a pass through. There is a concrete divider that goes between the two lanes, north and south, and there is a pass through right on the other side of the pedestrian bridge that didn't come down.

That's where we were, walking towards 2 World Trade Center. That's where we were when we started walking. When I saw the building was coming down, I turned around and started running back towards Albany Street. I was trying to get around another building and down the block. I saw tomorrow Tommy Dun was with me. He was in front of me. He was our proby, and another guy, Darren Jacobs, he was in front of me as well.

I didn't get as far as Darren and Tommy. Tommy must have been 30 feet in front of me and after the collapse he couldn't hear me. I was calling for him. Darren kept on running. I don't know where he wound up ending up, but Tommy Dunn was maybe 30 feet in front of me. I was right by a Suburban car.

As I was running, there was debris, I don't know what it was, rocks or part of the building, shooting over my head, hitting the ground and it was going through windows and taking cars out. I ran as fast as I could and as far as I could until the black dust cloud overtook me and I couldn't see any more. I knew that there was a car there because I saw it just before it blacked out. I went over to the car and I thought not to go under the car, because if something landed on the car it would crush me and the car. I thought I would just go next to it like a void, try to make a void and hope for the best.

I remember thinking that -- first I remember praying that I was going to make it out of there alive, but I didn't think I was going to. I didn't think I was going to make it out of there. I prayed that my family would be okay. My wife and my boy would be okay, and I waited for something substantial to land on me and I was hoping it was going to be quick. I was hoping I wouldn't be trapped for any period of time. I was getting pelted with -- it felt like soft balls. I couldn't breathe. It was like putting your face in a bag of cement and trying to take a deep breath.

I couldn't get any air. It was like holding

your breath, trying to breathe in and breathe out. Nothing was going in and nothing was going out. So I tried to take my mask. This all happened in between maybe 15 and 30 seconds. I tried to take my mask and take a hit off my mask and it didn't work. There was no air coming out of it. There was a pile of dust inside so I shook it out. Shook all the dust out and tried to take another breath. It just wasn't giving me any air. I remember trying to turn the valve again, thinking that my mask wasn't on, but it was on. It just wasn't working. It was clogged up with shit in it. I banged it a couple of times. I finally got a little bit of a breath out of the mask and shortly after that, it started clearing up anyway. I could start seeing daylight through the dust.

I remember it being very very quiet, like being under water. I was calling out to my proby. I was yelling his name and I was yelling, you know, anybody in 240, because I didn't have a radio and I didn't know if anybody else made it. He couldn't hear me calling. He must have been maybe 30 feet in front of me. The sound must have been like not traveling through the air. It must have been stopping dead because it was so thick.

After that, I got up and I started seeing, I started hearing pass alarms going off. I started walking around. I started looking for my company. I couldn't find anyone from my company. I was on Albany Street. I went down to -- one more block and I turned around and went back to the rig. I figured maybe guys would go back to the rig. That's where I ran into John Winkler. And we tried to test the hydrant and hook up to a hydrant to put out car fires. There were a bunch of car fires right by the rig.

There was a Deputy Chief's rig on fire that was extended to 113's rig. There was a big ambulance, like a rescue company truck, but it wasn't a rescue company truck. It was a huge ambulance. It must have had Scott bottles or oxygen bottles on it. These were going off. You would hear the air go SSS boom and they were exploding. So we stretched a line and tried to put that out. He could only use booster water.

We would open up the hydrants. The hydrants weren't working. The water main broke or something. So after we ran our booster water, the rig was basically useless. 113's rig went up and we tried to get a line from the fire boats to supply one of the rigs so we could get some water.

At that point I had to leave because I couldn't see any more. I couldn't open my eyes. I had to rinse my eyes out quite a few times during the course of what we were doing. After a while I couldn't open my eyes any more. There was fiberglass or whatever the hell was in there. They led me. Two guys led me to the water by a rope and a cop drove me to an ambulance.

From the ambulance they rinsed my eyes out again. I walked to the tunnel and hitched a ride with a Port Authority guy to the other side and came back to the fire house. That must have been about 2:00 or so or 3:00 in the afternoon. I don't know if I left anything out, but that's basically what happened, as I remember it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great. Thanks, Pat. It's 1:51 p.m., this is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110236

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WINKLER

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 5th of December, 2001. The time is 1:25 p.m. This is Engine 240. My name is Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview of Firefighter John Winkler, Engine 240. This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Maybe, John, you can tell me in your own words what happened at the Trade Center from the time that you responded to the scene until you guys left the scene.

A. When we received the ticket, we were assigned to the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. There was a staging area. We were the first ones there. On the arrival of the other companies, we received a ticket to respond to West Street, West and Liberty.

I was driving that day. I went through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, came up West Street. There was a chief at West and Albany who stopped us right on West Street and told us to remain right here.

Members of my company got out, grabbed

their rollups, reported to the chief that was on the sidewalk on the west side sidewalk of West Street. This was after the second plane hit, before the first tower came down.

I was told to stay with the rig. I proceeded to put my bunker gear on when I looked up and I saw the tower falling, the first tower coming down. I jumped into the cab, put my helmet on and just ducked and just waited. It shattered the windows, shook the rig.

While sitting in the rig, I heard over the radio that "I'm trapped underneath the rig." So I responded -- I'm not sure if I responded on the department radio or on the handy talky -- "Engine 240 chauffeur coming to get you."

I climbed out of the rig, climbed over the rubble, got my mask and went forward and walked north on West Street. Right before the south pedestrian bridge, there was I believe it was one of our members stuck under an ambulance. There was another fireman with him. He said, "We have a guy under the ambulance here."

I gave a mayday on the radio that I'm 240 chauffeur, we have a guy stuck under an

ambulance by the south bridge. I then proceeded to grab members from Ladder 14. We grabbed their air bags, went back to the ambulance. By that time the guy was already out. The member was out. So I left 113.

I went back south on West Street to where 240 was. At that time I was told by Chief I don't know who that we have to start putting these fire outs. There were numerous car vehicles on fire. There were also ESU vehicles on fire. I was told they have ammunition in them and we have to get them out.

Tested the hydrant; there was water. Connected to the hydrant; there was no water. In the meantime I put the rig in pumps. One of my members stretched a line with the help from other firefighters. While I was in pumps, I used that as a booster and was putting car fires out.

We tried to get another hydrant. Same thing: opened the hydrant; there was water. Connected to it, there wasn't enough water. While doing all of this, he ran out of booster line.

The best I can remember, we just got

together. That's when the second tower came down. I dove behind a chief's rig, the two of us, and same thing. We were down there for a while. Mouth full of the dust, choking on it. Couldn't see for a while. Finally it cleared up a little bit to see.

We regrouped, got a couple of our guys. Everybody proceeded to walk down Albany to the water, where we started stretching lines to the fire boat. We continued stretching lines, lengths of hose, up Albany Street to West Street.

Pretty much the rest of the day that's what we were doing, taking lines from the fire from the water up Albany Street, down Albany to Washington, around, and just continued doing that most of the day. That's about it.

Q. Let me ask you a question, John. When you said you saw chiefs when you came in, do you know the name or the identity of the battalion or --

A. I know one of them that was on the sidewalk was Chief Lakiotes.

Q. Okay, from the Safety Battalion.

A. He was on the sidewalk. My company

reported to him. There was another chief in the street that stopped me and said "Keep the rig right here." I was double parked right next to I believe it was 210, right behind Ladder 113.

I didn't catch his name, but I think he was the guy that was pretty much running this area, telling us to stretch lines, we've got to get hose, we've got to put fires out. I'm not sure of his name.

Q. Okay. Great. Okay, John, thanks for the interview.

CHIEF BURNS: The time is 1:29 p.m.

File No. 9110237

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER OWEN CARLOCK

Interview Date: December 5th, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 5th, 2001. The time is 4:17 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Owen Carlock, Ladder 122, detailed on the day of the incident to Engine 220. This is in reference to the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Owen, if you would, just tell us in your own words exactly what happened that day.

A. We took the Brooklyn Bridge, which was closed. We had trouble getting there from here with all the traffic. We took the Brooklyn Bridge, which was emptied at Chambers Street, a lot of traffic, obviously, in Manhattan.

We went to West Street, turned left on West. We picked up a straggler, John Jermyn, from the -- he used to be here in 122. He works in the Fire Department Museum. We picked him up and drove around to -- as near as I can figure out, I think it was between Murray and Barclay Street, where we left the rig on the southbound lanes.

We walked down the southbound lanes to I guess it was the command post. Captain Grabher went over there, and they told him to go to the south tower. So he said he wasn't going to take Liberty because of the jumpers.

So we went to some building on the corner of Albany and West Street that's under construction. It's being renovated. We went that way. We took Albany past Washington, and then we were on our way to Greenwich? No, it was at Washington when the tower came down on us. Somebody yelled "Oh, shit, here it comes." It was coming towards us.

So we dove behind the Deutsche Bank, and the five of us -- three went back, four went ahead, the seven of us. Four of us laid behind that building, waiting. We thought we were going to die.

After that we tried to take a window in the back of the bank. We did take a window, but behind it was a steel wall, corrugated tin or whatever. We couldn't get into the window.

They followed me. I had the light. They followed me, and we went into Deutsche Bank

into the side entrance, got our wits about us, and we went across the street to get Eddie and George and Mike Schroeck.

Then we were going to make our way back to the command center when the north tower came down. We ducked into some hotel. I don't know what hotel it was. It was on West Street south of Albany.

After that came down and the stuff cleared, the officer said, "Listen, we're not going to go back to that area. We're going to come around, because we don't know what else is going to come down, what else could come tumbling down."

So we went over to the water, and from there we helped Marine 6 put it into -- I think it was Captain Fuentes. They dug him out. He was banged up pretty good. We helped put him on the boat.

At that time Captain Grabher told Eddie Plunkett and myself, "Go find a rig and back it up to the fire boat, Marine 9, which is already there." He said, "We're going to at least get water as best as we can to the towers."

Eddie and I found I don't know whose rig it was. We backed it up to the fire hose, took the three and a half off of there and went as far as we could. Then another rig came, and they stretched their three and a half off the rig we were on, and then they left.

I went back to find Captain Grabher, Mike Schroeck, George and Dean. They were nowhere to be found. Later on I found out they were on the ninth floor of one of the apartment buildings on the west side of West Street, fighting the fire on the ninth floor. That's why I couldn't find them. I had no radio. I had no clue where they were.

So I hooked up after a while with Chief Congiusta of 48. He and I went down with a couple other guys from 240 into the parking lot of the Vista to look for 6 Truck, which was missing at the time. We were standing there and waited for him to come out, and he never came out. He took an underground passageway and came out on Barclay Street.

After that I hooked up with four guys, recall guys. I hooked up with 220 and stayed the

rest of the night until 11:30 and went to the hospital. I had my eyes cleaned out.

As far as the companies, somebody said 205 was right in front of us, and I don't remember seeing them. That's the best I can tell you where we were, where everybody is, that's what we did the day of the attack.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes our interview. The time is 4:22 p.m.

File No. 9110238

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEITH MURPHY

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 5, 2001. The time is 12:08. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion, Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Keith Murphy from Engine 47.

Q. Give me the events as you remember them from September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. I basically was in the fire house that morning and I will just give you a real quick synopsis of where we were at. We were in the kitchen getting ready for start of tour like normal. It was actually prior roll call because it was about 8:45, 10 to 9.

I heard the dispatcher queue up the voice alarm and it sounded like they were looking for a Company or a Battalion or something. It was just a weird thing, because it just sounded strange. Maybe like 30 seconds or a minute later, the voice -- they came over the voice alarm and said second alarm transmitted. I still remember box 8087, World Trade Center number one. I'll always remember his voice. It just didn't sound normal. Something just wasn't right.

We flipped the channel, we had the TV on in

the kitchen. We flipped the channel. We saw breaking news on Channel 5 probably and we see the north tower, they flashed to it, the tower is burning. Naturally we were shocked like everyone else, no one knew what was going on and started to hear on the TV, people started saying it might be a plane crash. So a couple of the guys ran up to the house watch, put on the Department radio and I was still in the back by the kitchen.

Probably 10 minutes passed, maybe 15 tops. About 10. I'm watching the television and again they are showing the towers and all of a sudden out of the corner of my eye I see a blip go by, which I determined later was a plane. Then there was a huge explosion, second tower. I ran up to the house watch to tell the guys did you guys see that plane. I think another plane hit and before I could even get the words out, our dispatcher was saying report of a second plane into World Trade Center number 2.

Within maybe 5 minutes of that, I was thinking in my head we are relocating definitely. We are not going to be here for long. Within five minutes the voice alarm came on and we were assigned on the fifth alarm. We never got a teleprinter ticket, but we were assigned over the voice alarm on the fifth alarm

to the second tower. So we were going to the south tower, the second tower that was hit.

We got off, stopped and grabbed extra flashlights, did everything we could real quick, jumped on the rig and started to respond. We are on 113 Street just off Amsterdam Avenue, so we came down 113 Street, we turned the corner at Broadway and the chauffeur went south down Broadway and then it turns, you bear to the right, I remember going down West End Avenue.

At this point we were making real good time. There was no traffic. We went all the way down the west side, till I guess -- I believe West End turns into 11th Avenue. Could be tenth, but I think it's 11th Avenue. Continued straight down to there and I believe we came into the West Side Highway, which is West Street really, about 23rd Street I think.

We turned down West Street, West Side Highway, and I was sitting in the jump seat behind the chauffeur, so I was looking forward. Just as we went a few blocks south, both towers came into view. I could see heavy heavy smoke and even from that distance as we got closer, we were still a pretty good distance away and I could see fire showing, visible fire throughout

dozens of floors.

Naturally on the rig we were listening to the radio and gearing up and it probably was the toughest run I ever took in. We knew we had something pretty heavy in front of us. We were coming down the West Side Highway and the cops had closed -- I remember seeing squad cars and they had closed off to block traffic.

So at one point, it would be a guess only, we were south of Houston I think. Definitely south of Canal, maybe south of Houston, definitely south of Houston, rather, and maybe even as far as Canal, we saw the other side of the highway going northbound was open. The chauffeur saw that but I realized it because he then took the wrong way down and it was a clear shot. There were other -- I noticed other police cars, other rigs, I think there were other rigs behind us. I don't remember seeing them, but I remember hearing other rigs.

We continued south down the other side of the highway, which would be the northbound side. We parked on West Street. I would say my recollection is that we were a little north of Vesey Street but it might, looking at the map, that's here, we might have been as

far as up as Barclay. I thought it was Vesey, but I'm thinking that from this map it might have been another block. It might have been a little north of Barclay and south of Murray Street, because we did walk quite a distance.

Now we arrive at the box. We had all our regular gear and we were thinking high rise and we were going to take the extra cylinders, but the officer suggested that we take our medical -- mask up, have all our stuff and then take some extra things. We took our medical bags, the O2, we took the hose drop roll and an extra hose and an extra -- spare. I believe someone took forceful entry tools too. It sticks in my head but I could be wrong. I know they were gone later, but it could have been the rig was raided. I thought we had those too.

We got all our gear together and we met in front of the rig and the officer basically told us to just stay calm, relax. We are going to stick together. And we are going to have to -- looking for the command post. We started to walk south on West Street and we had our roll ups of course. I felt like we walked a pretty good distance, probably a couple of blocks. At this point I started to notice a lot of

other rigs, apparatus. I remember passing the hazmat company's big rig, so I guess they had to have been on the scene at that point. If I had to guess the time, I would think in my mind we probably took in the box around 9:10. We made great time down the west side. I couldn't believe how fast. So I would say at this point we pull up, it's probably 9:25 maybe. That's what I think, but I'm not a hundred percent sure on that.

We kept going south. I see a lot of other companies but I really don't remember really anything but that hazmat company. I do recall police officers kind of running up to us and they had their radios, their Department radios, and they kept saying guys, specifically to the officer, but we were right there. We have a report of a third inbound aircraft. That's all he said. He didn't say jet or anything like that. Just said we have a report of a third inbound aircraft. At that point just to the right of us was the World Financial Center, and immediately on our left was the beginning of the World Trade Center complex. Looks like here it's number 6 World Trade Center would be on my left. We were coming up to the first pedestrian bridge.

Came up to the pedestrian bridge, came under it. Now as we were under it, now we are looking at the plaza and you could see people, there was debris falling, people jumping, bodies hitting the ground. To our far right some other companies seemed to be gathering, I don't know if it was a command post but there seemed to be people gathering across the street from there. But there was so many companies coming in together, we were kind of spread out. So I don't know whether they were going somewhere they had been assigned to. All I know is our officer said we were looking for the south tower command post.

So in our minds we know we are going to the south tower, now we are way north of that at this point. So we pass under this pedestrian bridge and now we are in the plaza. I remember not being on the street or a regular sidewalk. I remember it being a few small stairs and we were walking through and there was a tremendous amount of body parts. Then there were full torsos. I notice a lot of people with heads missing, legs missing, arms missing. I almost walked into one and I wouldn't even have believed, it looked like a bundle of rags and it was a body.

We were looking up, kind of watching what was

falling to see where our bearings were and our next goal at this point was, and it was quite a ways down, because I see now on the map we were heading towards Liberty Street. So we actually made it through. We went back out of that plaza because it was obviously more dangerous there and we worked our way back towards the street. We came down, we kept coming south down the street and we are still walking with all our gear. I remember at this point being really - we were all geared up, so it was getting very warm.

We went south to the next pedestrian bridge, which I guess was the south pedestrian bridge and we kind of took cover under there. At that point, our officer stepped away. I thought he had talked to a civilian, but it could have been a fire employee. I'm not sure who it was, but he was maybe about 10, 12 feet away. We are a 5 man company, so the chauffeur wasn't with us but the four of us were together. He walked back over and he said we have to go to the command post, it's in the Marriott lobby, which is I guess number 3 World Trade Center.

He said to us again about looking up, watch where we are going. We have to get over there as quickly as we can. So we kind of - I wouldn't say we

ran, but we were going pretty fast and watching again, watching up at all the things that were dropping down, people and still there was a lot of debris still falling too.

We made it over to the entrance to the Marriott Hotel, which was on West Street. I guess we went in. We went in the West Street side. I don't think we went upstairs but we went into like -- I don't know if it was a driveway or not, but we came into the lobby and we passed under a big awning, and I remember the awning was glass, one of those glass and steel encased awnings and just as we got into the revolving doors to go into the lobby, this huge crash, a body hit the glass and the steel. Didn't come through, but it sounded like a bomb had gone off but it was a body hitting this glass.

Now we get into the lobby and I clearly remember right away seeing Deputy Chief Galvin from the Third Division. He was a little bit to our right. I remember him yelling out to the guys I want my Engine companies on the left, Truck companies on my right. Told the men hang back, officers come up to the desk. It was kind of like a front desk and the lobby was set up a little weird. It wasn't like you walked in and

into the middle. It was kind of like the desk seemed to be a little to the right. We were gathered over waiting for our officer to come back. I actually saw a member of -- we saw 74 Engine, which is from our Battalion. We kind of started talking to them. One of the guys was saying to me that he had been here in '93, couldn't believe he was back. Another guy who I happened to know who I'm pretty friendly with who didn't survive, was in there also and his name is Ruben Correa. He is from Engine 74. We were talking with him and he actually told me to be safe in there, which I will never forget.

They ended up being assigned separately. Maybe 2 or 3 minutes later, the officer, who was my Lieutenant, came back after talking to Chief Galvin and he said that we are assigned to the 44th floor of the south tower. He said there is a report of fire as low as 44 and he wanted two guys from our company to go find the stairwell, get someone from the Marriott, there is supposed to be a staircase into the south tower that you can get to safely from the hotel.

So the control man and the doorman went to go find this. They went up a staircase. It was kind of like a grand staircase. They went up the staircase,

they disappeared for maybe four or five minutes and came back. In the meantime we had been assigned with 3 Engine companies, Engine 47, Engine 22, Engine 21 and Ladder 13. The four of us had been assigned I guess as a group. But it was kind of strange, because I remember us being assigned as a group but we were kind of still functioning a little independently at this point.

Our two guys came back and they started to say that the guy showed them - a maintenance worker showed them a stairwell, but I don't think they were 100 percent convinced that it was a hotel stairwell and not a tower stairwell, but before we could even act on that, the Captain of Ladder 13 and, I since found out, I didn't know his name that day, his name was Captain Hynes, said that a couple of his guys found an elevator that was still working. He said we are going to check this elevator.

All four companies headed out of the Marriott and what I found out, it took a day later to piece together, we headed to the north tower, not the south tower. That changed -- that's one of the reasons I am still here. But also at this point we think we are still heading to the 44th floor of the south tower. He

also said at the time, he said we found an elevator, it works. It will only get us to 24 and we will have to walk the other 20 flights, but at least it will get us halfway there.

I remember thinking - a lot of guys, a couple of my senior guys saying elevators, you know, we didn't know what was going on in the building, but elevators sounded kind of, let's see, we know this sounds like - it just sounded kind of scary. We came through the Marriott. We left the Marriott and it was determined now we would have walked out of the Marriott all internally though. I don't know whether it was on the concourse level or the street level exactly, but we came through what was a revolving door and it brings you into the north tower. I remember seeing in front of me, we walked a few feet and there was a small escalator, two escalators coming down off of another level and there were dozens and dozens of office workers streaming down this. There was Port Authority. I don't know if they were Port Authority, but definitely building security guards there with gray blazers on and little ear pieces. They were still directing a lot of people down these escalators. They weren't directing them out onto the street. I remember

that now because when I came through the plaza there weren't people - there weren't civilians walking through the plaza.

Right in front of us were these escalators. Now we are moving as a whole group. I guess four companies, so it was a good amount of guys. We came into the lobby and to our left is the core. We walk up and come to the core of the building, which again I assume it was the south tower, but it wasn't. To our immediate left is turnstiles, like security turnstiles. There was a security guard. He goes okay guys, you got to come through here. So people were exiting, I guess from a staircase inside. They were coming out these turnstiles and we had to go through like one. I went to try another one to see if we could get through, but it was only one that was like reversed. We all went, kept going through, just a bunch of us went through. In front of me was a hallway, what I would call an elevator bank. I have been in the World Trade Center a few times on my own and I have been on these elevators, so I'm not familiar with them, but I kind of know the set up.

To my immediate left is a bank. If I had to guess I would say it was maybe 75, 80 feet long. It

was a pretty long elevator bank and it was big sky lobby elevators. They were like floor to ceiling, the ones that hold, I don't know, 60, 70 people. There was tremendous damage in the lobby. There was already things that were fallen or cracked. A lot of structural wall damage and ceiling damage that I could see. There was also about four or five inches of water on the floor.

I remember that struck me at the time because I remember seeing all these office workers and civilians leaving. I remember seeing women's feet like they were in shoes or something or some didn't even have their shoes any more and they were trudging through this water. At the end of this elevator lobby, there was - it just looked to me like something had exploded. I don't remember how I heard it or who said it, but someone said I think an elevator - when the plane hit, it severed the elevator cable and it came all the way down and crashed. I don't know a hundred percent if that's what happened, but it looked to me like that could have been true. It looked like something had fallen down, hit and like exploded out. I mean the whole area around it was maybe 25, 30 feet of really severe damage. But I didn't get close enough

to see exactly what it was. It just seemed that way.

Before we even got that far down we turned to our right and there is other local elevator banks to the right, so you are in this hallway. On the left is the big elevators and on the right is the small elevator banks with 6 elevator cars in each. We maybe went down about 30, 40 feet and there was a stairwell where people were exiting, just past this elevator bank, and we went into this elevator bank and these other companies that we were going to operate with, we were like the last ones behind them so they were already in this little elevator bank.

I remember thinking, I looked at the elevators and I still wasn't feeling good about them, because the damage that I spoke about was more severe or at least up close I got to see it. There were pieces of marble, like ornamental marble I guess, on the walls that were maybe 2 foot by 3 foot pieces, maybe even a little bigger, that had split and cracked and some had actually fallen. There was a couple that had fallen onto the lobby, this little lobby floor.

Some of the doors - they were silver colored elevator doors and they were almost like hanging out of plumb. They just didn't look right. But there was one

elevator. I had the elevator key. At this point now we are with Engine 21. I know on the list it said to mention companies you saw and people you know. I saw Captain Billy Burke and he was the officer and Captain in Engine 21 that day. Now a few guys were saying who is making the call on this elevator. It was two Captains and two Lieutenants. And I thought I heard, I don't know if our Lieutenant or somebody else said it, a couple of the senior guys were saying you know, who is making this call.

I believe Billy Burke said well, we are going to test it first and see if it works before we commit to it. I believe him and another person got in. It was one elevator. As you looked down this bank, there were 3 on the left and 3 on the right. It was the second elevator in on the left. If you went down to the end, it's kind of like a dead end. I remember there was actually a -- it was strange. There was a little marble thing with flowers on it and the flowers were still standing, which amazed me because everything else had been crashed down around it.

He got in the elevator. They put the 1620 key in. They were having a little trouble with the one across, but that one went in. They disappeared for

maybe I would say 10, 15 seconds, something like that. It wasn't very long. And they came back and oh, elevator doors opened up, no problem, they said it's working. So we proceeded now at this point to start putting gear and companies into the elevators. They were taking them to 24.

At this point I guess -- I don't know the exact order, but I know that 21 was pretty much gone. Most of 22 and most of 13, so I would say there were probably about three elevator trips. They come down and there is a guy -- the Captain from 13, again says can you - 47 give me one of your guys. He will come up with us and he will come back down and get you guys.

So we were going to be the last ones. We are in the lobby and our control man was a young guy. I have a little over six years on him. He has maybe three. The officer told him he didn't want him to go. He sent our guy with about 20 years on. Told him to take the radio and go take the elevator and then come back and get us.

So at this point, he gets in the elevator with the one guy, I believe it was - this is where I'm a little confused because I know from his story later that he is just with one guy -- no, no, no, I'm

incorrect. I want to take that back. He actually is with 13. He goes up. They are about to exit the elevator, I find out later, and he is with one other guy who was going to come back down with him. The two of them ended up staying together as a team.

We are in the lobby waiting for the elevator. I put my roll up. We still had our roll ups. I put it down on the floor next to me, kind of propped up because there was water on the floor. I was standing kind of on the edge of where our elevator bank met the big elevator bank. That was when the - I determined that's when the north tower collapses. We are standing there and the first thing that happened, which I still think is strange to me, the lights went out. Completely pitch black. Since we were in that core little area of the building, there was no natural light. No nothing, I didn't see a thing.

I had heard right before the lights went out, I had heard a distant boom boom boom, sounded like three explosions. I don't know what it was. At the time, I would have said they sounded like bombs, but it was boom boom boom and then the lights all go out. I hear someone say oh, shit, that was just for the lights out. I would say about 3, 4 seconds, all of a sudden

this tremendous roar. It sounded like being in a tunnel with the train coming at you. It sounded like nothing I had ever heard in my life, but it didn't sound good. All of a sudden I could feel the floor started to shake and sway. We were being thrown like literally off our feet, side to side, getting banged around and then a tremendous wind started to happen. It probably lasted maybe 15 seconds, 10 to 15 seconds. It seemed like a hurricane force wind. It would blow you off your feet and smoke and debris and more things started falling.

At this point, I got hit in the head with something. I think it came off the ceiling. I'm not sure, but in any event I ended up knocked down. My helmet stayed on and I landed on top of one of the other guys that I work with. Everything was still shaking and blowing through. I still don't know. I don't think I blacked out. They asked me that, but I don't recall blacking out because I know it was only a couple of seconds later and I felt now kind of everything stop.

My initial reaction was these bastards, whoever they were, because now I'm thinking terror. They got us with another plane, because out in the

street the cops, they kept saying there is this third inbound plane, so I'm thinking we just got hit with another plane. That's it.

The first thing I'm thinking is that I'm dead because I didn't know what happened to me. I thought I was dead. Then I kind of started feeling like okay, I think I'm here. Then I thought - I thought we died together. I was sure everyone was dead that I was with. Then I started to hear them kind of groaning and moving about.

At this point I fished around and breathing was horrible, there was so much debris and smoke. I actually - my mask was activated. I opened the cylinder earlier. I grabbed the hose, the low pressure hose, and I kind of crunched it to me and I actually put it on my face. Unfortunately, I didn't see what was in it. I put that on my face and inhaled and it was just even more stuff that was in my mask that I sucked in and I actually finally got some air and I used that for maybe a minute or two.

At this point, the other four guys, three guys, were coming to their feet. So it was the officer, the three of us and that one guy who had been in the elevator who we don't see now. The officer said

actually - I am laughing now looking back. He wanted us to count off. He meant a roll call, I kind of knew in all that was going on he meant a roll call, so we started yelling our names. I'm Murphy and the other two guys are saying their names. Kind of all gather together and asking how everyone is. One guy Steve, he got hit too and he lost his helmet.

Mine had stayed on. I don't know what happened to it. Later I ended up without a helmet but I don't know where. I had it on initially. I don't know where this thing went. We looked around, we kind of -- I should not say looked because you couldn't see anything, but we knew that Steve was missing his helmet. We kind of felt around the floor where we were and there wasn't anything. I think our officer actually gave him his helmet if I recall correctly now.

He told us, he goes all right, who is hurt. Is anybody hurt. I said he was the only one with the radio and he hadn't heard anything about a collapse. Nothing. That was one thing I forgot to mention before. When we got into the lobby, Chief Galvin told everyone with radios to switch to channel 3. That was where -- he is on channel 3. He says is anybody hurt.

The other guy Steve, he couldn't even barely say his name.

I said I hurt. I said something. I said I don't know what I did, I said my neck. I got hit in the head, my neck, I don't know what's wrong. He said all right, we are going to get you two out of here.

I don't know where we were at this point. Where we were was where we started. But he had his officer's hand light and he said each of you grab onto each other. We will go out in kind of like a chain. He says I know the way, I can get us out of here. So we started to follow him and some people who had been coming off the staircase that was right around the corner from us, maybe about ten feet away, had joined us, civilians.

I felt like I was the last one of us four, I'm not sure, but I know there were other people who were not firemen who were kind of grabbing onto my coat and we just started to proceed and you could see maybe a foot in front of you, if that, visibility. I remember everything stinging your eyes and lungs were stinging like crazy.

He walked out, which I found out later, which I found out later that was now where the security

turnstiles were. I had wondered, I said oh, boy, I don't remember climbing over these things, but there was actually like a middle part, like a bar that was apparently gone now or had been moved, because he said he walked straight through that. He turned right and we continued to follow him. I also from clarifying with him later, I thought he could see things. I said how did you get us out. He says, well, I kept walking and then I hit the wall. I said oh, okay. Apparently he hits this wall and knows to make another turn right.

We didn't go back into the Marriott where we had come out, we kind of -- we basically made like a U turn around that elevator bank that I described. Now we started to walk, which turns out, towards West Street, and in the far distance, maybe 100 feet away, I started to see, not light, but a lightening of this cloud that we had been enveloped in in the darkness. We started to hear people yelling this way, this way. It was now - it started to become a little clearer and all the windows and I think they were already blown out from the initial impact. The first two stories or maybe three stories of the Trade Center has bigger windows and there was no windows. It was all shattered

in between the columns.

We got to the edge. There was a lot of us and civilians and now I'm starting to see some other firemen. We got to this window and there was like a bannister kind of in front of it or I guess it was a handrail maybe. You could either kind of climb over it or crawl under it. So I'm a little short, I said let me go under. So I crawled under and I actually got a small burn on my hand going out because I ended up crawling over - putting my hand on a really hot beam or something that had fallen, collapsed down or fallen out.

Now we merged onto the plaza, I guess, in front of the building and it was completely, there was debris everywhere. It was like a gray. It started lightening up, but it looked like a gray snow storm and there was inches and inches of this powder and dust on everything. I remember seeing a Chief's car not too far out when we got out onto the street completely like - it was still intact but everything in the windows were gone, completely blown out and it was just kind of like, if I had to describe it, I would say everyone is just kind of like walking wounded. I mean you were just looking around, people were almost in trances.

I remember seeing - at this point now, I started to hear pass alarms. It didn't register in my head what it was. I heard pass alarms. I never really heard any radio traffic, but I understand there were a lot of Maydays being called.

The officer said all right. I'm going to get you guys to an ambulance. The two of us were hurt. I remember we were passing firemen. I remember seeing firemen carrying civilians over their shoulders. I remember seeing other civilians carrying people. I couldn't tell if they were dead or alive, but there were people everywhere trying to just get away. We ended up crossing West Street, so we probably came out - I would say we came out of the north tower and again I still think I'm in the south tower, but I know now from the map, piecing it together, we came out of the north tower through like lobby windows over the plaza onto West Street.

We crossed West Street, came up the other side of the highway and we were kind of in the - adjacent to this World Financial Center. We passed this Winter Garden and we went up underneath this other pedestrian bridge, the north pedestrian bridge, and we got to the corner of Vesey and West. On that block was

a bunch of ambulances. If I had to guess a number, I would say there were ten ambulances there.

So the officer, an EMT, not a regular FD guy, I think he had like a golf shirt on. He said who needs help, who needs help. The officer said I got two guys here that are hurt. He said all right, I don't have my ambulance, but I have an ambulance I could treat them and I will get them out of here. We walked maybe around three or four ambulances down and he put us in an ambulance. I remember someone running over to me at this point, another fireman, I don't know where he came from or what, but he took my mask. I slid it off my back or whatever and he took my mask and he disappeared. I sat down in the back of the ambulance and now the officer and the other guy who wasn't hurt said all right, we are going back to get the other guy who was our control man now in the elevator.

At this point the officer apparently heard enough, I guess on the radio. Initially he didn't hear about the collapse, but out in the street he must have heard about the collapse: He knew it was collapsed. I didn't know the building even collapsed at this point. Looking back now, the sound, the noise, everything, it's the only thing that could have happened, but still

not realizing. I'm thinking it's this plane crash.

He sits me down. I'm in the ambulance now. I start to realize about our other guys. I said no no, I'm all right. I want to go back. He made me sit down again. He said you are done. You are not going back. I kind of had tears in my eyes. I said we got to get Louie. He goes we are going back together. He goes sit down, you got to get treated and get out of here.

I'm looking at and him and he goes Murf, the tower just fell down and you are alive. You got to get out of here. I remember looking at him like the tower fell down. He goes the tower is down, it's gone. I was stunned. A, I was stunned because I thought we were in the tower that collapsed, so that was even more stunning and B, I just couldn't believe it.

He and the other guy left the two of us there and said they were going to go back to find Louie, our other guy, so the EMT at that point now started treating me and the other guy Steve. Gave us both oxygen, gave me a neck collar. He said listen I want to get you out of here but this street, it's blocked, you know, there was nothing moving. We must have been on the scene, because I remember the oxygen actually ran out. I would say we were a good 15 minutes, maybe

20 minutes.

We started to move. I believe we were going west on Vesey Street, kind of towards the Battery Park City area. So all of a sudden the ambulance, the EMT, it's just him and the two of us in the back, he jams on the brakes and the ambulance stops short. He wasn't going fast. He was only going a couple of miles an hour. He said guys, we got to get out of here, just get out of this ambulance. He runs to the back, pops open the doors and I'm looking around like what's going on.

The other guy I was with had kind of come a little more to now and he just grabbed me and he said we got to get out of here. As we jump out the back the other tower is starting to fall, the north tower now. At this point, it's very hazy in the sky from all the smoke, but you could still make out from our vantage point the lower portion of the north tower. You can't see really high up. So that whole thing starts collapsing again.

We ran. I didn't see the ambulance driver again, but the two of us ran west down Vesey Street and a lot of people I think went to the left. I saw other people in the street, some people ended up going left,

which I think I found out they ended up going on boats to Jersey or something. We went north. Ripped off my neck collar. We were running. I thought we were actually going to end up in the water because we were heading towards Battery Park. There is kind of like an esplanade right on the water.

We ended up over there and at this point we kind of -- the buildings were kind of buffering everything that was coming around us, so we were out of the main cloud and we just started walking. I'm like what's going on, what's going on. He goes I don't know, we just got to get out of here. We ended up coming out north of Chambers Street, which is Stuyvesant High School. There was another bridge across the highway. We came out north of there. I remember lying down, the last thing I did there was lie down like in the middle of West Street there.

At that point there were tons of ambulances and there were people staggering all over and they ended up treating us there. So that was essentially where I left. Well, I didn't leave the scene yet. It took probably about another half an hour before we finally ended up in an ambulance that got us to Saint Vincents, but up until that point that's kind of - from

the response to where both towers were down.

I would say that's pretty much the story.

Q. Okay, just to get it straight, all that time you thought you were in the north tower, but you were - you thought you were in the south tower but you were in the north tower?

A. Correct, yes.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: If you have nothing else to add, thanks for your help and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110239

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD CASEY

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 5th of December, 2001. The time is 3:59 p.m. I am Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion conducting an interview with Firefighter Second Grade Casey from Ladder 122 in regard to the events that took place on September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell me in your own words what happened at the World Trade Center fire.

A. We received the alarm about a quarter to 9. We responded to the tunnel with 132, 105, 101 and 131. 101 might have made -- I think 131. We got stuck in the tunnel for ten minutes. There was a car with two firefighters. They cleared out the left lane, and we finally made it through the tunnel.

We were last in line because we were getting into the tunnel via the service lane, and 105 and 132 were closer in, closer to the tunnel portals than we were, because we were in the service lane. So we ended up behind them. 105 took the front of the north tower. We went with 132 and I believe 131 or 101, I'm not sure.

We had to pull the rig out. We had spots in front of the rig where there were a lot of bodies and debris in front of us, body parts. We were in front of the north tower where the staging area was.

We positioned the rig up around -- passed the north tower at Vesey Street and we proceeded to walk towards the north tower at the staging area, which is in front of the north tower. There were two garages directly across the street from the north tower.

The incident commander and Ganci, Feehan was standing there too, divided up the trucks and the engines, engines on one side of the garage, trucks on the other side. We couldn't go through the front of the north tower because there were too many bodies on the ground.

So he wanted us to go to the south tower, all the truck companies that were in that garage bay front area, about five truck companies. We grabbed extra bottles, proceeded to the overpass that is next to the Marriott, I believe, on West Street, and we had to go underneath the overpass to avoid debris falling

from the south tower and bodies. People were jumping.

We made it across there in time to get into the building. 132, 105 and 101 I saw. When we were in the lobby, I saw them. We were standing fast in the Marriott lobby. Close to the doors where the elevators were in the south tower was a doorway that leads into the lobby.

That was the last known positions I know that I saw them, those companies I mentioned that were next to us. I spoke to Vinny Brunton on the Brooklyn Battery's Brooklyn side. We thought we were going to be there all day. They were giving us water. Guys were cooling off. We knew we were going up. We didn't know if we could take any elevators at that point. Later on we found out we were going to go up and walked up.

We got the order to move, to go ahead and go forward. We started putting our gear on. Other companies moved up ahead of us maybe 20 feet, 25 feet ahead of us. There was a short distance between us, and 131 was behind us, waiting on us to move. We were just moving up in

the line going in. I believe 24 Truck was behind 131. So it was us, 131 and 24 Truck. In front of us was 132, 105 and 101.

We put our gear on, started going moving forward, and that's when we heard the rumbling. Somebody screamed, "The building's coming down." I had one shoulder strap on, I dropped my mask and I turned around and made it to -- I tried to run towards the restaurant to get out.

I didn't get any more than one step and everything just turned black, and I got pulled into a corner in there that was still standing. My helmet came off. I had a concussion, I believe. That was it. At that point I didn't think I was going to make it out alive. I thought that was it.

I made noise at the door. I banged on the door really loud before guys came to me. One guy from 24 Truck was bleeding really bad. He had no face piece on his regulator. I said, "Let's get this door open." I put my light on and I started banging and making a lot of noise. Other guys came and started lifting up the door.

I heard a guy from my company screaming, "I've got the way out. It's over here." I followed his voice with two other firemen. I followed his voice.

That's pretty much what I remember as far as locations and locations of the companies that I saw that were operating.

Q. Which tower were you operating in?

A. South tower.

Q. South tower.

From there where did you go? Did you go to EMS?

A. I came out. I came out of the crater. The street was gone, the restaurant and everything was gone. I saw Koyles and Vitiello. They were alive. I saw them and then I turned around and I couldn't see them. Walker had come out. I turned around and Koyles was gone. I don't know where he went.

I told Vitiello, I said, "Follow me," because he's a proby. Then I turned around and he was gone. He walked another way. I walked up -- by the overpass was a fire truck there. There was a fireman crushed. There was another guy who

was screaming, going crazy. I walked another 50 feet and there was another guy that was dead. There were bodies everywhere.

I walked another like 50 feet. I was limping. I hurt my knee, my back. My eyes were closing. I couldn't see. I bumped into a guy on the floor. I helped him. He was hurting. He was injured bad. I started walking with him. Another fireman came over and helped me.

We just kept walking, and we ended up at the water marina. A boat came over, and they pretty much threw us on the boat. They said, "You guys are banged up. Get on the boat." And that was it.

Q. Okay, Jerry, thanks for the interview.

CHIEF BURNS: It's 4:06 p.m. This is the end of the interview.

File No. 9110240

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN PICARELLO

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 6th at approximately 1320 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes from the safety command. I'm here to interview --

FIREFIGHTER PICARELLO: John Picarello, 40 Battalion.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can start me off with the response. I guess it was you and Chief Henry.

A. Right. We responded from quarters with some units, went down toward Fourth Avenue. Our original assignment was to a staging area on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. We reached somewhere around the tunnel when the second plane hit. The second plane hadn't hit yet. So it was right about that time the second plane hit.

The tunnel was a mess. They were trying to clear it for the rest of the emergency vehicles and everybody else and their mother trying to get out of the city.

I went through the tunnel, made a right out of the tunnel onto West Street and went up as

far as I could. I dropped off Chief Henry and his equipment. Then I backed up to get the vehicle out of the middle of the street and parked it by West and Rector on West Street just short of Rector Street.

Q. Here's a map. That may help you a little bit.

A. Okay. That's where I parked, by Rector Street.

So I got out and suited up and told Chief Henry I'd meet up with him.

After parking it, I walked along West Street up to about Liberty, just a little past I guess it's the south bridge, the one that's by Liberty. I was there for a few minutes, just like everybody else, just looking up at the two gaping holes, looking at the towers, debris falling.

I remember in particular my attention was on the north tower, just watching jumpers and people falling. I don't know much about the south tower, the huge hole. My attention I just know was mostly toward the north tower.

After a few minutes walking underneath

that south bridge, just because of the debris that was coming down, I made my way into the lobby of the hotel through the corner. There's a bar and grill or something there.

Q. Tall Ships?

A. I don't remember the name of it. I do remember that's where I entered. There was some EMS workers taking people out, swapping helmets with people so they can get across the street. I went through there, and walking through there you can go through a double doorway into the lobby.

So I got into the lobby of the hotel. There were some other guys there, the Fire Department, police, EMS. I always said there had to be about a hundred people. That's what I said, in my estimation. There were a lot of people there.

I walked through the lobby and got to about, I'd say, maybe halfway through to the center of it, met up with Chief Henry. There was another chief there. I wasn't sure exactly if he was a deputy or acting deputy. I wasn't sure. He was giving out assignments.

So it was me and Chief Henry. There

were two other guys to my left, and there was Chief Stack on my right. I just remember looking up and seeing Safety Battalion. I never met him before. That was the first time I met him. So there was a group of us.

Our assignment was either the 70th or the 75th floor of the north tower. They gave us some units that Chief Henry had, so I didn't have them, and said some of them already started up and just meet up with them and go as far as you could.

I'd say we were there just maybe a couple of minutes. We took a couple of steps --

(Interruption.)

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. We're continuing with the tape. We stopped it momentarily to answer the phone.

Q. John, you said you're in the lobby now. You saw Chief Stack with Chief Henry, and you were assigned to go to the 75th floor. Some of the units had already started up. You go?

A. Yeah. We go meet up with them.

So we were there a few minutes, and we started to walk, make our way through the lobby

to the other side. I'd say we got maybe ten steps. We didn't go very far. I heard sort of like a rumbling sound. We stopped, looked at each other, and took off.

We just took off away from the doors. Instead of running out, we ran to our right, which would be toward the walls. It just happened really quick. I just remember running. Stack was in front of me. Henry went to my left with the other guys.

In about a second or two, you just heard like a ba-ba-ba-boom, and everything just came down and everything was pitch-black. I landed on top of Stack, and we were both in the corner by the wall. Everything was just quiet, pitch-black, quiet I guess for a few seconds or so, I would imagine.

We got up. Stack had gotten up. He didn't have his helmet. He looked like he was trying to get out of his turnout. He got out of his turnout. He asked me to give him a hand with it. He pulled on it, pulled out his flashlight, and it was half under the wall. So the wall we were against probably shifted. His turnout was

under the wall, so we just left it.

Then we started hearing some guys calling. Chief Henry was trying to call outside on the handy talky. Nobody was responding. It was almost like it was dead. You could hear nothing on the handy talkies, but you could hear some muffled sounds, both guys calling for units and some guys calling for help.

About three or four feet behind me, when I stood up and Stack stood up, from ceiling to floor was all collapsed down, so we were cut off from the rest of the lobby. I couldn't see too far in front of us, but I could see debris all over the place.

Immediately to our right was the wall that we were against. I don't know, it looked like a coat check. That's the best I can make out of it. In there I could see debris probably shoulder high, and I could see the wall was open on the other side of that. You could see that it was collapsed.

Right to my right also there was a guy yelling for help. I found out later -- I don't know if he was an officer or what, but I do know

that he made it out. But he was buried. It looked like he was in a wall. I don't know if it was in a hallway, but it looked like he was in a wall.

So there were a few of us, I'd say three or four of us, trying to dig him out, throwing stuff, chairs and everything, I would say maybe 15 minutes. It seemed longer, but it was probably about 15 minutes digging him out. He came out. He was able to walk.

Q. Firefighter?

A. He was a firefighter.

Q. You don't have any idea who he was?

A. No. The group I was with right there, I knew nobody.

Q. You had lost Larry? You had separated from Larry at this point?

A. No, Larry was with me the whole time.

Q. Okay. So the other group, you only knew Larry?

A. Yeah. It was like we were about two groups. After the collapse, I'd say it was probably maybe 12 to possibly 15 people. There was about 12 of us. But with that there were

also some hotel employees that were with us. It wasn't only members.

Q. Of the 12 or 15 members besides Larry, did you know anybody else that was there with you?

A. No.

Q. Chief Henry wasn't with you at this point?

A. Chief Henry was with us, yeah. He was --

Q. Part of the group. So besides Larry, Stack and Chief Henry --

A. No, I didn't know anybody else.

Q. -- you didn't know anybody else?

A. No. I did know there was another battalion chief there.

Q. Big tall guy with gray hair?

A. I don't know if he had gray hair. Everybody had gray hair.

Q. I know. O'Flaherty?

A. That's what I found out. His arm was messed up. That's what I remember. I remember his arm -- he put his hand in the pocket of his turnout and he just couldn't use it. He was

there.

Q. Chief Downey? Do you know Chief Downey?

A. I don't know Chief Downey, no.

I remember after a few minutes digging this guy out, Henry and one group started ahead of us. We felt like a cool breeze in our face, so we decided just follow that. They went on ahead. So we were a little bit ways behind them after we got this guy out.

We started to walk. We came down to I guess it was a corner, and there were three doors on the left. One was a stairway that went downstairs. That was pitch-black. We didn't think that was a good option. There was a stairway from the stairs next one.

The next one opened into a corridor that I thought looked like a service entrance, because it was cinder block, concrete. Then after that there were double doors with an exit sign. But we elected just to stay with that second door because when you opened it up we could see light all the way down at the end of the hall. So we elected to go down there.

At that point I don't know exactly how many were with us, but I do know there were some hotel employees. There was a big heavy guy. His leg looked a little mangled.

Q. A hotel employee?

A. A hotel employee.

Stack was helping him. Another one of the guys was helping him. We were just sort of helping him along down that hallway.

Q. In reference point, walking north towards tower one, do you think?

A. Okay, the best I can tell is when we got out, if I could say standing in that lobby right where we were after the collapse, if to my left was West Street, let's just say, then it was sort of in that direction. It was north, it would be, towards West Street but a little towards north. It was at an angle.

The hallway that we went down was on our left, but it did open up onto West Street. We came to the end of it. There was an opening. I don't know if it was a knee wall or originally it was a window. I have no idea. But it did open up onto West Street. You could see out onto

West Street, nothing but rubble everywhere.

I remember looking out. I didn't think I was on West Street at first, because I thought there was a building on my left, a big slant, looked like it was going to come down. That looked like it might have been those big pieces that came down and stuck in West Street.

Chief Ganci was out there. So I saw him. There were some other members across the street, and at that point Ganci was waving guys out, telling them to get out. So some of the guys went over -- it was about four feet high. They went over that, went out across West Street onto the other side.

I remember to my left I saw two members coming toward the building and actually going in. One guy I don't know. The second one I do remember from 10 Truck was Georgie Bachman. Georgie Bachman was going in. It almost looked like a bay or something. I'm not sure. I remember him going in.

So I stuck my head back in and just wanted to go over, just head out. I was just waiting for a lull in the debris; to then run

across.

At that point there were two or three guys who went to our right. If you're facing that opening on West Street, to my right there was another little hallway that went out. There was a door at the end of that and a set of stairs that also went downstairs.

The guys tried to open that door. It opened about maybe six inches, and you could see there was a ton of debris behind it. They couldn't get it open. They were going to look for another way out.

I'm not sure who went down the stairs, but I believe two members went down the stairs. I don't know who they were. They went down those stairs, looking for another way out. That's the point when I got separated from Chief Henry. So I don't know which way he went.

I came back to the area where all of us were. They had found a chair for this guy, big guy. He was sitting down. Now we were just questioning, do we lift him up, get him over the wall, who wants to go next?

At that point Ganci was motioning to

us, "Come on. Let's get out." Stack said that he'll wait for another two guys who were still lagging behind and going to come up. I said, "I'll wait for them." He told me, "No, you go ahead and go."

So I went over the wall, and Ganci called me to him. He had told me that they had just moved the command post. He said they're probably not set up yet, but it's up toward Vesey Street.

He wanted me to go to the command post. He said he wants four trucks if they've got them, if there's a squad and a rescue available. He said just bring them back here as soon as possible. He just told me, go ahead, go.

That's when I left the building, left Ganci. I started walking north on West Street. I remember getting under the north bridge. I stopped for a few seconds just to catch my breath. I don't know how long I was there, probably about 30 seconds, I guess. I started to walk again. I don't know how far I walked, just a little ways, and started to hear that rumbling sound again.

I looked up, and the first thing I saw was the aerial on the top of the tower just rocking one way and rocking the other way, and all of a sudden there it goes. So I took off.

I remember running diagonally. I ran across Vesey diagonally to the other side of West Street. I do remember making it across Vesey. The next thing I know, I could feel pressure behind me. I could feel all sorts of stuff. You could feel it coming.

I do remember out of the corner of my eye things started looking grayish and dark. There was a truck there. A lot of vehicles were parked. There was a truck there. At that point I just dove behind the truck --

Q. Apparatus?

A. No, it wasn't apparatus. It was a plain truck. I don't even remember if it was either a van or a pickup. I'm not sure which. I saw the front of the truck.

I dove behind the truck. Just as I hit the floor, it was like this black just blew past me. It was like a hurricane. It just blew past. You could hear stuff breaking and everything. I

just covered up.

When that stopped, I just remember opening my eyes and it was pitch-black. I couldn't see anything. I do remember it was just silence. You heard nothing, no radio transmissions, not even a call for help for a second or two. Everything was quiet. I didn't know, did I get buried or something, whatever. I took a breath. It felt like somebody threw a handful of sawdust in my mouth. The whole thing, vomiting and everything else.

At that point when it cleared, the first transmission I heard was Chief Henry calling me. So I acknowledged him and told him that I made it out, I was okay. He said he made it out. He was a little bit pinned under stuff, but he said, "I can get out of it." Nothing he felt was serious. So I told him "meet up with you later," because he wasn't sure where he was.

So at that point I was able to make it to my feet. I remember turning around looking toward where the buildings were. I don't have to tell you what it looked like. It was just a mess. The thing that struck me was just looking

at the north bridge. I was just there. It was just crushed to the ground, rubble all over the place.

The first person I actually saw was actually Father John Delendick. He had told me about Father Judge.

I made it to an ambulance, got taken care of a little bit, and just went back to see whatever it is that I could do. So I actually didn't leave the scene until about 12:30, 1:00. I went to Roosevelt Hospital and came back to the scene.

Q. So the last place you saw Larry Stack --

A. The last place I saw Larry --

Q. -- would be east of West Street inside some part of the building?

A. Yeah, I don't know what part of the building, where that is. This really doesn't help me at all. I went back on Monday the 15th and just looked at the hotel. I couldn't make heads or tails of where we came out.

Q. But from your description, I'm guessing you were either at the very north end of the

hotel or somehow had gotten into tower one.

A. Something like that. Somebody told me that we came out in the north tower, but then again I can't --

Q. No, I understand. The general area.

A. That would be accurate, because I do remember when I started to walk, when I left Ganci and went north -- I didn't walk very far at all and I was under that north bridge.

Stack, the last time I saw him was when I went over that little wall or out the window, whatever that thing was. He was standing there with two or three other members and some hotel personnel and one of the staff guys, the heavyset guy. He couldn't walk. His leg was really messed up.

Q. Brian went out over the wall too, I think, prior to you getting back. Brian and Henry went over that wall when you went left to go see the other firefighters or something by the stairwell, you said, that went down?

A. Right.

Q. When you got separated from Henry.

A. I got separated just prior to reaching

that big opening. He had told me he was going to down the stairway. I do remember he had somebody there with a little flashlight or something. It wasn't even ours. I think one of the hotel employees had it. So that I remember.

But I had stopped at that point and turned around with Stack. There was a number of others. We just stopped, and we were just helping lead these people out. So Henry went down the stairs with the other group. That was the first group. We were sort of behind after we helped this guy out.

Q. You went down the same staircase, though?

A. No. It was the same staircase that was that first door. We didn't go down there. We passed that. We went through the second door, which was the long hallway and went through the opening.

Q. Brian talked about going over a wall with Henry.

A. So that might be, then, that second stairway, because there was another one -- you reached the end of the hall, there's the opening,

and then to the right there's a stairway. I don't know where that goes.

Q. He explains it almost like you did. In fact, they had to put a chair in front of the wall so Eddie could step on the chair and get out.

A. Right. He was ahead of us, because there was a chair there by the opening. That's the chair we used for this big heavy guy.

Q. That was probably the chair that they used to step on to help everybody, Brian with his broken arm or his broken shoulder. They couldn't get over this wall; it was just high enough. Eddie probably couldn't get over. So they knew they had this chair there to step on and get over from our talk with Ladder 9.

A. Yeah.

Q. So this chair was there when you --

A. It was already there by the opening.

Q. So that was probably the chair they used to go through the opening.

A. Right.

Q. That's the last time you saw Larry and the heavyset --

A. Yeah, the last time was right by that opening. That was it. That's the last time I saw him. That's the last place I saw Ganci.

Q. Did you see Commissioner Feehan up there also?

A. No, I didn't see him.

Q. You don't know what Ray Downey looks like to know if you saw him at all?

A. No.

Some of the faces -- after the collapse, it was so dark. Even if I did, I didn't know if they were with me or not.

Q. Right, exactly.

A. That's basically it.

Q. Thank you, John.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is now 1547.

File No. 9110241

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF STEVE GRABHER

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1330. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, New York City Fire Department. I'm here to interview --

BATTALION CHIEF STEVE GRABHER: Battalion Chief Steve Grabher.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Steve, in your own words, could you just take me through your day, responding out there and what transpired?

A. I responded with Engine 220 from quarters. I think we were assigned on the fifth alarm. I think it was after the second plane hit. We could hear it hit at quarters from where we were. So on the way, we heard Chief Cross say on the Department radio that the Brooklyn Bridge was open. So we headed right there and we headed right across the Brooklyn Bridge. I think it was the Brooklyn Bridge. What is the one right there on Flatbush?

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Manhattan. Brooklyn is over on Adams Street. Doesn't matter. You took the Manhattan.

A. I took the bridge Chief Cross said. Went across and came down. We ended up on the west side on West Street. We pulled down as far as we could, I guess somewhere up here, probably up here someplace, pretty far away, because a lot of rigs were parked there.

Q. Were you near the pedestrian overpass, that white pedestrian overpass?

A. This place?

Q. No the one that goes to the Stuyvesant High School.

A. I think we were closer than that. I'm not sure. Got out of the rig. I gave a 10-84, I got the guys together at that point and told them that we have to stick together because the rescue companies are going to be heavily engaged and that we are just going to go down there, walk up the stairs and put the fire out. We went down West Street, we were on the east side of West Street, up here, and as we got closer I told a -- a lot of people started to jump off the towers at that time, the north tower, and I was telling the guys keep your eyes out, keep your eyes up so you don't get hit by people.

Actually on the way while we were going,

right before I got out of the rig, the dispatcher told all the Brooklyn units to switch over to channel 3. They would be going to work in the south tower. So I put it on channel 3. I told the guys switch over to channel 3. He also said that the command post was on West and Liberty. I took out the Hagstrom. I saw exactly where West and Liberty was. It was a map just like this. I knew I had to go down to here. We were on the closest side of the building. When I saw the smoke in the north towers, I was kind of glad that we were going to go to the south tower, because the north tower was roaring. There was no way that was getting put out. The south tower I thought we were going to go put out.

We came right down West Street, down here. We couldn't get too close, because by the time we got near 2 World Trade Center people were jumping off the roof like crazy. Landing near the hotel and the street was littered with body parts. I don't know if it was from the plane or what. But there was just body parts all over the place. Chunks of meat. I saw an airplane tire. I walked past an airplane tire. What looked like an airplane tire. Again we were looking up the whole time.

The thing was we were walking past a lot of rigs as we went down West. I didn't see anybody on the street. There was one cop somewhere around this pedestrian bridge. A lot of cars were on fire. A van was roaring on fire right here. Right over here.

I didn't see anybody. I stood on the corner of West and Liberty and there was nobody to be seen. There is not a building here, I don't think, right?

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: There was a church there at one time.

BATTALION CHIEF STEVE GRABHER: But not when we were there?

Q. Were you there before or after the collapse?

A. I was there before the collapse.

Q. That church was there, St. Nicholas Greek Church.

A. Really?

Q. Had a parking lot all around it.

A. Geez, that confuses me. We walked right up to the corner here of West and Liberty. We couldn't -- I was looking for the command post.

Q. It was a very small building, one or two stories?

A. It was small, yes.

Q. It was facing -- the entrance was on Cedar Street. It was right here the building.

A. Must be way over on this side. Was 90 West the building that had all the scaffolding on it?

Q. Yes.

A. There was nobody around. It was completely desolate. I couldn't find the command post. I told my guys look for the command post. There was nobody around. It was completely desolate, except for like I said, body parts and burning cars and the people who were jumping off the 2 World Trade Center had picked up tremendously. I mean it was, first of all pieces of building and a lot of pieces of building, a lot of glass coming down.

Like I said, a lot of bodies were coming down. They were coming away from the building because they were coming from such a great height. So we took a wide turn here. Finally, I saw a company in front of 90 West, right in front of here under the scaffold. I think it was 205. There was a Lieutenant there. I went up to him and said come on, let's go. We got to get into the lobby. I was thinking that the command post must be in the lobby of 2 World Trade Center, because where I was a Lieutenant -- where I was a

Lieutenant in Long Island City we had one high rise and whenever we had anything there the lobby command post was right in the lobby of the place.

But these guys had a look on their face, like they wanted nothing to do with this. It turns out they had seen, they had helped with Danny Suhr. I don't know if they conveyed that to me then or later. They had seen the first fireman get hit. He said we are not going -- we can't make it across the street, whatever you call this, the promenade, to the building. When I took a second look, I realized that it wasn't going to happen. We had our backs right to 90 West and we were looking right across the street at the Trade Center.

I'm thinking we got to get into the World Trade Center, because obviously that's where the command post must be. There is a door behind us and a maintenance guy opens the door and I thought to ask him is there a subway here that comes up underneath the tower. I was thinking we could get in the entrance like half a block away and come right up the platform into the tower. He said yes, it's down this way.

Actually, before that happened, when I was standing in front of 90 West, I had the handy talky on channel 3 and really the only -- I heard a couple of

handy talky messages. I heard, I thought it was Ladder 4, the roof man from Ladder 4 give a Mayday.

He said he has fallen 2 or 3 stories. I asked the guys in 220 a couple of weeks later if anybody heard anything from Ladder 4 and they said no. They thought they heard something from Rescue 4. I thought it was Ladder 4. I thought he said he is the roof man from Ladder 4. He gave a Mayday. He was as calm as a cucumber and it was right when I was standing in front of 90, right when I first got there to 90 West and I was looking up, I heard the Mayday come over, he said it two or three times.

He said, Firefighter so and so, I have fallen two or three stories. I'm trapped, come get me, help me, come get me. I heard someone give a reply, okay brother, we are coming to get you. Just give us your location. He was saying I don't know where I am. I have fallen 2 or 3 stories. This was all happening very quickly.

I heard a Battalion Chief, it might have been the 8th Battalion, but I'm not positive. I'm really not positive on that, say something about -- I heard him say something. I heard either the squad or the Rescue -- somebody said we are coming to get you

brother, just give us your location, hold on. He gave a couple more Maydays. And then he said I'm losing consciousness, hurry up, come get me. This whole thing probably took about 15 seconds, if that.

With that, I heard someone say collapse. This wasn't the building collapsing yet. I heard someone say there has been a collapse. I heard a Battalion Chief -- might have been a Battalion Chief -- say everybody out, everybody out, back out. I don't know if it was back it out of the floor. I took it as everybody out of the building. I took it as this guy falling two or three stories, that there had been some type of internal collapse on the floors. This was in the south tower.

As all this is transpiring, it's probably happening while I'm talking to this building guy. He takes me into 90 West, we go about 15 feet, make a left turn. He said he was going to take me to the subway. We make a right turn and end up right here. I think there was another street here. Which is the big German building? Maybe a German bank. Is this Bankers Trust with the pillars on it? This might be it. Is this two buildings or one building?

Q. (inaudible) connect the building, this is

where the fire house is. That's where 10 and 10 is.

A. Well, we go through - 90 West is the one with the scaffold. We go in about 30 feet and come out this way.

Q. Out to Washington.

A. As we come out here, I take a quick look to my left and I thought I saw 2 firemen somewhere over here. I should not say firemen. Two members of the Fire Department, I don't know if they were firemen or not. I thought I saw. There really weren't many people around and everything was happening very quickly.

With that, I told the guys before we left that place that we have to get to the corner of the building. At that point I wanted to approach the building from a diagonal here because that would be the safest way to come, so we weren't exposed to the two faces of the building with the stuff falling. I go this way.

Just as I go out of the building, one of my guys says hey Captain, the building is coming down. I looked over my shoulder and you could see the whole top of the south tower leaning towards us. It looked like it was coming over. You could see the windows pop out

just like in the picture, looked like a movie. I saw one floor of windows pop out, like poof, poof. I saw one and a half floors pop out. It looked almost like an explosion. The whole top was teetering, and I really thought just the top of the building was falling off. I didn't think there was any way we were going to make it out because just being this close, it looked like it's leaning right on top of us.

So we ran. It wasn't that far. I guess it was right to here and just as we turned down Albany, the whole building -- we got behind some pillars right here. You could see over the top of the building from where we were standing. You could see coming over the building, the whole building was coming on top of us this other building. Just instantaneously, this was all in a fraction of a second, a big dust cloud come down this block and this block, just like whoo, like that, this coming -- the building coming over the top of this. That's what it looked like, it was a dust cloud. It looked to me like the building was coming down. Then pitch black.

That was it. We thought we were trapped there. We got into this building over here, until the dust cloud settled. Keep going?

Q. Sure, tell me the whole story.

A. After that, actually we were in this building and I was missing a guy. Turns out when we turned down here he decided go to this side of the street and I thought I lost him. So I told the guys to stay there. I'm going out trying to find this guy and there is no answer. I go back inside, tell the guys to count each other again. Because we were with 205 too. Some of the guys were with us from 205. I don't know if all of them were.

Went back out. Couldn't find him. Finally I think we got everybody together. We headed out. At this time I thought just the top of the building fell down. I really wasn't sure that the whole tower was going to come down.

We headed over here to Albany. We started going back this way, then the second tower came down. We headed into I think a building. I don't even know where we headed into at that point. I have no idea. We went down to another building. A big black dust cloud again. That time I had all my guys with me. Actually, you know what, I think we were in this building.

We went in here after the first one because

we couldn't see too well, because of all the fiberglass and stuff, we were trying to get the stuff out of our eyes. We started evacuating this building. This building, I think it was this one. A bunch of secretaries coming down, I remember that. But I remember telling the security guard, has this building been evacuated yet? This was before the first tower -- the second -- tower one collapsed, in between. Told him you got to evacuate. You should evacuate. If anybody is left here you better get them out, have them head south, so they were evacuated.

We were cleaning stuff out of our eyes. Just as we left that building, the second one came down and we ran to another building. Again it was pitch black. You couldn't see anything. You had to wait I don't know even know how long. Five minutes, ten minutes, before we got came out. We headed down. When we got out, we headed back down this way. Whatever building we were in. Down this way. We saw the wreckage and we thought - I thought that's the top of the building. We have to go find the main part of the building. It turns out I was looking at the Vista, what was left of the Vista, and, of course, the tower on the street.

So, what's next?

By this time - by the time we got all over to this debris pile over here, there were - really nobody was looking into the pile. You still couldn't see much of the pile. It was all covered. It was all dust and we had taken - most of us could hardly even see ourselves. We could barely keep our eyes open from the fiberglass or whatever it was, the asbestos.

Q. Concrete?

A. Concrete, everything. We were exhausted. I guess it had been about 45 minutes and we spent most of the time running around. I think we came under here. We came over here and we were starting to run into firemen that had come all back through here.

Which building is this? No, not this one. This one. Gateway Plaza, yes, okay.

Q. That's an apartment house. That was the one that was on fire?

A. Yes, that's the one that we put out.

Q. Did you?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't worry about it.

A. Anyway, we come back over here. I remember I ran into an EMS doctor, who said he set up a triage center here and then I got on the radio and I was

calling command. Trying to call somebody to tell them that we had the triage center set up over here with a doctor. But the funny thing was, after the first collapse, I was on channel 3, that was it. I didn't hear one other thing on the handy talky. It's like someone shut them all off.

I don't remember hearing anything on the handy talky until I got over there, until I started calling and I think I went back to channel 1 and I think I got in touch with somebody. Over here on -- I got in touch with some Chief. I said you got an EMS doctor set up over here with a triage center.

We started taking our stuff off by then because we were drained. Before we left the rig, I had the guys load up with everything, because I figured we were going to be there all day. Extra cylinders, search ropes, rabbit tool, all the EMS gear we had, we took everything. We cleaned the rig out completely. We were really like packing. Of course we were dropping stuff for the last 45 minutes. Things were getting dropped off. Two of my guys I didn't realize at the beginning of the tour, they were kind of old fellows, I think -- about 55.

Q. Be careful with that old stuff.

A. They were -- my proby was a spring chicken but the rest of these guys, these guys had basically had it by this time.

Q. Especially with some time on the job.

A. Very senior members, very experienced fellows. They were. One guy was a marine, I remember, and he wasn't going to say die, but this guy was, his eyes were popping out of his head. He had had it. He is carrying all the crap around.

We get over here and there seems to be -- actually, when we got over here, there was an Engine pump parked over here. It wasn't damaged. That's right, that's right.

They tell us that all the water mains in the area are out. You got to get water up to us. They got one rig parked here but their ECC is gone, there's nobody. I had an extra, I had my chauffeur, I told him this is your position. You take over this rig. I think he stayed there until 2:00 in the morning working that rig. That was right over here. I left him there. I took the rest of the guys away.

That's what we were doing. We were going to get water. As we went down the street there were other guys checking hydrants. There was nothing. Someone

said there is a fire boat over here. We went up to the fire boat. It was that little teeny one that was parked over here, over here?

Q. That's a building.

A. That's a building? Where's the harbor?

Q. Right back there somewhere.

A. Out back.

Q. Off Albany?

A. You know what, it was in here, it was in here. We went down this way. Somebody said there is a fire boat. I go there is a fire boat. I said it's a little teeny fire boat that wasn't going to do anything.

So we work our way up this way. I think we went through the lobby here. No, actually, I told the guys to wait here at the fire boat, thinking that we could stretch a line through here. I went into this building. Is this the big glass atrium?

Q. That's what it is.

A. I went into here, right up to the end and I could see all the debris had piled right up up to there. So I could see we weren't going to take a hose through there. So we went back and got what was left of my guys that were still -- listened to me and stayed

there. We went up this way. I ran into a Chief that said they have a manifold here. They need to get a line.

So we commandeered an ambulance here on Vesey. We drove it down this way. And there was one of the big marine boats set up right here with the big hose. So by this time we had the construction workers helping us and I had my proby driving the ambulance.

We hooked it on the back, the hose on the back and we drove it all the way down here where they had the big manifold set up. It looked look like they were setting up a north command post there because there were a bunch of Chiefs at this point.

After we left there, we said let's go back and get the rest. Get our gear, so we came back to here and as we are sitting here, there is smoke coming out of the window, Gateway Plaza, light smoke and there is a lot of firemen in the street. Probably the recall guys or guys that are like us, that had just been scattered. Nobody wants to look up at it. Everybody is kind of like, you know, I was doing the same thing.

We are looking up. It was light smoke. It was black but it was light. We are sitting there drinking some water and everybody is kind of licking

their wounds. Then it got blacker. It got blacker. Next thing you know there is fire blowing out the windows. I said come on. We can take care of this and then some of the guys in the street, I don't know if they were recall guys or whatever, but they were like, hey Cap, got no water, we got no rigs that can pump.

There was a Lieutenant there from 201. I think he had come and I was talking to him but I said we can put this out. If we don't put it out now it's just going to get worse. So I had my proby grab two cans and we grabbed the -- I told what's his name, the guy's name, I thought was big face. He has a nickname. Bullet or biscuit, or something like that.

Q. Lieutenant from 201?

A. Yes. I said listen this is what we will do. I was talking to him. We will grab the Clorox bottle, we will drop it out the floor below, we will pull up two lines of hose. We got 500 gallons of water in the rig here. That's a start, you know. We go up, go up the stairs. I had a couple of my guys with me, not all of them, and the proby, and my nozzle man was with me.

Me and the Lieutenant went into the floor below and pulled the hose up, to the floor below, below the fire. The apartment was right there on the next

floor up. We realized at that point we had a stand pipe. We turned the water on. There was still water in the stand pipe, so we pulled up one length of hose, disconnected it. Might have been two lines. We pulled up two lines, disconnected it, and, of course, give it to the fireman. One guy hooks up on the floor below and the other guy hooks up on the fire floor, which is two feet from the apartment but we had no pressure, so we ended up just putting the nozzle on one length of hose right there, went in and while they were hooking it up, me and the proby went in with the can.

That wasn't doing anything. It was going. The room was roaring. We got the line. My proby went in, not the proby, my nozzle man Dean went in and put the fire out. There was like no pressure on this line whatsoever. We almost had to put it out by draining the hose. By that point we were shot. We were just - I don't know even know what time it was, it was noon or afternoon or 2:00. I have no idea.

But I see my old boss from 14 coming up and they were coming up to do a second primary on the floor above or something like that. A few people had evacuated, but basically the building was empty. I mean everybody ran for their lives.

We went downstairs. Again we just dropped our gear because we were beat by that time. We took 5 there. At one point two of my guys were heading off to the hospital ship or something. They had hurt their backs. There were 3 of them, 2 of them. They were heading south. They got on a golf cart and headed south down somewhere over here. I think there is a walkway here.

Q. There is.

A. Right.

Q. Yes.

A. They headed out this way. I was left with the proby, Dean, the nozzle -- no Dean left too. The nozzle man left. This other proby that was a recall guy, Bob, his name is Bob they call him -- what's his name?

Q. That's the Lieutenant you saw?

A. I think that's Bob.

Q. No, it says Robert. So it's Robert.

A. He has got a nickname, Paul or something like that. Anyway. So most of my guys were gone. I had a proby with me. I also had this kid that had joined me before the fire. I don't know his name. I wrote his name on the riding list too. He was like just out of

the Academy. He had no time on the job. He was wearing the old boots and the old turnout coat. He stayed with me for most of the morning. I don't remember his name.

Then later on he said I'm going to go find my own company. Then we were hanging out on Liberty with a lot of the other firemen right here, just waiting for orders. That's it.

Q. That's it? How did you get back to the house?

A. While I was waiting, I kept having the EMS clean my eyes out. They weren't getting any better. They kept swelling up. It got to the point where I couldn't open them any more. So me and the proby went up and they took us by ambulance to Bellevue, where they were irrigating my eyes for most of the evening and then some health team, Division Corps, somebody took me and him and a whole bunch of firemen dropped us off in different parts of Brooklyn.

That's when 118 got back. Not 118, 122, I guess is the truck. We thought they were killed. They thought we were killed, because they were assigned on the initial alarm.

Q. That's 220?

A. Yes, we all got back at like 11 o'clock at night or something like that. They came back separately, they were getting off sanitation rigs and stuff. They thought we were wiped out and we thought they were wiped out, but it was a very lucky fire house. Nobody was killed. But the handy talky messages when I was standing there, I'm trying to think exactly what it was. I could almost swear it was Ladder 4, Ladder 4 roof.

There was - somebody was insinuating that there had been a structural collapse and this is probably 15 to 30, 15 to 20 seconds before the building came down. I was hearing this. There was some collapse.

Q. It might have been an interior collapse happening prior to the exterior?

A. Yes.

Q. Nobody knew exactly what was going on. But you are saying you are pretty sure it was Ladder 4, the roof man.

A. I'm almost positive it was Ladder 4 roof. I remember him saying his name. This guy was calm as a cucumber. I'm thinking this guy is about to die and he is as calm as a cucumber.

Q. He didn't know it, I don't think.

A. Then he said I'm losing consciousness.

Q. Did you notice the firefighters you saw coming across Liberty Street, was it a Chief or could you tell?

A. It was such a glance. They were pretty far away, because I remember there wasn't much life that I was seeing. There really weren't people around. Especially over there, because I was looking over there for about 15 seconds when I was standing in front of 90 West, looking for someone, where is all these Chiefs, where is everybody. I talked to Mike Dunn, but I must have walked right in front of the command post. I was on the other side of West and we were looking at the building. We weren't looking that way. That was you?

Q. That's where I was, in the command post, staging area, right across the west side of West Street on Liberty.

A. Yes, so we were on the east side, we were looking at the building.

Q. Oh, well, you weren't going to see me up there.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It's approximately 14 hundred hours.

File No. 9110242

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MIKE ZECHEWYTZ

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 5th, 2001. The time is approximately 1820. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER ZECHEWYTZ: Michael Zechewytz, engine 278, firefighter.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This is in regard to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, do me a favor and just tell me in your own words from probably the time you started responding with the company to the events that unfolded for you that day.

A. Well, I remember we were drinking coffee in the kitchen and we saw on the news breaking story on Channel 5 that a plane just hit. I remember I was right by the TV set and I said, "That must have been a drunk pilot." I mean, it was clear outside. So we were like, "Wow, the guy must have had a few last night or something."

So then Roger Jackson and myself went out to the front to see the smoke. If you were in front of the firehouse and you looked over to the right, you saw the smoke. Then he called and he goes, "Zech." That's

my nickname. He goes, "Zech, look," and we saw the other plane going from left to right with its nose down.

So then we ran back in the kitchen, and then maybe 30 seconds later the news said that a bomb went off in the second building. But then they saw in slow motion it was a plane. So that was the plane that we saw go into it. Then the 4 responded, I forget what alarm, maybe third alarm, and then we went on the fifth alarm.

Then we went to the staging area right by the tunnel. 228 went through the tunnel and they couldn't make contact with them for a while. Then there was a collapse. Someone said it might be a collapse on the south side of the tunnel. Then we didn't hear from them and then later on they went through. There must have been a lot of debris in there.

Q. Let me ask you a question before we go any further. Were you there before or after the collapses?

A. We saw the collapse.

Q. You weren't there?

A. We were at the tunnel on the Brooklyn side.

Q. And you saw tower 2 go?

A. We saw tower 1.

Q. That was the second tower to go.

A. All right. No.

Q. The first tower to go was tower 2.

A. Okay. So that's the tower. We saw that from the Brooklyn side of the tunnel. I was right in front of the rig. It was me and Vinny Buonocore right in front of the rig. We were like the first thing out of our mouths after that was, "Wow, we have firemen just died." We saw it come down.

Then whatever Chief was there by the tunnel, they sent us and a couple other companies to the Brooklyn Bridge. Tower 1, then, I guess was still up. People were saying like, you know, it's crazy to give us the assignment to cross.

Then we went over the bridge. The tower was still up. That was tower 1, I guess, that was still up.

Q. The north tower.

A. I guess from that time, when we got over the bridge and where we parked our rig, it went down. But we didn't hear it. We just saw debris everywhere, but we didn't know that tower came down yet.

Q. Do you know who the Chief was that gave you the order to go back?

A. No, I don't know. I remember his face. I mean, I could remember like it was yesterday. No, I don't remember.

Like I said, we parked the rig on I forget exactly what street and we went to the West Side Highway. We were there for a while. Then, I guess, after an hour or two, they sent us to the Milennium Hotel with roll-ups. We went to the fourth floor there, hooked up to a standpipe.

Then another Chief -- I don't want to say the wrong name. I'm not sure exactly who. It might be Jensen, if he was there with us. We went there with a truck company, another engine company. We were there for at least an hour, an hour and 15 minutes, and then they said that someone gave a Mayday in the hallway up the stairwell that the Milennium Hotel might come down. So we just ran out of there. We left our folds right on the stairs. We left the hose on the standpipe and all our stuff.

Q. That's about it?

A. Yes. After that we were pretty much just going from -- we were helping dump trucks, we were doing like little searches, engine searches, moving debris.

Q. You said Roger was with you?

A. No. Vinny Buonocore, McLaughlin, John McLaughlin -- no, Jimmy McLaughlin. I'm sorry. Richie Vetland, Captain Henricksen. The only companies I remember with us at the staging area, I can remember 280 being there because I have a friend that was working that day. 102 truck was there. They walked through the tunnel. I knew a guy from there, Jimmy McCutcheon.

Q. Jimmy McCutcheon?

A. Yes. He actually walked through the tunnel.

Q. I hope he has a brother on the job. There's a Lieutenant in 122.

A. Oh, yeah?

Q. Yes. Somebody said they saw him there, Lieutenant McCutchan. Did you say 280?

A. 280 was with us at the staging area, 102 truck, 114 truck.

Q. 114 got through.

A. Yes, they got through. I don't know how they got through and we didn't.

Q. Because Dennis Oberg was standing next to me when the buildings came down.

A. Yes.

Q. I know 114 got through.

A. Because I remember seeing them. We had pulled up. They went in front of us at the staging area and that was it. We didn't see them anymore. But we saw the tower come down from the tunnel, and then, like I said, the first tower, which is the second tower that went down, we didn't see come down. I saw it up all the way until we got over the bridge.

Q. Very good.

A. That's all. I wish I could help you a little more.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: No, that's fine. This concludes the interview at 1825.

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File No. 9110243

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TROY OWENS

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 5th, 2001. The time is approximately 1705. I am Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command of the N.Y.C. Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER OWENS: Firefighter Troy Owens, Engine 279. That day I was working at Ladder 131.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Troy, if you would, just take me through your day during the event, after the event, where you went and so on and so forth.

A. We responded on the fifth alarm or whatever it was at the time, and we were told to report to the staging area on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. We were standing there when we were watching one building burn. The second plane hit while we were standing there.

At that time we were deployed into Manhattan. We were stuck in the tunnel for a little while. We finally made it through. It was a disaster area, of course. Everything was

crazy. We took a position on the west side of West Street.

Q. If it will help you, here's a map.

A. I know exactly. We had to get right from underneath everything. There was too much shit coming down. We were standing on the other side of West Street. We were watching them jump and all of that there.

Then we received orders to proceed into building two via the World Trade Center Marriott Hotel. That's where we were. When we first arrived there, we didn't have any other specific orders. The lieutenant told us to take a minute, told us to take a breather.

We didn't have specific orders at the time. The first captain or lieutenant said, "Listen, guys, take your gear off. Take a breather, take a minute." What I chose to do is I went to say hello to someone I hadn't seen in a long time --

Q. Would you tell us who it was?

A. Yes. I went to say hello to Lieutenant Gregory McLetchie from Ladder 122. I saw another gentleman from proby school. I don't remember

his name.

Q. Do you know what unit he was with at the time?

A. Lieutenant --

Q. No, the one from proby school.

A. I don't remember what unit he was in.

Also I came back to the company and said, "Lou, I'm going to the bathroom." I went to drink water and wanted to urinate. I didn't want to get stuck up there and have to be thirsty. I went to the bathroom. As soon as I came back, they said, "Troy, we're ready." I saw we had our orders, to proceed to whatever staircase, whatever.

At that time I just had my bunker pants on. I put my bunker coat on. Right after I put my bunker coat on, I went to grab my mask. I noticed one of the guys from the company said, "Look, they're all running."

I heard rumbling. There was a window there. I looked outside. I saw a black quick shadow come to the building. I thought it was another plane hitting. I just heard rumbling, and everything just came down.

I just had to turn -- they said, "Get down, get down." I heard someone say get down, and that's what I did. I dropped. My helmet was buried. I couldn't get it. I had my hand on the strap to my mask. As everything was coming down, I was getting blasted by the dust, the debris. I was getting blown away, tossed around and whatnot.

I turned the mask on, and I tried to open it up and it wouldn't work. So I just stayed there until everything finally came down. I didn't get hit. I didn't get hit with anything, but I was choking on that shit.

So at the time I was like, wow, everything had gone black. I had my big light on. I've got my big flashlight on. After everything eventually came down and I was still alive, at that time I just wanted to know where was the way out.

There was a gentleman; I think he worked in the hotel. Maybe he was a fire safety director or something. I said, "Where was the way out?" He pointed in that direction. I went out towards the way out to look. The ground was

missing in some of the parts of -- in part of the lobby was like a bar area over there somewhere. It kind of went out a little bit.

At that point I said, okay, let me go see what's up with Ladder 131. I went back with 131. The first person I found was Lieutenant Woods. He was okay. He was okay. He was badly shaken up like I was.

The rest of the guys, we all came out. I think there was a door they were forcing to. Eventually we all got out. But I thought everybody was with us. Mattie Castrogiovanni, we didn't know where he was. From what I understand, somebody took him and put him in an ambulance and they took him away because his eyes got blasted pretty bad. We had communication with him at first, but then we lost him. So we didn't know where he was.

When we got out, we kept calling, kept calling. While we were trying to find out where he was, we helped pull this guy out from under an ambulance. I think lieutenant said pair up and help people. I paired up with Keith Kaiser.

We helped get this guy out from under

an ambulance. He was a fireman. I don't know who he was. Hopefully he's all right. The other guys helped this photographer.

What we did is we went across West Street. There was a store over there. I know we all needed to drink something or get the stuff out of our eyes. So we got into the store. The first thing I did was go straight to the back where the sink was. When I went there to cut the water on, they said, "The other building's coming down." The other building came down. All the guys that were there that were outside the deli, they dove in the deli. I dropped behind the counter. That's how we survived the second collapse.

After that the lieutenant said, "Look, we just survived two collapses. Let's get the fuck out of here." So we kind of got away from the area. At that time we -- during the second collapse, we kind of lost what's his name? Craig Gutkes? He got disconnected from us. We were still communicating with him.

So we went south a little bit. He met us there further down. There was another

building there, and I went inside this building to try to wash some of the stuff off my face and go to the bathroom. While I was in the building, I wanted to make a phone call also. While I was on the phone, they said you have to get out of the building because the building is going to blow, there's a gas leak.

At that time everybody in the vicinity, in that immediate vicinity, they made us all get on boats and they took us over to Jersey and that was it. We got on, me, Keith Kaiser and Mark Ruppert. We all got on together. We stayed together the whole time.

They took us to the decon units over by the triages over there. We tried to hook up with the lieutenant and Greg Gutkes was together. We tried to found out where they were. We spent a long time trying to find out where they were. We didn't want to go to any hospital until we knew where they were. Then eventually we found they were all right, because a gentleman from the house, Harry, he was helping us out, Harry (inaudible).

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. Yeah. He was helping us out. We knew everybody was okay. It was just Mattie, we didn't know what the hell was up with Mattie.

Eventually we wound up in the hospital. I forgot the name of the hospital.

Q. New Jersey? It's okay.

A. Actually the hospital was in I think Staten Island.

Q. That's what I'm saying, Staten Island, whatever. St. Vincent's or something like that.

A. I can't remember. They sent me a letter with the pictures that they took of us. They were real nice people. They took real good care of us. They washed out my eyes. My eyes got washed out three times. I still had a hard time. I was still choking on this stuff. My chest was burning and whatnot.

That was the end of it for us that day, for me.

Q. How many guys did you see in the lobby when you were in the lobby? 50? 60? 100? More?

A. There were a lot of guys going in with rollups. We were one of the last companies to go

in the building. I believe we were -- when we first walked in the Marriott World Trade Center Hotel, if I remember correctly, there's a bar that you ran into first.

Q. I think it's called the Tall Ships bar or something like that.

A. Okay. Then right after you get to the bar, then you actually reach the lobby, the hotel lobby. We were like the last ones, because I remember there was this wall.

When I found out the building was dropping, I dove right on this side of this wall. I tried to get close to something. Instead of being out in the open, I was kind of like hugging the wall. The other guys were right on the other side of the wall. There was a bunch of guys in there. The hallway, it was a long hallway, a long lobby.

From what I understand, everything behind that -- if you were behind the revolving doors, it would be curtains. From what I understand, everything behind the revolving doors -- I believe not even that far. I don't know how many people made it out. I don't think

it was too many. There were a lot of guys in the lobby. I can't really tell you a number because I know it was a deep lobby.

Q. What was that lieutenant's name from 122?

A. Lieutenant McLetchie.

Q. McLetchie?

A. Yeah, Lieutenant McLetchie, 122.

Q. So basically you were in the lobby close to the Liberty Street side.

A. Yeah. Actually they found my helmet.

Q. Did they?

A. The front piece only, just the front piece.

Q. You don't know what happened after tower one came down.

A. When tower one came down, we were on the other side --

Q. Yeah, I know. You left your helmet in the lobby of the hotel; right?

A. Yeah.

Q. That's what I'm saying. So we don't know what happened to the lobby after tower one came down.

A. The lobby itself?

Q. Yeah, after all the --

A. I have it up in my locker. The front piece, it's just the front piece of the helmet only, the leather part. It has a tag on it that says deceased.

Q. All right.

A. It said on Liberty Street.

Q. Very good.

A. It had a 9 on it, a 9. My badge number is the only one with Engine 279 on it because 279 is missing so maybe that's why they put "deceased" on it. I was working with 131.

Q. Okay. Sure. That's possible.

A. Mine was the only one from 279 that started with a 9, so it had to be mine.

Q. The guys from 279 didn't do too well.

So except for the lieutenant -- you really don't remember the name of the proby that you saw?

A. A Latin guy. I didn't see his name on the list of deceased. I would like to hear his story.

Q. What about his picture? I'm sure we

have it.

A. I talked to Lieutenant McLetchie. He said that he just grabbed a column and held on. What held him up is he was waiting for one of their men in the bathroom. That held them up. After everything came down, I remember him saying he was trying to cut a lieutenant out, some lieutenant.

Q. I'll get to talk to him.

A. Their tool failed, and they went on to get another one. When they went to get another tool, the other building came down. So that's what he told me. I thought he was missing, actually. I got his name mixed up with someone else. But he's okay. I talked to him on the phone. They were a little further in the building than we were.

Q. I guess that's it. I want to thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is approximately 1725.

Thank you, Troy.

File No. 9110244

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JAMES YAKIMOVICH

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 4, 2001. The time is approximately 1530. I am Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Captain Jim Yakimovich.

Q. Regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Tell me in your own words how this day unfolded for you.

A. I was detailed to the Department of Citywide administrative services, preparing the Lieutenant's promotional exam. At approximately I guess 9, o'clock a little before, Lieutenant Marianne Monahan called me up and said that the World Trade Center had blown up in front of her. I crossed the hall at One Centre Street, the municipal building, the 14th floor, looked out the window and there was fire coming out 2 or 300 windows. Myself and Lieutenant Chris Ginocchio, also doing the test, took the elevator to the lobby and we proceeded to go down Park Row to Broadway and at Broadway and Vesey we headed west, to where we reached Church and Vesey when the second plane impacted.

Then we were -- I didn't see many uniformed personnel on that corner. A lot of civilians observing the first fire burning and when the second impact

happened, everyone went running. A lot of civilian injuries, that's all I really saw was civilians injured. Other ambulances on the scene that were able to respond and remove these victims. A few ESU rigs responded. I assisted a couple of PD with this.

Got back and then I walked north on Church Street to Barclay. Barclay to Washington and at Washington Street I proceeded south to Vesey and that's where I went to OEM, because I figured since I worked there before I could give them a hand. I met Chief Peruggia, who said, see if you can get to the 23rd floor to staff the Office of Emergency Management, being the Fire Department representative.

When I got to the 23rd floor they told me they were evacuating the building and I proceeded to the lobby and from that time I don't recall what happened, but I did get to 10 Engine and 10 Truck. In front of their quarters I met Citywide Tour Commander Chief Cassano. He told me to get some bunker gear and report to the command post, which was on West Street.

I went to 10 Engine and 10 Truck and I spoke to Lieutenant O'Malley and I grabbed a helmet and a bunker coat and I signed it out in the day book and proceeded west on Liberty Street, where I was

approximately at the western end of 2 World Trade Center when 2 World Trade Center collapsed.

I ran and at the first door I saw, which was at the corner of Liberty and West, there was a revolving door into the Marriott Hotel, 3 World Trade Center, Vista International Hotel, whatever it's called, and I went into that lobby and I found a piece of -- some kind of masonry thing in the lobby about a foot and a half square. I jumped behind that, then the windows fell and I got hit with the wind blast, it got dark and the debris then came.

I forget how long it was, it could have been 10 seconds, it could have been 30 seconds, it could have been a minute, I don't know. It stopped. Then there was some murmuring and moving about in this area where I was in and it wound up there were 8 people there with myself. There were 7 civilians and myself. I knew which way it was towards Liberty Street and we proceeded to walk that way. I don't know how many steps I took. I didn't know if I was inside or outside the building. I ran into an apparatus, a pumper and that's when I knew we were outside the building.

I then told the people I was with, "head towards the river, because that's where it's got to be

clear." We proceeded west on Liberty Street past West Street to - there was a marina there and they let us use their bathrooms and I was able to get some of the debris out of my face.

I then came out and it was - it's not listed here but it's behind West Street, there is a way you can walk through, is it 2 World Trade Center? The Merrill Lynch building? It's around that way towards the Winter Garden. I proceeded east on that street underneath the Winter Garden, or right in that general vicinity. Then I came to West Street. I proceeded north on West Street not knowing that the command post was south of West Street on West Street and when I got to the corner of Vesey and West, I turned and saw tower one move a little bit. I proceeded to run as fast as I could north on West Street where I encountered 16 Truck and I jumped underneath the rear wheels of 16 Truck, then the second collapse hit.

At that time, it seemed like there were a lot of firemen around, but I don't recall seeing any one. The only people that I do recall seeing was, I guess his name is Billy Riggs from 44 Engine, that was between the two collapses. He was injured, but he swore that there were other people injured more than

him, and he didn't need a hand. That was right around 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch building. He was on a bench right there.

I'm trying to think of any other guys that I saw. I mentioned I saw Chief Cassano. I saw members of Engine 53, Lieutenant Bob Dougherty, one or two other men, I can't remember who they were, but again they were directing people in the area behind 2 World Financial Center to head north away from the Trade Center collapse, number 2.

After the second collapse, I presumed, like everybody else, that most people in that area were hurt or dead, but it wound up that they were alive. After I got out from underneath the 16 Truck I proceeded north again on West Street to get away from the dust cloud, because I knew that's where it would be clear. I hit Chambers Street, made a right, walked up to Chambers Street to, I guess that would be Park Row again, came around and was headed back towards the site when a lot of Fire Department apparatus were arriving on the scene, and I told them what happened and that was pretty much what happened from the time I got there to the time when the second collapse was over.

I know the actions that I saw. I know I saw

a lot of Fire Department people. Their names I don't know and I don't recall actual faces, but I could see many people in my travels.

Q. So you really don't have any ideas of names or where people were?

A. No. No keen ideas of names. I don't know if that's any help at all, but.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is now approximately 1540.

File No. 9110245

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL HAZEL

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1625 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion of FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Michael Hazel from Engine 224. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, you can start any time you're ready.

A. Okay. That morning I was awaiting relief, believe it or not, and we were watching TV in the kitchen and we saw the news saying that the tower was hit, the first tower was hit.

So we had a couple of guys here. One guy was going off duty. The rest were all working. Another guy just came back from a detail. I said to them, "Don't go anywhere because we're going to be going to the World Trade Center," because we always respond to that box and you could see from the TV that it was a substantial fire and I knew we'd be going.

You couldn't tell at that point it was a jet. I thought originally it was a publicity stunt, especially after that guy with the parachute who got caught in the Statue of Liberty. I figured it was just some guy who was trying to fly between the towers and got lost because it really didn't look like that big of

a hole. So a few minutes later we responded. We were sent a ticket and we responded, but to the Battery Tunnel, to the staging area. We didn't go directly to the Trade Center.

On the way to the Battery Tunnel, we're driving along Columbia Street and I'm sitting across from the proby, and as we're talking and I'm preparing him for the events, what to expect at this job we're going to go to, he just says to me, "Look at this dummy. He's flying underneath the smoke instead of over it." With that I turned to my right and looked at the Twin Towers and I saw the second jet hit. So he started screaming and I just said to him, "We're in big trouble. This is an attack. We're being attacked."

So we thought we were going to get sent right to the Trade Center, but we went to the Battery Tunnel and, obviously, everybody else who was there saw the second plane hit, so no one was sitting in their rig just waiting to go. We all jumped out and ran over to each other and started talking, like this isn't good, we're in trouble here, there's a lot of fire, there's a lot of people, and we couldn't understand why we weren't getting called yet.

A couple of the chauffeurs who got out of

their rigs to mingle turned up their radios, so it was like in stereo. All the rigs just blared, "Anybody at the Battery Tunnel." They started rattling off the companies. "Respond." So we all wished each other luck and we jumped in our rigs and we went through the tunnel. We got stuck in the tunnel for a while, probably a good ten minutes, but it seemed like forever, where it just wasn't moving at all, and we pretty much all got the feeling that it was a setup, that we were meant to get stuck in there.

But we eventually got through the tunnel, and at first we started seeing bits and pieces, when we turned up West Street, of the plane and of what turned out to be body parts. But the closer we got, the bigger the parts got, the plane parts and the body parts, and it finally got to the point where I was facing forward and I told the proby, who was facing the rear, not to look anymore because I told him the things he was going to see he'd rather not see and that he would never be able to get it out of his head if he did see them.

At that point, Smitty was driving. That's when he started trying to snake his way up West Street. There was a lot of debris in the street and I

remember yelling to the Lieutenant to keep going because stuff was still landing all around us. We just passed a compact car where the engine was running and the door was open, which looked to me like the driver had escaped, but from the back seat to the trunk was crushed by a jet engine. I said to the proby, "There goes the luckiest guy in the world right there." So we went past that and we saw a couple of more gruesome scenes, and at that point I just made sure that we weren't going to pull over because it was just raining down too much debris.

We started going up West Street. I believe that's when Smitty ran over the part of the plane, but he did that to avoid the bodies because there were obviously bodies in the street that were hit by either apparatus or cars or something and it wasn't a pretty picture. Like Smitty said, it's just very hard to intentionally run over a body, even if you know they're dead. So we tried to go around them as best as possible. I didn't hear him hit the debris in the street. The guys on the other side said they heard it.

Anyway, we pulled up. We got a hydrant. We all jumped off and the Lieutenant reminded everybody to take their extra cylinder. I told the Lieutenant that

maybe we should help Smitty hook up because we'd probably need water more importantly than anything else. They had a lot of people there already. The hose I didn't think was going to be that important as much as water would be.

So we helped him hook up, and an officer came over from the command post. I thought it was a Chief. Somebody told me it was a Lieutenant. I'm not sure who it was. He told us to move. He said to get off the hydrant and move further up north to another hydrant so that rigs coming up from behind us would be able to form a chain rather than have them try to get around us because there wasn't much room to get through West Street. So we had to disconnect the rig.

We got back on the rig. We moved up to the next hydrant. Again we helped Smitty hook up and grabbed our roll-ups and our cylinders, and as we were turning to walk away, one of the guys just nonchalantly said, "Hey, Smitty, that's you," and he pointed to the ground. I didn't know what he meant. I looked down and it was transmission fluid. So I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "That's from when he hit the plane. We must have a leak." So I stopped him and I said, "We can't leave him here like this because, if

he runs out of transmission fluid, he's not going to be able to pump and he's going to be useless." So I said, "Let's see if we can help him."

So I called to one of the other guys, Richie Saulle, and I asked him to get the clay, the gunk that we use to fix gas tanks. I asked him to get it and see if he could go under there and try and patch this hole. So then we got the gunk and we went under the rig and it was a pinhole. It wasn't that much. We patched it up and we waited a while to see if it was going to stay. It looked like it was going to hold.

So we got out from under the rig and we got our roll-ups and our cylinders and we walked about maybe ten yards, 15 yards, and the tower started to come down. At first it looked to me like just the top of the tower, like maybe the top 15 floors, like the skin of the building was just peeling off and coming down. We pretty much all just stood there in disbelief, and what I did at that point was I told all the guys I was with to put their masks on, their face piece, because I saw the dust coming and I said, "Who knows how much we're going to get hit with? We might as well put our masks on." I told Smitty and this other guy, Bailey, who was just buffing the job, to get

their masks on or to hightail it.

So we all put our face pieces on and we pretty much got hit with a lot more than we expected, so we tried to find refuge behind cars or up against fences or whatever we could. I got down on the ground and a civilian -- I don't remember now if he bumped into me or if he just was calling out, but I grabbed him and I started sharing my face piece with him, sharing the mask, and then you just started hearing people screaming and yelling because they started getting engulfed in the cloud and it started getting darker and darker. Another guy was coming running by crying, screaming. I called out to him. He came over. The two of those guys were sharing my mask now. After a little while, a third guy starts coming up and he was screaming and we grabbed him, and then I had all three guys sharing my mask. So I was trying to calm them down because one guy was panicking. He was pretty upset. He was getting hysterical.

CHIEF KING: We're going to stop the tape for a minute. It's 1635 hours.

(Pause.)

CHIEF KING: It's 1636 hours. We're going to restart the tape. Go ahead, Mike.

A. So the one guy was getting pretty hysterical. The other two guys were okay. They pretty much took their hits of the air and they gave it back to me when I asked. But the third guy kept grabbing it and screaming and yelling. So I told him, I said, "Listen, you keep it up, I'm not going to give you any more and then you're going to pass out and I'm going to leave you here." So he pretty much calmed down after that. The bottom line is, I had my hood over my face, but they pretty much used up all my air. When it finally started to lift, the first guy who was pretty calm said thanks a lot and took off. The other two guys were a little more out of it.

We regrouped and tried to go a little up north to try and find a place where we could clear our eyes and throats and noses so we could breathe better. At that point I called out to all of the other guys in the company. I wanted to make sure that we didn't lose Smitty or Bailey because they didn't have any masks and I knew it got pretty nasty and, if they didn't run, they were going to need help.

So we couldn't find them originally. We got together, all of us regrouped, and we stood there for a while because we had heard reports now that the tower

came down and we didn't believe it. We just thought it was the top couple of floors. It was still too dusty and too dark to see. So we just stood there watching and waiting to see if it cleared and we could tell what was going on. At that point, on the radio, we heard a lot of Maydays and a lot of yelling and who's trapped and who's hurt.

It didn't seem like that long of a period of time, but by the time we regrouped and got our act together and we were going to start heading back down, that's when the second tower started coming down. When that tower started coming down, we knew from the first one, which, actually, the first collapse was blocked by the north tower from us. It sort of shielded us a little. When I looked up and I saw the antenna on the second tower coming straight, just like falling straight into the building, I knew it was coming down, and we pretty much just turned and started to run.

As we were running, it overtook us, the impact. A couple of guys went flying. We went diving under cars and up against fences. We started getting pelted with stuff. Nothing substantial, though. It turned pitch black. You couldn't see anything, but you could still hear the screaming again and the yelling.

Pretty much the radio went dead after that, the second tower. We didn't hear anybody screaming for help. It was just like an eerie silence. We knew that it was really bad.

At that point, I put my face piece on and my cylinder ran out. So I had the proby with me, who I had told to stick with me, and we ducked down behind a fence and I told him, I said, "Joe, you're going to have to remain calm here because you're going to have to change my cylinder." He said, "No problem," and he took my spare cylinder and changed it without a problem.

Then two guys behind us that were following the fence actually walked right into us and then a cop came by. I thought he was a transit cop. I'm not even sure now. We all stuck together and we started moving north up along the side of the fence because we still couldn't see anything. At that point, I think the four of us got together and we waited for it at least to clear up a little bit so we could see.

Most of the guys now were pretty bad as far as the dust and the breathing, and it seemed like a godsend. We were walking up West Street and a guy in a Poland Spring truck pulled over. I said to myself,

"I'm going to go over there and I'm going to grab some water. I don't care if this guy likes it or not." But we couldn't even blink. I told the guys to sit down, and as I ran over towards the truck, the guy got out of his truck and he just started opening up all the gates on the truck and started throwing us water. So we just took bottles and we started rinsing everybody's eyes out. By the time we got cleaned up, there were guys coming up by the hundreds, walking up the block and just needing to be rinsed and cleaned.

We got our act together. We regrouped and the Lieutenant and one of the other guys went down south again to see if we could find anybody left because at this point we didn't know what was going on and we wanted to see if we could find a command post or somebody down there that could tell us what to do. But we were northwest of the hotel and all the debris, it was like a roadblock. There was no way to get in there. That whole side of the West Side Highway was just pretty much just demolished. That's where the walkways were.

We went down there and there were numerous rigs burning, cars burning. It looked like something out of a war movie. There was really nothing to do. I

mean, all the rigs that were crushed and with all the debris in the street, we couldn't even get to the World Trade Center complex.

That was about it. That's pretty much it. After the second tower collapsed, we tried to get together and stick together. We found Smitty. We never found Bailey, but it turned out, we found out later on, that he ran up to 20 truck and made a few phone calls. But, unfortunately, when they asked where we were, he said he didn't know, that we were lost. So that didn't work out too well, except for the fact that at least the guys that were here knew not to tell anybody who called what he said. But that's about it.

The only thing I left out was, in between the two towers collapsing, there were a couple of firemen who were walking up that were bleeding pretty badly from the head, and we stopped them. They didn't want to stop. They were lost. They didn't know what they were doing. They were sort of out of it. So we had to like grab them and restrain them and hold them by the rig while we patched up their injuries on their heads.

An ambulance was coming down the block and I pulled them over and I said, "These two guys are hurt pretty bad. You've got to take them." They said, "All

right. We'll pull up and you can throw them in the back." I said, "Okay." So they drove to the back of the rig and I went behind the rig to grab these two guys and their heads were being bandaged by the proby and by Saulle, and the ambulance just took off. They kept going. So, when they kept going, I was like, you know, well, whatever. But anyway, they kept going, and that was only a few minutes before the second tower collapsed. So I don't know what became of them.

But most of the guys that were walking up the block after us were obviously closer to the building than us and they were injured. A lot of them were bleeding. Most of them were dazed and didn't even know where they were. That's why, when that water truck pulled over, that was really good because people couldn't breathe. The civilians didn't even realize, you know, when you can't breathe and when you've got dirt in your eyes, I guess, for some reason, we're a little more used to that than civilians are, but these civilians were panicking, and you know any time people are yelling and screaming and crying, it just adds more stress to the situation. So when this truck pulled over, we pulled out a couple of the five-gallon barrels of water, put them on like a ledge and just pulled the

cap off, and there were people sitting underneath them just like a shower and it helped a lot of people. That calmed them down a lot anyway.

CHIEF KING: Okay, Mike. Thank you. The time is 1645 hours and we've concluded the interview.

File No. 9110246

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS SMITH

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1355 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter Thomas Smith from Engine 224. This interview is regarding events which occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tom, you can start whenever you want.

A. My story starts with, in the morning sitting having coffee at the firehouse table. Somebody says, "Turn on Channel 1. A plane crashed into the Trade Center." The guys getting off the night tour, day tour, we had about seven to eight guys in the kitchen. The young guys were saying, "Look at that, look at that."

So my first thought was somebody flew a small Cessna or some plane and flew into the tower. We were sitting there, and the guys were like, "Wow." I said, "You know what, we may go on that," because us being so close to the Battery Tunnel and we went there in '93 to the towers.

Two minutes later, tones go off, "224 respond to Brooklyn Battery Tunnel at the staging area." The plane crashed at 8:48. We got that tone probably at about 5 to 9, 8:55.

So now there were guys hanging over from the night tour, and it was like, all right, ba-ba-ba, things were going on. Who's jumping on the rig? Who's the day tour? Who's taking the ride? PS, we start responding towards the Battery Tunnel.

En route to the tunnel, making a left out of quarters on Hicks, a left on Joralemon and another left on Furman heading towards the Battery Tunnel, there's a wide open view at the foot of Atlantic Avenue that shows the Manhattan skyline.

As I'm making the turn heading towards Columbia Street which leads into the tunnel, the proby on the right side of the rig yells out, "Another one hit the tower." I'm driving and I'm looking, I'm looking. I didn't see the crash, but I could see the flame, the orange.

Now we get to the tunnel. Now, the whole time we're not even thinking when we're

responding that it was a terrorist thing. En route to the tunnel, the second plane hitting, we meet at the tunnel. We were there with about six other companies. We're staging and, hey, how you doing, how you do, what's going on. Do you see what's going on? What are we going to do, blah, blah, blah.

With that they're trying to get Brooklyn-bound traffic out of the tunnel. It was chaotic at the toll plaza there. 224 and 210, we were on like a Rapelye Street, which is a side street leading into the tunnel. 101 was there already. Two or three other companies, this way, that way, at all different intersections leading into the toll plaza. Also we got word it had to be 9:08, 9:10 -- I'd say about 9:10, all right, let's go, respond to the towers. So we went through there, six or seven companies, I think it was; I'm not sure. If I see the ticket.

So we proceeded to go through, and it wasn't a straight run. We went and we had to stop because they had Port Authority guys in the tunnel, whatever. They still had cars inside. So it was go and stop. Cars would come along,

go, stop, which is normally a two- to three-minute ride through the tunnel. It seemed like 20 minutes we were in that tunnel.

Q. It was long?

A. It was long, probably about ten minutes.

If the second plane hit 9:06, we were at the staging area there probably about three minutes. So by the time we came out of the tunnel on the Manhattan side, it had to be 9:20, 9:25.

When we came out of the tunnel, I came out of the tunnel, went to West Street, made a right. There were rigs backed up, backed up. We proceeded up to the front of tower one where they had a lieutenant there. I don't have his name. The trucks were getting orders, and the engines were getting orders.

The trucks were just -- they were saying everybody get as far left as you can because they want a passageway for rigs to get in. Me being an engine, my officer got orders from the lieutenant in the street, "Tell your chauffeur get as far left as he can. There's

hydrants on West Street. Get a water supply. You're going to be relayed, you're going to feed," ba-ba-ba, the whole thing.

So we went as far left as we can, and there were rigs coming in, coming in all different angles and guys just coming up the rig. So I pulled up to my hydrant. My members get off, and we test the hydrant. We stretch our 35 foot yellow hose. We're hooked up to the hydrant.

One of the brothers in my firehouse turned to me and said, "Smitty, do you see that puddle of trannie fluid?" I said --

If I can go back a little bit. When we came out of the tunnel when we were heading on West Street, there was all debris in the street: airplane debris, building debris, body debris. So as we were going heading towards to get our orders at the tower, we were serpentining around body parts, airplane parts, building material. It was just chaotic.

So in the midst of me doing that, I hooked up to my hydrant, got my orders. My brother, one of the other firemen, noticed that I

punctured my trannie pan. We had a 5 by 5 circle of pink trannie fluid in the street, and I'm saying to myself as the ECC that I'm going to be fed, I'm going to be supplying, my rig cannot break down. Plus I had my back to the tower.

So I don't know what made me do it, but I repositioned my rig. I think it was Murray Street where all the rigs were when I got there. So there was an opening. I went a half a block, and there was a cross street. I think it was Murray. I turned my rig around, and faced the towers where I was looking at my pump panel and looking at the towers.

So this whole thing took maybe seven to ten minutes. Here it is probably a quarter to 10, 20 to 10. I'm trying to replay the time in my mind, but it's very foggy. It might be 2 minutes; it might have been 12 minutes. But we did the maneuver with the rig. I don't know what made me do it, but personally I just said -- the guys helped me out, we repositioned, came back around, hooked back up.

Me and another fireman proceeded to get our putty out that we putty for gas leaks and

everything on the highway. We took a piece of a chock. We chocked it up. The hole was probably a one by two hole. It was a nice gash. Obviously I ran over some airplane debris, propeller or whatever, a rough edge, blunt edge, gouged my pan.

So anyway, we proceeded to plug it. It was a steady plug coming out. When we finished probably three to five minutes -- because the fluid was hot, so it was tough. We had to plug, step back, wipe off. We were getting it down our arms. PS, about five minutes we plugged it to a slow leak.

Our guys, who had their rollups and everything ready to go in, I would say, approximate now, I would say probably quarter to 10, 10 to 10, and our guys -- "Smitty, you okay? You all set?" "Yeah, I'm all set. I'm all hooked up. I'm all right."

This whole time we're watching people from probably 95 to 105 come out of the first tower, just coming every three to five seconds. There's another one, there's another one.

I'm taking deep breaths in the street.

I'm almost getting sick. All I had was a cup of coffee in me. I just couldn't believe what was going on. It was sickening. There were so many urgents and maydays and chaotic radio transmissions.

Another person coming out, a couple holding hands coming out, splashing on the ground. I could see them coming down three-quarters of the way, but we couldn't see the splash. [redacted].

Our guys are all set. They start moving in. I'm standing there in a golf shirt and shorts. The tower comes down. My guys just rolled up in a ball, ran, rolled up in a ball. They were all donned up in gear.

I, seeing this coming, ran and I had to jump over two parked cars. I ran two, three blocks, myself, EMS and other units that were still there in the street trying to get set. So I jumped over two parked cars. I ran two blocks. So two blocks after Murray, I'm not sure what street it is. But there were cars parked on the side, and I just bailed over these cars, rolled

up in a ball and just let the first cloud blow me over.

So after I regrouped, I hacked up a little bit more, because I had all that stuff in my throat, my eyes. EMS guys came over to me and gave me rinse for the eyes. I was taking water. I was a little disoriented, but I was fine.

The only thing I wanted to know is how my guys were, because I knew they were there. But me being in non-detective gear, I just did the 400 yard dash down West Street. I was a little shaken up.

So after I was tended to, eye rinse and washing out my throat, I proceeded to find my members, and we all embraced in the middle of West Street: Are you all right? Are you okay? Good, good.

One of the guys that was off duty, he was with me when we ran. He didn't have a mask, so he stayed with me. He never came back to the pack. So I ran another block to see if he was all right, couldn't find him, met up with the guys again. Everybody okay?

With that, guys that were on the outer

part of the collapse were coming out. I took out first aid stuff, put it on the back step of the rig. The rig was just whited out, glass taken out, just whited out everything, smoke, debris. I mean, just debris, dust.

So we took our medical EMS stuff out, put it on the back step. There were guys on the outer part of the debris, guys coming out with glass hanging out of their forehead, guys couldn't see, their eyes were caked, they couldn't breathe because they had no breathing apparatus on, they got caught up in the ball.

We were just tending to ourselves, making sure everybody was okay. What went on was just bullshit, uncontrollable, this is crazy. Okay, everybody's okay? You're regrouped. The officers, everybody all right, ba-ba. Let's make sure we know what we're doing here. "Smitty, are you okay?" "Yeah."

I went to the rig. They proceeded to head towards the tower again. The second tower comes down. I still have no protection. I'm still whited out. The second tower, the cloud of debris was twice as big as the initial one. I

knew I did this dash before. I knew I ain't going to die in West Street this way.

I knew there were brothers in there after the first one. I'm not even thinking about how I'm doing. I just know that there's casualties, not only civilians from jumping; I know there's 45 minutes of respond time worth of brothers in there.

PS, the second tower comes down. Every man for himself. I did another 400 yard dash down. There were so many people coming out of the scene already, I couldn't get to where I went to the last time, so I ended up running towards Stuyvesant High School. There were people running in there, so I could see them from a distance. So that's why I made a straight line, made a left-angled turn, headed towards the outside lobby of Stuyvesant.

As I was going there, the cloud was on the back of my head. I could feel it. I just lunged to the door. As I was lunging, a guy opened it up and I darted inside. They tended to me.

I was not shaken up, not upset. I was

out of sorts, out of sync. I didn't know what to anticipate was going on, what can we do. There was no radio transmission. I had an empty feeling in my stomach.

Then I go back to see where my guys are again, because I'm fine. I knew my guys -- they had all their gear on. They weren't going to run as fast as I was. So we went back there and made sure everybody was okay. There was more crazy stuff in the street. There was bleeding civilians coming out. It was hysteria in the street.

I went to my guys. Everything was okay. "Smitty, are you all right?" We're hugging, kissing, making sure we're all here. All of a sudden I hear on the radio transmission, "Okay, 224 start water." I'm saying I'm 224. My officer is right there. I said, "Lou."

Anyway, to make a long story short, when I repositioned my rig, I was the only rig facing the towers. Everybody who was coming in from Brooklyn from the Battery Tunnel were facing going down West Street. I was facing the towers. So they obviously moved my rig, repositioned my

rig from West and Murray to two, two and a half blocks up right on West -- on Vesey right up at West, and they started to relay from marine unit to 57 Engine, 84 Engine, feeding me. I was feeding 33 Engine, who was feeding the manifold.

I went back to my rig it had to be five minutes after the second tower came down, and I pumped from about 11:00 a.m. until quarter to 11 that night. My captain finally came on the scene probably about 12:00, and he took charge and made sure the guys were okay. I stayed with my rig until about 10:30, 11:00, quarter to 11 at night.

They backed me off the rig because seven was in dead jeopardy, so they backed everybody off and moved us to the rear end of Vesey Street. We just stood there for a half hour, 40 minutes, because seven was in imminent collapse and finally did come down. Then we proceeded to pump another six hours.

I was told to go back to the firehouse, jump on the first bus out of there. Relaxed, because to my group -- I was on a mutual that day anyway. I was working for somebody. I wasn't even supposed to work. My group was due in

tomorrow morning at 0900. They wanted me here.

So the captain picked a few guys, they had to stay. The guys that were here all this morning, whatever, you guys go home. So instead of staying in the firehouse, I told him I'm going to go home.

In the midst of all this, I called my wife and let her know I was fine, called my mother and all the family, because it was a little -- I knew my wife would be a basket case, because she knows I was there in '93. My one son is up in college at Marist. He knew I was there in '93. He knows I'm five minutes away from the tunnel. They're watching it on TV. I wanted to make sure that everybody knew I was all right.

My wife said, "I saw Tommy on TV." They saw me fleeing from the scene. So I went home that night. I was shaken up. I was fine on the way home -- when we came back to the firehouse a little after 11:00, that was the first time I saw the actual footage on TV. We stayed there for an hour and a half, and we talked with the brothers.

Then I proceeded to drive home. I was

fine. A block away from my house, knowing my wife and my three other kids were waiting for me, I just lost it. I watched it on TV for another three hours with my wife and kids and couldn't sleep, woke up about 7, was here by 8:00, and I went up there for the 12th and we did our part digging, digging, digging.

We all came back, but unfortunately the guys that we met outside the Battery Tunnel that morning, the six or seven companies that were there -- 118 went over the Brooklyn Bridge. So let me remember this. 101 was there. 226 was there. 279 was there. 35, 38 guys, I don't know how many extras that were on each rig. 19 or 20 of them didn't come back.

I'm just glad to be here. I don't know if it's a guilt complex thing, but I'll never forget. It was the most traumatic day in my life. I said it ten times in the street, I've got 18 and a half years on the job. I've got three sons. They all want to come on the job. I said it ten times in the street that day, I said, "This is it. I'll fight fires until I'm 65 years old, but I can't control it. This is bullshit."

But I was just concerned about guys that I knew that were unaccounted for. Then the twelve we met at 211. We went over there. I had to go on the bus. They had the list of the unaccounted members. That's just a tough nut to swallow.

That's my take on that whole morning from 9:05 to 10:55. I was at the scene -- I was back there 0900 the next morning. We did 24 on, 24 off. I went there in between a few tours.

I'm just coming back, just took a vacation, just came back from my vacation. I came back and I had what they called the WTC cough. I've been coughing since. Some shit nights sleeping. I'm just happy to be here, Chief.

Q. Thanks, Smitty.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1615 hours, and this interview is complete. Thank you.

File No. 9110247

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD SAULLE

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1735 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen J. King from Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Richard Saulle from Engine Company 224 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Richard, you can start whenever you want.

A. To start off with, I was in the shower, because I have this fetish about taking a shower before every shift. No matter if it's the first half or the second half of the 24, I always take a shower. So unfortunately I was caught in the shower.

The run came in. Somebody came running up and said a plane just hit the tower. I said, "What are you talking about?" I thought they were trying to get me out of the shower, maybe flour me or do something hilarious like they normally do, or somebody will turn the water off. So here I am, I jump in my shorts, just a regular work shirt and a pair of shoes, no socks, no drawers. Here I go, I'm down.

The tones went off, responded. The first response was to respond to the World Trade Center. Then the second one came in as we were driving out of quarters to report to Rapelye Street at the base of the Battery Tunnel. That was the second one that came in.

So we sat there and waited. I believe we must have waited there until they were clearing the tunnel out. That was just my logic. There were cars coming in there. They shut it down, cleared the tunnel out. We were getting ready to go through as a convoy with the rest of the fire engines and fire trucks going through there.

I was on the chauffeur side of the rig, back of the chauffeur, like I normally sit when I ride in the back, unless I have the pipe. A young kid, Joe Sullivan, said, "Why is this plane flying through the smoke? Holy shit, he hit the second tower." I said, "Get the hell out of here." I stuck my head out the window, and I looked up and I was amazed what I saw. Both towers were on fire, and I said we're in a lot of trouble.

So we started going through the tunnel, and I said we're in a lot of trouble. They're coming with more planes. This is terrorism. My brain started -- I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed. Guys will tell you I say that about myself all the time. I said, they're coming, they're going to hit the tunnels, they're going to hit the bridges.

So my mind told me to say good-bye to everybody. So I reached across and I said to Hazel, "Good-bye, Mike, it's been nice working with you for 16 years." "Joe Sullivan, I'm sorry you're only on the job a couple of months."

I told Bradbury, who was sitting opposite me, "Kevin, I know we don't like one another very much," because me and him are always bickering, but we still like each other. That was just our way, we always fight with each other. I said, "Goodbye, Kev." Then I hit Smitty in the back of the head and I said, "Smitty, you still owe me $15. When we get up to heaven, you better pay me."

This kid, Stu Bailey, was in the middle of the officer and the chauffeur in the front,

and I told him the same thing. I said, "You owe me $5 if you remember too." Then Desimone, I said, "Desimone, I'll see you at the big one."

Then we proceeded. We got through the tunnel. What we saw on the floor was amazing. There were plane parts, cars wrecked, body parts. It looked like Tales of the Crypt. There were arms sticking up in the air, and bodies were just shredded all over the place.

There was a car that we drove by that the driver's door and the passenger door were open, and there was a plane motor on the back half of the car. Two inches more, and both these guys would have been dead too. That was their ticket. It was amazing. The car was actually cut right in half with this motor, right there back of the front seat. I sat there in amazement.

Then we drove. Smitty is very aggressive, just like I am when I drive. We kind of hit a couple of bumps when we went over. I don't know what it was. But we got to a point in front of the two buildings. We looked up, and the flames were coming and the bodies were coming

down and splattering on the street like watermelons.

Chief told us to supply an engine company in front of the building, find a hydrant. We started rolling up, and as we rolled up Kevin says, "Hey, we have a transmission leak." There was a puddle about two feet around of transmission fluid.

So we got to the spot, which was probably another 50 feet up. The first hydrant that we saw that was open, squeezing through all kinds of fire trucks that were angled all over the place. It was just the way everybody just parks and just gets out and runs.

So I climbed under the rig, and there was a little cut, about an inch cut, with a little drip hole coming out from the transmission. I need a chock. I said, "I need a chock. Do we have a chock?" I started jamming. The chock was too big.

So I actually started gnawing at it with my teeth. I made like a miniature size toothpick out of this, and I jammed it in there. It still was dripping. I had to put the goop on

there, and it worked pretty well.

As I did that, that's when the first tower fell. As soon as I finished, got up, the tower came down. We heard somebody saying, "Sh." That's how the tower sounded coming down, "Shhhhhh." That's all you heard it, a big shush. The tower came down.

Hazel said to me, "It's going to get awfully dark in a minute," and that's exactly what it did. It just wiped us out. Nobody had masks on. People were running at us, knocking us over. It got black. You thought it was night. It was like night for five minutes.

The first thing that came to mind is, we all had masks on and everything, but we didn't don them. It didn't dawn on us until after the fact. We must have donned them a minute after this building came down and after the blackness hit us, because we didn't have time between people running you over and worrying about Joe Sullivan, make sure the proby was next to us, and Bailey, who had nothing but shorts on. He had dress shorts on.

After the first building came down and

it finally cleared, it was like somebody blew pillows up. It was just dust in the air, totally dust. A couple of guys came walking out of the pile, truckies, because they had their tools with them.

One guy had an ax, one guy had a halogen, and they were actually throwing their halogen and axes on the floor in frustration and pissed off. Maybe somebody they knew got wiped out in front of them, maybe what they saw. One of them looked like he was scalped because the whole back of his head was opened up.

So we grabbed the EMS bag and we started bandaging his head, we washed him out. We actually washed his head out with booster water, which was rusty. The rig wasn't hooked up to a hydrant yet, and that's all we had, whatever we had, the 500 gallons in the tank.

We started washing his head off because the stuff was like glue. It was stuck to him. It didn't come off by just washing it. You had to rub and wash. So we washed the back of his head off, and this guy was so -- he was cursing up a storm. He was worried about what happened

to him. He didn't even realize that the whole back of his head was ripped open.

So we were bandaging two guys heads, and then I guess it must have been a worker came out of the building. He had just a white shirt on. He was covered. When he opened up his eyes, it looked like the Little Rascals in the film when the guy got covered in stuff and you just saw the whites of his eyes. He was black. He couldn't see. So we proceeded to wash him and rub him down.

Geez, about a couple of minutes after that, here come the second tower on us. The first tower was in the way of the second tower. When the first tower came down, the second tower was blocking it in our hitting range. I figured this tower is definitely going to get us, because now we were closer, and there was no building to block it. I thought this is it, we're getting wiped out again.

We ran down the street. We must have gained 30 yards, 30 yards at most, and it was like you were running as fast as you can and somebody shoved you in the back of the head and

you went head over heels tumbling, because the force of the wind was incredible. It knocked you over.

There was a guy actually on his hands and knees begging to me, "I have no mask. Don't leave me here. I don't want to die." I slapped this guy -- I don't know, he's from an engine company, because he had a black face piece. I slapped him and I said, "It's dust, stupid. It's dust. You're not going to die. Relax."

Then when the lieutenant heard me yelling at the guy and hitting him, he came crawling over and he said, "I have no mask." I said, "Listen, we're going to buddy share this mask. If you try and take it away, I swear to God I'll knock you on your ass," just like that. I said, "It's dust. Go like this. That's all you have to do. Put your coat over your mouth." These guys, they lost it, totally lost it.

The second tower came down. The same thing, blackness for longer this time. It was ten minutes now. Finally the dust cleared, and it was like panic. People were running. The whole street was running at us.

The chief was telling us, "I want everybody 300 feet back," because we didn't know if any other buildings, from the shock, or undermining or anything else if they were going to weaken any other buildings. He said, "I want everybody 300 feet down."

We walked all the way down. There was a couple of fire hydrants that were open. There were thousands of people giving us bottles of water. It was amazing. It was like a candy store in the street: water, drinks, this, that. Within minutes everybody was getting it. Trucks were there with food.

I jumped in a puddle because there was a fire hydrant running, and I washed this stuff off me, because, like I said, it was glue. I washed my helmet in the water. I had it all down my neck. I was breaking it, and everything, because it was gagging you.

After that it just ended right there for a while. It was like stagnant for a while. Then finally we heard the total recall. We heard the radio, we tried to listen to radio stations. Then everybody had radios around us. They hit

this, they hit that, they hit this.

It was like oh, my God, we're in the middle of like a world war over here. They're hitting everything. I said they're going to hit more. I thought they were going to hit another building by us, because there were a couple buildings -- as we walked down West Street, there was a couple of big buildings that we were getting to.

I said, "Listen, they're going to start hitting this because this is the next tallest building. I said this is no good either. You're better off staying right here." In between this tall building, in between the towers, this is a regular low area. I said you're better off saying over here, and we did. We kind of like shacked up on the curb. It amazed me.

(Interruption.)

A. So now we're just sitting there it seemed like an hour, an hour and a half goes by, and we said what the hell are we doing? So we started walking back towards what I guess they gave it the name now ground zero. They might have given it the next day or whatever.

We were walking back towards that. Guys were just sprawled out all over the place. Who was there, who has a bandage on their head, who was just sitting there with their mouth open. It was terrible. It was terrible. You knew guys were dead. You knew guys were really dead.

It was hours, it must have been. We were trying to find the rest of the guys, because the recall was there. So we started walking -- you're walking in this stuff, and it was just like powder. So we were walking and breathing this shit all day long. It was like an inch thick. No matter where you looked, everywhere, blocks away, it was an inch thick. We're walking in this rubble, and nobody has a mask on. It only lasts for 17 minutes.

We walked down Vesey all the way around -- we actually found where the rig was, where Smitty was actually pumping water. He was pumping water for a few hours. Before that we packed up into a hotel, and they said there were some sandwiches up on one of the upper floors. So we ran to get a sandwich and thought of Smitty. We came around and gave him half a

sandwich.

Then it creeped up until it must have been 2:00 in the morning they were ordering guys. They took a head count. Everybody had to report in. There were a few guys that were missing, but we got a head count of our whole company. Then they said, "Anybody on the day shift, you have to go home. You're ordered to go home." I said, "I'm not going home. I'm staying with my rig. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere."

Our captain was there, Captain Quinn, at that time. Now he's a chief. A few days later after that they made him a chief, the next rank up. He ordered us to go home. I said, "I'm not going home." He said, "I'm telling you, go, that's it. You've had enough. Go home. See you tomorrow." He said there's buses on West Street.

I walked for three miles on West Street. We didn't see a bus at all. There was like seven of us that were walking back. This guy Pacheco, who was one of the recall guys, he had an interview with I guess a Puerto Rican station. So they wanted him to talk a little Puerto Rican, and he started talking, and the

rest of the guys filtered up. They must have jumped on the bus, and we missed the bus.

So me, Smith and Pacheco were left behind. We walked for three miles on West Street until we found nothing. There was a Con Edison crew there that we actually begged them, "Do us a favor. We just want to go home. We're tired." It's now 3:00 in the morning. We're exhausted. We want to go home.

One of the guys said, "I'll take them home. I'll take them. Where are you?" I said, "We're right over the Brooklyn Bridge, right there on Hicks Street." "That's no problem, but you have to get deconned first." Ai-yie-yie.

So here we are, stripped naked as a jaybird. We had to get washed down with ice-cold water from the fire hydrant. They gave us these coveralls. They put all our stuff in red bags, double taped them, gave us all the stuff.

Normally when something like this happens, they say usually you take everything that's on you. I had the commissary money on me. I had $600 in my right pocket. I said they're not getting that. I ripped open the kneecaps,

the pads in the bunker pants, and I stuck it in there. I said they're not getting the money. I closed it back up. So I had the $600 on my right knee just about from 3:00 in the morning on. I said, "Sh, they're going to confiscate all our money. I put all my money in the kneecap."

They dropped us off and wound up giving us back our bags. So the first thing I did is I ripped my bag open and let all this air and shit out in the firehouse. The whole firehouse was white from everybody else coming in with their bags.

I didn't even go home. I just went upstairs and went to bed, I was so exhausted. The only thing is my wife was trying to get in touch with me the whole day. She didn't know. A couple of guys told her, "I don't know. I don't know where he is. I don't know." So she was kind of on pins and needles all day.

I woke up about 9:00 in the morning, 9:30. My eyes usually open up at 6:00. I was so overexhausted that I got three extra hours in there.

When I got home, I collapsed on the

floor like a baby -- I have to say that -- right on the floor. I don't know why I did it, but my legs just gave out from under me as soon as I walked in my door. My wife and my kid was home, and my puppy. I just got a dog.

The only thing I wanted was to kiss that dog, kiss my wife. All four of us were on the floor. My dog was ballistic because he was licking the three us. He was licking us up, going from person to person and licking us up. It was amazing. It was amazing.

My legs buckled. They never did that before. Actually they probably buckled one other time. When I had my first son in the hospital, I got the jitters. But other than that, I usually hold everything. You know, I cry at funerals. That's me. I'm a little weak. But the weak legs, I usually never have them.

That's my story.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1755 hours, and we're concluding the interview.

File No. 9110248

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STUART BAILEY

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1715 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Stuart Bailey from Engine Co. 224, and this interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Stuart, you can start the interview. Just tell me what position you had that day.

A. I actually didn't have a position that day. I was one of the guys that took the run-in being off duty.

Q. Okay. Tell us your story of what you saw that day.

A. I worked that night in Ladder 101, the night before, and got relieved there around 8:20, came here, got in the house around 8:30. We responded shortly after that on the first plane, took the run-in, jumped on a rig with another kid, Joe Sullivan, a proby. We both took the run-in, both were off duty.

We got to the staging area by the Battery Tunnel. Before we were going into the tunnel, we were pretty much just watching it, just watching the first plane. I believe the second plane hit as we were going into the tunnel, or possibly as we were going to the

staging area, the second plane wound up hitting.

At that time we realized -- the kid in the back, the proby, said it was a terrorist attack. No one even realized what actually was going on. We just thought this plane accidentally hit, until that second plane hit, then we realized what was actually happening.

Maybe ten minutes after being at the staging area, they started moving the rigs into the tunnel. As we were going into the tunnel, one of the kids that was actually walking with his gear -- I can't even recall his name, but there's a big article. The guys know his name -- actually asked Tommy Smith, who was the chauffeur, if he could jump on the back of the rig. I didn't even realize that he jumped on, neither did Tommy or anyone else, until maybe later on, then we realized the kid actually did jump on the rig. I believe he was lost. He was missing.

When we pulled out of the tunnel, the way I saw it, they couldn't keep us really right there by the tunnel. We had to proceed past the building because of all the rigs that were behind us. I guess it would have delayed them from getting in. We would have been backing up the tunnel pretty much. So they kind of had

everything blocked off and we kind of swerved around debris from the plane, body parts pretty much everywhere. That's the first time I've ever seen anything like that. I'm sure no one did.

Then I believe we went to get a hydrant. We had a pretty close hydrant to the Trade Center itself, pretty much almost right out in front, and a Lieutenant started screaming at Tommy Smith that he wanted the rig moved. He wanted to stand out front, I guess, to relay water or to help out with that, getting water over there. So that guy actually moved Tommy from pretty much in front of the Trade Center to a little bit further where we wound up being on Vesey and West Street, over there.

At that time both buildings were going, both planes had already hit the building, and we were just standing there. I looked up, realized the transmission, our transmission, from riding over the rubble that was on the ground, the remains of the plane, ruptured our transmission tank, so transmission fluid was leaking. Tommy noticed that. So we kind of spent an extra five minutes or so kind of trying to plug that in. I guess the guys rendered it useless at that time, it would have been useless if we didn't do

that, you know, just another story out there of how you get saved. But the guys got off their gear.

Guys all had their gear. I didn't have any gear on me. I didn't realize. I was just going in for the ride. I thought it was just a regular fire, a little bit bigger than regular. But as we're standing there, the guys had all their tanks on. I didn't have anything. Tommy didn't have anything. So we were kind of like maybe even a step back from everyone else, realizing what's happening, jumpers. You didn't realize, until you actually looked and saw arms and legs waving, exactly what was happening, you know, one after another. There must have been three or four dozen that jumped out right there while we were standing there, just in amazement, exactly what actually was happening.

Then all of a sudden, the further tower, the south tower, I think it is, the first one that went down, the south tower went down. We really didn't realize that it was actually the whole building going down. It looked like just maybe a side or something because you couldn't really see because the other one was in the way, and then you realized exactly what happened because, as you saw on the TV, all the smoke,

that pretty much came up ten stories high, 15 stories high, pretty much just came right at us.

Asses and elbows, you know, we just started running every which way. I think I might have actually ran a little bit further than everyone else being I had no gear on me or anything like that. I couldn't take a knee and just let everything blow over me. So I was kind of out in the front. I might have even ran an extra block or two before I turned around and just realized there was nobody even with me.

I would say it was 15, 20, 25 minutes before that cloud kind of dissipated even a little bit. I started working my way back slow, relaxing, just taking it easy, realizing what's happening. I would say about a half a block away from there, I came back with my company again, not even knowing what happened to them because they weren't even near me, the second one came down. I ran again. It might have even been another block I ran.

At that time jets were coming over your head and you didn't know what was happening. Is that our guys? It didn't even dawn on me that it was our guys. It was just this happened here, big buildings are all around, they're still hitting us.

It must have been another half an hour until I kind of got on my feet and just was like, okay, let me start working my way back. At that time guys from other companies were kind of there also, so I wound up hooking up with some kids from different companies. A kid from 20 Truck was there, a Lieutenant from 34, Lieutenant Winkler was there. I hooked up with them and I actually wound up not even seeing my company until maybe 11:00 o'clock that night, you know, working without anything. I wound up getting gear later on. Maybe a couple hours later I was able to get gear on the side, no bunker coat, no helmet, just pants.

I just pretty much worked through the whole night. I wound up finding out that they were actually alive from one of the guys from 202 that was actually on our side. Somehow or another I wound up being on the other side of the building. I wasn't even on the side where we were. I wound up being on the other side. I saw a kid from 202 and he showed me a way how to get to the other side to where 224 was. He let me know that the guys were okay. That was at 11:00 o'clock at night maybe I hooked up with them.

Then we went back to the house by bus like 1:30 in the morning, you know, finally taking the bus

in. That's pretty much it. I went back to work the next day.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. Thank you, Stuart. The time is 1723 hours and I'm concluding the interview with Firefighter Bailey.

File No. 9110249

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DOMINICK MUSCHELLO

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1831 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Dominick Muschello from Ladder Company 119. This interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Dominick, you can start any time you want.

A. I worked the 6 by 9 tour the day before and the day of September 11th. We saw the smoke when the first plane hit the towers from headquarters here because we have a clear view to the World Trade Center, but it was obstructed by the factory across the street from the first floor. So we went up to the third floor to see what it was, and we noticed that it was the World Trade Center.

At that point we flipped the TV on in the gym, which is on the third floor. There's a TV up there. We were watching the news, and they said a plane had hit. Plus a marshal had come in. The marshals are also in the building. He

said he got on his pager that a plane had hit the tower and it wasn't just a bomb or a fire.

As we watched the fire from the third floor, we saw the second plane fly right into the center of the building clear as day, because there were about two or three of us up in the gym at that point.

I kind of thought we were going to go before that happened. But once the second plane hit, I knew we were going over there and then you knew that it wasn't any type of an accident, two planes, a terrorist. Then you started thinking it was going to be a long day. A lot of people definitely got hurt over there that day.

We got the alarm I think our ticket said 9:08. We were actually first due on the ticket to the second tower, out right first due on the first alarm.

So going over, looking at the towers as we were starting to go over the bridge -- I'm not the chauffeur, so I don't know what bridge we went over, but I believe it was the Brooklyn Bridge. I just remember saying to myself I hope they don't blow this bridge up on the way over,

because I had a real bad feeling I wasn't going to come home that day. By the way everything looked, I had a feeling it was going to be a bad day.

When we got to the Trade Center, we had a hard time getting close because of all the debris that was falling from the building. So we parked I believe, near the corner of Church and Dey near that old church there, along that street with the wrought iron railing.

I remember walking down there. We were going to make a left and head down towards Liberty because we were first due to the second tower. We were going to go down Church to Liberty, but there was too much debris falling. So we made a right, and we went down Vesey or one of those streets, whatever streets goes over to the West Side Highway, around tower one.

As we were walking up, the jumpers were jumping clear as day, hitting the street and the marquis from tower one right in front of us on the West Side Highway there. That was a very disturbing sight.

There was the walkway that goes across

right there that's no longer there, that walkway that goes across the West Side Highway. When we reached that walkway, we stopped for a second because there were so many people jumping we were afraid of getting hit by jumpers.

We walked across the street underneath that walkway, and at that point when we got across the street, that's where there was a command post set up, just maybe 100 feet south of that walkway on the northwest side of the West Side Highway. That's where the command post had been moved to, which we did not know at that point. We were going in to the lobby to the command post.

When we got to that command post, the chief, which I don't remember who it was, but I do remember seeing Chief Nigro there. I don't know if he was there when we got there or if he got there after us. Chief Ganci was down the road just another 30 feet or so. We were told to stay at that command center. It looked like there were about four or five other companies there.

While standing on the sidewalk, I

looked up at the tower and I said to the captain, "Captain, this is not a good place to stand." I said, "If this building comes down, we have nowhere to run." He said that's a good idea.

We moved in front of this garage door. That luckily was open. We stood in front of the garage door. It was a basement-entering garage, a garage ramp, underground garage door there. I think it was Two World Financial Center building or one of the buildings there. We stood up on the sidewalk but knew that we had the garage to run into if anything happened.

We were kind of wondering why we were still standing there. I kept asking the captain, "Captain, what's going on? Let's go in the building." He said that there was a mayday given for a company -- I don't remember which company. I'm sure he'll have that information.

The command post chief told us, or the lieutenant or the captain at the command post told us we're getting a so-called rescue team together. We're putting together three engines, two trucks, and we're going in for the company that's giving the mayday. I believe we had three

engines and one truck and we were just waiting for the second truck to come.

All of a sudden it felt like a train was pulling in, and the second tower came down. I only looked at that tower for a split second or two and knew it was time to run. Everybody ran into the garage. Upon running into the garage, there were people in front of me and there were people in back of me. You couldn't see anywhere. It was running into darkness.

I hid behind a pillar. I didn't know there was a way out. I wasn't thinking there was a way out. It was definitely every man for himself. There wasn't one person looking out for anybody else, which is understandable.

I didn't realize there was a rear door. There was a staircase that went up to -- and they were able to get out of the rear. I wasn't thinking that fast. I wasn't following the guys running in deep, deep, deep into this garage. I went in about 40 feet and dove behind a column. I didn't figure I had much more time than that.

I kneeled in the corner of this column and put my mask on, my face piece on, and took

the respirator part out and got ready. I didn't want to use any air, and I didn't know what was going to happen at that point, if it was going to fill up with fire or what-have-you. So I didn't want to start using air.

I put my jacket over my head. I took my jacket off and put it over me kind of, not took it off but loosened it and put my hood and everything, just tried to cover as much as I could. I crawled into the corner.

A couple of other people got on top of me, and all of a sudden debris and stuff started falling in front of the garage and falling into the garage and the cloud of smoke and dust came in.

Then all of a sudden when it seemed safe and there was no more noise, I got up. There wasn't really anybody else around me anymore. I guess the guys that were on me had left. They didn't feel safe or whatever the story was.

So my first reaction was to head back out instead of going deeper into the garage, because I knew 40 feet up along the right wall,

which is where I was, going in to the left but right on the way out, I would be able to get to the sidewalk again.

I couldn't see. I took my face piece off at that point because I knew it was just smoke. I reattached it to the respirator and just pulled my hood over my mouth and nose, just tried to breathe through that, because you really couldn't breathe at all. It was so thick that you spit it out. You coughed it and spit it right out. It filled your mouth up. Your nose got clogged instantly, you couldn't breathe anymore through your nose.

I made my way up to the sidewalk, and there was nobody there. There was one or two people around. You couldn't see very far. It was very, very quiet. There wasn't even any sound. I didn't have a radio.

I remember seeing Chief Nigro kneeling on the ground. It looked like he was saying a prayer. He had just his helmet on and his white shirt, no bunker gear. I tapped him on the shoulder, and I said, "Chief, are you all right?" He just looked up to me. I said to myself I know

he's not hurt. So I looked around to see if there was anybody else that I could help.

This whole time I'm thinking that all the guys that ran into this garage were going to come back out the way I was. I didn't think they had found their way out the back door. So I was kind of hanging on the sidewalk and heading across the street, hitting the middle of the street, looking around.

There was a lot of rubble, a lot of debris around. I was looking for people to help, because I knew where the garage was. You could actually follow your footprints back. It was like snow. There was no problem seeing where you came from.

A firefighter came across the street at that point. He didn't have any bunker gear on; or he may have had bunker pants, but he didn't have a coat or helmet or anything. I don't know who he was. It looked to me like his fingers may have gotten cut off or something, but he was bleeding really, really bad. He was bleeding real, real bad. He was bleeding all over me.

I actually yanked my T-shirt off that

was under my shirt, and I wrapped his hand. I brought him into the garage, because I wanted to get him off the sidewalk because there was still stuff that was falling. I don't know whether it was coming from the first tower now, because we were actually closer to the first tower, or if it was stuff from the building, maybe glass. There was still stuff falling down.

I went into the garage, and at that point I met up with somebody that had stretched a search rope. I didn't see who that was. All of a sudden he said this search rope leads out to the rear.

So I walked the guy that was hurt along the search rope, and I said, "Follow the search rope and you'll be able to get out through the rear," because there were guys that were coming. I said, "Somebody help him."

But he went into a closet and sat down and said, "I can't walk anymore." I said, "You can't sit in this closet. No one is going to find you." So I helped him back onto the search rope and started following the search rope. I myself didn't know where it went. I didn't

follow it yet.

At that point a guy came who had a white windbreaker on, I believe it was. It might have been like retirees or a union or a chief association, but I don't know who he was. It was civilian clothes with some type of a white windbreaker on, an older fellow with gray hair.

I handed him this guy that was bleeding off to him. As I told him take this guy to the rear, I'm going to see if I can help anybody else, we heard a tapping noise. I stopped. I said, "Do you hear that?" He said, "Yeah, I do." I said, "It sounds like it's coming from over there." The guy said, "Yeah."

We started stretching the search rope over to the noise, and then it wouldn't go anymore. I told the guy, "You take the guy to the rear, and I'll be able to find my way back to the search rope."

I followed the noise, the tapping noise. It was an OEM guy. His name was Powell, I believe, or something like that, a big black guy, Calvin or something. I don't remember. I remember asking him. He was in this closet. I

guess he was scared.

(Interruption.)

MR. KING: We're continuing the tape again. We had to stop the tape for about five or six minutes. It's now 1849 hours, and we're continuing with Firefighter Muschello.

A. So I helped the guy out of the closet there, the OEM guy. I brought him to the search rope. The search rope led to a set of stairs and a set of exits. At that point I said, "You can get out from here." He said, "No problem."

I went back out on the search rope towards the street again, went to look for more people to help. I made it pretty close to tower one across the street. Some guys, firemen, came running out. I don't know where they came from. You couldn't see no more than ten feet in front of you.

I didn't know where they came out from, but they came running and they were yelling something like a bomb or something. They were like, "Run, run, run!" Everyone was running. I didn't really know what they were talking about.

I knew where the garage was, so I said, "Come this way." They followed me to the garage. We ran into the garage. We still couldn't see. A few other guys came behind us, and they said run. We ran in.

At that point we ran past the search rope. Really you couldn't find it. I thought it was to the right, so I headed to the right. I think there was like a ledge or a curb of some type, a little bit of a drop. I kind of got trampled and ran and pushed and went down off the drop. I came down pretty hard, twisted a few things, but you know with adrenaline flowing I really didn't feel it until a day or two later, but I got banged up.

At that point I said to myself my guys from my company probably have to be wondering where I am. I tried to grab somebody with a radio and call my captain, but that wasn't happening. So I decided to follow the search rope out of the building, out of that garage, to the rear.

As I walked down the sidewalk in the rear like that Battery Park City thing close to

the water, I met up with my company, they were coming back to look for me. They thought that I had perished.

Then we were in the back, and I just remember saying, "Captain, I saw three guys that were hurt over there. Let's go back and help them. There's definitely people that we can help over there." He said that the first tower is going to come down too and we're not going over there right now. We'll all group together, look for some kind of command. Then we'll plan from there, instead of just running aimlessly back in and becoming more victims.

One thing I never heard a mayday after that first one was given by the guys in the first tower. I never really heard one. Like I said, I didn't have a radio. I didn't hear too many people telling people in the first tower that the tower had collapsed, that the second tower had collapsed. So I don't know if they were given that information or not.

Some guys said that they knew it collapsed, and a lot of guys said they had no idea it collapsed. So I really don't know what

happened at that point.

Then we walked around in the back there, and I just remember saying we have to try to find as much open space as possible, because there was nothing but tall buildings around, in case any more of them come down.

Then the second tower collapsed, on the first tower. Then we just ran a little bit, because that same puff of smoke engulfed you again. I would say we couldn't have been any more than a quarter mile away at that point. But that smoke went a long way, that dust cloud, whatever you want to call it.

The same thing happened again. I remember seeing a granite wall along the back of -- near the Battery Park City, kind of near where the New York Waterway Parks. I hid behind the granite wall, because I thought that was a pretty safe place.

Then we went out around past Stuyvesant High School. They were evacuating all the students. At that point there was nobody around. But then when we got around to Stuyvesant High School, there were a lot of people over there.

Everybody seemed to be walking along the sidewalk.

We jumped out onto the West Side Highway and gathered up the tools and stokes and things like that and headed back down to help whoever we could.

At that point they were saying all kinds of stories of gas, deadly gas, not natural gas, and stuff like that. So we really didn't know what was going on. We kind of had a feeling that there couldn't have been too many people more that we could help over there. We did go back there, but we just kind of waited until we felt it was a little safe.

Not to mention the fact that at that point a lot of our tools had gotten lost. A lot of our equipment had gotten lost by just dropping everything and running, guys trampling gear and whatnot. We really didn't have the gear that we needed to head back in.

Again, we gathered up what we could, and we went back over. Then we just proceeded to operate for the remainder of the day. Sometime later on that day, I believe after -- when they

told us to evacuate the area for tower number seven, building seven, when they knew that was coming down, I had hooked up with my company, Ladder 119, at that point. I told the captain I was going to set up with my company at that point, because at that point the recall guys were there. There were a lot of guys from each company there, so there wasn't any type of manpower problem. This is later on in the day. I worked with Ladder 119 for the rest of the day.

We were on the Church Street side, which unfortunately -- I was there for two days straight. I never left until the 12th. Actually I didn't leave until the 13th, which would have been Thursday morning at sunlight. That's when I really couldn't stand anymore.

The whole time we were down there, the wind was blowing exactly that way. It was blowing right towards the Church Street side. So we were getting nothing but -- you couldn't blink anymore, your eyes or so dry and red. You couldn't even blink or rub them. I couldn't breathe anymore. It was unbelievable. But we were over there for the whole time.

That night all the cars and that afternoon all the cars and the trucks and everything that were along Church Street were all still burning, and there were water problems. We operated and did different things with the tower ladder.

Actually we were putting water on building number five I believe for a while. Then they moved us over to building number four, and we operated the tower on that.

That's about it.

Q. That's terrific. That's fine.

CHIEF KING: We're concluding this interview. The time is 1856 hours.

File No. 9110250

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN CHARLES CLARKE

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1905 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King from the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Captain Charles Clarke from Engine 211, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Captain Clarke, you can start whenever you'd like.

A. Okay. Let's see. We were assigned on a first alarm, I believe. I know we were assigned on one of the alarms. I believe it was for the second tower hit. We came across the Williamsburg Bridge, followed Engine 230 down I guess it's Broadway. I know we parked by a church. I think it may be Dey Street. Either Broadway and Dey Street or Church. I'm not sure where we parked.

We came up the block. We came down Vesey Street. There were car fires in the street that I remember. We stayed to the right side because I remember there was an overhang there and I remember we could get down along the overhang without the -- there was stuff falling out of the building, not a tremendous amount of debris.

One thing I noted was I remember either it

was on the handy-talkie or on the Department radio that said that the command post was being created at Vesey and West Street and bring an extra cylinder with you. I don't remember where the transmission came from. The transmission saved our lives, though.

So I said to a guy in the street, because I don't know Manhattan well, I said, "Do you know where Vesey and West Street is?" He pointed me down Vesey Street and he said, "Yeah, go right down to the corner and that will be West," and I said okay. So we went down the street. The street was empty. It was deserted. There was nobody on it.

We got down to West and I looked up West Street and there was a pedestrian bridge there. I'm trying to remember. I remember saying it looked like a lot of curtains were falling out of the building or somebody was throwing debris out the window. As we got closer, I realized it was people jumping, and that's when I realized the heat condition on the upper floors had to be unbelievable.

So we got to the pedestrian bridge and I told the guys that I wanted to stay there for a little bit to judge how far out the jumpers were landing and the debris, so we didn't get hit by it, and at that time I

noticed the command post was on West Street right in front of the World Financial Center. So I walked up and told the -- I saw Chief Nigro. I did not see Chief Ganci. I told them, "211. What do you want us to do?" They took my piece off the board. They said, "Hang on. We're busy." I said, "Fine."

So we stepped back and one of my guys noticed a parking garage back across West Street and thought it was a good place to go if something happened. So I said okay. So we waited. I saw 210 there, 221, I think 34 Engine. We got together and we were deciding what the plan of action was and everybody was like everybody's feeling was, holy shit, we're going to have to walk 80 floors before we even get close to this thing.

So we were talking back and forth, whether or not you should wear your bunker gear, maybe you should carry it, carry your boots up with you. Literally, there was a lot of discussion about that. Definitely bring the second bottle because we saw smoke starting to issue from lower floors, you know, that lighter smoke. So we were wondering where that was coming from and I even heard some radio transmissions about fire in the elevator shafts from the jet fuel. So we said

okay.

I started talking to a member of 219, who I had probably worked with for 20 years, and he was facing the tower and I was facing away from it. He stopped the conversation, his eyes lit up, and he said, "Charlie, run." He saw it before you could even hear it. We started running. I can't tell you how far I was away from that parking garage. I really don't remember. I just remember thinking let's just get in there.

I got into the parking garage and I hid behind a pole. A few other guys did. A lot of other guys ran deeper in. I lost track of my guys at that moment. Everybody was kind of running. I was kind of in disbelief that the building was actually collapsing. I kind of stopped to say, well, maybe that was a piece of the facade. I couldn't believe that the entire building was going to collapse in one heap. Once I started hearing it hitting into the street, I said, that's a lot of stuff. I've got to move deeper into the building.

So I ran further down into the parking garage and a guy was waving me into a doorway. Then I ran through the door. I heard the stuff piling in a

distance back. It didn't seem close. We all got in, someone closed the door or the door closed, and then the hallway filled with smoke and the lights go out for maybe five seconds or so. Then they went back on again. They flickered. They went back on. So I said, "Oh, it's the generators." I said, "That's good. At least something in the building is still pretty good. Let's wait and see what happens."

Somebody said, "I found a door down at the end of that hallway." I said, "Okay. Let's go down there." So we went down to the door and, in my mind, with the towers being exposure one, that felt that exposure three, so I thought that's a good place to start. But I knew we had to climb a set of stairs to get to it. So, in my mind, I figured we've gone down a level if you ran into the garage. Now this is up a level. This may be where we want to be.

So I turned around and I looked and some guys had coats, some guys lost their helmets, nobody had any sets of irons or anything. It was about maybe 30 guys and three officers, all captains. I was wondering what happened to all the rest of the officers. I never really found out. So we were going to go back. Five of us were going to go back and see if we could search

and find a set of irons or something.

With that, an elderly gentleman was coming down the stairs and he's got a custodian patch on his shirt. I said, "You work here?" He goes, "Yeah." I said, "You got a key for this door?" He goes, "I do." He goes, "What are you guys doing in here?" He had no idea what the fuck had just happened. He had no idea.

So he opened the door and I opened the door up and looked out and it was solid smoke. So I closed the door. I said, "Where does this lead to?" He said, "That's outside." I said, "Are you sure?" He goes, "Yeah." I opened the door again. I looked along the floor. I saw it was concrete. I said, "Okay." Then everything started to lift. I could see a tree. I said, "Oh, man. This thing wrapped around the whole building."

We went out into the field. I said, "Keep going." It was very difficult to breathe by the door. I said, "Let's keep going across." As we went through the dust, we realized this is the water. This is the end of the trip. Okay. I started counting heads, did a roll call, saw I was missing one man. I took a look around, waited for all the guys, couldn't find him. So I made a decision. I said me and my senior guy were

going to go back to get him.

So we went back across the field, got back to the door, and just as we were going to cross in, I heard him yell out my name, and he was down maybe 50 feet, but he had gotten out of the door. I said great. I got all the guys together, and by that time I had about, I would say, 15 guys with no orders and everybody wanted to know what to do. I said, "Okay. Let's find our way around this building and we'll make a determination from there. Let's see what the hell just happened."

I looked up and through the smoke I could see one tower was still standing. The other one was gone. I could not tell by the angle that I was looking at it that it was in fact the north tower that was still standing and the south tower was down. When that guy told me to run, I never looked back. I just figured he's telling me -- the noise was very loud. I just decided to move out. I swore it was the north tower. In retrospect, now I know it was the south tower.

So we gathered up and made our way around, let's see, I guess that would be North End Avenue, to get around. So we headed up North End Avenue, got back onto Vesey Street, and the north tower started to

collapse. I saw the top of it peel off and bend over, and I was struck by how long it stood there. It seemed like forever. Obviously, it was probably only seconds. But I said, "Man, that thing is cracked over," and then boom, the whole thing came down.

We didn't realize at first how much dust there was from that first wave. We didn't realize how incredible it was. We saw the second one. It looked like a wave, an ocean wave just coming very quickly, very rolling, very fast. But when it hit us, though, it wasn't very hot. It was just a lot of dust but not so bad.

At that point we then retreated back toward the field by the World Financial Center and then came back out again onto Vesey Street. At this point I had my five guys, probably three or four guys -- I believe 210 was with me and I know another proby -- he wasn't a proby. He's a rotator from -- I don't remember the truck he was in. I believe it's 30 Truck. I know he was from a Manhattan, Harlem company. He said, "Wherever you're going, I'm going." I said, "Okay, great. Move with us then."

At that point the cops came up, came running past us and told us that there was gas on West Street,

and I said to them, "Well, what kind of gas? Is it natural? Is it this Saran gas they talk about?" I said, "What do you know about it?" He goes, "I have no idea. I know there's gas." So I said to the guys, "We're going to go back up West Street a little bit and let's see in fact what this is." We had no masks. We didn't have anything.

So we went back up West Street. It turned out to be a natural gas leak. I told the guys, "Start salvaging masks, tools, whatever you can get." They did a great job. They got a basket, they got a Stokes, they got cylinders, they got masks. We were back in business. Because as we looked, we could see that all the stuff that we had had was all buried up. It was gone. It was under a lot of debris. So we got that, and then by that time, as we came back up West Street, a couple of Chiefs had already formed at Vesey and West and were trying to put together teams. So we came back up. I told them I was 211 and that we would like to get back into the field, and they said, "Well, okay, we'll put you on the list. Hang on for a little bit." I said, "Okay." So we waited.

I was very concerned about my chauffeur. Like I said, we parked the rig right over on Church

Street, and I was looking at the debris on West and I could only imagine how much debris was on Church and all those side streets. So I conveyed that to one of the Chiefs there, that I'd like to go over there, and he said to hang out and wait. I'd have to say that was for at least a half hour, maybe 40 minutes. I have no recollection of any of the times. But what I did was at that point I figured you know what? Let's go down Barclay and get back out onto Church. Maybe there's a command post there that will get me closer in so at least I can find out, because there were reports and rumors of chauffeurs hidden under the rigs that are now trapped.

So we went back that way. There was no command post. There was no one. There was nothing. The street was empty; a few cops here and there that I can remember. We went back down Church and found the apparatus. Now the apparatus, I believe, was on Fulton midway between Church and Broadway being operated by members of 211 who must have came from quarters, and they said they had found the chauffeur. His hand was broken, they believed, and he had a piece of glass through his leg, but he was okay. I said, "Good." I said, "Where was he?" He didn't know.

At that point there was a command post at Park and Broadway and they assigned us to the post office, the Federal Office Building. So I went down to the Federal Office Building. Oh, preceding that, No. 7 collapsed. We were on Fulton Street when No. 7 collapsed, which was another incredible dust storm. At that point they said, "The post office is on fire, the top floor." We said, "Okay." We went up there with a line and it was just all the dust had permeated all the windows. Literally, it filled the building with smoke, but there was no fire. So we came back down and I gave the guys a rest for a minute.

Then we went back down Church. We had a report of a firefighter down on Cortlandt and Church. We got down there. We didn't find anything like that. But at that point we realized that rescue was going on on Liberty Street for No. 2 World Trade. So we helped with the line, getting the line up the hill. There were supposedly two cops buried up there. We assisted with the line. By this time, it had to be 11:00 o'clock at night. They were working on this guy. I know a lot of tools were going up there. I don't know who was operating up there. We stayed on the hill until about, I guess, around midnight. My lungs were

killing me. My back was killing me. I was shot, very tired. My legs were very heavy.

Then we came back down and started walking down Church, and I was kind of amazed that one building was burning on 90 West, I noticed, but I was amazed that all the tenements on Cortlandt and Dey, Fulton, none of them were on fire. I figured there would be a lot of fire and there was none. So we came back down.

By then I guess it was about 1:00 o'clock. We were done. We walked back down Park Row and a city bus was sitting there. I asked him to take me back to 211's quarters. He said he would do that. That's what we did. We went back to quarters and that was that. That's all we did that day.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. Thanks. The time is 1920 hours and this interview is concluded.

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File No. 9110251

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD CACHIA

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 2 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Division. I'm conducting an interview with Ed Cachia of Engine 53.

Q. Please state your recollections for September 11th.

A. As far as that particular day, we were in the firehouse cleaning the kitchen, and a member had come in from the house watch and said put on Channel 7, whatever channel it was. He said a plane hit tower one of the World Trade Center, the north tower.

We all ran into the kitchen. Everybody regrouped in the kitchen. We were watching the news, and they had helicopters in the air immediately with the footage. We were discussing more than likely we're going to go down there, this is going to be a big fire.

We all witnessed the second plane hitting the south tower, and with that everybody got kind of psyched up and said we're definitely going to be going down there now, it's definitely

some kind of terrorist act and everybody be safe. Everybody is very concerned.

With that the tone alarm went off, and 53 Engine was called down to the north tower. 43 Truck remained in quarters. As we got on the rig, everybody double-checked their equipment, checked the flashlights and all that.

We headed down. We had a very good chauffeur who went through the park and got us down there pretty quick. I believe we pulled up somewhere on West Street a couple blocks before the towers, the north tower. With that I remember seeing 22 parked in front of us, 13 Truck. They must have gone ahead of us.

We walked towards a command post which was set up by an underground garage across from tower two. There was a chief on both sides of this garage, the entrance and the exit. One was the truck, which was on the southern side. On the northern side of the garage were the engine companies. We were waiting there for our assignments. I believe as we were there a couple companies were assigned into the building. I remember seeing 13 Truck to our right.

Then the jumpers started to take effect as far as everybody's concentration and thoughts. There was a tremendous amount of people jumping from the top floors, and the sound and the vision of it kind of broke everybody's concentration. So with that I remember losing sight or record of 13 Truck, which I believe they soon went in after.

We moved to the top of the hill. I don't remember what companies were in front of us, but we worked our way up to the top of the hill. We were with 44 Engine, I believe. We were about to get our assignment to go into the building, and I remember Chief Ganci on the radio yelling, "There's another plane in the air. I don't want anybody to go into the towers. Everybody stay put."

Then I remember him desperately trying to get information: Is the military going to send a plane up to intercept the plane? He told the chiefs again, "Make sure no companies go in right now. There's another plane up in the air. We don't know what's going on."

With that I remember a chief coming

over to us saying, "53, 44, do me a favor, before you get your assignment, before you go anywhere near this building, I want you to move a couple of rigs so we can get some ambulances in here."

So now that broke up our company. I remember standing there with my officer, Lieutenant Bob Dorritie, and the other members of the company -- Danny Schofield, Louis Giaconelli, Michael Catalano -- went to move some rigs.

As I'm standing with my officer, the people are continuing to jump. Ganci is still on the radio trying desperately to get some information concerning this third plane in the air.

As my officer and I were looking at the south tower, it just gave. It actually gave at a lower floor, not the floor where the plane hit, because we originally had thought there was like an internal detonation explosives because it went in succession, boom, boom, boom, boom, and then the tower came down.

With that everybody was just stunned for a second or two, looking at the tower coming down. Then everybody started to turn towards the

garage. That was it. We were just kind of blown into the garage with all the dust and the debris and material from the building. It came up rapidly right up the street.

As I remember turning, if you were out in the street somewhat, a good amount out in the street, you were kind of blown down the street, where we were kind of forced into the garage. We were very fortunate. There were several companies.

We were encapsulated in this garage for quite some time, maybe 15 minutes or so. You couldn't see. You couldn't breathe. You couldn't even hear because all the residue and material was in your ears and your nose and your mouth.

Then as a few minutes went by, you heard some voices. It was dead silence at first. Just different emotions: How are we going to get out of here? I can't see. I can't breathe. My chest. It was still completely black. You couldn't see an inch in front of your face.

Then I remember an officer saying, "I've got a wall. I've got a wall. I'm going to

hit the wall with the halogen. Follow the sound of the halogen. Come towards me. I've got a wall. We'll get out of here."

As I was on the floor -- I was very fortunate. I landed towards the incline of the garage. I was probably one of the last ones to get into the garage. I felt the incline with my left hand, and I had my light. I remember screaming, "I'm at the entrance. Follow my light." I was telling everybody, "Just follow this light, because this is the way out."

I remember another officer yelling, "How do you know that's the way out? I've got a wall. Come towards the wall." So there was a lot of different emotions and different things going on in everybody's mind at the time.

I started to kind of go up the hill myself, pointing the flashlight towards everybody in the garage, and came across like little tree limbs. At that point you still couldn't see. It was completely blacked out. I knew this was definitely the way to go. Some guys followed me out.

That was it. I remember hearing the

chief's voice. Maybe this is like 15 minutes or so, maybe going a little towards 20 minutes, a little under 20 minutes, everybody kind of followed their way toward the incline of the garage.

The chief said, "We're going to regroup." It started to lighten up just a little bit. It was still kind of dark out but lightened up enough where you saw other people's faces. The chief said, "We have to regroup in another area."

With that guys were asking each other, "How are you doing? Are you all right?" This and that. Guys were starting to regroup little by little. It's still dark out but light enough to see people now where we were standing. People were still jumping from tower two because you could hear the bodies hitting the ground.

Then another chief came over and said, "We have to regroup, but I want everybody to go back into the garage. We're going to have a lifeline set up, and we're going to come out the back of the garage. It's safer." The other chief had said, "We'll walk along West Street and

we'll regroup around the other end of the building."

So with that I remember my officer grabbed me by the shoulder and said we're going to go back through the garage. It's going to be safer. I remember him yelling out to a few other people too we'll go through the garage, it's a lot safer, because at this point in time it's still kind of dark out. People were still jumping. There still was a little confusion as to what was down the block from the collapse.

So a few guys regrouped on top of the garage and I believe started to walk along West Street on the outside. I walked back into the underground garage with my officer and several other guys. There was a lifeline set up, and we came out the rear of this building -- I don't know what building it was -- by the marina.

At that point in time, everybody got out the rear, and my officer and I, Bob Dorritie, was standing there. There was the chief that initiated the entire removal. My officer said to the chief, "Chief, I'm missing a couple of guys. I don't know where they are."

At that point in time, myself, Louis Giaconelli and my officer were the three left standing there with the chief. The chief said, "Send one of your guys back into the building. Maybe they're in the building somewhere. And you two guys stay out here in case they do come out." So I stood there with my officer, and we sent Giaconelli back into the building.

At that point in time, we're looking up at the north tower. I remember my officer saying, "I have a feeling this one is going to come down too." Just as he said that, that tower came down it looked like at the point of impact. We actually witnessed both towers coming down visually. We happened to be looking at that particular time. With that, the tower came down.

We ran towards the marina to seek shelter, and all the debris came over the building we were behind. We were kind of buried a second time with light debris, my officer being ahead of me by the boats, and I just didn't quite make it that far. I just hit the ground and hoped for the best.

You could hear the steel beams coming

down. They flew everywhere. That was it. There's another point in time you couldn't see, couldn't breathe, for at least another ten minutes or so.

I remember finally getting in touch with my officer, calling his name out. It took quite some time, and he had said he couldn't speak because of all the residue in his mouth. I had my mask with me at the time, and I had it on. That was it.

After that we were hoping for the best with Louis Giaconelli who went into the building to look for the other members who were in another place. They moved the rigs and took shelter in the Winter Garden, I believe, at the time of the collapse. We were hoping that he was going to be all right. He had walked out of the building at that time, so we knew he was all right.

So what we did was we walked by the water to regroup in another area, which I don't exactly recollect. We were explaining to the chief we're missing a couple guys. He said, "A lot of guys took refuge in the Winter Garden, which was next door. Let's get some confirmation

before we do anything, but everybody stay here."

Later on we did hook up with the members that we were missing. My officer was extremely concerned and very upset about that. He pursued it wholeheartedly. They regrouped with us.

At that point in time, they were trying to organize some kind of search for the missing members that were caught in the collapse. I remember walking towards tower two, basically back towards the front of the garage where we regrouped to leave the area. We wound up back in that area.

I remember seeing Chief Visconti very visibly upset, standing on a pile of rubble. It must have been a story or two high in that area. He was explaining that we're going to create a line. We're all going to walk across the rubble as wide as we can, and we're going to search every little nook and cranny and hole or cabin, whatever we can find. Where there's a space, you're going to look for the brothers that might have got caught in the collapse.

At that point in time, we did that,

this being maybe half an hour from the point in time of actually leaving that marina area, maybe half an hour after that. I remember several guys came across a fireman's body here, a fireman's body there, a helmet. You saw the back of someone's bunker gear, his legs, a rig twisted under the rubble. Basically that was it.

There wasn't the equipment at the time to dig anybody out, because of the twisted steel. So we put markers for the bodies. They would try and get as deep as possible and close to a body to see if there was a pulse. If there was a confirmation that this person didn't make it, they would mark off the area and we would continue forward, hopefully to find someone that was still alive.

We did that for some time. The inhalation of the dust and the initial collapse just was overwhelming. You were just choking and coughing on your own phlegm and this and that. So we did that maybe 45 minutes or an hour or so.

Then my company and I, we regrouped in another area just to get a breather, because at that particular time more and more firemen were

coming in. My officer said, "Look, we've got to really just take a break here. We're really overloading ourselves here," because he saw our condition. We were kind of waning at that point in time from exhaustion.

So that was it. We went back to another staging area. We regrouped. We replenished water. Basically that was the last thing I remember, we regrouped. At that point in time, other members from our company met us at that area, and they were going off into the area to search also.

I myself personally had my eyes encrusted with the cement and lime dust. The second I stopped working, I couldn't even keep my eyes open. So my officer said, "Look, we've got to get you to see the eye doctor right away," because my eyes were bloodshot red and I couldn't even keep them open at that point, knowing that this was it, we're going to take a break, more guys are coming in.

Then I remember it was a little while after that we all went to the triage center, and everybody was getting treated for eye injuries.

Then they said they felt that we had cornea damage so we should go right to a hospital.

So my officer and myself, I think Mike Catalano and Louis Giaconelli went to Cornell. That was it. That was it for us. We were examined.

Q. Thank you very much.

CHIEF KENAHAN: This concludes the interview. The time now is 2:16.

File No. 9110252

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN COLON

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is 1:35 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with John Colon of Ladder 43 about the events on September 11.

Q. Please tell us what you know from that day.

A. Well, I'm John Colon, I was a chauffeur for 43 Truck that morning. We were watching TV and we got a run to 43 Street and Lexington Avenue for a person trapped in a revolving door. We go from here from 102 Street and 3 Avenue and it was a 10-91. Then we got called to the World Trade Center. We kept hearing what was going on. I made a right on 57 Street. I went down the West Side Highway and we parked around 4 blocks away, 5 blocks away. We got out of the rig, we got ourselves organized.

We started, not running, but walking fast towards the -- towards one of the buildings. We didn't see whether the first building was down. We really couldn't tell. When we got about approximately a block, block and a half away, the building started coming down. We stopped, we paused because we were in awe. The whole building starts coming down. We turn

around, we run. Luckily we got into a loading dock and I asked the junior guy, Jerry Suden, to force open a chain.

We got in there. The whole building came running down, came falling down. We waited a few minutes. We regrouped, we went back to, I presume it was the second tower, the building that came down, that we were looking at. There was numerous fires all over the place. The officer, Glen Rohan, told Jerry Suden to put out car fires. There were car fires. The rigs were on fire. Jerry got a hose line, started putting the fires out.

We climbed up a 35 foot portable ladder and we helped get the officer from Engine 1, who was deceased. We continued from there. I don't know how much more I could tell you. I could tell you what we did all day long.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: No, that's not really what we are interested in.

Q. So as far as you know, you didn't see any companies go into any particular position prior to the collapse?

A. No, not at all. No, we didn't. We saw the rigs parked there, but I have no idea where their

positions were.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, thanks a lot. This concludes the interview. The time is 1:35.

File No. 9110253

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BANACISKI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 6, 2001. The time is 3:30 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Rich Banaciski of Ladder 22.

Q. Please tell us the events of September 11 as you recall them?

A. We got the alarm for us to respond, just, I would say, a minute after the second plane had hit the tower. Then they actually came over the voice alarm. Actually told the companies to respond outlet. We responded in and it was all the west side companies were actually all running down together, down the West Side Highway, because it was closed going northbound. So we could see what was going on, the two towers, both of them burning pretty good and then we got into, down to the site. We were at the corner of West and Vesey. That's where we parked the rig, in front of the Verizon building.

We were told to bring extra cylinders. We each brought our extra cylinders and we brought our rollups, the whole thing, and we reported in to the command post, which was in front of -- I think it was

the Merrill Lynch building. There was a parking garage. There were two ramps that went in that parking garage.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street. We reported in to there and I remember they had the command post set up. They were telling the engines to the one side, all the trucks to the other side, put your cylinders in the middle. We were there. They were getting the command structure going. I just remember we were -- initially we were out by the street and they started having jumpers, so they all kind of moved back towards the parking garage, towards the building, so nothing would come down on us.

We were there I don't know, maybe 10, 15 minutes and then I just remember there was just an explosion. It seemed like on television they blow up these buildings. It seemed like it was going all the way around like a belt, all these explosions. Everybody just said run and we all turned around and we ran into the parking garage because that's basically where we were. Running forward would be running towards it. Not thinking that this building is coming down. We just thought there was going to be a big

explosion, stuff was going to come down.

There was just a tremendous cloud that came into the parking garage. Somebody actually laid out a search rope, I think it was the officer of 76 Engine too, Lieutenant Farrington. He laid out a search rope so some of the guys could find their way to a back door, set up a back staircase in the Merrill Lynch building. We followed that up and we ended up coming out behind the building where the Marina is. Back in there. A lot of guys made their way out there.

We kind of -- from there we kind of regrouped together because we lost each other when the building came down. We all ran, so we kind of regrouped there, got ourselves together. Then there was a lot of people not knowing what to do, do you know what I mean.

I said to the officer, I'm going to go look for our chauffeur and I knew he parked the rig right in front of the Verizon building. I went up there. I started looking for him. He had moved the rig, not knowing now -- now I know, but he had moved the rig. I'm not exactly sure where he put it, but I went to go look for him because I couldn't get him on the radio due to the amount of radio traffic. People looking for this guy, this guy, companies looking for their own

guys.

So I was kind of looking around over there, up and down West Street and looking on Vesey and I just remember there was a police officer standing there and he just started saying, it's starting to lean, it's starting to lean. I remember looking up, looking at the second building and just seeing it starting to move. I just started running back down Vesey towards the water again to where I had come from. That's -- the second building came down there.

So we kind of -- same thing, there was a time period where people were kind of in shock, not knowing what to do. I just remember we finally said we got to go somewhere now. We got to figure out what's going on.

I remember going back up Vesey to West and then they were telling us to go north. Go north up on West Street, because there is a foot bridge north, like an arched foot bridge. Had everybody going north of that. We will regroup up there.

I just remember that's when I started seeing all the guys coming in from home, all the guys from the company and we actually -- everybody from this house, we stuck together and we actually from there, a little

bit of time, maybe an hour or so, they actually started telling us to go here, go there. They moved us from one spot, they moved us on to Vesey again. Because then they were worried about -- we actually searched the Verizon building, because there was reports of firemen there. Basically our whole house searched that building.

They told us to get out of there because they were worried about 7 World Trade Center, which is right behind it, coming down. We were up on the upper floors of the Verizon building looking at it. You could just see the whole bottom corner of the building was gone. We could look right out over to where the Trade Centers were because we were that high up. Looking over the smaller buildings. I just remember it was tremendous, tremendous fires going on.

Finally they pulled us out. They said all right, get out of that building because that 7, they were really worried about. They pulled us out of there and then they regrouped everybody on Vesey Street, between the water and West Street. They put everybody back in there.

Finally it did come down. From there -- this is much later on in the day, because every day we were

so worried about that building we didn't really want to get people close. They were trying to limit the amount of people that were in there. Finally it did come down. That's when they let the guys go on. I just remember we started searching around all the rigs.

That was basically the rest of the day, the rest of the night. We were searching around rigs looking for men. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right.

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you very much for your cooperation. The time now is 3:45 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110254

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BATTISTA

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 4:49 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Battista of Engine 76.

Q. Richard, explain to us what you remember on September 11.

A. Well, September 11, the day started out normally just like any other day. The men had gotten up for breakfast and I turned on the channel, I turned on the news TV and we saw that one of the World Trade Center towers had been struck by an airplane. At that time we thought it was an accident. Shortly after, the second plane struck the second building. We started receiving our alarms and everybody came over the voice alarm telling us exactly what to do.

Members started to turn out and we made our way downtown. We took a route along the West Side Highway and on our way down there you could see both towers in flames and you could see a lot of smoke in the immediate area. On arrival we got there, the Lieutenant had - Lieutenant Farrington, told us basically what we needed to do as to - just start getting to a staging area and while he was receiving

his orders from the Battalion, we pretty much kept a wait in front of what is now -- I think was the American Express building.

At that time he just told us basically to prepare, getting extra water, whatever else we might have needed for the flight up. I think he was getting reports of possibly going up to a building, one of the floors in the second tower.

Q. North tower or the south tower?

A. Sorry, the north tower. At this time, I had just been waiting for a while, and all I could remember from my vantage point was seeing civilians jump out of the buildings in the west side of the tower and landing around the surrounding streets. At that time, to be honest I didn't really focus too much on what was going on around me because I was sort of fixated on what was happening up above, so I didn't really get too much of a time to notice what was happening immediately around me. I know there was a lot of people running back and forth and there was havoc, but it didn't really dawn upon me at that time that I should be aware of my immediate surroundings.

Once they started falling, we got a report of a firefighter being injured, from someone maybe

falling, so we decided to move back further away from the tower. I remember specifically the command post, which may have been, I don't know, maybe 40 feet in front of us, something in that nature. When I saw that, Lieutenant Farrington told us to move back so we were sort of underneath a garage area when we first heard reports or guys yelling that one of the towers was coming down. I was able to stick my head out and look up a bit and once I saw that I just immediately turned around and ran into the building.

Within seconds everything was pitch dark. I remember something actually hit me on my shoulder, what it was I don't know. It could have been a helmet, it could have been something that hit me on my left shoulder. Even though we weren't immediately in front of the south tower, in that vicinity, because I wasn't able to see what was coming down around me, I thought maybe it was a piece of the building or something, so at that point I just ducked into a corner and put my -- rolled up in a fetal position, just balled up and waiting for the worst to be over.

Once things settled down I heard firefighters asking for help. Someone actually stated oh, I have asthma. I can't breathe, whatever. So I was one of

the few firefighters that I remember who actually had my cylinder on my back, because some of the firefighters had actually put them down to rest, because we had been waiting for a while.

At this point I turned on my flashlight and I tried to look for anyone that I might be able to assist within the garage area, keeping in mind I didn't know how badly affected the building I was in was. I just knew it was pitch black in front. I couldn't see out where I came in from originally, so I thought who knows, maybe we are underneath or trapped as well.

After some of the haze started clearing, we started seeing bits of light, but we couldn't exactly see the entrance. Lieutenant Farrington had the forethought of getting a search rope tied off to a bannister and made his way out to the back of the building heading towards the west river. He started calling out to the members of the 76 and other companies. We found the line and made our way out the building and back down under some steps and coming out, surfacing on the other side.

At that time I really don't remember too many other faces, because myself, I have a little over a year on the job, so I really don't know too many other

people from surrounding companies, just a few familiar faces.

I do remember once we made it out the back of the building, running towards the river and I saw several members of our truck company, 22 Truck. Those were the only distinguishing faces I could make out. Not only was it hard to see, but a lot of helmets were covered with soot at that point after we made it out the back, so it was difficult to even see some of the numbers, even if I did look for it.

At that point we waited by the river and tried to gather everyone because all the members who were in the Engine that day, I think two of the members might have gone a different way, so we were waiting to catch up with them and then we were waiting to make a voice communication with them over the handy talky, but there was just so much confusion that that wasn't able to happen right away.

Eventually we did meet up with them and we started walking up north when the second tower collapsed. At this point that walk turned into a run very quickly and we made our way to, I believe it's Vesey or on West Street, and started going up West Street until we were able to come to another meeting

point.

Other than that, that's pretty much all I can recall at this point.

Q. The point that you are just talking about now, had the second tower come down yet or not?

A. No.

Q. What happened after you met at that point, did you go back at all or did you stay up there when the second tower came down?

A. Once we made it out to that meeting point where the Chiefs were trying to get a head count over on West Street, I was (inaudible) for a message from the Chief's aide and found out that we had to go back in eventually to find -- to see how many members we could find. This took some time, because like I said, everything was out of whack. People -- whole companies weren't together, so it took some time for us to not only gather the men but gather our bearings, because you could imagine once we were waiting we also got another report of a plane in the area, so we thought possibly at that time that another building around us might get struck.

I remember sitting down and drinking water and trying to get a bite of an apple or something by

that time. When we finally did get our job duties, what we were supposed to do, we started gathering up again and we were told we had to turn out on a spreading fire in what I believe is 6 World Trade Center or the customs building, possibly a bank.

At that point, this was later on, closer to the afternoon maybe, maybe 12, but I'm not exactly sure, during that time --

As I was saying, once the afternoon came around, 12 or 1, by that time I think a new officer had met up with our company, we had Captain Jirak take us into that fire on that 6 World Trade Center where we helped extinguish some fires on the back of that building.

Prior to that, earlier in the day, just to backtrack a little bit, when the second tower collapsed, I remember we were all by the water way, by the river, right on the river's edge, and we were looking in the general direction of the towers, but you couldn't see much, because I believe the other building, maybe 4 World Trade Center or the American Express building, was blocking our view. We couldn't really see nothing but what was up in the sky.

Once we finished extinguishing the fires, we

once again met up on West Street with Captain Jirak and we just waited for further orders to go out and start making searches. That's about it.

Q. Okay, anything else you would like to add?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you Richard, for all your help. This concludes the interview it's now 5:05 p.m.

File No. 9110255

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TODD HEANEY

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is 11:10, and this is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with Todd Heaney of Engine 209.

Q. Please tell us any information you have about September 11.

A. All right. I'm going to -- just a little checklist you gave me, Chief, might help me --

Q. Fine.

A. -- if I can use it.

Q. Whatever way.

A. We were here in quarters, just like everybody else, and we saw what happened. When the second tower got hit, we were dispatched on the fifth alarm.

We left quarters. We took the Brooklyn Bridge to Manhattan. En route we could just see the damage to the towers. It was bad.

We got to Manhattan. I think we were dispatched around ten after nine. We got to Manhattan quickly. We were there in 20 minutes, but maybe less. We were there about 9:30. I don't remember where we parked our apparatus.

We came down Chambers Street off the Brooklyn Bridge, made a left-hand turn onto Broadway, and we took one of the side streets. Might have been Liberty. I don't remember. I don't remember where we parked exactly, but when we got off the rig, we took our roll-ups, and we took some forcible entry tools, search rope, things like that.

No civilians or anything approached us. It was pretty -- pretty much had people evacuated from around the towers at the time. A lot of people on Broadway and the side streets, but when we got down to the complex, I expected to see a lot of people running around, but there weren't. They had most of the people out.

We saw Engine Company 217 on the corner of Liberty and Church. At that time, I had a handy-talkie, and we were supposed to report to the lobby of Tower 2, but our handy-talkie message told us to report to command post at West and Vesey Street.

Now, at that time, they also were telling us to bring additional cylinders, so our rig wasn't parked that far from where we were, which was Liberty and Church, so we went back to the rig and grabbed additional cylinders.

We -- our officer spoke with the officer of 217 for a couple of seconds at the corner of Liberty and Church. I don't know if that's 4 or 5 World Trade Center on the corner, and then there's a Burger King right there.

We proceeded down Liberty towards West Street. We ran into an injured fireman. I don't remember too well, but there was an injured fireman. Dr. Kelly was there. She came out of a building, and they were carrying this fireman. They put him into an ambulance right away.

I asked Dr. Kelly if she needed our help, and she said, "No, we're going to take him to the hospital." We passed 10 and 10's quarters.

I mean, I don't know what they want me to tell them. There were people -- dead people everywhere. I don't know if you want to know that.

Q. What did you do, you know, you can say it. Whatever you saw.

A. You know, they -- the people were just everywhere. Saw some luggage. From the plane, I imagine. A lot of debris from the upper floors, papers and things of that nature.

We ran into a truck company. I don't

remember who they were. This was on Liberty. On the corner of Liberty and West is 90 West Street. I know that building, the old -- an older building with scaffolding all around it. This building is located next to 90 West. It's the building -- it's still standing. It has a big slash in it from the -- that's where we bumped into this truck company.

There was some type of, like, promenade there or steps that could go up into, like, some type of balcony, steps that could go down, and they came up to us and said, "There is no command post. We're going to the lobby." And they went to the lobby.

Our officers -- we were very close to West Street at this time, standing right across the street from Tower 2. We thought we could just go to West Street and look. If there was no command post there, we were going to go to Vesey.

At this time we found an officer's helmet badly crushed with a lot of blood on it. I don't know what company it was. I don't remember. 54, 50 something, but it was an officer's helmet, badly damaged.

We continued down Liberty to West Street, and there was this chief standing there in the middle of

West, a little bit south of West Street, and he had his own little, like, command post in there, you know, like the flip-up, and he was standing there all by himself.

Before we went to go to Vesey, our officer said, "Let me just ask this guy if he wants us to do something from here." That chief told our officer to stand fast right here, and the buildings came down. Tower 2 came town.

We ran across West Street to one of the financial buildings, which is near the south pedestrian overpass.

Q. Right.

A. The doors were locked. We couldn't get in the building. Two of our guys got caught at that door. Me and another guy got caught outside, and that was it. Just -- the buildings came down. It became black as night.

Q. All your members went the same way, like --

A. We all headed towards that building. That's where we all headed towards. I mean, it happened very quickly. You heard the sound, like a crack, like a giant tree branch breaking, and I was frozen. I couldn't even run.

People were just running past me, and I

watched the building, and the top half cracked and started to fall towards Liberty, started to fall towards Liberty Street, towards where 10 and 10 is, and then it just started coming down, and the pounding got louder, and louder and louder, and then we just started running.

Q. What happened with that chief?

A. I don't even know. I don't know what happened, if he made it. I don't know.

Q. I guess he didn't go the same direction you went or --

A. I don't know. He was -- he was a little south of us. We were on the corner of Liberty and West. He was a little south of that, so our officer went to him. We stayed, like, in the middle of West Street right by the Marriott Hotel and the south overpass, the south pedestrian overpass.

When it started to come down, we just ran. There was nothing else to do, and we tried to head towards that building.

Two guys got caught in the revolving door. I didn't find out until later that they were able to break the window and get into the building. Myself and Tommy Hansard, who was working that day, we got caught

outside. There was a -- there was a police officer and a woman civilian, who were kind of, like, curled up on the floor. I kind of just, like, curled up with them. I thought that was it. This is the end. You can't out run the World Trade Center, and the concussion was -- it was deafening, and this hot, super wind blew, and it just got dark as night, and you couldn't breathe because of the dust, and we didn't have our -- we dropped our masks. We had them on, and so we -- really that was it.

I -- I didn't know what happened to everybody else. I thought I was by myself, but I knew -- I knew what direction I was facing. I knew that that building we were running to was the west side, and that if we could make it to the west side, we'd hit the water, and maybe we'd be able to get away, so I crawled along the side of the building, and I had this police officer and this woman with me. They held onto me, and I crawled along the wall until I got to the corner, and I made the right, and we just kept crawling.

Along the way, I found a fireman's helmet from 101, and I picked it up, and I kept calling out to 101 on the way there. Nobody answered. Other companies would answer. I don't remember who answered,

but it wasn't 101.

We crawled to just about the end of this building, and we got to the west side where it was a little bit clearer. We got into a restaurant and dropped those two people off there.

Now, I don't think I bumped into my guys again. I went back to where we were to try to find our gear, and I still had the guy's helmet in my hand, and I kept calling out for him, and he didn't answer, so I put the helmet back down basically where I found it.

When I got to the front of the building, it tossed rigs down the street like it was -- like they were toys. They were upside down, on fire. There was a large chunk of the facade basically where we were standing. I didn't know where the officer was or what happened to that chief, but I found Tommy Hansard, the guy who was caught outside with me.

We went back to the west side because it was clearer, and then we found our other guys. They had went through the building and came out basically on the other end, so we regrouped there. We started to head back. We weren't on Liberty. It would be the next street north of Liberty, and we were heading back towards the towers, and we found three firemen

climbing -- just coming up out of the rubble. Two were trying to help one, so me and another guy took him. He had a bad head wound.

While we were down by the water dropping off the civilians I was with and that cop -- there was an ESU cop or someone there who said, "I have medical equipment," so I remembered him saying that, and we brought this officer to him, and he had a few people. There was even -- there was a police launch boat there.

It cleared -- the air cleared pretty good down by the water, so we dropped him off, and we started heading back. I don't remember what street we were on. I don't remember exact -- I really don't remember where we were, but as we were heading back, the next tower came down, and again we were just totally engulfed in just debris, and we just curled up next to a building until it blew away.

We made our way back, and everything was gone. Everything was gone. It was gone.

Q. With the second collapse, did you see anything?

A. No, we weren't close enough to the second collapse, plus the dust cloud from the first -- I

couldn't even see the tower. I knew where it was, you know. I mean, you could hear the fire.

You had a good idea where it was, but you couldn't see it any more, so instead of walking straight down the block, we just figured that we headed -- we were now more north than we were when we were at the south tower, so we're right near the north tower.

We were figuring if the second tower -- if the Tower 2 came down, Tower 1's coming down, too. Just don't know when, so instead of walking straight down the street, we headed a block south, and then headed east to go back to the towers.

Just figured if the towers are going to come down, we'd put a block between us, we might be able to make it. Just knew that there were guys in the tower. We knew there were guys in the tower. We saw them coming -- I saw them running out of the building, and I knew they didn't make it, and there is no way those guys I saw emerging from the tower were going to make it.

We got back to basically where the Marriott Hotel was. That's the only landmark I can remember, that and the south pedestrian walk, and we got split up

from there. They were trying to get water. Marine companies pulled in at the foot of one of the streets, and they just started laying hose, and I just started helping out with that.

My eyes were really bad at this point. I -- they were just really bad, and they bothered me and progressively got worse as the day went on.

I don't know where my company went, but at some point on that street I ran into 102. 102 truck was housed with us, and they were sent to the staging area at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel on the Brooklyn side when this happened. They ended up walking through the tunnel, and by the time they came out, the towers were down, but they met up with me at Tower 2 basically, what was left of Tower 2.

I don't know where my officer was. I didn't know where my chauffeur was. I didn't see them again. We started stretching hose. We couldn't get water for anything. The satellite units were showing up. I saw the manifolds being brought in.

Officers were pleading for help to try and get a line in place, so I just stayed with them and helped stretch a line. There was a rig there that we were stretching hose off of. I don't know what rig it

was. I saw 113 truck, their rig. It was basically intact, but heavily damaged.

I remember getting a drink of water out of their cooler there, and then we just started to put out the car fires, and the rigs were going, ambulances. I mean, there must have been 50 of these things burning heavily. The Scott cylinders and the oxygen cylinders were all letting go. They were all blowing up left and right.

It was quiet in the beginning, but then the radio transmissions started on the radio, and they just didn't stop, who was stuck here. I remember hearing 9 truck being stuck in a staircase and then trying to figure out how to get to them. I think it was 9 truck. I don't know. I don't know what truck it was.

Q. It was 6.

A. Was it 6? I heard that whole transmission of them trying to tell where they were, and them not even knowing that the building was gone, and -- but I knew that they had help. I knew that people were going for them.

I ended up with an officer who seemed to be by himself trying to put out these car fires, so I just hooked up with him, and we put out a bunch of them.

By this time, it was really, really getting hard to see. My eyes were really, really bad. I tried to get in touch with my officer several times. The radio traffic really, really started getting bad, because people were trapped. People were trying to find out who was where.

It was very hard to get through. I heard him calling me. I tried to respond. I don't know if he ever got the message. I don't think I even saw him again that day.

Time went by very quickly. Before I knew it, it was four o'clock in the afternoon, something like that, and I was losing it. I was pretty shot. [redacted] I couldn't really see too good.

So I went up to -- I went up to Broadway. Someone said that they were -- a recall was being held at City Hall Park, and I went up to -- I went up there and I saw some of the guys from this firehouse who reported for the recall, and I told them what I knew.

I knew that 102 was okay. I saw them in the collapse. The collapses had already occurred, and they

were still alive, all of them. I told them who I knew was still alive from 209. Again, I didn't know what happened to the chauffeur or the officer. I just told them who was alive.

I went back down. I went back down. I tried to -- I flushed my eyes out with water. It wasn't helping. I went back down. Finally, one of the guys found me, and they put me in an ambulance, and they sent me to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. They treated me there, and they put something in my eyes that numbed them, and like a miracle I could see again, and it didn't hurt. So I left there. I told them I'm okay, and I went back.

And the last thing I remember was being on Church Street, seeing 4 and 5 World Trade Center blazing. Every floor of the building was going, and just thousands and thousands of people coming now -- our guys, cops, people -- I don't know. Just thousands of people just started showing up.

Within a half an hour, that medicine they gave me wore off, and I was totally blind again. One of the guys found me. It happened to be one of the guys from this firehouse found me wandering around. I couldn't see. I was -- I was shot. I just couldn't do

anything any more, and they sent me to Pace University, where I got triaged and sent to the hospital from there. And that's all.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thanks for your help, Todd.

And the time now is 11:30. This concludes the interview.

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File No. 9110256

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRIAN FITZPATRICK

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 4:00 o'clock p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department from the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Brian Fitzpatrick, Firefighter Sixth Grade from Ladder 22.

Q. Hi, Brian. Just tell us in your own words what happened.

A. I'd say that morning, on September 11th, it was 8:48 a.m., one gentleman at house watch, one of the firefighters, saw on the news flash that Tower 1 was hit, the north tower was hit by a plane. Everybody started getting their gear ready because we knew we were going. I was actually kind of excited because I thought it was going to be a big job. We didn't know the size of the plane that hit it. We just saw a lot of smoke. Our tones went off and it was a voice alarm and they were basically just calling companies off. It basically ran up the west side. I remember it going from 35, 40, 74, 25, straight up the west side they were calling us, and we responded. I'm almost 100 percent sure that we were en route pretty much when the second plane hit. I don't remember seeing it on the news when the second plane hit. So I'm almost 100 percent sure we were en route.

When we got down to the scene, it was pretty hectic. We pulled up close to the north tower and then saw that it was pretty ugly, a lot of debris falling, a lot of people running. We moved the rig and went to the west side command post. Ladder 22 and Ladder 25 I remember seeing go to the north tower. I mean, I apologize, the south tower. We were basically standing fast just watching what was going on.

I remember hearing people shouting about a third plane being in the air. I don't know if that's what held us back from going right away. But we waited basically until I saw our Lieutenant Farrington coming back and we thought he had our orders where we were going. So we were grabbing our gear and we were walking out to meet him and we were in front of the parking garage in front of 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch building, which is basically on the southwest corner of the north tower and right across the street from the Vista International Hotel, and that's when we heard a tremendous noise and it was coming from the south tower, and we looked up and it was coming down.

I basically froze and Rich Banaciski shoved me and told me to run, and I remember there being a

large number of people behind us as we turned to run. I remember making it into the tunnel and it was this incredible amount of wind, debris, heat. I remember falling down, getting back up, and the guys were just falling all over each other. It wasn't like we were trying to kill each other, but it was all bets were off, just run.

I made a right in the tunnel. I was with some other guys. I can't remember the engine company. They're from the east side. They were trying to force a door in the right of the tunnel and it turned out to be a storage shed. I remember when I fell down, I picked up a mask and I put the mask on and I was buddy breathing with a few of the guys because the air was so thick and pulling out like baseball clumps of debris out of your mouth. We knew that we couldn't force that door.

My Lieutenant, Farrington, from Engine 76, we heard him screaming and banging his tool against something metal and I distinctly remember hearing his voice. He had found the exit to the back of 2 World Financial Center, and it was a maze of stairways, but we got out. He found the exit, set up a search rope, brought it back, and he got out about I'd probably say

40 guys out of the tunnel.

Then we exited out by the marina, the North Cove Yacht Harbor, where we all basically just took a knee and we waited a couple of minutes. Everybody was in shock. We didn't know what happened. We just thought it was debris or an explosion or a secondary explosion or another bomb inside the building or another plane.

We got up and we made our way around through what turned out to be the North End Avenue and we hit Vesey. I'd say probably 25 minutes had elapsed by now. We were walking up Vesey and we got to Vesey and the West Side Highway and we were making the turn. I remember seeing the bridge as we turned and somebody came running by us saying the north tower was leaning. I didn't even know the south tower fell yet. I looked up and I actually saw the antenna coming down.

I just took off running again. I headed straight down Vesey. I wound up breaking up with the rest of my company, and I wound up by the railing by the water. I remember there was a bunch of senior men there and they were getting out of their bunker gear and they were getting ready to jump in the water because you could see ferries out in the distance

waving us on. They said, "Get out of your gear. We're going in the water."

When I was younger, I used to work out in the Hamptons on people's boats and I remember currents. I knew the currents down there would just kill us, you know, they'd find us in South Jersey. So I just buried myself in the fence and hoped for the best.

The debris cloud pretty much caught us, but it seemed like right by the time it hit North End it stopped. I think the wind was blowing a different direction. It was pulling it all east. That's what it turned out to be because I remember the command post, everything that was set up later was set up on the west side because the wind was taking all the smoke and debris east.

I wandered around looking for the rest of my company, which was Rich Banaciski, Richie Batista, Billy Reynolds, George Rodriguez, and George was with the rig and we were sure that he was under it, and Lieutenant Farrington. It took me, if I had to guess, I'd probably say about 45 minutes before I found the rest of my company and that was on the West Side Highway and everybody was just lying on the West Side Highway. By that time there was just hordes of firemen

coming down the West Side Highway whatever way they could get there. I guess it was the recall. I don't know if that was hours later, but I remember seeing guys that weren't working that day that came down, and we were all just waiting to get back in.

When they let us back in, it was early afternoon. I'd say it was probably 1:30, 2:00 o'clock. We searched 140 West, the New York Telephone Company building, for 15, 16 floors. It was myself, George Rodriguez, Doug Robinson, a battalion aide, and Captain Pellegrinelli. We forced numerous amounts of doors, but we were basically searching in the wreckage of, if you were on West Side Highway, it would be the exposure four side of the telephone company building. It had gaping, massive holes that you could fit a house in, you know, what it looked like from the inside. So we basically crawled in the rubble there and looked for victims on each floor because the holes took up several floors.

We heard a Mayday for everybody to get out of the building -- no, I'm sorry, an urgent, three urgents, and we came out of the building. I'd say that was like an hour and a half, two hours later. We were then positioned on Vesey Street between North End and

the West Side Highway because there was an imminent collapse on 7 World Trade, and it did collapse.

As far as other companies, I don't know. I knew from sticking my head out the window going down that we were by 35 and 40. I think they were ahead of us when we pulled in. I'm sorry. 35 Truck and I can't remember the engine down there, 25, 74, I think 47 was there.

Q. These are all the rigs that were on West street?

A. Yes. We were headed down together. From what I saw, we all pretty much met up on the West Side Highway at the same time because the alarms went off and we're all fairly the same distance from the on ramps.

That's about it. That's my story. I wish I could be more helpful.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: No, that's been fine. You've been very helpful. Thank you for your cooperation.

THE WITNESS: No problem.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 4:10 and this interview is completed.

File No. 9110257

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER LOUIS GIACONELLI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 6:52 p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Louis Giaconelli.

Q. Please tell us anything you remember about the events of September 11th.

A. I reported in for work before the change of tours and I was already ready to drive. I was assigned chauffeur that day in Engine 53. I was upstairs in the bunk room when the first plane hit the first tower. I heard some of the other firefighters talking about it. I slid the pole, made sure I had all my gear on the rig and made sure that the rig was full of fuel.

Then the second plane hit the second tower. I was pretty sure after the first plane had hit the first tower that we'd be going down there, and when the second plane hit, I definitely knew we were going down there. Then we were assigned on the second fifth alarm to the second tower that was struck.

I started to drive down there. I went on various streets. I do remember going down Lexington Avenue to 97th Street, I believe, and then I went down 5th Avenue to the 90th Street entrance to Central Park,

and I went down Central Park Drive on the east side to 72nd Street, across 72nd Street, and I got on the West Drive and came out of the park by Tavern on the Green on 66th Street, I think, and Central Park West. I went down Broadway to 57th Street, made a right, and I went to 11th Avenue, where we started to pick up radio transmissions that we were to respond down 11th Avenue because the police had opened up lanes for us or they had corridors open for us. So I went down 11th Avenue and, sure enough, we picked up a few police cars in front of us or vans and we made it down there pretty quick.

When I got there, there were already a significant amount of rigs there, and I found a parking spot along the right-hand side, along the west side of West Street, and I actually was close to a hydrant that I could have hooked up to if I had to. I noticed that rigs were parked on both sides of the street and that there was a lane open straight down.

So when we got there, we were driving down, obviously, we had a clear view of the towers. We knew that both of them were on fire. There were thousands of people running up West Street when we were driving down, thousands of people. So I parked the rig.

Everybody got out, got their masks on, and I yelled to my officer, I said, "I'm not going to stay here with the rig." I said, "I'm going to come with you guys." He said, "Yeah, definitely." So I had all my bunker gear with me and I had a spare mask. So I put it all on and I went down with the company. We walked down West Street and we reported in to the command post staging area.

As we were walking down, I was just looking up and I saw it was a lot of smoke, but it was up high. It was a crystal clear day and there was a lot of stuff in the air, in the sky, floating around, and I was trying to get my bearings. I saw something weird coming off the building and I looked up and I didn't know what it was and I was trying to get a sense of what was happening, if things were falling on us, but it turned out they were bodies. There were people jumping off the top of the buildings. So then I realized how bad it was up there.

We got in to the command post staging area and my officer Reported in and tried to get us an assignment. So we stood in the staging area, which was in the driveway to an underground garage going into the World Financial Center. We stood there for a few

minutes and made sure we had all our gear on, and we were trying to figure out what was going on and it was a calamity. A lot of smoke, a lot of debris coming down, bodies coming down, landing right in front of us.

So while we were waiting to get our assignment, Captain John Sudnik, who I knew from 23 Engine, I think, was giving out the assignments and he asked my officer if we could move some rigs to make sure the lanes were clear coming down to the World Financial Center. So it was myself -- I wasn't the only chauffeur working. I know Kevin McGovern was working, too. He was a chauffeur. Eddie Cachia was working also and he was a chauffeur. So we had those two guys and two probies with us.

So between the three of us, we dropped our masks and all our gear, we kept our bunker gear on, though, and we walked back up West Street to see if any rigs had to be moved, like he asked us to do, and we found one or two. I know I myself moved one or two, I don't recall, that were blocking the path a little bit, and I got them out of the way. Then we got together again and we all started walking back down West Street.

I remember passing underneath that north

pedestrian bridge, and I was just about to get back to the entrance to the driveway to the staging area and I heard this sound, and it was like a train, like a huge train rumbling, and I knew that something was coming off the building, but I didn't know what it was. So I think Lieutenant Doherty and Eddie Cachia were in front of me. We were kind of walking in single file, and I think those two guys were in front of me and I was third or fourth. I don't recall. I know the two probies were behind me and I think Kevin McGovern was a little behind me, too.

So I remember Lieutenant Doherty and Eddie Cachia went for the driveway and I said to myself I wasn't going to make it, but I knew I had to find someplace to ditch. So I looked to my right and a High-Rise 2 Unit, which I didn't notice at the time what it was, but I figured out later a High-Rise 2 Unit was parked on the grass to the right of the staging area driveway and just in front of the entrance to the big glass atrium going into the World Financial Center. I didn't think I could make it to the entrance of the building. I think that's where Kevin McGovern went, and I don't know where the probies went.

So I just dove underneath the High-Rise 2

Unit. I dove underneath there, and just as I got underneath there, the first building had collapsed. I didn't realize the whole building had collapsed. I knew something significant had come down, but I didn't realize at the time that it was the whole building. So I dove under the rig and there was another guy underneath there with me. It turned out he was a fire patrolman. He wasn't a firefighter. But we were under the rig and the next thing I knew, I heard the crash, I felt the impact, and it went from day to night.

We couldn't see anything. I couldn't see anything, and then, of course, we couldn't breathe anymore, and the guy next to me starts yelling that he couldn't breathe, couldn't breathe. I had my hood around my neck and I was able to get it up over my nose, and between breathing through my hood and into my coat, I was able to breathe for a while. I just laid there for a few minutes and tried to stay calm and get the other guy calmed down and I just waited until I thought everything was safe again.

So after a few minutes we were able to see some light again, and I started to crawl out and I dug myself out and then I poked my head out from under the rig. The other guy came out with me and we stood up

and kind of shook each other, made sure we were okay. I said, "Are you all right?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Are you all right?" I said, "Yeah, we're all right."

So with that we kind of went our separate ways, and I just took a quick look around and I don't recall ever looking up. I don't really ever recall looking up. Not that there was anything to see. It was all dust and debris and there really wasn't much to see.

So I made my way back just a couple of feet into the driveway and I went looking for my mask and I found it. It was right where I had left it and it was buried, but I was able to dig it out. Most of our equipment was still all there and everybody was clearly shook. I don't mean shook that they were scared. They obviously had been affected by the impact of this thing, and we were all covered with dust and dirt and debris and you couldn't breathe and that stuff. So I got my mask on, but by the time I got it on and hooked up, I didn't have to put it on my face. I was able to breathe normally. I made my way down into the entrance of the underground garage and into the World Financial Center.

So we decided to make our way up the stairway of that basement of that building up into the upper floors. When I got into the building and we started finding our way in there, we were kind of strung out and I was still with Lieutenant Doherty, I think, and Eddie Cachia. Kevin McGovern and the two probies, I don't know where they were. I remember trying to find my way through this maze down there and I finally found a staircase and made my way up.

Somewhere along in that process I came across the members of Ladder 16. Danny Williams was the officer I remember and I know Stevie Wright was there, Joe Petrich, Oscar Davila, and I can't remember who else. But they had an EMS worker, I don't know if he was a New York City EMS worker, but he was definitely an EMS worker or EMT, on a stretcher, not a board, not a back board, a stretcher, and they asked me if I could help them carry this guy out. I kind of said, "Well, what's wrong with him?" They said, "We think he has a broken leg and a broken arm."

So he was kind of a big guy and they were having a really tough time trying to get him up the stairs because it was a real tight staircase and this guy was big and we had all our gear on. I mean, I had

all my bunker gear on and my mask, and we were trying to carry this guy up. I think there were about four or five guys from Ladder 16, me and maybe one other guy, I don't recall, and we struggled to get this guy up these stairs. We struggled so bad that even at one point I asked the guy if it was possible that he could walk because we were having such a hard time with him, and the guy said he didn't think so.

Anyway, we wound up carrying him up. I don't know how many flights of stairs it was, but we got him up. I think it was probably at least three, maybe four flights, and we popped a door and we wound up in the huge atrium or lobby of the World Financial Center. We carried him out and I made it through the building and came out on the back side of the building. So now I was in I think it's the harbor area. I don't know what it's called.

Q. Marina?

A. The marina area, I guess. So that building is 2 World Financial Center. That's the Merrill Lynch building, I guess.

So I came out on the other side and I found Lieutenant Doherty from 53 and Eddie Cachia from 53 and they were searching around there, and we talked for a

few minutes and made sure we were okay and tried to digest what had happened to us. We started searching around, and I was curious or worried about what had happened to Kevin McGovern and the two probies. Somehow or another they went in one direction and I went in the other. I wound up going into, looking at the map here, it says the Winter Garden, which was this glass atrium that I was in.

So I went into the glass atrium and I started working my way to the front of the building. When I was in there, it was pretty desolate. I didn't see any other firefighters and I really didn't see any other people, except I do remember seeing a few civilians walking around and they looked like they were workers from the building, not us, but maintenance workers that had semi-uniforms on.

So I started working my way to the front of the building and I got to the front door of the building. When I got to the front door of the building, I took a quick look up and I saw that the north tower was directly in front of me, still burning, and I don't really remember looking for the south tower, but my view might have been obstructed at that point because the Winter Garden door was a little set

back from the World Financial Center entrance.

So I took a few steps outside the entrance of the building onto the stairway there, and the High-Rise 2 Unit that I had been under when the first building came down was parked right there on the right-hand side on the grass. I took a few steps and I was looking around, and the next thing I knew, I heard the same sound that I'd heard when the first building had come down. So I didn't have to look up. I knew what the sound was. I didn't have to look up. It was the same sound I had heard when the first building came down.

So, again, I was caught out in the open and I didn't really know where to go. I guess instantly I decided not to go under the High-Rise 2 Unit. I decided to turn and try and run back into the building. So that's what I did.

As I ran through the door, I remember saying to myself close the door behind you, close the door behind you. But, of course, I didn't really have time to do that or even attempt it. I just tried to run as fast as I could, and I didn't get very far. The building came down and, of course, the concussion from the impact blew me down and knocked me down and blew my helmet off my head and sent me flying down I guess it

was the hallway of the main entrance of the building.

There was a tremendous crash and glass and then the same effect that had happened the first time. It went from day to night. A huge, huge blast of hot wind gusting and smoke and dust and all kinds of debris hit me and blew me over and covered me, and the same thing. I just tried to get my head down into my hood and my face inside of my coat where I could try and breathe again because it was the same thing. I couldn't see and I couldn't breathe. It was just a repeat of the same thing that happened to me the first time.

So I waited, it seemed like an eternity, but I waited a few seconds, and then, of course, I remembered that I had my mask on my back this time. So I reached back and turned it on or made sure it was on, I don't recall, and grabbed the face piece. Of course, I blew into the face piece like you're supposed to do and it didn't make any difference. The face piece was full of debris and dust and who knows what else. I took a couple of quick hits off it and I got two mouthfuls and nosefuls and my eyes all full of stuff that was in the mask and the stuff that was all around me.

Eventually that cleared up and I was able to wear the mask. I got my mask on and, of course, I started hearing some screaming and yelling around me. So there obviously were some other people around, and then I remembered that I had seen a few civilians or these maintenance workers in the building to my right as I had walked in, so then now they were to my left.

So I started crawling along the floor because I couldn't see anything, and I was right alongside the wall and I got my right hand on the wall and started following the wall along, and I found my helmet. Hard to believe, but I found my helmet. It had been blown down the hallway a distance and I came across it and I was able to get it on my head. I had also had a flashlight. So I just crawled along the wall, crawled along the wall, and I heard a guy screaming in front of me and, sure enough, I eventually came to him and found him. I grabbed him and told him he was okay, and I just said, "Stay with me and we'll find our way out."

As I started going along, I came across the other people that I heard yelling or screaming in the atrium. So I got them all together and I had them all hold on to me or follow me along the wall and somehow or another I saw light. Even though it was pitch black

where I was and we couldn't see, I saw light coming from somewhere. I said, "Let's go. Let's see where this light is coming from."

It turned out that it was a storefront and the light was coming from another atrium that was behind the store that was in the atrium. I don't remember if the door was open or whatever. I didn't have to force the door, but we were able to open it. Maybe it just swung open. I popped in there and it was clear as a bell in there. We could see and we could breathe. So I got all these people in there.

What these guys were doing, and I give them a lot of credit, these maintenance guys, they had a woman, a black woman, I remember, and she was kind of large also and they, much to their credit, were trying to carry her out of this building. They were inside the building, but they still got impacted by the collapse of the north tower.

So I got them all into the storefront and got them all calmed down. They were pretty excited and nervous. I got them all calmed down and I said, "Okay. We're okay here. Just stay here," I said, "and I'll find a way out and then I'll come back and get you. So just stay here. I'll find a way out and

I'll come back and get you."

I put my mask back on again and I had my flashlight, the same thing, just followed along the right-hand side of the wall, worked my way around. I went through the whole glass atrium and I found an exit door and I popped out, and again I popped out onto the harbor side of the World Financial Center. So then I got my bearings and I left the door open and I retraced my steps back to the same store that I had left the people in and got them out. I counted heads and I made sure I had, I believe it was seven people. I made sure I had seven, and I said, "Okay. Let's just follow me and we'll just follow our way out." I just followed the wall all the way back and they followed me, and I got them back to that exit door and got them out into the harbor area and that was it. That was the last I saw of them.

Then I started looking around, and it was pretty desolate down there. There was really nobody around. Off in the distance I saw my Lieutenant, Bobby Doherty, and Eddie Cachia from 53, and they had been down by the seawall when the second tower had come down. They said they had wedged themselves up against it and still got blasted there, too, tremendously. I

guess you could say they were kind of far away but really not far away enough, and they were impacted enough that Bobby Doherty said he actually thought he was going to have to jump in the water to get away from it.

So then we regrouped, the three of us, and we didn't know what to do really. It was clear that where we had been had been completely demolished and devastated, and we were in pretty bad shape. Our eyes were full of stuff and, of course, our noses and our mouths were all full of debris and we were trying to breathe. Because we knew we couldn't use our masks constantly. We would run out of air. So in the open air we had to breathe the air. We just couldn't use our tanks for any length of time.

So we started working our way north around the back of the World Financial Center, and I guess we either went through the back, the glass atrium behind the American Express building, or we went on -- I'm looking at the map here. It looks like maybe North End Avenue. I don't recall how we found our way to Vesey Street. But somehow or another we found our way to Vesey Street, and then we went over to West Street and we started to walk north.

We went north about as far as Barclay, I believe, and we sat down along the wall there and we tried to collect our thoughts and figure out what to do and what had happened to us and all that. I don't think we ever really realized that the two buildings had come down. I guess we maybe knew it but we weren't sure. We sat down and, again, we were surrounded by hundreds of people, a lot of cops. Everybody was covered with dirt and dust and debris.

I noticed a lot of people had cell phones. So for some reason or another we asked somebody if we could use their cell phone, and Kevin McGovern called his wife and we asked his wife to notify my family and Bobby Doherty's family that we were okay.

Then we sat there for a few minutes and we came across a lot of people, but I remember specifically running into Pete Clinton, who was the chauffeur of Engine 22, and Joey Graziano, who was the chauffeur of Ladder 13, and they looked shook, but Pete Clinton was all banged up. He wasn't wearing bunker gear. He was driving. He just had shorts on and a work shirt, and he was all banged up and bruised and covered with dust and clearly distraught. Joe Graziano had all his gear on. As it turned out, they were the

only survivors of their company, and I told them to stay with us. They stayed with us for a while, and then we decided to make our way back down West Street back to the site to see what we could do. We didn't stay up there very long, maybe ten or 15 minutes.

So we made our way back down West Street and on the way down I started looking for our rig. I didn't know where our rig was. I couldn't remember where I parked it. Of course, the whole landscape now changed, so I had no idea where it was. So we started walking down West Street and I was looking for the rig, looking for the rig, and I couldn't find it. I thought for sure that it had been crushed.

So we made our way back down as far as we could and started searching around, and I asked somebody if they knew where 53's rig was and somebody, I don't recall who, said they thought they saw it, it was over on the west side, somebody had moved it. So I told Bobby Doherty, "Let's see if we can find the rig," because, obviously, if we could find the rig, we could get some tools and maybe fresh bottles for our masks and start working down at the site.

So all of us took a walk over on Vesey Street and, sure enough, there was the rig. It was hooked up

to one of the marine units. It was already hooked up and pumping water. It was relaying water to another engine and they were supplying a tower ladder with water. I guess they were pouring water I think on the Customs Building. We also noticed that 7 World Financial Center was fully involved there, too.

We started getting whatever gear we needed off the rig, and there was another chauffeur working on 53's rig and he was supplying water. He asked me if I was the chauffeur of 53, and I said yes, I was. He said, "Would you mind taking over here? I'd like to get back to my unit." I said yeah, sure, I would, and I basically operated for the rest of the day while 53's guys went down to the site. I went over there a few times, but I basically operated 53's rig for most of the day pumping water, relaying it to the other engines and the tower ladder.

I did go over to the site a few times to try and help out, but my eyes were very bad and I couldn't really see very well. About 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon, I finally had gotten them washed out once, but it didn't work, and I started going to the triage areas and washing my eyes out, washing my eyes out, and they just weren't getting any better.

I wound up staying down there. I was down there from about 9:20 in the morning until maybe 10:00, 10:30 at night, and we wound up going to the main medical facility and they told me my eyes were no good, they had to take me to the hospital, and they wound up taking me and Eddie Cachia and I think Bobby Doherty, too, to the hospital, where they worked on my eyes and checked me out for anything else that was wrong.

One thing I forgot to say was, after the second building had collapsed and we worked our way up West Street, I had run into the two probies that I had been looking for all morning, Mike Catalano and Dan Schofield, and they were okay. I still to this day don't really know where they went. I don't know if they ran into the Winter Garden glass atrium or if they just went up north on West street after the first building had collapsed, and I don't know where they were when the second building had collapsed.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Well, thanks a lot, Louie. We appreciate your cooperation. The time now is 7:22 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110258

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT PALMIERI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is now 11:08 a.m. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter first Vincent Palmieri of Engine Company Number 6 regarding events of September 11, 2001. We are in the quarters of Engine 4. There is no one else present in the room and the interview begins now.

Q. Say whatever you like.

A. Basically I was on my way into the city that day through New Jersey when I first heard of a plane hitting the Trade Center and I tuned into 1010 WINS to hear what was going on. Being from lower Manhattan, I knew all the companies would be there. As I was going further in on the Turnpike, I started coming in through the Holland Tunnel when the second plane hit. I was able to actually see the Trade Center, both of them, smoke coming from them.

I went through the Holland Tunnel, got in, started heading towards my fire house, which is 6 Engine. I got to 6 Engine and got my gear together, changed, put my uniform on. I took a quick look at the

cars outside quarters so I would have an idea of who was on duty that day, but I really didn't look at the riding list or anything like that. I made a quick mark in the journal so someone would have some sort of idea that I was on my way over. I just started heading over to where I knew the company would be, or the lobby command post would probably be set up in the north tower.

I walked up Park Row, made a right, went down Vesey Street, cut across Vesey Street, crossed Church and started heading towards the entrance of 5 World Trade Center, which is right on that corner. Just as I was about to get maybe about 20 or 30 feet from the entrance of 5 World Trade Center, is when the south tower began to collapse.

I was with a female police sergeant, a group of civilians and I got everybody against the building wall which is right by Borders and Books and we took cover under the overpass of 5 World Trade Center. Then basically the collapse occurred. I wasn't totally sure if we were caught in it or not. Just basically waited until we had some sort of visibility to try to make my way out.

I waited a period of time, I'm not sure of

the time here, because I lost track of time. I waited till I had a little bit of visibility, turned my light on and told everyone to stay with me. I decided the best thing to do would be to get away from the area, since I had no idea of what was going on. We were going to try to head to the end of the building line following the wall and then head diagonally across Church to the opposite corner of Vesey, then try to go up Vesey and get out of here.

I had everybody stay with me. There was one gentleman, a civilian, who was cut pretty bad. I believe it was on his right arm. I told him just follow along. We would get him medical help as soon as I could. As we followed along the wall, I came into a group of ESU officers, so that was right outside of Borders and Books on that corner. They had donned air masks. I think they were either ESU or Port Authority. They weren't firemen. The masks looked different and they weren't in fireman gear.

They were headed actually back towards the entrance of 5 World Trade Center to try to go in the building. I was like, guys, I don't know where you are going, but we don't know what happened. I wouldn't try to go in. Let's get out and find out what's going on

before we go in. They said good idea. They turned around, I said we got to go this way out. They started going along the wall like we were.

When I reached the end of the wall, they went one way and I led, and I stayed with the group of people. I brought them across the street like I said, diagonally across to the northeast corner of Church and Vesey. There was a construction awning up there. I went underneath there. There was a beauty parlor like on the corner. A few stores in off Vesey there was a deli.

Some police officers had already taken the front door to the deli. They took out the glass and they were getting people inside there. There was still a lot of smoke, but visibility was pretty decent, not totally dark.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's 11:12. I had to shut the tape. We were interrupted by somebody coming into the room. We now resume at 11:13 hours.

A. Again, Palmieri. Basically, there was an officer, he took out the door to some sort of deli. He was getting people in there. We were still in a light smoke condition, not too bad, but we didn't know what

was going on. People that I was with and a female sergeant, I told the officer get them in there, one of the guys is hurt bad, you got to get him in an ambulance. I'm going to go back and try to find my company. I just wanted to find my company and find out where they were. I knew where they were probably at, so I turned around and as I'm getting back into Vesey Street a Suburban comes down Vesey Street, a Fire Department Suburban comes down Vesey Street.

A bunch of guys jump out, I go up to the officer who was in the passenger side. I said where are you guys from. They said they are from the Rock, research and development, if I believe correctly. I told them okay.

During this I only had my bunker coat on and my helmet. After the collapse I dropped my bunker pants. I figured we would be walking up 80 flights either way, so I was carrying the bunker pants. I left the bunker pants after the collapse. I only had the coat and a helmet. The officer asked me, are you all right, are you okay? I said yes, I have no mask and no pants. They were gearing up, they were going to go in and try to do a search and find some guys, so I told one of the guys, look, I only got shorts on, I'm ready

to go, do you have an extra pair of bunker pants? He gave me his bunker pants and his boots. I couldn't get a mask from them, but I was able to get an axe and I got a search rope. I think there were 3 firemen and two Lieutenants. They asked me to stay with this other Lieutenant, he seemed a little bit older than the rest of them and he walked with a limp. I don't know any of the guys' names.

There was also an Engine parked on the corner, which would be the southeast corner of Vesey and Church. He was hooked up to a hydrant and he had the spicket going and the water flowing. I went over I told the guys wait up a minute. I washed off, got the stuff out of my eyes, cleared my mouth as best as I could and took a drink.

Then they started heading up Vesey Street, that would be westbound down Vesey, along the World Trade Center site. I was with the other Lieutenant, like I said, so we were maybe a half block behind them. I said Lou look, I know the area down here. I have been here a long time. I don't think it's the best move for us to walk up Vesey Street. We don't even know what happened.

At that point I don't think either of us

could look up. There was still too much smoke to know that the entire south tower had collapsed. We thought maybe a portion collapsed. So I said I think we should go one block north and come down Barclay, which is what we did. We went down Church and started to come down Barclay and that was just me, this Lieutenant and it was actually an off duty former union president, Boyle.

We met up with him. He was looking for his son, who was in 33 Engine that day. The rest of the guys just decided to continue up Vesey Street. I never ran into them again for the rest of the day so I don't know what happened to them.

This officer and I were walking down Barclay Street. I don't know the exact -- how far down we got. Also with Boyle when we heard the same noise that I had heard before. I knew it was the second building starting to collapse, the north tower collapsing. The officer I was with had his officer's tool. We just happened to be under a construction type awning and in front of 2 glass doors to an entrance to one of the buildings on Vesey. I don't remember the exact address, but I know it is DC 37's headquarters, I think.

He made the move, he started to take the front doors. I had the axe. I moved with him. We took the doors, went into the lobby, looking to see if anybody was in the lobby. At this point the building continued to collapse, the building is surrounded by smoke. We ended up meeting an Engine Company, I believe, from Brooklyn in the lobby. Half the company was there. Half of their company was still in the street.

One of the guys was like my officer, an Engine officer and the chauffeur was still out in the street. We made it into the lobby and I was like, there's a lot of dust out there. It doesn't look like the collapse came this far up because the other buildings would have blocked it. So I believe their rig was parked on, you don't have it marked here, and I don't know the name of the street.

Their rig was either - I don't believe it was West Street, this street here. It's between West Street and West Broadway. Between Barclay and Murray. I think it's Greenwich Street. I think that is the name of the street.

Q. Greenwich?

A. Greenwich. I think that's the street they

were on. So he took the search rope and him and one of the guys decided they wanted to go out and find their officer and the engine chauffeur. We said all right, we will wait here. We will give you a few minutes. If you don't come back we will follow the rope out and come get you.

We took a feed and waited for them to come back and the Engine officer and the chauffeur were fine. They just took a feed. They were in the street but they were okay. There was, I don't believe, any serious injuries.

Basically, then we were in the lobby for a few minutes. A couple of guys made phone calls to their wives and stuff. The original officer that I was with from the company from Research and Development, I don't know if he worked there, but he came with them from the Rock, decided to go out on his own and try to find his guys now. I decided I would stay with this Engine Company and operate with them as a company. I tried to get them to come around with me and look for the main entrance for the north tower of the Trade Center to try to get in.

Basically that's what we did. We stayed together. We walked out down Barclay, got to West

Street, came up West Street. I noticed an Engine hooked up with a couple of lines coming off of it. I noticed he had a hydrant, he had a good hydrant, he had good pressure, it looked like. He was right on the corner of Barclay and West. As we walked up West Street we could see a lot of cars burning, a lot of smoke, other than the smoke from the collapse. There were cars burning all over Vesey, up around the park, a couple of rigs, a dumpster, right on the corner of Vesey and West burning.

Of course 6 World Trade Center was right on the corner of West and Vesey burning. Still there was a lot of smoke. I wasn't sure it was a total collapse of both buildings. I didn't realize that until much later on in the day.

I told the officer, we've got an Engine here with good lines if you want to get a line and try to get something in operation. He said fine, let's go up to Vesey, go a little closer and try to get an assessment of what's going on. Like I said, there was a huge dumpster on that corner going, right next to the AT&T building.

So he said, all right, go back with a couple of guys. We searched and grabbed one of the two and a

half inch lines that were laying in the street and we started to operate it into the dumpster. At around that time we were there for a little while. He went off just a little bit to see what was going on. Trying to find guys, find out what we should do.

Vesey Street -- I don't remember if it was totally blocked at the time, but there was definitely, definitely stuff across Vesey Street that you could see. You couldn't get totally down Vesey. Maybe all the way to West Broadway. You could see the damage at 7 World Trade Center, the damage into the AT&T building. You could see the damage - 5 World Trade Center was burning. There was an aerial ladder up at 5 World Trade Center. I saw guys operating up into 5 World Trade Center trying to do some sort of search. I'm sorry, let me correct myself. 6 World Trade Center, right on the corner of West and Vesey.

There was an aerial ladder parked on West Street operating to the concourse type area on the 6 World Trade Center looking for guys and they were trying to do a search. At this time the truck was intact. 6 World Trade Center was almost fully involved in fire. We operated the line into the dumpster. We stayed there for a little while and then I saw one of

the first members of my company to come in and it was actually Captain Sakowich. He had walked up West Street. He saw me. During the time that I went back to the Engine to get the line I was able to get a mask off the Engine. Captain Sakowich came up to me, asked me if I seen the guys or whatever.

I said Captain, do you know where Engine 6 would be. I was trying to operate with these guys. The walkway on West Street for the north tower was down. So there was no way to walk straight into what would have been the old lobby of the north tower, where 6 Engine would have been. So he said I'm going to try to find a way around. Stay here. He said give me your mask for now. I stayed with the company.

Then I found another member from my company, maybe, I don't know, 20, half an hour later, Firefighter Jeff Straub, hooked up with me. I told him Sakowich was around. He was trying to find a way over to where the guys were. He said let's not wait here. Let's try to find Sakowich or let's try to find our own way in.

We proceeded to walk down Vesey Street, West Street was totally blocked. We couldn't get across. We got to the corner of West and Vesey. Chief Nigro

was there and I saw Chief Pfeifer and a couple of other guys from the Battalion. I don't know if they responded in or they were there prior to the collapse.

Basically Nigro -- a lot of the officers were trying to get information from Chief Nigro as far as to what type of operations he wanted them to commence. [redacted]. Chief Pfeifer was just saying I don't know what happened. Let's just get everybody down Vesey towards the water away from the scene. Myself and firefighters Straub had just broke off from them and we walked around through the World Financial Center area, which would be through the lobby of 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building, out into where the Winter Garden is, but on the outside, not actually into the Winter Garden. You could see the Winter Garden had took a lot of damage also.

While we were on the outside near the marina, walking near the marina, because we were going to try to come around up Liberty to see if we could gain access from West Street there, we encountered another group of firemen that were carrying a fireman on a stokes basket. I don't know what company they were

from, but I do have pictures of that. A photographer took pictures of us doing the carry so I could give you his name if you need it, in a pinch, probably the road.

There was only maybe four or five firemen helping to carry this guy, so we helped to carry him. They needed help. We carried him to a boat that was waiting. It was a marine company boat. I don't know what marine company. They got him on the boat. I believe they were taking him to a Jersey hospital. They really didn't say. They got him on the boat. Me and Jeff stayed together and we started again to come around Liberty Street. Liberty and West in that area, then we came across, I found Captain Mallery from 10. I saw Captain -- I think you already spoke to him. From 10 Engine. I asked him where their guys were. If they know how their guys are doing. They basically didn't know much about where their guys were or anything or where my company was.

Again West Street was pretty well blocked. There wasn't any good access into the area then. That's when we basically started to realize it was a total collapse, so we tried to make our way into this pile or into the area where my company would have

been. We went down. Liberty Street was pretty well blocked. We couldn't go down that. We continued down West. I think we went up Cedar, then took Washington back to Albany to try to get to where 10 Engine's quarters were and see what was going on over there and see if we could come in kind of like from the southeast corner or so.

I got over by 10 Engine's quarters. There was a lot of damage to the quarters. There was a lot of destruction in the street there. That wasn't any other easier access. We ended up somewhere around this area again, meeting up with Captain Sakowich. Trying to get back around through the Winter Garden area over there. Sakowich and Firefighter Straub, then, and myself, we walked around looking for guys and basically the day just dragged on. We would get separated, I would run to numerous different guys that I know throughout the job and trying to find reports of who is where and stuff like that.

Eventually we end up finding the easiest way back out on to the pile is through the Winter Garden where the glass had taken a lot of damage, but it was still intact at this point. Then we got out on to the pile there and started doing some searches over there.

As the day dragged on, again I got separated from Jeff and Captain Sakowich. I kind of was operating on my own for a while with a lot of other guys. I don't know even know who they were. I just started getting fatigued. I came out just to take a rest a little bit, out into this area here again on Vesey and West and I ran into Firefighter Bob Emans. I asked Bob, Bob, were you here, who was working, et cetera. He gave me a quick rundown of who knew was on the rig, where the rig was, what he was doing. He was an extra man. He jumped on the rig that day and he was assisting the chauffeur.

So he capped up the hook up and supplied the Siamese and then that's when the collapse occurred. I had absolutely no idea of the time of the day. Bob might have had a better idea and Bob was like look, I think the best thing we should do right now is go back to 6 Engine, try to regroup, find out who is where, definitely who is missing, who might be in the hospital and come back and get back. We got to get something to drink. We need something to eat. It was a long day.

I was like all right, Bob, start heading back. I'm going to head back in a little while. I stayed a little bit longer, I don't know how much

longer. It could have been maybe an hour or so. I saw Firefighter Al Sicignano from my company. I told Al what was going on, how long I had been there, who I had seen so far and that was probably just Jeff, Captain Sakowich and Bob Emans. Bob had said that Jack Butler was also okay. He was the chauffeur that day from 6 Engine. The rest of the company we had no reports of where they were. We knew they were in the building, we didn't know where.

So then I told Al, I saw Bobby, he said he thinks it's a good idea we go back to 6 and try to regroup and come back in a little while with a better plan or something. Al was like all right, go ahead, you go on your own. I will meet you back there in a little bit. I left and went back to 6 Engine.

While I'm at 6 Engine, getting phone calls from some of the wives, specifically Lieutenant (inaudible)'s wife. Gave her whatever information we could and that's when 7 World Trade collapsed. So that might give you a time frame of how long I was there.

Stayed at 6 Engine for a while. I don't remember who else came back and I grouped up with a couple of guys, a handful of guys. We headed back over after we got something to drink, a little something to

eat. I headed back over, spent the remainder of the night there until late into the night. Ran into a brother-in-law of one of the firefighters who we knew was missing that day, Billy Green. His brother-in-law is a corrections officer, at the corner of West and Liberty, with Jeff Straub. He was looking for him. Had no idea where he was. I just told him that and I told him I would be in touch with the families or him as soon as we found somebody and just stayed there a long time that night.

Basically didn't see anyone from the company that responded that day at all that day. I don't remember now. I ended up going back to 6 Engine sometime late that night. Got back to 6 Engine. Most of the guys that had reported in from home were already back at 6 Engine. I was glad to see Butchie Barone and a bunch of guys, because I knew that they might have been there before me, even though they might not have took a mark in the journal. I didn't know who was where. I was glad to see most of the guys.

That's when I started to find out exactly who was missing from the company and there were reports that Billy Green was okay. He was in a hospital but it wasn't confirmed yet. That's it. Just various

information like that.

We just operated as a company for the next almost week or two on our own going back and forth. The rig was crushed, so we weren't really responding. We didn't have a rig for a week or so, so the company basically just woke up every morning, ten or 15 guys would get together, walk over, one or two guys would stay at the house and try to keep the house organized with one officer, just to have some sort of idea who was where in case anything else happened.

Every once in a while they would be relocating company. I don't remember if that was like day 3 maybe or 4. That's basically how we operated until we went to an actual AB chart. When we went to the AB chart, really didn't make much. The guys that were on duty got to go definitely, except one of the guys that was on duty had to stay at the fire house. Guys that were off duty geared up and went over. It was almost like as we were drawing straws of who had to stay back and that was it. I don't know what else.

Q. Okay, very good. You mentioned that north walk bridge was completely down?

A. Yes.

Q. You couldn't cross West Street because that

bridge was down, but it became necessary to go up and down West Street you had to find a way around?

A. Right. That's what we were looking for. There was a total collapse in that area. There was no way in. No way over or around. You couldn't even probably bring portable ladders to get a truck in, because there was just too much debris in the street. There was a lot, lot of rigs parked on West Street between Vesey and Murray, both sides of the street. Just rigs all over the place.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I thank you for the interview. The time is now 11:30 a.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110259

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT SEAN O'MALLEY

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: December 6, 2001. The time is now 11:41 hours. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview today with Lieutenant Sean O'Malley, of Engine Company 10. We are in the quarters of Engine 4 at this time. And the interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Now I will let the Lieutenant begin his interview.

A. On the morning of the 11th sometime around, shortly after 9 o'clock, I was in my apartment on the west side, at 72 Street. Just turned on Channel 1 news and they had a live video feed from, I think a traffic camera someplace north of the Trade Center complex. It showed a heavy smoke condition issuing from tower one, the north tower of the World Trade Center. Details were very sketchy at that point. The person was trying to get some information. There were still vague reports as to what caused the fire.

While I was watching, shortly after, I saw a second fire emanate from the -- the vantage point of that particular camera, I couldn't tell if it was a second fire in the north tower. I actually assumed

that to be the case. It never occurred to me that there would be two fires in the two towers at the same time.

Because it was still rush hour in the morning, the subways were all crowded, so I jumped on my bicycle and I headed down the bike path along the West Side Highway. As I headed south, once you turn the bike path at 56 Street, you could basically see the Trade Center over the horizon. At that point I saw that there was in fact heavy smoke issuing from both towers.

I probably got down within 20 minutes or so. Once I got south of Chelsea Piers heading towards Chambers Street, near Stuyvesant High School, there was a lot of civilians heading away from the towers. No one was running, no one was panicking, they were just walking away from the towers. I kind of was operating under the assumption that there was some sort of cataclysmic failure of one of the mechanical equipment sections or an electrical problem of some sort. I had no idea what started the fire and what had transpired.

Around the Chambers Street area, someplace a little bit north of Chambers Street, the pedestrian traffic on the bike path heading against me was so

heavy that I took the bike on to the West Side Highway and by that point, the NYPD had shut down the street for all vehicles except emergency vehicles and all of the ninth and Tenth Battalion companies passed me by as I was heading down; 22 Engine, 13 truck, 25 truck, 35 Engine, 40 truck, 35 truck and 40 Engine, 74 Engine, 76 Engine, 22 truck, the Tenth Battalion.

They all came by me and pulled up on the west side of West Street in a line, basically side by side. There was none of the chaos that is depicted on the cover of (inaudible) from 1993, the rigs and hose all over the street. The rigs were lined up, there was access lanes for the apparatus to get in and out.

I saw some of the guys that I worked with at 13 truck getting off the rig and donning their gear. I told them be careful. I spoke to the Chief of the Tenth Battalion and directed him to -- he had asked me where the command post was. I didn't actually see the command post, but he gave me -- I think he told me that he was looking for the corner of Liberty and West. I don't recall, but he told me the street corner he was looking for and I directed him to that.

In that time there was civilians in the street, standing in front of the building. The upper

part of the building was completely obscured in smoke. You could see from about the 50th floor down. As I paused for two or three minutes that I was in front of the building, you could see civilians jumping out of the windows and landing on to the -- what the Port Authority called VIP drive, which was the west side of tower one. It was a covered roadway and it was like a circular driveway that went in to the front of tower one.

I could see -- I think Ladder 1's apparatus was there. There was a bunch of Engine companies in front. There was somebody hooked up to that hydrant right in front of the building. I don't remember taking notice of which companies they were. I made my way, continued south on West Street. I knew I wasn't going to go down Liberty Street. I went down to Albany or Carlyle Street, and when I came around the back of the fire house, there were crowds of civilians in the street on Greenwich one block south of the fire house.

There was a lot of civilians in front of the building who had evacuated the building but not cleared the area. There were several hundred people in the street. As I went in the back door of the fire house I met up with a Firefighter from, I think he's in 6

truck. I think his name was Gary Matalatis, who was coming in off duty. He was dressed in uniform and carrying his gear.

There was body parts on the street around the fire house. From the time I left the apartment to getting to the fire house, it was sort of just getting a better picture of what was going on and it was like walking down a spiral staircase getting darker and darker and you could tell the magnitude of the operation was more and more severe.

I think by that time I probably heard that there were planes that had hit the building and that this was a terror attack. Once I got into the fire house, I met up with Captain Paul Mallery from Ladder 10 and there was an FDNY ambulance pulled into the apparatus bay. Both the front doors were open and there was, I would say close to 15 or so civilians being treated by EMS. They had a triage set up.

Some of them were standing, holding -- those that were capable were standing or sitting, holding bandages on themselves. Two or three people were on the floor being -- on a backboard. Another was -- a male civilian was in a sked, collapsible stretcher. He looked --- I think they were treating him for a broken

pelvis. He had some pretty severe broken bones. There was the EMS paramedics and a civilian who apparently had some first aid training who was assisting them.

Captain Mallery told me that he had a sister-in-law of one of the firefighters making phone calls in the Engine office to recall the firefighters from the Engine Company and a Lieutenant from operations who they had alerted, name would be Keith Ruby, who worked, I believe in Chief Nigro's office. He had him making phone calls from Ladder 10's office to recall the members of Ladder 10.

There was several probationary firefighters there from the proby school, who had told me that they had cancelled classes and that they had come in. I directed them. They were suited in their bunker gear from head to toe. Although they actually hadn't started any operations, they looked like they were getting overheated already. I directed them to strip down to their bunker pants, go into the kitchen in the back of the fire house, cool down, take a couple of glasses of water and wait for me to come back.

I went upstairs to my locker. I changed into my work duty uniform, came back down, collected up these three or four probies and made up a BF4 with

their names, explained to them how we were going to be operating. I put on my helmet. I directed them to each put on each of their helmets. Take a look at me, take a look at each other. I said if we get masks, we are going to be putting them on. You are not going to recognize one another. We are going to stay together. We are going to go over as a team, we are going to operate as a team. I gave them each a handful of bandages and rubber gloves. I directed one of them to search the fire house for any hand tools he could come up with. That probably took 15 or 20 minutes or so.

We were trying to get moving but I felt that we should take the time to get set up. I didn't think there was any rush. Figuring we were going to be fighting this fire for a good long time. Figuring we were going to be setting up, climbing stairs, and humping hose.

In that time, I also crossed paths with several other firefighters, actually a Lieutenant, that were dressed in administrative uniforms, white shirt and ties with their ID cards from headquarters. I later found out one of them to be named Jeff Guja, Captain Jimmy Yakimovich, also from Chief Nigro's office and as I said earlier, Keith Ruby, and another

Firefighter, I believe he is from 55 Engine, who I have seen him since. I know he got out of the attack alive.

As we were headed out into the front --

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I have to stop the tape. They are going out on a run. It's 11:52 hours. We will resume later.

Okay. It's now 12:23, we will resume the interview.

A. As I was saying, I collected up my team of probies and was heading out the front door of the fire house with them, when all of a sudden, civilians -- some of the civilians that were in the street came running into the fire house. One man was yelling it's coming down. I could hear behind him a roar like a jet engine, so I turned around, started running towards the back of the fire house. I grabbed one of the patients that was lying on the floor on a backboard under one arm and just started running towards the back door.

As I said, in addition to the civilians that were being treated for first aid, several more civilians came running through the fire house from Liberty Street heading out towards the back of the fire house and by the time we got to the rear of the fire

house, there is a hallway that is probably like 45 inches or so and that dead ends into the kitchen. You have to take a right-hand turn to go out the back door. By the time I got to that where you make the right turn to go down the additional 10 or 15 feet to the back door, there was a complete log jam of people. All trying to get out that back door.

Sometime right around then I also became aware that Captain Kelty, and his brother, supervising Fire Marshal Jim Kelty, were also in the fire house. At least one of them was by the back door and the roar that I heard was getting louder and louder. I started to feel a breeze against the back of my head. I put the civilian on the backboard. I put him down in the hallway that led out towards the back door and I was standing directly next to the stairs that led to the basement and I dove down the stairs into the basement. I hid under a doorway arch.

I was thinking it didn't make any sense because the only building I ever remember falling down -- a high rise that was burning, it was the one in Philadelphia that burnt for days. I remember thinking it didn't make any sense, but I also remember thinking there was no way that big building was going to come

down in that little fire house. Just before the dust cloud hit, I remember seeing the door to the high pressure steam room directly to my left and I had seconds to ponder if that was a place to hide, but we really had no place else to go.

Then it got black, there was a big gust of wind that came down the stairs immediately followed by that dust cloud that you have seen on videotape. It was like beach sand, it was so thick and heavy. Although I could still hear debris falling outside, I had to bail out of that position because the amount of dust was so choking that I thought I was going to choke down there.

I came back up stairs and much to my pleasant surprise the fire house was still there. There were several civilians wandering around the back of the fire house trying to find their way back out. The dust cloud was so thick, you almost had to bump into someone to even know that they were there. I called out to Captain Kelty and Captain Mallery, yelled to them. They said that they were okay. I yelled out to my crew of probies. They said that they were all right.

We went into the kitchen and there were some civilians in there. I turned on the sink and some of

them would wash their face and took some quick mouthfuls of water. We started directing them out the back door. Captain Kelty started leading them out the back door. I ran upstairs and Captain Mallery was on the second floor. He said he had done a primary search of the second floor and it was negative, there was nobody up there.

I went downstairs and ran to the Engine office to see if I could find the civilian female that was assisting us, calling guys from home. She wasn't in the office any more. We did a primary search of the ground floor of the fire house and directed the probies with me to start doing a broadening search into the street. I think the pile of debris into the fire house through the front doors was ten or 15 feet high. The ambulance was crushed in the bay. The EMTs and all the civilians were gone from the apparatus floor.

The pile out in front of the fire house, which began actually inside the front door, was so high that I actually climbed out a window in the house watch rather than try to make my way out the pile into the street.

One of the probies, I haven't been able to contact him yet, I saw him later on in the day, I

believe he survived both of them -- I know he survived both of the collapses. I believe he said his name is Dino. Dark skinned guy with a bald head. Told me he had heard someone, we have a man down. When I went out the window of the house watch, there was absolute silence.

I have since seen video tapes of the north side up towards Chambers Street, with the pass alarm, firemen stumbling around. By Liberty Street and Greenwich Street there wasn't a single sound. There wasn't a creature moving, there was no pass alarms, there was no sirens, there was no yelling for help. There was no one in the street. It was absolutely dead silence.

We made our way directly across the street from the fire house, the address is 130 Liberty Street. Prior to -- there had been like a public space, like a second floor garden area that came from the second floor mezzanine of 130 Liberty Street. It had a foot bridge that extended across Liberty Street and went into the plaza of the World Trade Center complex. It went through like 4 World Trade Center. It actually exited between number 2 and number 4, from 130 Liberty Street across the street and also in

between building two and building 4.

Underneath that there was a wide entranceway with a fountain and a wide sweeping steps that led up to the public space. If it was a fire building we would be looking at the corner of where exposure one and exposure two came together, inside what had been a cafe or like a coffee shop for the building employees. I found Lieutenant Keith Ruby, who was lying on the floor underneath what had been like a counter rail where you could stand up and eat your coffee and donuts.

His head was facing towards the Trade Center. His feet were pointing away. He was in a great deal of pain, although he wasn't badly buried, it was just light debris. He was lucid and not -- from the look of him, he didn't look that bad, but he was in a great deal of pain and he pointed to the middle of his right leg and said that he had a great deal of pain there. He felt that he had surely broke it. He said he heard it snap.

So I suspected that to be a mid shaft femur fracture. I applied traction. Just followed the protocols for that sort of an injury, but I also knew that was -- he was in pretty deep trouble, owing to

where he was. I sent this proby I mentioned earlier back to the fire house and I told him to raid that ambulance and to come back with oxygen and a backboard if he could, and apparently he had some EMS training, because he had the wherewithal to bring back a traction splint, so we were able to properly traction splint and package this Lieutenant as well as supply him with some oxygen therapy right away.

But still in all it took us a fair amount of time to do that. I had two or three other probies working with me and I believe a police officer came over to help as well. Captain Mallery came out and Captain Kelty -- he was yelling over to me. I could still hear him directing civilians away from the area.

While we were doing that we heard small explosions, rumblings, which sounded like additional collapses. When one of those would happen some of the people that were helping us, would run for positions of cover, but I was holding traction so I had to stay with the patient and the probationary Firefighter Dino, whatever his name was. Maintaining traction on the Lieutenant's head and supplying with the oxygen. He stayed his ground as well.

That happened 3 or 4 times during the course

of our trying to get them out of there. Then we heard jets overhead and we were concerned that there was another plane coming in to attack us. We just about finished packaging him when we heard that same roaring rumble that preceded the first collapse and the probationary Firefighter at the Lieutenant's head leaned down over him and covered him with his body over the Lieutenant's head and chest and I leaned down from the other end and covered the remainder of him as best as I could with my body and we just crossed our fingers and waited for the other collapse.

Again the shock wave that came through and the cloud of dust and some more lightweight debris had fallen on us, but we were just very fortunate that we happened to be inside the building itself, because the two story balcony that had been a garden, the following morning when I came out, which was extended from exposure one towards Liberty Street from the front of 130 Liberty Street out toward the street, it was probably 200 feet long and about 40 feet wide. The following morning when I went back, that had collapsed down to within 5 or 6 feet of where we were.

By the time we had finished packaging the Lieutenant, we knew it was time to just get him out of

there. I had, as I said, this probationary fireman, I think he said his name was Vinnie. He was from Ladder 5, probationary firefighter Dino from the academy, Firefighter Kerry Horgan from Ladder 10, Captain Mallery, Captain Kelty from Ladder 10 and myself, we started moving this Lieutenant south on Greenwich Street towards Battery Park. We could see flashing lights and we thought there might be an ambulance down there.

We moved him about two blocks to the corner of Carlyle and Greenwich Street when we discovered -- we actually had to get almost close enough to touch it to realize that the ambulance that we were moving towards we could see the flashing lights, but the front of it was crushed down. So we then headed west on Carlyle towards the West Side Highway and came upon an EMT, a Fire Department EMT, who was walking north on the West Side Highway towards the Trade Center. She was about in front of the Marriott Hotel, which is 85 West Street I believe. She said she had an ambulance parked down near the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

By that time I think there was one or two police officers that joined us to assist in carrying him. I peeled off from that carry operation, a police

officer asked me to assist him in searching some parked cars that were along Albany Street between Greenwich, Washington and West Street, so they continued to carry this Lieutenant down to the ambulance and I went to see if there was anyone in those parked vehicles.

Shortly after that, when I finished that operation, we checked three or four cars. I headed north on West Street and I found an apparatus. I don't remember. I think -- it was a Brooklyn company, it may have been 205. I'm not really sure. I went to the back of their apparatus and I pulled three or four lengths of inch and 3 quarter. Grabbed a reducer and a hydrant wrench out of the compartment and I dragged it up to Albany Street and tried to get a hydrant on the exposure four side of 90 West Street.

At that point from Albany Street two blocks north to -- which would begin the Trade Center complex, it was littered with burning ambulances and vehicles. I checked three or four different hydrants along the way trying to get one that was supplying water. I was unsuccessful in that.

At that point firefighters operating on the west side of West Street yelled to me that the scaffolding surrounding 90 West Street was shaking. So

I dropped the line where I was and ran across to the other side of the street.

There was a Chief setting up a staging area around that corner on West Street and Cedar Street or West and Albany, around that corner there. He was trying to put together some fire teams and dispatch them off. By that time I had seen the two probationary firefighters that I had been working with who teamed up with another Lieutenant and operating with that Chief.

I left that spot and walked north along the river promenade, which goes along behind Battery Park City. Walked up to the North Cove Marina. I hooked up with Lieutenant Tom White from -- I believe he is from 93 Engine, but I don't know if he is in the marine unit now or he had been at one time, but he said that he had radio contact with an old fire boat, and I remember it was the Harvey. I recall having seen the Harvey on earlier weeks on West Street doing water displays for cruise ships. So I mentioned to him, I believe their fire pumps are still working and he coordinated that with them, but they said they had no fire equipment on board.

So I left him on the promenade at the North Cove marina area to coordinate, I believe there was one

of the operating fire boats tied up alongside there as well. Again, between the smoke and the dust it was kind of hard to see what was more than ten feet away from you.

I headed down Liberty Street and Deputy Chief Blaich, Charles Blaich, he was standing in a circle of clear area that couldn't have been more than five square feet around him and he had set up a command post there and was tasking groups of firefighters from there. I got his attention. I told him I was going to try to stretch lines from the fire boat on the promenade near the North Cove marina. He said take as many guys as you need and you're on your own.

I found two Queens companies. 319 and I believe 325. I explained to their officers what the situation was at the fire boat and they proceeded to have their companies assist me in uncovering the apparatus beds, two different apparatus, which took a fair amount of time, owing to the amount of debris that was on top of them.

They were parked right on Liberty Street just opposite number 1 World Financial Center, which is on the west side of West Side Highway on Liberty Street, just before the foot bridge, which is still standing.

I believe Rescue 1's rig is also there. They were all completely buried in all kinds of debris.

But these two companies helped me clear the hose beds and we stretched every piece of 3 and a half inch hose we could get our hands on and managed to stretch a supply line from the North Cove marina from the fire boat Harvey all the way down along the promenade, up through Liberty Street, and we set it up with whatever, gaited inlets and a manifold, whatever we could get our hands on, and we started supplying tower ladders and lines from that corner on Liberty Street.

Shortly after that, they discovered a fire burning in the corner building at Gateway Plaza, which I believe is -- I'm going to say 325 South End Avenue, but I'm kind of making a guess at that address. It's the first apartment building as the crow flies that's closest to the corner of the World Trade Center complex on the west side of the West Side Highway.

There was a fire on about the 8th or 9th floor and the company was stretching -- they had to actually stretch up from the exterior and the two companies I mentioned earlier, 319 and 325 assisted me with that, assisted those companies with stretching

those lines up to the exterior of the building. Then we went back and again with Lieutenant White, we set up another line coming off the fire boat Harvey and continued stretching 3 and a half inch hose from wherever we could get our hands on it and connecting it up. So we ended up getting at least two lines off of the Harvey and stretching it up to West Street.

That was pretty well into the afternoon, probably 2 or 3:00 in the afternoon by that point. I finally managed to find a spot someplace along the west side promenade there where I was able to get my cellphone working and called home and then just -- I told the guys that I had a cell phone that worked and a line of firemen -- none of the phones were obviously working. Ten or 15, 20 guys managed to get their home phones -- phone home from there.

By that time I was having a lot of trouble seeing where I was going with the dust and debris and I had already had my eyes washed out twice by EMS. I operated on that corner in the North Cove marina with Lieutenant Csorny from Ladder 10, who was on light duty. He had come in from headquarters. We were assisting loading some injured members down into the NYPD and Nassau County police boats from the North Cove

marina. They were walking them down west along Liberty Street down into the marina and dispatching them over to New Jersey, I believe.

I guess around 4:30 or so when it started getting a little dark, myself, Lieutenant Csorny, Firefighter Horgan and a couple of other firefighters from Engine 10 and Ladder 10, I believe John Morabito and Firefighter Jimmy Calvanese, made our way back to the fire house on Liberty Street. We came in the back window and started doing what we could to clean the fire house out and make it operational.

For the first couple of days it was being used as a forward triage unit for EMS. So that's what our position was at that time. We figured they were going to use it as a command post or whatever to move the debris out of the house watch area and shovel as much of the things -- cleaned up as much as we could.

I guess I left about 9:30, 10 o'clock that night. I was at the point where my eyes weren't getting any better. I had been to EMS to have them washed out 2 or three different times. It was at the point where I actually couldn't see where I was going. I had another Firefighter, Dan Peritore, who had been the MPO of Engine 10 that morning, walked in front of

me and I made my way up as far as Battalion 1's headquarters up on Duane Street.

From there a tow truck had stopped at the traffic light. I climbed on the back of the tow truck. He got me up as far as the subways were running, which I believe was 14 street or Canal Street. From there I took the subway home and came back down the next morning and started all over again.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I want to thank you for the interview. The time is now 1245 hours. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110260

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DANIEL STERLING

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1434 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin, safety battalion, New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 6th Grade Daniel Sterling, Engine 24, regarding the events that occurred on September 11. There is no one else present in the room, and the interview is following right now.

Q. Just talk in a normal voice and tell me what happened.

Where did you respond from?

A. We responded from quarters. I was getting off duty at nine o'clock that Tuesday morning. The alarm came in at 8:47, so I had been relieved already. We're a five-man engine, so because it came in as a second alarm, and I just got on the job in February, I rolled as the doorman, to get, you know, experience. Second alarm fire, we don't get that.

So we were riding down -- I was the doorman -- and going south. The control and the nozzle could see that we actually had a good job. There were a lot of people standing in the streets, looking down toward the building, but based on my position, I couldn't see

what they saw.

We pulled up to the twin towers on West Street and into the lobby of the north tower. We got there about nine o'clock before the second building got hit. We didn't know the second building got hit at nine o'clock or anything.

When we made it into the lobby, there was debris falling from the building. Guys were trying to vent those big windows in the lobby. I saw 33 engine in the lobby. I recognized one guy, who I didn't -- who wound up being missing, but I remember seeing him in the lobby. He said, "Hey, how you doing? We're here to go to work" and whatever. We were in the lobby waiting for the elevator. They set up the command post, and we are trying to find out if we were going to be able to take the elevators up, because they said that there was a reported fire on the 80th Floor, so, of course, we were going to try to get to the elevators.

After about maybe four, five minutes, still no elevator. They're saying the elevators weren't working. Ladder 20, the officer from Ladder 20, decided to start walking up the stairs. He like rallied his guys. So we're walking. We're going to

start walking. Everybody at that point started walking up the stairs.

We -- my team started up the A staircase, and we were following Ladder 20. I guess all the other companies were following behind us. We ended up going up single file. Civilians were coming down single file. They were telling us what floors they were coming from.

Lieutenant Hanson was the officer, so he was finding out what floors they were escaping from, what the conditions were like on their floors, and by the time we got to the 11th Floor, people started to get tired.

We got up to the 15th Floor, and we were -- started taking breaks. The 15th Floor might be open, and then the consecutive ones would be closed up until about the 21st Floor, so we came off the 15th, and we heard Maydays on the radio from Ladder 10. Ladder 10 had two men down with chest pains. We heard that on the radio.

Then we would keep going. When we stopped on the 15th Floor, we took a survey of the floor, found the vending machines. Guys had broken the vending machines already to start taking out the water, so we

were taking bottles of water, taking a break, and then going back on the stairs. We kept doing that every five or six floors, wherever there was an open door.

Realistically what happened is it took us about an hour to get to the 37th Floor, and the guys at that point -- well, at the 27th Floor, my lieutenant decided to drop two roll-ups, because we were taking the four roll-ups and the control bag. We were taking a beating just going up the stairs, getting tired, so we dropped two roll-ups on the 27th Floor, and we left one of our members on the 27th Floor because he really -- he didn't feel he could make it any further.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. So we continued up. We got to the 37th Floor, and we were about to drop the other two roll-ups, because Lieutenant Hanson said he got word that we were just going to back up 33 engine, so we were going to use their hose. We weren't going to take any of our own hose.

At that point when we were on the 37th Floor, that's when the building shook from the other tower going down, so -- but we didn't know it was the other tower that was going down. A battalion chief -- the battalion chief from Battalion 11, came from a higher

floor. He came down and saw us on the 37th Floor and told us that he thought there was a partial collapse of the 65th Floor of our building, and that we should drop everything and leave the building.

Lieutenant Hanson didn't hesitate. He had us drop everything, and we started to leave the building. We were right by Staircase A. The vending machines were around the corner to the right of Staircase A, so a lot of the guys that were taking out water and stuff ended up hanging out right in that hallway by the vending machines, which also had a staircase to get out of the building.

So when the chief told us to leave, we immediately started down Exit A, and I think he ran around the corner to tell the other guys that were hanging out in the hallway with the vending machines to also leave, but when the building shook, everybody instinctively ran for the staircase, because it shook for about 10 or 15 seconds, and we all, like, ran to the closest stairwell, so I guess everybody that was in that hallway ran for the staircase close to the vending machine, and I know for a fact Ladder 5 was in that hallway. There were at least 15 other guys, aside from Ladder 5, because Ladder 5 was in quarters with us, so

I know all the guys that were there, and I'm making jokes with them. The lieutenant was sitting down.

ESU cops were handing out their oxygen bottles for guys to take oxygen, so we were like -- everybody was trying to relax for a minute, drink their water and get up their energy to keep going up the stairs, but when it shook, we went back down Staircase A.

We had another probie with us, Rob Byrne. Byrne, when the chief says, "Drop everything," he took his face mask, and he took his mask off and everything and left it there. And we started going down. We all kept our mask.

I just -- I didn't see giving up my mask at that point. It's not that heavy to me, but he wanted to go quick. He said, "When he said drop everything, I'm dropping everything."

So we started down. When we got to around maybe the 10th Floor, there was a lot of smoke, and I guess just dust coming up the stairwell, so we all started masking up. At that point, Byrne had the -- he used his hood.

Q. Go ahead. At 1507 hours, we resume the interview.

A. We were exiting the building, and Byrne was using his hood to cover his mouth and his nose because of the smoke and dust that was coming up the stairwell. We started using our masks to breathe through the smoke and dust around the 10th or 11th Floor.

On the way out from the 37th Floor, we did stop at the 27th Floor to meet Rich Billy. [redacted] He looked like he might really need the break, so we left him there, and on the way back, he hooked up with us.

So the entire engine was making its way out, and when Lieutenant Hanson noticed that Byrne was having to use his hood, he sent Byrne ahead. He told him to go ahead and run as fast as he could to get out of the building, because we were moving down in a slow, orderly fashion, like, making sure we didn't really make any errors on the way out. We were going slower than Byrne could have made it on his own without the mask, so he went ahead.

At that point, we got all the way down in the A staircase to the 3rd Floor. Apparently the ESU cops

had -- they put a piece of Sheetrock blocking off the 3rd Floor, blocking off the A staircase going below the 3rd Floor, so we exited the A staircase at the 3rd Floor.

Q. Yeah.

A. We ran into two ESU or Port Authority cops, and they were helping a guy in a swivel chair about -- he was at least 300 pounds. He had broken legs, and they were trying to pull him through the hallway to get him to the B staircase, which they said was good. They said that they were responsible for blocking off the staircase, because there was debris now in that staircase. We couldn't have made it out to the ground level that way.

So we helped them with the civilian. We took him in the swivel chair down the B staircase. We had a new swivel chair in the lobby of the building, because we broke that one on the way down. We broke that stair -- we broke that chair dragging him down the stairs. We put him in a new swivel chair and dragged him out the lobby, and we left the north tower on the north side. The north -- we came out the north side of the tower, and we went right across to 6 Trade Center, to the Customs building.

Q. Okay.

A. We collected ourselves under that little, like, overhang.

Q. Okay.

A. There's an overhang there. We waited for a second, cut the civilian out his pants to make it easier for him to move. Then we all started moving west. Excuse me, east. East up to the corner of that building where we could kind of make it out to Vesey Street.

I went ahead of my team. There were about four people helping this guy walk through debris, and everything that had fallen, I guess it got pushed out to the Customs building from the first tower that fell. There was a lot of debris.

So as everyone is helping the civilian, I really couldn't help the civilian, because there were already four guys helping him move. I went ahead. I got ahead to the corner, made the corner, and went down in between these two buildings. There were two Port Authority cops standing at this corner of the building, of the U.S. Customs building.

Q. Okay. We're talking about going between the two buildings. That would be 6 World Trade Center,

U.S. Customs building, 7 World Trade Center. He was going north between those two buildings.

A. Five.

Q. Was that 5? Between 5 and 6 rather, going north?

A. I got there to that corner. There were two cops, like, directing traffic, and when I got to that point with them, they said, "All right. You go ahead and run diagonally straight over this way," there were some stairs to get out -- to get off of the courtyard level.

Q. Okay.

A. Because this whole area is on, like, an elevated courtyard. You're above the street. So I stood there, and my team still hadn't come around the corner of this building of the U.S. Customs building, so I decided to wait for them to come around the corner before I made my run.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. While I was waiting, it was maybe 30 seconds, this tower fell. I never saw them come around the corner.

Q. Right.

A. Because everything started falling. It went

pitch black immediately. I was standing there with the two cops. We were pressed against the side of the building, so everything that fell kind of, like, fell in front of us.

So at that point I masked up again, and my viber alert started going off, so I know I didn't have that much air, but when it went pitch black, we all assumed that the building had, like, fallen on top of us, because we couldn't see anything at all. We assumed were trapped inside, like, a big void.

So I put my mask on and everything, and I started crawling on the floor towards the other building. I started crawling on the floor towards 5 World Trade Center.

Q. Okay.

A. I noticed that there was fire on the ground. The courtyard now had dents in it, like craters from where things had fallen through. So I regrouped, stood up, and decided to start feeling along the wall, and that's when I started bumping in -- I bumped into one guy from my team, Rich Billy, the same guy who we left on the 27th Floor.

I saw him. He didn't know where the lieutenant was, and he was -- he was -- he thought I

was a lieutenant. Then he started -- he had a radio. The door position didn't have a radio. He started giving Maydays and looking for Lieutenant Hanson. We were also with four other -- four firemen, and they had a civilian.

We took our area of refuge in Building 5. We made it into a window into the lobby of that building when everything was still pitch black, before the smoke had completely risen. We went in the building, and you could notice, like, big chunks sticking through the ceiling of that building. So we were just waiting around. We're going to have to, I guess, start digging our way out or wait a little while and see if anything else is going to fall. Then gradually the smoke started to lift and the dust and everything.

Q. How long?

A. That took about -- it seemed like no longer than ten minutes.

Q. Okay.

A. Maybe about seven to ten minutes it started to lighten up, and you could see shafts of light starting to come through from, I guess, this direction, Washington Street. Like you could see light.

So at that point, when it lightened up good

enough, you could look over to the edge of the courtyard and see where the rail was. The rail had gotten knocked off, but you could see the top of street lights --

Q. Okay.

A. -- the curve of the street light coming up over the courtyard level. So I told Rich Billy, "Let's go over to the edge there and see if we can make it to the street over there," because at least you noticed -- you could see the top of the street light. The street is not that far below.

He didn't really want to go across the courtyard at that point. He told me he felt that -- that if other things started dropping, we might be -- we would be in jeopardy by going across. He has 20 years on the job, 18. He has about 18 years on the job, but I was already a little nervous, and seeing the things coming through the ceiling, I'm telling him, "Well, if more things fall, they might -- everything might come through the ceiling," so our area of refuge to me wasn't that good anyway. It was fine while we were standing there, but if more things fell, they were going to come through the ceiling anyway.

So I said, All right. "Well, you stay, but

watch me. You watch me make it over. If I make it over there, and I don't come back, know that you can come off that way, because I'm going."

Q. Yeah.

A. Because I figured maybe I would be able to jump across to -- the street lamp didn't look that far from the edge. I figured maybe I could jump across and slide down the street lamp and maybe to the street or whatever, but he didn't do it.

I went, and there was another fireman that came with me. I don't know his name or what company he was from, but he was much bigger than me, taller guy and heavier. So when I got over to the edge, I realized I couldn't jump over to the pole. It was about maybe a five, six-foot jump over to the pole and then slide down. I just dropped the mask and hung off the side and dropped down to the ground and ran straight up.

I must have run a little bit this way. Then I started heading north. There was also two cops, I guess in front of 7 World Trade Center or around this corner somewhere pointing towards the north, just go north, because I never looked back at the building to figure out that both towers had completely fallen.

Q. Right.

A. As soon as I dropped down to the street level, I noticed there was an engine that was abandoned, and there was a cop car directly behind the engine, and a whole row of cars that was on fire, so I ran past all those cars and started heading north. That was it.

I got about four, five blocks before I really started limping. I sprained both my ankles just dropping off the side there, but I didn't catch up with Rich Billy until maybe seven o'clock that evening. He told me he waited about five, ten minutes after I left, and then the guys he was with just kind of walked around the courtyard and found the stairs and took the stairs down. I actually -- they had a picture of him on CBS News, I guess, like, when he finally made it, walked down the stairs, because he was still covered in all the gray dust, and he just looked beat. I guess that was right when he walked down the stairs. They got a picture of him and, like, two other firemen he was walking with, and I told him, "I saw you on the news." He was, like, we found the stairs. I took the stairs down.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. I didn't really -- I couldn't wait for the stairs. I couldn't wait -- I was too impatient. I was already -- I had already thought we were dead. Like, when everything went pitch black from everything being bright, you got outside to the bright daylight, and the cops are telling you to make a run this way. It was bright. Then all of a sudden it was pitch black. Fire was on the ground, craters, so that was it.

But when I made it out, I went up -- I ended up on West Street, and the ambulance took me to St. Vincent's. I got my ankles wrapped. Before I got there, I was able to call my parents. I called my grandmother. I spoke to my grandfather at about 10:30, because there was a civilian who let me use the phone when I was walking up. Then I got to St. Vincent's. I called the firehouse, and I was back at the firehouse by about one o'clock, and the chauffeur was here. The chauffeur that drove us down there was at the firehouse, Otto. Then we -- we kind of regrouped and went back to West Street to look for the other guys.

We found Marcel Claes. He was our control man. He started walking down with us from the 37th Floor, and we walked -- we were all together, and we come to find out -- he told us he stopped and went back

to get the control bag after -- we dropped everything, and we started down. He went back to get the control bag, started back down the same A staircase. He said he cut across the 7th Floor and made it out the building before we did, but everybody in the engine made it out.

Q. They did?

A. Yeah. Everybody that was in the engine that day made it out.

Q. Were they safe? Did anybody perish from the engine? They were all okay?

A. Yeah. Everybody from the engine made it out just fine. I got hurt the worst, a sprain in my ankles after the fact, but everybody in the truck that was with us on the 37th Floor, none of them made it out at all.

Q. No kidding.

A. None of the truck made it out. We had two other guys that weren't working that day from the truck that went in. They never made it out.

Q. Were you with them on the 37th? No? Yes? Did they get the message to leave the 37th the same time you did?

A. Yeah. Apparently the chief went around the

corner and told everybody --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- to start leaving the building, too, but I think they must have got caught up for some reason going down the staircase that they were going down.

Q. Yeah.

A. I think they were going down either the B or C. We were in the A. If you walked straight down the hallway, they were calling that the B staircase, and the hallway came into like a T. There was the vending machines in this hallway, and there was another staircase in that hallway, so they went down that one.

We went down the same way we were coming up, the A, because when we went and got our drinks, we came right back, because we were going to start walking up again. We were just taking the A staircase all the way up.

Q. Yeah.

A. But --

Q. When you guys were walking down the stairs, when you had been ordered to walk down the stairs, now, you had been climbing for a long time, maybe an hour?

A. Yes, just about.

Q. Now, you turn around, and you start coming

down. Were there a lot of civilians still coming down the stairs or you were booking in that staircase?

A. There was nobody in the staircase on the way down.

Q. Nobody?

A. Nobody at all. I guess the only reason that the cops had that one civilian was because he was hurt, because he -- he couldn't walk on his own.

Q. Right.

A. They had him in the swivel chair.

Q. Right.

A. A lot of people were making it out of the Tower 1 when we were going up. Even on the way up, we ran into one businessman who was coming down from the 90th Floor, so he made it all the way down from the 90th Floor. He said he saw fireballs come at him, and thought he was going to die, but then he got to a good staircase and made it down. He was helping a lady with an asthma attack, and at that point we put him in an office on about the 21st Floor. We put him in an office off to the side of the staircase.

So I'm hoping he got out, because we were figuring we can put people in a safe area of refuge below the fire.

Q. Right.

A. So we told him to just hang out over there, but he was just fine. Somebody told me they saw some blood on his shirt, but he was coherent and everything. He told us he was coming from 90, and there was a lot of fire on 90, so we're thinking, man, we got 10 floors of fire, and we got roll-ups, but we still didn't know the jetliner or anything.

We're thinking small plane, because when it came across the teleprinter, it was a small plane hit the building.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. And when we arrived, you could just see smoke and fire coming out, but it didn't look like when you see the news footage of the second building getting hit. It wasn't a big explosion like that.

Q. Yeah.

A. It was just fire and smoke. That was it. That's it. I mean, that's pretty much the most scary experience I've had.

I get a little nervous every now and then at regular fires, but that's, I guess, because I'm brand new, but that -- the thought of being stuck is not good.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: That's an interesting story. All right.

I want to thank you for the interview. The time is now 1521 hours.

This concludes the interview.

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File No. 9110261

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EUGENE KELTY, JR.

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is now 10:44. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Captain Eugene Kelty, Engine Company 10. We are at the quarters of Engine Company 4, regarding the events of September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center.

There is nobody else present in the room at this time, except the Captain and myself, and now the interview begins.

A. Okay. My name is Captain Gene Kelty. I'm the Company Commander for Engine Company 10, which is located at 124 Liberty Street, which is the firehouse right opposite the World Trade Center. I was off that day. My partner, Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, who was working and is still missing in action, was working that day.

We were on the golf course at a company outing that we have in our neighborhood when we got a report on the pager that the fire -- the towers had been hit. Knowing that that was my company, I

responded in with my brother, who is a supervising Fire Marshal, James Kelty from Manhattan base, we got in Manhattan somewhere around, I would say, around 9:35, a quarter to ten. We went up to my quarters, because we were changing into our work clothes so we could go and start our assistance on what was going on within the building or outside the building.

When we got into the building, there was a lot of civilians in my kitchen, which is on the backside of Cedar Street, between Greenwich and Church, and they had been quartered with us when the plane hit the buildings, and all the debris and stuff was coming down. Captain Mallery was in the building at the time, and Lieutenant O'Malley, my Lieutenant from Engine 10, was in the building. Captain Mallery is the Captain from Ladder 10. Captain Mallery was in my office with my brother and we were evaluating what was going on and he was giving us a briefing regarding the first plane that hit the tower, and then the second plane.

At that time, which was probably somewhere around a quarter to ten, the second tower, World Trade 2, came down. Unbeknownst to us, we were

upstairs, we heard the building shake, a lot of debris came down, and the building was hit with a dust cloud.

The apparatus doors were open, because I went out on the second floor by my office, and it was pitch black from the air conditioner that was blowing in the bunkroom of the second floor. I looked out the window. It was pitch black. All the dust that was coming down Greenwich Street headed southbound. We went down the stairs to see how everybody was doing downstairs. There was people all over the place. People with broken ankles, broken legs, femurs.

We went into the kitchen and we started evacuating the house, because we didn't know exactly what happened, other than the building came down and collapsed. It was later determined that it was building World Trade 2, which is the south building that came down. We started evacuating everybody. I had not gotten out to the street yet. We just made sure that we could get people out the back door, that's the Greenwich Street side, and we were having everybody go down up to Trinity Place and go south. We were heading them towards the Statue of Liberty

way, Battery Park. Captain Mallery, myself, Lieutenant O'Malley were in the building doing the evacuation.

At the time, I think, the Captain or the Lieutenant went across the street. There was a Lieutenant that was injured at 130 Liberty Street, which is the Deutsch Bank, and they were assisting a first-aid case over there. In the meantime, I continued the evacuation.

Most of the equipment in the building was gone. All that was left was my turnout coat and I grabbed the truck helmet. I had an understanding that the building was taken over by civilians and everybody else and all our equipment was taken out of the building and had been ravaged by civilians and anybody else that needed equipment that day.

While we were evacuating people, there was an ambulance in the engine bay, that was stuck in the engine bay because of the debris that came down from World Trade 2 and there was no way of going out the front door, other than climbing over piles of debris that was there. After the tower came down, we made the determination that we weren't sure if any other building would come down, so we evacuated the whole

building. I went through and did a search and there was two EMS people that were still left in the building. Again, Captain Mallery and Lieutenant O'Malley were across the street at 130 Liberty Street. I went into the kitchen to make sure there was nobody there when I heard the rumble of Tower 1 coming down. I don't know the time that it happened. I just heard the same rumble I heard when Tower 2 came down, the same thing, and I took cover in our kitchen.

The only people left in the building were the two EMS people and after the tower collapsed and we got more debris thrown in our kitchen, I opened the door to go out to the apparatus to find out if they were okay and they were right behind the door. We pulled them in the kitchen and the two EMS people were hurt, but they were conscious and stuff, and we evacuated them out. I evacuated them out of the back of the building and they went down the street towards the south.

After that I checked with Lieutenant O'Malley and Captain Mallery to make sure that they were okay and that they were still alive, because I didn't know what happened when the second tower came down,

which is World Trade Center 1. They were across the street. I was calling to them. I managed to get a hold of them. We went over there and there was a -- at the time, too, when we were evacuating the building Ladder 124 was there. They assisted with moving people up the block and down to the south. They helped work with EMS. When we went over later on, after the second tower, I went over again to see if our Captain was okay. They had stabilized the Lieutenant. I think he broke his leg and his shoulder, and dislocated his shoulder. Lieutenant O'Malley had packaged him up -- Captain Mallery, and we started on our way and we started going down Greenwich Street south to Albany; to Rector Street, we made a right on Rector Street to head over to the west side, away from any more possible collapses until we figured West Street would be open.

We took them over to -- I think there was two other firefighters with us. I don't know what company they were. We stopped on the way on Carlyle Street, between Greenwich and Washington, to take a break and make sure that the Lieutenant was okay. Captain Mallery I think remained and I think he was doing a search at 130 Liberty. We managed to get

down to West Street and Carlyle and we ran into an EMS person and we passed off the Lieutenant to him, and they backed him out on some type of vehicle. I think it was a flatbed truck. And then Lieutenant O'Malley and I started to search some of the buildings. We went into the Marriott Hotel, which was, I think, 85 or 90 -- 85 West Street.

There was a security person in there and we talked to him. He said that the whole place was evacuated. We told him we wanted him out of the place, and made sure that everybody was accounted for. After that Lieutenant O'Malley and I went down to West Street. We started walking around on West Street seeing if we could see any surface victims to rescue and stuff. The whole area was covered with gray ash from the debris that came down, and then we ended up splitting up. I was trying to head over to the north side, which was Vesey and West, to see what was happening over there. There was no access on West Street due to the World Trade Tower 1 coming down, part of 3 was down on West Street and there was no way up Liberty Street due to World Trade 2 that collapsed.

I went through the back way, which was through

the World Finance Centers, cut through the building. I ended up getting onto West Street. I'm not sure if I went through the towers or I went around the back to the north cove and I came out on North End Avenue. At that time, there was people on the Vesey/West Street side and I paired up -- down on the corner of West and Vesey, there was a lot of rigs that were buried under the debris. I remember the super satellite from Engine 9 was there, in front of the 6 World Trade Center. There were people climbing all over the place trying to get into there and there were some fires. They looked for surface victims and stuff.

I ran into some of the people from the first battalion. There was Chief McKavanagh, and we started trying to get water. We wanted water lines down there to start water. I understand the boats were in, so we managed to get rigs that were further back towards Murray and Warren Street that were not covered in debris. I remember Ladder 115's rig was in the middle of the street on West Street by Vesey, heading southbound, and that was covered in debris. I managed to get an Engine out and we backed it down the street, down through Murray, up around the back

on to North End Avenue and we brought it in on Vesey Street and parked it midway. We then had lines running from the boats, which was at the waterfront at the time. We ran lines down to supply the pumper, and then the pumper ran more lines down to supply the satellite, which was located down at the intersection of Liberty -- of Vesey and West. And we were trying to use that as a supply line to get any hand lines or even to get the super pumper up or the Vesey water satellite unit in service.

We then had another break in the block on West Street heading southbound that we were hooking into to try to boost the pressure up to get water into the satellite units so we could extinguish fires that were going on right now in 6 World Trade, which is the Federal building, the Customs building. We couldn't the get pressure up on it. It would only reach so much pressure and because it was 3-inch, 3-and-a-half-inch lines, we couldn't get enough water down there to provide the pressure to use the satellite gun. And that's where we spent most of the day, was just trying to attack the fires, put whatever we put out in the area.

There was units searching in 6 World Trade.

One World Trade we couldn't get near, because the bridge had collapsed on top of it. The north end bridge had collapsed on the street, blocking the whole street, and we were just -- there were units all over the place. People were all over the place. I didn't know who they were. Because at the time we had a problem with as far as determining who was who, because equipment was being borrowed from all firehouses.

And 7 World Trade was burning up at the time. We could see it. There was concern. I had gone up to take a look at it, because I knew that the telephone company building, which is 140 West Street, was next to 7 World Trade Center, and there was a concern that if 7 World Trade came down, what would happen to this building? We went in there, we checked it out. There were some people in there. We made them evacuate and I went in the back to see what was happening.

The fire at 7 World Trade was working its way from the front of the building northbound to the back of the building. There was no way there could be water put on it, because there was no water in the area. I went back and I reminded whoever the

chief was, I don't know if it was Chief McKavanagh or Chief Blaich, that with 7 World Trade Center in danger of collapsing, you had to be careful, because Con Edison had big transformers in the back that supplied the lower half of Manhattan. So we had to be concerned about electricity, that this may be energized or not be energized. We also reminded him about the telephone company, about the equipment that was in there.

After a while, what happened, my eyes started bothering me. I ended up getting taken over to St. Francis in Jersey by the water, had my eyes washed out and when I was coming back somewhere around I think it was 5:00 o'clock, 6:00 o'clock, 7 World Trade Center came down. We were in the water when it came down. It might have been earlier. It might have been 4. I don't know exactly when, but we were on the river coming back from New Jersey when the towers came down.

They were utilizing the north cove as a reference point for evacuation of all people over for hospitals and stuff. The Port Authority -- or police launches were there. They were bringing people across. They had a triage station set up

over there to flush the eyes or to handle whatever emergency was quick, and then they moved them over and then transported them out over to New Jersey. After pretty much the towers came down and there was some sense of no more collapse happening, Engine 10's quarters started to get used as a triage station and a general focal point.

Throughout the whole time Engine 10's quarters emergency generator was working we had some type of lighting system and some type of electricity. That's why they used it as a focal point. The EMS people were in there, they were triaging a lot of people. They were eye washing any emergencies, any civilians, any firemen. There was continued searches throughout the area. Again, the people I don't know, because helmets were being used by everybody, taken out of everybody's quarters. Partial equipment was worn. There were no face masks down there at the time, we had no breather masks. We were using whatever was handy, and I probably didn't get out of there until almost 1:30 in the morning, and which I stayed at the Fire Marshal's base with my brother. I finally touched bases with him. I stayed there and then we were

back again at 9:00 o'clock in the morning. That's it.

Q. You mentioned Lieutenant O'Malley. You may have mentioned it before. What unit is he in?

A. He's in Engine 10.

Q. Okay. And Captain --

A. Mallery. M-A-L-L-E-R-Y. He's the Captain at Ladder 10.

BATALLION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. Good interview. I thank you for the interview. The time is now 10:58 hours and this is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110262

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM HOREL

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 9:55 hours in the morning. This is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the New York City Fire Department.

I am conducting an interview with the following individual: William Horel of Engine 64, Firefighter 6th Grade, of the New York City Fire Department.

The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 64 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Horel, would you tell me what happened in the events of September 11?

A. Sure. We were assigned first to respond to 35 engine for the staging area and met there with several other engine companies, and we were told to respond to the site, so we drove down to the site, parked near Chambers and West.

Myself, Mike Ferrara, Vinnie Massa, Dave Moriarity and Lieutenant Steve O'Brien started to walk down West Street. We got to the corner of Vesey and West when the north tower started to collapse.

At that point, I turned north on West and dove behind an ambulance. When the dust cleared, we

headed back towards looking for, you know, whatever we could do.

We weren't given any specific assignment until much later in the day when we did the primary search of the Verizon building from the 11th floor to the 20th Floor.

Don't really recall seeing any members of any other units going into the building, because we didn't get up right to where we could see the lobby or anything. We weren't that close before the collapse.

Q. Is that it? Do you have any other recollection?

A. Nothing.

Q. Okay. I'll ask you a few questions, and maybe it will help you out.

When you said you were told to respond, did anybody else respond with you? Any other companies?

A. From 35, yeah, there was probably five or six other engine companies. I remember 83, I remember 50. There was either 96 or 94, or maybe both of them. I'm not sure. I know 50 and 83 were there, and 35.

Q. Okay. Do you recall if they responded, they got there at the same time as you or --

A. We were actually the lead engine in the

convoy, so we pulled in first, but they were all right behind us.

Q. Okay.

A. All right behind us.

Q. Do you recall if you reported in to anybody?

A. We were working our way towards what we thought was the command post near Vesey and West, but as soon as the collapse came, we never got to report in to anybody at that point.

Later on, there were smaller command posts set up all over that our officer checked in with, but...

Q. Okay. After you got there, like you said, the collapse occurred very shortly afterwards.

Did you happen to see -- maybe not companies. Did you happen to see any apparatus?

A. One apparatus I noticed was 12 truck, because I had a couple of friends working at 12 truck, so I knew they would be down there. I saw the rig, but no members.

Q. Okay. Where was that located?

A. Right around the corner of Vesey and West, right where we were, a little bit farther in.

Q. Okay. Was it intact or was it --

A. It was intact. It wasn't damaged.

Q. And afterwards?

A. Yeah, after the collapse I noticed it.

Q. Okay.

A. So...

Q. Any other things you can recall? As far as did you see any members?

A. We stretched line, I remember, to the water. I guess it was, like, up to one of the boats, one of the marine units.

Q. Right. That was after the collapse?

A. That was after the collapse.

Q. As you said, you hadn't seen any members or anything before that?

A. No, not that I can recall.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110263

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENTANT STANLEY RYBAK

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today is December 7, 2001. The time is 12:10 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, the safety battalion, New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Stanley Rybak in regards to the events on September 11, 2001.

Q. If you could, Stan, just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. Okay. I was sitting here in my office at hazmat operations, and I was listening to the department radio and heard that a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

At the time, I didn't know what size of the plane it was, so I went inside to Chief Fanning to inform him, and I'm not sure what time it was, but the first plane had just hit. I went inside, told Chief Fanning, and within a minute or so, we both responded with his department vehicle to the trade center.

Chief Fanning drove his vehicle, and I was the passenger. I had taken two handy-talkies from our operations. We went down FDR Drive to some place -- one of the streets -- I'm not sure which one it was -- and that street led us to Central Park. We made a left

on Fifth Avenue, drove down Fifth Avenue for some time, and I'm not sure at what time we -- probably 23rd Street, we might have turned to go towards the water to get towards the Westside Highway.

We did see a flash, which we didn't know was the second -- at that time, we didn't know if that was the second plane hitting. We were probably on about 23rd Street, crossing 23rd Street, when we saw the flash, and we had -- again, crossing 23rd Street, I saw the flash of the -- now I know was the second plane hitting.

We were on Westside -- now on the Westside Highway headed south, and we made a turn onto Vesey Street and parked on the corner of -- on Vesey.

We both got out of the car. Chief Fanning donned his bunker gear. He did not have breathing apparatus. I did not even have my bunker gear. Hasmet 1 at the same -- simultaneously arrived, and I had gone to see how I could assist Hasmet 1 and seeing where they might be going. They had two officers on board with extra manpower, extra men. I wanted to see what they were doing. They were going to continue into the building to -- probably to the lobby command post.

As I turned around, I did not know where

Chief Fanning had gone, and so I proceeded then to the -- what I thought was the original command post, but there was a -- I was out on the highway itself, and soon as I got there, I saw a lot of the chiefs setting up the command post. The command post, it was on, I guess, opposite 3 -- the American Express building.

I know there was -- I jumped over some dividers, again, and I saw -- it was in the -- near the parking lot. There was a parking garage that went down into a building, and I had spoken to -- I saw Chief Ganci, the priest, about 20 -- 20 of the personnel, Chief Ingram. I asked what I could do to Chief Ingram, how I could help, and he had just informed me if I could possibly relay a message to the other units who were standing fast, that there was a possibility of -- they had heard a third plane coming in and to be aware of this. There might be a third plane coming, to tell the members just to watch out for any other kind of planes coming in.

So I did that, and I felt I wasn't needed. I was going to go look for Chief Fanning now, and I left the site, that command post, and walked south down West Street. As I was walking south, I saw -- I actually passed Commissioner Von Essen. He was walking the

opposite way.

I went and walked underneath the pedestrian bridge -- I guess that would be the north pedestrian bridge -- and made my way down to the corner of Liberty, and the corner of Liberty and West Street, and then that's where I heard -- as I was looking up, I was observing people drop from the windows, civilians, and then I heard a noise.

I looked up from the corner where I was and saw the building, the ^ inaudible tower, I guess it was the Tower 2 collapsing, the south tower collapsing.

I turned around and ran diagonally looking for some shelter, and I found a -- ran towards the building that was the Dow Jones center. It's the building where it had a revolving door, that's all I know, and a regular pullout door.

I chose to go up to the pullout door, and there was a lot of pressure on me, on the door. I could hardly open up the door. As I walked -- ran through another 5 or 10 feet, dove on the ground, and hit a -- what was a garden wall inside the middle of the lobby, and then the -- then everything just came right through. The dust and the explosion knocked the windows out, and so I was momentarily on the ground.

I had hit my head on the marble wall, so kind of a little dazed, and then the first words I heard, I heard someone, an officer from 217 engine, screaming for his men, "217, where are you? Where are you?"

So I -- that was my former company, so I went over to the lieutenant. I told him who I was, and I said, "Who are you?" And he said, "Lieutenant McGoff." Tom McGoff was there. I said, "Tom, this is Stan. I don't know if you remember me, but I used to work over there." And he said, "I lost two guys." I said, "Who did you lose?" He said, "Steve Coakley and Levy."

So we found our way out of that building to the -- I think that was the north side of the revolving doors on the -- on Liberty side, and we found our way out, and it was still -- it was still very dark, dusty, and then we just proceeded to get together and shake everything off and then started looking for the missing members.

And then it just went on after that, and then it was -- as we were looking again, the next building came down, and we were on -- in front of the American Express building, headed, again, towards West Street. We were near the pedestrian bridge that did not go

down. I don't know which one that connected to, but we were looking for anybody else who could be found.

I know there was a lot of missing members they were talking about, and then again we heard the building was coming down. We looked -- you know, I just felt it coming down and, again, we ran into the same building.

That seemed to be -- as I hid behind a column on this one, it seemed to be a much hotter force going through, and again found our way out. We had to search our way out towards the waterside exit of the building. There are, I think, three different exits in that building, and that one went towards the Gateway Plaza, towards the water, and again, we just started at that time in trying to collect ourselves and go get whatever kind of medical attention we needed.

A lot of guys with eyes were -- you couldn't see and breathing and because we had no -- like I said, no apparatus, so -- and that was it after the second building collapsed, and then we just continued on searching, and that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Stan. That's the conclusion of our interview. It's 12:18 p.m.

File No. 9110264

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOHN CITARELLA

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 7th, 2001. The time is 11:25 a.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT CITARELLA: Lieutenant John Citarella.

CHIEF BURNS: -- of hazmat operations with regard to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, if you would, just tell us in your own words what happened the day of the World Trade Center.

A. Well, I was here at the academy. I was on the phone with my old company, Squad 41. I was talking to the members there. They were going to come out and do a drill out here in the afternoon. One of them said, "Did you hear that on the radio? A plane just hit the Trade Center." I said, "Really? I'll call you right back."

I went upstairs. I spoke to Chief Fanning. He was already putting his radio on. He was getting ready to respond. He turned on

the TV. He saw the one tower had gotten hit. My friend next door, Lieutenant Steve Turilli, he came up and said, "Come on, let's go down there." We didn't have our gear with us here, so we went to Squad 41, got gear there, and then headed down.

On the way down we heard that another plane had hit, on the department radio, that Marine 6 gave an urgent that another plane hit the south tower. We continued down. We parked on Washington Street, went west on Vesey Street and then made a left onto West Street.

As we were walking down West Street, there were numerous people jumping out of the top floors, the upper floors. They were landing right next to us. I remember them hitting my leg as they were landing, parts hitting the divider on West Street.

We got into Rescue 3's rig, took their confined space masks and converted them over to regular masks. We ran into Freddie Scheffold and Joe Marchbanks. They were asking us where the command post was, and we said, "We just got here. We don't know."

We started walking around, looking for the command post. We walked down West Street, made a left on Liberty Street. When we were walking down Liberty Street, there was I think a guy from 217. He was an officer. I think he was from 217. He was screaming at us. We came over, "What's going on?" He told us that a fireman just got killed, got hit by a body in that spot that we were walking.

So we came back around and then made our way into the hotel, into the Marriott Hotel. Once we got in the hotel, we met up with -- Chief Galvin was there, and he asked where we were from. Me and Steve said we were from the rescue school. He knew Freddie from the 12th. Freddie wasn't even working that day. He went down there with Joe Marchbanks.

The chief told us, "All right, make your way to the 90th floor in the south tower." I remember Steve started walking right away. I remember I put my arm around Freddie and I said, "Did he say the 90th floor?" Freddie looked at me and said, "Hold on a second."

Right as he said that, I heard a loud

roar, "boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom," and it was getting louder. I looked around, and we were looking at each other. What is that noise? I just looked out the window of the lobby. I could see stuff out of the window of the lobby hitting the street, and I just dove into the corner of the wall.

I got down and put my head down, and nothing was happening. I just heard that noise getting louder and louder. All of a sudden "whoom," everything just went black. You could feel the air rush around.

The wall that I was leaning against started coming down and "crunch, crunch, crunch." You could still here things coming down. I was squashed right down. I said one more thing hits this wall, I'm going to be squashed.

Then it just got real quiet and stopped. You could see nothing. My head was shoved down into the floor and the wall was on my mask and my knee was in my chest and my leg was out. The only free hand I had was my right hand, and I was able to grab my radio that I had and I was trying to give a mayday, but nothing was

responding.

I couldn't hear anything on the radio. I just started screaming at the top of my lungs, "Mayday, mayday, help me, someone." Of course the way my head was like this and the ground, I was having a hard time breathing. I would scream for about 15 seconds. Then I would like hyperventilate. Then I would just listen. There were no sounds. I know Freddie was right next to me, and I know Joe Marchbanks, we were as close as this. I would start screaming again.

This went on it felt like forever, but probably about 15 to 20 minutes. I was resolved to the fact that I wasn't getting out, it was over. Then I heard someone go, "John, is that you?" I knew it was Steve. I said, "Stevie, get me out of here." I started screaming. He said, "Where are you?" I was like, where am I? You can't see where I -- I didn't know what was going on.

I started screaming some more. He said, "See if you can grab --" I reached out with my right hand, and I felt something. I just started hitting like a pipe or something, "click,

click, click." "All right," he said, "Can you see my light?" Just out of the corner of my eye, because it was so squished like this, I'm looking and I don't see nothing.

All of a sudden I see the light come in. I put my hand up like this. He said all he could see were my fingers from my glove coming up. Larry Stack was there with him at the time. He had a flashlight. The chief didn't have it.

I think what happened was I had spoken to Mike Stack, and he said his father was pinned originally and they had to cut him out of his coat. He started moving stuff out of the way. Steve took off his coat and he tunnelled in and he saw me. There was a lot of stuff. He yelled back to Chief Stack to get a saws-all. He said, "You're on your own. We've got nothing here."

It took them a while. It took them probably about five minutes to maneuver the stuff out of the way. There was an I beam on my foot and some debris. Once he got that out, he was able to take my foot and he straightened it out a little bit. That actually dropped my body just enough that the mask was able to turn and he was

able to turn the mask and take the mask off.

Now I was starting to be able to rock a little bit, and he was able to turn me out into -- it was like a lean-to. I was here, and there was a lean-to to the right of me that he was actually able to crawl under. I went out feet first, and then I saw Stack was there. It was Chief Stack and I guess Meyers.

Q. Right, Brian Meyers.

A. Yeah. When I came out, he said, "Welcome back, John." I remember that distinctly. I gave Steve a big kiss and we were starting to talk and Stack said, "Let's get out of here right now. We've got to get out of here."

We started walking up north now, in the hotel. We walked up north, and we must have gotten to about this section right here north in the hotel, and there was a door there. We tried to open the door, but there was too much debris on the other side of the door to open it. We swung back around and we got to about here.

Q. "Here," what do you mean?

A. On the West Street side of the

building. West Street, maybe it would have been 20 feet south of the northern most end of the hotel.

There was a hole in the wall there. O'Flaherty was there and a civilian, and we walked up. We stopped there. Chief Downey was out in the street at this time. He came running over to us, and he looked at me and Steve. "Steve," he said, "What are you guys doing here?" Chief Stack said, "These guys were buried. They've got to get out of here." Downey said, "You guys run out." He told us to run out.

Ganci and Feehan were out in the street at that time. He told us to run out towards them. Downey and Stack were going to stay with the civilian. The civilian didn't want to walk across. He said he pulled his Achilles tendon or whatever and he wasn't going to be able to make it across. He wanted to stay right where he was.

We walked across. Steve stopped for a second to talk to Al Fuentes, who was standing in the street. It was still right in front of the hotel. We were all right in this area.

Q. That's on West Street.

A. It's on West Street. Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan were standing right next to each other like actually out in the street. You could still make out the street a little bit. All that iron wasn't thrown into the street at the time. There was debris in the street but not to the extent that there was when the other one came down.

Chief Downey and Chief Stack stayed right by the hotel. Fuentes was in the middle of both of them, of both sets. Chief Ganci immediately asked me if my radio was working and tried to grab it. He said he was trying to get in touch with Rescue 1 and he couldn't get through with his radio. But my radio was smashed. Mine wasn't working at all.

He told me and Steve Turilli to head up West Street, north on West Street. We walked about maybe 10 feet to 15 feet up West Street. We ran into Joe Angelini. Joe said he was going to go back. He was going to try to go into the hotel because he thought there were more people in there.

The captain from 58 Engine was also

with us, Nagel. 58 Engine was going to go up in the south tower with us. They were starting to get down and get their rollups and stuff, putting them up, the officer came walking over.

Joe Angelini and I were out in West Street, and he starts walking towards the hotel. We tried to tell him, "Joe, they want everyone out of here. They think the other one is going to come down." He started walking over.

We started walking now up West Street. We got to about -- I guess we met Joe somewhere in here, because I remember stopping -- I was right in front of the north tower. I stopped and I looked back, and I saw him walking on a diagonal and I remember still seeing Chief Downey standing on the outside of the hotel, looking in, and Stack still being there with the civilian at that time.

I turned, I took maybe a couple more steps, and then I heard another explosion, it sounded like. I looked up, and the north tower was starting to come down. So me and Steve started running. I saw the north bridge, and I said I've got to at least make it past the north

bridge.

I started running, and I just made it past the north bridge and I got a little bit past that and I felt like someone just hit me from behind. But there was no debris at that time. It was just I got knocked down. I tried to get back up, and there was a couple of trucks lined up on West Street. I got behind one of the trucks. Everything just came down.

Steve didn't make it as far as I did. I got a little further because he stopped and watched a little more as the tower was coming down. That was the last I saw of any of those guys.

It turns out obviously now that Ganci and Commissioner Feehan, they probably didn't make it much of a way, because all the iron got thrown into the street when this one came down.

I know that Downey, Stack, Freddie and Joe Marchbanks are in the hotel for sure. I had spoken to Freddie Scheffold's wife and kids, and I spoke to Larry Stack's son. But I know that's where they are.

There's no way that they can be

anywhere else, because in the time it took -- if Downey didn't go into the hotel to take cover, he would have ran and they would have found him in the street. He had to have gone into the hotel. I didn't stop -- I didn't actually see him go in, but where he was when I looked up when the building came down, he's in the hotel, in this area right here, the northern part. Freddie and Joe and the guy from 58 are more in the center, but Stack and Downey are more in this part, in the northern part of the hotel.

Q. Let me ask you one question. When you were in the south tower, did you see any other units that were getting ready to go up? Were they staging?

A. We never actually made it into the south tower, because there was a spot in the hotel where you traversed I guess underneath and into the south tower. That's where we were starting to head to. There are other units in the hotel.

I couldn't tell you for sure who it was, but I think we saw Kerwin from 288 in the lobby there. He was starting to go into the

Trade Center, down through the lobby. There were a couple of companies. I can't remember. There were companies from all over the place.

But the south part of the tower -- when the south tower came down, the south part of the hotel was saved pretty much intact. A lot of guys that were in that section survived, got out. They weren't buried at all. They were able to get out.

I remember there were a couple of rigs parked on Vesey Street where the MPOs were. I remember borrowing gloves from one of the engines that were parked there. It might have been 24 Engine. I don't know what happened to those guys over there.

But that was pretty much all the guys that I saw in the street. I know Joe Angelini they found in the street and Ganci and Feehan they found in the street. But those guys are in the hotel.

Q. Okay, John, thanks.

CHIEF BURNS: The time is 11:41:30 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110265

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN ALTINI

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is Friday, December 7th, 2001. The time is 1615 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual: Steven Altini, firefighter first, assigned to Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department, City of New York. The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 24 in the engine office, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Altini, would you please tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. Okay. Me and two other off-duty firefighters responded from home prior to the recall. We went over the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Looking towards Manhattan, we could see the two towers, pretty heavy smoke rushing from the towers.

We responded through Brooklyn via the Gowanus Expressway. We were waved through the easy pass lane from PD as we showed our ID, who we were. We proceeded to go through the Battery Tunnel. We noticed no fire apparatus or

emergency vehicles as we went through, just some civilian vehicles.

As we exited the Battery Tunnel to lower Manhattan, we proceeded to make a right turn onto West Street where we were confronted with a lot of debris in the street, airplane debris, human remains and such.

We pulled our pickup truck just north of the Marriott at Carlisle Street on the east side of West Street, facing north. As we exited the vehicle, two other firefighters donned their protective gear and headed north towards tower two or one.

Me being in civilian clothes and no protective gear, I proceeded west across West Street to Commissioner Gregory and his aide and asked them where the off-duty firemen were going, and what I can do. I was instructed to either remain at the scene or proceed over to City Hall where the firefighters were now mustering up after the recall.

As I was there, I remember seeing Ladder 113, but there was no members there. This was between 9:30 and 10. I don't know the exact

time the second plane hit the tower, but that's exactly when we left Staten Island. It took us maybe about 20 minutes to get in.

I noticed an engine company -- I believe it was Engine 211 -- pull up. As they were getting out of the rig, I went over to the chauffeur and asked them if they had protective gear that I could borrow. Being the chauffeur was also suiting up, they had no extra gear.

With that I headed east across West Street and went through the Marriott at Carlisle Street, exiting the rear onto Washington Street, headed north one block, over east another block to Greenwich Street, where I met up with another fireman who was in full gear from Engine 249.

We proceeded north towards Engine 10, and we tried to enter their quarters through the rear basement entrance, which was locked. As we continued north on Greenwich Street towards the corner of Liberty and Greenwich is when tower two started to come down.

The only other apparatus I saw, that I remembered seeing on Liberty Street in front of tower two, I believe it was Ladder 15. The

number is not clear, but I thought it was Ladder 15. I may be mistaken. I confronted no personnel other than the one member from 249 at that point.

We found cover at the corner of Cedar and Greenwich Street as tower two was coming down, in a deli next to O'Hara's Restaurant. After it sounded like the tower was finished collapsing, we exited the deli and headed south one block, where we were separated, me and the fireman.

I met up with a fire cadet, Eddie Gonzalez, who sustained a broken left arm, I believe, and we got him to an ambulance maybe about 15 minutes, 20 minutes later. By that time tower one had already come down.

When he was taken away in the ambulance, I went around by Battery Park and back up West Street where there was a lot of firemen that weren't there earlier. I didn't see Commissioner Gregory or his aide. I didn't see any other members that I saw prior to the collapses. Just a lot of firemen from out of the borough I guess responded from the recall.

I gave Chief Mosier from the 8th Division some information about the two members that I came up to Manhattan with, because at this point I knew they were missing and I thought they were caught in the collapse of either one or two, tower one or tower two. I wasn't sure, because they didn't say where they were going.

Throughout the day I met many different personnel, and we continued to search and help stretch some hose line from the tugboats to supply tower ladders on West Street, and that was pretty much it.

Q. I'm just going to ask you a couple questions. That was pretty good.

When you say you went there with two other firemen, who were the others?

A. It was Craig Monahan from Ladder Company 5 and Joseph Rea from Engine Company 255.

Q. They had their gear with them?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were on West Street, you said you were on West Street and you met Commissioner Gregory.

A. Right.

Q. Where on West Street was he? Do you know what street?

A. Yeah, we were pretty much right between Liberty and Cedar, just south of the south walkway bridge, at the median in the divider. There was a separation in the divider, and he had his car and they were there, facing north.

Q. You mentioned 211, again on West Street. Do you know where on West Street? Is that the same location?

A. Same location. They pulled up, and the officer had come out and I believe he spoke to Commissioner Gregory. At that point I went over and spoke to the chauffeur as he was donning his gear.

Q. And the guy from 249, you don't recall his name?

A. No, I'm sorry.

Q. That's okay.

A. I was told his name a couple of times.

Q. Okay. Fine.

A. I don't remember.

Q. It would help, but that's fine.

And Ladder 15, you said they were on

West Street also on Liberty Street. Is that the overpass, the south overpass?

A. No, it looked like they were facing -- they were on the north side of Liberty Street facing east on a diagonal. I hate to speculate, but they may have come around by Battery Park and then up West Street and parked their rig in front of tower two. They weren't near tower one.

Q. No, but the overpass on Liberty Street, the south walkway.

A. Right.

Q. Were they near that?

A. They were just north of that and east.

Q. Okay. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you.

File No. 9110266

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT BYRNE

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 7th, 2001. The time is 1645 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter 6th grade Robert Byrne, assigned to Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24, in the company office, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Byrne, would you please tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. September 11th I arrived for work early to do my probationary firefighter duties so I was square with everything. When we got the call to go, I was able to -- I had to beg the nozzle man to let me take up on him, which I did. The call came in around 8:46, so we responded immediately. So I had the knob.

En route to the World Trade Center, it was myself as the nozzle man, Marcel Claes was the backup, Dan Sterling was the doorman, and

Rich Billy had control, Lieutenant Hanson was my officer and John Ottrando was our chauffeur.

While going to the Trade Center, I'm really doing my size-up and saying, oh, my God, there's like ten floors missing. Everything is blowing out fire. I remember looking how high it is and saying, oh, my God, how are we going to get up there with all of our equipment.

We parked on, I'm pretty sure it was the West Side Highway by Vesey. I'm almost sure it was over in that area. I remember John parked the rig. We headed to the north tower at that time.

When we were going there, I remember seeing debris and whatnot falling. When we got to the staging area inside the lobby, I remember seeing other companies. I remember vividly seeing it looked like the core elevators of the building were blown apart as if a giant had punched through tinfoil.

I remember seeing some bodies. I remember looking out into the courtyard and seeing some mutilated bodies. Debris was everywhere. I remember we were just waiting for

our assignment.

From there we headed up, I believe it was behind Ladder 20, and we headed up to the staircase A. We got as far as, I'd say, the 13th floor initially. We had to take our first blow because we were carrying a lot of equipment.

There were civilians jamming the staircase. There was water flowing down the staircase; I remember that. People saying, "Thank you, guys." I remember another unit behind us. I don't remember what company they were with. One of the senior guys was saying basically, "You're almost there, folks. You're almost there." Then I started joking around with the people. I said, "Yeah, all this for 32 grand." People thought it was funny. That was my way of trying to make them feel better, tell them a joke.

On the 13th floor we took a break. I remember hearing radio calls then, by other units, some maydays, members down with chest pains. I don't know what floors they were on.

I kept going up. I remember seeing people coming down in the stairs. We had to make

way for a couple of people that had their skin hanging off their bodies, basically. They were pretty burnt up.

I don't remember what floor it was, but we were with a woman who had an asthma attack and a man was helping her down. We were trying to help her. We didn't have too much CFR stuff with us, but some EMT I guess it was -- popped out of nowhere. He had an oxygen tank with no proper rebreather mask, but he was able to give her a little air.

To make a long story short, she was able to get out because she decided not to stay and wait for EMS to help her out. She just got out. She got out of the building.

It was around the 29th floor, I think it was, that we decided to take some of our gear off in order to make it up to the 80th floor. Then we moved up to I think it was the 29th floor. I don't remember what other units were up there. Like I was saying, we were going to take some gear off, leave a few of the hose lengths. We carried a lot of gear up, and it was almost impossible to make it up that high anyway.

That's where we left Rich Billy to be communications relay, basically, because communications were pretty poor in the staircase. Personally I didn't hear a lot of radio transmissions.

I remember going to I believe it was the 35th floor we got to, and that's where we ran into 5 Truck, our guys. They saw us. We came into the hallway, and we were pooped. They came over and offered us water. We took a blow there for a little bit.

I remember somebody had gotten into a water dispenser, and we took Poland Spring bottles. I think it was Andy Brunn that got into it. We were giving them out to civilians on their way down.

I remember later on we went up to -- I don't know if it was still on the 35th floor and that's when we all dove into the staircase because basically the whole tower shook and we heard the noise of something going on. We didn't know what it was.

What it was was the south tower collapsing. We didn't know. Finally we got some

sort of transmission on the radio saying there was a collapse on the 60th floor. Meanwhile the south tower happened to come down.

We were still on a rest period. We started going back. We were supposed to meet up with another unit; I don't remember who it was. We made it as far as, I believe it was the 37th floor, and I believe it was a chief from the 11th Battalion that popped up on the staircase. His exact words were "Drop everything and get out." We looked to Lieutenant Hanson, and he said, "Drop everything and get out." That's when we basically evacuated.

I remember going up the stairs took us over the hour. Getting down the stairs took maybe ten minutes, not even. By that time the staircase was empty. The same staircase we took up was empty on the way down.

We got as far as I believe the 10th floor, 10th or 15th -- I'm not a hundred percent sure -- and we knew something was bad at that time anyway.

There was a radio transmission for -- they needed help. Lieutenant Hanson told me to

get out because my -- when the chief told me to drop everything, because I'm a proby, I followed orders to the T, I guess, and I dropped everything, except for my bunker gear, of course. But I dropped my Scott tank and everything. When I got down to that floor, he said, "All right, Byrne, you don't have your face piece. Just get out of the building."

Basically, I got as far as the third floor, where I ran into -- it looked like there was a collapse down there. It was pretty bad. It was all smoky and dusty. I thought it was smoke, and I got a little nervous. I was at the point where I was going to go up and get another Scott tank, but I realized it wasn't smoke.

That's when I saw it was a collapse. It looked like a collapse; either that or the collapse and just closed up the staircase, I think it was the second floor, third or second floor, whatever it was. That's where I ran into a Port Authority cop, and he directed me out.

It was a good thing I had my flashlight on still, because it was pitch-black. I followed a pitch-black hallway, and that's where I ran

into a group of civilians. When we got to the point, I think it was the lobby, and that's where we had -- we had a little overhead protection there, and then we had to run across to the next overhead protection it was about a 75 foot run. There were jumpers and debris that was falling. We had to pretty much take our chance when we made the run.

Before that I remember running into another guy in my probationary class, Jimmy Brown. He was with 10-10. He was saying he doesn't know where everybody is. To make a long story short with Jimmy Brown, he ended up living but he got buried up to his shoulders. They had to dig him out before he suffocated.

I remember making the mad dash, praying I wasn't going to get hit. I took a peek up. I saw it looked clear to me, and I ran. I was under another bit of overhead protection, but it wasn't really that good a protection because the aluminum was just coming down from that building. It was just going through that thick plate glass like a hot knife through butter. There were bodies littering the courtyard. Everything was

on fire.

So I was by myself with 20 civilians, I guess. I was the only fireman. The whole line stopped because we had to stay in a single column to keep the overhead protection. I didn't understand why the column stopped. I was worried. I was like, why is this thing stopping?

So I went around to the front, and that's when I found this big lady and she couldn't walk. Basically I was like, "Lady, you've got to get up. You're going to kill everybody." She said, "No, just leave me here." So we couldn't do that of course. I tried to help carry her, but I was just so exhausted. She wouldn't give any effort whatsoever to get up. I told her I have to go get a straight board.

Right around the corner of the building, maybe 20 feet, 30 feet, I found a couple of ESU cops. With them two and myself, we were able to get her as far as Church and Vesey on the courtyard still. We're not in the street level; we're still right next to the building.

I think there was another cop that came over with a straight board. We strapped her in,

we took her down the stairs, and that's when the building came down. We were about 150 feet away when the building came down.

I remember when the building came down I couldn't believe it, because I didn't even know the other one came down yet, because we were never told. We were told it was a collapse above the 60th floor.

What's that, Chief? I'm sorry.

All of a sudden the lady was able to get up and walk fine. That was good. At least she lived. Because I didn't have a mask, I inhaled quite a bit of that stuff. It went in my eyes, everything.

I remember walking into, I think it was towards Vesey, and I saw somebody in the middle of the street and said, "Who are you? "I don't know if I said, "Who are you?" I just remember looking. I kept on walking towards the only person I saw. It turned out to be Lieutenant Hanson. He barely got out too.

Together him and I were able to walk a block or half a block through all that debris. The debris was burning. We got help from a group

of maintenance guys in a building. They were able to wash our faces for us with a five gallon jug. From there we got over to 7 and 1 somehow.

That's about it.

Q. Okay. Thank you. I have some questions just to clarify stuff.

A. Sure.

Q. That was a good job there.

The first question, you said there were other companies that you saw on the way, but you don't remember their numbers? When you got to Vesey and West, you started walking. These other companies, you didn't take any notice?

A. When I was going in or out?

Q. Going in, walking towards the north tower. You reported to the lobby command post, probably, but do you know who the chief was at the lobby command post?

A. Yeah, I remember seeing Chief Hayden.

Q. All right, Chief Hayden.

A. Because I remember there was a firefighter from this house. I think it was 5 Truck. I remember seeing him around here before that, and he was setting up the table, the

command table they use. I remember him knocking it down. That's what drew my attention to see Chief Hayden.

Q. All right. So that was the aide probably of the division.

A. Right.

Q. So that was Division 1 was there already.

But you didn't see any other companies like in the lobby, the numbers, any numbers?

A. I remember seeing 5 Truck too.

Q. You don't know where he directed him to?

A. No.

Q. You went up the stairs with Ladder 20?

A. Yes. They were leading us.

Q. No other companies came down or up while you were working that staircase?

A. We were passing companies.

Q. But you didn't take notice of their numbers?

A. I didn't take notice. It was my first job, basically.

Q. Okay.

You said you didn't hear much on the radio. Did you have a radio?

A. I did not, but I was close enough to listen.

Q. That's fine.

The 11th Battalion, the chief you saw, you said you believe it was the 11th?

A. Right.

Q. Did you see anybody with him? Was his aide with him?

A. No, he was by himself.

Q. He was by himself. All right.

And you met 5 Truck on, what did you say, the 35th?

A. The 35th floor, I believe it was.

Q. When you were coming down, did you see any other Fire Department units or any apparatus when you came out?

A. When I came out there was an engine. I forgot the number.

Q. It was probably crushed; right?

A. No.

Q. It was in good shape?

A. It was in good shape after the building

collapsed.

Q. You came out of the lobby on the Church Street side. Is that what you said? I believe you said that.

A. Yeah, either that or I came out another way. I had to go around the building.

Q. That's when you saw the engine, when you first came out?

A. After the building came down I saw the engine, because I went to look for a Scott tank.

Q. When you saw this fellow Jim Brown, was he in the lobby? Outside?

A. I'm pretty sure he was in the lobby. I thought he was just right outside the lobby. Just before the mad dash.

There was something else I missed, I wanted to tell.

Q. Okay. If you can remember something else, go ahead. There's no rush.

A. I just forgot it.

Q. There's no rush.

A. Sorry. Thinking about this bugs you out.

Q. No, we're just trying to find out if

you saw the units --

A. Oh, okay, I remember now. I remember exactly. I remember 5 Truck telling us that they got up staircase B because it was empty of civilians, because we were telling them how we were packed with civilians. They told us to take B with them, and we ended up just staying in A. That is what I remembered.

Q. Okay. If there's nothing else, that concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you, Chief.

Q. Okay.

File No. 9110267

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD MASSA

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 7th, 2001. The time is 10:20 in the morning. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Massa of Engine 64, firefighter first grade. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 64 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Massa, please tell me what happened in your own words on September 11th.

A. I was chauffeuring for 64 Engine, and we responded to the World Trade Center from a command post on 125th Street and Third Avenue. We went down there with about four other engine companies. We went down there together.

On the way down we heard reports of the first building collapsing, and we heard on the dispatch system of people being trapped. I remember one instance, there was a guy giving a mayday from inside one of the apparatuses, of being trapped inside there. It was hard to believe what we were hearing.

Heading down the West Side Highway, I

went down West Street as far as I could go, which was on West and Eighth, West Street and Eighth Street. I think it was called Eighth. I went down as far as I could. There were apparatus backing up all the way on West Street. So that's as far down as I believe I was able to go.

Looking down to the World Trade Center, I saw just really a puff of smoke where the north tower would have been. I still found it hard to believe that it was actually collapsed. I thought maybe it was just hidden behind the smoke.

When I got out, I started getting on my gear to go down with my men. I realized that I had no mask, because the chauffeur's mask was being used by one of the firemen whose mask was out of service. So I reported to my officer that I had no mask. He said to hang back.

What I started doing right away was I remember seeing one other chauffeur that was back there with me. I didn't know who he was. We started moving the rigs over to one side, because all of West Street was blocked up. We figured if anybody needed to get by -- I don't know if there

was an order given for us to start doing that or not, but I was kind of seeing to it myself. I thought at least I could be doing something. I could be moving the apparatus over.

I started moving a bunch of engines and trucks over to the side. While I was doing that, the north tower, the second tower to collapse, collapsed. I watched that and backed up a little bit from the smoke. It was really out of reach from me. It was hard to tell at the time how far it was going to go. But after that I continued moving apparatus over to one side.

So from then when I lost my men, I never met up with them until the evening time after 6:00 o'clock. We got down there between five and ten minutes before the second building collapsed.

After that, after moving over the rigs to the side, someone was going around with wheel barrows collecting tools and anything that might be important for down at the site. So I went to a few apparatuses and looked for maybe halogens or whatever they were looking for, extra masks, to be brought down there, then setting up

hospitals after that, just trying to set up or help out with what I could at the time.

I went looking for my company a few times, trying to head down as close as I could to the Trade Center. There was always a lot of people around. I know I met up with 94 Engine for quite a while, from my battalion, and I knew them pretty well. I hung out with them. We were at a command post at the time, and we were told to hang back while Seven World Trade was on fire and they were afraid of collapse.

That's really pretty much how I spent my day, trying to help set up what I could with the hospitals or with equipment. I spent a lot of time trying to look for my men. I tried to listen by radio if I could hear where they may be, but I never found them until after 6:00.

I really didn't get too close to the buildings to really see anything that happened. I was pretty much always a few blocks away.

If there's anything else that would be important that I could tell you -- I didn't report to any command post on my own.

Q. Okay. I've got a couple questions.

When you said you got to Eighth Street, you said you heard a mayday on the department radio. Do you recall who gave it?

A. No, I don't. The fireman gave his name. I'm not even sure. But I know he was stuck in an apparatus.

Q. He didn't say what company?

A. He probably did. More than likely he did, because I remember the dispatcher asking, "Calm down and try to give the location where you were." I remember hearing him saying that he was running out of air. I was looking at my officer. We were looking at each other like we couldn't believe what we were hearing.

No, I don't remember his name or what unit he was from.

Q. When you say another chauffeur and yourself were moving rigs, apparatus, did you happen to know what company he was from?

A. No. I didn't know who he was. I didn't recognize him.

Q. Do you remember any of the company numbers of the apparatus you were moving?

A. I really didn't pay attention.

Q. The same thing happened when you took the tools, you were putting the tools in, you don't remember company numbers?

A. There wasn't any tools that were taken. But no, I really wasn't looking. I probably knew at the time but didn't try to remember.

Q. When you were moving the apparatus, you were getting closer to the buildings?

A. No, I was just moving to the side.

Q. This is all the way up by Eighth Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. When you say you hooked up with 94, that was after the collapses?

A. That was after the collapses.

Q. Okay. Unless you can think of something else, that will be the end of the interview.

A. No, I remember helping a few civilians that were walking, back around that time after I was moving the rigs, with oxygen. Some of them I guess had difficulty breathing. So I used mine from 64 Engine, my oxygen, to help civilians.

I remember one woman in particular, she

took some oxygen for a few minutes, said thank you and then I put the stuff back and started to head down to hook up with some of my men. I don't remember helping anybody else besides that one woman.

There's nothing else I can think of as far as incidents like that as far as helping any civilians coming by. There were some around there. There were some firemen back with me that I know were helping people that were coming back that needed maybe some oxygen.

Type of tools or what engine or truck companies are gone from me.

Q. Do you have anything else?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Okay. That concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110268

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF ROBERT INGRAM

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 7th of December 2001. The time is 1:25 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Battalion Chief Bob Ingram, acting Chief of hazmat operations now. At the time of September 11 I was working in headquarters as an executive manager for special operations.

Q. Okay. Maybe you could tell me about what you saw and did on the day of the Trade Center tragedy.

A. On the day of the event, I was in my office in operations, 7th floor of headquarters, when I heard a commotion outside. I looked outside. Several people were viewing out the window of Chief Ganci's office. I went to see what was going on and we were able to see the north tower on fire. We got the report that a plane had crashed into it.

Along with Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, Chief Turi, Chief Burns, myself, we all went down to the garage, got into our vehicles and responded to the World Trade towers over the Brooklyn Bridge. On the way through the streets of Manhattan we passed hundreds of civilians fleeing. We got on to West Side Highway

down by West Street, parked my vehicle along with Chief Ganci's and Chief Nigro's on West Street. It was just north about 50 feet, 40 feet of the north pedestrian bridge.

We got outside and we were viewing the building, height of the smoke and flame that were visible. We decided to set up a command post on the outside in the side street on the west side of West Street over by the financial building. As we were out there trying to notify units, we had radioed to position, we heard the second plane come in and observed it hit the second building, south tower.

Prior to that and during that impact of the second plane, we were discussing getting in contact with the control towers at the airports to find out if this was indeed an accident or if it was an intentional hit. As soon as we knew the second one was hitting, we knew that it was intentional and we were looking to contact Office of Emergency Management to start to get air support.

We set up the command post at the guard house at the underground garage entrance on the west side just south of the Shearson Lehman building, in between the two pedestrian bridges, one north and one south.

At the command post was Chief Ganci, myself, Chief Nigro, for a period of time. He left later on to go towards the building or into the buildings. Chief Turi was there for a period of time.

During the process there before and during and shortly after the first tower came down, Chief Downey had reported in there and operated there for a few minutes. Captain Fuentes reported there and worked there for a few minutes. Field comm.'s mobile van was parked in the driveway there. We proceeded to start to stage Engine and Ladder companies on the down ramp into the underground garage as a means of protecting them from glass that was falling from the building.

During this time we observed the civilians coming down from the upper floors of the buildings, whether they were jumped or pushed. The Father was there also, my mind is a blank on his name right now, but he was there for a while before he went over to the north tower. Had the Police Department, emergency service sergeant and two officers clear the garage for secondary devices. Chief Ganci called for their third fifth alarm to be staged over on the Brooklyn side. We started to discuss setting the staging area two blocks north of the buildings, mainly because of the falling

debris.

The first building came down. We all evacuated the command post into the parking garage. Took us about a good 15 minutes to get out of the parking garage once we were able to determine where we were and what was going on. It had become pitch black, pretty well debris filled on the entrance. Several of us had lights. We were able to find an exit, made our way out. Chief Downey, Captain Fuentes, myself, Chief Ganci and probably 20, 30, 40 other members of the Department. I don't know the identities of the ladders and engines that were being staged there that was being monitored by the officer of the command post.

Captain Fuentes took a team, did the secondary search down below in the underground parking garage to make sure everybody that was down there made it out. Chief Downey sometime during that time afterward made it out. Made his way towards the building that had collapsed, the south tower, to see what can be done over there. Chief Ganci and myself were out on the street, trying to size up what was going on. Telling units coming in to stage two blocks north, sending people to that location, get them out of this collapse zone.

Continued at that location on that entrance to the underground parking garage, trying to coordinate units coming in. Trying to contact units on the inside, reestablishing the command post.

Second building came down. Most of us ran either south or north. I ran north back underneath the north pedestrian bridge, made it to the intersection, at which time as the debris from the second building started to overtake me, I dove under a Tower Ladder that was parked on West Street, covered up, waited for the debris to pass and once it was cleared, we all got out, waited for the debris to lighten up, see where everybody was, what was going on.

We proceeded to start to reorganize there at the intersection, trying to establish water supplies, trying to establish Chief officers on the scene, coordinate activities. Other members of SOC that were there at the time that I'm remembering now, Jack, of SOC was there, one of the firemen that worked in the office, works in the decon support unit, but he is alive and his last name escapes me right now. I can't recall anybody else being present at that time whose name stays with me that is not with us.

Continued to operate at that intersection and

on the scene probably for somewhere between 35 and 40 hours. Eventually leaving to set up the SOC base camp on Chambers Street with the research and rescue equipment and teams, trying to organize the search units and giving them the special equipment that was needed. Worked on establishing the water connection during that time also with the second fire boat on the scene, getting the large supply hose down Vesey Street from the marine unit to a manifold at the intersection of West and Vesey. Worked with Chief Cruthers at that location.

Going back to the beginning. After we arrived on the scene, shortly thereafter, right after the second plane hit, I did have contact with hazmat company one. They arrived on the scene and I met them and gave them orders to go to the first building with radiological and chemical equipment to see if there was any other secondary hazards involved with that plane.

They went in, they proceeded to the first tower, north tower, and I believe they reported in there, based on information I received later on from 3 additional hazmat members who had responded from the medical office, Bob Hunter being one of them, Armen Koroghlian. They told me later on they had made it

out. They were told that the lobby command post at hazmat was somewhere between the 10th and 30th floor.

Starting to monitor conditions there. Members who I recall working on hazmat one that day, I did see and speak to Captain Waters, Captain Moody, Lieutenant Crisci and all of the other 6 firefighters working the tour. A 7th Firefighter Anthony Castagna had resource that day. He is the only member of the unit that is still alive. Resource man's position is to maintain position with the apparatus.

When the second building came down, I met additional hazmat people, Lieutenant Rybak, Firefighter McArdle, Firefighter Borkowski, Firefighter Tralli, Firefighter Gimbl, and one or two other members of squad units. I had them search out SOC units, apparatus that was still on the scene, where they could get chemical and radiological equipment, had them do a perimeter search around both towers to see if there was any radiological or any chemical agents that were in the area. All the reports came back negative. Had them continue to monitor for several hours.

During that time, I heard from Lieutenant Rybak that Chief Fanning had responded to the scene, parked his car on Vesey I believe, on the east side of

the West Side Highway. I didn't see Chief Fanning myself, but I understood that he went into the lobby of one of the buildings. I don't know which one, reported in there. I assume he reported into the lobby of tower one, the north tower, because that is where hazmat was, so I'm assuming he would go there to communicate with them.

I don't know how much you want.

Q. Let me just ask one question. You talked about the underground parking garage where you guys were staged. What was the exact location of that, was that next to the Trade Center or across the street?

A. It was across the street. It was a two bay parking garage with a concrete median in between the up ramp and down ramp where the guard post was. That is where we set up the command post and the mobile command board from the small field comm. van and it was in between the north and south pedestrian bridges or overpasses. It was probably in the area of the Merrill Lynch building, 2 World Financial Center, I believe is where the parking garage was.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thank you very much. That's the end of the interview. The time is 1:40 p.m.

File No. 9110269

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN ELLIS

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 7th of December, 2001. The time is 4:06 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER ELLIS: Firefighter Ellis, Engine 239, Firefighter First Grade.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regard to the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Steve, if you could, just tell us in your own words what you saw on that day.

A. Well, we responded through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We drove up West Street. I was in search of a hydrant. We proceeded past both towers going north on West Street, and I finally came across a hydrant at the corner of West and Barclay.

I tested the hydrant. We hooked up. We had water. Soon thereafter I found out that Engine 24, which was located on Vesey Street and West Street, needed to be augmented. So myself, Firefighter Brown, Firefighter Martin and Firefighter Wheeler had stretched three-inch line from my rig down West Street from Barclay to Vesey and hooked into Engine 24's rig, and I had then gone back to my rig and started water and augmented them.

Other than that, I was not in any of the towers. I was there when the towers did collapse and me and the rest of the members had gotten caught in the huge dust cloud. That's about all I can tell you as the chauffeur. The other members were, I understand, going towards Tower 1 at the time, after they had helped me stretch the three-inch hose to 24's engine. That's about all I can say.

Q. So from the position you were in, did you see the tower go down?

A. Yes. I saw the second tower, not the first tower, the second tower go down.

Q. Did you see any units, where they were, or any units that were involved in the collapse or the identity of any people that you saw?

A. No. All I saw was 24's rig when I was supplying them and going back to my rig. In the immediate vicinity of the tower, I didn't see any other rigs. Back by where I was parked on Barclay, I saw Engine 235's rig. But in the immediate vicinity of the towers, I didn't see anybody else's rig that I can remember besides 24. I was concentrating on supplying them.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great. That

concludes the interview. Thanks, Steve. It's 4:10 p.m.

File No. 9110270

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM WHEELER

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 4:52 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with William Wheeler of Engine 239 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Bill, if you would, tell us in your own words what you saw that day.

A. We went through the tunnel, responded through the tunnel, we went up to the West Side Highway. There was people all over the ground, debris and whatnot. We stopped in front of the building and dropped this guy off -- I'm not sure who it was -- and proceeded past the building down to, I think -- I'm not sure what street it is. Warren Street or Murray Street, one of them. We found a hydrant, stretched a 3 and a half inch line off the back of the rig to 24 Engine who was parked on the corner of Vesey and West Street, West Side Highway.

I went back to the Engine back on Warren Street, I think, took my roll-ups, live saving rope

and whatever else, other tools, went back up to the command post in front of 2 World -- the World Financial Center.

The building then fell down. We ran back towards underneath the pedestrian bridge on the West Side Highway, the north one, and stayed there for a period of time. Then I was told by someone, the Captain I believe it was, to go get a hand line and stretch it into the basement of the World Financial Center. I went back to do that. I stopped to wash my eyes out and whatever.

The other building started falling. I ran into a building on the corner of Warren Street and stayed there for a while. I came back out, went back to the rig. Then we went over to see if there was a hydrant. 54 Engine was across the street from us. We went, hooked it off the hydrant and started working the gun on the top to see if we could get the car fires out that were in the parking lot across the street. But then they told us to shut it off because there was no water pressure. They were going to move a hand line in.

Then I went back and we reconnected our 3 and a half that we had stretched to Engine 24 originally,

because it was covered in the collapse. We went to stretch some more of it and got that all done, and that's about it.

Q. When you said earlier that the building fell down, that was the first building? The south tower?

A. The south tower. That was the first.

Q. When you were on West Street stretching lines, did you notice any units or the identity of any people over there?

A. The only one I saw, 5 Truck was outside of 6 World Trade Center, the Customs building, with a ladder up. I don't know. There was a tower ladder out behind it. I believe it was 12. I'm not sure.

I saw 54 Engine across the street, I saw 2 Truck on the West Side Highway facing underneath the pedestrian bridge. Let's see. There is not that much more I remember seeing.

I saw 131 Truck when we first pulled up. I saw 131 get out of their truck. I saw 122 Truck when we first pulled up, I saw them get out of their truck. I saw the chauffeur for 16 Engine. I talked to him, because I used to work there. And he was asking me -- he was trying to back out of a block. He

asked me how far he could stretch a 3 and a half and I really didn't know. I couldn't help him. I was doing something.

And I saw the chauffeur of 235 after the collapses asking where his company was, and I saw 231's rig was around the corner from our rig, and I saw their chauffeur. I didn't see any of their guys. And there was a guy that was with us the whole time. I don't know where that guy was from though. He was with us. Like we used him to untangle search ropes and stuff in the building, after the second building fell. I don't know if he was from Rescue or where he was from. He just came out of the basement of the building and he was like "Uhhh" and I don't know.

I think that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Bill.

The time is 4:56. That's the end of the interview.

File No. 9110271

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER LIEUTENANT ANTHONY MANCUSO

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is the 7th of December 2001. The time is 4:13 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Anthony Mancuso from Engine 239 in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, in your own words, tell us what you saw on that date.

A. We had gotten the order to go through the Battery Tunnel after the second plane hit. We were heading north on West Street. I had told my chauffeur we might as well move away from the towers, because there was no place to hookup. We ended up getting to Barclay and West Street, and that's where we hooked up.

In the meantime, I had seen a lieutenant that I knew, Lieutenant Joe Torrillo. He was in the street, on West Street. He mentioned to me that companies are having water problems. We augmented 24 Engine, which was at Vesey and West, with the help of the whole company. We took roll-ups and we're a command post company so we have extra radios

and we took forcible entry tools. We figured we might be used in the towers either as an Engine Company or to operate elevators. We didn't know the status of the elevator problems or anything in the building.

We were heading south on West Street and we were told the staging area was at 2 World Financial Center, where Merrill Lynch is. We were in the middle of West Street, just about in front of the north tower, and we met Commissioner Feehan. He had asked us if we had any orders, and I had explained to him that we already augmented one of the Engine Companies. And he asked me if I knew where the staging area was. I said, "Yes, I do." He walked south on West Street away from us.

We started -- we were actually underneath the -- we were just in front of the north tower, heading towards the staging area. Maybe, I guess, about 20 seconds later he walked away from us and one of my firefighters, William Wheeler, he says to me, "I think the building is coming down."

From what we could see, we couldn't see the whole tower that was coming down. We could just see the facade coming off, and we backed up. We were

about in front of the north tower, in front of -- half of us were in front of one piece of apparatus when it hit and a dust cloud came down. We couldn't -- I don't think anybody knows how long we were in the dust to make any decisions about -- it just seemed kind of confusing for a while, because you couldn't see anything.

Once the dust cleared, I was able to put all my members -- we were pretty close to one another and we all got back together. We walked north again to our apparatus at Barclay and West Street. Once I knew everybody was all together, I headed back. We headed back towards -- I know I was headed back towards the pile, because some of the members were saying they had trouble seeing. I went back towards the pile of the first tower that went down, not finding anybody. It was very quiet, silent. Then I walked over to the north tower. Companies were coming out of the north tower, but to this day I can't remember the numbers on their helmets. They were saying they were told to leave the north tower.

Civilians were coming out. We helped them across West Street and told them to head north. Then it got pretty -- like there was nobody coming

out of the north tower. I'm not really sure if we got a transmission to stay away from the north tower or it just so happens I backed up north again up West Street and I was probably right about Vesey Street or probably just a little north of Vesey Street when the second tower came down.

Again, after that came down we knew we had all our members. We went back to some of the rubble from that and we had worked in that area for a short time and then we were told to keep feeding a couple of the tower ladders they had in front of 6 World Trade. They just didn't want anybody operating there. I think they were fearing about 7 World Trade coming down. So then we kept augmenting tower ladders and staying away from that collapse area.

I guess after that we were pretty well spread away from the collapse area for the rest of the evening. I can't really think of anything that I could say as far as companies or anybody else we saw before they came down.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Thank you.

That's the end of the interview. It's 4:19 p.m.

File No. 9110272

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER BROWN

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 4:30 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Peter Brown, firefighter from Engine 239 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

If you would, Peter, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. My name is Peter Brown, Firefighter First Grade, Engine 239. We were sent on, I guess, a second alarm. We staged at the mouth of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. While we were there, the second plane hit. We got the word to go to the tower and proceeded through the tunnel. There was some traffic in the tunnel and Steve Siller from Squad 1 jumped on the rig. We proceeded through the tunnel. Steve Siller jumped out on Liberty and West Street.

We proceeded past the two towers up to Barclay, looked around. The rig faced south, we grabbed a hydrant and we started to stretch the 3 and a half back to Engine 24. They had water problems. We

hooked up the 3 and a half, stretched it to like 6 lengths off us, hooked up, pulled some lengths off of them, put them all together, augmented them, hooked into 6 World Trade Center, into the sprinkler system, went back to our rig, got some -- put our masks on, I grabbed a cylinder and a personal search rope and we started heading back south again on West Street.

All this time there were people jumping from the building so we walked in the middle of the street. We walked as a unit down the street and the Lieutenant, I think, saw Chief Feehan and he said proceed to the staging area. As we were walking, the south tower started to collapse. The command said the south tower was coming down. We looked up, we saw the tower coming down. We ran back north, hid under the north pedestrian bridge behind -- I hid behind Ladder 3, and the dust clouds, debris cloud blew by us and hung around a while. It was pretty dark. We sort of thought we were buried underneath the bridge.

It was me, Kevin Martin and another guy was there who I thought was a Lieutenant, but I found out -- he was coughing. I helped him buddy-breathe and

then he said he needed water so we ran around the side of the truck and got a can. I hit him in the mouth with the can a little bit to get some of the dirt and garbage out of his mouth. Finally the air cleared and we realized we weren't buried under debris and we regrouped. We got everybody together and Lieutenant Mancuso said, "Let's get out of here. This one's gonna come down." He said, "Get everybody together" and we went back to our rig. It was pretty much debris in our eyes and in our mouths.

We went back to the rig and sort of took off my mask and I had dropped some tools while we were running. I guess the cylinder and the rope I had. While we were there -- I was on Barclay, sort of went around to this other building there. It was, I think, the DC37 building, DC 10. Something like that. And while we were in there we went to the bathroom to wash up, get the stuff out of our eyes, the second building came down. After that it was pretty much an operation from a distance, I guess. We didn't get in too close. We stretched a few lines. There was cars on fire across the street in the parking lot. We stretched some lines and put

them out and we did a variety of minor things.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay that's it. That concludes our interview. The time is 4:34 p.m.

File No. 9110273

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FRANK PUMA

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 0730 hours. I am Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT PUMA: EMT Frank Puma of Division 1 EMS.

MR. MURAD: The interview is being done at Battalion 8, the Kips Bay station, Station 13. This is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Can you please describe the events with respect to that day?

A. Just from the collapse?

Q. Yeah, from the time the call came in, from the beginning or whenever you were there, to the World Trade Center.

A. Before the first plane even hit, me and my partner -- our unit designation is 1 Adam, and our street corner is Fulton and Church, it's our 89. So we were about a block away, two blocks away on Barclay between Church and Broadway getting breakfast when we heard the first plane hit.

After we heard the first plane hit and felt the ground shake, I ran down to the corner of Church and Park Place, looked up and I saw the plane shooting out of the top of the towers. That's when I grabbed for my radio and yelled over the air, "1 Adam. A bomb just went off in the Trade Center."

Me and my partner proceeded to grab the ambulance, turn it around. I jumped in the passenger seat, and we drove right up to Vesey and Church. When we got there, all the people started running out to us, and we were bombarded with patients.

Through that whole time before the second plane hit, we were treating anywhere between 7 and 15 different patients. When the second plane hit, me and my partner were in the back of our ambulance. We felt all the debris come down, bouncing off of me, myself, my partner, shooting inside the back of our ambulance and rocking our ambulance back and forth. We shut the doors, jumped on top of all of our patients.

Once all that cleared up, once the

ambulance stopped rocking, my partner looks at me and says, "We've got to get out of here." He then proceeded to get into the driver's seat, and we started making our way to NYU Downtown Hospital, Beekman, to drop off our first set of patients when we got flagged down for another lady who got hit by the landing gear of the first plane.

We then proceeded to put her on a long board as best as we could, because we couldn't roll her because she had no back anymore. We put her on the long board and put her in the back of the ambulance, dropped off our first set of patients at Beekman Hospital.

Then after that we took about a minute to take some sterile water and clean off the back of the ambulance, all the blood and everything. From there we proceeded to go back into ground zero. We started our way back in, and we stopped again on Barclay and Church Street, where we helped another unit long board two more patients.

We then proceeded to go back to Vesey and Church where we originally were, but we were stopped by the PD. We noticed other ambulances

going into Battery Park City, so we followed them. That's where we had our triage center set up, one of our many triage centers that day.

We were placed at the back of the line. We left our ambulance running. We went up to the LSU truck to go get more supplies, because we diminished the first set of supplies. We started walking back up towards West Street between Liberty and Vesey when we heard them start screaming over the radio that the first tower, the south tower, was ready to fall.

We started running because we looked up and we saw the part of the tower coming down. Me and my partner started running, and I ran west down Vesey Street and almost jumped right into the Hudson River.

Once all the smoke and debris cleared up from the first tower collapse, I then got up to look around for anybody that I knew. I ran into a couple people that I work with: EMT Allen Cruz, who was working the LSU truck that day, EMT Joe Torres, EMT Mike D'Angelo and a couple other faces that I don't remember their names.

We then proceeded to go in to move all

the ambulances that were parked on Vesey and West Street and move them up further on North End Avenue. Then we heard them screaming over the air that the second tower was ready to fall.

I then proceeded to run back to my ambulance, started up the ignition and grabbed EMT Mike D'Angelo with me, and we started driving off. I made it as far as Chambers and West before the cloud of smoke caught up to me. When the cloud of smoke caught up to me, me and him were stuck, trapped inside of our ambulance for approximately it felt like about ten minutes. It could have been anywhere between five and ten minutes.

I shut the motor off. That way the motor wouldn't take in any of the fumes. We had all the doors shut and all the windows closed. We were stuck in the ambulance in pitch-black for about ten minutes with all the smoke finding its way in there.

Once that cleared up, we got out of the ambulance and walked back to Vesey and North End Avenue to see if there was anybody else that we knew around there. We ran into EMT Joe Torres

again and EMT Allen Cruz. Then after that we heard that we were starting to set our staging area up further near the Chelsea Piers.

We proceeded to run back to our ambulance, and we took off. We started making our way up north via West Street where we stopped off at North Moore and West Street where we ran into a lot of the other EMTs and paramedics who were operating at the scene. I finally ran into my partner, Orlando Martinez, after an hour and a half of being separated from him.

Then we heard them screaming over the air again that there was a gas leak, everyone keep pushing forward. We then proceeded to get back in our ambulance. My partner, Orlando Martinez, was driving the ambulance at that time. I jumped in the passenger seat. EMT Mike D'Angelo jumped on my lap, and about ten other EMTs and paramedics jumped in the back of our ambulance and just started screaming to drive.

We proceeded to go up to the Chelsea Piers, where they had our staging area set up there. Once we got up there, we just started looking for anybody who was from our station.

Then at that point we started running into more people from our station, EMT John Moritz, EMT Kevin McKeon. I don't remember all the names offhand. Then we just stayed there until we were relieved by CISD at approximately 8:30 at night.

Q. Were you operating on any type of radio frequency or how was the radio communications at the time?

A. That morning I believe that both Manhattan south and Manhattan central were operating on the Manhattan central frequency, and we were told to just stay on that one frequency throughout the whole operation, intermittently switching between Manhattan south and citywide.

Q. You did find your partner. Your partner was Orlando Martinez; right?

A. Yeah. Me and him were separated for approximately an hour and a half after the first tower collapsed, because he ran north and I ran west.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. Unless you want to know the details about the stuff that I saw.

Q. Well, if you would like to go into it, you can.

A. I remember when we pulled up first, because we were the first emergency unit on the scene there, I remember counting at least six bodies who jumped out from the 50th floor. I know one of the bystanders, one of the civilians, as he was running out of the towers ran up to us and told us, "You've got to help this guy." I turned to him and said "All right. What happened? Where is he?" He said, "He just jumped." I said, "From where?" He said, "I don't know. It looked like the 50th, 60th floor." I said, "Brother, I'm sorry to say he's dead. Just keep running."

I remember after the first tower collapsed hearing over the EMS frequency all the EMS members screaming, "Mayday, mayday. Somebody please help us. We don't want to die in here." I listened to that for about two, three minutes. You had to lower the volume because you couldn't stand listening to that anymore.

I remember the F-16s and the F-18s flying overhead before the first tower collapsed

that we all jumped on the floor because we didn't know what it was. We looked up and saw it was our guys, and we were like, okay, we can stand up now and take control of this.

I remember trying to run around trying to find like a respirator or something to put on our faces after the first tower came down, because we had no equipment with us. I remember losing all of my equipment down at the Trade Center before we left to drop off our first set of patients, because I had all my stuff on the outside.

I just remember the sheer look of terror that came over my partner's face, which really got me nervous. When I saw that, I knew I was in trouble.

I remember seeing some of the engine companies go in. I work downtown Manhattan, so I was friendly with a lot of the firefighters who were around there. I remember seeing a lot of them run in and not seeing them ever again.

I knew all the Port Authority cops who worked in the building, because, like I said, that was my street. That was my 89 was the Trade

Center. So we knew all the Port Authority cops in there by first names. We knew their first names, their shield numbers. When we walked in, they knew our shield numbers. We just like, "Hey, how you doing? How's your wife and your kids?" I remember reading about them in the newspaper that they still haven't found their bodies yet or seen that they were confirmed dead.

I remember my parents' voice when I was on the phone with them. Right before the first tower collapsed, I was on the phone with my mother, telling her that two planes hit the Trade Center, that I was all right and okay, that I was still standing near the buildings but I was all right. Then we got disconnected, and that's when the first tower came down.

I didn't get a chance to call my family until about two and a half hours after that. I remember the sounds of joy in my mother's voice when she heard me, that I was still alive.

Q. That was important, communications to the family.

All right. I'd like to thank you for this interview.

MR. MURAD: The time now is 740 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

EMT PUMA: Thank you.

File No. 9110274

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CHARLES GSCHLECHT

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 620 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with the following.

A. Charles Gschlecht, shield number 5445 of Battalion 8.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 8 located at Kip Bay station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Charles, can you please give us your perspective on what happened that day?

A. All right. Well, the day started out as usual, you know, sign for the equipment, putting it on the truck, logging on, and going on to our CSL. Traveling up First Avenue to 34 Street, when we got to about 34 Street and Park Avenue, I forget what unit it was, but they said something just hit the World Trade Center. A few minutes after that you hear other people saying the same thing.

Somebody said they thought it was a plane and that there was an explosion. So I asked my partner if

he wanted to take the job, because we weren't assigned a job and he said yes, okay. We asked for the assignment. The dispatcher gave it to us and we started responding down 34 Street to West Street heading south.

About when we got to Chambers Street, by the college, we saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center. I told my partner slow down and wait to see if the building was going to collapse right away, because you could see it swaying. After a couple of minutes of waiting, we didn't see it collapse, so we started heading in further.

When we got to Vesey and West Street, the Lieutenant told us to set up second staging at 3 World Financial Center. I guess they were getting all the walking wounded that were coming over the pedestrian bridge. There were busses lined up there. Then we were triaging people, minor burns I guess. Then started loading them up on city busses. I remember running out of equipment, so I had to go to the LSU van, which was on the corner.

I saw people jumping out of the World Trade Center. I saw a few people, I guess maybe three or four. After that I couldn't watch any more so I went

back, took the equipment and I guess by the time I got back, I don't remember how long it took for, you know, the building to collapse or whatever, but most of the people were already in the busses and they were already going up like I guess towards the -- what is that place on 23 Street, Chelsea Piers.

So then I heard -- I guess -- I'm not too sure. I know I heard a rumble and I figured it was the building coming down. I told my partner run and I started running and there was one person left there. I can't remember her name, but she was in the chair. She was strapped in the chair, so I ran back and I got her and just started running. Also the people started running up West Street. I guess they were overcome by like dust and debris and I started running up West towards the Hudson River. Then I started running north.

I got back on West Street around Murray and there was another Lieutenant there, I can't remember his name, but he said that it was all over, that we are going to go two blocks in. I told him, I said, listen, if the first building collapsed, you don't think the second building is going to collapse.

Then maybe about 10 minutes of deciding

whether or not he was going to go two blocks in, the other building collapsed, I guess 10, 20 minutes. I don't know. Then I just started running up South Street, I couldn't find my partner for about 3 and a half hours, because initially when I told him to run, he started running with me and then I turn around and he is gone. I had no idea where he was. Like I said 3 and a half hours later I found him. He told me, I think he was with the Captain and a Chief.

Q. Do you know the Captain's name or the Chief's name?

A. Yes, Captain Stone. He had to go to the hospital. He was injured. I don't know what part of the body was injured.

Q. And the Chief's name?

A. Hirth. Chief Hirth. I guess that's about it.

Q. At any time, were you asked to switch to any frequency on the response into the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, we were all on Citywide, but I had lost my radio when I was running. I left all my equipment in the truck. I saw the radio fall, [redacted]. I just kept running.

Q. Anything else that you think you would like to add?

A. I guess that's about it.

MR. MURAD: Okay, time now is 0630. I would like to thank you, Charles, for this interview. This will conclude the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110275

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ALBERT SINGER

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today is December 12, 2001. The time is 0600 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Albert Singer.

Q. Your rank and your command please?

A. Paramedic, Battalion 8, Manhattan.

Q. The interview is being conducted at Battalion 8, the Kip Bay station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Al, can you please give us your perspective on that day, on September 11?

A. Okay. Just prior to the collapse, my partner and I, Arty Gonzalez, and I were doing an RMA in the Long Island Railroad when the first plane hit. We were just completing the RMA and when the second plane hit, we knew that we had to respond.

So we finished the RMA, we went to our ambulance. We had on the computer screen on the ambulance, the job was already there to respond to the World Trade Center. We drove down the West Side Highway. When we arrived at the vicinity of the World Trade Center, we were staged on the street on the West Side Highway, approximately where the AMEX, number 3 World -- the AMEX building, 3 World Financial Center

was.

We were initially on the street. We observed the building, presumably the first World Trade Center, on fire and people were jumping off the roofs. About 10 minutes later, we were told to set up a staging inside what I believe to be the American Express lobby. My partner and I, Arty Gonzalez, set up a staging area.

10 minutes later a co-worker of ours, Corey Romanowski from BHS, showed up. We asked him to remain with us since he was unassigned. About 10 minutes later, two EMTs came running into the building saying that the World Trade Center was collapsing, that we should run.

We proceeded out the American Express building and we proceeded to the building directly behind, which was 4 Financial Center, which is the Merrill Lynch building. We remained in that for about 5 minutes before we were told to evacuate because there was a chance that the gas lines had been ruptured and the building was in danger of exploding.

Following that, we went on to Vesey Street, where the commanding officer, whose name I don't recall, suggested we head towards the waterfront, which

might have been the safest place. When we responded there, we remained there for about 5 minutes until we were redeployed up to one of the buildings on North End Avenue where staging had been set up. The MERV had been brought up.

We treated and triaged some patients in the lobby of that building for about 15, 20 minutes. When it was deemed unsafe to remain there, every patient that was in the lobby was evacuated, whether by MERV or by ambulance, up to 23 Street. We had the first patient that we transported, so from that point on we transported our patient to St. Vincent's Hospital.

Q. I just want to check with you. On that day what unit were you guys assigned to?

A. 7 Young, Tour 2.

Q. Were you operating on any radio frequency? Were you told to switch to any certain radio frequency and what was the radio transmissions like during that time?

A. We were switched over. We were told to switch over to Citywide, but we never had to utilize the radio since the job was already on the KDT.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to mention or --

A. I would like to mention that I think Corey Romanowski was a very heroic individual, he told us his experience outside the building. He had stepped outside for a few minutes and he came -- he told us later on that he was nearly killed by the collapsing rubble of the building and he had dived under a fire truck, which had the springs collapsed by the weight of it while he was underneath it and he said that there were a couple of EMTs that were running for cover for the same fire truck and he said that they didn't make it, so he considered himself very lucky. He didn't know which way to run because of the fire and smoke. Eventually he did get out. That was the most remarkable thing I heard of the whole experience.

MR. MURAD: Okay. Paramedic Albert Singer, I would like to thank you. The time is 0605 hours. This concludes the interview of the World Trade Center. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110277

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARTHUR RICCIO

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 1718 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Arthur Riccio from Ladder Company 119. He was on overtime as a chauffeur in Ladder 110 on September 11th.

This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Artie, you can start whenever you want.

A. I came down Liberty Street. When I got to Church Street, the second plane hit. We didn't know it was a plane; we thought it was helicopters going around. I thought a helicopter went into it.

I stopped there. People were running at us. It was like a movie. The lieutenant was saying, "Back up, back up. Get out of here." I stopped. I had people running all around me. The women were losing their shoes. One woman lost a pocketbook. We took the pocketbook, threw it in the rig, and we gave it back to her about three days later. She got her pocketbook back.

I backed out. I went down Broadway. I came back around and wound up in the same spot, Liberty and Church. I went up to Vesey Street. I parked the rig on Church Street. We walked down Vesey Street, and it was like total silence, nothing. It was eerie. There were police cars all parked on angles, metal going through their hoods. There was a tire of a plane on top of one.

We walked down Vesey, went into the lobby. Battalion 11 came to us and said we have people trapped on the 31st floor. In the lobby was the Commissioner, Ganci, the Mayor was there, Father Judge was there.

We walked around to the A staircase. The A staircase was loaded with people. We couldn't even get in there. Battalion 11, I don't know who it was, he came around and said, "You know what, this elevator here goes to 16. Let's take the elevator." We asked, "Chief, do you want to take the elevator?" He said, "Yeah, come on, let's go. If only goes to 16, there will be no problem."

So we took it, went to 16. We got out

and went into C staircase. As we started walking up, we were telling civilians to go to the left and we were going to the right. We walked up and got to 21. 21 was locked. Chief said, "Maybe another floor is open. Let's go up." We got to 28.

I was behind the chief. I said, "Chief, this is 21. Where are we going?" He said, "You know what, let's go back down and force the door." We went back down to 21, forced the door, we go in and searched all the occupancies. Nobody was in there.

It was a little hazy. The bathrooms were charred. I had to use my mask to look in the stalls and make sure no one was in there. I came out. It was like a horseshoe. The last office, I was in there with Lieutenant Meara to and this kid Mike, a proby.

All of a sudden we felt wind hitting us in the face. We thought fire was coming in. Every door we went through , we broke the locks so it wouldn't lock behind us. As we go through a door, we would hold the door closed. We would lay on the floor with our feet on the door,

holding it.

I think 55 Engine was hooked up, and they asked, "Where's the fire? Where's the fire?" No fire. Paulie Howard was saying the whole building shook. I was laying on the floor saying, "Come on, this building -- it's got to shake. Everybody was swaying." He said, "No, this building's going down." I said to him, "There was a bomb in the basement. It's not going to go down."

Every window was broken. There was smoke coming down the hall, and I was just in that office. I said, "You know what, I'll go back in there. I know the layout." I go back in, and the proby came with me. We went on the whole outside. Every window was broken. All the blinds were burnt. It was smoky. So we came back out.

55 Engine said, "You need a line?" I said, "There's no fire in there. I don't know what it is. I don't know what happened." We didn't know the building went down next to us.

We passed the C staircase and got to the B staircase. We were standing right there,

and a chief, whoever he is, he saved our lives. He was yelling, "Get out now. Get out." So we started walking down. We were lucky we were in the B staircase. They told us that the B staircase was the only one that went out, the only one that wasn't blocked with rubble.

On about 18 I saw two civilians trying to get a lady -- she must have had arthritis because her hands were bent. They were permanently like this. So I said, "Come on, we'll throw her in a chair." We put her in a chair, and I took the back and a civilian took the front. Actually another civilian took my halogen, and we walked down. The rest of 110 was behind me.

We walked down. I don't even remember going down. They told me it was stop and go. It was real slow going down. I was kidding with her. She was crying. I was telling her, "Don't worry, Uncle Artie's got you. We're going to get out of here. No problem."

When we got down to the lobby, it was like a bomb hit it. I looked around and said, oh, my God, every window is busted. I was shaky.

My arms were shaking. I was totally exhausted. I looked for an ambulance, got her into an ambulance, and I sat down in front of the building on West Street. I was sitting there and I thought, my God, I can't move.

Another chief, another guy who saved my life -- I don't know who he was -- he kept on telling me, "Go north, go north. Get out of here now." So we started walking up West Street. I don't know even know how far we got. A block? I know we walked under the first walkway, overpass. I think we might have just got past there.

The guy said to me, "Run!" I turned around, and it was a tidal wave of black coming down on top of us. I couldn't run. I was done. I knew that a two and a half foot wall in the street was next to me. I couldn't see it, so I just rolled to it. I tucked, I hit. I couldn't put my mask on. I couldn't breathe. I was pulling cement out of my mouth.

I finally found my mask and put my face piece on. It was full of cement. I must have laid there for five minutes, ten minutes, in total darkness. The next thing I knew -- I was

totally at peace, I swear to God. I think all our guys that died, they felt the way I felt. I was ready. Total calmness came over me. It was unbelievable.

The next thing I know, a guy from 122 -- I couldn't see his face in front of my eyes. The way you can't open your eyes in the morning like this. I had so much dust -- you know the dust out there.

Q. Sure.

A. You couldn't open your eyes. I just saw 122. The guy's lifting me up. He walked me out.

After a while, a couple hours, I guess, they went to start searching subways. We regrouped and got saws together and were cutting gates of subways and going down. They were totally collapsed.

I did see in the lobby, though, a friend of mine, John Crisci, as I was walking in. He was from hazmat. They just got there behind us. I thought they were getting assigned behind us. He died. They said they found him between the two towers, so they must have sent him over

to go into the south tower.

I think the people jumping was probably my -- they were hitting the atrium as we were going in.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. Yeah. We had a proby. I told the guy, "Don't look up. Just put your head down and let's go."

I know Mike said he felt the whole building shake. We regrouped afterwards. I don't know if Mike ran into a building through a glass door or something. Another kid Mike, the proby, he ran into the back of an ambulance. The ambulance was open.

Over the Brooklyn Bridge, you saw black coming down the side of the building. It was like drippings. I said, "Lieutenant, what are those windows, plastic? What's melted on them? It looks like plastic going down the side of the building." They said it was the jet fuel coming down the side.

Otherwise seeing anybody, that's pretty much it.

Q. That's terrific.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1727 hours, and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110278

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER LANCE LIZZUL

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 10th, 2001. The time is 5:18 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Lance Lizzul of Engine 47 in the quarters of Engine 47.

Q. Lance, just relate to us anything you saw on September 11th.

A. When the first plane hit, we heard the alarms come in. Watching the TV, we saw the second plane hit. They transmitted the second fifth, and they sent us down.

We came all the way down West Street and parked the rig I guess around Warren Street, and we started walking up the block. I was the chauffeur. The rest of the members of the company got together, and they started walking.

I hooked up with another chauffeur. We walked towards the Trade Center, and there was a rig on the corner that was hooked up, and he was fine. So we started walking towards the Trade Center and actually stopped because of all the jumpers and walked across West Street in front

of, it looks like the Winter Garden, with the atrium there. We were standing by the command center, watching what was going on. Some of these jumpers, I didn't look.

After a while just standing there, waiting to see what was going on, we heard some bangs. That made us look up, and that's when the first Trade Center came down. We ran through that building and past the atrium and came out on Vesey and walked back up to West, helping people as we could all along.

We just couldn't see anything. So we waited a little while until it cleared. We stayed on the corner. The chief started chasing everybody back north, and we started moving back. Then we heard the rumbling from the second one and just turned around and ended up staying all the way down north for most of the next couple hours.

Q. The building that you ran through after the first collapse, which building was that?

A. That was one of the Battery Park buildings. It was just a building.

Q. This is all interconnected.

A. Okay. Right. We ran right through the command center, it was on the ramp going down, and then the walkway was right next to that that went into the building where the atrium was. We ran through that building along the side, along the side of the atrium, and out the side door and came out on Vesey. There were people all over the place on Vesey.

Then when we came out, we walked up Vesey Street. The radios were silent. There was no talking on the radios. Then I got to the corner of Vesey and West, and the radio communications started again. I heard Engine 74 giving maydays. I know with 74 there was 22 and 13 and they were all in the same building, 22 and 13, 74 and us.

Q. Which building?

A. It was supposed to be in the second one. We ended up, I believe, in the first one. By mistake someone took them there. I met our control man, and then I saw him a little bit. I walked down the block a little bit. He kept going. I stopped and was just staring at the building. I heard the rumbling of the second

one, and it just came down and I just started running again.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Thank you very much for your help, Lance?

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 5:26 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110279

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT RICHARD SKELLINGTON

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11th, 2001. The time is 3:45 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT SKELLINGTON: Lieutenant Skellington, Engine 305.

CHIEF BURNS: -- in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Rich, tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. That morning we were responding to a relocation to Engine 3 in Manhattan. We proceeded to go down Queens Boulevard. Judgment was made to go over the 59th Street Bridge instead of going through the tunnel. We went over the bridge. We got right in front of Engine 3's quarters, and we were assigned to the World Trade Center box.

We went down West Street, the West Side Highway. Halfway down we were around, I guess it was Sixth Avenue, when we saw tower one came down. We proceeded to where we were supposed to go. It was Vesey and West, but we couldn't make

it down that far with the rig because there were too many people coming up. So we stopped at Chambers.

At that point we met Mykel Judge, the priest. He gave us a little prayer. He gave us HEPA masks, said he would see us down there. We started to get our gear, what we thought we would need to take with them. They were asking at that time for more equipment, anybody coming down bring anything you could bring.

So instead we loaded up our back board with extra stuff. I took four Scott cylinders, empty ones, the proby took two, and we took all the other equipment that we might think we needed and proceeded down the West Side Highway.

We put the equipment down at least two or three times because it was so heavy. At the fourth time I told them just take what we needed. We were close enough that if anybody was coming down they would see the equipment and they could take it with them.

As we proceeded down West Street, I was about a half a block or three-quarters of the block, with the proby, ahead of those guys. We

saw many people jumping out the windows. It was about Barclay Street when I felt a rush of air come in behind me. I looked up. I saw a helicopter, and I was trying to figure out what he was doing. Then the second tower exploded and started coming down.

I told the proby to run. I dumped my two cylinders off my left shoulder. I was trying to get the other two off my right. They got hung up on my mask. My chauffeur came running down and said, "What are you doing? Let's get out of here." I told him, "We'll be right with you," and we turned around and proceeded to evacuate the area.

I think it was Park Place West where we made a left-hand turn and we jumped into a building. As we were running down the street to Park Place West, we got caught in the cloud. Then I saw firemen and civilians out in the street that had gone out there after we heard the rumble and everything falling down.

The building that we were in shook. Some glass broke. We thought this building was coming down. It didn't. That's when I went out

and started pulling people into the building, and my chauffeur was just pushing them back, holding them up.

My other members, they got disoriented. We found them later. We called other units, whoever we had. That's it.

We then went back to Chambers Street. We went back to Chambers Street to figure out where the command post was going to be. ESU then came out and told us that there was a bomb in Stuyvesant High School, so we had to evacuate that area.

Then we came back, up to Chambers, and we hung out there for most of the day and most of the night until they sent us down to do some digging. Then we were relieved at the site and went back to Engine 3.

Q. Okay, Rich. Thanks for the interview.

CHIEF BURNS: The time is 3:50 p.m.

File No. 9110280

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CHESNEY

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 10:20 a.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHESNEY: Firefighter First Grade William Chesney assigned to Engine Company 309.

CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Bill, if you would, just tell me in your own words what happened that day.

A. Okay. We were assigned to relocate Engine 309 to 33 Engine in Manhattan. That would be after the first tower had fallen. After coming over the Manhattan Bridge into Manhattan, we were notified by the dispatcher to I believe the Deutsche Bank, which had I believe been set afire or there was a collapse there. I'm not sure what the assignment was. I'm fuzzy on that.

We proceeded to the West Side Highway. We made it up to Liberty next to the second World Trade Center before it fell. We didn't exit the engine. It was still running at the time. We

heard popping, people, crowd, screaming. The first tower had already fallen, so everything was very unclear due to visibility, bad visibility, because of smoke and ash.

We visually saw the beginning of the first tower crumble, so the engine turned off on Liberty and made its way over to Albany Street. The tower had fallen. Our engine company then exited the engine and proceeded over and attempted to help out in any way they could with civilians or Fire Department personnel who needed assistance. Then we had other companies join us that were scattered.

There was no water pressure downtown at the time. It took a while for water to get to the fires, Marine 2. We were down by Liberty close to the water by Gateway Plaza. We were assigned to put a fire out on the eighth or ninth floor of Gateway at the time. We went up there with hoses. We were drafting water from Marine 2 from a three and a half.

After that fire was out, we then proceeded to put out additional pockets of fire close to second World Trade. I believe it was

adjacent to the Vista Hotel and three World Trade.

For the rest of the day all we did was assist rescue operations, basically. That's basically the fundamentals of what happened.

Q. Did your unit get there prior to the second tower collapsing?

A. Yes, we did, yes.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. I'm believing that we actually made it over towards the pedestrian bridge close to Liberty off the West Side Highway, because I believe the Deutsche Bank is adjacent to the second world tower or a block off. I'm not positive. That's where our assignment was.

Q. When you guys got there, did you see anyone or any companies that you can identify?

A. No. Due to the poor visibility, it was very tough to see in front of your face. With the smoke down there, the ash, it was very difficult to see anything. Basically I just saw through the fog on my end -- I'm not speaking for anybody else -- was first and last of the clouds

there were people running here and there.

There was no sense of direction. There was no way to know what anybody else was doing, so we just kept ourselves together and kept a level head and just tried to make the best of the situation, help out any way we could. That was it.

Q. Okay. Great.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes the interview. It's 10:25 a.m.

File No. 9110281

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN WRIGHT

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 12:18 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Steven Wright of Ladder 16.

Q. Steve, please give us anything you have about the events on September 11th.

A. Sure. Okay. I remember being in quarters here when somebody said a plane crashed at the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV. We saw the hole in the building. We thought it was just somebody, a bad driver, a bad airplane driver or something went wrong. As we watched and we saw the second one hit the building, that's when we knew, we figured, everybody thought it was a terror assault. We had a bad feeling about this. So now the second plane hit and we get called, I think, on the fifth alarm for the second building.

So we leave quarters. We go down. We're following 13, I guess, 22 and the 10th Battalion now. We get down West Street. We see all the smoke. When we report there, we park about, I guess, two blocks north of the walkway on West Street and we start walking down. There was a guy from 35 Truck, Shea. He

borrowed one of our masks. I remember that.

As we're walking down, we're watching. We see people jumping from the north building as we're walking under the overpass, the walkway. Then we reported to the staging area, which was directly across from the north tower, which was 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch Building. We were standing in the staging area at the apron of a loading dock that went underneath that building. The engine company was on the north side of the ramp. The truck company was on the south side of the ramp directly across from the north tower. They started upping it and about 20 feet was the ouija board, as they call it. Anyway, I remember standing there looking up and looking at the flames, seeing people jump. Again, it was about 20 people that jumped while we were standing there. I remember being told as we were walking down there may be a report of a third plane coming in, and I didn't hear anything else about that.

So they gave some assignments to engine companies and truck companies. 13 was the truck company directly ahead of us. They got the last assignment. I'm not sure which building they went into. But 16 was the last truck company there and we

were waiting for the assignment. I remember standing like two, three feet away from the overhead doors that were open in that loading dock, and I had my bunker gear on with the tools on the side, mask on the side. I stayed close to the building because I was taking debris. I didn't know.

So I guess it was after about ten minutes, 15 minutes after 13 got their assignment, I remember looking around and I heard this sound and I looked up and it was the south tower crumbling, coming down. We all just took off, turned around and ran straight to the back of the loading dock underneath 2 World Financial Center. Moments went by. Smoke had come in the loading dock, a good amount at the beginning, but I had ended up in the back and it wasn't that bad back there. So then people were calling out to try to find other firefighters and stuff. I remember walking back in. I found all my guys except one. I couldn't find one. He went off and went out the back of the building. He made his way out the back.

So we ended up, the rest of us, coming back out of the loading dock to the front of that building where we were standing and looking for people who were hurt and looking a little bit scarred but they were

walking around. There was one EMS guy. He was about a 400-pound guy. He was laying down on the ground. One of the guys found a gurney, I guess, his gurney that he had. There were about 15 of us there. We picked him up, put him on the gurney. My guys went to push him up the apron to the sidewalk, which was closer towards the north building, which didn't collapse yet, but my officer said, no, we're going to bring him back down the ramp to the back, to the loading dock, out the back of the building. That turned out to be a good move.

So we went to the back, picked him up on top of the loading dock there in the back about four feet. Again, there were like 15 of us, so 400 pounds wasn't too bad. We found we had to go up like another two levels to get out the rear of the building that goes back towards the marina. So we found an elevator. Two of us got on the elevator. I was one of them and another fireman with this heavy guy, the EMS worker on the stretcher. The other guys walked up. The elevator went down. What a mistake!

So now it was just me and another fireman. We were in the basement with this guy that's 400 pounds and the elevator wasn't working correctly. So good thing we got off. I remember we were looking for a

stairwell so we could get this guy up, and I remember saying how did this happen, me and this other fireman with this 400-pound guy. We couldn't budge. We tried getting him up the stairs. It was like we got him up three stairs, let alone three floors.

So I remember looking around for the stairwell and all of a sudden the building started rumbling and the lights went out for about ten seconds. I turned my light on and I'm just thinking, I'm hoping this building isn't collapsing. I thought it was the tower coming down across the highway, but I didn't know for sure. For about ten seconds the building rumbled and then it stopped, and I felt very relieved.

I called for some more assistance to see if we could get this guy out, and then my officer was telling me, Steve, come on out of the basement because I think I smell something burning in this building much lower. So me and this other guy, that's when we tried to lift him up. We couldn't lift him up. So finally we got some help. Within a couple minutes we got some more help and we got him up, I think, 43, some guys. The north tower did come down. That's what made that building rumble like that. We came out the back. I

don't have that EMS worker's name. The other fireman that was with me, he was all right. I met him the other day. His name is Gary. We put him on a PD boat and they took him to a hospital in Jersey or Staten Island.

After the collapse, we were walking around. We started heading south, near the marina, and from there we started to help stretch a line from one of the boats for about two blocks. We stretched it and that took a little while. Then I remember we walked back up alongside of the marina. We headed north again. I don't know what street that is. I was with the officer. I was trying to find out who to report to, what was happening, and nobody had a clue. So it was like we were on our own.

After that we waited there for a little while and then we made our way back into 2 World Financial Center where we came out. We went back through the back of the building, back through the loading dock, back out to the front, and we started climbing the metal, the debris field. We started looking for people. We didn't see anybody. Well, the people that we did see, they were crushed. So other than that, I really don't --

Q. When you were standing fast at the staging area, did you hear any Maydays or anything that would indicate the collapse, any warning signs of the collapse?

A. No. I didn't notice any Maydays, not that I can remember. But I know there were two different channels, one for each tower. I think each tower had a different station. Anyway, it seemed to be a little foggy.

Q. Did you see anything looking at the building that indicated --

A. No. I just remember seeing just the flames, and when I heard the noise, I was already looking away. But I remember talking to some other guys. They remembered seeing the floors being blown out, I guess, when each floor collapsed on each other. I didn't see that. I heard the sound. I looked up. I saw the building collapsing and just like being pulverized, the smoke, and I probably looked at it for about a second and I just took off, if a second. Once I saw that, I was like, whoa, get out of here.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thank you, Steve.

FIREFIGHTER WRIGHT: Okay.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 12:28 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110282

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VANDON WILLIAMS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11th, 2001. The time is 1:14 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAMS: Firefighter Vandon Williams, Battalion 49.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. I was just finishing a 24-hour tour on the 10th, which is my wedding anniversary. I was looking for my relief to come in at the time that the first plane hit the Tower 1. I watched it on television from our quarters here in Astoria. Then when the second tower was hit, the signal came in for us to proceed to a staging area by the Midtown Tunnel.

So, knowing that I would not be relieved in time, I just decided that it was best that I go on and handle this event. I proceeded to the staging area at the Midtown Tunnel. We were there for, I guess, approximately 30, 35 minutes, until the Midtown Tunnel was cleared out, and then we proceeded through the

Midtown Tunnel to the west side, going down to the area of West Street and Vesey.

Upon getting to the west side, we were able to park our apparatus, and I believe we might have had about ten to 15 units as a convoy from Queens. We proceeded and we parked our car about a block or two blocks north of Chambers and West Street, and we proceeded by foot toward the command post at Vesey and West. I got as far as a block north of Chambers and West and I was told by my Battalion Chief, Chief Mike Keenan, to make sure that all the units that were with us were accounted for and he proceeded to go toward the command post, and once I had checked everybody off that had come with us, then I would proceed down to the command post.

So one block north of Chambers, I stopped and turned around and proceeded to count off the companies that came in. I guess I was doing that for about a good five or six minutes, about five minutes or so, and then I heard a rumbling. As I turned around, I saw people and some firefighters coming toward me and I looked up and I could actually see Tower No. 1 coming down.

So at that time I tried to get myself as

close to -- there was a police tow truck on my side, looking at the Hudson River. There were two police tow trucks parked there. So I just covered, bent next to one of the tow trucks and bent my head down until the smoke cleared. For me the eerie thing was not hearing any communications on the radio, any transmissions, anything, until most of this acrid, black smoke had cleared away, and then I could hear the sounds of our pass alarms going off around. Once most of the black smoke had kind of lightenend up and we were still in a fog-type state or a fog-type atmosphere, I tried to proceed down toward Vesey and West, where my Battalion Chief Mike Keenan was.

So I got to meet him. Around Murray and West we met up. We proceeded to set up a secondary command post at Chambers and West Street. That was the call that was given out to the units, that there would be a command post set up at Chambers and West.

Then we proceeded down toward Vesey Street. We proceeded southbound on Vesey Street until we came to West and Vesey, and at that point Chief Keenan started to operate at the north side of 6 World Trade Center, the U.S. Customs Building. The pedestrian bridge at that point, that I could look at, was already

down and completely destroyed. I was standing on the north side of the pedestrian bridge listening to Chief Keenan as he went up and tried to get onto one of the levels that was still standing on the Customs Building, doing communications with him and finding out what companies that we had that were able to go forward and help with some of the extinguishment as far as an engine company and a truck. I don't know the names of the companies that helped us to go work at that, but there was a truck company and an engine company that were being put into action to work on the Customs Building.

At that time I also met the 14th Division Chief, a Chief McNally, and for the most of my duration I was there operating with him doing communications on the tactical and the channel for the Chiefs, going between both of them to try to ascertain who we had, what we could find in that area. I believe I worked with Chief McNally for a couple of hours before I was released to go with Chief Keenan.

We proceeded to go around the pedestrian building and try to go south toward the World Trade Center No. 1. In order to get there, we had to walk around the World Financial Center building, the

American Express Building, toward the water, which would be going west toward the Hudson River. We were able to walk around the building and come out around the Winter Garden building, and at that time we were now just looking at what was left of the World Trade Center No. 1.

We proceeded to walk over some of the metal and steel beams and stuff and we were able to get to a point where we were high enough to see a couple of mounds of just twisted metal, and we stood there while there were groups of firefighters, I'm not sure what units they were, that were proceeding down the mound and trying to get up to the second level of the mound to start our searches.

At that time I was able to see two civilians. One was standing up on the mound and firefighters were able to get to him and another one, and we were able to bring them out in the Stokes baskets down through the mound. It could have been an hour, hour and a half we were doing that before we were ordered to move away from that part of Tower No. 1 because there was an imminent danger of collapse of World Trade Center No. 5 and 7.

So he proceeded to take us from that area and

we proceeded back from that part of the World Trade Center No. 1, all units, Chief Keenan and I and some other Battalion Chiefs there. I know Battalion 46, Chief Turner was there. We operated also under the SOC command of Chief Seigel looking over those areas of Tower No. 1. Once they recalled us from that area, we proceeded back over to the area where we started at, Vesey and West. I was there approximately 15 hours. I left at 11:00 that evening.

Part of my duties with the 49 and the 14th Division, I was also used to do logistics and command with Deputy Chief -- I don't want to say his name wrong. It will come to me.

Well, I'll say this. This happened to be closer toward the evening. I guess it was close to about 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock, as it started turning more toward the sunset. We had been working on the north tower and we proceeded back over to West and Vesey. At that time I was able to see Chief Fellini talking with Chief McNally and other Chiefs on the scene that came in. But I was able to do liaison. I was there to set up for what other units that came in in the staging area and I worked as the aide that proceeded to tell what units would go in and what areas the Chiefs wanted

to work with. I can't think of that Chief's name, but I liaisoned with him.

Before the night was over with, I was one of the firefighter liaison officers in the temporary Office of Emergency Management, and I worked with Chief Cantley, I think, if I'm not mistaken, in the OEM office from about 10:00 until midnight, and at that time they released the 49 Battalion to come back to Queens. Basically, that's what I did.

Outside of seeing some carnage and being able to see at least us pull two civilians and bring them out, and they were alive when we brought them out, much of my recollection, outside of what I thought was papers and stuff coming out of Tower No. 1 while it was still up, I now realize there were some falling bodies just coming down. That's the extent of what I remember.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great, Vandon. Thanks for the interview. The time is 1:27 p.m.

File No. 9110283

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANCIS NASH

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 11:13 a.m. I am Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Francis Nash, Engine 260, Firefighter First Grade, and this is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you could, in your own words, Frank, would you tell us what happened on that day.

A. We were responding, Engine 260, to the World Trade Center, going through the Midtown Tunnel. We were heading south on the West Side Highway where we parked our rig and we proceeded to walk down West Side Highway to the World Trade Center. The number 2 World Trade Center was already collapsed as we were responding and as we were walking to the World Trade Center number 1, we were approximately 100 yards away when the building number 2 collapsed.

At that time, we ran for safe cover. And that's the story.

Q. You said you were 100 feet away. Do you know --

A. I mean yards.

Q. 100 yards. Do you know what direction you were in?

A. We were north of the tower, by Barclay Street. Between Barclay and Vesey. Maybe a little more than 100 yards between there. Barclay and Vesey Street.

Q. When the second tower came down, did you see anyone? Did you see any units?

A. I saw people jumping out of the building. I didn't see any units. I saw, you know, when the building came down I was with other companies from the 45 Battalion and we were all retreating at the same time, and we got caught in the huge dust cloud for a few minutes, and then we went back to go look for companies until another chief told us to go back.

When we went looking for companies, we saw some damaged rigs. I can't tell you which companies they were. Then we were ordered by a chief to leave the area.

Q. You said you were there prior to the collapse. Did you hear any transmissions on someone's handy-talkie or any radios just prior to

the collapse?

A. No. I didn't have a department radio.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Frank. That concludes our interview. It's 11:16 a.m.

File No. 9110284

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES POWERS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001, and the time is 11:25 a.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with James Powers, Firefighter First from Engine 35. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. James, just tell us the events as you remember them on September 11th.

A. The morning of September 11th I arrived at Engine 35 to get into uniform to go to an educational day. Before I left, the TV showed us the first tower smoking and fire. We didn't even know what it was before I left to go to the Rock, Randall's Island. By the time I got to Randall's Island, the Lieutenant conducting educational day told us that a plane had hit the first tower and that we might be going back to our companies. He didn't know yet, but he was going to start educational proceedings. As soon as he said that, the second plane hit the second tower. Within minutes we were dispatched back to our companies.

I reported to Engine 35 and reported in to Lieutenant Whalen. Lieutenant Whalen put me in the Engine and said, "Right now you're going to be our fifth man in the engine." We took roll call of the units that had already been sent here as a staging area and within 15 minutes of being brought back, maybe even ten minutes of being brought back to the firehouse Engine 35 was dispatched to the World Trade Center.

We were told by the dispatcher to use the West Side Highway and we went across 125th Street and we went down. Myself, firefighters Lowrey, Vanname, Fischer, and Keith Schroeder were on the rig with Lieutenant Whalen. We also had Lieutenant Patten and Battalion Chief Horan on 35's rig. We reported in down at West Side Highway, West Street, right above Barclay Street, and we ran into battalion chiefs there. We had heard on the radio the first tower collapsed. We heard somebody on the department radio calling for help, saying he was trapped.

We were told that we were going to be going into World Trade Center number 1, the north tower building, because it was still standing and there

was still fire. When we got to the battalion chiefs that were on West and, I believe, Barclay, they said, "Okay. Make sure you've got everything, your roll-ups. We're still going into this tower number 1 or World Trade Center number 1."

At that time there was heavy black smoke pumping from the top floors of the tower. You could see the collapse dust and stuff around the other buildings, and the top of the tower was just blazing black smoke. On our way to the building, we had just passed Vesey Street, we were near the pedestrian bridge when you heard the rumble and the roar of the building and at which point we all looked up. Nobody really moved for a second. The tower began to collapse and we all ran back up the West Side Highway. We ran with our gear still on. We dropped our folds, roll-ups and ran hard up West Street.

I made it to, I believe, either Murray or Park Place, wherever the high school was, and the collapse, the dust and the debris had already caught up to me and was actually pushing me, and I dove into the left of that street, whether it was Murray or Park Place. I don't know where it was, but I

dove in there and somebody pulled me into the high school and when I got into the high school there were already firefighters and Police Officers in there. When I was there I realized that I didn't have any of the guys that I was with with me, so I went back out onto that street. But when I did, I was immediately lost in the black dust and I couldn't even see my way to get back into the building that I just came out of. I put my face piece on and started breathing the air, but I realized the face piece was contaminated and I was sucking some stuff in.

I went onto the West Side Highway and slowly walked through the black and gray dust heading back towards where we were to see if anybody was still there, to see where everybody was. When I got back to where I think we were, which was below Vesey but above the pedestrian bridge, there was a couple of people just completely covered with dust and I just brushed them off and chased them back to go north on the West Side Highway. I did run into one of my guys, Keith Schroeder, and asked him where everybody was and he said he didn't know. He didn't know.

We stayed together and then we saw Billy

Vanname, our chauffeur, and we asked him about our lieutenant, Lieutenant Whalen and also Lieutenant Hadden and Chief Horan, who had gone ahead of us towards the tower, and they were in front of us while we were walking towards it.

We then found our Firefighters Fischer, Lowrey and our Lieutenant Whalen, and we started picking up our folds to go down towards fire. There was fire on the streets, there was fire in the cars. And then he realized the roll-ups were gonna do us no good, so we dropped our roll-ups and we started looking to help people and I was -- I had breathed in a whole bunch of stuff and I was starting to get dizzy and I could feel myself trying to breathe, but I couldn't get any air into where I was and I started getting lightheaded.

We helped a couple more people back up the West Side Highway. We split up, I stayed with Billy Vanname. The other guys went down into underneath the pedestrian bridge with a line they had to try to put out fire. We then found Lieutenant Hadden and he told us that Chief Horan was okay. He told us the tower came down on top of guys in the hotel and we were gonna try to get to that.

Maybe 15 minutes later I was completely overcome by all the dust I had already breathed in and I could no longer operate and I was starting to pass out. I don't think I passed out. Somebody says I did. I was treated by a couple of EMT's and some firefighters and they took me back up the West Side Highway to near Murray Street and we were sitting there and then somebody said that there was a major gas leak in one of the buildings and we had to run from there, so everybody started running again. As I tried to run, I knew I could no longer run. So I was loaded onto a green golf cart and I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital and I was in and out. I could breathe in, but I felt like I wasn't getting any air, and I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital approximately 45 minutes to an hour after my arrival at the World Trade Center.

Q. That's it?

A. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you, Jimmy. The time now is 11:33 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110285

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM WALL

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 10, 2001. The time is 6:40 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant William Wall of Engine 47, in the quarters of Engine 47.

Q. Lieutenant, just account for us what happened on September 11th.

A. We were assigned as additional units on the fifth alarm for the south tower. We never received a ticket for it until we -- you know, there was one waiting for us in quarters. We got down and according to the voice alarm we were supposed to report in to the command post in the south tower. So we made our way down and we parked the rig on approximately Vesey and West Street. We got all our gear together. We took some extra gear, extra bottles, we took our oxygen cylinder from our EMS kit and we started heading down towards the south tower. We made it as far as -- we were on the east side of West Street and we made it past the U.S. Customs building, but we couldn't go any further on the east side. So we crossed over onto the west

side of West Street and we made it -- we made our way down the west side to the covered overpass and we crossed underneath the covered overpass, which was just opposite the hotel where we were informed -- we asked a Police Officer where the command post was. He said he thought it was in the lobby of the hotel.

So we hung out under the covered overpass until we saw it was clear and we ran into the front doors of the hotel where we were -- where we met the command post, which was manned by Chief Galvin. Chief Galvin told us to stand fast while he was putting companies together. A short while later he told us Engine 47, Engine 22, Ladder 13 and Engine 21, to follow a building employee who was gonna take us to an elevator bank that still had a serviceable elevator to the 20-something floor. He told us we were going to the south tower, but the building employee took us to the north tower.

After we found the elevator, the other companies went up and we were the last load to go up. On the second-to-last load, the guy that was operating the elevator told me that they wanted one of our guys, since we were a five-man engine, to

operate the elevator and since there was only one truck. So I looked over and my control man was kind of a junior man so I asked the senior man working to take the elevator.

He entered the elevator with the last company that went up. They went up to the 24th floor or the 22nd floor and the company was getting off. I think it was the truck company at that time, because he grabbed the last guy getting out, who was the irons man and he said, "You gotta stay with me, because I need tools in the elevator."

At that time, the doors closed and that's when the power went out. Which, what we found out later was when the south tower fell down. They were able to force their way out of the elevator and for some reason the guy from the truck, from 13 truck, went to the right and he went to the left and found a stairwell and he was able to make it out.

Q. Who is "he"?

A. Louie Cacchioli.

Q. Louis Cacchioli?

A. [redacted]. Me and the other guys are still in the lobby and it was weird, because the lights went out just

before the rumbling started and one of the guys reminded me, just after lights went out, I made a little remark like "Uh-oh."

The lights went out, which was good, because it took one of our senses away. And then the wind started. It was like a hurricane wind. Just like black stuff just blowing and hitting us. Me and Tommy Turilli were actually a little bit more into the elevator lobby, a dead-end corridor, and Steve Viola and Keith Murphy were in the main corridor, and they took a little more beating than we did.

Steve's helmet, the front piece that holds the -- the metal piece that holds the front piece was actually bent on his helmet. Steve still doesn't remember getting out of the building. He was hit good enough in the head. The wind came and pretty much after the wind stopped and the rumbling stopped it was still black. You couldn't see nothing in front of your face.

I called for a quick roll call. I said, "Count off." And I could still remember Keith Murphy's face looking at me like "What are you talking about?" I said, "Oh, yeah. Shout out your name." So everyone shouted out their name and we got

everybody together and I told one of the other guys to hold on to Steve and I went over to the elevator bank and I got in touch with Louie Cacchioli, who was in the elevator. He informed me that he was out of the elevator, he was in the staircase and he was on his way down.

At that time, I gathered the other guys together and we locked arm in arm and we made our way out of the building, which was interesting. On the way in I noticed that all the windows in the lobby were just blown out. All the glass, like the arch glass, was all blown out. For some reason I thought it was probably a good way out. Just, you know, always know your way out. For some reason that worked.

I know we had to go from where we were past turnstiles, make a right, go a little ways and then go right again and then just go straight out the building. So we locked on and there was a building worker with us and fireman Turilli was trying to coax this guy into coming with us. He said he had to stay because of his job, and Fireman Turilli informed him that "Your job ain't worth this much." So he came with us.

After we got past, we walked down the lobby, through the turnstiles, made a right and we encountered a line of civilians coming down an escalator shaft and they were looking for the way out so they got on the line too.

So we made our way. After we made a right at the turnstile, I knew we had to make another right. When we bumped into the wall, I knew that was a good time to make the other right and after that, after we made the other right, we just kept walking straight and then it started to clear and we could see the windows, and we made our way out of the -- kind of the grade floor windows. I remember there was a little bar going across the windows and I was trying to break one, because Chief Murphy was going to crawl underneath and he didn't have his gloves on. When he kneeled down, he burnt his hand because of all the debris right at the window, right at the outside level, was still hot.

We got out and you really couldn't tell you were out. It was just as dark outside as it was in. We made our way -- we went straight across West Street before we went north. We found an Engine apparatus there and we pulled the booster and one of

the gates just to wash our face off, because we couldn't see a thing. Just the face was burning and the eyes were burning.

After that we walked up to I believe it was Vesey Street. They had like ambulance after ambulance after ambulance just lined up. Keith Murphy and Steve Viola were hurt. Steve hurt his neck and took a shot in the head and Keith, you know, his neck was hurting to and as he was getting out he burned his hand.

When we got to Vesey, we looked up and we saw all the ambulances. So we turned left and we were going on Vesey towards -- I guess towards the river where all the ambulances were lined up. That's the first point where we saw that the building actually came down. You know, where we made the left onto Vesey I looked over my shoulder and to that point we didn't know that the actual building had come down. Because on the way in there was a Police Officer underneath the Customs building and he told us to come inside because they were tracking another inbound. Which he meant was another airplane. So when the building came down, we just thought -- we didn't know the building came down. We thought it

was another airplane that hit. That was the first time we actually saw that the tower came down.

We got Steve and Keith into an ambulance and the guy assured me that he would take care of him, even though he didn't. They put them in collars and then as the second building was coming down, he opened the back door and he said, "You gotta run, because the other one is coming down. That's another story.

Me and firefighter Turilli, we grabbed our masks and we found another probie in the street who had just gotten down there and we were on our way back down, because now the may-days were coming in. So we were gonna make our way back into the collapse site and we met somebody at West and Vesey, right in the middle by the median, in the middle of West and Vesey, and it was a chief and he said, "We're gonna fall back and regroup."

At that time, we heard an explosion. We looked up and the building was coming down right on top of us, so we ran up West Street. We ran a little bit and then we were overtaken by the cloud and we hid behind a white suburban. I believe about seven of us. And we were sharing -- I was sharing my mask

with the other people. It was Jack Ginty and Gerry Reilly from 22 Truck. Then after a while, I mean it was just black for what seemed like forever. We were just passing the mask back and forth. It wasn't lifting or anything.

Then finally we just said, "All right. Let's go. We can't stay here." So we all got up and we just started walking down Vesey Street, which was still pretty black. We were just taking small little steps up and we actually bumped into a rig walking up Vesey Street. Just bumped into something and you look real close and then you find the light flashing. It turned out to be a rig.

So wandering up on Vesey Street, we found a curb and you just walked up the curb and walked out of the cloud and there were two guys in an ambulance. I thought they were okay, because the guys said they were okay, but I didn't know they had run. But I didn't know where my chauffeur and the guy in the elevator, Louie Cacchioli, were. So we were trying to make contact with them for a little while. I realized later I couldn't make contact with my chauffeur because when we went into the south tower we went to Channel 2 and my chauffeur

was still on Channel 1, and Louie lost his radio. Because when they switched radios in the lobby, they took just the radio. So he had it kind of around his thing and in his pocket. So when he was running -- he made it out of the lobby and he met up with Lance, the chauffeur, just as the second tower was coming down. So when they were running, he lost the radio.

After that we finally regrouped. We regrouped in front of Stuyvesant High School. We all got together and they were like backing us up to try and regroup us and then we just got all our gear off. We were sitting down and someone said there was a bomb at Stuyvesant High School, so we grabbed all our stuff and we ran further up West Street and ...

Oh, when we came out of the building and we were walking across West Street when we first got out of the building, we're walking across the street and all you heard was like bombs going off above your head. You couldn't see it. It was just cloudy. And we found out later it was the military jets. That was an eerie sound. You couldn't see it and all you heard was like a "boom" and it just kept going. We couldn't see 50 feet above our head

because of the dust. So we didn't know if it was bombs going off or whatever, but we didn't want to stay there.

We regrouped and after -- we were pretty far up on West Street. We were by that -- well past that arch bridge that everyone was forming up at.

Q. Probably was at --

A. Chambers? Yeah. All the way up past this. Yeah. Past this on the map here. Pretty much that's where we stayed for the rest of the day. I mean my guys were shot. [redacted] finally we gave all our gear to the guys that came in and me and my guys and the guys from 22 truck, Gerry Reilly and the 11th Battalion had already tapped out, so we found their rig and we commandeered their rig and we just loaded up with like nine people and we left. [redacted] We came up here and we went to St. Luke's across the street. We had our eyes

washed out and checked out with the dye and stuff. That's the day in a nutshell.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot Bill. The time now is 6:57 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110286

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH SULLIVAN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 1442 hours. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the safety battalion.

I'm conducting an interview with firefighter 6th Grade Joseph Sullivan, Engine 224. We are at the quarters of 224, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001, and following this is the interview.

Q. Okay.

A. Okay. We responded from quarters. The ticket came in at 8:54. We were going on the first alarm to the staging area by the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. En route to the staging area, we were going down Columbia Street, saw the second plane strike the building and we went from being a, quote, good job or a rough job, or we were going to earn our money today.

Some of the guys put it, to -- started realizing that it was a terrorist incident, that we were -- you know, we were in for more than we thought originally.

We pulled into the staging area. We were there for maybe -- it's a little foggy. Maybe four, five minutes. I got all my gear set.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Then I remember getting sent in. The only -- the only other companies that I remember hearing over the radio besides us, there was a bunch of -- I remember hearing 202, 101, I'm pretty sure, and went through the tunnel.

It was pretty slow go. I was sitting with my back to the lieutenant, and I remember seeing people out the window, seeing people in buses trying to use their cell phones being confused after seeing all the apparatus going by, not knowing what was going on.

They were scared. One guy yelled up into the -- up to us, "Are we going to be able to get out of here?" We were nervous that maybe somebody was going to bomb the tunnel also. Eventually, we got out of the tunnel with a sigh of relief, started making our way down, going down West Street, see some stuff on the floor, pieces of bodies, bone, stuff like that.

Really couldn't see up. The buildings are too tall. I saw one body. Most of it was just pieces of bodies. As we were riding in, we must have ran over some debris from the plane. We saw debris all over the floor. We saw a wheel. There was cars that were flattened. It was obvious that heavy things had fallen

on them, but the reason that I say that we ran over something is because we had pulled up -- I believe it was in front of the south tower, and Smitty was driving that day, the chauffeur. He didn't like where we were, and he shimmied up a little more. We saw tranny fluid on the floor, so Richie Saulle climbed underneath there with some putty, and I cut some chocks up, little splinters, and kind of plugged it up.

Q. Coming from where? Where was it coming from?

A. From underneath the tranny pan.

Q. From your rig?

A. From our rig, yeah. So just quick tried to, like, patch it up. At that time, as far as I know, we didn't have any orders, as far as where to go.

We went up there. Lieutenant DeSimone told us to get settled, get an extra cylinder ready, ready to grab your hose rollups, like that. There was a transmission. I didn't have a radio on at the time. I'm just going by what I heard going on around me, but I don't know who it was or exactly where it came from, if it came from the command center or not.

Somebody had told us to move up towards Vesey Street, I guess in order to relay water, if it was needed. So we did so, and then Lieutenant DeSimone

asked us again to get our cylinders, hose rollups ready, and by the time we twisted and turned, the first building had come down, started to fall.

People scattered. I was right next to Lieutenant DeSimone. We took a knee, masked up, covered over us. It was -- that lifted relatively quick, the first one. I don't know if it was because we were blocked by the north tower or some of the other buildings. That lifted relatively quickly.

I went ahead and I started looking around. It looked just like snow, and I took my mask off, put my hood up over my face, and I went over by another member, Mike Hazel. He was giving blows of air. There were a couple of cops. There was a maintenance man. Turned out to be a maintenance man, afterwards we found out, from one of the buildings, so I was giving him a hand.

We were doing that, and then we got oxygen off the rig and gave it to the maintenance man. We were looking out for Smitty, and for Stu Bailey. Smitty had run down the block. Stu Bailey had run down the block, and now we were looking for them to make sure that they were all right, because actually when the building had come down, on the angle that it was --

the north tower was over here. You won't be able to get this on tape, but the north tower was kind of blocking the south tower.

Q. Okay.

A. Because of its natural angle.

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah. You could see it right there on the map, so here we are, yeah.

Q. You guys were parked. Now, we are talking about the north tower shielding you from the south tower collapse?

A. Yeah.

Q. So where were you guys at that time?

A. From the best of my knowledge, I'd say that we were up right around -- we were up right around here.

Q. Okay. He's indicating with the rig, right?

A. Yes.

Q. The indication is that they're on West Street at the north foot bridge, so that would be just north of the first tower, the north tower.

A. So we were still covered over, but it lifted relatively fast compared to the second one.

Now, when it did collapse, I saw a chunk come

down. I thought it was a partial collapse, like maybe part of the fascia coming down, so we were actually looking, you know. It came down, and we were looking, and all of a sudden the cloud rushed. It was like whoa, but then a couple of seconds it overtook us. So we may have stopped then. A couple of other firemen came out. I don't want to curse, but for lack of a better word they were, mother ba, ba, ba, bouncing their helmets off the floor.

Q. Where did they come out of?

A. They were south of us. They were a little south of us. They came and they started moving up. One of the firemen -- I don't remember where he's from. He was a ladder, because I remember he had a red patch. He had a gash on his head. Triaged him, patched him up.

A couple of other people -- like I said, we gave oxygen to the maintenance man. A couple of other people running around, dazed, grabbed them, checked them out. We were looking for Smitty. We were looking for Stuey.

Q. Smittie and Stuey are guys from your company?

A. Yes, yes. Yes, members of the company.

Q. Where did they go? Where were they at this

time?

A. They went north. They started moving up north.

Q. When the building was coming down?

A. When the building was coming down. So they went north, and Smitty had come back. We found him. Stuey later on had hooked up with another company, was coming around looking, see what he could do.

After that, there was a lot of commotion. It's a little hazy. I remember somebody screaming and the second tower was coming down, the north tower, and that was coming down, and we just took off running. Actually, I still had my extra cylinder in my hand. I started running, felt it was slowing me down. Discarded that.

I had a choice to go left on Vesey Street or to continue straight. As I turned, thinking about going left on Vesey, I decided not to, but I saw the cloud coming, pressed the face piece up against my face, turned on my air cylinder and started walking along the fence. I remember a chain link fence.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Started walking along the chain link fence. I didn't want to run because I know I depleted some of

my tank with the previous collapse and from giving air to people, so I just remember trying not to panic going at a hurried pace, but not running and sucking down my bottle.

As I'm going, I heard somebody -- I remember somebody moaning or something like that, and I reached off the fence, and I went off the fence a little bit. I couldn't find anybody. I started going forward, and I bumped into another person, which turned out to be one of the guys from my company, Mike Hazel. I bumped into him. "Who's that?" He said, "It's Mike Hazel. Who's that?" I said, "It's Sully." Running out of air. Changed my tank out for me. He still had his extra cylinder.

Q. Okay.

A. Changed that along the fence, and as luck would have it, another member came by with a flashlight, and he was looking with the flashlight, and we walked out along the fence, kept going north till we were out of the cloud.

This one was very thick, the second one, because I remember as I was walking, and I had the face piece cheated up against my face, I had knocked my helmet back trying to get it on, and I didn't get it on

till right before I changed Mike's cylinder, but I wiped across my face piece, thinking that it was just ash, or dust on the face piece. When I wiped it clear, it was still black. It was still -- you couldn't see. It was pretty thick.

As we walked out, started to dissipate. People -- somebody turned on a hydrant. People -- cops, everybody were diving into the hydrant, trying to wash their faces off, wash their mouths out. It was filthy, wretched water, but nobody cared. There was nurses and doctors coming around with eye wash.

There was a transmission to go north. I remember a disturbance by the water. I saw a police officer come out to the street and start directing people away from the water, and it turned out there was a gas leak or something, but at the time we didn't know if it was a bomb or -- so we just kept getting orders to go north, go north, go north.

Eventually we turned around, and we went north, settled and regrouped and worked our way down a little bit to investigate and see what was going on.

As far as anybody that has passed or is missing that I saw -- the only person I thought I might have seen was Dennis Oberg. I thought I saw him.

Q. Who's he?

A. He was a probie in my class.

Q. What company?

A. Geez, I forget what company he's in. I really don't recall, Chief, I'm sorry. I thought I saw him after the second collapse. The first collapse rather. I'm sorry. But I can't guaranty that, but that was about it on -- I had seen Terry Rivera when we came in. He narrowly got away. He's in 10 truck. He was on the detail. I actually spoke to him the night before, because I had a friend that's in the academy being assigned there for his seven-week rotation.

I spoke to him the night before, and as we were coming down West Street, I saw him, and it wound up that when the first building was coming down, I guess some of the other firemen -- this is the story he's telling me, that they thought it was debris coming down, and they ran into the lobby, and he drove underneath the rig, and the building came down and that's why he was alive, instead of going in, going under the rig.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Throughout the rest of the day, I was across the street from -- I'll show you on the map. Where the

movie theatre is across the street from the telephone company.

Q. This is the north tower. This is the south tower.

A. South tower, and where would the telephone company be? That's it right there.

Q. Okay.

A. So I would imagine it's right around here is the movie theatre.

Q. Indicating across West Street on the west side of West Street just north of Vesey.

A. I was again with Mike Hazel. I stuck with him. He's one of the senior members. I stuck with him most of the day, and we were walking back towards where our captain was, because after the recall he had come in. This is later on in the day, and we heard a rumble that Building 7 was coming down, so we didn't know what to expect, so we wound up doing -- actually a broken window in the door of the theatre. There were two police officers actually walking next to us so I told them, I says, "Duck in there," and we both ducked in there, too, and it really didn't, you know, reach us.

We came out and went down to see what we could do with helping with the stretch, because now by

this time they were starting to draft, so I think it was -- I don't know what marine company was drafting, but it was 53 engine, into 84 engine, to us.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. The 224, because we actually -- when we were getting ordered up north, all of a sudden we started hearing 224, start water. That's why we wound up going down and investigating.

Q. Right.

A. Because the rig had to be okay, so we wanted to go down and man the rig. There was -- I remember there was really no pressure in the hydrants.

Q. Right. Who was calling you to man -- to supply water? You don't know?

A. I don't know. I don't know, to be honest with you, but I do know that the water pressure was terrible. The volume -- it looked like there was volume there. You turn on the hydrant, there was water flowing out, but, I mean, the hoses barely filled, you know, at any rate.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Then they started drafting later on in the afternoon, and the rest of the day we were pretty much by the rig. The rest of the night, I should say.

I think we probably went home around eleven, started heading back towards the house, as far as I can remember.

Q. Go back to when you took the position at the hydrant after you were first at the south tower and they told you go up north, you wound up somewhere north of the north tower by the foot bridge, right?

A. We were by the hook.

Q. Okay, you hooked up?

A. As far as I can remember, yeah.

Q. And then go over where the guys were again, what duties they performed, how long you were there, how long you operated there. What did you do there?

A. Well, geez, let me think how long we were there. I had moved up. We were --

Q. Go ahead.

A. It's hard with the time. We were helping the chauffeur to hook up.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm trying to think if --

Q. How long were you there when the south tower came down?

A. How long were we there when the south tower came down? Maybe 15 minutes or so, maybe.

Q. Okay, 15 minutes. You helped him hook up?

A. We were helping him hook up. I remember actually I think the -- also the first -- the first place that we stopped we might have started to hook up also there.

Q. Okay.

A. And then had to pack it back up.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember for some reason we went with him when he moved.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. We were helping him. I remember helping Richie Saulle with trying to plug up the tranny pan. I remember Lieutenant DeSimone telling us to get an extra cylinder, get a hose rollup, and then he says we're going to go over and see what the story is.

Q. Where were you now? You had moved up to the north part?

A. We had -- I'm trying to think if it's after the first time or the second time we moved. I think that was actually after the first time we moved.

Q. Okay. Did you get your rollup and your cylinder?

A. Yes, we actually took the rollups off the

rig, and we had --

Q. Did you walk up to the building any place to the south tower? Did you walk away from the rig?

A. We started -- yeah, we walked away from the rig. We started walking towards the building, yes, okay. It was after the first time we moved that he -- what do you call it? That we started going towards the building, and that's whether they were ordered to move up.

Q. So you put everything back on the rig?

A. So I put the hose rollup back on the rig.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't put my cylinder back into the proper spot. I just stowed it, tossed it the rig.

Q. Did you get back on the rig to ride up to the other spot? You walked up the other spot?

A. Walked, walked.

Q. Now, the rig goes up to West Street where you indicated north, somewhere in the vicinity of the north walk bridge?

A. The north walk bridge.

Q. You found the hydrant?

A. Yes.

Q. And then you said you helped the chauffeur

hook up.

A. Helped the chauffeur hook up.

Q. And two guys went where? There was something about two of you fellows went --

A. When the building came down.

Q. Now, how long were you there? You said 15 minutes maybe?

A. Maybe 15 minutes. I tell you the truth, it's very hazy.

Q. So what happened in that 15 minutes? You just --

A. I tell you the truth, people jumping out of the buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. I tell you the truth, that was quite a shock, too. I mean, there we were, and out of the corner of my eye, I thought maybe it was a piece of debris falling down. It was a person jumping out of the window, and another one, another one, another one, and I don't know. It was pretty hazy as far as, like, how much time --

Q. Okay.

A. -- was spent or what was going on, and again I didn't have a radio.

Q. Right.

A. So I couldn't really hear what was going on. I could only hear if I was next to somebody.

Q. Right.

A. You know.

Q. Was your officer there with you?

A. I remember Lieutenant DeSimone walking ahead of us towards the building.

Q. Okay.

A. This is when he was telling us to get ready, that we were going to go and see, you know, what the story was, what we could do.

He was ahead of us. He was a good maybe 20, 30 yards because he had told us to get our rollups and our cylinders, and he started walking up.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. As that's when we started walking towards him, towards the building, and he told us put our stuff back on and move up, and then we did it again. I grabbed the cylinder again.

Q. After you relocated up to the north --

A. After we relocated again.

Q. Took the stuff off, helped the chauffeur hook up.

A. Yeah.

Q. And then what do you remember? Did you go into the north tower?

A. No, we didn't go into the north tower.

Q. Did you go to the command post over there? Did you see Ganci at the command post on West Street?

A. No, I didn't see Ganci.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't see Ganci. I was -- most of the time, I was on the -- well --

Q. Go ahead.

A. We're facing this way with the rig.

Q. Okay. That's facing --

A. Most of the time I'm on the left side of the rig.

Q. Okay. That's facing north on West Street, okay.

A. So I really couldn't see too much of what was going on, because all the hydrants were on this side, so I was running around over there.

Q. So while you were in that area, the south tower collapsed.

A. The south tower collapsed, right.

Q. It was a tremendous cloud --

A. Yes.

Q. -- that lasted for some period of time.

A. Yes.

Q. 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, something like that. You used your mask intermittently.

A. Yes.

Q. Then that cleared.

Then what did you do after that? There was a long period of time between the second building collapsing?

A. Maybe 15, 20 minutes, and we were -- that's when we were helping the firemen that were coming that were from south of us that started moving up.

Q. Okay.

A. We were helping civilians, police officers.

Q. Okay.

A. And we were trying to get organized. We were looking for Smitty, make sure he's all right.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Stuey.

Q. Where did they go again?

A. They went up north.

Q. They went up north because that cloud enveloped you guys?

A. Because the cloud enveloped us.

Q. They moved up north. They were looking for them, but at the same time you were helping civilians?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Kind of like --

Q. Yeah.

A. You know.

Q. Okay.

A. New on the job.

Q. Okay, all right.

A. But, I mean, I tried to do the best that I could, as far as helping out. I didn't want to -- you know, I -- but I just remembered doing that, and I remember also at the same time looking up again.

There was still people coming out of the north tower, jumping, and I remember one person in particular, if it really was a person. There was -- it was a guy who looked like he was standing in the window maybe, hanging on. I just remember seeing it looked like a white shirt up there, and thinking, don't jump, you know, they're going to get you. You know, they are going to get up there and get you. Didn't happen, but I don't know.

I just remember after that one came down, there was just an order to move north, and so we moved north. People were trying to wash up again in the hydrants, and then there was the whole commotion by the waterfront, gas leak, a bomb, whatever, you know. We didn't know what was going on.

There was also a transmission at some time. I don't remember if it was after the first tower came down.

Q. Yeah.

A. Somebody said -- I don't know if it actually came over the radio or something. You heard a buzz about that there was another plane being tracked. I don't know if it was a military plane maybe somebody was tracking.

Q. Right.

A. Or they were talking about the plane in Philadelphia, and they didn't know where it was heading, but that was also -- caused a little bit of a commotion, too, so it was a mass exodus up forward north. People were trying to get settled, get reorganized. They had that whole thing with the gas.

Q. Yeah.

A. They pushed us farther north again, regroup,

went to go see what we could do. We heard the transmission 224 start water.

Q. Yeah.

A. Looked at each other, like, huh? We realized the rig was all right, didn't get crushed, and we wanted to go down there and man the rig.

Q. You guys never got orders to go into the Tower 1, right?

A. Not that I'm aware of that.

Q. Yeah.

A. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't believe we had orders to go into either building.

Q. Uh-huh. You didn't see command post or -- any chiefs you remember on West Street? You didn't see -- did you see the chaplain? Did you remember anybody?

A. The only person I remember, really remember seeing a hundred percent --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- is Terry Rivera. I drove him to probie school every day.

Q. Okay.

A. And he was standing outside on West Street. He looked like he was looking for somebody.

Q. Yeah.

A. And as we were driving down West Street, I yelled out to him, and he didn't look like he heard me. When I spoke to him later, he did hear a voice. He didn't know it was me, though. He thought it was a truck calling him, but he was in and out of the south tower before it fell, and that was the only specific person that I remember.

There was actually -- I think the Rescue 5. There was a rescue firefighter that actually rode the back of our rig through the tunnel to the trade center. I wasn't even aware that he was on the back of the rig. I didn't know until sometime after this happened, weeks, that he came out. I didn't even know. There was a lot of things going on, you know.

Q. Where was the staging area on the Brooklyn side? Where did you respond to when you staged there?

A. Geez.

Q. Outside the Battery Tunnel was it?

A. It was outside the Battery Tunnel. I think it was -- Hamilton Avenue? Let me think.

Q. You were there when the second plane hit, you

said?

A. Yeah, we were coming down -- I believe it was Columbia Street, and I was with my back to the lieutenant, and the lieutenant had actually said, "Look out the window, look out the window."

We didn't see the plane yet. Looking out the building, the smoke was already across the river. There was papers falling on the Brooklyn side already.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a plane coming, and I actually said to Mike Hazel, I said, "What is this guy going to do? Is he going to try to fly under the smoke?"

I thought it was a regular pilot, just, you know, that he was going to have to divert his flight path because of this big, huge plume of smoke, and I'm saying to myself, why isn't he flying around the building on the windward side instead of, you know -- it looked like he was trying to duck under the smoke, but then he banked and hit the building, and that was that.

Q. Well --

A. I mean, actually, the guys on the other side of the rig didn't believe me, because when this

whole -- when this all started I was upstairs, and they said, "Hey, Joe, you know, a plane hit the World Trade Center," and being the johnnie in the house, I thought they were pulling my leg. Get out of here, you know. Came downstairs and saw it on the news.

My first thought was it was like what happened with the Empire State building. You always see these old, you know, newsreels or whatever. They're talking about the B-29 or B-17 that hit it.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Oh, wow, you know, this is going to be trouble, but I thought it was an accident. Then on the way there, just, you know, stopped, turned into something totally different, and I don't know.

Q. Okay. How did you guys get back to quarters late at night when you were finally relieved?

A. Basically hitched a ride in an ambulance.

Q. Yeah.

A. We walked up north. We were trying to look for a bus to get back. Couldn't find a bus. I don't know what the story was, and we wound up flagging down -- what do you call it?

Actually, it might be of some interest. There was a person that they -- really wouldn't be.

They thought had been lost.

Q. A fireman?

A. A fireman, a lieutenant, actually, and our lieutenant saw him on the bridge, and he passed it along. I don't know what the story was with that, but probably really of no relevance, but yeah, we flagged down a volunteer ambulance.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. We were piled in. Just came home.

Q. Okay. Anything else you remember? That's good.

A. Nothing off the top, Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I thank the firefighter for the interview, Firefighter Joseph Sullivan.

This concludes the interview at 1508 hours. That finishes it.

File No. 9110287

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH MEOLA

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 2:53 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Joseph Meola in the quarters of Engine 96.

Q. Joe, just tell us what you saw on September 11.

A. On September 11, approximately -- I'd say it was a little bit after nine, we responded on -- I was in Engine Company 91. Responded on the second fifth alarm to Tower 2. I went down with a Captain Montera and a Firefighter Brian Russo.

We went in the RAC unit with the RAC unit guy whose name is -- I forget his name. He was in the RAC unit that day.

We left quarters, went all the way down Second Avenue, eventually pulled onto Church Street outside Tower No. 1, World Trade Center No. 1. On foot we proceeded to Church and Liberty, where we tried to get a couple of extra masks.

After not getting any extra masks off the rigs that we saw there, there were a couple of engine

companies, maybe Engine 207, 209. It was a 200 number, low 200 number. I don't remember. A couple of rigs there, low 200 numbers.

We went into the quarters of 10 and 10. After we were in the quarters for approximately 30 seconds -- it was a triage center at the time. After we left 10 and 10, as soon as we walked outside the door, a firefighter from an engine company 2 -- I believe it's 216, Danny Suhr, just outside 10 and 10's quarters on Liberty Street, got hit by a jumper.

They were pulling him away. I believe they got him into an ambulance, and they were yelling at us to get away, because jumpers were jumping from the south tower onto Liberty Street, and a few jumpers came close to us, but no -- we met up with another company, Engine 58, which is in our battalion, which was in the 12th battalion.

I believe they were on Liberty at the time. I don't know if they were going in the building. I don't remember, but they did make their way into the building before us, not building -- not Tower 2, but Tower 3. The Vista, Marriott.

They made it into the Vista before us after -- later on. We met up with them on Liberty, talked

to the boss for a little while, talked to a couple of the guys, and we were avoiding lots of material that was falling from the building.

We went under -- I believe it's 130 Liberty Street. The building -- I think that's the address, actually, 130. There was a scaffolding, and we went under the scaffolding there, and we made it to West. We made it to West Street, down to West Street, asking firefighters where the command post was.

They showed us that the command post was located just outside the 2 World Financial Center in front of a garage, a parking garage. We made our way down that block and to the command post.

At the command post was several other companies. I don't know what companies were there at the time. Several other companies, ESU police, several of the high chiefs -- Ganci, Burns, Donald Burns, Ganci. I remember seeing those two. I remember seeing -- I think it might have been Barbara. I'm not a hundred percent sure. I just -- there was a lot of chiefs at this command post.

At that time, I believe it was -- I believe the chief was -- okay. At that time, I believe it was Chief Burns who explained to us that we were going to

go to -- we were going to go through the Vista, the Vista -- Marriott Vista, into 2 World Trade Center to a subbasement with an engineer that was at that post at the time, at the command post.

We were getting our gear together. We were getting ready to walk across the street, and he told us to hold up. We didn't have our forcible entry tools. We were an engine company, didn't have any forcible entry tools. At that time he sent our chauffeur. He didn't send the chauffeur. I think the chauffeur went to the rig to get the entry tools, and that was the last I seen that chauffeur that -- until later on our chauffeur was -- did survive, but was hurt in the first building collapse, Tower No. 2.

He held us there approximately within three minutes. As we are looking up at the building, what I saw was, it looked like the building was blowing out on all four sides. We actually heard the pops. Didn't realize it was the falling -- you know, you heard the pops of the building. You thought it was just blowing out.

We turned -- I turned to take a look where to go, turned around. Several companies, myself and half of my company, ran into a parking garage at 2 -- I

believe it's 2 World Financial Center. We ran into the parking garage.

As I ran into the parking garage, I turned around. I saw the whole side -- the side of the building falling into the street and the cloud of dust coming towards us.

As we got to the back of the garage, the dust had entered the garage, and somebody had opened up the door that was ahead of us into a stairwell. We got to the stairwell. We got into the stairwell. We shut the door. There was already maybe 20 firemen in there already and officers in the stairwell for the financial center, and a couple of more guys banged on the door. We opened up the door. We pulled them in, got a little contaminated, but not bad at all, and we made ourselves -- after that we made ourselves up to the 1st Floor of the financial center.

After that, we exited the rear of the financial center, and what you can see was -- I believe it's the little bay there. The North Cove Yacht Club coming out of the back there. We went right -- you could see the water of the yacht club. We worked our way around 2 World Financial Center, and it was pretty dark, dusty.

You couldn't -- your eyes were hurting. You couldn't breathe, but you tried to head for the water. I think I believe I ended up on North End Avenue, one block just short of the water, right on the water somewhere.

After on North Avenue, I believe we went down Vesey Street -- Vesey or Murray. It's one of those two -- back towards West Street. I was with half -- maybe half the members of the company, three of four members of the company. The other three or four members, at that time we were -- we did not know where they went. We didn't know if they made it in the garage, they were still in the garage, if they were out on West Street. We got split up.

As we worked our way back to Vesey towards West, we ran into several people that we knew. We tried to get people together. We were going back towards West and Vesey somewhere where we heard people screaming, "The second building is coming down. The second building is coming down."

Within ten seconds, the second building started to drop. We ran up West. We made it up West maybe to Barclay or past the telephone company building up on West, past the telephone company building. We

didn't make it as far as Stuyvesant or where the other overpass is yet. We didn't make it up that far. I don't remember. Maybe Murray or Barclay on West.

We took cover from the second cloud, smoke that engulfed us, and...

Q. Did you have any warning that the second tower was coming down, via radio traffic or --

A. Radio traffic. Radio traffic on -- what you heard on the handy-talkies was you heard conflicting reports of guys saying hold in the first tower or -- and you heard other guys saying, "Get out. Evac the first tower. Evac. Evac the first tower."

Also at the command post, when I was at the command post earlier, the radio traffic that you heard was Maydays. I didn't have a radio, but the -- several radios were on in that vicinity of bosses or control man or -- at the time in that -- and I believe the radio traffic was -- you heard several Maydays coming from -- I don't know if it's Tower 1 or Tower 2, Channel 1 or Channel 2. I believe we were on Channel 2, and you heard Maydays on Channel 2 coming from rescue. I believe it was rescue companies. I'm not a hundred percent sure. My memory is just jogged on that. You heard Maydays. You did hear Maydays,

several Maydays. "We need water. Mayday. We need water. Mayday. We need water. We got no water," to that effect. I don't remember exactly, just -- that day is such a tough day.

Coming back to Vesey and West on another communication after the first tower fell, Tower 2 fell, Tower 1, you heard guys -- firemen, chiefs, lieutenants, I don't know who -- yelling conflicting reports, some saying -- most saying, "Get the hell out of the tower. Get out of Tower 1. You know, Tower 2 fell."

I didn't realize the full Tower 2 fell until we went back to Vesey and West. At the time when I ran into the parking garage, I believe only half -- I thought only half the building fell down. I did not know the whole building came down, and when we got back there, I realized the whole tower was down, and that's what you were, like, the whole -- you know, you knew the other one was imminent.

After that, we worked our way up West Street. I got -- I believe we met up with another two tour members of the company. I remember going to a hydrant, going to a rig, opening up a hydrant, everybody washing their face, their eyes out, trying to

get their composure back together, and in -- we wanted to work our way down towards West and Vesey, and we got held up by one of our bosses, which said -- which told us to hold, to hold tight there and go back to the command post, which was now located somewhere up by Stuyvesant. I believe it was located by Stuyvesant High School.

We went back there, washed up, cleaned up and I spent, you know, a part of the day there before returning back later on that afternoon to the site.

I believe that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you, Joe.

The time now is 3:08, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110288

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM REYNOLDS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 1:59 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with William Reynolds, Firefighter First Grade, from Engine 76, in the quarters of Engine 76.

Q. William, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We arrived down through the West Side Highway, I honestly don't remember what street we had gotten off the rig, 76 Engine. Probably somewhere in the area of Murray and West or maybe something south of that like Vesey. At that time, the engine went off to places unknown and the company ended up down at 2 World Financial Center by the command post, waiting for an assignment.

More companies arrived and so probably there was approximately 45 people there. I don't know the other companies that were there. I wasn't really paying attention. I did notice at the time I saw standing next to me Mayor Guiliani and the Police Commissioner, Chief Ganci and Chief Ray Downey. It

seemed like a decent amount of time that we were there and we as a group had become pretty distracted with the amount of people jumping down out of the north tower. It got to the point that we were talking about not looking at the people. So as a group we all turned our backs to them so we wouldn't have to look. Then the noise from the people hitting, it became so much that we ended up having to turn around and look again. This went on for a while and I remember the people that were hitting the awning over the doorway, they were blown to pieces. I remember saying, "I hope they don't hit that awning, because this way I don't have to see them blown to pieces."

After a while, and I don't know how long it was, I was distracted by a large explosion from the south tower and it seemed like fire was shooting out a couple of hundred feet in each direction, then all of a sudden the top of the tower started coming down in a pancake. I remember my jaw dropping and just staring at it and Richard Banaciski, one of the firemen that was there, yelled "Run" and I turned and I started running into the parking garage of the Financial Center.

Q. Bill, just one question. The fire that you saw, where was the fire? Like up at the upper levels where it started collapsing?

A. It appeared somewhere below that. Maybe twenty floors below the impact area of the plane. I saw it as fire and when I looked at it on television afterwards, it doesn't appear to show the fire. It shows a rush of smoke coming out below the area of the plane impact.

The reason why I think the cameras didn't get that image is because they were a far distance away and maybe I saw the bottom side where the plane was and the smoke was up above it.

So we ran into this parking garage, the parking garage was empty of cars and it was lit and I remember thinking, "I hope that this building doesn't fall down and crush the building that I'm in." And I remember saying, "I can't die today. My wife wouldn't accept this."

So anyway, we made it to the back of the building and I remember looking over my shoulder as this wall of darkness came in. Luckily it was only just smoke. I was standing next to my Lieutenant in the engine, Lieutenant Farrington, and I had set my

mask down by the ramp at the entrance and I didn't have a mask. I said to him, "Frank, if the smoke gets bad, you're gonna have to share your mask with me." Then we continued back further. Frank found an exit and a security guard, we asked the security guard if that exits the building and he said, "Yes." I remember saying to him, "Are you absolutely sure?" He said, "Yes." So I said, "All right. Then get out of here. Go."

So all of a sudden Frank came out with a life saving rope, which I wasn't aware he had at the time, and he hooked it to the doorknob and we started walking back into the area where we just ran from and I heard people with masks on, the guys had masks on, I could hear them in all directions. So I followed behind Frank and I started talking out loud saying, "If anybody can't find the way out, we have a rope over here. He'll take you to the door." Some voices said, "Where?" I said, "I'll keep talking. Just come to my voice and there is a way out over here."

Then I remember hearing somebody saying, "Oh, I have a door here." I said, "Well, if you have a door, then go out the door. But if anybody is lost,

just come over to my voice and there is a rope and you can follow it out." So then guys started showing up towards me. They put their hands on the rope and that's the last I saw of them.

So after we were confident that there was no one left in the parking garage, Frank and I followed the rope back and we worked our way to the back door. When we got out, we were by the North Cove Yacht Harbor and we went out to the Hudson River. What I had forgotten to state previous to this, before the towers had fallen, two emergency service cops had come up to us in wired gear, carrying uzis and asked if we had seen any civilians. They said, "If you see any, come get us. Don't go near the civilians." At the time there were no civilians around, in my eye shot.

I also remember, at that time, which I had also forgotten to state, that in the north tower there was a woman who may have been a security guard for the complex and she was just walking back and forth seeming to be oblivious of the people falling down, jumping down right on the other side of the glass. In hindsight, I would say she probably was in shock.

There was also a Police Officer in there. He

just seemed to be just standing there not paying attention to what this woman was doing. Anyway, back to getting out to the water.

We started regrouping as a company, verified we were present. We did not know at the time where George Rodriguez, our chauffeur, was. There was a lot of radio traffic. The Lieutenant was trying to find out where George was. After a short time we heard communication that George was fine.

I remember then seeing a civilian, the first civilian that I saw, he was carrying a bag and I thought, you have to watch out for the civilians and I was thinking, maybe I should take his bag and throw it in the water, because I didn't know what it was. Then I thought maybe of throwing him in the water. Then I said, "No. He's walking south. I'll work north and get away from him."

I remember discussing with other guys that maybe there is people around that would shoot us. Then we went over closer to the water and there was a barge there. I remember thinking, this might be an oil barge and there might be a bomb on it. So we started walking back towards West Street. Then I was thinking, we can't go close to the buildings

because if more planes come. So we kind of just all were walking around dazed and I ran into a Battalion Chief. I don't know who he was. I said to him, I said, "Chief, they're evacuating the other building; right?" He said, "No."

Q. You're talking about the north tower now; right?

A. Before the north tower fell. He said, "No." I said, "Why not? They blew up the other one." I thought they blew it up with a bomb.

I said, "If they blew up the one, you know they're gonna blow up the other one." He said, "No, they're not." I said, "Well, you gotta tell them to evacuate it, because it's gonna fall down and you gotta get the guys out." Because I had felt there were hundreds of firemen who died in the first tower and thousands of people. He said, "I'm just the Battalion Chief. I can't order that." I remember looking at the radio on him and I said, "You got a fucking radio and you got a fucking mouth. Use the fucking things. Empty this fucking building." Again he said, "I'm just a Battalion Chief. I can't do that."

So I walked back by the water. We were all

basically just somewhat in visual site of each other, us and 22 Truck, some of the guys from 22 Truck. I had known, at that time, that all of the guys of the 22 truck had gotten out. We were walking around very numb. I knew I was in shock, but there was nothing I could do about it.

So eventually this other chief came back and said, "They are evacuating this tower." I said, "Oh, that's great." And sometime after that I watched from the, I guess, by the Winter Garden area, I watched the north tower fall. It was expected so it wasn't as traumatic as the first one to me. Then that Battalion Chief came back again with his clip board and he said, "We need volunteers to go back in and check the perimeter for survivors." He emphasized that we didn't have to go in, but if we would he would appreciate it.

So he took the names of us in 76 Engine and we went back in. I believe it was at Vesey Street we got up to about Washington and a Deputy Chief met us there and said that he wanted us to go back up West Street and regroup and we'd take it from there. Basically while we were in that area, Washington and Vesey, it was just everything burning on the ground

and around us and the dust, and it was no apparent people laying around that was visible. So we walked up West and I think we got to the area of Stuyvesant High School and basically that's where I spent a good amount of time. I don't think anything much after that should be relevant, because I didn't come back down to that area again of the World Trade Center for many hours.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Bill. I appreciate your cooperation.

File No. 9110289

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT DANIEL WILLIAMS

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 10, 2001. The time is 1:35 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department safety division.

I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Daniel Williams of Ladder 16.

Q. Dan, please tell us the events of September 11.

A. Beginning on September 11, approximately quarter to nine in the morning, voice alarm went off in quarters, telling 39 engine to turn out. Highly excitable voices over the voice alarm, turn out with the high-rise rig.

I was down on the apparatus floor at the time. I stepped into the house watch area, where one of the members had a TV on, and we heard that a plane hit the trade center, took a quick look, figured out to myself that wasn't a small aircraft that hit the tower. I went over to the apparatus and just started looking over equipment, thinking we are going to be going momentarily.

Approximately ten minutes later, one of the members yell out, "The second tower was hit," and I started thinking it was a terrorist act.

Approximately ten after nine, we received a ticket to respond to the south tower command post, along with Ladder 2, Ladder 13 and Battalion 10. We were special called.

We had trouble getting out of quarters due to numerous police cars parked in front of the firehouse. Evidently, they were on recall. It took us a few minutes to get out of quarters.

As we pulled out on Lexington Avenue, 13 truck and the 10th battalion went by, and we convoyed down to the site with them. We parked on West Street at approximately, I'd say, Murray Street, and we proceeded south. Members -- we proceeded south.

We took our extra bottles, proceeded down to the command post, which was in front of 2 World Financial Center at the loading dock area. At that time I reported in, there was a few companies, a few engine companies, and a couple of ladder companies standing there.

I heard the chief say to the companies that were already there, "Report into the north tower." The one company I do realize that went into the north tower that was assigned to the north tower was 13 truck.

The 10th Battalion Chief Harten said, "Stand

by. We'll have an assignment for you in a few minutes." At that time, I believe we were the only truck company still left at the command post, and I believe there were two or three engine companies still standing by on the other side. We had the engines on one side and the trucks on the other.

As the time -- as I was standing there, I was watching the towers, and especially the south tower. I really believed that there was going to be a partial collapse, meaning the upper floors were going to come off. You know, I'd say there was 15 floors of fire.

We were witnessing people coming off the building, jumping from the north tower, which was directly across the way from us. A few of my firefighters started getting very upset, and I did yell something to them. In other words, turn around, shut up, turn around, look the other way. There's nothing we can do for these people but say a prayer.

I turned my face back towards the buildings as -- looking up at the south tower. It seemed like the one floor exploded, but in retrospect I'm thinking that was the compressive force of the building coming down that blew it out. I remember yelling, "Run."

My company and I know other members were

behind us from the command post. They came running into the loading dock area. At that time, a heavy cloud of dust entered the loading dock area where we had zero visibility for a couple of minutes.

I asked members of 16 truck if everybody was there, and I went through the riding list. We were missing one member at this time, and I told the rest of the members up the ramp we're going to find the other member. We proceeded out up the ramp out towards West Street again, from 2 World Financial Center, and we started doing a search looking -- mainly looking for our guy that was missing.

At this time, we found 10 or 15 walking wounded types. We directed them into the loading dock area. At this time, there wasn't much debris on the ground. There was maybe four or five inches of concrete dust and light debris around that area.

As we were directing the people into the loading dock area, we came across an EMS worker that told us he weighed approximately 350 pounds. I believe he was heavier than that. I said, "We got to get you -- you got to get out of here. Can you walk with assistance?"

Two of the members tried to pick him up, one

under each shoulder. He had a broken leg and a broken arm, evidently, and he was yelling in pain. My chauffeur, Oscar Davila, found a gurney that was blown down the loading dock, down the ramp. He brought that up, and we placed this member on -- this EMS worker on the gurney.

A couple of the brothers wanted to take him up to West Street, and I said, "No, we're going to go through the building, through the loading dock area and out the back," since the north tower was still burning.

We started wheeling him into the locking dock area when a member of 6 truck -- I don't know if he was recall or if he was one of the on-duty members. He said to me he couldn't find his company. He did not have a radio.

At that time, the radios were going. You couldn't get in edgewise any word on the radios. I told him to stay with us until the radio traffic calmed down, and I would notify someone of that fact.

We got down into the loading dock area with this gentleman on a gurney. There were trucks blocking the loading dock. My chauffeur moved one truck so we could get him up on the loading dock.

At this time, the -- we still hadn't found our fifth man. He was still missing. I had the other -- I had three of the members start leading the walking wounded and other people we were finding within the financial center, leading them up the C stairway to the rear of 2 World Financial Center toward the river.

About this time, I was told by my chauffeur and the man he was with, the EMS worker and the man from 6 truck, that they were stuck in the subbasement. The elevator took them down. They took an elevator, and it took them down into the subbasement. At this time, I told the chauffeur to get out of the elevator and just stand by. I'll get help to help get this guy up the stairs.

I started up the C stairway to retrieve the rest of the members to give a hand with this guy when I heard a deep rumbling, and I felt vibrations. I thought it was the financial center coming down.

I was in the stairwell. I ducked behind the stairs. The door was propelled with quite a bit of force, and debris went down the hallway, went flying down the hallway. Then within 15 seconds at the most, it subsided. I proceeded up the stairs where I found three of the members.

I was still missing my can man at this time. I got my three members that were up there. I got a couple of other members. I believe one was from 53 engine. We went down the stairs into the subbasement, and we carried the EMS worker up the stairs, up -- I believe it was four flights of stairs to the back of the 2 World Financial Center. We took him over to the marina over there, where he was placed on a police boat and was taken to Jersey, evidently.

At this time, I saw a battalion chief with no bunker coat or helmet on him, and I asked him where the command post was. He just kept repeating, "Go south." At this time 6 truck member, he left me. Couldn't find him. We were still without our can man.

The rest of the company, we proceeded down along the river's edge until approximately -- I believe it's Albany Street. I saw a couple of fire boats tied up to the pier head there, and I believe it was Commissioner Gregory. I asked him where the command post was. He mentioned that he was it, and to help stretch a line from the fire boat down Albany Street.

The members of 16, we helped numerous other members stretch this 3 1/2 down to approximately Washington Street, where I noticed a building pretty

well involved. I don't know what -- you know, couldn't tell where I was at this time approximately.

After stretching that line, headed back, and we are going to head north again, go back to the financial center and see if we can find our member. We went back down through the same stair, the C stairway, in the 2 World Financial Center and worked our way out through the loading dock area, which by now was covered with heavy steel I beams, and box beams and all of this, where the command post was.

We did start climbing into voids and things, tried to do a radio feedback assist, got nothing on that. We had no tools. We lost all our tools in the first collapse. We proceeded out to the financial center after doing a search of a couple of floors in that building.

We worked our way up -- I believe it's North End Avenue to -- it might have been Vesey Street where there was another command post. While we were working our way up, I ran into the member that was missing, on North End Avenue. We ran into him. He did state that after the first tower came down, he just -- he ran through the building, came out near the river and headed north. He asked me if I was mad at him. I said

no. I said at that time nobody ever saw anything like this, and I was just very concerned.

I took the members into a restaurant. I'd say this was approximately two o'clock in the afternoon, took them into a restaurant that was open on -- I believe it's Vesey Street. Not too many members in there. We had some water, and I had everybody call home to let somebody know they were okay.

I heard that 39 was trapped, and the command post, the north command post, was telling us, don't go down there. We did do a survey around the area there and around the perimeter of where the buildings were, looking for any victims in the outlying areas of where this occurred.

About, I would say, four o'clock or so, we were told go to up to Stuyvesant High School, where they had a command post, triage, to do a roll call, you know. We proceeded north up West Street, and we went to Stuyvesant High School.

It was not too soon after that that 7 World Trade Center collapsed, and at that time people were yelling, "Run," and we just stood there and watched the thing come down. That was about it.

We did -- I did give them a list of company

numbers of members that we told to get on boats to go over for medical aid, wherever they were taken, whether it was Jersey or Staten Island. It was approximately ten members on that, on the list that I had. No names. It was just company numbers.

At Stuyvesant High School, a few of the members did get, you know, eyes washed out and things like that, and then we took a little rest up there in the cafeteria area and went back out.

Our rig was moved sometime during the day. We got back to that, and there was damage done to it, the windshield and lights, things like that.

At approximately eight o'clock we left the scene. We were ordered to take up by the command post, take our rig back to quarters, which we did.

Sorry to say that Rob and Ray didn't make it through that day.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you, Dan.

The time now is 1:50, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110290

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KENNETH ROGERS

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 10, 2001. The time is 10:48 a.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Kenny Rogers, Firefighter first from Ladder 16 in the quarters of Ladder 16.

Q. All right Kenny, please give me any information you have regarding the events of September 11.

A. At about a quarter to nine, high rise, Engine 39 responded to the first plane crash into the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV and we were watching because it was newsworthy and we saw the second plane hit and almost immediately, we were told to respond down there. We had trouble getting out of quarters and we were delayed a bit and 13 and 22 in the Battalion were ahead of us, got ahead of us. I saw them pass us on the corner. We wound up following them down, downtown. Wound up on West Street going south and we followed them for as far as we could. We got down further than I thought we did, because we passed a lot of rigs and eventually we couldn't go any further.

There we disembarked and we walked south. We went down to West Street, to the command post, and then

we passed in front of 2 World Financial Center, by a garage bay. We were just standing there and 13 and 22 were there, a big group were sent in ahead of us. We should have been in their place but because we arrived a step behind them, they went in ahead of us. We just stood by and waited. I think we were waiting for another truck company to fill us out. We were going to get the next assignment. We sort of had the nod but we didn't have the wave yet.

Watching the building, mostly the south tower. There were people jumping, someone said we are going to go a long way up, let's take off some of our gear. At first I didn't, but after a while I thought he was probably right because it was getting heavy. So I took off some stuff and he took off some stuff. Some other guys did.

Meanwhile we were standing there with about five companies and we were just waiting for our assignment and then there was an explosion in the south tower, which according to this map, this exposure just blew out in flames. A lot of guys left at that point. I kept watching. Floor after floor after floor. One floor under another after another and when it hit about the fifth floor, I figured it was a bomb, because it

looked like a synchronized deliberate kind of thing. I was there in '93.

I went down to the garage bay. Most guys were down already. The Lieutenant had been yelling at the command post, run, run, run. The only person I saw come in with us was a Chief and the rest of them didn't come in. The companies just scattered everywhere. I think we had maybe nine people with us and there had to be four in the beginning. All these other companies just scattered. We didn't know where they were. They didn't come down with us. We had two people, I think, from other companies, different companies. One guy was from a truck. I think the other another guy was Steve Wright. An injured person with us, a big fat guy and I found an ambulance cot at the bottom of that ramp.

We put him on that. We moved a truck away from the loading bay, because it had the key in it. We put him up on the loading dock and then we put him into a freight elevator, but the Lieutenant said I don't want everyone on that elevator. We don't know how well it works. He turned out to be right. Because it didn't -- it malfunctioned. It went down instead of up and the guys were lucky to get off it. Steve Wright was on that elevator. Two people were on it, the guy

from the other company, Steve Wright, and the injured guy. The injured guy couldn't walk and he had a broken arm.

The Lieutenant said okay, we are going to have to carry him up the stairs. I should say that he already had a roll call after the dust cleared. We were missing one guy. Then he had another roll call back by the stairwell, hoping the guy might be back by the stairwell, but he wasn't there either.

We decided to carry this guy up the stairwell. One of the guys from the other company said there is a way out, out of the building, that goes out the back. We decided we were going to go that way. We tried to pick this guy up. The stairwell was narrow. We couldn't all get our hands on it. The guy was very big. Eventually we got him up several flights of stairs. We got him out the back of the building and we put him on a boat going over to New Jersey somewhere.

Then we went back from North Cove harbor, we went back to the building and the second collapse occurred when -- the three of us were in the back of the building; myself, Oscar and Joe Petrich. There was a really heavy draft. My helmet just flew off into this black curtain of soot behind the building and on

the back of the building there was an overhang, so I didn't really want to go into either one of those places, but then I was worried about the glass flying around inside the building. So the thing to do, I figured, was to just stay where I was, where I had the most places to go and see what would happen.

What happened was it subsided. I didn't have a turnout coat at this time. I didn't get cut up so it turned out to be the best thing to do was just to wait and see where the best place (inaudible). That's how it worked out for me with the second collapse.

Then we went back into the building to find the Lieutenant. At this time, there was still lights in the stairwell. There was a lot of water running down the stairs, so we knew the building had some kind of damage. I went down to a lower level, which I hadn't been to before, below the loading bay, where we had been originally. There was no access in the loading bay anywhere else. It was just one level that went down. I was hoping there was, because I was hoping I could hide down there.

Someone located him and yelled down the stairwell, we found him, we got him. So we went back, we all regrouped and then we went up the ramp to go out

to the front of the building where we had come in. We were looking for the guy we were missing. The Lieutenant and some people were off to the left and me and Joe Petrich went to the right of the bay to the left and we went up there. We kind of searched quite a bit of the building looking for people. We didn't see anybody except one guy with a camera. I don't know where he came from. He was taking a picture of the World Trade Center collapse I guess. He was okay though.

When we left the building, then we saw a couple of other firemen starting to come in to search. We told them we have looked around already. We knew we were the first guys there because there was no foot prints in the dust or anything. There was a lot of dust in the exposure, blown in windows on that side of the building.

After that, we went back into the building. We went out the back. We skirted North Cove harbor and we went to a street, which I guess was North End, and then we went to Vesey Street and we turned right. We ran into a guy. The Lieutenant asked him where is the command post. The guy said I'm it. So we figured the command post was in a lot of trouble, because we could

see them from where we had been in our staging area. Now there didn't seem to be a command post any more.

Anyway, we found a place on Vesey, somebody forced their way into it. It was a place called Chevy's. We went in there. We were very happy to see people come in. We -- like 39 Engine, we heard them give a Mayday and they weren't responding to any radio transmissions so we thought they might be all dead.

One of the guys came in from 39, a couple of guys came in and started wandering in and it was just good to see these guys were okay. We stayed there for a while. That was pretty much the events of that day for us.

After that, we sort of went back to the school. We went into the school. There was another collapse of another building, but we were too far away to be affected by that. We went back to the rig and we washed the rig down. It turned out that --

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you Kenny. The time now is 11:13. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110291

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL BRODBECK

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today is December 10, 2001. It's 1645 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King from Safety Battalion FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter First Grade Michael Brodbeck from Engine Company 210. He was working a mutual in Ladder 1106 on September 11th as the can man. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Mike.

A. Right after the first plane hit the north tower, we were dispatched and we were first ticket. We jumped on the rig and started going over the Brooklyn Bridge. At this time we were still unaware it was actually a large plane until we got around three-quarters of the way over the Brooklyn Bridge and they confirmed it was a commercial airliner. The 2nd Battalion aide, I believe, was screaming on the radio about the jumpers up and down.

I think we arrived down Cortlandt Street, which was facing Two World Trade, and pretty much the way you see that second plane hit on the videotape was the way we were facing that

tower.

As the second plane hit, the chauffeur, which was Artie Riccio, did a U turn around Century 21, which I believe is near One Liberty Plaza over there. We came around, and I think we came down Vesey Street, where our rig was.

We grabbed our gear, carried extra cylinders. I had the can and had my hook. We walked around, I think down Vesey to West Street. We made a left and we came to the north tower. We proceeded to wait until jumpers were down. We went into the lobby. We arrived in the lobby, awaiting instruction.

We awaited instruction from the chiefs. We went with I believe it was Chief Picciotto. I don't know if that's exactly him, but I think I recognized him. He was on the television and stuff.

We went up to the mezzanine, and we took an elevator. The chief said that these elevators were all right. We took the elevator which I believe goes up to eight. We got off at eight and proceeded to walk up to 23. We stopped on 23, and then we went up to 25. Then we made

our way back down.

So we were either on 23 or 21. I don't know. I don't remember that. I think it was 23. The lieutenant gave us instructions to make a thorough search, pop all the doors, make sure everybody is out of the building.

Me and the irons man went. I left my can and I took the Halligan. He had the router tool. We probably popped at least 10 or 15 doors making a search.

Q. On what floor?

A. On 23 or 21. I'm still confused about that. I believe it was 23.

At this point after we made a thorough search, we located together via the stairwell. At that point, unbeknownst to us, the south tower fell. We didn't know that the south tower fell. I didn't have a radio because I had the can. But I heard there was a collapse in the north tower between the 68th and 70th floor.

When we heard the evacuation, we started our way down. At this point we were still unaware that the other tower went down. We were in the stairwell. We all regrouped at the

stairwell before the tower went down. When it went down, like everybody else says, it was like an earthquake. The building went six feet to the right, six feet to the left.

We started to make our way down, a very slow process. Once the maydays kept coming over, guys were just stopping in the stairwell. At approximately the 18th floor, the other members of Ladder 110 started carrying a woman down in a chair. I was walking down with another woman I believe from 18 to like 12, and she went with two other members. I forget which engine company. They walked her down.

I picked up another civilian at 10. I walked her down. She was with two civilians. I walked her down. She was hyperventilating. She thought she was having a heart attack. So I put my mask on her, because the dust from the other tower was starting to come up into the other building. This was probably around like the sixth floor where the dust started getting bad. I gave her my mask from like ten down because she was just trying to catch her breath.

We went down -- this was the B

stairwell. We got down to the lobby. I was a little bit ahead of 110 while they were carrying the other woman down. When I got down to the lobby, I asked the woman if she was okay. The two civilians told me that they would take her. She went with the two civilians.

I went and caught up with Ladder 110 and walked out of the north tower, which I believe was at least 25 minutes just to get down from up there. We walked out into the street under the overpass, the northern walkway on West Street.

We got out to one of the rigs and put our gear down. Lieutenant Wayne Mera -- at this point we still didn't know the other tower went down. The north tower is ahead of the south tower. So as we walked out, we're still pretty much clueless about the other tower going down.

We made our way under that overpass. We stopped there. Lieutenant Mera said he didn't like this, where we were standing. We started to walk north on West Street. We probably got maybe 50 yards, they were like two red lights, and we stopped again. We put all our equipment down.

One guy took his mask off.

At that point the north tower collapsed. From the time we walked out of the tower to this point had to be less than five minutes, maybe like three minutes by the time -- it happened very quickly.

At that point we all pretty much scattered and ran. I ran north on West Street. I put my mask on. The vibra-alert was going off. I had no air left because I gave it to that woman on the walk down.

The dust ball came down and hit us. I ran in complete darkness and wound up running face first into the building before the Verizon building on Vesey. I was actually trying to break through the glass.

At the time I dislocated my shoulder. I was running. I dislocated my shoulder. I was trying to break through the glass with my left arm. Then the door flew open. I happened to be banging on the door. The door swung open and knocked me on my butt.

Two firemen from 305 Engine dragged me in there, which I believe is Six World Trade in

the customs building right there. It was either that or the telephone building. I'm not too sure. Two firemen dragged me in there.

At that point I was trying to get in touch with my battalion to find out if those guys lived or whatever. We all met up at what I believe was West Street and Murray, that bridge that goes over, that other one. Near like Stuyvesant High School, we met up there.

That was it pretty much, from collapse purposes. I don't know if you want me to go on.

Q. Did you see anybody there, any specific individuals at any point?

A. That ain't here no more? I walked out with someone from 65 Engine that I grew up with. I haven't seen him in two years. We happened to hit the lobby doors going out.

On the way up we were with 21 Engine. A guy from 21, I played football with, he was with me going up. When we were coming out, they were ahead of us. I remember seeing Billy Burke, the captain who got killed. I think he went left, because they all went right with us. I assume he might have gone over to where the

command post was or whatever.

That's like the overview. When we first got to the front of the north tower, I was watching people jump. We were actually waiting to see if anybody was coming out of the building on the West Street side to make sure we weren't hit.

Q. When you were on the 23rd floor doing a search, what were the conditions?

A. Fine. Nothing up there.

Q. No smoke? No sign of water flowing anywhere?

A. No, not at all.

Q. The stairwell dry?

A. The stairwell was dry. No water.

Q. Do you remember what stairwell you were in?

A. I believe B.

Q. B?

A. We came down B. From what I understand, it was the only one that was not obstructed. It was a good thing we were going down B. When we were going up, there didn't seem to be that many firemen. I believe we were

probably one of the first 15 units on the scene. We got there pretty quick.

I happened to see that thing on CNN from 7 Engine. They were on 21. I didn't see them. I'm pretty sure it was 23 that we were on. There's a lot of doors. We popped a ton of doors, looking for people.

To be honest with you, I remember looking out the window and seeing that command post on West Street, thinking it wasn't a good idea to be there. I've been on six years. When I looked down, it didn't seem like a real bright place to have one. Little things like that stuck out in my mind. When I looked out on that, I felt uncomfortable about that.

We were so in the dark about the other tower going down, we walked out of the north tower and I looked south and I just saw the Marriott Hotel, the corner of it. I remember saying to myself the Marriott took a beating from all the debris falling. You just saw the corner of it from that angle coming back.

So up until the point where the north tower went down, we didn't --

Q. You didn't notice that tower came down at all?

A. We didn't know that at all.

Q. You didn't feel that or hear that?

A. Oh, no, we felt it. We were in the north tower, and we were in the stairwell. When that tower went down, our tower went six feet to the right, six feet to the left, and we felt the debris falling, but it felt like an earthquake. I've never been in a big collapse. I thought --

Q. You didn't know the tower came down?

A. No. What I heard over the radio was that it was a collapse from the 68th through 70th floors. I thought that's what was -- that much of a rumble and everything else, you know. Until afterwards, like I said, I dislocated my shoulder.

So after the collapse, after I left that building and I got back with 110, a doctor from Hazollah came over and put me in a sling. I stood on West Street for like an hour and a half fighting with the lieutenant not to get on the ambulance.

Then the F-16 flew overhead, [redacted]

[redacted] They convinced me to go. I didn't want to go, but I was useless anyway after that. I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital. I was taken to Chelsea Piers first. They had triage, and they popped my shoulder back in. I was taken to St. Vincent's.

I didn't get back to Brooklyn until 6:00 or 7:00. I was taken to Metrotech. I was with John Feehan. They brought me back to the division, I was with him, and they brought us back to Metrotech. From Metrotech I just walked over to 110 and went to sleep.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay, Mike.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1700 hours, and this interview is concluded

File No. 9110292

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STANLEY TROJANOWSKI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is December 10th. It's 1813 hours this is Battalion Chief Malkin, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with firefighter Stanley Trojanowski, first grade, Engine 238. We're at the quarters of 238. There's nobody else present in the room. This interview is related to the events of September 11th, and what follows is the interview.

Q. You start out from in quarters. When did you get the run?

A. We received the run a little after 9:00. We responded on the fifth alarm to the initial building that was hit by the airplane. We made our way down Barclay Street. We tried to make a left-hand turn on West Side Highway or West Street, but it was all congested with traffic. So we left the rig on West Street. Actually I stayed with the rig on West, between Barclay and Vesey on West.

The guys responded to the command post which is at Liberty Street and West, and I stayed with the rig. I hooked up, got a little bit of

pressure, just enough for an inch and three-quarter, which wasn't even sufficient because it read zero from the hydrant pressure on the gauge. I had a little bit of water. So I tried to be prepared there.

That's it. Later on to see what was going on, I listened to the radio. I saw some people jumping eventually. First I thought it was debris from the airplane that hit or maybe from the building itself, or birds. Once the people got closer, I could see they were actual human beings.

After the collapse of number Two World Trade Center, which I actually thought was a bomb that went off because the north tower was blocking my view, debris and everything started falling, people were running. I hid underneath the scaffolding on Barclay; I'm pretty much sure it was Barclay and West.

Things cleared up a little. I started up the stair and tried to wash off anyone that was still trying to escape from the collapse and tried to help as many people as I could, this and that.

I tried to contact the company. I was pretty much sure I made contact. Someone responded. I remember hearing "Engine 238," but it sort of seemed like a response to my calling them. I heard everyone was supposedly all right, which wasn't true, which might not even been a response to my calls on the handy talky.

The north tower came down, and I got hit with some debris. I remember getting banged up to the divider by the rig which was in the street. I made my way underneath the scaffolding again and just tried to outlast the collapse, which I thought was just another bomb going off.

I'm trying to remember of anyone who's still missing or was missing that I had seen. I can't recall.

Q. Did your unit come back, your guys come back to the rig at some time?

A. After the second collapse I radioed again to see if they're okay. I had a response, or all I caught was part of a response. I thought it was them again. So I started looking around for them. I went to the north overpass.

The response supposedly mentioned they

were at the north overpass. I looked around underneath the overpass, because it was partially collapsed on the south side, rigs sticking out on the north side, burning, this and that. No one there.

I was trying to put out some fires. I used about 20 extinguishers. I tried to put out car fires there, and some of the rigs burning. I tried to keep it from escalating even worse just in case we had people trapped in there still alive so they don't burn to death.

The debris on Vesey between Vesey and number Seven World Trade Center, three and a half was the seven, and a couple of civilians helped me stretch that. We had a little bit of water in the three and a half that was stretched from another company north of me on West Street. The tower ladder was in front of Six World Trade Center, I guess, because it was just north of the pedestrian bridge. We couldn't put it out. It was five or six stories high, the debris, I'm going to say.

I helped tried to get a couple of firemen out of the debris and managed to work

with other firemen to get one fireman out. He was in cardiac arrest, bleeding. About five surgeons were dropped off in the area that came over to me, asking where they could respond, where they could help, this and that.

I knew the command post on Liberty Street was annihilated or whatever you want to call it. One of them went with the ambulance with an unconscious fireman to the hospital. The other one -- I had no clue where the command post was because there's no way of getting through on the radio.

Q. Right.

A. There were all the important messages, maydays and everything. Unless you have a mayday I guess you don't want to interrupt important transmissions. So I just kept on looking for our guys, which took a while for me to find, a couple hours. I went all around.

Q. You walked around looking for them?

A. Yeah. I went and actually met up with some of the guys from our firehouse on Church Street. The last transmission I heard was north of the pedestrian overpass, the north overpass.

I walked around there for a while, asked the guys that I knew. They said they had seen two of our guys, so I knew at least two of the guys were alive. I just kept on looking. When we met up, we came back to West Street where my rig was just to see what I could do.

There were a lot of things in between that come to my mind now. I helped them stretch a line from the rig north of me to the tower ladder. Everyone was doing what they could. Later on we helped a marine company, because we had no supply of water at all on the west side. So we helped the marine company with three and a half inch hose. We got them off other rigs. We supplied a pumper, I guess it would be, on North End Avenue.

Q. Stretched a line from the marine company onto North End Avenue?

A. North End Avenue. We managed to get a pumper that was still working. We drove it over there. A chauffeur from that company stayed with that. Actually he wasn't the chauffeur that responded with the company, but he was from that company and he was a chauffeur.

So he manned that rig while we helped to stretch a three and a half from that pumper to the other pumper which was closer to West. I was like in-line pumping to get some supply of water.

Q. After the tower two went down, where were you after the first one went down?

A. I was there the whole time.

Q. Still up by Barclay Street?

A. Yeah, at Barclay. That's where our rig was, on West between Vesey and Barclay; actually closer to Barclay, close to the corner.

Q. Right.

A. Because the hydrant I had was around the corner on Barclay.

Q. Did you ever see the command post where Ganci was or the chaplain or anything?

A. No.

Q. After the first building went down, did you see companies, where they were, any particular firemen or companies, where they were working or anything like that? No, you were remote; right? At least a block away?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

A. There were a lot of cops in the area.

Q. Yeah.

A. Scattering.

Q. How did you wrap it up? Total debris, you were hooked up over here, you stretched all these lines? You worked there into the night, would you say? You worked there all day?

A. Yeah, I was there. Yeah, I was there until Wednesday. I found our officer just south of the pedestrian north overpass.

Q. Late in the day when you found him?

A. Yeah. Actually someone else mentioned they found him late in the day. It was dark already.

Q. Did 238 guys get together all at once or in dribs and drabs they got together or did you find each other at the scene?

A. Yeah, we were looking for each other. Actually everybody was looking for each other, from what I heard.

Q. How late did you stay at the scene?

A. Until Wednesday. I got banged around a little when the second one came down, the north one. There was debris flying this and there.

I really don't like to talk about it much.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with fireman Trojanowski, Engine 238. I thank him for the interview. The time is now 1826 hours.

File No. 9110293

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID KELNHOFER

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 1815 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter David Kelnhofer from Engine 221, control man on September 11th, 2001. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Dave. You can start whenever you want.

A. Basically, we came to work that morning. Everything was normal. We saw on the TV that the first tower was hit. We normally go into Manhattan, so we started to get ready, figuring that we were going to get sent there. Then we saw the second plane had hit, and right after we saw that on the TV, we got the ticket over the computer to go to Manhattan. So we grabbed our stuff. Pauley Warhola, who was getting off the night before, had jumped on our rig as an extra man, as a fifth man.

We went down. We were told to go over the Manhattan Bridge. We went over the Manhattan Bridge. We ended up parking the rig on Broadway close to Dey Street, I believe, looking at the map here, and we left the rig with the chauffeur there. Then we walked down

Dey Street, I believe, or Fulton, down Vesey. We were told to report to the command center by the World Financial Center on the opposite side of the Trade Center. We walked completely around and ended up right by the World Financial Center, I believe it was the first one, right in front of the north tower.

We stopped there. We took our gear off to take a break while the captain went up to get an assignment from the command post. He went up to the command post, got an assignment, came back. We were supposed to go into the south tower, I believe. Just as we started to put our gear back on, the first tower collapsed.

We ran down the loading ramp of the building, through the loading ramp, up the opposite side of the building, up the stairway. We tried to get out the stairway in the rear of the building. We were trapped there for a while and then finally it cleared a little bit. We made our way out of the building, across the courtyard and down towards the piers, through the marina and down towards the piers.

Okay. Here is the building here, yes, the second World Financial Center. That's the building there. We made it through there. We ended up on the

piers with a group of, I guess, like 100 firemen. We stopped there for a minute. Then we regrouped. We got all our men together because we were separated a little bit.

We started to make our way back down to the basement to recover some gear. We figured we'd go help in the rescue operation. Before we could do that, the second building came down. We ended up going back towards the pier, towards the water. We stood there for a little while, regrouped again.

We left there, went back to the building, made our way into that basement with a search rope, recovered our gear, came back out, and then we were told to go on West Street to the new command post. We stood at West Street for a while for another assignment. That's basically it.

Q. You didn't really see any guys, individuals you remember who might be missing?

A. No, nothing like that. We went in front of the command post that everybody got killed at, but we were waiting. The captain went up to the command post to get the assignment. We kind of waited in the back. So I really didn't see anybody actually at the command post. We were on the other side of the street.

We had picked another guy up. I don't know whether he was lost or came in on his own. I don't remember his name. He stayed with us most of the time, until the collapse, he went to the pier, and then he ended up regrouping with somebody else, I don't know whether his own company or what.

Q. Do you know his company?

A. No. I'm not sure.

Q. Sounds like a guy I talked to the other night from either 211 or 119.

A. No. I would have remembered that. It definitely wasn't a company around the battalion here because I would have remembered that. But he was kind of lost, so he hooked up with us. The captain said "follow me" just so at least someone had a record of him being with somebody. The captain probably would remember. But after the first one collapsed and we ran through the building, we kind of lost him.

Q. Okay.

A. That's about it. We ended up staying at West Street for a while. They didn't have an assignment for us, so we worked our way back to Broadway. We found our rig. We didn't find our chauffeur. We found out later the chauffeur was hurt in the collapse, that he

was taken in an ambulance. So we had gotten back on our rig and we ended up doing a four-pumper relay.

Q. Who was your chauffeur?

A. Warren Monroe. He was hurt. He'll be out on three-quarters. He's still in therapy.

We ended up getting our pumper back, getting it operational, and we were doing a four-pumper relay to a tower ladder and a hand line into the Trade Center. They were doing a rescue operation and a tower ladder operation. So we were working both of those. I was working I think it was Squad 44 rig. I'm pretty sure that's what it was. I was working that rig. One of our chauffeurs that came afterwards took our rig, and then there were two other pumpers, 290 and somebody else down the road. Because the hydrants were so far away, we had four pumpers feeding the tower ladder and the rescue hand line.

We stayed there until about 8:00, 9:00 o'clock in the morning, and then we worked our way back to the firehouse. That's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: All right, Dave. Thank you. The time is 1821 hours and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110294

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH RAE

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 2:30 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER RAE: Joseph Rae, Engine 255.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you could tell us in your own words, Joe, what happened.

A. Myself, Steve Altini from 24 Engine and Craig Monahan from 5 Truck took Craig's truck into the Trade Center. We came through the Battery Tunnel. We drove north on West to about I'd say 90 West is the building where we pulled over and there's green scaffolding there. We pulled over. We got out of the pickup. Steve Altini went to 10 and 10 to get gear. Me and Craig Monahan got out of the rig. We put our gear on and we started walking north on West Street.

As we kept approaching towards the Trade Center, there were all the rigs parked left and right. We went under the first pedestrian bridge, which would be about Liberty Street. We knew they were riding heavy, the engines and trucks, because we were looking

for masks and tools and there were no masks. Even the four-man engines didn't have any masks in them, and I knew they were riding heavy because it was change of tours.

When we got about, I would say, the Vista Hotel, right there, we saw the 1st Battalion parked there and we saw I think it was 10 Truck. I'm not too sure. There was a truck parked there. We kept walking. We got to about, I would say, probably around the second pedestrian bridge, over there, where we encountered Rescue 1, the 2nd Battalion, we saw 5 Truck, we saw 3 Truck, I think 1 Engine was there, too, and in front of that was 18 Engine, which was towards the south. That's where we found our masks. We took the masks out of 18 Engine.

We put the masks on. We started walking north to just about the second footbridge, which would be 6 World Trade, and all of a sudden we heard the explosion and the building started to come down and I ran up --

Q. Which tower?

A. 2 World Trade Center started to collapse. We ran and I dove under a rig and I lost sight of Craig Monahan. I don't know where he went. I dove under a

rig. I'm not sure what the number was, but I dove under a rig. It came down. I got back up. After about ten minutes, it cleared. There was a hose line in the street. We were hosing each other off.

I met up with Craig Monahan again and he said come on, come on, let's take 5 Truck's rig because there's guys on 6 World Trade, on the Customs Building, there's a little balcony there. So we moved the tiller. He told me turn the wheel all the way to the right. We backed the rig up. We put the rig up. We put the ladder up. There was a couple of Port Authority cops, a couple of firemen, I'm not too sure from where.

We got up the pedestal, and then the second one came down, and once it started to come down, we ran. I ran up north towards about Vesey Street where 12 Truck was parked on the corner of Vesey on, it would be the east side of the street. I dove under there and then the Trade Center, the second one came down. That would be 1 World Trade came down. We climbed out of there and we started walking back to see where all the collapses were.

What I forgot to mention was, when we were walking north before the first collapse, I actually saw

that command post. I saw Chief Ganci. There were I'd say about maybe eight people there. I saw Chief Ganci. I saw Chief Feehan. The two of them were there. They were actually moving the command post back a little ways because they were moving it with maybe his driver or something. But they were all standing there and they were trying to push the thing back.

After the first collapse, I didn't see the command post after that. After the second one collapsed, I crawled out of 12 Truck and we started back to see if we could find anybody because it was only me -- I lost sight of Craig Monahan after the second collapse. It was only me and two or three Port Authority cops and a civilian. That was all that was left that I saw from where I was standing, which would be the second footbridge by 6 World Trade, north. There was nobody else standing after that.

So then we went back. We got through, and I met with Ray Reilly, who was a Lieutenant in 248, and we were trying to get up onto 6 World Trade because there was a guy on the top floor of 6 World Trade hanging out the window. So I tried to move 12 Truck. I couldn't get 12 Truck started. It wouldn't move. Then all of a sudden the chauffeur came and moved it,

but they still couldn't get it. They still couldn't get him.

So we took the portable ladder off of 24 Engine's rig, put it up there, and we started up, where I met with my captain and a couple of guys from 255 up there, and we took a window and we went inside of 6 World Trade Center. They were carrying out the guy from Rescue 1. I don't know his name. But they were carrying him out. We helped them carry him out, and then we stretched a hand line into 6 World Trade Center to about the 4th floor to knock down some fire. Then we went back down and we were knocking all the car fires down and we were just looking for people.

We scuttled back towards what would be like where the Winter Garden is, over there, and that's where I met up with the rest of the guys from 255 and Ladder 157, and we started digging and we found Chief Ganci and Chief Feehan there. Then after that we just kept just digging for people, you know, for the brothers.

Actually, it all happened so fast. They say it took like 40 minutes between or whatever. Still it was just very fast the way everything went. Then I was there until 9:00, 9:30 at night. I got there about,

I'd say, right before the first collapse, enough time for me to get out of the truck, walk north with my gear on, right under the footbridge, right to about here, to about right in front of the 6 World Financial Center, when No. 2 World Trade Center came down. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Joe. That concludes our interview. It's 2:37 p.m.

File No. 9110295

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER FENYO

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 12:31. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Christopher Fenyo of Engine 35 in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. Chris, just tell us what you saw on September 11th.

A. This is Firefighter 6th Grade Christopher Fenyo. I live at North Moore and Greenwich Street. On the morning of September 11, I had dropped my girlfriend off at the subway at Chambers and walked home, and at a quarter to 9:00 I was in the elevator of my building when the first plane hit. I didn't hear anything. We face north.

When I got into the apartment, I heard FD going down the West Side Highway. I pretty much figured the only ones that go down the West Side Highway are probably rescue, so I took a look out the window to see if they were going to a job nearby. I saw a few hundred people standing in Greenwich Street pointing up, so I figured there was a job and I'd go buff it out. I still had no idea.

So I took the elevator down. I walked out

onto Greenwich Street and I looked up and saw the north tower, this is about maybe five to 9:00. I ran back into my apartment, up ten flights of stairs, grabbed my backup gear and started running down Greenwich Street. At this point there were about ten floors of fire and my first thought was I have no idea how we're going to put this out. I got about three blocks running flat out and I saw a guy on a motorcycle and we both had the same idea. He told me to jump on. He drove me down to Vesey and West.

At the corner of Vesey and West, I went up to the first Battalion Chief I saw and asked him what I should do. He said to stand fast at the manpower pool and he pointed to a spot about 100 feet away from him where there were some men gathering.

As rigs came down the West Side Highway, I kept going up to them asking if there was an extra helmet. I finally got some luck with Engine 39. They were already in the building, so I was with the chauffeur, Arthur, for that time being.

There was an explosion at the top of the Trade Center and a piece of Trade Center flew across the West Side Highway and hit the Financial Center, and Arthur went to hook up with another chauffeur to the

Financial Center. His rig was parked in the southbound lanes of the West Side Highway just north of the north pedestrian bridge.

At this point a Battalion Chief looked at me, saw 39 on my helmet and told me to move my rig in front of 1 World Trade Center to supply water to the standpipe. I said yes, sir, but I didn't want to move the rig. Even though I wasn't 39, I probably could have moved the rig. I back-pedaled, looked around the rig to see Arthur. As I was coming back to the front of the rig, the Battalion Chief, I guess he got a little impatient. He jumped in the rig and moved it himself over to in front of 1 World Trade Center.

About 30 seconds later, Arthur came back and looked at me and said where the hell is the rig? I said it's across the street. At that point the rig was essentially in a hailstorm of glass. There were bodies hitting the canopy of the Marriott at that point, I guess, right between 1 and 3 World Trade, or actually that was the canopy of 1 World Trade. He saw the situation, saw we weren't going to be able to hook up without getting hurt, so we ran across the West Side Highway, jumped in the rig, and we pulled it back across the highway to the southbound side just north of

the pedestrian bridge, as it was before, only now the rig was facing north.

When I stepped off the rig, probably about 20 after, 25 after 9:00, I ran into George Reese of 80 Engine, who was also off duty. He was responding into his second job when he came up from the subway. He had gone to the quarters at 10 and 10 and gotten gear. At that point I told Arthur that I had met someone from my company and that I was going to go with him. He said be safe, and I went off with George Reese to the command post on the loading dock between 3 and 2 World Financial Center, just underneath the Winter Garden, where Chief Ganci had his command post at the top of the ramp.

We were there for about ten minutes. George went off to talk to the Chiefs to find out what we could do. I was standing there alone. There were several companies down the ramp behind me. One of them I believe was 76 Engine, there was 211 Engine, about 50, 60 men, various states of dress.

About a couple minutes after George came back to me is when the south tower from our perspective exploded from about midway up the building. We all turned and ran into the garage. At that point I banked

down to the floor. We were trapped for a little while in there. We went off to the right. There's a big, big loading dock underneath there. You could probably fit three or four tractor-trailers with the doors closed.

We ran off into a dead end, realized it. At that point the smoke had gotten down to the floor and someone, who I found out later was the engine officer from 76 Engine, had put down a search rope. A lot of us got out through the staircase by that rope. At that point we discovered that we were inside a fire staircase with all metal doors, metal frames, opening outward, and none of us had tools. There were a lot of calls down to go get tools. But at some point there was a facilities guy there from the Financial Center who had a key. He let us out on the water side of 2 World Financial in between 2 and the Winter Garden.

At that point there was a lot of confusion. There was heavy ash in the air and on the ground. We made our way over towards the river. At that point there were a lot of guys cut up, some broken bones, a lot of civilians getting on the ferries. We helped some of the civilians get on the ferries.

At that point a debate began to rage because

the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges. We had really no concept of the damage on the east side of 2 World Trade Center at that point, and at that point many people had felt that possibly explosives had taken out 2 World Trade, and officers were gathering companies together and the officers were debating whether or not to go immediately back in or to see what was going to happen with 1 World Trade at that point. The debate ended pretty quickly because 1 World Trade came down.

At that point we ran up through Battery Park, through the north part of Battery Park, where I lost George because I stopped to pick up a civilian who had sprained her ankle and wasn't able to run. At that point, after carrying her up to Chambers Street and the water, her friends assisted her, I believe, onto a ferry at that point. But we were out of the danger of the collapse of 1 World Trade.

I made my way around to Stuyvesant High School. I still wasn't able to find George. I learned later on that he was all right. He had hooked up with another company and they had gone back and started working on Vesey near the Customs Building. I made my way with 211 Engine and a couple of other folks. We

essentially just picked gear from here and there, picked up masks, picked up gloves, picked up bottles, tools, and we worked the rest of the night. That's pretty much it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. The time now is 12:39 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110296

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK MACCHIA

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 10:53 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Frank Macchia, firefighter 1st, from Ladder 43 in the quarters of Ladder 43.

Q. Frank, just explain to us what you saw on September 11.

A. After arriving on the Westside Highway, what I know to be the collapse, after the collapse of the south tower, Ladder 43 and myself were in a position approximately between north of Vesey Street on West Street when Tower No. 1 collapsed.

At that point, once we had donned our masks and retreated to Barclay Street to allow some dust to settle, to make sure that we weren't caught in any debris, and then advanced out to the corner of West Street and Vesey Street.

At that point, myself, Firefighter Suden, Firefighter Regan were ordered by the chief to place into operation a pumper to extinguish Fire Department vehicles and to make searches of those vehicles. We did so and operated that line for approximately 30 to

45 minutes, simultaneously searching any rigs that we extinguished, mostly Fire Department vehicles.

Twelve truck was not on fire. We searched that rig, Haz-Mat, both Haz-Mat rigs, 132 truck and a few rigs that were underneath the pedestrian bridge south of Vesey Street.

Q. Were all the searches negative?

A. All the searches were negative except for a Police Department vehicle where we extricated a Police Department -- I'm guessing a plainclothes detective or plainclothes officer.

At that point, after approximately 45 minutes, myself and Firefighter Long following Lieutenant Rohan, John Colon and Firefighter Frederickson up a ladder onto the mezzanine of World Trade Center No. 6, U.S. Customs building.

We transported stretchers, a power saw and a few Stokes baskets up that ladder by orders of a chief -- at this time, I don't recall his name -- and proceeded to search in that building, and those searches were positive.

We did find a battalion chief and his aide just inside World Trade Center No. 6. At that point, myself and Firefighter Long, along with -- there were a

couple of other firemen up there, a chief. We operated with him, searched into the World Trade Center No. 6 building.

Q. The members you found, were they alive or --

A. Dead. Two -- I don't know the names. A chief that we had pulled, that was alive, who was -- looked -- appeared to be disoriented, not -- at the time didn't seem like he was injured in any major way.

We removed him from World Trade Center No. 6, took him to the north end of that mezzanine, where someone had got the bucket of 12 truck into operation, and we put him in the bucket, and he was removed to the street. I recall the name Rappe. I'm not sure if it was him, though. Maybe it's just the chief that I saw there that day, but from the back of his coat that's one of the names I remember.

We then moved into World Trade Center No. 6 with the chief. I believe that Firefighter Long can recall what battalion we were with. We operated with him for about a half an hour, searching in there.

We then left that building on our own back down onto the West Street side, helping extricate and operate more hose lines and doing other searches of rigs for the time frame, I can't recall, and then made

our way underneath that pedestrian bridge, the north bridge, underneath that north bridge after we had spent, I guess, between operating the line and searching that World Trade Center No. 6, has to have been almost two hours gone by now, listening, hearing the Ladder 6 Maydays throughout, went back down via the 12 truck basket down to the street underneath the foot bridge and tried to make our way up to where the rest of our members were operating in that separate stairwell.

And that's what we did the entire day.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thanks a lot, Frank, for all your help.

The time now is 10:58, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110297

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN NELIGAN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 12:07 p.m. I'm Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER NELIGAN: Firefighter Dean Neligan, Engine 262.

Q. This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

If you would, Dean, just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. Well, about at 8:45 that morning, the first plane hit the trade center, which came on the TV. We were all in the kitchen. We being located in Long Island City, we knew we'd be going over to Manhattan, whether to the trade center or relocation, so we more or less got ready to go.

I believe at 9:02 we got a ticket in, which sent us to the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel, so we proceeded to the Midtown Tunnel.

In the process of going to the Midtown Tunnel, the second plane hit, which we were not aware of. There was no communication on the rig of a second plane hitting the second tower.

We actually were at our staging area for what

seemed to be 30 to 40 minutes waiting for them to close down the Midtown Tunnel and the Westside Highway, apparently set up a route for us to proceed through. We were probably about a dozen rigs, all from the Long Island City area.

As we started going through -- as we actually staged there, then we heard word that the Pentagon was hit, and there was a second plane that hit the second tower.

As we started through the tunnel, is apparently when the first tower came down, because we heard a chauffeur in his rig saying there's been a collapse. He was stuck in his rig. He didn't say it was the tower that came down. I assumed it was some sort of facade that came down, not realizing it was the whole tower.

We then proceeded to go through the tunnel, made our way to the Westside Highway, one rig after the other. We parked on the Westside Highway. We proceeded down the Westside Highway towards the towers, not knowing the first tower was down.

We made it to Vesey and West and more or less paused there looking for some sort of direction, because there was no command post. There was nobody

more or less giving directions on where to go, what to do.

At that point, I looked up. I saw the second tower. I said to one of the brothers with me, that it's so smoky, you can't even see the first tower, not even knowing the first tower was down to the ground.

From our angle, the second tower was closest to us, so between the tower being behind that one and the smoke, I just assumed you couldn't see it from the smoke.

As we were staged at Vesey and West is when the second tower began to come down. At that point, I thought it was just the top of the building coming down, the antenna. Didn't make a move initially. Then everybody started making a move for safety. I proceeded to follow.

I was able to duck in behind an ESU unit, which was about 20 or 30 yards back down the Westside Highway, got behind that, was involved in the coverage and the darkness, which seemed about five to six, seven minutes, and then the area cleared.

There was a parking lot on the right of us that was about 20 cars on fire. We stretched a line off of 220's rig, which was parked right there and

proceeded to operate trying to put out the car fires because of the tremendous amount of black smoke that was coming back towards us at the Westside Highway.

We operated there for about an hour, hour-and-a-half with whatever little water we could get and no tools.

At that point, we then proceeded back to our rig, which was back at the walkway further east behind us, and then more or less we just stayed there for many hours waiting for instructions.

Q. When you were there, when the second tower came down, did you see any rigs that you could identify or any people?

A. Not offhand. There were rigs parked one after the other along the Westside Highway, and where I ducked in was near this ESU unit, police vehicle, and then 220's rig happened to be there that we could stretch a line off.

First I found my officer. Then we proceeded to find two other members from our unit, which were a little further back, and then we started operating at the -- in the lot with the car fires.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Thanks, Dean. That concludes our interview. It's 2:12 p.m.

File No. 9110298

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM VAN NAME

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 11:57, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with William VanName, firefighter 1st, from Engine 35, and the interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. William, please tell us the events of September 11 as you recall them.

A. On September 11, we were at educational day at Randall's Island. The entire company was out of service.

We were notified that a plane hit the World Trade Center, to stand by, and then the instructor came in and said another plane had hit the tower. We are on total recall. Go back to your company and man your rigs.

So we did. We got back to 35 engine's quarters. We were told to wait there for six engines to arrive. We were the staging area for six engines, some from the Bronx and some from north Manhattan. Five engines showed. We were waiting for 83 engine,

which didn't show up. They were on their way down West Street, halfway down at 50 something street. The dispatcher returned them to our quarters when they arrived here.

Then we all went in a convoy down West Street to the World Trade Center. Driving down West Street, we observed the towers, both on fire. Both were still standing. By the time we arrived down the end of West Street, around Chambers or so, one tower had collapsed. I believe it was --

Q. The south tower?

A. -- the south tower. We gave a 1084. We got up to -- we were on West Street between Vesey and Murray, where the rig was positioned. We took all our gear. Everybody that was on the rig -- there was five men on the rig and two on the back step at that time.

We manned all our gear. We went down. We started walking down West Street towards the World Trade Center. When we got to between Vesey and the pedestrian overpass, the north pedestrian overpass, we heard a fantastic rumble. Everybody looked up, and as we observed it, the second tower started to collapse.

The time frame of that, I'm not sure. It was probably between 10:10 and 10:30, somewhere around

there.

As we observed the tower falling, most people stood there and watched for a couple of seconds, and then as the cloud of smoke and the debris started coming at us, we all dropped our equipment and gear and we ran for shelter down West Street north on West Street.

We ended up in the high school on the west side. We stayed there for a few moments until we could get our company together and the lieutenant can make sure he had the roll call and everybody was present.

We started heading down towards World Trade Center again, and we had assisted and helped with EMS and helped the brothers -- police, firemen, civilians -- to the ambulances and take them out of the immediate area.

At that time we were separated. Our company was separated. I ended up staying with Firefighter Jim Powers. He was overcome by the smoke cloud and debris. He went down. He became light-headed, and he fainted. I got EMS to assist there. They treated him, and they felt he should go to the hospital.

I was with him at that time. We got on a bus. We went to St. Vincent's. He was admitted. We

stayed there for two hours under observation. He was released. We immediately came back to where our rig was positioned on West Street, and we found our company, and after that the lieutenant said we were on standby.

I was notified that our two chiefs from the 12th Battalion were missing, and -- could you stop it for a minute, please?

(Recess taken.)

A. Also while we were responding down West Street to the World Trade Center, we heard a Mayday given by, I believe, an engine company chauffeur that was trapped in the collapse inside the rig.

As we arrived at the staging area, we also saw the dust cloud and the debris that had already been from the first tower on the ground. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right, thank you very much. That's fine.

File No. 9110299

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT ROBERT DORRITIE

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 9:56 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Robert Dorritie, Engine 53, in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Robert, just tell us what you know about the events of September 11th.

A. Well, I'll just start from the beginning, I guess. We were sitting here watching the television, and we saw the first plane hit. At that time I said, oh, we'll be going. We kind of got our gear together and thrown on the rig.

The second plane hit, and I guess about two or three minutes afterwards, about 9:09, is when we had the alarm come in on the second fifth alarm. We were the fourth due engine on the second fifth alarm.

So we took off right away. We cut through the park, got over to Twelfth Avenue. Twelfth Avenue had already been closed by the New

York City Police Department. We were down in the World Trade Center -- I gave a 1084 about 9:18. So it only took us about nine minutes to get down there.

When we got down there, I went over to the command post, which was located across the street from the north tower, we reported in to the command post. At that time we were ordered to go back by a Captain Supek, I believe his name was. He orders us to go back onto West Street and to remove two rigs that were blocking West Street. So we ran back and we moved the two rigs.

We came back again to the command post. At that time we received our orders to go into the south tower. They said start making your way up on the south tower, tower number two. I turned around, looked for my men, and they were in front of who I believe was a Franciscan priest. He was giving them absolution, and they were accepting absolution from him.

I said, "Okay, guys, we've got to get going." I don't know if it was Father Judge or not; it could have been. He went towards the

north tower at that time and started walking across the street. I kind of cut him off at the pass and said, "What about me, Father?" He said, "It includes everybody. Absolution includes everybody here."

I got my guys and started walking across West Street. I guess we got about three-quarters of the way across when we were deciding which way to go into the south tower. That's when I looked up, and the tower started coming down, which at the time I said I thought it was a secondary device. I had warned the guys about secondary devices on the way down and to be careful of that.

So when I originally saw it -- and then I realized the building was coming down. We ran back across the street and into the garage, the parking garage, underneath Two World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch building, I guess. We ran in there.

Eventually there was a little confusion down there, but we found our way out the back. We sent a search line, a search rope, up from there, a couple of the companies, and we ran it

back out to the front of the building. Then I went back into the building, back through the World Trade Center.

I came out, and that's when I saw Chief Cassano there. I saw I believe it was Chief Ganci on the corner. That's when I heard the transmission of a mayday from Ladder 21. I don't know who it was. Couldn't get through. But I heard the transmission from Ladder 21.

At that time after hearing that transmission, I decided to go back, get my men, who I left back over here behind the Winter Garden area, in that parking area back there, because I thought that was a good place for that, and there was a lot of people starting to gather.

As I came back through the garage, I didn't even know I was outside for a while, it was so dark. So I came back through the garage again, got some of my guys. When I told them that there were guys out front yet and that they were making their way north and that I was afraid the pedestrian bridge was going to collapse, being that I also thought the north tower was going to collapse.

So one of the guys, Louis Giaconelli, says, "No, no, don't you go back in. I'll go back in and see if I can get anybody to come back that way." He went in there, and as guys came out of the parking garage, we directed them back around North Street onto Vesey Street. We stayed here, me and Firefighter Ed Cachia, stayed here.

Q. Here where? In the rear?

A. In the rear of the Two World Financial Center. As people came out of the Winter Garden, we directed them around here. They also were coming around on the outside. From Two World Trade Center, guys were coming from this side. I saw Captain Yakimovich, Pete came around this side, a couple other guys. I tried to get information on who was trapped and where they were trapped.

I don't really remember that much, but Louis ran into the building then to see if he could get more guys out this way.

Q. Out of the garage?

A. Out of the garage, and outside the front of the building, because a lot of guys did survive the first collapse, they didn't go into

the parking garage but they went north towards the pedestrian way.

But I was arguing to a couple people out there that I thought the best way out was this way through the rear of the World Financial Center, back through the rear and out through this way, because we had the protection of the building and also it seemed to be a safe area underneath the parking garage out in the back because it was so substantial.

I figured if this tower collapses -- this tower is going to collapse, and the best place for us to get away from this as quickly as possible, being that if we went north on West Street we would wind up at the pedestrian bridge. So I decided not to.

Louis Giaconelli is back now in Winter Garden and in that area. Myself and Eddie Cachia are back here. There was nobody else coming out. At that moment I said to Eddie, "We've got to get out of here because this building is going to come down." Within 30 seconds of me saying that, the building comes down.

Me and Eddie Cachia run back here along

the benches over here and take cover behind these benches.

Q. Near the water?

A. Yeah, near the water. We ran back here, hid behind the benches. It gets pretty cloudy, but it's not too bad back there.

After that collapse, now I'm worried about Louis Giaconelli, who I had left in the building. So we get out and we start making our way back into Two World Financial Center, and we find Louis Giaconelli bringing three or four people out. So he guided three or four people out. He also mask shared with somebody.

I said, "All right, Louis, let's get ourselves together and whoever else we have here and let's get ourselves out of harm's way." And we walked along North Street to Vesey Street, and we stayed there. Once I got all my guys together again, Kevin McGovern, Eddie Cachia, Louis Giaconelli and Mike Catalano, we all got together. I left a couple guys there.

We made our way back into the south tower after the collapse. Really I was trying to hone in on Ladder 21, since they're the only ones

I really heard. But I really couldn't get through on the radio. Every time you got some kind of mayday or you thought a mayday, it was covered up by somebody else trying to get through and you really couldn't get through. It was very confusing. I didn't like the radios at all at the time.

We just walked around on the rubble that day and tried to see what we could do. Basically that's what happened.

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. I don't think so, no.

Q. Well, thanks a lot, Robert.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 10:05, and that concludes the interview.

File No. 9110300

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN KLEE

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 10, 2001, and the time is 3:15 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Steven Klee, firefighter first from Ladder 22. We're in the quarters of Engine 76 to conduct this interview.

Q. Steve, please tell me what you remember from September 11th.

A. I remember responding. I was the chauffeur of 22. I got to the scene. I pulled in. I drove down Columbus Avenue down to 24th, then to West Side Highway. West Side Highway we took all the way down. I remember pulling in behind 25 Truck. Then I remember 2 Truck pulling in behind us.

We got off the rig, grabbed our equipment, gear, cylinders, whatever, and started walking towards the towers, initially walked past the command post and then walked back to the command post, stood at the command post I believe which was across from one for about maybe five minutes. Then the lieutenant said, "All right,

we're going in."

We walked down West Street on I guess it would be the -- that would be West; right? Yeah, west side of West Street down to I guess the south pedestrian bridge, walked underneath that across and shimmied our way -- or not shimmied. How would I describe that? Ran into the hotel.

In the hotel we were told we were going to get our orders from there. The lieutenant said take a blow, just relax, take our stuff off. We took our stuff off. Probably about maybe another five minutes after that, we got geared up and he said, "All right, we're going." I didn't ask the officer exactly where we were going. We just started walking.

We headed towards tower one or into the hotel into tower one, passed Deputy Chief Galvin on the way in. He was with somebody else. I don't really remember the chiefs. He just told us we were going to the 75th floor.

We got into tower one, made the turn into tower one started heading I guess either towards the elevators or the escalator. That's

when we heard a rumbling. I dove for a wall and it got pitch-black.

I just basically rode it out until after the sound and -- how would you describe that one? After the (inaudible) stopped. I don't know what the heck happened then, how best to describe it. I got up. I thought I was by myself, and I then just started calling out for the rest of the company.

I found the four other guys. We got out towards the entrance of one onto West Street. We couldn't find the lieutenant, so I told the four of them if they go outside I'll go back in and look for the lieutenant.

Four of the guys went out. I came back in to look for the lieutenant. I was searching for him. I was trying to get him on the radio. I couldn't get anybody on the radio. I kept going back and forth. I was grabbing civilians, bringing them to the front, going back in, looking around, bringing civilians back out.

I was bringing some civilians out, and that's when debris started falling and hitting the ground. I brought them back in, gave an

urgent, saying I need help in getting the civilians out, because I couldn't go out the hotel. There was no hotel entrance anymore. I couldn't go out through the food mall or whatever because that was completely caved in.

I was giving an urgent. Somebody answered me. I told them what it was, and then they didn't answer, they didn't come back. All of a sudden I went back to the main entrance and I saw a bunch of firemen. So I figured they came in to help me, but it wasn't that. They were coming from upstairs.

I asked did they see my lieutenant. They said no. That company I remember was actually 7 Engine, I believe. They were coming down. I think they were missing their control man at the time.

I searched for the lieutenant, looked under the debris and everything, couldn't find him. I said he must be out because I should have been able to see him.

That's when I got out. I believe I remember seeing Feehan. I believe he was by the entrance of one. I walked across the street to a

command post, which when I got there, there really was nobody there anymore.

I remember talking to a four-star chief, telling him what happened. All he kept telling me was we're going north, we're going north. I said, "I can't find my lieutenant. I'm 22 chauffeur." I said, "I can't find my lieutenant." He said, "We're going north. I'm sending everybody north." So I said all right.

That's when I left and I started walking up the street, trying to find the rendezvous or whatever what the heck would you call it? What do you call it?

Q. The staging area?

A. Staging area. I went up there. I spoke to a couple of chiefs up on West Side Highway and West Street. They said, yeah, guys are going to the water.

So I went back down to Vesey, tried to get to the water. I guess I got behind the American Express building. That's when one came down. After everything calmed down from that and I finally made it to the water, talked to the field comm., told him who I was missing. Our can

man showed up there. So then I only had to find four more guys.

I asked them have you seen the lieutenant? I went to West Street. I walked up. That's basically where I saw the rest of our guys there.

Q. Before the second tower came down, did you notice anything, a sign that it might be coming down or anything like that or did you hear anybody give any warning on the radios or anything like that?

A. No, I was just trying to find out -- no, there was no -- it was still dusty out there, and you really couldn't see. I didn't even realize that two came down. I thought another bomb or a plane hit the building. That's what I thought it was. When I got out, debris and paper was all over. Like I said, I didn't realize what happened until after one came down and I put together what happened when we were in one lobby.

Q. Okay. That's it.

A. I think so, yeah. Quick and easy.

Q. Thank you, Steve. I appreciate your cooperation.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 3:24 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110301

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN McGOVERN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 10:24 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City department Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Kevin McGovern, firefighter first from Engine 53, in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Kevin, please tell us the events of September 11th as you remember them.

A. I was working my second day tour. We were in the kitchen, and we saw the first plane, watching TV. Of course the news came on that a plane had hit one of the towers of the World Trade Center. So we were watching TV, monitoring the radio.

Then there was another explosion in the other tower. That's when we got called down there. It was the second fifth alarm when the second plane hit, and we got sent down to the Trade Center. We were assigned to tower two, which was the south tower of the World Trade Center.

We got down there pretty fast. It must have taken only ten minutes to get there. Once we got to the West Side Highway, it was kind of

empty and we just flew right down there. We parked the rig on West Street approximately between Murray and Vesey.

Then we walked down to where the command post was set up, which was in front of an underground garage entrance in front of Two World Financial Center. So we reported in to the command post on West Street and kind of just waited there, awaiting our orders.

We were just standing there watching people jump out of the -- we were opposite the north tower, so we just kind of stood there. There was a lot of jumpers coming from the north tower on the West Street side.

I really don't know how long we were there, maybe ten minutes. To be honest with you, I couldn't even recall what other companies were around us, but there were several other companies with us, mostly engine companies.

With all the jumpers and stuff, I just put my head down and stopped watching the jumpers. I waited there, waiting to see what they were going to do with us.

A chief came over to my lieutenant,

Lieutenant Dorritie, and told us to move some rigs to make a lane for ambulances coming south on West Street. He wanted us to go back north on West Street, back towards where we had our rigs, and just ensure that there was a lane for ambulances to get down West Street.

So he said leave all our equipment there at the command post, which we did. We left our hoses, took our masks off, and walked north on West Street. We only had needed to move I think two rigs, because they were blocking the lane. It really didn't take long. It took maybe 15 minutes to take care of that. We made the lane for the ambulances, and then we headed back towards the command post.

We were walking south on West Street back to the command post. Like I said, I had my head down again. All of a sudden I heard like a tremendous thunder. I looked up, and all of a sudden people were just running towards me. I looked up and, sure enough, the south tower was collapsing. It was like a big, huge wave coming at us.

At this point we were right before the

command post. I was only a few yards in front of the command post, but there was a fence between the area for the Winter Garden atrium and where the command post was. Lieutenant Dorritie was in front of me and two firefighters, Firefighter Cachia and Firefighter Giaconelli, were in front of me. Two other firefighters from my company were behind me, Firefighter Catalano and Firefighter Schofield. They were two new guys on rotation in the firehouse.

When I saw the thing collapse and people running towards me, I just turned and looked for the quickest place to get cover. Initially I thought of ducking under the pedestrian bridge that goes over West Street on the north side, but I decided that wasn't going to be safe.

So I just ran right into the Winter Garden atrium. A lot of people were running in that way. So I kind of just ran in there. I ran inside and realized it was an atrium, so I had to get out of there in case some debris had come through the atrium.

So we went through the atrium and made

a right, once we got inside which there was -- so now we're heading north within this building. There was an exit that led out to Vesey Street. This is where I ran into Firefighter Catalano, who is one of the guys that was walking behind me, and I was asking him did he see Firefighter Schofield. He said no. I was worried about Schofield.

We came out onto Vesey Street, and we were walking around Vesey Street. A bunch of other firemen, a bunch of civilians had gone the same route, through the Winter Garden and made a right and north onto Vesey Street.

So there were a bunch of ambulances lined up on Vesey Street, and me and Mike were walking west of Vesey, away from the cloud on West Street, and we noticed Schofield in one of the ambulances.

We found out how he was doing. He was hyperventilating. He was taking oxygen inside the ambulance. We stayed with him for a while, made sure he was all right. He said he was feeling better after he took some oxygen. He said he was going to come with us. So he got out

of the ambulance and walked with us west on Vesey.

We came out onto North End Avenue. Here I ran into another fireman that was covered in soot, and we stayed with him. He was choking on I guess the dust and stuff. He almost sounded like a cat with a hairball. He was just trying to get the stuff out, clear his own throat. I stayed with him and was encouraging him to cough. He was able to get some air, he was saying, but he was trying to get this stuff out of his throat.

We stayed with him, and we led him to an ambulance on North End Avenue. I told him to try and get some oxygen. We kind of left him with an ambulance on North End Avenue.

There was another ambulance there. There was an EMT inside the ambulance, and she was really kind of freaking out. She was very emotional. We stayed with her, calmed her down, made sure she got some oxygen.

There was a big cloud on West Street, so we decided to go north on North End Avenue and go up a block and around. We were going to walk

back down West Street, approach it from the north. So we went up North End Avenue and made a right on Murray street.

I was with the two rotation guys, Mike Catalano and Dan Schofield. They were pretty shook up. Dan was still kind of breathing heavy and hyperventilating a little bit. He said he needed to call his wife. He called his wife. We ended up near Stuyvesant High School. I think that's on Murray Street. So he made a call.

I said, "Okay, I'm going to go back down." They were kind of hesitant, so I said, "Look, you guys stay up here at Stuyvesant High School. I'm going to head back down."

I started walking south on West Street again. I probably got just before Vesey Street when the north tower collapsed. Again, I just turned around and looked to see a place where I could get some cover. There was a big open lot between Murray and Vesey, so that was all wide open.

So I ran north back up towards Stuyvesant High School. Basically I got to the high school just as the cloud hit. I went inside

the high school. I was in there only about a minute, kind of let the cloud pass, gave it about a minute.

I didn't run into the two firemen, Catalano and Schofield, again. I assumed they were safe inside the high school, Stuyvesant High School, because that's where I had left them, right outside. I just assumed they got some cover inside, which they did, I found out later.

So I stayed in the high school about a minute, let the cloud pass, the initial cloud. I left the high school. I went back onto West Street, started walking south again. There was a big cloud out there. Everything was covered in dust. I just headed south on West Street again through all this debris, past all the rigs. I just made my way south again back towards the site, back towards the Trade Center.

There wasn't really a lot of people around. It was kind of eerie. It was almost like a ghost town with the cloud and everything. I guess I got to Vesey Street and I ran into some other guys. I ran into a guy from 43 Truck. He said that he had seen my lieutenant on Vesey,

towards the water, towards North End Avenue.

So I walked up there. I wanted to let my officer know. We had tried earlier to get through on the radio to notify my officer that we were all together, me and the two other guys, and that we were safe up on North End Avenue, but we couldn't get through.

Like I said, one of the guys from 43 Truck said my officer was out on Vesey Street. Somebody had to move that rig, which was actually a pretty good move. From where the rig was on West Street, somebody had taken it down Vesey all the way down to the water.

Q. That was your rig?

A. Yeah, our rig.

By the time I got down there, I looked for my officer, who I ended up running into, to let him know we were all safe. I let him know the two other guys were up by Stuyvesant High School, they were okay. So we regrouped by where our rig was, by the water on Vesey Street.

I think it was the marine unit, Firefighter, that had pulled up to a pier there and stretched a line to feed our rig with water.

So we regrouped there.

I think at that point -- a lot of this is murky. Sometimes I think I don't know what came first. I think at that point we went up North End Avenue. We went up to Stuyvesant High School to hook up with the two other guys. That's basically where a staging area was starting to form up there, on West Street.

So myself, the lieutenant, the two other guys that the lieutenant was with, I had found out that they had ran through the garage where the command post was. Since we were walking behind them, our quickest route was to run through the Winter Garden. So we got separated that way.

Like I said, there was this fence there between the Winter Garden and where the garage was. They were south of the fence, so they ran through the garage. We were north of the fence, so our best route was through the Winter Garden. That's how we got separated.

As I said, I regrouped with the lieutenant and the two guys that ran through the garage on Vesey near where our rig was. We

walked up to Stuyvesant, hooked up with the other guys, stayed at the staging area for a while.

Basically we just worked our way south again on West Street. I think we went back to the rig once and then we walked over to the site and started a search at that point.

We were searching around the debris field that ended up on West Street opposite the north tower. We were searching around in there. At that time Seven World Trade Center was burning and was in danger of collapsing. After a while the lieutenant said, "Let's move, let's get out of here, let's take a break."

Actually I think at that point just as we were leaving, guys -- I don't know who it was. I guess it was a chief was saying clear the area, because they were worried about number Seven World Trade Center coming down and burying guys who were digging.

So we basically went back to the rig, because they were clearing that area out. It took about three hours for Seven World Trade Center to actually come down. So we were off to the side.

There was a whole bunch of firemen on Vesey Street, and that's where we were, on Vesey, just waiting to go back in and start searching again. But that didn't come for a few hours. It didn't come until after Seven World Trade Center had come down.

Then we went back, did a little more searching, and then we ended up taking up. I think we took up around 9, 9:30 at night and caught a ride back to the firehouse.

Q. Did you hear any maydays before the collapse or right after the collapse, either collapse?

A. Not really. I didn't have a radio. Like I said, everything was kind of foggy. It was kind of a weird scene. So there may have been maydays. Probably not having a radio I didn't take notice of them. I didn't hear any radio traffic at all, basically.

Q. Is there anything else?

A. No, that's it.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 10:42, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110302

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BOERI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 2:05 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Boeri of Engine 44.

Q. Richard, just explain in your own words what happened on September 11th.

A. I was minimum manning that day, overtime. At 9:08 the call came in. I was control man. We ended up going out of quarters, going down Second Avenue down to about 59th Street, across the West Side Highway and down.

I believe we parked the rig approximately, I think it was Murray Street or Barclay and West, and we proceeded to go down to the command post, which was I believe across from One World Trade Center or the north tower.

I think we were there for about five minutes. They said, "Put your gear down. You're going to walk up about 80 flights of stairs," because the elevators were out. So we put our masks down, rollups and everything.

I think we saw like 18 people jump.

Then one of the officers there said, "Turn around, concentrate on who you can save. You can't save those people anymore." I don't recall who that was.

There was a chaplain behind us. It wasn't Father Judge, but one of the guys knew him. He said a little prayer for us.

So I went through the guys from there. I saw the chief's aide, and I talked to him for a little bit. It had to be about 20 minutes later when they sent us down to approximately Cedar Street and West Street. They were there, two or three rigs blocking the West Side Highway coming from the south. So we were sent with 53 Engine to move those rigs out of the way.

Myself, my whole company, Matt Shannon, Bobby Reeg, the covering officer, and Eddie Kennedy proceeded to walk down. Looking over, I saw 65 Engine hooked up to the hotel, I believe, or the south tower. I don't remember which one because there's a high pressure pump.

The officer saw there were several small fires at the foot of the pedestrian bridge right there at Liberty and West. So our initial

thing was myself and Eddie Kennedy would move the rig away from West Street to let the companies come up from the south. Also they told us to bring ambulances up Washington Street, which is on the south side of the south tower there.

Bobby Reeg, the nozzle man, he was checking rigs up the West Side Highway for an extinguisher for the car fire along with Matt Shannon. So they were looking I guess -- right in front of the Vista Hotel.

We had our backs to the tower and under that pedestrian bridge walking south, myself, Eddie Kennedy and the officer, when you heard the crackling. You looked up and you saw the one floor explode on itself and the top start to slide.

At that point Eddie just told me to run, and we just dropped everything and ran south towards Albany Street. Now, we ran I guess on the east side of West Side Highway -- we ran across to -- the east side, we ran to the west side of that highway, down towards Albany.

At the southwest corner there were a few parked cars. I saw Eddie Kennedy lose his

helmet and dive under a car. I saw a building -- I believe it's at the corner of West and Albany -- and I was going to try to go for the building.

Once all the debris and everything caught up, I was pushed over a four foot fence. The next thing, I woke up, I was spitting everything out of my mouth, and it was just black, silent.

When I came to, I heard a civilian yelling on my left. So I found my helmet next to me, picked myself up. I found the civilian, who was over by the building. Make it Park Place, I guess? I can't tell what building that is. Anyway, it's right on Albany and West Street.

So I walked the civilian back. I walked back to where my company was. Where I last knew, Albany and West, where I found the officer and Eddie Kennedy. I passed the civilian off to someone else who was there.

I was with Eddie Kennedy and the officer when Dr. Kelly showed up, her and another guy I believe from 4 Truck, I want to say. I'm not sure. I had cut my head. My whole face was

full of blood. I was talking to them. I was okay.

We were trying to radio Matt Shannon, who was our backup man. He had the radio. He said he knew where Bobby Reeg was, because Matt was just going for the river up by the marina there.

Dr. Kelly said, "Come with me. We'll wash you up. You're hurt." So I told the officer I'm going with him, which we proceeded to go to Albany Street, I guess, half a block to a parking garage, which is in the Hudson View West, in the Hudson Tower here.

In there they had a guy on the back board, Kevin Shea, who I guess he was hurt before the collapse because there was something -- they had him on a back board and everything.

I was there when they went to try to find a gurney or stretcher to get him to an ambulance, because they told us the whole southern section you couldn't get to an ambulance or anything.

I was there for a while with him, when you heard the rumbling again. That's when the

north tower came down. We stayed in the garage. There was another chief there. He covered Kevin Shea when all the dust came into the whole garage, all the debris and everything, all the dust didn't get into his spot because he was all strapped down. He had a dislocated hip or something. He kept repeating the same questions about 15 times over and over.

We knew we had to get him out. We got to 4 Truck on I guess it was West End Avenue over here one block west of West Side Highway. They got an ambulance, which we threw him in the ambulance and we drove straight toward West Street.

(Interruption.)

A. So we got the ambulance, and we drove straight west on Albany Street all the way to the river. We broke through the chain fence on the esplanade there where the police boat pulled up. At that point is where we proceeded to hand Kevin over on the back board over the side railing and into a police boat.

A few minutes later I ended up going on a police boat also across to Jersey to Hoboken,

where I was there until about 11:00 at night because they wouldn't let us back. While we were there, we made phone calls back and found out where everybody was from our point of view.

In general that's it.

Q. Thank you very much, Rich.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:12, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 911303

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-D RALPH RAMOS

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MS. BASTEDENBECK: December 12, 2001. The time now is 1556 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department. I'm at EMS Battalion 4 conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and your current unit.

A. My name is Ralph Ramos, EMT-D, assigned to 01 Charlie Tour 2, Battalion 4.

Q. MR. RAMOS, I would ask you if you can recount the events of September 11, 2001. Were you working that day?

A. Yes, I was working. I started at 0600 that morning. I was on my way back to my 89, which is on Duane and Church Street. We were returning back there from Battalion 4 and we were going up, I believe it's Pearl Street, and my partner Alex Loutsky and I, we witnessed the first plane hit the first tower. Saw it flying low and we thought, that plane's flying kind of low, and then it hit the building and we went over the radio and we told central that we had witnessed a plane hitting the building, and at first she didn't believe us, but then other units started saying they saw the same thing and then we proceeded straight over to the

Trade Center.

We went down West Street and parked at West and Liberty. There was -- Lieutenant D'Avila was there. There were several other units already on the scene and there was a wave of people running out of the building, running towards us. Stopped like about maybe 4 people, put them into our vehicle and I was treating them and in the process of doing that, the second plane hit right over top of us and all the debris started falling down on top of us.

So we got in our vehicle. At that time everybody left the vehicle and ran down West Street. Everybody started running in different directions. We got into our vehicle and we followed Lieutenant D'Avila around to the east side of the building, which was Church Street and Dey Street and we parked on that corner there. He parked in front of us.

On that side people were running out also, so we set up a triage and treatment in front of the hotel Millennium, which is right cross the street from them and we started treating patients as they were coming out. We stayed there for a while. Lieutenant D'Avila lost his voice, so he had asked me to stay next to him to sort of be his voice as far as giving the orders.

We were treating people and triaging and trying to send people out from that location. The vehicle, my vehicle, 219, stayed on the corner of Church and Dey, so see if they needed that for transport. It stayed there. In the process of treating and organizing the people getting out of there, all of a sudden we heard the rumble of the first tower, and it was just, you know, really just chaotic on the corner that we were at. We treated as many people as we could and got a lot of the people out of there via private ambulances and Fire Department ambulances that were on the scene.

When the first tower started coming down, I got separated from Lieutenant D'Avila and my partner Alex. I started running towards -- we were on the corner close to Dey Street and Fulton Street, so I started running towards Fulton Street to try to get out of harms way, but by that time it was too late, because the building had came down. The dust cloud covered me and I couldn't see and I couldn't breathe.

Q. Do you know where you were then?

A. At that moment, at first the panic, I got disoriented from the panic, but I have worked this area for about a year and my unit has always been in that

area. I sort of closed my eyes and then made a map in my head of what I last saw and then using that as a guide in my head and feeling with my hands, I was able to find the building and just like patted alongside of the building until I got down Fulton Street.

I made it as far as Broadway and I went into the bank that's on the corner, the left hand side of Fulton and Broadway. I think it's a Chase bank. I made it into the lobby of that building. Helped some people who were in there who had stuff in their eyes and stuff like that. Pouring water on it, get the dirt out of their eyes, like that. Tried to calm some people down. People who were in that building were trying to leave that building. You couldn't see outside.

So I was trying to keep them -- blocking the doors, trying to keep them inside. It was me and another fireman, it was just us two that made it into that building. We kept everybody inside, then I ran into one of the EMS doctors, Fire Department doctors. I forgot his name. We ran into him and he said you know, just try to take care of as many people as you can in here, just flushing their eyes and stuff like that.

Did that and then it cleared up enough outside, I realized that I left -- my partner was missing and Lieutenant D'Avila was missing. I was getting ready to head out and I ran into Lieutenant D'Avila. He had made it to the bank as well. We went back down Fulton Street back to the front of the building to look for my partner.

So Lieutenant Melarango, who was there also, and Amy, Lieutenant Monroe. We went down to try to find them and see how many people we could help. We went back down and it was like a ghost town down there. We didn't see anybody, people laying around and stuff, but as far as walking around, there really wasn't anybody.

My vehicle exploded. I was heading over to my vehicle to get -- to use the radio, because I had lost my HIP radio. I went inside my vehicle to get on my vehicle radio, but by the time I went over there, the vehicle exploded. Then we just continued to look around see, you know, how many people we could find. It is a little bit of a blur. I don't recall how many people we might have run into.

At that time, then, in the process of doing that, we heard another loud rumble and it was the

second tower coming down. We both started -- you know, we hugged, locked arms. Both started running, but we didn't make it too far. Again, we got covered with the cloud and everything got black again. We couldn't breathe and we were panicking. Again, I closed my eyes and mapped my way out of there and made it to a Subway sandwich shop that's on Fulton Street and banged on the glass. They didn't want to let us in. We saw people in the back. I was waiting for someone to open the door, we were banging on the glass. We couldn't breathe any more. Everything was fading fast. Finally one of the people came and opened the door and we went in.

There was only about 12 people in the store. They were all panicking and stuff like that. When they saw us, they kind of calmed down. We wet towels and wrapped them around their heads and we got them out of the store down Fulton Street towards New York downtown hospital to get them out of there.

Then after that, I ran into a couple of Beekman, the New York downtown medics. Two Beekman medics. I can't recall. I can't recall. I stuck with Lieutenant D'Avila.

We got supplies and took it over to 49 Fulton

Street, where they had set up a little triage area also. We took supplies from the hospital and brought them over there. From there we went to West and Chambers to the high school. They had set up --

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Yes. We went over there. Ran into a lot of my friends. (inaudible), who was from this Battalion, but transferred out. I think I saw Thomas Monahan, Tommy Monahan, who was from this Battalion. I saw -- I don't know his first name. I know his last name is Hayden and his Father is a Chief of the fire suppression side. I saw him. I saw Allan Cruz from this Battalion. He does the LSU from this Battalion.

Q. Did you ever reunite with your partner?

A. No, actually. We had gotten separated, so the whole time he was thinking I was dead and I was thinking he was dead. Looking for him though, (inaudible), and the mass of all the people who were there, and all those people who responded. All those who were told to stay in the high school until they needed them. Looking through faces, trying to see him and I didn't see him for a long time. It wasn't until the next day that I saw him.

Q. Did you ever get word that day that he was

okay?

A. No, not that day.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. I looked through the whole entire high school to see if he made it or not. I stayed over there at the high school for a while, until, I think about 9 o'clock at night and then I couldn't go any more, because it was just too overwhelming for me and I passed out and I woke up in New York downtown hospital. Got treated for exhaustion and smoke inhalation and stuff.

Q. Do you know how you got there?

A. I remember telling Lieutenant D'Avila that I wasn't feeling right and then they started walking me over towards the MERV and I just sort of woke up in the emergency room.

Q. Beekman?

A. Beekman, yes. They treated me there and then they released me. I went home, I walked back to the Battalion first to take my stuff and leave it in the locker, my uniform, and put my street clothes back on. I walked from New York downtown back here to the Battalion.

Then I saw my friend, (inaudible), was here.

I saw Orlando Martinez, Frank Puma. Who else? I think I saw Rick Abono, Rick Abono was here also, I believe.

Q. Are these people that work at your Battalion?

A. Yes.

Q. They were all working that day?

A. Yes. They were all people from this Battalion. Some of them responded in from home. They came in. I saw Gregory Zeek, who came in. He was on AL. He had like -- was on vacation. He came back in. He was here. He was my third partner from my unit. It was me, Al Loutsky and Gregory Zeek, all on one Charlie and Zeek was on vacation. Me and Al were working together that day.

I saw Zeek, who was off. He was here. I really can't recall, you know. They were glad to see me and I was glad to see them. But as far as specific faces and names, I really, I guess I'm trying to push it back into my head so much, instead, it's starting to become very vague for me.

I left work and I went home. From there went home. I came back to work the next day at 11 in the morning.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to the day, anything that strikes you or --

A. No. Just the terror of -- from almost having died twice. It was like, you know, I was never one to be afraid of dying and then it happened, almost happened once and I made it out of there and I was like glad I made it out. It was enough to put an impression on me and then to go through it again so quickly afterwards. So like the first time it put an impression on me and the second time is seared it into my head, you know.

So that is about it that I can think of. I'm glad that I'm here, that I was able to make it out.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes my interview with EMT Ramos. The time now is 1610 hours. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110304

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NICOLE FERRELL

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13th, 2001. The time is 0720 hours. My name is Tom McCourt, New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview at Battalion 45, EMS Command, in regards to the World Trade Center attack. Being interviewed is --

EMT FERRELL: Nicole Ferrell.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: -- EMT Nicole Ferrell.

Q. Could you please give me the details of your experiences on September 11th, 2001, at the World Trade Center?

A. When the first plane had hit, we were still parked in our area and I was sitting on Queens Boulevard and Greenpoint.

Q. What unit were you assigned to?

A. 49 Boy.

Q. 49 Boy. Okay.

A. When we heard that the plane went into the first building, we went and drove closer to the water, which was near the 108th Precinct on 50th Avenue and 5th Street, to get a better look. So we drove down and we saw that it was a fire and we heard units being dispatched to it, which we were not assigned at the time.

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Jeff Warner. We ended up going to another job instead and made that a 98. Then after we left that job, we went back to our unit to watch what was going on. We saw that it was still burning and we just waited to see if we were going get assigned to it. After a while my partner picked up the radio and kind of got us assigned to the job by asking the dispatcher did he need more people over there and they sent us.

On our way there, the first tower, which was the south tower, was the one that collapsed while we were en route. Then, when we got to -- what I believe is we drove down Broadway and we made a left. When I got to Liberty, right over here, is when the next tower collapsed, right after. After that we ran with all the people and we took the ambulance and we drove across Liberty again, went up I believe it was Church.

Q. When you got down there originally on Liberty, did you see anybody? The building hadn't collapsed at that point, right?

A. When I just pulled up to Liberty, we had just pulled up, just got out, and there was still debris flying around and no sooner than we got out is when the other tower came down.

Q. Okay.

A. No sooner. So we were out of there because we had parked over here. So then we came down Liberty and we went up, I believe, Church and went to this side instead, which was, I think, Vesey and Church, and we were standing in front of building 5, across from the post office. Then, from there I told him let's go up West Street. So we went up to West and I believe Murray and left the ambulance and walked back down over here. After a while, just things started happening because we couldn't find anybody.

Q. You didn't come in contact with anybody, any supervisors or anybody from your command or anybody?

A. No. Not at all. Because by the time we got over here, everybody was like running in every direction. You couldn't barely see at all. It was like snow, the stuff was so heavy, and people were just running and screaming and stuff like that. Some cars were on fire and I remember some people were choking and stuff and running towards there but they didn't want to be treated and they kept going.

Q. Did you treat any patients at all?

A. Actually, we attempted to treat a firefighter and he didn't want to be treated. But what we did was

he said he wanted to be driven back to another area where I guess they were doing like staging or something like that. So I told him that we would drive him around to where the MERV is and maybe he can reconnect with some of the other Fire Department resources that were over here somewhere.

Q. So you moved from Church and Vesey?

A. Yes. We moved from Church and Vesey and we went up to -- let's see. If I'm not mistaken, I was going up West Street, because we actually just went, you know, we did an actual triangle just about and went up West Street and then cut across to meet everybody else somewhere over here, I believe. I think it was on West Street, that's where everybody was, and I was at the first MERV right over there.

Q. So it was West and Murray?

A. Yes. That's where we were.

Prior to us going to West and Murray with the fireman, we were right over -- I believe it was either 5 or 7. See, my memory is a little bad because I don't know. I'm having a little hard time with this. But we went (inaudible) -- no. You know what? It was 7. Now I remember. It was 7 because we went over here to West Street, like I said, and I stopped here at Barclay and

I saw the firefighter. There were people screaming out of one of these two buildings over here saying they couldn't get out, and my partner took one straggler fireman, the one that we had with us, and was trying to break the door because the door obviously had shifted or something. They couldn't get the door open.

Q. That was 7 World Trade Center?

A. I believe it was 7. Maybe it was 5. It was at the back end of it because I do remember the telephone company. So I think it was the back end of 7, I think right over here at that point, and they couldn't get out. Then I had ran down the block and I flagged a ladder company and they brought the ladder, which they had like a vestibule that you couldn't like really reach the people because the ladder wouldn't reach. So they went and got other resources, they went inside the building, and I told my partner that it wasn't safe and that we need to go because everything around us was like falling apart. So we got back in the ambulance. Like I said, I had the firefighter with me who was still injured at the time.

Q. Do you know who that was? Do you remember?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Do you remember any company or was he --

A. No. My partner probably would remember more than I could because everything was a mess. People were grabbing other people's coats and helmets. So I honestly don't know where he was from. All I know is that he was having a problem with his eyes and stuff like that, like us. He was complaining he couldn't see and stuff like that. But he couldn't find the rest of his company.

So that was it. Then we went to over here to the MERV, in that area over there, and we had our bus parked near the school. Yes, right over here. We parked the bus down here and we walked to where everybody else was.

Q. That was on Murray and West?

A. Yes, I believe it was Murray and West. Wherever the college is? We were across the street from there and the pedestrian walkway was in front of us. I remember looking directly at it. I had went into an area where they had a whole bunch of EMTs and paramedics that were supposed to be congregating inside the auditorium in which they piled us all in. They closed one door and left the other one open. It was conducted by Lieutenant Kathy Fuchs. She told us all to gather all our equipment, gather together and we're

going to go out in groups of four or five, which would be like two paramedics and two EMTs or whatever.

About a few minutes after that, we all piled in there and stuff, the lights went out, we lost power. She closed the door and locked us all in there and she ran. So we started trampling each other. So everybody started running all over each other. People were getting hurt and stuff. Finally a police officer came and opened the door for us because he heard us all screaming in there for about 15 minutes. We were in complete darkness.

We came out and she told us to sit along -- let's see. I believe it's like a water area over here. It's like River Terrace. She told us to move down, I believe, over here and pile over here instead. When I saw that her plan wasn't working, I abandoned ship and I went to go stay with my Captain and Chief Nigro across from the MERV. I was there for a good part of the evening, but I was -- let's see. The walkway came down. 1 and 2 had already fell. I believe it was either 7 -- but 7 was empty at the time, when it came down, that I remember. We had just missed the collapse of 7 because me and my partner moved away. Then we were in the MERV, and after the MERV, we

stayed there for a few hours or so and we rode around with a Cushman vehicle and we rode around the area where the site was, they let us ride around, all through here, all around here, where all the collapses were, and that's basically it.

Then we went and made a makeshift hospital at an apartment building which was -- this part is going to be difficult because I'm not really sure exactly where this building was.

Q. Okay. That's all right.

A. But there was an apartment building. It looked like a hotel but it wasn't a hotel and they made it -- maybe it was the Millenium. It could have been the Millenium. I'm not really sure because there was just too much going on. But they made a makeshift hospital over there. They made us all set out like IVs and stuff like that and water and stuff, and we all stayed there for a good part of the night freezing to death and we started getting sick. So Lieutenant Hadala told us that we were all going to move from that location because it was freezing and it was dirty and we were filthy and we all were starting to get sick and we couldn't breathe.

So we jumped into the MERV and moved closer

up to Vesey Street, and I came back to look for my ambulance, which was supposed to be parked over here at West and somewhere, Murray or something, and they took my ambulance away. They took all my equipment away, they took all my personal stuff away, and my stuff was stolen. So I went to go with the gang to ask one of the supervisors where all my stuff was, and they said that they took our ambulance away because they thought that we had passed away. So they took our truck to Bureau of Training, and we stayed here for the rest of the night stranded until we found somebody to take us back. We were there for a total of, I believe, 28 hours, 30 hours, and we came back to the station.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't see any EMTs or paramedics or anything prior to them passing that were listed or (inaudible). As far as firefighters, I have no idea. I don't know who I saw or what. It was total chaos. So that was it.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: Okay. The time now is 7:30. That concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110305

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PATRICK RICHIUSA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13, 2001. The time is 0742 hours. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at EMS Command, Battalion 45. I'm currently interviewing --

EMT RICHIUSA: Patrick Richiusa.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: -- that's EMT Patrick Richiusa from Battalion 45.

Q. EMT Richiusa, can you please tell me the events that transpired on September 11th, 2001, from your perspective, please?

A. Okay. We left the station to go to our 89, and about 8:45 in the morning we noticed smoke coming from one of the towers, my partner and I, Laura Siebuhr. So we moved our position to a better location to see if maybe it was just a smokestack of a building in front that was just from the angle. It turns out that it was the tower that was on fire. So I asked the dispatcher over the air and --

Q. Where were you sitting at this point?

A. Metropolitan and Forest Avenue. We moved to a better position and from there you could see the actual tower was on fire. So I asked the dispatcher over the air, and there was silence for about a minute,

and then the tones went off and they said a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. So they started sending units from all over the place and I was assigned. I went over the 59th Street bridge. I forget exactly what route I took. I picked up two priests on the way once I had crossed the bridge into Manhattan because they asked if we were going and I figured they were going to be needed if a plane crashed into the Trade Center.

So I came across Vesey to West. That's where staging was. I arrived there. I let the two priests out. I never saw them again. I found the first Lieutenant from EMS that I saw and he told me to go over to triage, which was right by 3 Financial.

Q. Do you remember what Lieutenant that was? Do you have any idea?

A. I have no idea. There was a group. It was a couple Lieutenants and I believe one Captain. I don't recall any one of their faces.

Q. Okay.

A. From there I went over to triage. There was about 15 people all laying around on the floor there, nurses, doctors, private ambulances, Fire Department ambulances, volunteer ambulances from Hatzolah. I

believe Forest Hills was also there.

Q. What was the status of the towers then?

A. They were still standing. This was about five minutes before the second plane hit and nobody had known it was a terrorist attack. So it was just -- we positioned the furthest point from Trade Center 2, which was the one first to get hit. So we went over and then the private ambulances started to try to take patients away, but I had no names and nothing else. So I went over to a Lieutenant and a Captain and I asked them and he put me in charge. So I went back and -- he told me nobody leaves until you say so, and I said okay, until you get names and all the other information.

So I went back, stopped the ambulances. There was a city bus. Everybody was walking wounded. So I figured we could just take all 15 people in one shot in the city bus, and I was going back to ask the Lieutenant when the second plane hit. It was a loud thunder noise and you looked up and all the buildings on the opposite side of the tower's windows were shaking. So somebody started yelling run, so my partner and I both ran with all the people. The patients all got up and ran. We all ran towards the

Hudson, down West towards -- I mean Vesey. Sorry. I got that all backwards. Towards Vesey, towards the Hudson. When we arrived at, I guess, North End Avenue, that's when all that debris fell and it all -- basically, there was nowhere else to run, so you got enveloped by the cloud of smoke and debris. After that settled, there was a little chaos. Nobody was quite sure what happened.

Q. That was the debris from the --

A. The plane actually crashing.

Q. The plane?

A. Yes. This was the actual when it blew out the 80 something floors.

Q. Okay.

A. That was the plane, the umbrella, you know, it looked like to me.

Q. So the debris went that far, up to the river?

A. It covered right up to the Hudson. I actually considered swimming the Hudson River because there was nowhere else left to run.

Then the debris settled and there was a little chaos and nobody was really quite sure what happened because all the vehicles were parked down the block and a lot of equipment was down the block. Some

of the vehicles had been positioned on North End, I guess, from other areas, or maybe they were told afterwards, after the second plane hit, where to go. There was a large crowd of people. I don't know where they all came from. I guess it was just from all over that general area. People were sharing cell phones to see if they could call. There were no signals, nothing else like that. Afterwards I saw Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Gombo.

Oh, prior to that I saw Bobby Abril, Carlos Lillo's partner, and my partner was a little nervous of the situation, she's new on the job, and I asked Bobby to stay with my partner, and he said, well, Carlos is down the block. I said, all right, I'll go get Carlos, you stay here, and I told Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Gombo that I was going to go down there and get Carlos and bring everybody else back up. He said, all right, tell them to bring all the equipment with them.

So on the way down the block, by 3 Financial, there was still some guys standing there. So I told them bring all the equipment back up the block because we're going to put staging up there now at -- I don't even know what building that was there.

Q. At Vesey and North End?

A. At Vesey and North End, yes. I think that was a hotel or something, in the lobby of there. So you had people coming up the block as I was going down the block, firemen, but you couldn't really recognize anybody because everybody was covered with the white powder, you know, you couldn't really see faces or anything else like that. There was nothing distinguishable about anybody. That's when I basically made the turn around West and I was coming across and it was by the pedestrian bridge when -- actually, no. The first tower fell and the second tower fell and we had no idea that the second tower fell. We were over here for a little while, then everybody got a little bit of their bearings back.

Q. So that debris was actually from the tower falling?

A. No, no. The first one was the plane crashing. My time frames are all messed up because things went and there was no time perception. I didn't realize how long I was there until I looked at my watch when it was time to go home. So I'm not sure exactly when 2 Trade Center fell because basically we were protected by the corner, the edge, because we were up over on North End and Vesey. So we wouldn't even have

known the second Trade Center had fallen because the debris would have been blocked by Trade Center 1 and 6 Trade Center. So I never even knew the Trade Center had fallen.

When I came around the block, and this was -- I don't remember what time it was. It was just minutes before 1 World Trade Center fell. I made the turn and two guys were walking towards me and I looked up and that's when I saw 1 Trade Center coming down. There was no way to outrun World Trade Center 1 from falling. So me and the two guys laid on the ground. I laid on top of them.

Q. Who were they?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Were they civilians?

A. Yes, civilians. One guy was a black guy in kind of a jump suit and one guy was a business guy dressed in something else. We got buried under all the debris from 1 World Trade Center and what was left of 6 Trade Center when they both came down because they toppled into each other. I don't know how long we were under there. Everything went black and I felt stuff hitting me all over the place and they were screaming, I was screaming, everybody was yelling. Basically, it

was so loud that you couldn't hear anything else except what was right in front of your face, and everything went so black that it went from as if you shut all the lights off and closed your eyes, it was that dark. It was hard to breathe. That stuff, all that powder was getting in our faces, your eyes burning and everything else.

I would say maybe a half an hour we were under that rubble before we dug ourselves out, before we thought it was okay. But when we opened our eyes, I thought, jeez, now we're in a cave. How the hell am I going to get out of here? But it was mostly debris and the powder. When we stood up after digging for about a half an hour, we basically just popped out of the powder, and five feet from where we were, an R&P, a cop car, was destroyed by an I-beam. So we got lucky with that.

I walked them -- we still couldn't really see. I had a flashlight and we just started walking to the side, and we walked into 3 Financial building and we traced that to the corner by touch because you still couldn't see anything, made the turn onto Vesey, and then all the way in the distance you could see a dim, blinking red light. I asked them if they could see the

dim, blinking red light, and they said yes. So I said head that way because from behind us I heard a whole bunch of people screaming.

So I went back and I met one lone fireman. I have no idea what his name was. I don't even know -- I couldn't even tell you what he looked like. But he came over to me, he gave me a Scott pack and a turnout coat to wear right then and there because we didn't know what else was going on, what else was going to hit. So I think that was out of -- I don't even know what truck that was. But I wound up giving that back later to one of the Battalion Chiefs.

Then we went and started looking, and he was looking for some guy, I think his name was Paul or Frank he said help me find. So we started looking and the ground was caved in right by 6 World Trade Center and in the distance you could see ladder trucks turned into the building and it was -- then it was dead silent. There was no noise after 1 Trade Center fell. It was like something out of a movie. It was really loud and then it was -- maybe it was just my hearing from the blast. I wasn't hearing the minor things. In the parking lot across the street, cars were exploding.

Then me and him went and looked and there were holes and stuff, and I said, well, where was he last? He goes I'm not exactly sure. There was nothing to landmark with at all at this point. So we just started looking through the rubble. We formed kind of like a Y or a V type of formation, always staying within visual of each other, to make sure neither one of us disappeared. I found a fireman -- I don't know. It was by a car, one of the Suburbans. I asked him are you okay? He said yeah, I'm fine, just like that. So he goes but two of my guys were on the other side of the truck. So I said okay. So I went around the other side of the truck and the other side of the truck was smashed by I-beams, and I looked under with a flashlight and I couldn't see anything.

Then one guy we heard from all the way up. I figure it was in, I would say, what is that, the Customs Building? 6 Trade Center. All right. We heard somebody yelling. So me and the other guy, I was up first because then I called him over because I didn't know how many people were up there and I was going into a building. So he came up behind me and we found one fireman up there, and I said are you okay? He said my back. I said, listen, you're a big guy. Me

and him aren't going to be able to carry you out of this, and he says, no, no, I can walk, I can walk.

So we started walking out of what I thought at that time was the third floor of 6 Financial. It turns out six floors were standing of it because of the way debris angled up. So he was holding on to us. As we were coming down, we fell, I don't know, 10 to 15 feet, and that's when I hurt my knee. I didn't really notice it then because it was just all utter chaos. There was like no time. I hadn't noticed that I had cut my arm and back either.

Then we carried him down -- well, we climbed out and then we all went down and that's when other firemen started coming. So I said all right. So now everything else is here. So I started heading back up the block. I saw a couple guys with EMS over by 3 Financial still. I said, listen, there's nothing over there for you guys. I said start heading back the other way and get all the equipment. I didn't know that everybody had left already.

So I went into a building that was on Vesey between North End and West, and my portable wasn't working. I had asked -- I said I'm also going to need, you know, I need to know where everybody is, and they

were like, well, where are you? I said I don't really know because I couldn't landmark anything. I shut the portable off because I wanted to reserve the battery because I didn't know how long this was going to be, and there was people screaming and yelling all over the radio from where they were and nobody knew where anything was. So it was kind of chaotic.

So I went into a store. I tried dialing zero on the phone. The operator, there was no answer. I guess the phone lines were down. I tried dialing 911. There was no answer on that either. So then I just started walking up North End and a Hatzolah ambulance I saw. I waved at them. They just waved at me and drove away. I don't know how far I walked. It was all the way up towards Stuyvesant, right in front of Stuyvesant High School. I don't know how far up that is.

That's when my partner was in a Cabrini ambulance with a bunch of other guys in plainclothes and they found me and they brought me over to Chelsea Piers. I still hadn't noticed -- because that's where staging had been brought to. Everything was pretty chaotic there, also, still at that point, doctors that were setting up forward triages and treatment areas and there was people everywhere, people that weren't even

involved in the Trade Centers that were just from Manhattan that were evacuated to that area. I ran into a couple of guys from my stations. I ran back into Bobby Abril and he asked me, did you see Carlos? So I said no, I never even got a chance to get that far.

From there we just hung out with each other. The union was there. They were doing -- the news was there. Everybody was asking is everybody okay and this, that and the other thing, is there anybody that they know of missing? That's when my partner noticed -- we went to go get something to drink because I had all that powder in my mouth and my eyes and everything else. I wanted to get washed off.

So she said, you know, your shirt's ripped and your pants are ripped. I said yeah, it's probably just nothing. So she goes let me see, and we pulled off my shirt and that's when I saw the laceration on the arm and the laceration on the back, which was, I don't know, six inches. She goes, oh, you're going to need that sewn up. I said, listen, I don't even notice that's there, so that's the least of my worries. She looked at my leg and it was just a minor abrasion to my leg. There was nothing really yet there.

So from there we went to get something to

drink, came back, and that's when -- I don't know. Time was pretty -- like I said, I don't even know what time that was. That could have been 2:00, 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. So then I went to -- who was it? I think it was Captain Sickles sent me to triage, and that's when I got sewn up on my arm. Then I went to the hospital that night and I left at 5:30, which I was pretty exhausted. I had an accident on the way home, too, with the ambulance.

Q. Really?

A. Yes. Somebody turned into me. Actually, the actor, Bill Nun, changed the tire for me. He was a nice guy. He came over there and said, oh, you guys had a hard enough day. We asked if they needed us back just before that and they said no, and that's when 7 Trade Center fell. But by that time they said you guys are done because we were there for nine hours, ten hours at that point. We were pretty exhausted.

Then we went to Parkway Hospital and they made the phone calls to confirm that we were alive besides that, and that was pretty much my day that day. Then I was out for the two days because I couldn't work with the open wounds, with the stitches, and then I went into my vacation, which was two days

before my month's vacation. So I spent my whole vacation -- and that night, the next night, after I went to BHS, my knee swelled up.

So I went back to the doctor and he said, well, you probably just sprained it really good. The pain didn't go away for like a week or two. So I went to get an MRI and that's when they found the tears in the medial and lateral meniscus. So my vacation was spent hobbling around.

Q. Anything else you left out or you can think of now that you want to add?

A. No, nothing that I can remember.

Q. Okay.

A. It's all pretty much a blank, that day.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The time is 8:00 o'clock. That concludes this interview. Thank you.

EMT RICHIUSA: Thank you.

File No. 9110306

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DAVID CIRA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13th, 2001. The time is 9:15. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at Battalion 45, EMS Command. I'm currently interviewing --

EMT CIRA: EMT David Cira, Division 4.

Q. EMT Cira, could you please tell me the events that took place on September 11th, 2001, from your perspective, please.

A. Shortly after the first plane was announced over the EMS frequency to have hit the first tower, my partner and I went 98 from an assignment out of Booth Memorial Hospital at Main Street and Booth Memorial Avenue.

Q. Who was your partner?

A. Felipe Torre. We were working 50 Adam, Tour 2, Vehicle 466. We were 98 for about three or four minutes when the assignment was sent over to our MDT. We hit the 63, acknowledged the assignment and headed into Manhattan. I entered Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge and we made -- where is the Brooklyn Bridge?

Q. It's got to be over this side.

A. We came down -- this has got to be it. I believe we came down John Street, made a right turn

onto Broadway, took that up several blocks, where we ended up on the corner of -- where we ended up on Vesey and Broadway, made a left turn onto Vesey Street, and we were stopped on the corner of Church and Vesey at a Citibank. We were flagged down by a woman who had a couple of patients, one of whom was complaining of chest pain, and various other injuries and whatnot that had been patients from the Trade Center itself that had gotten outside of the triage sector apparently. We were there with a North Shore University Hospital truck that was no special designation. They were a transport truck that decided to come out on their own. I believe one of the crew members was paramedic Adam Schriebman. We all began to triage the patients in the area.

We decided that we were going to move these individuals across the street to the north side of Fulton and Church, which it's showing here as a cemetery, but I remember it to be a Citibank, and we started to triage the patients when the building -- we looked outside, there was a rush of people coming down the block, and someone informed us that the tower was coming down. All we could basically do was take cover. I lost my partner at that point in time because of the rustle and I was trying to shield ourself from

the debris. I lost my partner for somewhere in the line of -- I would assume it to be around 13, 14 minutes. We all had apparently walked up northbound on Church Street. Like I said, it took about 15 minutes when I finally met up with a Brooklyn bus.

Q. What was the scene like after the collapse?

A. Right after?

Q. Describe that a little bit.

A. It felt like a snowstorm at 3:00 o'clock in the morning. It was absolute, total silence. Everybody and everything was covered. We had stumbled upon Captain Janice Olszewski, who was in a pile of -- it appeared to be just a pile of debris. At that point in time -- actually, let me step back a bit. I'm actually leaving something out.

When I had walked up north a bit, I'd met up with a Brooklyn bus, I believe either 39 Adam or 39 Charlie. I'm not sure. They took me back -- after the debris started to settle a bit, they took me back further south to meet up with my bus again and my partner, which was at the intersection of, I guess, Fulton and Church, which is where we found Captain Olszewski. At that time we had about seven patients at the back door of the ambulance that started to gather.

Most of them were police officers. We had Captain Olszewski there. We advised her to get into the ambulance. She said she was feeling okay and she was with another ambulance crew. We had seven people by the truck and we just, you know, green tag patients and we wanted to get them out of there.

So we took them out of the borough and we took them to Booth Memorial Hospital. We took them back there. Our reasons for going there were we had to go out of the borough because they were green tag patients. Brooklyn wasn't a feasible option because of all the traffic coming in and out. So the next best thing, we traveled northbound on -- I couldn't tell you the avenue. We found our way to the 59th Street bridge, which I took to the LIE, and I was -- I bypassed Elmhurst and I bypassed St. John's only because of the reason -- I bypassed Elmhurst because it is a major trauma center and a partial burn unit. I figured that, if any major patients were going to start spilling into Queens, leave that open, and then we went to Booth. It was right off the LIE, it was open, they were ready for us. I notified them on my own cell phone.

Then we were seen there at the ER briefly

just to make sure we were okay. We were both covered in dust. Our truck was a disaster. But to be honest with you, I don't remember much more than that about that morning. If you have any other specifics, I'm sure you could --

Q. Do you remember seeing anybody else other than the Captain or anybody?

A. I saw various EMS workers that I recognized just by uniform. Somewhere along the line I remember seeing Lieutenant Hadala, but I couldn't tell you what street corner I saw him on. He was with Paramedic Chevalo Wilson-DeBriano. But I don't remember where I saw them and, honestly, the time frame I really couldn't tell you because it was just, once those buildings came down, it was just --

Q. You weren't there for the second building, were you?

A. We were pulling away as that was going on. We were being advised by -- we were driving up through the crowd. We were trying to get through a crowd with a bus full of patients.

Q. Right.

A. We were being advised that the second tower was coming down, and we did, actually, if I'm not

mistaken, we did see the debris cloud from the second building. But were we inside the cloud? No. We were cleared by then.

Q. So you never made it over to the command post or anything on the west side?

A. Never made it near the command post. We were assigned to go to West and Vesey. That was our original assignment location. We never made it there. We were flagged down, thank God. Like I said, we were flagged down on like Fulton and Church, somewhere along the Fulton and Church vicinity because we were on a corner and it was a Citibank. I definitely remember it being a Citibank because that's my bank and I just happen to remember that's where we were at.

Like I said, I took those patients to Queens and we were seen and we were sent back to the battalion and were released -- what is that? LOA, when they release you -- it was before the end of my tour, but they said that's okay, you can go home. Captain Scott Holliday was at the battalion and he released us for the remainder of the tour.

Q. All right. Anything else you can think of or anything?

A. I'm sure every time I sit down and tell the

story, I could probably think of something to add into it, but those are the basics of it.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: Okay. The time is 0923. That concludes this interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110307

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN RICHARD WELDON

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 10, 2001. The time is 1655 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Captain Richard Weldon, assigned to Ladder Company 20 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20 in the truck office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Captain Weldon, can you tell me what happened to you on that day.

A. Yes. I was on the Long Island Expressway, actually headed north to take care of my mother when the first plane hit. Later I was on the Cross Island Parkway when the second plane hit. When I got to the Throgs Neck Bridge and looked downtown, I could see both towers burning and I realized that I was going to be needed so I immediately started down there.

I got down there very quick, down to my quarters, Ladder 20, and I pulled into my parking spot,, came up. There was somebody in my bunker gear already, so I grabbed my spare bunker gear and my street shoes and I hopped on 58 truck, which was about

to leave my quarters for the World Trade Center. They had a box they were going on for a trapped man.

We had about 15 people on that truck. When we got down there, we were parked about two blocks from the World Trade Center in the area where they had the guy reading the magazine, the park, where the guy reads the magazine. Within 30 seconds, as we got off the rig, some of the guys had masks, most of us didn't have masks. Some people had radios. I personally just had my bunker gear.

All of a sudden someone yelled run. Turned around and this big black cloud was coming at us. I started running away from the cloud. Some people ran towards buildings and other people, all they had time to do was duck below the rig. As I was running down, a person opened up a door and I jumped in there. The black cloud came flying by and one of the people who were with me, the guy from the squad actually, that was blown down in that black cloud and we pulled him into the door.

At this point, I thought I should go to the second floor and find the window and do some reconnaissance rather than just get out in the street and maybe there would be a second collapse, but one of

the members of 58 truck was panicking and he said we got to get out there, we got to get out there. I said okay, we will go out there.

We went out there. It was pitch black we couldn't see anything. I told everybody stay against the wall, we will work our way up the corner and we will see if everybody is okay. That's what we did. We got up there and kind of everybody came back to the rig and regrouped. The darkness started to fade away and at this point, we all -- I took my men and a couple of guys from squad. I had Adrienne Walsh with me and Gregg Edwards and two guys from squad.

We walked 30 yards and we found large pieces of debris laying in the park; duct work and things like that. We began searching at that point. We searched the entire park area and then decided to make our way closer and we did that by going south. We came upon -- we came up from the south, I don't know what the street was, the one that would run just west of the World Trade Center as far as I could see, like we went under a tower. Eventually we had gone under the tower. So that was the street we came up.

There was a Battalion Chief there and I walked up and I said, what do you need? He said go

stand over there. At this point, I noticed that the satellite truck was there and nothing was being done and none of the lines were in operation, so I asked whose truck it was, the guy says it's mine. I said where is the manifold. He says it's in the truck. I said -- I grabbed a few people, some squad people, some Ladder people, and they went over and they got the manifold.

Meanwhile I heard on the radio that the boats were coming. I saw an Engine and I told the Engine to go down and stretch a line from the boat, 3 and a half inch line, and bring it back. I started other people stretching 3 and a half line towards the boat.

Eventually the two lines met up. The mistake we made was not putting an Engine in line, but we got a 3 and a half inch line to the manifold. There must have been 15 cars burning and initially being an Engine officer at one time for most of my career, I was very concerned about water and nobody was putting any fires out. That's why I got into that operation.

But then I said, now I'm in the truck and I decided -- I wasn't going to -- we did operate a line for a short time. Adrienne Walsh was on the nozzle and I was backing her up and guys started stretching lines

off the manifold and eventually one line needed more pressure, so we shut down and they needed to go further and they hooked into our line and Adrienne Walsh and myself went closer to the two buildings that had collapsed.

When we got there, I saw a guy from Ladder 10. At this point I didn't know where my other guys went. I saw a guy from Ladder 10 and I asked him how would you get below the World Trade Center, what subway station. He told me Rector Street and I don't even know what the line was. I asked him if he would come with me and he did.

We went down there; Adrienne Walsh, myself, a guy from Ladder 10 and some other guys, they had managed to get some flashlights. We walked about two blocks in the subway tunnel and we came to a dead end, a concrete wall that apparently the building had collapsed right down into the cellar.

At this point I finally realized that where the two buildings had gone, because there was only 7 stories of piles, I realized they must have all collapsed into the ground. At that point we left and went back to the site, which there was a command center right almost between 2 bridges that existed at one

time.

Didn't report into anybody at this point. I was standing there and wondering what to do, when Battalion Chief Richard Picciotto came out of nowhere like coming across the pile and I offered him some water. He was completely encased in dust. He just pointed in the direction and said over there, tell me where to go. At this point, myself, a guy from squad, Larry Cohen, and a proby asked if he could come with us.

We went over towards the north tower, stairwell B where they had -- some survivors had come out. When we got there, there was a line coming down from the pile and initially we helped a guy from Port Authority, I think he was, down the line. Then they said they were going to need some help getting a woman out.

At this point, I moved up all the way to stairwell B. We got the lady out, passed her down, then they were trying to dig out, I believe it was a second Battalion Chief and I waited and stayed there with them until we were ordered -- well, we were ordered several times, but the Captain of, I think it was a rescue company or a squad refused to leave.

Finally he gave up, he said there was nothing he could do and we all left that area. This is in the collapse zone of tower 7.

At this point, I went down back to the middle area of the pile and I proceeded to make my way to the north side of the towers. At that point, I ran into Lieutenant Simms, who had another complement of Ladder 20 there. At this point, I guess I had formally reported into Deputy Chief Visconti. He was up on the North End. We waited until tower 7 collapsed and at this point, we went into the area and assessed the damage that was done to the buildings and to see if we could control the fires that resulted from the collapse of tower 7.

We searched several buildings, decided that they were sound enough that lines could operate, tower ladders could go into the area and put the fire out from tower 7. We remained in the area till about 11 o'clock that night, 12 o'clock that night. Myself and some other of the members of Ladder 20 that had been there early on. Then about that time we started walking back to Ladder 20. We arrived back at Ladder 20 and another group of guys from Ladder 20 went down there.

I wound up -- that next day I had to work and I wound up going right back down there the next day, spending the day down there. They all thought I was on vacation. That's about it. That's what I did.

Q. When you said you went to where the guys rigged the boat, I believe he was in the North Cove wasn't he, that little park by the North Cove?

A. Yes, I'm not familiar with the area.

Q. At that point when you were with 58 truck, the first building had already come down you believe?

A. I believe so.

Q. You were caught in the second tower collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. When you said you were with squad, you were referring to squad 18?

A. Members of squad 18 who were housed in Ladder 20's quarters.

Q. When you said the satellite was there. You walked --

A. The satellite unit.

Q. When you said you walked under a tunnel, was that the other overpass?

A. Yes, the south.

Q. Not the south overpass. When you came back

from where the guy was reading the book, the statue, you went under an overpass there too, right? That's by 1 Liberty Plaza, I believe, where they set up the triage center later on? You are not sure, okay.

A. No, actually I think we went two blocks south of where maybe like Engine 10 and Ladder 10 would be. Two blocks south and then crossed over and then made our way up.

Q. The last thing I have to ask is the satellite you referred to, was that nine?

A. I really can't tell you. I can't tell you.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you have nothing else that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110308

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE KOZLOWSKI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The time is 1620 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with GEORGE KOZLOWSKI of Ladder 20. He is assigned to Ladder 20 of the New York City Fire Department. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20 in the office's quarters regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman KOZLOWSKI, tell me what happened on September 11.

A. We just got relieved after 0900, Fireman Escofrery and myself. We saw the plane coming over, sort of over quarters and then the initial crash. We heard the initial crash. 20 truck and squad 18 took off right away and Kenny and I, we were just standing there and Timmy Haskell with squad was there also and he was going down there, so they grabbed -- can I say the bread truck, their other rig.

Kenny and I got redressed and Timmy Haskell, same thing and we took off in their hazmat spare rig, the hazmat rig. Approaching there we could see the tower, where the plane hit. We pulled up alongside squad 18's rig and just before 20's rig, at that point

we were looking up and we saw the people jumping already. We thought it was parts of the building coming down, but it was jumpers. We must have seen, while we were standing outside at that point -- because we were looking on our rig for any tool that we could find. We didn't have radios. I think Timmy Haskell had a radio, but I will get back to that.

So we got a couple of tools, I think two axes and a halogen, but no -- there was no radio around. As we went inside on the West Street side of the north tower into the lobby, I can't remember the companies really. There was a bunch of companies standing fast. I just can't picture it right now. We were right by the command post. I did see Ganci, Chief Hayden, Feehan, Von Essen, who else, the aide, who was it, Kevin Wa, I think it was Kevin Wa, the aide.

We first initially, we wanted to tell somebody that we were there, so they knew we were there. We tried to get Chief Hayden because he knew us. We knew us while he was at Division 1 anyway. I think Kenny got -- did tell him.

At that point we were just standing fast. We didn't want to go roam off far away because we didn't have a radio. At that point we heard more jumpers

hitting the outside awning. We thought it was stuff, but man, the sound of those bodies crashing down was unbelievable. I mean a giant thump. We did see bodies that got pulled out of the elevators because all the elevators fell. Then Kenny and I just thought well, let's just walk in the main lobby there and maybe try and pry open and see if anybody is left in the elevator itself.

We did a quick walk around in that section, but there were only a couple that were closed. We could wedge it open a little and take a look. There were no other bodies. There was about three or four bodies that were pulled from the elevator and they were covered up already.

We went back closer to the command post and at that point there were more jumpers and there were body parts flying into the lobby. At that point, they started to move the command post, because all that shit was just flying in, I mean, you know, chunks.

Kenny and I -- I forgot who asked us -- it was one of the officers. At that point there were a lot of people coming down from the lobby, the loge area, and they were asking us to tell the people to keep moving, move, move. So he goes why don't you take

a walk up to the third floor, the third floor through the B stairwell. He goes people are -- you know how narrow those stairwells are. As big as that building is.

There was a lot of water coming down from the stairs. Lot of people were panicking, so we kept pushing them out, pushed them to that second floor lobby and then it was getting pretty bad out there, because I couldn't tell you what side, I guess the jet fuel and everything that was flying down was really kicking up on the outside. We let them know too, and we were afraid, because those big plate windows, we wanted to get the people away from there in case it blew and that's eventually what happened. Thank god Kenny and I, we closed off that door so nobody could go down there any more.

At that point, we were -- I can't remember how long we were on that third floor pushing the people through. That's when we felt a big giant tremble, like a mini earthquake. That was the south tower collapsing. We didn't see it but we really felt it. All the lights shut down, the emergency lights on the stairwell and everything. People were starting to really panic.

Then there was another small explosion on that second floor. I guess it was that plate windows, everything going. That's when we encountered 5 Engine. They were coming down from the fourth floor or whatever. I didn't see their officer. I might have, but it was dark at that point too, and then -- let's see -- there were a couple of other probies there. I think they were probies, because you know, you look, but it was mostly 5 Engine there working on -- to find another -- not a stairwell, an exit to go out.

Luckily a person was coming down. I don't know from what floor but on the third floor encountered us. He says no, I know another exit down this way. Well. That was the only other door that we could get out. It was lucky, because a lot of the other people -- because it was pitch black now. So Kenny -- well we all lined up. It was not like a long walk, but a good enough walk to get to the other exit. It was good that guy found it, because I think we would have got stuck. That he knew about it, because I don't think we would have found it.

Okay, so then we made a line and we pushed the people not to go through that third floor door and we just told the people which way to go. Then we had

flashlights. Other people had flashlights so everyone made it and we kept pushing people through, go, go, move, move. There was one guy, we thought he was having a heart attack. We got him up and we put him on a chair. He was pretty heavy set. So I think it was one of the guys from 5 Engine that said keep going. I will stay here with him and try to get him out.

So we just kept going, moved more through, went downstairs, got through -- it wasn't the main lobby where the command post was. We made it through that way. Got downstairs, and there was like a -- it was like a giant courtyard or something and somebody out there was a black Battalion Chief. I forgot his name. Another guy that says no, no, keep going through here. I don't even know what building it was that was adjacent to the Trade Center right there. It was closer to the West Street side.

At that point, there were more jumpers in that courtyard and more -- there was quite a bit more debris from the building, falling from the upper floors. So we set up like a -- one guy stayed where the people were coming through and another guy ran over to the -- where that other building was or something.

Couple of us would look to see if anything is

falling and then tell the people run, run, run and then wait to see if anything else fell. Luckily not too many things fell. It was good hooking up like that to make sure.

At that point, all the people that were with us or whatever, there were quite a few. That was it. So at that point, I think the Chief says hang out here in case some other people come back. I know there was a proby with us, Escofrery, and another guy. The Chief took off. We heard like a lot of trembling and everything. So we better get out of here. This doesn't look good. There is no more people coming.

So we started walking the same way the Chief went, and he was at the other end. He said the same thing. He said we better get our asses out of here. This doesn't look good at all. As we were walking, we heard -- we thought it was another plane coming. It was like a big shhhhh. A thousand times louder than that. It sounded like a missile coming and we just started booking. We took off like bats out of hell.

We made it around the corner and that's when the shit hit the fan right then and there. We heard that loud and then ba boom. I just -- it was like an earthquake or whatever. A giant, giant explosion.

Kenny made it and those other guys made it around this bend here. I was like the last guy and I just turned around and I just sort of ffffffff, I just did a fetal position. I crawled down and held -- thank god -- that helmet saved my life: I just held onto it and the impact, I closed my eyes -- just the impact, I could just feel shit hitting me, flying.

I think something fell on my back that protected me from some of the other stuff that fell. Luckily a couple of things hit my helmet. Then it was just that impact and I was in a fetal position, just holding my helmet, shaking. Then this big gust came and I just went flying, maybe 30, 40 feet. Tumbling.

I got up, got on my hands and knees because all of the white shit was all over me. I just kept crawling. My ears were like deaf, you know, when you hear a giant firecracker or something. I went crawling, spitting that shit out, and I couldn't see anything because everything was white. I just kept crawling. I tried to yell out Kenny, Kenny Escofrery, but everything was so muffled. I didn't know what else was going to happen. I just tried to fucking get out of there.

Then I saw flashing lights. I said oh, man,

at least there is something there. At this point I didn't even know -- I thought it was like a part of the building collapsing. I got up to the car and it was like a Suburban and the lights were still on and it was running. I got in there, opened the door, there was nobody in there. At first I was just going to get in the Suburban and wait it off or something, wait until it cleared off. I said I'm getting my ass out of here. I don't know what's going to happen.

So I kept crawling and I saw another flashing light and I was yelling out Kenny, Kenny, hey, anybody out there, help. That's when I heard Kenny. He already was walking back to see where I was. We met up. He goes let's go, let's go. Because we were dying of thirst now too from swallowing that shit.

Then it started clearing up a little. We were on the West Street side. That was it. We just kept walking and just walking, trying to find some water. We saw some other trucks there. I forgot what companies. They weren't affected with it, but it was mostly everything was covered white.

We made it to the street. There was a cop there with an open hydrant, washing everybody down. She was very nice. She said kneel down, because we

were covered in shit. We made it. We were on West Street. Got some water. We were just sitting there wanting to catch our breath. We were looking at this shit and saying, "oh, my god," I wonder where's our guys?

Took a little rest there and we started walking back to ask people if they saw 20 or 55 or squad. That's initially A truck or something. A truck made it out, because they know our guys. That's why. At this point we saw -- oh, god -- we didn't catch up with anybody that saw 20.

We waited there. We said let's hold off. Maybe some other companies will come out and we will ask them. Maybe -- like the first, second, third due companies that would know anybody if they did see 20, because initially they probably all showed up together. They might have been on the same floor or they passed them on the stairwell.

Hung out there for quite sometime. Just hoping somebody saw them or -- so at this point Kenny and I said we can't -- let's walk back to A truck. Maybe they know something. We got back to A truck and -- were they back already? There were a bunch of guys there already that got called for a recall. There were

some officers that retired that came down to help out. Lieutenant Woods, remember Woodsy? He was there. [redacted].

Then a couple of the guys from A truck came back and they didn't -- they said they did see them on the stairwell. After that they lost them, before, because they were making their way down from the 30th floor or something. They saw 20 on the 35th floor or something. 28th floor or something. They weren't sure. I'm trying to --

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay.

Q. I have a couple of maybe clarifying points. Nothing -- when you said you responded with the red truck and you parked near squad 18 and Ladder 20, do you know where that location was?

A. The Vesey Street. Do you know where that --

Q. Where the north walkway was?

A. Yes.

Q. That aide you said was Wah, Chris Wah, the Division 1 aide?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. When you said you met 5 Engine, originally you said you went to the B staircase, was that there

where 5 was, the B staircase?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. When you were escorting people out of the stairway from the third floor to the second floor that was also the B staircase?

A. Uh-huh. It might have been -- no, that was the B. That was the B.

Q. No Fire Department personnel came out, all civilians, other than 5 Engine?

A. What I saw. Yes. Because they were behind us. We had to keep walking in front and these guys would stay by the door.

Q. No other Fire Department units passed you?

A. No.

Q. That you know of?

A. Yes. Because there were a lot of probies there, so I didn't know what companies.

Q. When this guy directed you to the other exit down the hallway, that exit wasn't marked or anything, was it, like C exit?

A. It was pitch dark.

Q. It was basically a mezzanine type exit, a little wider staircase maybe?

A. No, I wouldn't say it was wider.

Q. The two of you and basically 5 Engine?

A. Right.

Q. When you finally did get out, you headed towards West Street?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. That same corner that you turned was with the walkway?

A. No, no, that wasn't a walkway.

Q. When you left --

A. Okay, we went to the north walkway, so we were going opposite, we were opposite of that walkway. We were away from that walkway.

Q. You headed back maybe towards Church Street?

A. Yes, maybe, probably, yes.

Q. When you came out, maybe you were on Vesey and made your way up to Church?

A. I don't think it was Vesey, because it was all big like courtyards that we made our -- there was a loading dock that we went down.

Q. Could it have been Barclay maybe?

A. I don't know, maybe. We were going opposite.

Q. You were east of where you were before?

A. Right. We weren't close to that -- the walkway. We went way around.

Q. When you walked back towards West Street, did you happen to see any apparatus maybe destroyed?

A. No, not at this point. They were all by the walkway.

Q. The only ones that you can remember are 18 and 20?

A. When we pulled up?

Q. Right.

A. Yes, 55.

Q. You saw 55 Engine?

A. I think so, because they were usually right there too.

Q. They would have been parked in front?

A. Yes. They would have been on West too. You know, when we do respond there, that's where we always park, right there.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you have nothing else that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110309

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ANTHONY SALERNO

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 10, 2001. The time is eleven o'clock in the morning.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Anthony Salerno, fireman 1st grade, of Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Salerno, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. On September 11, I was on my way into the city. Being on vacation, I had just come back from a road trip. I was going to come in in the morning and bullshit with the guys.

I had not known at the point when I woke up that the buildings were attacked. On my way in, I noticed the trade center on fire, turned on 1010, and listened to the thing on my way in.

On my way in, the recall, the active recall, was engaged. I had gotten to the firehouse probably around ten after nine, was on the phone with Mike

Paolone. He was the -- he was working in Queens. He had told me to look across, look at the television. I saw the first building come down.

At that point, I noticed a bunch of guys coming into the firehouse -- Captain Varriale coming in, Billy McCarthy, Frankie McCutchen, Chris McArdle. We all had come in, and we were all ready to go down to the trade center, knowing that both companies and the battalion were down there.

We left the firehouse probably around a quarter after nine with two volunteers. One, a volunteer fireman, his first name was Tony. The second guy was a construction worker whose brother had been working at the trade center on the 110th Floor, I believe.

We got down to -- we got down as far as West Broadway and Chambers Street. At West Broadway and Chambers, we drove down with Captain Varriale in his pickup. We took some tools that we had grabbed out of the firehouse and some EMS supplies.

We got down to West Broadway and Chambers. We parked the rig. We walked down as far as West Broadway, and I would say Barclay and came back up, noticing that there was nothing but three blocks of

fire from Barclay down to Vesey, which would bring you to the north tower of the trade center.

We found car fires. We found buses on fire, but we happened to find a volunteer rig from the Bronx that was still in there. It was a old LaFrance. I got in the rig, backed the rig out with everybody helping, parked the rig on West Broadway, and found the rig on West Broadway between Barclay and Park, and backed the rig out and hooked up to a hydrant on West Broadway and Warren, and ended up supplying whatever lines we can get off the rig with -- using whatever fittings we could use off their rig, and I remember the water pressure being very low.

We ended up putting out as many fires as we could from West Broadway and Warren all the way down to West Broadway and Vesey.

Putting out all those fires, in that interim, the second building had come down. I remember hearing a lot of explosions, the street turning completely gray, gray clouds of smoke all over the place. Everybody had stopped what they were doing and ran back up the block.

We ran up West Broadway past Chambers, regrouped when the dust settled, and there was a

command post that was established at the time. I remember seeing Chief Daly and another chief -- I don't remember his name -- coming down to West Broadway and Barclay and setting up a command post.

I remember finding Engine Company 6's rig, stripping that rig of fittings and hose to hook up to anybody else. I remember at that time also they were worried about Building 7 because when the second tower came down, they were worried about parts of -- actually, when the first tower came down, they were worried about parts of Building 7 collapsing, so I remember getting into Building 7 and searching.

I got separated from the crew that I had gone down with, because I stayed at the pump panel. They had gone around the West Street side of the building and into the rubble.

I hooked up with a Lieutenant Ryan from 15 engine and Richie Cipoletti from Engine Company 55. We hooked up with as many people as we could.

We went to the command post, the true command post, which was set up at that day on Broadway and Chambers. We ended up getting assigned to a Staten Island firehouse engine company. We manned a hose line across the street from Tower 1 or what was remaining of

it, and I remember that building taking off in fire, so there was really nothing we could do with our one hand line.

I remember coming out of the building now because they were afraid of Building 7 coming down, and all the other buildings around it getting knocked down. So they took us out of the building.

I remember Building 7 coming down, again, with dust clouds, getting separated momentarily. I remember Staten Island companies all over the place. I remember a Brooklyn company coming, a Brooklyn engine company coming in, when I was still hooked up on West Broadway and Warren.

I don't remember the company's name, but it definitely was a Brooklyn company. I used their rig for parts also, and after the second building had come down, they had left their rig and was part of the command post on West Broadway and Barclay.

After that I stayed with the Staten Island company for quite awhile. We ended up working with some Brooklyn truck companies, and some Staten Island engine companies, a Brooklyn chief, just going through the various buildings after the building had gone down to see if anybody was still in there or if we could do

anything, putting out various little fires that were about from the rubble, and got back to my firehouse probably around 11:30, 12 o'clock, September 11 night, back to the quarters of Engine Company 24 and Ladder 5.

And that's what I did that day.

Q. Good. And you couldn't remember any of the numbers of the Brooklyn companies, right?

A. No, I couldn't remember the Brooklyn companies.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thank for you the interview, and that's it.

File No. 9110310

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHARLES GAFFNEY

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 10, 2001. The time is 10:30 in the morning, and this is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I am conducting an interview with the following: Firefighter CHARLES GAFFNEY, fireman 1st grade, assigned to Engine 24, Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24 in the engine office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Gaffney, could you please tell me in your own words what happened on September 11 and your experience?

A. I just got relieved by a probie, one of the seven-week probies in Ladder 5, about 8:30. Sitting in the kitchen, tones went off. It was for the trade center. A plane hit the trade center.

I thought it was an accident, and I turned on New York 1, and I could see the hole in the building. Myself, couple of other guys that just got off crossed the street. We looked down the block, saw the trade center and we said, "Oh, we better get down there." Myself, Lieutenant Giammona, Jimmy Miller, Jimmy

Esposito got dressed, and we started down there.

On our way, Chief Prunty came by. He got dressed and came down with us. We walked down to Varrick Street. An off-duty firefighter pulled over with a pickup truck. We got in the back. We headed down there.

On our way down there, he told us that a second plane -- he heard on the radio that a second plane had just hit the other tower. So we were all discussing -- not panicking but discussing, you know, what's going on here. It kind of dawned on us that it was a terrorist attack at that point.

He drove us down there and dropped us off on Vesey Street right by Tower 7, and we proceeded into Tower 1 around the corner. We saw Engine 24 parked on the corner. We stowed our shoes that we were carrying with us at Engine 24.

We went into the Tower 1 lobby, and I noticed the command post was already set up, saw Commissioner Von Essen there in the lobby, and Battalion Chief McGovern. We went to Battalion Chief McGovern. Lieutenant Giammona told him, "Make us a unit. Put us to work. We're here." He said, "Okay."

Lieutenant Giammona got a radio from

somewhere, and they made us Ladder 5-B, and we met 9 truck on their way up the stairs. We met 9 truck on the way up the stairs, and there was another engine company. I don't remember what engine company it was, but I grabbed -- they were all carrying extra bottles, and since we had no masks or no equipment, we grabbed their extra gear and helped them. Me and Jimmy, Jimmy Esposito, grabbed roll-ups and a bottle and carried it upstairs for these guys, because they were overburdened.

We walked up. We got up to about the 10th Floor, and there was a chief on the floor who told us -- I don't know what chief it was. I don't know who he was. He said guys are already working their way down. He wanted us to start working our way up searching floors, going in on each floor, walking around the perimeter of the building, looking to see if anybody was on the floors, panicking, or trapped or whatever. So me and Esposito started doing that.

Vinnie Giammona, he flew up the stairs in front of us. Lieutenant Giammona, I should say. He had a radio. He went up the stairs. We lost track of him as we were searching the lower floors.

We made our way up to about the 21st Floor.

We met up with Engine 65 somewhere along the line there, and we were kind of listening to the officer of Engine 65's radio. We heard like a continuous roar, like a thunder, and the building shook.

All in between there was all foggy. I don't remember what happened in between there. Like, all I remember was once the building started shaking, I forgot everything else that was going on. It was like you were being thrown around on the floor.

We made our way into the stairway, and there were a few guys from Engine 65 in that stairway. There were no civilians in the stairs at that time. Most of them had -- must have gotten out by then from below the crash, but I remember hearing a radio transmission, "Urgent!" I don't know who gave it, but I remember hearing an "Urgent!" that all inside operations were off. Everybody out of the building, and we all started running down the stairs.

I remember seeing Faust, Battalion 28, on the 10th Floor in a doorway, and he was directing guys down. He must have been waiting for Chief McGovern, who had gone up ahead of us. I think he was on the 24th Floor. I left out -- I thought I heard -- I heard a radio transmission, and I thought it was Lieutenant

Giammona, that he was on the 44th Floor, something about an elevator. I'm not sure if there were people in the elevator or he found an elevator that was working, but he was trying to get through a message. It was his voice. It was unmistakable, that he had an elevator on the 44th Floor.

I do remember seeing Chief McGovern when we were on 20 or so go past me on his way up, and on the way down I saw his aide, Faust, and I said to Faust, "Come on, get out of here. They are ordering us out. Let's get out." He said he was waiting for the chief, and then when we got down, when we finally got down to the bottom, the lobby was a mess. It wasn't like a clear run out of the building.

I went out the same way I came in, so I knew where I was going. There was a pile of crap in the lobby, marble, Sheetrock, all that stuff. It was smoky, hazy, and when I got out in the street, it was a cloud. I had no idea what time it was, how long I was in there.

I remember running north at first under a scaffolding that was up and looking to my left, which was west, and I could see, so I ran west, and as I was running west, there were a bunch of firefighters in the

street. I remember guys screaming, "It's coming down," so I was, like, running for my life.

When I got -- I ran as far as the water, and then I started running north when I got to the water, a little park. That was Vesey Street, I guess, I took to the water. I started running north, and that pier, whatever that one -- whatever you want to call that ended, so you had to run back east to get further north.

By that time, the second building had already come down. I was shedding gear as I was running, so I went back for my gear, so that I could go back and look for people, because I wasn't sure where the guys I had gone down with were. We all disbursed, so I was looking for Jimmy Miller, and Jimmy Esposito and Vinnie Giammona. I don't know when I met up with them again, but I think it was on West Street, maybe a couple of blocks north of Vesey.

I remember running into John Ottrando, who was the engine chauffeur, when I ran out of the building. When I started running west, I remember seeing him, and he was covered in white, and I told him to run. I don't know which way he ran. I think he ran north as I was running west, and then little by little,

you know, started running into people, and that was really all, and then we started going back looking for people.

Q. I have a few questions, if you are finished.

A. Yeah. There are things I don't remember, like parts I'm sure I'm forgetting, but I think about things sometimes when I'm home or alone or something and something will pop in my head, and I said, wow, I forgot that even happened.

Q. Great. I mean not great that you remember stuff like that, but you did a pretty good job here.

You were with those three guys, Lieutenant Giammona, Miller and Esposito --

A. Right.

Q. -- originally?

A. When I got on -- I left this out. When we got in the back of this guy's pickup truck, Chief Prunty was with us on Varrick Street.

Q. Right.

A. Another SUV of some type pulled up, and he said -- he must have been an off-duty firefighter, too, because he said to Chief Prunty, "Chief, get in with us." One of the guys got out and went in the back and let the chief in the front seat. They followed the

truck we were in, the pickup truck we were in. They followed us, and the chief got out, and he came in the lobby with us.

Then Chief Prunty I never saw again that day. I don't know when he went to the command. I saw him go to the command post. I don't know where he was assigned to go, you know, what he was doing.

Nine truck we were with on the way up the stairs, and we were carrying their bottles and their roll-ups, whoever's roll-ups they had. They had roll-ups with them. It must have been an engine with them. I'm not sure if it was 33.

I remember seeing the guys from 65 out in the street after we got out, like, whoever the officer was on 65 that day. It was his radio we were listening to to get out of the building. I remember seeing them in the street later, and we were all glad to see one another that we got out.

Like I said, when everyone started running down the stairs, firemen -- it was all firemen. Nobody knew where -- everybody ran in separate directions, and there was an ironworker in the lobby -- I remember that -- directing people out of the building, telling them not to walk, to run, because there was stuff

falling.

I'd say there's a lot -- there are so many things -- like, on our way in, we had to avoid jumpers or bodies coming down. I remember seeing one about 20 feet away from me as we were approaching the end of the scaffolding before we went into Tower 1, and then as we got there, one landed five feet from me.

Then one guy stood and looked up, and it was like being in the military. He'd say, "Okay, come on. Oh, hold up. Something is coming down. Hold up. All right, come on. Come on," and it was bodies that were coming down.

Q. When you say you went to the command post, you said Tower 1, is that the north tower?

A. Yes.

Q. So you were operating basically from West Street?

A. At the time, I didn't know that. I found all that out later, which tower --

Q. Okay?

A. -- which tower we were in and whatever.

Q. All right. So that was where you saw the commissioner, McGovern --

A. Yes.

Q. -- in that lobby?

A. There was a bunch -- there was a command post set up in that lobby, but when I had come back down, they weren't in that lobby any more. That lobby was pretty much destroyed, and there was nobody in there.

Q. Okay. So you hooked up with 9 truck. I mean, you weren't ordered to, but you hooked -- do you know which staircase it was, A, B, whatever, something like that?

A. I'm pretty sure it was B. I'm not positive, but I'm pretty sure it was B. I know I came down the B, so I'm pretty sure it was the B I went up, because I used that as a reference for getting out. I knew I came up that way, so I knew my way down with that staircase.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember being on about the 13th Floor and opening the door. I heard a door being forced from the outside of the stairway. A company was trying to get in, so I went and opened the door for them, and that was the A stairway, I believe, but I can't tell you what company it was. I don't remember.

It was -- we were kind of like in a hurry. I just popped the door, let those guys in, and continued

searching the floor.

Q. Okay. And the stairway that you saw 65, that was B?

A. Yes.

Q. And Faust and McGovern, you figure were B, the B staircase?

A. Yes, it was the staircase I was in. That was B. I saw McGovern on there. I saw Faust. He was standing on the 10th Floor. I don't know -- he was standing in the doorway.

Q. Okay.

A. He was, like, telling people, okay -- no, he was, like, reassuring civilians, I guess, on their way out, and then when I was on my way down, it was only firemen, so I said to him, "Come on, Faust, get out. They are ordering us out. Get out." He said, "I'm going to wait for the chief."

Q. Okay. You came out the same way?

A. Yes.

Q. And --

A. As I came out of the stairs --

Q. -- you were running?

A. I remember making a right, climbing over a pile of crap, and there was glass, thick glass,

everywhere. It was like running on ice, you know, glass on top of glass sliding around.

I remember an ironworker being in the lobby, and I ran into the ironworker later. I wound up knowing him, but I didn't realize who he was at the time.

Q. Okay. If you saw Otto, who was with 24 -- did you see any other rigs in the street at any time, whether they were crushed or the way in?

A. On the way in, I saw Squad 18's rig was right in front, I think.

Q. In front of the tower or in front of the hotel?

A. In front of the tower.

Q. Okay.

A. In front of Tower 1. I think Lieutenant Giammona grabbed a mask out of there.

Q. Okay.

A. We went to 24 first on the way in, and there were no masks left or anything.

Q. Where was he parked?

A. He was on the corner -- he was on West Street facing south right off Vesey, and then it's the same place he was parked for the first trade center. That

sticks in my mind.

I was at that one, too, in '93, and Otto was driving also, and he parked in the same spot for both incidents.

Q. Okay. Now, when you were running out and everything, you didn't happen to notice any of the other front pieces, who they were?

A. What do you mean? The guys I was running with?

Q. Yes, or when you came back, did you see any other apparatus crushed or 6 --

A. I remember the civilians in the street, like they were in the lobby, like, pooling in the lobby instead of going out of the building.

I guess they were having a hard time getting over the debris and stuff, but coming down the stairs, there were no civilians in the stairway.

Q. Okay.

A. As I came out, Otto was standing in the middle of West Street at Vesey by the island. He was covered in white. He said he had -- he dove behind a wall or something and just got covered with the cloud. He was in shock.

Q. Okay. If you have nothing else, this

concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you. I mean, that's all I can remember. I mean, I remember seeing people in the street not that were in the building. I remember seeing companies, like, standing watching.

Q. Well, can you remember who they were?

A. I saw --

Q. And where they were?

A. I saw one of the guys from 55 engine on the opposite side of West Street at Vesey standing -- 33 engine was on that corner on Vesey facing east, I guess on the west side of West Street.

Q. And this is after the collapses or before?

A. This was after the first one, which I didn't even realize was a collapse until I got down to the street, but before the second.

Q. Okay, so they were on Vesey and West?

A. Right. They were on Vesey actually facing east.

Q. Anybody else?

A. I remember running into guys from 8 truck who were coming from company medical. They were -- they sent them back from the medical office.

Q. You don't know where you met them?

A. I met them by the water. I met them by the water. I met -- there were also two guys from 55 engine. I don't think they were working. Paddy Schuppel and Pete Metzger. I don't know if they were working or not, but I met them by the water. I don't think they were working. They must have come later. They were clean.

Q. Okay. If there is nothing else, we can conclude the interview.

A. I think that's about all I can remember right now.

Q. You can keep going as long as you want.

A. No, that's all I can remember really.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, thank you very much.

File No. 9110311

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DEPUTY CHIEF HOWARD HILL

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 10, 2001. The time is approximately 1540. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, New York City Fire Department, safety and command.

Q. I'm here conducting an interview with --

A. Deputy Chief HOWARD HILL.

Q. Regarding events of September 11, 2001. Chief Hill, if you would in your own words, tell us how you became aware of the events unfolding that day and what transpired as far as what you were concerned and what you did.

A. All right. I was home, I was jogging along the Belt Parkway. I noticed the twin towers on fire. I got in my car, I went home, and I called up operations. I asked them where they wanted me to report in. I was told report into the First Division. I showed up at the First Division between 10 o'clock, 10:30. I relieved the Battalion Chief who was on duty. I was then told by operations to formulate teams, get teams ready to respond in some kind of orderly manner. They were having some problems with that.

I had a fair number of people on recall. I had them do like sort of command post procedures to

organize the members of the teams with officers and make up arrival lists. We followed some of the procedures of the command post. I designated some people as administrative. As that was being prepared, there was some problems, to put it mildly, regarding keeping people at the fire house and in the Division.

I did a survey of the Division to see what companies were in service, what relocators we had. No units were back in at all throughout the day. They told me at approximately 3:00 I was going to take all members over to the site and operate. At 3:00 then I got a phone call informing me to stay. They were worried about a second attack or some other things that might happen. I again tried to keep members.

There was some problems at that point to keep members at the fire house. It was extremely difficult to just to keep people standing by and maintain discipline. Discipline was a significant problem. There was something screaming and shouting. I made several efforts to keep people focused, to keep them ready. I was less than 100 percent successful but I did manage to keep some teams in the fire house and I went around to different firehouses that I could hit in the Division to try to insure -- and via the phone as

well.

That went on continuously up until about 3:00 in the morning. At that time I was told to relieve Chief Kilker over at One Police Plaza at their command center. I was in Police Plaza, answering phones and manning that station until approximately 4 the next afternoon on Wednesday. I then went home and I reported in to work on Thursday morning.

On Thursday morning, they told me once again you will be manning the Division. We manned the division once again trying to get some -- the status of the units, finding out what resources we had in the Division and keeping guys ready to respond to fires and fire duty as necessary in the Division.

Then at approximately 18 hundred hours I was told to report to the site. Now, this is Thursday evening. I went to the site, I reported in to the Liberty command site. I climbed up on a piece of jutting steel. I relieved -- I don't remember who I relieved. The Deputy said this is your post. There was, I would say, around 300 people in view and it was fairly disorganized. There was lots of vollies, being aware of what all our members were going through as far as wanting to go down and not having work to do or

being kept from the site, I had people coming in, reporting in, our people. My priority was to get volunteers out, and anyone who should not be there and to keep our people in.

I tried to set that up. I tried to get police assistance in setting up perimeters and that was less than successful. People would say yes we will take care of it and the police would walk away and then I wouldn't see them.

I did get some control of the firefighters. I had them set up control points. There were three or four access points into that Liberty command area. I was able, after a while, to patrol and then pull the vollies out of there when I saw them, and I had Fire Department members, FDNY members, staged. I would pull them in. There was a bucket brigade at the time. They were using the dogs. We had the USAR teams. We continued with this throughout that night. I was leaving about 9 o'clock in the morning. It was just a continuous. I don't even know what time I got there the next day. I don't.

But there was a continuous flood of people in and out of the area. I had some Battalion Chiefs, we had some sector control, and I believe at about 4:00

o'clock in the morning it started raining heavy that night. Thursday night. I have to look at that. Maybe that was the next shift I was in. I forget when the rain came down. But when the rain came down that was the first time that I believe the whole site took a collective breath.

It was glass scaling off the wall of buildings. It was cracking around and it was pretty heavy glass, rain was heavy and the effect of all these people out there at that point was (inaudible) that we were trying to accomplish. We pulled people back and we actually got everybody off the pile. That was just in my sector. But my sector was one of the earlier ones. And that spread around the other sectors as well. I think collectively, my only problem with this is that I don't remember if it was Thursday night or Friday. Excuse me. I was off Friday, on Saturday. I had to look at the weather because it is a bit of a blur at this time.

But I do remember that was the first time I know that everybody just stopped for a moment and we were able to get a little better order when we were coming back in, although it was a big problem, they could not get any kind of security with police, in

controlling any of the perimeters in the area. There was a lack of police supervisors around. I did speak to some of them. One was the head of ESU. I forget his name. He was an inspector. He was standing there with me at the -- the command post was a very makeshift thing. Like I said it was a piece of steel jutting out. The only reason I was standing on that, that gave me the overview of the site. It was the only area with good height that you could see out.

Most of the efforts were coordinated fairly well with the USAR teams. They had their team people ready and when I needed them, they did respond. I do give them credit. They controlled their people very well. They staged them. I was getting good feedback from the rescue people out there, as far as what was -- the area they were concentrating on, and why they were concentrating on it. The Battalion Chiefs were out there. The Battalion Chiefs were superb.

I think the main reason why we didn't have any serious injuries was that the Chief officers at the site did a spectacular job of controlling and looking over the best they could under the circumstances to insure that people weren't getting hurt or doing things that they should not be doing. That didn't happen all

the time, but the Chief officers made an extreme effort to control people out there and I think in my mind, anyhow, that's going largely unrecognized.

I think the main reason that we didn't have significant major loss of life there was because the Chief officers of the FDNY did their very best under the circumstances. It was effective in preventing a lot of injuries at that site and stopping people from doing what they should not be doing. And trying to control as much as possible the people from outside the Department and the -- of course well intentioned, but emotionally involved people from our Department from being -- putting themselves in more harms way than was appropriate.

I believe that that is what worked in my sectors from what I saw. The Chief officers were diligent. They worked very very hard and got some control that way. Because you couldn't go out there yourself all the time. You could just go to some spots where there is problems to look over. You could do a survey, but you had to have Chief officers out there, and that's what made my zone work.

A lot of it was a blur. There was a lot of input from different agencies so we had to -- a lot of

decisions being made. I wish I could recall half the things I said. It was non-stop talking, non-stop giving orders. It was a flood of people coming to you for directions and a myriad of things that are just a blur to me. Everything from labor disputes with steel workers to just trying to get guys. It was a nightmare.

It was an intense, unending. That was the thing about it. It just didn't stop. You got out there, you did not shut up. You talked, you gave orders, you directed, you tried to control. Non-stop. You didn't have ten minutes to yourself. But all in all, from what I saw, I thought we were as effective as -- I couldn't imagine anybody being more effective. There was a fair amount of chaos. I know that's a focal point, but I sincerely believe that there was a lot more control than people are acknowledging.

I think the officers, particularly the Chief officers, did a splendid job. Once again, I know I'm repeating myself, but I think they forget this and I think the proof of that is in the major injuries, of how there wasn't any. There was no fatalities and there was certainly a tremendous amount of potential for that and that was only due in my mind and I'm clear

on this, is that we did have that kind of control and I think that's being ignored.

I think that we did have some control, of course, with the mass of people that we had there. When I say 300, of course, I never had a count. It was a guesstimate. There could have been between 3 and 500 people and that was just in my sector, which ran two blocks long and as far deep into the pile as you could go, which is probably about, I don't know, maybe 6, 800 yards.

Q. How did you get to the First Division? Was that before or after the collapses?

A. I drove in, from home.

Q. You had no problem --

A. I couldn't believe how fast I got into the Division. I saw them collapse. I said woah. That's when I jumped in the car and I had just pulled myself away from it. Went home, changed and got in the car. I was in the city, I would say it took me about 20 minutes.

Q. What was your route?

A. I took the BQE from the 14 Avenue exit.

Q. The Belt Parkway?

A. What I did Arty, was I came in off of 86

Street entrance to the BQE and lots of congestion in the streets, but everything was soon to be closed. But once I got on that BQE, it was closed. The police were out there. It amazed me. I went over the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. You I.D.'d them?

A. Yes, I had to I.D. It was shut down except for us. When I came over the Brooklyn Bridge that was clear. I shot right into the First Division and that was extremely difficult to control. That was just -- some officers were outstanding. Some officers understood what they to do and tried to control their people. Other officers were overwhelmed by trying to control their members and were unable to, as a matter of fact. A fair amount of members went down there on their own without authorization.

Plus trying to find out accurate information of what companies were relocated, what resources we had, was an all day affair and into the night. It never stopped, trying to get accountability of who we had and how effective we were going to be if anything else would have happened. That was a long long day.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Thank you Chief Hill. That concludes the interview. It's

approximately 1550.

File No. 9110312

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

Captain Paul Mallery

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 12:30 in the afternoon. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Captain Paul Mallery of Ladder 10 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 10 and Ladder 10 in the truck office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Captain Mallery, could you please tell me what happened on September 11?

A. I just finished working a 24 hour shift, Monday morning and Monday night, so it was about 8:30, 8:35, I was down in the apparatus floor and saw Lieutenant Steve Harrell coming in and he said I'm just going to get a pack of cigarettes. I said well, I'm going to go in the shower, because I have to go to do Alan Hevesi for the union. It was primary day. He said all right, I got it. That was the last I saw of him.

I go upstairs, I'm in the shower and at the same time there was Murray from BITS doing a stipulation thing with Fireman Bachmann, because of

another situation. So they were in the office. I said if you don't mind, I will take a shower and I won't bother youse. They were in the office and I was in the shower. We heard the sound of the first plane striking tower one.

I come out of the shower, all 3 of us are standing there looking out the window and you can't see tower one, because it's blocked by tower two, but we did see papers starting to fluttering down from the sky. We said uh-oh, this can't be good.

So the two of them bailed out, ran out the door and I said well, I better put some clothes on. I turned on the TV, which wasn't on, and I saw the shot the news had from like the Empire State Building looking south. You could see the building on fire, the plane had hit it. It was a remarkably clear day. We were saying, what was it, some guy being a wise guy, a little Cessna, being cutey cutey, trying to thread the needle between the two buildings and he missed or whatever. We didn't know.

So I put on the same clothes I had on the night before, short sleeve work duty shirt, work duty pants and I go downstairs and the apparatus doors were up. That's why the doors are still intact today,

because they rolled out the door on a verbal and left the doors up. Civilians are coming in, burns, broken bones, cuts and bruises. The next thought was oh, shit, this can't be good.

I'm back and forth between the house watch, the kitchen, the apparatus floor and I hear Lieutenant Gregg Atlas of Engine 10 over the radio that is in the console in the house watch. He said give me a 1060 and give me every ambulance you've got. Those are his exact words.

That was the last I heard from Gregg Atlas. I thought to myself 1060, that's a pretty good call. I would have said second alarm, but he went 1060. Now there is people coming and going, people, civilians coming off the street, people who were supposed to go to work, were late, they were in, and then people were like what can I do, what can I do.

One fellow, I think his name is Rob Weisberg, he is a paramedic out in Commack or Merrick or one of those Long Island places. He goes I'm a medic and I said hoo, you are my man. I showed him the locker with the blue gloves and the first aid supplies and he says all right, I got it. He started taking care of people. He had chairs, we got blankets and pillows and

we were prepared for all kinds of stuff.

He had the less injured go to the kitchen. One woman I remember she was just taking a little paper towel, wiping the blood off a little cut on her elbow. But they were fine. Then I get on the phone, call the dispatcher, and I told him it wasn't a terrorist attack, it was just a stupid plane crash.

He went yes, right. I said give me an ambulance. I said have the ambulance come up Trinity and come in from Liberty from Trinity. So later on we did in fact get the ambulance here and the kid backs up on the apron and I said back it in, all the way to hell in, because the Engine wasn't here, what the heck. And he did. He backed the ambulance into quarters, in the bay where the Engine would go.

Now the paramedic guy EMT guy Rob there, has assistance, two EMTs. Later on there was an article in the Newsday about the 3 of them. The two EMTs and the guy, whatever. What was his name. Jill Moore, did the article.

Back and forth and then in the house watch I hear about this recall. Now I guess the second plane hit the second building. People are standing out front and I said get in, get in. Lo and behold, somewhere

along the way, Sean O'Malley, Lieutenant, Engine 10, he comes in by bicycle then I say oh, good, this is good. I got help then. Then Kerry Horgan, one of my firefighters, he comes in and guys are getting suited up and they are asking me for hose, nozzles, fittings and they are going down the block to the parking lot and they are putting out car fires.

Then the second plane hits and then I am looking down on the apron. I'm looking down, I'm going these guys got to get out of there. The guy taps him on the shoulder. He says no, we are already here, we are back. So good. With cadets, there were firemen from Brooklyn. Like I said, Horgan, O'Malley, and Joe Turillo comes in.

When the second plane hits, Joe Turillo puts on Gregg Atlas' second set of gear and he goes off. I said Joe, where the fuck you going? What are you going to do, bring another can. I mean it violates all the rules about two in two out and all the other stuff. You got no radio, no mask, where are you going?

Joe goes off. I find out three days later he ended up bumped on the head in the hospital in Jersey. But there were guys who were taking gear who did not return. There were guys who did return. So it was a

matter of six of one, half dozen of the other.

I did get a -- hear a recall on the radio and one of the girls says what can I do. I said come with me, I took her into the Engine office, I pulled the sheet out from under the glass, crossed off the names of the guys I knew were working, and I said don't call these numbers, you will waste your time. Start calling these numbers and tell them it's a recall. I had her on the fax phone in the Engine office. Then another guy, a Lieutenant in a white shirt and tie, from headquarters, he says what can I do. I said come with me. Take off to the truck office. Likewise I had to do the truck recall, phone calls.

Things were going pretty good. I had the recall under control. I had the medical situation under control. Had a lot of people in quarters and we were doing all right. Then I happened to be on the second floor when the Kelty brothers came in, Jim, the supervising Marshal, and Gene the Captain of Engine 10. They were in their golf shorts. They had been out on the golf course and they came in. They are going to change into some kind of fire duty clothes and while they are changing in the locker room in the second floor -- the Engine side lockers, I'm telling them

what's going on, briefing them.

I said it sounds just like this, this is exactly what it sounds like, here's another one, thinking it was a third plane. Meanwhile the sound to me was four distinct events. They all sounded the same. The two plane crashes and the two collapses, except the collapses lasted longer.

I don't know if that's the physics of it where the plane is going and how fast and it goes to zero and the building is at zero and it goes to being how fast by the time it comes down, you know, 32 feet per second squared and all that. As the third sound takes place, it's in fact the collapse of tower two, but I didn't know that at the time, the dust comes rolling down the hallway, up the stairs through the bunk rooms and I realized the windows are gone.

I knew my way around quarters, [redacted] I could feel the difference between the mortar lines of the cement block indoors and the brick mortar lines outdoors. So I knew I was outdoors, I knew where I was.

There is some guy screaming at me, get me out of here, get me out of here, in the dust, the total

blackness. I tapped him on the shoulders, I said you are outside pal. He said well, let's go inside. He wanted to run down the cellar, I said no no, don't go to the cellar, thinking there is going to be lack of oxygen. I don't know if this is a nuclear attack. I don't know what this is any more.

But it was black like the worst oil burner fire, that you didn't put your mask on down the oil burner, but you could breathe it because the oil burner has got the carbon monoxide. This was no carbon monoxide, I could tell. I could breathe it and spit it out.

So back into quarters, do a primary secondary whatever, the kitchen, the bathroom. Every place I looked, the TV room, worked my way back to the front of quarters. Nobody is around. They are all gone, which is good. I get back to the house watch. It is packed to the gills with shit that came through windows. I check the Engine office where the girl was making the calls on the fax machine. She is gone and I see no blood or anything on the floor so I figure okay, that's good.

Then I walk up to the front where the truck would normally be and I see this pile of debris

immediately on the apron. I climb up on top of the pile to be in a spot that would be where you would have a double parked car out in the street. I look up and it's still this brown -- black turning to brown turning to beige. I am looking around and it's total silence. The article in the Times, the guy quoted me saying it was like a silence like you never heard before. Not in Manhattan. You always hear something in Manhattan. Train rumble or something. This was nothing.

I said well, this is like the end of the world. Looked up and I did see a little patch of blue poke through the sky, through the dust. I said okay, we are still here. The sky is still blue. Then I hear help help. Lo and behold, it's in the coffee shop of the Bankers Trust. I make my way over there, up and over all this debris and it was the lighter debris of the Trade Center, the aluminum facia and a lot of paperwork and a lot of stuff.

I get into the Bankers Trust and lo and behold, it's the Lieutenant that I had making the phone calls in the truck office. He finished the phone calls, put on coat, boots and helmet, went across the street to get blown around like a rag doll. He had a broken shoulder and a broken femur.

So I go back to get help, I come and get Sean O'Malley and Kerry Horgan. They get over there and they are going to start to CFR-D this guy, get him ready and Sean goes this guy needs oxygen. So I said I will get oxygen. Go back to the ambulance that we had here which was a good thing. Otherwise we had no oxygen in quarters. Get the kid with the ambulance to go over there with the oxygen.

They got a backboard. They are going to do a traction splint, they got oxygen. We got help. We got a bunch of guys, these cadets. We had a few guys. Mike Frusci's son, I remember him now too. We are hooking him up, getting ready to go. There is a cop. There is Captain Kelty now, we are going to package him up and pick him up over the knee wall of the coffee shop, when tower one collapses.

That was the fourth event in the sound department. The sound was the same thing again. Sounded like a plane to me. Sounded like another plane, but it was the collapse of the tower one, which geographically is further away from us, so we said well, we couldn't run anywhere, because there was debris all over the street. So we just hunkered down and we waited. We lived through the second dust storm

and did a little minor roll call, you all right, you all right. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. We waited about -- I don't know, five, ten minutes till we could see better.

We got this Lieutenant up over the wall and they carried him down Greenwich to Rector, made a left on Rector and they got an ambulance at Rector and Trinity Place and off he went.

Then the guys came back, now Lieutenant Jim Csorny shows up. He said come on, let's go get our guys. Then I take off my house watch shoes, put on my bunker gear, coat, helmet, I grab a tool, we go across the street through the Cedar Way, which is the middle of Bankers Trust. I see a guy named Paul at Bankers Trust, building engineer guy, how you doing.

He said, "We evacuated on the first plane crash." He said, "All I got is five essential personnel. They are on the 7th floor by the machinery." He had a handy talky of his own with him. I said, "Could you get them on the radio?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You are okay? We are out of here."

We go through Cedar Way, come out on Washington, right by the Amish market. There we see heavy duty red steel. This is the Trade Center. We

said, "Holy shit, this is -" We only saw the light stuff on Greenwich. Washington had the heavy stuff. We were like this is it. The fucking thing came down. It's not just the plane. The whole building came down.

We go across where the Church used to be in the parking lot, figuring that would be easier, did the surface thing as we went over the pile, nothing, nobody. Make our way to West and Liberty and it's Charlie Blaich in command with some cop guy on top of some unit and they are starting to get this thing going, which turned turns out to be what happens with these chain gang lines with bucket brigades and handing stuff one over one. They were working on getting who out of the where and over there.

We did that for a while, then they wanted water. All the pumpers that were there were shot. I figured water, Hudson River. So I start making my way to the Hudson. We already had the tender, Smoke Two, was inside the marina hooked up to a pump, he was pumping. I see Ray Bressingham. I said -- there is a fire boat out in the river. I said Ray get on the horn and get that boat over here. We need water. He is trying to get the guy on the radio, the guy is not responding.

We ended up walking down to the south side of the south cove, and the boat was coming up anyway. It's the Harvey, fire boat Harvey. Then I could see up and down the river. Marine nine was in. Marine one was down by Albany, and I get this guy and they are all wearing civilian clothes and it doesn't dawn on me. I found out a couple of days later this is not a fire boat. It was scrapped by the city, and it's a museum buff boat. So, I think can you get water out of that thing. The guy goes, "I got no hose. I got no fuel." I said, "What the hell kind of fire boat is that? No hose, no fuel." I said, "All right, I will get you the hose. We will see about the fuel."

Go back east again. Once again bump into Lieutenant Sean O'Malley. "Sean, we need hose to the boat." He musters up some guys. They start stretching from some pumper somewhere back west, back to the boat. I see a Port Authority guy. I said, "Could you get fuel into that boat?" He said, "All right, let me see." He gets on his radio.

Long story short, he got the Circle Line tender to come and fuel up the boat. O'Malley got the hose, the guy down below made water and we had water. Only thing is, the boat does volume, it doesn't do

pressure. What you need is to put pumpers along the way to boost it up, which didn't happen for another day or two. But we got water out of the hornswoggled boat. That was good.

Get back over to West and Liberty and we see what's going on. I hook up with a couple of my guys who are now coming in on the recall. Captain of 20 truck and the girl, Adrian Walsh. He looks at me and I look at him and he said well, you know, what else can we do. I said let's try the number 1 train. He said let's do it. We break off, we walk down to Greenwich and Rector, go down the stairs, dust on the platform but no foot prints.

We hopped the turnstile like little hooligans from the tough neighborhood. We jumped out on to the track. One of the guys was like well, what about the train. I said there ain't no train coming here, you know. We leave a guy in case there is a train and we walk north, up the northbound number 1 train track.

We get to where there is an emergency exit, which happened to be right behind the American Stock Exchange. We send a guy up to open the exit. Now we got a little light, we got a little air and we walk up the tracks. We hear water and as we are going, the

water is getting to be like up to the rail level.

We see the catch basin in the middle, it's got a few rocks covering it. We kick the rocks away. We got the drain going nice. So the water is going down. Then we keep walking north. We see water, broken pipe in the wall somewhere. We keep going and then we get the solid wall of debris. Checked the other side of the track. Both tracks, two solid walls of debris.

Give it a look, see what we can do, you know, tunnel through or something. That ain't going to happen. Nice try. No cigar. We walked back, we go back up the emergency exit and now I'm starting to get the dust in my eyes. This dust was -- somebody said 30 percent ground glass. There is a company from, I don't know, Brooklyn or Staten Island, with a hydrant that is normally always knocked over because trucks make the turn and knock it over on Carlyle. I said give it a wrench and see what happens. Lo and behold it gets water. Now we are washing the face and all that with this nice water.

Couple of guys go off to Whitehall Hardware. They break in, enter the store and come back with flashlights, tools and stuff like that. We head back

and we jump on the pile. We start working.

Needless to say it was a long day. I washed about 4 times. We hooked up with Brian Lustenring, Tony Konczynski, Bryan Platt, Calvanese, what a group, what a real group. We worked our ass off and then we had to take a break. We had to get away from the dust. It was just -- you had to get up wind of the dust. We ended up going into the river, where you could get -- at least the wind coming off the river was clean wind and not dusty wind.

Saw John Morabito, who was the truck chauffeur, still had his radio on him, the only guy with a handie talkie. He is walking around like in a daze. He don't know why he is alive. He has got a whole story to tell. Basically he saw what was going on at West Street. People couldn't come out of the building onto West. He started what I called a conga line and had them go through the lobby, go into the number 1 train and then over to the E train and walk underground and come up at Vesey or come up under at Chambers. Walk the platform of the E train and the A and come up at Church and Chambers, which was a fantastic idea. He had three or four thousand people evacuate that way.

Anyway, needless to say, long day, long night. It got to be four in the morning. I don't know. I lost track of time. Me and Konczynski and Lustenring, we went over to the esplanade and we just laid down on a park bench like a bunch of bums. Took off the bunker gear, feet were soaking wet, socks, we had the socks hanging on the fence to dry. That was good for about 15 minutes, then it started to get a little chilly.

So Tony Konczynski goes off, finds an ambulance and comes back with white sheets. We cover ourselves with white sheets because also the dust was still around, even though it was minimal. We are laying there with white sheets covering us and people are walking back and forth, I guess from the Staten Island Ferry, walking up the esplanade and you hear them talking, and they see the white sheets over these three bodies and they figure we are dead so they shh shh shh, so we were laughing. That worked a little while and we said enough of that shit. Then we got dressed again, soggy boots, soggy socks, came back to 10 and 10. Laid down in the dust, because we were shot.

The next day we did the whole thing all over

again, working on the pile in front of quarters. Then things started happening in quarters. We had eye wash, triage, food started showing up, gloves and boots. We had retirees coming in. Former members, Al Selloti with his triple bypass. Freddy Cappetta, Lieutenant in Brooklyn now. We were doing charging stations for the cordless Saws-All, handy talky batteries, flashlights. We were doing our own little one to one exchange on batteries.

We had food, we had -- Tony Konczynski got a hand line and back fed the quarters to feed water into quarters. We had a flushing toilet. I venture to say we had the only flushing toilet south of Chambers Street for the first two days. It was incredible. People that were here know what was here and people that weren't here wouldn't believe it anyway, so why bother telling them.

The day went on and they said 1 Liberty Plaza was falling. You know, chicken little and henny penny, the sky is falling. Tony Konczynski said no, that building has been looking like that for 20 years. Now with the dust laying on the ledge and the way the sun was setting and everything else, everybody looks up and sees a building that is twisting and they all start

running away. People getting hurt as they run away. I said stop, stop, stop your running.

Then it gets to be about 6:00. I look out the truck office window and Captain Kelty is in the street. Come on, you got to get out, everybody out of quarters. I said yes, all right. Now I'm by myself. I pack up what I want. I get the names -- Matt Donachie was at the Stuyvesant High School the night before working on the list of the missing.

We went through one by one till we confirmed and denied who was who. The phones were not working so good. Everytime you tried to all somebody to confirm they were home or not home it was tough. I got it down to what I thought was my list of about 11 missing. Got the wives, kids, names, phone numbers, truck office, Engine office, took one last look around. The place was empty, looked out the front door, everybody evacuated, because the building was supposed to fall down. They are yelling at me get out of there, get out of there. I said yes, all right.

I left, headed to the Staten Island Ferry, got some Reverend, the Reverend Vargas from Babylon drove me home to Long Island City. That was day one.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. Just a couple

of questions.

A. THE WITNESS: And two. Day one and two.

Q. Okay. The Lieutenant's name, do you have any idea what it was?

A. Lieutenant Keith Ruby I believe.

Q. Lieutenant Keith Ruby. You don't know where he is assigned, do you?

A. He was in headquarters, white shirt and tie.

Q. You said you saw some pumpers when you were down towards West Street.

A. Right.

Q. Were there any markings on them that you can recall?

A. I think 54 Engine. I'm not sure. Kerry Horgan got the chauffeur from 65 Engine dug out. I'm not sure where that rig was buried.

Q. These were all --

A. Maybe squad 18. I don't know. It was a lot of different companies.

Q. You said Ray Bressingham?

A. He is retired but he was there.

Q. That's what I wanted to know, who he was.

A. He was working with SOC as a retiree.

Q. Those other guys you mentioned, you mentioned

all the guys that you hooked up with?

A. My guys basically. Current and former members of 10 and 10.

Q. That's what I wanted to know. Those were all 10 and 10 members?

A. Except for the few people from 20 truck.

Q. You said the chauffeur Ladder 10, he did a great job. Do you know where he was, where his company was operating?

A. 10 truck rolled into tower one on the first alarm.

Q. He was in tower one?

A. In the lobby of tower one.

Q. That's where he started his operation?

A. In the street. He went around the outside, up in the plaza, looked out there and then he was in the lobby. He said he was also feet away from Pete Ganci and when Ganci bought it, he was only a few feet away. Why he was alive and Ganci is not is just one of those things that we don't know.

Q. Okay. Last thing is, in your travels did you see any other companies?

A. All right. Back to that.

Q. Maybe their locations.

A. Back up a step. One of my trips to the front apron, I saw 4 truck come in from West Street heading eastbound on Liberty and they hopped a divider. There is a median between Liberty and the little Trade Center plaza where the tourists get off the busses. I know it's a brand new rig, and I thought about the springs. That's how stupid I am. He hopped the divider, and he parked 4 truck's rig underneath the pedestrian foot bridge that runs from Bankers Trust over to 4 World Trade Center, which was a good move, because the bodies were dropping like water balloons.

He parked the rig under that pedestrian bridge for a little cover. I saw the guys in 4 truck get off, squirrel around, pick up their hooks and cans and whatever they did, masks, and they went to the wall of number two, hugged the wall and then they went in the building.

Also I saw rescue four, they must have parked further away and they walked over. They came across, right in front of my path. I saw Kevin Dowdell. I said how you doing Kevin. I saw Bronco Peersall, and I said where you going Kevin. He said number two, I said, "Yes. That one right over there." That was the last I saw of Kevin Dowdell.

I know rescue 4 and Ladder 4 both went to tower two. I had a visual on that.

Q. Okay, if there is anything else you can remember, you can add it now or that concludes the interview.

A. Well, there was a lot of stuff but that's the gist of it right there.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, thank you very much. That concludes the interview.

File No. 9110313

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN ANTHONY VARRIALE

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The time is is 1450 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual. Captain ANTHONY VARRIALE assigned to Engine Company 24, Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine Company 5 in the office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Captain Varriale, tell me what happened to you on September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. At approximately 8:30 that morning -- I live in Valley Stream, New York. My son picked me up, we were going to go -- I was doing something at his house. We were heading towards Queens, I noticed a large column of smoke on the horizon. I thought it might have been something from Newark. As we got on the Cross Island Parkway headed north, I could see one of the towers of the World Trade Center, smoke coming from it. It was a clear day that day.

I said to my son, let's turn the radio on, something is happening. As we turned the radio on, they had mentioned that a Cessna might have hit the World Trade Center, at which time I told my son to take

me back home. I picked up my pick up truck and I headed in towards the quarters of Engine 24.

On the way in, you could see that the towers were hit. I went through the streets of Brooklyn, which most of the civilian population had helped clear the streets off and I got into the Williamsburg Bridge relatively -- maybe 20 minutes. As I was on the Williamsburg Bridge, I saw the second -- the first tower collapse. I actually stopped my truck and I looked out. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

I responded to quarters of Engine 24, which is located at 6 Avenue and West Houston, where several members were coming in also.

We got our gear. Some of the members I remember that were with me, I can't remember all of them, were fireman William McCarthy, fireman Anthony Salerno, fireman Jeffrey Anstead of Ladder 5, fireman Michael Paolone of Engine 24. Several others and one civilian. We loaded up my pick up truck with first aid equipment, some hose, rollups, whatever we felt we were going to probably need, basically first aid equipment and our fire fighting gear.

At that time, we headed south on Varick Street into West Broadway. We got to about a block

south of Chambers, between Chambers and Warren on West Broadway, where I parked my pick up truck. Right around then, I believe the second tower came down, because it was relatively clear at that point as we were heading south. There was lots of people heading north and then when we got out of the van, my memory is a little vague on that, I'm pretty sure that's when the second tower collapsed, because we were hit with dust.

As the dust started settling we noticed there was nothing but vehicles and fire for as far as the eye could see. We actually commandeered a volunteer fire truck. It was the only fire truck we saw at that point. It was just south of Warren on West Broadway. It was from, I believe a vollie -- volunteer company from the Bronx.

My chauffeur, Anthony Salerno, got into the apparatus, we backed it up, because it was in danger of catching fire from the numerous vehicle fires that were on. We found a hydrant, I believe it was Warren and West Broadway, hooked up and stretched down West Broadway. We also hooked up a manifold. We were able to get water into some hand lines and started extinguishing the numerous auto fires and there was two busses, several trucks. As we moved south, some of the

fire was communicating into one of the buildings on the west side. We extinguished that. I'm not sure of the address.

When we ran out of line, we shut down the pumper, disconnected the hose line and then went into -- we were now between Vesey and the block north of that. We went into the east side building, stretched off the stand pipe and extinguished a couple of busses, a bus fire, several cars and the apparatus of Engine 28, which was fully involved. That was roughly on the corner of West Broadway and Vesey.

At that time, other firefighters started showing up, Deputy Battalion Chief Paul Ferran of the 41 Battalion, and James Savastano of the First Division assigned to the Second Battalion showed up and we attempted to search and extinguish, at the time which was small pockets of fire in 7 World Trade Center. We were unaware of the damage in the front of 7, because we were entering from the northeast entrance. We weren't aware of the magnitude of the damage in the front of the building.

We made searches. We attempted to put some of the fire out, but we had a pressure problem. I forget the name of the Deputy. Some Deputy arrived at

the scene and thought that the building was too dangerous to continue with operations, so we evacuated number 7 World Trade Center. At that time, some of my members went with another officer, I don't remember who it was, to try and search the collapse of -- I guess the number one tower on Vesey Street.

I was with one Firefighter, who I can't remember right now, over to where we were told there was a command post set up, which would be, I think it was West Street and Vesey. But I went down the block north to it, because you couldn't go down Vesey.

When I got there, there was hundreds of firefighters. Chief Fellini was there. I guess he was in charge. He was trying to give people direction. I then went with Firefighter Paolone who ended up meeting him there and Firefighter Jeff Anstead of Ladder 5.

We went south on West Street under the bridge, at which time they were just removing the body of Chief Feehan, Deputy Commissioner Feehan, and then from there, we started searching on what was West Street, south of the first bridge and I operated there for several hours. I helped remove one Firefighter from under the apparatus of Engine 34, with fireman Erik Wiener of Ladder 111, and several other

firefighters. I know Erik because I had worked in Brooklyn.

From there I just started working my way over eastward to the north tower. I was there for hours. We ended up stretching a line from somewhere. It was a pumper on West Street, I think, that was still intact. We tried to stretch lines into the pile that would have ended up being just west of number one tower. Trying to extinguish the fires there.

We performed searches, void searches. I was also on the tower, the pile there we called it, when they removed one victim, a male. I believe he was the guy that said he was on the 83 floor or 73 floor. He seemed to be fairly intact. I was at that point where I stayed most of the day because I found a face piece from one of my members.

Actually it was handed to me from a Captain Steven Geraghty and so we stayed in that area. I thought I might be searching for members of Engine 24, while Fireman Palone and Fireman Anstead went further to the tower where they hooked up with Ladder 43 and made contact with Chief Prunty of the Second Battalion, who they said at that time was still alive. I didn't see that myself, but this is what they had told me

later on.

I continued operating into the evening, at which time I went back to the quarters of Engine 24 just to freshen up. I stayed there maybe an hour, hour and a half, regrouped with a bunch of other guys, then we went back and I worked through the night, searching voids, and operating with some of my members. We actually had them operating a hose line now. That was on the south tower.

We were there until the day, sometime the next day. I don't remember exactly what time. Maybe around noon. We went back to quarters. Then that's when we went on the 24 hour, 24 hour off, 24 hour on. That's about all I can recall now.

Q. Okay, just a couple of things. When you say you were at, you saw, Engine 34. Where were they located?

A. I'm pretty sure it was the apparatus, what was left. It was crushed, it was buried. It was on West Street. I wasn't sure if it was Engine 34, but Fireman Wiener said it was Engine 34. There were two firefighters trapped, I helped remove one. He was dead. I don't know who it was. He was pretty mangled.

The other one, they just didn't get him out at that time. I ended up operating -- this actually ended going from Engine 34 to the apparatus of Ladder 105, because they believed there were members trapped under that. I worked there for a while. So I wasn't present when they got the second body out.

Q. 105 is also on West Street?

A. Yes.

Q. South of that foot bridge?

A. Yes.

Q. Steve Geraghty you mentioned, where is he from?

A. Well I know him from working in Brooklyn. He is a Captain, I believe. He is not a Captain of 111. I don't know where he was assigned at that time.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, if you have nothing, else that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110314

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL PALONE

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 1515. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Michael Palone, fireman first grade, Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the office of Engine Company 5 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Palone, please tell me what happened in your own words on September 11th, 2001.

A. On September 11th after the two planes hit the World Trade Center, I heard about the recall over the phone and headed into the city. When I arrived at the firehouse, a bunch of guys were getting into Captain Variale's pickup truck. I grabbed my stuff, jumped in the back of the pickup truck and went down Seventh Avenue down to the site.

As we got down to the site, there were also two car fires. We tried extinguishing car

fires on the way down. We had a problem with the water pressure. There was no water pressure out of the hydrants. We tried hooking up to a pumper, basically trying to put out the car fires, not too much success because of the water problem.

We went into World Trade Seven to try and get their standpipe system to possibly use their water off their tank on the roof. Then from there we met a bunch of people outside of 5, hooked up with Darren Lebow and Kevin -- what's Kevin's last name that used to work there?

Anyway, I hooked up with a couple of guys and went into the basement of five, got right next to the collapse, searched for people, searched through the cars in the bottom of five, couldn't find anybody. I went back up to the street level and ended up going around to the front of five where 5 Truck, 24 Engine was and went up onto the mezzanine into the building there and searched through there for a while. We were ordered out of there. We came out of there.

We went back down and hooked up with Craig Monahan, I believe, Jeff Anstead, myself,

Bobby Beddia and went from where we were on West Street under the walkway bridge. That would put us in between the two walkway bridges and across the pile of rubble into I believe it was the B stairway, where they were searching for Ladder 6.

We hooked up with a guy from rescue who was lowering down a civilian and tied the rope off from him. A guy from rescue in the top of the staircase lowered the civilian down and then slid down himself and then went down those stairs.

They were getting the woman Sylvia out, basically helped carry her out on the stretcher. 6 came out somewhere there when we were there. 6 Truck came out. We were there for a while trying to get Battalion Chief Prunty, who was trapped under the steel in the bottom of the staircase.

There were a couple of other companies down there; I'm not sure who. We were down there for a while until we were ordered off, because they were worried about Seven coming down. We ended up coming out of there and going off the rubble and then over towards the marina, cleaning up our eyes and just basically getting ourselves

back together until we went back to the firehouse. I don't really know times.

Q. Just a couple quick questions. Darren Lebow --

A. 5 Truck.

Q. He was from 5 Truck?

A. Yeah.

Q. You operated with him for quite --

A. Right. When we went down into the bottom of five, we got right next to the bottom of the collapse, and we were in there pretty close. Kevin Anderson was with us. It was me, Lebow, Kevin Anderson.

We basically grabbed any tools we could out of a Port Authority suburban that was down there. Anything that we thought we could use we grabbed and tried to do whatever we could.

Q. But it was just the three of you at that point?

A. It was the three of us at that point. Then when we came back up, we hooked up -- I think 5 Truck was there with the captain of 5 and the rest of 5 Truck and then hooked up with Monahan and Beddia and Anstead and then actually

went over to that B stairway.

Q. You saw 5 and 24's rigs?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were they located?

A. 5's ladder was going up to Five World. I believe that was five world, and 24 Engine was just behind them.

Q. On what street?

A. On West Street.

Q. When you say the chief ordered you out -- you didn't say chief. You said somebody ordered you out of the building.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. I think it might have been Blaich. I'm not sure. It was a division chief who was ordering us out for a while.

Q. When you said you hooked up with Monahan, Beddia and all of those guys, those are the members of Engine 24 and Ladder 5, just to clarify that?

A. Yes.

Q. And the guy from rescue that was going down, do you know what rescue it was?

A. I don't know what rescue it was. I think it might have been -- I'm not sure. I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. He was up above us. He was looking to tie the rope off, I tied it off to the banister, and Jeff Anstead was with me. He went up to see if he could help him, but it was up there and everything was a little compromised. He didn't know what he was stepping on and everything else. It was just a little unstable.

Q. Okay. If you have nothing else, this will conclude the interview.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

File No. 9110315

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL HADDEN

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 2:15 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Michael Hadden from Engine 35, in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. Lieutenant, just state the facts as you remember them on September 11th.

A. I was scheduled for education day on September 11th. Education day was canceled. We reported to the quarters of Engine 35. We went down with Engine 35 in a convoy of five other engines. We proceeded south on the West Side Highway.

We had no idea what was going on or what had transpired. We were special called as additional engines after the second fifth. I believe the ticket we got was around 9:50; I'm not sure.

The company from the night before was held over, so I was effectively an extra officer. Battalion Chief Ferran was with me. The company

stayed at the staging area. I believe they were at Murray and West Street.

Chief Ferran and myself headed south on West Street. We got around Barclay Street when the second tower, the north tower, started to come down. I took cover next to a fence, and once the dust started to clear, I headed south towards the tower.

There wasn't much that I could see at the time. It was very dusty. I started encountering rigs that were crushed. I made it to the north walkway with two firefighters from 85 Truck who were there. They had been separated from their unit. We searched under the north walkway. There was no signs of life around any of the apparatus.

We came out from the north walkway. I hooked up with two guys from 14 Truck who had come down on their own. This was after the second tower had come down. There was no presence of Fire Department personnel by the crosswalk, by the north walkway at West Street at that time.

Do you want me to tell you what I did

the whole day?

Q. No, no, that's fine. What we're interested in is the time around the collapse.

A. I had no handy talky. I had no radio access. I didn't hear anything. When we were heading south on West Street, the first person I actually saw was Chief Mike Telesca being helped north. Then I encountered a lot of people just kind of walking around dazed.

That's about it at the time of the collapse. The rest of the day, I remember pretty much exactly what I did but my time frame is all messed up.

Q. That's okay.

When the north tower came down, just prior to it, was there anything you saw with the north tower that would indicate it was coming down? Did you see anything or it was just coming down?

A. No, it just started coming down. Just the noise -- we were heading south on West Street, and Chief Ferran and myself were saying to each other that thing isn't going to come down, not knowing that the south tower had

already come down.

It seemed like it was in slow motion until it got about a block away, and then it was fast.

Q. Thanks a lot, Mike.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:19, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110316

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JAMES CASEY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 12th, 2001, and the time is 1:45 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant JAMES CASEY from Engine 91, in the quarters of Engine 91.

Q. Lieutenant, just state the facts as you remember them on September 11th.

A. We responded when the plane hit the south tower, which would be Two World Trade. They just told us to respond and they would send us a ticket later.

We responded on West Street. We parked the rigs I guess you would call it north of the north pedestrian bridge. We were just north of that. We responded to the command post at the World Financial Center, number Two World Financial Center.

While there, it was called over the command center that there was a civilian employee, an engineer from Two World Trade Center. He said he knew how we could control the

valves to increase the water pressure in the building.

So we were ordered to go over there. However, we did not have forcible-entry tools. I sent my chauffeur back to the rig to obtain the forcible-entry tools and, while waiting, Two World Trade Center collapsed.

We ran into the garage that is located at Two World Financial Center. I later on found out that two of my men ran out the rear, and I and another one of my men responded to the front of the building. General chaos ensued.

Me and that one member went back looking for the chauffeur, to the rig, could not find him, and I ordered -- that member was a qualified chauffeur, to move the rig out of harm's way, I guess.

We moved the rig out of the way, and then I went back looking for my chauffeur and the second one came down. So I got caught in the smoke from that one. I went back out again I guess up to Murray.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. I was --

Q. On West Street?

A. -- on West Street, making my way back, looking for my chauffeur.

After the collapse, I got back into the clear, and I found the two missing members. Then I went back in again and found my chauffeur, who was being treated by EMS. He was taken to the hospital.

Then the whole company got together again, and we tried to go back in but that was it. We were told to go off to the side and rest. That was it for the day.

Q. Prior to the collapse did you hear any maydays or anything like that?

A. I'm trying to think. I know there were maydays all over the place that day. I can't say for sure.

Q. No particular company or anything sticks out in your mind?

A. No. There were maydays that were coming all over all the time. Between that and the jumpers, that was basically it.

Q. Okay.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:49, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110317

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 11:01 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with George Rodriguez, firefighter first grade of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. George, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. On September 11th we weren't dispatched to go down to the World Trade Center until the second plane hit the building. We responded by getting on the West Side Highway at 96th Street and subsequently went southbound until we reached the towers.

I was assigned to Ladder Company 22, but I'm a recent transfer from the engine. I happen to be an engine company chauffeur and was assigned to drive Engine 76 that day.

En route we met up with Ladder Company 25 on the West Side Highway. We traveled southbound together and arrived at the towers at approximately the same time.

Upon arrival I dropped off the members of my company, which was Engine 76 that day, on

Vesey and West. They proceeded with their equipment to the command post, and I proceeded to go east on Vesey to seek out a source of water and/or to assist any other chauffeurs I saw down there.

I first parked my apparatus approximately 75 feet east of West Street on Vesey. I sized up the situation. Pretty much all the hydrants in the area were taken.

At that point I grabbed some standpipe tools from my apparatus, and I proceeded to walk east on Vesey to assist any other chauffeurs as necessary. Pretty much all of that was being done.

I remember at that point looking up at the towers. The operation was growing in size. Many civilians were coming out the windows or being blown out the windows.

As much as I didn't want to, I went up on the concourse in between the north and south towers to actually see if there was any help I could render to anyone; there wasn't.

I came back down to the street. I met up with Commissioner Von Essen at that time. I

told the Commissioner what I saw on the concourse. His response is not that important.

So I proceeded to get back into my rig and drive down Vesey. I took a U turn and I came back. I saw the maintenance crew to Seven World Trade Center standing there watching the building. I gathered them up and asked them if they had fire pumps in the building. They did.

I had a Siamese directly across Washington Street on Vesey going into the towers, so I used the maintenance men and an engine company chauffeur from 26 Engine named Mike Incantalupo. I used him to hook up a source of water from their fire pumps to my rig and into the World Trade Center, which the Siamese was located right below Six World Trade Center, the U.S. Customs building.

At that point we were supplying the standpipe Siamese. All was going well with that. The operation was growing in intensity. At that point the preliminary sounds of the collapse started, the loud crackling sounds. We all started running, because I think the energy coming down through the cylinders of the building

because of the pancake, the energy came out first and then the actual debris started coming.

So we all ran. Myself and the chauffeur of 26 Engine grabbed about 30 civilians as well as the maintenance men, and we put them all in the basement of Seven World Trade Center. At that point all power was off in the buildings. The only means of egress was out onto Washington Street, which was totally covered with debris and ash. You couldn't get out the door. There was no means of egress from that particular point in the basement.

So I gave a mayday. I heard a lot of other maydays on the radio; I couldn't even pinpoint to you which ones. I gave a mayday: "Mayday, mayday, mayday. This is Engine 76 chauffeur to command post. I'm trapped in the basement of Seven World Trade Center with approximately 30 civilians and another fireman." I got no answer, but I figured guys were in much worse situations, so I just shut up on the radio and listened.

Two of the civilians didn't want to stay in the basement. They wanted to get out

because it was a smoke condition down there and a lot of ash. You couldn't really breathe that well, but it was much better than outside.

We tried to block the door so they wouldn't go out. The situation wasn't going to get good with that, so I stepped aside, let them run out. Unfortunately for them they ran to the left, which happened to be right towards Vesey Street, which was the wrong way to go. I never saw those two again.

It seemed like an eternity. As it started lifting, myself and the chauffeur of 26 Engine removed all the civilians to the right down Washington Street towards Barclay and evacuated them from the area.

At that point we still were hearing maydays over the radio from right in our area, from Vesey and Washington. So we made our way down to try and see if we can help another fireman. Actually the mayday was coming from -- I'm not sure if it was Vesey and Washington. There was a bridge there going from the Trade Center to seven world, and it was right under that area we were hearing the maydays from.

So we went down Washington, took a left, which is east on Vesey, and we started looking for this guy that was in trouble. No luck in finding him.

At that point that sound came back, and the second tower started to go, which happened to be tower number one. We did everything we could to make it back to Washington and turn northbound on Washington. As we turned the corner, the rubble started coming down, but the energy caught us first. I think it was a lucky thing because the energy actually picked us up and threw us about 40 feet.

We rolled on the ground. We kind of got separated. I had my mask on.

Q. You had your face piece on too?

A. No. I just had the mask on and the cylinder turned on. The other chauffeur didn't, so when we got separated he was in a real bad way.

I looked up. That was it. I didn't really realize I was alive until I started hearing him call my name. I searched around for him. I donned my face piece. I searched around

for him, found him, buddy-breathed with him. I took him down Washington, east on Barclay, north on whatever street that is and put him in an ambulance.

At that point I went back and I started searching for my company, which I thought both companies were gone because they had gone into the command post. After the second collapse there wasn't really much chatter on the radio. So the silence was actually the worst part of it all, you know?

Basically that's it. I really can't recall which companies I saw going into the buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. I saw companies going up on to the concourse. That's where a lot of civilians were coming and hitting the ground like water balloons. Prior to the collapses we grabbed a couple civilians out of there.

It was so crazy at that moment. There was just no answers on the radio. You just did all you could. My rig was gone. I thought my companies were gone. I knew a lot of other

companies were gone. You just picked an area and started digging.

You actually had to pass over seriously injured people to help more seriously injured people. That was insane in itself. The conception of that is crazy.

Q. Were you able to meet up with your company later or not?

A. The first person I saw was Chief McNally. I guess whatever situation he had been involved with, as soon as the situation got to a point where he could make it towards the buildings again, he came back in. He could barely even talk because of everything that was going on, myself included.

I heard Chief Harten from the 10th Battalion on the radio trying to get in touch with McNally, and McNally's radio died. So I said, "Don't worry, Chief, I'll send it for you." I couldn't get Harten either on the radio. The reason I know them, because they were both battalion chiefs here.

I told Chief McNally, "I'll go over there and I'll go personally deliver your

message." I went over and I did that. On the way we had helped a couple people out. On the way to go deliver the chief's message, I ran into my engine officer, Frank Farrington.

At that point we started to try and get a head count, all right, what have we got, who's alive, who's not alive. Let's start with our company, we'll group up, we'll go and get whoever is there.

There was a lot of firemen. The firemen that were remaining after the collapses were trying to regroup with their guys and then go back and help other people. That's pretty much what I found.

It turned out that all the guys in the engine that day made it. Then we started hearing the different truck names, they made it, and the only one in question at that point was Chief Picciotto and his aide, Gary Sheridan.

Then we got the orders that we were going to regroup. Bring out another command post. I'm not sure exactly where it was. It was probably north on the West Side Highway. Way north on the West Side Highway, they got another

command post ready. They had a full recall. I met up with my company, and I came back and we started searching for people.

That's pretty much my whole account of the situation.

Q. All right. Thanks a lot, George.

A. Thank you, Chief.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:13, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110318

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FERNANDO CAMACHO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 11:17 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Fernando Camacho of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. Fernando, describe the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. On the morning of September 11th I was on house watch, and it was about 8:00. A little bit after 8, because I was watching the news, I saw the first airplane or it would seem, an explosion on one of the towers; I believe it was the north tower. Chief Picciotto came down, called the dispatcher and went out on his way down.

Approximately 15 minutes later, both the engine and the truck, we got our tickets to go down to the World Trade Center. It took us about maybe 20 minutes to get there. We came out of our truck prepared to receive our orders, walked down to the command post which was across the street on the West Side Highway. It was across the street from the north tower. We

waited there approximately about 15 minutes for our orders.

After we waited for a while, we were told to go into the lobby of the Vista Hotel. We proceeded along the right side of the highway, basically the same side of the command post, down to the south pedestrian bridge, under the pedestrian bridge, to avoid being hit by bodies and debris going down.

We came in through the corner of Liberty and the West Side Highway into the Vista Hotel. There was a setup, a small command post or small gathering of firefighters there with a couple of chiefs. I can't tell who they were. I don't remember that.

We were in there approximately another ten minutes. Lieutenant Riley came back from talking to the chief, and we were assigned to go to the 75th floor. We got our equipment together and started walking up. Ladder 25 had gone ahead of us about five minutes before we got assigned to go to the 75th floor.

We went across the lobby of the hotel, going north, and we exited and made a right going

towards the second tower, the south tower. We must have walked about 100-200 feet to revolving doors, which led into a hallway to where the mall was. I could see maybe 20, 25 civilians and I believe Ladder 25, which was about another 100 to 150 feet ahead of us.

As we came in through the revolving doors, the lights went out. A second or two later everything started to shake. You could hear explosions. We didn't know what it was. We thought it was just a small collapse.

As I looked straight ahead of me, I saw total darkness. Everything was coming our way like a wave. The firefighters that were ahead of us and the civilians that were ahead of us totally disappeared.

We turned around. We were all pretty much within ten feet of each other: lieutenant, chauffeur, roof, OV, can. As we turned around, I ran probably maybe ten feet and that's when the body of the building or body of the collapse hit, and we were flying through the air basically. I must have flown 30, 40 feet through the air.

Then total quiet. You couldn't

breathe. You couldn't see anything. None of the equipment worked. My face piece was gone, flashlight, helmet. There were about maybe five or six civilians around us. We tried to get them out, as we tried to make our way out.

We did a perimeter search. Everything behind us was blocked and to our sides. We came back out basically through the same way we came into the building. We were facing the West Side Highway now, but there was a hole in the side of the building. So that's how we found our way out.

The only thing I know is that it was the roof, the OV and myself that got out. I had the can. Lieutenant Riley and the chauffeur we couldn't find. We didn't know if they were trapped or they made their way out in some other fashion. We found out later that they did make their way out, through another exit or behind us.

The West Side Highway was still pretty clear. There wasn't a lot of debris in front of us. We made our way north underneath the pedestrian bridge that's to the north. As we approached the rig again, I was being tended by

EMS for head wounds.

Five minutes after that the north tower started to lean.

Q. You saw it leaning?

A. Yeah.

What happened was that as I was standing there and getting bandaged, somebody said the tower is leaning. So me and Gorman -- he had the irons. We turned around and looked, and we could see the tower leaning. As it started to lean, it just came straight down. Now we're running again.

Q. Which way was it leaning? Towards West Street?

A. The tower was leaning not towards -- it leaned somewhat northwest but not -- it came down pretty straight after it leaned. It didn't really continue to lean. It just leaned a little bit and then came straight down.

Basically that's it. We ran and we went into the high school that's I believe somewhere --

Q. On Chambers.

A. Chambers, yeah. It might be Chambers,

a little further up from Chambers Street. We came back out after the cloud passed us and started helping out people that couldn't breathe or were injured.

That's basically the bulk of the information I can give.

Q. Fine. Let me get one thing straight. From the time you noticed the leaning to the time of it coming down, are we talking about seconds here?

A. No more than three, four seconds.

Q. All right. Thank you for all your help, Fernando.

A. No problem.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:27, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110319

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN MALLEY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 12th, 2001. The time is 11:31 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter John Malley of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. John, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We responded on the second fifth alarm, work our way down. The streets were kind of cleared, and the police had everything opened. We got there pretty fast; I don't know how fast, but record time to get all the way down there from here.

We pulled up on West Street, maybe a block away from the north tower, maybe half a block; I'm not sure. We grabbed our gear and worked our way down. We were right under the north tower when we realized people were jumping right very close to us. So we had to run across the street to avoid being hit by debris and people.

As we're halfway across the street, we

hear on the radio about an urgent message or a mayday message about a third plane en route. So we kind of froze there. We said now what do we do? Do we go back into the building or take cover under where the command post was in the garages.

So the men went to the garage, and the officer went to the command post. We stood there and watched everybody jumping and waiting for our assignments, for our officer to come back.

People started to jump with such a -- it was maybe one jumper every five seconds at one point, every ten seconds. Then they just started jumping like one every one second, two seconds. There were people just coming down like it was raining people.

One of the officers -- I don't remember who -- said that's it, we've got to do something. Truck companies on the left, engine companies on the right, we'll start going single file. We can't wait any longer.

So we were going in not knowing where this third plane, whether this plane was coming or not. I remember hearing I think it was Ganci

asking if we could get confirmation on whether the military can down the plane or not. I didn't hear whether it was or wasn't. All I know is we were going in regardless.

We proceeded to hug the west side of West Street to avoid any debris. We went from the north walkway to the south walkway pedestrian bridge, where we went from the pedestrian bridge one at a time, ran into the Liberty entrance of the Vista Hotel.

At that point we were just mulling around in the lobby, waiting for our assignments. I believe I might have seen the guys from 25. I was kind of shocked, so I don't really know who I was talking to.

I was dreading walking up the stairs. I was worried about having to hump those stairs, because my heart was already racing about 150 beats a minute. It was racing, and I knew that claiming those stairs were going to make it almost unbearable.

We proceeded. We got our assignment to work the 75th floor and above of the south tower. We proceeded through. We went north through the

Vista Hotel lobby into the atrium, I believe, of the north tower, made a right turn, proceeded east in the atrium, preparing to go through revolving doors into -- I don't know because it was pitch-black. We were walking into darkness.

As we walked through those revolving doors, that's when we felt the rumble. I felt the rumbling, and then I felt the force coming at me. I was like, what the hell is that? In my mind it was a bomb going off.

The pressure got so great, I stepped back behind the columns separating the revolving doors. Then the force just blew past me. It blew past me it seemed for a long time. In my mind I was saying what the hell is this and when is it going to stop?

Then it finally stopped, that pressure which I thought was a concussion of an explosion. It turns out it was the down pressure wind of the floors collapsing on top of each other. At that point everything went black, and then the collapse came. It just rained on top of us. Everything came. It rained debris forever. I was semiburied. I thought I might be the only one

alive at that point, because it was just an incredible amount of debris falling around us.

Although I was relatively unhurt -- it was miraculous. I couldn't believe I was still alive, with the amount of debris that came down. At that point I was amazed I was still alive. When I stood up, I thought I was going to drown in the dust, because I didn't know the dust was coming because it was pitch-black.

Then I went to put on my mask to don the face piece. I don't know if my face was so covered with dust or the mask was covered with dust, but it was pretty useless.

I hopped up when I could. I heard one of my members calling Ladder 22 to have a roll call. So we pretty much were scurrying around in the dark, we found each other, everybody but the lieutenant. We couldn't find the lieutenant. We had all five members.

There were secondary explosions, I don't know, aerosol cans or whatever. But we're in the darkness. We see basically the glow of a flashlight and still things coming down. The noise, the explosions, whatever it was. I don't

know, we just realized we had to get the heck out of there.

We still couldn't breathe. There was still heavy dust. So we started to make our way out. We said let's dig our way out and then we'll come back for the lieutenant.

As I started to proceed in the direction I felt was the way I came in, I felt wind, so I walked towards the wind. The guys I was with were getting further away, and I was trying to explain to them that it's this way. I said, "It's this way. It's this way. I can feel the wind." They were saying, "No, no. It's this way." So I continued on my own.

I met a civilian. The civilian asked me what he should do. I said, "Stay with me. I'm going to walk into the wind, and we'll get out of here." I continued to walk, and then I realized that I was about a foot away from a fire truck. I felt I must be outside now, although I wasn't a hundred percent sure because I could have been in a garage. I don't know because it was still completely dark.

As I was at the fire truck, I heard my

lieutenant calling me, so I answered him. I relayed to him that everybody was okay and we were working our way outside. He said he's on his way outside, that we would meet outside.

That's when I realized I was outside, because something landed right behind me. It sounded like a body. The same sound that I heard before when the bodies were landing was similar to the sound that I just heard.

Then it occurred to me that I was in harm's way right now, because I'm underneath this thing and I could get hit and not know because I can't see it coming. So I decided to run what I thought was west. It turns out it was. I ran across the street. I was tripping over people and hoses and everything.

I worked my way up to that green fence. There was a green fence. I had worked my way back into the Vista Hotel, and that's how I got out. I could start to see daylight north. So I started walking towards the daylight. The first time I stopped I was under the north foot bridge.

While I was standing there, things started to clear up. One of the chiefs that I

know, Chief McNally, told me to stand post on Vesey and West Street and try to get everybody I could to go north to get away from the collapse zone.

So while I was standing there, EMS workers started to try to clean me up because I was completely covered in dust. My eyes were almost sealed shut with the dust.

While I was there I saw a few guys, Kevin Gorman and Camacho. I told them we have to work our way north from here. I don't know where the other guys were. I just remember pretty much at that point hearing on the police radio that the building looked like -- the north tower was going to come down.

At that point I didn't know the building came down. I thought I was still in the explosion. I didn't know the whole building had come down.

So while I was on the corner of Vesey and West, the police, everybody, started herding everybody north of there, saying that the building was coming down, the building was coming down.

So I got to about Barclay and west, and I looked up and I started to see the building crumbling down. That's when I turned around and just started running. I believe I dove in the bushes around Murray Street and was engulfed again in the cloud.

That's pretty much it. Then we worked our way north to the command post. We were relieved there by the guys that were on the recall. They started taking our masks and gear and everything.

I was so covered with insulation dust and everything, I was itching like crazy. I hosed myself off on West Street. It wasn't doing anything, so we all got together at that point. We were standing at the command post, wherever it was, north of the Trade Center.

At that point the lieutenant said he was going to go let them know that all our members were accounted for. We told him that we were going to try to find a local firehouse to go shower off.

That was it.

Q. Okay, John. Thank you very much.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:45, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110320

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT FRANCIS FARRINGTON

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's 11:58 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant Francis Farrington of Engine 76, in the quarters of Engine 76.

Q. Francis, just tell me the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We were in the firehouse and we had seen -- we had the television on and we saw some tape of the first plane into the first building.

Q. The north tower.

A. The north tower. At that time the second plane struck the second tower and immediately Chief Picciotto contacted the dispatcher and informed him that we needed to double the response assignment. He jumped in his battalion car and he responded, informed the dispatcher he was going to the World Trade Center.

Shortly thereafter we received a ticket, and the ticket was for the second fifth alarm for the second tower. We responded second due on the second fifth.

We responded down the West Side Highway. Approximately three blocks from the World Trade Center, we received a radio transmission from the Manhattan dispatcher that advised all the units responding in on the second fifth alarm to report in to the command post on West Street.

We momentarily parked the apparatus under the pedestrian bridge just north of Liberty Street. We exited the apparatus. The chauffeur positioned, attempted to take a position on the north side of the towers to impede the Siamese. I'm sure he can inform you the specifics on that if he hasn't done so already.

At that point we directed our members to return with rollups, so we set up in front of Two World Financial Center on West Street. The command post and staging area was located in front of a parking garage.

We reported in, we stand fast. We were waiting for our assignment when the south tower collapsed. At that point my members and myself and some other companies took refuge into the parking garage. We felt that was our best

protection at that point. We headed into the garage.

My concern at that point was to shelter my company and also find an alternative means out of the garage. I did a quick check in the building and I found -- I hoped to find and I did find a stairway leading up to the garage. We found the exit, hooked up a search rope and we stretched the search rope back into the garage, because at that point various personnel, civilian and firemen personnel, had scattered at that point.

We got them on the search rope, got them up into the tower, up about two flights. We were on the west side of Two World Financial Center and were heading towards the water. We didn't receive orders at that point. We tried to regroup in the staging area along the Hudson River at that point.

We awaited orders at that point when the second tower -- we were forming up in the staging area when the second tower collapsed.

Q. Where exactly was the staging area?

A. We attempted to find the staging area

at Vesey and north river. Different battalions were reporting in, and we were trying to group together. At that point or shortly thereafter, the second tower collapsed.

After it had collapsed, we regrouped and were ordered by the command chief -- I don't know his name -- to conduct a perimeter search along Vesey Street and West Street. We did so. The conditions were very quiet and very poor visibility. It was almost like we had a blizzard there.

During the search we were ordered by one of the battalions to move north above -- towards Stuyvesant High School -- under the overpass at Chambers Street, because at that point it was feared that Six World Trade Center was going to collapse. It did so later in the afternoon.

While at the command post some people I saw that eventually were, killed or missing, Chief Ganci, Donald Burns, Chief Downey, Captain Stackpole, Chaplain Juose. As I was crossing West Street, I saw Safety Chief or SOC Chief Paolillo.

That's pretty much the story at that point. If there's any other people, I'll let you know. As far as companies reporting in, Ladder 22 was with us at the staging area and ordered into the building. I believe they were ordered into the south tower, and they were on their way through the north tower, I believe, into the south tower when the south tower came down. They were apparently inundated and buried in the lobby. Their members could probably give you more specifics there.

Reports of Ladder 25, I didn't see them directly, but some of the men reported they saw them entering an elevator and were never heard from again. Lieutenant Nichols talks about contact with people in 4 Truck, so he may be able to give you more information. He's in Engine 74.

I think that's it for now. If I had more, I'd give it to you.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 12:05, and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110321

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN BREEN

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 3:17 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Breen, firefighter fourth grade from Engine 74. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 74.

Q. John, just tell us the events of September 11th.

A. On that morning we got the run -- after the second building was hit, that's when we got the run. It was after 9:00. It came over the voice alarm. The whole battalion was called to go. us, 25 Truck, 47 Engine, 76 and 22 and 35 and 40 I believe were the companies that I heard over the voice alarm to respond.

We went down the West Side Highway. We had a clear go all the way down. It was no problem as far as traffic going down that way. We pulled up on the West Side Highway. We were on West Street. Where we parked I believe was Vesey Street. I probably will tell you about

that later on. I'm almost positive it was Vesey Street where we parked our rig.

As we parked there, one of the other trucks I noticed that was there was 25 Truck. I believe Joe Collins from 25 Truck. I believe that was who he was. He was riding extra for 25. I heard he was supposed to go to a detail to 76 and 22.

I was just talking to one of the details that's working here today. He's from 25. He said Joe Collins was riding extra. He came over to our rig, and he was asking for a mask, and he was given our chauffeur's mask.

Myself, Lieutenant Nichols, Jeff Johnson, Pat Carey and Ruben Correa were walking down West Side to West Street underneath the pedestrian bridge. We were walking towards the Marriott Hotel. I was told by Lieutenant Nichols that dispatch called him over the radio and we were told to report to the Marriott Hotel, the old Vista Hotel, which is Three World Trade Center.

As we were walking underneath, we didn't see any bodies falling out. We did see

one body on the ground, and that's when the lieutenant told us to walk as far away from the building as we could and just to keep our heads up for any falling bodies.

We walked into the lobby of the Marriott. The only other company I saw that I knew down there at the time that I know was 47 Engine. The chief that was working there that morning, I wish I knew who he was -- I really don't know -- at the command center. I really don't know what his name was, but he was telling us to -- the engines to line up on one side and the trucks on the other side.

We were told first we were going to go into the south tower. Then there was a report of people stuck or possible hotel guests still up in the Marriott. A couple of units were told to go up there.

The companies I do know that went up there with us is 74 Engine, 54 Engine, 11 Truck and I believe, but I am not positive, 23 Engine. We were told to go up to the 22nd floor. We took the elevator up to the 18th floor. We walked up four flights of stairs to the top floor.

Up on the top floor, it was a pool, spa, gym equipment, saunas. It was just a workout area and a spa area with a couple of office spaces. We did see part of -- I didn't see it, but Jeff Johnson told me later on he did see part of the landing gear actually fell right through the roof and it was in one of the Jacuzzis in another room.

There was nobody up there. We did a search up there. There was no fire up there either, no bodies to report. We were going to take an elevator down. I don't believe there was an elevator on 22. We walked down one flight.

We went down the south stairwell. We walked it down one flight to the 21st floor. We went to the elevator, which is more -- from the south stairwell, we walked a little bit north down the hallway, waiting for the elevator. There was about 20 of us. Again, this was 54 Engine, 74, 11 Truck and I believe 23 Engine.

As we were waiting for the elevator to take us down, it was running a little too slow or stuck on one of the floors. My lieutenant, Lieutenant Nichols, said we're better off walking

down. We were going to go down I believe to the lobby, and I think we were going to go to the south tower, which is I believe connected, somehow connected to the Marriott.

We started walking down the hallway towards the south stairwell. It was my company that was leading the way. Pat Carey I believe was in front, Jeff Johnson, Lieutenant Nichols, myself, Ruben Correa, then the other companies.

As we were walking, that's when the south tower came down. Pretty much we just stood where we were. There was nowhere we could go. We were just stuck in this hallway.

Pretty much when all was said and done, we gathered ourselves. We were doing a head count as far as my company, and we noticed that we were calling for Ruben and Ruben was behind me in the hallway. Him and the other companies were behind us. I was about ten feet away in the hallway from being one of the missing. As far as we turned around and we looked, that side of the hallway was all covered in debris and rubble. All the lights were out. There were no lights. We had to use flashlights.

So it was just basically four of us that got out. The chauffeur, by the way, was back at the rig. The chauffeur did not go with us. He was back at the rig. That was Mike Shagi. I forgot to mention that earlier.

So pretty much at this point it was the three companies I just mentioned and Ruben Correa that was trapped. It was about 16 guys, roughly. There was about four of us that were still on that floor.

We called a mayday. We couldn't hear anything. Nobody responded. We didn't know what was going on. We didn't even know that the whole building came down. We called a mayday. We couldn't hear anything. However, we did hear one mayday, and I believe it was from 4 Truck, one of the members from 4 Truck. His mayday was given. He didn't know what floor he was on. He was just saying that he was with 4 Truck, he was running out of air, please come get him.

We couldn't do anything at that point. We just were trying to get out to guys that we had. We were trying to find a void. We started moving some of the rubble pieces. We couldn't

find anything and started yelling. We called for guys' names and tried to listen for any names. We couldn't hear anything.

We walked a floor down below, which is the 20th floor, and there was more rubble that way. Basically we saw, okay, we're trapped inside of all this debris. There were two floors of rubble. My lieutenant made the decision at that point for us we have to get out, try to get some help, especially for the guys trapped and for the guy who was calling the mayday for 4 Truck.

We went down the south stairwell. We met up with members from 12 Truck, and there were some other members. I don't remember who they were. When we went down, there were about ten members in all that we met up with.

We got down to about the sixth floor. They were in one of the hotel suites. I believe it was the presidential suite. I heard later on that's what it was. This was on the sixth floor. I heard it was looking out -- later on Jeff Johnson -- I'm only going by what he said. I don't know what we were looking at outside this

suite. There was a whole section of the building that was gone. I was told later on that that was West Street that it was out looking over.

Basically the bottom line was we were going to lower ourselves down by rope because we heard from 12 Truck that they couldn't go any further down the stairwell. This is on the sixth floor of the south stairwell we went down. They were going to lower themselves by rope.

I told them we passed some roof rope on the way down. A couple guys went up to get it. We even breached a wall, and me and Pat Carey were tying off two and a half lengths. We were going to even use some of the rollups to lower ourselves down.

My officer said this is just too dangerous, it's too unstable to do this. He made the decision to try to do something. Him and the senior man felt that they could do something as far as maybe there's a way to get down the stairwell that we overlooked.

It was a good thing we did, because when we went down the stairwell, we went down about a floor or a half landing, and Jeff Johnson

hopped over one of the railings, started moving sheetrock. It was just lightweight sheetrock. It wasn't nothing heavy-duty or extra heavy or anything like that. It was just basic lightweight sheetrock. He started moving it out of the way.

He went down to about the fifth or the fourth floor landing or the fourth floor. He yelled back up that there were some people down there. There were some civilians. We were later on told that they worked with The New York Times or Time magazine. We still don't know what it was. There were five businessmen, all men. To this day I still don't even know who they are. I tried to contact the, and tried through New York Times, but I got no response.

Basically everybody else at that point started following us down, just started coming one after another, started going down the stairwell.

I heard later on -- in fact, I went to his memorial service. I heard a couple of guys from 12 Truck made the decision to go back up and see if they could help out the mayday from 4

Truck. I heard one of them was Mike Mullan, the lieutenant, and I think a rotating fireman. I wish I knew his name, but I don't. But I heard that they made the decision to go back up to try to help out the mayday.

We made our way down to about the third floor, the rest of us. It was maybe about ten in all, probably about like four of us from 74 and maybe six from 12 truck and a few others from -- I don't know what other company it was. I still don't know to this day.

We got down to about the third floor with also the five businessmen. I think we were facing east at that point. I would say we were facing east or maybe north. I'm just looking at the way the building was shaped right here. It might have been the north section of the building, facing north or east, either way.

When we got down there, Jeff Johnson and Pat Carey hopped out. There was more or less like a little patio about half a story down that they hopped out on. There was a lightweight beam that they situated where we could get these civilians down.

Either way, you could slide down this beam or you could go down the other half landing and hop over. This is as far as we can go, because this whole section of the third floor was still open like that. This was a big opening to get outside.

I was staying back. I wanted to feel like I was doing something. I was helping out these civilians, making sure that they got down the beam, that they slid down the beam okay.

It got to a point where everybody was starting to get out. It was me, two more civilians left and maybe two guys I believe from 12 Truck that were still in there waiting to get out, and that's when the north tower started to come down. We just kind of stood and braced where we were.

One of the civilians with me was about 80 years old. As the building was coming down, I was yelling to see if he was still there. He said he was. I held his hand just to make sure we were together in case we were trapped.

When the dust settled, the hole was open and we were lucky enough that that happened.

Everybody was pretty much scattered all over the place. My lieutenant was in front of me. That half landing or patio that he was on where the beam was situated, he was down there. He was a little bit trapped, but he was able to get out. There was all kinds of rubble all around him. He was very lucky that he was alive. It was sort of like a bunker that he was in. It was just all debris around him. He was able to squeeze his way out of that.

Two of the brothers from 12 Truck, they were okay, and the two civilians were okay. I heard Jeff Johnson yelling -- I found out later on that he had gone to the second floor. There was a way to get in there. There was some kind of a sliding door.

He had gone around a corner of the building, which I believe would have been the south side or possibly the east side of the building. I'm really not positive. He had gotten down to the second floor and hid behind a beam. He was with three of the civilians in that hallway.

Pat Carey, he was yelling for Pat. I

didn't know where Pat was either. I thought Pat was gone. Somehow he had gotten down to the second floor, but he lost contact with us. He didn't have a radio. We had lost him. I thought he was gone.

I got out. I was helping the civilians down. Once we got out, Lieutenant Nichols got himself out. At that point I was yelling for Pat. I was yelling and yelling. At this point we knew we couldn't even do a mayday. We were just trying to get ourselves out. Myself and the lieutenant and the two other guys from 12 Truck, we helped the two civilians out. We walked them out.

By the way, at this point I don't know what happened to the other members. I think and I hoped that they did -- I'm pretty sure that they did because I met up with 12 Truck. All of their guys got out. I heard later on that the only guys that didn't get out -- all the guys that survived the first collapse, the only ones that didn't get out was Mike Mullan, the officer, and the rotator that went up to respond to the mayday. I heard later on that they got out.

Somehow they went the wrong way.

So the only ones at that point that I saw visibly get out was myself, Lieutenant Nichols, the two civilians and then the two guys from 12 Truck. Jeff Johnson, I thought he had gone around another direction and got the three civilians out another way, because I did hear his voice but I heard he was okay.

Although he was on the second floor, I didn't know at the time he was where he was. But he was pretty much stuck on the second floor. I thought he had gone out through another section of the building and walked out.

That's how confusing it was. Everybody pretty much was just trying to get out and walk their own way. As far as me, I heard Jeff's voice, and the lieutenant said he was okay. So I knew Jeff enough to be a senior man, I knew he was okay. The only ones that I was really worried about at that point that I knew was missing was Pat Carey. So I yelled and called his name.

We couldn't do anything at that point, so we started walking out. I believe we were in

the atrium? Is this called the atrium?

Q. I'm not sure.

A. I believe we were walking in the atrium. I think we were walking towards Two World Trade Center. The south tower, I think we were walking pretty much among the rubble and everything there. I think we got out and walked out on Liberty Street.

As we were walking among the debris of the fallen building, a couple guys from rescue came over. They helped us with the two civilians. I told them that there were missing members. I pointed to the Marriott. I told them basically that on the 21st floor, it was the first collapse.

We had the three companies plus Reuben, where they were trapped. But it was useless by that point because the floor wasn't even there. There was only about four stories to that building left.

The other one I talked about was Pat Carey. I said I saw him last on the third floor of the Marriott. It ended up that Pat got out okay. He was trapped on the second floor. He

was actually separated from Jeff and everybody else, and he actually jumped out, found an opening and jumped out, and actually fractured his cocyx bone and has several herniated disks.

Jeff Johnson made it out too. Although I didn't know at the time, I thought he was out, but he was still stuck on the second floor with the three civilians. He made his way out another way. They kind of finagled their way down and they got out okay.

From there, me and the lieutenant basically just walked towards the park. What's the name of that park? Battery Park. That's where I met Jeff. Basically we were calling for Mike Shagi. We found out later on when he was running he was getting short breath and everything like that, and he went to the hospital for some air, to be treated. We found out he was okay later on.

As I mentioned before, we were on Vesey Street when we were out where the park was. We were walking on some of the south streets, I guess Albany Street or Carlisle, one of those streets. We kind of made our way up Trinity or

Church, and then we kind of made our way down to Vesey. That's when we found our rig over there. Our rig was parked on Vesey.

I still don't know all the companies that were with us that we ran into in after the second collapse. But as far as I know, the companies that we did meet up with was 11 Truck, 54 Engine and I'm pretty sure it was 23 Engine.

Q. That's it, John?

A. That's it.

Q. Thanks for all your help, John.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 3:38, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110322

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH GALASSO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 1607 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter Sixth Grade Joseph Galasso from Engine 212, who was the backup on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Joe, you can start whenever you want.

A. After the first plane hit, we were here, actually. We could see the towers actually from here. So after the first plane hit, we saw it on the news. So we came up here to look out the window, and we saw it. We watched the second plane hit. Just as the second plane hit, that's when we received the alarm.

We were going there. On the way there, we hit a little traffic. We were going to turn onto the Manhattan Bridge but instead we were told to take the Brooklyn Bridge. So we had to back up. We were on our way to get on the Brooklyn Bridge.

We drove down I'm not sure which street. I think we came down Liberty. We parked on Liberty. We got out. We grabbed our rollups, we grabbed our spare cylinders. I remember walking past 10 and 10's quarters.

At that point Lieutenant Brosnan told us to keep walking down Liberty. We went into one of the buildings on Liberty to go through, because we saw debris falling. We didn't know what was falling. It looked like debris. So to be safe, for our safety, the lieutenant brought us through another building with one of their attendants.

Q. Were both towers hit at this point in time?

A. Both towers were hit, because we watched the second tower hit over here. When the second tower was hit, that's when we got the alarm.

So we went through a building, and we came out on -- I don't know exactly the street, but it was where that pedestrian walkway is to go to the Financial Center. We came out over there. We went two at a time, because debris was still

falling. We stood underneath the walkway for protection.

Then we went into the hotel. I guess that's the Marriott Hotel. I saw a couple different companies there. 238 was there, and a couple other firemen were there that I didn't know. We were there, and that's when the lieutenant went to talk to a chief. He came back and told us we were going to the 74th floor. I don't know which tower, to be sure. I don't know. He just said the 74th floor.

At that time we got all our stuff. We made one of I guess the clerks of the hotel show us the way into the concourse level. We got into the concourse level. We walked maybe about 100 feet, 200 feet. The lieutenant said, "Take a break here for a second, I've got to go ask to find another stairwell."

At that point we put our stuff down. In a matter of seconds after that -- at this point when we came in, there were people getting evacuated. I guess there were cops down there and stuff like that. But there were all pedestrians coming out. They were pretty calm.

I was shocked to see how calm these people were.

As we got in there, like I said, the lieutenant walked away for a second to find a stairwell, told us to wait. At that point, not even a few seconds later, the lights went out and you heard -- it sounded like a waterfall almost. You just saw people running. The lights went out, and it got dark. You just saw parts of buildings coming down.

We ran and made a left. There's like a little bend. We made a left and went into a doorway. At that point I just sat there and waited and held my helmet. It just stopped. Everything was dark and people were screaming. Everybody stopped screaming. You couldn't see anything. It was all dark, dusty.

Somebody yelled, "Just stay calm. There's firemen here. Stay with the firemen." So at that point we all regrouped. We were yelling, "212, 212." I think there were five of us or six of us at that point. We all regrouped. We found each other. We put our flashlights on.

One of the members here, Firefighter Picciano, asked if anybody knew a way out: "Does

anybody work here? Does anybody know a way out?" There was a maintenance man actually there. He saw a store, and he said, "I know a way out of here." So we said, "Okay, hold onto us. We'll lead with the flashlights."

At that point there were just people that were grabbing onto my arms, grabbing everybody else. I was holding onto one of the other firemen just to find a way out. So at that point this maintenance man -- I still don't know who he was -- led us to an exit.

Maybe three of us took a bunch of people to one exit, which there were escalators going up. I think that let you out on Vesey. We led a whole bunch of people out the escalator. Two or three other firemen from the company went to the left with another individual, and they found another doorway, opened it up and led the people out that way. So we led all these people out.

Sorry, I need to backtrack. Before we went back into the building, ESU cops were telling us there are reports of a third and fourth plane coming. They're leaving, we're

walking in, and they're yelling there's reports of a third and fourth plane.

I guess when the first building came down I actually thought it was another plane hit at that time. I didn't know the building came down.

We led the people out. We cleared everybody out that was with us. At that point we went back in to look for more people just to see if there were any more people there. We searched around. We walked around, went down to the PATH train to see if anybody was down there. That was clear. At this point Engine 212 was there, a couple of guys had FBI jackets on, there were maybe about two or three, and I think a couple of cops were there.

We were searching around, searching. We backtracked a little bit from where we came from. At that point there was a little fire there. One of the guys tried to put it out with one of the house lines, but there was no pressure. It was dead. So we just left that.

I don't know who yelled, but somebody yelled, "We see somebody. There's somebody

underneath a bunch of debris." We pulled all the debris off. He had this round face that was all full of blood. He was struggling to breathe at this point. Of course he was like 250, 260 pounds, 300 pounds.

We found a chair, a regular chair. We put him on the chair. Between the time when the first building came down, it felt like hours but we were in there for a while. At that point we put him on the chair. We took turns carrying him out.

At this point you couldn't really hearing anything on the radio. It was like in and out, in and out. I remember somebody yelling "We've all got to get out. We've all got to get out." They're saying, "Everybody get out of the building."

So at that point we put the guy in the chair and took turns carrying him out. We went out like a little bit of steps to the landing and a little bit of steps and came out on Vesey. Five World Trade we came out of.

I can remember inside the hallway was the McDonald's sign. On top it said the mall.

We came out of there. There was just white debris, white powder everywhere.

There was a rig right across the street. I don't remember what company it was. There was a mail truck right across the street, because I guess the post office was there.

At that point -- again, not even -- I would say about 40 seconds, we get to the middle of the street with this individual, and you heard like a loud "rrrrr." Everything started shaking. We thought it was another plane.

What we did, we all separated. Me and two other guys, Walker and Murphy, we went back to the building. Picciano and Brosnan ran away from the building. At that point we just knelt down in the doorway. We knelt down, and I held on.

The pressure from the collapse, I guess, it was like a heavy snowstorm when you're trying to walk and you're trying to push and fight it. You try to fight it, and it just pushed us all back. I remember just letting go of Walker.

At that point, to tell you the truth, I

thought I was dead, because I was all by myself now. This whole time I was I guess, not happy, but I felt safe because we were all together the whole time. At this point I was by myself, and it was pitch dark. I had the dirt in my mouth and everything.

I thought I got blown back into the building, so I started yelling, "Walker and 212, anybody." Finally he acknowledged. He happened to be right next to me and I didn't know it.

At that point you couldn't see anything. I put my mask on at that point. Then we regrouped. Me, Walker and Murphy, we all regrouped, the three of us. At that point we thought we had lost the lieutenant. We thought we had lost Picciano and Brosnan, because they went the other way.

We came out of Five World Trade. At that point then it was just like an eerie quiet. Everything was quiet. We couldn't even find those FBI guys that were with us or the cops that were with us.

It was an eerie quiet. We finally saw daylight. We saw the sun and said let's walk.

We walked and walked up West Broadway. I remember that the rig was on fire at that point, and the postal truck was on fire. There were little fires everywhere. We were just trying to climb over like I beams and stuff.

We walked to West Broadway, and we just kept walking. At that time we were saying to ourselves let's just get as far away as we could. If these buildings come down, they're going to take out a couple of blocks. We still didn't know the buildings came down at that point.

We walked to Duane Street, and somebody -- I think it was a cop -- told us there's a firehouse right here. We went and made a right, and it was Engine 7. At that point we went there. From there we just sat there and waited. That's when the ambulance came and took us all in.

We finally met up with the other two, Picciano and Brosnan. They wound up walking there. Somehow some way they walked there. We all met up, and that's when we went in the ambulance to Forest Hills.

Q. Anybody else you remember seeing there?

A. It's weird, I remember seeing a kid I went to parochial school with that I graduated with, James Pappageorge, in the hotel. I remember saying hello. I don't know what company he's from. I remember saying hello to him. The lieutenant was saying, "Come on, let's go." We went into the concourse, and I never saw him after that. That's the only guy I can remember.

I don't know the guys' names from 238, but they're in the same area over here so I recognized a couple of them. I don't know which way they went either. Pappageorge specifically, I know him because we said hello to each other because we went to school together. I don't know which way they went. All I know is that we got -- somebody was with us because everywhere we walked was the right place.

Q. Anything else, Joe?

A. That's about it.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1620 hours, and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110323

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES MURPHY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 1649 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, firefighter second grade James MURPHY from Engine Company 212. This interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jim, you can start talking whenever you'd like.

A. The first thing I remember is hearing this was a second alarm over the voice system. Second alarm, World Trade Center, it came over. We were in the kitchen. We said let's turn on the TV and see if there's anything, basically, because I worked in the city, sometimes something like the World Trade Center will make the TV.

So we turned on the TV, and they didn't have it yet on New York 1. About maybe 30 seconds into it, they had it. They just set it up. The anchor said, "We just got word that there's a fire in the World Trade Center, and we'll go to a camera" I think from the Empire

State Building.

They did that, and you could see the extent of the fire on the World Trade Center, a huge hole. Nobody knew what it was. We didn't know if it was a plane yet or anything. Everybody in the kitchen was just like, oh, my God.

Then the guy on the news got a call from somebody who was on the West Side Highway, I think, and he said that a big tire came down and landed on a car in front of him or something like that. You think it's a plane, and then you see the hole in it and you still don't think it's a 747 or 767. You still think it's like a Piper Cub. I was just thinking that from the hole, it might have been packed with explosives.

After that I ran up to the roof on the third floor with me and Eric Bernsten. We were watching it. We could see it from here. We have an unobstructed view. The other guys came up too. All six of us were on the roof.

We were sitting around looking at it, and I remember one guy saying, "You're going to earn your pay today, guys." I just remember

that. Then we saw the second one come up. It looked like it was coming up the East River from here.

I guess it was coming from the south. I thought it banked over the East River, which is what it looked like. I thought it made a left over the East River and went right into it going from east to west. But as it turns out, it came from the south. Then we saw it just go right into the building and explode.

I remember talking to Eric. I remember Eric saying something, "Oh, my God, there's another plane." I was saying to him, "That plane is closer to us. It's really not a big plane going towards the building." Two seconds later it rammed into the building. You don't expect it. We just freaked.

About a minute after that we got the call to go. I guess it was a minute or so. We shot down Tenth, down Park Avenue. We rode on the dividers because traffic -- we rode in between the highway where they parked the cars, we rode up there, over those until we got basically to where the Gowanus -- basically to

around 207, 101. We made the turn to go over the Manhattan Bridge by accident. We figured out it was an accident. We backed out and went over to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Two guys jumped on the back. I don't know who they were. Somebody just told me. One of the guys on the rig said, "Two guys just jumped on the back." So I never saw them jump on, but we stopped, let them jump on, and we went over the bridge.

That was it. We got over to the other side, and we went down Broadway. We made a right on Liberty. We pulled up, I guess it was like 20 feet from Church Street and Liberty. We were about maybe 20 feet or 50 feet. We were close to Church Street, right by a fruit stand, because I couldn't get out of the rig, we had to pull up.

After that we got out. We grabbed our hose, and we went straight down Liberty Street. I just remember looking up and seeing the building on fire. It seemed really high. You could hear it a little bit, and you couldn't hear anything else except the fire. It was a beautiful day out.

There were papers all over the place and the smoke and everything, but the smoke wasn't on our level at all. There was nobody else around.

We walked down Liberty Street. We walked past 10's quarters. We ran into a guy, he looked like -- I don't know what he looked like. He had a white shirt on. He had a helmet on, not a fireman's helmet. I think I can remember this right. He said, "Follow me. I can take you through. There's stuff falling from the building."

He took us through the Deutsche Bank building like through the middle of it. It was down whatever street that is where 10's on. We went through it, and we came out another street underneath that. I'm not sure. It's Greenwich Street or something like that. Then we went back onto Liberty Street.

The guy warned us, he said there's body parts all over the place. There were body parts everywhere, like all over, body parts and all sorts of chunks of debris. For a second I thought were part of the plane. When I think

back on it, they could be part of the building too, because it was all aluminum.

There was scaffolding. We were walking under scaffolding until we got to West Street. Once we got on West Street, we got under the bridge that crosses West Street, and we waited to get in. The lieutenant got in first. That's all I know.

I was looking up, making sure all the stuff falling down wasn't going to hit me before I ran in. I didn't see anybody jumping from the south tower, but I saw things coming out of the north tower, which I don't know what it was. It was falling straight down. I just knew it wasn't going to hit me.

As soon as I saw a big piece of like aluminum hit the ground, I didn't see anything else I just ran into the building. I just walked as fast as I could underneath the overpass to the Marriott.

Now I'm in the Marriott. There was two guys, I guess they were managers or something in the restaurant, running around. I grabbed one of them. They got us water. I asked them if I

could get some water, and they did. They came out with water, like glass bottles of water and a big jug of water.

There were a bunch of units inside the hotel. I only knew two of them. I knew 22 Truck. I saw them because I'm assigned to 220. I knew 22 Truck from uptown because when I was on rotation I spent a year in 76 Engine and they're with 22 Truck. I knew a couple guys there, but I just said hi to them. I just waved to acknowledge them because everything was so crazy.

After like five minutes -- it seemed we were there for a little while. We finally went -- we were inside the hotel, and we went north inside the lobby of the hotel. Somehow indoors we got from the hotel into the lobby of the north tower. We didn't miss a beat. We walked straight from the hotel into the lobby and straight through the revolving doors. They were like pushed open so you didn't have to revolve around, you could just walk straight through.

So we walked in there, and there were a bunch of civilians. I don't know where they were coming from, but they were coming and walking the

same way we were walking. The sprinkler systems were going, and everything was wet, the sprinkler systems worked fine, the big system.

We just kept walking in that corridor, the mall corridor, until we got almost to like an intersection in the mall corridor. We were in the corridor running west to east. That's the way we were walking, west to east.

Right before we got to a corridor running south to north is where we stopped. Lieutenant Brosnan said, "Let me go see if we can find a way up." We were supposed to go to the 74th floor or something like that.

We waited there right on the corner of the mall, right on the corner where the two sections met, the two mall sections. We were on the north corner of that. That's when 30 seconds after the lieutenant left you could hear the noise.

I was looking down towards West Street, because that's where it seemed that it was coming from. You just heard -- I thought it was a third plane that hit, because when we were going in there was a couple of cops. When we made the

right onto Liberty, they said, "Be careful, guys, there's a third plane heading in." So that's what I thought it was.

It just seemed like a long time that it was -- it didn't seem like an explosion. It was like boom, boom, and then just got louder and louder. It got louder and louder, and then all of a sudden I was looking out onto West Street and the whole area turned from gray to black in a hurry.

All the debris just pushed through all those doors, and all the people were falling down. The wind was just -- you could see it coming. People were screaming and falling down. Before the lights got totally black, I ran east a couple feet and made the left and ducked into that first store, not in the store but in a little niche where the display window was and where the corner -- what do you call it? Where the corner of the store was, where the west to east and the south to north corridors met. So it was that corner store.

For some reason there was like a foot -- you could go in about a foot before the

glass, and I just curled into a ball and just waited for everything to stop.

Then it stopped. Then I got up and it was pitch-black. I turned on my flashlight. Everybody else turned on their flashlights. We were all right around each other. We couldn't have been within ten feet of each other. We were all right there. We were all on the ground.

We got up and we organized. Then we just started looking for somebody. I think we started looking for -- we just started saying, "Does anybody know how to get out of here," or something like that. I forget what words we used.

We found a guy, a maintenance guy, with a flashlight. I'm familiar with the corridors over there because I take the train in three days a week. But I don't get out on the north side; I always get out on the Liberty Street side, because I go to school on Cortlandt. So I knew there were exits on both ends, but I never get out on the north side.

Anyway, we found this guy. We grabbed him. We put him in front of us. We had our

flashlights. I remember him saying if you find the Duane Reade, there's an exit by the Duane Reade. We never found the Duane Reade, but we were walking.

People were grabbing onto us. We were picking up people, because they were still -- after it was black, there was screaming in the beginning and we were shouting. We were saying "Don't worry, we're with the Fire Department. Everybody is going to get out." I remember saying stuff like that, which is pretty wild, actually. We were just as scared as anybody else. We were just victims too.

Basically the only difference between us and the victims is we had flashlights. It was hard to breathe, but you knew you could breathe. The first thing I did was grab my mask. I put it on, and then I realized that you could breathe without it. It was very, very dusty in there. You couldn't see with the flashlight in the beginning more than three or four feet. But you could see everybody's flashlight because they would glow in the beginning. Then it gradually settled down.

We started walking north. I remember seeing big columns. We walked past big columns. We ran into a store -- I don't know how far we were, maybe 60, maybe 100 yards, and we ran into a watch store. That's what I remember seeing, watches. It might have been a jewelry store or whatever. The guy said, "Oh, this is the watch store. I know where this is." He said, "The exit's this way. Keep going straight."

We went straight, and we ran into a -- what it was was a stairwell and like a wall. One said handicap exit. The maintenance guy, I was talking to him. He said, "The exit's right up here." There was a little confusion. Somebody else in the crowd said, "The exit's that way." What it was was there were two exits.

Me and Eric Bernsten went up to the one on Vesey Street. It was still black, and you couldn't see. When we found the doors, we opened them up and we knew it was outside. When you got out there and you opened the doors, you could see it was like it's nighttime but you know you're outside.

We took a bunch of guys out with us.

We went back down. The other guys were going the other way, which was another way. They were going to some kind of exit that came out on Church Street. Either way, we all got rid of people on both exits.

After that it started clearing up a little bit. A couple other rescuers started coming. I don't know who they were. I remember one guy saying 30 stories of the south tower collapsed. Maybe that's what it looked like. That was the first time I realized it wasn't a second plane that hit.

Some other guys were coming down, like rescuers. They were coming down. Somehow they went back in. I don't know who. We wound up saying we've got to go back in and see if there's anybody else there. We were basically looking for our lieutenant who was lost. We said we've got to go back in and do a search.

We went back in. I don't know how we hooked up with these guys again. Maybe they came back down to see the way they brought the guys out. But we hooked up with them. A couple of other rescue guys came in. I was standing at the

top of the PATH train looking down at that long stairwell and saying to myself I don't even know if I should go down there because it's so deep down there.

I've been down there a few times. My brother takes the PATH train. I met him in the bars. There's bars down at the lower levels. I started getting nervous. I started thinking that we shouldn't be here.

A couple of guys came in and went down. I don't know they were, guys in white shirts. They were some kind of rescue people. I don't know if they were Port Authority or whoever they were. They walked down. I was like, guys, I don't know if it's the best thing to do to go down there. They were like, "We're going down."

So I went with them. They went down there, and I stood by the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs. When they came back I said, "Did you find anybody? Do you need any help?" They said no. They didn't find anybody. They were leaving the place, and I boogied up the stairs, because I was getting spooked down there.

I got back upstairs, and I ran into

Eric again. He had found a line. He had found a hose line. At this point you could see there was a collapse. Everything got a bit lighter because wherever we exited was glowing, so we knew the exit was there. There was a blue glow, almost like a fluorescent glow. You could see down the corridor.

Right where we were almost when the first building collapsed, there was a huge collapse, a big wall of stuff, and it was on fire. Eric found a house line, and he grabbed the house line and he was saying, "Let's pull it." We pulled it over, and we got caught up on some stuff, he came back, helped me pull it out. I went to turn the wheel of the gauge and there was no pressure. There was water in it, but you could squeeze it closed.

About that time, that's when somebody said that there's a body -- "I've got somebody over here." That was close to where the collapse was, past the Coach store. That's where the house line came out; it was close to the Coach store.

By the time I got over there, there

were three guys putting him in a chair. There were FBI guys down there at this point. They had come down, and they had told us -- they might have been down there for like five minutes. I'm not sure exactly when they said this, but they came in and they said, "It's your show, guys. You just tell us what to do." That's what I remember.

There was least three, maybe four of them. I remember telling them, "The only thing you can do right now" -- they all had flashlights -- "is to stand like 50 feet apart towards the stairwell with the flashlights," because it was starting to bank down because of the smoke. The dust had cleared a lot, but the smoke was starting to bank down again and I was getting really nervous.

These guys picked the guy up in the chair, and they started walking with him. His head was flopping all over the place, so I grabbed his head. It was a long walk. It was at least 100 yards -- it seemed that way, because it was black -- to the stairwell. So we switched up. I switched and grabbed one of the legs. One

of the FBI guys was helping us. We got him up the stairs. We got him out on Vesey Street.

We couldn't have walked more than like 15 steps when the second tower came down. Everybody just ran for their lives. Really that's exactly what happened. All of a sudden there was blue out and then it just got a shade darker and the noise and then it got darker and darker and darker. The noise was getting louder, and there was stuff falling.

Eric and Vinnie ran out into the street, and me, Danny Walker and Joe Galasso ran back towards building number five, where we came from. We tried to get in the building. I'm not sure if Danny Walker got in the building and was able to stay in there.

I stepped in about two steps and I tried to push myself in, and the wind pressure from the falling building pushed me, knocked me off my feet backwards. I wound up in the street. I didn't even know it was the street at the time. It was actually a good thing, because I wound up under the overhang.

Then everything stopped. We got up. I

guess we were shocked. I didn't know if we were outside or inside. You couldn't see a thing. You couldn't really breathe without your mask. I guess you would have lived. But I don't know if you would have been able to maintain your consciousness.

There was mud in my mouth about a quarter of an inch think. I just pulled it out in my hand, and I swallowed a whole bunch of it. I put my mask on. There was more dirt in the mask that blew into my face.

We regrouped. We were right around each other, me, Joe and Danny Walker. We couldn't move. The first time I knew I was outside was when I basically almost ran into one of the flowerpots out there on Vesey Street. You could barely move, for at least five minutes. You couldn't move because you didn't know where you were, what you were stepping on, where you were going.

Then you could see little fires, like paper fires. Then I saw the lights of a rig on Vesey Street that were blinking, the bottom lights. I knew that was the street. We walked

towards that. I thought the best thing to do was to head west into the wind so that we could get out of the smoke.

(Interruption.)

A. You could feel the wind blowing. You knew which way it was blowing. You just wanted to get out of this stuff. Plus I was really nervous about these fires on the ground. The ground was covered with papers and all sorts of debris. There were a few cars on fire.

We walked west. We could see the outdoor escalators at that point. We walked that way. We ran into like a building. I guess there's a building there, right there on West Broadway -- or there was a building there on West Broadway and Vesey that cut off the street so you couldn't go straight through. I remember running into something. We made a right, and we walked straight up West Broadway.

I remember just walking up that block. That first block, all the cars were on fire. They weren't totally engulfed in flames, but there was fire on them and their tires were exploding. I just remember how quiet it was

walking up that block. Everything was quiet except for the explosions of tires and stuff like that.

Eventually like a couple blocks later we got out of it and made our way to 7 Engine. That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay, Jim. That's good.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1717 hours, and this view is concluded.

File No. 9110325

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WAYNE MERA

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today is December 12th, 2001. The time is 1337 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Wayne Mera from Ladder Company 110. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. You just start whenever you're ready.

A. This is Wayne Mera. Where do I begin? I'll start at the very beginning, the morning, beautiful day. We had the apparatus doors open and I remember (inaudible) said, hey, check out the smoke. So we look outside. I see the smoke rising over the bridge and stuff. I figure it's got to be in Manhattan; otherwise we would have gone right away. I think I heard someone mention something about the World Trade Center. So I stepped back in the kitchen and I see the World Trade Center on fire on TV. Oh, you've got to be kidding me. So we walked out immediately. By the time we got to the front of rig, we heard second third alarm and we were dispatched. So at first I thought we were dispatched on the third alarm, and it turns out we were actually dispatched as additional units on the first alarm. On that ticket it was us, Battalion 31 and Engine 205.

We responded. We're going over the bridge. We have a perfect view of the building. Never did it cross my mind that it was going to collapse. I saw burning. I heard reports of jumpers and from that distance I didn't know if it was jumpers or it was debris, but you could see a lot of stuff coming out of the windows, falling down. All I could think, at that point I'm thinking we're going to lose the top 15, 20 floors of this building. We're going to take a beating today. We're going to get the snot kicked out of us.

We turned down Broadway. We were looking for Liberty, unsure exactly where Liberty is, of course. We didn't get box 8087. We got box, I think it was 9031 or 9030. I think 9031. Respond to Liberty and West. That's where we were supposed to respond. So we turned down Liberty off of Broadway and we're almost at Church and all of a sudden a massive explosion. Unbelievable. The sound was incredible. It turns out it was the second plane that hit the south tower, and it hit on the Liberty Street side, so it was a block and a half, two blocks from us. The sound was incredible. We didn't know what it was at the time. We thought it might have been a bomb. I remember right before that I saw a helicopter passing by and I thought

maybe it was a helicopter, we were thinking a bomb, but we knew at this point something wasn't right. In fact, it was so immense we stopped the rig. We never stop the rig on the way to a run. We stop. We get out. 31 is behind us. They're out. We just couldn't believe it. What's going on here? 205 pulls up and says we know how to get to Liberty and West. Follow us. So we back out and we start following them and they have a little lead on us. By that point the traffic was really horrible.

At first, when the plane hit, luckily we weren't close to the building because when it hit, it was just raining a bunch of debris all down. So we actually were fortunate we were another block up because we would have been right underneath it. So we started following 205 and, in hindsight, they must have gone all the way down to the Battery and across and then up West Street because they made it to Liberty and West, I believe. We lost them. So we ended up turning up Trinity, which ends up being Church Street. So we ended up almost exactly where we were. So we ended up parking on the corner of Church and Vesey. We parked the rig.

The only thing I can think of at this point

is that I saw a lot of debris raining down from the north tower and I thought it was closer to Vesey, so I didn't want to park right underneath there. It turns out we could have because we had the Customs House right there, but at the time I didn't know. So we walked up, grabbed extra cylinders, all our gear. We were walking up Vesey and we saw parts of the plane on the ground still burning. So we turn down onto West Street and get to the north tower. I look inside. I think it said 1 World Trade Center. So I didn't know if it was 1 or 2, but considering that was the only one burning, it had to be 1.

So I saw a bunch of white hats inside the lobby and walked past a little bit to see if there was a command post in the street. I didn't see anyone. So we turned around and we went into the lobby. We went in. I remember seeing the Commissioner there, a couple of Chiefs in there, it must have been like a building engineer, OEM or somebody else. They were behind the desk. I said is this 1? They said, yeah, this is 1. We were there maybe a minute when a Chief turned around and said you're a truck? Yeah. He said you're ready? Yeah. Okay. Come with me. It happened to be a Chief from the 11th Battalion. What's his name? Piccarelli,

something similar to that.

Q. Picciotto.

A. Picciotto. So we went up with him. He said we've got a report of people trapped on the 21st floor. So that's where we ended up going. We took the low-rise bank of elevators up to the 16th floor. It was a flying shaft from 1 to 8, so we stopped at 9 just to make sure it worked. Thank God it did. We went up to the 16th floor. We got off. People were coming down the stairs, then we went to the stairs. I believe it was the C stairwell. It was the one closest to the West Street side. So we went up to the 21st floor and that was locked. So then we went up to the 22nd, which was open. So we threw all our gear down, you know, left our extra cylinders, because conditions were clear. So we left the search ropes, we left everything up there.

Q. What about people evacuating; how was it?

A. They were very calm. There was a steady stream of people coming down and a steady stream of firemen going up on the right side, people were coming down on the left side. It was just a constant stream of people. I remember one elderly lady, she was walking very slow, seemed to be holding up. So she had

stopped at a landing and let a lot of people past her. But it was very calm. Everybody was calm. You could tell that everyone was nervous, but it was remarkably calm, really. It was pretty quiet. No one was really saying much, a couple words exchanged, you know, good words, encouragement and stuff. I was very surprised that it was that calm.

So we got up to the 22nd, threw our gear down, dropped back down to the 21st and forced the door.

Q. It was clear?

A. Clear as day. We started to search. We searched every room in there. I remember forcing one door, beautiful mahogany doors, beautiful trim, taking off the little trim between the doors and I'm thinking to myself, wow, this is a beautiful door, because you can do some damage to this, you know.

The search was negative. There was nobody anywhere. As soon as we got done, it must have been -- we started by the C. We worked our way around. We passed a couple of other stairwells. At the time I didn't know what letter they were. I was in the back room, it must be the northeast corner, and some guys must have been on the southeast corner, when all of a

sudden the building shook. I've never been in an earthquake, but it couldn't have been any worse than that, any major earthquake. It just shook the building like I just couldn't believe. I mean, it was really bad. We stopped a second, looked at each other, what's going on here? We come out. Another guy comes from another room, let's go, let's go in the stairwell.

We start going to the stairwell. The other guys closest to the south tower started coming out. The guys who were with me that day, my chauffeur was Artie Riccio from 119, I had Mike Brodbeck, who was the can that day, he was from 210, he was doing a mutual. Artie was on overtime. I had Dave Sandvik. I forget what position he had. I had Mike Beehler, who was a proby at the time, he had the irons, and I had Paul Hyland. So Dave was with me at the time. I forget who else came out of the other room closest to us. But I had Paul Hyland and Artie and Mike might have been down on the south side. So when we were going to the stairwell, we were yelling get to the stairwell. They came out. It turned out to be very fortunate. We were all headed towards the stairwell. We never actually made it in. We just hit the ground and got close and it shook for a long time. I know Artie went back into

the room, I think, with Mike, and when they went back into their room by the south side, all the windows were broken out and there was a lot of glass everywhere and debris and so on. So luckily they got to the hallway before the glass went and they could be injured by that.

We get back. We heard an order to evacuate. At the time I didn't know who gave it or anything else. It turned out to be the Chief that I was with that day. I talked to him later on and he said he gave the order to evacuate. So I think it was 6 Engine in the stairwell at that point and they were yelling for us to come on, let's go, let's get in the stairwell. I said I just got to make sure I got everyone. Dave Sandvik went up to the 22nd or 23rd floor to see if he could find the Chief. He couldn't find him.

Earlier, I forgot to mention, there was a little confusion when we were conducting the search. All of a sudden they were switching tactical channels from tactical 1 and tactical 2, and they said north tower was tactical 1, south tower was tactical 2, and we were trying to find out if the north was number 1 and the south was number 2 because we weren't sure when we went in. I had a feeling that's what it was, but I

wasn't sure. So I tried to contact the Chief at that point by radio. I couldn't. I went upstairs. I couldn't find him because, when I went up to the 22nd floor at that point, there was no one there. It was totally empty. So they must have continued on. We even tried a land line from one of the offices to call the dispatcher to see if they could get in touch with the command post to see if we could straighten out which one is 1, which one is 2, so we'd operate on the same channels, but we couldn't get through there either. Not surprising.

We finally started down --

Q. Which staircase?

A. Staircase B, which ended up being very fortunate. Stairway B, what happened, when we came out from the rooms we were in, stairway B was right in between us. So as we came out, we met at the B stairwell, and I could be wrong, but from what I understand, that's the only stairwell that went to the lobby. So we only went down that stairwell because that's where we met. That's what was in between us. So that's why we went down that stairwell.

We started down. Guys asked if they should grab the tools. I said grab what you want, but we're

getting out of here. Don't worry about it. So we had the irons with us. Guys were forcing doors on the way down. Dave Sandvik and Paul Hyland, they were popping doors on the way down, and they yelled in the first one and they said is that good enough? I said, yeah, it's good enough. I just wanted to make sure someone could hear us. Maybe they didn't hear the Mayday transmission. So we were checking stuff on the way down. I remember Artie was helping a civilian down, carrying her. I'm not sure what floor he actually started carrying the person, but he carried her down at least 15, 20 flights. We started on the 21st floor. So he was pretty shot by the time he got to the bottom. Mike Brodbeck was helping another civilian down and we were working our way down the stairs very slow.

At this point, I think, I remember about five civilians in the stairwell going down. So it was almost all firemen. Three civilians, we passed them. They were on a landing, on a half landing further down. I'm not sure what floor. As we were passing, we stopped to help and everybody else that previously had passed them stopped to help and they kept saying no, we're okay, you guys just go on. They were able to

move, but they just stopped to rest.

Q. I hope they made it out in time.

A. It was slow going at first and then it got even slower. It got so slow by the bottom, I remember Dave sat down on the landing. He sat down on the landing because we just weren't moving. He might have done it on two different landings for like half a minute, maybe a minute or so each, just sat there because we were just at a dead stop, and I think maybe guys were coming in from the other stairwells because they didn't go to the lobby and they might have had to filter into us. So there was a bottleneck. It was very, very slow.

When the building shook, to go back, we didn't realize what happened. We didn't realize it was the south tower. I know myself and I've talked to the guys that were with me that day, we all thought the same thing, it was the upper floors of our building. That's what we thought. We thought the upper floors of our building had collapsed and we didn't know what was going on. So on the way down, I remember, I know myself, I kept thinking that the rest of it was going to be coming down. But it ended up being the south tower.

I remember when we started going, I heard a radio transmission, and I don't know what company it was, my feeling is it might have been Timmy Higgins of 252 down in the lobby and it might have been a rescue company up on the upper floors. It must have been the rescue company that started the transmission. He said we'll start up here, you start in the lobby and we'll meet you halfway, and I remember thinking halfway, jeez, that's about where we're at, where we started at about the 21st floor. So in my mind I'm thinking the rescue must have been up on the 40th floor, somewhere around there, and I remember thinking they must have been checking just to make sure that everybody was out of the building. I could be wrong, but that was my impression. Since we had heard the Maydays and since they were going to meet halfway, I was just thinking they must be checking to make sure everyone is out. I knew Timmy and he didn't make it out and his company didn't make it out.

We got down to the lobby and it opened up where you could walk at a normal pace. Nobody was running out, but you were walking at a pretty good clip at that point. You could see a couple of the elevators had crashed to the bottom and there were doors blown

open and stuff. It was very strange because there was debris everywhere, not the big, heavy, steel debris, but there was dust, coated with dust everywhere. We walked down past the elevators out into the main lobby and looked around. There wasn't a soul there, just the guys walking out. What's going on here? I was expecting to go down to the lobby and there would be a command post, a beehive of activity, people everywhere. Where is everybody? What's going on here? It just wasn't right.

So we continued out. I don't think we even went out the door. I think it was windowless and we stepped out. We went outside and I remember, I don't know if it was a fireman or if it was a civilian or who it was, but there was somebody outside that was constantly looking up and waving us on as we went out, looking for jumpers, looking for any debris falling down. So he was waving us on. Artie and Mike had brought the people outside.

We followed the building line around, followed the Customs Building. We stopped underneath the pedestrian bridge, the north bridge. We stopped there for a second and said let's move up a little bit. So we headed north on West Street. When we came

out, I remember looking to the left and seeing a whole bunch of heavy debris down, and so I guess it looked a little bit clearer to the right, up north. That's the only thing I could figure. So we moved up a little bit further. I'm really not sure how much further. I think it was less than a block. I'm not sure if we were even at Vesey Street yet.

I think it was 224's rig. My back was towards the building. The guys sat down on the rig, you can open up your coats, take your mask off your shoulder, breathe a sigh of relief, okay, let's catch our breath, see what's going on before we do anything. Paul Hyland looks up and goes here it comes. Run. My back was towards the building. I didn't check back and look. A lot of the other guys were already looking that way, so they saw everything break apart.

So we started up West Street and all of a sudden -- it was a gorgeous day, beautiful, sunny day. Within a split second it turned gray and then pitch black. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. You just couldn't see anything. Once it turned black, I remember thinking, okay, but I saw this line of rigs going all the way up West Street and I said I'm going to follow these rigs up until it clears up. I

don't know when it's going to be, but I'm going to follow it up. At this point, I don't know what's coming behind me. I'm expecting maybe a fireball is going to be blowing right up behind me. I don't know if anything is falling down. I have no clue.

So I'm heading up West and I get to a point where I really couldn't breathe anymore. I was sucking in all this, not just dust, I mean, it was just solid pieces. So I dropped down. I put on my mask. The mask was just full of stuff, too. So as I'm moving on, I'm brushing this stuff out, getting it clear. I remember when I was on my knees, I was feeling around and I felt somebody and that person just kept on going across. I was never able to contact them again, but they must have been safe at that point.

So I followed the rigs all the way up and I finally get to a clear area around Chambers Street and I look around and none of my guys are with me now. Now I'm really worried. I start calling them. At this point there's just wall-to-wall radio traffic. There's Maydays, everyone trying, like myself, trying to get in touch with their members, because if they're missing, now we're going to have to give Maydays. So we're trying to get organized as much as you can. I'm trying

to locate my guys. Then little by little, I don't know who was the first one that came up, but Paul Hyland came up and I saw Dave and I saw Artie, and I've still got two other guys missing. Where are they?

So I was calling in trying to contact them and eventually I got in touch with Mike Brodbeck. He had the can, so he didn't have a radio, but he was pulled in to the telephone building. I think it might have been by 305. So their officer gave me a call and said I got your guy with me. He's okay.

Then I'm trying to get in touch with Mike Beehler, who was a proby. Luckily he had the irons. It ended up he got pulled in to, I think it was a Hatzolah ambulance. So he was inside there. So I didn't hear anything from him for a while and then eventually I heard him. So I knew he was okay, but I wasn't able to talk to him for a long time. Eventually I was able to talk with him and I said where we were. We worked our way down.

I remember I had a couple of other guys I had found. I'm not sure what company they were with, but I got in touch with their officer to let them know where they were at, that they were okay, I got these two guys with me, they're in this corner, they're going to stay

here until you come. So everybody was doing that. Who you had you were trying to stay with and just watch over.

Shortly after that I remember seeing Bobby Sutton. He's Battalion 8. Obviously, he was working that day and he had gotten separated earlier from the Chief. So he comes walking up. I grabbed ahold of him, just stay with us now, because he was extremely lucky. He made it out twice and he was very shook up, so I wanted to keep an eye on him, and we were trying to look for the Chief, who we didn't find until later on. We were trying to locate our guys from 207.

Somehow I forgot to mention this. When we went up, 207 at that point was in the lobby. They were right by the front, in front of the elevator bank. 207 was to the right, 110 was to the left, and that was the last I ever saw of 207. That was right before we went upstairs. So, 207, that was the last location I know with them that I had seen.

So we were trying to locate 207. When we were going up Church Street, I saw 14 Engine coming down one of the side streets and I glanced over and I saw my brother-in-law, who is the officer in 14, I saw him working. I thought, oh, I wish he wasn't working

today. Normally I would love to see him working. So I listened to them, asking guys. No one saw 14. No one saw 207.

What we did then, a lot of guys were coming down West at that point. We were obviously shook up a bit, so we stopped in front of Stuyvesant High School by that pedestrian bridge. I know there was some Chief saying that, if anybody was in there, let us know if you got everybody. So I said, yeah, I got everybody. I got one minor injury, which was Mike Brodbeck. When he was running down the street, he ended up running, I think, into a cop car or over a barrier, the cement wall. He ended up fracturing his arm, broke his hand, and dislocated his shoulder. So fortunately that was the worst injury. So I let him know about that.

At that point I know Bobby (inaudible) was also there. They stayed with us for a while. They didn't want to leave. We're in front of Stuyvesant catching our breath, and I'm not sure how much later, it wasn't that much longer, a cop comes running up and tells everybody from the high school to go down the block, that they got a bomb scare or a gas leak, the high school is ready to blow up. So now we're trying to catch our breath here, so we ended up running up

another five or six blocks not knowing what's going on. We're going up West Street and I'm looking over to the right and I saw all these buildings, the rig was to the left, and I'm thinking are these secondary devices? Are they planted to explode every 20 minutes now? Are they going to chase us all the way up the west side?

So we get up. It eventually turns out to be a false alarm. We worked our way back, and by the time we came back, everybody and their brother, I mean, everybody in the world was there coming down West. We were passing all these volunteer rigs from Jersey, upstate. It's just incredible.

I still don't realize at this point that the towers actually collapsed all the way down. It wasn't until later in the day that I'm staring down through the smoke that I'm realizing. Someone said, yeah, both towers collapsed. I just couldn't comprehend it at first. So at this point, in hindsight, I'm probably half in shock. So I just wanted to watch over my guys. So we kept them there because there was plenty of other guys who were showing up who were in perfect condition. So I figure, okay, once those guys go to work, we'll go back to work. Where we were, it looked

like they had some command post set up, so we just stayed with them, and we basically stayed there the rest of the day until even after No. 7 collapsed.

Throughout the day I was trying to find 207. I asked Field Com, asked the Chiefs, walked down a little bit and couldn't find anyone. A couple of my other guys went down. 207, obviously, they never came back. They were all missing. Probably about three hours after the collapse or so, two hours, whenever, after asking Field Com if they had heard about 207 and 14, I was walking away and I figured they're both missing, it's no good. Then I heard my brother-in-law on the radio calling for water and I said, okay, he's okay, so I started thinking, oh, maybe 207 is okay, too. Maybe you just haven't heard them on the radio. Because no one knew where 14 was and they're okay. Maybe the same thing with 207. Let's hope. False hope it turned out to be.

Basically, we waited around, and then later in the day a bunch of the guys from recall from 110 came by and we hooked up with them and we went back to find the rig. One of our guys that came on recall earlier ended up moving the rig and pulling up from the area. So it wasn't where we left it, but we found it.

There was a crack in the windshield. That's all there was. It was covered with debris, of course.

So we were walking down Church and it was dark by this time. We were walking down Church and ESU comes up to us and goes, you guys got a saw? We got a report of people trapped in the subway. We looked over and there's a saw, a blade and a can of gasoline right on the ledge. Yeah, we got a saw. We put it together. We cut the gate, we rolled down, we're going underneath, and we crossed underneath Church and it was just a solid wall of debris from the World Trade Center and there's no way you were getting through that. Oh, my God, I said. This is just unbelievable. So we went to the station. The station was totally empty, no trains, no people. Very eerie. Very eerie.

Then after that we found the rig and went back, found a command post, found a Chief and said we've been here all day. So we took the rig back to quarters. He said are you able to drive the rig? Yeah. So we piled everyone on and came back to quarters. The next day they used the inch and 3/4 in the morning to hose it down.

I know there were a couple of other thoughts that I had. Let's see. I'm trying to remember the

company. 207, of course, sticks out in my mind in the lobby. 6 Engine. When we went up, there was an engine with us, and I can't remember what engine was with us, but I had heard they had gotten out okay.

The elevators, we got lucky with the elevators. It was orderly going up. The civilians were very orderly going up, and coming down everything was calm, too. Like I said, I'm sure a lot of other guys at the time thought it, too, that it was our building that was collapsing. It was very calm. There was no one rushing. It was just you moved as fast as you could move and that was it. It was very calm considering the circumstances.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1409 hours and the interview with Lieutenant Mera is concluded.

File No. 9110326

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL BECK

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 1510 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King from the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter PAUL BECK from Engine Company 205. This interview is being conducted in the quarters of Engine 224. This interview is concerning the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Paul, you can start whenever you want.

A. [redacted]

[redacted]

Q. Which bridge?

A. Brooklyn Bridge. I think we were just past the Brooklyn Bridge on the Manhattan side when the first tower came down and, of course, our concern there was now we've got to find Engine 205 and we've got to find Ladder 118.

We parked immediately. We found a spot. We geared up with our gear. There were no masks or anything of that nature, just helmets, bunker gear, pants. We had our chauffeur there who was pretty knowledgeable about where we would respond and he sort of led us, and I think we ended up on Trinity -- I've got a map here -- and Liberty. I think there's a Burger King on the corner there. That's what would stand out in my mind as our focal point, the location.

We found Engine 205 there. We congregated and talked a li ttle bit about where we're going to search now. We started trying to call out members' names and we started going around the rubble a little bit to see if we could hear anybody tapping, anything like that. Probably a good ten, 15 minutes, I would

say, we were there. We didn't find anybody. Maybe I think we found one person. That person may have suffered a broken leg. We put him in, I think, a police van.

We were just rummaging around and soon we heard this noise. It sounded like a train. I thought it was another jet coming overhead. I thought it was a fighter jet now patrolling or another plane coming. Pretty much everybody started scattering and I figured, well, that's a good idea now. I just remember running. I don't know, I think it was about two blocks I ran, and I think I hooked up with a guy from 124 and we were trying to force a door to get into this building. I'd say it's on Trinity, maybe the Trinity Building. I'm not sure. It had big double doors. We were trying to force the door, get in there. I think, now that I realize what happened, once the compression happened, it sort of helped us push the door in. When we got in there, we were running down the hall because we figured this building is coming down pretty soon too now. So we're running through the building trying to get to the opposite end.

Give or take five, ten minutes, sort of the emergency or the urgency is sort of dying down now. I

think we were sort of gathering our wits. So we come back out and we find the rest of the members there. Everybody, thank God, from the crew that came in on the personal vehicle had survived. It was a good half hour, I guess, just trying to round up everybody and, thank God, everybody was there, like I said, from the personal vehicle.

I think we walked down -- not Liberty. I'm going to say it's Thames or Albany. We were walking to the west side because we had seen the engine there physically and we didn't know where the ladder was. So, in the meantime, we also found the chauffeur. He seemed pretty beat up, and me and one of the other guys got him to --

Q. The chauffeur of what company?

A. 205. We had got him to EMS. We hooked up with the engine company that was on duty that day. All the members, thank God, were there. So we brought the engine back around down to West Street, and I think we went into the Marriott Hotel and supplied water. We went up to like the 30th, 31st floor. We pretty much operated there all day. It was a big building with a green roof, scaffolding all around. It was fully involved and we just hit it from the roof, we hit it

from the 35th floor, the 29th. We were there all day doing that and that's basically it.

Q. Does anything else come to mind?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1516 hours and this interview is concluded with Firefighter Beck.

File No. 9110327

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER PATRICK MURRAY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is now 1343 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Christopher Murray of Engine 205. We're at the quarters of Engine 207 at this time. There is nobody else in the room. The interview concerns the events of September 11, 2001, and what follows is the interview.

Q. Just talk at normal tones so that it picks you up.

A. I guess it was about 8:50. A passerby stopped in quarters, told us that the first plane just hit the north tower. Personally, I happened to be the person to take that verbal from the passerby. I walked out in the street and you could see the north tower right down Middagh Street. You could see the billowing smoke. I went back into the firehouse, told the guys to put on the news. Us being where we were, everybody knew -- we felt we were going to get assigned. Roughly, I would say, it was three minutes max, Engine 205 got assigned to the Trade Center.

We went over the Brooklyn Bridge, came down I believe it was Broadway and stopped the rig on Broadway and Liberty. At the same time, the second plane hit.

So when we were stepping off the rig, we heard the explosion and we looked up and we saw what everybody else saw, a big ball of fire, smoke, flame debris, building debris.

We got off the rig, grabbed the roll-ups, and our boss, thankfully, decided that it was not a safe place for us to be. We moved the rig. We went down a little south and came up on Church Street and I believe that would be Greenwich or Trinity rather. It looks like Trinity. I believe it would probably be Trinity and maybe Cedar.

Q. Okay.

A. No. Sorry. I guess maybe Trinity and Thames. Right by the Burger King, across the street, actually, by the church, by Trinity Church there. We grabbed our roll-ups. We walked over to the command post on West Street, on West and Liberty, and we spoke to Chief Barbara.

Q. So you walked about three blocks over?

A. Yes, we walked.

Q. You walked past the whole Trade Center complex?

A. Right. I think the only time we actually traveled on Liberty Street, and I'm not sure because I

don't know if we came behind 130 Liberty and came up Washington to Cedar, but I know we wound upcoming behind Washington or down Washington over to Cedar to West Street.

Q. Okay.

A. At this time Chief Barbara was right by the footbridge.

Q. South footbridge?

A. Yes, the south footbridge.

Q. Okay.

A. [redacted], the Chief told us to stand fast, which we did for, I guess, well, it seemed like an hour, but more than likely it was five or ten minutes.

At this time we witnessed a lot of jumpers, a lot of debris falling off of the building. I don't know if you want to talk about Danny Suhr because we eventually got involved with Danny Suhr.

Q. Who is that?

A. He's another fireman. I think he's from 216, but I'm not sure. Danny Suhr, it's rumored he got hit by a jumper.

Q. You tell me everything. This will help us.

A. Standing on West Street across from Liberty, watching the jumpers, we saw a jumper come off the south side of the south tower, which would be the side facing Liberty Street, say on the cross street, a good distance to the southeast corner of this parking lot, which would actually be the northwest corner of Cedar and Washington, which is where Danny Suhr and his company, which, again, I believe, was 216, they were forming up to make their way to the towers. Danny Suhr got struck. Approximately a half a minute to a minute later, we came upon the scene, stopped to help Danny Suhr, dropped our roll-ups, grabbed a bunch of EMTs. There were other companies there. The companies I remember, I think, were 122. Somebody said 217, but I don't remember seeing them, which, again, it doesn't mean they weren't there. There were probably about 20 firemen trying to help Danny.

We were there for about five minutes. We helped Danny get loaded into the bus, went back, reformed, grabbed our roll-ups, put our Scotts back on, started walking north on Washington Street. At this time we were -- actually, it might have been in front of 90 West. I think we were in front of 90 West and we

were going to start walking north on Washington. Our Lieutenant decided that the safer way to go would be to go down to Albany, over to Greenwich, down into the Rector Street train station, which is on Greenwich and Rector Street, and try to come up to 4 World Trade through the tunnel.

Q. Through the tunnel.

A. Through the tunnel. We made our way south from where we were, which was Cedar and Washington, south on Washington, behind 130 Liberty Street. As soon as we got behind 130 Liberty Street, the building came down. So it's us, 122 I know was there, I believe the remainder of 216, minus Danny Suhr, if that is his company. It could be 219 for all I know. We were all there. We formed up in the basement on the back side of that building to regroup after the collapse to avoid all the stuff you see on the news, the cloud of dust, the pitch black, the debris, everything else. Our boss took a role call. All our members were accounted for.

At this time we exited the building back onto Greenwich Street and Albany. Realizing that there was really no way to go north at this point, we started heading south and we started searching the storefronts, vehicles, for other civilians in need of aid, and I

believe we got as far as possibly, if there's an address here, which I don't think there is, opposite -- I think we were in this building opposite 19 Rector Street. We went in there again to reform, try to get some water to clean out our eyes, regroup, make sure everybody is all right. We didn't aid civilians in any way except probably gave them a direction to go, which was south, go to the ferry, go south. Probably we were in there for five to ten minutes max. Our Lieutenant now wanted to go find our chauffeur, who at the time we thought was missing, so we started going back north.

Going back north, we heard the other building coming down. Almost as soon as we left the building we were in, the other building came down. A cloud of dust ensued. We kind of went back into the next building we came upon to let the dust settle. Me and another firefighter, George Clancy, with the -- I don't want to say recommendation -- at the request of a civilian searched the two lower floors of this building looking for a school that was rumored to have 20 or 30 kids in it. We didn't get any access. We assumed that the school had been evacuated.

We left there, walked back up, and we saw our boss, who had spoken to the other guys in our

company now who had come on their own. They had given us word on our chauffeur, that he was taken to the hospital. The other guys that were there, frantic calls on the radio trying to get in touch with anybody, and at this time we still had no idea what the magnitude of this was. We managed to get most of our guys that we knew were there.

Prior to all of that, prior to leaving West Street, I remember 118's report that they were on the 15th floor. I don't know which building. I don't think they gave a building. I think it was just to the battalion who sent them into the World Trade Center, and they said 118 is on the 15th floor working our way up. Then, when the buildings came down, we realized that we lost probably all of the truck.

We went back over to West Street after the second collapse and started stretching 3-1/2 hose to marine, which was down in the pier area over here. I guess that would be Gateway Plaza.

Q. Right.

A. Or maybe north. No, I guess it would have to be. Because most of the stuff that we did, we stretched down Albany probably, so I would have to assume that they were down here.

After doing that, we got assigned to 90 West Street or the building south of that, which I think was 70 West Street, because 90 West Street was burning, pretty much fully involved. I would assume that this was -- I'm just guessing -- just guessing, I would say somewhere in the neighborhood of about 11:00, 11:30. We entered 70 West Street, went up to the 37th floor, set up a Stang, and spent the remainder of the afternoon until about 9:00 o'clock at night in a hotel room on the 37th floor putting water on 90 West Street.

Q. Is that right?

A. Yeah. Then about 9:00 o'clock at night, the Chiefs asked that anybody who was working for more than 24 hours, which at this time was half of 205, plus the chauffeur, I believe, we were released. They told us you've been released, report back in the morning. Then we went down in the street and, you know, you do your own private search looking for people that you know, guys you've seen. Guys that I saw over here on West Street that I know personally were Arthur Barry from 15 Ladder, 15 and 4 down on South Street.

Q. From 15 and 4?

A. Yes, 15 and 4. He was down there. He was at

quarters that morning. He went up there, I believe. Actually, I'm certain. He was listed as missing. He was also on West Street. I saw 101 come up with their rig. I saw 202 and 224, I think, also come up with their rigs, and this is all before we left. So a lot of these companies were at the command post on the west side.

Q. The command post you said was still somewhere near that side footbridge?

A. Yes. Well, they didn't have an official command post set up. They had a Chief that was sort of forming a command post. He didn't have the boards out, the command post that we know where you have the boards and Field Com.

Q. Right.

A. He had, I guess, a group of companies asking him which way do we go, where do we go, where do you want us? So whether he was setting it up at the time or the other Chiefs wanted him to stay and they were up by the north bridge at the command post, maybe they told him to go down there and accept companies. I have no idea. That's speculation. But that's where Chief Barbara was and that's basically the end of the day.

Q. Was there any order to switch handy-talkie

frequencies? I'm just thinking, how did they -- when they knew they had two buildings, they couldn't even do one building reasonably on channel 1.

A. I don't know. I didn't have a radio.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. The message that I heard, the report that I heard from 118, I mean, you're used to hearing company numbers, you hear it and for whatever reason it just stands out over all the other reports. That one I heard, and then you heard the Maydays, you heard all the Maydays.

Q. After the first building came down?

A. Yes.

Q. On the handy-talkie, there were a lot of Maydays?

A. A lot of Maydays, a lot of people -- well, it was basically just back up, back up, back up, and that's pretty much what I remember of the whole day.

Q. Were any orders given to like, hey, let's go on the pile. I mean, once the smoke cleared and --

A. I don't know.

Q. You didn't hear that?

A. No, I don't know, because we were in the hotel all day. So halfway through the day or a couple

hours through the day, we actually lost our radios. Our radios went dead. It's probably more than half of the day. Probably about 4:00 o'clock, 5:00 o'clock, our radios went dead, because we heard reports all day long of 7 World Trade possibly coming down and I think at 5:30 that came down.

Q. Right.

A. So we heard that all day long, all the warnings. But as far as the other directions that people were giving or getting, everything was garbled. You had a lot of transmissions, people stepping on everybody, a lot of Maydays, a lot of confusion. I mean, nothing but confusion.

Personally, and this is an opinion, I don't think there was anybody there that would have given anybody an order to go dig. But that's just my personal opinion. Hearing some of the transmissions that they sent that they put on CNN, you could pick up transmissions, if you were able, evacuate the area, if you're able. But as far as individual orders over the radio to individual companies, a direct order to individual companies, I didn't hear any of that or I couldn't make any of that out if there was. Like I said, the radios were a ball of confusion.

Q. Most of the time, huh?

A. Yes. I mean, all day.

Q. All day.

A. All day. All you heard was Maydays, and whether it was from members in the building, I'd like to believe that it wasn't, because that's going to be a horrible thought for anybody that there were guys in there that survived the collapse. That's just kind of sad. There would be no rescue. So I'd like to believe that all the Maydays were from people out in the street trying to get the attention. [redacted]

This is before the collapse. Actually, afterwards everybody pitched in. [redacted] I think all the firemen were looking up.

Q. The firemen that got hit from earlier on in the story, he wasn't alive? They were giving him first aid. Was he conscious at any point?

A. No, he wasn't conscious. Whether or not he

still had any vitals we couldn't ascertain, but his company was working on him, so they were giving him rescue breathing if they resuscitate him or the bag, the BVM rather. But we didn't try to ascertain vitals. We just tried to load him up on the stretcher and get the EMTs to get a bus and get him out.

Q. I have a question for you. The building you were in, now, you lobbed water all day onto 90 West.

A. Yes.

Q. 90 West was largely involved in fire from the collapse?

A. Yes. I believe it started early on. There were a lot of car fires from the debris that was coming down, so I believe that maybe some of the debris from the first plane that hit the north tower traveled into that building and started the fire. I know there was a pretty good fire condition on the first floor. You could see it through the doors and the windows and then through the rest of the day. I don't know the condition of the building. It looked like they were work on it because they had the scaffolding set up.

Q. Right, yes, there was work.

A. So I assume that the interior condition of the building was not really in that good shape because

the fire traveled to the upper floors pretty fast, unless that whole side of the building was affected by the plane debris, which is probably a safer assumption.

Q. From where you operated from lobbing water all day, were there any other companies with you or in that area? Do you remember seeing any other companies?

A. Yes, there were companies. There were a lot of vollie companies, I think, coming up, trying to find out if they could help, and there really wasn't a lot for anybody to do other than relieve a company that was already there. But a lot of vollie companies were coming up. I know they had at least two hand lines operating and another Stang out of 70 West, out of the hotel, which I think is the Marriott Hotel, of course, the problem being we had very limited water.

Q. Right. Water was a problem all day.

A. Right. That building, 70 West, we were hitting that in waves. We'd shut down the upper floors and use the hand lines on the lower floors, then we'd shut down that floor and use a Stang in the middle floors, and then shut down that and use the Stang for more floors. I think they had I don't know if it was a hand line or another Stang up on the roof trying to shoot it into the top of the building. But limited

water, so it was kind of a --

Q. Not a good way to put out a high-rise building fire.

A. No. Definitely not. Very tedious process. The winds kicked up and it looked like we were going to lose that building as well. Thankfully, the winds died down and we got control of it. When we left, it wasn't extinguished but it was on its way. I wouldn't even say it was under control, but it looked like it wouldn't be that much longer.

That's about it. That's all I know.

Q. What impression did you get when the south tower fell down and this cloud of dust was enveloping you? Did you have a sense that most of the building collapsed or did you have a sense of what was --

A. Early on, looking at the buildings, my personal belief, my personal immediate belief was that the top of the building was going to slide off of the south tower because damage that the plane did, it looked like it took out half the building on a number of floors, on multiple floors. But it was a fleeting thought. I don't think anybody there believed in their heart that that building was going to collapse, even that the top would come off. But I don't think anybody

believed that that building was going to collapse the way it did.

But when it did start coming down, you knew exactly what it was. A couple of guys thought it was another plane because we heard reports of another plane coming in, and then you heard this noise and a few guys said it's another plane. But for whatever reason, I knew exactly what it was. It sounded like a freight train going right over your head. It was an unbelievable experience. Then, when the second one went, obviously, you heard the same noise, so you knew what that was.

Q. At any time did anybody -- I'm not being critical or anything like that. Did you ever hear of anybody trying to get a handle, like on a roll call, who's left? Was the handy-talkie at any time clear enough? How about orders assigning companies to do certain things? Anything like that?

A. No.

Q. It was just chaotic on the radios?

A. Everybody was screaming. We knew we had guys down there that came on their own, and if you're standing next to somebody with a radio, a couple of us had radios and we hooked up with the other guys from a

company that came on their own, so you're trying to break in whenever you can. We heard one of our guys breaking in looking for another guy on the truck and we had just run into him. We all kind of converged on the same corner. It probably took us at least a minute to get our message out that we got him and he's with us. Then we all hammered again three blocks north, which, again, was north and I would assume it had to be Trinity, like right in front of the American Stock Exchange, just north of the American Stock Exchange, we happened to run into a couple other guys, and then we went all over to West Street, where we regrouped with off-duty members and on-duty members.

Q. How did you get away from the scene? You said before something about 9:00 o'clock at night you operated until around?

A. Yes. I think at 9:00 o'clock at night, again, a lot of this is personal belief, I think some of the Chiefs started to realize that you really had a lot of people down there and a lot of people that were not going to be that effective in the job that needed to be done. You could have 10,000 guys down there and endangering these 10,000 guys needlessly there for the work that 2,000 guys are going to be doing. Plus you

had guys that were tired, you had guys that were beat up, you had guys that were hurt.

Not to say that not every single one of us was not dedicated. We were all dedicated. We all wanted to go in there and dig and help to get these guys out. But there was a lot of guys, I think, that were just incapable of doing that, and I think a lot of the Chiefs realized that. So the guys that were there for more than 24 hours, which I'm sure was a lot of guys, they released them. Whether everybody left or not, I don't know. But our company left. We were physically and emotionally beat up and spent.

Q. Okay. Sad story.

A. Yes. There's a lot of them out there.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I want to thank Fireman Murray for his interview. This concludes the interview at 1406 hours and that's all.

File No. 9110328

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT NEIL BROSNAN

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The time is 1608 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Brosnan of Engine 212. We are in the office in 212's quarters. There is nobody else here in the office. This interview is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. What follows is Lieutenant Brosnan's interview.

A. We were at quarters. We were assigned fourth on the fifth alarm. Our ticket gave us a response location, lobby command post of Tower 2. So we were assigned to a lobby command post on the initial alarm.

We arrived -- we'll start with our response from quarters. We respond from quarters, we hit extremely heavy cab traffic on Park Avenue, in the vicinity of Engine 207's quarters. For four blocks, to get past the cabs we actually had to go through a parking lot, the housing project parking lot. We were blocked out. We tried to move traffic.

[redacted]

[redacted] Brosnan [redacted] This was reported to the police detectives on my interview with them. We thought it was unusual, but we just went against traffic. We got to the Brooklyn Bridge. Me and 221 were in tandem for the whole way.

I arrived on Broadway. Liberty Street was open. We went south on -- we went west on Liberty Street. I took a hydrant location at Liberty and Church, on the east side of Liberty Street. At that time, getting off the rig, we were informed, we believe, by the department radio that the elevators were falling in the shafts and not to use high bank or mid bank of elevators. To use only low bank of elevators only.

We switched to our command channel. I walked across the street. We had heard a transmission about bringing in spare Scott cylinders, which we had already had. We had already left the rig with our extra equipment. I encountered 217 and 214 on the other side, informed them that spare Scotts were needed. They went and got their spare Scotts. We proceeded single file to 10 Truck's quarters. Our command post was supposed to be Washington and

Liberty, in the lobby command post.

We arrived at that location. We encountered large amounts of building debris falling, hitting 10 Truck's quarters. We did not think we could safely egress into the lobby command post from this location due to the bodies and debris falling down.

Right around this time we encountered a ESU unit. We believe it was ESU Unit 8 from PD that was reporting a third plane was inbound. They were running north on Liberty towards Broadway, imploring people to run.

Q. East on Liberty. East on Liberty? Liberty is this way.

A. Okay. They were pushing east on Liberty towards Broadway.

Q. East on Liberty toward Broadway.

A. They were going east, going back up towards Broadway. At this time, we thought a third plane hit and we were now in the debris field of the plane with numerous bodies and we thought we couldn't survive a third event in the street. I looked -- we were right here, at the corner of Liberty and --

Q. Greenwich.

A. -- Greenwich. We encountered the security guard at 130 Liberty Street. We asked him could he escort us through that building and could we get down to West Street through this building to use them for cover in case the third plane hit. We figured we couldn't live in the street. We would be dead if the third plane hit where we were.

We then exited. Me and 217, at this time, were definitely together. We went single file through the building, came out under this underpass. There was a small white bridge there. We used that as cover. We brought our members in one at a time into the Marriott Hotel for cover.

At this time, I had my five guys brought in. 217 was the next company to cross. I proceeded to the desk. There was a chief there, I believe it was the 8th Battalion, and I'm not going to recall his name right now, but it was the Battalion 8. We were not assigned to the hotel, so we inquired -- I inquired with the hotel manager. I see numerous Fire Department units here and I inquired, "Could those elevators get us into the Trade Center?" He said, "No." I said, "How can we get back into concourse level of the Trade Center for cover?" He

assigned us his desk clerk who led us through the Vista Hotel and into the concourse level of 1 World Trade Center.

Now, I believe that is still the concourse level from the West Street side. That's how I interpret it. We proceeded through. On the way out I met a chief who assigned me actually to the 71st floor of 1 World Trade Center and I informed him that I was not assigned to 1. I was going to use the concourse level to come back on 2.

238 came, was behind me and he encountered the same chief. I proceeded into Tower 1. I started through Tower 1 concourse level, got in approximately 200 feet, realized -- did not encounter any other Fire Department units at this time.

I staged my members and went looking for a command post or another chief to try to touch base with somebody. At that point, I had made a circle, looped around and seen 238 coming up behind me, which they were still in 1, right before it comes into the Concourse Plaza. I proceeded back to 238, which my men were staged approximately 150 feet further in. So I went back out towards the West

Street side of World 1. At this time, I encountered 238 at an elevator bank and they were asking the security guard was it a Fire Department manned elevator and I had just told them that "We are not assigned to 1. Follow me and we will proceed deeper in the building and we'll pick up the hallways. That will get us across back to 2."

At this time, I caught the explosion, coming out from my left side. I seen the ceiling coming down and we all got low and backed down a dead end hallway. Me and the officer from 238 and the security guards, and I believe two of his members. I got low and back down and all I recall is for me it was the right wall that would be my wall back out to West Street.

When I crawled out, we became entangled with civilians. Our masks got entangled, I believe, on turnstiles coming out of their security posts and with civilians pushing, I lost my mask at this point. At this point I tried to go back towards my members, but we had 20, probably -- could have been upwards of 30 civilians pushing us out this way and it became the best option for me. Me and 238 crawled back out to West Street.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I'm going to hold the tape for one second. I'm going to shut it to stop the interruption.

(Recess taken.)

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's 14:18. I had the tape off for two minutes because of an interruption and the interview resumes now.

A. We were blown down the hallway. My left eye was blinded by debris. Our mouths were stuffed with, I guess, the concrete debris from the explosion and at this time, when I was getting blown down, I thought this was the third plane ESU was talking about. I had that in my mind, that now the third plane had hit the building and that's what the event was.

At first we were waiting for the heat to come and then we realized it was breathable and we crawled out. We crawled out and you couldn't even talk. You had so much debris in your mouth.

Q. This building was still okay. What happened was 2 collapsed and caused all of this debris and dust and everything else. Is that it?

A. Actually, the explosion came in through

those doors and came up behind the way I had come in. And I realized that, that the explosion came from the way I had just left.

Q. Did you know what the explosion was?

A. No. We never heard, through this whole event, through the collapse of other than -- well, 1 World Trade Center I happened to be there. I seen that collapse. We never knew 2 World Trade Center collapsed on Channel 3. My men didn't know it, I didn't know it. In fact, I didn't know for a week later the sequence of events until I talked to a chief in the 8th battalion and he told me I was wrong. I thought the hotel collapsed first.

Because now as I get out of 1 World Trade, we get out with civilians. We tell the civilians go north. I told the civilians go north. I don't know why, and I went north. I actually exited the building and went north on West Street. I went to a rig to try to get the debris out of my eyes. I was unsuccessful, turned around and linked up with Lieutenant Wilkinson of Engine 238 and asked him how he was doing. He stated he was missing his nozzleman and I said, "Okay. I'm missing my whole company. Let's try to get our Maydays transmitted."

We were unsuccessful. We could not get a Mayday transmission acknowledged and there were so many maydays coming in. We were unsuccessful so I told him, at that time, I had lost my mask coming out, to wait for me. Me and him would go back and we would do a search for our missing members, to move his men safely up here.

I believe the last I seen of Lt. Wilkinson was under the black overpass at 6 World Trade Center. I then began searching for a mask and to clean out my eyes. Somebody led me into a store. I have no idea where the store was. They washed my eyes out in the slop sink. I came back, I went up Vesey Street searching the rigs for a mask and was unsuccessful. I came back down to West and I believe I found a spare mask on Squad 41's rig or Squad 18's rig. I took the mask.

At this time, I encountered a Chief Keenan and I knew he was not in our battalion and I believe he's in the 49, but he used to be in 28 Engine. I physically gave him my Maydays and 238's and told him their last location. We had just entered 1 World Trade, concourse level. He proceeded south on West Street. I would assume towards Chief Ganci's

command post. He was heading in that direction when I last seen him.

At this point, my eyes are now I can see. I squint and I notice that the hotel is in a V-shaped collapse with only the two ends of the hotel -- the whole center of the hotel has disappeared into a V-shaped collapse down to almost street level.

I realized there was ten to fifteen companies that I had only passed three to five minutes prior to this explosion. That's about the time I was in 1, was no more than three to five minutes when this occurred, which we found out later was the collapse of 2, but we did not know at this time.

At this time, I have a mask, I run into a John McDonald of Engine 271 and he says, "Neil, where are you going?" I said, "Mike, I'm going back in to look for missing members and so does 328." I get back somewhere in the vicinity of 20 Truck, is the last truck I physically remember, when we noticed that Tower 1 is coming down and we all proceed north on West Street.

Q. Running away from this collapsing tower?

A. Running. And I used the rigs that were parked on West as a guide, because I couldn't see

very well at that time to begin with and I really couldn't run. All I did was I was holding onto the rigs trying to work my way north. I made it one to two rigs past 20 Truck and I crawled under a rig and as I did, I became separated from McDonald. Engine 271 was a little north of me.

After the collapse, which really was rapid, I was no sooner under the rig then it went silent. I crawled out, I believe I followed the rigs. When I ran out of rigs feeling my way and then I went left and I found myself somewhere over on that North End and Vesey Street in like an open lot.

I seen a Chief that was coming down the West Side, West Street, encountered him. I told him my company was missing. I asked him where there was a command post. He stated he didn't know. I physically gave this chief and a lieutenant wrote down the names of my missing members who I had last seen. I then told him I was going to go back up to Liberty and Church to see if my chauffeur was alive, because I thought I had lost the company at that time.

I was unable at any point to raise anybody on the radio due to the numerous Maydays, so I

physically walked. I believe I must have walked up Murray Street. I was heading down Church, I encountered a jet engine somewhere on Church Street and decided this was not good and headed up to Broadway. I walked down Broadway, encountered my chauffeur at Broadway and Liberty and I said, "Okay. He's alive. I have a chauffeur." I said, "Mike, go to the hospital. You're injured. I'm going back down to the command post. I'm going to search on my way."

On my way up from West Street to Broadway, I searched the perimeter. I didn't find anybody. I didn't even find another fireman. Nobody. On my way back I encountered a Captain I knew that was the Captain of 22 Engine that day being loaded in an ambulance. He said, "If you see 22 Engine, Neil, tell them they're taking me to the hospital."

I then went back to the command post, reported to Chief Nigro, told him I had members missing, I was going to wait until I had word whether they were in the hospital. I stayed there two to three hours and then I was removed to the hospital.

Q. You stayed where two to three hours? At Nigro's command post?

A. At Chief Nigro's command post, and I believe that was at Chambers Street.

Q. Chambers and --

A. And the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay.

A. I stayed there and then I was removed to the hospital to have my eyes treated, and that was the end of my day. At the hospital he had told me that my members had been removed, but at the time I thought they were lying just to get rid of you.

Q. Sure.

A. Just trying to say, "Hey, listen. Come on. Time to bring in a fresh crew." But I remember the last three people I seen was Chief Keenan was south of me, 271 was behind me. I had last visually seen Lieutenant Wilkinson by 6 World Trade and I never made eye contact or radio contact with him. He was found expired later that night in front of 1 World Trade.

Q. Tell me about what command channel -- you said you switched to a command channel, something like that. Where was that?

A. We were told to go to 3.

Q. You were told to go to 3?

A. We were told to go to 3. And that's when I was with 217, 214. We were getting our gear together at Liberty and Church, on the south side of -- on the west side of Church. So we all went to 3 right about that time.

Q. Who gave you those instructions? That came from the department radio?

A. It came on the radio. You know, I didn't know they said go to 3 and, actually, the guys checked my channel to 3 because of my eyes.

Q. Did you get the sense that 3 was going to be the tactical channel for the operations in the building they were sending you to?

A. I thought 3 was going to be my operations for 2 World Trade.

Q. For 2 World Trade. Okay.

A. Because as an assignment we were assigned to the lobby command post. I actually took that physically to mean, from the last event, that we were going into a commander. We weren't going into Chief Ganci's command post. We were being assigned a fire assignment right on the ticket. None of us could get to it. Some units got to communications. We never seen it. I never knew where the command

posts were. We were told, when we got here, the kids that were still in 10 Truck's quarters, there were two firemen, and they said, No. The command post had been moved two or three times, but they didn't know where they were.

When we got here nobody knew, because we were all predominantly Brooklyn and Harlem companies were here.

Q. Right. At the hotel.

A. At the hotel. I knew -- it wasn't my assignment -- that I could get in back through the concourse level without getting killed. To go across the street, actually Danny Suhr got killed right behind us and I never seen him. But there were jumpers coming. I said, I'm gonna lose 50% of my men in the street.

And it was that many bodies right here on the street at that time. It was scattered with bodies. They were coming down like -- I seen several coming through the smoke and I said, "We're really not going to survive here." But we never questioned, you know. We seen the amount of fire. We just figured it would be an evacuation. I thought there was 10 to 15 floors of fire on the Church Street

side of Tower 2 on my arrival, fully involved.

I said, "There is no way." I said, "This is just an evacuation." I mean we did this fire last time. And I knew when I got here there were too many companies, but the companies looked at me like I was talking Greek when I said, "No, I don't belong here, Chief. I'm assigned to 2. I'm leaving."

My company searched the hotel during the 1993 explosion and I knew it's a low-occupancy hotel. It self-evacuates, you don't need 20 companies to search it. I said, I'm out of here. and we proceeded in. Then the only company that followed me was 238. 217 got involved in Danny Suhr's rescue and I don't know where 214 went. 214 might have went to the command post. I'm not sure. Like I said, we seen the 8th Battalion Chief, I seen 122 Truck, 58 Engine.

Q. Where were they? Where were they physically?

A. 58 Engine was at the doorway of the hotel. There were numerous truck companies at the elevator lobby, but I do not know -- I thought I seen 4 truck, but that was the only one I recognized.

Q. In the Vista Hotel?

A. In the Vista Hotel, at the elevators. But there were at least four other truck companies staged there. I mean it was compact. I mean it was crowded. It was literally crowded at the elevator bank. And I remember them looking at me saying, "What do you mean these elevators don't go through?" Because I went to the hotel manager and said, "Can we get here from there?" He said, "No."

He assigned me his desk clerk. The desk clerk escorted us out and led me the way, because I had never been into the Trade Center from this route and he assured me the concourse level, I could get back to 2 at the concourse level. I knew once I got up the front, I was familiar with the front-end mall area of the concourse level. I knew I could get back over to 2 without getting killed. Not realizing that it collapsed.

But we never knew. We never knew 2 collapsed until after the event. I physically seen 1 collapsing, because I seen it just crumbling down. And I said, if it comes down, we're dead. You know, we were really just looking for a place to die. I did not think I was going to live through the event.

Q. What happened when you were in the

concourse level or the lobby of Tower 1 around the time that 2 collapsed? All kinds of dust was blowing in.

A. Oh, you couldn't see. It was pitch black.

Q. Pitch black and was it the concourse level or the lobby of Tower 1 you were in?

A. No. The street level from West Street, which I'm going to call it the concourse level.

Q. Okay.

A. Now it's not the first floor, because that's not where the fire command -- the fire command station would have been the floor above me. I knew this was not my assignment. My assignment was here. I knew where I was going to. I just never made it.

Q. Who was with you? What units do you remember in Tower 1 when you were there?

A. I went in a good 200 yards in, maybe 150 feet in as -- right short of the Path station, retreated back when I seen 238 coming in the hallway I had just come in. I had just hooked up with 238 at an elevator bank. He was asking the security guard, "Is it a manned Fire Department?" And I was about to tell him, "This is not our assignment.

This is 1. We're going to cut across and go to 2." With that we both got blown in. That was it. It was pitch black and we were being thrown back down, 50 feet down a hallway.

But I recall it was right wall out for me. I tried to go back left for my members and it was not possible. We were now getting groups of civilians coming to the lights and the people were just coming to our light. Which saved the last people that we visually seen.

They observed the explosion and the hallway disappeared. They thought the hallway blew up where I had come from. They thought they seen debris coming down and said, "The Lieutenant's dead." My senior guy regroups the company. He yells out, "Regroup." They're under light debris also.

The senior kid that I had, Vinnie Picciano, who had come down from 8 Engine, who had worked midtown for eight years, his next thing he yelled out, "Are there any Port Authority personnel here?" And we had in our visual range, when we walked in, it was perhaps up to 200 people in our visual range. Which is not a lot for that building, but we had people milling around and not really in urgent -- they

weren't running. They were just there. You know, leaving the building. These people probably seen the Fire Department units and when we put on our lights they just came to us like fire flies. They just came right to our lights.

We came out with 20 to 30 people on West Street, me and 238, something in that vicinity. These kids deeper in actually came out with more people. It could have been anywhere from 50 to 100 people that they got out. They actually got them out two different exits. They got them out through the Church Street side, up to Church and Vesey, and they got the second time -- the last time they left the building with an unconscious man, they went out to Vesey and West. But they actually made three trips in, because it was lighter conditions in this side of the building than there was outside. It was heavy black smoke over here. Conditions lightened as they went through the building. But none of us knew that there was a collapse.

The kids had an extraordinary day. The senior kid actually said -- because they got a maintenance guy. The maintenance guy said, "If you can get me out of the building, I know where the exits are."

He was their assured thing to get them out. And for some reason everybody went to Vesey Street. Nobody even thought of taking these hallways back towards Liberty. Thank God.

But actually on their third search in they encountered a heavy rubble and heavy fire field in that concourse level, which they didn't know what it was. They just knew that -- they actually stretched the house line and there was no water. They said, "Okay. Time to leave."

At this time, they had split into teams. One of the teams had found an unconscious man by the Path subway. In that vicinity, 50, 60 feet from Path. In, behind, I think there is a Banana Republic in that vicinity. That was the last guy. They put him in a chair, they rolled him out to the exit that goes out by West Broadway. As they got to West Broadway, the second collapse occurs. Which they have no idea what it is.

They are now blowing. They actually lose the guy they had just brought out in the debris field. They could not find him. They lost him and they actually had to dig -- Fireman Picciano had to be dug out of a debris field. I think Fireman Berntsen

dug him out. Gallaso, Walker and Murphy go up West Broadway. Berntsen and Picciano get separated from him. They actually go up Church Street.

They all eventually meet each other at a triage area at 7 Engine's quarters and that's where they all wound up. They all suffered -- a couple of them suffered significant injuries, but they all got out. We were just lucky. It had nothing to do with skill. It's just a little bit of knowledge got me out of the hotel. If I wasted three minutes there, I was dead. I would have been as dead as everybody in there.

But we never did encounter our command. We never did encounter or link up with our command post. We just never did. We heard transmissions about what not to take, elevators, what channels to go to, but we never physically met a chief that was in charge of 2. We just ...

Q. When you were wherever you were and 2 fell down, what came over your handi-talk? A lot of Maydays; right?

A. Nothing.

Q. Nothing came over?

A. Nothing. Well, first off, I might have

been deaf from the concussion. But I asked my members who were also further in and they didn't hear a transmission. And I mean I got out. We couldn't get our Maydays in. I tried a Mayday right away and there were so many Maydays.

My last physical transmission, the thing that saved my life is when I had found the mask and was working my way back towards 1, I received "4 truck OV. Mayday. Mayday." I've fallen several floors. I wait for an acknowledgment. No acknowledgment. He comes on the air again. "4 truck OV. Mayday. Mayday." I've fallen several floors, I'm running out of air. I go "212 to 4 Truck, what's your location?" With that I hear, "Hey, brother. We gotcha. We gotcha. Turn on your pass." But I can't pick up the designation of the truck, other than that they are working their way to 4 Truck. That part I picked up.

"4 Truck, we gotcha. Turn on your pass, brother. We got a roof rope. We'll come and get you." But I don't know who it was. So then I cease and desist, because I was stepping on his transmissions.

But it actually fixated me. It stopped me

nice. "Christ, I got my own Maydays and there is nothing I can do. I'm here by myself." And then I run into 271. I said, "I'll go with you." But it delayed me enough that I wasn't back in the building. If I had found the mask five minutes sooner, I'm back in the building. You know? And I would have been history also. But it was just an extraordinary day. It was just a matter of what luck you had. If it hadn't taken me so long to find the mask, because most of the rigs were stripped clean. I just happened to find some kind of -- one of those masks they're tethered to.

Q. Yes.

A. So I said, it's better than nothing.

Q. That's for sure.

A. But there were electrical fires starting on my way out. I could see -- I could actually see the electrical arc and it was like the white lights above us. So I was actually using that for reference. Ceiling, floor. That's how I got reference back on my feet. I was just watching the ceiling and it was arcing. We were extraordinarily lucky, because when I came out there was nobody. I didn't run into another fireman up until I got onto

Broadway. I walked all this way and I didn't find anybody.

We encountered -- but I had walked up this way. I had missed that debris field that was here. But even when I walked back I walked around the debris field and just didn't find anybody. And I'm not sure -- the last physical thing I remember was 20 Truck. I have no idea how close -- I know that 1 Truck was crushed, so obviously I made it past 1 Truck. But out of all the trucks I knew, that was the only thing I could remember, was 20 Truck.

We tried to do an intelligence report of who seen last which companies in that lobby. One kid knew the 8th Battalion Chief, Chief Deangelis? We knew he was there. And that was the chief. I told him, "Chief, I'm not assigned here. I'm leaving."

I thought I ran into, just looking facially, the Chief I met in the hallway going out. I thought that was the 12 Battalion Chief and I didn't know his name.

Q. Scheffold?

A. Yeah. I'm not sure if there was two 12 Battalion Chiefs there. But I wasn't certain. Because he told us, don't use high banks of

elevators. He said they're collapsing. But we already knew that from the department radio transmission. Other than that, we really -- we just never got into a command post.

Q. In the lobby of Tower 1, did you notice any elevators, anything unusual about the elevators or the elevator doors? Was there fire in the elevator shaft? Were they blown in, the doors? Anything like that?

A. No. They had asked me that, where the explosion came from that I encountered. The explosion came right from the way I had entered. It came right from in back of me. Because I was standing next -- I was on the far side of the bank, away from the officer from 238, right at an elevator door and nothing came from my left side. Everything hit me from the blast from my left. And I was actually looking at the elevators trying to figure out what floors they served to see if anything was moving. But I knew it was not our assignment, so I was going to just leave there and just grab 238 and proceed in after he finished talking to the security guard.

But the good part was the security people

stayed on site. The Port Authority people stayed on site and they were our eyes out. They were our sure way out. If they weren't there, I think I'd have lost the kids, and I had a probie -- he was actually holding on to people, he had no idea. I know some kids from midtown, they're dead. He made the smartest decision. He latched on to a Port Authority personnel and then he physically, as they moved through that concourse level, which is a considerable distance from here to get over to here, to find these exits, they used stores as reference points. They were wiping the stores clean to see what the name of the store was and the woman actually knew -- in their track of women that they had, actually knew by stores, "You're moving in the wrong direction." So they actually referenced off stores and the Port Authority maintenance guy. They were his eyes, but these kids led them to safety.

As they got people up the first time to the street and told them to go north, they did encounter three FBI people, I believe, and even some Port Authority police then had helped them on their third -- when they did their last search of that area. Which their last search was from the -- they

actually searched the Port Authority station. Two guys went down there and looked. Nobody. They found a body behind the path and that was the last person they seen in their visual range. They didn't encounter anybody else. That was the last guy that they had seen. There was nobody else moving in their visual range. And they actually encountered the debris field in two. They just got out the door when the second one collapsed and it blew them out into the street. But if they stayed a minute longer, I don't know -- I think they were in the only survivable part of that building. We just hit the two survivable ends on the Vesey Street side. We were lucky.

Q. Did 212 lose anybody? No?

A. No. We accounted for everybody. Everybody went to the hospital with scrapes. We had one kid on medical leave. That was the kid, Picciano.

Q. How long did it take to get a handle on that your guys were okay? I know everybody was scattered.

A. I thought they were lying to me at the command post, because EMS said, "all your members

have been removed to the hospital." I found out, the first call they let me make in the hospital, I called back to the firehouse and they said all members were accounted for. They were all minor injuries and they've been treated and they've been released. I was ecstatic, not realizing how many guys were gone. But it was agonizing for three hours.

Q. It must have been.

A. Well, because I had left them. You know, doing the right thing, going to find the command post. We walked in. "You guys wait for me. I'm going to find the command post."

Luckily 238 come up behind me. Because I knew the building. Once I got by the Path, I knew how to get to 2. I was two minutes away from being in Two.

It was just flukey how it worked out that day. But we knew.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: We're going to break for one second. It's now 1445. I'm going to shut the tape off for one minute.

(Recess taken.)

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's still 1445. We're resuming.

A. That's pretty much it, Chief. We just waited at the command post and waited to regroup. We gave the location of the last people we had visually seen, which wasn't a lot.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I just have to read a little statement at the end here and then we'll be done. This concludes the interview with Lieutenant Brosnan of Engine 212. The time is now 1446 hours. I think Lieutenant Brosnan for his interview and that's all. I'm shutting the tape.

--o0o--

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Brosnan, Neil Brosnan, Engine 212. This is Tape 2. I had already finished Tape 1 and I had to start Tape 2 and I have more information about Chief Downey, Chief Barbara in the street. I just want to continue the interview. The time is now 1659 hours. Just tell me that again.

A. Firefighter Vasquez, who drove Captain Stackpole to the site was at the command post or in the vicinity of Chief Ganci's command post and he

had observed or heard some of the following. He had seen Chief Cross and Chief Barbara, who he believes were going to be the commanders in Tower 2, headed across. They had just left Chief Ganci's command post to go over to Tower 2. Chief Downey, he believes, was getting ready to do a hazardous collapse assessment of the building and he had just left the command post, looking at Tower 2 as far as how much damage was done to Tower 2. That's right about when Tower 2 collapsed. And that was his last observation of those three individuals.

Q. Vasquez's last --

A. Bobby Vasquez, he was working light duty in Division 11. He drove Stackpole and somebody else. I don't know. He might have driven Cross. I'm not sure if he drove Cross that day, but he definitely drove -- Captain Stackpole was with him. And Captain Stackpole was with Chief Cross, and I believe both of those individuals were found in close proximity to one another. But they would have been, I believe, the commanders in 2. I think Barbara --

Q. Right. Barbara was sent to be the commander in 2.

A. He was to be the staff chief in charge of 2.

Q. So they never really got a foothold in 2 too much.

A. No.

Q. I mean by the time they started to organize --

A. Pretty much how I interpret it, we were all scrambling from the moment we got off the rig. I mean we scrambled for cover, and I'm sure the chiefs had the same problems. It was monumental to evaluate. I never seen that much fire in a building, in two buildings in my life. It was just extraordinary. I said, "How are we going to do it?" All we could think was bring extra cylinders, because we're going to need lots of cylinders. And then we said that walking up 50 floors is going to take us an hour. That's what we said.

Q. It would have taken you longer?

A. Two hours.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. This is the second conclusion. This is the conclusion of this tape at 1702 hours. The conclusion of the interview with Lieutenant

Brosnan.

--o0o--

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: This is Chief Malkin of the Safety Batalion once again. It's 1703 hours. I'm still talking to Lieutenant Brosnan. He just told me a note about in response to the World Trade Center. Go ahead. Tell me that again.

A. While us and 221 [redacted]

[redacted]

Q. This is at Park Avenue and around -- where was this?

A. [redacted].

Q[redacted]

Q. Yes. That is unusual.

[redacted]

Q. You left from quarters?

A. We left from quarters.

Q. And how did you wind up at Park and Tillary?

A. All Fire Department units were instructed to use the Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge would be held open for us. We were all headed towards the Brooklyn Bridge. It was the quickest way we could get there.

Down right, down onto Park Avenue and Tillary down to the Brooklyn Bridge. We were instructed to use the Brooklyn Bridge, all units responding on that fifth alarm. That was our instructions.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. Again we stop, at 1706 hours.

File No. 9110329

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVE FERRIOLO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 12, 2001. It's 1417 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the safety battalion.

I am conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade Steve Ferriolo, Engine 207. We are at the quarters of 207. There is nobody else in the room.

Q. The interview begins right now.

A. On the morning of September 11, we responded to the trade tower at approximately -- oh, it was just before the second plane hit, because I noticed as we were going over the Manhattan Bridge both towers were burning.

We arrived over on West Street, just south of Liberty Street a little after nine o'clock. At that time, the members and the officer grabbed their roll-ups, the standpipe kit, and reported in to the command post. That was the last time I saw them.

That's basically it. I don't know what they were assigned to do. A few hours after that, I went around looking for them. I came upon two different command posts. They had no knowledge that 207 was there.

I found out there was a third command post

that got -- was caught in the collapse, so they probably reported in to that one. The two that I did find did not know that they were even there.

Q. Where were the two that you did find?

A. Might have been on Broadway. One was here on Broadway.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's looking at the map. He's looking at Broadway and John Street.

Q. Dey Street or John Street, that's the first one?

A. Yeah, around there. The other one was over here on West.

Q. On West Street near the north walk bridge?

A. West Street, right, West.

Q. You checked those two out, and then there was a third one?

A. When I went to the second one, they told me that there was a third one that got caught in the collapse. So they probably reported in to that one. Like I said, I don't know what their assignment was, which tower they were assigned to go into.

Q. Okay.

A. This was later on in the day, like two o'clock in the afternoon.

Q. What did you wind up doing with the pumper? Did you hook up or you just stood where you were?

A. Well, when we first arrived, I hooked up as they were bringing in their roll -- you know, they took their roll-ups, their equipment, and they went to report in to the command post. I was hooking up on West Street just south of Liberty.

Q. West and Liberty, good.

A. Like I said, that was the last time I saw those guys.

Later on during the day, we moved the pumper onto Liberty, and we would be relayed water by the marine unit. We set up our manifold, and there were units taking water off our manifold during the day, and that's where it stayed for a few days after that.

Q. Your manifold -- what is a manifold?

A. The satellite.

Q. Oh, the satellite, okay.

A. We had the satellite with us.

Q. Perfect, okay.

How was the water pressure? Well, from the marine company, it was good.

A. Marine yeah.

Q. Marine is good.

A. After the second tower fell, we lost all hydrant water in the area.

Q. Right.

A. So then we had to bring in marine to pump in whatever 3 1/2 lines we had coming in off the marine boats. That was the only water supply we had.

Q. Did you stay in that area pumping and so forth until late in the day?

A. Mid afternoon I started walking around looking for them. I did the whole perimeter. It was three, four, five o'clock in the afternoon. I came to realize that -- you know, that they weren't around.

Q. How did you get home from the scene? What time did you leave?

A. About eleven o'clock at night. I left the pumper with a fireman that came in from Staten Island. He was manning the pumps. I came back, and I caught a ride with one of the other firemen that came in from home in his truck.

Q. Do you remember hearing any specific things on the handie-talkie? I know Channel 1 was crazy.

Do you remember any orders? Anything specific? Anything unusual?

A. After the second tower collapsed, there was a

lot of Maydays, casual Maydays. No, nothing out of the ordinary.

Q. Do you remember hearing anything before the tower -- were you guys there before the towers collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember hearing any specific orders to companies? Go here, do that, anything like that?

A. No, no.

Q. Do you remember --

A. Not that I can remember. I'm sure there was.

Q. Yes.

Do you remember now -- can you place any other companies where they were operating?

Can you place any members, friends of yours, other firemen?

A. No, like I said, because the towers are -- our rig was two or three blocks away.

Q. Okay.

A. That's where I stayed.

Q. Yes.

A. I don't know even where the command post was, who they reported in to, and what they were assigned to

do. I visually couldn't see where they went.

I don't even know where that command post was. I would imagine it was near the towers.

Q. Yes. That's about it?

A. Yeah.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with Fireman Ferriolo of Engine 207.

The time is now 1423 hours, and I thank you again for the interview.

File No. 9110330

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVE PICCERILL

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is 12/12/01. The time is 1511 hours.

This is Chief Malkin of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with fireman Steve Piccerill of Engine 204. We are in the quarters of Engine 224.

There is nobody else in the office, but the two of us, and what follows is the interview.

THE WITNESS: Okay. Got to work a little late that day, about maybe about quarter to nine with the traffic.

I walked in the firehouse, and the guy says a plane hit the trade center. I thought it was a little plane. Anyway, I go running upstairs, get changed, because I know on the third alarm we're going to go.

So I came downstairs, New York 1 had it on TV, and we were watching it, and we are saying wow, looks like a pretty good job, you know.

With that, we get the run to respond, but they tell us not to respond immediately to the trade center. They kept us on Hamilton Avenue and Rapelye Street. So we went down there, and we

were actually buffing the job. You know, we were looking at it and saying wow, that's some job.

All of a sudden, I turned away, and I heard a tremendous explosion, and I turned around. That was the second plane hitting the trade center, so that's when they told us to respond.

Meanwhile we thought the tunnel was clear at that time for emergency traffic. When we got in the tunnel, it wasn't clear. It was -- we were stuck in there for maybe ten minutes. I don't know. That's when I started to get a little nervous, because I was afraid that someone in the cars just, you know, figuring in the tunnel, this would be a place to hit also.

We finally got out of the tunnel. We were driving out of the tunnel up West Street, and we're seeing body parts in the street, torsos, chunks of flesh, parts of the airplane, landing gear, car fires everywhere. It was like a war zone.

I had the nozzle, so I had the window right there, and I'm looking up at these two towers saying, how are you going to put this thing out, let alone anything else.

So we got out of our rig. We stopped on West Street some place, and we got out of the rig, and there was a chief -- I don't know who it was, but he told us to wait by this underground parking garage in the staging area.

So we all got off the rig, and we were just standing. He told us to take our turnout coats off, our helmets and our tanks, because he said we're probably going to be here for a little while. He didn't want us to heat up.

So we were all just kind of standing there looking at it, and a lot of stuff running through your mind at this time.

That's when the bodies started coming down, you know. I stopped counting after six, but I don't know how many bodies were coming down. We were waiting. I figured we were going to be going in the building soon, [redacted] I was walking back up to the front of the tunnel, and I heard like a -- to me, it sounded like thunder, and I just saw stuff coming down, and I heard someone. He said, "Run

for your life. The tower's falling."

I looked up, and I just saw this thing coming, and we all just ran, ran into the tunnel. We got in there, and I don't know how many guys were there. Maybe -- maybe 30 or 40 guys. I know 211 was there with us, 210. 224 was with us. Who else? That's all I can remember offhand. 221 was with us.

We were all kind of making our way through this underground garage, and now it's starting to get lousy from the smoke, and it's banking down, and we were trying to find our way out.

We found our way to a doorway in a stairwell, figuring we were going to get out, and the door was locked. Not one of us had any kind of forcible entry tools, so we just ran.

Now I'm saying, "Oh shit, now I'm going to -- I'm going to suffocate in here along with 40 other guys," and who comes flying up the stairs out of the smoke, this lonely janitor, saying, "I got a key for that door."

So bingo, the guy comes up fumbling for the keys, and he finally gets the door open, and we get out, and I was, like, wow, wow, we're out of

that.

So when we got out, I'm not really sure where it was, Chief. We were in this -- maybe a courtyard or something adjacent to the first tower that was still on fire, and I'm looking up at that, and I'm looking at one our of our guys, Gary Z. He got hurt pretty bad at the time. He was sitting in the ambulance. Our lieutenant got hurt there, too. He was laying on the ground. So we packaged them all up, and we were getting into the ambulance, and I don't know if a guy said it over the bullhorn or a P.A. or something. I don't know. I know it was a loud voice.

He said, "The tower's leaning. Run for your lives." And I look up, and I see the tower coming our way, and I'm saying, that's it, Steve, you ain't -- you know, you know you're not going to outrun the freaking tower.

So we put them in the ambulance, and we just took off. We just ran for all we were worth, running and running, and I'm looking back and, you know, it's coming. So me and this guy Mike McKenna and two cops -- I don't know if they were Port Authority, regular cops -- all running

through this lot and we see a little -- maybe a security shack or some kind of shanty, a little building, maybe 10 by 10.

So I'm the first one to hit it. I dive behind it, and we all dived behind it, and we were just hunkering down. The stuff is hitting us, and it gets pitch black, and I can't breathe.

We were all just sucking the ground, and I figured the building -- the tower didn't get me, the other tower. I didn't suffocate. Now I'm going to die here in this shit.

We were just hunkering, praying, just waiting for something to happen, and finally it started to lighten up, and it got a little bit lighter. I said to Mike, "Mike, it's lightening up. Let's get the hell out of here."

And we got up. We still couldn't see good, but we were kind of like feeling our way. We found a fence. We found a hole in the fence. We just followed the wall until we finally got out into clean air, and right by the river, a little walkway. I think it's behind Stuyvesant School, a little walkway right by the river, and we came out there. I was hacking out stuff for ten minutes.

Then I just sat on the bench and was saying to myself, this really happened? It was really -- after that I was basically, I guess, shocked. I was just -- I was just standing there. I was just sitting there, just contemplating. That was really it.

I met up with the guys from 224, 202. I hung with them for a little while. Then we were just hanging out watching the Building 7 ready to go. That's where our captain had finally found us on a recall, because everyone thought we were dead, because our rig got destroyed.

That was it. The captain says, "You're going to the hospital." I said to the captain, "I'm okay." I said, "I'm alive, man."

He says, "No, you're going to the hospital, because you look like shit." He sent me and Eddie to the hospital, and that was it.

They checked us out -- x-rays, whatever -- and I finally made it back to my firehouse and

[redacted]

BY CHIEF MALKIN:

Q. I don't blame you.

A. I just couldn't -- just for a couple of days it was -- it was like a videotape going on in your head from the time it happened to the time it ended.

Q. Unbelievable.

A. That's basically it. I came to work the next day. The captain says, "What the hell are you doing in work?" I said, "I don't know what to do, Captain. This is -- I feel I should be here."

"[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

so our lieutenant volunteered. I think it was 202, and I'm not sure. It could have been 221.

The lieutenant said to Z, "Listen, go back to the rig, get some gloves, because you might be doing a lot of nasty stuff. Get a search line and get a couple of spare Scotts."

So Z went back to the rig. He got his stuff and went to get a flashlight. He was walking from the rig, and he seen -- he heard the rumble. He seen guys running. He looked up, and the building was coming down. He was, like, should I dive under the rig or should I run with the rest of them?

He chose to run. That's what saved his life, because the rig got destroyed by all the debris and stuff, and he got thrown up against the wall, and he was hurt pretty -- he hurt his back, but he was a lucky man. I mean, we were all lucky, I thought, geez, but he was very lucky.

You know, we thought he was dead. We were in that underground garage. We did a head count, and he was missing, and everyone said he went back to the rig, and we knew that wasn't a good thing.

Q. Yes.

A. And when I -- like I said, we got out of that

garage finally, the underground parking garage. He was sitting in an ambulance all covered in blood in shock, like deer in the headlights type of shock, where he didn't have a clue where he was.

That's really it. The way I saw it anyway.

Q. All right. This is a map of the trade center. Put your glasses on.

A. We were just below Vesey Street, right below the atrium. I don't know if the atrium is on this --

Q. Like on West Street, on the west side of West Street?

A. Over here. Okay, I was right by the American Express building, so I think we were just below Vesey. Here is the Winter Garden. Here is where we were, I would say right around here somewhere.

Q. That's where you were sitting after the collapse? When were you there?

A. No, this was when we were watching the buildings burn. This is where the underground garage is, somewhere around here. There's the Winter Garden. We were right next it to, and when we pulled up off of West Street, the chief said, "Listen, stand by the underground garages." Somewhere around here. I'm not really sure.

Q. When Tower 2 was collapsing, the first one that went down, you ran down a ramp or something like that, and then you came up. The guy opened the door, and you came up into the street, you said?

A. We came up into a courtyard.

Q. Courtyard, so you were over -- on the west side some place?

A. I would assume so, chief. I'm not -- tell you the God's honest truth, I'm not really sure.

Q. You're not sure.

A. I'm not really sure.

Q. All right. When you met that chief, do you remember what rank he was? Do you know who he was?

A. No.

Q. Anything like that?

A. No, but I'll say one thing. He saved a lot of guys' lives by making us go to that place, because if he didn't, we wouldn't be here today.

Q. Yes, really.

So you ran in the tunnel when the first building came down?

A. Yes, with the first, this one.

Q. That's this one, the south building?

A. Yes.

Q. Then eventually you worked your way up. The smoke cleared and everything else.

Then where were you when the second one -- what were you doing when the second building came down?

A. Putting guys in the ambulance.

Q. Right.

A. Gary Z and our Lieutenant Healy.

Q. On West Street?

A. It was in the courtyard somewhere behind West Street. I don't know if it was this side. I tell you the truth, Chief, I really don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. I've gone back and tried to even piece it together and --

Q. You're not sure where you were?

A. I still can't find the exact spot.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm going to say just for the heck of it that it was probably somewhere around here.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's indicating north of Vesey Street and west of West Street in that square block.

Q. Do you remember this one coming down and where you were when the second building was coming

down?

A. Yeah. Like I said, we were in that -- we were in that lot somewhere.

Q. A lot?

A. I would assume maybe somewhere around here, but I really don't know, but I remember when we came up out of the underground parking garage and we got out, it led us right into that courtyard where Gary Z was, and Lieutenant Healy.

All I remember was looking up, and basically about like the same angle about -- the way I pictured it, I was almost directly in line with one of the corners of the building. I'd say around in that area, but I can't tell you for sure.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's indicating on the map the same location, just west of West Street, just north of Vesey Street.

He had somewhat of a view of Tower 1 coming down, the second building, when it came down.

Q. Anything else?

A. Not really. I went to the hospital.

Q. Which hospital did you go to?

A. I went to -- what is the one on -- Beth Israel on Second Avenue and 17th Street or something.

Q. Yes. Do you remember anybody there?

Can you identify anybody that was there with you?

A. Just me, and Eddie Rodriguez. He works in 204. That was the only two firemen at the time I seen them bringing in, because originally they were trying to get us to Brooklyn to a hospital, but they couldn't get over the bridge, so they took us over there.

It was probably the easiest one to get to at the time, because I have to tell you, traffic was insane. Everything was blocked off, and no one was going anywhere in a hurry.

Q. Yes.

A. That's really it.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview.

It's now 1525 hours, and I thank the fireman for the interview.

That's the end. I'm going to shut it off now.

File No. 9110331

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DIANE DeMARCO

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today is December 14th, 2001. The time is. The time is 0800 hours. My name is Murray Murad from the Fire Department of the City of New York, and I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

State your name.

EMT DeMARCO: My name is Diane DeMarco. I'm an EMT for the Fire Department.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at Battalion 15, located at 4109 White Plains Road. This is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Diane, can you tell us what happened on that day?

A. I was assigned to unit 15 Boy, tour 2 that morning. I had responded up to the final outpost to pick up a partner. When I had arrived at the outpost, there was a call given of I think it's a 1040, plane into building. Shortly after that I was assigned to the job.

I responded down the West Side Highway, and as I was traveling down the West Side Highway the second plane had hit the other tower. At

that point I was traveling to my destination, which at the time was Vesey and West for a staging, I believe it was.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with another EMT, Thomas Lopez.

We had gotten to the location of Vesey and West. There was really no one in charge down there. We were basically in charge of ourselves, which worked out pretty well. We were getting out of the vehicle. A supervisor had been passing us by. I don't know who he is, where he was from, but he had directed us to go into the building, the second floor of the building, with our equipment.

I don't know what happened. A couple of minutes after that, I saw my partner get his bags and start heading towards the building. I told him -- I had turned around myself. I had started to go get my tech bag, and I realized that is not a good idea. So I called Tommy back.

He came back to the vehicle. And just as he came back to the vehicle with me, a couple other units had come down and said, "Let's turn

the vehicles around," because we were facing into the location. So myself and a medic unit -- I don't know how many other units -- turned the vehicles around.

Shortly -- I don't know, it would have to be minutes, seconds, after we turned the vehicle around, the first building fell, the first collapse. At that point there was a car blocking the area, and I was going to attempt to turn that vehicle around. It belonged to a chief that had just passed me by. I knew that he was in front of the hotel.

I attempted to walk towards the hotel, but just as I attempted to do that the -- I don't know what you'd call it, that mushroom, avalanche thing was coming at us. I turned around and called to my partner. We got back in the vehicle and started to pull away from the scene.

But just at that point, somebody was pounding on the glass on the back doors of the ambulance. I looked through the rearview mirror, and I saw a man in a hazmat suit. But I couldn't stop the vehicle because something would have happened to either the vehicle or him.

So I sort of motioned to him, but I don't know if he saw me, that I knew he was there on the back bumper of the ambulance. So I drove off, but I drove off at a steady pace so that I wouldn't knock him -- he wouldn't fall off.

I pulled a few blocks up from there. I don't know what location that was. As I attempted to go around to the back of the vehicle, I saw the man that was on the back bumper. He was a sergeant from hazmat, Port Authority. At that point he thanked me. He said that I saved his life because he couldn't run anymore.

We then proceeded to treat him, my partner and I. We just did the normal protocol for something like that. He was covered in dust. As my partner was treating him, I noticed several Fire Department personnel, firemen, walking aimlessly or sitting on the corner of where I had pulled in. I don't know the location. I was safely enough away from the first collapse to start treating patients.

So I started to take firemen off the street corners wherever I was finding them. They

were totally covered in dust, caked, caked on their eyelids. So my partner and I again started to treat. I think we treated about six people, six and EMT from a private hospital.

As we were doing that, the second tower collapsed. So everybody scattered. The patients that we were treating scattered, and they started running. As we also got in the vehicle and started to drive off. I think that's the point where I got up to Chambers Street, after the second collapse.

By that point then there was some supervisors then on the scene, and they were starting to organize things and sending everyone up to Chelsea Piers, where we then waited for further instructions.

After that I think it was like around 6:00 in the evening we were then released to go back up to the Bronx.

Q. When you were there when the south tower came down, did you feel anything? Was there any indication that the tower was coming down?

A. No. The first tower?

Q. Right.

A. No, no.

Q. When the second tower --

A. I just happened to be looking up or out towards that direction of the buildings when all of a sudden we just noticed that it just dropped straight down. Then it got really dark, real dark. Things were flying through the air.

I looked up at the building, and before I realized what I was seeing I thought it was paper floating through the air. It was people jumping from high up, way up high. But then at that point we had left that first location of Vesey and West.

Q. So now when the north tower now collapsed, did you feel anything?

A. No.

Q. Were you just --

A. I saw the antenna start to come down, because again -- the vehicle was facing north, so we were at the back of the ambulance treating patients, facing south. The towers were in our eye view, so I saw the antenna go down. I don't know if that was the first building or the second

building.

Q. I think that was on the south tower. That was probably the first building.

A. The first building, yes. I saw the antenna start to slide, but we thought at that point that it was going to topple over, not go straight down.

The second tower I just recall seeing it fall, a cloud of dust.

Q. The radio communications, were you guys directed to use a certain frequency?

A. We were directed to monitor citywide frequency. There wasn't supposed to be any transmissions. I followed the those directions; I think it's only because of the experience that I had. I have 25 years in the street, 21 of them with EMS.

Because of my going to mock disaster drills at the airport for my own reasons, because when I was working on that side of the Bronx, the unit I was working was one of the first units that would have gone to an airport incident. So I attended those for my own reasons.

[redacted]

[redacted]

And as far as monitoring the radio and not talking over the frequency, I had enough experience to know what to do and how to handle it. So I began giving instructions to my partner. We did paperwork. Not a lot of people did that. We did ACRs, we did log sheets, we kept track of everybody that we treated.

Unfortunately every time the building collapsed or we got word that we had to move from the scene, those patients scattered. But I found that I ran into two of those patients at least twice that morning in different locations, one of

which had to be -- eventually was transported to the hospital. Another one was a fireman that I took off the street corner and treated with that dust, and then a medic unit came and took him to the hospital, somewhere up around Chambers Street at that point.

That's about it, really. I just thank God that I had the sense enough to take care of myself and my partner, or it would have been a disaster. Who knows. I was so close.

MR. MURAD: This concludes the interview. I would like to thank EMT Diane DeMarco. The time now is 820 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you very much

File No. 9110332

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DWIGHT SCOTT

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 74545 hours. I am Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York, and I am conducting an interview with --

EMT SCOTT: Dwight Scott.

MR. MURAD: And your rank and your command, please?

EMT SCOTT: EMT from Battalion 15.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at 4109 White Plains Road, Battalion 15. This is regarding the events on September 11th, 2001.

Q. EMT Dwight Scott, can you please give us your perspective on that day?

A. I was on a call, minor injury call. Then I heard somebody -- the dispatcher said for us to go on citywide, monitor, don't say anything. I went 82 to the hospital. Then when I got to the hospital, I saw a lot of people around the television. I went and looked and I saw the plane had hit the World Trade Center.

After finishing the call, we went back to the battalion. I asked my lieutenant are we

going to be assigned to the World Trade Center. He said, "As a matter of fact, you've already been assigned." So I grabbed some extra equipment, put it on my ambulance. We continued to go to the World Trade Center.

On the way there we heard a lot of people crying for help, some people saying, "Mayday, mayday, mayday. My ambulance is crushed. I can't find my partner."

So I started to speed up a little bit more. We finally got there, and I saw -- the last tower was still standing. I went forward, tried to advance as much as I can down to the site.

Q. Do you know where you were or did you see any officers or were you just actually operating on your own?

A. When we got there at first we saw officers. There were different groups of command. We kind of advanced until we saw somebody that we knew. They told us what was going on. They told us to pretty much just stay put so they could account for people as they're -- we were setting up a command post.

That's when the building started to come down. Then we had to retreat north.

I was on the West Side Highway by Vesey and West. We started to help firefighters that were injured. We saw a couple of them running by themselves from a huge cloud, the smoke and the dust. We started to help them, irrigate their eyes, help walking wounded. We started to bring them to the triage station.

Then after that we heard another unit; they were crying for help. We didn't know where they were. We tried to advance to where they said they might have been, but there was so much smoke and dust that we had to retreat.

When the building started to collapse, we pretty much just got up and just ran.

Q. Which building? That was the north tower at that time?

A. The last one.

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower. The north tower -- I was at the bus. As a matter of fact, I even made a pact with my partner that if a chief tells us to split up we would never split up. When the

north tower collapsed, he started running one way. I called for him and said, "Come on, Melvin, Melvin." He couldn't here me. He just started running.

The ambulance was idling, so I jumped in the ambulance and just started driving and drove until everything was quiet. Then I turned around. Melvin, he had jumped in another ambulance.

Q. Melvin is who? Your partner?

A. Yeah.

Q. What's Melvin's last name?

A. Rodriguez.

Q. Rodriguez?

A. Yes.

After we met up again, we went back to another command post. Then they said there was a secondary explosion or they weren't sure if it was a bomb or a gas main. But we all started running again. We went north. After that we regrouped and set up another triage station farther from the site.

We pretty much stayed around there because we weren't sure what was going to happen.

We didn't want to lose any more people. So we stayed around.

Q. When you went down where you were at that time, can you just specify?

A. After the secondary explosion?

Q. Right.

A. It was somewhere by -- what's that big complex?

Q. The Winter Garden? American Express building?

A. It was further back, further north.

Q. To Church Street?

A. Chelsea Pier, Chelsea Pier. We went to Chelsea Pier. We pretty much stayed there because they were thinking about secondary devices or something might happen.

Q. Was there any officers that were at that time operating there once you guys were regrouped over there?

A. Yes, there were officers there, and they took our name and unit number. They tried to keep us accountable like to where they were and where they wanted us and which direction they wanted us to keep the ambulance just in case we

have to run again.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. I'll just say that was one of the worst experiences I've ever seen in my life, and I hope I don't see anything like that again.

Q. Were you guys operating on a radio frequency?

A. Yes.

Q. How were the radio communications?

A. We were on citywide.

Q. How were the communications?

A. Communications I think were pretty good. On citywide. They did try to keep that channel open just in case. There wasn't a lot of confusion like the other channels where everybody's talking.

Q. When you were down at Chelsea Pier when everyone regrouped -- when you guys regrouped, were you then given an assignment or were you told just to stay there or what was the actions of everybody?

A. Pretty much to stay, to stand fast, because we weren't sure what kind of danger we might be in. We weren't sure what kind of danger

we might be in, so they pretty much kept us at bay so just in case anything happened they wouldn't lose any more members.

Q. All right. Anything else you feel you want to add? All right.

A. Unless you have other questions.

Q. No, you mostly answered them, where you guys regrouped, what frequencies you were operating on, did you see anybody. Any individual person that came to mind that you saw that comes to your mind or was it just you and your partner most of the time?

A. When you say people, like victims or --

Q. Well, if you knew some victims or EMS people or fire people.

A. Yes, a couple of people that we work with, a couple firefighters from our area.

Q. Do you know the names of the EMS people or just you know them by sight?

A. Just by sight.

Q. So just by sight?

A. Just by sight.

Q. All right. You know some of the firemen that were responding down there?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. EMT Dwight Scott, I'd like to thank you?

MR. MURAD: The time now is 755 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110333

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ROBERT RUIZ

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is December 14th, 2001. The time is 11:35. I'm George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

PARAMEDIC RUIZ: My name is Robert Ruiz. I'm a paramedic with the Fire Department of New York, and I work at Battalion 26 in the Bronx.

Q. Paramedic Ruiz, can you please tell us the events of September 11th from your recollection, please?

A. That morning we had just taken a patient to Bronx Lebanon Hospital, and we had just cleared from the hospital when the dispatcher sent us the assignment to respond down to Manhattan. It was kind of odd because we work all the way up in the Bronx. They don't ever send Bronx units into Manhattan.

So we were wondering what it was. So we switched to citywide frequency. That's when we found out something was going on in Manhattan.

We still didn't know what it was. So we turned on the news, and we listened to 1010. That's when we found out that a plane had struck one of the twin towers.

At that point me and my partner -- we didn't think it was terrorism or anything like that. We just thought maybe it was some sort of a problem with the controls or something like that.

Anyway, we started responding downtown. On the way there, halfway there, we hear the news that a second plane crashed into the World Trade Center. Right then and there we both knew that it had to be terrorists because what are the odds of two planes crashing into two separate buildings.

So we're driving there. There's a lot of traffic, a lot of police, a really long line of fire trucks, unmarked cars and ambulances and everything.

Q. How were you getting there? What route did you take?

A. We ended up taking the Grand Concourse all the way up to the FDR Drive and then the FDR

Drive all the way down. We ended up having to get off around 34th Street, because they had blocked off all the -- the traffic wasn't moving, so one of the fire trucks blocked all the traffic and everybody just went.

From there everybody just split. Everybody just took their own routes. We took a pretty good one, so we got there maybe ten minutes after that.

Q. So you took West Street from there?

A. Right there from 34th Street? Yes. We took -- what's the name of that street that's right by South Street Seaport underneath the drive? I don't know what street that is.

Q. Allen?

A. The one that runs underneath the FDR Drive, that street there, like the New York Post.

Q. Pike?

A. Right, right where the South Street Seaport, you know, where the mall is at. So we ended up taking that street all the way down. It was pretty clear, I remember. So we ended up going through there.

As soon as we got there, we went inside

the tunnel underneath Battery Park, and we came out on the other side. When we came out on the other side, it was like -- we already saw the building on fire from way uptown, maybe 125th Street. As we got closer and closer it was like, wow, it was amazing. The second plane had already hit, so we never saw it when that happened. But we already saw the two buildings in flame. But as we got closer and closer, you see it better and better.

So when we came out of the tunnel on the other side, we were right there. It was incredible. We were just amazed that this had happened.

As we see, there's a line forming of ambulances up on West Street and -- it is West Street, but it wasn't Liberty. There was another street there. What's the next street after Liberty?

Q. Still south of the World Trade Center?

A. Yes. It wasn't Liberty, because -- or could it have been Liberty? Was it just that big? Oh, yeah, so it was Liberty. There had to be like another bridge there. I remember the

bridge.

Q. There's a walkway over here by Vesey.

A. I remember this. That's where we were. Okay.

There's a couple of commanders, chiefs, captains at Liberty and West Street. We came out of the tunnel, and we ended up on the West Side Highway. We went up to the back of the line. Before we got to the back of the line, like people describe it, there were body parts all over the floor.

I saw pieces of scalp and entire torsos and legs, hands, just about everything. I never saw a face, but I saw just about every other part you can think of. It was like an obstacle course to get to this line that they had formed at Liberty and West Street.

It can't be Liberty and West Street. It has to be like right by the hotel. Right over here, right in that corner, that's where it was. The line didn't start on Liberty and West Street; it was a little bit further up, maybe by the Marriott. Maybe right around there, maybe a little bit before that.

Q. So you're right by the towers at that point?

A. No, we never made it to the towers. I'm going to tell you what happened.

It was like an obstacle course to get to the end of the line, to the back of the line. What they were doing is they were getting patients, throwing them in the back of the bus, and then the bus would just take off.

Q. These are all walking wounded coming to you?

A. That's right.

Then the captains and chiefs, they were directing people everywhere. It was total chaos. So that's just what we did.

As soon as we got to the back of the line, these firemen come running from the building right on Liberty and -- right on Liberty and West Street, there's a building there. I'm not quite sure whether it was a church or not. It didn't look like a church. I remember it had a lot of scaffolding on it.

They come running from the building, and he starts yelling at us. He said, "Help,

help, help, we need your help. One of our guys got hit with some debris that fell off a building." My partner was driving that day and he said, "Okay, no problem."

We get off the line, and we park right on Liberty Street now. Right on Liberty Street, there's a parking lot there. He parks there, gets out of the bus, runs to the back and gets a trauma bag. He goes, gets the trauma bag and runs out and goes inside the building.

Now, I get out. I jumped inside the back of the bus, and I'm getting the rest of the equipment. I'm getting the oxygen bag, I've got the monitor, I've got a couple trauma dressings and stuff, and I'm putting it on top of the stretcher. I jumped out with the stretcher and everything.

I go to the building where he went, but there's a few entrances on that corner and I don't know where exactly he went. So I see some firemen almost on the other side of the building on the other corner. I go and I approached them and said, "Which way did my partner go?" He said, "We don't know what you're talking about."

So now my partner's inside the building, and he probably needs the equipment and I don't know where he is.

Q. What's your partner's name?

A. Joe Jefferson.

I can't tell you the times that all this is happening because I really --

Q. Time is lost?

A. Right, time is lost. All I know is that the building hadn't fallen yet.

So I approached these guys. They told me they don't know who I'm talking about and whatever. So what I do is I end up standing right in the middle, because if he comes out of any exit I can just run to him, throw the guy on the stretcher and just leave from there. So that was the plan.

As I'm waiting there -- I must have waited a good five minutes. Then the firemen I had just spoken to, they go and they run into the World Trade Center number two. So they run across the street into the building.

Right after them, you see three FBI agents, two men and a woman, run right after

them, and they also go inside the World Trade Center. I'm just standing right there in the center, and I'm looking up. I'm like, oh, man, you know, just dumbfounded. This is such an amazing sight.

I don't know what else I was thinking. It was just incredible. It was just one of those things you look at and you just have your mouth wide open saying, "I can't believe I'm here witnessing something like this." I said, man, you know, this is real history, and wondering where my partner is and what's the matter with this guy.

All of a sudden I see a plain clothes cop come and stand right on the corner. So this is now Washington and Liberty. He's right on that corner, and he's looking up. He looks at me, and we just both nod in disbelief. We just keep staring like -- this happened in a matter of like five minutes, the firemen running in, the FBI right behind and then the plain clothes cop on the corner.

The next thing you know, you hear a loud thundering noise. It sounded like a jet, a

big rumble. I start looking around and I'm like, what is that? The next thing I know, I see the cop just take off. I'm like, where's he going?

Then I see the things on the floor, like Liberty -- you know, just like the movies, bouncing up and jumping and shaking. I mean, not like an earthquake, like a 6 point something or something like that. But you see stuff on the floor shaking from side to side. I'm like, oh, my God. I look up and I was saying, oh, no, the building's going to fall down.

Let me tell you, you talk about being scared, never in my life -- I don't think ever again I'll ever be so scared. So I turn around. Right where I'm standing I turn around. I'm in the center of the building. I turn around, and I try to go inside the building, but that door happens to be locked. So I run towards the corner where the cop was, and I keep trying all the doors.

All the doors and all the windows are locked, and I can't break any of the windows to get in because they have metal gates on them. So even if I was to break a window to get in, I

can't get in. So I keep running, running, keep trying the doors.

I make it to the corner. I make it to the corner, and I turn right. So I was going to keep running all the way straight up Washington. So I ran maybe a few feet when I tripped and I fell on something, some debris. I don't know what it was. But I ended up falling.

By now the sound is just getting louder and louder and louder. I said, oh, man, this building is going to fall on me right now. What do I do? I got up, and I just -- this is like a split second. I said I can't keep running straight up, because you have this building right here on Washington. What is it? Bankers Trust Plaza, 130 Liberty Street? It takes up the entire block. So I can't run like in a diagonal.

What I wanted to do is I didn't want to run straight up; I wanted to go diagonally to get out of the -- because I figured this building was falling, it was tumbling over. I didn't think it was falling down on top of itself.

Q. So you had a feeling the building was coming down right away?

A. Yeah.

Q. Is that what you first thought?

A. Yeah. The sound, it's just loud. At first it's (sound) and then you feel everything around you -- not around you but the floor. You feel the floor trembling and shaking. You look at the floor, the dirt, the sand and everything on the floor shifting from side to side. I'm like, oh, man.

Then the cop takes off. He runs. Then I hit the corner, I turn the corner, a few feet I fall. By this time the sound is so, so, so loud, I think oh, my God. I never looked back, because I figured if I looked back that was going to be it, I'd freeze or be hit with something. I said, look, I don't want to waste any time. Whatever it is I'm going to do, I've got to do it quickly.

So I saw the building. I saw that I couldn't run. I saw that if I kept running straight -- the map here, it doesn't look big at all. But this was like a really long block for me to keep running and running and running and go around the corner on the other side.

So what I ended up doing was there was

a door right on that corner, and the door was locked. It also had a gate, a wrought iron fence gate. I kept trying to open, open, open, open, and I couldn't open. I said, oh, my God, this is going to be it.

The way they made the door is it's like a cutout in the building. It's like about a foot wide of wall before you hit the door. So it was like a little corner. What I ended up doing was I ended up hiding inside that little corner there. I ended up going inside that little door well and hiding up against the wall facing the World Trade Center building and hiding right in that corner.

As soon as I did that, the next thing I know, all the dust; the dust, the dirt. I said, oh, my God, this is it. That's all I kept thinking: Oh, my God, oh, my God, I'm going to die here. This building's going to fall on top of me. It's going to fall on top of this building and squash it and this is it. All you hear is all this rumbling. The rumbling, the rumbling, the rumbling, that's all you heard. The rumbling and the smoke.

In a matter of seconds it was from daytime to complete, complete darkness, something straight out of a movie.

Q. So that doorway protected you?

A. Yeah. It saved my life.

But while I was in there, I was getting hit with stuff. You heard it, and you heard glass breaking and stuff -- there was so much noise, you couldn't distinguish one thing happening. But when it happened close to me, I could hear it, like glass breaking.

But the biggest problem there was I couldn't breathe. The smoke was really, really hot, and I couldn't catch my breath. So I ended up taking off my shirt and wrapping it around my face, trying to get some air, but I couldn't.

What I remember is, oh, man, I'm going to die here and -- who will protect my family. I was wondering how does it feel to be dead. That's what I remember thinking while I was stuck in that corner. I was just like I'm ready for it. I wasn't so calm like I am right now, but I remember thinking this while I was there.

The only words I remember saying is,

oh, my God oh, my God, over and over and over, and trying to pull the fence off so I could get inside, but there was no way. There was no way for me open the door. It was locked. I was just trapped there. So I was just waiting for the big impact that was just going to take me out.

Miraculously the building stopped falling. The noise completely stopped. But the smoke kept coming. I was having a real, real bad time breathing. The shirt wrapped around my face wasn't helping at all, because it was saturated in that dust as well.

I'm saying, oh, my God, what do I do? Do I stay here? Do I try to run out? But then I thought if I run out of that little corner I'm going to get hit with the rest of the stuff that's flying. I was trapped there.

Like things weren't bad enough already, the car that's parked right on that corner catches on fire. I don't mean a little fire, the entire thing. Don't ask me how. The entire car caught on fire. You would think maybe just a motor part or just the engine part. But this entire car just goes up in fire.

I'm like, oh, my God, what's happening? I didn't get squashed and I'm going to suffocate here and now I'm going to burn. The smoke was real hot. The smoke was real, real hot. I thought about, oh, man, if I keep breathing the smoke in, my larynx is going to swell and I'm going to suffocate like that, and all attached to crazy things I'm thinking. Forget about it.

Now it was the car. Then I can't stand it anymore because it's getting real, real, real hot. I'm like, oh, man, I've got to get out of here. This thing is cooking me. Now thanks to the car fire -- because it was so big, I could see now. Before then I couldn't see anything. It was literally like people say you stick your hand right in front of your face and you couldn't see it. Now with this car fire, I could see a few feet in front of me.

I got out of the door well there, and I walked a little bit. I notice that there were windows there as well, but the windows had gates on them. All the stuff that fell knocked the gates off the building. So the windows weren't there anymore, the gates weren't there.

All I had to do was break a little bit of glass that was left there, and I ended up jumping inside the building, because you couldn't walk in the street. I was right along like the edge. It's really hard to describe. It was like a mountain of stuff.

I was walking right alongside the building, and I ended up going inside there. There was no gate. I tried to remember where were the gates, and I didn't see the gates at all. That whole corner was full of windows with gates.

It turns out that it was a restaurant. The only reason I know is I ended up going inside of it. I must have been there like a good 20 minutes, because I couldn't find my way around. I kept falling over tables and chairs. That's how I found out it was a restaurant. At one time I tried to yell for help. I was like, "Help!" I said, oh, man, what am I doing? I am the help here. Who's going to help me?

Q. Nobody answered while you were in there?

A. No, no, there was nobody there. The

people, I guess when the first plane hit, locked up and just took off.

So I'm in there a good 15 minutes, good 20 minutes, and I'm trying to find my way around. It's like you've got no sense of coordination because you don't know in which direction you're going. You're just bouncing into stuff and trying to look for a wall. I remember feeling a counter. Then I would fall on a table or trip on a table, on a chair, get back up.

Q. Was your radio working at this point?

A. I'm going to get to that right now.

So then when I yell for help, I'm like, oh, man, there's nobody here. So I go and I reach for my radio, but there's no more radio. I don't know where the radio is, where it went. Don't ask me where I lost it.

I usually keep my radio real secure. That's something I've always had that -- ever since I started working there, I always kept the radio secure. I don't know, I lost it, maybe when I fell or maybe climbing in through the window or I had already fallen a few times.

The reason I was yelling for help was

because I still hear stuff falling. You could still hear stuff falling. I said, man, I don't know if the whole building fell. I didn't know what the story was.

I thought at that point that only half the building had fallen off, because I was still there. I said, oh, my God, only half the building fell. The rest of the building is going to fall. I thought it maybe broke in half and just fell down. I didn't think it just crumbled onto itself.

Anyway, I start feeling around, and I see a light. I was saying, oh, yeah, that's the way out. I ended up walking towards the light. It's kind of silly. It ended up being a refrigerator full of Snapple. It was kind of stupid. Oh, man, I got so mad when I saw that.

Q. Did you need a drink?

A. No, I didn't want a drink. I tell everybody that part about the Snapple. I said, you know, I thought it was light. I thought it was the way out, and it turns out to be a giant refrigerator full of Snapple. I got so mad at that point.

Anyway, I turn around and I end up looking inside there. I eventually find a little corridor, and I followed the corridor all the way, all the way, all the way. I ended up coming out in the same building, but I ended up coming out on some windows further south on Washington.

So now I'm in between the block. I'm halfway in the building. So I ended up coming out of some broken windows that were there. Now I'm on Washington again. I look back, and I look at everything that was -- and I could still see where it was, because of the fires. It was just like a movie. There were fires scattered all over.

I remember there was a row of police cars, and they were all smashed. I was like, remember that plain clothes cop that was running? There could have been no way that he made it, because the guy was right in front of me. I'm talking about he was right there. I'm right behind him. I fall, I get back up, I hide inside that little corner, and then everything just starts falling.

So I was like, oh, man, that poor guy.

I was even thinking of maybe even trying to look for him. It was like you couldn't see anything there.

So I got out of the window, and I walked down Washington -- I didn't walk. What am I saying I walked? I ran. As soon as I got out, I ran. I ran and ran and ran and ran and ran. I ended up at the entrance to the tunnel. Where is the entrance of the tunnel here?

Q. It's off the page here.

A. Let me tell you how I ran. But I ran and ran, and finally I could see the light. When I got to where the tunnel was, I'm looking everywhere. It was just like that movie the day after with the atomic bomb. They drop it and nobody's left and I'm the only one. That's exactly how it was.

I'm looking and like, "Hello?" I'm looking. "Anybody?" No cars moving, no birds, not one other person, nothing at all. Everything's abandoned, everything's left, and I'm just stuck there. I'm like, oh, my God, what do I do? I said, what do I do now?

Then I remembered Jefferson. I was

like, oh, my God, Jefferson. What happened to Jefferson? What I ended up doing is when I hit that tunnel, I ended up going back on West Street. I was still trying to catch my breath, so I was taking it easy. But I started walking back to that building where I was.

I'm coughing, I'm coughing, I'm walking and everything. As I started getting closer and closer, that's when I start seeing people. I start seeing people scattered everywhere: a fireman here, a guy in a business suit there; just very, very little people.

When I got to the building that I was in but on the other side -- we're now on West Street -- I go in. As soon as I go in, who's behind the door? Jefferson. He's in there. I'm like, oh, man. But I didn't recognize him because the guy was completely black. What he was doing, he was helping out one of our other guys who got hit with stuff and had something stuck in his chest and he had broken his arm.

So there was him and maybe three or four other guys attending to him. So he was hurt, and somebody else was hurt that I remember.

I didn't really pay too much attention because I was still trying to catch my breath.

All this happens real quickly. I was stuck in the building for a while. But as soon as I got out, I ran, went to the tunnel entrance and ended up going back to the other side of the building. I find them. They're taking care of him.

So they ended up taking this guy, throwing him in an ambulance that didn't get smashed. Our bus was completely totaled, because we were parked right here on Liberty. It's demolished. So they take him out and put him inside an ambulance, and they take off. So everybody ends up leaving.

Now, Jefferson comes back to see how I am. When he comes back in there, it's completely empty. Now all of a sudden we see this big group of people come out; I'd say about maybe 15 people, about 17 people. I'm like, oh, man, we thought we were in there all by ourselves.

Somebody had brought a bucket, and it had water in it. I just stayed by the bucket, trying to drink some water. I tried to clear my

passages out, because I couldn't breathe. I was coughing, coughing up that black stuff.

Anyway, so these people come out of a closet or there was a doorway or something. We're like, oh, my God, what are you people doing here? We started talking to them. They told us to leave, but then the building started coming down and we got scared and they hid.

There was a lady with a baby, a guy with some cats, some other guys that said they were students from I don't know where, and there was this other girl, an EMT, from Metro Care.

What we ended up doing is me and Jefferson, we end up leaving the building. I'm feeling a little better now than I did originally from the smoke and stuff. So I take the T-shirt off. No, that's a lie. Someone takes a T-shirt off and rips it, and now we make masks out of that. We put these white pieces of -- we put it on our face to try to protect ourselves from the smoke.

We go and we end up walking back on the West Side Highway. We leave those people there with the EMT from Metro Care. We end up walking

a little bit. What we were going to try to do was to try to find -- oh, no, that's a lie. Oh, my God, I can't believe I forgot it.

Even before we found that, we found the people. As soon as we found the people, we hear it again, the rumbling. Right, I forgot all about that. We hear the rumbling. I was like, oh, my God, Joe, the rest of the building is falling down.

We all run, and we all try to get as much as we can inside this building where we are now. We hide in a closet or something. The walls are all full of glass. So we're thinking that this glass is going to break. All you see is the thing moving. Later on we found out that was the second building that was falling down. We thought and I thought that the first one is still -- the rest of it is falling down.

So anyway, when this one finished falling, we waited a little while. Then that's when we came out. That's when we came out. We must have walked for maybe a block or two. We found a school bus there, like one of those mini school buses.

So we go in, and we were looking at all the cars to see if we could find some transportation or something. We were picking up equipment as we went along. We found a radio, we found gloves, we found a life pack, a bag. We were picking up equipment as we went along.

So we end up finding a school bus. We go inside the school bus, and we find a lady inside there hiding. Why this lady didn't turn the school bus around and leave that area, I don't know. I guess everybody handles it differently. So we told the lady that we were going to borrow her school bus.

So what we end up doing is we end up taking the school bus. Joe jumps in the driver's seat, and we end up going as close as we can to this building. Now, we go in there, and we end up taking all those people out, throwing them in the school bus and then just taking off.

So we end up taking off, and we end up driving back down the West Side Highway to the tunnel and all the way around to the FDR Drive. Now, we end up taking the drive all the way up to Bellevue Hospital.

Once we got to Bellevue Hospital, we dropped the people off. Then me and Joe talked it over, what are we going to do now? Are we going to go home? I was like, I don't know. I don't know. What do you want to do? We talked about it for a few minutes. I said, look, let's go back. We just wanted to go back to help, see what we could do.

We ended up getting back in the school bus, and the lady doesn't want to go back down there, and we don't blame her. So what we end up doing, we left her and the school bus by the Brooklyn Bridge, and from the Brooklyn Bridge we had the life pack and we had the monitor we had found. We had the life pack and the trauma bag that we had found. We ended up walking all the way back down to the twin towers site.

When we got back to the twin towers site, it was still a lot of smoke but not like when everything had initially fallen down. So what we end up doing is me and the firemen that were there, whoever was left, we end up just digging. We just started digging.

A chief came by -- I forget who it

was -- and he tried to make a team, tried to make teams of groups of people, but those things just fell apart. As soon as he left, everybody decided to do what they wanted to do.

Me and Jefferson decided to stay together and, when the smoke cleared, just started digging. Then there's like no way to dig. All we can do is walk around and try to listen to see if you heard something.

It looked like somebody had taken like a broomstick and taken all the debris and everything and pushed it all the way up onto the buildings that were across the street from the World Trade Center.

This street was more or less clean, like the highway, right around here was like a giant mountain. I don't know what building it was, this building right here. Everything had piled up over here, up on top of the buildings over here.

So we ended up staying there. We found a couple of helmets from people, firemen. One EMS helmet, we ended up taking that one back to the station. That's what we did all day.

Then around 6, 7:00, my leg was hurting, my shoulder was hurting, this whole side. I couldn't hardly walk. I was like I can't really move my arm anymore. Joe said, "Do you want to go to the emergency room?" I said, "I don't know."

I ended up pulling up my pant leg, and my calf must have been the size of a grapefruit -- no, bigger. It was real swollen. I decided to go to the emergency room. This is like about 6:00, 6 p.m. or 6:30.

So we ended up walking there too, because there was no transportation at all. We went to New York Downtown Hospital. We end up going to that hospital. They rush me in. They rush my partner in. They asked us, "What happened to you? Where do you feel pain?" I said, "I feel pain in my leg, my knee. I feel pain in my shoulder, right here in my ribs."

They take my clothes off, start examining me, and say, "Oh, yeah, your leg is pretty bad." They started looking at my shoulder, and they said, "It looks like you might have broken a bone here or something."

When all this had happened earlier, I didn't feel anything. I don't know why it was. They took x-rays and found out that my collar bone was broken. They said I broke the AC joint as well. They said no broken bones in my legs or my ribs or anything, just the shoulder got messed up.

The only thing I can think of is that little piece of wall that didn't hide me completely, because it wasn't wide enough, so I imagine maybe something -- I remember stuff flying everywhere and falling next to me, but I don't remember feeling pain or getting hit with anything. Maybe it's because I couldn't breathe or what it was.

While we were taking the people out of the building and while we were looking for stuff, trying to find anybody that we can find in the rubble or anything, looking inside cars and all types of -- nothing. I was walking with a little limp, but I thought it was just nothing until later on during the day.

From there, once I got discharged from the hospital -- they put my arm in a sling and

told me to put I believe heat on and then after that put cold and then go see an orthopedic doctor the next day, they gave me somebody to go see.

Now it was how do I get home?

Q. Did you ever end up calling home all that time?

A. I tried to call -- I ended up -- oh, this is so funny. I had a cell phone in my pocket. After we came back from Bellevue, I said let me try to call home. The cell phones weren't working. Everything was completely -- I'm telling you, it was completely shut down.

After maybe an hour or two, I got a signal, so I ended up calling. It just so happens that I hadn't charged my phone. So I was on low cells. So I called my girlfriend. She picked up the phone and she said, "How are you?"

It's so funny, because on my way down to the World Trade Center I called her and I was like, "Look, I'm going down to the World Trade Center." She said, "No, don't go." I was like, "Look, they told me to go. They assigned me there." She's like, "Be careful, be careful."

Then from there she never heard from me again.

Now I said, "Oh, you don't know what's happened to me. Oh, my God, I almost died." I'm trying to tell her the story. I said, "Look, it's going to cut off." It cuts off, and then that was it.

That's when everything else started. We started looking for people and stuff like that. I took about an hour or two taking -- I had a lot of glass in my hands. My hands are fine now, but they were destroyed. I don't know how I got so much glass in my hand. I figured maybe I was trying to break the glass with my hands or something, but I don't remember.

I don't know, but my hands, if you saw them, they looked like -- they were completely messed up. So there I was, trying to irrigate and going through every cut, picking the glass out of my hands. That took about an hour.

Then we would go and look inside cars, look inside the fire engines, the flipped-over SUVs, everything. There was really nothing we could do, just the little bit we did. We took those people out of that building, so I guess we

did a little bit of our part.

As far as finding anybody after that, nothing. Then when I got discharged from the emergency room, we had no way to get home. We were stranded, so we started walking. Jefferson ran into somebody that works there at New York Downtown Hospital. They said they would try to get us as far as Bellevue and then from there maybe we could get a ride from one of our own units there.

As it turns out, they didn't call them right away. I don't think they were logged on or whatever the case was. They ended up taking us all the way to the station. You don't know how happy I was when I heard that he was going to do that favor for us, because by that time I had really had just about enough by the end of the day.

So we get to the station, and there's just a giant crowd of people. Everybody that works at the station was like, "Oh, my God, we thought you guys were dead. We thought you guys were just --" I guess they might have done roll call on the radio, something like that, and they

hadn't heard from us.

So when they saw us, they were happy, clapping. I told the story once, and then that was it. I was like I really don't want to talk about it anymore. I just want to go home.

By that time Jefferson had lent me his phone and I had called my family, and they were on their way there. So I was in five or ten minutes and they got there. My girlfriend Tamara, my brother, my sister, they all came. They hugged me and everything.

It was definitely something I don't ever want to live through again. That's how the day ended. That was my World Trade Center experience.

Q. Thank you for taking the time to conduct this interview.

MR. CUNDARI: It is 12:12, and this concludes this interview.

File No. 9110334

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT KEVIN McLEON

Interview Date: December 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is December 15, 2001. The time is 25 minutes past the hour of 12. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and shield number.

EMT McLEON: EMT Kevin McLeon, 5758.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. That morning I was late for work. I got stuck in traffic and was late for work. The alarm had gone on as soon as I got here. We pulled up the block, and we were a block from the station when we realized there was something going on. There was a large crowd gathering in the street.

We parked our ambulance and we got out of the ambulance, and we looked up and we realized the World Trade Center was on fire.

That's when the calls started coming in.

My partner managed to get us on the call, with all the radio traffic, and we responded down to the World Trade Center. In doing so started to hear all the mass confusion about what was going on. Lieutenant Davila was the first lieutenant down on the scene, screaming for EMS units, crying that this was a hard hat operation. We knew something was really going on.

As we got closer to the World Trade Center, we realized this is really something of a large magnitude we have never seen before. We pull up 84, and we were actually on the opposite side of where the staging was, which probably saved our lives.

Davila was on one side of the station, one side of the building, and we were on the other side. We got out and started to pull our equipment out.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map provided approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. Church and maybe Cortlandt, Dey,

somewhere.

Q. Okay. So Church, somewhere in between Cortlandt and Dey?

A. Somewhere in between there.

Q. Okay. And you were in vehicle --

A. 69.

Q. -- 69. Thank you.

A. We pulled our equipment out and started to stage in front of the building. We started to distribute equipment for triage. We had one or two patients who had a piece of the building that fell on his shoulder. We started to bring him to ambulance when all of a sudden we heard a large explosion. That explosion turned out to be subsequently the second plane hitting.

We threw him and two other patients in the back of the ambulance and started to do triage in the back of the ambulance. It was a safe haven. We ended up driving three more patients. The last patient was a burn patient. Since she really couldn't wait around, we decided to take the five that we had, hit our 82 and go to the hospital.

Q. What hospital did you transport these

patients to?

A. We went to Cornell.

Q. Cornell?

A. The burn patient we had had second and third degree burns. It has a really good trauma center. So for the first time we went to Cornell. When we got to Cornell, that's when we heard the towers had collapsed.

We quickly finished what we had at Cornell, made our way back down to -- we started making our way down and managed to get down to South and -- it was South of Canal, near the seaport. We were down there. You could see the towers had collapsed and saw the smoke and all the people running out towards us. We were just bogged down in so much traffic we couldn't get through. .

We couldn't get our way through because of all the traffic and all the people. We had been hearing there were three staging areas being set up. We managed to stage at Chelsea Piers.

But from that point on we managed to get ourselves up to Chelsea Piers. We didn't do anything for the rest of the day. We sat there

and we waited like bumps on logs. That was our claim to fame. That's all we really did.

Q. When you initially arrived on the scene, were there other people at your location when you arrived on Church between Dey and --

A. There were other BLS units and a couple of medic units from Cabrini on the same side as we were. They had already started to set up a triage and gather patients.

Q. Do you know any of these other people? Would you know them by name?

A. I remember seeing one of them, a guy named Andy, who was a medic. I remember him. We also started to gather our patients. Then when we heard the large explosion, we took all we had, put them in our ambulances, and waited for it to die down a couple more seconds, got out, gathered more patients. Then I split, and after that I don't know what anybody did.

Q. Do you know approximately what time it was that you went 82?

A. It was probably somewhere in the area of 9 -- somewhere around 9:30, 9:40, because actually we were up -- at 10 to 10 we were

already up at Cornell with the five people, the five patients. We were up at Cornell probably about quarter to 10, 10 to 10. We were up at Cornell already, because we stayed there long enough to hear the buildings had collapsed.

I guess it was gut-wrenching to know we couldn't get closer down to the scene as we wanted and wound up getting sent down to Chelsea Piers and then we sat there doing absolutely nothing for the rest of the day, when you're knowing that people from our own station were down at the site doing more than you.

That was really it. That was -- I took care of five people. That's it.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview? Anything at all?

A. We'll never see something like this again for the rest of our lives. My partner and I really were more mad at the fact that we couldn't get down there. We both knew we did the right thing for our patients, especially the burn victim, because if the burn victim didn't come along, we were going to go to the nearest trauma center, dump them off and then get back to the

game. She came along at the last second, and we both made the decision that she's got to go to the burn center. That's what kept us out of there.

That's about it.

Q. Okay.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 33 minutes past 12. The counter on the recorder reads 139.

Thank you very much.

File No. 9110335

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JODY BELL

Interview Date: December 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is December 15th, 2001. The time is 1:05 a.m. my name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and shield number.

EMT BELL: My name is Jody bell, EMT, shield number 5209.

Q. Mr. Bell, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. I was due in at work at 0900 hours. So being a resident from Staten Island, I commuted that day on the ferry. So I was aboard the 8:00 ferry leaving Staten Island. So I reached the city at approximately 8:30. I had my car on the ferry.

A funny thing is I bumped into my partner on the boat. Being that it was Tuesday, we were just talking about Monday night football,

just looking forward to a good day. He had just come off a three-day swing. We were just looking forward to a good day, because the weather was nice and everything was pretty good. Everything was going fine.

As I'm driving to work --

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Mike Mejias, Michael Mejias.

Q. Okay.

A. As I'm driving to work, at around a quarter to, I noticed that the traffic was getting heavy. I'm saying to myself I might be late. I'm wondering why there's all this traffic, because there's never this much traffic. This is my usual routine.

That's when we noticed a whole bunch of police cars responding somewhere. So at first we just -- we were thinking that maybe it's a bad car accident or something of that nature. My partner said he noticed people looking up in the air. I was concentrating on getting to work. I'm trying to get there on time.

As we moved closer to the battalion, we're about two blocks away, and I see all the

ambulances flying out of the station. I'm like, something's going on, man. I see my lieutenant standing in the middle of the street just like -- just flagging all the ambulances to leave. He's in a real excited state.

Q. Who was your supervisor?

A. This was Lieutenant Melarango.

So then my partner says, "Stop the car." So we stop the car in the middle of the street. He's like, "Something's going on." We jumped out of the car. We turned around, and we see the building on fire. We see the smoke coming out of the building and automatically assumed that we were bombed again, that another bomb went off in the World Trade Center, there was another attempt at trying to destroy the World Trade Center.

We immediately jumped back into the vehicle, back into my car, and we get to the station. That's when we were informed that a plane hit. A plane had hit the World Trade Center. So we're in awe. I just jumped out of the car. I left the lights on. I didn't realize that until like two days later when I tried to

start it, but that's beside the point.

I was already in uniform, and my partner wasn't. So right away the lieutenant was like, "Just get into a truck and get the fuck out of here." That's exactly what he said.

I was already addressed, and my partner ran upstairs. He said, "Just meet me out there. Be safe." I was like, "I'll meet you out there. Be safe." So I jumped into a unit with another EMT, Garfield Grey. This is my first time really meeting him. We jumped into a unit together. I think it was unit 413. We immediately proceeded over to the site. We got there about three minutes later.

Q. Do you know about what time this was?

A. The scene was insane.

I lost all track of time, to tell you the truth.

Q. Okay.

A. Once I saw that the building -- it was unreal, and I lost all track of time from there.

We proceeded over to the site, and the scene was hectic. There were people running everywhere. There were units flying everywhere.

There was debris falling. It was just the worst -- it was the worst -- the horror on the people's faces, they were scattering, running all directions.

At first we pulled the bus -- we pulled the bus onto West Street about right in front of -- I'd say right in front of One World Trade Center on West Street, close to the corner of Vesey. We were just looking at the turn of events and we said, you know what, let's go over to the other side of the West Side Highway, just to be safe, because our first move is scene safety.

So we crossed over to the other side of the West Side Highway, and we parked the bus at the corner of Vesey and West.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1 where you parked the vehicle?

A. So we parked the unit there. We unloaded it. We threw everything we could onto the stretcher. I immediately ran to the corner. My partner said he was going to move the bus back even more to get the bus out of harm's way. At that point I didn't know where he had put the

bus.

I immediately jumped into action. I started just rounding up people, because people were running with second degree, third degree burns, half their hair burned down to the scalp. People had broken arms. They were holding limbs. It was a bad scene. I saw a couple bodies falling out of the building.

I just gathered myself within a split second, and I started gathering people to the corner. I had them all sit down, and I started triage tagging people. I was trying to listen to the radio, as I was doing all of this, to find out where a staging area could have been. I already had people -- I just started tagging people. I kind of lost track of time.

My partner came back shortly after that. My partner came back. The bus wasn't too far away. It was like a hundred yards away from us. He just jumped into action too. He started tagging people and just trying to gather people towards us.

Shortly after that nurses started arriving on the scene. I guess they had come out

of the building -- it looked like they were coming out of the World Financial Center. Anyway, there were nurses and other medical staff that were starting to arrive on the scene. Other units were starting to arrive. Everybody was trying to lend a hand.

I figure about a half hour later after we arrived we had a good 20 to 30 people on that corner we were trying to treat. We were just trying to treat them.

We then hear this explosion. We hear this explosion, and our first reaction is the plane was lodged in the building and it exploded or parts of it were still in the building and that exploded.

Then people were screaming that another plane hit. I'm like, no way, there's no way. From where I was, I couldn't see the other tower. I saw the one tower. I couldn't see the other tower. They said another plane hit. So I'm like, there's no way. More people were starting to say it. Then it came over the radio.

That's when I knew it was deliberate. I knew it was deliberate. At first I was

thinking maybe it was an accident, human error of the worst kind. But the second plane, I knew it was deliberate. I knew this was an attack. I wasn't even concentrating on that at the moment. I was just trying to gather the people.

Then the scene became even more hectic. It became even more hectic. We were just trying to do what we can. Now there were news people on the scene, more units, more hands. It was becoming a more hectic scene.

I'm not sure how much time passed after that. I lost track of time. You start to hear this rumble. You hear this rumble. Everything is shaking. Now I'm like, what the hell could that be. I'm thinking we're going to get bombed. This is an air raid.

You hear this thunder, this rumbling. Then you see the building start to come down. Everybody's like, "Run for your lives! The building is coming down!"

At that moment when that building was coming down, I was strapping a patient onto a stair chair. The thing about it was the patient was stable, but she was in a bit of hysteria. I

couldn't blame her. It was a female. She was very nervous.

So I had her sit in the chair and I put some oxygen on her, because she wasn't breathing right, she was hyperventilating. I was just trying to calm her down. I was strapping her onto the stair chair, and that's when the building comes down. So I strapped her on.

As I this tidal wave, it's like a tidal wave of soot and ash coming in my direction, my life flashed before my eyes. I made a U turn, and I started to run -- I took about ten steps, and the lady started screaming, "Don't leave me! Don't leave me!" That's when I gathered myself. I got a hold of myself, wait, what the hell am I doing?

I turned back around. I got her out of the chair. I said, "Ma'am, can you run?" She said, "Yes." She took off. I immediately made a U turn, and I've never moved so fast in my life. I don't think my feet were touching the ground. My feet weren't touching the ground.

Then shortly after that -- the building came down. It's like snow fall. The cars are

covered. The streets are covered. I'm covered and breathing in mouthfuls. You couldn't see. The scene was totally blacked out. You're just running in the direction that you think is away.

I knew I was running -- this would be westbound. I was running westbound down Vesey. I ran about a block to North End Avenue. That's when the building -- you could hear the sound. The building came down. The building finished collapsing.

So I immediately made a U turn and just ran back, because I got separated from my partner. My partner Mike, who I rode with, I had bumped into him -- between all of that I bumped into him somewhere. When other units started arriving, he had finally arrived.

So I immediately made a U turn. I ran back. Now everybody's running back: firemen, policemen, EMTs, paramedics. Everybody's running back because we've got men in there, we had equipment in there, and the people. We were just running back. That was everybody's first -- not even hesitating, just made a U turn and started heading back.

That's when over the radio you hear, "Stand fast. The north tower is leaning." I'm like, how is the north tower leaning? See, once I heard the second plane hit, I was thinking the second plane hit one building, both planes hit that one building, and that building had kind of come straight down. So all I saw was smoke coming at me and everything else, and I just ran. I still got bombarded with all of that stuff.

When I came back this time, not only was it snowing but I could see the tower, and the tower was starting to break off. It was kind of looking like it was going to tip, and there was a piece of the building coming down right on top of me and Mike. We were holding each other's hands and we were like, "Whoa, look at that."

We sat there like for a split second and we just watched it in amazement that this building was coming down, the second building was coming down. The building was hitting other buildings. It was hitting buildings over here. It was crazy.

Then we made another U turn, and everything started rumbling again. Another tidal

wave blacked out the whole scene. This time it was worse. We were just running. This time we ran all the way back as far as we could to the railing. I was damn near ready to jump in the river. I swear to God, I was holding the railing, looking back, as this thing's coming towards us. I was ready to jump in the water. We were all gathered there.

The debris went well into the Hudson. It almost went to Jersey. There was debris almost to Jersey. It was over our heads. It was just blowing. There were papers -- the amount of paper, it was like a ticker tape parade. There were like a billion times more paper. We were swatting paper out of our face, on top of the soot and the ash and everything else.

So then we stayed there. More people were coming. I started cutting up sheets. I had sheets. There was a stretcher like to the side. I started cutting up sheets and started making masks for everybody, because everybody's coughing, breathing in mouthfuls of shit. We were all covered from head to toe. I just started cutting up sheets and whatever.

Then we stayed in that one area. I think there was a fire chief in the area. He said to stand fast until further notice. We stood there. A boat was in the Hudson, and they called that boat in. It had beverages and reinforcements on the boat, water and everything. They pulled that boat in and docked it, and we unloaded it.

As people were coming down Vesey, coming down to the scene, we were just handing out water, tagging them, treating them. Everybody wants to go back, but we're told we can't go back. Now we smell fumes. You smell gas in the air. You can damn near see fire. You could see fires blazing.

That's when they say -- I don't know how much time passed since then. Now they're like, "Gather anything you can, anything you can retrieve, and head north to Chelsea Piers. That's where the staging is going to be."

So I grabbed the stretcher, and I ran back about halfway between West and North End on Vesey, and I was trying to gather my equipment. All of my equipment was right there on that

corner. I didn't have anything. All I had on me was my helmet I was wearing and my turnout coat. My tech bag, all of my equipment was at that corner. I think the unit was at that corner, or my partner had got out -- the guy I was with, Garfield Grey, he was out of there.

I was going to go back for the ambulance, but I was told not to, because there were ambulances on fire. There were fire trucks crushed. So I went about halfway. There was nothing there to gather. Then I came back up to North End.

Inside the lobby of this building here -- I guess that's just an apartment building -- they had a lot of equipment in there. So we just gathered all of that equipment and loaded up the stretcher about a good six feet high and just walked that thing all the way up to Chelsea Piers. I walked behind along River Terrace back onto West Street and then up to Chelsea.

We stayed up there a good -- I'd say a good five hours. By that time me and Mike had hooked back up. Now we were in unit 240. The

unit was totally stripped. We unloaded the unit. Now it was totally stripped. We were sitting up there waiting for the word, just waiting for the word when we could go back down.

Now it's afternoon. Now it's like there's thousands of units. You see units rolling in from Baltimore, Philly, Jersey. Everybody was out there, just lining up along West Street on both sides of the street. I'm talking from about Chambers -- yeah, I would say from Chambers all the way up to like 28th Street you could see units lined up with no space in between, bumper to bumper, all the way up West Street. That's as far as I could see. I was about at -- that's like 23rd. I was at about 20th, 20th and West Street.

We noticed around like, I guess, 4:00, 4 or 5:00 that we were running low on fuel, so we asked for permission to refuel at Battalion 8, at Bellevue Hospital. So we were given permission. We went that way --

Oh, wait, another major thing. When that second building came down, as we were running, you hear this thunder in the air. This

was a scary part. We hear thunder. That's when I'm like, oh, no, now they're going to bomb us. You hear this thunder. You know it's in the air, but you don't see anything. You just hear this loud sound. It's just getting bigger and bigger.

Then you see our fighters in the air, F-14s, whatever they were, F-18s. Everybody just got a new sense of hope. We were all just cheering, like "USA" and "shoot those mother fuckers down." We knew we were at war. We knew we were at war.

When the Feds arrived, like the Secret Service agent was near me, a couple Secret Service agents, and they were just telling us about the Pentagon. That's when we found out about the Pentagon and some of the other things transpired down there. Now that I think about it, there's a lot I forget.

Basically we waited up there for the word to go back down. Once we got to Bellevue, the National Guard was already mobilized. They had check points along 23rd Street. Once we got to Bellevue, instead of heading back to -- since we knew the bus was stripped, we called Battalion

4, which is our station. We called from Battalion 8 to ask if they wanted us to reload the bus, restock the equipment. So we were told to restock the equipment at Battalion 4.

So we drove down to our battalion, and we restocked the bus. Then we proceeded to the ferry, which was another staging area. They said any injuries that were north of the site would go to Chelsea; anything south would go to the ferry. Since we're more south from the site, we headed to the ferry after we stocked the bus, which was around I guess 6, 7:00. It was starting to get dark.

They were like, all pass days are canceled. You're going to work 12-hour shifts or 16-hour shifts or something like that. All pass days are canceled until further notice.

So we went down to the ferry, and we just sat there and waited for a while for patients. Everybody was really anxious to go back. Nobody wanted to sit there. Nobody wanted to sit there like that. We were all getting frustrated, truthfully.

A few firefighters came in. A few

firefighters with minor injuries came in. Between the ferry and Chelsea Piers, they had these units set up where they were ready to perform major surgery. They had surgery that was really impressive, the organization of the whole thing.

It was really organized and really -- I mean, in the middle of a disaster, we were really prepared and we wanted to treat a lot of people, but unfortunately we kind of knew there wasn't going to be a lot of patients. We knew, but we were in denial.

Then we sat at the ferry. Me and Mike, we stayed together. We stayed until about 4:00 that morning, and then we were finally relieved. We were both pretty exhausted, so we drove home. I dropped him off at home. Did he stay? No, I dropped him off. We drove back to Staten Island together. I dropped him off at home.

I finally went home, and the first thing I did was turn the television on. I was exhausted. I turned the TV, and I saw things happen -- I saw the replay of the planes hitting, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It did

not register. It didn't look real. It looked like toy planes. I'm like, that's what happened out there? That's what happened out there?

I think I watched TV for about six hours straight. I didn't go to sleep until well into -- they told me to come back when I could on Thursday -- I mean on Wednesday, Wednesday day. I didn't get home until Wednesday morning. I watched TV until a good 12 or 1 in the afternoon. I slept about two hours, and then I came back to work. I stayed another 16.

When I got home I think it was around Thursday night, and I woke up Friday morning and I fell apart. That's when I fell apart. It really hit me. I was in shambles. I was in bad shape. My wife was trying to console me.

Once the buildings fell, cell phones were out. Everything was out. I didn't even get in contact with my family until I got to Battalion 8, which was that afternoon. Everybody was hysterical. My family was calling from all over the country. It was really -- it was insane. It was insane.

I feel like a part of me is still out

there. A part of me is out there with the people (inaudible). The whole situation has really changed my life. It's humbled me. It's made me real humble that every day is not guaranteed, which I already knew but that even brought it more, just in the business that we do.

But a situation like that, that was -- in my imagination I can't think of devastation to that magnitude. Just -- every day I come back to work it's like a nightmare that I can't wake up from. Every day I come back to work it's like, no, they did not take those buildings down, because I'm right downtown. The unit I work sits right downtown.

Just as a kid I've always been amazed by those buildings. I was always amazed by those buildings. It's a part of our identity as New Yorkers. To see the skyline without those buildings, especially the first few weeks coming back to work with the smoke -- that smoke didn't stop for a good month and a half after -- it was totally unreal, totally unreal.

My words don't even begin to touch the surface of what happened that day. I'm just

trying to put into some kind of perspective. My words don't even begin to touch the surface. That's about it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. I would just like to give my -- I don't know if it's proper, but I just want to -- all the guys that responded, fire, police, EMS, private, just everybody all across the country, it was a really heroic effort.

Speaking for the guys at Battalion 4, we all -- I'm very appreciative that we're all accounted for. Some guys were missing for a little while, but for the most part we're all accounted for. That's more than we can say for a lot of guys. I just feel sorry for everybody that was out there. I dedicate my career, the rest of my career in the Fire Department to the people that died that day.

That's about it.

Q. Thank you very much for doing this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 1:31, and the counter reads 390.

File No. 9110336

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BARRETT HIRSCH

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. CUNDARI: Today is December 17, 2001. The time is 719 hours. I'm George Cundari, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assign command.

A. Barrett Hirsch, paramedic, New York City Fire Department, Battalion 58, Division 3.

Q. Okay, Barrett, can you please tell us the events regarding is tragic day of September 11?

A. Well, starting about roughly 10:15, 10:20, we received an assignment to respond to the Borough of Manhattan. Initially, our first response was not to where the World Trade Center was, but to an unconscious patient somewhere in the general vicinity.

We responded from Brooklyn, and basically once winding up in the borough, we came across one of the local bridges. From the explosion back in '93, I knew that the towers would pretty much be an odd ball shot of getting there. Came across the Manhattan Bridge, and that's -- you can basically see pretty much both towers engulfed in flames.

We shot down toward our assignment, which was just west of Broadway, and did a canvas of the area.

Once we made contact with the Brooklyn dispatcher, we went to the tower, at which point the first tower collapsed, so when we finally got it to a staging area, one of the two that initially had been set up, they were worried about the integrity of the second tower, so we went into another area.

Q. Did you witness the tower collapsing?

A. The second tower. We were about --

Q. The first tower. Did you see it as you were approaching?

A. To be honest, Bill may have seen it. I was busy driving the vehicle and trying not to hit the pedestrians that were around, because obviously there were a lot, a lot of traffic.

So once we got to one of the first primary staging areas, at that time. We were directed just to get the vehicles out. They were trying to establish a secondary.

Q. Were you seeing any patients at that time after the collapse?

A. Not initially, not initially. I think most people were just trying to basically evacuate the area. It was basically a lot of the same stuff you saw back from -- at least that I saw back in '93, a lot of

little people with soft tissue stuff, but most people just trying to get out.

Once we set up the second area, we started to get ourselves back down towards the second tower so we can assist in patient care.

Q. Who was at that staging area?

A. To be honest, I really -- I remember seeing some of our vehicles and one or two voluntaries, but not one particular officer was in charge, so I really couldn't give you the name as far as who was basically calling the shot.

As we started to make our way up is when I happened to look up, and I saw a lot of people, you know, jumping out of the building. Then I noticed, like, the top of the tower seemed to shoot up a little bit and start to fall down a little bit, and that's when Bill Simon and I, who was my partner, just bolted in towards one of the other overpasses just to get some cover, and--

Q. So you ran north?

A. We ran north up the Westside Highway, and just went into -- several police officers were shooting out doors so we could get in, just trying to secure a safe area for us as the second collapsed, at

which point -- once some of the debris and the last big pillar of smoke, we were able to get out, just start working our way back up to towards what was left now of the second tower, and we just, like, left the vehicle where it was, and I don't even remember at that point. I think it was where the second one (inaudible). Somewhere near Murray, I believe, and we just started working our way back down towards the trade center.

At that point, there was pretty much a lot of mass confusion at that point. It was just like everybody knew whatever resources had been in the immediate area were probably just wiped. I ran into one of my old S.O.D. lieutenants, Lieutenant Santiago. He and I immediately kind of like snapped into some of our old S.O.D. training. We started just, like, gathering units together, see if we can create like a secondary staging area.

We saw a lot of little soft tissue stuff, a couple of respiratory distresses. We were finding some half crews. We did our best to, like, put them together and see if we could coordinate getting the most critical moved up to Chelsea where we heard -- whatever they -- I guess they made that their primary staging and just whatever we could find, just trying to

get crews together and start taking care of the patients.

And that's basically how that -- that part of the event went -- seemed like several hours, but I know it was only several minutes. Bill and I at that point had separated, Bill Simon and I had separated. Bill hooked up with -- I don't know his name. He was one of the lieutenants from Manhattan. He was from Bellevue. He went up to Chelsea Pier with the vehicle, and Jerry Lieutenant Santiago, tried to keep it in the Haz-Mat realm.

Q. Basically, so really not many patients after the collapse?

A. No, not really. Not like back in '93. I mean '83. '93.

Then once all the bosses started to get over their primary shock, they started to get the sector commands back, established again, including the Fire Department, we had a small -- they were actually gathering some of the old Haz-Mat teams together and some of the old USAR teams. Was all part of S.O.D. at that time. The whole area was -- they were deciding whether or not we were going to suit up, or how and when USAR was going to get activated.

Q. Where were you exactly when the tower collapsed?

A. Second tower?

Q. North tower collapsed.

A. North tower collapsed. North tower, I was probably somewhere between -- probably between either Murray and Barclay, or Barclay and Vesey.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West, yeah.

Q. You guys just ran up? You didn't go into a building anywhere there?

A. Trying to go up?

Q. You ran north when you --

A. Oh, you mean after the tower collapsed?

Q. When it started collapsing.

A. Yeah, we just ran north probably more towards Barclay.

Q. Did you go into a building there?

A. Yes. Probably down a little bit further when we stopped running was on the other side of Warren Street where the school is. We ducked into the -- there's an overpass from one school over to the other, and we ducked into the school.

Basically after that it was just -- at that

point they started bringing us into one of the other secondary schools, and they started putting medics with EMTs and going down to the pile to see if they could find anything. I did that for the next day or so.

Q. A long time.

A. Yeah, it was a long day.

Q. How was your radio communications?

A. Well, to be honest, other than point-to-point, as far as, like, trying to hear some of, like, either Brooklyn central or Manhattan, it was very scratchy, pretty much unreadable.

What little I did hear was mostly on the -- Bill and I, we were staying point-to-point, we were on the local TAC frequency, so that that kept us -- at least he knew what I was doing, and I knew what he was doing to make sure we were safe. So that went -- like because I knew, like, the lower Manhattan frequency was just trash. They didn't need to know where we were going through or any other nonsense.

You could hear -- every once in awhile I switched over to citywide to see if anything was going. When I had run into Dr. Gonzalez, he basically wanted to know -- once again, it goes back to the old SOD days. He was, like, oh, what do we have here,

here, here and here. I'm like, this isn't the old SOD days. I don't have any details for you like I used to be able to get.

Q. Right.

A. And it was very -- that was very -- that was very annoying to me personally.

Q. Because you didn't have the equipment?

A. I didn't have the equipment. I didn't have the resources, and I didn't have the additional -- just basically additional information to be able to play with, some of the tools that I had earlier. That kind of made me feel pretty much worthless. I just didn't like that at all.

Q. So when you arrived, they were talking about a secondary collapse?

A. They were already concerned about the --

Q. So they were moving things around?

A. Like that, they were trying to get things reorganized after the first blast they -- I know they started some of the crews and somebody over in the other tower and --

Q. Who was talking about that?

A. It was just (inaudible) around the area. I couldn't be specific as to what particular boss

mentioned it or --

Q. Fire chiefs were there?

A. Everybody was there. Everybody was squared off at that point, because they already knew they lost one building. It's only a matter of time -- the second is less than 200 feet away, so yeah, everybody was pretty much concerned.

Fire was pulling back. We were pulling back. P.D. was screaming get their guys out. Everybody was -- everybody was just trying to get the fuck out at that point. Trying to -- you saw a lot of people taking people with them. Nobody was like -- I mean, they tried to make this about as organized as that could be, but --

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for conducting this interview. The time is 7:31. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110337

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT HUMPHREY

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1700 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter Robert Humphrey of Engine Company 4, firefighter 1st grade, of the City of New York Fire Department.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine Company 4 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Humphrey, would you please tell me in your own words what happened on September 11, 2001.

A. Well, we didn't get the run normally, because our computer was out, and the department phone was not working. So the first time we heard was when a Spanish gentleman was running down the block saying there was a big explosion at the World Trade Center, and then shortly after that over the voice alarm we heard, "Explosion in the World Trade Center. Stand by for assignments." Then we didn't hear nothing after that.

We figured we were going, so we took off, but before we went, there was a major traffic jam. Usually

we would have gone right out of quarters, but we went left and I took a little different position, but ended up putting me right where I needed to go.

It was backed up, so the guy said, "Don't go that way. Don't go that way." So I went left, and I saw there was traffic all the way through the tunnel, because usually we go under the battery tunnel and go around, so we went down through Fulton Street to Church to Vesey, and then when I parked at Vesey right under 5 and 1 World Trade across the street from 7 World Trade and West Broadway.

West Broadway leads into Vesey, and I was right against the building, where there's a subway entrance into down in the trade center. There was a hydrant right there, and I hooked up there. At that time, it was Captain Farrelly, and the rest of the guys got out of the rig, and I realized that we had another guy on the rig, and I didn't know at the time, because everybody jumped into the rig, and we had Richie Allen jumped into the rig, because he got relieved earlier. So we had an extra space, because we were a four-man engine company, so he came along.

So Richie. We had Charlie Anaya, Richie -- Jimmy Riches, Tommy Schoales, and Richie Allen and

Captain Farrelly took off toward West Street, and we waited at that part of the building.

After that, I was -- basically I wasn't watching. I just know which way they were going. I was busy hooking up to the Siamese, which was supposed to be supplying one end to the World Trade Center right over there, so I hooked up to the Siamese.

As I was waiting, then all of a sudden the second engine company pulled up right next to 7 World Trade Center, which is on West Broadway and Vesey, but they were right across. They were right next to it, directly to the east of 7 World Trade Center and across from the post office.

Then I helped him hook up, and then after that I think it was 21 engine, 21 or 22. I think it's 21, though. He hooked up a little further down on Vesey Street. Maybe it was 50 yards from the corner of West Broadway, and then we dragged hose all the way over to the Siamese. So we had one Siamese full, with two -- three halves hooked up, and another Siamese with one line hooked up. So we had three pumpers pushing water into the building.

At that point between actually -- probably before the third engine company came is when the second

plane hit, and I was in the middle of the street at the time, and it came -- the plane came from the south, so I saw very little of the plane. I only saw a flash going on the side of the building where the opening is, and then the explosion. That's when I took cover inside the rig, because everything was -- all the metal and stuff was coming down on the rig and in the streets, you know, stuff from the plane, and metal and whatever, and glass, and et cetera.

So I jumped into the rig until everything was -- it was safe to come out, you know, out of the building. Then I came out. At that point a couple of things happened, I guess before that.

It was -- somebody wanted to borrow my gear, so I told him, "No, because I'm going to probably need it." Usually as the chauffeur I'm wearing just the regular pants and stuff, because you're running around, and then right after that, I put all my gear on right away, because I knew this is not -- this is not your normal, everyday thing which is going on right now.

So I had all my bunker gear on. I put everything on, my helmet. The only thing I didn't have is a mask, because we didn't have an extra mask in the rig, and the extra guy that was in our rig took the

mask, so I had no mask, and I had no light, and -- but I did have my helmet and my coat and whatever. I just wore that for the rest of the tour.

I was working with 28, so I was talking to him a lot. Since we were kind of the closest, and -- well -- and then as time went by, saw a lot of people jumping off the building all different ways, and I couldn't -- from where I was, I can't see them land, luckily, because that would have been -- I ended up seeing it later when I went after the first collapse when I came back, but I seen about 15, 20 people jump from my angle, and I know there were a lot more, because on the south side they said they saw a lot of people jump.

I was on the north side of the building so that's what I saw, and there was no -- there were a lot of pedestrians around, cops trying to keep them back, but there were a lot of people looking at that point and then -- I remember now when it was -- when the building came down exactly.

Oh, I was in the middle of the street. What I did was after -- also after the second plane hit, I knew that I didn't want to get hit with any stuff, because I saw a lot of stuff come down, so I was

looking for a place I can duck my head under so I wouldn't get something landing on top of me, not that I thought the building was going to come down, but maybe pieces of the building.

So I saw there was like a delivery tunnel in the post office inside of West Broadway and Vesey. There were five cops there. They were hanging out there, so well, if anything happens, duck in. Thank God I did that, because all of a sudden when I was standing in the middle of the street, here comes the south tower, starts coming down.

Took off into the tunnel. We got blasted a little bit, but nobody got too much stuff on their head from that angle. We just got a blast, and the dust and everything else, and the cops had some flashlights, and there was one security guard in the building, and he basically knew where he was going even though he was taking us back out from where the blast was, taking us back to the west side.

So I told him, "Why are you taking us back where we were? Take us out towards Church Street, you know, towards the east side." So we went back, up and around, and we had to go up a flight of stairs, because we were in the basement and, we went out that way.

There was a guy they pulled in from Church Street that was hurt bad, and I was taking care of him, and nobody had -- there was no water. There was nothing, so I ended up taking him -- bringing him all the way to Broadway, got into an ambulance. First I got him cleaned up at a post, because I guess they set up posts right after the plane hit, and the first -- actually the first two planes, after the planes hit. They set up a post and a first-aid station.

I brought him over there, got his face cleaned up, and then I brought him to an ambulance, because everybody was getting out of there. They said it wasn't safe, so I took him to Broadway and got him into an ambulance. Then I went back toward the rig.

When I was on Church Street, I saw a lot of bodies laying all over the place. I was trying to help a couple of engine companies that were already operating, because I was by myself, obviously, at that point. Mostly dead. Some were alive. There was body parts a lot of places right in front of the building. I went down pretty far down towards Church, and then I was coming back, and then I saw my rig. Then I saw water shooting across the street in the opposite direction from the building, and I was -- and that's

what brought me back also, from helping other people too.

I was saying, "Who the hell turned -- pulled the gate?" I was saying, "Who the heck pulled it?" So I went down, and I wanted to see what was going on, if there was a malfunction or something, but somebody pulled the gate full blast and was shooting across the street.

So I shut that gate, turned the pressure back up so there was water in the building. I didn't know if anybody was actually using the water, but I just did what I was supposed to do at that point.

Then I saw a couple of guys from one truck, Rogers was one, and he had somebody else with him, and then he wanted to know where everybody went. I told him they went around West Street, and they took off by the rig, and they went up that way.

I went back across the street to 28 engine to find out how the chauffeur was doing.

Let me back up just a touch. I saw 21 engine, and it was really malfunctioning. It was going -- it was like really doing weird things, the engine. I don't know if it was pumping properly or not. It didn't sound like it, let's put it that way.

It was having failure, heart failure, and then I saw 28 show up, and then I went over to him, and the rig wasn't on, and he says to me, "My rig broke down." Probably with all the dust and everything might have clogged it up, whatever, because everybody was pumping before that happened.

So my rig was the only one pumping at that point. Then I asked him, "How did you get out?" He said, "I went back to the rig." I said, "That's -- I don't know about this one. This one's a lot closer to us than the other one." I says, "I don't know if I'd do that," but I says, "All right." We had some conversation, kind of looking up at the building, and it was no more than 30 seconds later that the other one came down, and I just yelled, "Come this way," and then he went the other way, and then I just took off into the tunnel, but this time there was a ton of stuff coming down, major stuff, and I was in the middle of the street, and I just like made -- I just made it through, because I felt the blast come right through, and even the cars in there were getting pushed out.

I jumped over this railing, and on the platform, and I just like laid there for a second while all the shit was coming by me, and everything just

stopped. All the stuff was covering the entrance where I was in. Later on, of course, we found that he was alright, but he did get blown back pretty good.

So I was stuck in there, and I had nobody in there. It was me. I had no light, nothing. It was pitch black. So I was trying to find my way out, and I was debating myself, you know, should I have gone back. I did, but it was kind of one of those things, you know, flip a coin, and -- well, I went a little forward.

I thought I knew -- I thought I knew where I was. You don't know until it's pitch black, because when I went forward, what I thought I knew, I ended up finding an elevator, and I felt in there. I felt the metal and the felt the cloth. This is not where I want to go, so I ended up having to back pedal, trying to go back where I came, just a little bit, and all I could feel was the heat and smoke coming in, so I just had to try to find a wall.

I found a wall, and I just stayed along the wall the whole time. It took me 20 minutes to a half an hour. I ended up getting my way out of the building, which is lucky. I don't know how I didn't hit any hitch somewhere or some dead end. I was on

Barclay and Church, I guess, Barclay and Church. I came out somewhere over there. I had a feeling I was coming towards something, because I started feeling a little breeze, and I felt the breeze coming in, because when I got deep into the building, in the basement, there was no more debris. It was just straight dust. There was no more garbage or no metal. I was just riding around.

So when I finally got around, I felt this little breeze, and I just kept going toward it, and then my eyes were half closed, because I really took a good blast on that, and I was just looking, and I saw it said "Barclay Street," and I said, "Shit, I'm out of here," and I just took off. I thought I was going in the right direction. I went towards Church and went a couple of blocks up, and then I saw -- the first real person I saw was somebody with a camera about a block and a half up. He was taking pictures of me coming out of there. Then the next fireman I saw, who gave me a lift back to the post, was Danny Lynch. He was riding around in a suburban, his own suburban. He's an old Manhattan trustee, and he drove me back to West Street so I could get accounted for.

Backtracking, Smigeons -- and I'll tell you,

when I was back inside the cellar, I was -- when I was running in, I looked behind me, and I saw somebody else run in. I know it wasn't the chauffeur from 28. It was somebody else. I actually stopped, and I called out. I yelled about three times, and nobody answered, so I don't know what happened to that person.

Then I used my radio, and I was calling -- I said, "Engine 4 chauffeur to 28 chauffeur." I had nothing on it. There was nobody calling anything, no Mayday or nothing. I called him. I got no answer. So that's when I started to move because I figured that was it. I'm on my own at that point. You know, I called several times. I said -- and I didn't know whether to call Mayday myself, because I really didn't know where the hell I was, but I figured I'd give it a shot. Maybe it was a mistake, I don't know, but until I felt like I was --- they said, if you feel like you're ready to go, then it's too late, but I can compose myself at that point.

Once I knew I was getting nervous, then I was going to call Mayday. Tell you the truth, I don't think anybody would have heard me, because nobody responded. I didn't hear anything on my radio, nothing. So, I mean, I don't know how good the

communications is in the basement over there, but I couldn't get out where I came from, because it was high enough where -- and I couldn't even see. All I know is this stuff blowing out, and I couldn't take the chance going the same way I came from, because I knew it was no good. During all the radio contact, the only thing I could say is when I talked to other people, they said that Engine 4 was with Engine 28 and Engine 7, and they were on the 30th Floor, and then they were making their way down all together.

They got down to the lobby, and I think the guy -- lieutenant from 28 said, "We're going to make a break for it." At that point, that's when everything -- you know, everything was coming down, I guess. They all went, I don't know which way, and 4 didn't get out, and 7 and 28 did.

I wasn't with them, so I don't know what direction anybody went, but as far as I know, they all got down to the lobby at that point. Then 7 and 28 got out and 4 didn't, so...

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. Let's hope it doesn't happen again.

Q. I have a couple of questions.

A. Sure.

Q. You said the second engine. Was that 21 engine?

A. No, no. Second engine got there, 28.

Q. 28, and then 21 came in?

A. Yes, I think it was 21.

Q. Those engines that you helped when you were coming back after you took the guy to Broadway, do you know --

A. You know what? It was -- I was doing EMS work. I was -- one guy was dead -- I didn't know he was dead. I was going on the ground when they ended up putting his jacket over his head. He was dead.

Q. Right.

A. And another one we were working on, he was doing CPR on him.

Q. So these are the companies? They weren't the pumpers?

A. No, this is companies.

Q. You don't remember any of there --

A. Because I came back from Broadway, because when I finally got out of building, and I was helping this guy, got all the way to Broadway. Then I didn't want to leave him hanging, so I got him over to Broadway, got him to an ambulance, and then I took off

back.

That's why it really wasn't a lot of time, so when I finally got back and talked to 28 engine, that's when the tower came down, so I didn't really have enough time to, you know. One sigh, and then the freaking building came down.

Q. Right. No, I meant, you said on the way --

A. Right. On the way back, I really don't know what companies I was working, but it wasn't anybody from 21, and it wasn't anybody from 28. It was a company that came in probably to help. Could have been both companies, could have been it -- I really don't -- I really don't even know.

Q. Okay.

A. All I know is I was just helping out, whatever I could do, and then I saw the rig, and then I went over to the rig.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Great. Thanks for your time. Thanks for the interview.

This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110338

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID VITIELLO

Interview Date: December 13, 2001.

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 4:47 p.m.

Q. This is Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion, conducting an interview with --

A. David Vitiello, Firefighter David Vitiello.

Q. From Ladder 122, in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Dave, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. We saw the first plane hit. We didn't see the first plane hit. We saw the fire on the news in the morning. We didn't know if it was a plane at that time. Within five, ten minutes, we got the deal on where we are getting sent over. We still didn't know if it was terrorists or whatever. Ladder 122 responded, I think, on the second alarm.

We went to the staging area, which was on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. There I remember seeing 132 behind us, Ladder 132 behind us. There was lots of units there. Within the commotion I think Ladder 132 was able to get in front of us. We were trying to move cars and what not.

Got through the bridge -- actually we saw the second plane hit from across the river. Then they sent

every Brooklyn unit that was at the staging area to the World Trade. Got over to the other side of the tunnel, I wasn't really looking at units. I wasn't looking at companies. I was looking at what was going on around me. We pulled up past, I think, 132. We parked past the second -- first tower, the north tower, and then we started heading back towards the command post, which was directly across from tower one in the World Financial Center, the big black building.

We got there. I remember seeing Chief Ganci there. Who else was there. He was the only one I recognized. I can't remember any companies that were around me. Then Captain Metcalf who worked here, who survived, he worked here a few times, he gave us the orders to go into tower two, the south tower, and we went through on the pedestrian walk on Liberty Street and went into the corner door on Liberty and West, which was -- actually we were going into the Marriott, which I thought we were going into the tower, but I didn't know that building that well, but actually we were in the Marriott lobby.

Then I saw Engine 58, was right next to us, the Engine, I remember that. I heard from other guys that were there with me that Ladder 101 was in there.

That they saw guys with patches from 101 and 132, as well, Ladder 105. I didn't notice any patches from any of those guys, but I know for sure 58 Engine was right next to us.

Then the building came down, there was a lot of commotion. I got out. Found me and another guy from -- Jerry Casey from Ladder 122, we came across a fireman underneath an ambulance, crushed. I don't know what company he was from, but he was right by the pedestrian walk on Liberty. Maybe, I don't know at that point where I saw a walk, pedestrian walk was there. Then I lost Jerry, who is in my company, I got blinded by some of the soot. He walked off and everybody was shell shocked and I lost track of him and then I was by myself. Couldn't tell which way was what. Trying to find the rig. I ended up -- I know for sure I went south on West Street, which was good, because within a few minutes, the second tower came down.

Actually I ran into Engine 228, which had just come over through the tunnel. I spoke to the officer. I think everybody survived. I found out everybody survived from that Engine, I think, from what I heard from people. He told me -- I asked him if he

had seen my company, he said no. He said sit in the rig. I had a radio. I had the irons and he said sit in the rig. If they call for them -- if the command center calls for them, to call him and let him know where they wanted him to go. He said just sit in the rig and try to get your whereabouts. I said okay.

I sat in the rig and within -- they walked maybe like 20, 30 steps and the second tower started coming down. I jumped out of their rig and started running down West Street towards the tunnel. Some cop waved me into a city bus, I jumped inside there. There was like 5 or 6 firemen there. We all huddled on the ground when all the debris and smoke and everything hit the bus. Stood in there for like 20 minutes.

Then when the smoke cleared, we walked all the way down to the water. It was like a MERV command RV, Fire Department RV thing. Nobody was really in there. I signed my name there. They were taking names to make sure who was survived. I can't remember anybody's helmets that were in there. There was only like 3 guys in the whole thing. One guy working in and two or three other firemen besides me.

Then I came back to the site to find my guys. I walked around the water side, because you

couldn't go down West Street any more because it was blocked from all the debris. I walked around the water side and I can't remember any helmets or any companies or anything.

Finally I heard my chauffeur talk to my officer asking him something and I just cut in on him and went over the air, Irons to 122. They said, "Oh Dave, you're alive," or whatever. I asked them their location. They told me where they were. Then something came over the radio. There was some gasoline underneath the ground and everybody should evacuate the area. I was stuck down by the waterfront. I had no place to go. I saw everybody running north on West Street and I was by the boats. There were boats leaving to go to Jersey.

But they kept calling for me to meet them by Chambers and West, so I tried to get over there. Finally got over there and they weren't there. They had gone north and I went north on West Street and I saw my chauffeur, saw his bright red hair. I went up and that's all I remember.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: All right. Great Dave. The time is 4:56 p.m. That concludes our interview.

File No. 9110339

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN QUINN

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1:28 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Firefighter Kevin Quinn, assigned to Engine 271.

Q. This is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Kevin, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day?

A. I was starting my second tour of a 24. We got the call to respond to, I believe it was Engine 6, to relocate to the World Trade Center. Came over the Brooklyn Bridge. Obviously saw a lot of smoke from the towers. We ended up on Murray and Greenwich Street. My officer transmitted over the air that we were a few blocks out from the box. Should we take it in. They told us to stand by.

Looking up at the towers and it looked like it just basically imploded. Then I guess the cloud came right at us and we got zero visibility, we couldn't breathe. We got -- put on our masks and tried to orientate ourselves where we were. From our vantage point on Murray and Greenwich, didn't see any other

fire apparatus or officers or firemen in the whole vicinity.

After that, we worked our way over to West Street and we were headed towards -- we got our extra equipment off the rig, extra bottles, anything we could carry down towards the towers to see if we could help. The Battalion Chief, I believe, I don't remember his name, he told us to fall back and as we were falling back, I think we were on West Street, I think Murray again when the second one came down, same thing.

It just -- a lot of firemen running out. I didn't recognize any particular rigs at the time. Then we were all -- when we moved the command post back we staged in the area there. Then approximately I guess maybe two hours before number 7 came down, we went into Ground Zero and helped dig around and was there when they located Chief Feehan and one of the Chiefs pulled us all out because they said 7 was going to come down. We just went on the side of the financial building.

That is about it. Besides digging after number 7 came, I went back in, but it was basically when they both came down I was just basically blinded by the dust. You couldn't see anything.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay, great. The

time is 1:30 p.m. Thanks for the interview.

File No. 9110340

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER JARONCZYK

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 2:36 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Christopher Jaronczyk.

Q. Of Engine Company 236, in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would in your own words Christopher tell us what happened that day.

A. Okay. We got relocated after the second plane hit from our quarters into Manhattan to Engine 15. We proceeded to Manhattan, responded to Engine 15. When we got there we took in a run from the smoke in the area. Somewhere down near the Seaport area, we took that run in. We got there, we gave a 1033 and from there we were instructed to go to World Trade.

By that time, one of the towers had already come down. We proceeded over towards the World Trade. We parked the rig, I believe it was on Maiden Street, somewhere near Liberty Place. Got out of the rig, donned our masks and by that time the second tower had come down. This was approximately around 11 a.m. and we were about 2 or 3 blocks away. The area was already in total darkness from the dust cloud from the first

collapse and as we proceeded we heard and felt the second collapse and we ducked into an ATM machine to let the dust cloud pass by.

Then we proceeded down to, I believe it was Broadway and headed north up to Ann Street and Vesey and Park Place near City Hall. There was a makeshift command center. We were there for about 20 minutes awaiting orders. We were by then ordered to go down to World Trade, in front of 2 World Trade Center to start doing whatever we could, either searching for victims or survivors.

As far as seeing any bodies, we didn't see anything. We didn't see -- we saw other firemen, but we didn't see any other trapped firemen. We didn't see anybody really in need of help. We pretty much concentrated our efforts on the corner of Trinity Place and Liberty. We were putting out small fires, searching buildings, the adjacent buildings, for any signs of life. We really didn't see anything.

That pretty much proceeded throughout the whole day for us. It was very -- visibility was very low for most of the day due to the dust cloud and of course, our eyes were all watery because of that. Breathing was very difficult. We just proceeded to,

you know, we tried to get around the perimeter of the whole area. We really couldn't get down towards West Street because it was all blocked by debris. So we concentrated most of our efforts, like I said, near Liberty and Trinity.

However, we did make it down to West Street. We weren't able to go north on West Street because like I said, all the debris. That's about it. We really didn't see other companies. We saw lots of other firemen, but we didn't see any trapped firemen. We weren't able to rescue any.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great Chris, thanks. That concludes the interview, it's 2:41 p.m.

File No. 9110341

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FIRST GRADE DAN WALKER

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: December 12, 2001. The time is 1925 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Fire Department Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Dan Walker of engine 216, who is detailed to 212, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

We are in the quarters of 212 and there is nobody else present in the room where we are having this interview. What follows now is the interview.

Q. Go ahead and tell me what you want.

A. You know, we were in quarters that day. We saw it on TV, we saw that the first tower was on fire. At that point, a bunch of members went up on the roof and I went into the house watch. They actually witnessed the second plane striking the tower from the roof here, because you can see right across the river. I saw it in the house watch on TV. They were showing that that had happened.

We got a ticket shortly thereafter and responded -- I was getting off for the day actually. I don't know if they hired me minimum manning or what technically was going on. I jumped on the rig, officer told me I was on overtime. I got on the rig and we

went. We responded basically down under the BQE and we came out in front of 207 over there on Tillary Street.

Everything was wide open. They had shut off the traffic already, I guess because of the first tower being on fire. At that point -- it was a little tough getting through traffic there, but at that point we shot right over, I guess that's the Brooklyn Bridge there that comes into -- whatever it is that comes into Flatbush Avenue. We shot right over the bridge and all of downtown was shut down, so we had no traffic at all.

We wound up parking on Liberty Street, just east of Church. So we were actually on the southeast corner there where we parked. Right over there. Then we grabbed all our gear and we proceeded west down Liberty Street past 10-10. At that point we got some feedback from some guys in 10-10. I don't really recall that -- what was said there. But we went inside the buildings on Liberty Street. We walked through the lobby of those buildings in order to, you know, for our own safety.

We walked down by the pedestrian bridge on West Street and that is when we went across, headed north into the -- we basically went into the hotel. We

staged in the hotel lobby there and our boss went off to find some sort of command post or to find out who was in charge in the lobby there. They brought up some water and stuff for us. A couple of cases of water they were bringing up.

We weren't in there too long, when our boss came back and told us we were going to walk up to the 70th floor of the north tower, to loosen up your gear, lighten up your coat, open up your coats and take off your hoods, because we are walking up and it's going to take over an hour, hour and a half to get up there by his estimate. Lieutenant Brosnan was the Lieutenant that day.

So I grabbed some water, we did what we had to do, picked up our gear again and we started heading through the lobby north into the north tower. We entered into the lobby of the north tower and we basically turned to the right and now we were headed east and we passed through all the -- there was a whole row of revolving doors there, which I guess is the only way in and out at that point to that part of the building.

We then proceeded, I don't know how far. There was maybe 25, 30 yards ahead, there was a

corridor there where you could go left or right. We were just before that when Lieutenant Brosnan then staged us there, and he was trying to find a stair well I think at that point. He staged us there, he said wait here. Don't go anywhere, stay together, don't move, stay right here.

So he then -- at that point there were a lot of pedestrians, civilians leaving the building, passing right through where we were. He walked back toward the tower as far as I can recall across the hallway and back towards the lobby of the tower and he no sooner disappeared into the crowd than there was a big rumbling noise. Everything started shaking and the wind started blowing.

The wind was incredible. It had to be, I don't know, I would say like at least 50, 60 mile an hour winds coming through that hallway, through that corridor. Everybody, of course, starts running. Civilians were running, we are running, you are just trying to get away from this tremendous noise and wind.

At that point we still headed east and from what I can recall, we made a left and there was all these shops down there. We ran by these shops and you

know, pretty much the wind just picked everybody up and just knocked you right down.

Q. Really?

A. Everybody wound up on the floor and I think it was basically because of the wind, because I can remember whoever was in front of me, I don't know which guy was in front of me. It was me, myself, Vinnie Picciano, Joe Galasso, Jimmy Murphy, Eric Berntsen. We were all together and one of those guys was in front of me and he fell down. Other people I can remember were falling down.

I just said to myself, you know, I don't want to fall down. Like feet don't fail me now. I can remember going to jump over that guy and that was it. The wind just laid me down. I didn't get hurt. That's what struck me. It's not like I fell with a thud. Like I tripped over something. It was like the wind was blowing so hard that it just kind of picked me up and laid me down softly.

Q. Really?

A. As far as I can think it over in my mind, you know.

Next thing I know I'm kind of rolling around on the floor and getting blown down the hallway. The

windows are breaking, the lights are going. Lights went out, people are screaming. I mean it was horrible.

Now we are in complete darkness. I had a radio because I had control. I had the control position that day, so I had the radio. I had a pretty good flashlight with me. We just started calling out to each other, you know, 212, 212. We kind of rallied the five of us. We found each other. We weren't far from each other. We were all together. We got together and we made sure we were all okay. We had the five of us and then people were moaning and one lady started screaming.

There were other emergency personnel down there. I don't know who they were or what units they were with or what they were, Port Authority or FBI or EMS. I don't know who they were, but there were a few. At least two or three other people down there and I think one of those guys, it must have been, grabbed this lady that was screaming and going hysterical and I just remember him screaming back at her, telling her to shut up. Because we could have gone into a panic.

We had a lot of people. I don't know. It's hard to recall how many people were there and now, of

course, it's pitch black and even now I put my flashlight on, you couldn't see anything because of the dust. The flashlight was --

Q. Useless?

A. Basically useless. I could shine it down on the floor to see my footing, to make sure that I wasn't going to trip over anything or if I was coming on some steps or a hole or whatever. That's why I had the flashlight down at the floor. Basically that was the best I could do, because pointing it forward you couldn't see anything because of the debris, the dust floating around.

So we told everybody to grab onto somebody next to them. I had four or five people hanging off of me. We were all together at this point basically. We rallied all the people that were there. The other emergency workers, I don't know who they were or where they were, but we kind of said okay, Fire Department, don't worry, we will get you out of here, not knowing, of course, what had happened.

I thought myself that the lobby -- they were talking about the elevators were -- looked like they were going to come down. The elevators weren't secured. We did hear that over the radio as we were

coming up on the towers from the dispatcher, I think gave that information out over the radio.

So I thought that the elevators in that lobby of the north tower had come crashing down, because you just can't imagine that these buildings were going to come down.

Q. Absolutely not.

A. At that point that's what I was going under the impression, that the lobby of the north tower had collapsed in some way. Whether it was the elevators or whatever. It seemed to me like it was right behind me and of course the other tower is on the other side of the plaza. So anyway, we grab all these people and everybody is holding on to somebody and we just start walking. You don't know which direction to head, and you lost all sense of where you were or where you were heading.

I can remember walking into a wall and coming up to a wall and I shined my flashlight up on the sign of a store and some woman that was standing next to me was like, I know where we are, I know this store, I know where we are, we have to go this way. I had no idea where we were, so I went with that. I said okay. Let's go.

As I turned there was now a whole crowd of people in front of me, because she said go to the right basically and I had to break through the crowd. I had to -- okay, let me through and I had to get through this crowd of people because I had the flashlight, you know, and nobody else had a flashlight. So I -- I don't know at that point. It was a good crowd of people. I got to the front of the crowd and we just started walking.

Q. The other members were with you at that time too from 212?

A. Yes, we all were together and somehow we got split up. That's all I know. I don't know how we got split up or what. All I remember is that lady saying I know where we are, we got to go this way and we all started walking that way and I wound up in front of this crowd of people.

As we walked further through the hallway and from looking back at maps and trying to figure out where I was, I think -- what I know we did was we were headed east and we went over to the Church Street exit of 5 World Trade Center. There was an escalator there.

Now there is all big glass on the street

level there going from the floor to the ceiling, so as we are coming down the hallway, even though there is a lot of dust and stuff flying, I mean when they say there is light at the end of the tunnel I know what they mean now because now we could start to see the light. So we start heading towards the light and that's where we came to this escalator at the bottom of where now -- see the thing what I figured out about the building and one of the things that's weird is that on West Street you are at street level. At Church Street you are one level below grade.

Of course I didn't realize that's what was happening at the time, but, so now we are at one level below grade and there is an escalator there and now we let all the civilians that were with us. I think it was me and Joe Galasso and Vinnie Picciano that wound up at the bottom of that escalator. There were one or two guys that might have been cops. One guy maybe. Now we let all these civilians go.

I could still picture them walking up the escalator stairs. Of course nothing was working, because all the electric is out. Glass all over the place and I can remember looking down and this one lady -- it's funny the things we remember. I remember

looking down and watching her feet and she had no shoes on, just her stockings, and walking through the glass to get out.

I'm sure as I think back on it that she didn't even know that she was walking through glass. All these people, I don't know if it was 50, hundred, or 150 people, just kept up the escalator and out to Church Street, where they headed probably towards Vesey Street at that point.

Now we are standing there and we are wondering what do we do now. We were missing two guys that were with us when the officer staged us. There were five of us. Now there were only three of us. We are missing those two guys. Our officer now had gone off to find the stairwell or whatever, so he is missing from us. Those are the main guys that we are concerned about.

So we went back in and it gets a little fuzzy here, but we probably went down that hallway so we probably headed back west down that corridor and we did a search of the PATH trains, that I went myself and I think Jimmy Murphy. Again, we talked about it when we got back here. We actually walked down. There is a whole bank of -- it's got to be like 12 escalators or

so, that go down into the PATH train there under 5 World Trade Center.

Me and Murphy actually went all the way down and we got to the bottom of the stairs and we are calling out and we are hearing nothing, and nothing on the radio, because I had a radio. I tried to call people. I was getting a couple of little things that I heard that were all garbled.

Q. What channel were you on?

A. I think I was on Channel 1. In the building. Guys that I have spoken to afterwards said that under the best of circumstances, from the lobby sometimes you could talk to somebody on the 70th floor and you couldn't hear the guy on the second floor. So they said it was always tough there with communications.

I was hearing nothing on the radio. I gave up on calling people because there was no response. We were calling out in the hallway, we got no responses. We went down into the PATH train, calling out, anybody here, anybody need help. No responses down in the PATH train. We just looked at each other and we were like, you know, this is not good. Let's get out of here. The other guys were at the top of the stairs waiting

for us.

Now we walked back up to the top of the escalators there to go down to the PATH train and we walked back towards where we had been inside.

Finally we are calling out, we are calling out, we hear somebody calling us. We go back, I don't really know which direction, I think we headed more towards the south. Now I think there is like two other corridors that cross the corridor that we were walking in from the west to the east, but I still haven't seen a map of downstairs there, so I'm not sure.

Anyway we hear this guy calling us. We go back towards him. He is like an EMS guy. I'm not sure exactly who he was or why he was down there, but he had a helmet on. I think he was an EMS guy, big guy and he has a civilian under a pile of debris.

I think the debris came from the ceiling tiles right above him. Some of the guys are saying they think it actually came -- that he came through the floor. I don't think he came through the floor because I don't think he would have survived. I think he was just in the corridor and got hit with stuff, where he happened to be, the ceiling came crashing down and he was piled onto like, hanging ceiling tiles and the grid

that they hang that on, was on top of him, plaster and lath and all that kind of stuff.

He was underneath the pile of stuff, but it was heavy because that guy couldn't get it off of him. So now there is the five of us. Somehow -- again, this I found out afterwards. The other two guys had taken some of the people and they went out to the north. They exited to Vesey Street through the north is Vesey Street. They went out that way with some people when we went to Church Street. That's where we got split up. But they came back in too and we all wound up together when we found this guy. We kind of heard them calling us and we all kind of met back probably the same place where we split up and we all walked together and we found this guy and we all now dug him out and got the debris off him. He was pretty banged up and he was a pretty big boy.

There was a little store. Of course there were all stores there. The store across the way started to go on fire. Two of our guys actually grabbed a line from one of the lines that the building has. Started maybe trying to put the fire out, but that was kind of a waste of time. It wasn't like a big fire. Just some of that hanging stuff was starting to

burn, but it was lighting up the area, which was kind of good so we could see what we were doing. I.

I went into the store. It was like a little shoe store or something. I did a search in there. All the alarms were going off and stuff. It was pretty crazy. I grabbed a chair because we didn't know how we were going to get this guy out. I grabbed the chair out of the store and everybody is like oh, great, great idea. We put the guy in the chair and we start carrying him out. Again it was the five of us, maybe this EMS guy and I think a cop was helping us.

We put him on the chair. It was a long way that we were in and he was a pretty big guy. We switched off. We had like four or five guys carrying him. We stopped and the other guys jumped on and they carried him the rest of the way. That's when we -- now we got to a point of like -- I know we got to go this way towards Church Street and one of my other guys, my friend, was like we got to go this way.

I'm like well, I know we got an exit this way and he is like well, I know we got an exit this way. I was like, let's not stand here and talk about it. You got an exit, let's go. We went his way and now we went out to the north. We went to Vesey Street, which as it

turns out, wound up being a better way to go, because there was only a couple of steps to the street level, whereas on the other side, it was that escalator -- we were one level below grade. So we only had to carry this guy out up a couple of steps and it was a very gradual incline. We carried him out.

We go out the door of 5 World Trade Center, which we are now just east of where West Broadway comes in and we came right out of these doorways, right across from the US Post Office building is where we came out.

We came out the door. When I walked out the door, I looked up, because when we were going in, it was a horrible scene. It was like a war zone already before the first collapse. There was stuff all over the floor, debris and what have you, body parts.

We knew that there were jumpers, we knew that people were jumping, we knew that stuff was coming down. Now walking out the building again we are a little concerned. I look up and I could see there is a big overhang that goes all the way around these buildings. I see the overhang ahead of me as I'm looking towards Church Street and we go to the left. We are going now towards Vesey, towards the Post Office

building. We are going across the street.

What I didn't realize was that overhang goes all the way around the building. I didn't realize I was still under the overhang. But in my mind I said if I hear anything coming down I'm going back towards that overhang for protection. Next thing you know, we didn't walk 25 feet and it starts rumbling. You know, again, you don't even imagine this is what's happening.

The other building had already completely collapsed and now the building that you are standing under is completely collapsing. It didn't even occur to me. I'm just thinking that stuff is falling off the side of the building and I want to get under cover.

So we got the guy on the chair, we put him down and lucky for him I guess, he was under the overhang. We left him kind of at the corner of the building. We ran back in. He was right at this corner here, the north corner where there is the cut out of 5 World Trade Center.

We ran back towards the doorway that we had just come out of, and couldn't -- I mean the wind now. I'm saying if it was 50, 60 miles an hour when we were inside when the first tower collapsed, now it was like

hurricane winds, it's like a jet engine. As I'm trying to get in the doorway it's getting worse. I couldn't get even through the doorway. The wind is like, crrrrrrr, like a jet engine coming out of that doorway. It was incredible.

So I kind of got blown a little to the side and I wound up right in the corner of -- there was this huge beam behind, I guess it was like a marble facia and I can just remember getting down on my knees and covering up with whatever I could do. I'm holding on to my helmet and I'm watching this debris fly out this door and I mean every bit of it is going straight. It doesn't matter what it was. Rocks or dust or whatever it was. It was just going straight because of the force of the wind.

I wound up huddling in this corner while this building came down. Joe Galasso I know followed me and I guess Murphy was there somewhere too. That the three of us went back towards the building and the other two guys went across the street. Thank god they are okay, but now they were out there when all the debris was coming down. I just sat in that corner, said my prayers. I thought I was going to die.

Joe says he was holding on to me, but he let

go of my coat and the wind caught him and blew him, I don't know, 40, 50 feet.

Q. Really?

A. Yes, because the wind, I mean when I say it was like a jet engine coming out that door, it was like a jet engine. It blew him and Murphy maybe 30, 40, 50 feet away from me where I kind of stayed right in that corner, right next to the doorway where the wind was coming out.

You know, then it stopped. I mean I don't know how long it took. I heard guys that have seen tapes of it coming down that said it took 30 seconds. I don't know. Doesn't seem to me that it could be that quick, but that's what I was told. It did actually not take that long. The noise stopped. The wind stopped and it was pitch black. I didn't know if I was buried or what. I'm thinking I'm buried because I can't see anything.

I'm looking up and then little by little you start to hear people calling out. Anybody there, anybody help me or whatever. I found Murphy and Galasso. The three of us wound up together and it was like, let's keep moving. We didn't know what had happened. It could come down again. It's not safe

here, we have to clear the area. We lost track of the guy in the chair because you couldn't see anything. We couldn't see anything.

We just start stumbling over stuff and trying to make our way out of there. I can remember walking pretty much -- again, it's partially what I remember that day and partially what I put together afterwards. I remember walking across the street and banging into another fireman who was with a rig that was right there. I don't know what company he was, but it was right in front of the Post Office.

He is telling me help me find my helmet. Help me find my helmet. He apparently dove under the rig for safety and lost his helmet under there. I'm like, help you find your helmet, let's get out of here. Forget your helmet. So he is looking for his helmet and we again continued on.

Now as he is asking me to help me find his helmet, I can see Joe and Murphy continuing on. I wanted to stay with them. I catch up to them. We headed up West Broadway towards -- just going north and at that point Murphy was asking somebody, he was a few steps ahead of me, he was asking somebody, I guess, where do we go. I don't know what he was asking the

guy, but I noticed the guy pointing down the block.

Murphy goes down the block. It turns out it was Duane Street and that's where 7 engine is. So I guess the guy was saying there is a fire house right here. So I head that way too. There is the fire house. We wind up in 7 engine. We start taking our gear. We are covered. I'm sure it's the same old story everyone is telling you. Covered from head to toe in dust. I got crap in my eyes, my eyes are killing me. I can't breathe. The stuff that was coming down I was choking and puking back by the building.

Got our gear off, jumped in the slop sink, rinsing off, cleaning up. Now we are just like, we are just stunned. I still didn't actually know that both buildings had completely collapsed. Guys are coming in and they are grabbing gear and they are grabbing my gear and they are grabbing radios. Some guy took my radio. A guy took my flashlight. Somebody took my turnout coat. Guys were just coming in to get down there.

I made a phone call. I called my family and let them know I was okay. Then you just kind of wandering around and they start to set this area up as

a triage area and doctors were coming in and nurses are coming in. I started choking again. This is after a half an hour or so. Choking and I'm choking so bad that I can't breathe. I felt like I was going to throw up again.

I got to the sink and I'm rinsing myself out again and drinking a little water. This doctor grabs me and he is like hey, let me look at you. Get over here. I said what. He says were you down there? I said, yes, we were down there when it happened. He says you were down there when it happened? I'm like, yes. He said, let me look at you. He is checking my eyes, he is looking in my throat. He says you got to go to the hospital.

I felt fine. I'm sure I was in shock. He says you got to go to the hospital. I said I don't want to go to the hospital. He is like you got to go to the hospital. You could be in cardiac arrest, you could this, you could that, respiratory failure, starts hitting me with all this stuff.

Next thing you know it's me -- oh, I forgot that as we were there the three of us showed up; me, Murphy and Galasso. We are like where is everybody else. We thought they were all gone because we thought

we were gone. About 15 minutes after we showed up, Berntsen and Picciano walk in. The same fire house.

They came up, I think the other street is -- I don't know. What's the other street over there. Maybe Broadway.

Q. They came up Church. They actually came up --

A. Because they ran across the street and went east. They got a little banged up because they were out on the street, but they survived too and they came walking in about 15 minutes after us and we were all happy to see each other, of course. A little bit later this doctor grabs me and he puts all five of us on the ambulance and another officer, a Lieutenant from 24 truck or 24 engine and Chief King, actually, from the Safety Battalion and the 7 of us, they sent us to a hospital over in Forest Hills. That was basically it. We were done.

They threw us on the ambulance, sent us to the hospital. I was probably in the hospital by 11:30, quarter to 12. That is basically it.

[redacted]

[redacted]

A. But it was the situation.

Q. You lived through both building collapses.

A. Yes.

Q. There was the first obscuring of everything and then there was the second obscuring and the rumbling and all that. You lived through both. Lucky guys.

A. The whole company got out. We were in three different places. We had the chauffeur was with the rig. We had the officer had gone to find a stairwell and the five of us. So the officer wound up actually hooking up with some guys from 238. I found this out later on.

That he went out to the West Street side somehow. They had a hard time getting out because it was the collapse of the south tower, I think, I'm not even sure, but it obstructed West Street.

Q. Yes, very much.

A. We were lucky because we went out to Church Street and Vesey Street. It was all wide open. Of course until the second tower came down. Even at that, I think it mostly went northwest and we were on the

northeast in a way. We were north in the middle, but we were -- 5 World Trade Center is actually a little east of the tower. We were lucky in that respect.

He wound up with engine 238 and a couple of guys from that company and we wound up going up to 7 engine. I mean one company, three different locations, and we all came home. Guglielmo, the chauffeur, Lieutenant Brosnan and then me, Murphy, Picciano, Berntsen and Galasso, all came home.

Q. Do you remember seeing any command posts or any Chiefs?

A. No, because we went in, I think the -- I'm not sure where the command post was. But when we were going in, we were underneath the pedestrian cross over bridge. I saw, when I looked to my left, coming across West Street was just 50, 60 of the brothers were coming. They were using that -- the cross over for protection. They were all crossing the street underneath that bridge and I don't know where they were coming from or who they were or what companies they were with. That's when we just went across and went right into the building.

I don't know who Lieutenant Brosnan spoke to, but he spoke to some Chief in the lobby of the Vista

Hotel. I think that was the first time we were near anything that was a command post or anything like that. I don't really know the locations.

The only company I know is that Lieutenant Brosnan wound up hooking up with 238 and other than that, we were basically on our own. The engine that was across the street in front of the Post Office, I don't even know who that was. Again it was after both collapses. Everything was covered. I didn't even know who it was.

Q. What do you remember about the handy talky? Like before the first building collapsed, and it was just fires and they were trying to get organized and everything, do you remember anything over the handy talky, like assigning companies, anything, was it chaotic?

A. You know, I really don't remember hearing much radio transmissions. We were in the building. Even after -- the only time I started to try to contact anyone or whatever, it was after the first collapse. At that point we were in the basement. I could hear a couple of garbled transmissions. I called out, engine 212, Mayday. I think I gave a Mayday. I'm sure I gave a Mayday.

I got no response. But I could hear another two guys trying to talk to each other. I don't know who they were or what they were trying to say.

Q. Did you ever get an order of -- somebody mentioned -- I think the officer said at some point he was told to switch to channel 3 because that was going to be the channel in number 2 World Trade Center?

A. No.

Q. Basically you stayed on Channel 1?

A. Yes, I was on Channel 1. I never changed the channel and I really didn't hear much radio transmission.

Q. Anything else?

A. No, I'm just lucky to be alive.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Lucky to be alive. Word. Okay. Where is my little speech I have to make. I thank Fireman Walker for this interview. The interview now concludes at 2001 hours.

File No. 9110342

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES IPPOLITO

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1530 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter James Ippolito of Engine Company 28 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 28 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Ippolito, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. We were sitting at the house watch, and we heard an explosion, and some of the senior guys immediately started to tell us to get on the rig, because they knew we were going to go somewhere. We get on the rig, and then I think it went to second alarm immediately. We got the ticket. We were out the door immediately.

We started to head down the FDR where we could see the north tower, I believe, was the first one hit, was burning. A lot of black smoke and debris all around the building. As we approached, came out from

where the Battery Tunnel exit is. I guess that's by the south tower. We passed going north on West Street, coming right up.

The rig was swerving, and there were bodies all over the street. There was paper and everything in the air. We pulled up in front of the north tower, on West Street. There was a pedestrian walkway right near us, so we ran along the wall of the walkway to get towards the building, because people and debris were coming out of the buildings, and people were inside the lobby yelling to us to look up before we came in.

As we entered the lobby, we -- there was a chief there. I don't remember where he was from. He assigned us to team up with 4 engine, and we were to start ascending the stairs, because there was no elevator service, obviously.

So we teamed up with 4 engine. We proceeded to the B staircase, where there were a lot of civilians still coming down, but we had to walk single file up the stairs. We had roll-ups and spare cylinders, and we started making our way up.

If I can interject, before we entered the second -- before we entered the tower, I -- me and Mike Kehoe, another guy who was working in the company with

me, we heard a screeching sound, sounded maybe like a train derailing or something, and what they're telling us now is -- the time frame we saw in the paper, we think that was the second plane hitting. That was once we were entering the building.

So we started heading up. I guess we got up to the 30th Floor, and we took a break. We were taking intermediate breaks on certain floors, and we got to 30, and the guys were really fatigued, so we sat down. 4 engine was there. I remember seeing a guy from 13 truck there. Let me see. I'm trying to remember other companies that were there. I believe 9 truck.

We were taking a break. There were still civilians coming down. Let me just rewind again. We were, I think, on 20 -- maybe in the teens somewhere, maybe 17th Floor, when we making our way up slowly, and I believe it was a guy from 13 truck had come across. So we stopped, and a guy on, I think it was 13 truck, told us to come in the C staircase, because there were less civilians, and we would make better progress there.

We headed across to the C staircase. It was the same problem. You know, a lot of people still coming down. We couldn't get up any faster, so we went

back to the B staircase, and we were taking a break on 30, and that's when we heard a rumble, outside explosion, and I think that was the other building coming down, but we were getting reports on the radio that there was another incoming plane, so guys weren't sure. At first we thought it was the plane hitting, but we at this point -- we knew the plane was already in the building, and we heard rumbling.

The building started to shake. We all ran into the stairway, into the B staircase again, and the building started to shake and lights went out. Just got this tremendous rush of air coming up through a staircase. Everybody was just holding onto each other. Then we started to make sure -- you know, we didn't know what happened. We were -- everybody was questioning each other, what the hell was that. We thought it was another plane.

So at this point, our chief comes down. He was -- he was on that show, that 6 truck. He was with them, the 6 truck. That chief came down from floors above us. I'm not sure what his name was. He had come down, and he ordered us out, so at that point we started making our way down. I guess we were starting to spread out, I guess, a little bit on the stairs

coming down. I guess we were on 17. We took another stop. Lieutenant Becker wanted to make sure we were all together, and then we went down again. We kept coming down, got down to -- I guess we were about the 8th Floor when we saw 6 truck, and on our way down -- excuse me, before we saw 6 truck, we saw -- I saw at least two members from Squad 18 going up the stairs where I informed them that the chief told us everybody out. The chief gave us an order to all get out, and they passed me by. They kept going up.

So at this point, we were heading down again. We get to 6 truck. They are helping a woman down the stairs. We tried to help them, and Billy Butler from 6 truck told us to keep going. He said they got it under control, and they would get her out.

So we get down to the lobby where we find 18 truck, and Hughy Mettham, he -- we asked him where the rest of their guy was -- where the rest of 18 truck was, and he said they're all together. They are in the lobby, and they're getting out.

At this point, we made the decision to leave the building. We waited for 4 engine to come down. We went back to the entrance where we came in closest to West Street, closer to the Vesey Street corner, and we

stayed by the doors. The debris was all over the 1st Floor, and there was a lot of confusion.

I saw Von Essen there, and I saw Ganci there. We passed them, went to that doorway, and we waited for 4 engine to come over, where I believe it was a lieutenant working with them, he wanted his guys to stop. I guess we wanted to check in with the chief or something before they left the building.

We were all ready to go, and we made sure there were people outside by that walkway where we came in. They were telling us to look up before we run. I think that was 18 truck. They had already exited, and they were telling us look up before we run. That's what we did. We came outside. We ran to that wall by the walkway. There were still people coming out of the building, jumpers.

So we ran to the wall. We walked alongside, as close to the wall as we could. We got underneath the pedestrian walkway where 18 truck was. They were parked right there underneath the walkway, and we stopped, made sure everybody who went in with us came out, all our members of the engine came out with us, and we just started to walk.

I saw a whole bunch of members, right -- I

think it was the Vesey Street, corner of West and Vesey. We started to walk towards them, and there were all rigs and stuff outside, and that's where we were walking towards. Looked like some kind of maybe a command post or something was there. Started to walk towards it, and that's when the building came down. I heard an explosion and turned around and the building was coming down.

At that point, we dropped everything we had, at least I did. We started to run north on West Street. At that point, we were overcome with the cloud and it looked like -- felt a lot of wind again, got knocked down. I crawled. I think I fell under a van or something, and that dust started burying me in there. I started crawling out from there. I couldn't see anything. I pulled my hood over my mouth.

As I got on my feet, I felt another guy run by me, so I reached out and grabbed ahold of his cylinder. I asked him for a couple of hits from the cylinder, because I was choking. He gave me a couple of hits, and then a whole crowd of people ran us over. I lost him.

I found my way onto the island in the middle of West Street, the grassy island, and I somehow -- I

don't know where I was at that point. I got onto that island. I started crawling, and by the time I got out of the smoke, I was on Chambers Street, and then that's -- I came out, and I couldn't find anybody.

After a couple of minutes, I ran into 228 engine. That's where I rotated to on my second stop. So I knew those guys and I said -- I figured I might as well stay with a boss, any boss. So I stayed with them and finally I saw Kevin Murray, who was assigned to 11 truck, but he was detailed to 18 truck that day, saw him and Hughy Mettham come out of the smoke. I helped them, and I brought a big jug of water over there to help them clean up, get the stuff out of their eyes and mouth.

At that point, I went with them back towards the site, because they were looking for their guys. I was looking for my guys, and I was with Hughy. I figured I was with a senior man, that's good, so I stayed with him. I started making my way back towards the site. I ran into Lieutenant Rallis from 11 truck. He came in on the recall. I stayed with them for the rest of the afternoon.

They assigned us to go searching buildings in the financial center. So we went there and were doing

searches. The building was empty at that point. It was pretty much destroyed. I stayed there -- geez, I don't even know what time. I must have left around four o'clock or something.

We started heading back up West Street, and that's where I ran into the rest of the guys, Lieutenant Becker that I was with, Roy Chelsen, Mike Kehoe and Frank Campagna.

At that point, we went back to the firehouse, and the rest I watched on TV. As soon as we got to the firehouse, the 7 World Trade Center was falling down, so it must have been close to that time in the afternoon.

Q. If you can recall anything else prior to, I have a few questions, if you don't mind.

When you said you were on West Street, and you reported in, you reported in from the south and went north?

A. The rig, we drove. Yeah, I guess the entrance from the battery tunnel is south, and you have to drive past the south tower to get to the north tower.

Q. Right. Did you see any other apparatus?

A. Trying to remember. I think I saw 15 truck

in front of the south -- in front of the north tower.

Q. Right. Any others? I'm just trying to -- if you can remember them, fine.

A. Right. I think I saw -- remember seeing 15 and 8 truck, and that was really about it.

Q. Okay.

A. We got there pretty fast. I guess the fire was on the outside of the building, went to second alarm immediately, and we must have been among the first arriving units, I gather.

Q. That's fine.

The guy from ladder 13, as far as you could tell, he was by himself or was the rest of his company making --

A. There were other guys with him. I'm just not sure if he was detailed out to another company or whether it was his company.

Q. And Ladder 9 was pretty much their whole company?

A. Yeah.

Q. That B.C.'s name that you said his name is Picciotto, I believe.

A. Right, that's him.

Q. That's the guy that was with 6 truck in the

same staircase?

A. He was in the same staircase. He was above us. I don't know.

Q. He's the one that told you to get out?

A. Right, he was coming down from the floors above us.

Q. You saw Engine 228 after the collapses. Were they responding or leaving?

A. I think they were just responding.

Q. So they were coming towards you?

A. They were getting off their apparatus already. They were coming down the block.

Q. Coming south and you were heading north?

A. Right, on Chambers Street. Well, on West Street, but it was the Chambers Street intersection when I saw them.

Q. Right. All right. You said when you went back with the lieutenant from the truck, they assigned us to go into 7. Who was they? A couple of chiefs?

A. No, they didn't assign us to go into 7 World Trade.

Q. You said they assigned -- you hooked up with the lieutenant from the 11 --

A. 11, and to one of the financial center

buildings.

Q. Who is they? Was it a chief or --

A. It must have been a chief. He told us to stay and this corner, and he went to -- I guess it was a bunch of chiefs there together.

Q. Okay. So it could have been the deputy, it could have been --

A. Right. I'm not sure who told him, but then he came back and said they told us to go down there, so we went.

Q. Okay. That's very nice of you to give us this interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you.

Q. Do you have anything else to add, let me know?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thank you.

File No. 9110343

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TERENCE RIVERA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: December 13, 2001. Time is 1630 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual. Firefighter 6th grade, Terence Rivera, assigned to Engine Company 10 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine Company 4, temporary housing of Engine 10 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Rivera, please tell me what happened on September 11 that you were involved in.

A. I was standing outside the quarters about to go home when the first plane hit. I heard a loud noise and then all of a sudden an explosion, looked up. I couldn't even tell really which tower was hit. There was debris flying. There was a lot of smoke and fire. I ran back inside, let everybody know we knew there was an explosion, grabbed my gear. I went as the extra man on the truck, on Ladder 10, right on the back step, because they already had their morning crew. Everybody was full.

We pulled out of quarters, we made a left and went towards West Street. We stopped on Liberty Street

at first to see if we could see which tower exactly was hit. That's when we determined it was the northern most tower. We went around the corner on West Street and the Ladder pulled right up in front of tower -- the north tower. The engine took the hydrant on the middle of West Street.

As I got off the back -- the back step, there were a few individuals that were civilians that were outside that were burnt. There was a -- he wasn't a regular security guard. He had a weapon on him. I don't know if he was FBI or Secret Service and he was trying to put the pants out on one individual that was conscious. His pants were still smoldering. I took the can, fire extinguisher off the truck and then sprayed down the pants on the person that was still conscious.

At that time, I had asked him where did this individual come from. He told me when the plane had hit, a fire ball had shot down the elevator shaft and had blown people out of the lobby.

I proceeded to render care. I went to get oxygen and a stretcher for the person that was on the street while the rest of the companies went inside the building into the lobby. As I got the oxygen and the

stretcher, I was just by myself and Engine 55 pulled up, which then I flagged the chauffeur from 55 engine to give me a hand to put the victim on a stretcher.

We did that. Then we stopped the first ambulance that was shooting down West Street coming from -- they were coming up towards South Street ferry side going up north. Then I went -- proceeded back in the building, I grabbed some tools. I went back inside, couldn't find a mask or a radio since I was the extra man and I went back inside. I was heading towards the east staircase, which is where I figured Ladder 10 would be and I saw the chauffeur from Ladder 10 was telling me to go back outside and don't come back in unless you have a mask.

So I went back outside. I spoke with the Engine 55 chauffeur to ask him do you have an extra mask. He said no, but he needed help hooking up to the stand pipe. So it was me, him and another individual that I don't know who it was. It was three of us, because there was a lot of debris falling down and by that time already there was people jumping. So we had one person looking up and two helping hook up to the stand pipe. Trying to do that.

Sometime while we were doing that, that same

individual that was -- when we first got there, that was trying to put the pants out, he came over and he is saying to us that it's a terrorist attack. You guys are too close. It's a terrorist attack. So once we got hooked up, I kept that in the back of my mind. Get on trying to get water going.

I'm pulling the supply line, trying to figure out where we are going to hook up to, and 55 Engine showed up. You couldn't really tell where there was a hydrant. I forgot, 10 Engine had hooked up to a hydrant, so the chauffeur of 10 Engine saw me pulling supply line that we relayed from 10.

At some point close to that, they were saying they had too much pressure, so I don't know if they were getting water or they were doing some type of -- 55 Engine chauffeur told Engine 10 that he was getting too much pressure. Then I went -- that same individual, the security or -- he told me to go over to the command post and let them know it's a terrorist attack. There are more planes in the air.

So I went across the street where they were starting to set up. I told them. They said we know. Just stage down by the Financial Center, that driveway down there, that's where everyone was staging. So I

went to go back to go find 10 Engine chauffeur to tell him let's go down here. This is where they are staging, and he didn't want to leave the rig. He said, I got to stay by the rig. Just get me some water. So I got him some water and sometime when I was getting the -- put in the back or getting out, that's when the second plane hit. I went inside the rig to escape the debris falling down on us for a few moments.

I came back outside the rig and I was looking for 10 chauffeur. I couldn't find him. I figured it's going to be an extended operation so I didn't want to go back down where they were telling to us stage. I said you know, just ferry, until I find a mask I'm going to bring spare cylinders inside and try to bring spare cylinders up and down the staircase. So I could do something else.

I grabbed two cylinders, went back inside the building and was trying to find anybody from 10 or anybody that I could hook up with, anyone who might have an extra mask. As I went back inside, that's when they were telling us evacuate, the fire command was saying get out of here, so on and so forth.

As I was coming outside, I see a lot of people running towards the Marriott Hotel, I see people

running -- everyone was just running. And I hear shh. It sounded like someone was turning on a hydrant and I look up and the first tower was coming down. I proceeded to run up north and I run towards the overpass that connects World Financial Center where they have -- where the high rise rig is at and also -- I think it was Rescue 1 or Rescue 5's vehicles underneath it.

As I run towards it, I know that I'm not going to escape the -- escape it, so I dive under -- I don't know even know which rig it was. I dive under a rig. At the same time it felt like an explosion. I got bounced around underneath the rig. I just kept on crawling, trying to get to the other side. I was thinking that the rig was going to collapse. I got caught up or temporarily pinned. I just kept crawling until I felt like when I was near the end or nearby the bumper, so I could roll out, in case the rig was going to collapse.

I waited a few moments until I felt like all the heavy debris was over, all of the stuff, debris was landed or until everything went quiet. All I could hear was pass alarms and I started pushing debris out from under the rig. I couldn't breathe because I had

no mask and I had no radio. I just grabbed my T-shirt, put it over my face and I started crawling in the direction that I last remember going up north, trying to get out of the debris. I'm crawling over. I feel the grass. I have an idea where I'm at. I am going up the incline and I crawl towards the World Financial Center. I break the glass. Eventually I hit -- the glass is still intact, so I break the glass to go inside the Financial Center.

Then EMS, which is staged on Vesey, they see me when I come in and I'm pretty much out of it, out of breath and almost passed out. I just collapsed when I get inside. They come inside and drag me out. Another Firefighter came in right behind me.

I was in the back of the ambulance for about maybe 5 or 10 minutes, trying to get air. I didn't want to go to the hospital because I knew I wasn't severely injured. I had numbness in my right arm, but I knew I was okay and I was going to hook up with two other firefighters. We were going to basically look for people.

They come running around the corner about 5 minutes after that. The other one is coming down. So I jump back out the ambulance in my T-shirt and

underwear, run up towards the water. It's getting better, that debris field and that's when I met members -- I saw two members from Engine 10 that were by the railing about to jump in the water. We all were trying to get accountability of who was where and what was going on.

We started walking towards -- I went back to get my bunker gear. We started walking towards the water, towards the launches where one of our members from Ladder 10 was having chest pain and bring him over -- make sure he goes on the ferry. They were ferrying people to Jersey. Not too long after that they were telling us to run again. There is a gas that they can't control, so we run past Stuyvesant High School and then eventually when they set up the next command post, which was in that area. That was it.

Q. Okay, I have some questions. When you first responded, do you know who the truck officer was?

A. Lieutenant Harrell, he was the company officer.

Q. He is okay?

A. No. Dead, both officers.

Q. Yes, I know, Lieutenant Atlas. You said Engine 55 was parked and you relayed from 10. 10

parked in front of the north tower? Did 55 stop before or after?

A. 55 was pretty close on the overpass between the Financial Center, like right by the curb.

Q. They were past 10?

A. Right, they were past 10. They were north of 10.

Q. The staging area across the street, was that across the street or is that in the garage of the tower?

A. It was across the street when the World Financial Center started. It's where the Winter Garden is. The glass is right down there. There was a --

Q. Who was at the command center?

A. I saw Chief Ganci one time when I went over there. They had a lot of companies coming from Brooklyn.

Q. Other companies. Of the other Chiefs you don't recognize?

A. No, I don't remember any of them.

Q. So the World Financial Center overpass was the north overpass from the north tower to just north of the Winter Garden.

A. Between both, right.

Q. When you met the guys from Engine 10 that were going to jump in the water, who were they?

A. There was Mark Dulski and John Schroeder.

Q. And the guy from 10 with chest pains?

A. Serge Pilipczuk.

Q. -- Pilipczuk?

A. Yes. He went to Jersey, from Ladder 10.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If there is nothing else you would like to add, this concludes the interview, thank you.

File No. 9110344

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN McCABE

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 3:48 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Kevin McCabe, Ladder 122.

Q. This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Kevin, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that date?

A. I was coming to work that morning. Soon after we heard either a second or third alarm transmitted in the Borough of Manhattan. Somebody said the Trade Center was hit by a plane. At the time that didn't make sense to me. I'm thinking what do you mean got hit by a plane. I'm thinking a small commuter plane or something of that nature.

I remember going up to the house watch, seeing it on TV, seeing the smoke issue from what turned out to be the north tower, thinking to myself and the guys, we are going to be going to that. A few of the guys, we went up to the roof of the building, where we have an unobstructed view of the city. It was a crystal clear day. There I was thinking oh, my god, we are going to go to that.

Came downstairs, I had already taken my gear out, but now it was a question of are we going to get a ticket for that and sure enough about, I think it was 8:54, we got a ticket that we were going to respond in to the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. Some street there. I don't know the name of it.

I remember getting on the rig, got everybody together, we took off. I was driving that day. I remember making the turn off 7th Avenue on to 9th Street. 132 was coming down 9th Street and we met them at the corner and they followed us down to the initial staging area, which was right on the Brooklyn side of the tunnel.

I remember pulling up there by the tunnel and seeing a bunch of units off to the side. We stopped the rig. I remember seeing 105 was there, just from remembering the ticket. There was probably like 10 companies there, a lot of traffic. The guys got off the rig so they could go walk to the side rails so they could still see what was going on. Being on the rig, I didn't have any TV screen, so a lot of the stuff that I experienced early on that day didn't make sense, because I think I remember hearing somebody say soon after that the other building got hit.

Around that time the teleprinter on the rig, the MDT, we got another ticket that told us to respond into the Trade Center. I remember driving through the tunnel. Both tunnels had been shut down. They were just opening up traffic so all the apparatus could get through.

We ended up going through the left tube, the left lane, which was Brooklyn bound, but they had stopped all the traffic. We were going through the tunnel. There was at least an Engine Company in front of us and an Engine Company behind us, but I couldn't see anything more.

As we were going through the tunnel, I remember hearing -- I knew the voice, Captain Vinnie Brunton saying -- he was trying to call somebody saying they are getting a report that there is a bomb in the building, which again didn't make total sense to me because you got some information from people or you just heard like the other building got hit. What do you mean, the building got hit. I'm thinking this whole time that it was an accident, so far it was an accident, buildings got hit.

I remember going through the tunnel. Our procession, the lane that we went through came to what

seemed to be at least a solid 5 to 10 minute stop. We didn't know what was going on. As it turned out, a car that was Brooklyn bound had gotten two flat tires, so they had to move some cars out of Manhattan bound traffic in that tube just so we could get around them. I remember driving past and looking down and seeing the guy's car had two flat tires on the drivers side, which I would imagine whoever went through the other tunnel, they actually got through the tunnel a little faster.

Anyway, we come out of the tunnel. I remember as we got up on West Street and we are heading north on West Street. I'm looking ahead. I remember kind of leaning forward and looking up and seeing the smoke in the buildings. I remember seeing what to me looked like road kill in the street. I'm thinking what the hell is that over there, not really knowing what it was, you know, driving around, there was some debris in the street. There were people directing traffic.

I remember at one point seeing what looked like a piece of an airplane. Now at the time when I saw it, I'm thinking oh, that's part of the airplane. But I'm still thinking a much smaller plane. I also see some of this -- what I was thinking at the time looked like road kill, but I remember one time slowing

down and leaning up on the steering wheel to look down, and it was an intestine. Clearly that's definitely what I saw. Talking to the guys later on, they saw lots of other carnage that was on the street, but I'm trying to drive the rig [redacted]

As we passed the Liberty Street walkway bridge, we were now looking to try to find a spot on either side of the street, but there was really nowhere for me to tuck the rig in. It seemed like there were tons of units there already. We ended up going north of the Vesey Street walkway bridge, and we ended up pulling off to the left-hand side of the street somewhere, you know, a block or two or some distance past the Vesey Street walkway.

From there we got off the rig. We got all our gear together and we made it a point to -- I said, listen, let's make a point not to get separated. I remember the boss telling the guys, something to the effect that this is going to be a bad day. It was just not going to be a good day.

So as we were walking back, headed back to the command post, which was set up -- I believe it was on the west side of West Street, I guess the American

Express building was behind us and we were looking directly at the north tower. From there you could see that building, the Marriott Hotel was to the right, the south tower was behind the Marriott.

I remember looking up, watching, there was smoke pushing from both buildings, but at this time when, you know, I know you are hearing bits and pieces of information but you don't have time to discuss it, get all the facts, like two commercial air liners hit the building.

I don't think I was fully aware of that. I think it was half of -- this is unbelievable what we are watching. A little bit of excitement too, like wow, we are going to be -- [redacted] but we were probably in the command post for probably not more than 5 minutes, maybe a little more. I don't really remember the exact time frame, but I remember while we stood there in these two driveways, looking up at the north tower, and seeing debris coming down and I remember as the debris got closer to the ground, you realized that it was people, because then you started seeing arms and legs and that was, I guess, like watching a train wreck.

You just had to watch. You just couldn't believe what you were watching.

I remember seeing probably from that time frame, 8 to 12 people, where you would have one person coming down, there was a second and a third person on their way down, I just remember it was like cannon balls hitting the ground, boom. Most of them were landing up on I guess there was somewhat of a set back on the front of the building, where they weren't landing on the street, because it was, I guess some sort of a set back. They were landing there.

I remember one person actually hitting a piece of structural steel over a glass canopy and that just disintegrated. Just the most horrific thing I ever saw. But like I said. You watched it in somewhat disbelief, but you just -- I can't believe what I'm watching. I remember the reaction of the guys behind me. Like oh, my god, they are jumping, they are jumping. And somebody saying turn around, don't watch it. I remember just saying, you know, I don't need to watch that, turning my face away and you just hear the pounding, like boom, it was just tremendously loud, like taking a bag of concrete and throwing it in a closed courtyard. Just a loud echo, just boom, boom.

Anyway, I don't remember exactly who was in the command post with us, but I know we went through the tunnel with 105, 132, because we were all stationed. Actually I remember vaguely seeing the 48 Battalion on the Brooklyn side. All these companies I remember seeing on the Brooklyn side. I remember seeing 105's rig, because they got a spot closer to the command post. They actually I think were parked actually just north of the Vesey Street walkway or very close to it. I remember seeing that.

We ended up getting our assignment. We were going to go into the south tower. With that, we started heading south along West Street and we didn't go straight across because with all the debris and people that were coming down, we headed over towards Liberty Street and kind of took some head cover from the walkway bridge. As we crossed over West Street we were still more or less under the Liberty Street walkway, and I know 131, they were behind us, because when we ended up going in the hotel they were right behind us, but we were all going in groups of three or four or five, like looking up to make sure it was clear and then running diagonally across the street and then entering I guess through the restaurant portion of the

of the hotel, which is right on the corner of Liberty and West.

We went inside probably 60 or 80 feet and then we came to a stop because there were units in front of us who had come to a stop. It was almost like you got the impression that you are trying to look over the crowd to see who was leading the procession or who was directing traffic ahead. But in my mind it was like well, as soon as the companies in front of us move, that's when we start to move.

Everybody was standing fast, everybody had their gear. I remember civilians that were working in the hotel. Some woman bringing out a bottle of water, a big 5 gallon bottle and she was trying to pour cups. There was a desk off to the side. I said why don't you put that down on the desk there. Somebody brought out cases of water. I remember taking a case of water and walking it ahead and putting it down for some of the guys that were maybe 20, 30 feet ahead of us.

I don't remember seeing head pieces of the guys in front of us, but some of the guys that we were with, one of the guys who actually spent a year in 105, said he saw 105, they were just some distance in front of us, where you could still see them, but they were

also standing fast like I said. You weren't moving because there were guys in front. You just assumed that they were going in the same place. You didn't make a push to go through the crowd.

Sometime after that, we were probably there for another say, 7, 8 minutes, then there was talk in the group with us and 131 and whoever the company was in front of -- I don't remember, but saying, I don't know if we are in the right place.

I remember walking. Now at this point I had taken off my turn out coat and my mask and laid it down I figured because I'm sweating my nuts off at this point. I said when they start moving, we will grab our gear. We will go through. Somebody also said it's like an hour walk to 70. We just figured like, wow, we were going to be going up to just try to evacuate some people.

I remember walking straight ahead more towards the front of the lobby of the Marriott and I grabbed the maintenance guy and I asked him where are we right now. He said you guys are in like the restaurant or bar area of the hotel, which was where we were standing, but the actual physical bar restaurant would be between a wall. We were in an area that was

probably like 20 feet wide. To our left would be West Street, straight ahead would be the north tower. To the right the south tower. Behind us was the door that we came in. I guess we were in like a corridor that would take you to the lobby and through the wall that was to our immediate right, the restaurant bar area was directly behind that and the doorway to get in there was more or less -- the doorway that we came in, if you made a sharp right, that would take you into the restaurant bar area.

He told us where we were and I asked the guy how do we get to the south tower. He said go straight through the lobby more or less. He said you go through those double doors and you make a right and it will take you back to the south tower. I remember asking him, are we going to be inside the whole time. He said yes, there is like a tunnel or some overhead that you won't be exposing yourself to debris that's falling down.

I remember telling our Lieutenant and the boss of 131, I said Lou, we are not in the right place. We have to go through this crowd. We have to go through those doors. With that we put our gear on and two of our guys had gone to the bathroom. You turn

back, where are they? They went into the bathroom, which was actually in the bar restaurant there. They said that when they were in the bathroom there was a ton of guys in there. Some guys who have heard this story thought I can't believe they went to the bathroom, but you were standing fast. You were more or less staging. There was nobody going anywhere.

Once they came out, we said we are not in the right place. It was only a matter of a minute when they showed up saying we are not in the right place, get your gear, we are going through. Shortly after they came out and got their gear on, we were ready to go straight ahead, you heard a roar, some sort of a vibration, like a vrr vrr vrr, getting louder and louder.

My first thought to myself, I live down in Rockaway so I have heard planes coming overhead for years. It sounded like a plane getting closer and louder and louder and next thing you know, you felt the building shook. At that moment, it was I think every man for themselves. I think I might have heard somebody say it's coming down or something.

But at the time I was facing straight, which I was facing north in the hotel lobby. To my left was

West Street and I remember thinking to myself I'm going to head towards that perimeter wall and there was a desk somewhat behind me. I remember diving to my left and back between the perimeter wall and a desk. I remember hearing crashing coming down.

There was dust starting to blow in, because I remember starting to feel stuff in my mouth. Trying to spit that out and I remember having problems breathing, because there was just so much crap blowing into my face. I remember just lying there on the floor thinking I can't breathe too well right now because I got all this crap in my mouth and I'm just waiting for something to fall on me and then I'm just going to sit here and I'm going to suffocate.

Once all the crashings, you know -- after that went silent, I could hear guys behind me inside the doorway where we had just come in. I guess there was some sort of a fire gate or something or a security gate, I'm not sure. That had somewhat come down and closed and it was only open like 3, 4, feet. There was a bunch of guys that were trying to lift it up. I remember getting up. I still -- I had my mask on at this point, because just when we were getting ready to go, I had all the gear on, I had a Halligan, an axe, my

mask, getting ready to parade straight ahead.

I remember turning my light on and looking. It was pitch black. You had a haze of dust looking around for the guys that I was just standing with. I was able to finally Lieutenant McLetchie and John Leanza. At this point we were missing 3 guys. Vitiello, Koyles and Kasey were not there. It was just like, where are they?

I remember walking around and just kind of doing a quick look around trying to look through the dust and the darkness. Looking straight ahead I could see that it was pretty much from what I remember sealed off. That part of the lobby was now blocked with whatever. Talking to Kasey, not Kasey, Leanza and McLetchie, I said I don't know where Dave and the other guys are.

So I remember walking back towards the guys that were lifting the gate up and they were trying to lift it up, but it was open like 3, 4, maybe 5 feet. I remember going back and grabbing like a podium and wedging it there. That way the gate wouldn't come down any further. I was able to walk out the same door that we had walked into. At this point, I still don't know the south tower came down. I'm convinced that up until

that afternoon I was saying I was in the hotel when it got hit by a plane.

I remember going outside. Now to my left down Liberty Street in the direction of 10 house, I remember seeing parked cars that were on the same side of the street as us and they were covered in rubble, probably just higher than their front ends, because I could just still make out their flashing headlights with the alarms going off.

I remember looking south on West Street, past, on the side of the Liberty Street walkway bridge where Ladder 113's rig was. I remember that was a ball of fire. I didn't know it was 113's rig at the time. I remember there was a ball of fire over there and I was like wow, what's burning over there.

There was an Engine Company hooked up right outside the hotel where we walked in, I guess hooked up to a hydrant and hooked up to the stand pipe. I don't remember what engine it was, but I remember there was another guy, a fireman, he had blood on his face and he was trying to force open some of the -- I guess EMS compartments on the rig.

I tried to give him a hand, we couldn't force them. I remember there was other debris burning in the

area of the doorway. I remember it was one of those mats that you would hang on an elevator when you were moving. One of those was -- a piece of that burning by the doorway. So I remember getting the can with this other guy off the engine. I remember to get it off, you had to climb over some debris and kind of force it out. Like it was kind of wedged in there.

But there was a lot of debris on it, but like I said, I still didn't know what had happened. I knew there was a mess out there. There wasn't a lot of people. Like I said it didn't make sense. A lot of this stuff, it was later in the day when I found out what happened, I remembered. I was like yes, come to think of it, there wasn't a lot of activity on West Street. It was like a white powder. I don't remember climbing over a lot of debris, but me and this guy, we operated, I don't know, maybe 10, 15 minutes.

In that time, McLetchie and John Leanza came out of the hotel. We had a little meeting I guess in the street between the Liberty Street walkway bridge and the entrance to the hotel where we had gone in. They said they had a guy trapped. It's been a while. Now I'm not sure if it was the boss of 55 or the boss of 58 Engine they had trapped. I guess he identified

himself. They said we needed some other guys to get him out.

With that, some other guys came out from the direction of Liberty Street walkway bridge. I believe it turned out to be 113. We had a little meeting. They were saying we got a guy trapped somewhere in the hotel in the direction more towards the lobby area. I remember the boss telling me and Johnny C, go in with them and try to get him out. I told the boss why don't you go back because you know where he is. I'm going to head back to the rig, because that was one of the things we said, if we get separated at any time, that's going to be our meeting, go back to the rig.

Just backtracking, when we were still in the hotel, I remember I was able to get in touch with Dave Koyles. I was able to get him on the radio. I got his voice, but what we didn't do is -- I don't remember there being a lot of radio traffic, but there was enough where I couldn't get a conversation out of him. I couldn't -- he didn't -- I couldn't get enough information for him to tell me where he was, or for him to tell me that the other two guys that we were missing were with him. So I had radio contact with him at that point so I knew he was alive, but I didn't have any

contact with the can man, and I think it was Dave, I think he had the roof.

Now after working with the guy on this Engine Company, I remember walking, I was now up on West Street. There were 3 of those big pieces of steel that were stuck in the ground that you see in all the pictures. I remember walking around that and looking at those and thinking if they fall over they can reach me.

With that I saw in the background was the Marriott Hotel, and my first thought was that looks like the Oklahoma City building, because I remember the whole middle of it just seemed like it was carved out.

Somewhere right around that time I got a Mayday. I heard a Mayday transmit. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, Ladder 4 with a Mayday. Nobody answered it. The Mayday came again. I answered it. I said go ahead with your Mayday. He said I'm trapped. I was knocked unconscious. I don't know where I am. He gave me his name, it was Mike Brennan, because I said what was your last known location. He said he didn't know. He was knocked unconscious but he was trapped.

I don't even know what I said to him after that. I remember just looking around thinking I got 2

or 3 guys missing. I don't know even know where to begin. There was just nobody around. I just felt helpless at that point. You think that's one of the things I should not think about now and again, but, I started to walk north along West Street heading back to the rig. I figured at some point when I see a Chief or I will tell somebody that I got a Mayday from a guy.

Like I said, I had no clue where the guy was. I kept walking. Thinking back, it was white powder. I don't remember climbing over mountains of debris, but I remember, I guess, stepping over stuff. I got back, I passed the north tower. I got to the Vesey Street walkway. I passed that, I got to our rig, which was again, I don't remember exactly how far, but it was some distance past.

I got to the rig, the guys weren't there. Also with this, back at the hotel, McLetchie, Leanza and the guys from 113, they ended up going back into the hotel to try to get -- I think it was either the boss of 58 Engine or 55. I have to ask them. I don't remember now.

So they are in there, I go back to the rig. They are not -- our guys aren't there. So I continue walking north, because I think I see guys in the

distance. I guess I remember seeing guys. So I start walking, but I also remember seeing just like a few straggler firemen walking, but nobody is coming together and saying we got to do this, because I think I was half shell shocked and I guess a lot of other people were.

Shortly after as I'm walking, you hear another loud boom. I hear guys behind me, I guess I hear some commotion behind me and I turn around and I see guys running towards me. Again I think I hear somebody say it's coming down. I remember turning, looking and looking up and seeing the dust cloud opening up overhead.

With that I got that sick feeling. I am just like all the wind is out of you. Saying like holy shit. Throw the Halligan down that I had in my hand and I start running as fast as I can heading north. I'm reaching for the shoulder straps. I'm thinking I don't have much time here. I'm going to have to take shelter. I'm passing rigs, I'm passing cars. I got the waist strap undone.

Now I'm just running. I just have my helmet and my bunker gear. I passed a police car I think it was. I duck in behind the back of the police car. I'm

thinking to myself, don't climb under the car because when it gets hit the car is going to lurch. I don't want it landing on my back. I just got on my hands and knees against the back of the car, just put my head down. More or less waited to get crushed again.

Then it was silent. Then you just heard, crrrrrrr, just a rush of wind getting louder and louder and everything is just blowing in. Now you got hit with the dust again, just a lot worse than it was inside, because now there was I guess, there was nothing really protecting you from the dust, but I remember that blowing like halfway down your throat to the point where you are really gagging on it. But I'm still waiting for heavier pieces of debris to start falling around me, which didn't happen,.

Now it goes pitch black. I remember hearing someone, I guess it would be to my left, saying help me, help me, I don't know who it was, I didn't really find that person. I remember standing up again, it's pitch black. It's like I don't even know -- I know something fell down, but I still don't know the building completely fell down. I guess at that time I'm thinking maybe a portion of the top fell down.

When I got up, I continued walking north. I

guess I ended up on Chambers Street, so I was walking in that direction and I think it was at that time, I remember helping an EMS worker put one of their personnel on one of the carry chairs. They needed a hand carrying her. I remember walking and stepping over some debris, you know, to kind of help walk. I remember feeling exhausted.

Somebody else walked up and I remember only carrying this person for not too long, grabbing someone and saying, you got to help her. I got to go -- at that point I was thinking I got to see if I can find the guys I'm with. At that point I'm thinking I'm the only guy from the company going home. Because I know the other two guys were in the hotel. Two guys, I don't know where they were, one guy I had radio contact briefly before the second one came down.

I ended up getting up to Chambers Street, still not being fully aware of what was going on. I remember telling guys I was in the hotel when a plane hit. Within the next hour or so, the irons man, Leanza, and McLetchie, I got them on the radio. I got Koyles, the first guy I had gotten radio contact with after the first building came down. I had him on the radio. But two of the other guys were still no contact

with them.

I guess within the next 4 hours, we accounted for all the guys. One guy ended up after the first building came down, Kasey ended up getting on a boat and going to a Jersey hospital. Dave Vitiello, he ended up making his way up to Chambers and West Street so everybody was together. I remember sitting there talking and when I said to somebody that I was in the hotel when a plane hit, he said what do you mean the plane hit. He goes both buildings had been hit already. I said what do you mean. I said what noise were we hearing. What we heard was the noise of that south tower coming down.

At that point we had gotten word that all our guys were accounted for. We started hearing stories that some guys were missing. Now before we got verification that Kasey was in the hospital, I remember telling the boss -- now this was probably, I don't know if it was an hour or two later, I said I'm going to take a walk back over to where we were.

But at this point I guess I was kind of gun shy from walking down West Street. I said I'm going to walk down along the water and then I'm going to come up like Liberty and see if I can see anything.

I remember when I came up Liberty to West Street, now I could see this devastation that I definitely didn't see to that magnitude after the first building came down, but now there was just mountains of steel. I remember seeing what turned out to be 10 Truck flipped on its side, kind of twisted. I remember walking across the bumper of a TAC unit, thinking that there were guys that I knew in TAC, who actually didn't make it. I remember walking across the bumper of one of the TAC units, climbing up on some steel and just figuring that if Kasey was around maybe I would see him.

I ran into some guys from other companies that I knew. What was left of the hotel was -- what I had seen of the hotel was no longer standing. It was just one portion, I guess of what would be exposure 4 side still standing, I guess looking at it. I'm on the west side of West Street now, looking across at the hotel. I guess the one end of the hotel closest to Liberty that was, I guess, you know, the only remaining portion of the hotel that was still standing.

Now Leanza and McLetchie had said they left the hotel because they needed a generator, because the power tools, the battery operated tools that they were

using to try to get the boss out, I think it was 58, but whatever, they ran out of -- the battery power went dead so they went looking for a generator. They said when they came out, they were now between the hotel and the Liberty Street walkway when the north tower came down. They ended up running over to the base of the pedestrian walkway and they took shelter at the base of one of those columns. Fortunately they survived also.

After that I ended up going back over to like Chambers and West. Stayed there for the next couple of hours, wanting to do something, but it was just -- at this point my eyes were starting to bother me. Probably around 8 o'clock that night I guess it was, 8:30, me, McLetchie, and I'm not sure who else, a few of us ended up taking a ride to the hospital, because that afternoon I remember I had my eyes flushed like three or four times at the Stuyvesant High School and then ended up going to the hospital to have them checked again, where I had my eyes flushed again.

I remember Gregg McLetchie, he had a bump on his head attended to, went to Bellevue Hospital, ended up coming back to quarters probably about 11, 11:30. For the first time saw it on TV, the actual planes hitting the buildings and actually seeing them collapse

to the point where they just completely pancaked. I said like -- I couldn't believe that the buildings came down, because I remember sitting there in the afternoon looking up at the smoke telling people what's left of the buildings must be up in the smoke, because I don't see anything.

Then some other things made sense. Like when I came out of the hotel, now I realize why it seemed like it was so quiet, because nobody was left there. Anybody that was in the command post I guess they got blown down the driveways and they probably hadn't dusted themselves off yet.

The piece of airplane that I originally saw coming out of the tunnel, now it made sense. At the time it didn't make sense, but that piece of an airplane was way too big for the type of plane that I envisioned hitting this building. It's like -- you know, it's a jumbo jet. Come to think of it, that piece of plane looked like it crushed half that car and I remember that first piece of intestine that I saw, I was thinking at that moment that must be the pilot of the plane.

Then I find out it's all this and I realize oh, my god, all these people got thrown out of the

building and the noise I heard was the sound of the tower coming down and the other building was coming down. I think that was pretty much my day.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay Kevin, thanks for the interview, the time is 4:21 p.m.

File No. 9110345

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN DUGGAN

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 1:24 p.m.

I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER DUGGAN: Firefighter 4th Grade Kevin Duggan, assigned to Engine 1, was on rotation with Engine 210 on September 11.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: And this interview is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Kevin, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. I came in that morning for a day tour. I checked the rig. We were sitting in the kitchen having breakfast, and we heard over the voice alarm Brooklyn announcing the second alarm at the World Trade Center, and at that point, we turned on the TV to see what was going on.

We saw a lot of smoke coming out of the World Trade Center, and then tone alarms went off, and we were sent -- 210 was sent to World Trade Center. We were in the quarters of 211 and 119 at that time, because 210's quarters were being redone.

So we were over near towards in Williamsburg

basically. We responded, and I never saw the ticket, so I wasn't sure if we were responding to the incident or if we were responding -- if we were getting relocated, and so we headed -- I figured we would take the Brooklyn Bridge, and we headed in that direction, but apparently had been dispatched to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and so we went past the bridge. We were taking Park Avenue right under the BQE. So we went around and passed the bridge and were heading towards the tunnel when the fellow sitting on the other side of the rig saw the south tower explode. He saw an explosion.

He told us the building just exploded. We looked over and we saw the south tower, a lot of orange and a lot of smoke. So we continued towards the Battery Tunnel. There was a lot of traffic. Took us awhile to get there.

We got to the tunnel. We saw -- I think it was 105 or 132. They were right ahead of us, and we came in together with them. The tunnel was backed up. There was a car with a flat tire, so we were delayed. Actually, the captain of 210 gave a report that 210 would be delayed due to traffic.

We came through the tunnel finally, and we

stopped because we got out of the tunnel right at West Street just when you come out of the tunnel, and we had a detail from 219 with us that day, and he wanted some water. So he hopped out of the rig and went to get water, which was in one of the back compartments.

We actually thought that's why we were hopping off the rig. I thought we were hopping off the rig, but the captain waved us get back on, but the detail grabbed the water jug so we could have some water, and as we were there, 279 went past us while we stopped and put the water jug on the rig.

Then we pulled up, went up a little further along West Street, past the first pedestrian bridge, so that's Liberty Street, went past Liberty Street, and somewhere between the Liberty Street and 2 World Financial Center, we stopped and hopped out of the rig.

The command post was in front of a parking garage at 2 World Financial Center. So we got off the rig, grabbed our roll-ups and our spare cylinder, and we reported to command post. As we were heading that way, I saw Joe Falco from Engine 1 working with the chauffeur from 65 engine hooking up to a hydrant, and I didn't say hello to him. I just walked past him.

We reported to the command post where Chief Ganci and Feehan were, and the captain reported in, and they told us to stand fast. This was right in the mouth of the parking garage. So we were standing there. They put the engines on one side, on the north side of the ramp, and the trucks were on the south side.

When I was standing there, I saw 24 truck was there, and so I said hello to the guys from 24 truck. I asked them were they sent on the third alarm. They said they were sent on the fifth, and one of the guys told me to be careful in there, and I said I will, and at that point, people started jumping. So there was a lot of debris had already been falling.

At this point, there were jumpers, so when the people started jumping, they tried to move us back into the garage so that nothing would hit us on the head, even though we were far enough away on the west side of West Street. They still said all right, just move back inside so nothing -- when you're standing there no one -- we don't want anyone getting hurt.

So in the tunnel there, we were just in the mouth of it. We were there. It was 210. I saw 211, 202, 34 engine, 91 engine, 44 engine. I saw Joe

Angelini from Rescue 1. He was wearing a different helmet, and in my mind I was just, like, when did Joe transfer to Rescue 1, not realizing that he was just grabbed a helmet from somewhere else and just wearing that.

So we were just watching people. People were jumping. The fire was -- a tremendous volume of fire. Our captain said he didn't think we'd be able to put out the fire because of the volume of fire versus the volume of water. He said the sprinklers were going to be out, the standpipes were going to be out. So we were there.

They told us there was a captain -- I think he was a captain -- who was a liaison between the command post and where we were, and he told us gear down, take off your bunker coats. It might be a little while before you go to work. So we were standing there. I took off my mask and jacket and put it all down. Again, just inside the mouth of the garage. They wanted everyone inside the garage.

At that point, I saw Captain Brethel from 24 truck, who was just a little to the north of the command post. The driveway ramps down. He would have been -- he was above where the driveway ramps down. He

was on the street level. He was calling all the off-duty members together so he was trying to -- I found out later that he was off duty. He had driven Father Mike down.

So he was calling the off-duty members together so I guess he was trying to get a company of guys together, and that was just to the north of that driveway where the rest of the command post was, where the other chiefs were. So we were standing fast.

I saw a couple of guys that I knew, said hello. We weren't sure what we were going to be told to do. Just at that point we still -- not realizing what could we do and what were we going to do, but I did expect we were going to be sent in at some point, and so we geared down.

My captain actually was standing -- he had taken his bunker pants down to his knees, and we were standing there, and then we just heard this real loud roar. We looked up and we could see the south tower. Looked like the middle of it was just exploding out, and at that point, one of the officers just said, "Run," and we were just turned and started running into the garage, so I just turned and ran in.

I was just -- I didn't think it was a great

move to be running into the building like that, but there was nowhere else to go, and I was just thinking, like, holy shit, we're going to be buried in here, thinking the tower would probably fall over towards us.

I remember thinking I left my -- I had taken off my mask, and when we started to run, I left my mask down. I don't even have my mask, but we just got real lucky and went right to the back of the tunnel or the parking garage and opened up a few doors.

There was nothing, nowhere to go. We opened up one door, and there was a stairwell, so we all just piled into the stairwell and -- so it was basically all the engine companies that had been standing there made it into this tunnel, made it into this stairwell.

Then once we got into this stairwell, we weren't sure -- we wanted to get out of the stairwell, and there was a door to go upstairs was locked, and they were trying to find a maintenance man. We were looking for some tools, looking to see if we could pop the lock, but at that point one of the guys just pushed the back door.

There was a back door, and he opened it up and just showed us what was out there. It was pitch

black, so we closed the door. It was the emergency exit. So we just waited there for -- the radio was complete silence, couldn't hear anything. There was nothing coming over the radio.

We were waiting there. We didn't know what to do, but we figured just wait a few minutes. They opened up the door again maybe five minutes later, and it wasn't as dark, but it was still pretty bad, so then at that point there were a few captains who had gotten together, and they said, "All right. If it lightens up a little more. Then we'll just get out of here."

So the third time they opened the door, it looked like it was snowing out, and they said, "All right, let's go." So we just went straight out towards the water, because that's where we ended up being. We were in the -- we found out afterwards we were in the 2 World Financial Center and through the parking garage.

That leads you right out towards the marina there, the harbor. We got out and everyone just kind of went on their own. Some guys went south. Some guys went straight to the water. Some guys went north.

I looped around towards the north, and because it seemed -- I guess it just looked like it was whiter up that way, and went north. Then the next

thing was, was trying to find the rest of the members. I saw the guys from 34 engine, but not 210. Then I found one guy from 210, who was the detail, and then I found the captain of 210, and then the nozzle man of 210. I had back up that day.

So we had everybody, except the chauffeur, but the chauffeur wasn't in the tunnel, because he had been by the rig. He was hooking up. So we weren't sure what happened to the chauffeur at that point, and my captain -- because he had pulled down his bunker pants got knocked down when we started running originally, and he was a little bit disoriented, and he had gotten hit with the dust cloud more heavily than the rest of us, so his mouth was all dry and everything.

We were trying to get him some water. He was very concerned about calling his wife, because his wife -- he had been talking to his wife right before we got dispatched. So he was looking for a pay phone and basically just walked around.

As we were heading north, we were looking for some water, trying to get -- we had our crew, and there was a pay phone there, so the captain called his wife, let her know he was all right. Then one of the other

guys wanted to call his girlfriend because she worked -- she was a court officer, and he wanted to make sure she was all right, and so he made that, and actually he called his parents, and at that point we were together. We were trying to decide what to do next.

My captain didn't want us to head back towards the north tower, because he said that it was a terrorist attack, and we couldn't be sure what was going to happen next, and we still hadn't -- we were still very -- we had gone around, around the -- we were probably up getting near Vesey Street maybe at this point. No, we probably hadn't reached Vesey Street. Somewhere right around there. We were still right by maybe 4 World Financial Center, because we were in the grassy area there, and then the north tower, we heard the rattling, and we saw the north tower collapse.

The dust cloud came at us again. So we just headed north and again we got separated a little bit, and we just kept -- we just headed north as the dust cloud came towards us, so we headed north to stay out of it as much as we could. We still got hit with it, but by heading north we were getting away from it rather than -- the wind was blowing south, so once that had passed, we realized it was just, again, it was like

the snow was falling, so we headed north to try to regroup, got up past Stuyvesant High School, ran into Chief Collins from the 31 battalion, which was our battalion, and he was a little disoriented, as well.

So there was a guy with some oxygen, so we gave him some oxygen. We walked north out towards the street and out towards West Street there. At that point, we were looking for -- just regrouping, and at that point, there was a battalion chief from the safety battalion, who was disoriented.

He broke an ankle and looked like he was in shock, and so he was just kind of wandering. We got -- he was right next to an engine company, so we pulled a board off the engine company, and there was a woman there who -- of course I asked if she was a nurse. It turns out she was a doctor, but she helped us.

We put him on a board, and there were a couple of ambulances there, and put him on the board. He was giving my captain the information for his -- wanted someone to call his wife, and he was concerned about -- there were guys from the safety battalion in the building, and I think he might have given the name of one of the firefighters who he was with, and yeah, he was pretty much in a state of shock.

So he was put on the board, put him in the ambulance, and my captain who had been knocked down and disoriented himself said he was going to the hospital with the chief. He said I could come along, but I said no, I want to stay, because Chief Collins from the 31 battalion was -- I thought he was a little disoriented, and I wanted to stay with him, and so I stayed with him, and he didn't want to go to the hospital in the ambulance.

At that point, we met up -- I met up with the other guys from 210, but not the chauffeur, still the nozzle man and the detail from 219, and then we were pretty much by ourselves at that point. So then we saw 211. Since we were in the same quarters with 211, we knew all the guys and their captain, Captain Clark, so we kind of fell in with them, and that was our crew for the rest of the day.

210 went in with 211, and so at that point there was a report of a gas leak. They told to us move north again, so we went north again, and we realized everything was all right to go back, so we went back then. We reported in to the command post they had set up on West Street. This is after both towers had collapsed.

We were told -- we were in Group 7, and we'd be put to work in a little white. So we were just all in the staging area right by Stuyvesant High School, so we could go in and use the bathroom, whatever. We were there for an hour or so.

Then at that point, since both 210 and 211, we had everybody except the chauffeurs, who we hadn't accounted for, the captain of 211 wanted to go find his chauffeur, but they had parked on the east side, so we went over by on the Church Street side. So that's how we headed back that way to go to find 211's rig and see if their chauffeur was all right.

We were able to finally -- took us a while to walk over, get down that way, and we found 211's rig and the 211 recall guys. They said that their chauffeur was injured, but he was all right. He ended up with a broken arm, and he was in a bit of shock, but he would be all right.

So then we were working with the 211 guys, and the recall, and the nozzle man from 210. I was still concerned about the chauffeur from 210. I thought I heard his voice on the radio at one point that he was working with somebody pumping water, and so I was pretty sure he was alive, but we wanted to verify

that.

So we walked back towards where 210's rig was. So we went back north again, went all the way back maybe up to Murray Street, came back around, and then came back down West Street. We actually ran into the 210 guys from the 210 recall and found the 210 chauffeur, and it was good that we found him, because he thought that we were gone, and we thought -- I thought he was still alive, because I thought I heard his voice on the radio, but he didn't think we were alive. He thought we had gone in.

So once we found him, and then we were able to -- everyone was all right. We realized that everyone from 210 was all right, and that's when we started getting reports of how many other companies were missing. 207 was missing. 226 was missing, in the 31 battalion, and I heard -- I had run into guys, a couple of guys from 1 engine, who had been in the north tower, and then I got a report afterwards that Lieutenant Desperito from one engine didn't make it, and I heard Father Mike hadn't made it, and I heard Captain Brethel, who I had seen that day, he didn't make it.

The next day I found out about Mike Weinberg

who was off duty, that he didn't make it, and Steve Belson as well, and Orio Palmer, the chief of the 7th battalion, but it was really -- after the collapses, we never operated.

We were standing fast, and we helped out some company hook up to a standpipe somewhere. 119 was throwing some water on it, but when we went back, they already had some machinery in there. It was just weird.

So then we just spent -- after I made it with 210, we just spent the rest of the time looking to see who else we could find, and digging or anything, and that was it. But then sometime that night, I guess around midnight, we started heading back to Brooklyn. And that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay, Kevin, thanks. That's the conclusion of the interview. It's 146 p.m.

File No. 9110346

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SEAN BROWN

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 12:07 p.m.

I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, safety battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BROWN: Firefighter Sean Brown, Class 6, Engine 16.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Sean, in your own words, just tell us what happened that day.

A. Well, about 0845 hours, the morning of September 11, 2001, just about to come off tour. Lieutenant mentioned to me that might be staying a little later than usual today, due to the fact of a report of a plane hitting the north tower of the World Trade Center, and the lieutenant said to start gearing up.

Approximately at 0850 hours, 16 was called, was called first due on the third alarm. At that point, myself, Ronnie Cifu, Lieutenant Mickey Kross, Firefighter Paul Lee, Firefighter Timmy Marmion, Firefighter Pete Felluca and myself, Sean Brown, firefighter, Grade 6, responded to the scene.

We arrived via Church Street, tried to make the left turn onto Liberty Avenue, but could not. Liberty Street, excuse me. We could not gain access to the south tower, so we ended up backing up, staying on Church, and at that point, that was about 0900 hours.

When we started to back out, back from Liberty Street to Church, due to we couldn't gain access, the second plane hit the south tower, showering debris everywhere. So we proceeded northbound onto Church and ended up parking the rig on Park Place and making our way southbound towards the north tower, which would be Building 1.

So we made entry to the World Trade Center with our roll-ups and extra cylinders, and we at that point went into the lobby, where they were just setting up the command post, and that would be approximately ten after nine.

At that point, we were met by Ray Downey, Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan, and Father Judge and Tommy Von Essen, the commissioner. We were then teamed up with Engine 1, asked to proceed up to the 23rd Floor in order to set up communications.

We were with a couple of ESU cops, and one of the -- I would say officers from the Port Authority, so

our orders were to go up with engine one with three roll-ups, extra cylinders, and set up communications, and then proceed up to the 70th Floor.

We were warned that whoever was on the nozzle that day would be sucked out of the -- possibility of being sucked out of the building, but they said it would be about an hour walk up, but our main job was to set up communications.

We were on the 23rd Floor, set up communications, when we heard a rumble. I would say we were on the 23rd for about five to ten minutes. The building shook. Lights went out. Asked my officer if -- you know, what happened, and he thought maybe the top of the building got blown off.

I turned to him and I said, "What do we do?" And some chief appeared. Don't know who the chief was. Chief from the department appeared, said, "Start making your way out of the building. The south tower just collapsed. A third plane is coming towards the north tower."

At that point, we gathered up all our gear and were ordered to leave the roll-ups and start proceeding downward.

At that point, the team became separated. We

were all together. A minute later everybody was separated, so it was myself and Firefighter Felluca. We started to head downstairs, and at that point Lieutenant Kross wasn't with us, became separated from us, so I ran -- we were at the 19th at that point, ran back up to 23rd to look for him, but to no avail. Radioed him. Couldn't get him.

So we started to head down. We ran into another officer from a Manhattan company that knew Lieutenant Kross, said he was starting to head down. We proceeded downward, ran into 110 truck. That was the first company from Brooklyn we ran into, told them what we heard, and then we heard a transmission over the radio.

The Maydays started coming in to vacate the north tower. So as we started going down, we started running into Brooklyn companies and telling them to -- that we were told to vacate the building.

At that point, we proceeded down. Most of the civilians -- we didn't see any civilians at that point. It was mainly firefighters. Made it down to the lobby. There were about maybe 30 firefighters that were with us. Made it to the lobby, and the lobby was like a war zone. All the windows were blown out, and

the command post wasn't there.

We proceeded out onto West Street and proceeded to start walking north, and the building was a little listed when we came out, and we made it to the corner of West and Vesey when the building came down. That was myself, and Firefighter Tim Marmion and Firefighter Pete Felluca.

At that point, attention was called upon me to go back and get -- there was a chief that they pulled out, so I ran over to grab that chief, and proceeded to move to pull him towards the ambulance. We got him the help he needed.

I have medical training, so I figured I would do my best to help him out, and put him in the ambulance. Then the building totally collapsed, and I would say I was on West and Barclay. The guys from the company were on West and Vesey.

I radioed to the company, and they -- their precise words were, "Run, run for your life," and me, the chief and some ESU cop that jumped in to help me dragged him to an ambulance, put him in an ambulance, took off and proceeded to get caught in the dust cloud.

Had all my gear on, had my hood on, and I

still was wearing my mask at the time of the dust cloud. Call it luck, as you may, chief. Can't tear it off my back, though. It's free.

Proceeded to realize before I got hit with the cloud I was walking northbound on West, and I was about West and Barclay, proceeded to keep walking west, and got caught in the cloud and ran into one of the chief's that got caught in the cloud, but didn't have -- he was so far back from the scene, didn't figure he'd get caught in the dust cloud, so he didn't have his mask, and helped him out, pulled him out of the scene, too.

So we shared some air, and at that point after the dust cleared we went back and started looking. I got on the radio and started looking for my team and ended up meeting back at Vesey and West where we originally were together, and after that was just all started looking for people. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great, Sean. Thanks for the interview. The time is 12:16 p.m.

File No. 9110347

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SIDNEY PARRIS

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 1:19 a.m.

I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER PARRIS: Firefighter Parris, 1st Grade, Engine 21.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: With regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell us in your own words what happened on that date.

A. We responded first on the 6th alarm, and we loaded up extra bottles, everything we think we might need, extra Scott bottles and oxygen, in case there were a lot of injured members and pedestrians.

We left quarters. We got downtown in the vicinity of the World Trade Center. We tried to get as close as possible to supply the building, supply the siamese. Came down West, and I made a left onto Vesey Street, and I was -- I parked the rig by a fire hydrant in front of the post office, and supplied the World Trade Center across the street right near West and Vesey.

I was standing on the corner of West and

Vesey by the post office as the company went to the command post. There we saw 28 engine, and I think it was 33 engine. Their pumpers were in the same vicinity, and the three chauffeurs were supplying the siamese in that particular intersection.

After supplying the building, I was listening to the transmissions and standing at that corner. We began to just see people jumping left and right constantly, two-minute interval, maybe a minute and a half.

After that, FBI agent came down the block. He identified some landing gear that was in front of our rig, asked me to make sure no pedestrians came down the block to interfere with any type of metals and debris that were there, because they were trying to identify to put the pieces back together for the plane.

At that particular time, one member from here that was detailed to 7 truck had just come down, because 7 truck left before he got to their quarters. He took my Scott bottle out of the cab at one of the compartments, and from there I left West and Vesey, the actual corner, I left there by the parking garage, to close the compartment that he left open and to put my

shoes on the rig.

At that particular time, I saw another FBI agent come by, who was starting to log some of the things. He was on his transmission, talking to whoever. They told me that another plane was in the area, and we thought that -- the chauffeurs -- some of the guys that were out in the street thought it was a third plane.

At that particular time, I walked to the corner of Church, because I heard the plane, but I couldn't see anything. Afraid it was going to hit the same part of the twin tower and make it topple and start a domino effect. As I got to the corner of Church and Vesey, that's when the building, the south tower, came down right on the corner, and from that point on, it was like mayhem for me.

I ran towards the Brooklyn Bridge, in that vicinity, just running. I got maybe about three, four blocks. It was difficult for me to run, and I was slowing down, and a plain clothes cop, police officer, was running by, grabbed my turnout coat and was telling me to keep running.

From that point on, I saw someone open a door, and we just dove inside the door. After the dust

settled, came outside, and I heard transmissions from 21 engine standpipe, the guy that had the control. I heard him calling, but he couldn't hear my transmissions to him, so I was making my way back to the scene, and I was hearing a lot of members.

I heard 39 chauffeur. I heard him calling his unit. And 16 truck, he was getting no feedback. In trying to make my way back, I can't remember what street we were on, but it was a bunch of cars, buses, mail trucks, Fire Department, all types of vehicles that was on fire before you can actually make it to the scene, so there was no pressure, no hydrant pressure.

The responding companies that were coming in, we started breaking windows or trimming windows to see if the buildings had a system that was already fed where we can get a line off of it, get some kind of pressure to get closer to the scene. We had to get past these cars.

At that point, it just looked like a war zone, and I was -- can't draw back that much of who I saw or where I saw them. People thought that I was missing at one point for a long time. It was some truck coming from Brooklyn. I don't know if it was 101 truck said he heard that I was one of the missing, and

they were looking for me, and he sent me to another command post that was -- when they changed it and put a command post down by the Brooklyn Bridge, and told me just report there to let members know that -- and the chief in charge of the command post that I was still here.

I got back to -- when we outted the car fires, I got back to the actual scene, and just as we got back there, I think was with Lieutenant Curran from 9 MetroTech, and the building's second tower started to come down, and we had to run again.

Then we made it back after the second tower collapsed, and again we were helping with the pumping line and everything with the cars and debris, trying to get closer to the scene. After that was just digging, you know, and just seeing other guys come in.

I was seeing people -- I thought I was seeing guys there because people were coming and asking you, you know, other members, and PD was coming down, has family on the job, and asking you if you saw so and so, because they saw your unit on your helmet, knowing that they were working that battalion and whatever and figured we'd run in together and asking if you saw a family member or friend.

I thought I saw quite a few guys that I saw, but not thinking, we were just at a funeral in Staten Island, not even -- I don't even know if it was a week ago, so I thought I saw these guys there where these guys were lost. So it was all -- I don't know if you call it shell shocked or what, but it was quick for me, because I was outside, but it was late, much later on in the day before I hooked up with anybody from my unit.

The backup, I believe, was Jimmy Foley. He had a radio, because just recently we started carrying radios for the backup, and I couldn't hear -- I didn't hear any response from Jimmy. I don't know if he was giving any transmissions, but Mike Burn was the only guy I heard, and Mike couldn't hear me. The captain I couldn't hear.

That was it for the guys from this company.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great. Thanks for the interview. The time is 28 after, and the count number is 65.

File No. 9110348

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT CHYRIWSKI

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 2:51 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHYRIWSKI: Firefighter Robert Chyriwski of Engine Company 3.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: -- in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Rob, in your own words, tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. That day, of course, we're all sitting in the kitchen and then I see the news come on and something has hit No. 1 World Trade. Before you know it, we get the call to ride down there. Knowing that it was a high-rise building -- and on the assignment we notice, you know, we had the high-rise unit in quarters and it wasn't on the ticket -- I merely got on the phone to call the dispatcher. I said do you want us to take the high-rise unit? In all this madness that might have been going on in the command center at the dispatcher's office, they said take everything you got.

So we automatically just started riding down,

and on our way down we heard over the radio the staging area will be on West Street. So right around when I hit Canal Street and Varick, I headed down West Street. I parked on West Street. The guys got out. I wanted to get in better position by 1 World Trade because we had gotten there before the second plane had hit 2 World Trade. So in the whole madness of things, I tried to reposition the rig and tried to get a hydrant. So I tried further down West Street, which I'm probably right around across from the hotel, the Marriott, when I hear this loud noise, this crash. That's when the second plane hit Tower 2.

So I managed to turn around and head back up north towards 1 World Trade, not knowing what had happened, that it was a plane that hit. But upon meeting up with my members on West Street by 1 World Trade, I was told that another airplane hit 2 World Trade. Right then and there I knew we were under attack.

Chief Ganci wanted to clear out the -- I guess it was the bike path or pedestrian walkway, whatever, just to line up all ambulances because he thought there was just going to be hundreds of casualties. I had to reposition the fire truck at

least two times, and by doing so I ended up further north and west and the truck ended up by 3 World Financial Center. We also had the high-rise unit with us and that ended up being parked under the pedestrian bridge that crosses over West Street that links 6 World Trade with 3 World Financial Center. So it was directly underneath there.

Then 39 Engine, which has high-rise two, they pull up. So they pull up close to our truck and they were kind of like in the scuffle trying to position rigs. Chief Ganci was telling them to move here because he wanted to make a clear way for ambulances. I ended up hooking up with the chauffeur from 39 Engine because he was high-rise, too, and we kind of like worked together with our equipment, and one thing led to the next. We were just standing there waiting for orders. Engine 3 was pretty much still waiting on what news to hear from the Chief, what they're going to use, what type of equipment.

I took a walk over to the high-rise unit to try to set things up to pull the ramp out because we had the bottles in there and that's the only way that you really get the heavy stuff out, the cylinders. Then I just look up at 1 World Trade and see what's

going on and it was just like it seemed hopeless, like what can we possibly do with the people just falling out of the windows left and right and not knowing how we can get this equipment up there.

Then I look and I see Mayor Giuliani and Von Essen and Nigro and a whole entourage walking south. I don't know exactly where they were going, but I saw them. Then I went back to 3 Engine, which I said was by 3 World Financial Center, and I was with the chauffeur from 39 Engine just waiting to find out what we would do. One thing led to the next and my company, 3 Engine, came back and they didn't get an assignment yet.

Then I see Captain Danny Brethel. He needed a face piece for his mask because, I guess, within the scuffle of getting out that morning. I went into the rig engine and gave him a face piece and that's the last I saw of him.

Another one of my members was detailed to 26 Engine. He was like an extra man. He jumped on a rig and he didn't have a mask. So he came up to me and I gave him my chauffeur's mask so he can go operate, and he ended up hooking with 12 Truck because he missed 26 Engine going in. His name was Adam Mazy.

I guess one thing led to the next. We were just standing there looking at all this chaos going on, the two towers just burning, and before you know it, I'm just hearing this loud roar and I look up and I just see this big cloud coming down. That was when 2 World Trade started to come down. People were just saying run, run. So I just took off.

I started running north and then I head west down Vesey Street, and I guess I ran down until I got to North End. There was another block and I started running north again, and luckily I was able to beat out the whole dust cloud. I didn't get enveloped in it.

It seemed, when everything just calmed down, I started walking back, and at that point I thought I had lost the guys from 3 because I thought they might have been in there, or wherever they were, they didn't get out. But luckily we hooked up back on Vesey Street. They were looking for me. I was looking for them. We met and at that point we were told by the Chief from 6th Battalion, I can't remember his name, that everybody just retreat to the River Terrace, on Vesey Street and the River Terrace, everybody just go there.

Pretty much we stayed there and we were

helping out victims. Victims were coming in. Ferries were coming in, taking the injured to Jersey. We were helping with the civilians and firefighters, helping them move along the way, getting on these ferries, and the next thing you know, Tower 1 collapses, it's on its way down, and at that point everything just seemed hopeless, the way you felt.

Then we just started walking further north. We were all together. Engine 3, our company was together, and we walked to Stuyvesant High School, and that's pretty much where we ended up for the rest of the day.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. That concludes our interview. Thanks, Rob. The time is 2:59 p.m.

File No. 9110349

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN DAVID LOPER

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 13, 2001, at approximately 0845 hours. My name is Chief Lakiotes of the safety command. I am here interviewing Captain David Loper of Engine 210, in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. David, if you would, just take me through what happened that day, as far as your experience.

A. Right from the response?

Q. Yes.

A. We were in quarters and we got the ticket to respond to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to be part of a task force that was being formed to send over to the World Trade Center. So we were responding and as we were going down by the waterfront, I don't know exactly the street that is, by Brooklyn Heights, underneath the promenade, I could see the north tower burning on whatever it was, 10 floors, 15 floors and I remember just being overwhelmed, trying to figure out what we were going to do when we got there. I just couldn't figure it out. Every time you size up a situation, you can come up with some kind of a plan, but I couldn't on this particular case.

Anyway, it's then that I was looking at the north tower that I saw what I thought looked like a seagull in the distance almost and it went into the south tower and the south tower exploded in a huge fire ball. I just told my chauffeur, "Stop for a minute. Stop the rig." And he just slammed the brakes and we just looked and it didn't strike me as to what happened. I still thought -- I said to him, at that point, "The gas tanks exploded from the plane." That's what I thought it was at that point. It wasn't until afterwards that I realized it was a whole second plane at that time. And I didn't realize that until a couple of days later. It just didn't make sense to me.

Anyway, I said, "Let's get out of here." By the time we got down to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, they had tried to clear a lane, although there were some cars in the way still, but there were several trucks and engines, whatever, at that scene and by the time we got there I think another one or two engines came in behind us and I said, "Let's go." We went in as a convoy.

I don't know the companies that were there. I know 279 was behind us, because they ended up

passing us when we got through the tunnel. It took, I would say, a good 15 minutes to get through the tunnel. There were cars in the way. A battalion called about a pregnant woman that was going to give birth and we got out of the rig and looked. We couldn't find the battalion or the car, so who knows. I don't know what happened there. We got through. When we got through finally to the other side, there was a lot of debris and the dust and stuff and everything from the plane smashing into the building and the traffic stopped. We didn't know why at that time, but we figured they were getting directions, but I think it was more probably because of the parts of the building and the body parts and everything that were all around.

One of my guys got out of the rig for some reason. I was yelling at him, "Get back in," because the convoy started to move. Before he could get in, 279 passed us so we just followed them in and we took a hydrant in the vicinity of Liberty and the West Side Highway. I'm not exactly sure where it was, but it was in that vicinity where we took a hydrant. It was in the center median or to the left side maybe over on the west side of the West Side

Highway. I would guess it would be just before the pedestrian bridge in that World Financial Center, Dow Jones Oppenheimer. I think in that area is where we took a hydrant.

We got out of the rig and there was a torso up against the hydrant. My chauffeur said, "Cap, come over here. I don't know what to do." I told him, "Cover it." I think that's what he did. He covered it with a blanket. He moved it a little bit, covered it with a blanket and then hooked up to that hydrant.

At that point I told him, just stay with the rig. Hook up to the hydrant and do what he had to do there as far helping other companies hookup to hydrants or whatever. I didn't have any idea what they were going to do, but I just told him to stay with the rig and try not to get close to the building. Stay on this side of the highway, unless he had to hook up and got orders to hook up to some kind of a standby. But he would have known that. He's a good chauffeur.

Me and the other three guys got out. We each grabbed -- I had the guys take a roll-up and an extra Scott bottle. I grabbed a standpipe bag and

an extra bottle and we grabbed four roll-ups instead of three and grabbed an extra length of hose along with the extra bottle, and we were heading up West Street or whatever, West Side Highway, and we ran into Chief Barbara, who was standing actually like on the center median. Because I remember looking up at him and he just asked the company. I said, "Engine 210, part of the task force." And he said, "Go past the second pedestrian bridge. There is a command post for the north tower. I want you on the north tower."

So we proceeded up the highway. I told the guys -- actually, we stayed all the way to the west side. There were pieces of the building coming down and I kept looking up. I told the guys, "Look up. Just look down to see where you're going once in a while, but keep looking up in case something comes down. And if you have to, just run. You know, just scream for everybody, but just run if you have to."

So we stayed all the way to the west side of the West Side Highway, as close to the buildings as we could, away from the debris that was falling off the building, made our way past that pedestrian bridge and we hit the command post. But there is

two pedestrian bridges, so I'm a little confused as to where we actually stopped. I know we were at the command post closest to 1 World Trade Center, the north tower. I know that for a fact, that we were up there.

We reported. There was a Lieutenant there with the board, the set up, as far as the -- I'm losing track as to what that's called now.

Q. The command board?

A. The command post board, right. So there was a command post there and I reported in and things were a little bit crazy, as can be expected. People were like, "We're all reporting in." And I saw a friend of mine that I was a fireman with up in the Bronx, Captain Eddie Metcalf, and I remember the guy handing him -- I don't know what Eddie was doing there. I don't think he was with a company. I don't know if he was surplus or -- I really don't know what he was up to, but all I know is the guy handed him a pad and pencil and said, "You take care of the companies coming in. Write them down and give them to me."

So when I heard that, I heard that actually being said, I said, "Eddie, it's David, 210." He

said, "I gotcha, Dave." So he put me down on the sheet. I turned around to the three guys and I said -- there was probably two or three engines, a truck. I don't know who else was there. There were other people milling around. Probably some civilians. We were in front of, I'm guessing, 3 World Financial Center, American Express building. Although, I can't say for sure if that's where we were. Because when we came -- I'll get to this later, but when we came through the building, we ran down the loading dock and came out. I don't remember another building being behind us, but there could have been, because I was kinds of confused at the time.

But anyway, I grabbed the three guys and told them, because they had told us to stand fast, it's going to be a while before you go in. So I said, "All right." So I grabbed the three guys. It was a cool morning, but with all your turnout gear it was hot. So I says, "Listen. Put all the equipment here in a pile. Take your coats off and just, you know, it's not going to take a second to put your coats on and we'll go in when we get orders."

So that's what they did. And then I saw other

companies doing that, too. Each company was staying in like a little pile of stuff and staying by and taking their coats off. I remember taking my coat off and I had it around my arm and I loosened up my pants just to -- because I was very warm.

From that point they were back about probably 30 feet towards the loading dock area of that building, and I stayed up near the command post. That's when we kept just looking up, kept sizing up the building and then the jumpers started. I remember seeing 105 Truck, come to think of it, because I remember Vinny Brunton being there, speaking of him today. But I do remember him being around. So 105 Truck must have been there. But I don't know happened to them afterwards. They must have got orders to go in.

Anyway, we were sizing the building. That's when the jumpers started and you just didn't seem -- you didn't realize what it was at first until they started hitting and then I went back and the guys are looking. I said, "Listen, don't look up. You know, there is no sense in looking up and seeing this." Because they just kept coming and coming. I don't know what good that did, because you could

hear them hitting, so it was still not pleasant to say the least.

So we kept that up anyway. I went back to the commands post after talking to guys, kept them together. Went back up and there is a crowd of people and everything, still waiting to see what we were going to do. Then all of a sudden there was like a loud -- almost like a rushing sound, a roar, and we looked up and we could see it looked like an implosion and the building kind of went in and out and kind of like shook and I remember like 20 or 30 guys, whatever it was, all there at the command post. A lot of them in front of me pulled towards West Street. We were looking up and then this thing started coming down and nobody ran. I could just remember that. Even myself, I remember being hypnotized by this thing and just looking up at it and then finally, thank God, somebody yelled, "Run." And we took off and I think depending on which way you ran determined whether you lived or died. Because I think some guys that were there probably didn't make it.

Anyway, I ran to the loading dock area and all my guys went the same way. I tripped over some gear

initially as I first started running that was there or it could have been a curb. I don't know what it was, but I tripped over something, fell, hit my head. That dazed me a little bit. I couldn't get up right away. I rolled over to see what was going on and like 15 or 20 guys like trampled me and I think a couple of them did try to help me, but it was just the push was there and they couldn't.

Somebody might have even fell over me as we were going and they all like kind of trampled me and then the debris cloud came, so then all bets were off there. Nobody knew where anybody was. I got up again just as the debris cloud was enveloping us and I tried to run and again I tripped over something and I fell and I twisted my back and knee. This time I stayed down for just a couple of seconds. I said, I'm having difficulty breathing now, because it was like a funnel. All the smoke went right down into this loading dock and I remember it was just like having your head stuck in a pail of sand, trying to breathe sand. And I says, "You know, I'm gonna die if I don't do something about this." So I rolled and I found a wall finally and the only way I could orient myself is I heard a lot of voices on

one side of me. I said, "That must be to the rear, because everybody went that way. So the front must be this way." And I knew all the equipment was laid on the ground there. So I took a shot and I crawled along the wall towards the front and I started going up. That's when I knew I was going in the right direction. I started going up the loading ramp. And I didn't really hit too much large chunks of debris. There was the dust and stuff you could feel and all that stuff and you're breathing it.

I finally found three Scott air masks and, of course, needing to breathe now I was elated by that, but the one mask was upside down and dopey me didn't purge it because I'm not thinking. I throw it on my face and got this -- everything. I mean it was like solid. And now I'm coughing, I'm choking, I'm pulling solid crap out of me and I'm like, "That was real smart." So I finally got the mask purged, cleaned out. I put it on and then I could breathe a little bit better.

I grabbed the other two masks, crawled back to where I heard voices. I found one guy huddled like in a corner. I gave him a mask. I said, "Put this on. We gotta try to get out of here." I found

another guy and I said, "Put this on." And by that time somebody was saying they might have found a door in the rear. So we just started crawling to the rear. I still couldn't see anything. I found a rope on the ground level and I knew or I didn't know, but I thought immediately that somebody put like a search rope or something, a personal rope. So I says, "I found a rope." And I just started screaming and a couple of guys came. We found the rope and we started following it and it led out this door and there must have been lighting on there, because I could see like a glow up in the ceiling level and we bumped into some people and I heard somebody saying -- somebody came down the stairs and said, "Somebody's got a key." Somebody from the building actually came down into the smoke, unlocked the back door, and that's where we got out. We got out through the rear door and it was still -- you could see people at that point. That was to the west of the building and the breeze was coming off the river, so that actually was clearing faster than to the east. So when I got out I had blood running -- I remember feeling my forehead because I had a big lump from where I fell and I had blood

coming down my forehead and I said, "Now I gotta find my guys." Which I didn't even know if I was gonna be able to do that at this point. But I did. Two of the guys waited for me or were in the general vicinity. I don't know if they actually waited for me, but they didn't go too far. That was Casey, who went back to Ladder 127, and Duggan, who went back to Engine 1 on the rotation just recently. But those two guys were there and I gave them a big hug. Then I was looking for Tommy Carroll from Engine 219, and I told Duggan and Casey, I said, "Let's start working north a little bit away from this." Because now that was the south tower that collapsed. I says, "This north one is going. It's just a matter of when it's gonna go." I said, "Let's get a little further away, because I don't know if it's gonna come back this way." You know? So we started walking north and when I felt that we were far enough away, we went through like a park by the waterfront and stuff, when we were far enough away, there was a guy with a cell phone and he let Casey or Duggan use his cell phone to try to call home.

And I said, "listen. You guys stay here. I'm just gonna take a quick lap and see if I could find

Carroll. So that's what I did. I went south and from looking at this, I probably went behind 2 World Financial Center. I went to about that far and we were over by 4 World Financial Center, I would imagine, at this point. I think we ended up going down North End and then down Vesey Street is what we ended up doing.

But anyway, I made it to like behind 2 World Financial Center and I couldn't find Tommy Carroll anyway. So I says, "I gotta go back to the other two guys anyway." So that's what I did. I went back. They were waiting for me. As I was heading back towards them I was some where behind Winter Garden or 3 World Financial Center. Somewhere heading back towards those guys, that's when the north tower collapsed. And it was the same thing, the same noise. So as soon as I heard it this time, I knew it. I just saw those two guys and I just yelled "run" and we just started running up towards Vesey Street. And we came back up towards Vesey Street towards West Street and then headed north on West Street. I says, "we gotta get a couple of more blocks up north so we can regroup and see who we can find to see what we're gonna do here."

As we went up there, there were guys, a lot of guys just walking around like zombies. I remember Chief Collins from the 31 Battalion. A lot of guys were just in shock and stuff, as we were. Anyway, we got up there and we found a group of guys that were kind of dazed and stuff and we hung out with them right on West Street. There were a lot of ambulances by this time all lined up. I remember looking over and seeing Mike Talleska. I didn't know at the time, but he was with Safety. And there were a couple of EMS guys taking care of him. I don't think it was our EMS. I think it was a private Jewish ambulance. I went over. I told my two guys, I said, "Stay here with Chief Collins." There were like three or four other firemen. I said, "Stay here. I'm gonna go over and see what's up with this guy. I know him from up in the Bronx and up in that area."

So I went over and I said, "Mike, what's going on?" And he was in tough shape. He was mumbling that he was buried under the north tower and that he climbed down out of the south tower. I can't remember what he said, but he said he climbed down and he made it to this point and he thought he broke

his leg and these guys weren't taking care of him. So I tried calming him down and they were going to put him in the ambulance, but the ambulance was blocked in by trucks, ambulances, everything. This ambulance was going nowhere and Mike was pretty upset about things that he wasn't getting out of there. He was talking about car bombs going off and he got me really wired up with that kind of talk too. I started looking around saying, he said," look for the vans. They're gonna start blowing."

Anyway, I says, "Mike, what do you want?" He says, "You gotta get me out of here, Dave." So that's what I did. I grabbed him. I told the two guys, they were only about 50 feet away, Kevin and Danny, I said, "Stay here. I gotta get this guy up to an ambulance where he can get out of here and then I'll come back." And that's what happened. These EMS people didn't want to release him, but we just took the foot brace off that they put on and threw it in the ambulance. I put his boot back on and took him around my shoulders and he hobbled up. We kept hobbling up a couple of blocks. We finally found an ambulance that was free that could take him away and they started treating him. And I turned

around to go and I collapsed at the back of the ambulance and I don't know whether it was from hitting my head. I think I ended up with a mild concussion from when I originally hit my head. But the next thing I remember is I woke up in Presbyterian Hospital and Mike was there. That's basically all I remember. Do you want to know what happened at the hospital?

Q. No. That's not necessary.

A. I don't really remember too much about that anyway.

Q. Besides any brethren at the command post, did you ever see anybody else?

A. I said Eddie Metcalf I saw. Yeah, I saw 211, Engine 211. Because we're in the same quarters with them now, with our quarters being redone. So Charlie Clark, the Captain of 211 was there, and his guys. And I saw them afterwards actually behind and he told me he saw Carroll. Carroll was in front of him getting out. They got out before me, because I went back to get those Scott masks and stuff. So those guys all got out before me. I was one of the last guys out. And he says he was in front of me. I don't know where he went, but that relieved me a

little, but not too much. And now I was worried about my chauffeur too, because he was down by the south tower. So I was concerned about him.

Q. When you went to that command post, is that where Chief Ganci was and Chief Feehan?

A. I don't remember seeing them.

Q. At the command post?

A. I might have seen them, but it's just that I can't remember.

Q. Chief Turi?

A. I don't know what Chief Turi looks like. I would have to see a picture of him. I don't remember seeing him. Chief Ganci I would know and Feehan I would know, but I just can't remember. There were guys there, but I think I was looking up more than anything and I didn't take the scope of the ground area. All I remember is -- I think it was the guy that wears the half glasses in the command post company, with the mustache.

Q. Fieldcom?

A. Fieldcom. I'm pretty sure he's the guy that handed Eddie Metcalf the the --

Q. I know who you're talking about. A short guy with black hair?

A. Yeah. I think it was him, because I seen him a lot. You know, you always seem to see him. I'm almost positive it was him that handed -- I could be wrong. I know Eddie started writing all the companies down. And I know 105 was there and then I don't know when they got -- they must have walked away as I was looking up, because I didn't really see them going. But I remember looking down at the building at one point and seeing firemen going in and out.

Q. At the north tower?

A. Yes. Yeah. The south tower we were removed from. We didn't really -- we were right in front of that north tower. I remember being across from the Marriott Hotel kind of. Because as the bodies were coming down, there was like a canopy or whatever that they were hitting and crashing through.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. That concludes this interview at approximately 0905. Thank you, Dave.

File No. 9110350

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EVELYN VEGA

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time now is 1710 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm at Battalion 4 EMS command doing an interview regarding the date September 11, 2001, with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, your rank, your shield number and the area you work.

A. Hi. My name is EMT EVELYN VEGA. My shield number is 5752. I'm currently assigned to Battalion 04, Station 11.

Q. Ms. Vega, you were working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was. I was.

Q. Can you just tell me about the events that morning?

A. Yes. Okay. My tour began at 0900 to 1700 hours, and I was on duty. I came in, my normal routine, to work, and I went to the locker room, and came out, got ready, whatever, and my partner that morning was EMT Torres. When I came down, he was -- actually, he already had vehicle keys. That was vehicle 404. He was inspecting the vehicle.

It was about a quarter to 9 a.m. I bumped

into one of my coworkers. His name is EMT Bell. He starts also at 0900, and by the way, that morning, I was 01 boy. So I bumped into Bell, and he told me, "Oh, did you hear that a plane hit the World Trade Center?" I said, "No, no, I don't believe you. What are you talking about?" He said, "Come, come, I'll show you. You can see it from here."

So I followed him. We weren't able to see anything. So I just wasn't sure. I just went in for roll call, and I went inside, kind of ran inside to the office, and Lieutenant Melaragno was there, and he was -- he just threw the keys, the radios. He was just get out of here, get out of here, so now it was kind of confirmed, although I wasn't, you know, a hundred percent sure, but he was, like, get out of here. A plane hit the World Trade Center.

So I just took some keys, and I gave them back because my partner already had the stuff he needed so I just hopped -- jumped into the driver's side, and we just head out. We weren't dispatched by a dispatcher. We just were sent out by the lieutenant, and we just drove towards the World Trade Center.

As I'm getting closer, I see a big hole at -- I guess it was Tower 1, World Trade Center 1, the north

tower.

Q. The first building that was struck?

A. Uh-huh, the first building.

Then by this time, I think it was like five minutes to 9 a.m., and we're driving, and then we are -- I remember being on Barclay. We're driving. I told my partner, "Should I make a left here onto Broadway?" He says, "No, continue west." I said, "Fine." Do I turn on Church? He's like no. We looked. He said, "No, too much commotion."

We went straight, still continued west. We got to West Street. I said, "Do I make a left here?" He said, "Yeah, make a left here," and so I made a left, and I pulled over at Vesey and West Street facing south on the east side of the street on West Street.

We jump out of the vehicle. We put on our safety jacket, our helmet, and we take out all equipment, stretcher, whatever, everything, and we start heading towards the building.

Now, we bumped into a chief, fire chief. I don't know his name. I don't recall anything. I just -- he was flagging us to come towards him, and so we went towards him, and then when I assumed -- at the time I didn't know -- but now I know that the second

plane had hit, and we looked up. We heard it. The debris started falling. People started jumping off the building, whatever.

So he was, like, clear the way, move your vehicle a little north. So we moved like a few feet north, and I believe it was still on Vesey and West, but on the north side of -- north corner, versus the south corner where we were, and I moved, and I went back towards the buildings.

I had a few people that worked in the building calling us that there was people in the basement, and they needed help. So we're debating should we go in or not. We decided to go in.

We went into one World Trade Center. We went inside. We went -- the elevator wasn't working. It was on two sublevels down. We went down. We left the stretcher in the lobby, and we went down. There was two patients. It was like 15 other workers. They were doing construction work down there.

The patients were one female, one male, and one had a back injury, and one had a knee or a leg injury, fracture or whatever. We only had one back board. We improvised. We cared for these patients, and then we rushed them out.

We used the exit through the underground garage that workers there assisted us with, so we got out of there. Before we left, one patient was taken by the workers to help us. They took the female patient, and my partner went to make alignment for -- to let them know that where we were, because, of course, we were dispatched not by them, but by our lieutenant, so nobody really knew where we were. So he did that.

Supposedly he got in contact with central, whatever the case may be. He came back, and we took the second patient out, and we got out. When we got out, there were ambulances in the area, so they took the patients, and we just went to our -- we left with -- you know, we gave the patient to the other unit and we became -- we started walking now.

When we exited, we were on Vesey and West in the middle of the block between Church, between West Broadway and West Street on Vesey, so we just started walking together towards the ambulance. When we got into the ambulance, we put our equipment and whatever, and we found out at that time that they were staging at Vesey between West Street and North End, so I angle parked the ambulance.

My partner went to speak to the chief in

command or whoever the operating lieutenant that was, you know, responsible for the triage of the commanding area. So I stood there, and I was trying to use my cell phone, and I didn't get a reception.

At this time, I didn't know we were hit by a second plane. I just heard on 1010 WINS that the Pentagon was hit, and I was, like, okay, you know, whatever, and I just stepped out of the vehicle, and I stood behind my ambulance, and I saw a cop there trying to use the phone. So I started talking to him, and he said, "Well, I can't get through." I said, "Me neither," whatever.

So moments after, maybe five minutes or so, I hear a rumble, and I just look towards the east side of the street. I'm in the middle of the block on Vesey between West and North End, so now I turn, and I look east towards the corner of West and Vesey, and I see people in blue uniforms, cops, whoever they were. They were running towards my way, so I didn't know what to do, so I looked the opposite direction, and I see other people running the same direction.

So I just started running. So I started running by myself because my partner was taking care of something else, so I just ran, left the vehicle there,

and just kept running north. Running, running north, and still at this time I didn't know that the second plane was hit, and when we heard that rumble, that noise, I didn't know that that was when the first tower fell until I met up with another coworker. His name is EMT Orlando Martinez. We stood together for the whole way.

There was no one else from Battalion 4. We just kept running north. We kept stopping. I was trying to raise my partner over the radio, and all I kept hearing was Mayday, Mayday. We had no idea where his partner or my partner were, so we were worried, and no one else from our battalion was there. So it was out of control.

As we were running north, and we were looking south, we saw the smoke and everything, and then we heard, you know, that the building had fell, whatever, so we finally got, I guess, to -- it was West Street and closer to Chambers, and we just stood there, and trying to find out, you know, permission, trying to use someone's phone. The restaurants were open. People giving water at a local bar. So we got water, and I was trying to use the phone, but there were lines, so I didn't use the phone. And then we find -- we hear the

second building fell.

So now we keep running north, because they kept saying just run north. So everybody was just running, civilians, police officers, some ambulance. We hopped in some ambulance. We just went north, dropped everything. Everybody was just -- it was a commotion going north.

Now you have to go to Chelsea Piers. You have to go to Chelsea Piers. So we didn't go to Chelsea Piers yet. We were still going north, and we stopped, and then they said there was a gas leak. Something in the air. We got to get out of the area. Some pollution or whatever. So now the guy that I was with, Orlando Martinez, he bumped into his partner, so beautiful, I found out that my partner was looking for me, but no sight of him.

So now there was like a few -- like five guys from Battalion 4, so we were feeling better about, you know, everybody being okay. So we started running, and then when they announced there was, like, a gas leak, I mean, this is all I heard, you know, people -- just rumors running around with information, and, of course, everywhere we stopped there was like a lieutenant, EMT lieutenant, or a Fire Department lieutenant, or

whoever. There was always a boss, someone telling us what to do, where to go.

So finally, we jumped into -- the last thing was like that gas leak thing, and I opened the back doors of the ambulance, and like 15 million people. They were all EMTs, cops, transit, whatever. They ran inside of the back of the ambulance, and we just kept going to Chelsea Piers. They told us where to park, and we just staged there.

We stood there, and I was able -- that's when Chelsea Piers was open. They were helping us, giving us water. They let us use the phone, and I contacted my family. I guess this was all by eleven o'clock, because the second building, I think, fell like 10:30, so this whole thing by 11, I figure.

I contacted my family, and then finally before twelve I reunited with my partner, and then there was another EMT. Her name is EMT Perrin. I don't know her last name, but she belongs to Battalion 4, and she had just finished coming off duty, Tour 1, so she came in, and she was doing inventory of all the Battalion personnel, you know, who was missing or whatever. So it was a good thing that, you know, she had a list that we could ask, did you speak to this

one, did you bump into this one, did you have the possibility of this one, whatever.

So at this point, like, it was a whole bunch of us from Battalion 4. It was maybe a few people missing we were worried about, but for the most part, everybody was okay.

Then, like, three p.m. we were relieved from the scene, and we went back to the 911 system.

Q. At what point did you pick up your vehicle and bring it uptown with you?

A. I never did. My partner apparently -- I bumped into him by twelve, I'm assuming, and he had the vehicle, so he picked it up, because after the whole story, I mean, after this whole thing, I found out that instead of him -- most of them running north, they ran west towards the water, so everybody was hanging out there by the water. That's why we didn't hear any more from our battalion because that's where everybody was, but me and Martinez, we were going north because, I mean, that's the only way.

I didn't even think about going through the park out to the water. I just went north, so he picked up the vehicle with whoever else. We had all the ambulances there. That's where they were staging.

So that's basically the adventure.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add to what you told me so far?

A. No.

Q. That pretty much covers the day?

A. Yes. Of course, that I had to work two shifts, which is expected, 16 hours, and after we were relieved, and we went to the 911 system, it was like torture. We were getting calls with people having headaches and just stomach pains, and it was just too much for me to handle. I mean, just knowing what we just went through, and how we are needed for other things, and we have people actually dialing 911 for a headache. I was really bothered by that.

A lot of our calls were on North End Street and South End Street, which is right across from the World Trade Center, and both buildings, of course, had no light and no electricity, no elevators. Nothing was happening.

So we were receiving calls, and we were being dispatched to those buildings where we had to climb 30, 40 floors to get there with flashlights and all the equipment, so that was mind-boggling, because every time we got to these high-rises, there was no patient,

no one was there.

I mean, everybody was evacuated, but I guess it's part of our job, but it was just -- yeah, it was not a good thing, you know, and then to get there, we had to park our ambulance, like, far away from, and then we'd have to carry everything and go through all the rubble.

I bumped into firefighters that were taking out firefighters that were dead, you know, so it was just crazy. It was crazy, but that was it basically.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Thank you very much for your time. The time now is 1725 hours. Thank you very much.

MS. VEGA: Thank you.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview.

File No. 9110351

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

Captain David Fenton

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MURRAY MURAD: The time is now 1300 hours and I'm Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

A. Captain David Fenton, New York City Fire Department, EMS Command, assigned to Division 6.

Q. This interview is being conducted at the Fire Department headquarters at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Captain Fenton, can you tell us in your own words what happened that day?

A. Okay. I normally worked tour 3 as a duty captain in the South Bronx. I was home in bed. Nice place to be. My wife called me and said, "You better turn on the TV. Something is up. I think you have to go to work." So I turned on the TV and that was right after the first tower got hit. I called in. They said, "Yep, come on in." And they were going to leave a Suburban for me. I drove to Jacobi, got in the Suburban. As I was driving over the Throgsneck Bridge as I was -- in reference with time, on the way in, at about 9:55, when the south tower collapsed.

I got to Jacobi just as the north tower collapsed at about 10:29. It was myself, four EMT's who I don't have a clue who they were that Jacobi put in my Suburban. I know they track their names and stuff at Jacobi. And a paramedic by the name of Ed Bradley, we all jumped in the Suburban and down to the Trade Center we went. We were heading down -- we were told by Citywide to respond to Chambers and West and we were southbound on Chambers at about the meat packing district, at about Little West 12th Street, when they were in the process of doing the rapid evacuation for the gas main.

I saw everybody coming back at us. We turned around. Most of the units were stopping there. I knew that there was a prestaging area set up at the Chelsea Piers. So as the units were stopping there, I instructed all those units to continue on up to the Chelsea Piers to the prestaging area where they can be turned around and redeployed as needed.

After making sure that all the units went up to Chelsea, where I took my suburban and my five people, we turned around and went back up to Chelsea. I was there and I saw Chief Kowalczyk and a few other people organizing the staging area.

They told me to just turn around and go right back down again. So I responded down West Street parking probably just north of Warren Street and we were parked southbound in the northbound lanes. We got out and we walked out to the command post that was established at Chambers and West. At that point the five personnel who were with me were directed into Stuyvesant High School to a personnel staging area and I was directed to remain at the command post and await orders.

A short time after that I was instructed by Chief Carrasquillo to report in to the Stuyvesant High School and ensure that the personnel who are in there were getting formed into teams for deployment, if needed. There were approximately five lieutenants there and about 30 EMT's and medics combined. I know Lieutenant Horan was there and he was the one I tasked with taking attendance and forming everybody up into teams. So there would be at least five EMT's, one medic and one lieutenant per team. Also about that time there was a decision made that the lobby of the building would be used to treat any walk-in wounded. They set it up as a treatment area, which a wide variety of doctors,

nurses and everybody else arrived with medical supplies. I don't know where they came from or who they were. They set up a medical clinic there. We assigned some of our people to assist in that area.

Most of the stuff they were doing were eye washes. One thing that struck me as amazing was I didn't see any stretcher cases. Nobody came in on a backboard or a stretcher. Everybody was ambulatory. Then later on, about twelve-ish or so, 12:30, I went with Chief Carrasquillo and we did have a reconnoiter of the area. And what we were looking for was a place to place for the tents to be set up coming from the Parks Department to become the true treatment area on the Riverside with Medivac access. We found an area. We worked it out with a Police Officer, I believe, or maybe even a sergeant from ESU by the name of Techie who would -- where the cops would be landing their helicopters, where we would be landing the Medivac helicopters. And that never actually came to fruition. We didn't use it.

Going back inside, by that time Lieutenant Fuchs from the academy -- Kath Fuchs was there from the academy and she started taking care of organizing the inside of the house as the treatment

area. At which point I was redeployed by Chief Carrasquillo back out to the command post and I assisted in doing a variety of small tasks and directing a few people there.

Q. Where was the command post again?

A. The command post was at the intersection of Chambers and West, underneath an overpass. Deputy Assistant Chief Butler was there, Chief Carrasquillo was there and Chief Martin was there, that I saw. Other people coming in and out, but they were the ones that were assigned there. Originally I was assigned as the Fire Department liaison to the forward Fire Chiefs and I went down toward Ground Zero at that point, shadowing a chief. Did what we had to do. They then established -- a forward command post was set up at Vesey and West, which is where I spent a good part of the time after that for the rest of the day just funneling the information to the Chiefs, fire side and requests back out to our command post at Chambers and West.

Eventually I was relieved and I was sent back to the command post where I was given a set of keys and some paper and a pen and my new job was to go down to Ground Zero and record all the ambulances

that were destroyed and get the doors popped and make sure that none of our people were still in them. I went down to one of the fire vehicles, got a Halligan and I proceeded down into the south side. First I started the north side. There weren't too many vehicles there. I recorded what was there. Most of them were open. Then I went around to the south side of Liberty where a large quantity of ambulances were there. None really of ours. Mostly the 911 participants. And I proceeded with a couple of firefighters. We popped a few rear doors, popped a few cabs that we couldn't see into. I made an account of all the vehicles that were there. We didn't find anybody either under them or in them. I went around and did the same thing on the Church Street side to the vehicles I could get to. There were some vehicles that were underneath number 7 when it came down that we just couldn't get to, because the rubble pile was shifting and most of it was still on fire.

The list of equipment in the vehicles were then given back to the command post at Chambers and West and they called in representatives from the other 911 participants, to give them their vehicles at

that were in there. So that way they could start doing a vehicle accounting.

Q. How many vehicles did you estimate or did you observe or count?

A. Approximately 15 to 20.

Q. And those were all EMS? Fire Department?

A. No. Those were ambulances. Actually, the majority of them were 911 participants and not municipal ambulances.

Q. So you are referring to like Metrocare?

A. Metrocare, New York Hospital, Beekman Downtown.

Q. So roughly between fifteen and twenty ambulances?

A. Fifteen and twenty ambulances that I physically entered.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

A. No. And then the rest of the night I functioned pretty much as a site safety officer with several other former SOD members. Charlie Fraser, Jimmy Scullion, Steve Linke, Kevin Haugh, Jeff Race.

MURRAY MURAD: All right. I would like to thank you, Captain Fenton, for the

interview. The time now is 1312 hours. This now concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110352

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CASEY

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 17, 2001. The time is 12:18, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade William Casey from Engine 21.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 21.

Q. William, just tell us the events as you remember them on September 11.

A. All right. We were in quarters when we saw it on the television with the plane, and I believe it was Tower 1, the first one that got hit.

Our captain came down the stairs. He let us know to start getting the bottles ready, stuff ready. He assumed that we were going to be going shortly.

He came down. I think we went on fifth alarm. I forget what the assignment was. So we loaded up the rig. As we were heading out of quarters, we actually saw on the television the second plane hit Tower 2, so we headed down.

Sid Parris was our chauffeur. We went down Second Avenue. I believe we were parked -- I think it

was the corner of Vesey and -- I'm not really sure which corner, but anyway we came around. When we pulled up, of course, you could see the smoke, see a lot of stuff going on.

We walked into Tower 1, the north tower, and hung out in the lobby waiting for instructions on what to do. At that point, it was a lot of chaos. You were hearing jumpers. You were hearing different things going on. You saw different companies. We weren't told what to do really.

So then we got our instructions, and we followed the captain by an elevator, one of the elevator banks. Somebody told us there was somebody trapped in the elevator, so we opened up the doors. We had the rabbit tools, so we just pried it open a little bit, and then we pulled it open ourselves, and there was a lady in there, and we got her out.

We then went to another embankment, because we were with -- I believe the company -- I believe it was 13 truck. I'm not really sure at that time. We were going to go up the stairs, but we ended up -- there is an elevator would go up to the 24th Floor, which is what we took.

Then we started to proceed up, and I don't

know what the stairwell number was, stairwell letter, to the 27th Floor.

At that point, there were different companies up there, different people up there. At that point, as soon as we got up there, we all hit the ground, because the building started shaking. We didn't know what that was. We assumed it was some floors above that had collapsed. We weren't really told what it was. We found out, obviously, that it was Tower 2 that collapsed.

At that point, I believe it was a chief -- I wasn't sure where he was from. He came down from somewhere. He came from one of the areas on the 27th Floor, and he told us to just get off this floor. So we were told to get off the floor.

We started to proceed down the same stairwell that we came up, and with that, our control guy was talking to the captain, because he didn't follow us. He wasn't coming with us right away. So he told him, "Yeah, yeah. Keep going down, I'll catch up with you," and stuff like that, because he just wanted to make sure everybody was off the floor.

With that, I proceeded back up. It was on the 24th floor. I proceeded back up, because I said

I'll go hang out with -- you know, I'll stay with the captain, and this way if he needs a hand with something.

On my way back up, I came across a civilian on the 26th Floor, and he was struggling, so I was caught in between. I didn't want to leave him there. He was by himself. There was nobody there in the stairwell at that time, and so I had to help him. He was not making it. He was falling down the stairs. So I put him on my shoulder, and I proceeded down with him.

At the 19th Floor, I came across 13 truck, which I made sure the captain relayed to my boss where I was, so everybody knew what was going on, because now I was away from -- I didn't have a radio. I was the nozzle man. He gave me one of his guys to help me, because we didn't -- I wasn't going to get this guy out of the building by myself.

So with that, we proceeded down the stairs, and it was not chaos. It was not -- I didn't hear anything with his radio, not like anything happened. Still not hearing, not knowing that the other building collapsed, and we just proceeded down. The guy -- we had to help him. He was dragging his feet. He really

couldn't do anything. Every time he wanted to stop, we just kind of lifted him up in the air. We didn't stop. That was the one thing we didn't do, but it was not like it was people running over us or -- it was calm.

When we got to the lobby finally, there was a lot of ash and stuff on the ground, which I just assumed was part of the plane now, stuff. It must have been the other building collapsed, and part of it went in there, but still not aware of it.

Of course, like I said, in the lobby, I saw people that I knew, firemen. Nobody really was rushing out, because there were still civilians. So with that, I asked somebody from 2 truck did he see any of my guys. He said, "Yeah, they just walked out."

So then I knew that the guys were out of the building, and so I was going to -- we were going to go out with this guy, and we had to run out, because we were afraid -- like I said, there were people jumping, and so we ran out a little with him, but couldn't really run. We were dragging him.

Once we got across the street, I believe we went a little bit north.

Q. This was on West Street?

A. West Street. Well, we crossed over West Street. I don't know the street that we crossed over to, but we went up a little north of the trade center, so we never looked behind us, really never knew that Tower 2, which is really now south of you, I guess, not knowing that that's actually collapsed, still not knowing.

We got across -- like I said, I guess we crossed West Street. I don't know the little side street here, and we came to an ambulance, and we started -- they didn't have a key to it. We started getting ready to get this guy into the ambulance, and with that, you heard this -- it was almost like a roar, and it was like a rumbling, and I turned back.

I kind of froze, because when I turned back, I started seeing the building starting to come down, and when I turned back around, there was nobody -- there was nobody there, so I kind of just dove up against a fence. It was like a parking garage, an open parking space.

So I just put my face piece on, ducked my head, and it was frightening. It was very -- I thought that was it. Stuff was going over. It stayed dark. It felt like an eternity. I'm sure it wasn't, but it

just felt long.

At first I couldn't get my face piece on, like I said, so I was choking on the rubble and stuff, and I got it on in a lit bit of a daze. I didn't know where I was really at first, and started to go west, I guess, but then once you get your bearings now you want to turn back around because, of course, we had that guy, and I still didn't know where the guy that helped me with 13 truck.

When I started heading back, there was this chief -- you know, he didn't have his -- I think his helmet got knocked off, and he had like a -- looked a broken arm or something, and his face was bloody, so I wanted to help him now. So we just started walking him to an ambulance, because it was further west.

Now, when you wanted to head back, there were a few chiefs coming towards anybody that was going back that way. We had to regroup. It was sort of like we have to go around and you can't go back that way. So now I don't know what happened to the guy I was with, you know, the guy from 13 truck or the guy we helped out, but they were saying, "You can't go this way."

I guess they were still worried about collapse. You couldn't really tell what just happened,

so we walked around -- it was like a -- walked all the way west and then came back up. I don't know which street we came back up, but we ended back up on West Street, north, of course, of the towers.

Q. You walked around by the water?

A. Yeah. All right? Walk around by the water and then walked back. It's almost like I walked around that parking lot that was on the other side now. Cars were blowing up. I guess stuff hit it, and they started -- you know, it was pretty weird.

I don't know the time interval now, and now I came across the control guy from 21 engine, so because -- he didn't know where -- so it was kind of like we had to see each other. He was asking where the captain was. I didn't know if the captain was behind me or not. You didn't know, like I said, at the time I didn't know where anybody was then, if they followed us behind.

I would have to assume that -- you know, I didn't feel good about it, because I didn't assume -- I knew I wasn't out of the building that long, so they would have been out -- it wouldn't have been that much time for them to get out, anybody that was behind me.

So then it was just a waiting game then. Now

everybody was -- because he didn't know still where a couple of our other guys -- because they were running from if building, too, and they just got out, but they were in a different direction, but then it was just -- we were there the whole -- you know, till late, sometime at night, but it was basically any time that we wanted to try to get in, it was just -- became so many people were there now that they weren't really letting us get in or other crews were already in, and it was just basically a waiting game on West Street, and somewhere. I forget where else we were.

And then after a certain time, we headed back. During the time I said we were hoping to hear. We were hearing so many conflicting stories. We thought maybe our captain was out. We found out he was the only one, of course, that didn't get out, and like I said, the rest of the time, I barely remember what happened. It was kind of like I was in a fog at that time, but that's basically the gist of my story.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, William. Thanks a lot for your information.

The time now is 12:29, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110353

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ADRIENNE WALSH

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 17, 2001. The time is time is 1445 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter 2nd Grade Adrienne Walsh of Ladder Company 20 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20's office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Could you please tell me what happened on that date.

A. Well, I wasn't working. I was in my car on the BQE. I had entered the Kent and Wythe Avenue exit, and we were in bumper to bumper traffic. I was on my way to fire ^ inaudible, and as I approached the towers, I saw through the warehouse buildings a white puff of smoke and what seemed like confetti, and I thought, oh that's interesting.

As we edged along, again, there was an opening between two, and I saw black smoke, and I saw three floors of fire, which I thought was very bad for a building like that. I knew we were on our way down

there. We were about fourth due.

So I said, "Oh, damn. I'm missing the fire of the century."

As we inched along under the Promenade, I was listening to the radio, heard the DJ say that the second -- oh my God, the second building approaching, and all of a sudden, we pulled out again from a warehouse, and I saw the second explosion, so we had two buildings on fire.

I inched my way off on the Atlantic Avenue exit, sped to my parents' house and dropped the keys, car keys, off to them, because I didn't want to get a ticket for alternate side of the street parking.

I ran to my apartment and changed my clothes, put my running shoes on and literally ran to work. I got to the bottom of the Brooklyn Bridge and ran in front of -- I think it was Engine Company 246, and they gave me a lift across the bridge. I got off across the bridge and ran up to Lafayette Street.

By the time I got to the triangle here on Lafayette, the first tower just fell, and there were streams of people coming up Lafayette.

I ran into quarters, quickly went upstairs, put my uniform on, quickly ran downstairs, got my

bunker gear on. When I got down here, I saw Greg Edwards and Captain Weldon had already come, and we were all running for gear.

58 truck was relocated here, so he said -- Captain Weldon told us to put every piece of equipment on the truck that we had, spare cylinders especially, anything we had.

So we did that, and all of a sudden the tone alarm went off, and I believe 58 got a call for a woman trapped in Cedar Street. I'm not completely sure about that.

We all piled on top of the rig, and he took off down Broadway. As we got past City Hall, the sky disappeared. It was like snow and crap everywhere just flying through the air. We got down. We parked. I think it's Liberty Plaza where the guy -- the plaster guy with the newspaper is sitting there.

We parked right outside there, and I go to the back of the rig to look for a Scott pack, because I have no air at all. We have plenty of cylinders. We have no mask.

As I got to the back of the rig, I don't know why, but I looked to my right, and I saw a black cloud the size of the biggest skyscraper I've ever seen

actually coming, hurdling at us like a tornado, and I just yelled, "Run," and I took off.

Captain Weldon was in front of me. The chauffeur from 58 truck was over to my left just -- he was either even with me or just above me, and George Hough from Squad 18 was right behind me. We ran down the block toward the east side, and I thought to myself the building -- I knew it was the second tower going, and I thought if the building was going to collapse down, that if I beat the cloud, I would beat the building, and I saw the size of the cloud, and I knew I wasn't going to beat the cloud, but I gave it my best shot.

So I ran down the block, and three quarters of the way down the block, there was a door open. Some maintenance workers left the door open to the basement of another -- I think it was another office building. It was about the only light you saw. I ran into there.

I think the chauffeur from 58 got in first, Weldon then I -- Weldon was first. I crossed the saddle just as the black cloud took us over. I mean, you could just feel -- supposedly George told me he got blown down by the blast. He was not more than, I would

say, ten yards behind me.

We got into the hallway. I turned around, and I started banging on the door, because I knew the guys were behind me, so they could find where I was, so banging on the door, banging on the door. "We're over here. We're over here."

We went into the hallway. We found some hose, and we went back outside, because we couldn't see a damn thing, and we used the hose -- we put the hose in the door, and we walked -- the hose outside, so we at least had a line to follow back to find anybody, and eventually black became a lighter black, it became a gray, it became like a really bad, bad snowstorm.

We then walked across Liberty -- to Liberty Plaza, where there were cars and lights on, and there were eventually -- there were people there. I don't know where they surfaced from, but there were a few people there saying people were stuck under things.

The skin of the building as all over the place, so we searched under the skin of the building, searched under the cars, through the cars. Nothing.

So we then decided we'd walk around to Cedar Street to see if anybody was, in fact, trapped in those buildings. We did walk around there. I think we spoke

to somebody in the basement of the building, a person -- no, nobody was in that building, made a quick check of that area, the surrounding area, continued to walk -- I think it was down Cedar Street to the Westside Highway and got to the Westside Highway.

There were rigs everywhere and skeleton fire screws. For example, I mean, if you knew how many people, how much personnel was down there, to see those few individuals down there, you thought, where the heck is everybody else, but there were guys down there attempting to stretch lines from engine companies, which is what we were trying to do.

We kind of gathered at the median on the Westside Highway. There was an officer there. They decided to get a manifold in, because they were going to have to stretch numerous lines off this manifold, so we were working on stretching the manifold, picking up the lines, feeding the manifold, got all that hooked up, and there was no water pressure, so that was another problem.

We attempted to put out the car fires that we had with the water pressure we had, and then we proceeded up under the foot bridge to where the main tower here, closer to the Westside Highway, had

collapsed, and Chief Haydon was on top of -- he was on top of the truck or what was left of the truck, and there were a bunch of us waiting down below, and I guess he was giving us directions, and "Guys, over this way, stay together. I don't know what to do with you."

So we mulled around there for awhile. I got myself a mask. I just found a mask in the street, and I picked it up and carried it with me. We walked -- we walked through the rubble around that way to where they wanted us to be. I forget what that street was where they kind of put us all over just to gather us and to get us all together.

So I saw Regina Wilson from 219. I spoke with her, trying to figure out -- that's where I saw the bulk of the people. After I got off the Westside Highway and we went further west down that block, that's where you saw more people, more firefighters. And for the rest of the day, we just searched through rubble.

Then we were instructed to search through two or three buildings to make sure they were stable, and then they pulled everybody out because of the pink building. Was it 7 World Trade, that was going?

Q. Right.

A. Then they pulled everybody out. But we went through a couple of buildings for stability. I remember doing that, at least three that I remember, and that's when we met up -- I meet up with Will Manion, Captain Weldon. A whole bunch of us were there.

Q. I just have a question or two.

When you said you were on West Street, did you head west again now?

A. I mean, with the water pressure problem.

Q. When you picked up with all those other people --

A. We were on --

Q. -- where the majority of firemen wound up being.

A. Right. It was off the west side, West Street, Westside Highway, whatever it is, past the first bit of rubble, and you would have to --

Q. Towards the water is what I'm asking.

A. Right, it would be towards the water. It was north and towards the water. You had to walk through the rubble, and it was about, I don't know, 8 inches of water you had to wade through.

You had to wade through that and then go up

and over. I don't know -- it wasn't the block with Chi Chi's on it. I think it was one of the blocks before that, but I'm not sure.

Q. All right. When you went up West Street, you went under the south foot bridge?

A. Right.

Q. Was this past there you are talking about?

A. Just a little, not much. It was just one of the those streets off.

Q. Liberty Street probably.

A. Pretty -- probably, yeah.

We also searched -- I'm sorry, but before we did that, we went to the Rector Street subway station and searched down there. We went down to the tunnel. I had forgotten about that.

We went down to make sure that everybody was out. Pretty much everybody was out. We met one TA worker who was coming up the stairs as we were going down, and we went through the tunnel to where the debris was, and it was piled high in the tunnel, and then we came all the way back.

That's when we walked to the command post and then over or whatever that -- I guess it was the command post at that time. I don't know what it was.

Q. All those rigs you saw, you wouldn't know their locations? Near the foot bridge, whatever.

A. All of the rigs -- most of the rigs I saw were along West Street. Definitely, was it 113 I kept passing? I drank some of their water.

Then I saw -- as we got closer, I saw 226's rig, but I'm not going to remember where. I remember passing it, because it was my first company, so that's their rig. I thought they were okay, because they were far -- you know what I mean? I saw the rig. It wasn't -- I mean, the windows were blown out, but I thought oh, okay, maybe they're not in, but lots of -- a lot of crushed cars, a lot of crushed ambulances.

That day, I didn't see a lot of completely crushed vehicles, you know, windows blown out, dust all over the place, a side bashed in here, but the completely totalled ones I don't remember seeing that day. Like 219 I saw, and that was really -- had gone through the wringer, but it was okay, pumping. I don't remember -- when we saw Ladder 20, it was squashed.

Q. Approximately where did you see 219? You said they were pumping?

A. They were pumping -- they were pumping --

Q. Was it on West Street?

A. It was right off West Street, right near -- I'm going to say it's close to the Palm Court, but I was a little turned around at that point. They were near that area somewhere.

Q. South of the foot bridge, one of those streets south of the foot bridge?

A. They were north of the south bridge.

Q. All right. That's fine.

And 20 was north of the south bridge?

A. Oh, yeah. 20 was underneath.

Q. If there is anything else you care to add --

A. Unfortunately, no. Three o'clock in the morning, I'll start remembering, but, I mean, that was pretty much the bulk of the day.

I remember searching the buildings. I remember we were told to search the buildings for structural problems or to make sure things were okay.

I remember going through in and around that area a lot for long periods of time, in and around the Palm Court, going through the Palm Court.

We were there till, I think, eight o'clock, 7:30 eight o'clock.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview.

Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

File No. 9110354

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN MORIBITO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 12, 2001. The time is 12:55 in the afternoon.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with John Moribito of Ladder Company 10 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 4, Ladder 15 in the engine office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman, Moribito, please tell me what happened in your own words.

A. On the morning of September 11, I arrived at Ladder 10, Engine 10's quarters at approximately eight a.m., and I relieved the chauffeur that was on duty the night before. I was scheduled to be the ladder company chauffeur that day.

At about quarter to nine, at 8:45, we were sitting in the kitchen enjoying a cup of coffee, and we heard what I describe as kind of a muffled boom, and it sounded like when a container truck rolls down the block and hits a pothole, and the container on the back of the truck rumbles.

The officer, Lieutenant Steve Harrell, who

was the covering officer in Ladder 10 that day, looked across at me, and he asked me if that was normal for around that area. I said, "Yeah, it kind of sounded like a container truck."

When I finished my sentence, the house watchman ran in, and he apparently was very startled. He was very afraid, and he was yelling that a plane had just hit the trade center. A plane just hit the trade center. He repeated it twice.

We all jumped up from the table. We ran up to the front of our quarters out to the apparatus door, and the sky, which was a beautiful blue sky that September morning, had turned black. We could see up at the building. We couldn't tell at that point which building was involved with the crash, which one was on fire, but we could see smoke, and we could see debris falling from the building.

There was fire falling from the building. There were computers and pieces of desk. We noticed that there were also pieces of human being falling down from the sky and crashing in front of our quarters out on the street.

There were many people in the street right in front of the quarters that were startled. They were

bleeding. Some were burnt. They were cowering in our house watch. We tried to pull as many of the people off the street as possible before we left quarters and brought them into the firehouse.

We jumped on the rig. We got our gear on. We pulled out of quarters. I had to be real careful, because people were running in front of the fire truck, and we couldn't really control them at that point.

Pulled out of quarters and very gingerly was trying to go across the street. [redacted]

We proceeded to make a left turn down Liberty Street. I stopped initially in front of 2 World Trade Center, and everyone on the rig was yelling up at me that it was 1 World Trade Center that was hit.

At that point, there was a stalled Lincoln Town Car, livery car, that was in front of us, and there was a woman driver, and she couldn't get the car to move. She couldn't get it in gear. She was in shock. She was jumping up and down. Eventually, a

police officer came over. He jumped in the car. He tried to move it for her. He wasn't able to move it, so I did have to ram the car, and I pushed it out of the way. I opened up Liberty Street in order for the other engine that was behind us, Engine 10, to get up the block.

I came to the end, to West Street, and I made a right turn onto West Street, and I was barreling down. As I was approaching 1 World Trade Center, there was a Chinese man in the middle of the street, and he had been burnt pretty badly. At that point, we didn't know how he was burnt, but he was burnt. He was lying in the second lane from the right in the middle of the street, and he was still alive.

As I approached him, he lifted his head up off the street to look at me, and I stopped my rig and positioned it in a way that I would block him out so that no one coming around me would actually run over him, because they couldn't see him at that point.

That's where the members disembarked off the rig. They all jumped off. I myself jumped off to tend to the gentleman that was in the street. Terry Rivera, who had just gotten off that morning and took the run in with us, ran up to me and he asked me if he should

go into the building being that he didn't have a Scott pack on, and I told him to assist me with the gentleman that was in the street.

The rest of the company ran into the building. I had run over to a volunteer ambulance that had arrived at the scene at the time. At about the same time the ambulance arrived, Ladder 1 and Engine 7 was pulling up. It was very quick, within the first 30 seconds of our arrival at the building.

The ambulance had pulled up. We took the gentleman that was in the street. We wrapped him in a burn blanket. We actually wet him down with a water can, and we put him on the stretcher, and we actually put him in the back of the ambulance, and they took him away.

Then I proceeded into the lobby of the building. When I walked through the lobby, there was broken glass everywhere. There were also two people in the lobby, a gentleman who was already burned and was dead, and a female. She was nude. Her clothes had burnt away. Her skin was burnt away. She was still alive. She was trying to communicate. Her eyes were sealed shut. Her throat apparently was sealed. She couldn't really communicate. Within the next two

minutes, she had perished right there. We never actually got her any assistance. We couldn't get her an ambulance, and we didn't get her out of there.

At that point, I heard my officer, Lieutenant Harrell, call down to the chauffeur, myself, and asked me to do a perimeter check on the building, so I ran into the courtyard between 1 World Trade Center and 2 World Trade Center, and I made my report that the south side of the tower had visible flames showing from it at approximately the 80th Floor.

At that point, I wasn't able to see the entire perimeter of the tower, but there was fire showing around the entire perimeter of the north tower, Tower No. 1.

Then I looked down, and there were people approaching me and asking me if they should evacuate the building. I said, "Absolutely. Evacuate both buildings, if you can. Get out while you can now."

I noticed in the courtyard that there were valises, suitcases, strewn about the courtyard. There were wallets everywhere, broken glass, and then I noticed that there were airplane tickets.

I started to get a picture of the size of the airplane that had hit the building. Up until then, we

thought it was maybe a small two-seater plane, and now we were starting to get the idea that it was maybe a larger or a commercial airliner.

I also started to notice that there were what I thought was insulation or what I described as insulation. It was gray and pink, and it was all over the place, and it turned out that this was human flesh, people that had been blown apart from the impact or from the plane exploding itself, and I noticed that they were everywhere. They were all over the floor, all over the courtyard.

So I made that report to my officer, that I think this was a bigger plane than we had expected or what we thought it was initially.

I went back into the lobby. At that point, I had no idea where my company had gone. I know they went up the B staircase, but I didn't know what floor they were on, so I remained in the lobby and helped evacuate people that were now exiting the building.

I saw the chiefs. Chief Pfeifer from Battalion 1 come in. Along with him was the battalion aide, and the French filmmaker, who happened to be standing in the lobby at the time, and he was videotaping everything that was occurring.

Later on, I started to see other companies come in. I saw Ladder 15, and I saw Engine 4. They walked past me. I don't know what building they had gone into. I saw members of 21 truck. I saw members that I had recognized the -- I believe it was the Division 3's aide, who I went to the academy with. His name was James Smagala. I saw him in the lobby. Chief Cashin.

At that point, I was helping evacuate. Police officers had come up to me and asked me if I knew the building. I said I had. They said, "Well, we don't want to send people out onto West Street because there are people jumping, and there's falling debris and glass." What was the best way to get them out of the building?

I suggested that we send them through the plaza area, which was actually underneath 1 and 2 World Trade Center, and we would send them down into the subways and help them evacuate through the 1 and 9 line, I believe, and they would come up on Chambers Street or on Church Street, but in any event, they would be further away from the building, and they would be underground, which I felt was safe.

So that's what we did. I was the first

member in the evacuation line, and I was directing people through a revolving door from 1 World Trade Center into the plaza area. I describe it as an organized chaos. As afraid as they were, as fearful for their lives as they were, they listened to directions very well, and it actually made me feel proud that New Yorkers had come together the way they had and helped out one another, that no one ran out of the building just in fear of their own lives, but actually stopped and helped everyone along the way.

The sprinklers were going off in the lobby in the plaza. There was broken glass in the plaza. As people were exiting to get away from the building, some of them were running, and they would slip and fall, and they would get gashed wide open. They had major lacerations to the back of their head, to their back, to their lower torso. We were fortunate enough to have EMS nearby, and we put those people on stretchers almost immediately and got them out of the building immediately.

The majority of the people did listen to our directions, and they did slow down, and they were walking in a calm manner. We were able to get -- in my opinion, I counted approximately 3 or 4,000 people that

had walked past us and evacuated into the lobby.

There were two gentleman from Fire Patrol No. 2, that were right on the other side of the revolving door where I had set up for the evacuation. After a couple of minutes, we heard -- I heard over the department radio, "Prepare for impact. A second plane is approaching the building."

At that point, we all looked at each other and realized that it was now a terrorist attack. There was no way that two planes could hit the building in such a short amount of time on such a clear, blue sky, clear day.

I felt the impact of the second plane. I felt the building shake. I saw the lights flicker. At that point, I started to get nervous and wonder whether or not the buildings would come down.

I approached the chiefs. The chiefs were assured by the engineers of the building that there was no way that the buildings would come down. They actually said that the buildings could take -- withstand ten airplanes hitting it, and there was no way that the buildings could come down.

I also saw Mike Hurley and James Corcoran -- I'm sorry, James Corrigan -- who were the fire safety

directors at the World Trade Center, who I had met a couple of times before, and they were running around. They were trying to keep some organization and trying to give as much information to the chiefs as possible as to the structure of the building.

I went back to my post to help continue evacuate people. After I would guess it was about an hour, but seemed like just a few minutes, it seemed like people had stopped coming down. They stopped coming down off the escalators. People weren't using the elevators, and I had walked into 1 World Trade lobby from the plaza area to look to see if anybody else was coming down.

I noticed that some of the elevators had been blown out of their shafts. They came down and crashed out of the shaft. They were buckled, and I had noticed that there were people still in the elevators. I believe that they were at that point deceased.

Then I saw the lights in both buildings went out, and I heard the rumble. At that point, I didn't know what was happening, but 2 World Trade Center was collapsing.

I tried to get back to the doorway where I had just emerged from, and I saw the members of Fire

Patrol 2 and some civilians and police officers get down on their hands and knees, and I saw them buried in rubble. I saw the debris fall on top of them and push them against the wall. They weren't able to get through the doorway where I was on the other side which was somewhat of a safe haven.

The building came down. The rush of wind lifted me up off the ground, and threw me about 30 feet back into the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. I got myself up. I scrambled back to the doorway. I felt that the only safety area that I had was trying to be underneath that enclosure, which was a marble and steel doorway.

After the building collapsed, I jumped up, realized that I was still alive, and now I tried to make my way out of the building. I did hear at that point the Fire Department pass alarms were going all around me, and what I could imagine to be about ten or fifteen voices, firemen that were exclaiming they were still alive, not to leave them behind, to come back and get them, that they were okay, that they were pinned, that they maybe had broken limbs, but that they were alive. They were covered underneath some debris. There was a lot of dust we couldn't see, but in any

event, they were alive, and they were yelling for help.

I tried to look around briefly for somebody. I couldn't find anyone. I saw a couple of flashlights in the distance. I walked straight ahead. I ran into the elevators. The elevators were completely out of the shafts at this point. All the elevators -- I could see members were crushed in between them. I could see civilians were crushed in between the elevators.

I tried to make my way to the left of the elevators where the guard station was. There was debris from floor to ceiling at that point. I couldn't get through there. I made my way to the right of the elevators, which was underneath the escalator, and I saw -- I was following a gray patch on the wall, and then I saw a white patch. I realized that was a window.

I ran to the window. I stopped in the window. I took my flashlight off my helmet. I flashed it into the building, yelling out that this was a way out, that if anybody was alive, this was the way to go, follow the flashlight.

Approximately six firemen and two civilians had come out that window with me. At that point, I

couldn't see which company they were with. They were covered in gray soot and ash. Their helmets were covered. I couldn't tell or determine who they were, but there were about six firemen and two civilians that came out that window.

We ran across West Street, which was at that point littered with debris, including beams and broken glass, but not to the point where West Street was covered. West Street was still fairly open that we could run across it.

When I got out there, I saw Engine 10, which was parked right in front of the building, had been hit by a beam, what I found out later to be 67 tons in weight, and it had actually completely demolished Engine 10. It was on top of it, and at that point, Engine 10 was crushed.

I also heard someone yelling for the Engine 10 chauffeur over the radio, and I stopped briefly by Engine 10 to look for the chauffeur to see if he was possibly there, if he was pinned. Maybe if he was hiding underneath the rig, I could have gotten him out of there, but after looking quickly around the rig, I didn't notice any Fire Department gear. I didn't see the chauffeur. I realized he must have gotten away.

One of the female civilians that came out of the window with me kept falling. She'd run two or three steps, and she'd fall. I'd pick her up by the seat of her pants. I was throwing her in front of myself to try to keep her in front of me. She'd get up. She'd fall.

Not realizing it, but now thinking back, she had probably had a broken leg, if not two broken legs, and wasn't able to run, but I did manage to continue to throw her all the way across West Street and into the arms of an EMS worker, who put her on a stretcher and got her out of there immediately.

At that point, I started to run northwest. I dropped off my cylinder right at the center divider of West Street and started to run northwest away from the building towards the water, towards the Hudson River and towards where the rest of my company was yelling they were headed towards Stuyvesant High School.

After going about two or three blocks, I was far enough away from the smoke to turn around and see that what I thought had happened actually had happened, that No. 2 World Trade Center did completely collapse, and not until that moment -- not until that point did I realize that the trade center actually was down.

After seeing that 2 World Trade Center had collapsed, I could see that it was a bad situation for 1 World Trade Center. I reported to the chief that there were maybe 40 or 50 members that were standing fast in that lobby, Chief Pfeifer, and he himself was in that lobby, and he got out of there, and he knew that there were a lot of the members in there.

I don't know at that point if anybody ever went back into the lobby of 1 to see if any of the members that were injured in there would have been able to get out of there, had they been able to get in there to help those people. I don't know if that occurred. But only after about 15 minutes and after running about two or three blocks away from the trade center, I started to see the top of 1 World Trade Center began to buckle, and at that point I thought the building was going to come down towards the north, and I wasn't far enough away at that point, and I needed to continue to run.

So I got back up with the rest of members from Ladder 10 and Engine 10, and we started to run further from the building, and then the building had come down upon itself, and at that point, we realized that now it was time to turn around and go back to the

building to look for members that were possibly injured or pinned.

After going back to the building and regrouping, trying to report to chiefs to find out exactly how we should attack this, I had hooked up with members of Engine 10, Ladder 10 and other guys, and we grabbed some hose lines. We were trying to help extinguish some cars that were on fire, a couple of ambulances.

I quickly checked in the back of a ambulance to see if there was somebody maybe that was in there that had gotten pinned or was burning. We put out a couple of car fires.

We ran back to the building and then seemed like all day long we were running back and forth into the building and out of the building as other structures were possibly going to collapse, and which, in fact, after a couple of hours No. 7 World Trade Center did collapse.

So it was a continuous running back and forth and trying to help out as best we can looking for members, putting out fires, trying to make whatever kind of rescue efforts we can, try to get as many tools out of whatever rigs were close by, try to do some

digging, still not knowing whether or not there were explosives in the cars surrounding the area, didn't really know whether or not there were more airplanes incoming, if the terrorist attack was actually over at that point.

The rest of the day, just trying to regroup with as many people as you can and try to get together and do some kind of effort to help the members.

Myself, knowing that there were people in the lobby of 1 World Trade, I entered through 6 World Trade to get into that lobby, only to find out that the lobby area was completely crushed. There was no way to even determine where it was at that point to try to figure out how to attack it or try to get in there and look for bodies or look for people.

That's pretty much it, and the next couple of days back and forth to the firehouse, trying to make the best effort we can to look underground, to look into the subways, to try to find people that we knew were alive. We had never come across anybody. We didn't come across anybody that was alive in any of the voids that we searched.

Then the next couple of days it became more and more organized and became a better effort to try to

look for people, but, once again, never finding anybody, never coming across anyone that was alive from Engine 10 or Ladder 10.

Q. Are you finished?

A. Yes.

Q. A couple of questions.

A. Sure.

Q. After the first collapse, you said you heard people giving radio transmissions.

Did they identify themselves at all?

A. No, there was no identification given over the radio. I would imagine it almost sounded as if they were getting information off police radios, because they were giving me -- I also heard coming over the radio that they had heard that a plane just hit the Supreme Court building, a plane had hit the Pentagon, and this was coming over our radios.

Somebody, I would imagine, was out in the street and was maybe hearing something over the Police Department radio and was just making transmissions, whether they realized it was true or not.

Q. You said you hooked up with 10 and 10 later on and then by Stuyvesant.

Did most of those guys survive?

A. We had -- I think there were about 14 guys that day. We had 11 guys on duty and three guys that were laying over that had just got off, and we lost five, five of those guys.

Q. When you hooked up with the other guys, did they say where they had been operating?

A. Yeah. Members of Engine 10 had made it up to about the 23rd Floor of the B stairwell in Tower 1. They had stopped there because someone was suffering from chest pains, and I believe it was a fireman that was suffering chest pains, and they stopped to assist him.

The officer, Lieutenant Atlas, continued up on his way, and I had heard the last report that he gave was on the 44th Floor. He said he was on the 44th Floor and continuing up, that he was going to try to get water on the fire.

At that point, Engine 10, the entire company wasn't with him. He was on his own, possibly with members of another company.

Officer of Ladder 10, the last I heard from him, he was on about the 31st Floor. That was the last radio transmission I heard from Ladder 10, and I would imagine that he continued up with Lieutenant Atlas,

because they had gotten in at the same time.

Q. If you have anything else to add, you are welcome to do it. Otherwise, this is the end of the interview.

A. No, that's pretty much it. That's our adventure.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thanks for your time.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

File No. 9110355

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN JOHN OTTRANDO

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1100 hours. That's a.m. This is Battalion Chief Robert Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Ottrando, fireman first grade, of Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 24 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Ottrando, tell me what happened to you on September 11th, 2001.

A. My company and I pulled up to Vesey and West Street, parked on that corner. My company got off the rig. They took their rollups. They went into the north tower. I stayed there. I hooked up to the standpipe system that was there.

After I hooked up, I went into the lobby of the north tower and I saw the command post being set up there. I noticed some people on the floor that were badly burned. One man was deceased, and there was a woman there that was very badly burned.

I went out to get EMS to come in to help her. They were very busy, and I just asked them for some blankets. I went back into the lobby of the north tower, and I covered the civilians up. I stayed with the woman until EMS came in, and I helped them take her away.

I saw Battalion 2 in the lobby of the north tower. After that I stayed there a few more minutes, and then I went out to my company. We were stretching hose. I saw the second plane hit the south tower.

Then we really didn't have anything to do because we were all hooked up and everything. There were people jumping everywhere, and we really couldn't help them.

I saw Lieutenant Giammona. He asked me if I had a spare mask. I told him I did not. Somebody had already taken it. I saw him go into the north tower. That was the last time I saw him. He was by himself, as far as I could tell.

I was outside, still playing with some hose, when the south tower fell. I could see debris falling. I saw the dust cloud coming towards me, and I took off and I went

behind a car on Vesey Street. Day turned to night, and I couldn't breathe that well.

So I felt my way north up West Street by sense of direction. Some women grabbed me and she threw me against the building and she was washing my eyes out.

Then I was on the corner of -- I was on West Street, north on West Street, and then the second tower fell. I never got back to my rig.

That's about it.

Q. Where did you go then?

A. Then I stayed north. I never went back south. I never went back downtown. I went to Broadway because they told me there was a command post over there. I couldn't find my company. I found them one at a time.

A couple of guys that were in my company that weren't on duty were there. I found them. I could not find 5 Truck at all. I was looking for them.

That's about it.

Q. That was it?

A. That was it.

Q. I just have a couple of questions. You

said you went down there with the company. Do you know what your assignment was, the first due? It was Engine 24.

A. Right.

Q. You were the chauffeur?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you on the second alarm assignment?

A. Second alarm, yes, second alarm.

Q. And when you went into the command post, you saw some chiefs and stuff.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know who the chiefs were?

A. I saw Chief Hayden, I saw the Commissioner, I saw Chief McGovern.

Q. This was in the north tower?

A. Lobby of the north tower.

Q. Chief McGovern?

A. Yes, and his aide.

Q. When you said you saw Battalion 2, that's who you meant?

A. Yes.

Q. Any other companies at the command post that you can remember?

A. I can't remember exactly. I saw companies come in. I saw 5 Truck go in. I remember seeing 5 Truck go in. I can't remember the numbers of the other companies coming in.

Q. And as far as chiefs, those guys --

A. Those are the chiefs I saw, yes.

Q. Like I said, you were with Engine Company 24.

A. Yes.

Q. Lieutenant Giammona that you mentioned, he was off duty, but he was one of the officers in Ladder 5 Truck that responded by himself?

A. Yes. He was off duty.

Q. Okay. Unless you can remember any other companies that were parked behind you --

A. I saw 7 Engine parked south of the north tower in the street on West Street. I can't remember other companies.

Q. When you said you were outside stretching hoses with your company, did they then subsequently go inside the building?

A. No. My company was in the building at that time, and I was being helped by Fireman Jimmy Miller, who was off duty and had come up.

He was helping me stretch the lines.

Q. Do you happen to know where 24 Engine went? Up B, A stair or anything like that?

A. I couldn't say for sure. I think it was B stair.

Q. So you weren't with them when they went to the command post and ended up getting an assignment?

A. No, no. I was preoccupied with helping those two civilians, so I really didn't notice where they went.

Q. Okay. Anybody else you can remember at the command post?

A. No. Those are the only people I remember seeing.

Q. Since you were outside, did you see them at any point set up a command post outside?

A. Outside, no.

Q. Okay. Anything else? If you don't have anything else, that's the end of the interview. Do you have anything to add?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Thanks a lot.

File No. 9110356

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD GANASSA

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 3:02 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER GANASSA: Edward Ganassa, Engine 312, Battalion 49, Division 14.

CHIEF BURNS: This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Ed, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. I was working the Monday night and Tuesday day. On Tuesday morning, 9/11, the computer went off to respond to the staging area on Huntspoint Avenue and Vernon Boulevard.

We proceeded to the staging area. We lined up with a few other companies that were there. We stood there approximately 25 to 30 minutes. I'm getting the call to respond in to the Trade Center. I don't know the time.

We went through the Midtown Tunnel, following in a caravan with other rigs, and we stationed our rig on West Street. At that time

we got our Scott packs on and started walking with other firemen towards the north tower.

About five to ten minutes after arriving, I saw one to two jumpers -- two jumpers exactly jump off the tower, and about two to three minutes later, the tower fell down. We were covered with dust. We were not hit by any large debris.

After the dust settled, we found the 49 Battalion and his aide, the chief and his aide, and we assisted the companies in searching for firemen and civilians. We stayed there until approximately 11, 11:30 at night, and then we were told to respond back to our firehouse.

Q. When you went in, Ed, do you know approximately what your location was where you saw or heard the building about to come down?

A. We were at West Street, and there was a small pedestrian bridge. We were probably about 200 to 300 feet north of that bridge. There was a staging area, I believe. It was a secondary staging area.

Q. When the building started to come down, which way did you run?

A. Uptown, north.

Q. When you were the staging area, did you see any other units?

A. At the staging area? Where I parked the rig, there were many rigs there. I recognized the ones from our company: 262, 307, 263 I believe was there. At the staging area there were no rigs; it was just chiefs and Commissioners.

Q. And that staging area was north of the bridge?

A. Yeah, it should be just north of the bridge if I remember correctly.

Q. Did you guys ever come south of that or you stayed there waiting?

A. Not until after the collapse. After the collapse and the dust lifted slightly, then we proceeded south of there.

Q. Thanks.

CHIEF BURNS: That's the end of our interview. It's 3:06 p.m.

File No. 9110357

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL BEEHLER

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 1616 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter Michael Beehler, Firefighter 6 grade from Ladder company 110, who had the irons position on September 11. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Mike, you can start whenever you want.

A. Okay. That morning I was sitting in the house watch at about quarter to nine, when a few Lieutenants or a few officers were out front. We had the apparatus doors open. We were just finishing checking out the rig and one of the Lieutenants from the field comm. unit had said that he saw smoke and he said wow, what is that over there. Do they have something going in Manhattan or is that just a compactor fire.

I was on the house watch and I said I don't know. Let me turn the radio on, so I went in and turned the radio on. With that I heard a second alarm being transmitted at the World Trade Center.

With that, I notified my officer, because we

go on box 8031 to the World Trade Center on a second alarm or greater. So I let him know that we were probably going to be going. Went out and got geared up and came back into the office, turned the TV on and we saw what they were saying was a plane crash into the north tower.

With that, we were just waiting to get sent and we got sent about 3, 4 minutes after that. We all got on the rig. Went over with 31, Battalion 31 followed us. As we were going over, I remember looking out the window of the rig and seeing a lot of smoke and saying wow, this is something. I remember hearing over the radio that they had a lot of fire there and they had jumpers and what not.

As we got to Manhattan -- we went over the Brooklyn Bridge. As we got to Manhattan, there was a lot traffic, a lot of people on the road. We got pulled up. We had came down Broadway and as we got to Liberty Street, I believe -- yes, we got to Liberty Street and made the right off of Broadway on to Liberty and we were on Liberty between Broadway and I believe Church and we had gotten off the rig with Battalion 31. We were speaking to them on where we should go because we were assigned to the north tower.

I remember just hearing an explosion that basically I can't describe the sound of. It was actually the second plane crashing in. We were on the side, we were on the south side of the south tower when it came down -- I mean when the plane crashed in. I just basically said to myself something is not right here. It didn't feel right to me. I told my boss, just I said to him this doesn't feel right. We don't belong here. He said yes, I know, come on.

As we looked up though, when it happened, alls we saw was a big ball of flames and the flames went away. We saw a lot of smoke and debris was heading everywhere. People were just running. People scattering like -- the best way to say it is like a scattering of roaches when you turn the lights on. People were going anywhere that they could.

We got back in the rig, we backed up on to Broadway, went up to, I believe it's Battery Park or wherever it was. We went down, made the next right, which was back on Church Street. We came back down on to Church Street. We parked the rig in front of, I think 5 World Trade Center it was. Looking on the map here.

We got out, grabbed all our stuff. I had the

irons, I grabbed the irons, the bunny tool and we all grabbed extra cylinders and we started making our way up towards Vesey. We made it down to Vesey and on to West Street, walking into the northwest corner of the north tower. They had a mini command post set up, I believe it was from the First Division.

We walked in, Lieutenant Mera, the officer, he said, he told us to stand to the side while he went and got an assignment. We all put our stuff down. Engine 207, came in, followed us in and the guys that were working from the engine, the three guys that were on the back step came in with the officer. The officer went to the desk and they came over and joined us where we were standing.

We were only there for maybe about 2 minutes when Lieutenant Mera came over. He said come on, we are going up to the 21 floor. There are reports of people trapped there. We had a Battalion Chief with us. I don't know the Chief's name.

Q. Chief Picciotto?

A. I believe so. We all picked our stuff up. He said he thought there was a bank of elevators that were working. So we went up to the mezzanine, I believe it was. We went up the escalator to the

mezzanine. There was a bank of elevators there that were still in service, so we took that up to, I believe the 15 or 16th floor. We got up and then we walked up to the 23 floor from there in the B staircase, I believe it was.

People were coming down. People were calm in the staircase, they didn't really seem too overanxious. They were saying god bless you, this and that. We made our way up to the 23 floor. We dropped our stuff that we didn't need. At that point I just put the irons with my (inaudible) for the can. We went back down to the 21 floor and we started just searching the 21st floor. All the doors were locked. We were forcing all the doors. There was nobody on the floor. We practically searched the entire floor. We hadn't found anybody.

There was one last section that we went to go search and as we went in there, two of us -- two guys went to the right and two guys went to the left. I was one of the guys that went to the left. It was like an office there where it was like a split office almost. I was by I guess the outer part of the building and I just remember feeling the building starting to shake and this tremendous tremendous like roar and I just

-- I kind of didn't even notice it, but like out of the corner of my eye, I saw out of the building, I saw a shadow coming down.

At that point I thought it was the upper part of the north tower that had just basically like toppled over, fell off. I didn't actually see the building part go by me, because I think I was on the opposite side. But I just remember feeling this tremendous tremendous shake and hearing this, like, noise. Again I can't describe.

What I did was I ended up running out. I ran into the staircase where my officer and the rest of the guys that were with us at that time, we jumped into the staircase and nobody really knew what was going on. After that, everything had stopped. The boss told me and Artie Riccio, who was driving, to go check out the part where we just were down the hall a little bit, so the two of us went back down and we had searched the part where we had just been about 5 minutes prior to that.

All the windows in that area were all blown out. It was like a big office, it was a computer office. I don't know what they were doing there. But all the windows were blown out and dust was coming in.

Again we just searched there, there was no structural damage at that point on the 21 floor. We made our way out and as we were making our way back down to the hallway where the officer was, I heard on the radio, a Chief come over the radio. I don't know his name.

He said this is Chief so and so. I personally am ordering everybody out of the building now. Anybody in the north tower get out now. Lieutenant Mera said to all of us, he said come on, we got to get out. He said make sure to stay together. We are all going to get out, we are all going to go down together. We are all going to get out together. Once we get out, we will decide where we are going to go. Once we get downstairs we will decide where we are going to go.

With that we went downstairs. There was another truck company ahead of us. What we did was we basically piggy backed towards where --

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Time is 1626 hours. I'm stopping the interview.

The time is 1702 hours. We are restarting the interview, continuing the interview with Firefighter Beehler. Okay, Mike.

A. At the time when I heard the loud noise and

felt the building shake, we all ended up back in the staircase after re-searching the one area. We had gotten the order to evacuate the building. Lieutenant Mera told us all to stay together and as we started making our way down, we, like I said, we piggy backed floors with another truck company, forcing each door on the way down. Like they took the odd floors, we took the even floors, to make sure there was nobody on that floor and make sure that everybody heard the evacuation order.

We got down to the 9th floor and from there down it was very congested. It felt like we waited on each landing for about 30 seconds to a minute, because the staircases were packed with members of the Fire Department that were evacuating. So you did get to 9, then you got down to 8-1/2. Felt like you waited another 30 seconds to a minute. Got down to 8 and continued to go down.

When we got down to the lobby I just remember seeing all the windows in the north tower on the lobby floor blown out and there was like dust and debris everywhere. I actually remember picking up a helmet, thinking it was a Chief's helmet, and I said to Lieutenant Mera, I said, wow, some Chief dropped his

helmet here and as I picked it up, my fingers smudged a little piece of it off. I saw it was a fireman's helmet. The Chief came other over, took the helmet.

As we were walking out, we walked out the same place where we came in, and I remember seeing the board there by itself with nobody there. There was a guy actually standing outside the building telling us if it was safe or not to come out because he said there were jumpers coming down at that time.

He said come on, come on, go. We went out and we stopped right outside the building. We actually sat on 3 truck's bumper I remember just because a few friends of mine were in the company. I remember stopping and we all sat down and Pauly Hyland, who had the OV, said if this building comes down run up against this garage. We were under the foot bridge. He said run up against this garage, we might have a chance to live.

With that Lieutenant Mera turned to us and said come on, why don't we go down a little further. We all got up. We started walking. We were walking west on West Street, continued to go and as we kept on walking we stopped at a rig. I got some water.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Time is 1705 hours.

I'm stopping this interview.

The time is 1706 hours. We are restarting the interview again.

A. We continued to walk west on West Street and we finally had stopped, I believe it was at engine 224's rig and we weren't there for more than 30 seconds when Paul Hyland, again, the OV said something to the effect of oh, my god, it's coming down, run for your lives. Turned around to see the north tower coming down. At this time I had just taken my mask off and I just laid it down. I went to grab my mask and as I went to grab it, 10 guys just caught me and just swept me up with them and I just started running, figuring maybe I could out run it.

I remember turning back around and seeing it right behind me and basically said this is it. I figured I was going to die right then and there. I put my head down and as I put my head down, I just started walking, I saw there was a mask laying in the middle of the street. I looked around, there was nobody around it. I just remember, I said, all right, I'm going to pick it up. I picked it up.

As I was putting it on my back, I got covered in the dust cloud. I went to put the mask on, I had

turned the cylinder on. Couldn't see anything. I wasn't able to breathe. I just remember trying to put the mask on. The regulator face piece came apart and tried -- I was able to get the regulator and the face piece together. Took a hit -- took a hit breath of air.

At that point I was looking for a place to go because there was debris, nothing big coming down, because we were about a block, block and a half away but just to get someplace where it was safe because I didn't know what else was going to happen. I ended up finding an ambulance. I jumped into the ambulance. They brought me in. I stayed there until the dust cleared. Tried to get Lieutenant Mera on the radio, but there was a lot of radio traffic. Guys giving Maydays and everything like that.

I just started walking up West Street because I knew they were ahead of me. I finally saw them by Stuyvesant High School. We got together and there were 4 guys there. I was the fifth. Mike Brodbeck, who was detailed from the 210, he was the sixth guy. Lieutenant Mera knew he was all right. He was being treated by EMS because he hurt his shoulder, running into an ambulance or something.

We just basically hung out there for a little while and as the day went on, we basically just sat around, waiting to get some more orders. I remember seeing a lot of guys coming in. At that point guys grabbed, they took some of our radios and they took some of the tools that we had left. They went up and they tried to, I guess do some searching and whatever they could do.

I think it was around like 6:00 later on that night, we all decided, all the guys from the house had come in and we found-- we had known at that point that 207 was unaccounted for so, basically we just said let's see if we can find them, find a rig, find something, find our rig, because we didn't know anything that was going on. This is including -- this was after 7 World Trade Center had collapsed also.

We went searching. We searched for about an hour and a half. We ended up finding our rig about a few blocks away from where we parked it. We had no luck finding 207 or 207's rig. Basically we just came back here and that was it. We went to the chart that we were on, 24 on, 24 off. We just went on with that.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: All right, Mike. It's 1710 hours. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110359

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN BELTRAMI

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 3:40 p.m.

I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, safety battalion, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BELTRAMI: Firefighter Dean Beltrami.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Engine Company 260 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Dean, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. We responded to the alarm. We responded to a staging area in Queens by the Midtown Tunnel.

When we got there, we waited for other units to arrive in the battalion. The battalion chief arrived. He said that we were going to wait until the tunnel was checked for bombs before we went through the tunnel. There was probably maybe close to a half hour wait there. Then we proceeded through the tunnel.

While crossing midtown, or I believe just when we were coming out of the tunnel, we heard reports of a collapse. I was thinking -- I personally thought it was, like, a couple of floors. I thought it was a bad thing, but I didn't hear a catastrophic collapse

over the department radio, so personally, I didn't know if it was a catastrophic collapse, or just a minor collapse or whatever.

After awhile, I got, I heard the word catastrophic collapses occurred, and then I realized that one building -- that would be the south tower -- came down, Building 2.

So we responded . We were coming across 34th Street. We got to the Westside Highway, proceeded south, around where I heard the -- there was a guy on the department radio on the rig screaming that he was trapped under a rig. It was extremely frantic screaming, and it kind of got you nervous. [redacted] This guy is screaming for his life, and they can't find him.

So then we proceeded down West Street and when I heard a handie-talkie report of Firefighter Kevin Shea, I knew Kevin Shea from another company that I worked at. Kevin Shea is missing. Immediately after I heard Kevin Shea is safe. He's in an ambulance.

There wasn't much other -- I wasn't hearing much handie-talkie reception otherwise, because I had the nozzle position. I didn't have a radio.

The chief had us park quite a distance away,

at least ten, maybe close to 15 blocks, in my opinion, away from the south tower. I'm sorry, Tower No. 1 on West Street, on Westside Highway, and I was thinking this is an awful long walk to go. How are we going to get down there. We grabbed roll-ups. We grabbed spare bottles.

We began to walk. Pretty much my whole battalion was walking down the Westside Highway together. When we got to about a block, say about a block and a half north of the north tower, in between Barclay and Vesey Street, we dropped our gear to get ready to enter the buildings, and the lieutenant and officers that were with my battalion proceeded to try to report in to the chief.

Just maybe about a minute had gone by, and somebody said, "Look, the building is starting to bulge." We looked up, and you could see the entire facade starting to buckle on the upper floors. Immediately nobody said anything. We just turned and ran as fast as we possibly could.

I could see that no heavy debris was going to hit me, but I still ran as fast as I could all the way to Stuyvesant High School, and I got to about -- right before I got to Stuyvesant High School, the cloud

caught up to me.

I continued to run at a slower speed until I was out of the cloud, stopped, because there was a north wind. I donned my mask and went back into the cloud to make sure we could see if we could regroup some of my members that were with me, and we went back into the cloud to see if we could find anybody that was hurt or -- and we proceeded to head back towards the buildings.

We got to within a hundred feet or so of where the north tower stood, and the chief ordered us back saying that there was -- I don't know the chief's name, but he ordered us back saying there was a gas main underneath us, and it could blow.

We proceeded to go back one block to that post. Then slowly but surely every two minutes or so when we started to regroup we were pulled back further, and further and further until we were behind -- until we were past Stuyvesant High School.

At that time, there was a bomb threat in Stuyvesant High School, and we evacuated that area and went further up West Street until we were a good distance away, probably -- I'm not sure of the street, which street it was on, but it was quite a distance

away.

Throughout the rest of the day, we weren't put back in to work. We were considered to have worked already, because we were covered in dust, and in the evening we got to do a little bit of work, but that was it, and then we were sent back to quarters.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: That concludes the interview. Thanks, Dean.

The time is 3:45 p.m.

File No. 9110360

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT BRENDAN WHELAN

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

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BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 2:54 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant Brendan Whelan of Engine 35, in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. Lieutenant, just give us the facts as you recall them.

A. Okay. 35 Engine responded down to the World Trade Center after the second plane had hit. I believe it was the second fifth alarm that was given. We were assigned down on that. 35 Engine was the staging area for a number of the Bronx companies. We waited until those companies arrived and we all went down as one unit together. It was about six or seven of us, different units.

We were told to report in to a command post that was supposed to be at Vesey and West. On our way down the West Side Highway we had heard of a collapse of the first building, at the first building, which would have been 2 World Trade I believe was the first one to come down. Is that correct?

Q. Yes.

A. We didn't realize the extent of the collapse. Myself, I thought it was an isolated collapse. After the initial collapse we heard a number of people giving Maydays over the hand -- over the department radio. As we got down to -- we could only get our rig into about Barclay and West. We left our rig there and we walked up to Vesey, to Vesey Street.

Upon my getting to Vesey, we couldn't find the command post and [redacted]. We still hadn't realized that the whole building had come down. I took my crew as we started to head towards the pedestrian walkway that connects --

Q. The northern one?

A. Yes.

-- the American Express with 6 World Trade. We got to that area and as we approached, 1 World Trade started to collapse. At that point I told my men -- we were carrying all our gear -- to drop our gear and to basically high tail it up the West Side Highway as quick as we could.

We got shelter from the collapse, I guess it would be, between Barclay and Murray Street and after the collapse we -- immediately after the collapse I was able to regroup my crew and we headed back into the collapse zone and we operated at this time at the collapsed pedestrian bridge and 6 World Trade Center.

We operated there for -- it was quite a while. About three hours. We stretched the line off 24 Engine, was pumping there. We augmented water to that, to a number of hydrants in the area. We stretched the line off 24, because at the time there was a lot of car fires and there was a parking lot there I don't see on the map here.

So we were doing searches, stretching lines. We were doing everything that we could possibly do. We were kind of overwhelmed at the task at hand. Like I said, we operated for about three, three and a half hours and then we went to take a breather and as we moved out of the area we weren't permitted back in the area by that time by a number of chiefs that were in charge. Then we signed in at the command post and waited to be used, which we were never used. We ended up taken up out of there maybe

about 10, 11:00 o'clock that night.

Q. Earlier when you heard maydays, do you remember any specific companies? Do you remember any specific information about the maydays?

A. I remember the dispatchers asking who was giving the maydays over the air. I don't really recall who was giving the maydays, because there were a number of them and they were stepping on each other on the department radio. I remember the dispatcher was actually asking, "Identify yourself. Who are you? Where are you located?" and I don't recall them answering their locations or anything like that.

Q. That's it?

A. Yes.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thanks a lot, Brendan. The time now is 3:00 p.m. and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110361

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN WILLIAM McLAUGHLIN

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 2:42 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

CAPTAIN McLAUGHLIN: William J. McLaughlin, Captain Engine 312.

CHIEF BURNS: This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Bill, in your own words just tell us what happened that day.

A. All right. 312 responded from quarters after the second plane hit the World Trade Center. We were actually watching it on television. We were told to rendezvous on the Queens side of the Midtown Tunnel and wait there for further orders.

We met there with a bunch of other companies from Queens, including our own 49 Battalion from here, the 45 Battalion, and we were told to stand fast on the Queens side of the Midtown Tunnel.

We were under the impression that the

police were securing the tunnel from any sort of terrorist threat. Although that may not be the case, that's what we were under the impression.

We could actually see the towers burning from our location on the Queens side of the tunnel. After waiting about 25 or 30 minutes, we proceeded through the Midtown Tunnel. We went across town to the west side.

At that time we were getting some very scary radio traffic over the Manhattan frequency about people trapped in apparatus. We didn't know what was going on, but I think at that time the first tower had collapsed.

Once we reached the west side, we went down I guess it was West Street from midtown, and the closest we could get, because of the numerous apparatus in the area, was approximately six or seven blocks north of the financial district on West Street, and we just parked right in the back of the apparatus that pulled up in front of us.

We then proceeded to take rollups, masks with extra cylinders, search rope, standpipe kit, and proceeded on foot down West Street towards the tower.

At this time, once again, I didn't know that the tower had collapsed because all you could see was a lot of smoke and dust. The north tower was standing and burning. As we were walking downtown, we could actually see people jumping out the upper floors of the north tower. Everybody had a very bad feeling, which came true.

We did reach the area where we couldn't go any further; I believe that was, looking at the map, south of the pedestrian bridge and south of Vesey Street on West Street. At that point I told the members to drop their masks, cylinders, gear, take their coat and helmet off and stand fast while I went over to the command post, if I could find it, because there was so much confusion at the scene, and find out what they want us to do.

At that point in time, I had full expectation of going into the north tower, being the closest one to our location. Once again, I still didn't believe or know that the first tower had in fact collapsed.

We no sooner got our masks, turnout

coats off, put them on the ground, and somebody yelled "Run!" I looked up, and I could see the top of the north tower mushroom out in a cloud of dust and smoke, and you could see the tip of the antenna sort of wobble. Then I realized we have to run. From that point on it was fall back, retreat, get away.

We just went back up West Street, northbound on West Street, until this cloud of dust and debris and smoke engulfed us. In my particular case I had turned -- after running a bit -- I had bunker pants and bunker boots on, and being my age and weight, I'm not a very good jogger, especially with that gear on. So I didn't get that far.

I turned around to look to see what was happening, and the cloud had just enveloped me and I got clocked in the head with a piece of concrete, which had knocked me to the ground. I was on my hands and knees on the ground, and I said, well, I don't think I'm going to die in the middle of the street.

So I got back up again, but at that point I didn't know whether I was going north,

south, east or west. I was just trying to get out of this cloud. I didn't have a mask on, and it was very, very difficult to breathe, big chunks of heavy stuff just going into your lungs. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. It was pitch-black. I went a little further, fell again, causing some more injuries to myself.

Eventually, after walking with my hands in front of me like a blind man [redacted], I saw up and to the right and up high, instead of being dark black it was dark gray, and the dark gray turned into a lighter gray.

Then I realized that what I was looking at was the bright sunshine, which was there before this building fell down. The sun was completely obliterated until we got far enough away from this scene that we could actually see, and then it was just dust and debris and everything else.

As I walked out of the cloud, I was met by an EMT who sat me down and bandaged up my head, gave me some oxygen.

From there we tried to regroup, tried

to find my men. I found everybody in a matter of 20 minutes, except my chauffeur, of all people, Eddie Ganassa. I couldn't find him. I actually had him declared missing.

What had happened was that some chief officer who had lost his radio or needed another radio grabbed Eddie Ganassa and took his radio from him. I was calling or trying to get through. The radio traffic was outrageous. You just couldn't get through to anybody on the handy talky.

I was trying and trying to reach him, and he didn't even have a radio. So that's why he couldn't answer me, obviously. He didn't know that I had declared him missing. We did eventually in about 45 minutes, I think, find him and declared that he was found and he wasn't missing any longer.

After I got all my guys together and knew they were safe and sound, I went over to an EMS unit, a paramedic unit, and they tried to wash my eyes out. They weren't happy with the way my eyes were looking, and I had a cut on my head and concussion. So they took me over to

St. Vincent's.

At St. Vincent's I was treated for a lacerated cornea, both eyes, laceration of the head, concussion, sprained back, sprained knee, et cetera, et cetera.

So from that point on I never returned to the scene. I can't offer you any more information as to what happened at the scene because I haven't been back since, nor do I want to go back.

I went from St. Vincent's, after spending an hour or two there, to the quarters of 20 Truck, and then I was transported to the medical office and when back to Engine 312. I was back here by about 11:00 that night, I guess.

I think that's the whole story in a nutshell. As I said, I never returned to the scene after that. I just made sure that my guys were all safe and sound. I turned my riding list and them over to the command post, and my handy talky was taken by a chief from Battalion 50 who thankfully enough returned it that same evening over to 312.

So that's about it.

CHIEF BURNS: Okay. That's the end of the interview. It's 2:52 p.m.

Thanks, Bill.

File No. 9110362

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SALVATORE CHILLEMI

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 12:25 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHILLEMI: Salvatore Chillemi.

CHIEF BURNS: -- from Engine 260. This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Sal, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. We had eight or nine rigs, which I don't recall every rig that was there going down in the convoy down to the World Trade Center. We went down to West Street. I don't know the block that we stopped at. It was, let's say, eight blocks away from Vesey. We parked our rigs, and we were told to carry all the gear we can carry.

We walked down West Street towards the World Trade Center. When we got to somewhere between Barclay and Vesey, that's when tower -- tower two had come down before we got there. Tower one started to come down as we were between

Barclay and Vesey. The tower is coming down. We just dropped all our gear and just made an about face and ran for our lives. Basically that's what happened to us in that area that I can remember.

As we ran back on West Street, trying to get out of the danger zone, the cloud of dust, smoke and everything just covered us completely. I didn't get a chance to put my mask on at that point. I put it on after a few minutes as we were trying to get out of the area.

After the smoke lifted and cloud lifted, we all tried to look for each other, all our guys, because we all kind of scattered out of the way. We tried to regroup somewhere down on Warren Street, I believe it was.

The lieutenant and the rest of the guys in the company kind of regrouped and tried to walk back towards that area to get our gear and see if anybody needed any kind of help in that area.

Basically that's all I can remember at that point after that.

Q. Okay. Great.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes our interview.

Thanks, Sal.

File No. 9110363

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHARLES GUTTMAN

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 1150 a.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Firefighter Charles Guttman, Ladder 128.

Q. In regards to the events of September 11, 2001. Charles, if you would, in your own words, tell us what happened on that day.

A. We were held up at the Queens Midtown Tunnel and finally when we got released, the first tower, we heard reports of it falling as we were in the tunnel. We got to the scene, on the West Side Highway, quite a distance from the towers, started approaching the tower, got to about West and Vesey when the second tower came down, started coming down, in which I turned and ran away from the falling tower.

Q. Approaching the towers, were you coming from the north, the south?

A. This way, so what is that.

Q. Coming from the north?

A. Coming from the north, correct.

Q. After this tower collapsed did you run back to the north?

A. Back.

Q. When you were at the building did you see anybody or any units in particular?

A. We never got close to the building. We got to Vesey and West. I saw people jumping and it started to come down. I got covered with dust and then found the Lieutenant, all the members in the unit, they went into the rubble.

Q. Did you hear any handy talky transmissions prior to the building coming down or after it came down?

A. Negative. Not that I remember. I'm sure (inaudible). Some people running scared, police saying get out of here.

Q. Is that it?

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Charlie, thanks for the interview, the time is 11:51 a.m.

File No. 9110364

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK VASKIS

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: It is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1335 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Fireman Frank Vaskis of Ladder Company 15 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 15, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Vaskis, would you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. We were in the kitchen, I guess it was quarter to 9 on the 11th. An announcement came over the voice alarm saying there's been an explosion at the World Trade Center and get ready for your assignments.

At that point everybody who was in the kitchen went downstairs to the apparatus floor. Two of the guys who had been detailed the night before, Firefighter Oelschlager and Firefighter Larsen, were just coming back into quarters. They had pulled I think it was Firefighter

Larsen's van in front of the apparatus doors to unload their stuff before they parked across the street.

We got downstairs. We got on the rig. Everybody had their bunker gear on and waited for our assignment. We were down there maybe five minutes before it came over that they wanted us to go to One World Trade Center, there was an explosion.

The engine left before we did. We pulled out of quarters, and we headed down South Street. I had just taken over the position of chauffeur from Fireman Sica who was working the night tour and he was off; he was off the day tour.

We went down South Street. Lieutenant Leavey did not want to take the underpass because we had gotten stuck in there a few times in the past. So we were making our way around to West Street, and there was a backup.

I guess at this point the Police Department was guiding everybody from the tunnel into the underpass to get them off of the FDR instead of going up West Street. So there was a

bit of a delay with that.

Lieutenant Leavey was pretty upset about this. We got up as fast as we could with traffic. We finally were where West Street and the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel intersect. At that point the Police Department had those orange stanchions, directing traffic onto the FDR; not the small ones, the big ones that look like upside-down garbage cans.

Lieutenant Leavey told me not to stop, just to go through, just to take it and continue on. I did what he ordered. I hit one of the orange stanchions. At that point we heard an air leak.

He jumped out of the rig, and he tried to pull the stanchion from underneath the rig. It was wedged. He wasn't going to be able to do it. He picked up what looked like a black box, maybe four inches by six inches. I guess it was some type of a regulator for the front air brakes. He jumped back in, and he said, "Listen, just continue on, take it as far as it can go before the breaks lock."

I did what he ordered. We ended up on

West Street between Carlisle and Albany Street in front of a hotel before the brakes locked. I had it pulled over as far as I could. At that point people were streaming down West Street. There were several cops directing traffic.

Lieutenant Leavey told me that he was going to take the troops and walk down. He ordered me to stay with the rig, put the jacks down, pull out the thing, see if there was any way for me to stop the air leak. He said, "We're not going to be able to use this rig if we have no air. We're going to be stuck here."

I did what he ordered. The other guys were getting out. Firefighter Kopytko realized he didn't have his gloves with him. He asked if he could borrow mine. I told him, "Well, what am I going to do?" He said, "Well, by the time you finish what you're doing, there's going to be other engine companies. Just stop in and try to grab one from one of the other companies." So I gave him my gloves reluctantly.

I put the tormenters down and pulled out the stanchion. Now I had this brass coupling that was broken. I knew we had a toolbox on the

rig. I went over and grabbed the toolbox out. I thought that if I bypassed the broken fitting that I would be able to get some pressure. I took the one that was broken off, and the next elbow was too short; it wasn't wide enough to fit on.

While I was underneath checking out the situation, I heard a large crash, and one of the cops who was directing traffic said another plane hit. I heard more screaming, an initial rush of people by me, and the cops were saying that there was a third plane incoming.

I did what I could. I found a piece of heavy plastic that I thought might hold some air. I wedged it in in the broken valve. I put it back on, I tightened it up. I left the rig where it was. I figured after the job the guys would know where the rig was if I didn't move it. So I left it.

I got my bunker gear on, I got my Scott pack and my tool assignment, and I headed down. I stopped -- there were two engine companies parked in front of me. I don't remember the name of the engine companies. I checked both of them

for gloves. There were no gloves. I checked the chauffeur's seat. No gloves. I got to a third engine also. I don't remember which one it was. I found nothing in the back. I found a pair of gloves the chauffeur had put underneath the seat. They were a little small, but it was the only thing I had at the time.

I continued on. I walked down West Street, and I noticed that there were body parts on the ground in front of me. As I'm walking, I noticed a foot. I noticed one corner of West Street on the street before Liberty on the corner it looked like intestines. I couldn't make out what it was, actually.

I continued on. I realized that things were falling. I decided probably the best thing to do would be to walk under the overpass, south overpass, because I had heard that the command center was set up on the other side of West Street.

So I walked over underneath the overpass, and there was it seemed like ribbons of aluminum or whatever, the facade of the building, was trickling down. There were people screaming,

"Heads up. Watch for falling debris." When I looked up, I noticed somebody had jumped out of the building. There were rigs in front of me. I didn't actually see where that person landed.

So I'm still heading into One World Trade Center, which was our original assignment. I figured probably nothing had changed. I did not check in at the command center. I walked past it to the north overpass, and I cross back over West Street to the front of the building.

At that point the windows of the building had been blown out or taken out by the explosion. I don't know. The long, thin windows were gone, so I didn't use the actual entrance. I walked through the glass right where the fire command station was, and there was nobody there.

I headed towards the stairwell, and I got maybe about ten feet from the corner of the building, and I felt a wind. At first I didn't know what it was. I started to brace myself for it. It basically knocked me off my feet, onto my stomach, and I slid out of the building from where I had come. I was trying to stop myself, and I could tell that I went pretty much out if

not the same window that I had come in then one of the ones next to it.

I ended up about ten feet from the sidewalk in front of One World Trade Center. I crawled back in to what I thought was the threshold of the frame of the building. It was pitch-black. I fumbled around. I put my face piece on and turned my mask on. I was choking, choking dust.

So there I am. I'm on my knees for what seemed like, I don't know, 15 minutes. It was probably only about five minutes. It was pitch-black. It started to get gray, and it was just cloudy. I could make out where my helmet had blown off, and I could see where my tools lay further out in the street, maybe 20 feet, just outside the curb.

As the dust cleared, I made my way out. I found my helmet, picked up my tools, and I headed back into the building. I'm back towards the corner of the building, just about to get to the staircase, and the door opens and there are 10 or 12 civilians and they're all disoriented: "Here, this is the lobby. This is the lobby.

Now where do we go?" They're heading towards the main exit.

When I was outside picking up my helmet, I realized that that was where the -- I looked up at the Vista Hotel, and I noticed that there was a huge V chunk taken out of it. At that point I believe that the top of One World Trade Center had collapsed and fallen into the street. That's what I felt had happened.

In any event, that debris was blocking the main exit for the building. I told them that they shouldn't go that way; they should head out one of the windows where I had gone out. I said, "Stick close to the building and make your way up West Street and keep going."

When I knew that they had some idea where they were going, I headed back into the stairwell, when the urgent message came over to have all firefighters leave the building. They were going to form back up at Murray Street and West Street.

So I did that. I headed out. I actually followed them up West Street. When I got to Murray Street, we heard another loud

rumbling, and I looked back and saw a cloud of dust. That was I guess when one fell. From that time we just ran up West Street. We stopped in front of Stuyvesant High School, and we just got there just as the dust cloud made it to us.

We were in Stuyvesant maybe ten minutes. I came out. I still couldn't see that the building was gone. It looked like maybe the top half of it was gone. There was a lot of smoke; there was a lot of dust.

They started another whatchamucallit point at Chambers Street where they were letting companies go in. At that point I guess I ran into the engine chauffeur from 4 Engine, Bobby Humphrey, and he said, "Listen, just stay together." I told him what happened to me, and he told me what happened to him.

We ran into another group of two firefighters, one of the guys who had been relieved and another fireman who had been detailed but hadn't left yet before the run came in.

So the four of us hooked up. I remember him trying to raise Engine 4, as I was

trying to raise Ladder 15. They were not allowing anybody to go back in without supervision. We didn't have an officer with us.

That's really it. We stayed there. I think we spoke to three different chiefs. We told them that we had tried to contact our companies and they were missing. We told them the names of the guys who were working in our companies that day, three separate times: probably one right after we met up, the second one was maybe an hour later, and the third one was -- they had set up a table outside of Stuyvesant High School. That was the third time we were there.

We were there when Seven World Trade Center collapsed. I guess when we got back to the firehouse it must have been 10, 10:30, 11.

Q. Good. I just have one or two questions.

You say you were going to the stairs when you got into the Trade Center.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember which stairs you were heading towards?

A. I was heading towards the core. I never actually --

Q. Looked at any numbers?

A. Yeah, I never got that.

Q. So you wouldn't know what your company went up?

When you were in the lobby at any point, before, during, after, you didn't see any other Fire Department personnel?

A. I did not, no.

Q. So you hooked up with Humphrey sometime after the second tower collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Unless you have something else you can think of, that concludes the interview. I thank you for your time.

A. Sure.

File No. 9110365

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER HOWIE SCOTT

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1610. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Howie Scott of Squad 18 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Ladder 20 in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Scott, would you tell me what happened to you on September 11th?

A. September 11 started out -- I worked the night tour from the previous night before and was relieved by Manny Mojica as a chauffeur. I went upstairs, took a shower and was in the shower when the whole incident started to unfold.

I went into the locker room to hear over the department radio all the stuff that was going on. I threw on a pair of shorts and went downstairs to see what was actually happening.

I looked down south of Lafayette Street, saw the smoking tower, along with Tim Haskell and a few other members of Ladder 20. Timmy and I spoke of getting down there via the

hazmat bread truck, that's what we call it, the second piece. We saw that it was still in the second bay. I told Tim I'll be right back, I'm going to go get my shirt, some socks, grab my gear and we'll be ready to roll.

This was after the second plane hit the building that we decided, "All right, we're going down there, this is what we're going to do."

Anyhow, I ran upstairs, got my stuff, went to the rack, got my gear, came out to the front and Timmy and a few of the members of Ladder 20 had jumped on the bread truck and left. They were already gone.

I started looking around, because they had mentioned something about fire marshals were going to give them a ride down. I saw a fire marshal, and he said yeah, no problem, jump in the car.

As I'm getting my stuff, picking up my stuff and throwing it in the trunk, I see John Ceriello biking up the road. He's coming over from Brooklyn. I yelled down to him, "Hurry up. We've got a ride." So he peddled up, ran in, got his stuff, threw it in the trunk, and we went

down to the scene.

We pulled up on West Street I would say north of the north walkway, just to get an idea of the location. We got out of the car and put our gear on. We proceeded south down West Street under the north walkway and saw to our right in front of the financial building there was a command post over there that included Chief Ganci, Chief Downey, Mayor Giuliani, Bill Feehan and Tom Von Essen, the Commissioner. They were in conference about something. We caught Chief Downey's eye, and he kind of gave us the high sign to go find a SOC company.

So as we scooted away from there, we noticed that Squad 288 and Rescue 4 were coming across West Street. They went into the lobby of the financial building. I think it was One World Financial building. We informed the officer of 288 that we were going to join up with them with Lieutenant Kerwin. I believe he even put our names on his BF4.

Anyhow, they were taking a quick blow, sizing up what they were going to want to do next, get a little drink of water. Everybody

knew we were in for a long haul here.

In the meantime John and I kind of kept reminding each other: Hey, we don't have anything as far as tools, radios, air, whatever. So before we get committed to anything let's try and at the very least get some air.

They started to make their move back across West Street. We informed them that we would catch back up with them. I believe they were on their way into the lobby of tower two.

Anyhow, with the abundance of rigs right out in front on West Street there, we figured no problem, we'll just grab an extra mask from somebody, only to find out later that that was a big problem. There were no masks to be found.

We were hitting rig to rig, proceeding pretty much north on West Street until we saw the Hazmat 1 rig. We went over to there. The resource guy that's usually in the rig, he was still there. He came out and hooked us up with a couple of masks. We even changed out the bottles to one-hour cylinders.

In the meantime we picked up this other

guy, Phil. I don't remember his last name, but I remember he was an EMS worker there. I guess now he's over with the Fire Department. Anyhow, he joined in with us.

We started our walk down West Street towards the buildings, and I ran into Mike Macko from Ladder 8 and yelled up to John Ceriello -- I told John, "Hey, wait up. Let's wait for this guy. He's a senior guy in Ladder 8. He knows these buildings like the back of his hand. It probably would be advantageous, being as we don't have any radios or anything."

So I pointed Mike over to the hazmat rig. He also got a mask and I think also put on a one-hour cylinder, buckled up, and we were on our way.

As we proceeded back down West Street now, John was a little up ahead of us. I don't exactly remember how much further. We just made our turn to go in towards the lobby of tower two. For whatever reason, I just happened to look up and saw the whole thing coming down, pancaking down, and the explosion, blowing out about halfway up.

I yelled up to John -- I used a couple of expletives and said, "It's coming down, run, let's go." So we about-faced. In my mind I was saying north walkway, let's get under that, and dove under that. I probably fell short of that and kind of crawled. Anyhow, I did get under that. I believe I smashed into some sort of mask service rig.

I remember looking back and noticing that big mushroom cloud just roaring at us like a freight train. I quick scrambled and threw the cylinder on and threw the mask on my face and started crawling, which I'm figuring up West Street.

Now I decide, all right, let me get on my feet and make a move here. So I got on my feet and I start moving. I run right smack into a plate glass window, fall back, get back up. I don't know what building exactly, but there are some employees coming out of this particular building. It's on the other side of West Street. I just kept pushing them on: Go, go, keep going, don't look back, don't breathe even, just go.

Again I pretty much thought I was

proceeding up West Street, and in actuality I was proceeding west down I guess Vesey Street and ended up by the Hudson River, which I guess worked out in the sense of that all the boats were coming over from Hoboken now, all these ferries, and I got involved in just chucking people onto these boats. I even tried to make one boat like an ambulatory boat. Anybody that was banged up, I got them on just one boat and got them out of there, and the other boats we were just moving people on.

In the meantime, not really knowing what was going on back at the towers, because, again, I had no radio. I'm now separated from John and the guy Phil. Out of nowhere I see Mike Macko. Mike's crying. He's all upset. I get him calmed down.

We proceed now to go north on one of those streets in like Battery Park City, I guess, over there, and then swing around back towards West Street and end up back on West Street, north of the north walkway.

We ran into Pat Kelly from my company, Squad 18, who was in the tower when it came --

I'm trying to remember where he was. That's hazy, so I'm not going to go with that. I don't know whether it was after the first building or the second building came down I ended up running into Pat Kelly.

Anyhow, we start our descent back towards the building, because obviously there's lots of maydays and stuff going around. We get to just about the north walkway, about to go underneath, and the second one came down.

Again, a quick retreat back up. This one was, as far as I was concerned, the big one. The first one you had a chance to make a move, I felt, especially us. You may not have made the right move, but you had a chance, because it seemed like it pancaked down and that delayed the whole process, where the second one just seemed like it just opened up all over the place.

After that I was sitting on one of the medians at West Street just waiting for that smoke cloud to lift so we could see what the heck we're going to do next. Obviously it seemed like it was three hours we were waiting. It was probably not all that much time. Obviously some

officers were trying to get control of the situation.

But in looking at it later on, our position where we were, we were pretty much out of the picture at that point because all the devastation came that way, where I was, whereas any kind of rescue effort or any kind of stuff like that was I guess able to be done from, I'd say, the Liberty Street and Greenwich Street side, totally opposite from us.

But we did end up eventually crawling under that north walkway, which had collapsed and which was held up on either end. We were able to get under that, get up on the pile. Then I got involved with -- we found Pete Ganci. I was involved in that recovery.

I then ended up getting moved away -- I know I'm skipping some parts because the whole Pat Kelly thing is in there where we went to look for his mask and decided the heck with it, because that put us right by where building seven was, and Captain Verraile from 24 Engine said, "Hey, let's just back everything off here because this building is coming down." So we took all

the hose, equipment, everything that we could get our hands on and pulled it out of the collapse zone, so to speak.

Then later on we ended up in the financial building, the lobby, again. They wanted to get some sort of command post going in there. There's a lot of stuff that's all real hazy at this point.

I took a blow for a while. Then of course at that point every fireman on the job was there. I remember talking to my captain and trying to tell him where his father might have been on our way down.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay. Just a couple questions. As you said at the end, maybe where Chief Downey was. The first time you saw him was at the command post. You didn't see him go anywhere else?

A. Right. That's what I wanted to get, because while we were waiting on West Street, Captain Downey now reported in, just like everybody else was getting there. Everybody is like throwing stuff at him, pointing and throwing. You could see in a whirlwind not

knowing what was going on.

I kind of got his attention, pulled him aside and kind of specifically said, "Hey, Cap, look, this is what happened as far as your father goes with --" Okay, the rampway going into the garage of the financial building, that's where they were originally, meaning the five guys I told you.

If they made a move after the first building came down, I don't know. But that's where originally he was. When we saw them was right before the first building came down. So how much time elapsed there is probably not that great amount of time. So I don't know where he would have moved to.

John and myself walked around the whole rest of the day thinking each other was dead. It wasn't until 8 or 9:00 at night when we were in the lobby of that financial building getting some tables and chairs together so people can sit down and map some stuff out, and John comes walking around. We're both like, "What are you doing?" That was a relief to see him, and I'm sure he felt the same.

A lot of gray areas there. Like I said, the whole Pat Kelly thing, he was with us. A couple of the SOC battalion aides were outside that were with Chief Kasper and Chief Paolillo. Those two aides were out on the street with us. They ended up -- from what I'm gathering is they all got caught up in the same swoosh, so to speak, and got chucked this way and made it out, whereas anybody that got chucked that way didn't make it.

Q. Did they say where they were operating?

A. The 8th.

Q. No.

A. I'm sure they know. I just don't remember what they said. I'm sure they remember.

Q. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview?

A. Okay.

Q. Thanks for your time.

A. No problem.

File No. 9110366

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN CERIELLO

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1540 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Ceriello of Squad 18 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. I first saw on TV, I believe CNN, that the north tower was on fire. I was not aware of a plane hitting it at that point. Just looking like a high-rise fire, I decided that even though I was off duty that it would be a good idea for me to at least go into the firehouse and see if there was going to be any need of my assistance there.

So thinking that it was just prior to 9:00 there would be a ton of traffic, I jumped on my bicycle. I live in Carroll Gardens. I rode over the Brooklyn Bridge. When I was roughly in the middle of the span, there was a massive

explosion on the south tower.

Again I didn't see a plane or anything, so I didn't know it was a plane that hit the tower. I think in my mind I just thought there was a massive explosion on one of the upper floors and now you had a real bad fire. Obviously I figured I would be needed.

So I continued to Lafayette Street where Ladder 20 and Squad 18 are housed right now while our building is under construction. When I arrived, at the apparatus door was Howie Scott, another fireman from Squad 18, who was waiting for me. There were two fire marshals. I do not remember their names. They had a car fired up and waiting to take us down there.

So I quickly grabbed my gear. I remember grabbing a bottle of water, jumped in the back of their car and off we went. I believe we shot down to Canal, over to West Street, and down West Street.

En route you obviously could hear and I was informed that a small plane had hit the north tower and that a second plane had hit the south tower. At that point I think, knowing that it

was a clear blue sky, we knew something was up. I can't say that I thought it was terrorists right off the bat, but you knew something was going on that shouldn't be going on.

I didn't have my bunker gear on at that point, I remember, because I was just thinking of a high-rise fire, we're going to climb a lot of stairs, keep cool and try to save your energy in a sense.

So we quickly went down West Street and asked where the command post was. The command post was set up in the parking entrance to the American Express building across the street from the north tower, just south of the north walkway.

As we approached the command post, I noticed Chief Ray Downey at the command post. Being the SOC chief, I then asked him, "Chief, what do you want to do?" He told me and Howie to hook up with the next SOC units that came in and go to work.

So we donned all our equipment, and within seconds I believe 288 with Lieutenant Kerwin and Rescue 4 with Lieutenant Dowdell arrived at that command post.

We then all proceeded to go into the lobby of the American Express building, again right across the street from the north tower and just adjacent to the command post, and just did a little staging area.

The reason I believe we went into the lobby is there was debris falling around everywhere and swirling. I think just as a second form of protection if -- I guess the possibility of maybe a third plane or something coming in, the officer thought that was a good idea.

So we went into that lobby, and everybody was calm and cool. A couple guys I remember went to the bathroom and got some water. We just discussed the fact that we were going to go in through the south tower, try to go to the upper floors and help extinguish the fire or evacuate the people.

At that point Lieutenant Kerwin wrote my name on his BF4 as well as Howie Scott's name. I informed him that we did not have masks, and he asked me to get masks and come back to the lobby. If they were not in the lobby of the American

Express building, then they would be in the lobby of the south tower to meet us there. 10-4.

Howie and I left the American Express building and then proceeded to check rigs that were all in front of the north tower on West Street, moving north until we got to Vesey and West.

We found Hazmat 1 there, and Tony -- I cannot pronounce -- it starts with a C. I think it's Castagna or something to that effect. He was a member of Hazmat 1. He was there. I asked him if they had masks. He said yes.

At that point we donned half our cylinders. It was myself, Howie Scott, a firefighter from Ladder 8 and then a proby who originally was in 35 Truck who now I think is in hazmat, Phil Latimer. We donned half our cylinders.

At that point Tony from Hazmat 1 mentioned that he has our bottles and asked if we would like to switch over to our bottles, which we thought would be a good idea. So we took a minute and a half to two minutes to switch our cylinders.

We got all that, grabbed some tools and headed up West Street in the northbound lanes of West Street. We walked underneath the north walkway. When we got about 50 feet past that, Howie Scott looked up and said, "Oh, shit." I then looked up and saw the whole top of the building beginning to come down.

Then at that point we all ran north. I got underneath the north walkway, got behind a blue van, and everything went to hell, went to darkness.

Howie -- I didn't know where he was. I tried to locate him quickly and could not find him. Then I donned my face piece, because you couldn't breathe. I began to walk north and fell over something. I don't know what it was. I began to crawl, and what ended up happening was I crawled in a circle back towards the south tower, thinking I was heading north.

When the dust settled, I saw Ray Downey standing on West Street. I believe at that point we were in between the north and the south tower. The south tower was down. You really couldn't tell it was completely down, but you could tell

most of it wasn't there. I again approached him and asked him what he wanted to do. He said at this point you've got to do what you can do. He was trying to get the command post to move north.

Chief Feehan was with him and Chief Ganci. Chief Ganci -- actually Chief Feehan asked me to go with I believe it was Chief Fuentes, Al Fuentes. Is he is captain or a chief? I'm not sure.

Q. I think he's a chief.

A. Anyway, he asked us to do a primary search of the parking garage because everyone at the command post dove into the parking garage when the south tower came down.

So we went in there. We did a quick primary. We went in through the building. You couldn't get down there through where the driveways were; you had to go in through the building. We got down there, did a quick primary, we came back out onto West Street.

At that point Chief Ganci told us that we have a mayday of a fireman down at Liberty and West. Then Chief Feehan told me to take that proby, Phil Latimer, who I was with earlier but I

had gotten separated from and was with again. He said to do that assignment.

At that point we took off climbing over debris and whatnot on West Street. We passed a black woman with a broken leg with a firefighter on the sidewalk. We told them to stay put, that someone would come get them. We proceeded to Liberty and West, trying to ascertain from some of the firemen that were there if they had seen anybody or heard anyone. They said no.

We started up onto the pile when we just heard a horrific rumbling coming, and we knew the north tower was coming down. I then proceeded to run under the south walkway and dove into an ambulance. Again the same thing happened. Everything went to nighttime. The dust cleared. I donned my face piece, climbed out and headed to the water.

So basically that's who and what I remember. Some of the members that I saw from 288 and Rescue 4 were Joey Hunter, Ronnie Gies, Bronco Pearsall and John Ielpi. We all just briefly talked.

When we were in the American Express

building, we did see some people jumping and whatnot. We knew we had a bad scene on our hands.

For the most part that's who I remember seeing, in that particular order. After that, the rest of the day was spent in lousy attempts at trying to locate victims. That's basically all I can really say. It was just a lot of mass confusion. We just tried to do the best we could.

I basically operated on West and Liberty until about 1:00 in the morning. I never really went much up Liberty, and I never really went much north on West Street. I stayed in that quadrant right by what was the Marriott Hotel, making entrances and then running out because the buildings were collapsing and going back in, all that stuff.

That's basically the members I saw prior to the buildings coming down.

Q. Okay. First if that's all you have, I have a couple quick questions.

When you first reported in to the command post, you saw Chief Downey. Was anybody

else there, companies?

A. Yes. There were a lot of firemen staged, standing there. I cannot say that I actually recognized anyone.

Q. So you wouldn't know if Chief Downey or whoever was there was sending them any particular places?

A. No, no. I never even looked at our coffee table and clipboard at the command post.

Q. When you saw the apparatus, any apparatus numbers you can remember and where they were parked?

A. Yeah, I remember Rescue 1, obviously, right under the north walkway, the high-rise unit 3 from Engine 3, the high-rise unit. I remember rifling through that truck looking for tools and cylinders; a number of different engine companies, thinking the chauffeur's mask would be available.

But I cannot say exactly which engine companies. I believe Ladder 3 was right there. I think 18 was right there. Ladder 18 was right there. That's about it. I know the information on the buildings said West Street, so I think a

lot of units came down that way.

Q. When you say 288 and Rescue 4, they were basically at the staging area that you saw them? They weren't on any particular assignment in the building?

A. No, when I asked Chief Downey what to do, he said hook up with the next SOC units. Within a short period of time, 30 seconds, maybe to a minute, they walked up across West Street. I did forget one thing. So they walked across West Street. Then we all, as a group, went into that American Express building to stage.

What I do remember and I forgot to tell you is as we were checking the high-rise unit from Engine 3, I remember every maybe 30 seconds I would turn around and look towards the American Express building, trying to see if Rescue 4 and 288 were leaving that building.

At some time as I was making my way north on West Street, I did see them leave that lobby and do a single file and heading straight towards I would say it was the Marriott Hotel, heading towards the south tower.

Where they entered the building to get

into the lobby, say, that I can't answer. I didn't see at that point where they went in. But I do remember them walking in a single file across West Street on a diagonal, heading right towards the south tower.

Q. And that's who you were supposed to hook up with?

A. Yes.

Q. They were probably going to tower two?

A. Yes, I would say definitely. They're finding those guys there now. Absolutely.

Q. That's good. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview.

A. I don't think so. Any information that I can think of now, that's it.

Q. Okay. Thanks for your time.

A. Thanks, Chief.

File No. 9110367

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

JASON KATZ

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is December 20, 2001. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, shield number and assigned command.

A. My name is Jason Katz. My shield is 2101, and I am currently an EMT chief's aide at Division 4.

Q. Jason, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes.

Q. In your own words, can you tell me about the details of that day?

A. The day started out -- I reported to work at the division office, as I normally do, and I was here for maybe ten minutes when I was told that the two planes crashed into the twin towers, and that Chief Carrasquillo was on his way here, and he was picking up personnel to go.

From that time, Chief Carrasquillo arrived. We jumped into the car with him. We grabbed our helmets and turnout coats, and we responded in, and I guess about -- being on the LIE probably by the Pulaksi

Skyway, we got the report that the second plane crashed into the second tower, the north tower.

Q. When you say "we," can you just tell me who the other people with you were?

A. I was in the car with Chief Carrasquillo, Captain Rivera and Chief Carrasquillo's aide, Sal Sangeniti.

At that time, we came out of the tunnel into Manhattan and shot down the FDR around to the Westside Highway and parked our car roughly around Westside Highway and Carlyle Street.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map provided approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. I would say between Carlyle and Rector. That's about the best I remember. Between Carlyle and Rector.

Q. Can you just mark it with the No. 1? Thank you.

A. At that time, we got out of the car, and Chief Carrasquillo told me to meet up with Chief Brown, who had just arrived a little bit before us, and he was a few cars ahead of us, and to go team up with him and become his aide for the day.

When I went to go meet Chief Brown, there

were a few bodies laying in the street -- and I just met up with Chief Brown. We reported in to operations. Operations told us to set up staging and triage, more staging at West and Liberty, and on the way back to West and Liberty, there was debris flying down, and it was pretty scary. There was a bunch of pieces of metal or debris just coming down, and I think there were bodies. I wasn't even sure. We just kept moving, kept running over to set up the staging area on West and Liberty.

Chief Brown directed me at that time to just track what units were where, and, you know, who was who, and a lot of voluntary and private ambulances on the scene. Just try to get the number and names of the crews, and at that time I was doing that, and then we started to hear a roar, and I looked back.

Everybody was running, so I just kind of started running with them, and the next thing I know, I just remember jumping on a staircase and putting my hands over my helmet, and, you know praying to God, and then it all went black. It was silent. You couldn't hear a thing.

I remember something hit my hand. I don't know what it was. I got up after all this. It seemed

like it was forever, but it was probably just a few minutes. It was -- I remember seeing a fire truck. I think it was on fire. I remember just trying to work my way over there.

I heard people screaming and yelling and just, you know, all disarray. So I made it over to the fire truck looking for a Scott pack, and kind of hung out in this fire truck. I don't even know what company it was. I think it was a tower ladder, and things lifted a little bit.

Q. Do you know what that location was?

A. It was just south of the south crossover. It was just south of there, and things started to lift, and then I heard Bobby Brown's voice just calling for me, and things began lifting a little more, and I made my way back over to him, and we just kind of started to looking under debris.

Everything was lifting. It was kind of hard to breathe. We were covered head to toe, you know, with dust and everything, and we were just looking in the debris, listening for people screaming, seeing if we could find anybody. At that time, we ran into Chief Wells. We found a suburban, and we were looking through the suburban for a first-aid kit just to wrap

up my hand. Because at this time I noticed my hand was bleeding pretty good. I had cut two fingers on my left hand.

After that, we were there for maybe 15, 20 minutes just looking, you know, trying to regroup, see who was where, try and get in contact with the command post, if they were still alive. We didn't even know.

At that point, we really weren't sure of what had happened. We just -- you know, and then we looked up, and we noticed the tower was gone. It seemed like it was just maybe 15, 20 minutes, and I just heard everyone saying, run again.

So I went in through -- went in through one building that the south tower was attached to on the west side. I'm not sure what building it was. The lobby was all blown out. All the glass was blown out, so you could run right through the lobby, so once they started saying run, I just took off again, made it through the lobby, started running down -- I don't know what street it was.

Q. West End Avenue?

A. Yes, that's where it was, West End Avenue, and I jumped into a store, and I guess it's the Gateway Plaza here. I think it was a diner, or a coffee shop

or something like that. At that point, the second tower had come down, and when I was in that store, there was one civilian in there, who was hiding underneath the table, and she was pretty panicked. I calmed her down a little bit, and after things started to lift again, I escorted her over to a building on West End and Albany on the -- that would be the southeast corner.

There were a whole bunch of firemen in there and civilians. I don't even know what they were, cops or firemen. Cops were wearing firemen helmets. Firemen were wearing just hard hats. You had no clue who was who, but we stayed in there for a little bit.

They kind of pulled us over when things started to lift. We stayed in there for a few minutes, and then I came out of there, and once again just amazingly I ran into Chief Brown. I heard him screaming, you know, calling out. We met up with him, and we met up with Commissioner Gregory. I think he's communications.

Q. Yes.

A. He was there in a turnout coat, and a few firefighters, and a couple of, I think, Metro Care ambulance people had all gathered in the middle of the

street. Then we heard two planes coming overhead. We weren't sure, you know, if they were friendly or just loud jet engines, so we started making a little run to the west side. We noticed it was a F-16.

We were ready to jump in the drink if we had to, and at that time a fire boat had met us over on the west side and we -- that ambulance bandaged my finger up on the west side there. Then we started helping civilians onto the fire boat. That was pretty much just civilians and people who were nurses were helping wash out our eyes and helping wash civilians' eyes and just helping everybody off the island at that point.

Then from there we started making our way down to the Battery City, and something about a report of a gas leak, that they were evacuating the island, and it was kind of a mad rush, and everyone was jumping on police boats that were in the basin, the boat basin down there.

We all jumped on the police boats -- myself, Bobby Brown and a couple of other EMTs -- and we jumped on the boat. They shot us over to Jersey. After we helped everybody off, we went back, and at that time we made our way down to Liberty -- Battery Park by the Liberty ferry terminal.

Q. Okay.

A. That's where we met up with Chief Steffens. That was pretty much where things calmed down. We were there for about, I guess, an hour, just cleaning up, drinking some water.

At that point, I made my way down. Chief Brown stayed there, and I made my way down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal and the triage. They cleaned me up a little bit and sent me on the Staten Island ferry to a triage area at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal in Staten Island. I jumped on a bus, and they took me to Staten Island University Hospital.

Q. You said you had the injuries to your hand. What kind of injuries did you have?

A. There were degloving injuries, and I fractured the tips on my pointer and middle finger on my left hand.

Q. Do you know what you injured it on?

A. Just flying debris.

Q. Just flying debris.

A. What I forgot to mention was I remember when we were first there, Chief Brown told us to put on our chin straps, which is something most of the time we don't wear. That probably saved my life because I

would have lost my helmet when the debris was coming down.

Q. It's not something we commonly use, right. Is anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

A. No.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 1447.

I thank you very much for conducting this interview. The tape is 181.

File No. 9110368

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROBERT KIMBALL

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is December 20, the year 2001. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I'm at Division 4, EMS command, conducting an interview regarding September 11 with the following individual.

MR. KIMBALL: My name is Robert Kimball. EMT, currently serve as a chief's aide.

Q. Bobby, were you working on the morning of September 11?

A. I was off. However, at 8:45, I heard the incident happened. I called the Division 4 office, asked them what the plan was and what we had planned to do. She advised me that she -- I'm sorry, Lieutenant Guarneri advised me she really didn't have a plan yet. So I asked if the spare vehicle 913, the van, was available, and if it was, that we should load it up with spare equipment, and I would be in within 15 minutes to pick it up and transport it down to LSU and MERV 4.

I made it here approximately nine o'clock, and at that time the van was loaded, and there was a lieutenant. I don't remember his name. I really didn't know him, and an EMT from downstairs, pretty much a new guy.

Q. When you say downstairs --

A. Downstairs at Battalion 50. We went into the vehicle. It was loaded up, and we made our way down into Manhattan.

At approximately -- we left here at 9:15. I made it down into Manhattan approximately ten o'clock. We were initially going to the west side, because we were told that's where MERV 4 and LSU 4 were staged, but we were unable to get over onto that side of the World Trade Center.

They redirected us at about 10:10 and told us to go down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, because they wanted to set up a triage, treatment, transport area down there. So we went down to that area, went up to the 2nd Floor of the ramp for the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and we set up a treatment transport area over there.

At that moment in time, I had no chief to work with, so Chief Villani said, "Okay, Bob, you're with me today." We did some initial stuff at the Battery Park ferry terminal, and then we had a gator, and we were pretty much just traveling all over the World Trade Center site.

We went to One Liberty Plaza to check on the

units that we had over there, because we had staged over there approximately 20 ambulances at one point. There was a treatment center. We were asked to go over there initially because of the question of the building's sturdiness, and that all turned out to be fine at that particular moment.

We went back down to the EMS command post, I guess. I'm not exactly sure where exactly that was. Everything just looked very different from what it looked like at that point. Met with I believe it was Chief Carrasquillo that particular moment in time, see what he wanted to do, where he wanted us at, so we were just basically going back and forth from the ferry terminal to the World Trade Center site looking at units, you know, seeing who needed what, going back to the ferry terminal to see, you know, how we're doing there.

I guess approximately three o'clock-ish sometime, that was about the next time I remember, I saw deputy chief Bobby Brown come in with some eye irritation and his aide Jason Katz with -- his hand had some lacerations on it, I believe. That was pretty much about the last time that I remember any kind of, like, time sequence, because I basically just stayed

the whole day at the -- between the ferry terminal and One Liberty Plaza.

I believe we went down to Liberty and West at one particular moment in time, and I believe we did make it over to Vesey and West at another particular time. I believe the command post was somewhere along here. Was it Murray and West that particular night? But that was earlier. We had no real protection as far as masks went.

Q. Where were you when the buildings collapsed?

A. We were traveling down -- I believe the first building collapsed, and we were traveling down Broadway. I think it collapsed, what, 9:05 or something? No, I'm sorry 10:05. 9:55.

So we were traveling down Broadway, and that's when we were redirected at about 10:10 down to the ferry terminal.

Q. Where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. When the second building collapsed, I believe -- let's see. What time did that collapse? Because I think I was still -- 10:29. I was just -- I guess we were right about here. I don't know what street this is.

Q. So you were south of Rector?

A. Yes, I was about, I guess, one, two blocks south of Rector. We had a whole bunch of ambulances standing here, more like Hunter and Metro Care, I guess it was, and we were trying to get them down more towards our area so we could stage them up properly.

So when the second building came down, that's where we were, right about here, but I guess by then we set up a treatment and triage center, which pretty much had almost done, and then I was just pretty much aide to Chief Villani for the rest of the duration of the event. I left at 9:30 the next morning.

Q. So you were there overnight?

A. Yeah, I was there overnight. I worked 24 hours straight, and everything else is just like -- I don't know. I remember bits and pieces.

Like I remember walking by with the chief, and I remember seeing the airplane engine, you know, pieces of, you know, obviously trade center all over. When I was walking around, we didn't see any bodies or body parts. They had those pretty much either cleaned up, or they were buried with the debris, so we really didn't see too much of that, but there was no way to get even the gaters anywhere near, near Liberty and

Trinity. It was just too much debris and hose, and so you couldn't even take the gator around. You had to walk, I would say, for a two block -- one block area this way and like a one and a half, two block area this way. You couldn't get the vehicles in.

Then I do remember that later on during that night we did take his car, Chief Villani's, and we did take it and park it up -- I believe we made it all the way to about Rector maybe. I think it was Rector.

Q. And West Street?

A. Yeah. Rector -- yeah, Rector and West, and we parked the car there and did another walk up towards the site.

Q. At the end of the evening, how did vehicle 913 -- where did that end up?

A. Well, that vehicle stayed at the ferry terminal, Staten Island Ferry Terminal, because we didn't unload all the equipment.

Q. So it stayed there?

A. So it stayed there strictly as a supplement to whatever they might have needed down at the ferry terminal. I carried oxygen. I carried nebulizers, Albuterol, fluids for irrigation, a couple of extra long boards, boxes of ACRs in case we needed them,

triage tags. Pretty much everything that I can think of that we didn't need, that would be stressing out the battalion, I took into that vehicle.

Q. How many days was it before you got the vehicle back or do you even know?

A. Oh, God.

Q. You did eventually get it back at the division?

A. Yeah, oh yeah. I believe that's how I got home. I asked them if they needed it, because they were going to shut down that area, I believe. Either they were going to shut it down or they released me because they didn't need the equipment that was in there, because we didn't receive too many people.

We thought it was going to be a lot more casualties, and they figured, you know, we have enough here. I loaded up what I could load up, you know, that I didn't need too much. I pretty much left them, you know, my oxygen that I could leave them, and that was really it.

I believe I took the vehicle back home. Yeah, I believe I drove the vehicle home, you know, back to the battalion.

Q. Anything else you want to add or that you can

think of?

A. Well, then I had to have the next day off, you know, obviously, but then I went down there, and I served as Bobby Brown's aide for the next six weeks down at the World Trade Center.

I believe the first possibly four weeks was down at Chambers and West at the EMS command post, and then the last two weeks that I served down there was down at 10 and 10, Liberty and -- what is that? Greenwich? Yes.

So I served my six weeks down there, and I haven't been there since.

Q. Is that all you have to say?

A. As far as the events of that day, as far as it went with me, yeah.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This ends our interview. The time now is 1452.

File No. 9110369

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE PATROLMAN PAUL CURRAN

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is 12/18, 2001. The time is now 1544 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fire Patrolman Paul Curran of Fire Patrol number 3 in Brooklyn regarding the events of September 11th, and what follows is the interview.

A. On September 11th we got an alarm of a plane striking the World Trade Center, the north tower. So we responded I guess it was roughly a quarter to 9.

We proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge. We observed the north tower with a heavy volume of fire on the upper floors up, I guess, the 80th floors.

We turned onto Broadway, and we worked our way down West Side Highway. We reached luckily around John Street when the second tower was hit by the plane, another plane. At the time we didn't realize it was a plane. We just heard a massive explosion. Debris rained down on us. People panicked. They were running all over the street. I had to stop the rig dead. People,

hundreds of them, crossed the path running west on Broadway. One of the guys stuck his head out the window, John Citelli, and he saw the other tower burning.

We proceeded down Broadway to around roughly -- I made a left-hand turn. I'm not sure which street it was. It was perhaps Pine Street or Rector. We worked our way to Trinity Place to go up Trinity Place. I parked the rig on Church right at Fulton, directly in front of the World Trade north plaza.

We then suited up, masks, tools. My officer told us we're going to go into the north tower lobby. We proceeded down to Vesey. Walking down Vesey, we noticed large pieces of what looked like possibly the fuselage from the plane.

There was a caravan of motorcycle police coming up. We stopped them and we cleared the path of big O rings and pieces of fuselage of the plane. We threw it to the side, and we told the guys to go on. They went up towards Church.

We got down to Vesey, and we turned the corner onto West. There was two MPOs having

problems with the sprinkler cap, getting it off. We had tools. We assisted them. We took the caps off of them so that they could hook up to the sprinkler system. Then we proceeded into the lobby of the north tower.

In the north tower my officer, Sergeant Kenny, it was approached by Deputy Commissioner Feehan. He told us they were going to be using us shortly and to stage in the tower's lobby. Then he proceeded to leave. I didn't realize he left. I saw him leave the building. I can't say exactly what time it was.

At that time we heard the jumpers. A lot of jumpers were hitting right above our heads on the concourse plaza level. It was like one thump, another thump. I lost count about 19.

I saw Father Michael Judge. We went up the escalator of the customs house, myself and Sergeant Kenny, to see what the situation was up there. It wasn't a pretty sight. There were numerous bodies.

So we went back downstairs to the lobby, and Father Judge kind of like gave us a look. I remember telling Father Judge, "It's

terrible up there, Father." I did see Father Michael go up the escalators of the customs house. I guess that's World Trade -- what would that be, seven, I imagine? The customs house. It's Eight World Trade Center.

Q. Eight World Trade. Okay.

A. He was up there for a period of time. We were staying in the lobby for about -- there were people hitting the deck up there. There were body parts -- at one point a body part flew right through the lobby. There was an ironworker in there, which he plays a part later on.

With that, all a sudden the tower went completely -- a horrendous noise, a very, very tremendous explosion, and a very heavy wind came through the tower. The wind almost knocked you down. We were on the north side of the elevator banks, and they kind of broke up that wind.

At first I thought the upper floors were caving, coming in. But then kind of like all thought there was too much dust down there, too much wind downstairs. We really didn't know what happened.

So we made our exit up the escalator to

the customs house. While making our way out, we were with a truck company, and I don't remember who they were. It was dark. There were a couple of chiefs there. I can't remember their names.

While we were making our way to the World Trade Center, the customs house, to go up the escalators to go out, we were going to go out the other way, down West Broadway and down the staircase there. We found Father Judge. Father Michael was laying at the bottom of the escalators. He wasn't bleeding or anything like that; he was just unconscious.

Q. Tell me exactly where that was now.

A. This was in Eight World Trade Center, in the building --

Q. Outside the building?

A. -- in the building at the foot of the escalators, going up to the concourse level. He was laying there.

The guys from the truck company, the whole patrol was there, some guys from the truck company, they opened up his coat and they started working on him. With that, the building was shaking. It got very dark. We had our lights

on. It got very, very thick with dust.

I remember saying, "We've got to get out of here. We've got to get out of here. Let's pick up" -- They picked up Father Michael, and they carried him up on the escalator.

At that time I lost track of them because my officer told me to take this proby. He was getting a little nervous, and he told the proby stay with me and I was to get the proby out of the building, which I did.

We got up to the concourse level of the customs house. They were walking around that wraparound thing. I went to the left because I knew the staircase -- when you went to the left, the staircase goes straight down. It's a long like three-story staircase that goes down to West Street in between like the customs and the north tower.

I got the proby -- he hurt his ankle. I had his arm around my shoulder. I'm taking him down the stairs. I'm constantly looking up, because the jumpers were still coming. At one point a jumper missed us maybe by 40 feet. John said, "What was that?" I said, "Don't look

back." I remember distinctly it was a blonde woman.

When we got to West Street, out of the building, John was given medical attention. At that time I ran to Sergeant Sheehan from Fire Patrol 2. He was pretty shook up. He was covered with debris. I guess he was from the other tower.

At this time I still didn't realize the other tower fell. Our radio communications at the time was like non-existent. The radios went completely haywire. It was all static. You couldn't hear nothing.

Q. What radio?

A. The hand held. The hand held.

Q. Were you on the handy talky?

A. I was on the handy talky channel of the Fire Department, yeah.

Q. There was so much on there?

A. Nothing was coming through.

Sheehan told me that he got out and he lost one of the guys, Keith Roma. I said, "Where was he?" I knew they were in the back of the north tower by the escalators by the concourse

level where the subway goes through the revolving doors.

At that point I looked down south, and I saw the Marriott Hotel laying in West Street. What went through my mind, I still didn't notice the south tower missing. I just didn't see it, because I was kind of like shielded from it. So I thought in my mind there was a gas explosion or maybe another terrorist, because we knew there was a terrorist thing going on.

Now the situation with the north tower cleared. The dust, the darkness, it lifted. I saw the building was intact. I looked up. It was very heavy fire still. I ran back into the building, and I was yelling with my light, looking around if I could see somebody.

I went to the back, and the whole back part of the tower, the concourse level, was gone. I guess when the south tower came down, it must have ripped it all down. It probably is only like one story there, I believe.

Q. Yeah.

A. I went back to the escalators again. I made the right-hand turn back to the escalators,

where we originally found Father Michael. I ran up the escalators yelling, making sure everybody got out. Everybody did get out. I went back down the escalators. I went back out on West Street, back through the front of the north tower where they broke out the glass.

Now I'm standing in front of the tower, and the ironworker that was in there in the lobby, he was wandering around in front. He was dazed. He had a cut on his forearm. He had dirt in his eyes, so he couldn't see. So I took him across the street, past the collapse unit. I remember seeing a collapse unit parked on the west side of West Street, Vesey by the World Financial Center. The buses were staged there for trauma centers. So I took the ironworker there.

I returned back across West Street going toward the front of the World Trade Center. Still in the back of my mind is that they don't know where Keith is. I observed a red helmet. I yelled out, "Patrol." I turned, and it was Sergeant Canham. He was alongside the New York Telephone Company building on Vesey.

At that time I went further south. I went back and stood right in front of Eight World Trade Center right by the customs house, and the north tower was set right next to it. Not that much time went by, and all of a sudden the ground just started shaking. It felt like a train was running under my feet.

I was with two other fellows from Manhattan. They were truckies from Manhattan. I don't remember the number. Things were happening so quick.

Q. No problem.

A. The next thing we know, we look up and the tower is collapsing, it's coming down.

I remember yelling out distinctly, "Go north, north." We ran. Myself and these two other fellows ran north. I saw out of the corner of my eye -- I don't know how many members, but I did see guys go up Vesey Street toward West Broadway. I don't know what ever happened to them, because the other thing fell too. The walkway collapsed. I can't tell exactly how many. There were at least four.

So we ran north on West Street, and we

got about midsection to the New York Telephone Company, and the fellow behind me, he must have been looking over his shoulder. I wasn't looking back. I heard the guy say, "Hit the deck."

I was trying to get cover somewhere. I didn't know where to hit the deck. So I hit West Street by a parked car, and I wedged myself next to the parked car, and the other two fellows were behind me. I just kind of made myself like a little void, waiting for the steel to come.

Fortunate for us, the guys who went north on West Street -- the customs house took the big brunt of all that debris. Everything poured into it.

I was there by the parked car. I was put in total darkness. It went totally black. I had my mask on. I hit the mask -- I didn't want to take my helmet off to put the strap over my head, so I just hit it on the street. It cleared out the debris in it. I put the mask on my face and just sat there. It seemed like an eternity. It was total dark. You couldn't see anything.

Finally I started -- even with my mask I started choking. I got up on all fours, and I

was trying to make myself gag and throw up. I'm yelling, "I can't see." I thought at first I was blind. I had my hand in front of my face and couldn't see it.

The darkness lifted. A little bit of light came through, and I started to see. But I still had trouble breathing and I was on all fours gagging. I couldn't throw up. I got up. The two fellows that were right behind me, they got up. All three of us were intact. I remember distinctly north on West Street, I guess maybe past --

Q. Barclay?

A. Past Barclay, maybe between Murray and Barclay there was a rig there, and there was a guy -- he must have been using booster water, I guess. He had an inch 3/4 line, and he had the fog on, straight up in the air, soaking.

So the three of us, we helped each other. We ran down and started getting washed off. We were saying, "Come on, throw up. Get rid of it." We tried our best to throw up, and we couldn't throw up. So he hosed us off.

At that time after being hosed off, I

felt a little better. At that time I went back to the north tower again, and they were stretching a line. A lot of car fires erupted. All of a sudden cars were blowing up everywhere.

I went back and I helped a guy stretch a line. The guy was all by himself. I helped him stretch a line and started putting water on the car fires. I remember distinctly walking past -- I saw 118 Truck. 118 Truck was parked right on West Street right past Vesey.

Q. North of Vesey?

A. North of Vesey. There was a truck company next to them. There was a fire underneath that truck. I don't remember what the truck was. It was a tiller, though.

There was iron that came right across West Street and bounced off -- I saw it later. The iron must have deflected off Eight World Trade and laid right across right in front of 118 Truck. There was iron around there.

So we started putting out the car fires. Then I started to walk -- then other members showed up from an engine company, so I just started to -- I wanted to regroup with the

patrol. I didn't know where everybody was.

At that time I saw my captain, Greco, Fire Patrol 3, coming south on West Street. He told me that everybody was regrouping on North End and Murray. They were regrouping in the park there. He wanted us to go there. That's exactly where I went.

I got to Murray Street. I turned onto Murray Street, and I saw Mike Angelini, who was in the lobby with us. I saw Kenny. That was from the patrol I saw. Then I hosed myself off again. There was a shower set up there. I had a very hard time seeing.

Later on the time went by. We regrouped and we went back. We walked back to the -- we went back across Barclay, down Church, and we were trying to see if we could move our rig out of the way.

At that point my eyes were really starting to bother me pretty bad. The long and short of it, the patrol was taken -- we went back to 40 Fulton Street. The chief wanted to get all our guys together. At this time we were missing one member, Keith Roma, still.

Later on that afternoon I was taken to Long Island Hospital, where my eyes had to be flushed out. I did all right. I didn't scratch my cornea. I did the right thing. I didn't screw up my eyes. I just kept flushing them out.

That's kind of like what happened. I don't think I left anything out. It happened so quickly, it was just total -- it was bad from the beginning, and it went totally haywire when the other tower collapsed. It was just nothing but carnage and debris. It was just bodies, body parts everywhere, a shoe with a leg in it. It was just horrible, you know.

Q. I believe it.

The Fire Patrolman that you mentioned, is he lost?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he from here?

SERGEANT CANHAM: He's from Fire Patrol 2.

A. He was from Fire Patrol 2. I believe he was in the north tower concourse level, and I believe when the tower came down he couldn't get out of that concourse level. Probably the wind

wouldn't let him through the door. Sergeant Sheehan just got through the door, and I imagine maybe he just got stuck. I believe that's where he was lost, because there was only one story there.

Q. Everybody tells me all these vehicles were on fire. What do you attribute all these vehicles being on fire to?

A. I believe it must have been from the debris falling and the heat just started hitting the cars and starting cars on fire. There were an awful lot of cars burning, an awful lot. It had to be radiated heat or just stuff falling on cars and setting them on fire. There were numerous cars burning, numerous.

Q. Good. That's real good.

A. I hope --

CHIEF MALKIN: I omitted to say that sitting in on this interview was Sergeant Canham from Fire Patrol 3. At the conclusion of this interview, which is now 1601 hours, I thank Paul Curran for his interview, and this is the end of the interview.

File No. 9110370

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

SERGEANT JAMES CANHAM

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 18, '01. The time is 1408 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Sergeant James Canham of Fire Patrol 3. We are at Fire Patrol 3. There's nobody else in the room at this time. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001, and what follows is the interview.

A. I live in downtown Brooklyn. I saw the smoke condition when I dropped my wife off on Joralemon Street. I made my way back home, which is on Sackett and Smith Street. While I entered my welling, I heard my brother on the answering machine saying the towers were just hit by an airplane.

I closed by door, made my way back to Fire Patrol 3, approximately eight blocks. I went into quarters, took my turnout gear out of my locker, which consisted of a Halligan, flashlight, full bunker gear and PBI hood.

I made my way down Dean Street, when I saw a captain of a fire patrol responding from fire prevention. He said, "Are you going over

there?" I said, "Yes." I jumped in the car. I asked him what we had. He said, "I don't know. I just heard a plane had hit the building."

As we got onto the Brooklyn Bridge and we turned where we can get a view of the tower, we saw that both towers were burning. So I made the comment, "Geez, it looks like the plane must have hit one building and careened into the other," because tower one was hit much higher than tower two. So it looked to me like it had hit, dropped and hit the second tower.

Once again, I was off duty, I had no radio, I had nothing. He dropped me off, because of traffic, at the South Street Seaport. I made my way from the South Street Seaport to the corner of Church and Fulton, where I had spotted Fire Patrol 3's rig parked out in front of tower one.

Chief Raymond Cowa was standing in front of the rig, and he had said that Captain Keegan had just made his way inside. I grabbed a mask off of the rig. I told the chief I was off duty and that I would be going in. He said, "Watch your back." I began to make my way into

the building.

I had seen a couple of what I had thought were body parts in front of the building. I didn't pay it much mind. You still had a heavy flow of people leaving the building. I made my way into the building, down an escalator, where I believe I was in the concourse level. I believe that's what it's called.

I ran into Sergeant Sheehan and Patrolman Keith Roma. They were escorting people up the escalator. They were standing by it looked like a turnstile or a revolving door; I'm not sure. There were sprinkler heads going off on the concourse level.

John said something bad really happened. He said the overheads popped. There was a lot of heat here before. There's nothing happening now. He's going to stand fast.

I told him that the chief was looking for him and he wanted to coordinate all the fire patrol units, get them all together, and begin some type of operation coinciding with the Fire Department.

I proceeded into the building. I had

told John, which is Sergeant Sheehan, that I was going to go into the lobby area where the elevator banks were to take a quick look, because I saw that there were no firemen on the lower level. I wasn't sure -- knowing that the elevators had dropped, seeing the condition of the hallways, the bent doors, the fascias of the hallways were knocked into the hallways.

I started searching the elevators, when a woman said there was another woman trapped in an elevator. I had gone over to the elevator with my tool and began to pop the door open. The elevator was cantilevered, so it was very hard. But there was an occupant inside.

I went back to where I saw Sergeant Sheehan and Keith Roma. There were two firemen, two truckers. One was an officer. I believe they were from 10 Truck. I can't be sure. I told them what I had. They came with their tools. All three of us tried to pop the door with the Halligans.

A member from the building maintenance crew came up with a Port-A-Power. He said, "I've got this. I can pop the door. I've got it." So

with that we had all left. They had gone back to where Sergeant Sheehan and Keith Roma was. I had made my way up the stairwell.

On my way up the stairwell, I began encountering a lot of people on their way down, very calm, and they were filing out. It wasn't a panic. You could see that they were from upper floors. I had asked what floors. I believe the first floor I heard was the 26th floor, 27th floor. Given the time, it seemed this is how much time it's taking to get down. Very narrow hallway, stairwells going up.

I got up about four flights, found an open door onto the floor. I believe it was the fourth floor. I took a quick peek inside, saw no occupants, started making my way back up. Once again I was beginning to get respiratory now. I was beginning to get winded. I had come from South Street Seaport to this point and getting winded.

I made my way up to the eighth floor and did the same thing, stopped myself for a moment, found a water cooler, doused myself with some water, continued to make my way up.

I got up to the 13th floor, when there was a large man blocking the stairwell, people climbing over the top of him. I scooped him up onto my shoulder, and I began half dragging, half carrying him down the stairs.

I got to the 11th floor, and there was a woman sitting on the stairwell crying. I yelled, "Ma'am, you've got to move. You're blocking the stair. You've got to --" She said, "But there's a police officer laying on the floor." I took a peek into the doorway. I saw a police officer -- I believe it was Port Authority -- prone on the floor.

I had taken the man that I was carrying and passed him to two other civilians of large size. They were on their way down. I said, "Look, take this guy." They were very agreeable, no problem. One guy took the woman. The other guy grabbed this large man. They continued down.

I went over to the police officer. He said, "I was just trying to catch my wind. I'm very winded." I gave him my mask, get a couple of breaths. With that, two other police officers came, a sergeant and another officer. I'm not

sure if they were Port Authority or city PD. They said they're going to take care of their man.

I asked them if they had a cell phone. I want to call my wife. She works in downtown Manhattan. She works right in the neighborhood. He said, "No, but I saw an office down the hall that had phones that were still operating." They were up there making searches, popping doors, et cetera, they had a ram through with them.

I dropped my mask there in the hallway. Air quality was fine. Very dim as far as lighting. But the air quality was good. So I dropped my mask, made my way down to the far end of the corridor, popped open an office door, called my wife, told her this is real bad, I'm going to be here a while, go home, get the kids, stay out of Manhattan, it's going to be a zoo, not realizing what was going on.

When I came back out to the hallway, I saw the sergeant once again, that police officer. He looked at me and he said, "Are you aware of what's going on?" At this time I did not. I didn't have a radio, and I just assumed it was

one plane. He said, "This was a hit. They hit the Pentagon. They hit the White House. And we have another inbound coming at us now."

I looked at him kind of queer and I said, "You have another one coming at us?" He said, "Yeah. The other tower was hit also." He called on his radio, and his dispatcher said that, yeah, you have another one inbound, watch your back.

With that, they had started to go down the stairs. I went back and called my wife again. I figured I'm on the 11th floor of this building. If there's a plane inbound now and these guys were bailing out -- excuse my language, I'm done.

So I called my wife and left a message on her machine. I said, "Baby, I love you. I don't think I'm going to make it home. Just take care of the kids. I'll be back."

As I hung up the phone and started making my way back down the hall is when the rumble started. I thought it was our tower starting to collapse, being the volume of fire I saw when I had gotten there.

I ran down the hallway. As I ran down the hallway, I pass two other police officers. They were also, I believe, making searches on that floor. They must have been with the team. We passed each other in flight.

The sound became horrific. I was about maybe five feet from the mask. I just dove for my mask, scooped up my mask with one arm and I grabbed the stairwell doorway. I had half my body on the floor and the other half was in the stairwell. I figured if the stairs go, I'll roll onto the floor. If the floor goes, I can maybe -- it was a grasp at nothing.

This is what I thought the best way maybe out of this, because at the time with the sound of the wind blowing through the elevator banks, because it was air pressure coming in, I had believed at the time it was air pressure coming down. I thought the floors were coming down. But it was tower two falling, which once again I didn't -- it didn't register. I thought it was my building.

It must have rumbled for almost what seemed like an eternity, but it must have been

only five minutes or so, between the sound of it and the dying down. The entire floor was enveloped in dust, smoke, minimal heat, and a very eerie silence.

Had thrown my mask on, took a couple of breaths. You could breathe it. Then I had gone right into the stairwell. There had to be 20 people piled up, I mean actually in a pile.

So I started peeling them off. I said, "Can you stand?" "Yes, I can stand." I'd stop them. I'd tell them to hold the railing. I grabbed the victim behind them, told them to grab the belt loop of the person in front of them. If it was a woman, I grabbed the bra strap. I actually grabbed the bra and told them, "Hold the bra, the other hand hold the railing," and make your way down. I started a train.

The people, once again, even as panicking and crying as they were, they were listening and they were making their move. They were on their way down. They were coughing and disoriented. I said, "Hold onto the railing and hold onto the person in front of you and just keep moving, just keep moving down the stairs."

After I cleared those people out -- it had to account for maybe 30, 35 people by the time the last one had gone by me. Once again I felt very comfortable on the floor now. The shaking had stopped. The ground was very solid. The wall seemed solid. The sound was gone. It was just a matter of people coming down the stairs.

I heard clanking from tools and masks banging against the wall, so I figured the brothers were on their way down.

I began to make my way down the hallway to look where the other police officers were that had passed me in flight. I got to the end of the hallway. I found no one. I went back to the phone and called my wife's office again. Each time I was just leaving a message. As I picked up to use the phone, the phone was dead. I wasn't able to use the phone.

I took out a window, about four windows, because now the quality of the air in the room I was in is in question. It was starting to get charged. So I started taking out windows. When I looked down, I saw ladders that

were twisted and cantilevered. I saw light bars that were just -- it looked as if you had a blinking light under a thin layer of dust is what it looked like. It was the top of rigs.

Now I assumed that's where the tower -- I believed that the fascia or the upper floors had slipped from the building and dropped off, not realizing at all that the tower had fallen.

I began to make my way back into the hallway, when people started to come up out of the stairwells. They were coming up from the lower floors, saying that the second and third floors were gone, you can't get out that way, what are we going to do, in a panic.

Other firefighters had also now entered the floor. They were coming from above, and a couple were coming from down below. A battalion chief, a large man -- I don't know who he was -- he came in. I asked him if he was aware of what was happening. He said, "No."

I brought him over to the window where I was, and I showed him out of the window. I said, "Look, this is what we're up against." We both looked at one another like "We're screwed."

There were some firemen that were yelling "Bail out." They gave a bail out, everybody bail out, and they were making their way out of the building, down the stairs. Some civilians were panicking when they heard that, because they saw firemen leaving and saying bail.

The chief and I and two other firemen stayed with the civilians. We didn't go down the stairwell that they were coming up, we moved halfway down the hallway. We found another stairwell and started filing people down that.

We did almost a leap frog. I went down to a landing. I held my light until all the people came by. The chief and this other fireman had passed me. When the last person went by me, I made my way down the next level, relieving that fireman, and it was a leap frog to just try to keep the people moving and just make our way down.

I got down to what I believe is the lobby level. I believe it was the lobby level. It was a gray level, so if that's the lobby, it was the gray level. There were filing all the civilians to the left, which would have been

south.

I was exhausted at this time, physically drained, trying to (inaudible). I was really wiped at the time.

Oh, excuse me, let me go back to the 11th floor. I have to do this. I'm sorry.

Q. Go ahead.

A. I had passed a Lieutenant Ed D'Atri from Squad 1. He saw me. He said, "Jimmy, where are my guys?" This is on the 11th floor after the tower had fallen. He had made his way up. He had said, "Jimmy, did you see our guys?" I said, "No, Eddie. Some bad shit just happened." He said, "Yeah, I know. I don't know where my guys are." He had gone up, and I had made my way back down the hallway.

This is after the last civilians had gone by, just prior to me going back to look for the cops. I believe Eddie stayed on the floor with me for a minute. We gave a quick search. Then he made his way up. After that I didn't see Ed anymore.

Going back down to the lobby level. I got down to the lobby level. There had to be six

to what I believe were maybe ten companies in a staged area. They were standing there. They were talking with one another. Once again, a very relaxed mode.

The civilians were minimal at this time. There was a dark haze in the lobby, I guess from the settling dust from the prior collapse.

I had made my way out on the West Street side. Once again, I passed these companies, and even a couple of the guys joked. They said, "Hey, Patrol, what are you doing?" I said, "Yeah, we're going to be here a while." We all snickered and laughed, and then I had exited the building.

As I entered the building, a body fell maybe three or four feet from me and hit the ground. I got my back up against the wall and scooched along the building going north up tower one, going along. Two or three more bodies had impacted.

I ran over to what I believe is Eight --

Q. Yes, that's Eight.

A. Eight World Trade Center. I made my way along that wall and up and to the first bend. When I saw I had a pretty clear area, I made it over to this side. It's an L shape going on -- I don't know how to describe that area.

I ran into Patrolman Paul Curran. He saw that I was pretty taxed. Paulie looked wiped out. I said, "Paulie, what are you doing?" I said, "Where are the guys?" He said, "I really don't know. I'm going to go up and take a look for them." I said, "All right, look, I'm going to try to find out where our guys are, and we'll regroup back in front of the building." He said, "Okay."

He had left and gone north. I began to go up north and I said, let me turn around and go back the other way, because I was thinking to scoot down which would have been Vesey Street. So I ended up here. I started to make may way back down Vesey, and the building began to rumble. It was a very quick time between when I saw Paul.

As it started to coming down, I darted right back to the building which was eight World

Trade Center, dove next to a concrete traffic barrier and a truck and just covered up, because at the speed it was coming down, I saw that there was no way to run.

I didn't want to run north, because I just didn't think I could outrun it, as taxed as I was, equipment I was wearing. I just didn't think I was going to make any time. So I ran maybe six to eight feet, dove, and I just ended up between this barrier and this parked truck, covered up.

After this it gets a little gray. I have no recollection of time. I remember making my way back down West Street, and I came upon an engine. There was a chauffeur and another guy next to the rig. He couldn't get his breath. I had gone through the same thing as Patrolman Curran, puking up the dry dust, trying to clear your throat, nothing was happening.

I gave the chauffeur my mask. He used it for a bit. I made my way over to the hydrant and started splashing my face, trying to drink down some water to clear this debris out of my throat, the dust was -- visibility was maybe

five, ten feet.

I got back to the chauffeur. He said he was doing better. I splashed him with some water. We steam at the hydrant. I said maybe we can get the stang open or set up a fog pattern and try to knock down some of this dust to make a path for anybody that might have been this way. We tried that. We got no -- the pump didn't engage. I believe that we lost water pressure somehow. The chauffeur believed the same.

I told the chauffeur I'm going back over to the tower. I made my way back down north again. I remember hearing all pass alarms. Visibility was nil. There was heavy smoke. There was a lot of fire, a lot of car fires.

I realized at that time I had no strength. I physically just couldn't do anything. I saw no one. I saw no firemen. I felt I was alone. I had just lost Paul, who was my chauffeur when I worked with him. I figured he's gone. I remember turning and walking away.

An off-duty member from 105 Truck grabbed me and dragged me to a diner. There were other members from the Fire Patrol there. They

cleaned me up. It was air-conditioned. They took my stuff off, flushed my face, my eyes, washed me down. I began to recollect what was going on now.

I immediately went to a phone. The proprietor gave me a phone, and I called the house watch here in Brooklyn. I gave them a head count of who was in the diner with me. There were Fire Patrolmen, and I believe there was one firemen.

I gave everybody's name. I told the guy on house watch, "Take the names down, mark the time. This is who is alive right now. I'm very unaware of who else is around."

I had commandeered a radio from one of the members from Fire Patrol who was in the diner at this time. When I had gotten the radio, I turned it on. It was futile. There were a lot of maydays. There were a lot of searching for people. The radio was useless as far as any kind of command. There was none.

I made my way back towards West Street, where I ran into Captain Greco, another member of the Fire Patrol, a couple of firemen that were

wandering around aimlessly. Everybody was in shock. Anybody that was in that area was just mentally, physically gone.

After that it's really gray. I remember we made our way back. We tried to make a sortie back into the building. Physically nobody had anything. We started seeing a lot of incoming companies now, inbound companies.

Our supervisor had ordered us back to 40 Fulton, and we made our way back to 40 Fulton Street, where we regrouped, came back to Brooklyn, got cleaned up, got a little something to eat and made our way back to the towers to search. And that went on for days after.

Q. You thought about going back into the building. About a minute ago you said that. Which building were you going to go back into?

A. Tower one.

Q. Did you get a good view of it? It was just a pile of rubble.

A. It was a pile of rubble. All you heard were pass alarms.

Q. You heard pass alarms.

A. There were no firemen. All the guys

that I had left -- there were ten companies in there, I'm sure, as far as the number goes. They were all in that lobby area. This lobby swung around. There were guys down this end. There were guys over there.

Once again, they were escorting the people -- when I came down, it was -- it was just a small doorway. It was an access doorway that we had come out, and they had filed everybody to the left. I had gone to the right. After that it's just gray.

I had believed at first, looking at the map, that I was here, which would have been 40 feet from Vesey Street, 20 feet from the building. It was six of one, half dozen of the other, because either way I was in front of this building, either here or here. I really can't remember.

I believe it was here because I remember there was a truck parked into it. There was a truck parked into it. I remember going back days later. I saw West Street directly in front of tower one was buried. Vesey Street and the top of this building, some debris had fallen

this way. I remember I was right in this one little void, which the command center I believe was set up here.

Q. Right.

A. So that's --

Q. You're talking about adjacent to number eight World Trade Center, just west of the building called number eight.

When you went into the lower level of One World Trade Center, the sprinkler heads were going off.

A. Right, they were heads off.

Q. There was no fire; there was no heat. Their heads were off from a pressure surge like from the pressure created by the falling of building two or what do you think?

A. What I believe set those heads off is when those elevators had dropped --

Q. Why did the elevators drop?

A. They were sheered.

Q. They were sheered. We didn't cover that. People told me, yeah, I think the elevators dropped and the doors were blown out and all that.

A. Right.

Q. The elevators were sheered?

A. They were sheered.

Q. What did the elevator doors look like?

A. They were buckled, cantilevered. The one woman was -- how she was standing up, I didn't know.

Q. She was standing up? She was alive?

A. She was standing up and alive, as I popped it with my tool. I had a converted officers tool. I made my own little. It's very good as far as leverage and so on and so forth. I got the door open maybe six to eight inches.

That's when the guys from -- once again, I believe they were 10 Truck. He had put his officer's tool, my tool and the Halligan. We had both Halligans. But the door was so warped that we really couldn't get the strength to pop it open.

But when the guy pulled up with the Port-A-Power, he was very confident. He was like, "Don't worry. I've got her." It seemed almost like he had done this before, like he was here working. Once again, I had come off duty.

So this maintenance man had enough muster to get that tool and begin to work on the doors right away. It just led me to believe that he had things under control.

So myself and the lieutenant from whatever company that was were confident he could do it, and we had moved on.

Q. I wonder where he is now.

A. Exactly. He was ten feet from Sergeant Sheehan and Keith Roma.

Q. You're the first guy that told me that they saw D'Atri. I know D'Atri. Nobody else told me that they saw him.

A. When you speak to the others from Squad, they should tell you, because I had spoken to them immediately after that.

Once again, I'm doing this 23 years. You always think, yeah, if you give a location, you have a good idea where they can be. This changed all the rules. This changed all the rules. This went from a structure to a wafer in seconds, in seconds.

I couldn't believe the speed of that tower coming down. I heard the rumble, I looked

up, debris was already 50 feet from the ground, on its way down. You looked and you ran. You just didn't --

Q. You reacted or you didn't survive.

A. You just moved. You just ran. You knew you were dead. I knew I was dead. As I thought of my children, life flashing before your eyes, true. You see it, you see it, you see it. I saw my boys, I saw --

Q. That's about it?

A. Yeah.

Q. Good.

CHIEF MALKIN: I thank Sergeant Canham for this interview. The time is now 1633 hours, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110371

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL RICHARD MC CURRY

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 18, 2001, the time is 1457 hours and this is Battalion Chief Steven King, Safety Battalion of FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Fire Marshal Richard McCurry from SOC or Hooper Street, concerning the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Richard, you can start whenever you want.

A. I was working a day tour on that day, an 8 to 6 day tour. I get in about a quarter to 8. I was doing some paperwork. I guess it's about 10 to 9. I heard somebody over the intercom say that the World Trade Center was on fire. I looked out the window and from our window you could actually see the World Trade Center, the New York skyline and I could see the smoke and flames coming out of the World Trade Center.

Immediately the Chief got on the intercom and told everybody to respond and to bring their turn out gear and to report to the command center. So my partner, Mike Owney and I, as we were getting our gear and get into the car to head on over, we heard somebody say that a second plane had hit the tower.

We headed in our vehicle, we arrive at the

Brooklyn Bridge and at that point there they had closed the bridge to traffic so we were able to get over the bridge right away, because they were letting emergency vehicles over. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge, down Broadway and we parked our car on I believe it was Cortlandt Street right off of Church Street.

As I got my gear out of the trunk I could see the World Trade Center, both towers were literally a half a block away in front of me. I could see the heavy fire and smoke pushing out of the both towers. My partner and I then put on our gear, our boots and helmets and coat and proceeded into I believe it was tower number 2. We were looking for a Fire Marshal command post that we thought may have been inside the tower.

So as we got into the tower, I believe it was 2 World Trade Center was the first tower we were in, I could see the evacuation of the building and it struck me as being a very orderly evacuation. I don't remember anybody panicking. People were coming -- workers were coming down the stairs, there were Police Officers in the building, I saw firefighters coming in with their roll-ups. Some

were going into the elevators and into the stairwells.

As we were looking for the command post that the fire marshals had set up, we didn't see anybody in that tower. We proceeded to go to the other tower through the underground concourse that they have there. At that point we didn't find any of our guys from the Fire Marshal's office, so we proceeded back to the first tower that we were in. Which I believe was 2 World Trade Center. At that point we were on the west side of the building and across West Street I could see that they had a command post set up at the world financial building and it looked like there were some Fire Department personnel set up at that command post. So as we exited that tower, at that point there were some jumpers. I could see the people who had jumped were in the plaza right in front of us. We went around the side of the building and we crossed West Street and at that point there was a Fire Department command post set up over there. I believe that's where Chief Ganci and some of the members were, at that command post.

So as I was standing on the steps looking up at

the towers, I could see the people -- there were some people who had jumped. I could still see the heavy smoke and fire pushing from both towers and my partner, Mike Owney, my partner at the time, had seen Commissioner Von Essen standing on the sidewalk right in front of us. So we approached the commissioner and he was by himself and he started walking away. And my partner said, "Boss, this is a terrorist incident. You shouldn't be by yourself. There could be secondary terrorists out here and you have 'Fire Commissioner' on your back. You're a walking target.

So he told us he was headed over to Barclay Street to meet the Mayor at another command post that was set up over there. We said, "Well, we're going to go with you." So he said, "okay." So as we walked up West Street we made a turn on Vesey Street. We went approximately one or two blocks when all of a sudden we heard this big roar. It sounded like another plane coming in or it sounded like an earthquake, but it just didn't sound right. So we all started running, my partner and I, and we had the commissioner with us also. The next thing I know we were engulfed in this black cloud of smoke

and we couldn't breathe, we couldn't see anything.

Calling out for my partner. Couldn't find him. Eventually made it up the block a little bit. When the smoke cleared, my partner was behind me and the commissioner was still with us. We walked about another block or two and wound up on Barclay street. We went about a half a block on Barclay when the Mayor and Police Commissioner Kerick walked out of a building. We literally bumped into them and they had a bunch of their aides with them.

So we looked at Commissioner Von Essen and he had spoken to the mayor and he said they were going to find a temporary command post. So we had gone a few blocks and we entered a restaurant. At that point we looked up and there was a big atrium with a lot of glass. They felt it wasn't secure enough so we exited there and we started walking, I think we were headed north now. I don't remember exactly what street we were on when I hear this same roar again. At this point I didn't know the first tower had come down.

So we just started running again, not knowing what this noise was and as I turned around I could see the second tower collapsing. And we were

literally running down the street and we came to the quarters of I believe it was 24 Engine and 5 Truck on Sixth Avenue and Houston. So at that point we forced the door. There was a combination lock on the door. We forced the door. We got in their quarters. We had the Fire Commissioner, the Police Commissioner and the Mayor and a bunch of his people and a few more cops who had showed up. We set up a command post there for a few hours and they were making some phone calls and then about an hour and a half, two hours later their vehicle showed up. They decided they were going to set up a command post at the Police Academy. So we got in the car with Commissioner Von Essen and everybody headed uptown to the Police Academy on 22nd Street and on the 6th floor we secured an office. We made some notifications that the Fire Commissioner was going to be at this location for a while. We were giving out the phone numbers and they started setting up a command post. And that's where we spent most of the rest of that day. And then later on that night the commissioner went back down to the World Trade Center. We were with the commissioner. We were pretty much acting as his bodyguards and we wound up

being detailed into that whole first week acting as his security.

File No. 9110372

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

SUPERVISING FIRE MARSHAL RANDALL WILSON

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20th, 2001. The time is 1136 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Supervising Fire Marshal Randall Wilson, who is assigned to Brooklyn base Hooper Street, director of training. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Randy, you can start whenever you want.

A. Okay. I'm assigned to special operations bureau of fire investigation. I was in my office at the time of the fire in the first tower that got hit by the plane. I was notified. I was the supervisor in charge that day. The other supervisor in charge of special operations was off.

I grabbed Ken Moody. He was the fire marshal. We went over, took the Brooklyn Bridge. While on the Brooklyn Bridge, the second tower got hit. When we went over, we were able to park our vehicle on Church Street.

We got out, just regular attire, shirt and tie and suit. We went down Liberty Street

towards West Street. While on Liberty Street, we were notified make sure that we have full firefighting gear. My gear was in my vehicle. Ken Moody didn't have any gear, so I sent him into 10 Engine, 10 Truck to grab some gear.

I went back to my vehicle. I moved it even closer. It was roughly at Church and Liberty then. I got dressed. I picked up Ken Moody, and we went to the command post located in front of the hotel on West Street.

We were at that location. We were trying to set up a separate command post for the bureau of fire investigation. At that point they wanted us to relocate to Liberty and Vesey. So looking at the building, we walked around exposure two to exposure three, which was Church Street, and we were looking for Liberty and Vesey, which don't intersect.

At the time we weren't thinking that they didn't intersect. We asked somebody. They pointed us to the direction of Liberty. When we got to Liberty, we couldn't find Vesey. We turned around on Church. We were going towards Vesey.

While on Church Street in the area of Fulton, we heard the noise, and we were trying to go down the side street. Just making the turn onto the side street of Fulton and Church, I felt the wind coming.

So at that point I wasn't able to outrun it or find another location, so I went behind a car. I had a female civilian with me, whatever, and the tower came down. You couldn't see. We were waiting to see when we could start breathing or seeing or whatever.

After the tower came down and it started clearing, I was helping that woman. At the time that we were on Church, I probably had approximately about a dozen, dozen and a half marshals with me, trying to find the second location.

So at that point when the tower came down, I was trying to locate the marshals. Some had gone down the subway. Some had gone into buildings, things like that. So I had a difficult time finding them. I was trying to assist the people that were in the area.

Then the second tower came down. At

that point everybody was dispersed. I wasn't sure where everybody was. I was finally able to reach somebody. To be honest with you, I honestly forget how I was able to find out, but we regrouped at Battery Park.

At that point I took the wide way around towards the Battery Park. Then Bob Burns would have come in from home, Chief McCahey and myself, we had gone back to the scene area to see what we could do to start setting up under command post, something along those lines.

That was pretty much it.

CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1140 hours, and the interview with Supervising Fire Marshal Wilson is concluded.

File No. 9110373

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL MICHAEL CAIN

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20, 2001. The time is 1057 hours and this is Battalion Chief Steven King from Safety Battalion FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Fire Marshal Michael Cain, who is assigned to the DFI SOC command, our technical services unit. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Mike, you can start whenever you're ready.

A. I got to work about a little before 8:00 o'clock that morning. I was in my office checking out some of my cameras and straightening up my office when one of the other Fire Marshals, Jim Murphy, said there was a fire in the Trade Center and it was a fifth alarm already.

I went over to his office, which faces the World Trade Center and I had my digital camera with me and I looked out the window and I could see the fire. I took a few pictures of it and then my supervisors were saying where we were going to go over there. This was a fifth alarm already so I went back to my -- I thought a minute and I said, You know what? I better set up a video camera in the window here. So I went to my office. I got a

video camera with a couple of tapes. I set it up on the tripod in the window facing the Trade Center enclosing the top of -- the top, more like where the cash area was and I started the tape and as I was getting my fire gear ready looking out the window again, when we saw the second plane crash into the second tower. I left the tape running and I knew it was not an accident, you know, that this happened. So I gave Jim Murphy a little instruction on how to change the tape and he left the tape running.

I went with Bobby Burns and Mike Starace, we got in the car and we went over the Brooklyn Bridge. We went down underneath the -- down to the West Side Highway, came up West Street. We parked on West Street and I guess about Albany, West Street and Albany, got out of the car and started going up West Street and there were body parts in the street. The plane wheel was in the street. You could see the plane in the building. We went to about West Street, in front of -- West and Liberty, just before the pedestrian bridge where Chief McCay wanted to gather us all together just before we went to the command post. Then the Chief said to get my camera. I went back to the car, I got the camera out of the

car. Bobby Burns went back to the car with me and as I got back up towards Liberty and on West Street Bobby Burns yelled to me, "run." I looked up. I took a few pictures as I saw the building start to collapse, I started running back towards like Albany and Carlyle streets and stopped again and I looked, I took a few more pictures and I knew I wasn't going to outrun this thing so I just ran and hid behind -- a found an ambulance. I just waited and the smoke caught up with me and I could hear the beams and the rocks, you know, pieces of rock would hit me on the helmet and I just hid behind the ambulance. It seemed like forever.

You know, I was in the truck company for a long time and when you go in through a search you look for that peek on the floor, that 2 inches that you always have the clear air and, you know, you can see your victim. I get down on the floor and I'm looking for that clean air and there ain't nothing. You know, I just stuck my head in my coat. Lucky I had my fire coat and helmet on and I just waited until what seemed like forever for the smoke to clear.

When the smoke started to clear I ran back

towards the collapse zone, because I knew the rest of the guys were over there and when I got there the rigs were on fire, the pumper was on fire, the Ladder company was on fire.

I met up with supervisor Dave Lynn. You couldn't get through because of the pedestrian bridge, it was filled with debris. There was nobody on our side of the bridge that was hurt, so what I did was I made my way around the bridge down Albany Street, I guess, and down past the esplanade and then I started my way up towards the Yacht -- the North Cove Yacht Harbor and by the time I made it up there I almost made it to West Street again and all the E.S.U. cops were running towards me and towards everybody yelling, "Run." And I heard that distinctive sound again. The sound of the building collapse. I could see it collapsing and I started to run back towards the sea wall and as I was passing the sea wall, the Jersey State Police had a launch in the Cove Harbor and he was trying to pull out, but the bow line was still attached to the tire. You know, where they tie the boat up.

And I passed it by and then I looked up and the building and I said, "Oh, I can make it back there."

He cut the engine and I was able to make it back to whatever they call the metal thing they put the rope around and I was able to get it off. He had enough slack and I just through to the launch, the cop on the launch and I guess they made it out of the cove, because they had wounded people on the boat. And I ran back towards the sea wall and when I got there the smoke came again but it didn't stay as long. Because there was a big breeze that came off of the water there that pushed it back.

Then we just made our way to West Street, just looking for whatever -- anybody that was there. Then we grouped up and found people and regrouped back up at the marshal's with Chief McCay and everything. We went back. They had a temporary command post down by where the old Pier 1 was. We had Dr. Kelly back there and everybody else and then we all moved the command post up, just up to the college. I guess it was the college. We went back to the college. We did different things for the next 59, 59 hours.

Q. That concludes your interview?

A. Yes.

BATALLION CHIEF KING: The time is 1105

hours and the interview with Fire Marshal

Michael Cain is concluded.

File No. 9110374

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL HYLAND

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20th, 2001, the time is 1400 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King from the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade Paul Hyland from Ladder Company 110, who was the OBN man on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, you can start whenever you'd like.

A. It's Paul Hyland from Ladder 110. It was about five or ten to 9:00 in the morning when we got the run to respond to Manhattan for a possible 1076. From actually the headquarters I could see the smoke coming over Manhattan going into Brooklyn.

Jumped on the rig going over the Brooklyn Bridge. That's when we got our first sight of the World Trade Center burning and, as we were actually crossing over, reports of someone from I guess -- because we had flipped over to radio transmissions and we had confirmed people jumping and we had perfect sight and actually we were looking to see what was going on, and this was going to be a fucked up job.

Going over the bridge, then we're trying to make our way down there. Went down Broadway. People

running and trying to get out of the area. Very difficult, hard traffic. Went down Liberty Street. We were actually looking -- we were trying to figure out exactly the position of where we had to put the rig because they wanted us down, I guess, it was really on West Street and Vesey, and it turned out we had stopped at Chambers and Liberty and we were waiting there because there were thousands of people and everybody was filming and just couldn't get across and we're trying to figure out, and then there was a gigantic explosion.

I had the OB and I looked up and I just saw the top of World Trade Center go up like a lit candle. It just everything just lit up and I thought it was maybe a secondary explosion, because if you looked from where we were, they're twins, so you're going to picture the second -- I didn't see the plane go in and I thought it was just a secondary explosion in the same tower, and everything just came down on the street. It was just raining steel. We said we're not going that way. So we were going to back up and we had to go down to Broadway. We ended upcoming back. We were on Vesey and Liberty again. So we went back up and landed up parking the rig at Vesey and, I guess, Vesey and what

street was that?

(Pause.)

A. I guess Vesey and the Millenium Hotel. Church Street. I'm sorry. Church and Vesey. We were coming across and we walked down. We had to go down to the command center. We carried all our tools, the bottles, everything, and as we're walking down, part of the plane engine was sitting right in the street, still burning. I said, look, this is the plane.

That was the other thing. Another engine company, as we were marching, did shoot right down Liberty Street with all the debris going right there. I thought they were crazy. I had no idea. I can't remember what engine company it was, but they shot right across.

So we ended going around to West Street. Lieutenant Mera, the lieutenant for that day, I guess he saw a command station, command headquarters right inside the north tower, which is Tower 1?

Q. One?

A. We went in, busted through one of the windows, opened up, made like a door. I can't recall the fire companies who were there, but we responded there. We were waiting. We knew we were going to be

going up and it was a staging area for us. So I stood over by the -- I said let's get over by the elevator banks, put all our stuff down. Our Engine, 207, all came over with us. We were just sitting there talking, watching what was going on, and Lieutenant Mera came back to us and he said that we've got to respond up to the 21st floor, that there are people trapped. I'm not sure of the Chief that was with us who was assigned to us, maybe if you said his name, but I can't recall, and I think we had a maintenance guy with us at the time.

We were walking around. We walked to the back. I guess we were walking east inside the building, which was towards Vesey Street, right? Yes, where they had that mezzanine, they had an escalator coming down. There were just hundreds and hundreds of people just coming down at that point. The maintenance guy said I think the elevators are working, or it was the Chief said it. The Chief went around and says take a look at some of the elevators. I think we had a maintenance guy with us at the time. He said these low-rise are working, it will get you up to 16.

We said, well, this is not a normal procedure. We tried the firemen's service, brought the elevators down, put it in firemen's service, and about

all of us got into the elevator. It was a little unsettling. We went up I think a couple floors. We stopped and opened up. It opened. So we went up to 16, which was great because, walking 16 flights, we wouldn't be able to operate.

We got to the floor, went into the staircase, I think it was staircase C. It was the one right there. It was on the south side or west side. We went out and there were just people coming, constant amount of people, just a steady flow, but we couldn't attack with the steady flow of people. I mean, the staircases weren't that wide. We were shoulder to shoulder with these people with tools, we're banging them, telling them to step aside, and they didn't understand. They're just panicking. It was a nightmare.

So we got up to 23rd and they were going to try and clear that stairway out and make it an attack staircase. We actually had the people come out of the staircase and walk down to the other one and we were going to make them go down this one and make this the firemen's staircase so we could come up. We dropped our stuff on the 23rd and then Lieutenant Mera said down on the 21st we have people trapped.

We get down to the 21st floor. Me and Artie

Riccio from Ladder 119, we took the south end of the building. We split up. We paired off. Lieutenant Mera, Mike Beehler and Dave Sandvik took the north end of the building. We made our way around. There was no smoke. It was empty, but we were checking doors, forcing all the offices. We went around popping doors, popping doors, popping doors, all the way around, just anybody in there? Nothing. We were all getting very overheated and I have to say I took -- one of these offices were very expensive. I took a pitcher of water and just drank it right there, me and Artie, and then we got back. One of the doors we forced was like a water cooler -- it was microwaves and coffee pots and they had water and stuff.

So we got back to the other attack staircase, which was in the center of the building. We were all sitting. We were just waiting there for a few minutes, and we said we were going to go up to the next floor, and as we were waiting, everybody is sweating and hot and getting dehydrated. I told my officer, Wayne, I said, listen, I know where I can get some water. I said it's right over here. It's just down and to the back. I says I'm just going to pick up the cooler and bring it into the staircase so everybody gets water.

So he says don't go far. I says I'm going to put my mask right here. I'll just put my mask down.

I walk down and I make a left. Now I'm about 20 to 25 feet from the windows and the building starts to shake, and I look out and I'm just seeing all the steel from the south tower coming down right in front of my face, just all the steel, I mean, everything. I thought it was our building going down. So I just ran back, and the guys thought I was Derek Jeeter because I scooped up my mask, ran into the staircase, we donned our masks and we just stood there and the building shook and we just huddled like children.

It shook. We took about a minute or so, that's all I recall, a minute or two, then it stops. Everything was quiet. Then we went back out of the stairs. All the sheetrock, all the ceilings had come down in the building, guys were coming running back in. I think Dave and Artie said the windows were blown out and the wind blew through the -- lucky they didn't get sucked out. Then someone gave a Mayday to get out of the building, as I understand. I know it was just evac, but I didn't know if it was a regular Mayday or just evacuation. Everybody out of the building.

At that point it was only firemen I thought

at that point and we're all starting to make our way down through the building not knowing that the whole south tower -- I thought it was just a partial collapse. No one gave any word that it was a total collapse or the south tower is gone or anything like that. I don't know. So we just start walking our way down, but there's a line of firemen all the way down in front of us. There's not a step that doesn't have a fireman on it and we're all walking down.

Q. Did you see civilians or was it all firemen?

A. I only recall firemen at this point.

Going down, going down, and at times you actually had to stop. There's just nowhere to go. I mean, they're not moving. We're like come on, guys, come on, let's go, let's go, and they can't. Probably because I don't realize that the lobby is probably as black as what I'm going to find out in about five minutes, knowing the way we're coming out and it's nighttime or it's debris. So we're waiting. We're like, come on, guys, let's go, let's go, and we're just waiting and it took a lot of time. We were up on the 21st floor. Those are double flights, I believe. One, two, scissor. That's one floor. So it's 42 flights of stairs.

So it took us quite a bit of time to hit the lobby and it was just destroyed. I mean, it looked like -- it wasn't the same lobby 15 minutes ago. It was just completely gone, every window was shattered, all the ceiling tile, the elevator banks had let go it seemed, the floor was all crushed down. I didn't see any -- I don't want to say I didn't see any bodies there right now.

At that point we were waiting and we're watching. It was all dust on the lower burn, and I did remember I went over because I knew where we came out right away -- where we went in. I went over there and I was just -- because we sort of got lost with some of the other guys and we didn't want to leave anybody behind. I saw Lieutenant Mera, I saw Dave Sandvik, I said, guys, over this way, this way. Everybody was coming out these doors because everybody was just going through glass. I saw chards of glass that guys were walking under. If they let go, they would have cut them in two. Then everybody got together, I know Mike Beehler, he was a proby, so I was watching him, and I said, all right, let's go. Then, I had to remember, I saw one of the dead jumpers that were right next to me.

But as we went out, now we're all overheated and stuff. We sat down right underneath the west bridge is it? The pedestrian bridge. We were sitting on top of a police car right underneath there. We sat there maybe like two minutes, three minutes. Wayne says, come on, let's get a little further away from the building, you know, if this building let's go, run along the sides of the building because that's the only thing that's going to protect you.

I think I saw -- I think it was two things. I think it was 6 Truck had put its aerial up on the hotel over there. I remember, going back, I don't want to backtrack, but I do remember when we were going in some radio transmissions that one fire truck pulled right up in front and one of the Chiefs was screaming at him get away from the front of the building. I can't remember the truck company that was there.

Then, going back to my story, we started walking north a little bit. We got maybe a half a block away and I was turning around watching. I think Wayne was saying don't stop, but I turned around and I'm watching this thing. I don't know. I just saw the top half of the north tower sink and sort of just sat down on itself, sat down, and then just started

shattering and just blowing out like a Christmas tree. That's when I screamed, here it comes, run for your lives, and they all ran.

We ran -- I don't think we ran too far. Everything was just coming at us. I just hid behind a car. Another fireman, Tom, from a Manhattan company, I just said, well, what's your name? He said Tom. I said I just want to know who I'm going to die with, and we just hid behind a car. Then we saw what happened, the whole thing came at us, and we just kept walking north after that. We just wanted to get away from it as fast as I could. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1415 hours and the interview with Firefighter Paul Hyland is completed.

File No. 9110375

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID SANDVIK

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20th, 2001. The time is 1440 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter 2nd Grade David Sandvik from Ladder Company 110, who HAD the roof on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Dave, you can start whenever you're ready.

A. Okay. The day started out with I had the watch and I remember guys standing out on the apparatus apron and they could see the smoke coming from Manhattan, so we knew something was going on in Manhattan. I went back into the watch, I switched the radio onto the Manhattan frequency and found out it was the World Trade Center. Then right after that the news flashed and started showing the Trade Center where the first plane hit and I started getting dressed. I got my radio on, my bunker pants on, because we normally go to Manhattan pretty quick, just for a smoke condition at the Trade Center.

So I was standing right in front of the computer and the radio was already up to a third or fourth alarm and the computer came over and it was

filling out the alarm with us, 205 and the battalion, respond to the north tower. So I got on the PA, told everybody we're going. It started out as like we're going to an unbelievable job at the Trade Center. That's all we thought.

Everybody gets on the rig, we start heading over the Brooklyn Bridge, and my position was the roof and I'm sitting in the middle seat, so facing backwards I couldn't see anything. I remember asking the OV what's going on, what's going on, and he said there are multiple floors on fire, and I'm just thinking, wow, we're in for a hell of a job. Halfway over the bridge, I guess midspan, all of a sudden I hear on -- we switch over to the Manhattan frequency now on the rig and I hear Manhattan calling Division 1, saying Division 1, almost like am I hearing you correctly? We got jumpers out of the Trade Center? Division 1 was like, yeah, we got jumpers, and right at that point I remember everybody went from being like, wow, we got a job, to like this is not a good thing we're going to, this is something like a worst nightmare. You never want to hear about jumpers but anyway...

So we get over there and we come over the Brooklyn Bridge heading down Broadway and we pulled

down a street that leads to the back side of the Trade Center, it's off Church Street, and we get off the rig and at this point there's quite a few people, thousands of people coming up towards us, away from the Trade Center, but a lot of people, spectators too still kind of looking at what's going on. We start heading down the block and we get down to I guess about Church Street and the second plane hit, and I remember just being underneath. I never heard the motor of the plane, the sound of the engines. We just heard the explosion, you felt the explosion, and looking straight up and seeing that fireball that you see on the news, but we're underneath looking up now at it.

Lieutenant Mera, which was a great move, said to get back on the rig and we were going to try to make it around to the west side of the towers. So we ended up backing up to Broadway, then we head down Broadway, and at this point the streets were just thousands and thousands of people now. After the second plane hit, everybody was just fleeing Manhattan. We were able to manage to come down like a side street and we end up on Church Street now heading north and we end up, I guess, where like the farmers market is, somewhere in that vicinity, on Church Street.

So we get off the rig and now we walk up to Vesey Street, west on Vesey to the west side and then south on the west side, and we're walking past the north tower and I remember we were looking for the command post. We figured it was set up outside and we didn't see it. We actually walked past the tower and the boss said he remembered that the ticket said we were going to the north tower and we already passed the north tower, so he guided us to make a U-turn. So we walked into the north tower and the command post happened to be in the lobby of the north tower.

So as we get into the lobby, he directs us to go off to the side and relieve ourselves, take the extra cylinders, put them on the floor, take all our extra equipment and just put them on the ground to reserve some energy. As we start putting stuff down, I take a roof rope, put it down, an extra cylinder, put it down, I see Engine 207 come walking in. So I call them over and they come over and they start putting down their roll-ups.

We're in there maybe about a minute, two minutes, just enough time to get in there, put our stuff down, and then he came back over to us and said, okay, we got our assignment. We're going up to the

21st floor. We got a report of people trapped. So we pick up everything, put the roof rope back on, extra cylinders, and I happened to see a lobby guy, like a guy that works in the lobby, and I asked him which elevators does he have running, and he said all the elevators are out except for the low-rise, which will take us to 16.

So we get into the elevator and now it's us, I believe a Chief from Battalion 11, well, I'm sure of him, and I think there were some guys from an engine company, but I'm not sure about that. We take the elevator up to 16, get off, get into the stairwell, and we start heading up. The stairwell was pretty narrow and in the single file, us going up, civilians coming down. We get up to 21 and it happened to be a floor where the sign on the door says no re-entry on this floor. The nearest floor to re-enter was 23 or a floor below. The boss decided that we were blocking the traffic if we just stood there and forced the door, and so he said let's go up to 23, unload our stuff, almost make it like our own little command post, and then we'll come back down and then force the door. So we went up there. I got rid of the roof rope, extra cylinders. Whatever we didn't need we just left on

23.

We came back down to 21, forced the door, went into the floor, searched the whole floor, forcing 40, 50 doors. There was a conference room. We forced that. We just finished searching the floor and I was with -- it was me, the boss and Artie, and the south tower came down and our building rocked. I remember windows blowing out and the air pressure in the hallway felt like we were almost in like a wind tunnel, and I remember the boss just saying get to the staircase.

So we ran to the staircase. It felt like an eternity, but we were standing there waiting and he's trying to call Battalion 11 on the radio and couldn't get them, couldn't get them. Finally, after about two calls, I said to the boss, I said, I'll run up to 23 and look for him.

So I go up to 23, look down a couple hallways. Complete darkness. There was nobody around. The floor was deserted. I come back down and I told him, I said, there's nobody up there. Nobody's on 23. So he says okay. He tries to call him again. Then at that point they gave the call for everybody to get out. Didn't say anything about the collapse of the south tower. We didn't know there was a collapse of

the south tower. We thought -- well, I personally thought it was a collapse of the upper floors and that's what caused the building to rock and windows to blow out with the shift in the building.

Q. The upper floors of your tower?

A. Yes, the upper floors of --

Q. The north tower?

A. -- of our tower, yes. Not in my wildest dream did I think those towers were coming down.

So when they said to evacuate, get out, we got into the stairwell and headed on down, nice and calmly, nobody was running, nobody was pushing. It was just nice, calm, orderly fashion. We were checking floors as we were going down. I mean, checking a floor meant, if we got to a door, opened it and nobody was behind it, we continued, and if the guys in front of us opened a door, we passed that door. At one point, me and the OV, we came across a door that was locked and it couldn't have been checked because it wasn't forced. So we forced the door, opened it. I yelled down the hallway and no answer and I turned to my boss and said is that good enough? He said, yeah, that's good enough, and we just walked down, nice and calm.

As we got down to the lower floors, I guess,

I'd say we were on the 6th floor, traffic in the stairwell came to two stops where I actually sat down in the stairs. I sat down for maybe a minute and then the traffic started moving and we got back up and started going again. It was I'd say 95 percent -- I mean, it was almost all firemen. We had a civilian here, a civilian there, but it was mostly firemen.

We got down to the lobby, and when we got out of the stairwell, the lobby was deserted. Nobody was down there except the people coming out of our stairwell. We were walking through and the elevator doors were blowing off. The lobby was just like a complete mess. I remember grabbing the proby that day and we were looking down the elevator bank and I said, man, this would make a hell of a picture. Then, you know, we just kind of walked out. When we got to the edge of the building, all the windows were gone. There were guys outside telling us hold up or come out, and the guy in front of me stopped, the guys outside told him to stop and then all of a sudden waved us on out.

We came out and we ended up on the west side. Right south of Vesey Street there's a pedestrian bridge and we went underneath that bridge and we actually stopped there a minute. We thought we were

safe, we were under cover and anything falling from the building, you know, we were protected by this pedestrian crosswalk, and the boss said come on guys, we're still a little bit close. Let's move up a little bit. So we walked up about a half a block further and we saw Engine Co. 224's rig, and he said let's go over there because we were running with them and we figured we'd start unloading our masks and loosening up our jackets, put some of our tools down that we had left.

So we get over to the engine and we just started taking a couple things off. I got my mask off, I put my Halligan down, and that's when the south tower came down. It was just unbelievable. We started running.

Q. The north tower.

A. The north tower. Sorry. Yes, the north tower came down. We started running up the west side, maybe got to the end of 224's rig. I'm running, looking up, and I can see the top of the tower starting to come down and it was just an unbelievable sight. The OV yells holy shit, here it comes. I'm looking at the top of the building and when he yells that, I look down and I see the mushroom effect come rolling down the street, and we knew we weren't going to outrun

this.

So along the west side there, it was just masks laid down. Thank God they were left there. I remember I just took like three steps over there and grabbed a mask. I couldn't even get it on my back. I just threw the face piece on, threw my helmet back on, and we were swallowed up in this debris of -- you name it, it was in there. Total darkness. Didn't know if we were buried or -- we had no idea what was going on.

About ten, 15 minutes, you know, who knows how long it really took, but it was taking so much time and I remember saying, boy, it's a beautiful, clear day and I'm outside and I can't see anything in front of me. I thought my mask was just covered because I remember just wiping the front piece thinking I was going to wipe away the dust, and I still couldn't see. So I start searching the ground and I came across another cylinder.

So I set up the mask on the ground, getting ready to, if I ran out of air, that I could change the bottles. I didn't have to change bottles, but the air started lifting, and then all of a sudden I could see a couple of faint flashlights, so I knew other guys were walking around. So I got up and it started lifting and

I just started heading uptown and before I knew it, I was out in clear air, and I kept going uptown and then we just -- somehow the company got back together and we walked uptown, I guess, I don't know, five, six, seven blocks.

Then we took a break on the center medium of the west side, and our can man wasn't with us. So the officer kept on calling him, calling him, calling him. Finally, we got through to the radio and found out he was all right, and he got reunited with us, I guess, about a half hour after that, and that was about it.

We stayed on the west side by -- what is that, a college over there? I don't know. We stayed up there, about eight blocks away, and then the recall, guys started showing up on the recall. I mean, me personally, we were just spent. The guy next to me was throwing up. It felt like we went to ten jobs in a matter of two hours.

Then that was basically it. We didn't really do much. Well, later on that night we went in, we searched the subway, found our rig, and they said, if you find your own rig, you can drive it back to quarters, which we did, which was about 10:00 o'clock that night.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1457 hours and the interview with Firefighter Sandvik is concluded.

File No. 9110376

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WILSON

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 20th, 2001. The time is 7:07 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Wilson, firefighter first grade, from Engine 58, in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. John, just tell me the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We were dispatched as soon as the second plane hit. We were watching it in the house. They sent us down basically right away. So we got down there pretty quickly. I couldn't really say the time. I guess we parked on West Street and, I would say, probably maybe Barclay. I couldn't be sure. It was a block or two away from the Trade Center, north of the Trade Center. There were a lot of rigs there, so we didn't get that close.

We started walking down West, and the first thing we realized were the noises we were hearing were people hitting the ground. So we had to kind of detour across -- we went, I guess,

that median, over to the west side now of West Street, because we saw all these people coming down and we didn't want to get hit by them.

So we kind of detoured around West Street like to the west side of West Street, kept walking, took a lot of extra bottles with us, whatever we could take. I think we took a rope.

We were under the impression that the command post was at Liberty and West, so that's where we were headed. When we got there, there wasn't anybody there, no inclination, no -- it didn't seem like there was ever a command post there. But there was nobody around.

We didn't go down Liberty for the same reason as West Street, because people were jumping and there was crap coming off the building. So we kind of went right by this south pedestrian walkway on West Street, you know, that goes over, and I guess there was kind of like a parking lot or something on that corner between Liberty and Cedar on West Street here. We kind of were going through that, walking wide of the street so we didn't get hit by anything.

First thing I remember was we kind of

got split up. There was eight of us. The lieutenant was worried that three of the guys had gone ahead. They walked I guess a little faster than us. So they were ahead. Now he was like where are they? We could see them up the block. They were further up Liberty when I first saw them.

Then we came over to realize that one of the brothers was down on the ground, and I went over there. I believe it was Danny Suhr from 216 Engine. He was on the ground, and his guys were with him. He was a mess. The other bunch of guys really didn't stand there that long, because they were taking care of their own guy.

Q. What happened? Did he get hit with debris?

A. He got hit with a body. I didn't see it, but that's what they told me when I went over there. I said, "What happened? Is he all right?" They said, "He got hit by" -- I don't know who told me, but that's what I was told. I didn't see that. He was crumpled on the ground, and he didn't look too good.

Then someone -- I don't know if it was a Port Authority guy, because there were a few people out on the street with white shirts and radios, like maybe from the buildings. One of those guys or a civilian gave me a radio. They said, "Here." It was a Fire Department radio. It said 216 on it. It was all full of blood. So I guess it might have been Danny Suhr's. So I threw it in my pocket.

Now we noticed Chief Scheffold walking up Liberty Street. We're yelling at him to get out of the street because we didn't want him to get hit, but he just kept walking. Now we were deciding where we were going to go. The command post we were assuming was probably in the Trade Center lobby by this time.

We ran into the same Port Authority security guys, whoever they were, because they had their own radios. They were telling us that they think it was in Two World Trade they said there were firemen in the lobby there. He said we could access that by going through the Marriott Hotel. There was a bar I believe on Liberty called Tall Ships. He said if we went

through there we could go through the lobby, and then we could get to the Trade Center. So that's what we did.

We quickly ran across the street, and we got into the Vista Hotel through the Tall Ships bar. We walked through the lobby I guess of -- we walked through the bar. I guess we came to the lobby. From my recollection I thought we kind of turned to the right. It wasn't like a hard turn, but we went to the right, going east now. That's where we hooked up with the other three. We saw the other three guys that we got separated from. So we got together with them. So now the eight of us were in the lobby.

I don't know where they came from or if they were there when I got there, but Chief Scheffold, Chief Marchbanks, Chief Galvin and my lieutenant were having a little powwow. They were talking. The lieutenant said relax. We took our masks off. We were standing in the lobby.

At this time we were in the lobby of the Marriott. Me, I personally don't remember seeing other companies at this time. It was

basically us and a few civilians, mostly people that worked there. It's totally hearsay, but I know a couple of the other guys, they'll tell you in their interviews they had seen 288, 23 Engine. So they'll be able to tell you better where they went. But I know of other guys from 58 did see other companies, but I personally don't remember seeing them.

I would say we were in the lobby I don't think it was more than five or ten minutes, and they were talking, I guess discussing where should we go, what should we do. I think the lieutenant was on his way back to us to talk to us, and we heard the loudest roar that I ever heard in my life.

Everybody just ran. We ran away from the noise. So the noise was to my east as I was standing the there. We ran back basically the way we came in, I don't know how far. All of a sudden I was just picked up. I felt the wind from behind me just pick me up and throw me. So now I'm on the ground.

Now I started crawling. Hopefully I think I'm crawling the way I came in. However

long that lasted, ten seconds -- I don't know. It seemed like a long time. It just subsided, the noise. It was just like a crescendo sound like boom, boom, boom, and it just got louder and faster for like -- what did it last, ten seconds or something like that?

After it was over I'm amazed, because I thought that was the end of it right there. I was getting pelted. I was just trying to crawl. When I got up, I grabbed the flashlight. There was a flashlight on the floor. It wasn't even mine. I just grabbed it. The first person I saw was one of these hotel guys crawling around. I grabbed him and said, "Come on. We'll go this way."

Now I'm trying to call my guys. Now I started using the radio that they gave me outside, because I had, I would say -- four of the guys with us were probably basically probies. I tried to call them at the same time as I'm calling guys in the lobby. I'm trying to see what the hell is going on. Now it's pitch-black.

I hear my lieutenant on the radio. I don't know where he is, but he's calling me.

He's calling whoever he can call too. By this time I ran into two of the other guys, Mike and Scott, from 58.

Now it seemed like there were people all over the place. I don't know where they came from. We tried to sort of go out towards -- we saw light. I think it was towards Liberty Street. It was just like a light. There were no doors or anything like that.

A bunch of guys lifted up a rolldown gate that must have just fell down, because it wasn't there, I don't think, when we came in. So they lifted that up.

Now the lieutenant, he was calling us and I'm trying to find out where he is. I'm calling all the guys outside. Actually I think John Weber had the radio. I got him on the radio. He said he was outside already. He got out with three of the other guys, I believe. So I said, "All right. Stay outside."

We didn't know where the lieutenant was yet. I still to this day the three of us aren't sure, the three of us that were in there now still with the collapse, the first one, that we

somehow located the lieutenant. I don't know if I found him or who found him. We don't even know. We just heard him now, without his radio. I think we just heard his voice. We went back towards the building in the lobby area. I believe he was behind the elevators that were facing south. I think there was a bank facing south and north.

So we found him. Now he's buried. He's behind this elevator. He's trapped. We told him that everybody was accounted for. That was a load off his mind. He was worried about where everybody was. I said, "We've got everybody." He was like, "All right. Then get me out of here." We're like, "All right. We're going to get you out of there."

At this point I personally didn't know that that whole building collapsed. I knew something collapsed on us. That was some scene there for a minute.

At this point -- I don't know if you want me to tell you this, because I didn't actually see that. But Chief Galvin had a rope, and he wrapped it around a pillar, and he went

one way and he gave the bag to Scott from 58. He went towards where Lieutenant Nagel was with the bag.

So I remember him dropping the bag at our feet. We were standing there talking to Bob. He said he was fine. He said, "I'm all right. I'm not hurt." I gave him a flashlight to see if he could look around, see what was going on in there.

Then the weirdest thing was -- you mentioned before -- I never really heard any maydays. I didn't hear any of that. I didn't have the radio out of my pocket until the collapse happened. Now when I brushed myself off, it was in my pocket. So I didn't have the mic out or anything like that. So that's why I wasn't hearing anything.

113 Truck appeared out of somewhere. They weren't with us -- they said they heard on the radio -- I guess they heard that we were in there because my lieutenant was trapped. So they came in. Ray Brown was the lieutenant. I know him a little bit. His brother was a fireman here. So he came in. I guess there was four of

them.

So Scott Paskewitz went out. We asked him, "Scott, why don't you go out and see if you can get some tools," because we had nothing. So he went out, and he came in -- I don't know if he came in, but 113 and him wound up coming in together. They had a partner saw, a saws-all. 113 brought in air bags.

We proceeded to try to do something with Bob. I don't know how to describe it. It was just a maze of junk. There were little studs, there was sheetrock, there were pipes, wires, everything.

He was just in this little corner behind the elevator. He said he was fine but it wasn't like he could walk out. I could see him. I could talk to him. The ceiling above him looked very shaky. Something had knocked out. It was like a pillar. It was a wooden-faced pillar.

A lot of those pillars I think had wood facing on them. The one I saw later when the building was coming down, it was just an I beam probably. I don't know if it was. That was

leaning against the wall. It looked like it was holding a lot up. So we couldn't touch that.

Ray Brown, he was like -- I was kind of trying to watch the ceiling, and Mike got the saws-all. He cut, I would say -- at the same time, I forgot to say, it was Lieutenant Nagel, I'm talking to him. He told me that he could hear Chief Marchbanks and Chief Scheffold.

I was like, "You all right?" He said, "Yeah, yeah. Marchbanks and Scheffold are right back here." He could hear them, I guess; I couldn't. He told me that they were right near him somewhere; how far, I don't know.

So Mike had cut, I would say, maybe two pieces of pipe or the sheet metal or whatever he was cutting. He was cutting another piece. Now we heard this noise again, like this rumbling noise. I assumed the same thing is happening that just happened however long ago it was. It didn't seem like it was a half hour. It seemed to happen pretty fast.

So I just was standing right there. It was Ray, me, Mike and Scott. The other two guys from 113 actually left. Ray asked them -- he

goes, "I'm going to go outside and see if I can go around." He was looking for another way to access Bob Nagel.

So it was just Ray, me, Mike, Scott and one guy from 113 that I remember being there now. So it was five of us. Now we hear this rumbling again. We're like, "Oh, Jesus. Now what?" We tried to run again. We were running the way I think we came in. We were running back, I would say, towards Liberty Street, in whatever's left of the hotel now. Maybe half of it is left now. I don't know.

So the same scenario. We get knocked down and pounded around and knocked around. However long, 10 seconds, whatever, 20 seconds, from what they say, whatever I read. It just seemed longer when it happened.

So now I'm still around after the second one. I'm like, "Oh, man, this is amazing." Now I'm screaming to Scott. I scream, "Scott." He said, "What?" I would say he was a foot away from me. We were laying on the floor, because I hit the floor and I rolled and I hit the wall. So I just stayed by the wall.

When everything stopped, the noise stopped and everything, I was screaming Scott's name. He was at arm's length away from me. I could touch him. I didn't see him. I'm calling him. It got black again, and it cleared up pretty good after the first collapse. I guess because it wasn't that big an area. It cleared up pretty good. We could see fine. When I got outside later, it was a mess out there like with the dust.

So now we heard the second rumbling. Now we ran again. I'm calling for Scott. He's right next to me. Now I'm calling Mike. He's not answering me. Ray Brown is not answering me. The other guy, I didn't even get his name. At this point I'm calling him. Nobody is answering. I'm like, oh, man. Bob is not answering.

So finally now I see a light. I'm screaming. The guy's saying, "Keep talking." It turned out to be a guy, Richie, from 113. He came to my voice with his light. Mike said something. Now he's coming. So now they're coming out. But I still haven't heard from Ray Brown.

I'm like, oh, man, Bob's not calling. I'm thinking they must be buried now, both of them. I didn't see Ray. So we're like let's try to make our way out of here and see what the hell happened, because I still hadn't in my wildest dreams thought that two buildings, both of them, came down.

So we started to work towards the way we saw the light. It turned out I guess it was around Liberty Street. It was right near that south walkway we wound up coming out.

Just as we're getting ready -- because we had to climb up -- I would say the rubble probably was like two stories high just to get up to go out, out of the lobby area.

I turned around and I see a figure coming at me. I come back down. It's Ray Brown. He's like staggering out. I grabbed him. He was a bloody mess. I said, "Are you all right, Ray?" He's said, "No, I'm not." So we grabbed him. We helped him.

Now we start climbing up out of the place. Nobody around when we came up and looked out. It was just like a ghost town. It was just

like burning vehicles, the snow scene type of thing, cars buried, fires, cars on fire, puddles everywhere. I don't know what that was from. A lot of puddles, which I was afraid to step in, not thinking I'm going down a level. Trying to avoid that and trying to carry him.

The first person I remember seeing was a photographer, a guy with a big camera around his neck. I didn't pay him any mind. I saw a fireman too. I saw Jimmy Marketti, who is a chief now. He's coming towards the building with a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. He just came in on his motorcycle, he said.

So he starts helping us carry Ray. I'm tell him that Bobby Nagel, we lost him in the building. I'm having a very hard time carrying this guy too, because I'm a little tired, a little beat up.

So a couple other fire trucks, Scott got an EMS chair out of a broken down van. We put Ray Brown in the chair, tried to carry him in that. That was pretty difficult too, just up and down whatever, I beams, trying to avoid this water. For whatever reason, I'm thinking I'm

going to sink.

Gathered up another fireman, start seeing people. He had oxygen. He threw oxygen on Ray. So I kind of pass him off to some other guys. I can't even carry this guy anymore. At that point Jimmy Marketti, myself and Scott went back and tried to get back into the building, basically to look for Bob.

So we went back in and were looking around for Bob. Actually when we first tried to go back in, I don't think we made it back in, because now a fire had started right by the area we came out of. There was a fire there. So we had to go around another way to get back in.

The area we got back into in the lobby area, believe it or not there was a pretty good size area that was unbelievable. There was still bottled water there that didn't break, the very southwest, I guess, of the hotel that we had wound up amazingly getting to.

So we climbed back in. Now we're going back over this pile of just rubble. That's exactly what it was, just piles of like ceilings that came down. It was a mess, trying to go up

and down and around, calling him, no answer.

Now other people show up. I remember there was a guy from Rescue 1, I think I saw. I saw 252 Engine. It might have been an officer from 252 and a fireman. Now other guys just start showing up. Now there's a good ten people. I don't know where they're coming from, but maybe they heard us originally. I don't know.

They're in there. They're trying to go through holes. Everybody is just trying to get in. We're not getting anything done there. It was bad news. Bob is not answering the radio. His radio was kind of shitty to begin with, I think, because he was having a hard time -- even before the second collapse his radio was I think dying or maybe it was just all the crap in the air.

So we went back in. I would say basically futile attempts it turned out to be, unfortunately, to get back towards the area where we knew Bob was. The building actually collapsed right up to the pillar that had the rope on it. You could still see the rope. We knew we were just north of that.

How far could we have run after the second building came down? We were talking amongst ourselves, it couldn't have been more than 10 or 20 feet that we got before the building knocked us down again.

Then a chief showed up out of -- like I said, I don't know where these people came from. I'm not paying attention. Now there's a chief there, and he's asking us what's going on. I told him my lieutenant's in there, he's still buried, we have to try to find him.

He said, "Have you talked to him?" I said, "Not since the second collapse. I've had no communication." I said no communication with him. We have no -- in other words, no communication -- we don't know where he is, blah, blah, blah. He's telling everyone we've got to get out now, get out of the building. So he starts herding everybody out of there.

So we got out. He chased everybody out. We got out. I went back again. Numerous times that day we went back, kept going back in. I don't know why, piece of mind, I don't know, which you're not going to get by doing that.

Just to try to think I'm going to be able to find my lieutenant and the chiefs, which we never did. We still haven't to this day.

Basically after we got out of there that time, finally we got out of there. One guy, Mike, with me was limping badly. He said, "Oh, I'm all right." It turned outs his leg was pretty messed up. He was limping badly.

We walked towards the river, looking for an ambulance, an EMS or anything, trying to drink water, walked around, found him an ambulance. Actually we didn't find him an ambulance. We walked around in almost like a circle. We went to the river, headed back around, got our eyes washed out along the way somewhere, got a drink along the way, and came right back to where we started.

I think I went back in again. Mike at this point was hurting pretty bad, and I was starting to go find an ambulance to get him of there, which he didn't want to leave.

Basically that's what we did for the rest of the day. We just kind of walked around. After we got out of there, we took care of Mike.

He got in an ambulance. Actually he went with someone else. He wound up getting on a boat.

Everybody from here started showing up. I ran into the guys from my company; I don't know what time it was. They were under the impression the whole company was missing. I said, "No, Bob's missing."

Then we tried to get back in again. Basically all day I must have spent basically going in and out of there, to where Bob was. I really had no contact with other firemen that I remember in the lobby of the Marriott. Like I said, once you talk to all the guys from here, a few of them did, at least two or three of them I know.

Like I said, we got split up. So they saw the other companies and they got sent to wherever, and they were waiting for us. Otherwise we would have been in probably the same place they went. I don't know if they went up in the hotel or to the south tower. Like I said, you might hear that from some of the other guys.

Q. Is that it, John?

A. That's about it.

Q. Thank you, John, for all your help.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 7:30 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110377

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WEBER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 20th, 2001. The time is 7:50 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with John Weber, firefighter first from Engine 58, in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. John, tell us the events of September 11th as you recall them.

A. We got the call on the second fifth to go down after the second tower was struck. We took some extra masks and any extra cylinders we had. We tied up some rope rigs to hold double bottles on, put them over your shoulder to carry. We figured we're going to need the bottles on the upper floors of this thing.

After we thought we were equipped well enough, we took off for the box. We went up, all the way downtown to West Street, where we parked the rig, and started getting ready. We took our bottles off. I had control that day, so I had the radio, I had two bottles, I had the roof rope. I had something else; I don't remember what. We were taking Halligans, axes.

We were taking every single thing out of the rig, basically, just to be well-prepared when we're up there. We didn't know exactly what we were going to do.

We started heading down towards the second tower. Somehow our boss was told that we had to report to the second tower. As we were following along, we wanted to make sure that we all stayed together.

Q. When you say the second tower, you mean the south tower?

A. The south tower, I'm sorry. Yeah, the second tower got hit, the south tower. We were supposed to head in that vicinity. Where exactly, I wasn't sure exactly where at the time we were supposed to go.

We started heading there. As we got closer to the buildings, he just kept on saying, "Stay close together. I want everybody together. I don't want to have to be looking for people." Everybody understood.

As we were going, the jumpers were coming down, as we got real close to both buildings. Jumpers were just coming down right

near us, so we kept veering out further away from the building, kind of like around about, going around the back way until we can get a clearing.

As we were going around towards Liberty, the south tower around Liberty, that's when we saw I believe it was 216, the guy that got hit from the jumper. We saw his men with him or a group of men with him, firefighters, pulling him to the side.

They put over an urgent, I believe it was. He was badly hurt. We waited there with the company there with him until EMS arrived. That was the boss, Lieutenant Nagel, myself, John Wilson, Scott Paskewitz.

We kind of did split apart when all the jumpers started going. Some guys went to where they thought they could get shelter, and we of went around the other way. We stayed with him until EMS came. Then we made our way back in towards the south tower. That's when we saw Chief Sheffield and I guess the other battalion chiefs that were working that day from the 12th Battalion. We saw them walking.

We were yelling for them to come on the

other side of the parking lot, because that's where the firefighter got struck by the jumper, that they were too close to the building, that something could happen to them.

We got their attention. They moved away. Somehow we all ended up going into the south tower. We looked up, we found a clearing. We literally ran across Liberty Street, across the parking lot, into the hotel there, the --

Q. Marriott?

A. The Vista, I think it's called, technically the Vista Hotel, the Marriott Hotel. We ran into that, because we were told there was a way to get through from the Vista into the south tower, which is where we had to go meet the chiefs and find out where we're going to operate.

We met in the lobby. We met the other two members that we split off from in the lobby. We were there maybe a minute or so. The boss said wait here. Lieutenant Nagel said to wait where we were in the center and relax, because we walked all the way from West Street. By the time we all the way around, it was a nice walk with all the stuff on, the extra gear. He said to

take a blow, relax until we found out where we're operating, and I'll get back to you. Just stay here.

He went around to find the chiefs around the elevator shaft. By the elevator shafts is the last known place I know he was. We weren't in the building more than a minute when he told us to cool down, take our coats off, we took our coats off. We were hanging out, waiting.

I was just getting my bearings to see exactly where I was, and you just heard a banging, "bang, bang, bang." People yelled that it was coming through the window. The way the noise was going to me or to a lot of us, we thought it was another plane coming. It was two; why not three or four. It sounded to us like it was a plane coming through the windows.

Most of us that were in that little group there ran towards the entrance where we came in. As I'm facing out towards West Street, it was kind of like left. We ran left.

As we go, the ceiling started hitting us, falling down. We all just dove into a

corner. There must have been 20 or 30 guys there. We just huddled, a big huddle, literally on top of each other, just like covering each other, right near it seemed like a desk or a bar, like the check-in desk or a bar top, something like that. We waited there until everything kind of calmed down for a while. It was all blacked out.

We got up and I remember the hotel workers, I guess, the maintenance man or security guy or whatever, or the manager of the hotel, asking one of the other members there of his crew, "What's the best way out?," because the front door that we were at that we came in was blocked. The rolldown gates came and all the debris were in front of the door. So he looked for another stairwell out. That was covered too. We tried to gather together as many people as we can. Everybody started working on that one gate again that we came in. We were able to lift it up enough and started shoveling guys out the door to get out of there.

I got out on the first -- right after the first collapse myself. I was with Peter

Giammarino. Shortly after that we found Andy Ansbro, like right afterwards, sitting in basically the street, looking up at what was going on. We walked away from it a bit to see what was going on. Other guys were coming out the door, the hole that we had made.

A little while after that I heard my lieutenant doing a roll call, finding out where everybody is, calling, "58 control." I responded. "Who do you have with you?" I told him I had two other members with me. I told him their names. He said, "All right." That was about it. We all thought that they were out the other way; it was just a regular roll call.

We waited a little while. Other guys were coming out. Everybody was kind of heading in the same direction. We were right next to the south bridge, that pedestrian foot bridge. So we were right near there.

Some of the guys had concerns over whether we should be there. It was mostly up. It was 99 percent up still. People had concerns that maybe it's not the best place to be since everything was falling down still. They wanted

to move out a little bit more.

We followed the crowd basically out towards -- there's another foot bridge -- I don't know what the name of it is -- that runs north and south. The north bridge and south bridge both run east to west, but there was another foot bridge that runs north and south between two buildings on the way to the marina. I don't know what street that is. I guess it's a little part of Liberty Street, maybe.

We were there. We started heading there. We started helping people onto boats. Giammarino, myself and Ansbro started helping people onto boats. Everybody there. Police was there, EMS was there, all different -- some people that were in the buildings, some people that were out in the street. We were just pulling them out of the way, out of what we called the fall zone, I guess.

We were working on that, and a little while later, 15 minutes, 20 minutes later, is when the second tower started going.

Q. You were still by the marina?

A. About near the marina. Between that

foot bridge that ran north and south, as people were coming up, we were bringing them back.

Then 15, 20 minutes, a half hour -- I don't even know how long it was -- the north tower started coming down. We were actually able to see that starting to come down. Then it was just a plume of dust. You couldn't see anything then. You couldn't see anything two feet in front of you.

It was really dusty after the first one, but it started to clear out. By the marina you were all right. But after the second one came, everything was another dust ball for a while. It might have taken me five or ten minutes to get to the marina and five or ten minutes later is when the second one came down.

Then after that one we heard -- between the first one and second one coming down, I heard numerous maydays. Besides communicating with our boss, because everything sounded fine with them, trying not to clutter up the air because there were so many other maydays going on, we just monitored for a while.

There was one individual from a truck

company -- I don't even remember what truck it was anymore. He was saying several times that he was just trapped, he was all right, he didn't know where he was, he was knocked out. Somebody kept on asking, "What building were you in? Where are you now?"

He wasn't sure at all. He said he got knocked out, he just regained consciousness, and he didn't remember where he was at all. He was okay, for the most part, just trapped. He couldn't get out. I heard that all the way up until the second collapsed. Then after that, I didn't hear his mayday anymore.

After that, after the second collapse, we saw Mike Fitzpatrick, another one of our members, and John Wilson coming towards us up towards the marina wall. Basically we went in with eight guys. I knew we didn't have a lieutenant anymore, and we were missing one other guy, Dave McGovern. We weren't quite sure where he was.

We regrouped and we had to start running lines from the marine unit. They pulled up. They wanted guys to start stretching lines

up. It wasn't Liberty Street but one of the other side streets from where they were berthed. We started running three inch up or whatever. We started hauling that up. That's when we saw Dave McGovern come in from around the other way.

We stood there for a while and helped stretch the line a little bit. Then we heard the story from Mike Fitzpatrick and John Wilson and Scott Paskewitz that Lieutenant Nagel was trapped after the first collapse, that they were speaking to him, that they had tied a search rope and gave it to him.

I think they said they held his hand at the time, that they were at least somehow able to physically touch him. I think they held his hand or just let him know where he was, gave him whatever he might have needed at that time and were working on getting him out when they started hearing the second collapse occur, or what ended up to be the second collapse. They didn't know what it was.

After we all regrouped and they told us the story and we were loading hose off the marine unit, we decided that we were going to try to get

back in that area and see if there's any way of helping him, if he's still there. We weren't getting a response off the radio anymore. But maybe there was a shot that they could get back in the same area.

That's what we did. We went right back to the Vista Hotel, all of us together, going up the heap, down into it. There were other guys there. I think one of the rescue companies were there. They were looking all through every nook and cranny. They found the search rope. They followed it into the debris. They said that they couldn't see him -- they couldn't find anything more. They were calling, but there was no response.

As we were in there looking, trying to find ways of getting into the holes from outside, they called us out. They told anybody inside -- they saw us going in. Somebody started calling us out, that there was another collapse potential for that half of the building. The Vista collapsed on the left side, but the right side was still pretty much -- two- or three-quarters of it was still together.

They called us out. We went out. We stayed for a little while, right on the heap, clearing stuff, looking for people. We went back in a second time after they had other guys in there. We went in a second time, looked around a little bit more. They called us out a little while after that. We came out. That was the last time I was in the building.

Then we started working our way around to where all the crushed rigs were, closer to the north tower, I guess where all the chiefs were, basically.

Q. The command post?

A. Where the command post was, right. The command post was I think closer to the north tower, in between but closer to the north tower where the parking garage was or something, right behind it, I remember, in one of the buildings, closer to the north bridge.

So we started heading over towards that heap, looking under -- every single man that was there had saws going, Halligans going, axes going, trying to pry the metal back. Once we found a rig, knocking on it to see if there was

any response.

Then there was a large building, brick building, that was on fire, potential for collapse, that we started stretching lines for that, then using a hand line, alternating on and off. We were putting water on that. As you alternated off, you started searching and digging again.

That's basically what we did the whole day. I think we were there up until near 12:00 that night. We were there until at least around 12, maybe a little earlier but around 12.

Q. That's it, John?

A. Yeah, that's it.

Q. Thanks a lot, John, for your help.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 8:05, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110378

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH PATRICIELLO

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 20th, 2001. The time is 12:48. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Joseph Patriciello, working in Engine 44 that day, assigned to Division 3, Battalion 9, covering.

Q. All right, Joe, just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. I was in quarters when the first plane struck. We were watching it. Shortly after the second building was struck, we received the alarm to respond immediately on the fifth alarm.

We weren't delayed for too long, but I waited until a riding list was prepared by my officer who I relieved. When that was done, we proceeded south to the alarm site. We took I believe it was 11th Avenue, one street that was closed off to allow us to respond. We proceeded south after coming over from approximately Second Avenue on the east side. We proceeded south.

We pulled in. I would say it was just at about Vesey and West Street we parked the rig.

We grabbed extra cylinders, and we proceeded to the command post. When we checked in at the command post, we were ordered to just stand fast pending an assignment.

While we were there, the command post was obviously being overwhelmed by all kinds of information and activity. At one point a captain, who I do not know from what company -- he was obviously assisting the people at the command board -- turned to me and requested that I proceed south to Liberty Street, in that area, to remove any apparatus or police vehicles that may be in the way.

I told my men to leave their cylinders, since we would be coming back shortly. They all accompanied me together as a unit. We proceeded to walk south to Liberty. At that point it was clear to me that there wasn't much that had to be done. We did request one police vehicle just to move. We didn't have to do it ourselves.

At that time there were maybe two or three car fires going in the vicinity of the pedestrian bridge. I ordered my men to grab some extinguishers, purple K's, and my men proceeded

to go to apparatus that were nearby.

Q. John, one second. The pedestrian bridge, that was the south pedestrian bridge?

A. Yes.

As my men went to obtain some extinguishers, I happened to be looking up and saw the explosion or the building fail with the ensuing fireball and cloud. It didn't appear to me at that moment the building was coming down. But when the noise level began to pick up, it was obvious that something wrong was going on. We all proceeded to run southwesterly towards Liberty and West.

At that point there was debris coming down. Myself and my chauffeur ended up diving under the same car, and we were surrounded in a total cloud of darkness and dust, a heavy dusting, almost like a sandblasting effect, while we were waiting under the car.

It was quite a while. I can't say the exact time. It was very quiet. No more radio transmissions. We weren't sure if we were covered. We were under debris. We didn't know exactly what was the conditions that we were in.

But I could hear my chauffeur next to me. We were talking. I couldn't see him.

Maybe 10, 15 minutes when the cloud began to lift. I was missing three members. I decided to locate my members. I found two immediately. Both had injuries. One had needed stitches. Another one, he was complaining of a leg injury. It turned out he had a broken leg.

The last member -- I had my chauffeur with me. The last member I couldn't locate. However, it was maybe a half hour, three-quarters of an hour later I made contact with somebody who visually saw him being transported across the river to Jersey for medical attention. He received a collapsed lung and a broken shoulder.

But once all my members were accounted for and it was just me and my chauffeur remaining, since all three injured members were being tended to or transported away to receive medical attention, we continued to remain on the scene, assist with recovery. But more of our efforts were given to establishing water lines and getting some water to the area via the fire boats.

That's about it. We stayed there until about 9, 10:00. Myself, I had some -- well, I had eye abrasions that were looked at at the Ear, Eye and Throat Hospital. That's it. That's about it.

Q. Okay, Joe. Thank you for all your help.

CHIEF KENAHAN: This concludes the interview which is taking place at the division of training. The time now is 12:54.

File No. 9110379

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF EDWARD HENRY

Interview Date: December 19, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. LAKIOTES: Today is December 19, 2001. The time is approximately 1215 hours. My name is Chief Arthur Lakiotes, New York City Fire Department Safety Command. I am conducting an interview with Battalion Chief Edward Henry 40 Battalion, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would take me from the time of your response to right through the whole day's events, if you can.

A. We responded from the 40 Battalion's quarters. We were told to go to the Battery Tunnel and not to go into Manhattan, stay in Brooklyn. That was the original instruction. On the way, heading towards the Battery Tunnel and in the rear, we had a regular a.m. radio that we had in the car, that the second building was hit. The first building was already hit. The second building was now hit by the terrorist plane.

At that point, on the department radio we were instructed not to stop in Brooklyn, but to continue through the Battery Tunnel and to the World Trade Center area. As we entered the Battery Tunnel there was heavy traffic and we were held up for a while.

I was right behind the 48 Battalion I remember.

When we left the tunnel people finally moved the traffic and we continued into Manhattan and turned up West Street. We parked the car on West Street, south of the towers. Both towers were burning as we got out of the car. There were body parts in the street on West Street at this early part. So the only thing I could figure was that these people were either people in the plane or people who were driven out of the building. There were no jumpers at this time.

I reported up to the command post, which was on the west side of West Street and I stayed there for a little while. Eventually --

Q. Who did you see there? Do you remember anybody you saw there?

A. Chief Ganci. I spoke to Chief Ganci. He said stand fast. With that people started jumping out the windows from above the fire, splattering on the sidewalk. It was a scene like I had never seen before.

I watched seven or eight people. To tell you the truth I didn't feel like watching it anymore so I went to Chief Ganci and I said, "Do you have

anything for me to do?" He said, "Yes. Go into the Marriott Hotel and make sure the units are on Channel 1 and Channel 3" I believe he said. The Safety Chief was with him handing me a paper. Chief Turi, I think. He handed me a paper with the two frequencies on it.

We had to walk south on West Street to avoid being hit by people jumping out of the window. My aide and I walked south on West Street, we got near a walk-over bridge. We ran across the street and we entered the Vista/Marriott Hotel from the side of the building to avoid the front where the people were coming down. We entered the Vista Hotel through the bar and into the center portion of the hotel. I gave the report to Chief Galvin. He was in the command post, inside of the Vista Hotel.

He told me he wanted me to go to the 70th floor of building 2 -- of building 1, I believe and check on certain companies. I don't remember the company, but one company I remember was Ladder 122. They were supposed to be up there. I found out later that they had not left the lobby area at that time. I found this out later on.

So I asked him how to get to Tower 1 and he

directed me to my left, the left side of the Vista. I turned for a minute to talk to my aide. To tell him where you're going and everything and with that the Vista Hotel collapsed. It collapsed on my left side and on my right side. In the middle where me and my aide John Picarello were it did not collapse. It went completely black. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. I was actually right next to the collapse. It tore my helmet off my head and it through the light out of my hand. I still had my mask. I had no light. I couldn't see anything.

Fortunately a couple of the workers that were with us had small flashlights, which I took one of the flashlights, I tried to calm everybody down and I told them we had to find a way out. Chief Brian O'Flaherty found a door behind the main desk of the hotel. The door led to a stairway going down -- quite a long stairway going down to the -- I thought it was the basement of the Vista Hotel.

He ran down and I stayed near the -- I ran to the bottom of the stairs and stayed near the bottom of the stairs. I instructed one of the workers from the building who had a light to stay at the top of

the stairs. Most of the people who were with us stayed upstairs. I went to the bottom of the stairs and I kept calling out to the Chief, asking him if he found a door. Eventually he called back to me and said he found a door. I relayed the message up to the members who were on the first floor of the Vista Hotel and they all came down the stairs. I would say it was some firemen, mostly workers from the Vista Hotel. Of the ones who I know were there for sure was Brian O'Flaherty and I was told that Chief Stack was in the back, but I did not see him because it was so dark. I was told he was there. Anyway, we went down the stairs and went through a corridor which was under -- which I understand now was under building 1 of the Trade Center.

When I got to the end of it, we opened the door and we got out. There was a little area way, a little 4-foot high wall around this thing, maybe 10 by 10 with a 4-foot wall. Chief O'Flaherty told me he could not climb over the wall. And I said, "I'll climb over the wall and I'll go look for another exit." Which we knew there was one a little bit to the right.

That exit we couldn't get open because there was a lot of rubble outside. I climbed over the wall, went around to the exit and removed the rubble, pulled the door open. I called inside for all the men who I knew were waiting in there and I got no answer. So it was my conclusion that they must have climbed over a wall somewhere. They must have decided not to wait for me and they climbed over a wall and just got out the same way I got out.

At this point I started walking a way from the tower, tower number 1. I started walking away from it and I was looking up at it when it was burning readily. At this point I did not know that Trade Center 1 collapsed. I was under the impression that Trade Center 2 -- correction. Trade center 2. I did not know that World Trade Center number 2 had collapsed already. I thought the only thing that collapsed was the Vista Hotel that I was in. If I had known, I certainly would not have been standing there looking at Tower 1 and watching it burn.

So stuff was coming down, equipment was coming down, falling out of the building and I was afraid I was going to get hit with some of it. So I proceeded to an area where there was like a portico

over part of the hotel -- part of the Trade Center. It was a substantial portico. It was held up with four small posts, as I remember, and I got under that so I would not be hit by anything. The only two people who were under that was myself and a fellow who I learned later was a dispatcher from the Jersey City Fire Department. He was taking pictures. I called my aide on my radio and he was the first person I got through to the whole day. I had a lot of radio trouble. When I got through to him I asked him if he was out and if the other people who were with us were out. He said yes, everybody was out. They all got out the same way that I got out. The only difference was I walked away from building 1. I assumed I was walking -- I was walking south. I assume. I might not be wrong. I didn't end up there. I ended up over here (indicating).

I assume I was walking southeast, away from the Trade Center. I could be wrong on that. But I was walking away from tower number 1. With that I heard this noise like a freight train coming. The fellow who was taking the pictures started to run and I started to run. Within one second this whole

portico collapsed to the floor, pinned me to the floor. My face was 6 inches off the floor as rocks and rubble and everything were rolling past me. The only thing that kept me alive was -- when this came down, when this thing came down on top of me, apparently it hit something and it stopped about 3 feet above me. It wasn't that. It was another thing. It was over here somewhere (indicating).

So what happened was I laid there, pulled the helmet over my head, waited for all this rubble to pass by. All these rocks and everything were rolling. Shortly thereafter they stopped and this big cloud of dust where you couldn't see anything, it was like a fog, permeated the area. I decided I better try to crawl out of there. My legs were pinned a little bit. Not too bad. I was able to get them loose and I crawled towards where I felt cold air on the side of my face and I crawled and crawled and crawled and I finally got out into the open air and I saw either Ladder Engine 9 or Engine 6. I'm not sure. It was an one-digit number. It was either 6 or 9. The engine was running and the lights were flashing, but the amount of debris on the side of it was 30 to 40 feet high. I could not

get into the rig, which was my intention, to get into the rig and call on the department radio.

My next thought was, well, maybe I should crawl under the rig to protect me from anything else that was falling. The engine was running and I thought that if I crawled under the rig I might die from carbon monoxide poisoning. So at that point I continued -- I said I just better continue crawling away. I kept crawling away, crawling away and then finally I got to the outside. I got to the fresh air. I could see the clear blue sky.

Just before that I had something had fallen across my back. It gave me a terrific welt across my back and it was very painful. I could hardly crawl, but I had to crawl to get away from it. I crawled a little more and I was out into -- I saw the clear blue sky. The first thing I saw in the clear blue sky was three fighter planes coming over and I said, "Geez, what happened? Are we at war? What is it?"

I crawled a little more and I found the guy who was the dispatcher from Jersey City. He was laying on the floor on his back, telling me he thinks he was having a heart attack. I was in no position to

help him. I could hardly walk. I told him to clear all the dust and debris out of his mouth and lay there quietly and try to breathe some fresh air and that he would be all right. So he did that and we both laid there. I told him that somebody would come to get us shortly. We laid there for a substantial amount of time because apparently everybody on West Street was either dead or incapacitated. We laid there, I would estimate, at least 15 minutes and nobody came.

Finally I saw a fireman and I waved to him. The fireman came and I told him we needed two back boards. He said, "I'll be right back." He left and he didn't come back for another 15 minutes. I guess there was so much confusion and so few people around that he had a lot of trouble getting the back board. Anyway, finally he came back. To make a long story short, they put us on the back boards and they walked, they walked, they put us on two separate backboards and they walked with us it seemed like forever. A long, long time. All I could see was the blue sky and they put us in an ambulance. In the ambulance was a woman, an office worker who was very, very upset and a male office worker who told

me that he had come down from the 25th floor. They loaded us and those two people and shortly after that we left and they took us.

There was all sorts of crazy rumors going on. The EMS woman in the ambulance told me that the Beekman Downtown Hospital had just been blown up so they wanted to take us to outlying hospitals. Now I ended up in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, the Alan Pavilion, which is not where regular Columbia Presbyterian is. It's 220th Street, way above the regular Columbia Presbyterian. So I went from one ends of Manhattan to the other end of Manhattan. I was in terrific pain. My back was killing me. So when I get to the hospital I was X-rayed and I got cleaned up, all the stuff was washed out of my mouth. I was given an MRI for my neck and X-rays for my back. They told me nothing was broken in my back. It certainly felt like it was.

And with that, this is all taking a long period of time. With that we're into, by the time I'm treated they were into maybe four or five o'clock, I guess, in the afternoon. My brother Captain James Henry, 149 Truck, he found out where I was and he came up to get me. He came up to the hospital. ■

[redacted] So they wanted me to stay in the hospital that night. I said, "No, I can't stay. I gotta get out. [redacted] With that, I signed myself out and my brother drove me home still in my hospital gown and my boots and that's basically what happened. I got home and waited for Joey and Joey was never found. That's it.

Q. Anything else?

A. That's it.

MR. LAKIOTES: That takes care of it then. I thank you. That concludes the interview. It's approximately 1230 hours.

File No. 9110380

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF EDWARD MORIARTY

Interview Date: December 19, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. LAKIOTES: Today is December 19, 2001. The time is approximately 1030 hours. I am Battalion Chief Arthur Lakiotes, Safety Command of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

A. Ed Moriarty.

Q. Battalion Chief, concerning the events of September 11, 2001.

Ed, will you take us through the day and how the events unfolded for you and what your day was like.

A. I arrived here at headquarters and I was in the locker room at about 8:30. I came up the stairs after getting changed. I came up the elevator and I just missed Commissioner Fitzpatrick.

They must have been on the elevator as I was coming up. So when I got to the 8th floor, there was nobody, you know, of an upper level, on the 8th floor at that point. The first tower had already been struck by the plane. The second plane struck the second tower, the south tower. At that point I realized it was a terrorist act and I decided

because there was, you know, most of our command staff was over at the scene, you know, Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, I said, "You know, maybe I better stay in the building just for a short time and just make sure there wasn't going to be another hit in another area of the city." And that slight delay caused me to get involved with a situation here. I ended up in Chief Turi's office, because that's where the only phones were working. I started getting involved with mutual aide from the other departments outside the city. Jersey, Long Island, upstate. I got involved with the recall.

I was working back and forth with FOC, the operations command, Chief Ganci. And at that point we started to do some, you know, we were doing really a support nature. Time went very quickly and when the towers actually collapsed I was sitting at Chief Turi's desk on the phone with I think an upstate company that was looking to see if we needed help. At that point we were trying to arrange for staging areas for all of them to come into the city and to stage, and we were trying to get the outlying divisions to, you know, make sure that they would stage them and use them properly.

With that the first tower came down and subsequently at that point my cell phone. I could Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro with my cell. You know, because of the nature of the phone, and Commissioner Feehan. And I tried to reach them from here. I left the building and what I did was I went to the police academy where we had set up our OEM center initially. I was there and then I was at a couple of the Emergency Rooms checking to see if our members were being brought in there.

I went to St. Vincent's, but there was nobody there. There was one member from Ladder 6 who had gotten dug out with a separated shoulder, but that was it.

MR. LAKIOTES: The time is approximately 10:30. That concludes the interview.

File No. 9110381

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT CHIEF MICHAEL BUTLER

Interview Date: December 21, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CANTY: Today is December 21st, 2001. The time is 1113 hours. This is Michael Canty, Battalion Chief, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Assistant Chief Michael Butler, Bureau of Fire Prevention, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Michael J. Butler.

Q. And you're assignment?

A. I'm the Chief of Fire Prevention.

Q. Where did you respond to the World Trade Center?

A. I responded from home. I was on vacation.

Q. How did you become aware of the incident at the World Trade Center?

A. Via the television.

Q. En route to the World Trade Center, what did you see?

A. I saw the first tower come down when I was on the expressway prior to entering the Midtown Tunnel.

Q. That's the Long Island Expressway?

A. Long Island Expressway.

Q. Where did you park your car when you arrived at the World Trade Center?

A. I parked my car on Warren Street and West, on Warren Street facing east.

Q. On arrival did any civilian report anything to you?

A. No. A lot of people running.

Q. To whom did you first report to and where?

A. For lack of a better word, I reported to Chief Cruthers someplace on West Street shortly after the second tower came down.

Q. Were you given any specific assignment?

A. Chief Cruthers ordered me to assemble a staging area -- actually at that time it was called the operations post -- at Chambers and West Street.

Q. You never entered any building prior to the collapses; is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Did you contact anyone in the buildings prior to the collapse of the buildings?

A. Negative. I did not.

Q. You previously stated that you were on the Long Island Expressway when the first tower collapsed. What was your location at the time of the second tower collapse?

A. I was on West Street approximately two blocks north, probably at the interaction of Murray and West.

Q. Were you in your vehicle?

A. No. I was walking.

Q. Where did you go?

A. There was a chief's car, a GMC battalion chief's car in that interaction. As the enveloping dust cloud reached me or prior to reaching me, I ran behind that chief's car with a small group young firefighters. It was a truck company, and it was a single digit. But I don't know who they were.

Q. Did you remove any injured civilians or firefighters prior to or following any of these collapses?

A. From the site? No. I probably assisted people as they were coming in to the operations post that I initially started to establish at West and Chambers.

Q. Was that more in a supervisory capacity?

A. Yes.

Q. Were these people seriously injured or were they walking?

A. No, this was mostly dazed, disoriented firefighters and civilians.

Q. Consider your handy talking communications for a moment. When you arrived -- what information do you have concerning handy talking communications at the World Trade Center?

A. I have no information on communications of handy talky within the building. When I took my position on West and Chambers, trying to make contact from West and Chambers via my handy talky with anyone in and around the Trade Center did not happen. And I know my handy talky was charged.

Q. Did you hear any radio traffic on the handy talky at that time?

A. No, there was no radio traffic, and there was no radio traffic on the air, the department radio, either. It was dead silent.

Q. This was following the second collapse?

A. This was following the second collapse.

Q. Which channels did you operate on, if you remember?

A. The universal channel, handy talky 1.

Q. Were you notified to switch to any other channels?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Given the current known status of any missing or deceased members, did you have any visual or verbal contact with any of these members on September 11th?

A. No, none whatsoever.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this interview as far as information concerning the events of September 11th?

A. No.

CHIEF CANTY: Thank you very much for your time, Chief.

It is now 11:30 on December 21st, 2001. This concludes the interview. It was an interview with Assistant Chief Michael Butler, Bureau of Fire Prevention, conducted by Battalion Chief Michael Canty, Bureau of

Operations.

File No. 9110382

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ASSISTANT CHIEF HAROLD MEYERS

Interview Date: December 21, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

MR. CANFY: Today is December 21, 2001. It is 10:00 a.m. and this is Battalion Chief Michael Canfy of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Assistant Chief Harold Meyers, Bureau of Operations Citywide Tour Commander regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Please state your name.

A. Assistant Chief Harold Meyers, Citywide Tour Commander.

Q. Chief, after the alarm, what did you see?

A. I didn't respond to the original alarm. It was my day off. I was in upstate New York when I became aware that the World Trade Center had been hit by an aircraft. I came down and I arrived at approximately 11:30 in the morning.

Q. So you arrived after both towers had collapsed; is that correct?

A. That's correct. Both towers had already collapsed by the time I arrived.

Q. Where did you park your car, your vehicle, when you arrived at the scene?

A. When I initially arrived, I parked my vehicle at Park Row and Broadway. At that point I

got out and I did a survey on foot to do a size-up and correct any obvious safety matters that I saw. I got around as far as I could on foot down on Liberty Street and I proceeded back around on Church Street as far as I could go.

When I couldn't go any further, I worked my way back to my car. I then moved my car to Vesey and West Street. I parked my car at Vesey and West and I did another survey from that location. Again, taking any corrective action that had to be taken as I went along, giving any direction that I had to give as I did my survey.

At that point, when I finished that, I worked my way back up to the command post. The main command post at Chambers and West and reported in to the commanders.

Q. While you were doing a size-up, it appears that you basically had circled almost the entire site, did you observe any victims due to the tower collapse, either civilian or firefighters?

A. Yes. There were several bodies. Some were dead, some were not dead. There were people receiving emergency first-aid. There were people that were in the process of being moved in the

ambulances and there were other bodies that were kinds of staged waiting for removal.

Q. When you reported into the command post, you reported to Chief Nigro; is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Did he give you any specific assignment?

A. Yes, he did. Chief Nigro directed me to continue monitoring conditions at the site. Specifically to monitor number 7 World Trade Center. We were very concerned with the collapse potential there, and to do whatever I could do to ensure site safety in that no additional people became injured. Also, to do what I could while up at the site to organize some sort of command or control.

Q. Considering handy talkie communications, you could only comment obviously following the seconds collapse because before that you were not on the scene.

How would you characterize the handy-talkie communications while you were on the scene on September 11th?

A. There was heavy radio traffic, but the handy talk I seemed to be working okay.

Q. Did you operate on more than one channel?

A. Yes, I did. I was operating sometimes on 1, sometimes on 2, and occasionally on 6.

Q. One last question. Do you have any knowledge about the status of any missing, injured or deceased members, where they might have been before the collapse?

A. No.

MR. CANFY: That concludes this interview. The time is now 1005. It is December 21, 2001. This interview was conducted by Battalion Chief Michael Canfy and the interview was of Assistant Chief Harold Meyers.

File No. 9110384

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF STEPHEN RAYNIS

Interview Date: December 21, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 21st, 2001. The time is 12:15 in the afternoon. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Battalion Chief Stephen Raynis of Battalion 7. He is currently doing a UFO spot in the 2nd Battalion. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Battalion 2 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Chief Raynis, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. At 0848 hours I was in the 4th Battalion. I had just gotten relieved by Chief Ryan, Matty Ryan. The box came in for a plane into the Trade Center, second alarm. I took my gear off the rig; he threw his on, and he pulled out.

I turned on the department radio to monitor what was happening and the TV to Channel 1, New York 1. When I saw the second plane go into the tower, myself and my aide, Bobby Newman, grabbed our gear, and we got a police car to

drive us down to the Trade Center.

We were there shortly after the second plane hit the south tower. As we walked down the block, we saw numerous jumpers from the Trade Center.

I reported in to the command post which was set up in front of the World Financial Center. I saw Commissioner Von Essen and a number of other staff chiefs, which I don't remember exactly who at the time, but B.C. Ingram from hazmat had asked me to set up a staging area for all the numerous firefighters reporting in.

I didn't have a radio, so I couldn't communicate. I had teamed up with Captain Brethel from 24 Truck who had a radio and who was off duty. Like I said, I reported in to the command post, and Chief Bob Ingram had asked me to set up a staging area for all the numerous firefighters reporting in. Originally I had started to set it up underneath the Winter Garden, but I realized that we were still a little too close to the command post. So I moved up to West and Vesey.

I had a couple of companies there. We

were doing a search for a secondary device before we officially set it up. I had sent Bobby Newman back to the high-rise rig to get the sign for the staging area. I thought it might be in there.

At that time the first tower collapsed, which was the south tower. I was standing at Vesey and West, and I watched the tower go down. Then we got enveloped by the debris cloud.

I was teamed up with Danny Brethel at the time. We worked our way back, after a few minutes, back to the command post. There were a few injured firefighters and EMS workers right at the command post, and the only chief there at the time was Chief Cassano.

We assisted a few people into the garage of the World Financial Center. Then Chief Cassano ordered me and the units I had with me to set up another command post west of West Street.

We went through One World Financial Center. There was a search rope stretched. We had done a quick search of the garage. Then we walked through the building, out the rear door. I attempted to set up another command post on North Avenue and Vesey Street.

At the time I was trying to account for the people who might have been missing. So I was getting units together, trying to just account who might be missing, who was there.

I ended up working with Lieutenant Walsh from 3 Engine. I got status from him. He was helping me out. Then shortly after that the north tower came down. Again we got enveloped by the debris cloud which came down Vesey Street.

At that time whatever units I could get back together, we worked our way up Vesey Street to do a search of the street for any injured civilians.

The rest of the time I just spent trying to get the units back together again. Then I had heard that they were setting up a command post at Chambers and West. So at that time anybody I had over by the water in that riverside -- I forget what park it was, but North and Vesey, we walked our way over to the new command post at Chambers Street.

B.C. Hayden was there, and Chief Fellini I saw. At that point they asked me to set up a staging area again. So I went one block

north of Chambers, and I set up a temporary staging area. As units were coming in, I just filled out a log of who was coming in. Most of the units were coming from the 40 Engine staging area, so they all had different numbers: 41, 40-2, all of those teams.

I worked with Chief Narbutt and Nardone at the staging area for the rest of the night.

That's my story.

Q. Okay. A couple quick questions. You said when you first went to the -- after Chief Cassano told you to set up a command post at Vesey, I believe --

A. Vesey and North Avenue.

Q. You had a couple companies with you. Do you know who they were?

A. No, I have no idea.

Q. You said you sent the aide back for the sign.

A. For the staging area sign.

Q. Was that in the 7th Battalion's car?

A. He was going to the high-rise unit to see if it was in there.

Q. Do you know where that was located?

A. The high-rise unit was located right by I think the walkway. That wasn't damaged until the second collapse.

Bobby Newman was pretty close. He was pretty lucky that he didn't get hurt or killed.

Q. You said there was a search rope. Do you know who stretched that? Any idea?

A. I have no idea. It was stretched when I got there.

Q. You said you were forming up units you mentioned with a lieutenant from Engine 3.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you remember any units that you re-assembled?

A. No, I don't. Everybody was scattered, pretty much. I don't know. I don't remember.

Q. Okay. If you have nothing further, that concludes the interview.

A. Okay. That's it.

File No. 9110385

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL DIPAOLO

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 26, 2001. The time is approximately 1400 hours. I am Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER DiPAOLO: Paul DiPaolo, Engine 205.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of except 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you would, just tell me how your day unfolded, how the events unfolded.

A. I was home originally, saw it on the news. After the second plane hit, they gave the recall. I called Eddie Green. I told him I would meet him at his house. He said Richie Murray had already called him. I went to Eddie's. Richie picked the both of us up. We came to the firehouse. We got to the firehouse, got our gear. We picked up Rick Fowler, Paul Beck and John Urso, who were here already.

The six of us went across. The first building had already collapsed. We went across the bridge. We parked on I think it was Broadway and probably Liberty off Cortlandt, in that area.

As we're walking down Liberty Street,

what we had heard was there were people trapped -- they thought people were trapped in the Burger King, which was on the corner of Church and Liberty, around the corner of 10 and 10's quarters.

As soon as we got to the corner, we saw Tom Boccarossa, who was the chauffeur of Engine 205 that day, standing on the corner by himself. We got to him. We said, "Tom, what's going on?" He said, "Everybody's gone." We asked him to explain, because we didn't know exactly what he meant. He said the last thing he heard, he couldn't get in touch with the engine or the truck.

About maybe three, four minutes after we originally spoke to him, we felt a rumble. Me and Paul Beck grabbed Tom, and we ran down Trinity, and I believe we made it probably right around the corner. I don't know what street that is. What street would that be right there?

Q. Thames Street.

A. Thames that goes all the way through. We made it around the bend, and the three of us made it right around the corner as everything

came down. We got hit with all the debris. It knocked us down. We crawled into a little service elevator area in the building. There were I think one or two other firemen in there already.

We waited about it had to be ten minutes or so, and then we heard a voice on the loudspeaker saying if anybody can hear this follow -- because Tom we thought was hurt. He wasn't feeling good. He had been standing out there for the first collapse. He went onto the rig.

Me and Paul brought him -- let me see where it would be. We walked along Broadway probably to Pine Street, and that's where a security guard was with a bullhorn and a flashlight. But at that point it was all black.

We brought Tom into the building. I think it could have been the Equitable building. I'm not sure. We left Tom Boccarossa there, because they had set up a first aid station. Me and Paul Beck went back to find everybody else.

We met up with Richie and John Urso. They couldn't find Eddie Green; and Rick Fowler,

they knew where he was, but he wasn't with us anymore.

After that we went looking for Eddie. In turn we found the engine. We met up with all the engine guys. We asked them if they had heard from the truck. They didn't hear anything.

Eventually we found Eddie. He had been buried under a lot of stuff, because he obviously ran a different way. Three of us ran one way. The other ones, I'm not sure which way they ran.

Then we finally got all together, and we went right to the area to start looking for people. After we met up with the engine and Lieutenant Hayes, we went back to the rig. We got the rig and we drove it down onto the west side, and we drove it right in front of 90 West.

Actually we supplied -- it turned out we supplied water to a standpipe in the building, because they had a couple of stangs going out of the window into the other building. That's where the engine stayed most of the day.

I was in the rig for a while. Richie was in the rig for a while. Then we basically just went around searching and stuff like that

the rest of the day.

Q. You didn't see anyone -- you got there after -- okay.

A. We got there after the first building was already down.

Q. That's basically it; right? You found the engine, because I know they were --

A. Right. We found the engine after a while. We were just looking around and happened to see them. Richie Murray kept asking people on the radio, "Anybody seen" -- first Eddie. Then "Has anybody seen the engine? Has anybody seen Ladder 118?" We finally got in touch with the engine, but nobody ever heard from the truck.

So we have really no idea except Lieutenant Hayes had said the 15th floor. He thought it was the north tower going up. That was the last thing he had heard from them. Nobody actually heard from them. We have no idea.

We found the truck on the west side, right in front of West and Vesey. That's where the truck was. We have a picture of it there. So we know that's where it was parked. Then they

moved it up Vesey to North End. That's actually where we found it parked after we were walking around all day, because then we started looking for it to see where it was. But somebody had moved it. We don't know who moved it.

Q. Yeah, out of the way.

A. They moved it up that way out of the way.

Q. Paul, thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It's approximately 1405

File No. 9110386

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY JULIAN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 26, 2001. The time is approximately 12:45 hours. My name is Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

THE WITNESS: Firefighter JULIAN, Timothy Julian.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: What company?

THE WITNESS: Ladder 118.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: 118, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Tim, if you would just tell me in your own words -- start with the response and then take me through.

A. All right. I'm assigned to Ladder 118. I was working in Engine 205 on a mutual exchange for the day tour. The box came in. I believe the plane crashed at a quarter to nine. We responded to a plane hitting the first, you know, north tower, just the engine, not the truck.

I had the backup position. I didn't have a radio. I also was riding backwards, and I remember going over the Brooklyn Bridge, and we still at that point probably thought it was an accident. I remember

saying to the guys, "Guys, we're going to make history today." I meant that in a good way.

It was just a lot of hysteria, people exiting Manhattan over the Brooklyn Bridge. When we got to the Manhattan side, it was chaos, and I do believe that's one of the reasons why I'm still here is because at that point, I think we were responding to the north tower, and there was no access at all, so I think we made a left on Broadway at that point and started heading south.

Because I was riding backwards, I was a little disoriented. Finally, we made it to Broadway and Liberty, and the second plane hit, so that was probably about nine o'clock, and it was the loudest explosion I ever heard. It was mass hysteria, and screaming, and people running, and that's when we realized -- at least I realized it was more than just an accident. It was an attack.

There were some injured civilians at that point that came up to us asking us to help them, and we offered them some EMS bandages and what not and told them to keep moving.

We got back on our rig, and we proceeded south. I'm not sure which street we went west on, but

we came back up Trinity Place, the corner of Trinity and Liberty, and we parked our rig, and I remember getting off our rig, [redacted]

A. He saw what was going on, believe me. Anyhow, we walked down Liberty Street west past 10 and 10's quarters. They already had a triage going on already, wounded civilians. In the street that day there was like a market probably going to take place, a farmer's market or shopping bazaar, whatever you want to call it. It was vendors wagons.

Now, at this point, Liberty Street was pretty much desolate, except us. It was Lieutenant Hayes, Chris Murray, fireman at 205, myself at backup, and then George Clancy from 205 in control.

As we were walking down Liberty Street, we started realizing that, not only was there bodies and debris in the street, some burning, paper and debris, metal, but we started seeing -- it wasn't even bodies. It was parts of bodies, and it was pretty disgusting

and shocking, and I think we realized we were obviously in a bad zone, perhaps things falling from the building, and Lieutenant Hayes made a smart decision.

We saw a command post going on under the foot bridge at West Street and Liberty, but we walked to, I guess, Washington Street or even Greenwich. I'm not sure. Yeah, I think Greenwich. We cut over to Albany and down to West Street and back to that foot bridge, and I believe that's another reason the clock's ticking in our favor, not knowing at the time Lieutenant Hayes made that decision, figuring we were in a -- I don't want to say a collapse zone. We didn't think it would collapse but --

Q. Falling debris zone at least.

A. Falling debris zone. It was dangerous. Saw body parts everywhere. So we did that, and we made it to the foot bridge. At West Street, I remember seeing Chief Barbara. I saw you chief, but unfortunately -- I knew he was talking to another chief. I didn't know it was you.

At that point, I remember they were getting a report that a second -- another plane -- the Pentagon got hit, and we got a report another plane was coming in, and I believe it was a FBI agent, or whoever, or

police, and he was saying it's not another plane yet. It is a plane, but it's a fighter jet, and in hindsight it turns out probably that was the fighter jet that was going to maybe shoot down that plane, but we thought another plane was coming in, and we were in a bad spot.

Q. Paranoia was bound to set in.

A. But upon his -- we heard it fly over, and then we felt safe. It wasn't a kamikaze plane, you know.

Q. Yes.

A. I remember being at that command post, and it was pretty much a lot of radio traffic and a lot going on, and we were kind of nagging Chief Barbara to put us to work. We saw several jumpers from Building 1, the north tower, on the West Street side, and every time we saw a jumper, every time we were anxious to go to work. Put out the fire, they stop jumping. And I remember Lieutenant Hayes saying 205, you know, he wants to go chief, and the chief barked at us, "Guys, open your coats, loosen up your masks and sit tight for a minute, stand by till we figure out where we are going to put you."

Because I guess on the original plan we were going to the first tower, but due to traffic and

hysteria, we didn't make it there. Again, the clock is ticking in our favor, not knowing this, though, of course.

At that point, I think I remember getting an assignment to 216, 205, I think 217, and I think ladder 122, to go into 2 World Trade, report to another command post, and take it from there.

At that point, we got our gear together. We headed up Cedar Street to our left. Between us and the building was a small church, and there was a parking lot at the foot of that foot bridge, and there were several car fires going on. So we kind of went up Cedar Street for that very reason to avoid that to get to Washington Street, and then we were going to cut across to go into an entranceway at 2 -- the Liberty Street entrance at 2 World Trade, and that's when I saw 216 when they rounded the corner, and they were about 20 feet in front of me.

I saw them acting -- I don't know what's the word. Just excitedly, and there was a problem. I really thought that first they found a civilian injured, and I ran up as did other companies that were with us, and that's when I saw it was a fireman that was injured and down, and they began dragging him.

We figured let's get him out of the area. In front of 90 West on Cedar there was a scaffold. Let's bring him up to there. We figured that's more safe, and I heard them saying "Danny, Danny" and I realized. I looked down. It was Danny Suhr, from 216. I knew him from the football team. I still didn't realize that was him, you know. I just -- [redacted], I guess, but I remember help dragging him over there. I picked up his helmet, and we brought him to the entranceway of 90 West, and we opened up his coat and started giving him CPR as other guys ran to get a EMT paramedic and an ambulance, and I remained at 90 West working on Danny, and finally we got a stretcher.

We got him on the stretcher. We got an oxygen bag valve and off they went. I remained, though, at 90 West. I did remember having his helmet, and his helmet was split on top, and I put it to the side, and I know the guys -- I heard were looking for that later on. That was the last time I saw it. I remember at that time we packaged him, and he went.

I heard a rumor that Father Judge came over, but I didn't see him. I heard that Father Judge was perhaps on West and Vesey. No way he could have been on West and Liberty, but nonetheless, Danny made it to

an ambulance, and our guys came back, 205, so now it was 216, 205, I think 217, and I'm not quite sure what happened to 217 and 216. I know two guys from 216 are missing, I believe. I'm thinking they ran across into 2 World.

We're are figuring now we were obviously in danger, falling debris zone. I remember standing on the corner of Cedar and Washington, putting my mask back on, getting my roll-up. I had an extra bottle, and my back to the trade tower. I'm in a bad spot here, you know.

I remember walking back to 90 West. 205, we regrouped together, Lieutenant Hayes, Clancy, Murray and myself, and at that point -- and there was a photographer from the Daily News, who now gave me a picture that I just showed to you, which I'm going to keep with my own (inaudible.)

Anyhow, I remember seeing him then at that point, and a building maintenance guy from 90 West came out, and he was waving us in. "Guys, come through this way."

And Lieutenant Hayes was contemplating finding a subway entrance through one of the buildings -- probably Bankers Trust or 90 West, if they had one

-- so we could get into 2 World Trade and work our way up. We figured it was dangerous in the street.

Q. Right.

A. So we cut through 90 West. The guy -- security maintenance guy pointed us out to, I guess, Albany Street, and we popped out that door, and we headed east again. I remember the photographer. He says he went west.

I don't know what happened, again, to 216 and 122. We came out from 90 West, made a left, headed east, and right when we got to the corner of Washington and Albany, that's when I heard the building collapse.

First I thought it was an explosion. I thought maybe there was a bomb on the plane, but delayed type of thing, you know, secondary device.

Q. I was convinced for a week it was secondary devices.

A. You know, and I just heard like an explosion and a then a cracking type of noise, and then it sounded like a freight train, rumbling and picking up speed, and I remember I looked up, and I saw it coming down, and I was able to make it across Washington to the very corner of Washington and Albany. I think it's the south side of Bankers Trust building.

I made it right to the corner, and there's a column right there, and I was with my guys. We all made it to like the column, and I remember it was plate glass behind me, and I'm thinking I'm going to get hit by this glass and like a porcupine. I'm going to get it, you know, but nonetheless, it rumbled.

It was the loudest rumbling I ever heard. The ground shook, and I got thrown down, and I remember it just got black, and I got knocked down. I remember being buried. I think I ducked more or less, you know, pieces of metal -- something hit me, not that heavy, though. Wasn't an I beam or else I wouldn't be talking to you, and I remember that being on me, and I kind of -- I was able to stand up and push everything off me, but now I felt like I was in the street or the sidewalk, and it was hot, smoky. I felt like I was in a fire, and I remember digging my way out. A lot of cementation, powdery insulation, whatever you want to call it. Almost like being in a blizzard with some metal debris right on me. Fortunately nothing heavy hit me.

I got my mask on, and I found my extra cylinder. I figured I need that, and I was looking for the building, 90 West, and I found it, put my

flashlight on, and I found 90 West, and I was just about to smash the window of 90 West to get inside, and right when I did it, I felt a hand grab me and pull me in the doorway, and I think it was Engine 220, a lieutenant. I don't know who he was. He grabbed me.

I told him I was with 205, and we started hollering for each other, and we went into 90 West, and we kind of regrouped. We were missing Clancy for a short while, but we finally found him. He went into another building. Somebody else found him, and the ironic part is 90 West is now being collapsed on and is on fire. No, I'm sorry. Bankers Trust, and we're inside taking refuge.

We figured safer in there than in the street, but we figured once we regrouped and kind of calmed down, we took our masks off, and we talked to each other. It was kind of, like, all right, let's head back either West Street or, you know, head south a block.

So now originally we were with 220 engine. We got our act together. We went across Albany Street to the next building. I'm not sure what building that was, and we cut through that building. Now, it's two engine companies. We got no tools. I had my extra

cylinder. I don't know if it was -- once we got in that side, but on the next street, a car outside. I think it was locked, and I remember breaking the door with a cylinder, and I think we went -- I don't know whether we went one more block to Rector. I don't remember. I know we cut through at least two buildings south, directly right through, and then we popped out on, I think, Rector and made it up to, I guess, Greenwich. I'm not sure if it was -- I think it was Trinity. We made it to Trinity.

Looking for our rig, we figured we'd head back to our rig, find our chauffeur, or even the command post, whatever we had to do, you know, and at that point the second building collapsed. I heard the same exact noise all over again. It was just a little further away, and there was people in the street.

We kind of heard them, people on the street wandering around in shock. We were like kind of hurrying them to get inside, get inside, and people had minor cuts and bleeding. I saw faces in a doorway on Trinity. I don't remember the address. 61 Trinity or whatever it was. Probably Trinity and Rector. It was the building right there.

I remember I saw people inside. We ran in

there thinking let's get these people off the street in there and figure out what our next move is. And then the second building collapsed, and it was like a big wave again, a woosh, paper, and debris, and powder, and fire and smoke.

And at that point we were inside, and as it turned out, there were people in the building who wanted to leave, and we talked them in to staying, and we were trying to reassure them. Some people had cell phones. The phones were working. We told the people call your families. They helped us out. They gave us water. We washed our eyes out, towels.

I remember I called my fiancee. We're married now, but called her, and she works at [redacted], and I got her machine. Now, it's about -- do you know what time the second building collapsed?

Q. The second building collapsed at exactly 10:20?

A. 10:29 or something?

Q. 10:29.

A. 10:20? SO this is probably like 10:45, 10:35, you know.

Q. Right.

A. And I remember calling her and my mother, and

I got both their machines, so now I'm thinking New York just got bombed by, you know -- so we kind of regrouped, washed our eyes out. They were caked, you know, ended up getting conjunctivitis.

Q. Sure.

A. After that, but anyhow we regrouped, got our stuff together, and we headed back to Liberty and Trinity, and we found our rig, and we couldn't find our chauffeur, Tom Boccarossa, but we ran into some of our guys that off duty, came in, came across, and it collapsed, and they just escaped the collapse from -- they were on their way to the area, and so they experienced pretty much what we experienced.

So we all kind of teamed up. We saw our rig. We got our rig from corner the of Trinity. It was buried. The windows were blown out. There was a couple of car fires going on. We moved some stuff out of the way. Richie Murray drove it. He jumped in it. He turned it around, headed south, and then he headed west. I don't know if it was Rector. Probably Rector Street. We cut back to West Street, went north again.

I remember we made it to about the Marriott, south of -- to Carlyle and West, and we made it to there, and at that point they were starting to stretch

lines into 90 West, was pretty much going, and we stretched the line in there, and we were helping out, and it was just chaos everywhere.

Stretching a line here, help over here. There were guys setting up a hose to the draft from the river, and I actually knew a captain, Richie Weldon. He was a lieutenant at 74 engine when I was there, and I remember helping stretch like 3 1/2 for little awhile, and I remember going back to our guys, and we stretched a line into 90 West, and that was getting shitty, and they backed us out of there, and then we got an order to set up in the Marriott with a couple of other companies or on Albany. I guess between Albany and Carlyle, there was a Marriott right there.

We ended up walking up 40 fights of stairs with our roll-ups in the Marriott, and we brought a stang as well. Another company -- we were was taking turns carrying, and we made it to like 37, 38, 39. We set up at the windows on the north side and the roof, you know, multi-versile. The water pressure was horrible, and we were just shooting water on 90 West pretty much the rest of the day. That's where I spent most -- I spent the rest of the day, and then finally we got relieved maybe around -- I guess like 7, and we

walked back down 40 flights of stairs, and our rig got ravaged, all our tools and flashlights. Everything you had left on the rig, gone. Mask --

Q. Sure.

A. And at that point, I remember heading over to West, I guess West and Liberty again, and just starting to search, and plough, you know, and I must have been there for a couple of hours. I don't think I had a watch on. I think that threw me off that day. Maybe I was better off, but I remember it was around eleven o'clock that night, me and a couple of guys, we walked to the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge, and we started getting rides from PD vans, you know, a car going over, and I don't know if it was that night.

One of the nights, New York, Manhattan trustee, Rudy SanFilippo -- I could be mistaken. Maybe it wasn't the first night, but one of the nights I was working, he gave me a ride over the Brooklyn Bridge, but I think the first night a police car -- I hopped in the trunk literally exhausted. I was covered in shit.

Q. Definitely.

A. My eyes were --

Q. Gone.

A. Shot, burnt, red, and made it back to the

firehouse. That was the first night pretty much. I mean, Lieutenant Hayes -- I mean, traffic, we got delayed. Lieutenant Hayes made us go around to Albany, and then after Danny got hit, I really thought he got hit by debris, but the rumor was he got hit by a body. I didn't see it.

I know he was hit, obviously. It killed him. At the time we were working on him, I really didn't think he was gone, but I was obviously in denial. You know, you just want to help, but we helped 216 trying to help him, take the latest -- again, the clock's ticking, the bus, and then the guy from 90 West suggested we cut through. Lieutenant Hayes was, like, let's find a subway entrance to go underground into 2 and work our way up.

He was smart. He was thinking. There was a lot of chaos, and he kept his head, and 205, we stuck together. We bumped into other companies along the way, but I really believe that Tom Hayes -- you know, he made a couple of decisions right there that --

Q. That were right.

A. I'm still talking to you.

Q. That's true, sure.

A. And we all kept our heads, and we stayed

together, and we had an idea if we stuck together, and with Hayes, you know. We worked as a team and I believe he saved my life.

Q. Sure. It was not a day where you knew what decision to make.

A. No.

Q. It was --

A. Especially when there was a collapse, there's a fire. There was a car fire. Like, what do you do first?

Q. Exactly. Plus as part of the event, your thought process takes a little bit of what you're actually seeing, because you don't believe what you're seeing.

A. Right.

Q. When you're seeing those towers come down.

A. I never thought they would come down.

Q. No, it's amazing. It's --

A. I knew we were going to have a bad situation, maybe a partial collapse, you know, whatever, but never the whole thing. No way. I was in construction many years before this.

Q. No, nobody had any idea that was going to happen, obviously.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It's approximately 1305.

File No. 9110387

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT PLOVER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is December 26, 2001. Is time is 0950 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Vincent Plover, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Vinnie, if you'd please state your name and your company, and just recount for me the events as close as you can remember them.

A. Vincent Plover, Ladder 85. I was in Manhattan working a side job when I heard of the events, and it was after the second tower was struck that I decided to respond, so I went to 18th Street to 14 engine and got a turnout coat and pants, and I responded from there. I was crossing -- I was on 14th Street, and I saw the towers were still up. Both towers were still up at that point, but I lost sight of them as I was going -- I was going to the Westside Highway, and I got up on the Westside Highway, and I parked about seven blocks away to not interfere with traffic, and I got out of my truck, and I started running, and it was then I noticed that there was dust on the ground.

The dust increased, and I didn't know what

the dust was, and then when I was about approximately one block north of the tower, because I saw people at the windows -- and so as I stopped, I looked up, and people had begun jumping from the -- and it was standing straight up, but not having seen the damage to the other tower -- a couple more minutes, and see if there was any change.

Approximately four minutes later, myself and the other -- the company that was there and the chief, we started running north, and at that point I headed back down to -- toward where the Trade Center parking lot -- but adjoining the Battery Park City.

So I joined up with a couple of other guys, and there was a pumper there, and I started the pumper and stretched lines, and we cut a hole -- exposed, and they were -- one would light the other one up, and then the gas tanks were blowing, so we started putting out those car fires, and then we got some foam after that. I ran into Ladder 85.

Q. The fellow, from Engine 14, the firefighter from Engine 14 that you were with, do you have his name?

A. Yes, John Dilillo. Now, he responded with 14 engine.

Q. Okay.

A. I left him at 14 engine. He would be better off staying with his company, so he responded with them, and he --

Q. Also, the chief that --

A. I have no idea who he was.

Q. Or the company that was there with him?

A. I don't know either. It was just --

Q. The name of the firefighter that was under the car with you?

A. No.

Q. Do you know what company he was?

A. There was a Brooklyn company that I was -- that I was there, and I used to be an engine chauffeur, so --

Q. 9 or 3 give any indication as to where they might be?

A. They -- I remember hearing -- but I understand that they got out.

Q. You didn't know where they were?

A. No.

Q. The radio? They didn't give a location -- you know might help us.

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: Thanks for the

interview, then. The time is ten after eight, and I thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110388

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER FALLUCCA

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is Wednesday, December 26, 2001. The time is 1125 hours.

This is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Peter Fallucca assigned to Engine 16, now working in Engine 153 in Staten Island.

It will be regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Pete, if just say your name and your company, and then in your own words, kind of relate everything that you can remember from when you received the alarm up through the collapses.

A. All right. My name is Peter Fallucca, assigned to Engine 153 in Staten Island. On September 11, I was on rotation in Engine 16 in Manhattan.

Starting right from the very beginning, I was in the house watch, sitting in the house watch at quarters of Engine 16. I heard it come over on the scanner. I heard -- I was actually sitting in the house watch. I actually heard -- sounded like the plane flew over our quarters, and I said to myself, I said, that sounds low for Manhattan for a plane to be

flying so low, and then two seconds later it came over on the scanner.

I heard the guy say, "A plane just hit the World Trade tower. Send every available ambulance you got," I heard him say on the scanner. My lieutenant came running in. He said, "Did you hear that? Did you hear that?" I said "Yeah. He said a plane just hit the trade center," and we knew we were going to get sent in on that.

We suited up, and within two minutes, we were sent on the third alarm. We were on our way down there. We took the FDR Drive, and we could see the first building that was hit on the FDR Drive, and you could see an enormous hole in the side of the building from the FDR Drive, the first building that got hit.

You could see all the papers flying around it, all the -- you know, I guess the stationary from all the offices. When I first looked, I thought it was seagulls flying. There was so many, looked like seagulls at the dump, and we got down there, and as we are pulling in, we're getting into the side streets closer to the trade center, the people were lining the streets. All civilians lining the streets, you know, packed with people.

I think looking at the map, looked like we were on Church. We just were getting ready to pull up, getting ready to get out, and the second plane hit, and we started getting hit with debris on the top of the rig. We were huddled down in the bottom of the rig, because -- I mean, we were getting pelted with some heavy stuff, and at that time I didn't know that it was a second plane.

I just thought it was a secondary explosion from the first building, because I was on the opposite side. I was sitting behind the officer, and I couldn't see really the top of the towers, but the guys that were on that side of the rig, they were able to see, and I heard, "Holy, shit!" You know, he screamed, because he saw this big fireball, and then all the debris.

You heard the explosion and everything, but I saw the big fire ball. The stuff was coming down across the street. It looked like a meteor came flying across the street. They said it was the engine. I don't know what it was. It was a big fireball or something from the plane I guess, came from across the street in front of our rig, and as we get out of the rig, there's a cop, city police officer, in the

street. He's telling us, "I'm getting out of here. I just saw a rocket." He said he saw it come off the Woolworth Building and hit the tower.

Now I see the two towers are hit. He says, "I just saw a rocket hit that building. I'm getting the F out of here. I'm getting out of here."

And we were like, holy -- I'm saying to myself, I didn't even go in yet. They're shooting rockets. I don't know what we're doing over here, but after I watched it on the news a couple of times, I could see it was a piece of the plane or something flew off the building and made like a -- it looked -- if you didn't see it actually come off the plane, you saw like the stream of smoke coming from one building to the other, but actually came from the tower, and they didn't go the other way, so he swore he saw a rocket, but at the time we thought it was a rocket. We thought -- I thought we were under attack, and we were under attack, naturally, but I thought we were under attack in the city.

You know, I thought guys were in these buildings with rockets shooting at the building, and we made our way in. We got into the lobby of the Tower 1, the first building that got hit. That's where we were

called up.

Q. So you entered from the courtyard on Church Street?

A. Yeah, we walked through. It was a -- I don't know what building it was, but I remember walking underneath all the scaffolding. They had the scaffolding going over the sidewalks. They must have been doing work on one of them.

I remember walking underneath all of that, and they were telling us, be careful of glass going in, you know, look up before we go in this building, make sure there is nothing coming down. There's all kinds of glass and debris.

I remember looking up and seeing people jumping out, civilians jumping out, you know, and that was -- that's something to see, and I remembered as we turned, we got onto West Street, going through the courtyard we came to the entrance on West Street. I could see people jumping out of the second building that got hit, and you could see them hitting the ground and stuff.

I mean, it was a distance, but you could see it, and we got into the lobby of the first -- the north tower, and they were just setting up the command post.

I seen them coming in with the briefcase they open up. I saw the commissioner in there, Von Essen was in the lobby with us at the time, a couple of chiefs. I don't know who they were, and they weren't getting names.

It wasn't like you see guys shaking hands, hey, how you doing. Everybody was very serious because at this point, we knew we had a problem, and they had sent us -- I think it was the B stairwell. We went up the B stairwell. They hooked us up with another company, going up two companies at a time up the stairwell.

We took our roll-ups, plus extra bottles and stuff. We went up the B stairway, and I think they were going to send us up the 70th Floor. They were looking to establish a communication line. They had those phones in the hallways.

Q. Yes.

A. That's what they were looking -- our assignment was, I guess, to set up a communication line in that stairwell, and we were going up about 10, 12 floors at a time, taking five-minute break. I mean, you walking up, and people were coming down one way, we were going up the other.

Civilians were coming down one side of the

stairs. We were going up the other. You know, it was very orderly, single file. Nobody was really panicking.

Q. Do you remember the company that was with you?

A. I think they said it was -- it might have been Engine 1. I'm not sure. I really don't remember. I remember talking to the guys after the fact, and they said it was Engine 1, but I personally can't be too sure of that. I don't remember the company, but I know they sent us up with another company to go up, and we went up to -- like I said, we got up to the 10th Floor. We took a break.

People were handing us bottles of water going up, civilians, words of encouragement and all that stuff, good luck, guys. We had a few people -- women crying. There was a light haze inside the stairwell.

Before we got in, all the elevators were crashed down in the lobby, and we were going to the stairwell. See all the elevators were crashed down, big slabs of marble on the floor, all the ceiling tiles of the dropped ceiling was falling down, wires hanging.

You see wires and stuff hanging inside the

elevator shafts, because the doors were blown right off the elevators. There was one body inside the lobby. Looked like his legs were chopped off. I don't know where he came from, but he had already had a triage tag on him. It was a civilian. I don't know where he came from, how he died. Looked like his clothes were a little burnt up on him, but his legs were chopped off. I don't know where he came from, but he had a triage tag, so somebody must have tagged him before we got there.

So I can remember we started making our way up. We got up about ten floors, and we'd take a break and go up another ten floors. We got up to about the 23rd Floor. We were inside the hallway taking a break, and the whole building shakes. I mean violently, like earthquake shake.

Two seconds later the lights go out, and I hear guys going, oh, shit. I see guys taking off -- firemen, cops. Guys are saying, this building is not supposed to shake like this, and I see guys running down the stairs, running out of the building, and I told my boss.

I said, "I don't know what we're going to do." Usually I don't -- I don't -- I just do whatever

the boss tells me, but I was asking him. We're under attack. Is that -- we were on the 23rd Floor. There were guys in suits up there on the 23rd Floor. Guys were telling me there were -- the CIA's got offices on the 23rd Floor. I don't know who, but it could have been building super. They had a lot of information, these guys were giving us.

They had told us that the Pentagon was hit. This was while we were sitting on the 23rd Floor. The Pentagon is hit. They hit another place in Washington. They shot a plane down, and as we were on the 23rd Floor taking a break, they telling us, fellows, we just got a report of a third plane headed this way, so when the building shook, like that, I figured we got hit with another plane, but we found out later that was the first building, Tower 2. That was the one that was collapsed, so that's what we found out. That's what that was.

And the lights went out, and I was saying -- to me it seemed like about five minutes. I heard on the radio Mayday, to get out. Everybody out of the building. All personnel out of the building, and I started -- I just started coming down, and I lost my lieutenant. I couldn't find my lieutenant.

One of the guys I think in our unit, he went down before they gave the order to go down. The only one I had with me was -- one of the 14 probies was with me. It was me and him, and we were looking for the lieutenant, calling the lieutenant on the radio. Couldn't find him. He wasn't answering me. I was yelling up the stairs.

We went down four floors at a time, and we waited. I waited for him to go down, and then we got down to the lobby, and I waited for him. He still never came down. I was calling him on the radio, and then I saw one of the other guys in our unit, the senior guy. He's got about 17, 18 years on the job. I told the probie,"Sean," I said, "Let's follow Timmy." I said, "Let's regroup with him, see what he wants to do."

He was helping carry a woman with a couple of other guys in a chair downstairs, so we walked with him. We helped him carry the chair, put the woman in the ambulance, and it was the three of us together -- me, Timmy Marmion, Sean Brown, together.

We walked down to -- I guess we got down to about -- it was the first block. We got down to Vesey Street. It was the first block. Yeah, Vesey. We had

to be on Vesey, and I took my tank off, because I figured now I'm clear of all this debris falling down. I said "We're out. We're not going back in any more till we regroup any way."

And there was an EMT walking down the street. He was carrying a chief. The chief was bleeding from the head, and Sean Brown called me. He said he grabbed the other shoulder of the chief, and he helped carry the chief to the ambulance. I told Sean, "Make sure you come back here. Meet back here. This way all three of us are together," because we didn't know.

The chauffeur was still out on the street somewhere. We didn't know where our chauffeur was. The lieutenant, we had no idea where he was. As far as we now knew, he was still in the building, and one other guy was missing. Let me see.

He starts walking with the chief to get him in the ambulance. Me and Timmy were standing right under. We just took our tanks off and our jackets off, and that's when the second building came down. It came down right behind us.

So now we started running down West Street towards Stuyvesant High School. Take a peek behind.

You could see this black cloud coming behind you. You couldn't out run it, and you get caught in that black, and I felt like the push, you know, from this black cloud, and I got myself to the first building before Stuyvesant High School, and I seen guys go inside there, and I made the turn around the building, and I went inside that building, because, I mean, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

I was feeling the wall of the building to feel my way into the building, and we went inside the building. We looked outside the window. It looked like midnight at ten o'clock in the morning.

And then as it settled, we came out, and we were trying to regroup with the guys. We found Sean again, who helped the chief into an ambulance, and it was just the three of us for awhile, and we wound up finding our chauffeur, and then we wound up getting -- we had everybody together except for the officer. The officer wound up still being in the building.

He was with Ladder 6 on the 4th Floor. He survived. He was in the building, and we tried -- we asked the chief. They wouldn't let us go back in. Once we were out, they said, "You guys were in there already. You're not going back in." They wouldn't let

us go back in because we were looking, you know, both buildings had went down at this point, and we were going to see if we could pull people out, find anybody still that was alive, and they wouldn't let us go back in. They said, "You guys are done."

So we sat around, and one of the other guys had something in his eye. As you're sitting there, you feel -- a burning in my chest. I had mud caked up in my mouth from inhaling all this stuff. I mean, I ate it, never mind inhaled it, and guys came over, anybody want to go to the hospital, get checked out.

So the guy who had scratches, he said he was going. I said, you know what, they're not letting us go back in. Let me go get checked out.

And I went -- they took me to St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital and checked me out, and they sent me back to my house a few hours later, and I stayed at the firehouse answering phones.

Q. Just a few questions.

You mentioned that your officer was with Ladder 6, and that you had a radio on.

Did you hear any of the transmissions from Ladder 6?

A. No, I didn't hear anything from Ladder 6, but

on my way down, I heard one transmission that I do remember was from Rescue 1. I heard the boss from Rescue 1 telling all Rescue 1 members, meet up on the 40 floor.

When I was going -- that was when they gave the order to get out. I was on my way down. I don't know what floor I was on when I heard it, but it was fairly high. Had to be like in the high teens, maybe 20th Floor, just as I was starting to go down.

They were telling us to go down, and I heard Rescue 1 say to meet up, all rescue one members meet up on the 40th Floor, and I know all those guys are no longer with us any more, so they were somewhere headed to the 40th Floor, I would imagine, those guys.

Q. As far as --

A. I heard Maydays given for guys -- guys -- I heard of guys passing out. Still missing members I heard. This is before anything had collapsed.

Q. Can you remember any specifics, any specific companies?

A. No, I remember hearing that they found the boss from Engine 1. I remember hearing, found an officer from Engine 1, possibly DOA. I remember hearing that on the radio, but the only real one I can

remember where guys were going was Rescue 1. I heard them say meet up on the 40th Floor. I heard that transmission for Rescue 1.

Q. And the highest floor that your company, Engine 16 got to, was the 23rd?

A. 23rd Floor. And we were going to go higher, but at that time they had ordered us out, and we went down. Like I said, I lost -- I mean, there was at that point, there was mass chaos. Guys were going up, guys were going down.

My officer, I don't know if he went on one of the floors, but however -- he wound up on the 4th Floor. When I was coming down, I never saw him. I wound up seeing an officer from 65 engine -- like I know those guys, because you get detailed in the same battalion, and I asked him.

I said, "Did you see Lieutenant Cross?" Lieutenant Cross was my lieutenant that day. I said, "Did you see Lieutenant Cross?" And he said, "Yeah, I saw him. He's on his way down." He even told me they want everybody out of the building. Start heading down. I said, "Are you sure you saw him go down?" Because I thought maybe this guy is looking for me. I don't want this guy to get killed looking for me.

And he said, "No, I saw him. He's on his way down," and I said, "You sure?" He said, "Yeah, he's on his way down. Come on, let's start going down." That was Piambino from 65 engine. He told me that. So I said all right.

I went down to the lobby, and I was standing in the lobby. At that point, the lobby was a ghost town. There was nobody in the lobby. There was no more command center in the lobby. There was nothing.

Every window in the place on the bottom floor was broken. When we first got there, just the windows when we went in there were broken, but the windows in the back of the lobby were -- there wasn't a window in the bottom of the lobby, and it was empty, the lobby. I didn't see anybody, and, I mean, you just had the guys -- trails of guys, dribs and drabs of guys coming down the stairways coming out of the building. That was it.

I mean, I saw all these guys. I remember seeing all the rigs in front of the building. There were rugs underneath that north bridge, because when I got -- we put the woman in the ambulance, when we came out, the ambulance was parked under the north bridge. I don't know if they ever made it out alive or not, if

they survived or not.

Q. Do you remember any of the companies that were parked under there?

A. I remember seeing -- when we were going in, I remember seeing 6 truck, because I remember seeing them -- they got the tiller rig with the dragon on it, and a friend of mine that I worked with over here, he had just transferred to 6 truck. He was working that day at 6 truck, and I remember seeing Squad 18 going in.

Who else? I remember seeing 6 truck going in when we first went in. They were parked right in front just past the north bridge.

Q. As people were exiting the building with you, was everybody going north or were some going south?

A. I think people were going any which way they could get out pretty much, and then we got out, and we went north because we had the woman. I followed Timmy at that point. I was following the senior guy in the engine at that point.

I couldn't find the lieutenant, so I said let's go with him. You know what I mean? I got two years on the job. I figured he's the best shot. I don't know whatever he wanted to do. I mean, if he

would have said, come on, we're going back in the building, I probably would have went back in the building.

I was just at that point -- I was lost, to be honest. I didn't know what to do. We left our roll-ups and our -- I had the standpipe position at that point, and I left all that up on the 23rd Floor. I just took my tank with me.

When they told us to get out, that was our only order. I didn't know what to do. I knew we weren't going to put a fire out over there. It was roaring. You could see from the FDR. You could see the thing was going, thick, black smoke. You could see floors of fire. I mean, you see it on the news. You could see the whole thing was burning.

We went with him, and that's where it pretty much ended for us until I got caught in that cloud of debris when it hit, that cloud, you know, blowing all over the place, but that was it.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that might be pertinent?

A. When I came out, all the people that I saw in the lobby, I remember seeing a guy filming in the lobby. There was a guy with a video camera in the

lobby filming.

Q. Fireman? Civilian?

A. He look like -- you know, might have been a light-duty guy. He looked like he had a firemen uniform, but he didn't have bunker gear on. He just had the coat on and blue pants. It looked like a fireman, but it didn't look like -- he wasn't wearing -- he didn't have bunker gear on, and he wasn't wearing a helmet. Just he had a camera, and I remember him filming with a camera, and it wasn't like the amateur ones. It looked like a professional looking camera that he had.

I remember guys -- when we got out, I had heard that the other building collapsed, but I didn't know the extent of the collapse. I thought maybe it was a partial collapse, part of it broke off, floors collapsed, and I can remember coming out and seeing, you know, the ribs to the towers sticking in the street, but the front of West Street in front of the north tower was clear.

I walked out and didn't have a problem. There was nothing in my way to walk out. Just that layer of powder in the street, four to six inches of powder, that dust or whatever it was, papers and stuff

like that in the street. That was it.

When you see people coming -- like I said, everybody was coming down. There were firemen coming down when I came down, but nothing that I can remember vividly.

Even all the civilians, I only remember one civilian because I saw him on the news. He was the blind guy with the dog. That is the only one -- if I had to pick somebody out of a lineup, I could probably pick that guy out of the lineup, because I remember petting the dog on the way up. He said the seeing-eye dog coming down the stairs.

That's the only guy, but otherwise, I can't remember too much faces. Two years on the job, you don't know that many people. I was on the rotation. I was only there just under a year, so I recognized the guys that were in the battalion, you know, cause you get detailed, but the rescue, I did hear that transmission about the rescue, and I remember hearing the transmission about finding the officer from Engine 1, but that was it.

I remember seeing some people jumping and pretty much...

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: I want to thank

you very much for the interview. I'm sure some of the information will be very, very helpful.

The time is 11:46. This interview took place in the quarters of Engine 153 in Staten Island.

File No. 9110389

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

SUPERVISING FIRE MARSHAL JOHN D. LYNN

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 27th, 2001. The time is 3:24 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with...

SUPERVISING FIRE MARSHAL LYNN: Dave Lynn, Supervising Fire Marshal, Shield No. 66, assigned to Brooklyn Bureau of Fire Investigation.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Dave, if you would, just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. On September 11th, I was working a day tour and my attention was drawn to the situation via the Department radio when I heard some kind of transmission asking the dispatcher, send me every ambulance you got. The phone started ringing and my Chief had the entire day tour respond over to the World Trade Center.

We drove over. I drove over, myself, and I had three members of my squad also drive over. We came through the tunnel, went through the tunnel, and it was sometime while I was in the tunnel that the second plane had hit. So I exited the tunnel. I parked soon

thereafter on West Street, geared up and walked along West Street, where I noticed landing gear and the evidence of some kind of explosion.

I continued up West Street toward the Trade Center and I saw my Chief, Richard McCahey, off to the left on the west side of West Street. He waved me over. I came over with two or three of my guys, and he advised us that we were going to just stage there for a couple of minutes until we worked up some kind of game plan. We were there not very long trying sort of to size up, seeing how we were going to proceed, planning on how we were going to set up a perimeter, looking for like secondary devices, because at that time it was obviously a terrorist situation, terrorist attack, and so we were looking for trucks that might have parked, moved into the area and that kind of thing.

It's hard to deal with the time frame, but it seems as if suddenly there was a -- our attention was drawn to the south tower. There was some kind of explosion, you might say, up in the area where the fire was. Actually, in hindsight, that was the start of the collapse.

Now, we were very close at that time. We were up on West Street toward Liberty, very close to

the hotel but on the west side of the street. So immediately, from my point of view, I knew that we were much, much too close, and we just started running. There was a group of us there, all Marshals. We just started running south on West Street to the corner, and there were a lot of people running and a lot of people bumping into each other at that corner and it was like a pileup of whoever was passing by, which slowed us all up.

As soon as I made the turn, I jumped in behind some van. It was like the second car off West Street going toward the river. I dove in behind the van, and it was on us already, you know, the noise and like a pressure wave, like a wind, and the dust cloud. Immediately I recognized that I couldn't breathe. I was slightly winded, I guess, from running. So, breathing deeply, I took in a lot of dust and realized that breathing was going to be a problem, and vision, because we were sort of blasted then, I got a lot of debris in my eyes.

So I stayed there behind the van for a while. At some point one or two people dove in behind the van. I couldn't see what was going on, but here one of them was wearing a mask, obviously Fire

Department. Then he and I sort of exchanged -- you know, gave each other moral support. You okay? Yeah, I'm okay. Are you okay? That kind of thing.

The dust started to settle and I looked over to the guy next to me and it turns out to be Chief Cruthers, and we just sort of got up and tried to size up what was happening. You could see. Visibility started to clear up a little bit.

Some fireman came walking by. He was bleeding from the head but said he was fine. Myself and Cruthers gave him a quick look and he just had some sort of a minor head laceration. He said he was fine. He walked off. A couple civilians came running by. We directed them toward the river.

I remember hearing off -- I lost my radio, my cell phone, in the rush, and I couldn't find it on the ground. The ground was covered with debris. I heard one Mayday on Chief Cruthers' radio. So his attention was immediately drawn to the radio and then he started to walk off. He walked to West and then up toward the tower. At that point, I didn't see Cruthers again.

I went to the corner and I looked up West Street and it just looked impassable to get to that tower because I was going to head up that way toward

the command post. So I went down the side street toward the river. There were a lot of civilians going down that way.

When I got down to where it started to clear up, there were crowds down there on the river. There were some people down there injured. There were some it seemed to be volunteer ambulance people. So I got involved in a little bit of assisting there. There were boats, tugboats pulling up to the river. People were climbing over the railing jumping onto these boats. So there were some cops down there. There were also some firemen. We were also trying to assist with that situation.

That eased up a little bit, and then I started to walk down, I guess, north on that river path, and I was headed up because we had another command post on the other side, I was informed, I was told. Then, as I took a turn on a side street, I guess that might have been Liberty Street, to go back up toward West, toward the towers, that's when the second tower came down. But I was a good distance away from it, so you could see it coming, there was plenty of time to take cover, but there was still that dust cloud.

Then I made my way into some building that was right there and got on a phone because I had lost my cell phone, I had lost my radio, and I got on a phone to try to find out where we were going to regroup. I called my headquarters. I eventually got someone at headquarters and I was told that we were regrouping down by Battery Park, by the old marine, the Fire Department's marine facility there.

But in that building where I had looked for the phone, there were a number of people that had taken shelter there and there seemed to be a lot of -- they were mostly civilians, a lot of women with babies, with children, and there were some EMS people in there assisting. They were making a plan to evacuate these people on some boat that was about to pull up. So I assisted people getting on that boat, and then I walked along the river to Battery Park, where there were a number of Marshals that had regrouped.

We were trying to get a head count to determine who was missing. We determined that at least one of our guys was missing. We worked up some kind of game plan where we would -- we were told by my Chief, I guess, who was at the command post, that we were going to try to locate or determine exactly who was where as

to like what companies might have been where to assist in the or to streamline the digging or recovery process.

Then at some point later, I got involved in the arrest of some Saudi Arabian guy who was wearing stolen bunker gear, and that went for several hours into the night with the Terrorist Task Force.

That's about it in a nutshell. I don't remember seeing -- I worked at the morgue, so I pretty much know everyone who was missing, reported missing. I don't remember seeing any of those guys at the scene. So I have no information to offer as far as who might have been operating where.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thank you very much for the interview. The time is 3:36 p.m.

File No. 9110390

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JAMES FODY

Interview Date: 12/26/01

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The time is 1453 hours. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the safety battalion.

I am conducting an interview today with Captain James Fody, F-O-D-Y, covering in Engine Company No. 6, regarding the events of September 11.

Q. What follows is the interview with Captain Fody?

A. On the 11th, I was assigned -- I was a lieutenant at the time, assigned to Engine Company 7, located on Duane street, about seven or eight blocks from the trade center.

I was working that day. I had worked the night before. I was working that day on overtime in Engine Company 9 on Canal Street. I was only there about ten or fifteen minutes. One of my members was out in front of quarters and witnessed the plane come over the city and witnessed the plane hit the building.

Right after that, he came in, informed us an airliner had just struck the World Trade Center tower. I went outside and -- not that I didn't believe him, but somebody tells you something like that, you say,

oh, well, you think you saw it, or -- take a look.

So I went outside, and we looked in the direction of the towers, and you could see flames and smoke emanating from the area of the trade center. So we went back inside, and we turned out the company.

Engine 9 is a satellite. The day crew was already in. I took one member from the night crew as an extra chauffeur to drive the second section of the satellite, and we responded to the trade center.

Ladder 6 is also quartered with Engine 9, and they also responded. Captain Jonas was working. We arrived within, I would say, six or seven minutes. I had the chauffeurs position the rigs on West Street and Vesey, which would be the northwest corner of the north tower, Tower 1.

Myself and the three other firefighters entered the lobby. We took roll-ups. We took extra Scott cylinders. I also took a search rope, and I took the oxygen. The members asked me what else should we take. I said, "Give me the oxygen. Maybe we can use that."

And we went in. We reported to Chief Hayden, who had set up a command post. He advised us to just try to pair up with another engine company. I went to

the command board. They paired us up with Engine 15. Engine 15 I believe at that time had already entered the stairway, the B stairway, so I reported in to the board. They took down the information, and at the time we entered the B stairway, and we started up the B stairway.

It was a little bit crowded getting into the stairway, but we were able to get into the stairway. Civilians were coming down, and Fire Department units were headed up. The stairway was quite orderly at this time. Pretty much it was only room for two rows of people. Civilians were coming down one side. Fire Department was headed up the other side.

I told the members we are going to have to pace ourselves. Every five floors, we'll take a quick break just to catch our breath, make sure everybody is still together. We took a break on five, very short. We continued up.

I got a little bit ahead of them. At one point there, there was, I believe, a Port Authority detective behind me, who asked me two or three times, "Let me carry something. Let me carry something," because he saw -- so finally, I said, "All right, take the oxygen," and I told him what it was. In case we

get separated if he can use it, that's what it is.

Somewhere around the 10th Floor, a little bit above the 10th Floor, I was a little bit ahead of the members, and Captain Jonas gave a Mayday for a member of Engine 9 with chest pains, so I turned around to see they weren't right behind me, and I had to go down about a flight or two, and I found one of my members.

You want names, of course.

Q. Yes.

A. The member was Ray Hayden. He's assigned to Engine 9, and I believe he was either crouching or sitting on the landing probably around the 10th Floor and was in some distress. So we helped him onto the floor, the 10th Floor, and after a minute to two, he insisted he was all right. "I'm okay. I want to continue . I want to continue."

We took a little bit time longer to assess his condition. We took his pulse. We looked at him. He seemed to be all right. We rested a few more minutes, and then we continued on.

We continued on about the 20th Floor. We took another quick break, went in on the floor to catch our breath. As we were picking up our gear again, getting ready to go up again, the building began to

shake and sway, and I believe at this time the lights went out, you know, with all that going on.

We didn't know it at the time, but this was, in fact, the south tower collapsing. We just kind of stayed there for a minute to see what was going on. Within a minute or two, I heard a transmission on the radio that the 66th Floor had collapsed. It had collapsed into 65, but the building felt sound at this time. We continued on.

So from 20, we continued up maybe two more flights, somewhere between 22 and 23. We encountered Fire Department members coming down the stairs still in the B stairway, and they told us, "We are getting out. We're evacuating the building."

The order had been given. I didn't hear the order on the radio. I found out later on that it was given by Chief Pfeifer, the first battalion. They were in the lobby when the other building fell, and he had given that order. He may have given it on the command channel. That's why we didn't hear it.

So we left the roll-ups. We left the spare bottles just in order to evacuate quicker. Going down the stairs, it was again quite orderly. There were almost no civilians that we encountered. We did have

to stop probably four or five times to allow other members to come in from floors or civilians -- the few civilians that were left coming in from the floors, but it was orderly.

Made it down to the lobby, exited the stairways, and the lobby at this point was pretty much empty. There weren't too many people in the lobby. I did encounter a lieutenant from Engine 212. He came up to me and said, "I may need your help. I can't find any of my guys." So I said okay.

There was still one guy -- I wasn't sure of where one of my guys was, one of the chauffeurs. I didn't know if he had come in the building or he was still outside. I said, "Let me get all my guys together, and I'm going to come back, and we'll help you search for your guys." I knew that he was from Brooklyn. He probably wasn't familiar with the complex there. I had been there, from being -- usually we're second or third due at the towers. I was a little bit more familiar about where we might be able to look for them.

We exited the lobby. We went past where the command center was, which -- there were no more chiefs there. They had all moved, I think across West

Street. We went out onto West Street through the windows, which had been blown out from the south tower collapsing, and we turned north on West Street, mainly just because we were headed towards where the rigs were.

We got a little bit past, I believe, Vesey Street, which is the first street north of the north tower. We were in the middle of the street near the divider. We removed our masks and catching our breath trying to -- it was overheated and trying to catch our breath.

Within about two minutes of us being there, the north tower began to collapse, and we turned, and we looked, and we could see it was starting to come down. Somebody nearby me yelled, "It's coming down," which drew my attention it to, that plus the roar, so I just said to the guys, "Let's just run north. You know, just go this way."

Started heading up north, away from, because I knew we were too close, and would it collapse. At this point, I didn't know how far away we were going to get, whether the debris was going to hit us or not. I would say we ran -- I ran maybe 10 or 15 seconds before I looked over my shoulder, and you could see the dust

cloud of debris and determined we couldn't out run it, so I'm not sure if I yelled to guys to try to take cover or I just motioned to them. I really couldn't see them that well. At this point, it was obviously chaos.

I had in my mind to try to get behind something, because I didn't know what was going to be in this debris cloud. I didn't know if there was going hot steel rolling down the street or fire ball, or shock wave, whatever.

I ran a little bit further, and I came to a Fire Department suburban parked perpendicular to West Street and just dove behind that, and within a second or two, the blast from the collapse hit the rig.

The street went completely dark. Very difficult to breathe. I was covered with dust and soot, and the concussion blast actually rocked the vehicle that we were leaning against. Probably three or four other members also dove behind the same vehicle. One landed on top of me, and one landed next to me, and we just stayed there until it settled down and we could see and breathe again.

I was kind of on the bottom of the pile, so I was trying to get somebody else who was there to see,

because I didn't know how long it was going to be like this, see if there was a mask available inside the rig. It was a chief's car. Maybe there might be a mask there. We weren't able to get into the apparatus.

When things started to settle, I got up, and I looked around. It took me awhile to find everybody again that was in my unit. The time frame is -- I kind of lost it, to give you the time frame, because things I thought took five minutes may have taken an hour and vice versa. We probably took close to an hour to assemble everybody, find the other chauffeurs, and eventually we reassembled.

We moved further north up West Street, got together. I was kind of just waiting to see if there were any chiefs that were going to give orders or establish an assembly point. There really wasn't much of that going on yet. What we did hear within probably a another half hour or so, maybe twenty minutes, transmissions from Ladder Company 6, who was trapped in the building after the collapse, but they were still -- eventually they all made it out, of course, but being with members who were quartered with them, they wanted to go see what they could do for them.

There really wasn't much we could do. It was a pile. We heard over the next half hour, hour or so, transmissions back and forth from Captain Jonas about their location, and Chief Blaich trying to figure out where they were. They knew where they were. They were in the B stairway, but there was --

Q. When you look at the pile, where was the B stairway? So how to locate them -- how did that go? What mechanism would you use?

A. And just, you know, trying to climb over the pile at this point, seeing if it was -- eventually, we were able to get the pumper going. It was supplied, I think, by a relay from the boat, fire boat, on the river, supplied it, and somebody found access to the B stairway through the parking garage.

There was an entrance on Vesey Street, and we attempted to stretch a line through there to reach them from the bottom, but it was too much debris. It was completely packed with debris from the bottom. Must have taken three or four hours, and they extricated themselves from -- I know they were trapped with 39 engine, and 39 engine also got out, along with a Chief Picciotto was also with them. They were in communications.

There was also a chief there that didn't make it, Chief Prunty, I believe. He had covered down by us, s I knew him. I didn't know that he was with them at the time. I didn't find that out till later, but I know that he was communicating with 39 engine before he succumbed.

I'm trying to get the time frame right. After that, we were there quite late. We were there until about nine or ten o'clock at night, and eventually we got the rig. The rig was damaged, but drivable, and the members of -- myself and the other members of 9 returned to Canal Street, quarters at Canal Street along with a few other members, and I couldn't tell you what companies they were from.

After that, I went home. I returned after -- about midnight, I returned to my quarters, Engine 7, spent the night there, and the next day I went -- I went home to see my family in the early hours of the next day between nine and twelve, and I went back that night. I spent the next three or four days, just whenever we could get down to the pile and --

Q. Everybody got out okay from 9?

A. Everybody in 9 engine survived. Everybody from 6 engine -- I mean 6 truck survived, miraculously,

and everybody from 7 and 1, where I was assigned, survived.

Q. Unbelievable.

A. Unbelievable, yeah. I know 7 made it up as high as the about the 30th Floor, 30 or 31 with -- Captain Tardio was working. I think he had three guys with him.

Q. The intention of the chiefs giving the orders more or less to engine companies initially was take your roll-ups, and you were going to fight the fire. Pretty much that's the way it looked, right?

A. Yeah.

Q. In the initial stages, that was basically the intent, right?

A. They were basically, I would assume, treating it as a high-rise fire.

Q. As a high-rise fire, yeah.

A. A big fire. My thoughts going up the stairs was I didn't know if we were going to put it out.

Q. Right.

A. But I assumed that we could get close enough that, you know, people were trapped, and we had to extinguish fire to get to them, or to keep a stairway clear or --

Q. What would you say the chances of getting to the 85th Floor, the 86th Floor, with these roll-ups, the bunker gear, a mask, an extra bottle, without the elevators? What are our chances?

A. Looking back now, practically zero. If the building -- and I couldn't -- I don't think you could find a person there that day that thought the building was going to come down.

Q. Right.

A. You probably heard that.

Q. Absolutely.

A. You probably won't hear anybody say that they really thought they weren't going to go in because it was going to come down. That was it was the furthest thought from their mind.

At one point, I figured we'll get as close as we can get. When we reach the point of exhaustion, maybe other companies coming in would be able to come up with only their bunker gear and pick up the roll-ups and continue, pick up the roll-ups and maybe even our masks, and be able to continue, or if we got close enough to fight the fire, they would be behind us, but it was going to be -- as it went on, it was going to be more of just a rescue evacuation and not really

fighting fire.

Q. When you were in the lobby, did you notice the elevators, what the condition of the elevators was?

Was there any fire in the elevator shafts? Did you notice the elevator to any extent?

A. I didn't see fire in the elevator shafts. There was a good deal of soot, like a white soot all through the lobby. A couple of the doors of the elevators were buckled, so there was some kind of explosion or fire in there. There were -- in the vestibule between the outer doors and the inner doors, there were two civilian bodies burned. There was nothing we could do for them at that point, you know. I assumed something came down and just burned them. They might have been in the elevator or near the elevator and stumbled as far as they got.

I heard reports that there was one elevator working that some guys used. There were no elevators by the time we got there. All the elevators were out. It was one of the first things that was established. Elevators were not working.

If we were going to do anything, we were going to go from the stairs. That's pretty much it.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: That's pretty much it.

I thank Captain Fody for this interview. This concludes the interview and it's 1511 hours, and that's it.

File No. 9110391

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD MECNER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: It's 1609 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview at this time with fireman first grade Edward Mecner, Engine 5. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001. We are in the office at Engine 5. There is nobody else in the office. What follows now is the interview.

A. I was getting off a 24. I worked Monday morning a tour, and I was on mutual I think Monday night. I was supposed to be getting off Tuesday morning at about 8:20 or 8:15 -- maybe about 8:00 Lieutenant Mitchell asked if there's a bagel shop. We got some bagels; we sat down.

Approximately 8:30 we got a run. Lieutenant Paul Mitchell was relieved, as was Firefighter Burnside from Ladder 20. They had early relief. Someone came in already. We responded to a run at 8:30 on Irving Place and 19th Street.

I think it was a 10-33, smoke in the area, some general false alarm or something.

From there we were directed -- they said that there was an explosion at the Trade Center. We were directed to go directly there.

I was the chauffeur that day. I started driving up 14th Street. I was going to turn left on Broadway. The member who ended up being missing, Firefighter Delvalle, said to take the west side. So I continued up 14th Street.

As we approached Sixth Avenue when you look south, you could see a big cloud of smoke, and at every big intersection, Seventh Avenue and Eighth Avenue, so forth, going West down 14th Street, you could see a big plume of smoke. So we knew this was something very serious.

We got on the west side, and we made it down in the general area of downtown Manhattan and the Trade Center area. We parked the rig on West Street maybe three blocks north of Vesey. There were other rigs there, so we couldn't really get much further.

The members of Engine 5 grabbed their rollups and irons, extra cylinders, which is procedure for a high-rise fire, and they proceeded down West Street going towards the

north tower.

At that point I put my gear on out of the chauffeur's compartment. I grabbed a spare set of irons. I went down and I saw a chauffeur from 15 Engine and asked if he needed any help. He was on West and I think Vesey Street. He said he's okay. All the chauffeurs seemed to be okay.

So I caught up with Engine 5, and we proceeded up I think stairway A. On approximately the third floor, someone said to go over and cross over to stairway C, that there's not as many people coming down the stairs, it will be easier to make our way up.

We did that on about the third floor. We headed up to the tenth floor. I think we took a short break. We went up, and we stopped on the 13th floor while everybody stopped and took a rest on 13. There was a water cylinder, and we all took a drink of water. Everybody said we're ready to go up again, so we started going up.

We made it as far as 19. One of our members, Derek Brogan, started complaining of chest pains. We stopped at 19 and rested a moment. He said he felt better. We made our way

up to approximately the 23rd floor, where we stopped again. He started having recurrent chest pains.

That's where I also saw some members of Engine 10 that I knew by name and a couple members of Ladder 9. One of them was also having some difficulty breathing and chest pains.

Also at that point I guess someone called for Port Authority ESU. I guess the ESU Port Authority guys brought up some oxygen, and I believe they gave it to Don Casey of 9 Truck, who I saw. I saw Bruce Springstead from 9 Truck. Engine 10 members, I saw Mitch Castiglione and another member, I can't remember his name, all who made it out of the building, because I saw them later on.

While we were on the 23rd floor, at one point I took off Don Casey's coat. I saw that he was having a hard time breathing. Derek's coat we took off, his turnout, because he was having the chest pains. I figured just to get the heat off him. It was pretty hot carrying all the stuff up. We found some water.

Then within a minute or two, it sounded

like a missile was about to come through the windows, I guess maybe on every floor, but it sounded like it was going to come right through the 23rd floor. Everyone automatically just hit the deck, like you do in a war movie.

We heard a crash and the ground shaking, and everybody kind of like -- when we realized we were okay, everybody kind of got up and were wondering what was going on.

In a minute or two -- there was an order to evacuate. I don't know who gave the order. It was a verbal order. It wasn't over the radio. I didn't have my radio at that point.

Q. Where was your radio?

A. I left it on the rig when I was changing into my gear. I just put it there. In a hurry to catch up with the rest of Engine 5, I left it in the rig. I believe later on Richie Carletti, who came with Tom Lynn from Engine 5, they found 5 Engine and they saw my radio and he knew when he saw the radio and that the chauffeur's compartment was empty that I went in also.

At that point after the crash and the

evacuate order, we began to descend the stairs. At about the fourth floor, there was a blockage. They couldn't make it across. Someone said to follow him, go across back to stairway A, I believe it was.

We crossed the hallway on maybe the fourth floor or third, something like that, to stairway A. We got down to the lobby level. Lieutenant Bohack was there, Derek Brogan, Jimmy Andruzzi and myself.

Now we were looking for Gerard Gorman, who was on the 23rd floor. We saw him with us, and he didn't come down. We waited about a minute, and Lieutenant Bohack gave us an order to get out of the building.

We headed out on the west side towards West Street. There was either a construction worker or ironworker waving us out of the building, constantly looking up, ready to run at any second to get out of the building. So we didn't look up. We just ran towards West Street and where we had Engine 5 parked. So we ran in that direction.

(Interruption.)

A. At that point we walked up towards the rig, and then I believe they said to start running because the building was coming down. So we ran again towards the rig. I guess the south tower fell at that point. Maybe it already fell. I'm not sure.

Q. The south tower was the one that fell and shook while you guys were upstairs.

A. That must have come down already.

Q. That came down.

A. So at that point the other building was getting ready to come down, and they said run. So we ran towards the rig. I got in the rig. I had to back it out of the street, the way it was parked. I couldn't see, because it was kind of cloudy and there were still people running.

Then Rich Carletti got in. My eyes were full of dust and stuff, so he got in and he backed the rig out. We parked it up another two blocks north. I don't remember the street now.

I made sure --

CHIEF MALKIN: I have to stop the interview to remove cell phones that are here. It's 1617 hours right now.

(Pause.)

CHIEF MALKIN: 1618 hours the interview resumes.

A. The north tower started to come down, and we ran north maybe at this point five blocks north of Vesey Street. I saw Derek Brogan in an ambulance, the member that was having the chest pains. I asked him for his home number. I told him I would call his wife if I can.

I walked up the street with some civilians. I was just assisting them. We were walking up, and I was asking them their names and so forth. People were trying to get through on cell phones. They couldn't.

I got Derek's wife's number. I wrote it down. I asked him if he saw Gerard. He said he did see Gerard Gorman, the member we were looking for that was on the 23rd floor with us. He said that he's also in an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital; I don't know which one.

I was able to get to a factory building or there was a business -- I don't recall what it was. They let me use their phone, and I got through to Derek's wife. I left a message saying

he's okay, that he's in St. Vincent's, he's okay.

Q. You talked directly to her?

A. No.

Q. You think it was a machine?

A. I think it was a machine. So I just left a message saying Derek's okay. He's being taken to St. Vincent's Hospital, but he's okay. I think I asked for her to call if she gets the message, because we're having trouble getting through, to give my wife a call and say it's okay. I gave her the number. I believe I also was able to get through to my brother-in-law and tell him call everybody and say I'm okay.

I came back out of the building. I found Lieutenant Bohack at the rig, Rich Carletti, Jimmy Andruzzi. We repositioned the rig on Church Street and I think around Liberty. We were looking for some hydrants that we could use. Most of the hydrants were out. Our rig was one of the few that was in operation at that point.

We parked near I think Brooks Brothers. There's a store on Church Street. We found a hydrant that was out. There was a tower ladder

trying to get in position, so we were assisting with that. When we couldn't find any good hydrants, we walked the perimeter of both towers, looking to see if there was someone in charge, something to do.

At that point Jimmy said he wanted to find his brother. He did see him, saw that he was okay. So then he came back and stayed with us the rest of the time.

For the rest of the day we were mostly around Church Street in front of Brooks Brothers. I think it's south of Vesey Street a block or two. We were generally in that area trying to get water out of maybe some of the standpipes in the buildings. Then they said that the 47 story hotel building -- I think it's number seven -- was about to come down.

We were around for the rest of the afternoon. At about 5:30 that did come down. We were in the area, so we ran down the street again. We ran east down whatever street we were on and ran east towards Broadway.

Q. Would the map help you locate what street were on? Let me show you this map. This

is the north tower. This is Vesey Street, and seven is here. So where were you in relation to seven when it came down?

A. Well, Trinity and Church actually turn into the same street. We were I guess right around Fulton. We might have been on Fulton or Dey Street. We were generally in this area for a lot of the time later on in the afternoon. I guess my rig might have been parked around Warren Street when we first arrived, maybe Murray.

Q. So when seven started to collapse, you guys ran east on Fulton or Dey Street?

A. Fulton or Dey, and we met up around Broadway. At that point it was maybe around 6, after 6, 6:30. We kind of had enough. So I asked the officer if we could get ready to go back. At that point there were plenty of units there.

Jimmy Andruzzi and myself were there at that point for -- well, we worked 24 hours, and plus we were there for another 10 hours or so. That's going into 30-something hours of non-stop.

Q. You were tired?

A. Yeah. Plus we were in the north tower,

and that collapsed. Now this other building is telling you run for your life again. I think we had enough.

Q. You didn't want to wait for the next one?

A. We were there for the two of them. We said at that time we're tired, and they weren't really going to get much more out of us than what we can give.

Q. What did the officer say?

A. He said we're ready to go.

Q. Did you go?

A. Yeah, maybe in about the next 45 minutes. Tommy Lynn was there at that point, Rich Carletti from Engine 5, a couple other members from Engine 5 that arrived sometime in the early afternoon. Wherever they were operating, I don't know. There were units from all over the city. It was hard to determine who was who and where everyone was.

Then we came back.

Q. Came back to quarters?

A. Yeah, in I think a police van or something. They escorted about 15 of us. We all

piled in. When we came back to quarters, it was maybe 8:00 or something, 7:30, 8, and that was the end of the day.

Q. I want to ask you, somebody in the lobby of the north tower ordered Engine 5 to start going upstairs. Were you with Engine 5 at that point in the lobby of the north tower?

A. I just caught up with them.

Q. Just caught up with them?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you didn't see who the chief was that gave the orders to go up or who they spoke to?

A. No. I was just kind of in a hurry to catch up with the members.

Q. You caught up with them. They had been given the orders to start going upstairs?

A. Right.

Q. And you followed along with them. Okay.

Lobby conditions. Did you notice anything unusual in the lobby when you were there? Was there any fire in the lobby?

A. No.

Q. Did you see the banks of elevators, what the conditions was over that way?

A. I didn't look to see. I just tried to catch up. I saw them and they were headed towards I guess it was stairway A at that point. I just caught up with them and wanted to stay pretty much with them.

Q. Do you remember seeing any other units that were with you or that you passed in the stairway on the way up?

A. The only units I kind of recall seeing were the ones that were on the 19th floor and the 23rd floor. I saw a couple members of Engine 10 and the other members of Ladder 9 and a few Port Authority ESU units. That was about it. I don't remember seeing any other companies that I remember at this point.

That was it.

Q. That's about it?

A. Yeah. I think like Manny Delvalle at some point maybe around the tenth floor, after the tenth or 13th floor, I don't remember seeing him on 19 or 23. I think he was assisting a civilian. The last time I saw him was maybe

around the 13th floor.

Q. Is he missing?

A. He's missing, right.

Q. On the way up, he stayed behind, assisting a civilian, and you got separated?

A. I guess so, because when we were walking up the stairs, all turnouts look the same. You're just kind of walking up the line, and civilians were coming down the stairway as well. I asked a few what floor they came from, and I recall someone saying 84. One of the civilians said 84.

I saw a restaurant worker. I asked him if he worked at Windows on the World, and he said no, he works in the sky lobby. I guess there's a restaurant, someplace up on 44 or 46, wherever the sky lobby is.

Q. You guys were going up the A stairway, that you recall?

A. We started off I believe in the A. At some point someone said there's less people in the C stairway, so we crossed over on around the third or fourth floor to the C stairway. Then we went up.

Coming down it was pretty much the same thing. We started down I believe in C, and then on the third or fourth floor there was a problem. There was something stuck in a hallway. We couldn't get down, couldn't continue down that stairwell. We crossed over to the A. Someone said this way, and we went down to A.

Then we went to the lobby where we waited for -- we were waiting for Gerard Gorman at that point. He was the last guy we saw that wasn't with us. Then Lieutenant Bohack gave the order to get out of the building. We waited another minute, and then we did. A few minutes later it came coming down.

That was pretty much it.

CHIEF MALKIN: It is now 1627 hours. I want to thank Fireman Mecner for this interview. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110392

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM GREEN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: 1400 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman First Grade William Green of Engine 6. We're at the quarters of Engine 6. There's nobody else in the room. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001. What follows is the interview.

A. We were returning from an EMS run, and we pulled up to the intersection of Rose Street and Avenue of the Finest. That's right next to One Police Plaza. That's when we heard a loud explosion.

We were looking around. We didn't know where it came from. It was loud. A police officer pointed to the north tower of the World Trade Center. We looked up there, and we saw a hole, maybe about three stories wide, a jagged hole, somewhere in the eighties in the north wall of One World Tower. We thought it was a bomb.

We started responding. Lieutenant gave a second alarm because the exterior skin was damaged, and I believe he also transmitted a 10-60. We started responding to the World Trade

Center.

We had to make a left on Gold and a right on Beekman. The firehouse is located at 49 Beekman Street. Two firefighters came out from the house. They were scheduled to work a day tour, Firefighter Bill Johnston and Firefighter Bob Emans. They jumped on the rig, and we started responding to One World Trade.

When we got over to Church Street and Vesey, the street was packed with people. There was actually people gridlock in the street, thousands of people. The apparatus actually had to slowly plow the people out of the way so we could respond.

The rig stopped first on Vesey right in front of Seven World Trade. There was a lot of debris on the ground there. Then we continued to the front of One World Trade. We made a left on West Street, heading in the wrong direction of the northbound lanes on West Street.

The chauffeur positioned the apparatus right underneath what would be the north pedestrian covered bridge that connects Six World Trade with One World Financial Center. The

chauffeur took a hydrant, and we grabbed our rollups off the rig and proceeded into One World Trade.

There were people jumping out of the building at that point. They looked like they were landing on top of Six World Trade. Everyone was saying, "Let's get in. Let's get in before we get hit by the people." We ran into the building. It was me, Paul Beyer, Bill Johnston, Tom Holohan, and we had a covering officer, Lieutenant O'Hagan.

We entered in through the front doors of the lobby. The lobby was screwed. All the windows were already broken. Marble walls that surrounded the elevator shaft, they were cracked and broken.

Lieutenant O'Hagan, he reported in to the fire command station. We stood fast where we normally stand fast, basically right by the core there or just outside the core. There were some turnstiles that you had to go through to get like towards the core.

Lieutenant O'Hagan reported in. In a few moments he came up and said, "Okay, we're

going to head up the B staircase." I'm still thinking a bomb went off.

I'm sorry, I forgot something. When we pulled up in front of -- when we first saw the building with the hole, when we saw the hole, it looked like a jagged hole about three stories high and wide. A bunch of papers had flown out. We thought it was a bomb.

When we got over there, just before I entered the building, I took a look up and I could see two exposures, almost three exposures. There were multiple floors on fire on three exposures I could see.

Just as we started towards the elevators, we were going to go for the B staircase. There were handy talky transmissions saying it's confirmed, airplane crash on the 86th floor.

So I thought to myself possibly it was an accident with a small Cessna or something. Or possibly it was a terrorist attack, they had a Cessna packed with TNT. I did not know it was a jetliner, nor did, I think, any members of my crew.

We headed for the B staircase. It was pretty much in the center of the core. We had to go through these turnstiles. I remember there was a lot of rubble on the floor there. There was elevator doors ajar. There were elevator doors missing. I could see an elevator car twisted in the shaft.

I remember I looked up at the ceiling because I thought maybe the ceiling got charred because there was a bunch of rubble on the floor. It was about three feet high in the middle. The ceiling wasn't charred. So I had thought the floor blew up.

I was telling guys afterwards the floor must have blown up. Maybe there was a bomb downstairs or something. But I came to learn that that was bodies. We had to climb over and around this pile.

Q. A pile of bodies, in the lobby?

A. I didn't recognize it as bodies. I don't know if my mind didn't see it.

Q. Burned?

A. Burned.

Q. Near the elevators?

A. It looked like rubble to me.

Q. Right.

A. Right outside the elevators, in the core. We had to climb up and around it -- it was like three feet high in the middle -- to enter the B staircase.

We entered the B staircase. I believe on the first story it was like a metal security gate on the first story. It's like someone couldn't hop up the stairs, and there was a gate that was open.

People were coming down. People were evacuating. We were heading up. The staircase was narrow. It was only two people wide. We were telling them, "Stay to the right. Stay to the right." We started heading up. I remember water flowing down the stairs like a rapid river, maybe the first ten stories. Then the water seemed to stop.

We were heading up, telling people to stay to the right. People were cheering us, saying, "The firemen are here. The firemen are here." They're patting us on the back. The higher we got, we started seeing injured people.

People were burned.

Approximately when we got to the 14th floor I heard a handy talky transmission, "Another plane! Another plane!" A little rumble. "Another plane just hit the south tower." That's what I heard on the handy talky.

We continued up. At the 17th floor my company was waiting for me, took a blow. We went into the floor. People were coming down. Other firemen were maybe behind us going up. They were taking blows at different floors.

My whole company regrouped on that 17th floor. We uncovered a little bit. We were sweating, and we were fatigued already. There was a vending machine there with a big glass panel with a bunch of waters in it and stuff, and guys went looking for change. So I took the axe, and I smashed the glass. It took about two or three hard blows. We were laughing.

Q. Oh, you're the guy they're looking for. No, just kidding. Go ahead.

A. We were laughing. We were laughing. We took waters, passed them out to brothers on the floor, passed them out to civilians on the

stairs.

A few moments later we started continuing up again. We regrouped at the 31st floor. We took a longer blow there. When we were going up, people were handing us bottles of water too. The higher we would get up, there were some severely burnt people. People were helping people down.

At the 31st floor -- I was the last one to get there, again. The company took a blow. Lieutenant Atlas from 10 Engine popped his head in the door and said, "Come on, guys. We've got to make a push." Tom Holohan and Billy Johnston, they had a little bit of their wind, and Lieutenant O'Hagan. They said they were going start. Me and Paul probably needed a little more of a blow.

So they started in the stairs again. An officer came in from the A stairway, which was towards exposure 3. He came out of the A stairway and was asking me and Paul, "Where is the C stairway? Where is the C stairway?"

So Paul went towards the exposure 1 side of the building, and I went towards the

exposure 4 side of the building. The C stairway was towards exposure 1, towards the front of the building.

He said that they wanted -- I don't remember what company this officer was from. I think it might have been 5 Truck. I'm kind of fuzzy on that. They wanted civilians in the C stair. Rescue 1 was also taking a blow on this floor. The whole company was taking a blow with us.

At this point the whole corridor filled up with civilians that were in the B stairway, the attack stairway, and they were evacuating to the C stairway. Then it cleared up that stairway pretty good.

A short while later Paul realized his helmet was missing. Rescue had left. They started up again.

Q. What's Paul's last name?

A. Paul Beyer. Paul realized his helmet was missing. We were looking for his helmet. I said, "You know, maybe someone from rescue took it by mistake, you know," because guys were uncovering and they put their stuff back on.

Then I was thinking maybe one of the civilians took it. But I come to find out, talking to other guys, that there was an Engine 6 helmet on the 17th floor where we took the blow. He forgot his helmet down there and he didn't realize it and we didn't realize it.

So he grabbed a roll-up and started in the stairs again. Oh, on the 31st floor we decided -- we had four rollups with us. We said let's take two rollups between four guys. And we left two rollups on the 31st floor.

So Billy Johnston and Tommy Holohan grabbed one. Paulie probably grabbed the other one, and I was buttoning up, getting ready. I was really fatigued.

I remember on the 31st floor there were two guys from 10 Truck, and there was a Port Authority police officer with a Scott pack, a uniform and a Scott pack, and he had medical supplies. I think the guys were having chest pains, and he was tending to them.

Paulie probably was worried about me, and he was saying, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right." He told the

guy, "Oh, check him out. Check him out." The guy asked me, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right."

I entered the staircase. I started going up. I got to approximately the 37th floor. I had the backup position. I had a handy talky. The building violently shook like an earthquake, tossing us around. I donned my mask. I didn't know what.

Then someone opened the door from the 36th floor and said Two World Trade Center just fell down. I'm thinking it's one of these, it fell like on an angle, fell across many blocks. I didn't know it pancaked. The way the building shook, I didn't doubt him that it had fallen completely.

It might have been about 30 seconds later I had heard a handy talky transmission. I believe it was "Mayday! Mayday! Evacuate the building. Evacuate the building."

Q. On Channel 1?

A. On Channel 1. That's the channel I was on.

Then everybody was saying, "You got

that? You got that? Evacuate the building. Evacuate the building." On the handy talky everybody is going -- I turned around and started going down. You could only walk. You would get a couple of steps, and it would stop. Maybe you would get a couple more steps, and it would stop.

Q. Full of people?

A. All firemen. I don't remember civilians.

Q. So there were so many that they were bunching up? You would walk, stop, walk stop?

A. Yeah, walk, stop. It was like people gridlock again. Everybody was calling everybody on the radio: This unit to this position. This unit to this position. I was trying to get my chance in. I called and I believe I spoke to Tom Holohan control, "I'm working my way down. We're evacuating. We're working our way down."

You get a couple of steps or a couple of floors, and it would stop. Guys were filing in from every floor. I was on the outside of the stairway, so as you would come down each stairway, that's where the floors were feeding in.

At one point there was an opening on the inside of the stairway. I realized let me move over there, because this lane is slow. I think that's what saved my life is that it was on the inside of the stairway as you come to each floor, they filed in on the outside of the stairway. Guys that I had seen coming down filing in on floors didn't make it. In hindsight looking at it now, I think that's what saved my life.

I worked my way down. When I got to the lower floors in the single digits, I had contact with my company officer. He was making his way down. I don't know what floor he was on. Around the fourth floor I passed this civilian. He might have been 450 pounds. He was huge, a man. I don't know what his age was, but he was huge, 450 pounds. He was taking baby steps like this.

I walked right past him like all the other firemen. I felt like a heel when I'm walking past him, and I'm thinking to myself as I'm walking past, what does this guy think of me, you know? I mean, I know now I couldn't have --

it would have blocked up the stairway more. I think it was about the fourth floor.

The next landing, the third floor, I remember two firemen carrying a woman. I believe it was a Caucasian woman. I don't think it was 6 Truck because that woman looked large and she was dark-skinned. I believe this was a smaller woman, from what I remember. I believe she was a Caucasian. It looked like they had it, they were making their way down.

I continued to file down. I got out of the stairs, into the core of the lobby. I had to climb over that pile of rubble again. There was some Port Authority personnel in there. He was pointing us towards the fire command station.

The lobby was really screwed now. There was dust and debris everywhere. I saw the front doors. There was debris all over the front doors that we entered. We walked towards the fire command station, which was on the exposure 1/exposure 2 wall. There was no personnel at the fire command station. I said, "Oh, this is bad."

We went up to the window. I was with a group of about 20 firemen. I don't remember who

it was that was with me. We had to exit out a window, the last window on the exposure 1, close to exposure 2.

There was somebody outside. I don't know if he was a member. He was 75, maybe 100 feet away from the building. He was covered in dust. He pointed up and he held up. We knew that meant something was coming down. We waited. I kept looking back. More guys are filing down. There's a whole string of guys filing down from there. Some people jumped. Some people landed right there.

He said, "Come on." I stepped out of this window. I remember I started walking out the building. I was walking. I remember I looked to the right. There was a pile there. [redacted] I remember I looked to the left and saw what was the Marriott Hotel, and there was a giant V cut. From the top floor to

like the third floor was missing. There was a lot of rubble out in the street.

I remember I was walking out away from the complex to West Street, and I could see across the street on the steps on World Financial Center what looked like some kind of command post was set up. I remember I saw 6 Engine there, 6 Engine where we had parked it. No personnel around it.

I don't know if someone yelled "Go north" or if I heard a voice "Go north," but guys were going each direction. I went north, with a bunch of other guys too. I walked under the foot bridge, started heading north. I got to Vesey Street. I kind of crossed Vesey Street onto the southbound -- I'm sorry, to Vesey and West. I continued up West, but I kind of diagonally crossed into the southbound lanes of West Street coming down.

I got maybe a third of a block, half of a block up there, and I'm looking back, walking slow, waiting for my guys to catch up, and someone said, "It's falling." I saw the guy that yelled it, and he was far away. He was far away.

Q. Back towards the buildings?

A. No, he was further away from the buildings, further north and further west. He pointed up. He said, "It's falling." I looked, and it looked like to me that it was starting to tip at a 45 degree angle right towards me, the antenna. But you don't see that in the video. But I've seen one shot over and over and over. They play it on the news. I guess it started to pancake, and then at one point it started to tip. It looked like it was coming right towards me.

To backtrack, in this state when the order came to evacuate, people started ditching their equipment, their tools, taking their turnout coats off. I was buttoned up. I had my turnout coat on; I had my mask.

I was trying to run. I was so fatigued. I felt like the Michelin man. I was trying to run up West Street. I made a left onto, I don't know what street it was. I think it might have been Murray. There was a baseball field there.

Q. You were north of Vesey. You're coming up to Murray. And there was a baseball field

somewhere there?

A. Yeah. It might have been this street. There was a baseball field here, and it's a pretty big baseball field. It's two baseball fields wide.

Q. It's probably Murray street, just north of Murray street and just west of West Street.

A. Right. That's exactly where it was. I entered what appeared to be the outfield. I was trying not to look back. I was just trying to run, but I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere. I could start seeing this cloud coming at me.

I was just able to take my helmet off and get my face piece on and just get my helmet back on without snapping it, and I felt a blast. It might have knocked me to my knee and then I got up. It was all orange. It was papers on fire. I could see it was papers on fire. I could feel a little heat on the back of my neck and my ears. It surrounded me and then all of a sudden it just turned black, black ash.

I'm expecting, all right, something solid is going to hit me. Something solid is going to hit me. I'm pelted with small

particles, but I'm thinking the antenna is going to skew me in the back.

The first couple of breaths I took from my mask were concrete, dust, crap, so I was choking in my mask. But I knew it was a better environment than outside. I could see that rolling black stuff.

I turned on my flashlight. It only shined about two inches. I knew I couldn't stay there. I walked across this baseball field blind like this, like a baby, with my hands stretched out in front of me. I walked a long time. I thought my air was going to run out. I couldn't run because I couldn't see where I was going. Even though it was a baseball field, what's going to be in there; right? But you don't think.

The direction I chose was I guess a diagonal direction, and I walked a long time and stumbling a little. The next thing I felt was the back of the batting cage of the baseball field. I felt the angle of the fence. I knew it was a batting cage.

So I started working my way to the right, and I found a lower fence and I said to

myself this must be the dugout fence. So I worked my way all the way down it, around it, back down the fence. There's still no visibility. Then I felt the angle of the back of it. I said, all right, I'm at the back of the batting cage.

I was wondering if there's going to be a way out of this park now, you know. Some smoke started to lift, and I could see there was a break in the fence. I took my face piece off. My eyes were all irritated. When I came out, it was on North End Avenue, I believe, of that baseball field. North End Avenue.

Q. Right over here?

A. I think it was right here or right here. I'm not sure if it's Park Place or Wagner.

Q. We're looking on the map at North End Avenue at Park Place or Warren Street.

A. There was a news cameraman there. He's taking video of me. I'm kind of waving him off. I was pissed off he was taking video of me.

Two police officers came up to me and walked me up to the corner of Warren Street and North End Avenue, and they knelt me down and they

poured a gallon of water over my face to wash my eyes out. My face was covered with dust. There was a police officer then that said there's a triage center in Stuyvesant High School. He escorted me down North End Avenue to Chambers Street where Stuyvesant High School is located.

I walked into the lobby of this high school, and there were hundreds of people there. I turned around and I walked back out. I felt I was all right. I wanted to recoup my company. I started walking down Chambers Street, and some EMS girl came chasing after me. She said, "Oh, come in. Come in." I said, "No, I'm all right. I'm all right." She said, "Are you sure? You don't look all right." I was covered in the dust. I said, "I'm all right."

I tried contacting my company on the handy talky. I went down to West Street. I started regrouping with other companies in my battalion: Ladder 1, 7 Engine. I saw the captain of 7 Engine, Captain Tardio. He said he had two members missing. I said, "I'm missing everybody."

I was trying to call my guys. There

were no answers. Everybody started giving maydays, maydays, maydays. You couldn't get control. We had a chief who was trying to get control. "We've got a mayday. Let's get control." There was no control of the radio.

All of a sudden a wall of people come running up. They were afraid another building was going to collapse. I thought I was going to be trampled to death. I tried to run too. I maybe ran like a block north more. Then I knelt down. I was totally shot.

A short while lady an Army paramedic came up to me. He said, "Are you all right?" I said, "Yeah, I'm all right, just I feel cold." He said, "It's a warm day." I remembered it was a beautiful day. And I was freezing.

So he starts asking me questions. I was overweight. "Do you have shortness of breath?" Yeah, I had shortness of breath. He thought I was having a heart attack. I got scared. I thought I was having a heart attack too. He gave me a nitroglycerin pill. He flagged down two EMS guys.

They got an ambulance with the windows

blown out. It had no equipment in it, just a stretcher. They put me on the stretcher. They brought me to St. Vincent's Hospital. They deconned me outside. They brought me into the emergency room.

It seemed like a whole team was working on me. After evaluating me and looking for injuries, they said they don't think I had a cardiac episode but I inhaled a lot of crap. They admitted me to St. Vincent's Hospital. I was there for two days.

Late in the evening is when several members of my company found me in the hospital. Apparently I was among the missing. I didn't know.

First at the door I told the nurse call my firehouse. She had contact with someone, but it probably wasn't someone from my company. It was someone -- who knows -- to let them know I was in the hospital and all right.

The captain and several members came. It was Captain Sakowich. He said, "We gotta know where you were operating, because no one knows nothing." I basically described where we were in

the B staircase. It was pretty much in the center of the core. It was on the left side of the elevators, but it was pretty much in the core and we were working our way down, you know.

When we were on 31, we started going up. We tried to make the 44th floor. There was a report of an elevator on the 44th floor that went into the 60s. So I gave him all the information where we were.

CHIEF MALKIN: We'll have to break for one minute. It's 1429 hours. There's a phone call.

(Interruption.)

CHIEF MALKIN: The interview resumes at 1431 hours.

A. I think I got to the hospital like approximately 11:30 a.m., maybe 12 noon. They had me up in a room by 12:30. They contacted my firehouse at 1 p.m. The nurse contacted my wife. I went on the phone with my wife and I told her, "Just go home. It's a war down here." Of course she didn't. She came down to the hospital, and she stayed with me like the next 30 hours.

Like I said, Captain Sakowich in the

evening -- it might have been 10, 11; it might have been midnight -- came to the hospital with several members from my company. He said, "Where were you operating? We've got to know where you're operating. No one knows nothing."

So I told him where we were in that B staircase, explained the whole thing to him. I guess I was kind of emotional. [redacted]

So they left. They didn't tell me they didn't find any of the guys yet, but I could see it in their eyes. I knew that they didn't find anybody else.

I turned on the TV then. I think it's about midnight. Only one channel came in, Channel 2, and it was very fuzzy. That's when I learned that the planes were struck by jetliners. I never thought it was jetliners, you know.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Another Lieutenant Atlas, Lieutenant Atlas's brother, came in and was asking me had I seen his name. He said, "You know my brother?" I said, "Yeah, 10 Engine." I said, "I believe he was above me. I don't think he made it." [redacted]

[redacted]

I was released from the hospital Thursday afternoon. I came to the firehouse. That's when I learned the four guys I entered the building with were missing, and they told me an extensive search was being done.

Two retired members brought me home that night. The next morning a retired member picked me up, we came in, and I went down to ground zero and tried to help with the line on the pile. It really wasn't good for me. I was coughing a lot. I had a paper mask for protection. You know the story.

Everybody was kind of upset because we were working where Three World Trade Center was. I said the guys are going to be where one was. But they assured me that, no, they were working there earlier and they needed some cranes to move

some stuff out of the way so they could get in there more.

I guess that's about it.

Q. That's about it. Let me ask you something.

A. Sure.

Q. When you went in the lobby and you talked about the elevator doors that all, some were blown? What did they look like?

A. There were elevator doors that were missing.

Q. Missing.

A. There were elevator doors that were ajar.

Q. Right.

A. I could see an elevator car twisted in the shaft.

Q. Was there fire in the elevator shaft? Was there smoke? Any evidence of fire dropping down to that level?

A. That rubble was burnt rubble. I've come to learn from guys behind me they said it was burnt bodies. Like I said, my first instinct was to look up. I thought the ceiling might have

come down. But the ceiling was intact. Then I was thinking well maybe the floor had blown up from the bottom. I guess my mind was processing, processing what this rubble could be. It couldn't be what it was.

[redacted]

Q. [redacted]

A. [redacted]

Q. [redacted]

What were your instructions in the lobby? The officer reported in to the command post?

A. The officer reported in to the command post, and then he came over to us and said, "We're going to take the B staircase, the attack staircase. B staircase is the attack staircase, and we're going to start walking."

Q. You were taking the hose up. Did you get the impression the idea was like you were going to fight the fire or what?

A. We were going to put the fire out.

Q. You were going to put the fire out.

Okay.

A. Even like in hindsight I'm thinking now the standpipe must have been compromised. That first ten stories, the water was falling down like rapids, ankle deep. You get tunnel vision, I guess. Just like I was studying -- I was studying.

Or the time of the explosion, when we saw the explosion and then when we got to the front -- maybe it was four minutes. Multiple floors were on fire now. Steel fails in 20 minutes. What were we thinking if we had to walk up there.

I know something I forgot. On the 31st floor I think there was a handy talky transmission -- I think a member of Rescue 1 -- he said, "Be advised it takes an hour and 15 minutes to get to the 31st floor." I said, "An hour and 15 minutes? That seems like a long time, you know." But I think that's what it was.

Something else I forgot. As we were heading up, after that second plane hit -- and that's the way I heard it, a handy talky transmission: "Another plane! Another plane!"

A small rumble, and another plane just hit the south tower.

We also started hearing reports from civilians: The Pentagon got hit, the White House got hit, the capital got hit, the Sears Tower got hit. We thought it was a war. It was a war.

Q. It was a war.

When that guy from rescue went on the handy talky and said, "Be advised, an hour and 15 minutes," in other words, we were an hour and 15 minutes into the operation?

A. I believe so.

Q. He was saying, "It's an hour and 15 minutes, and I'm just on the 31st floor"?

A. Right.

Q. This is to give some estimate of how we were progressing going up?

A. I think so.

Q. Exactly right, yeah.

When your officer reported in the lobby, did you see who he reported in to? Did you recognize any chiefs? Was Battalion 1 there?

A. I think Battalion 1 had just gotten in when we got there.

Q. Did Battalion 1 give him the orders to take your company and go up and do whatever? You don't know who he reported to?

A. No.

Q. Okay. That's good.

A. There were a lot of officers there. I remember when we first got there Squad 18 was there. They weren't even in their rig. They were in the building. I don't think they were in the lobby. I think they had already started going up, I guess.

The other units kind of converged at the same time. They were coming from different directions, gather their equipment and run in.

I remember there was a decorative wall in front of One World Tower. It was like a driveway that came up. It was like an oval. I remember there was like a concrete wall there, and there was a lady sitting on there. She was shaking. She was burned a little. She was just shaking. She was in shock. But we had a task. We had a task at hand. We were going to put the fire out, and we went in.

I remember seeing people jump when we

were going in. It looked like they were landing on top of Six World Trade. Any minute we thought they could land on us, so we had to run in. We had to run in.

[redacted]

Q. Pretty much it?

A. I guess so, yeah.

CHIEF MALKIN: I want to thank Firefighter Green for this interview. It's 1441 hours. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110393

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS LYNN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 26th, 2001. The time is now 1549 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman First Grade Thomas Lynn of Engine Company 5. We are in Engine Company 5's company office. There is nobody else present at this time. The interview is in regard to the events of September 11th, 2001. What follows now is the interview.

A. I came in on the morning of the 11th, and the company ended up going on a run and had enough members where they didn't need me to go on the rig. They went to a box which turned out to be a false alarm. From that box they responded directly on the second alarm to the World Trade Center.

Hearing what was happening from the house watch, another member came in, Richard Carletti, and we took his car down and proceeded down towards the towers. We ended up parking his car by 6 Engine. We walked from there with our gear but no air tanks. We just had our gear with

us. We ended up walking down Liberty Street, past the World Trade Center, which is Two World Trade Center.

We basically saw a lot of body parts and plane wreckage that was just all over the street. We just basically walked by that. We were walking down towards West Street, I guess it is, to the staging area, which was I guess across the street from the Vista Hotel, more in line with the building that holds the Winter Garden theater.

Q. Right.

A. From there we went from rig to rig to see if we could locate 5 Engine's rig and see if we could get air tanks. Once we did, we went back to the staging area. I told the chief that we were from 5 Engine -- I'm not sure which chief it was -- and that our members were in the north tower and we were ready to go in. Actually I said we were thinking of going in. He said, "No, no. You wait here. I'm putting a team together." He put us with a captain from 91 Engine, and we were standing fast there.

Then the south tower came down, and

everybody just ran. We ran into the building where the Winter Garden theater was, and the debris was coming down. We just kept on running in there. The front of it collapsed.

Later we found out of where we went in, and we came out on Vesey Street. Yeah, we came out on Vesey and the West Side Highway and proceeded north on --

Q. West Street.

A. -- West Street until it cleared up a little bit. There were fires in the parking lot where Vesey Street and Murray Street was, and I ended up helping, with Carletti, helping stretching lines to put out those fires. There was really no hydrant pressure at that point.

Q. Where did you get the lines from?

A. I'm not sure which rigs. Whatever rigs were parked right around that area. Those rigs were still okay from the collapse of the south tower.

I just wanted to make note that Lieutenant Paul Mitchell, who was getting off that morning, from our firehouse, I met him at the staging area before the collapse of the south

tower and talked to him briefly. I thought he was still on duty, but he had actually gotten off duty that morning and came back and responded there.

He, I believe, was sent in moments or minutes before the south tower collapsed. I believe he was sent into the south tower before. It seemed like almost right after he was sent in it collapsed.

Q. You saw him before that?

A. Yeah. I saw him at the staging area.

Q. Where was the staging area?

A. The staging area was on West Street at the West Side Highway in front of the financial building which houses the Winter Garden. There was a garage area that went down into the financial building, and that was basically where the board was set up.

I know I saw Von Essen there at one point, and I think Ganci and all those other chiefs were there also.

Q. This is the Winter Garden here.

A. Yeah.

Q. So it was somewhere in this area, on

West Street somewhere in front of the Winter Garden?

A. Yeah.

Q. The staging area was in that area, you said?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that you saw your company officer --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- and he went to the south tower?

A. Right. I believe he went into the south tower.

Q. Okay.

A. So after that south tower collapsed, all the maydays came in, and you could hear everybody was asked to get out of the north tower, evacuate the north tower. We were looking for our members from 5 Engine and did meet up with some of them.

So we regrouped. We moved 5 Engine's rig, which was originally parked on West Street and between Vesey and Barclay, and we ended up moving the rig up to Murray Street off of West Street.

Then from there the members -- once we regrouped, though there was a missing member at that time, though there were a lot of maydays for missing members, so the lieutenant decided let's take the rig and we'll go around the whole area and back and get as close as we can to the towers. This is after the second tower collapsed, now. I guess I'm jumping the gun. A little after we moved the rig, the second tower came down.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. When the second tower came down, I probably was about around Barclay.

Q. Still on West Street?

A. Yeah, still on West Street.

Q. The company was still there?

A. Yeah, still there.

Q. I'm confused. There was an officer with you at this point to order the movement of the rig?

A. Yeah, once we all got together.

Q. Was he on duty or the other guy was on duty?

A. No, he was on duty.

Q. He was on duty. Who was the other officer?

A. He relieved Lieutenant Mitchell in the morning. So Lieutenant Paul Mitchell, he had been relieved. From what I understand, he went all the way to Brooklyn, heard what had happened and then drove his car all the way back and ended up --

Q. That's the lieutenant that went to the south tower? I'm confused.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. He's the one that went to the south tower.

A. Yeah.

Q. Now you had the on-duty officer with you at the rig?

A. Yeah. They were in the north tower.

Q. Right.

A. They were in the north tower. They got out of there before the collapse, barely, except for one of ours, Manny Delvalle.

Then we proceeded around to Trinity Street with the rig after that and ended up

taking a hydrant. Then we walked down I guess it was like Albany Street and then down to the west side to try to get closer.

Then we ended up not being able to do anything down there. So we walked back up to Trinity, moved the rig to I guess it was around Cortlandt Street and Trinity, took a hydrant. Then I think we walked down I think it was Vesey Street, but I'm not sure. We ended up helping hook up to tower Ladder 119 from the rig of 41 Engine. We were supplying the tower ladder, putting out fire in the --

Q. What were the conditions now as you were walking around here? What were the conditions in the World Trade Center? Was there a lot of fire?

A. There was a lot of fire in I guess it would be World Trade Center northeast plaza. I'm not sure. Unless it was the federal office building and the U.S. post office. I'm not sure. Or it could have even been Seven World Trade Center, now that I'm looking at the map.

Q. That's this building right here.

A. Yeah, I think that was the one that was

on fire that we were supplying 119 with.

Q. 119 was working into that building to put out fire in that building?

A. Yeah. I think -- yeah, that must have been the building that was on fire at the time.

So we primarily worked on that, and my time is way off on what happened or how long we operated. It seemed like forever.

Q. Where was your rig at this time? It was still back on Trinity?

A. I believe our rig was on Trinity or it could have even been Broadway between Cortlandt and Dey, I believe.

Q. What were you guys doing with 119 now? You supplied them? You got a line from someplace?

A. Yeah. Actually we hooked up a line into a basement of one of the office buildings there, the riser. I'm not sure which officer turned on the pump station in the building, which created like 90 pounds of pressure, which was plenty of pressure and a lot more pressure than any of the hydrants had at that time. I don't know who thought of that, but that was great. So

41 Engine had plenty of water.

Yeah, that's what we did.

Q. You operated there for some time at that location?

A. Yeah, for some time.

Q. Did you operate a line there? When you say that there was plenty of pressure --

A. No.

Q. -- were you guys operating a line?

A. No, no, we weren't operating a line.

Q. What do you remember after that?

A. I remember meeting up with other -- we went back to the rig and took a blow and met up with other members that had come down from the company. I just remember being very exhausted at that point.

Q. The guys on duty from 5 Engine that you met, they couldn't account for the guys that were missing; right? They didn't know where they were? Was there an organized effort to go back and find them?

A. I don't really know.

Q. You're not aware?

A. I don't really know. I don't know if

they were really aware of that, because of all the different transmissions and everything, whether or not -- maybe it seemed unbelievable. It seemed unbelievable to me -- I guess I can only speak for myself -- that one of the members was missing. I didn't know that he had gotten separated from the rest of the company.

Q. They were in the north tower at some point, and they got separated?

A. Yeah. But I wasn't in the north tower, so I don't know exactly what happened. So maybe I shouldn't speculate.

That's it. That's basically it.

Q. After you finished operating with 119, what did you say, you went back by the rig?

A. Yeah, we went back by the rig and took a blow. Then we ended up getting transported back to the firehouse. That might have been like 8:00 at night or something. Then we made a determination of what groups were going to continue on. I myself was relieved at like 10:30 that night, and then I worked the next day.

That's it.

Q. Okay. Pretty good.

CHIEF MALKIN: The interview is concluded. The time is now 1604. This concludes the interview with Firefighter First Grade Thomas Lynn of Engine 5, and I thank the fireman for this interview.

File No. 9110394

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT SPIRO YIORAS

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 10:28 in the morning. I'm George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is Spiro Yioras, rank is Lieutenant, command is Battalion 49, Division 4.

Q. Lieutenant, can you please tell us the events regarding that tragic day of September 11th?

A. On that day I was taken out of my battalion and redeployed to Battalion 46 for the tour due to no coverage over there. Initially, I was out on patrol when I heard a call come over the radio that there was a fire at the World Trade Center. Trying to find out more information, I got a message from Captain DeShore from Battalion 46 to come back to the station because we might be responding down there. As I responded back to the station at Battalion 46, we were watching the TV news, watching what was going on, and we saw the second plane hit the tower. Immediately we locked up the offices and we went right down to the Trade Center.

When we first got down there, we stationed on the corner of West Street and Vesey.

Q. How did you get there? What route did you take?

A. We took the 59th Street bridge over, down Second Avenue, and when we got down to like the 20s, we crossed over to the west side and we went straight down to the Trade Center.

Upon arriving on the scene, we met up with I believe Captain Wells from ERS. He was there. He was in charge of the scene and he gave us all assignments. I was assigned to staging. While I was doing staging, someone else appeared on the scene. I think it was Conditions 8. He already had started staging before I got there. Since he had everything under control, I went back to find Captain Wells and Captain DeShore and see what else they wanted me to do, how I was to be utilized.

Upon going back to the corner of West and Vesey, I don't know how long I was on the scene, it must have been like about maybe 20 minutes, 30 minutes, before the first tower collapsed. I just heard a rumbling noise and looked up and I saw parts of the building coming down and I just started running uptown on West Street.

Q. Prior to that collapse, did you see people,

injuries coming towards you; were there a lot of people?

A. There were injuries there. There were people being loaded into the back of ambulances. I saw some of the people from Battalion 49 like Lillo, Abrille. They were working 49 Victor. I saw EMTs Paul Adams and Mous Diaz. They were working 45 Adam. But once that started happening, we all started running and I lost track of them.

I got caught up in the smoke and all the dust from the building coming down, and as soon as the dust and smoke cleared away, I went back to look for personnel because I remembered where they had their ambulances parked and basically it was in the area of the collapse. As I was searching for the crews, Lillo, Abrille, Diaz and Adams, I was also searching for Lieutenants Scaringello, Captain DeShore, for Captain Wells also and anybody else that I could find.

Walking down on West Street, I passed this overpass, this white overpass that connected from the Trade Center to across the street. I believe it had to be connected to the American Express building. As I went inside, through all the rubble, where all the ambulances and all the fire trucks were, I saw body

parts all over the place. I only found one person alive in the whole thing. It was a black female, who I believe worked for a private ambulance. I'm not sure if it was Metro Care or something like that. She had a broken leg.

I yelled to some firemen that were standing by I believe it must have been 1 World Trade Center because No. 2 fell first, right? Yes. I had told them, you know, if they could come and help me with this female over here that had a broken leg, but they had injuries that they were taking care of also. Then a couple of minutes later, about five, six people showed up. I think some were civilians and I think one or two people were off-duty EMS personnel. I really don't know their names, but they were wearing IDs.

We grabbed a stair chair out of one of the damaged ambulances that were there. I believe it was a New York Hospital ambulance. We took a stair chair. We carried her across the rubble and I believe it was to the American Express building, underneath that overpass that connects to it.

As soon as we got underneath the overpass, the second tower collapsed. A lot of it fell close to the building and hit me. A couple of things hit me. I

don't know exactly what hit me. I believe it was some bricks or wood. I really don't know. I couldn't tell you. But it hurt. It hurt.

We got stuck inside the American Express building. We couldn't get out of there. We couldn't find no way. We couldn't see anything. We couldn't breathe. I mean, I thought I was going to buy it. I really thought I was going to die in there.

Q. Were you with other crew members, with the patient, that girl?

A. With the patient and the people that helped me take the patient out of there. We were all stuck in that building. I can't tell you how long we were in there. It must have been about 15, 30 minutes. I'm just taking a wild guess. I'm saying anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes before firemen came in and took us out the back way of the building. Initially, when we tried to get out, all the doors were blocked from debris. We couldn't break any of the glass doors because they were so thick. I even tried breaking one of the glass doors with an oxygen tank and it wouldn't even break.

But finally, it seemed, like I said, 15 to 30 minutes before we got out with the firemen, and the only reason they came in and got us out was because

they saw us go into the building after the second collapse. I should say before the second collapse they saw us go into the building.

Basically, they took me to the treatment center and gave me a little bit of oxygen, but then I went right back out there. I went back out there looking for my guys and everything else. I found a couple of them. I couldn't find Lillo. Abrille, I couldn't find him either, but I had heard word that he was safe; he might have been injured but he was safe. He was down in Battery Park, I believe. One of the other crews from 45 Adam, I found Mr. Adams roaming around and he was looking for his partner, Mr. Diaz. But we later found out that Mr. Diaz was in the hospital being treated for a head injury, a minor head injury.

Basically, for the rest of the day we were just looking for crew members, firemen. We were looking for any patients or anybody that we could find, and basically that was it.

Q. Were your radios working at that time?

A. The radio was working. That's another thing I have to say. Initially, when I found that patient after the first collapse, I had called on the radio to

the command center to see if they could send me somebody over to help me with the patient, and they had said something like, "We have a lot of patients out here and we're trying to deal with it. See if you could deal with it by yourself inside over there where you are." After that, luckily, the other people came by and they helped me. But otherwise, most of the time I didn't hear anything on the radio except for that one little conversation that I had.

Q. In the parking garage, you didn't see any Chiefs or anyone higher than what you were?

A. You know, they might have been.

Q. You couldn't see anything?

A. But I really couldn't see who it was. I know I saw the Chiefs with the white hats, they were out there and everything else, but I just couldn't tell you who it was. I really couldn't name them. I know after the second collapse I saw Chief McCracken, Chief Villani, and they were all heading down towards Battery Park to regroup, and that was like after the second collapse.

Q. Basically, after the collapse, you really found no patients?

A. No patients, nobody alive. They wouldn't let

us go back into the scene. They cordoned it off because they wanted to keep as many people out because they didn't know what else was going to happen, and they also said that some of the other buildings might not be safe also. So, basically, we tried to see if there were any patients or anybody coming up to us. But by then everybody had either been dispersed or been taken over to the treatment center at Stuyvesant High School, I think it was. Basically that was it.

MR. CUNDARI: Lieutenant, I'd like to thank you for taking your time and conducting this interview. This concludes the interview. The time now is 10:40.

File No. 9110395

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

RONALD COYNE

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. CUNDARI: The date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1122 hours. I'm George Cundari, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Ronald Thomas Coyne, EMT, Battalion 44.

Q. EMT Coyne, can you please tell us the events of that tragic day of September 11?

A. On September 11, we had just finished dropping off a patient at Kings County Hospital, and at approximately 8:48 a.m., we heard screaming over the radio. We were just about going available. I called the dispatcher and said if she needed us, because I wasn't sure where exactly this incident was taking place, but I told the dispatcher we were available to go wherever they needed us.

She designated us to go to Vesey Street in lower Manhattan for what at the time they were considering it to be just a plane accident.

We shot down over by the Brooklyn Bridge. When we went over the bridge, we noticed both towers were on fire. We made the turn around off the Brooklyn Bridge to go on the FDR, and we were stopped by the

Police Department to ask if we can carry a doctor. I got on the radio, and I notified the dispatcher that we were going to transport the doctor over to the World Trade Center.

They acknowledged it, and when we came out of the tunnel of -- I'm not sure what street you call it. I guess the Westside Highway, the tunnel out of the FDR. We got approximately over to the Vista Hotel, which was on Liberty, between Liberty and the first building, and at that time we saw people running towards us and cars gathering all over the place, police cars, ambulances, and then we noticed the tower was coming down.

Q. When you first arrived, the towers started collapsing?

A. Soon as we arrived, the south -- the north tower had come down. I know it sounds weird, but that's the way it was.

Q. There is a north tower, south tower. You think the south tower was the first collapse? You mean before the first collapse or the --

A. I was there when the first collapse happened.

Q. So it was most likely the south tower.

A. So then it was the south?

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay. I could be wrong in the way this is. The tower had collapsed. There was debris from the roof hitting the front of the ambulance, and we couldn't see a thing. I couldn't back up. I couldn't go forward. There were too many pedestrians running around.

I decided at that time to shut off all the vents, keep the lights on, and I told my partner, who was small enough, to try and climb through the back window that separates the cab and the back of the bus to go into the back with the doctor, and at that time I had asked the doctor to open up the NBC kit.

Q. Do you know the doctor's name?

A. I don't remember offhand.

It started to snow gray, and I could start getting a little field of vision. I decided at this point where -- because traffic was stuck behind us and on the side of us, that we would keep the ambulance where it was.

I got out and I started picking up these little old men, who were trying the cross the street, and they couldn't breathe, and I picked them up over my shoulder, two-by-two and carried them to the back of

the ambulance and packed in approximately 15 people.

With that, I saw a Poland Spring truck, and the guy told me to start handing out water, if I needed it, and I took two cases and started heading out to the first tower that fell. I was giving out water to people as they were walking by, telling them where my ambulance was, so they could be triaged there, and then sent over to wherever they were going to send them.

Q. Did you have any radio communications at that time?

A. I couldn't hear anything. The dispatcher couldn't hear me. I couldn't reach the dispatcher. My portable wasn't working.

My main concern was I knew that we had people up there. I knew we had our own up there, and I knew we had a lot of civilians over there, and I just wanted to get up and try and do a rapid triage as fast as possible.

My partner is very new on the job, you know. I didn't think she would be as well-suited to do that job right then and there, so as I went up towards the north building, I noticed I couldn't gain entrance around that area because of the destruction of the vehicles, the building, so what I did was I went up, I

would say, around Cedar or Barclay. No, Cedar. I'm not sure which way this is going.

Q. This is north, this is south on the map. You started heading north?

A. I started up heading up out of the tunnel.

Q. Yes, you came out of the tunnel, which is not the Battery Tunnel, but by the ferry, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that was the Westside Highway?

A. Right, we were here. This building came down first.

Q. The north tower, you mean?

A. I couldn't gain entry to the south tower, so what I did was I walked around Trinity and walked up in between the towers over by Washington Avenue, and I came up in between the Custom's building and the World Trade Center, northeast plaza of the building, and I explained -- there was a group of people that were trying to open up the exit door on 6 World Trade Center, but they couldn't because of debris that had fallen all over the place, so I cleared the debris, and I went in the basement, and I had counted 25 people.

I told them, you know -- there were all guys. I told them to gather around five-gallon water

bottles. I showed them how to make a make-shift masks, and I was there to lead them over towards the pier where they were picking people up. At that point in time, you know, I had time to do six masks by this point, and at that time I went back up the same street, the same route, around Washington Avenue, and came up in between the buildings, and I was looking at the car garages, and the cars in the street, and me and three buddies of mine from street crime were breaking windows in the cars to look for infants and adults, unconscious adults, because there was so much dust on them that we couldn't see through.

At that point, I just heard a thunderous sound, and I looked up, and I saw the building start to topple, start to sway, and it was swaying our way, and we just yelled, "Run" and I tried to run as fast as I could, and I saw an SUV parked, and I figured that that would take some, you know, some of the hit, because I knew I couldn't out run the building, and by the time it took me to break the back window of the SUV, my safety coat was already on fire. My socks were on fire. I was already covered with soot and all sorts of particles that were coming out of the building. I climbed into the truck, and that's when pieces of the

building lifted the truck and came through the front window and flipped the truck over, and I was trapped in there for approximately 25 minutes to a half hour.

I was falling asleep. I knew I was dying. I just prayed that I wouldn't be found like that. I felt as if somebody was giving me fresh oxygen. I was able to dig my way out myself, out of the truck. I crawled into the street through ash and the fire, and I found a door, and I opened up the door, and it was a tavern. I ran over behind the bar, and I took the seltzer spray and started washing my eyes and my face, because it was burning, and washing my back. I just -- I was just covered with burns and bruises, and I couldn't breathe at all.

What little breath I had was just whatever I could get. After that it started to clear up again. I searched the entire building to make sure there was nobody in it. There was nobody found. Whatever apartment doors were open, I just took a peak in to see if anybody was on the floor, and then I automatically locked the doors and left. Then I left the building, and I went back to try and find my partner, and I noticed that a lot of the ambulances were torched, flipped over, demolished, and I couldn't find my bus.

All the buses there were the same. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what to think. I didn't know where my partner was. I didn't know where the doctor was, and I was just walking around and bringing people over to stores that had not been affected by it and putting them inside the stores so that they can at least get some water and air. Then I ended up running into one of the engine companies.

I explained to the captain who I was. I identified myself. I showed him my shield and my rank and told him that I couldn't find anybody else from EMS, and that I would be more than happy to stay with them until a commanding officer finds me and tells me where to go. That was directly in front of the north tower. There was a fruit place over by the corner, on one of the corners, and it had already been blown apart by the blast and the collapse. I entered it. I started washing off fruit. I had firemen complaining of cramping in their stomachs and in their legs, and I knew their potassium was dropping. So I was bringing out bananas, and apples and all sorts of fruit, baskets of them to hand them out to these firemen so that they could continue to do their job. I ran into Chief McCracken, and he had asked where I had been, and I

explained to him that I was trapped in the vehicle for about a half hour, and I didn't know where anybody was. I couldn't find my partner. He ordered me to go to a triage station and start triaging patients.

So after he pointed out where the triage area was, I found my partner, and I just fell to the floor, and I started to cry, because I really, really would never forgive myself if I lost her. I was triaging the patients with the medic from St. Mary's and my partner, and we kept trying to go in, and we were pulling out bodies.

I was ordered to go into the ambulances that were next to it and strip whatever I could out of them, ALS and BLS supplies. We had numerous contaminated equipment that we were -- me and one of the -- a buddy of mine, whose name is Roger from St. Mary's, ran over to Beekman to drop them off to be cleaned off, and they gave us a new ambulance and brought it back.

We still couldn't find our ambulance. We didn't know where it was. I saw hands and legs, and I saw a woman impaled into a wall across the street from the building. I saw people jumping out of the windows when they were collapsing, going through cars and hitting the pavement, and that was only early in the

morning. We sat there all day taking care of firemen basically. A lieutenant came up to me and told me that I didn't look well, that I should -- I should go back to Brooklyn and go get checked out. I kept telling her that there was more work to be done. She said she was going to check on me in a little bit, and 12 o'clock that night she decided to send me back to my division, at approximately 2330, twelve o'clock, she decided to send me back to the division.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

MR. CUNDARI: I'd like to thank you for conducting this interview. The time is 11:46. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110396

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT NORRIS

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is Thursday, December 27, 2001. The time is 1407 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Robert Norris, Engine 202, and I'm holding this interview regarding events that occurred on September 11, 2002.

Q. Bob, if you would just state your name and company and then in your own words just start telling me what happened from when you responded up until whenever.

A. My name is Robert Norris. I work on the Engine 202 in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

I came to work on that morning on September 11, at 5:30 in the morning to do some studying for an upcoming lieutenant's exam. I was on the incoming for Ladder 101 that day.

About 7:30 in the morning, I had gone downstairs to tell the members of the kitchen that I was due to work in the truck, that anyone who was there who was going home, that I was there to relieve them and they could take up. So after three or four times telling everyone that I'm here, no one would answer

me. I said, "I'll be back upstairs studying. Whenever someone wants to go home, send him upstairs, and I'll relieve them."

Well, I kept studying till about 8:30, and I came back downstairs, and I repeated again, "Who's going home? Who's going home?" No one would answer me, and with a cup of coffee, I went out on the apron, and then we looked, and I saw that there was a cloud of smoke coming from over one of the buildings in Red Hook that I noticed it was coming from Manhattan.

Myself and a few other members ran up to the roof, and from there we were able to see that the tower had been hit or that the tower -- there was a fire in it at this time.

One thing I remembered, there were so many pieces of paper flying around that initially we felt that there were seagulls just hovering around the building. It was a pretty remarkable sight.

But at this time it was about quarter to, maybe twenty to. I'm not really sure what time the first plane hit. So we came downstairs, and being a mile and a half from the sight, we felt it was just a matter of time before we were going to be sent over.

So we kept saying, when are they going to

call us, when are they going to call us, and time went on, and went on, and on, and on, and on, and we kept saying, who's going on the truck, and the truck, they were filled up. No one would leave.

So it turns out they did send a ticket over to the companies here in Red Hook to go over to what's called the staging area outside the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel in a convoy fashion that when they would need us, they would send us over.

202 was the first engine on the line. We were lined up on Hamilton Avenue on the -- I guess the Manhattan-bound side of Hamilton Avenue, at the entrance to the tunnel, and Red Hook -- I'm sorry -- Ladder 101 was the second company on that line.

Well, because we were there for a few minutes, we all got out of the rig, and we were standing there. We watched another plane come in. I felt the plane was coming underneath the pillar of smoke that was coming out of the first tower, but obviously it veered into the tower, and it took another hit.

We actually felt like a rumbling sensation over in Brooklyn. At that point, we heard it over the radio, whatever they called our staging area, you know,

202, 101, 131, 279, and whatever other companies were behind us. They were saying, go, go, go, go, go through the tunnel, so we all jumped back on the rig.

The TBTA had stopped traffic. One thing that I should mention, one of the members that we had working with us that day was a detail from Ladder 118, Anthony Gonzalez. He came over on a detail, and one thing I want to mention was the fact that since there was no room in the truck, I was able to jump on the engine and take the box in on the engine, and over in the staging area, Lieutenant Hawkins was giving out positions, and I knew that now from this point on that I would be working in the engine, because I'm primarily an engine guy, but as we went through the tunnel, most of the traffic had been stopped after the first impact, and there was considerable traffic in there, but as we were going through the tunnel, it was eerie to see all the people on express buses going into the city, and they were at the same level as the engines and trucks, and it was weird to see the eye contact being made from the people in the buses. It was eerie. They were making signs of the crosses, and lip synching, God bless you, be careful and such.

But the reason why I mentioned Anthony

Gonzalez was because after the first impact, he called his wife, and she was in the southern tower. He said to her, "We haven't gone over there yet, but we should be going over there shortly. What I want you to do is I want you to get out of that building now and just don't worry about it and just be safe."

So as we stood at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel entrance, we saw the second plane hit, and Anthony had his cell phone with him, and he called his wife, and of course there was no answer. Sitting in the back-up position, I was sitting across from the control man, which was this Anthony Gonzalez. I only knew him in passing, but at this point, he felt that his wife was either in danger or considerably injured, so he was pretty much in shock at this point. It looked as if he wasn't ready to do anything.

Timmy Burke and I were saying how this is going to be a legendary day in the Fire Department because of the impact that the collisions would have on the department, as well as the city.

After considerable traffic in the tunnel, we came out, and all the traffic had been stopped northbound on West Street. We looked as if we were the first engine company to come from the Brooklyn Battery

Tunnel as a regular engine company, not the squad or any other companies, and there was a number of airplane parts throughout the street littering the streets, as well a considerable amount of body parts that were all over the street that were, I guess, either from the airplane passengers or somebody that might have been up on the tower working.

202 had stopped in front of the northern tower. I'm looking at a picture here, and to clarify the names, we stopped probably right about in front of either 1 World Trade or the -- the Vista was a bit southern. I think we were -- we were in between the two pedestrians bridges, more towards the northern pedestrian bridge.

I was under the impression that we were across the street at 7 Financial Center, which I don't see on here. It's right near the Winter Garden, the building in front of the Winter Garden on West Street, but we had stopped in front of what I thought was the northern tower, 1 World Trade, and I felt that we stopped pretty dangerously close to the northern tower.

I jumped out, and I'll never forget, a huge chunk of steel had fallen maybe 15, 20 feet from me,

and Lieutenant Hawkins screamed out, "Get on the rig. Get on the rig. We're going to move. We're going to move." And I remember jumping on the rig saying, I feel safe now, but had that piece of steel hit the rig, it would have split the rig in half, because it was such a considerable size piece, but Engine 202 had then driven across the median to the southern-bound traffic lane of West Street.

We jumped off the rig, and we went over to at that point the command center, which was a couple -- maybe a couple of hundred feet south of the pedestrian bridge, the northern pedestrian bridge. Maybe a hundred -- maybe 50 yards, we'll say.

We stood in the street. At that point, all the other companies started rolling in, and they had, I guess, moved the command center from wherever it was previously to where we stood, and it was pretty chaotic. There was nothing. No organization whatsoever. No one knew what was going on, who was going where, what building we were going to be sent into, what building they were speaking of. It was really chaotic.

One officer made the suggestion to have the companies move underneath the protection of 7 Financial

Center in what was an inbound garage, underground garage, entrance. There were two driveways. One was an inbound, and one was an outbound. There was a wall in between the two, so you couldn't see the other side.

This officer had said, "All the engine men to the right-hand side and all the truck men to the left-hand side, and all officers report to the staging area," which appeared at this point to be on the downgrade slope or it would be the upgrade slope of the outbound garage lane.

We stood there for what felt like an eternity. There were a number of people that were jumping from the building, landing on what looked like an awning. It might have been the northern tower's marquee, I'm not really sure, but people kept jumping at an alarming rate, hitting the ground.

Because we were there for so long and because there was such chaos, a chief had mentioned, "Fellows, just, you know, relax a little bit, take off our jackets, take off your Scott pack." He goes, "You're going to be awhile here today. I suggest you save all your energies." Being a hot day that it was, a number of people removed their jackets and Scott pack, their

helmets, and were standing around in this group of -- the engine men group.

There were a number of people who looked physically shaken up. A priest had come down and was checking over the crowd to see who looked as if they needed some assistance emotionally, and he pulled a few people to the side to speak to them.

At this point, the detail from Ladder 118, Anthony Gonzalez, kept trying to contact his wife, and he kept unsuccessfully calling. He was being consoled by our chauffeur, Mike Mahoney, who has known Anthony Gonzalez for a much longer time than I have. He was trying to console him by any way that he can. Anthony had removed his gear, as well, but he sat down in the back from where the group was witnessing the people jumping, and from where Anthony was sitting, I doubt he could see very much past the slope of the entranceway, because at that -- that's the height of the sidewalk, the point being Mike was consoling him, and myself and Timmy Burke were standing in the front area without our helmets on and our jackets on, witnessing what was going on across the street.

Anthony was by no means capable of gathering up his gear and going in. He just sat there in awe.

He was shaking his head and putting his hand on his head, just -- he was devastated.

At this point, there was a chief randomly walking back and forth, not necessarily, from my opinion, picking companies based upon officers signing in at the command center. It just looked as if somebody was saying, you guys in, you guys in, based upon -- in retrospect, those he looked as if were dressed and ready to go as a unit.

Companies arrived after 202 did, and they were sent in by no other reason, I think, that they were all collectively together. I was standing next to a guy who had just called his wife -- girlfriend, "I'm okay, I just want to let you know everything is fine," and I asked him -- I said, "Do you mind if I borrow your phone and call my wife?" And he gave me his phone, and as soon as I dialed my wife, the phone was ringing, and I heard what was a third plane coming in. I heard the propulsion of an engine and then an explosion.

We looked up and saw these huge chunks. There's one particular piece of this building that fell in its entirety that I'll never forget. It was as if it was a Schwartzenager movie taking place. It just

came down showering on us.

At that point, with the phone in my hand, everyone started screaming, "Run," so we all ran into the garage, and I was expecting a fire ball to come chasing us down the driveway because of how the air pushed its way down the tunnel in such a fashion with such force.

I'll never forget. I closed my eyes and just waited to feel the heat coming, and it was an incredible force, but it wasn't the force that I was expecting which was flames. It was just the all the dust and debris, which was, you know, pea soup. You couldn't see a thing.

But it was, I'd say, 30, 40 some odd guys running down one entrance, one way of the garage, not knowing what took place on the truck side, the ladder side of the exit of the garage, but we all ran blindingly down into an area that no one ever had been in before. We couldn't find an exit. It was pretty chaotic down there for a period.

We tried to force a door. That turned out to be a storage shed. There was no other doors around for us to force. No one had any tools. There was no tools around, because at the time of the collapse, a lot of

people had put down their gear, because they were standing there so long. All I had on was my bunker pants. I didn't have a radio. I had a radio. Didn't have my jacket. Didn't have my helmet.

And that was the majority of the people that I was around. A lot of them didn't have their gear with them. They were just -- you know, no one was prepared to start forcing doors, but people were screaming at one another down there, just trying to get back with the people they arrived with, and I remember Timmy Burke and I had said we were going to stay together all day, and I heard his voice, he heard mine, and it was as if walking in a pitch-black darkness. We were walking with our hand in front of our faces, trying to not walk into people or the wall, because it was just zero visibility.

Jimmy and I had paired up together, and we inch by inch started walking out towards the entranceway, and initially I felt that the debris had sealed off our exit from that entranceway, because there was zero visibility. We couldn't find anything with all the debris that was in the street, so I thought. In retrospect, it was all the dust that was lingering, but I thought it was actual pieces of the

building blocking our exit.

We started feeling along the floor for like different types of tools and different types of equipment, and I remember finding a helmet from 226, and there were Scott packs around, and miscellaneous jackets and pants. We then heard Lieutenant Hawkins trying to reach us on the radio, and we walked back into the tunnel area. Someone had tied up a search rope in an area in the beginning of the -- not in the beginning, but in the area where the visibility started getting better, the deep part of the garage, and people started following this search rope.

Didn't it lead out to -- I guess from this picture this call it the Winter Garden, I know it as the place where Moran's, is the restaurant/bar over there called Moran's, as well as a cruise ship called THE EXCALIBER that my brother had his wedding on.

When we got back together again, Lieutenant Hawkins had found Mike Mahoney and Anthony Gonzalez, who was still shell-shocked, but even more so now that the collapse had taken place. We were speechless. There was a period of silence that was around us because there weren't many people that came out of this particular exit from the garage.

We had come out to the Moran's -- we'll call it a quadrangle or a courtyard area -- and it was eerily silent with papers flying around us and the dust. With that, we stood there in awe for awhile, not knowing what to do.

Lieutenant Hawkins just kept us cool and said, "All right, guys, you know, just everyone relax." I recommended maybe going back out there and seeing what we could do, because we knew of a way to get back at least to where we stood. You know, maybe we could climb out from under the debris or whatever. Lieutenant Hawkins, I remember him saying that if that building had fallen, it won't be long before the other one is going to fall, as well. He told us just relax. "We are going to find something to do. We'll be able to do some stuff later."

We stood there for awhile and because the southern tower fell first, this northern tower was more in line of view with where we stood. We were almost, you know, parallel to the building, so Lieutenant Hawkins recommended walking north along the waterfront to get out of the way, harm's way of the possibility of the second tower falling, the northern tower.

As we walked, we were watching a number of

the New York Waterway ships, ferries, come over from New Jersey, and they were starting to have makeshift ferry entrances for people, civilians, who were coming over to this particular part of the area screaming, crying, some injured, some not.

There were a lot of people that were injured. We independently started helping people who looked as if they needed help, because as a unit we were without tools. We were without our own protection. I lost my jacket, my helmet. Anthony Gonzalez didn't have his Scott pack. He might have had his jacket. Mahoney might have had his jacket. Lieutenant Hawkins, I think had his jacket and helmet, but no light or no tool. We were helpless as, quote unquote, firemen without tools.

We just kept assisting civilians and just ferrying them onto the ferries to get out of the area to go towards New Jersey. I don't remember at this part whether we kept assisting civilians, and then Tim and I went to get something to drink, because the number one complaint was people were unable to even talk because of their mouths, as ours, contained all the shit. It was like pouring an ashtray in your mouth. It was terrible.

We went up to Stuyvesant High School, which actually wasn't Stuyvesant High School as we know it. There was an annex a few blocks down. I'm looking here, and it might have been on Vesey Street. Vesey Street there was -- well, looking here, either Vesey Street was this quadrangle or -- but there's a park that's over there, a grass park, and I believe it might be over Vesey Street. Okay. But the actual overpass and the Stuyvesant High School is at a different location. Actually, it's further up.

We went into what was an annex of the school. In there, Tim Burke and I tried to call our families and let them know that we were okay, but what I'm getting at is I wasn't sure if this took place after the second collapse or before the second collapse.

Tim and I had come back with cases and cases of juices that we were giving to civilians and firemen alike. As we went back with the drink -- and this is what, again, I don't remember what took place first. We walked back towards what says 4 World Financial Center, Merrill Lynch building. I remember being over there, and did I hear yet another -- what I thought was a propulsion of a plane, and then an explosion, and

then we all dove to the floor.

There was a section of that park that was elevated with respect to the benches. I remember diving underneath a bench that was below an elevated part of the park, a grass section, and there was this cloud, because I wasn't sure how far the debris was going to be falling of the building itself.

I imagine people who weren't able to dive underneath this protective area just closed their eyes, because there was no telling how far this debris would fall, because looking at this picture, you'd say, okay, you know, you're way out of harm's way, but as we all know, the size of the buildings was immense.

At this point, we happened to see a lot of other firemen start trickling in. I remember seeing one firemen. He didn't have a helmet on. A young kid, he was walking with his jacket off on one shoulder, and he looked like he was shell-shocked, and I said, "Bro, are you okay?" And I remember I had some juices with us. I said, "Bro, are you okay? Are you okay?" And he didn't answer me, so I kind of like stopped him and shook him. I said, "You okay?" Because he was just so deer in the headlights that I knew something was up with him, and he told me that he jumped out of the 2nd

Floor window, whatever that meant, whether that was before a collapse, after a collapse, during a collapse. I don't know which company he was from, but he looked emotionally pretty bad.

There were countless people on this waterfront promenade area that were requiring medical assistance, people saying they were having heart attacks, chest pains, those with visible lacerations, trauma, all being ferried over to New Jersey hospitals.

We felt helpless, because we had nothing. You know, they were asking us to get them what they were calling our oxygen masks to put on the people so they could be administered some oxygen, but I was kidding around telling my friends, you know, man, this is 4,500 pounds of compressed air, but they didn't understand what it was. They couldn't help it, that the best thing they could do was to hop on a ferry over to New Jersey regardless of how they were feeling. The best thing they could have done was to move over to that area where there were definitely some medical people.

I continued -- we had continued to help civilians and firemen alike, just trying to give them

some type of direction, just reassurance of their well-being that it was okay. You're going to be all right. Just keep walking up ahead.

Of the groups of people that were coming in this area, we seemed to be the better of the group, because these people might have been closer to the secondary collapse than we were, than we were of the first. At least we had some bit of shelter.

I remember hearing -- getting back to prior to the first collapse, we listened to the radio, and I remember hearing -- I believe it was 33 engine said that 33 to chief or whoever was in command, "We have reached the 30th Floor. It's taken us an hour. We project that we're going to be another hour by the time we reach our destination." And I was thinking, once you get to that destination, what type of conditions will the standpipe system be, as an engine. I mean, as far as extinguishing fire, there will be very little head pressure up that far up with the standpipe severed. I don't know if there are multiple standpipes or safety systems that are intact to bypass severed standpipes, but I would say what could a fireman do with 40 floors of fire.

Q. This was prior to the first building

collapse?

A. Yes, yes. As I stood there watching the people jumping, I heard a report of 33 -- I think it's 33, saying, "We're on the 30th Floor. We've been an hour, and it will take us another hour by the time we reach our assignments," whatever that might have been.

Q. Did you know if they were in the north or south tower?

A. That's just it. I was hearing reports from different people who weren't stating where they were from. I imagined if whoever was taking their positions knew where they were. 33 to command post, you know, I'm in this tower.

I wasn't aware of a separate frequency at this time. I didn't know if a separate frequency had been established before we arrived. I don't know of any additional circumvention to the radio chaos. There were a number of people stating that we have a man down on such and such a floor, chest pains, speaking of fire members. There were multiple reports of that.

Q. Do you recall any companies?

A. That I do not. I do recall saying that it was a shame to hear that people were giving very urgent messages that were being cut off by other urgent

messages. Maybe it's where I stood. Maybe some transmissions were coming through clear and some were not, and I was getting the dribs and drabs, but it just seemed as if there were no clear, thorough messages being sent, because everyone was stepping on each other's toes.

After the first collapse, it was just chaos. I heard of -- I heard of one officer -- [redacted] it seemed as if they were talking to a dispatcher, because they said -- again this is a memory. This isn't -- I don't remember where I heard this, but they were saying how such and such to command post, we'll say, you have an officer down on -- I think they said Broadway. You have a fire officer down in the streets of Broadway, and then I remember a transmission coming back and saying, "Disregard, DOA."

So I don't know who it was or who they were speaking of, but it just seemed as if that was the beginning of a lot of bad transmissions to follow. Coming in with 202 and 101 as a group, and knowing that I was to have worked with the truck, we were concerned as to what their assignments were. We did not know they were sent in. Being separated via the wall, I wasn't sure they were sent in or they were next to me.

We didn't know their whereabouts.

I felt kind of, you know, petty getting on the radio and saying, 202 to 101, are you okay, because of all the other transmissions taking place that I felt nothing I could do at this point to help 101, because we were equipment-less, as well as if they were hurt, they would have need of the airways, as well, to make their transmissions.

After the second collapse, sometime later we saw people starting to come in that had been under recall, and we said, "Have you seen 101?" And they said, "Yes, we saw 101." They were down in the -- south of the south tower. This was maybe eleven o'clock, 11:30. I don't know. It was still relatively early. So A, I felt the need to try to contact them, as we all did -- I'm saying personally -- to see how they were, make sure everyone was okay, but B, again, I didn't want to start making radio transmissions just to meet up with people, because I was already intact as a unit, and if they were intact as a unit, why would they want to hook up with us?

As it turned out, the spotting of 101 were people that came in on the recall, wearing 101 helmets as a group. Someone had seen a collective group of

guys wearing 101 helmets, thinking these were the guys that came in to work that day, so that's where the confusion took place.

We were hanging out, helping civilians and helping firemen with injuries. A lot of people with leg injuries, lacerations, again, just putting people on ferries. People were dying to get out of New York, hopping on the ferries.

I wanted to get back to help people down at the site to get back there and to help people search pretty much. I requested a few times to -- you know, can we get back down there, [redacted].

We stayed pretty much near the ferry areas, looked at the picture. It was probably at the end of Vesey Street, that little corner, that little -- I guess River Terrace and Vesey Street.

The ferries kept coming over there. We kept ferrying people over to New Jersey. After awhile, once that started calming down, we heard reports of members

to go north to Stuyvesant High School, or we went up by Stuyvesant High School, and we were there for awhile just in awe, just walking around, feeling useless, nothing -- didn't feel like it was real. Didn't feel like it took place.

After awhile, we heard a report that there was a gas leak or possible gas explosion in Stuyvesant High School because of ruptured gas lines. There was a chaotic evacuation of Stuyvesant High School, which just made things worse, because even though there might have been a leak, it just seemed as if it might have been connected somehow with what we found out was terrorist attacks.

Not being able to see -- our eyes were killing us. Our mouths were dry as anything. We stood up by Stuyvesant High School in awe. I remember being just devastated, just speechless, with respect to the potential of victims and potential of department members.

I believe when I was down on Vesey Street my old company, 65 engine, were giving Mayday transmissions. This I remember very clearly. I heard a Lieutenant Piambino, 65 engine, saying, "We're trapped. We're trapped. We can't get out. We're

trapped. We're trapped. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday." And that was one of many transmissions taking place at that time, but maybe due to my proximity, I was able to hear their transmission come out clearer.

Q. Was this prior to the second collapse?

A. This is what I don't remember. It could have been. It could have been, but maybe it wasn't. I don't remember. I don't remember, but as we went up to the building of Stuyvesant High School, did I see the whole company, five men engine company? They all walked out. They all walked up to the area of Stuyvesant High School.

It was like a little island in between the north and southbound lanes of South Street that people had started sitting on the walls after they closed the street's traffic. They just seemed they had been to hell and back.

Q. What companies?

A. This was 65 engine.

Q. 65?

A. Yeah, they all made it out.

The story which I would think was probably just the officer -- not that I was required, but I told him he did a great job, and he wasn't willing to relive

it. He said that at the Christmas party. I understood, but I just said, "You brought your men home. You did a great job."

There was a picture of a member being taken out of the pile screaming in pain with a missing tooth that was in the New York Post either that Thursday or Friday. I remember it really ripped the heart out of me. It was a chauffeur from 65 engine, Armand Reno, who has 30 some years on the job, but he made it out, though. It was a real heart-ripping picture. He dove under the rig, and the rig had been crushed, and he was underneath it, and somehow he made it out.

As far as my time line, we pretty much stayed up -- stayed up by Stuyvesant High School with dozens of other firemen. There were dozens of other firemen around us sitting on West Street, but I felt for all the members that were there at the time of the collapse that really weren't up to going back in and doing whatever needed to be done, for whatever reasons the individuals were -- we needed a rest. We needed equipment.

The dozens and hundreds of people coming from the northern part of West Street and walking down, fresh members, members coming in on recall, I felt

helpless sitting there, but, again, we didn't have anything to do what needed to be done, you know, without equipment and without hoses, tools.

We stood there for awhile. That was pretty much it. Consoling Anthony Gonzalez.

One thing I did mention, I did mention that happened. As we stood watching the people fall from the building, we looked at 202 was moving. The rig 202 was moving, and we turned around, and there was Mike Mahoney sitting there. For whatever reason, someone felt that the rig needed to be moved.

Someone had taken upon themselves to get in 202 and move the rig. I don't know how far they moved it, why they needed to move it or anything, but it was moved a couple of feet.

One thing I neglected to mention, Tim Burke and I had run out to get additional cylinders, because when we got off the rig initially, we kind of ran across the street to get out of any possible debris hitting us.

We went back up to the rig to get additional cylinders, and who do we see there at 202 rig but the Rescue 1 old timer. There is a -- I forgot his last name. He was just honored by the Holy Name Society.

Q. Angelini?

A. Angelini. And didn't he look at Tim and I and said, "Kid, give me your chauffeurs' masks," he tells us, and he was by himself, and we said, "Our chauffeur has it? You know, we don't have it." He kept going through our compartments, and I remember him walking into the northern tower as cool as a cucumber, not looking up, not anything.

Now hearing that him and his son -- I don't know what else to say, you know. It's not like I was in the tower, and I crawled out of a hole that was left open. I just -- we weren't sent in.

Q. Everything you said is certainly helpful. If there is anything else pertinent that you can think of --

A. At this point, no. Well, there is, I guess.

[redacted]

[redacted]

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: I thank you very much for the interview.

This will conclude the interview. The time is 1450 hours. This interview was conducted in the quarters of Engine 202.

File No. 9110397

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL VASQUEZ

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1110 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotis, safety command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER VASQUEZ: Firefighter Paul Vasquez, Engine Company 284.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you would, just tell me verbally how the events unfolded for you that day.

A. I was at home, saw it on TV, the first. My wife woke me up. I saw the first building burning. I watched on the news. I called up the firehouse, asked what was going on, if they had a recall going on or anything. They said nothing yet, stay home, stay by the phone. So after the second one, I called again. They told me it was a recall. I came in.

I came in, got changed. The truck and the engine were gone already, 284 and Ladder 149 were gone already, and I just got changed, took one of the guys' own private vehicle and headed up the Gowanus to the Brooklyn Bridge. They were holding people there. Emergency vehicles were allowed to go over, and they

were holding up guys in emergency vehicles waiting.

They sent us over, and then the rigs came over. We parked by the federal building over there, and it was already dust clouds, so I guess the first building already collapsed, and we started walking in, and not that long after that we heard, like, the rumble of the second building collapsing.

The first -- couple of us -- they were putting us in groups, trying to keep together. The first thing we started doing was -- I think it was Church and Vesey there was a bunch of cars on fire.

Q. Here is a map. You may be able to orient yourself.

A. I think it was Church, Trinity and Vesey. They were a bunch of car fires here on Vesey Street, and there was a couple of guys dressed in civilian clothes operating a hose line, so we took that from them and started trying to start putting out these car fires.

We were kind of hindered because of the lack of water, was like really bad water pressure, but we did the best we could, and we stayed there for I don't know how long exactly. We stayed there for awhile, started putting out -- trying to put out these car

fires.

Later on World Trade Center, I guess, Building 5, that was burning. They saw a couple of firefighters on the roof. They brought a couple of trunks over trying to get the aerial up and trying to get a tower ladder up. The building was too tall, I believe, and they hooked up the -- I believe they got out. They came down. A little while later I saw a couple of guys coming out of there, and the tower ladder started trying to put out the fire there.

We went up to Fulton and rather Vesey -- no, Fulton and Broadway. I think it was 212. They brought an engine down to try to pump more water to the tower ladder. We stayed in this area trying to help with the hoses, help the tower ladders getting set up on Building 4 and 5.

Q. Any other companies that were there with you besides the guys at 284?

A. I saw apparatus from tower ladder -- now I can't remember the numbers.

Q. I know.

A. It's a mess.

Q. Most of us can't remember too much of that day.

A. We stayed in this area for awhile.

Q. Those building were going pretty merrily.

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't get around to that point. I stayed on West and Vesey, West and Liberty most of the time there. I saw some shots of that, the two, four and five, and they were going pretty good.

A. I mean, they had a couple like three or four tower ladders going, but the pressure wasn't there.

Q. The pressure wasn't there. You couldn't do much with it, no.

A. Couldn't do much with it. We stayed in this area for awhile, and we started wandering around, and we came around to where like 6 and 7 were, and actually 7, we were coming down this corner going to try to find something to do, and that's when they were telling us 7 is going to go, 7 is going to go, so we kind of backed away.

Then we made our way back down. I believe it looks like Trinity here, and there was a building on fire. I believe it was -- I'm not exactly sure.

Q. I think 1 Liberty was on fire.

A. I'm talking about further down, down in here. There was a fire in the basement. We took some

hose off. I think it was 321, and we were trying to hook up to the standpipe, get water to the building's system, and then we went down into the basement of a building. We had -- the chief there didn't want anybody going down unless we had masks on. We had found masks. We went down, and we were trying to open -- force the door. We could feel it was hot, but they lost water pressure, so they evacuated the building.

And for a couple of hours they couldn't get water pressure. Saw smoke coming out of that building and we knew, you know, it was probably going, started going again rather well, but we just didn't have the pressure for it. You know, it was chaos, and nobody knew what was going on.

We did a search an of building. I don't even know where. There was a bar and a building next to it. It got hit pretty bad, looked like from debris and stuff like that. Did a quick search of the building, and it was empty. There was a dog in the bathtub, but it was a big dog, and we just left it there.

I mean, I think a little while later we made our way down to West and Liberty, see what was going on down there. There was nothing much we could do. Didn't look like anybody needed help.

A lot of guys hanging around, looking for something to do, and then I was going back up to Trinity, and that's pretty much where we stayed for the rest of the day.

Q. And then you just took off? Relieved or just too tired? How did you get back?

A. We were kind of tired, and then walked down to battery -- to the tunnel.

Q. You walked through the tunnel?

A. They gave us a ride through the tunnel, and the chief we were with, his car was parked on the other side, and he gave us a ride back to quarters.

Q. Great, good. Very good.

A. And, you know, everybody knows the water pressure seemed to be the biggest problem.

Q. Yeah, the water pressure was shot. We tried after the first collapse. We tried to test some hydrants, and they had water, but there was absolutely no pressure on them.

A. And then, you know, later on at night we helped them trying to search, but there was so many people on the pile, and too many people running over each other.

Q. Exactly. Nobody was hurt.

A. We went around trying to help out wherever we could.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: I thank you.

That concludes the interview. It's approximately 11:15.

File No. 9110398

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE CASTELLANO

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1155 hours. I am Battalion Chief Art Lakiotis, safety command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CASTELLANO: Fireman Castellano, 149.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Fireman Castellano, Ladder 149.

This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Pete, if you just take me through when you started the response and how the events of the day just kind of unfolded for you.

A. I was working that day. We were scheduled for educational day. We got up to the rock. We went into house watch.

The first plane hit. We were watching it on TV. We started getting ready to go. The second plane hit. They told everybody go back to quarters, get your rigs and respond from quarters. We jumped in our cars, and we started going back to quarters. We took the BQE back to quarters. We got around the Manhattan Bridge. I saw Tower 2 come down.

We went back to quarters. Our rig was already gone. The night crew must have taken the rig, but we didn't know. We grabbed our gear. We started heading over to Manhattan. We got to the tunnel. They wouldn't let anybody through the tunnel, so we started going to the Brooklyn Bridge. We went to the Brooklyn Bridge. People were running over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We couldn't take the cars, so we started walking over. As we were going halfway over, a car came across with a couple of firemen, and we jumped on top of the car. We got across.

We walked down to Broadway. They had a command center set up there. The captain was looking for some men. He asked me if I wanted to work with him. We hooked up with him. We were waiting for orders. Meanwhile, guys were coming out of Broadway from the building.

Now, I'm not sure when the Tower 2 came down, if we were coming over the bridge or when we got onto Broadway, but the smoke got heavy again, and I seen Tommy McGoff, Lieutenant McGoff, coming from up Broadway. He was dazed. He just kept on walking. I tried to talk to him.

And then we went back to the command center,

waited more time, and we got no orders, so we kind of went on our own into the area, the trade center area. We met a chief. He was looking for tower ladder guys. We operated with him for awhile. We were ordered down from the tower ladder because of a possible collapse at Tower 7. We went from there -- we went to West Street.

Another chief asked us to search financial center Building 1, see if anybody was in the building. We started making a search of that building. We were ordered out of that building. We got -- like collapsed. We were ordered out of that building.

Came down. Sat around for a little while waiting for another command. Building 2 or Building 7 about this time came down. There's some things that we did between that time, but Building 7 came down.

Went back onto the pile. Started, you know, looking through the pile, and, you know, what we could find, and then we came off the pile again. We hooked up with more of our guys, and we went back to Church Street, because our rig was on Church Street. We were looking for the guys that were working that day, that night, the night tour, and we hooked up with some of the guys from the night tour.

We operated on Church Street with the tower. We did searches in buildings. Ten o'clock came. Some guys left. Some guys stayed. We hooked up with -- I hooked up -- me and Freddy with Vinnie Marsala -- hooked up with 18 engine and rescue 3, and we started working on a guy that was trapped on top of an elevator shaft, and I wound up working my way down to the elevator shaft.

I held the line for them while they tried to vent the hose. Worked there for a few hours. They relieved us. Another company -- another two companies relieved the guys that were in the hole. I came out of the hole, went back to the rig. Me and Freddy Marsala went back to the rig.

I got on the radio, and I asked the dispatcher -- it was around six o'clock in the morning. I asked what him does he want us to do with the rig. I got the rig. There's nobody else -- me and another fireman at the rig. He told me to hang on for a second. Hang on. He'll get back to me.

About a half hour later, he got back to us. He says, "Get whatever equipment that you can get. Go back to quarters." So we took -- scavenged up whatever equipment we could scavenge up. We took the rig back

to quarters. We got our rig back into service at quarters and left the firehouse around -- I guess around 10 or 11.

Q. The lieutenant you said you saw, what unit was he from? Come up Broadway dazed?

A. Oh, like I seen Tommy McGoff, Lieutenant McGoff.

Q. From?

A. Downtown Brooklyn company. I found out later he was there when the first fireman was killed by a jumper, and he went to help the fireman, and half his company went into the tower, and they were lost, and he couldn't find them. That's why he was in the state he was in, but that was -- I heard that story later.

I didn't know what the story was. I tried to talk to him, but he just kept on walking, and that's -- and then there's a lot of other stories. You know, that's the basics of what I did that day.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Very good. The time is about approximately 12:05, and that concludes the interview. Thanks, Pete.

File No. 9110399

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRED MARSILLA

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1220 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes. Safety Command, New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Fred Marsilla, Firefighter first grade.

Q. Ladder 149. Regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Fred, if you would just take me through your day as the events unfolded for you and your experience of that day.

A. Okay. As I recall, I was just about to finish my 24 tour, when we were watching TV, and saw the first plane hit, reports of it, and they didn't know what it was and the tour to come on wasn't supposed to be coming in that day because of educational day, so I had to wait until 9 o'clock to be relieved. Actually 9 o'clock came around and we were out of service at the time. I believe the second plane hit a little after nine, 9:03 or so. Being that we were all off duty technically, we had the response ticket saying that we were off duty.

Second plane hits and everyone is still here. We couldn't believe what we were seeing. Immediately our Lieutenant called over to the Chief and

asked him if we were going to be in service or not. The Chief actually told him no, stay out of service. At that reply, Lieutenant told him no way, we are going to be in service, I'm calling dispatch to tell them we are going to stay in service. We did that and immediately after, we told the dispatcher, they sent us down to the mustering station at the Battery Tunnel. We were like 7th to arrive there. They sent 5 units across. The last unit I don't believe made it through. I think it was 228. They had closed it due to reports of a collapse.

As we looked in horror, the first one came down and that's probably what it was that caught them in there, much to our disbelief. We couldn't believe that this was happening obviously. No one could.

At this point, the Chief sent a few companies inside to help them, help get some of the civilians out that were stuck in the tunnel. They told us and the companies behind us start mustering at the Brooklyn Bridge. We went over there and were the first on the bridge. The amount of people that were coming over that bridge covered in debris was really an incredible sight.

Second one comes down at this point. They

sent us over immediately after it comes down. We muster, originally I believe at Church and Chambers. Actually, let me see what street I came over the tunnel with. I believe that was Chambers and Church. Perfect. Originally it was Chambers and Church. Then they sent us all the way down to Chambers and West, right by the Manhattan complex there.

Q. Stuyvesant High School, the big white bridge that's there?

A. Right.

Q. Yes.

A. Is that Manhattan Community College also?

Q. I think Manhattan Community College is on the east side and Stuyvesant High School is on the west side.

A. Right. That's where they sent us. We all took our gear and prepared to do what we had to do. Had a little scare there at Stuyvesant, saying there was a secondary device and we all ran. Upon reassembling, the Chief sent us down to Vesey and West. Upon getting down to Vesey and West, they told the officer to man Ladder 12. So I jumped in the bucket with another one of my members. They tried to supply us water as best as they could. It was very bad

pressure. We were pouring water on, I believe the customs building there. Customs building, Ladder 3 and hazmat truck. Incredible, incredible stuff.

At this point, 7, which is right there on Vesey, the whole corner of the building was missing. I was thinking to myself we are in a bad place, because it was the corner facing us. But you do what you got to do as usual. We operated till they finally started pulling people back. At that point they had reports of people missing in the customs building garage. The officer went down there with a squad company, I believe, and he started searching. I followed him into the garage area and he told me to wait there for him and give him a guide in case he needed help out.

I waited there until he made it back out. He got back out.

Q. Do you know what officer that was?

A. Officer -- Lieutenant Stringer, yes. He went in actually --

Q. Lieutenant Stringer?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that your officer?

A. Uh-huh. Actually I waited at the garage door like he told me and provided light for him to come back

and he finally came back and we reported back to Vesey and West. At that point, they were backing some of the units out. I don't exactly recall if we stayed there quite a while or not, but I do remember going around the Financial Center at that point, the American Express building, through the back yard there and you could see through the atrium.

Q. We must have passed each other a number of times?

A. Yes.

Q. Because I did that route a few times.

A. Then around that area and then as you came around, then you get the other view from the other side because it was closed off, that building, the pedestrian bridge going down. That whole other area was basically closed off to the rest of the units.

Got around to that side. That's when we saw the incredible things that took place and the amount of bravery that everybody was taking to try and help as best as they can. Bucket lines and people digging. Debris was incredible, how much of it was across the street. You couldn't even tell the street from the sidewalk. It didn't look like a big pile at first, but you realized it later on because it was a gradual

outlaying of material. It gradually increased in height as you went along, so it was like climbing a hill, you really don't know how high you are until you are up there.

Q. The perception wasn't real till you saw firemen standing on the pile. You could barely see them.

A. Barely see them.

Q. Then you have a perception of the mass that was there.

A. How deep it was. And how high it is. I mean you were actually standing sometimes 15, 20 stories up. It wasn't that much of a fall, because there was a lot of material along the way.

Q. Yes, but it was --

A. It was just incredible. We operated there, I told the officer we should have a designated point where we should meet in case we get lost. So we operated there for a while and probably throughout the course of the day we got lost a couple of times from each other, but we always found each other back. Like I said, we were probably there from 10 o'clock till, I didn't say this before, but being that we worked that day, 10 o'clock till later on at that night, till 12 or

so. And just running into the other brothers from our fire house, guys that called on recall. Somehow we all seemed to find each other.

We worked together for a while here. Worked together for a while there. Rested a little bit. They pulled us back, I think it was like probably between 4 and 6, because of 7. 7 was the concern at that time. I didn't even hear it come down. Didn't hear it come down.

Q. Where were you?

A. I was right by the marina. So I guess it was a building in front of me that protected me from the noise, the rubble, plus there was so much noise going on with the machinery and the people there. Lot of background stuff going on. Never saw it come down.

I guess they waited till it cleared up and then we went back in again, did what we had to do. Took quick breaks when we needed them, because at that point, no one was -- everybody was just -- work best you can.

Q. Running on adrenaline?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes.

A. 12 o'clock rolls around and most of the

brothers at this point just wanted to take a blow so they could regroup for the next day. It might have even have been later, I just remember that time for some reason. We all walked over to 6, Engine 6. Some guys wanted to take showers, some guys wanted to clean up. They had no electricity, no water, so a lot of guys decided to just make it to the bridge. Some guys who came on the recall went in their own cars and they went home. I decided to stay. I just --- I couldn't leave.

Pete and I made our way back. Pete Castellano stayed with me. We made our way back to the scene. Actually cleaned up a little, found a place that did have water. Cleaned up a little, made it back to the scene. I believe we started helping the companies that were on the scene from the front of the building at this time. This point we found our rig, which was located on Church and Fulton. So we had a good reference point as to what to go to. They had operated on the plaza's buildings there in front.

Q. Number 5?

A. Yes, they were engulfed with fire I heard.

Q. I saw pictures of that. Never made it around there, but I saw pictures of it.

A. Of it on fire?

Q. Oh, yes.

A. I didn't see that any of this.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. There was so much fire on every floor. Must have been a hell of a job just putting those out. Pete and I made our way down to the center between 4 and 5, and at that point they had located someone in an elevator shaft, so we all just, we formed a line passing stuff down.

Q. Bucket brigade?

A. Bucket brigade. It wasn't even a bucket brigade.

Q. But similar to it though.

A. Yes, similar to it.

Q. Bucket brigade with no buckets.

A. No buckets, just material. Acetylene torches and water and stokes and ladders. We were just passing them down to these guys. I stayed in the line with Pete. You know Pete, he's got to dig his nose in it there. He dug his way up to the front. He was actually helping them. He was holding the line for a while, trying to put down some of the fire, while all these guys were digging this guy out.

Around 4:00 o'clock from there, we went back to the rig. At this point it's freezing cold and we are all wet. I managed to have an extra shirt that I gave to Pete to put it on. We sat in the rig for a while and the rig wasn't being used. They were trying to get new companies in and out of there. No one would give us a straight answer if we could pull our rig out or not.

So we found -- actually I think we asked the dispatcher, I told him there were only 2 companies with the rig and that they wanted us to remain on the scene. They said no, go back and be prepared for the next day tour. So we ended up getting our rig, I drove back, drove our rig back. We got back by 6, 6:30 maybe. At that point, the guys who slept over, the guys who were coming in were coming in as well, so I took a shower, shower, the guys started cleaning up the rig as best as they could. Replenishing whatever they could on it, being that everything is depleted.

Q. They were all stripped. All the rigs are stripped.

A. Absolutely, all the rigs were stripped. Actually, we did have our cylinders, though, so -- and our masks. 9 o'clock came around and I had to go home

and see the family and appreciate them a little bit.

Q. Yes.

A. Then I went home for that day and came back the next day for 24 hours.

Q. Very good. It was a tough day for everybody.

A. Yes, absolutely.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is approximately 12:35. Thank you, Pete.

File No. 9110400

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD PISANO

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 14 hundred hours. My name is Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Gerard Pisano, Firefighter, Ladder 149.

Q. This is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. Jerry, if you would, just take me through the day, how the events unfolded for you, and just kind of tell me.

A. That day we were assigned -- detailed to the rock for education day. As I was going to the rock, I was listening to the radio on the car, I heard that the first plane hit, a small commuter plane they called it. As I got to the rock, there was a TV playing in the front, and my Captain and three or four other members who were detailed there were watching the TV and we were assigned to come back -- actually as we were watching the TV, the second plane hit.

We were told right away to go back to our unit, where we would be, you know, everybody reassembled and probably get detailed down to the rock to the staging area, I mean to the site or to a staging

area.

We did, we all got in our cars, we came back to the fire house. As we did that, the Captain that lives up the block was coming down the block. He took charge of us. About three or four cars got loaded up and we went to the staging area at, I believe Brooklyn Bridge. Actually we parked at Ladder 118's quarters, on that block, got together, we got as much hand tools and stuff. We walked over the bridge and we assembled over, I think it's Broadway and I forget what block that is. Let me see. Probably, yes, it was Broadway and Vesey. Right over there by Saint Pauls Church.

At that time it was -- you could tell there was a lot of things going on. We just waited to be assigned. That's about it. During the day, we were going back and forth. We were assigned to another officer and we were told to make a search somewhere, but we had no masks. We spent a good part of the day trying to find masks. There were no masks around. They were being worn by anybody that was on the recall, which I was pretty much. Working that day on the truck. So we had no masks. Then all we had was dust masks and that's all. We kind of like stood by for most of the day.

Then into the night, we were digging on the pile. Just free hand, you know, just going down there and doing whatever we could do.

Q. What time did you finally get back to the fire house, how did you get back to the fire house?

A. Our own car, we went back to 118. We got --

Q. You walked back --

A. Bus or something. I think we got a bus that was going over the bridge. We started walking over the Brooklyn Bridge and a bus was coming back with a bunch of firefighters. They stopped for us, we got on there and they let us off right on the other side, which our cars were parked, 118. We got into our cars and we came back here. Stayed here.

Then I went back to the site, World Trade Center, the next morning at 9 o'clock. Then that schedule came down, the A, B and C, 12 on, 12 off. 24 on, 24 off. I think it was the first day.

Q. Then they changed it to 24 --

A. They changed it very fast.

Q. They changed it a few times.

A. Few times.

Q. Where were you when the buildings collapsed, do you remember?

A. Yes, I was on -- I was in my car. I was on the BQE. Saw the first one, had a member in my car and I was driving and he told me there was -- that the building collapsed. I didn't believe him at first and then when I looked over, when I was able to look over, because I was following behind a police car, I was able to look over and I couldn't believe it. I saw the brown smoke.

Q. A lot of it. Amazing. Then were you at the Brooklyn Bridge when the second building came down?

A. No, when we came back. The second one, I think I was en route to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Walking from 118's quarters?

A. Yes.

Q. It was very hard. A lot of people coming back the other direction?

A. Yes.

Q. Mass exodus. You were walking on the roadways or were you walking on the walkway?

A. I was on the walkway, and then actually one of the members was going across because he had all the tools in his car. I went across the catwalk to the roadway and I jumped into his car with a bunch of other people. Half the way over.

Q. Were you there when 7 came down?

A. Yes, I was there when 7 came down.

Q. Where were you then?

A. I was -- look at the map. I actually -- I think it was on -- let me see this.

Q. 7 was up on Vesey and West.

A. Okay. Right. I think I was on Murray.

Q. Behind it.

A. Yes. We walked all -- we actually -- we were doing actually fire duty. It was an Engine with just an officer and a chauffeur and we jumped into the Engine. That's where we got our masks for the night tour. There was masks on the rig. We jumped on there and there was some car fires on one of these blocks down here. I think we were on either Park or Barclay. That's where we were. We were on Barclay and figure like Church. When 7 came down, maybe we were on Park.

When 7 came down, there was a Lieutenant and another member and they went down. The Lieutenant went down, he was walking and he took a bad feed of dust. So we saw him. We ran over to him. We picked him up. We dragged him about a block up to Park and into one of those lobbies of an office building in it. During that time, we were given a man down Mayday. Officer down,

member down, and we got EMS there right way and we got oxygen to him and stuff. I think he's doing okay.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That's good. Okay. This concludes the interview. It's approximately 1410.

File No. 9110401

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL REGAN

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 28, 2001. The time is 2:28 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Mike Regan of Engine 53 in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Mike, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11?

A. Okay. Before we headed down to the Trade Center, we were assigned to a box on 42nd Street. We took that box in for a man stuck in an elevator. Took us a few minutes to get him out. We got back on the rig. They told us to stay 10-8. We started heading back, we started hearing Maydays and everything over the radio. Guys being stuck. We heard guys screaming, they were stuck under rigs. We weren't sure what was going on at the time.

At about that time, we got an okay from the dispatcher to head down that way. We shot across to the west side, we came up the West Side Drive, West Side Highway. We got off the rig. I don't know how many blocks. We were parked a few blocks north and we headed down. We got to about the pedestrian bridge, right off Liberty. Sorry, the one --

Q. The north bridge.

A. The north bridge. Right near Vesey. People started screaming and running towards us that the second building was coming down. We were unaware that the first building even came down. We didn't hear anything over the radio on it.

Q. You were working in the truck?

A. Sorry, yes, I was in the truck that day. The Engine went down before us. They went down on --

Q. Ladder 43?

A. Right. Okay. As everybody was running towards us, we waited for the cloud to disperse a little bit. Then we started heading in. People were running towards us. I was giving oxygen to people that were gasping for air, and when we finally got in there, there were a couple of Chiefs and a couple of people yelling and screaming about you know, fire over there, secondary explosions and we stretched a line off a rig and started putting out fires, me and Jerry Suden. Lieutenant Rohan told us to stay with that, that we would team back up.

I guess we were operating for -- it's hard to tell time, I mean time, time was so -- but we put out, I don't know, a couple of trucks, a couple of rigs, a

couple of civilian cars, then they started taking guys off the roof of, I think it was building 6. We helped them take them down in the stretchers. We got a few of them out. We teamed back up with Lieutenant Rohan.

He got an assignment to -- he heard there was a Mayday for -- Battalion 2 was stuck inside. We hooked up with him and Battalion Chief Ferran. So it was me, Jerry Suden, Lieutenant Rohan, Johnny Colon, all from 43 Truck, and we headed over towards -- we went down Vesey to Church Street. We went into building number 5. We headed down the escalator of building number 5 and then we headed up into -- looked like a big crater. We found out later on that Chief Picciotto had some kind of megaphone. He had that going, and we started heading up that way.

We made it -- couple of us made it up there. There were a couple of guys coming back down that were hurt, so me and I think it was Todd Frederickson helped them down, back out of the crater. We took them down, EMS met us down in the bottom of building 5. They brought them back up to the ambulance. We went back in and it wasn't as clear as it was when we first were in there. They already went ahead, Rohan and a couple of the other guys.

We were calling for them. We couldn't get to them. They kept on going up. We stayed there for a while. We couldn't get in touch with them so Ferran was with us at that time. He came back out with us. We regrouped in building 5, we got a bunch of guys together, we went out on to Church Street and we got some tools. He wanted to go back in and try to find another way in. We ended up coming around Church Street. I think we went down Liberty over to the west side. We tried getting in that way. They ended up coming out on the west side. That's where we hooked back up with them. That's about all.

They wouldn't let us back in. I don't know what else.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. That's good Mike. Thanks a lot Mike, for your help. The time now is 2:34 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110402

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DENNIS FISCHER

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 28, 2001. The time is 3:07 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Dennis Fischer, Firefighter from Engine 35 in the quarters of Engine 36.

Q. Dennis, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11.

A. Okay, basically I remember being in house watch slightly after 9 o'clock and seeing an explosion in one of the Trade Centers and shortly after that while I was still in house watch, we actually watched live the second plane hit the second building. As far as I can remember, we started gathering up all the tools we could because obviously we knew something big was going down.

I think maybe 15 minutes after the second plane hit, we got the call to go down. The ticket came in and we headed down. We didn't know at the time on our way down, during our trip down on West Street, the first tower had collapsed. That we found out afterwards. We didn't even know the first tower was down. We arrived down on West Street. I believe we

stopped somewhere originally around West Street and Chambers Street and slowly we got a little bit closer. We had a Battalion Chief with us, got us a little bit closer so we weren't going to have to carry our equipment that far.

We passed a bunch of rigs parked along West Street. I'm not exactly sure where we stopped. I'm going to venture a guess it was somewhere between Chambers and Murray Street on the southbound side of West Street.

Q. Who was the Battalion Chief you were with?

A. Yes, actually I was with on Engine 35, it was Lieutenant Whalen was the officer that day and Billy Van Name was driving. I was on the -- I was in the back with myself, Keith Schroeder, Jim Powers, Brendan Lowrey and a Battalion Chief Mark Ferran also had jumped on the rig and came down with us and Lieutenant Mike Hadden also came on the rig with us. We had a total of about 8 people.

Chief Ferran was able to get us a little bit closer and we wind up parking. About that time, Chief Ferran and Lieutenant Hadden walked ahead of us a little bit, trying to find out what was going on and myself and the rest of 35, we grabbed our equipment,

our rollups, control bag and we started walking down West Street. Basically we made it pretty far down towards the Trade Center area. I believe we stopped somewhere between Murray Street and Vesey Street. I think we pretty much made it almost to Vesey Street and right behind an ambulance parked on the side of the road, a Lieutenant instructed us to drop our gear.

A couple of us looked up at the building. One of the firemen had mentioned he didn't think he saw the first tower. A couple of us gazed up and we weren't sure if we saw one or not. Time is kind of fuzzy, but I would say maybe a minute after we dropped our gear, the Lieutenant was going to walk up to the command post and find out what was going on.

He got maybe 40 to 50 feet ahead of us. At that point, a bunch of people started running towards us, running north on West Street. At that point, a police officer stopped briefly as he was running by us. He said guys -- can I say what he said?

Q. Yes.

A. Guys, get the fuck out of here that building is going to come down. It's coming down. That building is coming down. We looked at each other. We kind of looked around, we didn't really think it was

going to happen. Maybe 15, 20 seconds after he said that, we heard the rumbling. We looked up, that I remember as plain as day. I looked up and I saw from the top, I actually watched it with my own eyes, I saw the top start to pancake down. I remember looking at the proby I was with. We looked at each other in amazement. The time seemed to like stand still for a second. We looked at each other. We looked back up. We looked back at each other. It seemed like a bunch of time went by. It was probably like a fraction of a second. Everybody started just running the other way. I saw my Lieutenant as I was looking forward that was ahead of me running towards me, just waving me, just run, run. We just left our gear and just started running north on West Street.

I remember looking back and once it was all coming down, I was obviously far enough away where I wasn't going to be hit with debris, but I remember the cloud coming towards me and I remember thinking this is going to come get me faster than I can get away from this. I remember for a split second I wasn't sure if it was heat or smoke or -- I didn't know what was going to happen. I thought maybe we would get incinerated. I didn't know if it was just a ball of fire. I didn't

know it was just dust.

The cloud of dust pretty much caught up to us. It overtook us and there was never really a time though that you couldn't breathe. It was really thick around you, but there was never a time when you couldn't get enough oxygen. I remember in the confusion running, I lost most of the company, just took off for themselves, we lost each other. I remember following the light blue shirt of my officer and I wound up in Stuyvesant High School, a little bit further north. I just kept running until I saw him ditch off to the side. Somebody was waving us into the high school from the front doors.

I jumped into there, into Stuyvesant High School and found one other guy from my company. We stayed in there for about maybe 2 minutes, until the big cloud of dust. It was like black outside, completely black. Even after just a couple of minutes it started lightening up, so we figured it was okay. So we grabbed a couple of masks that were just random on the ground. There was equipment laying everywhere. Couple of guys were just taking a blow. Me and my officer took masks. We threw on the masks and we walked out of Stuyvesant High School and started

looking for the rest of our company.

Within about 15 minutes, we found everybody from Engine 35. A few of us were in the high school. We found a few guys on the street. We ran into Chief Ferran. We knew that we had everybody we came down with. Except for Lieutenant Hadden. The last we saw him, we knew that he walked further up north with Chief Ferran, but Chief Ferran had lost Lieutenant Hadden. Afterwards I know they might have been walking up, trying to meet people at the command post, so I teamed up with Chief Ferran and we searched the area for a little while.

Lieutenant Whalen and one of the other guys from 35 were searching the area. We switched to a different channel. We were looking back and forth to each other. A little bit of time went by, maybe 15 minutes, we found Lieutenant Hadden. We had everybody accounted for. After that we just did anything we could. We picked up a line here and there. We put out a couple of car fires and I would say within 20 minutes of the initial -- after the second collapse, myself, Keith Schroeder from 35 and one of the Lieutenants from 35, Lieutenant Hadden, we actually found a hand line from -- I'm not even sure, maybe 24 Engine somewhere,

it was a two and a half. We operated a line underneath the second foot bridge that was collapsed.

Q. The northern foot bridge, by Vesey?

A. Yes, the first foot bridge over there. It was collapsed in one spot. There was about a 3 foot opening. There was a void underneath about -- you were able to crawl. You couldn't stand up. There was one guy from Squad in there and another fireman. I don't know who it was, but there was a couple of crushed rigs under there and a couple of cars. The cars were on fire underneath there and so was the rig, so all we basically tried to do, we went for the rig first, we tried to extinguish the fire in the cab, hoping maybe we could find a fireman in the cab. It was crushed too far to get anybody out. We didn't even know if there was anybody in there.

The car fires, we tried to put out. They were starting to light up underneath there. We didn't have much room at that point. A Chief and my other Lieutenant from 35 just made a motion for to us get the hell out of there. They thought maybe that thing was going to come down on us. It felt like kind of a futile effort at the time. We were just doing anything we could. I guess that was -- I guess that pretty much

-- when we came out of the foot bridge, that had to be at least now about 45 minutes after the second collapse.

Then we just kind of regrouped and took a little blow after that. That was the immediate stuff that we did.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: That's fine, Dennis. The time now is 3:15 p.m. This concludes the interview. Thank you Dennis.

File No. 9110403

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TODD FREDRICKSON

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1:38 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Todd Fredrickson, Firefighter from Ladder 43 in the quarters of Ladder 43.

Q. Todd, just tell your story as you recall it from September 11.

A. We responded down West Side Highway, we didn't get that close because there were so many rigs backed up, so we got out of the rig. We started walking down. We got pretty much to West and Vesey when the building collapsed. A big cloud of smoke was coming down. We tried forcing the gate right next to a building in an effort to get everybody that was running down the street into somewhere that was a little more secluded.

But by the time we were getting through the gate, the cloud was already on us. I guess guys didn't know if it was going to be hot or not. Some guys were putting their mask on. It wound up not being hot and we just started making our way down the street towards the World Trade Center. On the way down there was a

cop. I guess we had jumped in the back of his police car, which I guess you can't get out of once you got in.

We got him out of there and then we just kept walking down. There was a bunch of fires all over the place. Stuff burning across the street, cars, cars, rigs. It was -- someone gave a signal for an EMS, the police emergency unit, whatever it's called.

Q. A 10-13?

A. No, whatever the police's rig. Emergency response.

Q. ESU?

A. Yes, ESU. They had one of their rigs on fire. They said there was ammunition in there so we were stretching a line there initially to put that out. I started jumping up on rigs and just putting the deck guns on and spraying it wherever there was fire. It was all over. Then we realized that that wasn't really what was important right now so we started moving towards the rubble.

Someone gave a Mayday. I guess it was someone trapped under one of the pedestrian bridges. We started to go under there to look. One of the Chiefs pulled us out of there. He said don't go under

there. I saw them -- it was pretty chaotic. So we started to move towards, I believe it was this building, it was a black building, US customs building. That was still standing or relatively still standing. I'm not sure if it was the lower portion of one of the buildings, like a vestibule. It was like 4 or 5 stories.

We put a ladder up. We went up there and there was a fireman that had been killed. He was obviously dead and we just put a -- his jacket over him and then we just kept searching. We hooked up with one of the Chiefs there, Mark Ferran. Me, Lieutenant Rohan, who else was there, Johnny Colon and the Chief were all up there. We had radio contact with Chief Picciotto and a couple of guys he was trapped with. We had no idea where they were. They were telling us where they were, but we didn't really know what everything was, because we are not familiar with the layout down there and it was very confusing as far as the rubble was all piled on top of everything.

So they said they were probably on the fifth, sixth floor of a building in the stairwell, so we started searching. We got up on that vestibule. We were searching in there. We couldn't really find -- we

couldn't really get a good idea where we were going. We decided we would pull out of there and we searched for a while in there and a couple of stairwells and we realized that it probably wasn't even the right building, so we went back down and I think we came out back where we were. We came out on Vesey Street.

Then we decided to grab some tools and then we started heading down towards Church Street. Then we made a right on Trinity and we came in through the other side. A lot of it I'm confused about, where I was at particular times. We actually wound up coming down in through that underground area, promenade, I don't know what they call it, the lower portion of the Trade Center. Like there is a little mall down there.

We were just trying to get to where we thought they would be, so we came into this one area down below there. We sort of split up. The Chief and myself went up through this hole. Everybody else followed Lieutenant Rohan. We had hooked up with a couple of guys from our company, Bobby Markardt, a couple of other guys. I think Mike Regan was with them, I think Johnny Colon was there. Tom Corrigan. They had went into an escalator, they went sort of under the rubble and up an escalator. They went one

way. We sort of branched out to try to have two prongs of getting them.

Me and the Chief went up through this hole up into the rubble and on top of the rubble. At that point, there was a security guard that was stumbling through the rubble and there was a fireman who had -- he had his bunker pants on and a T-shirt, and his suspenders. Everything else was missing. He was in bad shape. I was the only guy that had a mask on at that point.

I had it with me. I wasn't wearing it, and the Chief and other guys come and blow because there was still a lot of smoke in there and there was all smoke and it was hot. Chief is like, take these guys out. I took two guys. Actually there was another fireman there. I don't know what company he was from. This is after the buildings fell.

Me and that other fireman took -- actually the other fireman, I know what company he was from, but he said he was in the subway when it collapsed. He wasn't in the collapse itself, but he was -- I guess he just hugged the wall and he thought he was in badder shape than he was and he finally came up the subway and I just sort of wound up hooking up with him.

Me and him dragged -- we got a security guard who could walk and the other guy was in bad shape. We dragged him out. He kept laying down and saying leave me. Leave me. I'm going to die. I said listen, get up, because there is other people that want to get out of here, so don't fucking play this game. He thought he was in the movies or something.

We dragged him out, we didn't go out the same way we came in. We went down the subway and back up the subway. I'm not really sure where we came out. I'm going to say we came out back over here because I was going in the original direction, then I ran into some firemen and they said your best way out is down the subway and back up. We took those two guys down, laid them in the street and one guy they just put in the ambulance and the other guy was just getting treatment.

Q. That was probably Church Street where you are talking about?

A. I'm going to say it was Church Street. Actually there was a picture in Time Magazine of just where we had brought the guy out. I don't know -- there was a subway station right there. I don't really know where it was, but assuming it was there, I grabbed

a bottle of water and then I started heading back.

As I was going back, the Chief, he got turned around in the smoke or something and he couldn't find the hole that we came back up. So I started making a move towards him a little quicker. On my way there, they were pulling everybody out. So the Chief is like, you can't go in there, you can't go in there. I'm like well, there is a Chief trapped in there. I guess they thought that I was delirious or something. They are like oh, no, we searched in there. I'm like all right. Whatever. I wasn't going to stand there and argue with them, so I just kept going to where the hole I went in.

Went back up that hole. The Chief was -- I had to go into the hole and then walk a ways until I finally saw the Chief and I'm like Chief, over here. I went back out that hole. The radio was starting to die because we just had been using them so long. I mean this is going on for hours and hours. I'm just giving you the more pertinent points.

The Chief's radio was just about dead. Mine was still sort of working. We were getting calls from Chief Picciotto. He had a bull horn and he was hitting that off. We could hear where it was coming from, but

all you could see was smoke. You had no idea if it was up or down. You knew it was up, but you didn't know if there was a drop or what was going on.

We started to make a move there and the Chief was like no, let's try coming from a different way, because it seemed like it was pretty far away from us. We went back out, I think -- I'm going to say it was just me and the Chief right now. I think we ran into Johnny Colon. We came back out to Trinity, I'm not really sure where we came out.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm going to say we came back out. We walked, I think around and we came back to West Side Highway and there was a bunch of Chiefs here. Then he was talking to the Chiefs for a while. Everybody was pretty shot, you know. We were drinking out of the can and everybody was pretty exhausted. We got there. There was a couple of Chiefs arguing. No one really knew what to do. It was pretty chaotic. The Chiefs are saying don't go in, don't go in, and then Chief Ferran was like, let's go in, we have to find these guys.

Now at this point we thought Lieutenant Rohan was lost too because their radios were dead and there

was no contact with them. So now we are like, we lost those guys, because we didn't know what was going on there. We started headed back into the rubble and I think we went into the 3 World Trade Center. The building was half demolished. We went in, we climbed up over on top of the rubble till we get to a window. We went in the window and we searched in there for a while.

We hooked up with a retired guy and another guy, I don't know where he was from. We searched with those guys for a while. We searched that building and then we started making another move in and we got pulled out again, because I guess the Chiefs were getting more of control in the situation. They pulled everybody out of there.

They conversed for a while and one of the guys from 22, I think it was 22 or 13, his brother was lost in there. He is going what the fuck is everyone standing around here for, let's go in, let's give one more push, so I hooked up with him and two other firemen, went back in and searched around for a while. He started to realize it was sort of futile and everybody was shot. We pulled back out and that was pretty much the end of what we did.

But I mean that was eight hours into -- I mean it was probably like four or five o'clock before we stopped. Then we all went down to the water. Then we ran into Lieutenant Rohan about a half an hour later. We realized that they were okay and that they had pulled out the Chief, Chief Picciotto, and the guys from, I think it was 6 or 7 truck. That's all the pertinent information I can think.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. That's good.

Thank you Todd, if you have anything else you want to discuss, okay. Well, thank you for your help. The time now is 1:50 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110404

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GLEN ROHAN

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 28, 2001, and the time is 12:55 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant Glen Rohan from Ladder 43 in the quarters of Ladder 43.

Q. Glen, just state the facts as you remember them from September 11th.

A. Okay. Ladder 43 was assigned after the second plane hit the second tower. Engine 53 went on the box, went out on the second fifth alarm to respond to the Trade Center. Approximately two minutes later we got a box to respond to 41st Street for a pedestrian with their foot stuck in a turnstile at 41st and Lexington Avenue.

So we proceeded to that box and found -- there was an ambulance there already. We did find a pedestrian with their foot stuck. 43 truck helped the maintenance people in the building get the person out, and we left and gave a signal 1037 for that box.

We made ourselves available. I asked the dispatcher if he wanted me to proceed south to the World Trade Center. We could see the heavy smoke heading north up the island. There wasn't any reports of any collapses of the building or anything like that, but we knew it was a difficult job and we wanted to get in on it. But the dispatchers told us to remain 10-8 and make ourselves available.

So we proceeded up Third Avenue heading back towards quarters, heading north up Third Avenue, when we heard a radio report on the department radio of somebody who screamed on the radio that they needed help. It was indiscernible, most of the words, but asking for help, saying things like "collapse," saying things like "people hurt," "buildings collapsed." The dispatcher wasn't able to identify who was transmitting and tried to get the person to calm down, but it sounded like something bad had happened.

The dispatcher then called for Manhattan to field comm., called twice, "Manhattan to field comm." There was no reply.

Then the dispatcher asked "Manhattan to the 1st Division." There was no reply. "Manhattan to the 3rd Division." No reply.

I turned to my chauffeur, Johnny Colon, and I said, "Johnny, this is bad. Something happened. I think the building, part of it, maybe, might have come down, the top part over the planes or something."

He then asked, "Manhattan to any units operating at the World Trade Center," and there was no response. So I said, "I have to get involved in this." I called the dispatcher and I said, "43 to Manhattan. We're on 57th Street and the West Side Highway," which is an entrance to the West Side Highway, which we were close. I said, "I'm going to head south and tell you what's going on." He said, "Go ahead, 43, take it in." So at that point, now, we were assigned to the box.

So we headed down the West Side Highway. There was absolutely zero traffic. We flew down there in probably two minutes. There was no reports on the radio of any collapse of the building. We could see a lot of smoke

heading north, and we could only see one tower still remaining.

But from our angle and how I wasn't really sure how the buildings were configured down there, I thought maybe the building is being blocked by one of the buildings or maybe part of it came down and the rest of it is in smoke. Not enough for me to make a call to say I think the building is down. But we knew there had to be a partial collapse or something.

There was a lot of people heading -- thousands of people, it seemed, were running north on West Street. We proceeded down West as far south as we can go, and we parked at approximately Barclay Street. Probably between Murray and Barclay is where we stopped the rig.

We got everybody off the rig. We got a game plan, made sure everybody knew what our plan of attack would be and not to be running and not to be bringing the wrong tools, stuff like that.

We got it together, and we were walking south now down the West Side Highway, West Street. We got approximately to Vesey, a little further past Vesey, I would say about 200 feet

from the tower, when we heard a noise. I wouldn't even call it an explosion, but it was enough to make you look up.

When we looked up, you could see things coming off the sides of the building of what was then number One World Trade Center. We looked at it for probably about five seconds before I realized that this building is coming down. There was a lot of people standing around looking up. I just said, "Let's get out of here." We ran north up the West Side Highway.

We got back to about Barclay Street, maybe around the New York Telephone Company building, and ducked into like a service center or loading dock of the New York Telephone Company building and let the cloud try to go by. As it did go by, as it flew by us, and then actually there was so much of it circled us and enveloped us.

At that point we all put our masks on, and we just hooked up a search rope and started walking back south. When we got to around the pedestrian bridge, that had been collapsed on top of rigs. We started searching through the rigs.

A lot of Fire Department apparatus were under the pedestrian bridge. A lot of them were a little north of the pedestrian bridge. We couldn't see anything south of the pedestrian bridge because it was blocking our whole entrance into the World Trade Center. There was a lot of automobile fires, a lot of Fire Department apparatus fires.

I responded with six firefighters. One guy had stayed back. He was going off duty in the morning, Frank Macchia. I said, "Frank, there's probably going to be a recall here because there's two planes in the towers." So he took the run in with us.

I split the team up into two teams. Some guys were putting out car fires, and some of us were searching through the rubble, just surface rubble, surface search, seeing if we could find somebody or something. There was just a lot of guys that were walking around like in shell shock, one and two pair guys. There was just nothing organized. Everything was chaotic. People were looking to do something, but they really didn't know what to do.

So luckily while we were searching

right around the pedestrian bridge trying to look underneath the bridge to try to get into the rigs that were on fire underneath the bridge, I ran into Chief Ferran of the 12th Battalion, who at that time told me that we have some members that are trapped and on the radio in One World Trade Center.

I said, "Great. We've got a team. Let's go get them." It was a relief to get an assignment, because it was such a chaotic experience going on down there.

So all we had to do was figure out which building was One World Trade Center, because we were given this report. At that time Chief Ferran just told me, "Richie is stuck." And I didn't know who Richie was, but I knew Richie was a fireman. It ended up it was Chief Picciotto of the 11th Battalion.

He said, "Richie is stuck with some other guys, Jay Jonas, and they're in One World Trade Center, stairway A." I said, "Great." Now we had to find out which building was One World Trade Center, because none of us knew what the configuration was or what it used to be.

So we were asking a lot of people. No one really seemed to know. So we assembled our team, and we went up a 35 foot extension ladder that was raised against Six World Trade Center. We tried to get through that into Trade Center number one.

That's the first time I saw a firefighter that was dead. It was on like a balcony around Six World Trade Center. I believe it was a member of Engine 1.

We tried to get through Six World Trade Center, and we couldn't get there. It was collapsed in the rear in the east side of it and the west side of it, and we couldn't make it through. We went down through Six World Trade Center into a parking garage and exited on Vesey Street.

I said, "Chief, the only way we're going to get into the other side of this collapse" -- because all they could tell us was they were in a collapsed crater-looking like area. So I said it must be the center.

We went out on Vesey and headed east on Vesey to Church Street, made a right on Church

Street and headed south towards Trinity towards the Millennium Hotel. Now building number five was on our right.

At that point I ran into members of Engine 53, who were working a pumper into fires that were burning around building number five. There were also members from 43 Truck with 53 Engine putting out these car fires, and they hooked up with us.

So now I had even more guys with me, because they wanted to know where we were going. We said, "We got an assignment. We've got to get these guys out that were trapped. We just have to find where World Trade Center number one is." So we hooked up with four other firefighters from my company.

When we went to the east entrance, eastern exposure of trade tower number five, we were told by a Port Authority guy if we went through number five we could get to number one. There was like a mall entrance where you had to go through a garage, and now we were in like a mall-type level of building number five. It had a bar in there.

At that point I saw a couple of firefighters that were injured, working their way out of that, because number five also had a partial collapse.

We worked our way through number five into what we thought would be the crater area of the center. This Richie was Chief Picciotto. And the only way that we found him was that he had a siren with him. He had a bullhorn that's carried in the battalion van. He said he's going to ring his siren.

We were operating on channel Number 5, thank God, because that's the only way we were able to communicate with him. Everyone else that was on 1, it was impossible to talk to anybody. So luckily he was on 5, which I'm assuming it was a command channel from the beginning.

Ferran and myself and Picciotto could talk very easily to each other. No one else was on that channel. He would hit the siren mode of this megaphone, and it sounded like a police car. It went "woo-woo-woo," like that.

We said, "Hit the siren. See if we hear it." When we first did that, it sounded a

mile away, but at least it was something to go on. There was an escalator in building number five, escalators going up and escalators going down.

When we removed some debris around the escalator, we were able to go up into what was the eastern exposure of the crater, where the center of the World Trade Center was. All it was was rubble. It was steel that had collapsed inward. We could barely hear this siren going off, but it was something enough to go. I knew that it was west of us and south.

So every 20 minutes or so he would again use this siren, and we zeroed in on him. It took us, from the time we began to the time we got to him, about an hour and a half. From the time we began our search with the siren, it was probably an hour and a half to transverse the crater area with my whole group of guys.

We had guys around the top of the crater, on the right side of the crater and on the left side of the crater. It wasn't easy to walk even two guys next to each other through all this steel. There were high voids and there were

fires burning. It was a dangerous area to be. But we had an assignment, and we knew you had to get to these guys.

They were giving us reports that there were two firefighters trapped below them and a chief that was in very bad shape. So we were trying to move through this area as quickly as we can to get to them. They're also asking us to make sure rescue was with us because they needed special equipment to get these guys out.

But we were pretty much carrying just about ourselves, because we were dropping tools as we were going because it was a tough crossing. It was hard to carry everything that we were carrying all this way.

We eventually got through to World Trade Center number one, and we saw Chief Picciotto, who was Richie, at the edge of a stairway. We basically told him, "This is the way to come." We set up a rope, because that area immediately outside of the collapsed stairway was very dangerous. They told us they had a civilian with them also, a Port Authority guy with them also.

I was very concerned at the point where are the two guys that are still trapped. These guys are okay. We just had to show them how to get out of there. I sent one of my firemen, Jerry Suden, out with this group of nine guys -- six firemen from Ladder 6, the Port Authority guy and a civilian -- and told him to take these people out, go back the way we came. That's the only way I knew out of this crater was the way we came.

The remaining three of us that were right there at that time proceeded into the stairway. I spoke to Lieutenant Jimmy McGlynn from 39 Engine who was still there, and he said, "Glen, you're never going to get them out. We need air bags. We need torches. We need the Hearst tool." I said, "Jimmy, we barely have a hook with us. We have a rope. Let's look at what's going on here."

So all those guys left and went out with my guy to get out of the crater. As it turned out, Jerry had to double back because the way we came was now engulfed in fire. We couldn't go back that way. There was too much

smoke, too much heat, coming up from the steel. He had to find another way out.

What he did is he proceeded still heading west over --

(Interruption.)

A. Again, Jerry was forced to head southwest through an area of the crater that he didn't really know, but he knew that was the only way to get these people out of there.

By the time he got to the high point of the crater on the west exposure of the crater, there were other members trying to get to us that way. There were reports that we were missing, because the last transmission I had given to Chief Ferran was before we actually got to Picciotto.

He wanted to pull us out. I knew we were real close and I said we would be okay but we would get them out and we would be okay. But once I got in the stairway, we couldn't transmit anymore. We couldn't communicate. The radios weren't any good anymore.

So I couldn't tell him the men that were leaving, what we were doing. So he assumed

at that point we're in trouble, so he was trying to get another group of people towards us, that we might be in trouble.

So we proceeded into the stairway. There was two four-inch voids in the corner of the stairway, of the collapsed stairway, where I could see the lights shining up from the two members from 39 Engine that were trapped, exact two stories below all of the members from Ladder 6 and Chief Picciotto.

So I looked at the two holes for a while. One hole there was no way you were going to open it up. There was too much steel. The other hole had sheetrock against one of the sides. So I knew with sheetrock you had to have a bay.

So I took the sheetrock out. There were two layers of three-quarter inch sheetrock. That added up to an inch and a half. Underneath that there were metal two by threes. I was hoping for two by fours, but I got two by threes. So that added four and a half inches to a four inch void, which I thought would be enough to get these two guys out.

I told them to crawl up one flight towards me, because I wasn't directly over them; I was on the other side of the stairway. I told one of the guys, "Crawl up towards me if you can." We have about eight inches now. I figured that would be wide enough to get the guys out.

We sent the rope down from two stories above where we were and sent the rope down to them for them to get a handle on the rope and pull yourselves up. As soon as I could my hands on him, I pulled the guy out. I asked him if the other guy was any bigger than him, and he said, "He is bigger than me." I knew it would be close. Jeffrey was scraping on all four sides. If I needed another inch, I would have had to cut something with a torch. It was just enough room to get them out.

Before they left, I asked them where's the chief, because there was an earlier report there was a chief injured, and I wanted to get to him. They never saw him. They had talked to him earlier in the day. They said, "We haven't talked to him in a while." They don't think he's still alive.

Q. Do you know his name, the chief's name?

A. It was Chief Prunty from the 2nd Battalion. So we said, well, I'm going to go down and make sure or if it's the last -- we're going to go get him.

So all they could tell me was where they were, which was two stories down. There was a door open a couple of inches, and he was somewhere past the doorway. But everything was collapsed against the doorway.

So I said, "Okay, you go up and out. There's guys now here. They'll get you out of here. We're going down to get him." So myself and two members of my team went down to where they were. We found the doorway that was open about a couple of inches. We had to climb to the top of its frame to get through.

I can still hear his radio receiving, but he wasn't answering me when I called him. But I could hear his radio receiving. I knew he wasn't far.

One of the members with me, Mark Carpiniello, he climbed up in front of me. I couldn't even squeeze through, it was that tight.

He got up through there, went in there, and I was telling him where if I push through the sheetrock there -- I knew he was within ten feet of us.

He wasn't getting through the sheetrock. It was like a huge electrical closet had collapsed against this door frame. It was only a foot, if that, on an angle to get in there he couldn't get through there. I said, "Try the other side." It's about four feet over. There was a big electrical-type job box. "Climb up on that. See if you can see some sheetrock over there, maybe get through that sheetrock."

He went over there, and he said, "Lou, he's here. He's right here." I said, "All right. Check him." He tried to get a pulse. He said, "I can't get a pulse. I'm not sure, though." So I climbed up in there, and I got into him and I got on top of him. He was fully intact. There was nothing crushing him. I checked him. He was gone. He was dead. He wasn't dead a long time.

I didn't understand what our losses could have even been at this point. I said, "We've got to get him out. We've got to get him

out of here." He had fallen from a high -- he must have fallen from another stairwell or another part of the stairwell, and he landed on something. I think that's what -- he was all broken up inside. There was light steel on him, electrical conduits on him.

Now at this point rescue was above us, and rescue was sending down tools to us. One of the guys from rescue came down from Rescue 4, Dave -- I have his name. So we had saws-all and things like that.

We cut all the steel away from his back that we could, and we got ropes on him. We worked on him for over two hours to get him out. We had hooked up caribbeaners. He had fallen down in a position of actually hunched over. His legs were down in a void. His arms were free. He was just like on his stomach, like laying on top of a desk.

We got ropes around him. We could barely budge him more than a few inches. He was a big man. I would say Chief Prunty was probably 250, if I was to guess. After a couple hours of trying all these things, the void was just too

tight.

Even if we had moved him off this little area, there was no way we would have gotten him through the doorway and through the little void that we had made two floors above to get 39 Engine out.

My guys were starting to tell me they were getting dizzy. There was smoke coming through this area. Rescue was calling down to us saying, "We're evacuating the area. There's another building coming down." I had to make a call, and it was a tough call. I said we'll come back. We said a prayer on him, and we said we'll come back and get him the next day. And we left. Unfortunately no one let me go back to get him, but that's a whole other story.

He was taken out on Friday by I don't know who. All I know is (inaudible).

At that point we went up. There was a lot of people from my company around that were there at the time helping. They actually got the lady, the one civilian, on the stokes while I was down in the hole, got the lady on the stokes and carried her out.

When I came out of the hole, there was a string of 100 guys leading us back towards West Street over the west end of the crater. You couldn't head east. There was gunfire going off. There was parts of the buildings coming down. You could hear little internal small collapses going on in the buildings around us.

We just walked towards West Street, where I met again with Chief Ferran and Chief Harten from the 10th Battalion, told them what we found. Unfortunately I felt terrible we couldn't get Chief Prunty out, but we were all still together.

At that point we headed just over towards the river. This was now about 4:00, 4:30 in the afternoon. About half an hour later number seven came down. I don't know how close seven was to us. I didn't even know where seven was. All I heard was seven now came down.

That was it. We really didn't do anything else. We looked to do other things, but at that point it was almost like a hold-back, hold-tight operation. They wouldn't let anybody else towards the crater. It was too dangerous.

That was it.

Q. Thank you, Glen.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:27, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110405

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL STEVEN HEAVEY

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1136 hours and this is Battalion Chief Steven King, Safety Battalion FDNY.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Fire Marshal Stephen Heavey, H-E-A-V-E-Y, from Brooklyn Base Squad 34. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Steve, you can start whenever you would like.

A. Okay. I was working the Monday overnight shift, which would go until 9:30 in the morning, so I was still in the office. I actually had -- I was supposed to work Tuesday but I had that off. I was working Monday night. So I'm in the office. It was a very quiet night so there wasn't much going on.

I was at my desk and next to my desk is the scanner, which is set on Brooklyn, and they announced the second alarm at the Trade Center. I forget the box for the particular tower and I turned to one of the guys that was working, was in our Fire Marshal class and he's a former 10 Truck member. So I said, "Hey, a second alarm at the Trade Center."

Then I switched the radio to Manhattan. There was some various communications. The only thing I remember is I guess it was the Engine 10 chauffeur very excitedly asking the dispatcher to send every ambulance you got. The only thing I remember is I believe the first division telling the dispatcher: "Go to fall back, step three."

By that time whatever TV channel we had on, I think it was 7, broke in with it and you could see a serious part of the Trade Center. It was unconfirmed reports of a plane crash. And we were just sort of all fixated on it. It was pretty much unclear what our role was. I mean we assumed we were going, but nothing official had come down. We were just sort of fixated by the TV.

And then the second tower was hit. We didn't realize it. I mean it just sort of lit up. I didn't know what it happened. Pretty much at that time we just made sure each guy had a radio. Normally only one team carries a radio. So we divied up the radios and basically we went out there. I was in a car. I was with supervisor Grogan, because I was an extra guy. So I was pretty much assigned like the aide. So the supervisor

Brian Grogan was driving and I was in the passenger seat.

We had a brief discussion of how we were going to get there. I said, maybe we shouldn't go through the Battery Tunnel in case there is a problem there. But we decided that was the quickest way that we were gonna get over there. So that's what we did.

We came through the tunnel, parked the car right on the right. I guess when you come out of the tunnel there we just found a place to put the car. We didn't want to get it too close. And we both put all our clothing on, jumpsuit and turnout gear and we started walking toward the Trade Center.

Somewhere on West Street we saw Assistant Chief Fire Marshal McCahey and he instructed us that the marshals were going to stage in front of 1 World Financial, which is just south of the pedestrian overpass on West -- at Albany. So that's what we did. We basically stood in front of that building. And that was really as close as we could get without being in danger of falling debris and victims, as it were.

You know, again, our role was unclear. I didn't know if we were gonna be given equipment to

hump up or whether we were gonna be put to work in some sort of security role. It seemed to me a little too early to worry about the investigative angle. It seemed like there was a lot of work to be done.

Shortly after we staged there I was standing next to Fire Marshals Mazzarella, Coyle, Grogan was there, but I think he stepped away to try to talk to somebody or to see what was happening. And I remember Fire Marshal Mazzarella -- we were all looking up and he turned to me and he said, "You know, Steve, I think we're a little bit too close." And at that point there was a loud noise and the building from the upper floors started pushing like the dust and debris and a shower of sparks and it was clear that some sort of major structural failure was in the works and, you know, our instinct was to run. The guys started running.

They were all in their civilian clothes. I was the only one standing there in my full marshal gear, including the leather boots and turnout coat and helmet. So I was a little slower than them. Actually, I was a little stunned. I didn't know if I could outrun this thing because, you know, we

didn't know if it was gonna fall on its axis or pancake.

So we ran south and made a turn, a right turn, which would put us on Albany Street toward the river and I figured this One World Financial building seemed to be a rather tall building in its own right and I sort of found a corner and sort of ducked into it and knelt down and put my hands over my head on my helmet, expecting to get hit with debris.

I remember getting hit with like sand and stuff. No debris, just sand. Then there was just a blackened cloud of dust and soot. It probably lasted -- you know, I held my breath as long as I could. It probably lasted about two minutes. It was rather difficult to breathe there. I was worried for a moment that I might actually get asphyxiated by this stuff. But then it broke enough at ground level. There was maybe a 2 feet ceiling you could start to see a little daylight.

Those marshals, some of them had gone into the parking garage and we were able to find most of them. I know at least John Coyle particularly had run -- we found out later he was ahead of us and he went west on Albany into one of these buildings.

Hudson View West or something, according to the map here, into the lobby just to get out of the dust.

We regrouped -- we tried to find a rear entrance out of there, but we couldn't figure it out so we exited the we way came in and proceeded west on Albany towards the esplanade. Were gonna try to regroup and determine what our next move would be. At that point there was communication on our radio that we should make our way south toward the battery, all the marshals were gonna try to rendezvous and make sure everybody was all right and try to figure out what we were gonna do next.

At that point I didn't know the extent of the collapse. I didn't realize it was a big pancake. I can't say I recall the other tower collapsing. You know, needless to say the whole area took on a very sinister tone. We didn't know what was coming next. Suddenly every mailbox and city bus was a bomb. You know, every civilian was a terrorist and we made our way down to the battery.

As we went, more and more Fire Marshals, we would see guys and there were civilians who were asking what to do because I was in my gear. I guess I was recognizable. Most of them were dazed. There

was one Hatzollah Ambulance that had a guy on a stretcher. I instructed them to remain at the esplanade until the boats would come. Boats definitely came to the Battery.

Clearly they were safer at the esplanade than heading north. We made our way south to the Battery and ended up at that restaurant. There were the two Chief Fire Marshals. The Chief and the Assistant Chief ended up there. We basically stood by for a while and then we...

Q. Did you stay down there or later on did you have other jobs?

A. We were instructed to go to the Manhattan office, which we did. We were given some personal time and then we were --

Q. Where were you when Seven World Trade Center --

A. Oh, we actually from there, we made our way to the command post at the college.

Q. On Greenwich?

A. And I was actually standing on I believe it's Greenwich Street when 7 collapsed and I remember running about a block and ducking in. Because after the experience with that dust I didn't

know how far this cloud -- but it seemed to disburse before it got to us. They were apparently further up north where it didn't affect us there. We stayed at the command post for a while. We were given something to eat.

I remember seeing one of the Fire Marshals there, Andy Difusco, bring in a man in custody, in handcuffs, from some sort of looting incident.

Q. You didn't mention the north tower. You're not clear about the north tower? Do you know where you were when it came down?

A. No. I know we went west on Albany to the esplanade, probably somewhere along the esplanade. But I don't remember hearing it. In other words, I don't remember it as an event, because the dust was constant. Obviously that collapse had produced more, but it didn't -- I don't recall another event.

Q. Is that pretty much it?

A. That's all I can remember.

BATALLION CHIEF KING: The time is 1147 hours and the interview with Fire Marshal Heavey is concluded.

File No. 9110406

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL JOHN COYLE

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1101 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Fire Marshal John Coyle from Brooklyn base, Squad 34. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, whenever you're ready, you can start.

A. That morning I had worked the night before with Joe Mazzarella. Not a particularly busy night, I remember. We were all pretty much up having coffee downstairs at the base here. Steve Heavey was over near the department radio, which was on. He suddenly turned around and said a plane has hit the World Trade Center. Everybody looked at him and said, "What are you talking about?"

The TV was on. There was nothing on the TV yet. I remember a couple of us went outside and looked, and you could see smoke coming from one of the towers. You could just see it if you went around the corner of the

parking lot.

A few seconds later, a minute later or so, Supervisor Lynn came out of his office and said, "Everybody goes." So everybody started grabbing their gear and taking as much gear as you could. We wanted to take basically our bunker gear and helmets and everything we could lay our hands on. I went to my car. I had a Halligan. I grabbed that. We threw everything into the cars.

It was myself, Joe Mazzarella stuck with me and John Murray was in the car also.

Just as we were about to pull out, the second plane hit. Everybody was flabbergasted. We took off. I was driving. Actually just before we took off, I asked Dave Lynn, I said, "How are we going to get there?" He said, "You've got to take the Battery Tunnel. They've closed everything else down. That's for emergency vehicles."

I actually said to him, "What about secondary devices?" That was the only thing I remembered from terrorist training, was watch for secondary devices and don't go rushing into

something. This is obviously at that point a terrorist attack, because two planes had.

He said, "That's the only way you can go. You're not going to make -- everything else is closed down." So I took Third Avenue. We really went very fast. We cut in and out of traffic, siren going.

We got over Hamilton Avenue, then to the Battery Tunnel. It let us through. I just punched it through the tunnel because I figured -- I didn't want the thing coming down on me in case there was some other problem with that.

Actually later on I was talking to some of the guys a couple days after that, and I said I must have been going 75 through that tunnel. Actually Murray turned around and said, "No, I was in the back seat. We were going 89."

We came out of the tunnel, and there were rigs everywhere. There was debris falling from buildings, because that's basically where it comes out. So I just wheeled the car around and parked I guess it must have been like Rector Place or somewhere like that, just to the left of

the exit of the tunnel. Actually it turned out to be blocked from the World Trade Center I think by a building, which allowed us to drive away later.

Then we grabbed all our gear. We popped the trunk. Everybody grabbed their bags and started walking up towards the World Trade Center complex. I guess it was Richard McCahey was walking around there, and they said everybody assemble in front of One World Financial Center.

So all of us, at least, all the marshals who came on that side of the World Trade Center, started assembling there. We were probably 20 to 40 feet in front of the World Financial Center building on a little raised platform just to the south of the south pedestrian bridge.

It seemed to us from that vantage that you were directly across the street from the south tower, although when you look at the map it seems to be off-center. You could see lots of debris falling from the buildings, what looks like ribbons almost, initially, little fine pieces of metal and everything. But as they

fell, you realized these were enormous chunks of material coming down.

There were a lot of people jumping. That was horrible. I was shook up. I have never been that shaken up by anything before. I was standing there and I couldn't believe that you could see people apparently holding their coats out to try and fly or something and then adjusting to the landing. It was fucking awful.

Anyway, I remember Joe Mazzarella, who I work with a lot, said, "Just don't look at it." We were all kind of shaken. Firemen are all marching in. We were told, "Stand fast. Don't move." I had my helmet on, my radio with me. I don't think I had any other gear on at that point. I had my Halligan with me in case we could do something.

It was a little foggy as to what anybody could do at that point. I wasn't sure what anybody could do. It didn't seem you could put those fires out.

Then I remember seeing Dr. Kelly walk by. I remember a civilian, a middle-aged couple, a businessman, it looked like, but they seemed to

be tourists or something standing near us. He was kind of smiling and pointing at the thing as if it was a tourist attraction, with his wife, I believe. He stood there for a few minutes.

Finally he said something to me. I have no idea what it was, but still with this kind of dopey grin on his face. I said, "What are you doing here?" He was like, "Well, this is something else," or whatever. I said, "If I were you, I would get the hell out of here," or words to that effect. He kind of looked at me funny, and then started walking away, it seemed.

There was a photographer there not far from us with a lot of cameras on him.

Steve Heavey and Supervisor Grogan had come in another car right behind us. They were there too. We were all standing kind of together. Grogan might have been sitting at the moment this thing happened.

I remember glancing to my right, and Joe Mazzarella was at that moment looking up. I suddenly saw his face like a look of complete terror, and he just turned on his heel and took off running. I started running after him and

looking over my shoulder.

The tower was -- it looked to me -- I thought it was exploding, actually. That's what I thought for hours afterwards, that it had exploded or the plane or there had been some device on the plane that had exploded, because the debris from the tower had shot out far over our heads. It was raining down.

I ran south and then made a right onto Albany Street, which would be running west.

Q. Towards the water?

A. Heading towards the water. I was completely convinced that I was dead, that I had no chance of making it away from this thing. As I glanced up, I thought there's no way I can outrun this thing, there's absolutely no way, because it seemed to have gotten so far beyond these massive pieces of stuff.

[redacted]

[redacted]

I ran down the street, with pieces actually falling around me, the fastest I've ever run. Pieces fell around me. That big cloud thing enveloped me. As I made the turn -- I guess I made a left onto End Avenue, the first left.

But in my mind I remember thinking trying to get away -- I thought the building might be falling over completely, and I was trying to calculate in that fraction of a second, other than thinking of my daughter and things like that, how far is that building going to fall. It's going to crush these other buildings, I figured. I'm just trying to zigzag more or less away.

The debris cloud actually blew past me on Albany. I came out of it for a second on End Street, and then it came down in front of me too, and I was caught in it. I kept running. I could just see enough to run, and dove into the lobby of a building, a residential building, it turned out.

There were a bunch of civilians in

there, and more people started coming in. I went back out and started pulling people in. Everybody was covered in this dust, really super covered. But nobody knew what had happened. I still thought it had exploded, something had exploded.

I started banging on apartment doors and actually found a woman who was doing construction in her house. She had a bunch of dust masks. She gave me all the dust masks, and she gave me a bunch of towels. I said, "Wet these towels." She gave me an arm load. I said, "Let's wet all the towels, and we'll hand them out to all these people."

I kept a dust mask for me. I gave one to a cop that was there. I handed out all these towels, and then went back out looking for people. I pulled a guy and his daughter in.

I then started walking pretty much away from it with everybody else down the esplanade. At that point I had no idea what had happened. It seemed that the thing had blown up. I didn't know what this dust was, whether it was part of the building or what the heck had happened.

There was a huge crowd walking down the esplanade. I ran into Brian Grogan after a few minutes. He seemed almost in shock. We didn't really speak much. It was senseless chatter on the radio. I couldn't make heads nor tails of it.

I got down to the battery. I think that's where I ended up. I know I was at that fort at some point. Then the other tower came down. When that dust cloud came again, I gave my mask to a little girl who was with her father. I ran south. They were in one of those little nooks in the fort.

Then I kind of wandered back up. I ended up up near the exit for the Battery Tunnel again, trying to get back towards the thing. Then I heard on the radio all marshals are to report to -- and I have no idea where it was. Oh, near the Jewish memorial thing.

I made my way over there, found Mazzarella. All the guys who were with us were okay. We stood there for a few minutes, and eventually I said, "We shouldn't even be here. This is the Jewish thing. This is a terrorist

thing. This is a dumb place to be standing. This thing might blow up." No. Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up. So I was fully expecting anything else to blow up.

I think we mentioned that or somebody mentioned it to one of the supervisors, and then they said, "Oh, yeah, okay." Then they took us down to the very end of Battery Park near a restaurant and made us sit there for what seemed like hours, but it was hours.

Eventually we were all wanting to go back up and help. They were saying, "No, you have to stay right here. We'll maintain control," which made no sense. Finally they said, "Go see if your car is okay. If you can get your car out, bring it back here."

We went back up, me and Murray and Mazzarella, found the car, which was completely covered in rubble but wasn't really damaged badly. We cleared the windshield off, got in it and drove it back to the base of Battery Park.

Then at some point they said, "Okay, we're reassembling now up on West Street." I

guess it's the West Side Highway there. It's quite a bit up. There was a school, and they used that as an assembly point. I don't know the address.

Q. Manhattan Community College?

A. That might have been it.

We drove back up there, pulled in. Our car was promptly surrounded by rigs. We went into this thing and stood around for more hours. Well, it was hours with the cops. I don't remember that many firemen. I remember marshals, cops.

Rumors were sweeping, that the Washington Monument was down, the Sears Tower was down, all the stuff like that.

Eventually we made our way back -- I don't remember how -- to Manhattan base. They said, "Go get your car again," eventually. We went to get the car. We were inside the perimeter, more or less -- that's where the car was -- of where Seven World Trade Center was.

We started back going east, I guess it is. I don't know what street it is. Let's see. Six or seventh. We were probably here.

Q. Murray?

A. Murray, I'm guessing.

We started going back east. We were inside this perimeter, although we didn't realize it at the time. We saw a rig with the compartments opened. We stopped. They were actually reversing. I kind of pulled up along side them. Murray yelled out the window, "Your compartments are open." The guy yelled something back at us. They kept backing up.

We went forward to I imagine it's the corner of Murray and West Street. Just as we were approaching it, we saw a person run north in front of the car, and then Joe Mazzarella, who was sitting in the passenger seat, just started screaming, "Reverse, reverse, reverse, reverse." I didn't even look. I just threw it in reverse and punched it. We flew backwards without being able to see out the rear, and building seven came down in front of us.

At that point we just parked the car. I pulled it over, and we walked back and left it there until much later in the night when they told us to finally retrieve it.

Q. When you backed up, did you go across West Street?

A. I'm guessing -- if we were on Murray, we probably approached West, whatever this is here. Because it came down basically like this, right in front of us. I just reversed it back to the street here.

Q. And debris went past Murray Street, would you say?

A. Oh, yeah. It was like another one of those giant clouds. It shot through here. I didn't even know what happened at that point.

While I was down at Battery Park, I finally got through on my phone to my father and said, "I'm alive. I just wanted to tell you, go to church, I'm alive. I just so narrowly escaped this thing." He said, "Where were you? You were there?" I said, "Yeah, I was right there when it blew up." He said, "You were there when the planes hit?" I said, "No, I was there when it exploded, the building exploded." He said, "You mean, when it fell down?" I said, "No, when it exploded."

I still didn't realized what had

happened. I totally thought it had been blown up. That's just the perspective of looking up at it, it seemed to have exploded out. But that I guess was the force of the upper stories collapsing down.

That's really it. After that then they had us kind of compiling lists of missing members and then going to the various stations and trying to figure out who had been working and who had jumped on the rig and compiling all these lists.

Then we returned back to Manhattan base. After that we just stayed here for about three days at the base. I slept on the floor in the weight room. Then they had us up that morning.

Q. Okay, John. That's good.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1119 hours, and the interview with Fire Marshal John Coyle is concluded.

File No. 9110407

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRE MARSHAL JOHN MURRAY

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1007 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual, Fire Marshal John Murray from Brooklyn base.

Q. This interview is concerning the events of September 11, 2001 and John, you can start whenever you want.

A. You just want me to state everything?

Q. Start from the beginning and tell us your story, you know, how you got the call, where you were, what you did?

A. We were here.

Q. Brooklyn base, right?

A. Yes, here in the base. I was working the night before. We were sitting downstairs and whatever time that was, 8 o'clock or so. We were sitting there with the TV on and we were talking. We had the scanner on. We heard on the scanner some voice from 10 Truck or 10 Engine, said start rolling all available ambulances, somebody intentionally put a plane into the World Trade Center. We turned on the news Channel 1 and we see that it's on fire. You look at the thing

and the building is this big and the fire is this big, so we figured maybe it was somebody accidentally flew one of those little single pilot planes into the thing and, you know, no big deal. You knew it was going to be a big deal and you knew we were going to go. So we all got -- we were all getting ready to go. The boss that's working the night tour goes this is going to be a long drawn out day. Anybody got to take a shit, anybody got to do anything, do it right now. Get ready, get everything you need because you are going to be there all day long. Okay, so some guys go take a shit, get ready, we all get our shit together. We are getting ready to go out the door. The TV is still on. We see the second tower explode. There was nothing, at least those first few minutes, there was nothing about another plane. It was just that the thing exploded, so now we thought that it was a bomb.

We jump in the car, we take off, we shoot over there and we were shitting in our pants driving over there because now we figured it was a bomb. We didn't think it was another plane. We went through that, they were closing down the tunnel, we went through that tunnel. It was 89 miles an hour or 98 miles an hour, I forget what the hell it was. We were

flying. Get out of the tunnel as fast as possible, we figured it sounds like a good thing to blow up, the tunnel.

We get there, we pull up on West Street and you know we see this lines of cars, lines of trucks. So we couldn't really go too far, so we figured we would just pull over right there. I don't know what street that was. It was just outside the tunnel. Down here somewhere. On the water side of West Street. We popped the trunk, we get our gear, we carry our bunker gear and stuff in a bag. We get our gear, start walking, there is like a bike path there on West Street. So we start walking up the bike path and the whole time you are hearing, boom boom boom, you know, more fucking bombs, what the hell is this. They kind of sounded like block busters or something. We were walking and I'm like what the fuck is going on. More bombs going off? As we are walking, we see a detective looking, everybody is looking up and we are kind of looking forward walking, you know, heads up guys, we got jumpers. That's when I look up and see all these people.

Anyway, we were supposed to meet up with the Marshals at a command post set up on West and Liberty

which is where it was, which actually it wasn't. Looking afterwards it was maybe 10 feet south of that overpass, which is south of Liberty.

Q. Between Cedar and Liberty?

A. Yes. That's basically where we were. We were in front of the World Financial Center. Of course now we are sitting, you know, one of the things, put a helmet on. So we put our helmets on, some of the other guys went back to get their helmets and we are there looking up at the towers and we were no longer even focusing on the south tower, because the fire seemed to be darkening down. But there was still 10 floors of fire roaring in the north tower. We are all looking at this thing saying what the fuck are we doing here.

Looking up at the World Financial Center and saying this is a stupid place to be standing, because if they hit the World Trade Center, why not blow up the World Financial Center. At some point, actually I think we were -- I don't know where we were, we were either -- we were right at the corner there, I think, of Albany Street when we were still walking. Some guy was running around with a radio. They hit the Pentagon. They hit the Pentagon. Like I said, now we are standing on World Financial Center saying this is a

fucked up place to be.

We kind of migrate back down to the street and we were standing there because that's where the command post is. Where the Assistant Chief Fire Marshal was in charge. He really didn't have anything specific for us to do. We were just kind of milling around like I said, staring up. My supervisor for the night tour, he was kind of in shock. What's the matter. His brother worked in the north tower. That's really fucked up. Like I said, we were standing there watching the north tower and not even paying attention to the south tower.

Then you look up and it's like holy shit, the building didn't come down, it shot straight out over our heads, like straight across West Street. Holy shit, there is no fucking way we are going to out run this thing. Everybody, asses and elbows, we ran south on West Street, turned the corner on Albany Street and --

Q. Towards the water?

A. Towards the water, yes. I ran into somebody. We both went down. The person got up and kept going. By this time all the shit was hitting the ground. I was like maybe three or four cars up from

the corner on Albany Street. I crawled underneath the car. It was a Caprice, blue Caprice, like ours. I crawled underneath the front bumper. All the shit starts coming down. The fucking car keeps whacking me on the back and the shit is hitting me.

When the whole thing came down and everything went black, it got real hot. I felt something digging me in the side. It felt like it was burning me. This is fucked up. I'm going to fucking burn to death, sitting here under this car. First I thought I was going to be crushed under the car. Every time it hit me, it was like everything kind of quieted down. Okay, I wasn't crushed, that's one good thing. I started feeling around, I'm not burning, so that's another good thing. It was completely black.

I started reaching around, you know, laying on my face, I started reaching around out from under the car, trying to feel things. It was like nothing on top of me. It was like, you know, something must have fallen down, something big must have fallen down over me on the car. I'm underneath something because it's completely black. So I start sliding out from under the car, reaching out further and further and then reaching up above my head. There is nothing above my

head. So I stand up, I'm reaching, still reaching, in all directions. Now I'm standing up like in front of the car, reaching all around, saying oh, fuck, whatever this is it's big. It must be like half the building fell down. There is this big void over. I reached around and there is nothing. So then I start calling out, anybody out there, anybody. Yes, I'm over here. Somebody is over here, okay. You okay, yes, I'm fine. How -- anybody else, yes, yes, you okay, yes, I'm fine. So now I'm figuring that thing was, fuck, that thing was banging me on the back and on the head. Maybe I'm blind. Nothing. I didn't see anything.

Then finally it starts lightening up. It starts getting grayer and grayer and I start walking around, calling to people, everybody, yes, everybody okay. At this point, I turned back around and I go back. Once it started getting gray, I went back to the point where we were standing to make sure that everybody was out of there. There was a trailer inside of a fence, in front of 1 World Financial. Like on the corner of Albany and West. That thing was on fire. There was just bits and pieces. There was the steel that was (inaudible). All sorts of shit right there. You know, little things were on fire here and there.

But the whole row, up and down West Street, every car, every rig was on fire. I still couldn't see, everything was still gray. I could only see like two feet in front of me, but I could see the glow for about two blocks of everything that was still there.

At this point I go back to the spot where I'm standing and I start digging around, I find my bag with my bunker gear in it. I am looking around. There was nobody there. No people so I figured good, everybody got out of there. I started heading back to where I ran to because I knew there were people there. And I'm back and forth, you know, people, anybody see this company, anybody see this company. No. I don't know. There was nobody back that way anyway.

So I ran into the SIU supervisor in Queens, Jack McCauley. He was one of our instructors in school, so I come across him. He's okay. Okay. I go back towards the water, found an ambulance. I got some gauze wrapped around my face, went back. I found another supervisor from here. J.D. Lynn and a guy, a photo guy, another Marshal. They were like, 1 World Financial Center I guess has a parking garage there. They were tucked in there. Asking anybody see anybody, is everybody okay. Nobody knew anything, just us 4

people that we saw.

I'm starting to go back again, like back towards like West Street kind of thing. Then the other guy Jack saying come on, let's go over by the water. Let's see what we can do there. So we all go, gathering people as we are going, come on, everybody go towards the water. We went back, grabbed a couple of people, people with broken legs, dragging them back towards the water. There was police boats, tug boats, all sorts of boats, like right there, at the end of Albany Street. We were just -- anybody hurt, anybody injured, just tossing them over, over the rails on to the boats.

At that point, those are the only people that I saw, these 3 other guys, other than a couple of firemen and the Chief was one of the guys yelling for companies on Albany Street.

Q. Do you know who the Chief was?

A. No. Actually I did see, I came across a doctor on Albany when I went to go get the gauze. I came across a doctor. I saw Dr. Kelly and her entourage and when we were on West Street, Dr. Kelly was there with us. She was looking for some sort of command post that was supposed to be in the World

Financial Center or something. She had gone in there, she came out, she went into another door and she was like right around there with us and the last time I saw her, she was heading back north on West Street. That was just about the time that the tower came down. She was wearing a dress then and when I saw her on Albany, she was wearing like a T-shirt or something and she didn't have her dress on.

So those guys were coming this way. I saw a doctor who was wandering around. You know, everybody okay. We ended up, we were over there, putting people on the --

Q. By the water down at the end of Albany Street?

A. Yes, putting people on the boats.

Q. Is the north tower still up?

A. Yes, the north tower was still up. It was about that time that you hear that same rumble, oh, fuck, it's happening again, now telling everybody run down, down toward -- actually before that we were telling people just to go down.

Q. South?

A. Yes, south on that promenade there. Head down that way, just everybody go. Now you hear that

big jet airplane going again. Fuck. Everybody starts running and this time, like I said, it was coming down when we were right there by the water, ran down maybe 50 feet or something. There was park benches, ducked under a park bench and this time it was just dust. It still went black. There was no debris falling. We were far enough away.

Q. (inaudible) coming up the water, you know?

A. Yes, well, not really. When the dust came down, but it definitely cleared up by the water faster than it did in the streets. At this point, I had a radio that I had lent to Jack. We were back and forth, like I was sticking with him. We got -- we were back and forth calling on the radio for people. At this point, McCahey calls. Everybody meet at West Street by the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Everybody meet there. So now we are -- I should say we are here so we went down south maybe a block or two from Albany on the promenade. So we started heading back and we were wandering back and forth because there is like one street doesn't go through and then another street there was fences there.

We ended up, we came back, we came pretty close to Albany. There had to be another street. I

don't know where it is, but there was one street south of Albany I think that we finally made it to West Street. Now we are heading down West Street and we come to the point where we were all supposed to meet up and it's just me and him. There's nobody else here.

We are calling back and forth on the radio; we are here. Where are you. Oh, we are here. You are not here. Well, we are on our way there, where are you, we are standing there, there is two of us standing there, you said this is where you are and everybody is supposed to meet. So everybody starts gathering together and they say this is no good. We are still in the dust cloud. So they say go down West Street and meet at the top of the Battery Park.

So at this point that's where I met the other guy from SIU from the Bronx, Delancy. He had a woman in the car, he had his car there and he had a woman in it. A woman and a baby. I get in the car with him, see how she is doing. We started driving towards the top of Battery Park. She is kind of screaming and crying. She had the baby and her other daughter and her mother were with her and they got separated. We get to the top of Battery Park, whatever that cross street is. There are hundreds of people walking past.

She finds her mother and her daughter there. She goes on her way, everybody ends up going back around and they end up going down the tip of Battery Park and getting on boats and taking people everywhere.

The next thing we are here like regrouping, kind of waiting for other guys to come. We are just telling everybody start walking across the Brooklyn Bridge.

The rest of the day was kind of all screwed up like that. Hurry up and wait, do nothing. Later on we basically have everybody, except there were still some guys up, I don't know where they were, but we were trying to get everybody together. One of the things is go get your cars. We go back, we get our car. We bring it back down to Battery Park, shit flying everywhere.

We get there and now we are all going to meet here at this Manhattan Community College. There is a command center being set up there. Everybody go there. We go back up that way.

Q. How much later was this now would you say, do you have any idea of time?

A. It was much later.

Q. Couple of hours?

A. Yes, I had no idea. I have no concept of time from that day. We drive up there. We parked the car on one of these streets up here. We are on West Street. We parked on West Street. So we go to the command post and they have some shit. They got some letter bomb or something they thought they had. Things going on back and forth. But upstairs, they had food and stuff. We go upstairs. They were assigning what duties different people would do. You go here, you go there. They were basically trying to keep people away from trying to go back to the towers and digging, which everybody wanted to do but they didn't want you doing.

We go there, we get something to eat, we go downstairs and we get told to go to Manhattan base, which is on Lafayette and Houston Street. So we go get our car, start heading cross town, can't be this street. It has to be this street here, when building 7 collapsed. So it came down, we are going cross town. There was a rig pulled around the corner and one of its compartment doors was open. We tell the guy, we stopped on, I guess it was like right here somewhere.

Q. Warren Street.

A. Yes, it's got to be like right here. Because we backed straight across. We tell the guy, look, your

compartment door is open. I don't know. It's not my rig, some guy, one of the Chiefs just told me to move it. There was 3 guys in the car, myself, Tom Doyle, and Joe Mazzarella. He is sitting in the back and we are telling the guy about his compartment door. Back up, back up, back up, whacking us in the back of the head. You can see the building, you can see it over, there was like a parking lot in the little building. You see the building coming down. Oh fuck. We reversed and shot straight across West Street. Good thing there was nobody standing behind us because they would have got run over, parked the car and walked to Manhattan base.

Q. Hard day.

A. We get there and we get our assignment to go -- we had the old Fifth Division, you know they had the old charts. The old Fifth Division to go to every fire house and gather the list of names of the day tour and the night tour. So we were going and it was like 5 o'clock in the morning before we were done with that. Then the rest of the week was the same thing.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1033 hours, the interview with Fire Marshal John Murray is completed.

File No. 9110408

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN JOHN WANSLEY

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. Time is 1240 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Wansley, Fireman first of the City of New York assigned to Engine 45. He was detailed to Ladder 58 on September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Wansley please tell me what happened to you regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Well, we relocated down at 20 truck. We were there maybe 10, 15 minutes. The first building collapsed. About 10 minutes after that, they gave us a box to respond down there for a woman trapped in a building. In the meantime there was a lot of people who were coming in. There was, you know, a total recall. We were putting extra gear on the rig. We responded down there. We got down there. I guess it was probably Cedar and Broadway. We took two steps off the rig and we just heard loud noise and figured it was the second building coming down and we ran around the rig, just dove behind the rig. The dust came and all of a sudden it was just pitch black and smoke. I thought I had seen some fire coming. I thought that was the next thing. I got up, I walked down the block about halfway down one of the blocks away from the

buildings, I turned around, looked, I seen there was no fire there. I turned around. I walked back to where the rig was.

We all regrouped. We grabbed some tools, saws, hooks and everything else. We made our way and ended up over on West Street on the other side. When we got over there, one of the Chiefs had told to us to go look for 65 Engine. That's pretty much what we did. We started climbing up through the pile and looking for 65 Engine and anything else you could find. We just ended up somehow stretching lines. We went up into the pit up there with a line.

We just operated for a few hours, then we all regrouped back over where our rig was and I ended up in the hospital that day because I couldn't see no more. I had to go get my eyes cleaned out. That was pretty much it.

Q. Okay. When you said you saw the recall was in, do you know the people that got on your rig when you responded, were they from 20 truck?

A. I have no idea. There was just a lot of people coming in. I think there was a Chief from that quarters. I think maybe a squad was even in there, so it was a lot of people coming in.

Q. When you say your rig was at Liberty and Broadway?

A. I think that's where it was.

Q. You walked down the street towards Cedar?

A. When?

Q. When you first responded.

A. We just stepped off the rig and as soon as we got off the rig the building came down. We weren't standing in the street two seconds as the building came down.

Q. Did you see any other companies parked when you pulled up?

A. No.

Q. You said the Chief. Do you happen to remember what Battalion or anybody that said to go look for 65? Did they indicate where they thought 65 was, any location?

A. No.

Q. They just said that way?

A. I'm not even sure if it was a Chief who said it. Somebody had said go look for 65, Engine 65. We just started climbing over through the pile. Never found it either.

Q. Did you see any other companies doing

basically what you were doing, do you have any idea what your location was at that point?

A. Yes, I know exactly we were where. We were actually where the south bridge comes across. Across --

Q. Liberty and West?

A. Yes, I guess that would be. It was definitely West Street. 90 West Street is right there on the corner. Right there where one bridge was still up. That's where we went ended up coming that block right there. When we got there, somebody said go look for 65 Engine. I don't know who it was. Maybe it was just -- you know what, at first we ended up staging where all the ambulances were for a few minutes there. Then we ended up going right over right to where the bridge was. I don't know who it was. It was just a boss that told me we got to go find 65 Engine. See if we can find 65 Engine.

Q. Were there any other companies with you?

A. Yes, there was other companies operating in the area.

Q. But you don't know who they were?

A. Not assigned with us, no.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Is there anything

else you can remember? If not, the interview is over. Thanks.

File No. 9110409

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES WALLACE

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 29th, 2001. The time is 12:50 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter James Wallace of Ladder 58 of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Engine 45, Ladder 58 in the office of Battalion 18, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Wallace, tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. Okay. We got relocated to Ladder 20. We were there maybe ten minutes. The first building had fallen down, collapsed. We got a report of a lady trapped in a building on Cedar Street. We responded. We went down Broadway. We got to Liberty, and we stopped the rig. As soon as we stopped the rig, we got off, it wasn't even a second, the second building fell down.

At that time we got hit with a heavy cloud of smoke and debris, and we just ran to the other side of the rig, finally got our face

pieces on. It took like five minutes. We regrouped. It started to lift a little bit. We said we've got to go in there and see if we can get anybody out.

We took forcible entry tools, saws, everything, and we got in there. We couldn't get past Liberty and Cedar, so we went around the back to West Street. When we got to West Street, we were there a little bit, met up with some other companies. We went in underneath the walkway, catwalk, whatever you want to call it.

There were rigs everywhere, a rescue rig. As I was saying, people trapped. We heard maydays. We were just climbing over debris, under debris. Cars on fire, ambulances on fire, upside-down. Everything is all over the place. Crawled around, looked, looked, looked. We didn't come up with anything.

Rescue was in the middle of the pile at the time. They got jammed up. They needed a line. We stretched a line with 14 Engine. We operated with Rescue 3. We operated with them for a little while. We still didn't come out with anybody.

After that as time went on, we just kept searching. They were saying building seven was going to collapse, so we regrouped and went back to our rig. We went to building four or three; I don't know. We were going to set up our tower ladder there. They said no good because building seven is coming down.

We waited for building seven to come down. Then we went around the corner with our tower ladder, set that up and shot water on it until about 12:30 at night. We got relief finally. Then we went to the hospital, got our eyes washed out.

That's about it.

Q. When you said you heard any maydays, any identifying names or any companies that you could recognize from the maydays?

A. No.

Q. You just heard a lot of maydays; right?

A. Right.

Q. You said you were operating with other companies. Any idea who they were?

A. Like I said, 14 Engine we stretched the line with. Rescue.

Q. All right. 14 Engine, they were what, Liberty and West by that south walkway?

A. It was like maybe an hour into the operation when rescue went into the middle of the pile. They needed a line, so we helped them.

Q. I'm just saying 14, I'm trying to find out where you hooked up with them. Any idea?

A. When rescue said they needed a line, 14 Engine, the chief assigned us to work with them and that was it.

Q. Okay. If you can't remember anything else or if you have anything else to add.

A. If I think of it, I'll let you know.

Q. Was it a battalion chief?

A. Yeah. He just got promoted too. He was the guy that got the engine -- who was that guy? When he got the medal?

MALE VOICE: I don't know. Oh, Warner.

A. Warner.

Q. Oh, Ron Warner?

A. Warner.

Q. Battalion Chief Warner told you to stretch the line?

A. Yes.

Q. That was near building three?

A. No. That was by the motel.

Q. By the motel?

A. Yes.

Q. And that's --

A. Liberty and West.

Q. Liberty and West.

A. Right underneath the catwalk.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you can think of?

A. That's it.

CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. Thank you very much your time.

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File No. 9110410

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARK WESSELDINE

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. The time is 13 hundred hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Mark Wesseldine of Ladder 58 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the office of Battalion 18 in Ladder 58's quarters, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Wesseldine, please tell me what happened to you on September 11, 2001.

A. I was detailed to the rock for the day tour to teach educational day. Basically we didn't get the program started. Once the first plane hit we basically went into the office to watch what was going on. When the second plane hit, Chief Santangelo told us to shut everything down and send everybody back to their own quarters and wait for an assignment. With that, he told our members, everybody at the rock to start getting their gear and assemble, and that they were going to get a bus to bring us to the site.

With that, everybody assigned to the rock has gear there. I didn't have any gear so I just got in my

truck and drove downtown on my own. I was fortunate enough I had a red light behind my seat from when I used to be a volunteer Fire Chief, so the Police Department waved us right in. I went down and parked -- I was parked on Canal and Church Street. I was parked on the sidewalk. I was basically running up Canal Street, figuring that I could just basically carry bottles, doing something. I didn't need gear to carry bottles up and downstairs. I was somewhere, I was somewhere in the vicinity of Park, close to Park, somewhere right around there. There was a lot of people coming out. I mean just mass people just leaving, as would be.

I saw rigs, I don't recall any numbers, but they were just basically parked there on the way in in different locations. Next thing you know, you could hear the noise. You could hear the wind blowing and then the dust came and once the dust came that was it. I was asking the people that were running what was happening, they said the building just came down. I didn't think the building came down but that's what it was. It was the first building. This was, I don't know, 10 o'clock, somewhere around there, because it took a while to get down there. Then it was just, you

couldn't see nothing. You couldn't breathe. You couldn't do nothing. I said well I'm useless here now. I had to wait a little while for the dust to settle, then I went back, got my truck, drove up here and at that time, there was I guess a total recall so all the off duty guys were just starting to get back in.

Captain Principio was here. They just assembled us. We got our gear together, got what tools and what not together and we went to the Division and then we took a bus back down there. We didn't operate for a couple of hours later after that. All we did was go in and they told us to -- with the company they told us to go in and find a rescue collapse rig, see if it was serviceable. We went in and found that. We reported back and then they had us do victim tracking.

That was basically until later on in the day. We didn't do anything until later on in the day. I didn't report in to anybody because I never actually got to the site, because you couldn't see where you were going at that point.

Q. When you went to the rescue collapse rig, do you know where it was located?

A. It was on West Street, but I don't know the

corner street. Because we actually went in, went through a couple of buildings around back and came out on the other side. That's where we found it. Who was there? Nick was with the rig. I can't think of his last name last name right now. Nick Giordano was with the rig already from Rescue 3. So when we came back we had told the command post that there was a guy from Rescue 3 member with a rig, it couldn't have been moved at that point, but there was somebody with the rig and it was intact. I mean it was damaged but it was intact.

Q. Anything else you can remember?

A. Nothing I don't think of any importance on the initial one. Like I said, by the time we got in there it was hours later and there was plenty other guys in there already doing work. All we did basically was dig and check and search ambulances in that courtyard when we got there later on that night.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you have anything further, otherwise the interview is over. Thank you for your time.

File No. 9110411

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICARDO RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. The time is 1320 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Ricardo Rodriguez of Ladder 58 of the City of New York Fire Department. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 58 in Battalion 18's office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Rodriguez could you tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. All right. We initially got the call here to respond and relocate over to quarters of Ladder 20. We arrived there. We were there probably a half an hour or so. Second plane hit. Tower came down, second fifth alarm was given. We were told to respond down to respond down to I believe somewhere around Church Avenue and -- Church Street. Building somewhere down there. There was a report of a woman trapped. We were slightly delayed because members that had come back from Ladder 20 were piling on to the rig with their equipment. We had about 15 guys strapped on to the outside of the rig. We headed down there. We went down -- we worked our way to West Broadway. Headed

straight down West Broadway. We got to West Broadway and Liberty. That's where we stopped the rig, Lieutenant Scotto decided it was safer to just stop the rig and not get any closer than that, which I don't think we could have, because there were girders in the street going down Liberty.

As soon as we stopped the rigs, guys got off the rig. I was probably the last one. I was sitting behind the chauffeur. I was probably the last one getting off the rig. When I got off the rig I could see the chauffeur -- I heard the chauffeur yell something. He was running up Liberty Street. I turned, I could hear a rumble, I turned and all I saw was this huge black cloud, 50 story black cloud coming at us. Only thing I could think of was to duck. It hit us. We were choking for a while till I was able to clear my mask and put it on. We had 3 civilians near us that were choking. We tried to give them air as well.

Once it cleared some, guys came back -- some of the guys that ran -- there was a man in one of the buildings that opened the lobby door and yelled to the guys to run in. They went there. Well, as they got back together we got everyone -- make sure everyone was

safe, got together, we grabbed every tool we had and we proceeded down Liberty Street. We went down Liberty Street, as far as 10-10's quarters. Because of the debris field we couldn't go any further than that. We went through their quarters, came out the back of their quarters, headed south about another block or so and made our way over to West Street.

At that point I would say it was like midnight all through this time. By the time we hit West Street, we started working our way up West Street towards the towers. That's when it started to clear and you started to see a little bit of daylight.

We got to that point there and we were probably under the walkway. At that point we just went into the pile. There was a Chief up there giving out orders, whatever, but the radio was a mess, with all the Maydays and everything else. The only person I could recognize up there up on the pile was Ralph Tiso, Captain Tiso from rescue. He was searching around up there and found, I think it was some members trapped on the other side of the other pile. At that point the Chief yelled to everyone help stretch a line, we stretched the line. We operated a line to get those members back across.

After that it was just basically searching around. I really don't remember much more than that, taking a break around 2 in the afternoon. Then going back later that day. We were told to get our rig, because number 4 was totally involved and so we went, made our way back to Liberty and Church. The rig was gone. So we eventually wandered around until we finally found the rig on Vesey and Church. I think Ladder 120 was setting it up at the time.

We took the rig back over at that time and then some Chief came up and said he wanted the rig out of there because what was it, 6, number 6 building was going to come down. So we ended up pulling the rig up another block or so. Eventually he ordered everyone over by City Hall.

That was it.

Q. When you went into that hallway, the guy pulled you in?

A. I was by the rig. I never had a chance to leave the rig. About 3 or four of us that was stuck right by the rig. There was no chance.

Q. Did some of your company go down that hallway or was that the guys from 20?

A. The chauffeur, William Smith and I think

there might have been a couple of guys with him that went into that building, I'm not sure. Like I said it was -- I just remember myself, Matt Hagan being right opposite, because he had the jump seat next to me so he was right alongside me in the rig. There were 3 civilians that were standing up in the street gawking when we pulled up. So they got hit there.

Q. When you went through 10 and 10's quarters, you said you went through their quarters?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see anybody in there?

A. There was someone in there that came out to us and said listen, you guys can make your way through here. I can't remember who it was. So we went that way. We went through there. Because we were going to attempt to try to start climbing up above. He said no, you are not going to get through there, come through here. We worked our way back through the back of 10-10's quarters.

Q. Anything else you can add or is that it?

A. No, that's it. Like I said, after City Hall, after that, after number 6 fell, later on we were called to set up the rig over on -- I forgot what street.

Q. Vesey and West you said before?

A. That's where it was initially, but we had to move it down another block and then down a block so we could hit what was going on in 6.

Q. When you heard the Maydays, could you identify anybody that was giving them, did you hear at all?

A. No, not at all. The only one I remember was the voice of one guy saying he was choking, he couldn't breathe.

Q. But he didn't identify himself?

A. There was just so much going on on the radio, so much traffic, between Maydays and the urgents.

Q. Captain Tiso, that was the Captain in Rescue 3, you said Rescue. I just wanted to make sure it was Rescue 3.

A. Right.

Q. That was towards West and Liberty when you were under that walkway?

A. West and Liberty, yes.

Q. You don't remember the Chief?

A. No, I don't remember the Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, anything else, otherwise the interview is concluded. Okay, thanks for your time.

File No. 9110412

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES CURRAN

Interview Date: December 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: December 30, 2001. The time is now 1233 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter sixth grade James Curran of Ladder Company 8. We are in the quarters of Ladder Company 8. There is nobody else in the room. This interview is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. What follows is the interview with Fireman Curran.

Q. Take it away.

A. Okay, a guy called the fire house about 8 o'clock and asked me, it's not an emergency but I have been smelling gas in the area of my house. He lived on 313 Church Street. He asked if we would follow up on it, so I told him to call the non-emergency number for the Fire Department. They will decide if they want us to go check it out or not. So we did. At 8:30, we got toned out for odor of gas on the corner of Church and Lispenard.

Us, Engine 7 and Ladder 1, we all responded with the First Battalion. We were there for 5, 15, 16 minutes. We had found out what grate the leak was coming from and our Chief Pfiefer was bent over with the gas meter. We heard the plane, we looked up. It

was low enough that it rattled the buildings we were standing at. We saw it come out from behind the buildings and hit tower one and like I said, a fireball, looked like 10 or 20 stories big, shot out the south side of the tower and then out the hole that the plane made going in.

We all jumped in the rig, geared up, drove down. We had a straight shot. All the cars were pulled off to the side and people were looking at the building. We went down, I believe we went down Lispenard to the West Side Highway. Made a U turn and we couldn't pull in any closer. We tried to get into the taxi indent, but there were people on the ground burnt on the West Side Highway to where you would have had to run them over to get any closer. So we got out of the rig, went in the lobby. Engine 7 pulled up right behind us and Ladder 1 was behind them I believe.

We went in through the revolving doors. There was a mini lobby. There was like brown haze, smoke in the lobby. A lot of the marble slabs were falling off the wall, cracked. There were two people in like the little section of this lobby. One guy was burnt pretty much to a crisp and his jacket was the

only thing left on him. Put that out with a can and then there was a lady off to the right of us that was alive but she was screaming that she couldn't breathe. So I hit her with the can and cooled her down.

Q. Where did these people come from?

A. I don't know if they were in the elevator or what not, but they were the only two people I saw in the lobby and they were right in the entranceway. Like I said she was still smoking when we got in there. The other guy was dead and she was just screaming that she couldn't breathe.

After I used I guess about a half a can on her, we went through the lobby. All the elevator banks were kind of blown out at probably 70 degree angles, 60 degree angles, and there is all rubble and spot fires in the lobby.

Q. Where did that come from?

A. I think they said that the fuel went all the way down the elevator shaft and when it finally hit rock bottom it blew out all the elevators.

Q. Is that it?

A. That's what I have been hearing. I don't know. I don't think anybody really knows. It was pretty much rubble in the whole lobby walking through.

We got back to the escalators and the police had people running down both escalators trying to keep them calm. We finally got them to channel them all down one so we could get up. We went up there, looked towards the courtyard and all the windows were stained, people hitting the courtyard I guess.

We went around the inside ledge that was between the elevator shaft, the corner of the building and the escalators. This stuff was still dropping and breaking the windows. We walked all the way around again trying to find a working elevator. There was finally one right near the command post, by the silver desk in the northwest corner of the mezzanine level. It was working. Lieutenant Halloran made the call, he was like no, we aren't taking the elevator. In this case we will walk. I believe that's the elevator that 20 truck and squad 1 wound up catching and went to the 16th floor.

We rested on I think the 19th floor was the first one we rested on and we were just walking up. People were coming down.

Q. You had orders to go up, was there a Chief there or you just start decided to start going up?

A. No, at that point First Battalion I think was

the only Chief there. So he was kind of overloaded so Lieutenant Halloran made the call. Let's just get up there, we got to go up and get people down and out.

Q. Right.

A. So we started up. I think we were on the third or fourth floor when the first person we saw had both of her arms burnt. She was coming down. I don't know what floor she had come down from, but we were going up. It was us, Engine 7 was with us because their Captain had a roll up. We were all kind of just working together. That's why we only made it to the 30th floor because we were going slow instead of killing them. We had 90 floors to go.

So we were walking up. I think some guys from 33 Engine were with us. When we rested on the 19th floor, a guy from my class from 9 truck jumped in. He was with us. So like 28 Engine is right behind us actually going up. I didn't see any of them until we were going down. We went up, we rested on like the 19th floor. There were people on that floor getting out, going down the stairs. We made sure all of them, they had an open spot to file into. We rested probably 10 minutes there. We made another push and then we stopped on the 23 floor because there were people

there. That was the first time that we had a break for water. They gave us water out of their offices. That's again when I ran into John Tierney from Ladder 9. I realized he was with us.

After the 23, actually we were sitting on the 23, when I don't know -- it wasn't the tower going down, but the building shook and vibrated. I was sitting right next to the first elevator shaft, just my sleeve was in front of me. There was a breeze strong enough coming out, it ruffled my shirt and we all just dove into the stairway. Probably I dove about 5 guys just stacked 5, 6 guys out. Then it subsided. At this point the air conditioner was still working. Everything in the building was still functioning fine. We just didn't know what it was.

We went back out, got our bunker coats on, went up again. It was real slow going up because there were people coming down and with your equipment, trying to squeeze by them and at the 30 floor we stopped again. We had to make another push. We had thrown gear down. We had our masks on the floor. The only thing I kept my gloves and my helmet in my hand at all times. I called my mother from the 30 floor. I was talking to her on the news when she freaked. She

watched tower two come down while we were on the 30 floor. I was on the phone with her. I told her I will call you back. I got to go. She didn't know if we were going up or down at this point.

I don't know what Chief it was. I didn't see him before it and I didn't see him after, but he is the one that made the call, all FD get out now. We are going down staircase B.

Q. He was with you?

A. He popped out of nowhere. He wasn't with us going up, but he came out of nowhere, he had bull horn and he is saying everyone off the phones, all FD, we are leaving now.

Q. No reason, he didn't give you a reason. He just get out?

A. Yes, actually said get the F out. I don't want to use profanity. He stressed we are leaving, we are leaving now. Let's go. There was probably 60 of us on that floor. What companies I don't know. Because I think there were all different floors congregated on the 30th. We were all walking over to where our equipment was, our masks, all that. He said you don't have time, leave everything, let's go.

We started going down and on the way down,

there weren't many civilians. There was the one heavy set lady that I know Ladder 6 wound up getting out. We had her at first, big -- we took her probably about 10 floors. She had to rest so 33 Engine, I believe it was, 33 -- I'm not sure, they said oh, we got her now. So they were taking her. Then I guess 6 truck wound up getting her in the end.

But we went down and there weren't -- there weren't really any -- the last civilians that we saw that were around we let go in front of us. Going down I know 28 Engine was with us. 33 Engine had a few guys with us. John Tierney from Ladder 9 was the guy behind me on the stairs. 7 and 1 we were with still. Guys in my company remember seeing some guys from 20 truck. We saw guys from Rescue 1 branching off on to a floor when we were going down.

Q. What stairway were you in, do you remember?

A. B.

Q. B stair?

A. Yes, to the ninth floor. At the ninth floor, an engineer told us we are going to switch staircases. Because at that point that was the staircase everyone had found blocked when they got to the bottom. At that point we switched to staircase A. That led us down to

the west side of the tower on the ground, ground level, I don't know if it has a name. We were all in the lobby. There was -- I don't know, the whole lobby from where the stairs were to where they had whoever was in charge down there. It was probably, I don't know how many firemen. Probably 10 or 11 companies (inaudible). They were all standing around I guess waiting for an order. That's Danny Murphy made the call. He was like tower two went down, what's holding this one up. I think we should leave. It was almost like that's the call everyone was waiting on. I can't remember who said it but someone said get out.

Q. Who is Danny Murphy, who is that?

A. He is one of the senior guys, he was working with us that day. As soon as he said that, all the heads turned and they started filing out. I don't know how many companies got out before us but we finally broke into the line. We started going out. I was the second to last guy from my company and then Sal was behind me, Sal Butera and Lieutenant Halloran.

We started filing out and following the line of the building. I got just to underneath the north walkway. A guy started screaming to run. When I got underneath the north bridge I looked back and you heard

it, I heard like every floor went chu-chu-chu. Looked back and from the pressure everything was getting blown out of the floors before it actually collapsed. I ran north up the West Side Highway. Sal ran west somewhere and got blown off, got burnt on the back of his back and went to the hospital, but I ran north. Everyone in front of me was a ways in front of me. I didn't see anyone behind me.

The Captain from Engine 7 and me came out the cloud just about the same time. We went over, washed our faces off at a hydrant and I went back down, once I teamed up with the rest of my company. Me and Danny Murphy went down to look for Lieutenant Halloran and all the other guys were going down looking for their people.

Like I said, I don't know what it was when the building shook when we were on the 23. Everyone seemed to think it was the tower going down, but I don't think so. When we were on the 30th is when I was on the phone with my mother and she watched it on the live on the news collapse while we were in the 30th.

Q. How long did it take you to get from the 23 to the 30?

A. Not long, probably another 15.

Q. So the first shaking couldn't have been the plane hitting tower two?

A. No, we were on the 16 floor when it was confirmed that another plane hit tower two. At that point, someone that was supposedly Secret Service, which disappeared, we never knew where he went, he said there was a third incoming flight. That was --

Q. He was telling everybody that.

A. At that point, I didn't know if -- we looked at each other and like well, do we go up, do we go down. At that point it's like well, if it's going to hit our tower it's going to hit our tower, let's keep going up. Turned out to be a false report but we couldn't find the guy after he said that.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. Vanished. I don't know where he went.

Q. Who was the Lieutenant from 8 truck?

A. Lieutenant Halloran.

Q. Was he on duty that day or was he volunteering?

A. Yes, no, on night tour, the only reason we were even all there was our company was out of service at 0900 for company medicals. So we had to ride till 9. He was on the night tour. I was the only one that

wasn't on my normal schedule. I was working for a guy who was working --

Q. Where was he, was he with you when you were climbing the stairs, were you guys all together?

A. We got split up at one point. But we all met up 6 floors later because him and Kevin Dinkins wound up going up straight to the 30th and when we stopped with the Captain from Engine 7. Maybe another 15 minutes we were all linked up again on the 30th floor. Actually me and him, we had gone up to the 31 and forced the door. As soon as you took it you smelled jet fuel right away so we shut the door.

We said all right, we will go back down to 30th where the rest of the guys are. There were probably 6 of us that went up there. When we went down that's when I decided to make a phone call because my mother works at the Bank of New York building. I was just calling to make sure she was all right and tell her to leave, which she was, but she was at home. She didn't make it in. That's when tower two went down. I was on the phone with her.

Q. Where did this Lieutenant go, when was the last time you saw him?

A. When we were in the lobby, we all collected

right near the command post, but then after Danny said what he said about we should get out, we had already started making our way over, but all 6 of us were at that pillar of painted glass that we wound up walking out.

Like I said, the only thing I can think of is either once he got us out he went back, maybe just to tell the Chief for accountability. 8 trucks out. My guys are out, I'm leaving or he might have walked out right behind us and something hit him. He walked back in.

Q. You guys were exiting the lobby of the north tower and that's about the last time you saw him --

A. Yes.

Q. You are not sure whether he went back in?

A. As soon as we started filing out, was the only time we got separated the whole time down there. But it was just one of those things. It was such a short time from when we were filing out to when we heard run, that, you know, maybe we would have gotten to the north bridge to where stuff would have hit us and collect again, but we didn't even have the chance to do that. We were just going underneath the bridge when the guy started screaming run. That's the only

time we really got separated.

Q. What happened after the north tower came down, what did you wind up doing?

A. Like I said we ran up north. I got just past the beginning of the phone company building when the dust cloud came. I went up there, we cleaned our faces up a little bit, got some of the concrete out from us. Cleaned ourselves up a little bit. I wound up finding Danny Murphy. Everyone got separated. It was just bunker gear running everywhere. Once Danny saw me, he grabbed me. He is like let's go. So we walked right back down calling for Lieutenant Halloran.

There was guys coming up around us. We were asking like yes, we saw him back there. So we thought he was --

Q. Okay.

A. Standing out on the West Side Highway. But we went down and then once you were actually down, no, I haven't seen him, I haven't seen him. We looked for about an hour. That's when we finally went back to the fire house to call our families and say listen, we are all right, this and that.

Q. How did you get back to the fire house?

A. We walked. We all gathered what tools we had

here and we walked back down and then the recovery had been started. Like you said I don't know what it was on the 23 floor. But definitely it wasn't the tower going down. The only thing I heard on the radio -- I heard lots of Maydays going up. Guys having chest pains on like 10, 11th floors.

Q. You can't climb with bunker gear, I couldn't do it. I'm surprised you guys. 19 floors you said before you stopped. I couldn't do more than 5 floors. You are young -- but a lot of guys --

A. The only thing that saved you, with everyone coming down, you had to stop at every half landing, so you only did it half a floor at a time. By the time we hit the 19th, we were --

Q. Yes. How long do you think it would have taken you to get to the 80th floor if you had gone to the 80th floor?

A. I'm guessing probably 4 hours, 3 and a half. It took us just about an hour, maybe a little over an hour, to get to the 30th.

Q. The Engine companies that you saw were they carrying rollups up?

A. I think that's what saved us actually, because the Captain from Engine 7 was an older

gentleman. He knew that they would need an extra roll up so he grabbed one. He was hurting, we stopped, we always stayed with him. We never left him. Every time -- he lasted as long as us, I'm surprised, because we were all ready to stop every time we did. The stops were getting more frequent. We stopped on the 19, then we stopped on the 23. Then we stopped on the 30th. We probably would have stopped every nine, 10 floors after that.

Q. You have to do that. You had to do that or you would have a heart attack.

A. Thank god the air conditioner was still working. On the 30th floor is when the electricity went off. The lights went out and then the fire alarm systems started going off. The only thing on there was strobes.

Q. Could you see then? Were there emergency lights in the stairway?

A. No, actually the staircases's emergency lights weren't on.

Q. So what were you doing?

A. One of the night guys had flashlights.

Q. You had your flashlights?

A. Yes, but I think the floors that were already

passed, I think people chopped the doors open so light coming in from the windows. It wasn't light, but it was still I guess enough guys with flashlights and whatever, you could see. What's weird is the smoke condition on the floors actually got worse on about the 22 floor. John Tierney actually asked me, he is in my class, he recognized me right away. He is like you want some air from my mask, because I left mine on the 30th. I told him no, in case you need it keep it, and he didn't make it. He was two guys behind me on the stairs and he didn't make it.

I think me and Sal were pretty much the last two out of the building before it came down. I think the guys behind us, I think they all ran west or south.

Q. That wasn't good.

A. No. If you ran north you were unscathed. I think Sal ran like northwest. He got knocked down and thrown I think like 20, 30 feet. Stuff was laying on him. He was actually laying on the ground next to a Chief. He forget his name. The guy said his name. He was like oh, it's good to not be alone at this time. They couldn't see each other, couldn't know anything that he got burnt on the back of his neck. Came out of the clouds and the paramedics grabbed him, ripped his

coat off. They hosed him down and took him straight uptown, I guess Columbia Presbyterian, whatever it was, all the way uptown.

But I ran directly north. A lot of guys ran west. A lot of guys that never operated down there, whatever, I had a phone company job before the Fire Department that my office was down over in that area. So I knew -- I would rather run up the West Side Highway where there were no interruptions, pavement, as far as I could run, then jump over a middle island. Then who knows what you are going to run into.

Q. Right.

A. But I know a lot of guys ran west. A friend of mine in 207 Engine did that. He got picked up, he rode the cloud like 70 feet, till he hit a chain link fence.

Q. No kidding.

A. All he saw was a square. We was -- what if this didn't turn out to be a fence.

Q. Is he all right?

A. He broke his thumb. He actually, when tower one -- when tower two went down, and got buried in rubble and him and a guy dug themselves out and then tower one came down on him and tossed him again. So he

is still a little out there.

Q. He's a lucky guy.

A. Very lucky, lucky twice over.

Q. Twice over, right.

A. That's basically -- everything besides that is all jumbled up who I saw. The only reason I remember 28 Engine is because I think it was every half landing, the companies would scream 28, I'm here. I'm here, all right, all right. Then you got to the next floor, 28, there was a guy Wade, I think his name is, from 33, that was with us the whole way down. Just a whole mix up of all different companies.

Q. When you got back to the fire house you never went back that day? What time did you get back to the fire house?

A. Back to the fire house, I'm guessing, probably 11:30 in the morning. Maybe 11:30, 12 o'clock.

Q. The next morning?

A. That afternoon. The building collapsed at --

Q. 9:30, 10, 10 o'clock?

A. We were down there for a couple of more hours, down there until about 12, 12:30, came back and then we went back down that night. I didn't go home

until Thursday morning.

Q. Thursday morning.

A. We would do like 6 hours down there and then we would man the rig for whatever hours. I was pretty much down there in the area for three days. I don't know how many loads of laundry I did because everything would be itching like crazy every time you came back. All that is like a whole blur to me, because afterwards I was in shock. I don't know if I was in shock or couldn't believe that I lived or not or what. I just know we dug for like 6 hours a day and manned the rig for the other hours.

Q. Did you find any firemen when you were digging?

A. No, we were always sent to spots where we never found anyone. Although that spot right after we left is when they got deep enough, they wound up finding one or two guys here and there. Then they brought in the ABC platoon thing. I just did the 24 on, 24 off [redacted] Lieutenant Donahue got me detailed to 18 Engine. They took the squad out of service. I worked there for by a week, at 20 truck's quarters. No more fire duty. Then after that, I went

back to regular chart.

Q. Is that it?

A. Yes, that's basically it.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's 12:55 hours. This concludes the interview, I thank Firefighter Curran for the interview. That's the end.

File No. 9110413

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIERNACH CASSIDY

Interview Date: December 30, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is 12/30/01. The time is 1136 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Malkin, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Third Grade Tiernach Cassidy, Engine 3. We're in the quarters of Engine 3. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay. You can start anyplace where you were when you got the run.

A. At the time on 9/11, I was on light duty at the 1st Division. I was right over at 20 Truck and Squad 18's quarters on Lafayette between Spring and Prince. I arrived there for light duty 8:00 in the morning.

I go out on the top of the building for my morning cigarette. Usually I'm the only person out there smoking. I think by the time I got there it was maybe 8:30. The first plane had already hit. You see plainly from the roof of the 1st Division the towers.

Everybody was on the roof. The shock and dismay and fear in everybody's eyes, the firemen, everybody that was there that didn't go

down there that was on light duty with me because they didn't do what they call the total recall at that point.

Of course we're all asked, "Let's go, go." They're like, it went to a fifth alarm. We've got enough guys down there. Don't worry about it. It's taken care of. Still I was in shock. I was standing there, standing on the roof, not watching the TV, standing on the roof watching.

We don't actually see the second plane hit, but we see the impact. We were on of course the north side, so we saw the huge explosion engulf the whole top of that building. [redacted]

When I could talk after that, I said, "Now we're going. You know, let's go."

Q. Sure.

A. The guy in charge of the guys on light duty that day said, "I know. You guys still aren't going. You have to wait. You're not going. You have to wait until the call is made, until they say we can go." He's calling to see if we can, because we all want to go.

Then we start going downstairs. 20 and 18 left when the first plane hit. So we go downstairs. We go down the back stairs of the 1st Division, and we set into 20-18 and we start grabbing, putting gear together, because we were going to go anywhere.

Then the first tower came down. Then the guy that was in charge of us came running down the stairs. He's like, "Everybody's going who wants to go."

47 Truck was relocated to 20. Whether they were relocated there or just going down to pick up gear, I don't know. They were stocking their rig with cylinders and tools, radios, anything they could get their hands on.

Myself and ten other members that were there on light duty, we all jumped on top of 47 Truck, and we headed down Broadway. This is now after the first tower had collapsed. We're going down Broadway, and people were already flocking up Broadway, up Lafayette, everywhere uptown.

On the way down people were blessing themselves as we were going down. I'm standing on top of the rig between the bucket and the cab,

between the ladder and the cab. People were blessing themselves in this gloominess of going down. It was like out of a movie. I couldn't believe what was going on.

But we get down there, and all the guys that we had on the top of the rig -- we had ten guys and whatever other guys came in from 18 and 20. We couldn't see once we got past City Hall a block ahead of yourself. You could see one block at a time and that's it from that first dust cloud and the smoke and whatever.

We stopped when we get to Fulton Street just to get our bearings, and everybody on the back -- as I'm sitting by the cab, so everybody by the bucket, they all jump off. I think it was five guys, because we said we wanted to make sure we had a team of five guys. So I guess the first team jumped off the back on Fulton, and then the truck took off again.

We leave the truck on the Broadway side of One Liberty Plaza between Cortlandt Street and Liberty. We all get off the rig, the members of 47 and the members I was with from light duty, and we start packing stokes baskets with spare

cylinders, tools, whatever we could carry.

Civilians are running up to us saying they can't breathe, so we're giving them hits of the cylinders, of the masks -- we had cylinders, but we didn't all have masks. I didn't have a mask yet.

We start walking down Cortlandt Street from Broadway, going west, and we're carrying the stokes basket, myself and the team I was with, the other four guys. We started hearing the pancaking of the north tower now.

I looked at the officer I was with. We both looked at each other like what's that? Not thinking the second one would be coming down.

Q. What did it sound like?

A. It sounded like a plane just getting ready to land, just getting closer, coming in; a bowling ball getting closer when it's ready to hit that sweet spot, you know. But it didn't take us long to realize what it was. We didn't look up. We just ran back to the rig, thinking that would be safety or just away, anyway.

So we ran back up Cortlandt towards Broadway, and the other guys, I'm not sure where

they all dove. I opened up the door to 47 Truck and stuck to the side of the rig and pulled my helmet down over my ears.

I remember right across the street from one Liberty the other building had a monument or something. It was a big square with a hole in it. It's been sitting there forever. I just remember watching that and thinking this is it.

Whatever debris is hitting me in the head or hitting the truck and falling next to me, I'm still looking at this monument. Then the monument slowly disappears from the cloud it was covered in, that we were all covered in.

However long it took, I don't know. As soon as debris stopped floating on us, we dusted ourselves off, we went back to the stokes basket, found it, picked it up, and continued down Cortlandt.

Then halfway down Cortlandt before we got down to Church Street, we heard a mayday being given already in one of the buildings off to the right, which is the East River Savings bank. There was a member in there. I'm not sure what company, where he's from, but he had a

broken leg. The other three members needed to take him out.

So it was just myself and the officer now left with the stokes basket, and we continued down. While those three other members assisted this firefighter, the officer and myself went to the corner of Liberty and Church. It was on the corner of 10 and 10.

We dropped the stokes basket there. I used to live down on Maiden Lane years ago, which is a block and a half from the World Trade Center. So I knew the area really well. I was telling this to the officer on the way down, "I know this area."

So we got down to Church and Liberty, and he asked me, "Which way should we go?" And I didn't know. We couldn't walk through 10 and 10. The street was at least three stories high of debris covering 10 and 10. I think we walked down Cedar, down Greenwich, down Albany, until we got down to the West Side Highway, West Street.

We got to West Street. They had some sort of command structure set. We saw some white helmets. At first we started asking, "What are

we doing? What are we doing?" Nobody really had a specific answer.

At that point we just needed more tools. So we saw there was an ESU vehicle, emergency services unit, police vehicle, squad cars, whatever, and we tried to get into those to get some more live-saving ropes, utility ropes, anything we thought we could use, a Halligan maul, what we needed.

Then I found a mask, so I masked up, cylinder. I had a life-saving rope, utility rope, Halligan. The officer had -- no, I had the maul, he had the Halligan, he had his mask. Then we walked down West Street I think right -- no, actually we went further down than West. We went all the way down Albany. We went past West down to Liberty between the -- right before you get to that -- it's like another atrium almost set up. It's by the Gateway Plaza area.

We hung a right up Liberty Street from there, and we entered between the Marriott -- I'm sorry. Yeah, between the Vista International and Two World Trade Center. Here is where we entered the site.

I couldn't tell what rigs were on fire while we're walking by them. We had hose lines stretched. We helped stretch a line quickly just to get it over debris. Then we continued. We didn't know what -- we didn't know where to start looking. We could have started looking where we were standing, but we wanted to get in, get in, get in.

I remember the World Financial Center, Two and three World Financial Center, being at my back, because it was the biggest buildings -- I only knew what was north, south, east and west. That's as much as I could tell from living down on Maiden Lane for four years. I could only tell which way was north, south, east and west. So every time the officer asked me, "Cassidy, where are we?" I looked around and see Two World Financial Center there. I would be like, "That's west, that's north," and that's all I could tell him.

When we got to pretty much between one and two, I would assume -- because once you're in there at that time, you had no clue.

Q. It's like a mountain at this point;

right?

A. Yeah.

Q. Both buildings are down, you're on top of a mountain?

A. Correct, correct. We didn't know exactly how high we were up. Some of the voids that we saw, of course we went -- the officer, he was all gung ho. I was sticking with him.

I went for the life-saving rope, give him one end, he would tie himself off, and I would be up top and tie it to whatever substantial object I could. He would go give a quick search just to see -- because there were still maydays being given all over.

Q. Did you guys have a radio?

A. He had a radio. He had a radio which he took.

Q. From 20 Truck?

A. From 20 Truck.

I don't know how long we were walking around. It was about two hours prior to building seven coming down until we finally found somebody. We were walking around for at least three hours.

Finally we find this huge hole. I'm standing on the top of this huge girder. Nothing was moving on this girder, the size of these things. So I'm standing on top of the girder. At this point now we couldn't carry all our tools anymore. It was like climbing a mountain, with an extra hundred pounds on you, you just can't do it.

I started leaving tools left and right. I was leaving the Halligan. I just held onto the life-saving rope, which it's a good thing I did, because when I got to the top of the girder he said he's going to go down. So I unfurled the life-saving rope again, and he goes down in this hole and he comes up -- it wasn't a hole; it was a big gaping gash. It was about 35 feet down, 30-40 feet.

So he goes down, and he comes up the other side and he scales this other I beam to get up. He gets to the top of it, and I'm almost out of rope. So he says there's another gap, another void, over here. He said, "I'm going to be out of sight for a couple seconds." I was like all right. I didn't have a radio now. I couldn't

even hear him, how far he was away.

So I tie off, and I go down to the bottom of the hole, and I started coming up. He said he found him. It was the guys from 36, that Port Authority cop, three civilians and a friend of mine, Mickey Cross.

Q. I know him well.

A. Yeah.

So the Port Authority cop comes out first. There was a chief there, two chiefs, I think. I don't even remember.

Q. These guys were down in the hole? Where were these guys, all these guys?

A. The fourth floor of the north tower when it came down.

Q. And they were in this hole where he was looking around? What condition were they in?

A. The other hole was 60 feet deep. How the tower came down, it came down on itself. So it was just pummeled into the ground. How they survived, I have no idea. I couldn't believe it.

I mean, I thought that day we were going to find hundreds and thousands of people walking out. You know, we'd just take them out.

But those 10 or 11 we found right there, that was it for that day.

Q. What were they in? Why were they waiting to be rescued? Were they in a place where you had to dig them out?

A. They needed a life-saving rope to come down and get them. They were down that far. There was no -- they didn't know which way was up, which way was down. 110 stories comes down on your head and you're 60 feet down --

Q. Were they dazed?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. What kind of physical condition?

A. They are --

Q. So they needed assistance to get out of there?

A. Definitely, definitely. If you talk to Mickey -- the Port Authority cop comes out first. The life-saving rope is taut now. I'm like, "Come on. This way. This way." I'm just like directing traffic, you know. I get up to the top of the girder again, and now it's a tough climb to get to the girder.

So I use my body like a bridge. He

gets up on my leg and then my shoulder and he's up on the girder. He lies there on top of the girder, and he gives me the biggest hug and he starts crying. For me it was like, "All right, no time for sentiment. You've got to get going. You walk that way."

At this point now the officer I was with was giving calls for the stokes basket because the civilians that were down there were not walking out. So the guys -- I forget whatever squads, rescues, whoever was showing up, I see them off in the distance. They're like, "Who asked for the stokes?" I was waving, "Over here."

I pointed to the Port Authority cop. "See those guys? Walk that way out, the way they're coming in." He's like, "All right." He walks out under his own power. Everybody that got out -- the next guy that came out, I forget -- I don't know who the chief was, but he had brass, white shirt. Nicks and scratches, bruises, you know. Mentally not with it. Totally dazed.

Q. Mickey Cross is okay?

A. Mickey was the third guy to come out. At first I didn't see him when he was coming down the pile. He slid down the I beam, you know. I grabbed his hand when he was coming up. He looks up, and all he has is a cut on the top of his nose, on the bridge of his nose.

I said, "Hey, Mickey." He just looked at me. He didn't remember who I was. He said, "Which way out? Which way out?" That's what he said. I just pointed. You could still see the Port Authority cop and the chief walking for a while. I just pointed to them and "Follow them." So he walked to them.

Then the guys from 36 came out next, 36 Truck. Then we started running civilians out. Then the stokes came in. At this point I was wearing Squad 18's gear, so I guess these guys from rescue now and squads that were there, it was their operation, squads and rescue's work. I don't know. I had this gear on, "Come on," blah-blah-blah. So maybe I kept in the action a little longer.

So we got all the civilians out in stokes. We brought in ladders to help, because

the I beam that was going up. So it was some makeshift way to make it a bit easier to walk around.

Then, like I said, building seven was in eminent collapse. They blew the horns. They said everyone clear the area until we got that last civilian out. We tried to give another quick search while we could, but then they wouldn't let us stay anymore.

So we cleared the area. Our staging area at that point was on Vesey. It was down on Vesey, Vesey off West. We were probably a block up West on North End and Vesey, because I remember Marine 1 was docked right up here, and they were pumping water. They were pumping lines of water.

Q. Where did you find the hole where you were digging for Mickey Cross and all these people? Whereabouts was that in the site? Tower one?

A. That was tower one but it was --

Q. Somewhere in the pile?

A. -- the southeast end of tower one, because it was like I was dead center. As I

said, I remember looking back and seeing Two World Financial Center behind me.

Then we sat on Vesey, and doctors were coming around. My eyes were just -- everybody's eyes that was in that dust cloud were killing me. So the doctor looked at me and was like, you need an eye wash. I was, yes. They washed my eyes a couple of times.

We were making sure we had all our members. I'm not sure if it was at that point when I ran into my company. I think it is. Yeah. First I was just sitting by myself. Then I first saw somebody here, Angel Rivera. I saw him; he saw me. He came over and gave me a big hug, and he started crying. I didn't know any -- because we lost five guys. He was with them. He was in the Marriott Hotel with them. He took out two civilians. I don't want to be telling someone else's story, if you want to talk to him.

He was senior guy on the truck, and I think he had the irons. He had the civilian with him. So when they heard another mayday on a higher floor in the Marriott, they were like, "We're going for the mayday." He was going to go

with them, but they were like, "No, you have a civilian. Get the civilian out." He didn't want to, but he did. That was the last time he saw them. So he wasn't in good shape.

So yeah, then we just stayed on Vesey until building seven came down. There was nothing we could do. The flames were coming out of every window of that building from the explosion of the south tower. So then building seven down. When that started coming down, you heard that pancaking sound again.

Everyone jumped up and starts running west towards the water. I hear somebody yell, "Run and don't stop running." It wasn't half as high. It was only 47, 52.

Q. 40 stories, yeah, 47 stories.

A. Like that's nothing, 47 stories coming down; right? But the dust cloud didn't go as far west. I guess it blew whatever part north and south. But it came down as far as West Street. Nobody was injured with that.

So that was it. As soon as seven came down, we were going back in. I got together with my company, Engine 3, and Lieutenant Walsh was

working. We went to work. Where did we go? I'm not even sure where we went after that. I think we just went to the building seven area, checking around there.

I was there till about 10:30 that night, 11:00. I got back to the firehouse here at 12 midnight. I know that. My captain was surprised to see me, because I was on light duty. Maybe he wasn't surprised; I don't know. But I came walking in the door with everybody else in the companies. Some rescue company from Long Island or something or upstate dropped us off. He saw me drag myself in. "Hey, Knickknack, how ya doing?"

That was 9/11 for me.

Q. I wrote down one question here. When you were walking down Vesey Street when you first got there and three of the guys that were with you went in to help a fireman with a broken leg --

A. Correct.

Q. -- how did you know he was in there? Did he call to you verbally? On the radio? What?

A. Another civilian came running up to us saying there's a fireman hurt in here.

Q. Right.

A. We all went in at first. The two guys, one went to either side of him. He was laying down on the floor. He still had all his bunker gear on and everything, but he couldn't walk on his leg. I'm assuming it was broken.

Q. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A. The other two guys picked him up, and the third guy just gets behind him. That was it. They were looking for another stokes to put him in. We had all our tools in this one. There was a bus up the corner of Broadway somewhere, an ambulance, but that wasn't going anywhere. That was buried. We were able to grab the stokes from it. They grabbed the stokes, put him in that and then they carried him away.

Not to say we weren't waiting, but we weren't. We had other things on our minds.

Q. Why was building seven on fire? Was that flaming debris from tower two --

A. From tower two.

Q. -- that fell onto that building and lit

it on fire?

A. Correct.

Q. Because it really got going, that building seven. I saw it late in the day, and like the first seven floors were on fire. It looked like heavy fire on seven floors.

A. It was fully engulfed. That whole building -- there were pieces of tower two in building seven and the corners of the building missing and whatnot. But just looking up at it from ground level, however many stories it was, 40-some-odd, you could see the flames going straight through from one side of the building to the other. That's an entire block.

Q. I wonder what was burning in there. What do you think was burning? It's an office building. There's not a lot of wood in there.

A. You figure, that jet fuel, that explosion that hit, everything just came out. Remember that explosion? It was massive, that fireball. That jet fuel just --

Q. It was jet fuel, yeah. That must have been where it landed. That's probably where a lot of the jet fuel went.

A. A 25,000 gallon tank I think it had?

Q. It had to go somewhere.

All right. Is that about it?

A. Yeah.

Q. That's good.

CHIEF MALKIN: It's 1203 hours. I thank Fireman Cassidy for this interview. There was nobody else in the room during this interview. This concludes the interview.

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File No. 9110414

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEREK BROGAN

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 6:55 p.m., and this is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the safety command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Derek Brogan, firefighter of Engine 5 of the New York City Fire Department, regarding the events of September 11th.

Q. Derek, I'll ask you to state your name, unit and tell us what took place on that day.

A. My name is Derek Brogan, assigned to Engine 5.

We went out of the box about 8:30, at Irving and 19th Street. Food on the stove. As we were taken up from the box, we were backing out of 19th Street, and we heard a plane go over our heads. So me and the backup man, Jimmy Andruzzi, looked at each other. We realized it was low. We actually mentioned it to each other. We continued backing out into the street. Just a minute later our officer told us that a plane had hit the Trade Center and that we were going on the second alarm.

As we were going there, we heard the

10-60 transmitted. Going down 14th Street, we started looking down the avenues and saw a lot of fire down there. We mentioned to each other that we had to stay together and this was going to be probably the biggest disaster we've ever seen.

So we continued down to West Street and made a left turn, getting a better look at the tower. We knew that we had to go there and try and help the people out.

We parked by the Verizon building. All the members got off the rig. We all grabbed extra cylinders. Manny Delvalle was with us. He had the door position. He didn't take a roll-up; the chauffeur took a roll-up. He figured he was just going to park the rig on a hydrant and took off for the building.

We got in the lobby. I believe either the lieutenant or Captain Atlas from 10 Engine came up to us when we got in the lobby and said that we were to team up together, 10 Engine and 5 Engine. We thought that was strange. We thought they would be up there already.

Just as everyone was starting to walk towards the center stair, which was the only

stair we thought led up to the upper floors, we heard the next plane hit the other building. We looked out the windows at the reflection on the Financial Center and saw the fire plume coming down.

Then we really didn't know what we were up against. We were kind of hoping that it was an accident at the time for the first tower. But once the other building got hit, we realized that it wasn't an accident anymore.

We started marching up the stairs. I'm not positive about what floors it was, but we took a break on like 10 for a few minutes. All the people were coming down, they were very calm. They would yell from a couple floors up that there was a burn victim coming down, and everyone plastered themselves up against the wall and the burn victim would come down. It was amazing to see that they were actually smiling that they were almost down the stairs.

Maybe about the 13th floor I started having chest pains. I remember now what it was from. I had crossed my extra cylinder over from one side to the other side. I felt a tear go

across, but in the chaos of what was happening I never put two and two together.

So we stopped for a few minutes, got some water. I felt better. I started walking back up the stairs, got to 19, and I had chest pains again. So we stopped. The lieutenant was going to leave me there with a couple of other guys to go back down. But I started feeling better, and we went up again, to the 23rd floor.

There the chest pain was getting very irritating. They called mayday for somebody to come up and give us oxygen, because there was myself and two guys from 9 Truck there. The guy from 9 Truck was yelling that he couldn't feel his arms.

So the Port Authority ESU cops came up. They gave us some oxygen. There was an FBI guy I think on that floor or one of the floors just below it as we were walking up. He told us the Pentagon got hit and the other tower got hit. He misinformed us by telling us that NYU Hospital got hit. I remember him saying that to me. And he said, "We still have four planes in the air, and we don't know where they are."

We were in an outer office on the 23rd floor on the southeast corner, which I guess faces tower two. Then we felt the rumble. You just heard this noise that sounded like the subway train going by but magnified by a thousand.

When we heard that noise, we just all got up. We didn't bother to look out the window. We just made an exit out of that room. We got to 9 Truck. I remember them yelling that we had to close the doors behind us. We closed the doors behind us, and I went to go back in the stairwell and there wasn't any room in the stairwell. It was loaded with people.

So myself and a guy named Schroder from 10 Engine went down the hallway and found a closet, and we darted into the closet. We were in there maybe five to ten seconds. Then we heard a knock on the door. We opened the door. At that time the lights went out and the whole place just was -- you couldn't see anything. Dust, smoke, whatever it was.

Outside was a Port Authority cop. We dragged him in with us. We couldn't get him

all the way in the room because he was laying on the floor and his leg was hanging outside of the doorway. This wind came down the hallway and blew the doors open that were in that office that we were in. I remember me yelling that his ankle was getting crushed outside the door.

That subsided after about 20, 30 seconds. The rumbling was still there, but the wind was gone. We opened the door. We yelled outside where 5 Engine was, because you couldn't see anything. They said they were here. They just kept on yelling. We found them in the stairwell.

We went down with a number of civilians, maybe like nine or ten civilians and maybe four Port Authority cops, it seemed. We were all carrying people and sharing our masks with them.

As we got back in the stairwell, we didn't know whether we were going up or going down. But the rumbling was so intense that we didn't really know what had happened. We just assumed that our building had been hit by another plane.

The officer just looked at all of us and said, "That's it. We're getting out of here. We're done. We're of no use to anybody here. We've got to get these people out."

So we started going down the stairs. It was a real slow haul down the stairs. We got to the fourth floor, and the stairwell was filled with rubble. We couldn't go down that stairway anymore. So we went out into the hallway through the fourth floor, and the officer again yelled that we have to look for windows. Maybe we could blow out a window and just get fresh air from a window, whatever it was that was in his mind.

We went down the hallway, couldn't find the windows. Then we heard him yelling, "Anyone in the stairwell, go to the lobby." We followed his voice back to the stairwell, went down the four floors, and we had lost another member from Engine 5. We had lost Gerard Gorman.

We had lost Manny Delvalle on the way up the stairs. We saw him on maybe the first or second floor, and then when we stopped on ten, we posted a guy at the door and he just never passed us. But he was carrying an oxygen bottle.

Instead of carrying a roll-up, he had the EMS oxygen bottle.

Our thoughts are that he might have stopped to help one of the civilians that came down that was burned. That's kind of what we hoped he had done, because that would probably have put him back in the street.

We had lost Gorman, so we waited down at the lobby. We came down the center stair and were waiting in the lobby, yelling up the stairs for him to come down. He wasn't coming down the stairs, and there wasn't anybody else coming down the stairs. Our officer told us that he saw Lieutenant Donnelly on the down the stairs. He's from 3 Truck. But I don't remember seeing him even, he vividly remembers seeing him and trying to make him come with us.

We waited in the lobby probably about a minute, and then the officer just told us that we have to cut our losses and try to find our way out, because you couldn't see anything. There was gas leaking all over the place. The marble was falling on top of us.

So we proceeded to go to West Street,

pretty much the same place we came in. There was no windows in the lobby when we showed up, and there was no windows in the lobby when we were leaving.

We went to step outside the window, and we caught a figure. I don't know -- I remember his face, but I don't remember what he was wearing, whether he was a fireman or a cop or a civilian. He was probably about 50 yards away from us.

He just started yelling, "Come on." He was looking up at the building and waving his hand at us. So we went to walk outside the window. Just as we stepped out, he started saying, "Stop, stop, stop." That's when all the bodies -- I don't know how many bodies, but a bunch of bodies came down at that specific time. It looked like it was raining bodies.

After about ten seconds, he just started screaming, "Now you've got to run." We ran and ran and ran and we got onto West Street, and we started walking, looking for the rig. I couldn't find the rig, which was only parked a block up.

We looked back at the building, and the dust had already settled from tower two falling down, but we were blocked from the view. We didn't know what had happened. So we look at our tower and just assumed it was still standing. So we didn't know whether to go back in or not.

The guy just started screaming at us again, "It's coming down. It's coming down." We just took off. We couldn't find the rig. Me and Jimmy Andruzzi got split up. I went up and I tried to jump on the back of an ambulance that was going north up West Street, but it only went ten feet and stopped in traffic. So I got off of that.

I started running up West Street. I still had my mask on and looking back at the cloud that was coming behind us. A clear burst of air came right before the dust cloud came and blew my mask off my shoulders. I just kept on running.

I found a girl on West Street talking on a cell phone like nothing had happened. I just grabbed her under the arm and went up to Stuyvesant High School and sat down there.

That's pretty much where the dust cloud finished.

From there I saw a guy from Cabrini that works in the Cabrini ambulances that is familiar with us because we went with him all the time. He just said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "I have chest pains." He put me in the ambulance. We went to Cabrini. They did an EKG. Everything was fine. They told me it was a pulled muscle under my chest.

They gave me my -- well, first on 19th Street they decontaminated me with a garden hose, stripped all my clothes off in the middle of 19th Street. After they did the EKG, they just gave my clothes back and sent me back to the firehouse.

I came back, called the division to tell them that I was back here, and they sent me around to all the neighboring hospitals around here to start writing up lists of who was in the hospital, who was admitted, who was treated, who was released.

That's basically all there is about it that I remember.

Q. Good. What was the highest floor you

had gone up to?

A. 23.

Q. 23. Do you recall how long it took you to get up there in terms of time? Can you estimate from the time you left the lobby to how long to get up there?

A. I never really looked at the time line in the face of that. We were in the lobby when the second plane hit, and we were on the 23rd floor when the other building collapsed. Was that an hour? I'm not positive.

Q. It was close to an hour.

A. Yeah. It was a very hard walk up.

Q. Actually when you got to the 23rd floor, you actually went out on the floor itself.

A. Right. That's where we left to get some relief from going up the stairwell. That's when the chest pains set in, and that's when they called a mayday. They came up within three minutes. They gave me oxygen. Within two minutes of giving me oxygen is when the other building fell.

Q. When the other building fell, then, it was the dust and debris from the other building

that wound up on your floor?

A. Yeah.

Q. Had the windows, I guess, blown?

A. There were no safety lights. Nothing went on.

Q. It was total darkness now up there?

A. Total darkness, yeah. We just happened to be with two guys from 9 Truck which we know. They're right down the street from us. So we teamed up with them for a little bit, and they went a separate way and went down a rear staircase, and we went down the staircase that we're familiar with. We went down that one and got to the fourth floor.

Q. You've since seen those two guys from 9 Truck?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear anything unusual on the radio or you weren't wearing a radio that day? You had the nozzle position; correct?

A. Yes. I didn't have a radio. I didn't hear any maydays for anyone to come out. I do remember a guy from 10 Engine trying to find his officer. I don't know if he was the control man

or backup man or whoever had the radio over there.

I remember the officer saying that he was on the 43rd floor to come on up, and they were coming up with us. I guess it might be a little easier going up without a roll-up, so he was making good headway on the stairs.

The staircase we were in, we were only taking two or three steps and stopping, two or three more steps and stopping. As you got higher up, maybe for the first nine or ten floors, you were sailing right up the stairs. But then as you got more into the heart of the building I guess where more of the population was, it was harder to get up the stairs.

Q. I assume there were people coming down the stairs at the same time you were going up?

A. There were a lot of people coming down the stairs. It never ceased.

Q. Do you remember what stairway designation it was, by chance?

A. I believe it was C, which was the center of the building that we went up. We might have went up that staircase to about 14 or 15.

Then we just couldn't make it up that stairway anymore, and we left to I think B, which would be on the southeast corner and went up that stair. That's where we got up to the 19th floor first and then the 23rd floor after that.

Q. So the original staircase you did take, that was the one that was blocked around the fourth floor level?

A. No. From what I believe, there's only one staircase that goes to the lobby of that building. The other staircases go to the sky lobby or the promenade or whatever that level is called. We went right up the center staircase in the core of the building where the elevators were, and we went right up there.

When we were coming back down, we were coming back down the southeast staircase, which I think was B. I'm not positive it was B. I guess the rubble had come up and gone through the windows of the lobby and then to the staircase and just knocked it out. That was the rubble that was blocking our path to get down.

Which actually the guy that they were calling for, Gerard Gorman, found his way down

that staircase with a couple guys from 20 Truck. I guess it wasn't as cluttered as we thought. We just had the lead guy in front of us yelled back there's no more stairs, they're all gone.

So in the darkness we believed everything we heard. I was sharing my mask by putting it on people's faces. Gerard Gorman was sharing his mask by purging it. So maybe with that loud hissing noise going on, he didn't hear that we were getting off at the fourth floor.

That's the only thing I can imagine, that we were all close together, but we couldn't see anything. You would have to really get down like eight, nine inches from the floor just to see the glow-in-the-dark strip that was on the staircase to find out where the last stair was on the landing so you could make the turn.

Q. Any people you had seen prior to going up the stairs in the lobby that you know are not around today or any people you saw on the upper floors that did not make it through this?

A. We didn't see 33 Engine, which we thought we would see. We didn't see any familiar faces, no familiar faces. We teamed up with 10

Engine, and that's who we stuck with all the way up.

I remember asking a number of people while we were going up, the civilians that were coming down, what floors they were coming from, how high up they were. I don't remember hearing anybody from like above the 60th floor.

We had the mind-set that we were going to the 80th floor for some reason. I guess I just overheard that in the lobby, that we were going to 80. In hindsight, it was higher than 80, tower one. But I remember on the way up we were counting floors. We stopped on a certain floor like 10, we've got 70 more to go; 20, we've got 60 more to go.

I really don't know what we would have done when we got up there, but we were trying to get up there. We even started dropping our stuff to see if we could have the companies that were further up, leave their stuff and come back down. We would just go without our rollups.

I was even thinking we would switch bunker gear with them, trying with what company you have to go as far as you can, go with a

chain. But I really don't know if that would have been (inaudible).

When we were a couple blocks away from the building, we heard the noise coming down. It was just like dominos only it was probably going faster and faster and faster. Then you just couldn't see anything.

Q. This is the second collapse?

A. This is the second collapse.

Q. Do you remember your exact positioning, where exactly it was when you started to run at that point?

A. We were just beyond the Verizon building, which I think the Verizon building is the north side of Vesey Street.

Q. North side of Vesey, yes.

A. So we were just a block beyond that.

Q. So actually on West Street, though?

A. On West Street. Luckily that's the way we responded, so that's the way we started going to leave. Had we come in from the south side, we would have tried to go south and wouldn't have been able to go south. I don't remember seeing the other building laying in the street as we

came out, but I don't remember the giant dust cloud from the other building either.

I saw that guy that was 50 yards away that was waving us out of the building. When tower one fell down, I don't think we would have been able to see 50 yards with the dust cloud that came from that.

I only remember seeing the two guys from 9 Truck. Other guys they said they remember hearing 3 Truck giving maydays, having gotten a radio at that point. We were just preoccupied with trying to carry some people and hopefully trying to find our way out.

There were a number of times we didn't think we were going to make it out. You thought when we got off the 23rd floor, that was it, you were clear.

The chest pains, I thought it was a heart attack. I had never had any heart attack before, so you really don't know what it's supposed to feel like. But it didn't feel good.

When the fourth floor was blocked, I thought that our luck had run out there. When we got to the lobby, I thought our luck had run out

there. Then when the bodies came down when we were leaving the building, I certainly thought that was our last chance.

I would estimate we were out of the building maybe two minutes before it fell down. So in that little time line, I think it took us between 20 and 25 minutes to come down from the 23rd floor, which is a long time. It seems like two minutes, but it was a long time.

Q. Sure.

Any recollection of any talk of the elevators before you went up the stairs? You were in the stairwell, of course, but any talk of the elevators?

A. Someone did mention in the lobby about the elevators, but it was quickly dispelled. The elevators aren't working. The elevators aren't working.

I do remember seeing Joe Malone from Battalion 6 as we were walking in the battalion rig was parked on the east side of West Street by the center divider in the street. He waved to us and told us to be careful upstairs. He's gone now.

I don't remember seeing Chief Williamson that was with him, but I remember seeing Joe standing in the street at the back of the rig, waving to us.

Until the second plane hit, we really thought it was an accident. We didn't put together it was the clearest day, one of the clearest days I've ever had. We didn't put together that that plane went over our head until when we actually were told that another plane had hit.

I didn't know until I got to Cabrini Hospital that another plane had hit the other building, that it was actually a plane. When they were decontaminating me, I thought maybe it was something a little more sinister, you know, because they wouldn't tell me anything. They just told me --

Q. Of course. You go by sounds or what you hear. It's like not knowing exactly what's going on.

A. They were just telling me that I was exposed, and I didn't know what I was exposed to. I was just hopeful. When I heard it was another

plane, I was actually kind of relieved that that's all it was.

I do remember questioning myself, transferring from Staten Island to Manhattan.

Q. A lot different, huh? A high-rise building as opposed to a two- or three-story building.

A. I transferred here.

Q. Anything else of importance that you feel is necessary to add to this interview?

A. The evacuation of the people seemed pretty orderly coming out. I don't know if I would have been that orderly if I was running out of the building and I had the recollection of what happened in '93. They were definitely organized. Nobody was pushing, shoving.

There was no emergency lights. There was no intercom system in the building that I remember hearing. If you read the papers, they said that they were announcing to get out of the building. I don't remember hearing any intercom system remarking that the other tower got hit or they were evacuating tower one. None of that. None of the emergency lights worked.

They should have had more staircases going to the lobby, because when you come out at that promenade level and you have to walk outside in between the buildings, and there was no one between the buildings.

That's about it. I really don't recall much else. I really didn't recall much when I came out of there. It's just bullshit sessions that we had in the basement that triggered your mind to remember what happened. Just the guys talking to each other was a great asset to try and piece this together and figure out that we were just as much victims as everybody that was in the building. We didn't have a chance to do anything. We didn't have a chance to put the fire out, which was really all we were trying to do.

Q. That's all we can.

A. I don't recall anything else.

Q. That's all. It's what you remember, basically, on that fateful day.

A. Yeah.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: So the time is now 7:18, and this concludes the interview

that we have this evening with Firefighter Brogan.

File No. 9110415

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RONALD CIFU

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 5:05 in the afternoon. This is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command, and I am here today conducting the interview with Firefighter Ronnie Cifu of Engine Company 16 regarding the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. Ronnie, state your name and your company and describe for us what had taken place on September the 11th.

A. My name is Ronald Cifu of Engine 16.

September 11th I was working the day tour. I got here a little early. About 8:45 the run came in. I heard a plane had hit the World Trade Center, and I kind of figured that we were going to be going. So I got on the rig and turned the radio on. I was listening to it on the radio. Right away the box was transmitted, and they sent us initially.

From here I got on the FDR Drive and headed south from 29th Street. I made good time. Once I got past the Brooklyn Bridge, I was able to get a good look at the towers. There was an

incredible amount of fire, at least ten floors as far as I could see.

From there I was debating on which route to go. I got down to Battery Park, and I decided not to go through the tunnel, underneath the battery and out onto West Street. I got off, and I think I went up State Street to Church. I went up Church and made a left turn onto Liberty, but there was too much civilians and traffic on Liberty. So I backed out, and that's when the second plane hit.

I heard an explosion, and the guys got off the rig to back me out. Then the debris started falling. We got hit with a lot of debris on Church and Liberty. I continued north on Church, and I made a left turn on Barclay. I went down Barclay, took a hydrant over there. We all got off the rig.

I walked to the Trade Center through the plaza onto West Street. I was with the members of Engine 16. The officer and the members went into the building, and I started helping the other MVOs supplying water to the building.

We had the north corner of the north tower. There was a Siamese connection there. We had that supplied. There was a Siamese connection on the south corner of the north tower, and we had that supplied. We were relaying water from across the street to one pumper to the Siamese.

Once we had the building supplied with water and all the other chauffeurs were doing pretty okay and everybody was hooked up, I was plotting my next move. My next move, I was thinking about going into the building and down to the basement and maybe starting the fire pumps or checking with the engineers.

That's when the first person jumped. I was on West Street. I backed up a little bit. Then another person jumped. There had to be at least 15 people that just jumped in the amount of like ten minutes. The time was around 9:15, 9:20 at that point.

When I first got there, there were a lot of maydays and urgent messages. One of the messages I heard was we lost an elevator, and then there was a second message that we lost

another elevator.

As the operation continued, there was a lot of debris falling. As the people were jumping, I kept on backing up onto West Street and heading a little north. I was sort of like underneath that north bridge.

As all the debris was falling, I think that's when the south tower started to collapse. I remember a lot of people running, and I looked back and I just thought it was more debris. People were running past me. So I continued to run with them, and I was running north on West Street. I turned around and I saw the dust cloud. Before you know it, that caught up to me and I was engulfed in that.

Then I was crawling on West Street. I was worried I was going to get hit with part of the building or somebody was going to run me over. Sure enough, there was a police car and he was running north with his lights on, and he was crashing into the wall, the divider wall, which he kind of had me pinned up against. And then I jumped up onto the grass, and I started crawling along the grass.

The dust continued. It was completely black. I would say that lasted about 10, 15 minutes. Once that cleared, I kind of went and regrouped with a couple of the other chauffeurs. I got back up on my feet and went back to my rig. I pulled my rig a little closer. I hooked up. We were trying to keep some of the dust down. We had a couple of the stangs going to try to keep some of the dust down.

I wasn't really sure if there was a collapse. I thought it might have been a partial collapse, maybe just the top floors.

As far as water, I'm not sure if we had enough water into the building. We could have used a little bit more. I'm thinking that maybe the plane severed the standpipe system itself.

That was about 15, 20 minutes after all that took place, and another 10 minutes after that -- it was about 30 minutes between buildings -- then the second building came down. I remember seeing the top floor, about five or six floors, pushed out and to the west, and then the whole building came down.

Then it was the same scenario all over

again. I started running up West Street. This time I got behind one of the rigs and just waited for the dust to clear. Most of the dust cleared. Then I got dusted off. I regrouped with a couple of guys.

That was pretty much it for me for the day. I was kind of like knocked out of the kitchen. At that point they pushed everybody north up to Chambers Street to the staging area, and they weren't letting anybody back towards the fire.

I remember seeing companies. I remember seeing rescue, Rescue 1. I remember seeing 3 Truck, Ladder 2. That was the last time I saw them. I remember hearing Ladder 7 on the radio, on the handy talkies. I couldn't get a clear picture as to what they were saying. They just seemed to be checking in with one another. That was the last time I heard Ladder 7, and that was before the collapse.

That's about it.

Q. Do you recall who from Ladder 7 you heard on the radio, the voice?

A. No. I heard the officer maybe the OV,

or the roof. They were all kind of like checking in with one another.

Q. As far as the companies that you said you saw like Ladder 2, Ladder 3, did you see them in the street? Did you see them in a particular part of --

A. I saw Ladder 3 in the plaza between like Barclay and the World Trade plaza. They were just heading in. I saw Ladder 2 heading south on West Street. Rescue 1, I remember seeing them on West Street. That was all before the first collapse.

Q. You mentioned about hooking up to the Siamese on the north side of Vesey Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you recall which apparatus it was hooked into?

A. No. It might have been 1 Engine supplying that. I don't remember which rigs it was. But we had the building covered. We had all the Siamese connected.

Q. Just waiting to be used, if it was ever used.

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you go in the building at all at any point?

A. No, no. I started walking towards the building. I was thinking about going in, checking with the engineers, and something told me that's just not a good idea. I turned around. That's when people started jumping. I just backed off from there.

Q. All right. Anything else you feel of importance that you need to add?

A. I think the standpipe system itself might have been severed, so I don't know if the standpipes were ever used. If they were, I don't think we had a good supply of water. I don't think we had a good supply of water from the hydrants. It seemed like we were getting -- the pressure was just dropping as we used all the hydrants in the area.

The water pressure seemed to be a problem. It was just the more hydrants you were using, the less pressure you were getting and you just couldn't supply.

Even after the collapse when we were starting to relay water to the car fires and

stuff like that, we just couldn't get the water. I think that was a big problem.

Q. Do you recall what you were operating, what pressure you had, what you were drawing from the hydrant from the operating panel?

A. The hydrant pressure was down to like maybe five, ten pounds, and we were losing water. I noticed that at a couple of different locations. Towards the end of the operation, they were relying on the boats supplying water from the river.

Q. This is later on? This is after the collapses had taken place? This is when they were trying to control fires that were taking place around the surrounding area?

A. Right. Even when I went down there a week later, it was the same problem. We just couldn't get any pressure out of the hydrants.

Q. You weren't aware of the pressure of the hydrants before the collapses, though?

A. No, no. I was just stretching lines and making connections between the chauffeurs.

Q. Very good. All right. Anything else?

A. I don't think so.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: This concludes now the interview with Firefighter Cifu. The time is now 5:17.

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File No. 9110416

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY MARMION

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: The time is now 4:20 in the afternoon. This is an interview with Firefighter Tim Marmion, M-A-R-M-I-O-N, from Engine Company 16 of the New York City Fire Department. I am Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Okay, Tim, can you state your name and describe for me the events taking place on September 11th, 2001.

A. My name is Tim Marmion from Engine 16. I worked night tour the night before on Monday the 10th. I was scheduled to work the day tour on the 11th.

We got the call at about I guess 10 to 9. We came down to the Trade Center. When I got on the rig, one of the guys told me -- I had been in the rack before that working the night before. We had a pretty rough night, so since I was in the rack, I wouldn't have been aware of anything going on.

The guy told me -- what I heard on the voice alarm was explosion in the Trade Center. When I got on the rig and started down there, a

guy told me a plane had hit. At that time they thought it was a small plane.

We proceeded down the FDR Drive. You could see the Trade Center from there. At that time I realized it was more than a small plane, a bigger aircraft, because you could see the fire and the size of the hole in the side. You knew it was much bigger than the guy thought it was.

We arrived underneath the Trade Center at about 9:00. We went to move the rig. We tried to make a turn. We couldn't make the turn. So we got out and repositioned the rig. As soon as we got back in the rig, that's when the second plane hit. We proceeded around the corner, and I believe we parked an Vesey Street.

We walked around into the lobby where the command center was. There was Commissioner Von Essen, Chief Feehan, I believe Ganci was there, and I'm sure Mykal Judge was there. There was a bunch of guys standing there. Those were the only people I saw in the lobby besides building personnel. There were no firemen in the lobby.

They told us we were with 1 Engine. 1

Engine arrived a few minutes later, and they told us to take three rollups and a standpipe kit up between the two companies so we could piggyback them up there, switching on and off every six floors or so, taking a breath in between. As far as I know, they told us to proceed up as high as possible to see what was going on up there.

We started up. About every six floors or so we would switch on and off with the rollups. There was a steady stream of civilians coming down. There was a steady stream of firemen and a few cops scattered in there going up. It was orderly, both sides.

We got up to the 22nd floor. We used that as a rest area. The officers went to find a command center they had heard about which I think eventually wasn't one of our command centers; it was a Port Authority command center that was on that floor.

At that time is when the other tower fell. We were in the tower by West Street. I believe that's tower number one. So at that time the tower number two collapsed. We were on the 22nd floor. We waited for the officers to get

back and regrouped.

The building shook. The lights went out. There was some discussion about continuing up or to leave the building. I had heard on a radio that somebody else was wearing standing next to me, "Evacuate the building."

We had a brief discussion. I was told that they meant the civilians. I felt at 10:30 they weren't trying to evacuate civilians. The civilians were leaving at a quarter to 9 when the first plane struck. It was a foregone conclusion that they were leaving the building.

At that time when they told people to evacuate -- that was the word I heard, "evacuate" -- they were talking about us, get out. I believe the officer of 1 Engine tried to call down to the lobby just to verify that. Whether or not he got through, I'm not sure. I'm assuming he did, because then he turned around and told us to get down.

We proceeded down. I made sure that all the guys in our company were ahead of me and they were starting out. We proceeded down, it was an orderly evacuation, people leaving the

building at that point. Everybody was leaving at that time. There was very few, if anybody, going up at that point.

Around the 10th or 11th floor was where I saw the large black woman that 6 Truck had encountered. There were at least 10 or 12 firemen ahead of me that had asked the woman if she wanted help down. There was a security guard from the building, a Port Authority cop or someone with plain clothes and with a gun. He was adamant that he had her, he would take care of her.

So we continued on down. The next floor there was a woman on a stretcher that was being carried by a civilian. A couple of fireman, myself included, relieved those people on that stretcher and carried her down the remainder.

I met a couple of the other firemen that were at the bottom of the stairs waiting there for me, and we took the stretcher from there and brought it out to an ambulance.

As far as I know, there was no smoke condition in the lobby at that time. I thought

the command center was still being manned. I don't know if that's true at this point. There were people over there. I assumed it was the same people that I had left earlier, probably an hour, before. That might not be the case. I'm told that Ganci and Feehan and those guys went across the street, actually by that time.

We took the person out. We put her in an ambulance that was parallel with the Trade Center on West Street. We proceeded to walk north on West Street. We were out of the building a couple minutes, less than five, I would think, I was told, and the building started to come down. We ran up West Street.

We regrouped again, got all the guys together. Eventually we dove into one of those buildings that were there to get out of the smoke. You could feel the smoke and the heat from where the building hit the ground. We regrouped and just waited in the staging area.

We wanted to go back. I told them that we had lost our lieutenant. We didn't know where he was. Also our truck wasn't heard from in quite some time, and we wanted to know where they

were. Nobody really had any information at that point.

Pretty much the rest of the day we just searched the perimeter looking for these people. Eventually our officer who had lagged behind somewhat, he told us that he climbed out of the building. He was in that area with 6 Truck and that woman.

He was in that area with several others -- a couple chiefs and other various people. He had climbed out two or three hours later. I actually didn't see him until probably 9 or 10 or clock that night when he came back to the firehouse. We got back about 8:00.

The rest of the day was just us sitting in a staging area. They told us we couldn't go back in. That's about it.

Q. Okay, Tim. You mentioned the 22nd floor. Do you recall what amount of time it took you to get from the lobby to the 22nd floor?

A. If you could tell me what time that building collapsed.

Q. The other tower collapsed approximately like 5 after 10.

A. So we were on the scene for an hour at that point. It probably took us 45 minutes to get up there, I would think. I would think at about a quarter after 9 we started up. So if that happened a little after 10, I would think 45 minutes.

Q. 45 minutes?

Do you recall what stairway designation that you took up?

A. The stairway probably close to West Street on that side of the building, next to one of the elevator banks. They also told us to stay away from the elevator banks, that they were coming down.

Q. Yeah, they were afraid of them collapsing.

A. I don't remember any of the companies that were up there on the floor with us aside from 1 Engine. The 1 Engine officer, by the way didn't make it out. He perished. I don't know if he lagged behind getting guys down, trying to get as many down as possible. He didn't make it out.

Q. Okay. Very good. Anything else you

want to add that has any importance to yourself?

A. Yeah, I was wondering if they actually had a plan for us, what we were going to do once we got up there to the 50th, 60th floors, if there was any idea whether or not there was any stand pipe in service for us to carry these rollups up there, what was going to be the plan.

Did we have a plan to put out this fire or was it just -- that was the scary thing for me when I entered the lobby and didn't see any firemen there. I have been to many third alarms, and that's one thing, when you have third alarms, there's a hundred firemen around the command center.

There wasn't one fireman in that lobby that I saw. There was only four chiefs and the Commissioner, something like that. Apparently their idea for fighting this thing and trying to get people out was just everybody up, everybody up.

The thing that scares me -- people say that we weren't lucky with this thing. I think we were. I think if this building would have collapsed an hour later, we would have had a

thousand firemen in there. If it would have collapsed three hours later, we would have had 10,000 firemen in those buildings.

That was going to be their aim, get everybody in there. If they weren't up in the building, they would have been standing around the command center in the lobby. They would have set up another one inside the other lobby.

So I think we were blessed when we only lost 300 guys at that time. We would have lost less civilians, but we would have lost tons and tons more firemen. I think that's something they should think about.

I don't know how they planned on putting that fire out. You've got 20, 30 --

Q. You bring a rollup up there with the intention of using it on a fire.

A. I don't know what the other intention was.

Q. Yeah, bringing it up that many floors.

A. I don't know what their idea was going to be for us to use that. I can't believe they thought -- I wonder if they had gotten any reports whether or not the standpipe was even

working at that time. I can't believe it was working if the inner core of the building was destroyed when the plane hit. That's where all the standpipes are.

Q. I don't know if it was available or not.

The officer of Engine 1, any other individual you may have seen prior to the collapses that you knew that did not survive this?

A. Not that I was with. He was really the only one. I only considered us with 1 Engine. We had seen 3 Truck on the way in. They had asked us which way was the lobby where the command center was. We pointed them to where we thought it was, and that's where they all proceeded. They went ahead of us. I guess being a Truck company, they told them to go right up. I don't believe any of those guys made it out. It was a small group.

They weren't with Patty Brown and those guys. It must have been other guys that made their way down there on their own. I wasn't sure if they had masks on. I'm not sure.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: All right. The time is now 4:32. This now concludes the interview with Firefighter Marmion.

File No. 9110417

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN ZASA

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002, the time is 1436 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Stephen Zasa of the 21 Battalion. This interview will be regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Battalion 21.

Q. Steve, if you'll please state your name and just tell your story from the receipt of the alarm until as far as we can go.

A. I'm Stephen R. Zasa, Firefighter 1st Grade, and I've been detailed in the battalion for the past year and a half, and I was working the morning of September 11th. We responded to a box at Bayley Seton Hospital. We had received a report from the members coming out of the hospital that a possible plane had struck the World Trade Center.

Upon hearing that information, we took a ride down to Bay Street, and we had seen a lot of white smoke coming from the area where the World Trade Center is. So we proceeded to the pier, the Navy port where the ships dock down there, and we parked facing the World Trade Center and we saw a heavy smoke condition

coming out of the top of the building. I think Chief Vallebuona at the time got on the radio with the dispatcher asking why it was only -- at the time, as far as we knew, it was a second alarm. We didn't see any signs of fire or flames. We weren't sure if a plane had really struck the World Trade. It was just a rumor. We didn't hear anything.

Upon that time I heard a plane roar. I had my window down and on my side we saw a plane flying very low come right across us and with a loud, you know, the engines revved up, and I had mentioned to him, I had no idea that it was heading towards that way, and I just said like where is this guy going, you know, he was extremely low, not realizing it was another plane heading towards the World Trade, and we saw it struck the building, we saw a big mushroom of flame, of fire coming up, and it was like disbelief, and he had gotten on the radio and notified the dispatcher another plane had struck the World Trade Center.

Then we were dispatched to the 32 Battalion. From there we had picked up a Chief, I don't know even his name, and an aide, extra cylinders, and we went through the tunnel, proceeded to the west side.

Q. Here's a map, if it will help you at all.

A. Maybe West and Liberty we were? Maybe West and Vesey we were. I guess it was Vesey. When we got out of the car, Chief Vallebuona -- I can't remember. We just got out of the car and he went to see if he could get some information, came back to the car, and I just remember looking up and seeing the flames coming out, knowing that we had a -- you know, they were having a tough time up there.

As we opened up the doors, I couldn't even tell you how long it was after that but it wasn't too long, we had the battalion doors open, we were standing there, and then we saw everything -- we looked up and everything just started coming down. So we proceeded to run, I guess, towards the water, and we just got caught up in that cloud of smoke. I just remember turning around and seeing the cloud of smoke coming down and it just engulfed us.

I couldn't even remember if I heard things on the radio and I just can't remember. I remember just kneeling down and just stuff coming down all around us, choking, gagging on -- inhaled a lot of that dust. I heard somebody calling out. It was just like dead silence for a while, I didn't have no gear, no turnout

coat, I just put my hands over my head, and I heard somebody calling out. I answered after a while and it wound up being Chief Vallebuona and we got together, made it to -- tried to find our way around.

We made it to a building. There was a doorman. We banged on the glass. He let us in. There may have been one or two civilians with us. We stayed there for a little while and we made it back out again and headed to where our battalion car was. I can't even remember what transpired during that. All I remember was he found a mask, he handed me my mask, he said it was going to get worse before it gets better, and then we heard the second rumble coming down and just took off again.

Upon that I fell to the ground and a fireman came up to me. He had his mask and full gear on. Again, I didn't have my gear, my helmet. I had nothing. He was sharing his mask with me and I think it was a PD guy with me. We got to a building a few blocks down. It was cops, a couple firemen, took us in the building, cleaned everything off, rinsed my mouth out again, came outside, saw parts of the plane on the ground and then just made it back to the car. I didn't know where Chief Vallebuona was then. I saw him at the

scene again and we just remained there for a while and that was it. We started seeing the guys coming up from the ferry. I couldn't even tell you how long that was. I think that was about it.

Q. Is there anything that you can remember, any companies, any --

A. I just remember seeing a rig there. I looked for an extra cylinder on the way back up again. After the second plane came in, there was nothing. Dead silence. I just saw flashing lights again. No cylinders, didn't hear anybody, just maybe saw a couple guys at the curb, just guys milling around, I guess. I think everybody was in shock. We heard planes flying up above and thought there were still attacks. Everybody was kind of like crouching down again, kneeling down, not knowing if they were dropping bombs or what was going on. It was just a lot of silence, you just saw the lights on the rigs and I may have heard radio transmissions. I can't remember. Basically, that's about all I can remember.

Q. Can you remember any of the specifics of any of the radio transmissions?

A. No, at this time I can't.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you can

possibly think of that might add to this?

A. No, that's just basically it.

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Okay, Steve. I want to thank you very much for the interview. This will conclude the interview, then. The time is 1445 and thank you very much for all your help.

File No. 9110418

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF THOMAS VALLEBUONA

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002. The time is 1353 hours. I am Battalion Chief James McGrath of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Battalion Chief Thomas Vallebuona. This interview would be regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. This interview is taking place in the quarters of Battalion 21 in Staten Island.

Q. Tom, if you would just start from whenever you received the alarm, and responding to the scene and tell us in your own words exactly what happened.

A. Myself and Steve Zasa were working the night tour in the 21 Battalion. Around 8:00 in the morning, we got a run to the hospital, Bailey Seton Hospital, which is close to the shoreline of New York Harbor on Staten Island.

As we were taking up from the box -- it was a 1035 -- a fellow came down the stairs and told us that he just heard from his wife that there's been an explosion in the World Trade Center.

So from there we went down to the quarters of Marine 9, and we were watching across the bay. We could see the fire in the north tower, when the next plane that was going to hit the south tower flew over our heads.

I called up the dispatcher to volunteer to go to the first one, and after the plane went over our heads we were notified to relocate to the 32 Battalion.

We then relocated to the 32 Battalion -- we got there pretty quick. The bridge was already closed to traffic. The cops there were doing a great job. We talked to the dispatcher and made notifications. I could hear Rescue 5 wanting to go, and they weren't telling them to go yet. Then I think they were relocating them, but I was telling the dispatcher I thought they should send rescue because they're going to need all the help they can get.

When I got to the 32 Battalion, we found the crew from the 32 Battalion was in quarters, but their car was not there. Upon arrival we were notified to bring them over to a command post at the World Trade Center, and I

believe it was Vesey and Broadway, which at that time I wasn't really sure where that was.

So we took as many cylinders as we could in the rig from the depot at 101 and 202, and we proceeded through the tunnel. The tunnel had already been closed by the Fire Department. There were staging units there. We were waved through.

Upon coming out of the tunnel, I looked up West Street, and I could see a lot of apparatus. So I decided because the Brooklyn dispatcher had asked us to come back to Brooklyn if we could and I wasn't sure of the location of the command post they gave us, so I decided to stop on West Street, roughly in front of 90 West Street, opposite, actually, and walk up the street, because I could see chiefs setting up on the other side of the pedestrian bridge just beyond Liberty Street on West Street on the sidewalk area. I could see three chiefs setting up there. So I figured I would go up there and ask them where they wanted me to bring the chief from the 32 and if they wanted me to stay.

Upon walking up, as I got to the other

side of the pedestrian bridge, I asked them if they wanted me to stay. They seemed actively involved. I looked up. I realized how bad things were, and I said they're going to want me too.

I decided to go back to the car and get my gear, because we weren't sure and we figured we would just report in there because there was a lot of activity going on, although the street seemed amazingly empty. It was a beautiful, beautiful fall day.

Upon getting back to the car, I started to grab my turnout gear. I told the other chief we'll go up there, see what's going on, that we'll check in up there and I'll be right behind him, let them know that we have some cylinders here, as silly as it seems now, when I heard "boom," an exploding sound, a real loud bang. I looked up, and I could see the Trade Center starting to come down, the south tower, which I guess I was about a block away from.

Looking up in total amazement, I couldn't believe what I was seeing, which probably everybody was in the same boat. I saw

stuff coming off the side of the building. It looked like a giant fountain. It was actually beautiful in a strange way. I said I can't be here; I must be back in the firehouse.

But within seconds -- it was probably less, because they say the building came down in eight and a half seconds, I realized that we weren't far enough away from this building and we were going to be hit by stuff. It seemed like you could just see stuff spiraling out like a cone.

So we proceeded to try and outrun it, myself and my aide, Stevie Zasa. We were holding hands. Within seconds we're engulfed in a cloud that you couldn't see your hands in front of your face. It was hard to breathe, if almost impossible. You felt like you were eating the dust. You could hear things falling around you. You couldn't see anything.

We didn't get hit by anything, luckily. We hunkered down because we didn't want to keep on running, because we couldn't run. The thought in my mind is we were going to end up like the people in Pompeii, totally buried in ash and

dust.

When I saw the cloud coming towards me, it was brownish and like a color that I said this has got to be hot. You didn't know what it was. I figured we were going to get burnt up, but we didn't.

After half a Hail Mary, I said we've got to get out of here. So we started to crawl around. We worked our way south, and we worked our way west one block. I don't know whether there's a street on West Street that would be off that, but probably down to Albany. We made our way down to Albany Street, according to this map. I would say it was Albany.

I went down Albany and to the buildings on the corner of Albany and End, but on the east side of that building, I got in there and I found a store. We opened up a store, and we started to bring people in there. People were walking around in this cloud. I had a light, so I was directing people in with the light, and we were bringing them in. A lot of people were in there. People were just wandering around. What seemed like minutes but actually it turned out to be, I

guess, 20 minutes or more when the dust finally cleared.

We got back to the apparatus, which was parked opposite 90 West Street. There were firemen coming up the street. I remember seeing -- I'm not sure what the fellow's name is. He was running up the street. He said, "Come on, Chief. We've got to do something. We've got to do something." I said, "Wait a minute. Let's just figure out what's going on. Let's get our act together."

As I looked over in front of me, I guess Chief Cruthers had just shown up, because he didn't look like he was dusty or anything; he looked pretty good. He had his car there. He had plans or map -- I don't know -- on his car.

I procured my mask, because I figured the other one -- it only made sense that something else was going to happen. I put my mask on and I had it ready. I had no gear still, but I had a mask because I didn't think I could breathe that stuff again.

I went over to talk to Chief Cruthers. I saw guys running up the street. I was trying

to stop them from running up the street, but I don't know what happened to a lot of those guys. Myself and Chief Cruthers started to talk and I said, "What should we do?" And "ba-boom" again, the same sound, the same noise, the same shuddering, shrilling noise of the metal falling as it cascades down. Even though it's further away, it seemed like almost a worse cloud.

We were engulfed again in the cloud, but we sort of had a better idea. The stuff was hitting around us more, it seemed like, that time. I don't know why. You could hear like things hitting the ground, "boom, boom, boom," and stuff. Still we were lucky.

I lost track of everybody this time. I lost track of the aide. I was on my own. I really don't remember how we got out of that one or if it cleared sooner. But the next time we came up the street, I used my mask this time to try to take a few shots. It turned out being a mistake because I got the proverbial shot of crap in my face and dust, my eyes were impounded.

We came back, and I didn't know where Stevie was, and I was really upset about that.

Where I thought Chief Cruthers had run, there was a big piece of the World Trade Center. I don't know how it went over the walkway.

Where I saw a line go up the street towards the pedestrian bridge -- probably I guess you would call it the east side of the pedestrian bridge, there was a line going up the street there. I don't remember if it was from the squad trying to take a line up there. But I was trying to hold people back, and they went up there. But where that line went up, there was nothing but a pile of rubble on top of it. There must have been like 15 -- I don't know how high it was.

I heard radio traffic, but I couldn't figure out what was going on or who was doing what. I walked my way up the street and I went under the pedestrian bridge. When I came out, it was clear. Now the dust was pretty clear. I saw Charlie Blaich was on top of a pile there directing -- he looked like a Currier & Ives thing, the old Currier & Ives. I couldn't believe, he was calm as hell. He was doing a terrific job directing guys that I couldn't.

I said, "Charlie, I don't know what's

going on here. I'm really kind of beat up." I was pretty beat up. I said, "I'm going to go down, and I'll get water," because we had some pumpers hooked up before this and ready to go both times. I think even before the first one we had a pumper hooked up on West Street and ready to go.

I told Charlie -- he didn't recognize me, because he said I looked like a black man dressed up in white face. It's not funny, but that's the way it looked.

I went down the street, and we started using the pumper. 90 West Street had a couple of floors of fire going at the time. There was a fire on the first floor, and we felt there was a fire in the basement. We went in the front vestibule door, and the air was sucking in.

So we got some lines, and we were going to try and extinguish fire in that building. 90 West Street also had a -- which we were very concerned about, had a scaffolding around it all the way up. It was a gigantic building, under construction.

The apparatus was starting to burn up

on the street, and there were a lot of fires burning all around us. A lot of cars were starting to take off, some ambulances. I think it was 113's rig was starting to burn up. A guy said, "Chief" -- It was not that you didn't care. I did care. We were trying to do stuff. Guys were cooperating. I was the only chief there at that time. People would take leadership very well. Whatever you wanted to offer, they would do. Guys were very cooperative.

So we got some lines going and we were trying to knock things down, and the lines basically went flat. They didn't go flat, but they went limp, almost. You realized right away that the mains must have gone out in either the first or the second collapse. Basically our water supply was nothing. It wasn't even enough for one line coming off that pump. We were trying to work on other -- trying to find other sources of water.

The time span now I couldn't really even tell you as the day went on like how long this took, how long that took. We gave up on 90 West Street as far as an interior operation goes,

because we had no masks. We had no communications. We had a limited amount of people. Quite frankly, that would have been a fifth alarm, that building, without what was going on.

My objective at that time was to not lose anybody else at this fire, which I felt at that time would be a miracle. Of course as we all know, that has become a miracle that nobody else really died after this that we know of.

I just tried to keep people out of the way of 90 West Street. After we realized we couldn't do an interior operation, I tried to keep people from walking up underneath the scaffolding. I was grievously concerned with that because all day long you could hear it seemed like rivets or whatever pinging off the thing going "ping, ping."

We tried to set up in front of not 90 West Street but the Marriott and work off that corner. For some miraculous way, I told guys to go down -- I don't know how this ever worked out, but I told them to go to the waterfront and see if they could see a fire boat.

It seemed like within a remarkable amount of time -- I don't want to say minutes, because obviously it couldn't be. It seemed like shortly thereafter lines were coming up the street, three and a half inch lines.

We supplied the standpipe with non-potable water at the Marriott, and I sent a guy from 108 Truck -- I'll never forget that, because it was a former company of mine. A guy said, "108 Truck here." I said, "Go get a stang," which we all know that's not what we call it anymore. I said, "Go to the roof of the Marriott, and you take a line off the manifold and we'll start" -- because the roof of 90 West Street was proceeding to burn at that time also.

The objective, as I'm telling you, was to keep the fire from extending and to not lose any more people.

We got hand lines into the Marriott also, and we operated off the standpipe. I don't know how we did it. Companies were coming in from New Jersey who were helping us stretch lines. People were really working good. We had a couple lines going across from the Marriott and

off the roof.

That fire I heard was burning right through to the next day, but I felt like at least we knocked down and did confine somewhat the fire there.

It wasn't total chaos. As people came up the street, if I saw somebody from SOC -- it was a wonderful thing to see the guys from Staten Island come in and all the guys I knew. It's remarkable how fast that was happening.

As people would come in, I would have guys work with me. Bobby Mosier showed up, and he showed his terrific ability to lead. But as guys would come in, I would send guys from SOC up the street up to Charlie, and we would keep the guys down there to confine the fire.

I would say around 4 or 5:00 I was kind of burnt up, and I couldn't bear to see another building fall down. So I took a walk down the street and took a rest. I told Bobby Mosier. He said he didn't mind. A lot of chiefs were there at the time around West Street at that sector. I just sat down for a while, relaxed, called home and told everybody I was alive.

I went back and tried to do some more as it got dark, but I couldn't see. So I went down to a clinic that was set up on Washington Street down there someplace, a triage center. A doctor couldn't wash out my eyes, so I got a ride over to the hospital on the other side of town. I walked back, and I guess around 11, 12:00 I went home.

That's about it, I guess.

Q. Just a couple of quick things perhaps you could clarify.

Do you know whose pumper it was that you were taking the lines off to go to 90 West Street?

A. The pumpers ran out of water.

Q. But do you know whose pumper it was?

A. No. We started getting things going. I remember 15 Truck I believe we used as a tower ladder also on the side there at 90 West Street with Captain McKinney, Timmy McKinney, a couple guys.

The pumpers there -- you know, people were coming in. It was amazing the stuff that was going on; it really was.

The other thing, as I'm sure you're aware, not too much, there were body parts all over the place. It was just total --

Q. What about the company that was stretching, do you remember any of the companies?

A. I had 108 Truck. I had the Captain of D9. I think he had his guys. We knocked down a fire on the first floor of 90 West Street, and he went to the entrance to the basement. He's a pretty good firemen -- which they're all great firemen -- but he had tremendous amount of heat, had no mask. He felt there was no way we belonged in the basement there also.

What other companies? Let me think. It's really hard to recall because things were so screwed up and guys were coming in. I really can't remember the company numbers. I don't know why. It's just hard. There's a lot of stuff you just don't remember.

Q. I'm sure.

Any radio transmissions that you can remember?

A. I heard maydays in the beginning. Whose they were, I can't really remember. I

always tried to train myself to key in on maydays, [redacted]

The guys were really terrific. I never had more people follow orders and do the right thing in my whole time. Guys went up the street that should have gone up the street. It was terrific.

But the units I just can't remember, Jerry. I really can't remember what units, the numbers. We got our order from Marine 1. A lot of firemen came over from New Jersey -- I don't know how they got there; I guess by boat -- and they were stretching lines up the street too, quite a few lines.

Those fire boats, I tell you, if they

don't know they need new fire boats by now, they're never going to know.

Q. All right. Is there anything else in particular that you can think of that you might want to add?

A. That's it.

Q. All right. I want to thank you very much for all your information.

CHIEF McGRATH: This will conclude the interview, then. The time is 1412. Once again, this interview took place in the quarters of the 21 Battalion.

File No. 9110419

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD CARLETTI

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is January the 2nd, 2002, the time is now 7:35 p.m., and this is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Richard Carletti of Engine Company No. 5, about the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can for the record state your name and location of where you were working at the day of the incident.

A. Richard Carletti, Firefighter 1. I was working at Engine 5. I was assigned for a 24-hour tour assigned at 9:00 a.m. that morning.

Well, here's how my morning starts. I usually come in around 8:00 like everyone does, but I went to vote, so I was late. I was coming up Allen, which turns into First. When I was crossing Delancey Street, I saw a jet in front of me, which was the first jet. He was pretty low. He was probably about 30 stories. Now I'm heading north and crossing Delancey Street on Allen and I see the jet make a move toward the Trade Center. It made a southwesterly turn from that point.

I proceeded up First Avenue, left on 14th,

parked in front of the firehouse. Fireman Lynn was there. He said they were out on a box, they wouldn't let him on because they thought they had a good job, and right then he told me a plane just crashed into the Trade Center. It was the same exact plane I just saw.

I proceeded upstairs. I got dressed. We left here about five to 9:00. We made a left going west on 14th Street, left on Second Avenue. I was in my personal car. We started taking the lights on First Avenue. We got to about 2nd Street and Second Avenue and we saw Ladder 7 was on a gas leak. We asked them if they were going to the Trade Center. They said no, they weren't assigned yet. We were on the east side of the street. We went to make a right on Houston, and right when we were making the right on Houston, we saw a fireball in the sky, which at this point was the second impact, so that puts it 9:06, turning right onto Houston.

We went down -- I figured I was in my personal car, we wouldn't make it down Broadway. We thought it would be backed up. I made a left on Lafayette, which is a one-way north. I was going south. I stopped in front of 20 Truck. There was one guy there. He said everybody already left. We

proceeded down. We went on the side of I guess Lafayette, right down by City Hall, we made a left and we parked over by 6 Engine on Beekman, parked the car on the sidewalk, grabbed our gear and proceeded to walk up Beekman to Park Row, down Park Row to Broadway. We stopped in front of a building, left our boots inside the building on Broadway, got dressed and proceeded west on Liberty.

When we turned the corner west on Liberty, figure it was probably about 9:15 at this time, there was a good 20 floors of fire in the south tower. I mean, it was pushing red on at least 20 floors from what we could see. I turned to Tommy and I said, Tommy, this building is in danger of collapse. In my opinion, I didn't think there was going to be a catastrophic collapse, but from the fire load, there was no way.

When we passed 10 and 10, there's a bridge that runs I guess into one of the buildings directly south of Trade Center No. 2. There's a pedestrian walkway. As we passed that, we came into the debris field. It was jet parts and body parts. I distinctly remember seeing a woman's hand. It was cut off at the wrist. She had wedding ring, so it had to be a left

hand, and then I looked to the left and I just saw the rib cage with nothing in it and there was just debris.

At that point we stopped for a second and we heard impacts, which I guess was jumpers hitting the pavement. To our right, there was a parking lot right on West and Liberty. There were about seven cars on fire. We just walked -- there was a line there just dropped. We walked across West Street, found an engine company, and they said the command post is just north of here in front of World Financial Center.

We walked up there and we told a Chief we were two from 5 Engine. He told us go in the street, secure masks, irons, whatever tools you can get, and he ordered us to not go into the buildings, to come back to the command post. So most of the rigs were stripped in front of the Trade Center. There was nothing in them. The equipment was already taken.

We walked up West Street, past the Verizon, one block north of Vesey, and we found our engine, 5 Engine, parked there. I guess the chauffeur's radio was on step. I guess when he changed, he forgot to put it back on. I took his radio. We looked in the rig. There was nothing in there. All the doors were open. It was pretty much empty. I found a mask on 91

Engine. We looked for about another five minutes. We didn't find any other equipment. So all we had was one mask between the two of us.

We went back to the command post. We met a captain from 91 Engine, told him who we were. He walked over to the command post, told them who we were, and that's when we saw Paul Mitchell. He just got made out of Ladder 110. He was a covering officer here, covering lieutenant. I figure at this point that was probably about quarter to, ten to 10:00. So I saw all the Chiefs there. The officer from 91 took our names, told us to stand over there.

There was a driveway there that went into, I guess, one of the World Financial buildings. We went over and we stood on the burn in front of the Winter Garden room. We were just south of the north bridge standing on the grass area. I think EMS was setting up their command post behind us. When I saw Paul Mitchell, I was joking because he had a firefighter's helmet on instead of a lieutenant's, so I guess he grabbed equipment from 110. He got off that morning.

We were standing there. The officer from 91 says stay here, we're going to get two more guys and get teamed up, and what went through my mind was – the

only thing I was annoyed at was that we were going to have to hike 80 floors. We stood there for about ten minutes and I just heard a loud groan by everyone in the street. I guess the south tower started to lean. The top 30 floors leaned over. I was looking up at the north tower. I was trying to monitor more what was going on in the north tower with the radio, and they were on three different channels at this point.

I looked up and about the 70th floor I saw the western wall of the south tower start to belly out. Tommy turned, said run. He started running and I turned around behind him and we ran into the revolving door of the Winter Garden room, which is a glass atrium, I guess about ten stories high. As I went through the revolving door, I was in with an EMS guy and I either tripped her up or knocked her over. I remember picking her up. We went back around to the back. Everybody started going into the Winter Garden room. I remember the floor rumbling and the lights went out at this point in that hallway. Everybody started to go into the Winter Garden room. It's got a glass roof, so I told them to move north.

We went to the American Express Building. We ran north. So this was about five after 10:00. We

proceed to go back out on the north side of the building. The dust was just too intense. You couldn't see more than five feet at this point. So we went back in. We waited about another five minutes. We went out. The Captain from 91 Engine was covered in dust. We looked in two more rigs for any equipment. There was nothing. We went to the corner. We saw Tom Manley, sergeant at arms of the union.

We stood on that corner. A Chief came over and ordered us to go north. He wanted everyone to go north. I said, Tommy, let's go back to 5 Engine. When we walked back to 5 Engine, we found Lieutenant Bohack, Firefighter Jim Andruzzi, Firefighter Eddie Mecner backing the rig up and Eddie was all over the road with the rig. They came out of the seat and I got in the seat. We backed into a side street, turned the rig around and proceeded north and we parked on Warren Street one block south of Chambers. I guess now this was about 10:25. We stood there for another four minutes and the south tower collapsed -- I mean the north tower collapsed.

When the north tower collapsed, I remember seeing the antenna do a little rock back and forth and I could just hear the floors pancaking. I heard it for

about 30 pancakes, just boom, boom, boom, boom, and the dust blew up to us.

We ran about one block north. The dust settled. We went back to the rig, threw the equipment back on the rig, what was on the sidewalk, our jackets and radios. We took the rig. We went east. We made a left on Greenwich and we proceeded north. We came back around in front of Stuyvesant High School. They were setting up a command post there. I mean, you could listen to the monitors. Basically they wanted engines was booster tanks to come down and extinguish the car fires then going.

We stood there for about another 20 minutes. That's when we figured out who we were missing. We were missing Manny Delvalle, Gerard Gorman and Brogan were now missing at this point, and Eddie Mecner confirmed that Brogan was put in an ambulance, and about ten minutes later Gerard Gorman came walking up. He was covered in dust and pretty shocked. So he proceeded to get in an ambulance and go to the hospital at that point.

We got the rig cleaned up and we proceeded from -- when we were on Chambers Street, we were blocked out. We went over, down to Chambers Street, we

went across behind City Hall, made a right. We made a U-turn past City Hall along the Brooklyn Bridge. We went over to the east side, completely around Manhattan. We came up Broadway from the south, made a left on Exchange and a right on Broadway, and we came up to Thames and we shut the rig down and there was absolute silence. There were only six firefighters at this point over there. It was about 15 minutes after the collapse, the second collapse.

We checked the hydrants. We only found hydrants working on the east side of the street. The west side were all shut down, were all dead. At this point it was Bohack, Lieutenant Bohack, Andruzzi, Mecner, Lynn. They proceeded to walk north up Broadway. I stayed with the rig. I eventually moved the rig forward where I ran into my brother's Lieutenant and he had a spare rig. He was going to go down Dey Street and I was going to augment him, but another engine decided to augment. I came back around. I parked on Liberty and Broadway and I proceeded to augment 247, which was on Church and Liberty, and we stayed there until about 6:00 o'clock that night.

We went back to the house, we got our eyes

washed, we went back down at 11:00 p.m. with 3 Truck, with the rest of the battalion. We went to 10 and 10 command post. We went to about the middle of the pile, but we were just -- at this point we extinguished fires most of the night almost in the center of the complex and just west of what was left of building No. 4. We were on the pile just with three hand lines putting out fires until 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

Q. So that was during the nighttime, then, you were putting fires out on the pile?

A. Yes. And that was it.

Q. So you had mentioned about repositioning your rig just prior to the second collapse?

A. Our rig was parked -- I don't know the name of the street. It's one block north of Vesey. It was on the northbound side facing south. They came and they were parked on the hydrant. When I got there, Eddie was backing the rig up and he was having a hard time with it and so I got in the seat. We backed into a street and then we proceeded to go north.

Q. Had any of the guys that were working with the rig, had they returned back to the -- the guys who were working in Engine 5 that day, had they returned back to the rig?

A. Yes. At that point it was Lieutenant Bohack, Firefighter Andruzzi, Firefighter Mecner, and at that point we were missing Firefighter Brogan, Firefighter Delvalle and Firefighter Gorman. That's when we went up to Warren Street and we parked. Then when the second collapse happened, that's when we brought the rig --

Q. Around?

A. We went up to Greenwich, made a left. Greenwich is a southbound street. We went up, came past I think it was Manhattan Community College. We made a left. We came back down Stuyvesant. From this point we just went like a complete circle back down to Stuyvesant High School. Then they told us there was a bomb scare and we had to move the rig north from there.

Q. You said you were wearing a handy-talky. Were there any significant handy-talky transmissions that you did hear at any point prior to, during, or after any of the collapses?

A. About 10:15, 10:20, I finally heard the Maydays for the north tower, to evacuate the north tower. Prior to that I didn't hear any Maydays. I mean, I heard a lot of chatter, nothing of really any significance. I didn't hear any Maydays or anything.

It was mostly command post instructions of the Chiefs being moved around. I didn't hear anything else. That's the first time I heard the Mayday.

Q. About 10:15?

A. Yes. We also started repeating the Maydays on our radios because we were on the corner of Vesey and West Street. We were on the southwest side, that's when we were standing with Manley, and they were also blowing the air horns.

Q. Besides Lieutenant Mitchell that you had seen, any other individuals that you had seen that you're aware of that did not make it out of the collapse debris?

A. No, he's the only one I can remember. I don't think I saw anyone else at the command post. I remember seeing Hayden and I saw Ganci.

Q. At the command post you saw Chief Ganci?

A. Yes. I saw Von Essen there.

Q. This is the command post that was on West Street?

A. West Street. It was on the garage ramp in front of I guess that's -- I think it's 2 World Financial Center. There's a south building in the World Financial Center complex.

Q. Right. On the same side as the Winter Garden?

A. Yes.

Q. So you never entered any of the tower buildings?

A. No.

Q. So, primarily, when you came around from the Liberty Street side, you walked on West Street?

A. Yes. We were across the street.

Q. Oh, on the west side of West Street?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Because when we stood in front of -- right past 10 and 10, past that north -- we were really underneath the bridge. There's a pedestrian bridge that used to cross Liberty just south of 10 and 10. Is that a Bankers Trust building there? I don't know what the name of it is.

Q. I'm not sure of the name of the building.

A. Blockbuster.

Q. There's a south walkway, though, that goes across West Street.

A. When we got past there, that's when we entered the debris field and you heard shotgun blasts,

and when I looked -- I don't know if Tommy looked, but I could see what was lying on the ground. It was just a pile of meat, red. So I said to Tommy, let's get out of here. There's too many humans coming down from the building. I figured that had to be about 9:15, 9:20, and there was a good 20 to 25 floors of fire.

But, see, there were no Chiefs on that east side of that building. When we walked down Liberty, we were the only two firefighters on Liberty. There was no observation on that side.

Q. Nobody was on the Liberty Street side or the --

A. No. 10 and 10 was empty. The doors were open and there wasn't a soul in the building. I don't know if they were open. I think they were open. We looked and there was no one in there.

Q. So, actually, on the Liberty Street side there was no apparatus that was parked there?

A. There was apparatus parked on the corner of I think it was -- or it probably might have been Ladder 10 that was parked on -- Liberty's got two lanes in each direction. It's got an island in the middle of it. They blocked off -- there used to be two ways in each direction. I think it was Ladder 10 that was

parked there. I'm not sure. I don't really remember. I remember when I seen the body hit the ground, I thought I saw Ladder 10 parked there. I mean, I don't remember.

There were engines parked across the street. I don't remember who they were. They were across on Liberty, across West Street. I don't remember seeing any other -- in truth, I don't remember seeing any apparatus but that one on the corner.

Q. Otherwise everything else was in the middle of Liberty or on West Street?

A. West Street, yes.

Q. Okay, Rich. Anything else of significance that you'd like to add to this interview that you feel it's important?

A. No. Just that when we walked down Liberty, I found that we were the only ones there and that was odd to me. There was no observation on that side of the building.

Q. Okay.

A. When I got to the command post, what was I going to say? I mean, I've got seven years on the job. I remember telling the Chief I think this building is in dire need, it's going to collapse.

There was one point at the command post, I mean, I don't know about the battalion, but I felt I could have just walked away and no one would have known, but I didn't.

Q. You did what you thought was right.

A. Yes. I mean, I ran ten minutes later, but that was self preservation.

Q. The intentions were well at that time to do what you had to do to go down there. Okay. So if there's nothing further?

A. No.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: This now concludes the interview with Firefighter Carletti. The time is now 7:54 p.m.

File No. 9110420

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD GORMAN

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is January the 2nd, 2002. The time is now 8:25 p.m. and this is Lieutenant Chiafari of the Safety Command of the Fire Department of New York City. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Gerard Gorman of Engine Company No. 5, regarding the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please state your name and the unit you were assigned to and position for that day?

A. Gerard Gorman, Engine 5, control man.

Q. Can you tell us the events of September the 11th?

A. I came in and relieved one of the two details from 6 Engine. The other guy, he made it out, and the other guy, John from 20 Truck, John Burnside from 20 Truck, he was relieved by Manny, who didn't make it out.

Q. When you say relieved, he had worked here the night before; is that what you're saying?

A. Yes.

Q. So this is prior to --

A. This is like 8:15 or something.

Q. Okay. This is before the alarm had come in?

A. Right. He got relieved by him. Burnside,

then went to 20 Truck and relieved somebody there, and we'll get back to this later, but the guy who helped lead me out was the guy that Burnside relieved. So it was like, I guess, an ironic twist you could say. Anyway, so we relieved these guys, and then around 8:30 a box came in that sounded like a phone alarm came in for 19th Street and Irving, and that's a nice area, you never get a phone alarm from there, so we thought it was a good box.

We got on our rig. We were second due. 14 Engine was first. We were second. Ladder 3, I don't know who the second truck would be on there. 7 maybe. I don't know. And it was really nothing. We barely got off the rig and then we were just checking hydrants and stuff. Then the officer yelled there was a 1060, we tried to make ourselves 10-8 real quick. 1060 just came that a plane crashed into the Trade Center.

So we backed the rig up. We started down Irving. I remember looking up. We were walking towards P.C. Richards. At P.C. Richards I was trying to see on -- they had all these TVs in P.C. Richards and I was trying to see if they had it on TV already and they didn't. There was an interview on the Today Show.

We made the right turn on 14th Street. Then when we get down like Broadway and 5th Avenue, you can see the Trade Center, you can see the plane hit. As a matter of fact --

Q. What do you mean, you could see the plane hit?

A. You could see the aftermath of the first plane hitting.

Q. Oh, the aftermath. Okay.

A. As a matter of fact, Derek Brogan, who was with us, had said that plane was flying low when we were on 19 and Irving before it hit. He said, gee, that's the plane that hit it. I didn't notice it, but he did.

Anyway, so the box came in. We went. We were yelling at the chauffeur not to go down Broadway, to go down West Street, it would be faster. We went down West Street and we could see it in the raw. Pretty much in the rig you could just see fire from the skin. You could see the skin cut like in an angle, and I remember, we didn't know it was an airliner and I thought maybe it was an executive jet or something. I knew it was bigger than a Cessna, you know, a private plane, but I didn't think it was that big. You could

see about eight or ten stories cut in an angle. I remember saying, well, the good news is it's vented, you know, dopey fireman thing, and I remember just saying in the rig, I remember talking to Manny in front of me and saying just stay together, stay together, stay together. I was going to say it so often.

Then we got down there towards West Street. It was funny watching the people as you go down West Street watching it and stuff. So we go down West Street. We got off a block north of Vesey Street and we all got out of the rig. Our chauffeur came with us, too. We all got dressed up. Everybody was taking extra cylinders. I was control, so I got the irons and the control bag. Manny took the oxygen, which he took a little longer, but it was a good idea.

So we went in and we rushed in --

Q. You had a radio, of course, right?

A. I had a radio. I had control radio. So we rushed in to the lobby and pretty much pretty quick the guy, Gregg Atlas, who didn't make it out, from 10 Engine, came over to us and said to us, 5 Engine, you're going up to the fire. Just put water on the fire.

Somewhere along the line I heard the elevator

drop. He said, oh, shit, and just right after he said that, you heard a huge explosion, and I looked to my right and I could see the reflection, just the whole Financial Center, a reflection of flames just turn orange, basically, because it's all glass, you know, turn orange and you saw it.

Then we just start marching up the stairs. I don't know which staircase it was, B or C. I don't remember. It was around and we had to walk around an elevator shaft sort of. But we were with 10 Engine. 10 Engine was ahead. I think their officer got ahead of us because it was like trying to get into the subway train on rush hour, you know, because there's two people coming out of the door at a time and it was overly full and we're trying to rush our way in, and he might have got ahead of us. He got a good head start. We all had a hard time getting in to the stairwell and we were yelling to people as we were going in there, as we finally got in, everybody stay to your right, everybody stay to your right. We got in and we started marching up. That's the last time I saw Manny. I never saw him again. Because he was behind me, I think. I'm pretty sure.

So we start marching up and about the 4th

floor, 5th floor, one burn victim came down. I think she said the 60th something floor. I don't know. I think I heard that. I'm not sure. I don't think that's possible, but I can't be sure.

Q. Sixty?

A. Something floor.

Q. Sixtieth floor possibly?

A. It could have been possibly with the elevator. I don't know.

Q. You saw this person and you were on what; you were still on the lower floors?

A. Yes. 4th, 5th, 6th, something. Before we took a break. We took a break early at around the 8th, 10th floor. See, the problem with taking breaks was every fourth or fifth floor was the only entry point, and you've got to realize, we've got the key for every door, basically, the Halligan, but to take the time to force a door, we stopped the whole line of people behind you. So we just waited until we opened a door and go. I think we stopped at the 8th floor.

See, at that time somebody yelled, get oxygen for that lady. She was walking down. She was a burn victim. Her skin was peeling and stuff and she -- I think I seen a picture of her later in one of these

photo galleries. I can't be sure. A lady maybe in her forties or something. We think that Manny gave her oxygen because he had the oxygen with him and that he had helped. He got delayed back.

So we're marching up. I didn't know whether he did that. I don't know if he was two guys behind me or one guy behind me. I don't even remember. I wish I did.

Q. So really that's the last you ever had any contact with him?

A. Right.

Q. But he didn't notify anybody or say anything like I'm going to --

A. We never heard him.

Q. In other words, he wasn't like right directly behind you where he turned around and said that --

A. See, we weren't because when we had to get into that stairway, we were just like a mass of humanity. It wasn't like you could get in one, one, one, one. It's like the subway, you know, one person get in with 20 people behind you. Like I said, the officer from 10 was way ahead. That's what I think happened to him.

So we got on the 8th floor and we took a

blow. We were looking out the stairway for Manny, but you can only open the door so much. The doors open in and they were only going two across the stairs. The doors had nowhere to go other than against that wall, and any time you opened a door, we stopped the line. Now, if we're stopping the line from way down there, can you imagine what it was on the 90th floor just below the hit and everybody's trying to rush out and they're fucking opening doors? Every time you opened a door, you stopped the line. That's like kicking me in the head. I bring it up to people now, these doors should be sliding doors in all the newer buildings. I know you can't do it now but...

Q. It's after the fact.

So actually you're walking up the stairs. Intermittently you're stopping. So how far are you walking up and about how long does it take you to go up?

A. See, I only know that by the time we get to the 24th floor, that's when the first building collapsed, the south tower.

Q. Is that had highest point you remember getting to is the 24th floor?

A. Twenty-third or fourth. I'm not sure.

Q. Okay. And that was around the same time of the first --

A. I can tell you who was in that office. It was Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Q. The same floor as Blue Cross/Blue Shield; is that what you're saying?

A. That was the 18th floor for sure, the 19th floor. I'm not sure what was on the 24th floor. Anyway --

Q. So, in other words, you wound up stopping at that point, then, to the 24th?

A. Yes. We stopped a couple times.

Q. Go ahead.

A. We stopped. 10 we stopped and like 13th, 14th, 15th floor. Then around the 18th floor the guy Derek was saying he had chest pains, our guy. He had chest pains and we went to check him out. We got water. I remember cops opened up the water, you know, the machines and stuff.

On that floor, on the 18th floor, there was already a lady, a black lady, she had air from a respirator which was on the floor. She was being attended to and I was now looking for a respirator for Derek because Manny had gone. We thought Manny was

with that burn victim, maybe out of the building helping her or I don't know. I didn't know. We didn't know. So we went to help her. We were helping Derek.

In the meantime, I'm trying to find the rest of the guys of 10 Engine and our officer. We're trying to find them. We were supposed to be together because that whole time we're thinking we're still going up there to put the fire out. Later on we're hearing, now, after the fact, that people were saying there was an evacuation when that plane hit, the second plane hit, from the get-go. We didn't know. Because we're trying to call down to say that we had a firefighter down. At this time there were a lot of Maydays, a lot of Maydays going on for firemen with chest pains, a shitload of them.

Q. You mean that you were aware of; you heard a lot of Maydays?

A. Yes. You were like at that point, because you had your hands full yourself. You couldn't help. So I'm trying to get oxygen for our guy, but when we were looking around, I ran into the guys at 1 Truck at that point and we started forcing doors. We were looking for fucking oxygen for Derek. We didn't find any. So then I tried to call up by the fire phone, you

know, the red phone, call down. There was no answer.

Q. The fire warden's phone?

A. Yes. We tried the fire warden's phone to call down to the lobby command post. Nobody picked up. Nothing. Dead. It seemed like it was dead. I mean, we still had electricity and stuff, we still had running water.

Q. The lights were still working up there?

A. Yes. Because I remember taking a coffee pot and just throwing water over our heads like that. So we had water. There was water working in those pipes. We don't know if the standpipes worked. But I would have loved to have tested the standpipes, but it was too crowded in that stairwell to do it.

Q. You never knew.

A. I mean, we're trying to go two floors below.

Q. Of course.

A. It would be nice to know but....

Q. So you were attending to --

A. Derek. So, finally, we probably get to a land line, I called 911 and I said there's a fireman down. That was definitely the Blue Cross office. I went into a cubicle.

Q. You used a telephone?

A. Yes. I walked into the cubicle and called.

Q. You got a 911 operator?

A. Yes. Or did I call the dispatcher? You know, I don't even remember.

Q. You identified yourself as --

A. A fireman in the building. It was either the fire dispatcher or -- I might have just called the fire dispatcher. I don't remember, obviously.

Q. In other words, you don't know if you called on the 261 number or the 911 number?

A. Yes. I don't remember. I think I probably called 261. I'm sure it would be on tape if you still got it, you know, tell them we had a firefighter down. Then we tried to make our way up again. We made a push. He said I feel all right, dah-dah-dah, then he felt bad again. Then a couple Port Authority cops came up with oxygen, and as we were administering the air, we ran into a couple of guys in 9 truck who were having problems themselves.

Meanwhile, somewhere in this whole picture, I was trying to find a Chief -- now I'm going back and forth because things are popping in my head. But like on the 18th floor, after we called the dispatcher or whatever I did, I remember telling -- I was trying to

find -- like I only found a Captain and I said, is there any way we can tell the people down below to drop their roll-ups, to drop their weight, basically. We're hauling up there, but we're going to be in no shape to do anything.

Q. No. It was just like just get the manpower up there.

A. Yeah, get the manpower. We'll bring the hoses. We got the hoses this far, so let's get the guys behind us to drop their roll-ups because it's fucking -- you know, I'm not thinking there's 20 fucking floors higher either. My sense is we've got to hit the first fire we see and that's it. I remember doing that. I don't remember who I told it to. I remember the guy had a mustache, but I didn't see his picture or anything. I think he's a Captain somewhere.

There was something else that I wanted to say. We marched up to the 23rd, 24th floor, like I said, and the Port Authority cops came and they gave Derek oxygen, and somewhere during this thing there was a huge rumbling and we were about to mount up there -- oh, I know what I wanted to say.

On the 18th floor, when I ran back into the

guys at 10 Engine and they were resting and they were throwing water on themselves and trying to cool off and we were doing the same thing, I asked them where their officer was. They didn't know. So they called him on the radio, Gregg Atlas, and they said to him, 10, 10, backup, or 10 control to 10, whoever the control kid was, and they found him. He was on the 43rd or 46th floor. So he was 23 floors ahead of us. But right there, when he got the initial break-in to that stairwell, that was like enough where he probably had a clear path, you know, he's a little lighter so he went faster.

Q. He made it that much faster than you guys?

A. Yes.

Q. Plus he's not carrying any additional weight.

A. So I wanted to bring that up. I'm sure they do, too. They did. They're now being interviewed. But he was 23 floors ahead of us at the time. Well, it was on the 18th floor when we made that call.

Q. So you recall him mentioning that he was --

A. I was next to the guy when he called.

Q. He actually called on the radio?

A. Yes.

Q. And he actually made contact with him; he said he's on the 40-something floor?

A. 43rd or 46th floor. We said, oh, shit, he's way ahead of us. But he never asked us where we were. He must have had his hands full, too.

Q. I'm surprised you were able to get through that many floors on the radio.

A. Yes. We didn't think of that. We fucking didn't think of that shit. I mean, you're hearing Maydays like crazy.

So now I get back to we're on the 23rd, 24th floor, we're drinking water, we're getting loaded up again to go back up, we're taking our roll-ups again because we didn't hear nothing about no this is an evacuation. We still don't know, of course, and we're trying to stay together with 10. We're like making more and more of an effort to stay together because it's very hard.

Then it was like a fucking rumbling. It was like an earthquake. It was like worse and worse. All the windows blew in. It got real dark.

Q. The floor you were on, the windows blew in?

A. Yes. I think so.

Q. Wow. So, in other words, they gave way?

A. I think. I think. I remember diving into the core of the building by the elevators. I fucking forgot my mask, dove in, just diving. It was like an earthquake. It was shaking and then the lights went out and it got shitty in there. We all made it back in the stairway, all got out -- I mean, our officer, Lieutenant Bohack, said that's it, we're going out. That's it, we're out of here. He made the call. I don't know if he heard it on the radio or not. I didn't hear it. He said, we're getting out of here. I found my mask. Actually, Eddie Mecner gave it to me. He was the chauffeur who came up with us. We started our way down and there were still civilians coming down but less, not as thick.

Q. There were still people coming?

A. Yes. But they weren't like from offices. Some of them looked like custodians and stuff of some sort, and I started sharing my mask with them going down the stairs. We just turned the regular air on because at first, the first guy put it on didn't take a breath, so I just turned the thing on and give it to him. Every time we hit a landing, I gave him a quick hit, a couple, three, four people, I gave them quick hits on the way down. It was dark. You could only see

the reflector lights. My flashlight died. It always dies when you need it.

We start our way down. We start our way down and the rest of the company had switched stairs at some point and I didn't know that because I was lagging behind with those civilians, I guess. I didn't hear them switch and I kept going down the same staircase. I don't know if it was A, B, C.

Q. What did they switch?

A. They switched staircases.

Q. They switched staircases?

A. Somebody told one of the guys like on the fourth floor that it was locked and you can't get out, so they switched. But I didn't know that. I guess he had bad information or maybe I did switch and didn't even know. I don't even remember.

So I kept on going down and then I hit the bottom of the staircase where there's like some sort of a custodian locker area, and there were two guys from 20 Truck there that were leading the people out. I forget the name of the black guy and some guy -- the guy I told you that Burnside relieved, that guy. I forgot his name now. I know the faces in my head.

So they led us out and we actually went

through this custodian area, the lockers and stuff like that, and we ended up not on the lobby level but the level above, like that mezzanine level. We ended up there and there were doors going out into that -- not the concourse level, I guess, that's the lower level, but the outside level, the park area level on Vesey Street. Remember where they used to have the concerts and that globe thing and the fountains?

Q. This is outdoors now?

A. No, I'm not outdoors yet, but that's where it led to.

Q. That's where it leads to?

A. Right.

Q. Because you're actually like --

A. In the lobby but on the mezzanine.

Q. So from that stairway you were coming down, you actually wound up in the custodial locker area?

A. Yes.

Q. Not directly into it but --

A. Yes. We went right by it. We went right in it. I walked right through it.

Q. Really?

A. There were lockers. I think it was a custodial locker area. I think. Then I got there and

there was a cop at the door, but he was off duty. I remember talking with him later. He was putting his retirement papers in or vacation papers in or something like that. I can't remember.

There was a guy, he was in one of the smaller buildings, 4 or 5 World Trade Center, he's under the overhang of that and he was looking up, and he was looking up because bodies were jumping and he was giving us the go, okay, when to let people out to go, and at that point we started letting the civilians out and they ran. They got led out. There was a guy, he was a lookout, and he looked out and, I mean, this is like -- it must have took 15 minutes to get down those stairs, I guess. Maybe. I don't know. I have no idea how long I was out there.

A Chief came over to me and ordered me to help, you know, help them get back. All right. He was a black guy and I've never seen him before. I have no idea who the hell he is. I still don't know. So he ordered us to stay there and help. So I was helping, we were letting people out, they were coming down and coming down, and it was not a steady stream, but it was like three here, three there, like three then a minute break. I remember looking down the lobby and seeing

like companies coming in and coming out. I could see them marching through the lobbies. I didn't know who they were.

Then it was the last batch. We were --

Q. So you're observing this from an upper level?

A. Yes. But you could see. I just saw them marching by like briefly. I don't remember anybody I know and stuff like that.

Q. Approximately what time do you think this is?

A. This is ten minutes before the collapse. And nobody, you know, like nobody -- at that point I did not know the first building collapsed still. Didn't know. We thought it was a missile attack or something like that. We thought we were under attack. They didn't have any idea that this building could collapse. I didn't hear nothing. As a matter of fact, the radio traffic I heard after the first building collapsed, I remember distinctively somebody yelling looking for Chief Barbera, yelling for Chief Barbera, where are you, something like that. I heard a Mayday for a fireman down. I thought I heard Ladder 3 give a Mayday, either it was for a fireman with chest pains or maybe the collapse. I'm not sure. It could be something I heard about now and I'm still thinking in

my memory, you know? I don't know. Anyway, I didn't know that first building collapsed.

Q. You didn't know.

A. No. Didn't hear no evacuation, didn't hear nothing over the PA system. So the Chief told us stay, and then there was a guy, some Port Authority emergency service cops, an ESU cop, and a guy from Squad 18, Pat Kelly, they had just brought a heart attack victim down on a chair, a heavy guy, and had a hard time carrying him through, and he was the last guy that they got out. So they had a hard time with all the debris down. They were rolling him, you know, once they got him down on the lobby. But once they got outside the doors and they had the go-ahead, they had a hard time getting him through the debris because they couldn't roll him all the way and they had to pick him up and stuff like that.

Then me and the other guy, we looked and there was nobody else coming. For some reason we decided to leave. I don't know why. We leave. I remember seeing as I got to the overhang on the other end of the smaller buildings and --

Q. This is now you're exiting the building?

A. Exiting the building.

Q. Do you remember what exit, what door it led out to?

A. That was the lobby on whatever area that -- what kind of area was that? I'll tell you what it led to.

Q. Does it go directly out to West Street?

A. No. It goes to Vesey Street. On Vesey Street there's a staircase and escalators. That's where it led to. So on the overhang I remember seeing a frigging Bomb Squad cop and I asked him, what the hell blew up? He goes, I don't know. Oh, shit. Fucking he don't know.

So I ended up going down there, and then between the two small buildings there's an opening, a space, and then I heard rumbling again right as I was in that space, me and the Port Authority cops, the ESU cop, the Bomb Squad cop, I guess, we heard the rumble. We all ducked into the overhang of, I guess, 5 World Trade Center, where the staircase was. We ducked in there and everything got dark. I mean, it was like a rumble and it was like another earthquake again. I just dove into by the window between two metal bars, got down like that. I had my mask. I should have put my mask on at that point. I didn't think of it.

Q. It's still strapped to your back, your mask.

A. Yes. But never on my face because it was a sunny day, clear as a bell.

Q. But things are still on your back, though.

A. Yes.

Q. This is actually on Vesey?

A. That staircase is on Vesey. I got a picture at home of it. It's an outside staircase.

Q. It's on the opposite side of the street of Vesey?

A. No. It's on the same side.

Q. It's on the Trade Center side?

A. Yes, with the escalators and stuff.

Q. This is where you're jumping into right now?

A. Yes. I jumped into that and all the dirt came in your face, it got real black and dark, couldn't see, and all the dirt, it was just like you had your mouth closed but it like forced its way in, there was so much pressure. I started gagging on it and then I started choking. I thought that was it, you know, and then here we go, I mean, here we go. And it stopped. It got quiet. It just stopped right before I was ready to fricking -- I mean, I was eating the crap. It got dark and we stayed there and I remember the cop behind

me goes, this is the second time it happened to me, I think it was a Port Authority cop, the second time it happened to me, and we were standing there, like we just waited until it lifted.

Q. You were holed together there for a little while? How long were you there for?

A. I don't know. Five minutes, ten minutes. I don't know.

Q. It was still totally dark.

A. Yes. Then it like lifted and we went down the stairs and kind of like you dug yourself out a little bit. It's not much dirt but --

Q. What do you mean, you went down the stairs? You still were not at sidewalk level at this point?

A. No.

Q. This is still taking place where you were huddled on the --

A. We're on top of the staircase. Top of the staircase.

Q. So when everything cleared away --

A. We went down the stairs.

Q. Was it accessible to move through the way you were going?

A. Yes. We just walked down the stairs.

Q. It was cluttered with debris?

A. Yes.

Q. But it's not like any of the people that you were next to or near were trapped?

A. No, nothing. We didn't hit a thing. Like I said, I didn't know that building collapsed then either. That never went in my head. The Trade Center, shit, you didn't think of it. You couldn't tell if you looked up. There was nothing to look up to. It was black. If I had looked up, I still wouldn't have seen it. I wouldn't have known.

Let's go, I know the way out, one of the cops said, and you came out and you were on Vesey Street and all you see was cars on fire all over the place. I was like shook up, I guess. I went down Vesey Street. We went down Vesey Street and I hear this guy screaming the ESU truck is going to blow because they were worried about the ammo, I guess.

Q. Oh, really?

A. It's going to blow, get out of here. I went down to is it Murray Street? It started clearing up around there.

Q. This is walking on what street, West Street now, most likely?

A. No. Washington.

Q. You were walking down Washington?

A. Yes.

Q. Toward Murray?

A. Yes. No, Greenwich. It's Greenwich Street.

Q. So you were walking north on Greenwich Street?

A. You know what? I don't know about that. I can't tell on this map.

Q. Okay.

A. Murray. I ended up on Murray, going down Greenwich.

Q. So you were with the cop?

A. Yes.

Q. Anybody else from 5 Engine that was --

A. No. I lost them early. I lost them. I was alone.

Q. And those two guys from 20 Truck?

A. They had left beforehand. I was like the last guy leaving. Some guys here think I'm the last guy out, but I guess those guys from 6 Truck were.

Q. Knowing how people split up at that particular incident, I mean, no one company remained intact totally. So you were with nobody from 5 Engine

and then nobody recognizable from any of the surrounding companies when it actually collapsed?

A. As a matter of fact, going down the stairs, I heard my officer call me on the radio. He called me by name and I tried to call him back and I couldn't get through. I tried and I tried and I couldn't get through. It was just, you know, there were 500 guys.

Q. As you were coming down the stairs?

A. Yes. I guess when he thought he lost me, which he did. So anyway, I went down Warren Street. I remember some black guy giving me water or something and there was a bar to the left going towards West Street and the guy is like go in here. So I went in there and I got like water or something to drink and from there I called my wife to tell her I got out. It was the Brady Bunch Tavern.

Q. That you were safe and that you made it out of there?

A. Yes. Because they didn't know, you know. I talked to her, then left there. You wouldn't believe that the bar was packed. There were people there in the bar drinking. I figured there was like three guys there. I don't know.

Q. They probably didn't know what was happening

themselves either at that point.

A. I didn't even look at the TV or anything like that.

Q. So, unfortunately, you lost contact with them. Any significant things other than what we discussed, anything that's significant that you think you need to add?

A. No.

Q. Like people that you had seen?

A. I saw Timmy McSweeney from 3 Truck in the lobby on the way up. Like I said, I saw that guy, Gregg Atlas. I remember that guy, Gregg Atlas.

Q. He was also in the lobby?

A. Atlas was the officer from 10 Engine who died.

Q. That's the person that you had the last --

A. That's the guy who talked on the radio.

Q. -- radio contact with him?

A. Yes.

Q. And he said he was approximately --

A. Twenty-three floors ahead of us.

Q. Up on the 40th something floor, right?

A. Yes. So he was way ahead of us. McSweeney was the only guy I saw from 3 Truck, but he just walked

by. I didn't really say nothing to him. I'm good friends with him. I didn't see guys who I know around here at 33. I remember seeing 39 Engine going past us at one point when we had the problem with Derek, and I was telling the guys, take your time, take a blow. I remember telling that to the kid. I think they got out. Somebody said to me they were trapped below 6 Truck. I didn't know that story. There's so many it's ridiculous.

Q. There's some good stories that come out of this also, you know, people that wound up being trapped for a little while and then they wound up coming out of it alive.

A. I mean, we got more people out just staying there. Also, while I was there in the lobby, the guy who was looking up when the bodies were jumping, the bodies would jump and you'd hear a huge explosion and you'd see just blood spatter on the windows. It was like gruesome. It was bad.

Anyway, we went down Warren Street and we ran into the guy we saw before, Richie Carletti. I ran into him.

Q. This is later on. This is after you had left the bar.

A. Yes.

Q. Exactly. So we know you took a rest over there in the bar area.

A. Right. I was looking for my company and trying to make contact with them.

Q. The lighting had died out early on, like after that first collapse.

A. There was no light.

Q. So on the way down there was no lighting in that stairway at all.

A. No. Only just the reflective black paint, that's it.

Q. Like you say, your flashlight went dead?

A. Yes. Like it always does when you need it.

So I went down Warren Street. I was glad to see Richie. He was going to clean me up, but he said he saw 5 Engine and at that time I thought Manny was all right.

Q. Like you said, the last you knew of him he was carrying oxygen into the building in addition to his roll-up I would imagine?

A. Yes.

Q. Carrying oxygen and an extra cylinder maybe?

A. We were all like frigging pack mules.

Q. Like carrying whatever you could at that point.

A. It's like, in hindsight, maybe it wasn't the greatest idea in the world. But when we left the rig, we didn't know the elevator was out.

Q. How we depend on the elevators normally.

A. We're not designed to walk that many floors.

Q. No?

A. I mean, this gear is designed for five stories of walk-up, not 90.

Q. Exactly.

A. What can be designed for 90 stories of walk-up? There should be a policy. I mean, if we've got a 20-story walk-up like we had at the Waterside. We had the Waterside fire in April and the elevators went bad. We made it up there first due, so it was all right for us, but the companies that came behind us had to walk 24 stories and they're shot.

Q. Of course. You're totally exhausted. Your legs start to give out at that point.

A. Not only that. The worst part is, you keep on talking about the weight, but the worst part is you're in a frigging oven. There's nowhere for the heat to go. You'll never run around a block in a coat,

you know?

Q. I know. Our bodies are giving off a lot of heat, you're working, your metabolism is working.

A. That's why there should be like, if there is a huge calamity, there should be some sort of like every other company drop their roll-ups, like lighten the load or something like that, because it's just -- some sort of system because, you know, we do depend on the elevators.

Q. True.

A. If the elevators aren't going, we have no other plan.

Q. Absolutely not.

A. So, I mean, that's what I'm trying to bring up. I don't know who to talk to.

Q. And you knew early on that the elevators were not --

A. I said, oh, shit. It maybe saved my life. It might have saved my life, the elevators being out.

Q. Right. But you knew 10 Engine had said that we're going to have to take the stairs after you teamed up with them.

A. Right. But I think it may have saved my life. We went up there to put a fire out, but then

again, who knows, if we put water on it, it would have done anything. You don't know.

Q. You wouldn't have maybe know how close you wouldn't have gotten. I mean, all good intention, but you don't realize how close you would have gotten.

A. We don't know.

Q. All right.

A. Also, then, when I got up on Warren Street --

Q. Up until that point, then, when --

A. I remember going on West Street, I'm hearing calling for 33 Engine on the radio. I thought they were all right. I was shocked.

Q. This is at what point you heard them on the radio?

A. I didn't hear them on the radio. I heard them calling for 33 Engine. I thought they answered, but it wasn't them, when I was on West.

Q. This is, again, later on, after the collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. We're going to concentrate up until that point then.

A. All right. I'm going to tell the whole story.

Q. That's okay.

A. I ended up in the hospital twice that day.

Q. No, that's all right. But the thing is we're just trying to get back to the collapse. That's all right.

A. I ended up in the hospital twice, but I never put my name down or nothing.

Q. You were probably in a state of shock of what had happened.

A. That, too. And I felt like I wasn't that hurt, so I thought there'd be so many more people coming and I wanted to get the hell out of the way.

Q. More serious injured.

A. Yes.

Q. Even though you might have been in shock and upset and injured.

A. I didn't want them wasting their time.

Q. No. You would think serious injuries are going to come out of this.

A. Not enough, I guess.

Q. All right. So we'll take this as -- unless there's something else really significant you want to put into this.

A. Also, when I came in that morning, Lieutenant Paul Mitchell was here. He was relieved by

Bohack. He was sitting at the door. He was leaving.

Q. He was the officer that worked the night before in 5 Engine?

A. Apparently. I don't know what happened to him.

Q. He was also amongst the missing people?

A. Yes.

Q. He was working here?

A. Right.

Q. He already left, though?

A. I don't know. He was in the midst of leaving when we got the run.

Q. But you had gotten that run before this whole thing.

A. Like 8:30, yes. So I don't know.

Q. All right.

A. I'd just like to make the points like I was just making.

Q. Which is good.

A. The stairways, there weren't enough stairways. I don't know what the hell the papers were talking about, how they were big enough. They say they were more than big enough for regulation. To me that's ridiculous.

Q. Not with the amount of people that were in that building, the amount of people that were trying to come down. It was very tight.

A. No.

Q. Actually, you're going up single file --

A. Single file.

Q. -- and they're coming down single file, and it's not continuous; you're pausing as you're going up, right?

A. Yes. It's not like continuous. It's like slow.

Q. And like you say, trying to open up doors, if anybody tried to open up the door --

A. You stopped the flow. That's why there wasn't enough stairs. Then you find out later it was truss construction. Like, oh, shit. I didn't know. See, if there is ever a plane that did that again or anything of that magnitude and we really can't put that fire out and we decide early the only thing we could do is facilitate the self-evacuation, and like any person coming down, if there's one person in the stairs, an old lady, a guy who is a little bit too big or whatever, I'm being politically correct, and they'll clog the whole stairs and it's not even full and it's

clogging.

Q. He's hindering other people from coming down.

A. If we somehow just take that guy and move him along or that lady and you just move them along quicker, we are saving more people up there. I mean, on a regular high-rise fire, that's not true. We just go up there, we put the fire out the best way we can. But if we ever have a situation like that, if we just get in there and help the self-evacuation as quick as we can, that would save more lives.

Q. It would make more of an impact.

A. Yes. Even though they say we did and all that.

Q. There probably could have been more people that we could have gotten out of this thing.

A. Yes. I mean, it's not Monday morning quarterbacking, it's learning from it, because it's just something nobody ever dealt with.

Q. No, of course not. You're learning from experience.

A. I just wish, you know, I don't know how they could do this in a liable -- I don't know what goes into this, but it would help. That's my opinion, if

anybody wants it.

Q. Well, it's good to mention, right?

A. Yes. I wanted to make sure -- I really didn't want to do the interview, but I wanted to make sure those points got out. What I see in the paper, I heard nothing about evacuation on the radio. Nothing.

Q. I'll tell you, the way the building construction is designed to evacuate only from the floor where the incident is taking place down to a couple floors below where it is, not your entire building is being evacuated, I mean, you're clogging up the stairways to a point where people can't safely make it down, unless -- you know, we're talking about hours here. We're not talking about making it down very quickly.

A. Yes. I could only imagine what happened on the floors below the fire, what clogging went on there.

Q. Right.

A. The building is on fire. You can't do nothing about who's already gone.

Q. No. We have no control over the building.

A. We should. Did you see this? You see this? You open this door, the people in here were stopped, and these guys are pushing --

Q. Trying to make it --

(Interview ends abruptly.)

File No. 9110421

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN AMATO

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 2, '02. The time is 1330 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter third grade John Amato, Engine 68. We're in the quarters of Engine 68. There's nobody else in this room at this time. The interview concerns the events of September 11th. What follows is the interview.

A. We got the call early that morning to go to 35 Engine. We got down to 35 Engine. We mucked it up with a bunch of other companies. We took some equipment from 35 Engine. Then we got the call to go down to the World Trade Center.

As we were driving down to the World Trade Center -- actually we took a little detour because a couple of -- I think 64 Engine was leading us. We didn't exactly know how to get down there, which delayed us a little bit, thank God.

When we got down there, we parked I'd say maybe 10 blocks, 10 to 12 blocks away from the World Trade Center. We gathered all the

equipment, the rollups, the standpipe kit, and we started walking down the West Side Highway.

As we were walking down -- actually as we were driving down, we heard that the first building had collapsed, which is the south tower?

Q. The south tower collapsed first.

A. The south tower collapsed first. We didn't know what kind of collapse it was. We thought it was a partial collapse. We thought it was maybe two floors pancaking.

At that point we were walking towards the building. We still didn't know it was a total collapse. As we get closer and closer, we notice that the smoke is clearing. We don't see the south tower. Now we're starting to talk to each other, started to actually worry what's in for us next.

As we approached Chambers Street, kept walking, still no one had told us about the total collapse. We get down to about Barclay and Vesey Street, which is a block away from the overpass, the bridge overpass that goes across the West Side Highway.

All you hear is a rumbling in the

street. It sounded like an earthquake. When I was a younger kid, I was in an earthquake and it felt like the same exact feeling. I looked, and I could see the antenna on the top of the roof coming straight down.

We all turned and just threw our rollups down and started running as fast as we could. I took about five steps, I turned back to look behind me, and the debris was on my heels. Guys were just scrambling through the streets. Finally the debris overcame us, and you couldn't see anymore. It was like pitch-black, total darkness.

I kind of ran into a building. I hit the building. One of the gentlemen working in the building I think I see was an engineer pulled me over towards the entrance. I went into the entrance. You couldn't see. It was dark as night.

Finally a few minutes went by, about four or five minutes went by, it started clearing, and we started looking for members of Engine 68 as well as all the other engines that had driven down with us.

We found everyone. We were told to stay at Chambers Street until further notice.

That's about it.

Q. That's about it? So you stayed at Chambers Street?

A. We stayed at Chambers Street. They didn't give us permission to go back in there, since we had already been involved with the collapse.

Q. So you stayed there for some period of time at Chambers, the staging area?

A. The staging area, yeah.

Q. And then from there you left? You took your rig back to 68 at some point?

A. Oh, yeah, I'd say about 11 p.m. that night.

Q. Wow.

A. Yeah, we stayed there the whole day.

Q. The whole day, and they never put you work?

A. No.

Q. Were there a lot of companies at the staging area?

A. There were a lot of companies there.

They just didn't want anyone involved with the immediate collapse back in there. That was their idea. Since we were on paper as one of the companies, they didn't want us to go.

Q. You really didn't interact with any other companies or anything like that? You were walking in, it started to collapse, you ran out, wound up at the staging area eventually, and that's about it.

Is everybody from 68 okay?

A. Yeah.

Q. Everybody came back?

A. Yes. We had minor injuries from running into, not being able to see. We did have some minor injuries, including myself.

CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. It's 1336 hours. This concludes the interview with Fireman Amato. I thank him for the interview, and that's the end.

File No. 9110422

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL QUINN

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2028 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Paul Quinn of Engine 55. We're at the quarters of Engine 55. Also Chief O'Donnell from the Safety Battalion is in the room at this time. What follows is the interview.

Q. Can you just start where you were when you got the run.

A. Okay. We were at a box on -- I had my rig parked on Church and Canal Street for I think it was either a gas leak or an odor of gas. I don't know what time that came in. It came in before the run, obviously, for the Trade Center.

I guess the chief was getting ready to let us go, and we heard a big bang. I thought it was -- first, because it was a run for either a gas odor or a leak, that maybe something exploded in the street.

The officer looked out, my officer, and he saw the tower. A couple floors looked like they were all aflame, one floor or whatever. So

the chief told us to go down there. He let I guess all the companies go to the Trade Center.

We got down there. The officer told me -- when we got there, he said, "Help 7 Engine stretch to the standpipe. See if you can find a hydrant. See if you can get water." So I did that. I started to help 7 Engine's chauffeur. I put my bunker gear on and stuff.

I looked up, and somebody said there was an airplane. So I thought, okay, it was a small Cessna or something like that that hit the building. I'm looking up and I say, okay, there's a lot of fire, but it's vented. There's going to be a couple of hose lines we're going to need to do this.

So I helped 7 Engine. There was a guy in the street, and there was a civilian with him and another fireman. We put him in a stokes basket and brought him over to an ambulance on the southbound side of West Street, brought him over the median and put him in an ambulance.

I went back to work. I was helping him and stretching lines. My time frame is all off. I can't put anything into chronological order.

Q. Okay.

A. I got a line to my rig to 10 Engine, then hooked up into one of the buildings, and just the bodies were falling. It was a mess. Guys were coming off rigs.

As I said, companies were coming in. I can't tell you what companies. I know I saw -- guys were taking masks. The guys were coming in. Extra guys were coming in off the rigs, coming in more than they were assigned with. They were getting masks from different rigs, I guess. One of the guys took one of the masks and the other guy got another mask from the rig.

Q. Listen, this is not mandatory. If this is too difficult, just tell me. I'm not here to question you at all.

A. Yeah, I know.

Q. You don't have to do this. You can decline this. I'm not ordering you to do this.

A. Yeah.

Q. I feel for your position. If you find it too difficult, just tell me and we'll stop and we'll just call it a day. You don't have to do this.

A. Yeah, I know, I know.

You're asking me what units showed up.

Q. If you remember.

A. I think that I saw 5 Truck. I'm not sure. I think I remember seeing one of the guys. I said, "Do you have a mask?" Now I'm looking for masks and stuff like this.

I was by the rig, and somebody said the building's starting to come down, take off. So I started to run, and the north overpass, the pedestrian, I was kind of like there, and I got behind that or in front of one of the rigs. I was either going to go underneath it or -- I got, I guess, near the front grill, the front bumper.

I stayed there until the -- it felt like a damn tornado. It was black for a long time. I was near the median, so I kind of made my way north. I had the dust and the soot and swallowing the debris, whatever you want to call it. My eyes hurt bad. My eyes were bad. I felt like I was closing them on sand paper, kind of.

Then the other guy, Bobby, caught me. He kind of saw me. Made it to another ambulance and they gave me oxygen and I guess water and

stuff like that. Then they told us we had to evacuate that because the second building was going to come down.

So I got out of there and I'm walking around. I'm trying to find -- I went one way -- I don't know where this ambulance was. I get out of there. It was a M.E.R.V. It had a ramp. You didn't step up on it. So I get out of there, and I'm walking around, "Where should we go?" or something like that. So somebody said, "No, go this way." So they pushed, and I guess I just followed the rest of the crowd or whatever. The second tower started to come down, I guess the north tower at that time.

We made it into a construction booth, a construction trailer. Again it turned dark. It turned black. I was going to go behind that. But I was kind of like in the middle of a crowd with a bunch of cops and firemen. I made it into this construction trailer, and I looked out the window. Again, it was black.

I tell you, my time and the sequence is all off. I went up to where the command post -- I was going to go outside and see if I could do

anything, but my eyes, they were hurting, they were burning. So every time I'd go out -- I'm useless if I try to go out and do something here. So I guess after a while -- my time is all off.

I made it up to the command post, and I saw somebody. I started losing it. I eventually made it to Beekman Downtown Hospital, and my brother found me. Later on that afternoon we came back here.

Q. Your brother's name is John?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. That's good?

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with Firefighter Paul Quinn. The time is now 2036 hours.

File No. 9110423

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT SIRAGUSA

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2041 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview at this time with Fireman First Grade Robert Siragusa, Engine Company 55. We're in the office of Engine 55. Also in the room is Chief O'Donnell from the Safety Battalion. What follows is the interview.

A. I was at the firehouse approximately 8:15 that morning. We were waiting for the company to return to quarters. They were out on a run previous before we got in. Then as we were waiting -- actually from the television we found out that a plane had hit the Trade Center.

We then proceeded probably a little after 9 -- yeah, I guess it was around 9:15. We knew obviously the company wasn't coming back any time soon. So I and two members from the night crew that worked the previous night that were relieved already decided we were going to get in one of the private cars and go down to the site.

As we were proceeding to the site, we had word on the news, on the car radio, that a

second plane had hit the Trade Center en route. We found out that that had happened. We approximately arrived at the Trade Center complex about five minutes after the second plane had hit.

At this time we had had our bunker gear with us, and we had proceeded to the command post on West Street, which we mainly remained there for most of the next 20 minutes. We had debated on whether we should go into the building and help out, look for our company, but we decided probably not to because we had no SCPA, we had no gear, we had no radios and nobody would know where we were if we got lost or split up.

So we basically stayed in the street, thinking that sooner or later we would get up there to relieve or help the company, whoever needed help.

We did help stretch some lines in front of the building with the engine companies, helping the chauffeurs in the street. As we did, debris was flying out the windows. Bodies were flying out the windows. It was getting pretty bad in front of the building.

A couple minutes later one of the chiefs on the scene -- I don't remember who it was -- ordered all personnel in the street to remove themselves across West Street, which is basically where we stood on West Street directly across from One World Trade Center for the next couple of minutes, watching the insanity.

Probably a couple minutes after that I think -- what time did the first building come down? I don't even remember. Whatever it was, 9:20 or 9:40 or something.

Q. 9:55 south tower collapses, 9:55.

A. That was the first one. Okay.

So then we basically remained at the command post along with a lot of other firemen.

Q. At the time that the south tower came down, you guys stayed there? Were you enveloped in the cloud?

A. Actually as we heard a radio transmission of "Collapse, collapse, collapse," that's when everybody just went their own way. I looked up and I saw the top couple of floors starting to come down. So I took off into the building directly across from the World Trade

Center, which was --

Q. On the west side of West Street?

A. West side of West Street, which was probably the World Financial Center, it was called. We ran in there, a few of us, about 10, 12 guys. We ran into the building, ran about 50 yards to the rear of the building and dove behind a wall. Then we heard the tremendous roar and collapse of the first tower coming down.

We were pretty much safe from the dust cloud because most of the windows stayed intact. Only a few windows broke. So we pretty much survived that pretty well.

Immediately after the building came down, we then came back out to the front of the building in front of West Street and saw the collapse.

At that time there was a couple of guys really in bad shape in front of the building, guys that probably didn't get far enough away, that were kind of staggering in front of the building.

So what I did is I just grabbed a few of those guys. As a matter of fact, two of them,

the chauffeur from 24 Engine and the chauffeur from 55, who was working the night tour, who I was supposed to relieve on the day tour, they were in pretty bad shape.

They were pretty much in shock. They didn't know what happened. They were incoherent. I kind of just walked them a few blocks north to an ambulance to get them checked out, because I didn't know if they were hurt seriously or not.

After I made sure they were okay, got them in the ambulance, I proceeded back down West Street to the front of the Trade Center. There were numerous burning materials. There were car fires. We proceeded to try to extinguish some of them, but there was a big problem with the water. There was very low water pressure. We did have a problem with that, but we did the best we could trying to extinguish the perimeter fires all around the area.

Like I said, some guys did go back right into the collapse area, but I stayed back and did that. As we were doing that, 30 seconds, 30 minutes later, whatever it was, there was another transmission, probably a last-minute

thing. I heard, "Collapse, collapse" again. This time the north tower started to fall.

I took off running again. This time I ran west down towards the water on Vesey Street, and this time we wound up in the park over there by Battery City, I believe it is, or by the waterfront, as the second tower collapsed. The second time it was down and was really insane. There was a lot of firemen down at that end.

Everybody was kind of pretty much in shock at that time. We didn't know what the hell was going on or what to do. So we regrouped with a bunch of firemen. With a bunch of guys we regrouped. We just came back to the front of the building again. This time it was a bigger mess than it was the first time.

A lot of the guys just went right to work after that. They just got right back in that rubble, started looking for people. Some guys just kind of retreated and just sat down and they were in shock, just gave up and just sat there. Some guys were just walking around in a daze.

Q. They didn't believe it.

Were they pulling people off the pile? Did you see any of that?

A. Not much, no.

Q. After a collapse there's supposed to be surface victims.

A. Right.

Q. But it doesn't seem like there were any surface victims.

A. No, the only surface victims, as you know, were probably Ladder Company 6 and one or two other people, I think. But that was basically it. Everybody was pretty much buried in there.

It was just an eerie silence after that. It was an eerie silence, no radio transmissions, nothing. All you heard was Ladder 6 giving their mayday. Everybody kind of centered their attention on getting those guys out.

That's what we basically did. We continued to put out the perimeter fires.

Q. At some point did somebody take charge? Were there any chiefs around or any officers that said, okay, we're going to break into teams? Did

you get any sense of that?

A. Everybody was so widely scattered. I think Chief Blaich is probably the only guy I really heard on the radio try to get something going, yeah. Basically, as I said, the first concern was to find Ladder 6. He kind of organized everybody, let's find out where they are, let's try to get them out.

They were in the south tower, the second stairwell. Nobody knew exactly where that was, because there was nothing left.

Q. So Blaich was sending teams of guys to go try to kind Ladder 6 in whatever stairwell?

A. Right, right. They were trying to get into the rubble area.

Then basically after that the fire boats came in, because we had no water. So basically most of the day and the next couple of hours I was stretching line from the fire boat. I teamed up with a bunch of guys getting water from the fire boat in front of the Trade Center.

Basically that's what I was doing for the rest of the day, just stretching a couple lines back and forth, from out here, stretching

up Vesey in front of the building to the manifolds.

That was basically what the day was about. I don't know if I can get into any detail than that.

Q. That's okay.

How did you finish up the day? You worked there until 10:00 at night, you said?

A. Just about 9:00, when I teamed up with my company. We finally teamed up, because there was only three of us there. Basically after that we kind after ran into each other about 8:30, 9, and went back to the firehouse about 10.

But the guy you just interviewed, Paul, he was really in front of the building. He was the chauffeur that day.

Q. Yeah, he was saying.

A. He really got in there. He walked out without a scratch. I think he dove under one of the pedestrian bridges here. He's a lucky man.

Q. He told me.

A. Yeah, yeah, he was a lucky man.

Basically that's what the day was all about. Do you have any other questions?

Q. I'm trying to think.

How long would you say, like, the first building collapses until it cleared up, until you could see what the lay of the land was?

A. But most of the dust cloud went north and south, for some reason. Not much came west, for some reason -- I don't know -- because the buildings were there. They had the big tall buildings across from West Street. But most of the dust went, like I said, north and south.

So where I was, it cleared up pretty quickly. But to tell you how long it took to clear, I would say it was pretty quick, minutes.

Q. Minutes?

A. Minutes, I think.

Q. And some guys jumped on the pile. They had an instinct or the wherewithal to try to jump on the pile.

A. I believe some of them, yes. Some guys did jump up on the pile, jumped onto the mezzanine in front of the World Trade Center. There was like a mezzanine. Other guys went up there to look around. They had a tower ladder right there.

Q. Was there a lot of fire in the Trade Center collapse area and stuff at this time?

A. No. Basically there was a fire -- in the part of the Trade Center that was standing, the mezzanine area -- one of the towers? It must have been. There was like about six or seven stories left. I don't know if that was -- was it Eight World Trade, maybe?

Q. Yes.

A. I think it was Eight World Trade, which --

Q. That was burning; right?

A. That was burning.

Q. That's what caused the fire in that.

A. That was definitely burning. There was a lot of perimeter fires, rubbish and cars.

Q. Cars, yeah.

A. And of course there was smoke coming out but no active flame, not that I noticed anyhow. I don't remember.

Q. Okay. About it?

A. That's about it.

Q. Good. Okay.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the

interview. I thank Firefighter Siragusa for the interview. The time is now 2053 hours

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File No. 9110424

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE METZGER

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2058 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Pete Metzger, fireman fourth, Engine 55, regarding the events of September 11th. Also in the room is Battalion Chief O'Donnell of the Safety Battalion. What follows now is the interview with Fireman Metzger.

A. On the morning of September 11th I got relieved about 8:30. Engine 55 had a run for a gas leak on the west side. From there 55 went to the towers. Me, Pat Schuppel and Fireman Siragusa made our way to the World Trade Center after the second plane hit the towers.

55 was parked in front of the north tower. I went there and grabbed my helmet, which I left on the rig. An older chief kind of motioned us all across the street on the west side, West Street, to the command post, where we waited and tried to get into the building.

We were there probably 15 minutes before the first one came down. As it came down,

we all went underneath the building right there. I'm not sure what building it was. It might be --

Q. It's on the west side of West Street, the building?

A. On West Street. I guess it was the Merrill Lynch building. I think it was probably the Merrill Lynch building has an underground parking garage. Everyone that was at the command post went under that.

I came back, searched that area, the underground parking garage, went up, saw a little of the command post. I was with a captain. I don't know who it was. He said, "Let's go on out the back." As we made our way out the back, which is in the little green area near the harbor --

Q. Right.

A. -- the second tower came down.

I hooked up with Pat Schuppel, who I started with. Probably for a couple minutes we hustled. We just regrouped back there on the water. Then we went back to the towers, where we started putting out car fires and whatnot.

Some guys needed help up on the promenade deck, the second floor of I guess it's the customs building or one of these buildings, on the corner of Vesey and West. So I went up there and started helping this Squad 288. I carried out a couple bodies or at least one body that I remember. I think it was a captain.

I worked up there a little bit, came on down.

Q. The guy you carried out was a captain?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know what happened to him; do you know?

A. I don't know. His injuries were not conclusive. He was kind of intact.

Q. He was out in the street?

A. No. He was up on that second level of the building on the corner of Vesey and West. I guess it was Six World Trade, probably the customs building, but I'm not sure of that.

We kind of worked up there a bit. We came on down. We went up to Barclay street, went north and west, made a right on Barclay, down Church. From there I saw a member of 55 Engine

that was hooked up with another local company.

I said good-bye to the squad buddies. From there we searched a big old hotel that was on I guess Trinity, the Millennium Hotel. We searched all the rooms in that place, found nothing. We came on down. It took a while.

About that time --

Q. How did you get into the rooms?

A. There were a couple companies working together, and the first couple doors we popped. Then someone found the maid's keys. They found two maids' keys, master keys, and we swiped.

Q. Who was working in there with you; do you know?

A. Who was working in there?

Q. Just off the top of your head, if you can remember.

A. There was a local company. It might have been Engine 15 or 18. The captain was there. I'm not sure if his boys were there. Then there was a Brooklyn company. I'm not sure who that was.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a bunch of us, and the

officers had the keys and they would open the doors, and we would all go in and search them. All the rooms were immaculate. The first or second floors were dusty. Everything else was fine. So we did that for a while, you know, 50 stories.

We came on down. From there, I think that's when seven was going to come down. So they backed everybody out, somewhere near Church and Trinity, I guess. I remember being near the cemetery, and there's an old Church building up there. I'm not exactly sure where we were. But we were up in the Church, Park, Murray, Barclay, this area.

So we sat there for a while. Seven World Trade came down. After that came down, we all kind of regrouped. I think we started to stretch a tower ladder down Vesey Street towards Seven World. This was kind of late at night. Maybe this was 8 or 9.

I saw 55 Engine, so I abandoned that stat ship, me and the other 55 guy, hopped on with our 55 gang, and we kind of did a little cruise around the Trade Center area, did a little

digging in the north tower, and then we came home by 12 or 1 or 2.

Yeah, that was that.

Q. That was it?

A. Yeah.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with Firefighter Pete Metzger of Engine 55. The time is now 2103 hours.

File No. 9110425

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF FRANK CONGIUSTA

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is January 8th, 2002. The time is approximately 10:50. My name is Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Frank Congiusta, Battalion 48.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Frank, if you would, just take me through the day, how the events unfolded for you and explain to me how the day went for you.

A. I was at home reading the paper, and my neighbor came over and said a plane hit the World Trade Center. So I went next door, and I watched it for a while. Then the second plane hit. I said it's time to go to work.

I went in, and I drove to 240's quarters to pick up my gear. There were three other guys there, so we all got in my car. We were going to drive to the Battery Tunnel and walk through the Battery Tunnel.

While we were on the Prospect Expressway, the first tower collapsed. When we

got on the Gowanus, I figured the top would fall off. On the radio they said the tower collapsed. We were trying to see what was left of the first tower that collapsed, and we couldn't see anything. But it was hard to tell through the smoke.

We got to the Battery Tunnel, we parked the car, and they wouldn't let walk us through. They said they were afraid the tunnel would collapse. So they said they were going to send a bus for us.

So we waited for the bus. We got on the bus. When we were in the ditch on the Gowanus -- what is it?

Q. The BQE?

A. That's when the second building collapsed. I would guess we got there 10, 15 minutes after the second building collapsed. It was a complete mess. It was like walking onto the moon. Anybody we saw appeared to be in shock.

Q. That was after the event?

A. Yeah.

The first chief that we met was Chief

Callan. [redacted] Then there was some deputy there from Queens that asked us to search the customs building, which was still standing.

So we figured out a way into the customs building, and we searched the eight floors of the customs building on the west side. The whole middle of the building was blocked out by collapse.

We came out. Chief Fellini was there by then. I reported to Chief Fellini that we had searched the top eight floors with 43 Truck and 294 Engine. I reported that the west half of the customs building that we could get to that was accessible was negative, and he told us to search the subbasements. We went down and searched the subbasements.

While we were searching the subbasements, they decided that Seven World Trade Center, which was across the street, was going to collapse. So they called us out. We were so far down, we couldn't hear them. But we came out after we searched the subbasements. Actually we came out on the Seven World Trade Center parkway

street. When I came out, they were calling us on the radio to tell us to get out.

Then I reported that the search was negative, and then they wouldn't let anybody near the site pretty much, because Seven World Trade Center was going to come down.

After that I started doing a casualty report. I was there until like midnight doing casualty reports.

Q. Where was your location?

A. We were at West and Vesey.

Q. West and Vesey?

A. But then what happened was once I started doing casualty reports, I started walking all around the site, and anybody I saw with a helmet number that I thought would have been there, I asked them if all their guys were accounted for.

So I made one list of companies that everybody was accounted for, and I made another list of who they thought was missing, which was --

Q. Who did you give that to?

A. Stanley Door ^ CHECK was there, I

think. Actually we went further down to Stuyvesant High School, and I forget the name of the chief that was there. They have like a spiral book, and they were entering all the names in a spiral book. Somebody else had given them many of the names I had, but a lot of the names I gave them they didn't have. That was basically it.

And when that was done, I was shot and I went home.

Q. How did you get home?

A. I walked downtown through the Battery Tunnel, got my car, and I drove a couple of the guys to 168. I drove a couple guys to 168, and then I drove home. I had to work a 24 the next day. I was working up and down the next day. That was it.

Q. Thank you, Frank.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is approximately 10:55.

File No. 9110426

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER NICHOLAS BORRILLO

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 9, 2002. The time is 1300 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual --

FIREFIGHTER BORRILLO: Firefighter Nicholas Borrillo, first grade, Ladder 1.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are at the quarters of Ladder 1, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Go ahead, Nick. Tell your story.

A. We were at a box for odor of gas in the street on Church and Lispenard. We were investigating that. We were just about ready to take up from that box and come back when we heard the roar of the engines of the plane. Before we knew it, it was overhead. Within two seconds it hit the north tower.

We all jumped on the rig. It was Ladder 1, Engine 7, Battalion 1, Ladder 8, Engine 55, if I'm not mistaken. We headed down Canal Street to the west side. Then we headed town to

the Trade Center. We pulled up in front of the Trade Center on West Street on the east side right in front of the building. There's a bus stop right in front of the building. We were right there.

We got off the rig. We kind of gathered ourselves a little bit, discussed what we were going to do.

Q. Where did you park the rig?

A. The rig was parked on West Street facing north, right in front of the building. As I said, there was a bus stop that was right there. We parked a little bit north of the bus stop, probably by that big overhang.

Q. Okay. Right at the bridge that goes across West Street.

A. After that.

Q. It's not after that?

A. There was a big overhang when you walk into the tower. There's an overhang on that part of the building.

We went to the fire command station. We waited for some orders. Chief Pfeifer was in charge of the fire at that time. We were trying

to find out if we were going to get our Port Authority radio that we normally get. Those never came.

We tried to get information about the elevators. That took a little bit of time. I don't know how long it might have taken, but before we actually knew that, we didn't have any elevators and they said start making your way up.

We started going up. We went to the B staircase. There were lots of civilians coming down that particular staircase. It was a few minutes even before we were able to clear out enough space where we could see to start going up.

Maybe on the second floor I thought I heard a little bit of an explosion or something. Later on we found out that there was a -- there was a Port Authority guy on the staircase in our vicinity. He confirmed that another plane had hit the other tower.

We still kept going up. It was a slow go going up. It was really congested. We were single file going up. The civilians were single file coming down. We were just telling people

just to stay calm, just get out of the building, the best way you can.

We were getting a little separated from each other. We tried to just keep with each other, just in case there was anything -- we didn't want to have to look for anyone on the way out.

A couple guys were behind us, so we had to stop maybe two times as we were going up. We climbed up to the 23rd floor. We were waiting for a couple of our guys to come up. They finally hooked up with us, and we took a break. There was a water display thing like for sodas and everything. We got into that, because we were just overheating. We took, I don't know, a five-minute break there.

Then we heard a rumble. We heard it and we felt the whole building shake. It was like being on a train, being in an earthquake. A train is more like it, because with the train you hear the rumbling, and it kind of like moved you around in the hall. Then it just stopped after eight or ten seconds, about the time it took for the building to come down.

We just kind of looked at each other like what the hell was that? Then it stopped. I had left my mask, my helmet, my jacket down the hallway. I said, no, I might need that, let me go back and get it. I ran back and got that. A couple minutes later, not that I heard on my radio. I didn't hear the evacuation order over my radio, but there was a chief from the 11th Division, I believe, Picciotto.

Q. From the 11th Battalion.

A. The 11th Battalion.

He was probably coming down from like 30 or something like that. He was telling everybody directly to leave the building. So we got our stuff, we started going down. There were still civilians in the staircase. We probably got to the civilians around the 10th floor. So we kind of slowed down a little bit. We didn't want to panic them.

We really didn't know what was going on. We didn't know the whole building fell down. We just didn't know that. Maybe if we did, maybe we would have made it a little more urgent. It was really pretty calm in the staircase. Nobody

was yelling or screaming. The civilians were fine.

We got down. I don't know how long it took us to get down, maybe 20 minutes. About that time we came down, we got down to the lobby, walked towards West Street. We figured we would go back to the fire command station. There was nobody at that fire command station.

I waited for one of the other guys, Steve Olsen, to come down. He was about two minutes behind me. We walked down to the West Street side where our rig was. As I said before, I spoke to him for 10 or 15 seconds. We were looking up at the building. We were like, how are we going to fight this one? Let's regroup and walk north. I said, "Joe, are you coming with us?" He said, "I'll be right there."

Me and Steve got to about -- walking north on West, we got to maybe half a block to a block north of Vesey when the north tower fell. We just hauled. We were running. There were a bunch us running. I actually got up around two blocks.

The dust cloud was right behind me. It

overcame me a little bit. I got up to Stuyvesant High School. I ducked into the school, rested there for two or three minutes, came back outside, walked on the sidewalk back down. I didn't know where Steve Olsen was, and I didn't know -- (inaudible).

I asked where they were. Everybody else was with him. He said everybody else was with him, the officer and three other members. We sat up a rendezvous point. I think it was Harrison Street, maybe, Harrison and West. We kind of regrouped right there.

After that we scattered up and got back to the firehouse. We had no masks. Some guys didn't have their coat on. Some guys didn't have their helmet. We said, let's go back to the firehouse, let's get our second gear and then we'll get back down to the Trade Center. We had no tanks or anything.

That's it.

File No. 9110427

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT ROBERT BOHACK

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 9th, 2002. The time is 1100 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the safety division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual --

LIEUTENANT BOHACK: Lieutenant Robert Bohack, Engine 5.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: -- of the New York City Fire Department, at the quarters of Engine 5 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Lieutenant, go ahead.

A. We had a box at approximately 8:40 at Gramercy Park. The available was given. We were picking up, and I heard over the radio that a plane had hit the Trade Center. We were dispatched right away, I believe fourth due on the second alarm.

We proceeded westbound on 14th Street. I then made a left, heading south on West Street. I could see the tower clearly from that vantage point. There was a huge hole in the tower I figured about 85 floors up. It was about four or

five stories wide, triangular-shaped, and smoke was ripping out under heavy pressure. I could see flames, and I could see smoke starting to rip out of the top floors.

We proceeded southbound the traffic was getting heavy. We moved over into the northbound lane, and then we proceeded south. We stopped the rig approximately one block north of the north tower on the northbound side of West Street, facing south.

Got out of the rig. I had a five-man engine company. I took my chauffeur with me. I didn't think we were going to hook up to anything. We were too far away and proceeded to the lobby of One World Tower.

Q. The north tower.

A. Okay.

We reported to I believe Chief Pfeifer, and I believe Chief Hayden was there too. As well as Commissioner Von Essen. We were told to team up with Engine 10 with our rollups and all our masks and extra bottles and proceed to the 79th floor and operate.

We started going up the stairs as a

team. There was a large number of people coming down the stairways. It was a little narrow. There was only room for two people wide. It was slow going up. We stopped on the 13th floor for about two minutes because there were too many people coming down. We were with 10 Engine.

We took a two minute break and then went up to the 19th floor, where one of my guys, Derek Brogan, he was complaining of bad chest pains. Even though he's a young guy, he looked okay. He was a heavy smoker. So we decided to stop.

He was sweating a lot, so we stopped on the 19th floor. We got some water and poured

cxv
cx water over our heads. We took our gear off for a few minutes. I monitored him. In about 10 or 15 minutes, he said he was okay.

[redacted]

[redacted]

I called him on the radio. He didn't have a radio. I was hoping that maybe he was next to somebody. He wasn't answering. There was so much radio traffic anyway, you couldn't get a word in edge-wise, too many maydays for chest pains.

So we stopped on the 19th floor. He said he felt better after about 15 minutes. We got our gear up again, started to proceed up the stairs stairway A, I believe, until the 33rd floor. Then he was really sweating and said the chest pains were shooting down his arm. So that's when I made decision that's it.

We put our gear down. I called for oxygen. Within two minutes two Port Authority ESU cops came with an oxygen resuscitator. They were there quick. I was amazed. A couple

firemen, I think one was from 9 Truck -- I forget his name -- he was there taking a break. All the fat guys were taking a break on the lower floors, me included, you know.

We gave him oxygen. Another fireman who was there, he was a nurse. He looked at him and said, "Lou, I don't think he's having a heart attack. His skin is good. His pulse is good. I think it's something else." I said all right. We'll just hang out and let him rest.

Two Port Authority cops were with us. After a couple minutes, he said he felt better. It was probably ten minutes later. I said, "All right, the thing we're going to do, I want you in an ambulance. You're done for the day."

So one of the guys that was there -- I think it was the guy from 9 Truck -- said, "Lou, I'm going down. I'll take him down." I said, "No, I want to stay together." I was already missing Manny. I don't want to worry where he is. "I said, we're going to down together. We'll drop off our gear, go down, put him in an ambulance. When I know he's on his way, we'll come back up."

So we left our stuff down, tools, kept our masks on. I had my light. We began, with the Port Authority cops, to come down the stairs. As soon as we got into the stairway, the building started shaking like an earthquake. I thought our building was coming down. My mind was saying there's some kind of wind compensator up there in the upper floors, a big, huge vat of cement. Did you ever hear of that? I know the building moved.

Q. Yeah.

A. There's some kind of huge ton of weight up there. It's a huge vat filled with cement and it shifts. When the wind is blowing one way, it shifts to the other way with the wind to compensate.

I thought if that thing shakes and comes loose from its supports we're fucking dead. So that's what I thought it was. I thought our building was starting to collapse. I said, "Let's get the fuck out of here, now. We're out of here."

We start going down. We went down the C stairs.

Oh, before that I found out that the other building had gotten hit. One guy told me a couple weeks ago that it got hit while we were in the lobby. I didn't know that until we were on the 13th floor or 19th floor and were taking our break. I looked out the window, and I saw like 30 floors of fire in the other building. I'm thinking, this guy is having chest pains. I have a report of a missile attack or other terrorist attack. 30th floor, there's a fire here, 10th floor there's a fire here, missiles coming, heart attacks, this is ridiculous we're out here.

We started going down. The building shook. I said, "This one is coming down, let's get the fuck out of here." I didn't see the two Port Authority cops after that. I had four guys with me. I was missing one member from the get-go.

We started going down. I saw a couple guys who were going up on the way down. Kevin Donnelly from Ladder 3, I asked him, "What are you doing?" I said, "Let's get out of here."

We saw a couple civilians that were there, but mostly the stairway was clear. We

chose another stairway. We chose the C stairway. I guess that's facing the south tower. That's very close to there.

It started getting dusty, shitty and dark. The lights went out about -- we were maybe on the 15th floor. The lights went out on the 13th floor.

We were going down. There were still a few civilians, a few more firemen. It was dark. One of the guys who was sharing his mask with a civilian who was scared. We had to help him down.

Then we get to the third floor, and the stairway is partially blocked. They couldn't pass that back up. There was mostly firemen, a few civilians. I told my guys, "I'll go find another stairway. Stay here."

I walked to the fourth floor, go across. All the lights are out. I find the A stair that we went up. I stayed in the stairway. I yelled to my guys, "Let's go. I've got another stairway. I've got another stairway." They come. Only three guys come.

The crowd was obviously, or probably

from the collapse of the other building. There was debris from the other building coming down and pushing in. Because we were in the stairway facing the south tower. So that must have pushed in the outside wall, that's what caused a breach.

In the dark (inaudible), and Gerry Gorman was able to get past, along with a couple guys from 20 Truck. I didn't know it at the time when I called my guys -- I didn't want to lose the stairway and go back. So when they came, three guys came. Now I'm missing two guys, Manny from the get-go and Gerry Gorman, who made his way down to the B stairway.

[redacted]

[redacted]

With that, as soon as I said that, the building made a groan like steel twisting. I didn't have to tell those guys twice. We just started making a B line for West Street or the western side, the entrance we came in.

With that, we ran out the front. There was, I think, a chief's aide sort of as a lookout saying, "Come on. Come on. Come on." We stopped at the entrance as soon as he waved us on, we go. We get to him. He was maybe 50 yards ahead of us, in front of us. On West Street I get to him and he says, "Look at the building, Lou. The other one collapsed, and this one is collapsing." He showed me, about 20 stories up you see a crack in the building. I look, "Holy shit, the other building's gone."

I said, "Get the fuck to the rig." We run to the rig. I'm with two other guys, Richie

Carletti and Tommy Lynn. They came in their cars. Before that I'm down two guys, Gorman and Manny Delvalle. Now I'm back up to five. I've got two stragglers.

[redacted]

So we get to I think either Warren Street or Chambers Street. I think it was Warren. We made a right on Warren, got out. We've got all the dust and crap all over us from the other collapse. I just wanted to get my bearings straight, give a little thought, because there was no command structure. There was nothing. Nobody can get on the radio. The fucking radio was useless.

We get out. Mike Butler, chief of fire prevention, comes to me and says, "Look, Lou, I don't have a radio. My radio is dead. Can I have yours?" "Here you go." I ain't going back there. As soon as he got that, we walked maybe half a block, and that's when the building pancakes down.

Then the smoke and the shock wave comes up one street. We run. We hide behind C.U.N.Y., you know, the college there? There's like a big wall that sticks out. We hide behind there. The smoke and the dust and all the crap is outside the rig. The rig was stopped up.

We get back on the rig, and the rig was full of dust. I told my chauffeur, "John, I want to make a 360 survey to see what the hell we've got." I don't know what the hell we've got. I can't see shit down that way.

We go all around to Broadway and go up Broadway and turn right and it's like a frigging war zone. We go up to about Thames Street, and we find a hydrant that worked. We hooked up. I said, "You know what, we're going to have to relay water to somebody. We've got to get water on this place. I'll go check it out."

He gets water. He ends up relaying to 247 Engine from Brooklyn. They were operating. We walked up all the way to Church Street up here, Thames Street. We walked up Broadway it seemed about -- I can't even see these streets. Liberty, Cortlandt. I can't even see Liberty

here. Right here, Broadway and Thames or Cedar, right around here, that's where we find a hydrant.

We pumped this way and this way, up this way. We go walking up Church, and we go to Dey Street. I found Engine 252's rig destroyed. I found 41 Engine's rig.

Q. Destroyed?

A. No that was good. That was good.

Five World Trade, this building here, was fully involved. You don't realize even then where things stood. I said let's go and maybe put out the fire. That's what we did. We got water. We hooked up to the gravity tank of one of these buildings here. We were getting like 80 to 100 pounds intake. So we stretched a line as far as the tower ladder here. We started getting water on the fire on this fucking building.

Q. Was that seven?

A. No, seven was here.

Q. Okay.

A. (Inaudible) that wasn't on fire.

Q. Right, yeah.

A. This was on fire. This one, we were

worried about this. We started knocking this down.

[redacted]

We ended up pumping for two days. I heard that the water department shut off a lot of the mains because they were flooding the subways. They probably were.

That's basically it. We weren't in the building probably from 9 till, oh, after 10. We were in there for a while. It took us a while to get down the stairs too. It took us probably -- I left when the first building collapsed, and we got out probably five minutes before the second building collapsed. (Inaudible.)

File No. 9110428

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ALBERT BARRY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1200 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

FIREFIGHTER BARRY: Firefighter Albert Barry, Engine 65, third grade.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 65, and it's regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Al, do you want to give your story?

A. Okay. We got the call at 9 a.m., third due on the fifth alarm. We rolled up to West Street and Vesey where our chauffeur let us off. We grabbed the rollups, an extra bottle, and proceeded to the north tower and entered the lobby area through a broken window.

I believe we went up the A stairwell. It was pretty congested with civilians coming down. We kept telling the civilians to stay to the right, we're moving up to the left. We made it to about the 16th floor when the south tower

collapsed.

We did not know that. This is all hindsight, of course. The only thing that I can recall that happened was there was a big whoosh of air that pushed from the south up to the north. The building moved a little bit, nothing out of the ordinary, I guess.

From there we made it to about the 20th floor when we heard a radio signal for a mayday to remove ourselves from there, the building was in eminent collapse. On our way down, the stairwell was pretty much fluid. We were sharing air with civilians.

Nobody that we came down with was injured in any way just some civilian was hyperventilating. There was, I recall, an older woman that was being carried down by some civilians in a chair. We told the civilians to put her down and we immediately took command of her, checked her vitals, and she was all right.

I helped carry her down a little bit. Then we passed her along to some other civilians who carried her down some more. It was a quicker pace because people were making room for her to

come down.

I guess we got to about maybe the fifth floor, and the power was out. There was a bit of a smoky condition at that point. But everybody continued down. Nobody was running. It was very calm.

Once we made it to the lobby, (inaudible) seemed to be a triage set up in the lobby area. Our lieutenant said there's no need for us to be in here, let's make our way out the way we came in, and that's what we did. Once we came out the window, there was debris all over the place.

I've been told that Chief Al Turi was directing everybody to move north. He was screaming at the top of his lungs, "Go north!" with a megaphone in his hand, he wasn't even using the megaphone.

We took a few steps out, turned around, and the north tower was coming down. It was coming down on our back. That's when we just started running up, and at that point 65 Engine got separated.

I made it through the smoke, through

the debris, once everything cleared. Being that 65 Engine was separated, once we made it up to Stuyvesant High School, that's when everybody was pulled back together. 65 Engine was brought together again.

That's about it, the long and short of it.

Q. Okay. I just have a couple questions.

A. Go ahead.

Q. Did they give you a specific task? In other words, when you came in, did they tell you to go to the 30th floor or the 50th floor?

A. Yes, there was a chief, I guess it was at the staging area. There was basically just one chief standing there saying, "All right, you guys make your way up to the north tower." I don't know --

Q. He didn't tell you to go to the 30th floor or the 50th floor?

A. No. He just said make your way up to the north tower. That was it. We got our rollups and gear and everything else and that's it. That's about it, then.

File No. 9110429

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN ROGERS

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 9, 2002. The time is 2050 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ROGERS: Firefighter Steve Rogers, Ladder 1.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're doing this interview at the location of Ladder 1's quarters regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Steve, if you would just tell us what happened that day.

A. On September 11th I was on Staten Island. I heard it on my car radio that the World Trade Center was hit by a plane. Immediately began making my way into the city. I got there rather quickly. On the way here I heard the second plane had hit. Right before I got in my truck, they said that the top of tower two had collapsed.

I entered the firehouse here, Ladder 1, and began to put on my gear, get on my gear that I would need. I met two other firefighters, Kirk Pritchard and John McConnachie from this house, Ladder 1. We all suited up.

Before we left, the lieutenant that was here wanted to set up a triage center at the firehouse for the injured civilians that were in the street, so we pulled up all the equipment from the basement, all the C.F.R.D. equipment, stokes baskets, all the stuff he thought we would need.

There was a couple doctors available from across the street that came in. At that point we left them here to run a triage center, the lieutenant and the doctors. We jumped in my truck, the three of us. Actually there was a film maker there, a French film maker that was filming that day.

We proceeded to go down Church Street the wrong way with my truck. At this point I believe there was a lot of debris on the street a lot of dust and papers from the collapses of Two. As we made the turn, we passed the mayor and the

police commissioner. We told them a triage center was at the firehouse. If they needed to go to the triage center. They said thank you, and we continued down the street further.

I parked my truck approximately on the corner of Warren and Church and got out and suited up and continued walking down Church Street towards Vesey, where we had seen multiple civilians injured and hurt but ambulatory. They were walking. We directed them to ambulances that were parked on Church Street, and we continued down.

We made a right on Vesey going towards West Street. At that point I saw a guy from 4 Engine, Bob Humphreys, and I asked him what kind of equipment he had in his rig, masks and stuff. He said his was already stripped.

So we continued to work our way down Vesey. Each rig we came across we stopped and checked for masks and tools that we needed. We continued down towards West Street. When we got to the corner of West and Vesey, tower one began to collapse. We ran wherever we could. I ran north by the corner of Vesey, and I was already

getting hit with stuff.

The other fellow, other firefighter, John McConnachie, went the same direction I went; the other firefighters didn't. They stayed close to the building, which was World Trade Center Six. We were basically getting hit with all kinds of stuff. (Inaudible), black, dark.

Then we just tried to get our bearings. It was a good -- it felt like an hour but probably 10 minutes, 15 minutes of darkness. We heard people yelling for help. It took us a while before we could get our bearings and find each other after it cleared up to where we could work our way back to (inaudible).

I found one guy, John McConnachie. The other firefighter, Pritchard, they were putting in an ambulance. He was hit in the back with something. He might have a fractured back.

At that point it was very quiet. There was only like two or three of us there. There was no one around, no injured people. The rigs were on fire. There were people coming up one at a time (inaudible) it was going to come. A fireman here, a fireman there, a police officer.

I understand they were working on the mezzanine of six. There was a five-story, four-story mezzanine level, and ^ INAUDIBLE. I believe a fireman from Ladder 1, John, we found. We got 12 Truck -- we moved 12 Truck into position to set up the tower to bring people down.

We had help from Engine 1. That was the engine that had the stokes that we brought down with the tower ladder. We operated back and forth with the tower ladder for a half hour or so.

At that point there were a lot of firemen that started to come, older firemen, and from the recall. I got relieved by another chauffeur. I forget what company; maybe from 12 Truck. We came back and we were going to try to put some fires out because there were fires burning. Rigs were burning, underneath the rigs. We checked for engines that were operational, hydrants. We did that for about another hour or two.

Then I was feeling shitty, so I came back to the firehouse. I went to St. Vincent's

probably around 3:00. I had a cut on my hand and trouble breathing.

Q. You know what I wanted to ask you, did you see anything, Stevie? Like when you got there, did you look at the buildings at all? Was there cracking? Was there an indication that it was going to come down before it came down?

A. I honestly -- I don't remember. I really didn't see it. Number two was totally collapsed. When I looked up, all I saw was a lot of smoke from the fires and stuff. So you really couldn't see the top of the buildings very well. (Inaudible) from the jumpers. I really couldn't see structurally how it collapsed. There was just too much fire and smoke.

Q. How did you know it was collapsing? Did you hear the noise?

A. The noise immediately -- as soon as I heard it, we knew it was coming down. It wasn't like, oh, what the hell is that? It was like a noise you never hear in your whole life. It came down. I only ran like five feet when I got hit with stuff. I had to cover up. It wasn't like you could run three blocks before you were hit

with stuff. It was a matter of feet. There was debris everywhere.

Basically we could have definitely gotten killed because it was all around us.

Q. You know what I think that I found is that guys that were like on the corner of the building got less stuff on them than guys were like --

A. Directly in front.

Q. Yeah, directly in front and on the sides. It seemed like the corner kind of --

A. Kept it --

Q. It went four ways but it didn't come towards the corner, which is something you always expect from a collapse. But that really seems to have been -- the command post was right across West Street, and that got buried.

A. Right. It was directly across.

Q. So you figured that side went that way; this one went this way. But if you were in this area here, a lot of guys seemed to have made it out.

A. Well, you saw the chit; right? The chief that gave the original alarm, the third

alarm, was inside. The third alarm said report to West and Vesey to the staging area. If they had made that the command post, that would have been -- everybody at the command post would have been gone.

Q. Right.

A. That's where I was.

Q. Probably what they did, I think, was they may have moved it down when the second tower was hit. Maybe they started out there. Then when the second tower was hit, they may have moved here.

A. They had the one inside the building and the one --

Q. They needed one outside.

A. When it collapsed, they moved it to the opposite building, and then they got hit with the second collapse. They survived one collapse, and then they got it.

You're lucky. I'm been on the job 16 years. Every time you've got a tower job, and the chiefs are looking. They say move it out of the way. They set their command post up at around 10 o'clock.

Q. The area of the collapse zone would have been to Canal Street. Right. If it would have come down the way we expected it to come down, God knows how many people would have been killed.

A. We were in the collapse zone.

Q. We're probably lucky that it came down the way it came down.

A. Oh, yeah, definitely.

File No. 9110430

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH CASALIGGI

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's is January 9th, 2002. The time is 1430 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER CASALIGGI: Joseph Cassaliggi, firefighter third grade, Engine 7.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Who is assigned to the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview at the quarters of Engine 7 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Joe, if you would please state what happened.

A. On the morning of September 11th we were operating a box up on Church Street Near Canal. There was an odor of gas in the area. While we were out operating, we heard the first plane coming in. I turned around and I watched the plane crash into the north tower.

I got back on the rig. We raced down

there. We were actually one of the first companies on the scene. We pulled up right in front of One World Trade Center, right into the cul-de-sac right in front of the canopy.

So we got off the rig. I noticed there were several people sitting in the grass in front of the building burned head to toe, gray, just staring at us. The captain ordered us to grab four rollups. We went into the building. We went into the lobby.

The lobby actually looked like the plane hit the lobby. From what I understand, I was told afterwards, that a fireball shot down the elevator shaft and blew out all the windows in the lobby and blew out the elevator doors.

We searched for an elevator to see if there was one operating. There was none. The captain said we were going to walk up the stairs. At that point my mask had started leaking air from the high pressure coupling, and I had to go out and change my cylinder.

I left my rollup and my standpipe kit in the lobby. I went outside to the rig, changed the cylinder. While I was changing the cylinder,

I was keeping an eye because the chauffeur was hooking up to the standpipe. I was keeping an eye, making sure he didn't get hit with anything.

It was at that time when I saw the second plane hit the building. I called a mayday. I told them the second plane hit the south tower of the building. I wasn't sure which floors it was, but I knew it hit the upper floors of the south tower.

Debris was falling, body parts were falling. We ducked for cover inside Engine 7, but the rig was getting bombarded with debris from the building, debris from the plane. We saw bodies crash landing right next to the rig. So we couldn't stay there.

We abandoned Engine 7, and we headed north. We couldn't make it back into the building at that point. We headed north. We got up to Vesey Street. We stayed on Vesey for a little while. Another firefighter had come over asking us if we had a radio. So the Engine 7 chauffeur gave him his radio, and I was control so I had mine.

I radioed the Engine 7 captain, did he

want me to stay with the chauffeur or did he want me to meet him in the building, because the Engine 7 chauffeur didn't have a radio. His response came in broken up. I thought he said give him my radio and meet him on the 15th floor. I found out later he said don't give him the radio and meet him on the 15th floor.

So I gave the chauffeur my radio, and I went into the building. I saw Chief Pfeifer. I told him, "I don't have a radio. I'm going up to meet Engine 7 on the 15th floor." He told me I wasn't going up if I didn't have a radio and I didn't have a partner.

I stayed in the lobby. I didn't know at that point if he was getting me a partner or if he was getting -- I thought I was going to stay there, I wasn't going up. I didn't know what I was doing at that point.

So I stayed around, waiting to be told what to do. I was in the lobby for about 40 minutes. Finally I took Chief Pfeifer aside again and I said, "Chief, if you're not going to send me up, I'm going to go out by the rig and I'm going to help the chauffeur." He told me a

good idea, go out and stay with the chauffeur.

I stood by the blown out windows. I was looking for clearance, trying to get somebody's attention to tell me that I wasn't going to get hit with something as I was running out. I couldn't get anybody's attention in the street.

I saw another body crash down through the canopy. At that I just said screw this and I just ran. I ran to the street, just hoping I wasn't getting hit.

I met up with the Engine 7 chauffeur. We stayed together at least for a few minutes more. They were trying to clear the area. So we were getting pushed back up to Vesey. I think we got as far as almost Barclay.

As I was leaving the building, I heard them at the command post talking about moving the command post to the other side of West Street. I suggested to the chauffeur we make our way back to the command post, let somebody know who we are and where we are and that we're okay.

So we started making our way back. When we were about -- we were on the opposite

side of West Street now on the west side, making our way down. As we were standing underneath the foot bridge that connects Three World Financial Center to the World Trade Center. We were standing under there, and we watched -- throughout the whole time being outside, we must have watched 50, 60 people jump.

I was watching one guy hang onto the outside of the building, the outside of the north tower while I was standing under the bridge. Then there were police officers talking about a third plane coming into the area.

Then a few minutes passed. I was standing under the bridge. We had heard a loud rumble, and people just started running in our direction from the Trade Center toward us. I never even looked up. We just turned around and started running. It was me, the chauffeur, and there were two plain clothes cops running next to us.

We just started running for the Financial Center. I saw a Fire Department lieutenant in the Financial Center. He was holding the door open for us. He yelled to us to

get down, we weren't going to make. I guess I don't know what I was running from.

We grabbed the two cops, threw them on the ground behind one of the support columns for the pedestrian bridge and just dove on top of them. We got hit with the debris from the building. It felt like I got hit by a car. It knocked the wind out of me.

Gasping for air, I got a mouth full of dirt. I spit that out. I gasped again and got another mouthful of dirt. My mask was on. I had it turned on. My face piece was swinging behind me. It was an effort to reach back to grab my face piece. I held it up to my face and purged it.

After that I got a little bit of air from that. I couldn't even give any of it to the chauffeur or to the two cops. I just kind of held it in front of my face.

Everything just got deadly silent. I opened my eyes, I couldn't see a thing. I leaned up. I kind of sat up, so I knew I wasn't pinned under anything. I didn't know what happened. I thought a plane hit the Financial Center and part

of the building came down. I really didn't know what happened at this point.

I sat up, and I thought to myself, okay, I'm not pinned. We're just underneath something and they have to find us. I made sure the other three guys that were with me were okay. The officer that had seen us duck yelled to us, "Is everybody okay?" We yelled back, "Yeah. How do we get out of here?" He came in and got us, took us out through the back of the Financial Center.

At that point somebody handed me a bottle of water, gave me some oxygen. My chest was killing me. I was having difficulty breathing. I found an ambulance, got into an ambulance. They were going to take me to the hospital.

We tried radioing Engine 7. We couldn't get them on the radio. We weren't getting any transmissions on the radio at that point. We couldn't hear anything. So we didn't know what happened. We tried raising Engine 7. Nothing.

I got into an ambulance. I told the

chauffeur I was going the hospital. I suggested he come with me, but he stayed. We got separated at that point. I was in the ambulance. We got a few blocks, and the ambulance got stuck in gridlock. We sat there for a few minutes.

Finally the driver of the ambulance turned around in this little window and just yelled to the back and told everybody to get out and start running. I popped open the back door of the ambulance, and there was a crowd of people running in the direction the ambulance was facing.

I jumped out, and I just ran with the pack. I didn't know where I was running. We ended up by the water a block north of Chambers, at Stuyvesant High School and the elementary school there. I ended up by the water. Then everything calmed down again.

I figured, okay, let me figure out where I am. Now I have no radio. I have to figure out where I am, where I've got to be, just get my bearings. So I looked up, because when you're in downtown Manhattan and need to get your bearings you look for the Trade Center.

I looked up and I'm looking around and saying where am I, but I can't even see the towers. I didn't know what happened at this point. A person was walking past me talking to somebody else. I just overheard him say, "I can't believe they fell."

As he was saying that, I'm looking at the spot where the towers should have been, and I realized I saw the outlines of the other buildings. That's when I realized and I thought everybody in my company was dead. I'm the only one. I don't know where the chauffeur is, but we're the only ones that made it.

I wandered around West Street for a while trying to find a radio. I was jumping in rigs and trying to find a fireman, and I couldn't find anybody. Finally I found a fireman from I think it was Engine 5. He said he thought he had a heart attack and had just came out. He was sitting on the curb. He didn't have a radio either. I figured the two of us will stay together, and we'll find an ambulance, we'll get to the hospital.

I must have passed 50 people and said,

"Will you let somebody downtown know" -- I gave them my name and my company and said, "Let somebody downtown know where I am and that I'm okay and that I was taken to the hospital." I got into an ambulance and ended up at Cabrini Medical Center. I stayed there for about six hours, maybe a little less than six hours.

I got back to the firehouse. A police sergeant offered to give me a ride back down to the firehouse after I was released from Cabrini. I got back to the firehouse about 3:00 in the afternoon. They told me that they were looking for me and the chauffeur, that we were the only two from the company not accounted for.

Q. All the other guys got out?

A. Yeah, everybody from our company -- I don't know how. That's when I heard that Engine 7 got up to the 30th, 35th floor, somewhere in there, and they had gotten out just before the building came down, before the north tower came down.

Basically --

Q. That's it?

A. Basically that's it. That's what I

remember.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A. Just that I've had a cough since then.

File No. 9110431

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BATTALION CHIEF BRIAN O'FLAHERTY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is January 9th, 2002. The time is approximately 1140 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, New York City Fire Department, Safety Command. I'm here interviewing Battalion Chief Brian O'Flaherty of the Safety Operating Battalion regarding the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Brian, if you would, just start us off I guess when you got the note, when you saw the towers and then as the events unfolded for you that day.

A. I was in quarters. I had gone in the conference room, and I was typing up an interview from the Astoria Boulevard fire, and one of the guys from the marine unit, Eddie Mauro, came in the room and said, "Chief, you have to see the fire in the World Trade Center." I said, "Now?" He said, "Yeah, right now. You've go to see it. It's unbelievable."

We left the room, walked into the kitchen. As you walk in the marine division kitchen, you look out the window over the East

River and you could see real heavy smoke pushing out of the north tower upper portion of the building, heavy smoke. I didn't see any fire; heavy smoke.

[redacted]

At one point I guess Mike gave me the binoculars. I looked through. You could see them coming out. You could only see two sides of the building. Just around that time, I handed the binoculars back after seeing a few people jump, and I heard the dispatcher calling the 1st Division and telling them they had reports that people had jumped from the building or were jumping from the building. But it was a casual report.

I wanted to get to the phone to just tell the Manhattan dispatcher to tell the division that -- I asked Mike -- we had seen, I figured, a couple dozen people, two or three

dozen people. We only saw two sides of the building. I wanted to tell the dispatcher, let the division know, this wasn't just one or two people jumping; this was a real problem. They could land on your head and kill somebody coming out from a hundred stories up.

I just dialed the Manhattan dispatcher. The noise in the kitchen area was too much to hear, so I just stepped through the weight room, closed the door. I identified myself and started to tell them about how many jumpers, let the division know.

Just then out of the corner of my eye, I could see this plane. I just remember the dark. It was in the shadow. It looked low. I thought, "What the heck is the guy doing?" I watched it, watched him turn and crash right into the south tower. Right away I knew it was terrorism or terrorists. I didn't know what the first one was, but I knew what the second one was.

I had the dispatcher on the phone. I said, "Stop talking about the jumpers. We just had a plane go into the south tower, another

plane." He said he saw it, I assume on television. We both hung up the phone. That was the end of the conversation.

I came back out from the weight room into the kitchen, hung up the phone. Now it was noisy. These guys had all seen it. The television was on at that time. Maybe they were starting to play replays. I think shortly after they played one replay. Everybody knew it was terrorism.

Just then Larry had walked into the kitchen, Larry Stack, and said, "Wow, these guys have their hands full. What do you think, boys? Should we go give them a hand?" We just talked about that. Everybody said yeah. We turned around. It was Brian Meyers, Mike Telesca, Larry Stack and myself, and everybody decided get dressed, get ready.

I remember Larry telling Brian to get the car ready, put turnout gear in it, hand lights, any radios, whatever we could find. Battalion had already responded. We were right there. Mike was going to work on I think the Gorumba case. He had held Meyers to work over

with Telesca. Larry and I were going to work on Astoria Boulevard.

So we got everything together, and we decided -- we grabbed some notepads. We grabbed a bunch of boxes of gloves, the blue ones for blood-borne pathogens. We grabbed gloves, went downstairs. Brian had asked what car to take. I said, "Let's take the red and white." We had the two cars, the red and white or the blue. I said, "because at least it's got the lights on the roof."

We went downstairs, and Brian had all the stuff in the car. We left the Navy Yard and started heading over. We only had one radio. We had one radio, maybe three hand lights. That's all the stuff we could find. I remember in the car ride over Larry kept saying, "We only have the one radio. Everybody stick together until we find a command post, tell them what's going on."

We came out of the Navy Yard, down Flushing. We weren't sure what bridge, but as we look we could see the Manhattan Bridge. There was no traffic on it. So we said we'll take the Manhattan Bridge. We went over the Manhattan.

From the top of the bridge, you had a pretty good view of both the buildings, heavy smoke coming out. The south tower you could see fire and smoke. The north tower was still just sort of heavy smoke.

We cut down by Police Plaza, by City Hall and around the end of City Hall Park. We went west and got to Church Street. Now the traffic was getting bad, because now there was a lot of people walking from the scene. We saw a lot of vehicles to the left, so we went south on Church. We stopped just around the post office before you get to Vesey. It was all blocked up.

I got out of the car, and I told Larry I saw an FBI agent and I was going to start talking to him. I gave him my card, and he gave me a card. I said I thought that that second plane that went into the south tower was a military plane, like a transport or small cargo military.

The reason I thought that, I found out later, the sun never shined off it. It was a dark-color plane. It ended up, I found out later, it was why. It was United Airlines. They

paint their planes a dull gray and blue. I didn't see any shine off the plane when it went from dark to sun.

I just gave him cards. I left, turned around and said, "Where the heck did they go?" I couldn't see the car. I realized they had crossed over Vesey, and the car was right over there. There was a subway entrance on the west side of the street right by the cemetery.

Q. Church?

A. Yeah. The car was right up there, right by the entrance to the subway. Brian might have even have jumped part of the curb. They were getting the stuff out of the trunk. We were all getting dressed, putting our turnout gear on, full turnout, bunker gear, helmets, a couple lights, the pads and stuff. Larry again said, "We've got to stay together until we get to the command post."

I looked up, and there was debris coming down, papers, I know, papers all over the air. We looked at each other, the command post, where is it going to be? It's going to be on West Street, someplace around the area where it

was during the bombing.

How are we going to get down? We knew people were coming out of the north tower. There was all this debris. I looked across the street, and I knew we could go down like you go into the subway, right down to the concourse. So we did. We went in off Church, in the door, down one flight of stairs to the concourse level. I just know how to go from working in rescue and working the 1st Division when I was in the union.

We cut across the concourse. The lights were on. I remember the lights in the stores were still on in the concourse. Not all the lights, not all the lights in the hallway, but the lights in some of the stores were still on. I saw that.

I started cutting across. Just about the time you could see -- now you get to the area where all the escalators come up from the PATH line. That's on our right. Now it's dark. There were no more lights in the hallways.

Just before you get there, I looked to the left. There's a hallway where there's an entrance to go to the south tower. I could look

to the south. You could see figures of people, firemen or helmets, in the south tower. It's the lobby of the south tower. It's too far to see anybody.

Just from passing where the PATH escalators come up on the right, there was an engine company. It's a Brooklyn company. I just remember three numbers. They came up and said, "Chief, how do you get to the south tower?" I said, "Go up a ways. You'll see a sign to the right. Just make a right. You'll go to the south tower."

Just after we passed them, we walked up, and the sprinklers are going off. You could see the sprinklers going off. I think it was Larry that said, "That's a good sign." Of course now we know that wasn't. That was the water draining out of the system. The sprinklers were going off in that concourse level. In the area of the south tower, all the sprinklers were going off.

We cut in. When you go into the lobby at that area, that's not the lobby of the building; that's like that street-level lobby.

The command post level lobby is higher. That's in the north tower.

I don't know, I was just looking a little bit. Larry said it before I saw it. He said, "Holy shit." All of those fixed windows in the lobby were blown out. They were gone. He said it, and I was looking at it. He said, "We can't go out there." I don't remember why -- I knew why.

Q. The lobby of the hotel there?

A. No, the lobby of tower one, the north tower. We walked in the lobby. The long, fixed windows are blown out.

As soon as Larry says it -- I'm looking at the windows, and Larry says, "We can't go out there." I knew in my mind why, the debris coming down or people coming down. As soon as he said it, there was no doubt.

I quick looked to my left, because I know from '93 in that other incident, the bombing -- I looked to my left, and I could see there's four doors out of the south end of the lobby that go into the hotel. They're not really greatly marked, but you go through those doors.

I said, "We'll go this way." I said something about the hotel. [redacted]

When we first go through those doors, it's dark in there. There's no lights, and the hallway is dark. We're walking through. As we're going through, you could see light at the other end. I'm walking through, and I could see these concrete columns, big concrete columns, three feet, maybe even larger than that, maybe up to four feet in diameter. I just made note of it.

Then as you come out of that, there's a circular area. It's like a rotunda. I remember the ceiling was higher there. The columns were all around that, all around the walls. Again, I said they weren't there in '93, those towers. I just said in the back of my mind they must have put those things in when they rebuilt this place, because that's about the area where the bomb went off.

At the end where those columns were and then -- the columns ended, and just before you

walked into the lobby -- we were looking toward the lobby, and I could see the glass windows, see the high ceiling of the lobby.

I could see a bunch of people, Fire Department chief -- I could see back of the coat "Deputy Chief Galvin," so I know it's Tommy Galvin from the 3rd Division. His back is to us. The rest of the people are facing us.

I don't know if I say something to Larry or just point to him. In my mind the intention was to go over and see Galvin and find out where the command post was, exactly where the command post was.

As we were walking towards him, about, I'd say, six to eight feet from Galvin, and a lot of guys are looking at him, but the one guy, Freddie Scheffold from the 12th Battalion, he looked at me, I looked at him. You know how you make eye contact with somebody and you acknowledge each other, it's just that nod, I know he sees me, at that exact moment I can feel -- or hear the noise first. I hear a noise. Right after that noise, you could feel the building start to shudder, tremble, under your

feet.

Somebody said to me, "What's going on?" I said, "What's going on? The fucking building -- the goddamn building is coming down." I actually said, "The fucking building is coming down. This goddamn building is coming down." I knew what was coming down. The building I was in was coming down.

I looked real quick forward. I didn't like that option because it was a big, high lobby, a lot of glass. I figured it was not that well supported. I remember seeing those columns. Whoever was next to me -- I thought it was Telesca, but it ended up being Myers, Brian Myers. He said, "Where are we going?" I turned and said, "We're going back to those columns."

I remember taking a few steps and trying to run, and you're either thrown or blown off your feet. I remember I ended up my face was right up against the wall, a column was right near my left shoulder, a big column. That's it.

It was a terrible noise. Besides the building shuddering, the sound was horrendous. To me it sounded like steel cutting through

steel. That's how I explain it. You're laying there. There's stuff hitting you. I had my right hand up behind my head and neck, and I just said let it be merciful, because you think it's all over. There's stuff hitting you but nothing -- the stuff is debris flying around.

Q. Nothing --

A. Nothing hits you. The next thing you --

Q. Somebody compared it to as pelting you.

A. Yeah, but it wasn't heavy.

Q. No.

A. It was like stone, stuff hitting you and everything. I thought it was ceiling tiles, the suspended ceiling and shit like that.

All of a sudden the noise stops. There's no more shaking. Later after a couple seconds, you listen. My hearing is not great, but I think it's pretty acute at this point. I'm really listening. I don't hear anything else going on, it's all right.

I was just ready to say something or try to get up. Actually I think I tried to push myself up a little bit, and right away I know my

left shoulder, my arm, is hurting. I laid there for a couple seconds. Then I hear somebody cough behind me.

As soon as I hear somebody cough, I yell, "Who is that?" Again, I always think it's Telesca, but it's not; it's Myers. I said, "Who's that?" He recognizes my voice. "Chief, where are you?" I could hear his voice. I know he's behind me.

I have my hand light, the chief's hand light. I knew it was on. I could see it was on. I put it up over my head. It was dusty. I started moving the light. "Can you see the light?" He said, "No, I don't see the light." "What the hell's going on?" I couldn't figure if it was debris or just the dust.

I said, "I'll keep moving the light." I do it a few more times. He said, "Oh, I see you now. I'll be right there." In a real short time, he's next to me. I said, "You've got to help me get up," because I couldn't push myself up. I tried to push myself up. I wouldn't put pressure on my shoulder. He helps me up to my knees.

As soon as I get to my knees, I realize my helmet's missing. I said, "Do me a favor. My helmet's got to be right here. Just find my helmet. My glasses are gone." He said, "I don't have a light." I hand him the light. I just stayed there kneeling, feeling around a little bit. He wasn't gone long. When he was back, he gave me my helmet. I said "Thanks," because I was afraid something now was going fall and hit me in the head and kill me.

He gets me up to my feet. He said, "What the hell happened?" We turn around, and maybe, again, six, eight feet behind from where we left -- I don't think we traveled -- it was floor to ceiling debris. It was just solid, from as high up as I can look, which is pretty high at this point. It's floor to ceiling debris. I'm looking at that.

I think Brian hears it first, these voices, before I do. I was looking at the debris and looking around at the light. He gave me the light back. I think he yells, and I don't know if it was Telesca or Larry -- no, I think Larry answered. We start to move towards him.

I could hear some guy yelling, "Mayday, mayday," on the radio, handy talky, "There's been a collapse. We're trapped." I looked. It was Eddie Henry from the 40 Battalion. I recognized him. He was yelling.

We get to Larry. By the time we get to Larry, the next thing I know, all four of us are there: Larry's there, Mike Telesca, Brian and myself.

I think Larry said something about -- because nobody was answering Henry. He said something like "Nobody's answering. You should knock it off." I said, "Larry, let him yell. Maybe somebody will hear him. Nobody knows we're here."

Larry turned one way, I turned another, and there was a lieutenant there. There was a whole bunch of debris. I remember him saying, "Hey, Chief, Chief, there's a guy trapped in here." He disappears through a small hole in the debris. I tried to follow him. As soon as I tried to follow him, that stuff hit my left shoulder. It was like, whew, stop, don't attempt that again.

I back up, and Larry is coming again. Larry said, "What's up?" I said, "Larry, this guy says he's got a guy in here trapped." I told the guy, I said, "I can't get through there." I turned around and I said, "Just keep talking to the guy. Find out his name," you know, all that stuff.

I turn around, and Larry is behind me. He said, "What's going on?" I said, "There's a guy in there trapped." I said, "I tried to get through. I can't. I hurt my arm, and I can't get through." He said, "All right. Let me go."

I said, "If you're going through there, we trade lights." I remember he had the fireman's light. He had a hand light. I had the big chief light. I said, "Here, take that light. You go through there. I'm going to go" -- as soon as I said "Go," he said, "Whoa, whoa, we've got to stay together." I said, "Larry, we're still fucking trapped in this building." I said, "You try to get the guy out. I'm going to go back the way we came in and see if we can get a way out." I said, "But I'll come back to you. If you find the guy, come to me. That's what

we'll do."

I leave. It's collapsing. When I get away from this area in this hallway again, it's like a lean-to. But just before I get to the hallway, I find a door. I open the door. It's a storage room. I quick look in. There's no outlets.

I remember feeling cold air. I thought in the back of my mind "Close the door." If you stay to the left, you can bend over and walk up this hallway. Down to the right where it's like a lean-to, you have to crawl. I stayed along the wall. I go along.

All of a sudden there's this guy yelling, and there's a door open and it's a civilian. I asked who he is, and he says something about hotel security. He said, "I've got a door. I think it's an exit." I said, "Where does it go?" He said, "Down." I said, "Down where?" He said, "Well, I think you have to go down one or two flights."

I said, "Whoa, we're not going down anyplace." He said, "Give me a light." I said, "Nice fucking try. You're not getting my light

either." I said, "Stay here. We're not going changing levels. We have other people at this level. We're going to leave together."

Then I continue up. I go up and find where we came in, but the rolled-up gates come down and they're solid, metal. I have no radio. So I take the hand light, and I bang on the door. I bang on the gate. I wait, hoping somebody will answer.

A little while, nothing. I banged some more. I did that like three or four times. I realized there's nobody answering on the other side, and I can't keep staying here. I don't have the radio. I don't remember who had the radio. I think Larry had it. I'm not sure. I had no radio. You can't hear anything.

After three or four times banging, I said this is no good. I start to turn back to go back towards where Larry and everybody was. But as I go back, I noticed a door on my right I didn't see on the way out, because I was focused on those gates.

I opened that door up. It might have said exit on it -- I'm not sure -- or a light. I

opened the door. Ten feet in, there's another door. I quick open that one, go to the next one, and there's a third door. I said "Oops, this is no good." Too many doors. I go back.

Just as I go back, there's a civilian, and I don't know if it's the same guy I met the first time or not. Again, civilian clothes. I said, "You stay by this first door. You keep the door open. I'm going through the second door. There's another door. If I start yelling, you just yell." I didn't know if I was going through a maze or not -- "You just yell."

As soon as I opened the third door, there's a hole in the wall. I could see out onto West Street. This is a block wall, and the hole is about, I've got to say, four and a half to five feet off the ground. But you could see out. All you could see is the dust and debris at that point. I don't see anybody out there.

There's a door to the right. I opened that door. Then I could see a door that says exit, another door. I said screw this. I run back. Okay, I have a hole the wall. I have a door marked "exit." I run back. I start moving

back. There are civilians there. I start yelling, "We have an exit here." I tell them, "You keep yelling."

Just then Ed Henry comes. He's the first guy that gets there. So he goes back with me. I tell the guy, "Keep yelling." The guy starts yelling, "Come this way. We have a way out. We have a way out."

I went back with Ed Henry. He gets to the opening in the wall. I remember he yells a couple of maydays on the radio. Again, he's frustrated because he's yelling and there's nobody answering.

I said, "Ed, there's a door there." We open that door. He goes down. He leaves me. He goes down, and I watch him. He pushes and opens eight inches or so and it won't move anymore. I said, "Shoot." I said, "There is still nobody there." I said, "I can't really help too much." I turned around and said I would put my back against the door, you push. It opens to maybe 12 inches, but it stops like dead. That's not going to work.

We go back. He's still yelling the

mayday. I said, "Ed, use the hand light. Use the light." He's shaking it back and forth. In a few minutes he comes -- again, he's frustrated. Now more people are -- no, they're not there yet. I can hear the guy yelling. I can hear people coming.

Ed Henry gets a chair, and he climbs on this chair. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to go over the wall and see if I can get the door open." He's climbing up already.

I thought, "Oh, shit, he's got no helmet on." I said, "If you're going over the wall" -- and I give him my helmet. I'm afraid if he goes over the wall and something hits him in the fucking head he won't be able to open the door for us.

He no sooner goes over the door and disappears. He goes to the right. I can't see him anymore. I said to myself, "That wasn't smart, giving up your helmet." I knew why I did it.

The next thing I know, Larry's there. These two officers -- oh, Brian Myers is there.

I thought Mike was there, but he wasn't [redacted] I don't know what happened, but he wasn't there. I know now. But he wasn't with us. And the two guys.

The one guy said, "Who are you?" I said something about the guy that was trapped. Larry said, "Yeah. This is the guy. We have him." I said, "Where are you from? A company?" He said, "No. We're from rescue school. We shouldn't be here." I know I had a feeling we weren't supposed to be here either, because nobody knows we're here.

And there were a couple civilians. I think maybe in general between Ed Henry, his aide, Brian, I figured there was about ten people there at most. That's all that came from the area that survived.

I turn around, and I could see somebody with a white helmet walking, which to me looks like he's walking towards us. I keep watching. He's getting closer. I don't have my glasses. My glasses are gone. He's not too far away, and I realize it's Ray Downey.

Larry had talked to one of the

civilians, and the guy had some kind of problem. I didn't know if he was hurt. I didn't know if he had a heart condition. I remember Larry saying this guy said he can't -- we're going to go out, if we have to go over the wall. This guy said something about he couldn't, he needed help.

Just then Ray came. I was talking to him. We were talking through the hole in the wall. He said, "You're not going to believe what happened. This guy has got to get out of here." Larry comes over. Larry's talking to him. I backed up a little bit. I think Larry or Ed, one of them, said, "Let's go. We've got to start getting out of here."

I turned first and said, "Larry, I'll stay here, because I'm going to have trouble." He said, "Knock it off. You're the first guy we're getting out of here because you can't take care of yourself."

We go over there, and I think he wants to lift me up. I see the chair there that Henry had pushed over to the side. I said, "Grab the chair and put it to the back, turn it backwards." I stood on the chair backwards, maybe stood on

the back of the chair, and then Brian Myers and Larry boosted me up on the wall. I swung my legs around.

Ray is there and he wanted to grab me. I said, "No." I just put my right arm to his right shoulder, he put his arm up, and I slid down the wall. He kept saying to me, "Just walk away from the building as fast as you can and head towards Feehan and Ganci. Can you see them?" He pointed to them. I could see just two white helmets way across West Street, almost by the curb. I could see them.

I started to maneuver around. The sidewalk wasn't too bad with debris. There were a couple rigs there. I remember seeing 10 Truck. That's where the sidewalk comes in and curves in. That rig was partially turned in like that. I remember seeing the rig there.

I saw 10 on the ladder. I saw 10 Truck on the ladder. I walked behind that in front of a pumper. I decided to walk across West Street. There's all that dust like a moonscape. As you walk, every once in a while -- on dust, I didn't realize it then but what you're doing is the dust

is covering that stainless steel. When you have stainless steel and dust, it's like a shuffleboard. When I got that quick movement, my arm would go, "Oh, don't do that fucking move anymore, stupid."

I'm moving across that. I'm trying to pick my way. It was pretty slow in the beginning. I see somebody with a black helmet coming from my right. I just tried to keep moving. I'm focused on those two white helmets. I keep going. I get across the street.

About a third of the way over, the guy with the black helmet comes. I don't realize who it was. I know now it was Al Fuentes, because we talked about it. I never realized. I guess I was so focused on getting to Ganci and Feehan.

He helps me about two-thirds of the way. After about two-thirds of the way across West Street, most of that debris stops. It's easier to maneuver. He leaves me.

I get to Ganci and Feehan. "Just tell them how many people there are. Who's there? Where were you? How many people survived?" I said there was about 10, maybe 11 people where we

are. "Anybody buried?" I said there were two guys that we found. One guy was buried. One kid had dug himself out, one lieutenant, and the other guy, they went back with Larry and got out. I said that's the only two they said they heard, because they said there's nobody else they heard. All I saw was debris from floor to ceiling. We were just trapped in this little corner of the building I'll show you on the diagram later.

Okay. Ganci turns around and says to me, "Can you move on your own or do you need help?" I said, "No." He had his hands full. I said, "I'll move on my own." Just as I'm leaving, he said, "Where's Ray? Where are you guys?" I turn around, look back at the hotel. Again, you can't see -- I don't see clear without my glasses, but it's still dusty. I could see Ray's helmet. I could see the white helmet.

I said, "You see the helmet?" He said, "Where? Where?" I see it. It's right where the building bends almost in the hotel. I said, "Right there. That's Ray. Okay. Larry and them are on the inside of that wall." All right, he knows where they are now. He said, "You take

off."

I think it was around then I opened my coat up and I stick my hand into the coat, close the coat up. I'm looking at debris. It's better to stay up on the sidewalk, on the sidewalk across the street, move along. Then at the point where the roadway moves in, it goes under where the bridge goes across.

At that point it clears up a little bit, and I move more to the right onto the street, off the sidewalk, move into the street. I get under the roadway --

Q. The pedestrian bridge?

A. The pedestrian bridge. I wanted to stop, because, one, I knew I was protected from debris coming down. But something in the back of my mind said, "Don't fucking stop because you're not going to stop moving." So I didn't stop.

I walked a little bit further. If I had to guess, it would have been a tower ladder I saw. I saw Rescue 1's rig on my right. I remember seeing it. It wasn't really damaged, nothing from the first collapse. It had a lot of dust all over it. I saw it there. Nobody by the

rig.

Just passing that, I'm walking. I think there's a tower ladder to my right. I saw a guy walking. It's Joe Angelini from Rescue 1. I do a double-take, because he didn't have a Rescue 1 helmet on. He had bunker gear and everything else on.

I said, "Joe, did you see Rescue 1?" He said, "No, I'm trying to find it." I didn't realize he had been on light duty and came from SOC over at the TAC unit. I said, "How much further is Vesey Street?" because that's what Pete told me. Pete said, "Get to Vesey Street, and there's ambulances there. I said, all right, that's where I'm trying to get to.

Joey said, "You will see the collapse units parked up there." It wasn't that much further. I remember seeing Rescue's 3 collapse rig. I remember seeing the Volvo on the front. The Volvo cab was facing West. That was the rig -- I walked in front of it.

I went up there, looked around, and I saw no ambulances. I saw a lot of people around. I remember seeing somebody in a white helmet. I

don't think it was one of ours. It could have been EMS, just because I don't recognize who it was.

I remember asking the question, "Where are the ambulances?" Somebody said, "Oh, two or three more blocks." My famous quote is "You've got to be fucking kidding me" at this point because I made it this far and two or three more blocks at this point doesn't seem like an option.

Somebody off to my left, I don't know if he touched me on the shoulder or I heard his voice. I turned a little bit to my left. He said, "Chief, you don't have to go there. Just go west. Go west." He's pointing. "Go west on Vesey. There's a triage area up there much closer."

I start walking west. I don't think I get more than 100 feet up past the curb line heading west on that street, and the first thing I hear is this roar and people screaming. I have a chance to look over my left shoulder.

As I'm looking over my left shoulder, I see a shadow coming towards me. I thought it was another plane. I didn't think the building was

coming down. I thought it was another plane. I couldn't believe it.

I tried to run. I couldn't run. I moved as fast as I could. I knew there were people running past me; I could feel it. The next thing, you're again blown, thrown off your feet.

At this point now I'm trying to protect my left arm. I'm using my right arm to protect it. It's in the coat. I drove both my knees into the ground. I'm still not putting my hand out, and I smacked my face right into the ground. I bounced off the ground. Oh, shit. Look up. Just before it turns pitch-black, all I can remember seeing was blood all over the ground, laying there. The next thing it goes pitch-black. You can't see anything.

All I knew is there was a chain link fence right next to me. I tried to, again, turn my face, nose, over towards the fence a little bit. It didn't make a difference because within half a minute or so I couldn't breathe. There was blood in my nose, and all that concrete turned to like cement.

I got my hand over my head again. I can't even believe this is happening. This is the second. What is going on? I can't believe they didn't shoot the plane. I thought it was a plane. Why didn't they fucking shoot this plane out of the air.

I put my hand over my head. Again, I think it's all over. Let it be merciful a second time. I said this is unbelievable. I could feel things actually flying through the air. I can't hear them. I actually feel like pressure changing. I know there's shit flying through the air. I said something is going to whack me. This is going to be over. I'm laying there.

All of a sudden somebody again behind me -- I could feel them not far from my right foot. I can hear the voice, "I can't breathe. I've got to get up." I said, "Don't get up." First off, it's pitch-black. There's no way you can tell where you're going. Two, I feel these things flying through the air. This guy, "Let me get up," you're going to get fucking killed. I said, "Just stay on the ground, put your face to the ground and try to breathe the best you can.

Don't get up."

A couple minutes or so, I hear the guy saying the same thing. I said, "Don't get up. Just stay down." To me it seems like five minutes. I don't know, in the back of my mind, how long. But it's dark for a long time. It's hard to breathe. You could hardly even breathe.

The next thing you know, you could see off the ground a little bit of light. You see it just starting to lift. Okay. He said something, and I said, "Let it lift a little bit more." Just as it lifted a little bit more, he said, "I'm out of here." I said, "Whoa, whoa, you've got to do me a favor. You've got to help me get up," because I couldn't get up. I couldn't even move at this point.

Whoever it was, he came up -- I remember somebody grabbed the back of the coat, my turnout coat, helped me to my feet. I'm on my feet, and that's it, he finished his commitment. I see this guy gone. I think it's a civilian, only because the only thing I can really see is a guy with civilian clothes and a white shirt running, no turnout gear. He's gone.

I hobble out of there with two of my knees killing me and everything else. I hobble down the street. The first thing I see is I could see Louie Garcia. I could see the chain link fence, the lot on the right, and then there's a building up there.

I see Louis Garcia. I'm talking to him. He said, "Oh, God, Brian, you're alive." He told me to go inside, there's EMS in there. I go inside. It's like a deli or something, some kind of food establishment. EMS guys in there.

I was looking for water. I saw a cooler, and I said, "Give me water." I'm trying to drink it. I had these guys telling me, "Don't swallow it." "No shit, Sherlock, give me the fucking water." I was just trying to drink it, spit it out, drink it, spit it out. I can't breathe through my nose. I'm doing that.

Just then Louis comes back in, and Joe Callan. I remember Chief Callan sat right opposite me. I heard him say, "Oh, Brian, you're alive. Oh, my God, you're alive." I looked at him. He said, "I was with Father Mychal. He was right next to me. He's dead." [redacted]

[redacted]

An EMS guy came over because Garcia said something, he looked at a couple of things, he went to touch my arm. I remember him saying, "We've got to get him out of here. I can't treat him." I don't know if he came with me or he got somebody else. Two people walked me around the corner. We were going around this building to the harbor side, and that's where the triage area was.

They did a quick triage. They take me in the lobby. There was a captain or a chief EMS there. I said, "You've got to get this fucking triage -- you've got to move this area. It's too close." I'm thinking if this is another plane they can't -- in my mind now, there's another one coming behind it.

They triaged me. After a while I guess there's nobody coming in. One of the bosses came in and said, "Get all the firemen. Get them." Some man comes over and said they're going to put me in a chair stretcher. By now they had put a sling on my arm, a cravat type sling.

I got another bottle of water from some civilian, because I'm still trying to wash everything out. That was it. They put me in a ambulance.

There was a captain -- they were laying him down. They said, "We have to put more than one person in the ambulance." There aren't many ambulances there. I saw the jump seat. I said I wanted to sit up so I could control and hold my arm. So I went up in the front in the jump seat.

They said, "Chief, can you open your legs up? They put the gurney or the stretcher in, and there was a captain. I remember holding hands, talking. I remember him saying he was covering 22 Engine. I don't remember his name. He was under the bridge when the collapse occurred, and he thinks he's the only guy in his company that survived. I know they were talking about him having broken bones in at least the arm and leg on one side.

They put a couple more civilians in the bus. When the bus door was closing, I remember the guy saying, "Where are we going?" I heard them saying, "All firemen go to Bellevue,

Bellevue." That was it.

Two things I left out earlier, or one thing, I guess. When I'm by Ganci, I can hear -- it's got to be on his radio, because I don't have a handy talky. I hear a guy giving a mayday, "Mayday, mayday, mayday." He identifies. He goes right through the whole procedure.

This is Ladder 4 O.V. identify yourself. Mike Brennan, a young guy I know. I don't think Pete answers him, but whoever answers the mayday, I hear they said, "Where are you?" Ladder 4, they were in the hotel -- I remember him saying that -- and he's trapped.

That's the point I'm leaving and Pete's telling me, "You get going. Head north to the area where the ambulances are."

That's really the only handy talky message I heard other than trying to give maydays earlier. All we had were the visuals.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. That's it.

Q. With the map, where do you think the hole was?

A. What hole?

Q. That you came out of.

A. Oh.

Q. See where it says the World Trade Center three, Vista Hotel?

A. I don't know if it's the Vista anymore.

Q. No, it's the Vista International Marriott.

A. Marriott.

See where the bend is?

Q. Yeah.

A. It's past that bend, the end of the building.

Q. Right.

A. Maybe 10, 12 feet from the end of the building back towards that. It's on the flat section.

Q. You walked directly across to Two World Financial Center?

A. I probably moved diagonally a little. See where that red line is?

Q. Right.

A. Because, as I said, remember that's where that little bend is. I walked behind 10 Truck. 10 Truck is partially into that, nose in,

because when you come off West, you can pull in.

Q. Right.

A. Bent in. I walked behind them.

Q. So you wound up --

A. Then when I walked behind them, from there, then I go straight across. So on this map I'm probably heading -- yeah, right --

Q. This isn't exactly. The pedestrian bridge on this map is too far north.

A. But I'm walking towards that Two World Financial Center.

Q. Yeah, okay.

A. Because I could see that building. I could see it. I thought I saw ambulances over there. I even thought one of them flipped over.

Q. Okay.

A. There were big pieces of steel laying out in the street long ways. I remember seeing that.

They're not on the sidewalk, but they're right by the sidewalk, because when I leave them I realize the sidewalk is right there.

Q. They're above the sidewalk.

A. What?

Q. They were on that grassy knoll on top of the sidewalk.

A. No, no. They're right by where the sidewalk starts, right in the street.

Q. In the street.

A. Pete and Feehan are way across not too many feet, because I don't realize it when I'm talking to them, but when I leave them I see the sidewalk. It must have been a couple feet.

Oh, when I leave Pete, when I turn, I turn around and I go behind him when we're looking for Ray, to point to him. That's the first time that I now see what happened. Now I see --

Q. Off to your right.

A. I could see the parts of the steel still standing. I could see the steel cut through the hotel. Before I never saw what happened. I didn't know what happened. Now I know the tower came down. To me it looks like 100, 150 feet of steel is sticking up. But there are other pieces I could see where they cut right through the hotel.

In my own mind I think everything -- we

got in that -- we were probably in that area, just that little area where the bend is. From there where that bend is, that's where we are. That's the piece that survived. I think everything south of that is gone; maybe not. But I think everything south of me was completely gone, at that point.

Q. Yeah.

A. I walk across, see them, then walk up. You're right, this is further back.

Q. Right.

A. It bends in under here.

Q. Where the Winter Garden is?

A. Yeah. It bends in under there. When it bends in towards the Winter Garden is where I come in off the curb and then move up.

Q. I know they've got you on videotape over here.

A. Okay.

Q. You were talking to Al.

A. I don't know who I talked to.

Q. I know, I know. We were all in multishock.

A. I don't know who I talked --

Q. They've got you on videotape here on the right on the part I saw, on this corner. Then you're saying you went up this street.

A. Now I go this way, because whoever it is, when I get here and I said there's no ambulances here -- it's not a big, long conversation. It's like, "Where the fuck are the ambulances?"

Q. Exactly.

A. They said, "Two or three blocks north." I said, "No, I can't walk two or three more blocks." So I go here. I bet you I don't get -- 100 feet up here when this thing starts to go. I don't really know.

In my own opinion I thought what happened was one of the things that made me survive the second one was I got far enough that this building shielded this, the corner. I got just far enough up that corner of that building was shielded from debris.

Q. Yeah. Okay.

A. About 100 feet over here. After you see me here, maybe 100 feet from there, that's when I hear that noise. You don't have it marked

here, but there's a building here.

Q. A building there, yeah.

A. This is a lot. There's a chain link fence and a lot.

Q. Right.

A. This is the building. It has a deli here, and the entrance to the building is over here on the side by the harbor. That's where the triage area is.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. That concludes the interview. It is approximately 1225 hours.

Thank you, Brian.

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File No. 9110432

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN BUTLER

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 8, 2002. The time is 12:12. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter John Butler, Firefighter 1st, assigned to Engine 6 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the engine office of Engine 6. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On the morning of September 11, Engine 6 was taking up from Box 201 at approximately 8:40 and as I turned around by the Brooklyn Bridge I observed a blackened area in Tower number 1. The engine officer of 6 Engine, Lieutenant Thomas O'Hagan, transmitted a second alarm. We came back to quarters and I picked up two additional firemen who were waiting outside the quarters and we arrived at number 1 World Trade Center at approximately 8:47.

I immediately decided or I was gonna go into high pressure. I kept -- one of the firemen I picked up, who was an engine chauffeur, with me to assist in the stretch of the line across West Street because of the traffic, we hooked up into the

standpipe and I put Engine 6 into high pressure and I notified Battalion 1 that we were in high pressure.

Members of Engine 6, at this time I don't know where they entered the building. I heard one communication regarding a Mayday situation which was transmitted by Marine 6, that they thought they had observed a major collapse of Tower number 2. While we were operating at this spot, we were there for approximately one hour before the second plane hit Tower number 2 and up until that time myself and the other member of Engine 6 were unaware that a plane had already hit Tower number 1. We were under the impression that there was some kind of a fire up there, an explosion. We thought it was like an air conditioning room within the building. At no time did I hear any communications about a plane hitting.

When a second plane struck Tower number 2, I observed a large fire ball traveling from south to north. At that time I took the other fireman, Fireman Robert Emans, with me and we proceeded to run up West Street. We ran approximately one block and then we stopped to try to figure out what exactly had happened and some short time later Tower

number 1, with the radio antenna on it, started to pancake. At that time we proceeded to run some more up West Street. A cloud that ensued from the building collapse, when it hit the ground picked up great momentum and it was right behind us all the way up West Street. We ran approximately five blocks until the cloud subsided.

We gathered our thoughts and at that time we proceeded over to 7 Engine on Duane Street to see if we could find out exactly what happened. Nobody had any additional information. We then proceeded from 7 Engine back to our own quarters on Beekman Street.

At that time, I was in communications with Deputy Chief Hill of the first division and he instructed me to be the liaison to Beekman Hospital to coordinate information about how many members were being treated, extent of the injury, company identification. I did that for approximately four hours until I was relieved by Chief Oehm of the first battalion.

At that point, we rejoined the members of Engine 6 up at the site on Broadway and Fulton Street. The only thing I can say about this whole incident, it was a complete surprise. Like I said

earlier, at no time did we know that a plane had hit Tower number 1. We must -- I must have observed the tower approximately two minutes after the first plane had hit and at no time did we know that a plane had hit. I heard no communications to evacuate the building. I was in communications with members of Engine 6. They were on the 27th floor, proceeding upward. I heard communications from a squad company that informed them that it was an hour's climb to 30.

The only other thing I have to say is probably in the future modification should be made about truck companies responding into incidents like this. When they can observe from a distance the height of the building and the location of the fire, they know they are not going to use their ladders so they should just drop the members off in front of the building and reposition their rigs at a safe distance away from the building to avoid being hit with debris or falling bodies or as in this case, a total collapse of the building.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you, John. It's 12:50 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110433

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRENDAN LOWREY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department Safety Battalion. I'm here to interview Brendan Lowrey, firefighter 1st of Engine 35, in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. Brendan, just tell me what you recall from September 11.

A. Okay. As we were getting close to the site, we heard on the department radio, while we were still in the rig, we started hearing all kinds of collapse reports, maydays. Guys were actually on the department radio saying they were running out of air. Then we heard -- finally we heard the dispatcher say, "Manhattan to command center." Nothing. "Manhattan to command center." Nothing. Then finally said, "Manhattan to anybody at the scene." Again nothing. So that's when we -- we really didn't know the whole building had come down. We thought maybe the top.

So we got off the rig and we picked up our stuff and started -- we were on West Street, walking south. We were reporting to Vesey and West. We got off the rig, we started walking south to the command

center when a Police Officer stopped us and said, "hold up, guys. I have helicopters --" he was on the cell phone "-- on the cell phone here." And he says "When this one comes down, it's coming right for us." Meaning coming up West Street.

So we kind of delayed and, you know, looked at each other and then a chief -- we got down a little bit further, I think, and a chief told us, "okay, guys. Hang out here for a minute." And I would say less -- less than -- I don't know. It's hard to tell the time. It was probably maybe a minute or two minutes. Very brief after that the second one came down. And we watched it come down and, you know, it was coming towards us. We didn't know what it was. We didn't know if it was a building. It was black. You know, so we didn't know if it was heat, the building, whatever. It was just a huge black cloud that was chasing us, you know. So there we are, we're ducking for cover and the cloud passed us and then --

Q. You ducked behind a car?

A. What happened really was I fell down and I got caught in a stampede. It was like a doorway or something on West Street, you know. So the thing

went passed us. We waited a couple of minutes. Surprisingly the smoke, the black cleared within a few minutes and it was just the grey. So we figured we have to, you know, go back down there and see what's going on. You know, see if we could find anything.

So we made our way down West Street and our particular company got as far as where the walkway had collapsed by the command center.

Q. The north walkway?

A. The north walkway, right. So we did most of our operating around there. There were some pockets of fire. We actually found a pumper that was operable. A lot of them were crushed and everything. And we were, you know, shooting some water -- the pockets of fire were like 8 stories of a building. You know, stuff like that. I threw up a couple of ladders to those smaller Trade Center -- the black ones.

Q. There were some people in the customs building I think there was?

A. Yeah. So there was stuff like that, you know. So we did some searches. Then they told us they wanted us to go down in the garage. Like

the -- there was like an underpass. I guess it's like a garage going into underneath. So we started walking down there and we only got in about 30 yards. It was just sealed off so we came back out.

You know, we operated down there for a while. You know, we couldn't -- we weren't doing much but just, you know. Okay. You want to ask me some questions?

Q. No. Do you have anything else to add? You can keep going.

A. No. I want to think about it a little more. I don't really think we did much more than that.

Q. Okay.

(Recess taken.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. One other thing. The only company I recognized that's sitting in my head was 5 Truck. It was about 30 yards north of that walkway that was collapsed and if had its aerial extended into the --

Q. The Customs building?

A. -- Customs building. The west side of the Customs building. And that had been pretty well

crushed and the ladder was bent and it looked like guys had gone up into that area and I didn't see any.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Brendan. The time now is 12:02 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110434

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN GORMAN

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: This is January 9, 2002. The time is 2:32 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion, the Fire Department of City of New York, conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Kevin Gorman from Ladder 22 in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. Kevin, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11.

A. We responded down West Street, parked the rig, you know, got extra cylinders and stuff, headed for the buildings.

We were stopped before the north tower by an EMS guy, myself and John Malley. Pointed to jumpers. So the other guys had gotten a little ahead of us. He was telling us get blankets for this jumper and stuff, but there were plenty of jumpers, so we just passed him.

Now we are on West Street, and we hear an urgent message. We were between the two towers. At that time, I would say we heard an urgent message from OEM, it said, where OEM informs us that there is a third plane en route, pull back to the command post.

So we pulled back to the command post, which

was the parking garage there, and lined up with everybody, stood there, waited until we got orders. The captain -- I think was Mike ^ inaudible -- came up and ordered all truck companies to one side and then brought us all to the south tower.

We headed down underneath the south pedestrian walkway, stayed under there because of all the debris, and bodies and stuff, and then one by one we kind of ran into the hotel, you know, looking up, we ran into the hotel lobby entrance, or I think it was the restaurant entrance.

Wherever it was, it was facing, I think, south, so it was right near the south pedestrian bridge. Ran into there, got into the lobby there, opened up our jackets, got some water from some of the people that worked there and stuff, employees, and were waiting further instructions.

Lieutenant went to, I believe, Chief Galvin -- I'm not sure who it was -- got our orders to go to the 77th Floor and above of the south tower, headed out of the lobby of the hotel, which in the hotel there were other firemen. I don't recall from what companies. Not too many guys I recognized, so it must have been probably Brooklyn companies.

I saw Joe Rivelli from 25 truck, and then we headed out of the hotel lobby, passed Chief Galvin, and were, as far as we knew, heading for the south tower, passed another couple of chiefs walking through a walkway, made a right turn, were heading towards what we believed to be the south tower. There are some discrepancies. I don't know if you heard. We are not sure of exactly if we were in between or -- went through this other lobby, doorways, walked into that lobby.

Everything was dark. Water was coming down and everything like that, and then the shit hit the fan. Just everything started rumbling, a lot of noise. Turned around, went back the way I came, got probably five steps through the doorway I had just came. I don't even know if I got to that, because there was a walk -- there were bars in front of that that weren't there any more, got knocked off my feet and sent -- was buried under some stuff and pushed across the floor, and after everything stopped dug ourselves out, put the flashlight on, yelled for each other and then exited the building.

I couldn't even say which way. Towards air. You couldn't really see anything.

Q. Did your whole company get together or --

A. Everybody but the lieutenant ran into each other, so we all saw each other. We got underneath by this glass partition. One guy went to look for the lieutenant. We stood there for a couple of minutes and then exited the building.

Q. Then what happened? Where did you go from there?

A. Ran outside. We ended up being right by where the command post was, went over some wall outside, a cement wall, went across the street, made radio transmissions. I was speaking with Lieutenant Reilly, my officer. He was asking me who I saw.

I said I saw everyone, and since I got out of the building, I've seen -- and I said the names of the members that I saw from our company. I saw Lieutenant Wall from 47 engine, another fireman from 47 engine right out on West Street there, and then we stood there, waited.

We were talking on the radio. He was trying to make sure that -- he was looking for the one member of 22 that went looking for him, so we were trying to get radio transmissions with each other, and then we started heading north towards the rig.

Q. But that was after the first collapse, right?

A. Yeah.

Q. So what happened?

A. Now we are by the rig for the second collapse.

Q. On West Street?

A. Yeah, and there were guys working on me. I had a cut on my head. Fernando Camacho had a cut on his head. Guys were giving us water, wet rags to put on our head, and we were standing there, and there was a cop I knew who came by and gave me a drink of water, and then as he was standing there, he said, "Aviation just reported that the north tower is leaning." I said, "Which way is it leaning?" He said,"This way."

So we started to turn around walking. John Malley, who was right behind me, I turned around for him, because he was doing something, either putting his coat on or something, and as I was looking at him I heard the explosion, looked up, and saw like three floors explode, saw the antenna coming down, and turned around and ran north.

Q. About how long would you say it was from when the police officer told you it was leaning?

A. Within 30 seconds.

Q. Did you know if he had a lot of warning or did he just find out himself?

A. It was my personal opinion that because they -- as I was going a little north towards the rig, they were coming this way, and they all seemed to be hustling out of the way, even before he got to me. So there was a group of cops that hustled north before he got to me, so that crossed my mind, why is -- seeing they were -- you know, I don't know I was aware that even the south tower collapsed. I remember seeing, like, a hole in the hotel, down the middle, but I don't think I was aware that the south tower had collapsed.

Q. Now you went north, and you had the second collapse. What happened at this point? You got engulfed in smoke again?

A. In the ash. Went into the school that was there, washed my face off a little bit, washed my eyes out, came outside, trying to reach the officer again.

We all grouped up there right by that pedestrian bridge, Stuyvesant, I think.

Q. Yes, by Chambers Street or --

A. Yeah.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you very much. The time now is 2:39, and this concludes

File No. 9110435

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GERARD REILLY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is January 9th, 2002. The time is 2:15 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York conducting an interview with Lieutenant Gerald Reilly from Ladder 22.

Q. Jerry, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. Okay. We responded on the second fifth alarm for the south tower. When we got down there, we parked behind 25 Truck on West Street. We walked down and got to the command post. I don't know how long we were there, a few minutes. They had everybody line up behind the officer.

Oh, before we went to the command post, I saw Ladder 2, Freddie Ill, in front of the north tower. He was having his men run across one at a time because of the jumpers. I'm pretty sure they went in the north tower.

Then we went to the command post. They told us to line up in single file, everybody behind the officer, and they just sent us in. We were supposed to go to south tower. The last

person I saw there was Captain Fuentes. He was the last person outside I saw.

Then we walked down to Liberty Street to go under the overpass there because of the jumpers. I thought the hotel was the south tower. We ran across and went in the hotel lobby, and we couldn't find the command post. I don't know how long we were there, maybe 10 minutes.

We split up engines and trucks. I saw Ladder 24, because that was my old firehouse. I knew one guy working there. I was talking with them. I saw Engine 23, Charlie Gaborini. I think they went up in the elevators in the hotel.

Chief Galvin walked in and we went up for our assignment, and he gave us 75 and above in the south tower. I asked him, "Can I go up in these elevators?" He said no, we have to go out to the other building.

So we went outside, and there was a lot of debris falling. We walked around under a little underpass. We went across into the lobby. I thought it was the south tower, and three of the other guys working with me thought it was the

south tower, and two other guys think we're in the north tower.

So we probably were in the building maybe a minute in the lobby of the tower, whichever one we were in, and that's when it came down. But I thought it was an explosion in the hotel, because all the debris came down, it was pitch-black, the whole building shook.

I worked my way out to West Street. It ended up I had about eight civilians with me. I made contact with all the men in my company except for my chauffeur. I was missing my chauffeur. I had no visual contact; I made it on the handy talky. I accounted for them all, except for Steve Klee, the chauffeur.

So when I was outside, I got the civilians out to the street. When the smoke lifted, the dust and everything, I went back in looking for Steve, and I couldn't find him. When I came out again, I talked with Billy Wall, the lieutenant in 47 Engine, and he said he saw Steve Klee.

I guess we were standing in front of the north tower when that one collapsed -- oh,

before that, we were on Channel 3 on the radio frequency. It ended up that Steve Klee was on Channel 1. That's why we couldn't contact him.

But on Channel 3, a kid from 4 Truck -- it ended up his name was Brennan -- he was giving a mayday, and nobody was answering him. I talked with him, and I told him -- he didn't know where he was, what building, what floor.

I told him I thought it was a bomb in the hotel, because nobody said the building collapsed. I told him, "Just try to make your way down to the street and you can make your way out." So I talked to him for a few minutes, and then we were cut off. It was stepped on.

Then I was standing in front of the north tower when that collapsed. I heard the noise, looked up, saw the rumble. I was right on the north corner, the north part on West Street. When it started to fall, Billy Wall from 47 yelled "Run!" to his men.

We ran. I don't know how far I got, maybe half a block, three-quarters of a block. We dove behind a van. It was me, him, Jack Ginty from the union and some supervising dispatcher.

Then it became pitch-black again. Me and Billy Wall were using our mask for the other two guys. Then it started to lift, and we worked our way up West Street. We got all the way up north.

Then I had to account for the men again, which I eventually did. I was trying to let everybody know that now we're all accounted for, and nobody took a roll call, nobody did anything.

Anything else you need?

Q. No, that's good. Thank you, Jerry.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:21, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110436

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER GIAMMARINO

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 9, 2002. The time is 12:36, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Peter Giammarino, firefighter 2nd, from Engine 58 in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. Peter, just tell us what you remember from September 11.

A. Okay, chief. On our way downtown, I think it was somewhere in the 40s, we made a turn towards the west side to go down the west side. I believe we took the Westside Highway, and all the cops had their guns drawn, so we knew -- you know, we knew there was -- we knew beforehand, actually. After the second plane hit the south tower, we kind of knew it wasn't an accident.

So when we pulled up with all the rigs, I think we stopped about -- there was a pedestrian crossing. I think it was Vesey Street and West Street, and we had a couple of extra guys on the rig, so we grabbed everything that we could: Roll-ups, extra bottles, life-saving rope, Halligans, search rope, everything that we can carry, that we can think of,

which was pretty much everything, all the CFRD equipment.

And as we approached the towers -- I remember when we got off the rig, our lieutenant told us to stick together, so that was our main objective, to get into the building, if it's going to be a long operation, to stay together.

So when we got down towards the towers, we kind of got separated inadvertently, because there were jumpers, and they were pretty much landing right in front of us, and it was hazardous. That fireman from 216 -- I think it was from 216 -- that got hit by a jumper, he was right next to us, right close to us, so when he had gotten hit, somehow as a company, we split up.

Between that -- and there was -- the whole block I think was on fire. All the parked cars were on fire. There were a couple of firemen hooked up right to a hydrant fighting the car fires. I don't know what companies they were from, though. I didn't notice that.

So between -- basically we had to navigate ourselves into the building without getting hit by either the debris or jumpers, so we split up as a

company. So half of us went in and half of us remained outside, and then eventually we were able to get into the lobby of the Marriott.

We were there just a few minutes. I mean, when we first walked in, I saw some guys from 131 truck. I rotated through there, so I knew them, and one of the guys said to me that he had just heard that the Pentagon was bombed, be careful up there.

So we went into the lobby just a few feet towards the elevator banks, and our lieutenant said "Stand fast, open up your coats, cool off a few minutes, and I'm going to go see what we gotta do."

And it seemed like maybe it was a minute. It wasn't that long at all, and we heard this sound that kind of sounded like an airplane. We thought it was another airplane hitting the towers. That's exactly what it sounded like, you know, and it gradually got louder. And someone yelled, "It's coming towards the windows," like the front of the Marriott that might have been like an atrium or something like that.

So we basically -- we all ran for cover somewhere where we could, you know, just wherever we ended up. There was nowhere to go really. Then it got black, and there was a lot of wind, and stuff flying

all over, and then when everything stopped, we were trapped in there, and we had to negotiate our way out, so I was with two other guys from my company, and maybe one or two other firemen. I don't know what company they were from, though, and we found our way out, and we let some civilians out, and we heard a radio transmission from my lieutenant. I didn't have the radio that day.

Q. Lieutenant Nagel?

A. Lieutenant Nagel. He had made a radio transmission. He was giving a role call. He wanted to know where we were and who was with us. So it didn't sound like he was trapped or anything like that.

We thought -- the three of us thought that the rest of our company was out of the building, so we lost all radio transmissions, and then there was a Mayday given, so we didn't want to jump on the radio on top of that.

I think it was Fireman Brennan from 4 truck. He was saying that he was knocked unconscious, and he had no idea where he was. He gave that two or three times. He gave his name and his company and what had happened to him, and I later learned that he was in the lobby of the Marriott, and Lieutenant Nagel had

mentioned to the guys in the lobby that he was like 10 feet from him, so they were in that same area where the elevator banks were.

We also had a couple of chiefs from the 12th battalion in that area, too, Chief Marchbanks and Scheffold.

So after the south tower had come down, me and two other guys from the company had gotten out. Ansbro and Weber, and we were just trying to regroup. We didn't even know what had happened. I didn't even think the tower had come down, because when you look up at them, at a certain angle, one hides behind the other. Like at a certain angle, you don't realize that there's two there. That is what I thought I was looking at. I had no idea that it had come down, so I just couldn't focus at that time, you know. I couldn't really comprehend what had happened.

So somehow or another, we had got away from the debris field a little bit, and there were injured civilians and police, and we started assisting them, and then before you knew it, the other tower, the north tower, had come down or started -- it came down, and so then I realized really what had happened with the south tower.

Q. Where were you when the north tower came down?

A. When the north tower came down, we were by -- there were some boat slips. We were in that area, so when the north tower came down, we were over there, and just a few minutes later Mike Fitzpatrick, who was our chauffeur that day, he came. He hurt his leg, so he was like walking with a limp or he was favoring that one leg, and he had told us that we were missing Lieutenant Nagel and David McGovern.

At that time, we thought David was missing, because he was separated from all of us. I'm not sure when he got out after the north tower or the south tower came down, but there were three guys from 58 after the south tower that came down that were in the lobby in the Marriott trying to free Lieutenant Nagel, because he was trapped. He was in a tight spot, but he was okay, and they were working with 122 truck, and then another few minutes later the other members from the company came out, and we regrouped, and we went back into the lobby of the Marriott again, because we knew where our lieutenant was, so we were hoping that he was still in that void where he was.

So we were in there just for a few minutes

maybe and the chiefs pulled us out. They told us we had to get out, so we got out, and then later on we went back in again, and they pulled us out once more, and that was it. They said we lost radio transmissions, and we couldn't risk any members to go in there at that point, because the Marriott was leaning.

It turns out that it leaned for awhile until they knocked it down, but at that point, it was leaning, and they didn't want to put us in that risk of coming down on us.

That's basically it. Do you need anything after that?

Q. No, that's fine.

A. We did actually -- we heard that 288 -- there were some members from 58 that saw Squad 288.

When we were in the street with the fireman from 216 that had gotten hit, the other half of the company went in, and they had seen 288 in the lobby, and one of those guys was on the telephone, and I mean that -- I didn't see that. That's what they had told me, so he was calling someone before they went up whatever, and they were just a couple of minutes before us, ahead of us, and I think also 279 might have been

just a few minutes ahead of us also, Engine 279.

Q. You think they went into the south tower or they were all in the lobby?

A. Well, I had spoken to guys from 131 truck, and they had told me that -- I don't know. I think they're dispatched differently to the trade center, but for some reason I think they were together in the lobby, and the engine 279 had just went ahead.

They were just ahead of the truck, but I didn't see 279. I did see 131, though. I don't know. I really don't know where.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: That's fine, Pete.

Thank you. The time now is 12:48, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110437

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHEVALO WILSON-DeBRIANO

Interview Date: January 11, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today is January 11th, 2002. The time is 0615 hours. My name is Richard Dun working for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name.

A. Chevalo Wilson-DeBriano.

Q. And your rank?

A. Paramedic.

Q. Where is your location of work?

A. Battalion 50.

Q. In your own words, just tell us what happened on the day of September 11th.

A. I was here. I was extra personnel, so I didn't have a partner. I was instructed by the -- or actually I saw it in the lounge, an incident happened, the World Trade Center, fire, listen on Citywide radio. They said it was a plane hit. They put MERV 4 on standby. I was told by the supervisor to stand by, if MERV 4 was to roll, I would have to go on with the MERV. The second plane hit and then we were told to roll, go to Battalion 46 in Elmhurst, Queens, and stand by there.

We ended up going over to Battalion 46. We stood by momentarily. Then we were told to roll. We

continued from there down Queens Boulevard. We had a view of the burning World Trade Centers. When we crossed the 59th Street bridge, we heard over the radio people screaming that there was a building collapse. We crossed Manhattan, went down the west side. We went down past Vesey Street, past the pedestrian bridge. We stopped the MERV. There was a lot of smoke. We started helping a few injured firefighters who came on the MERV van for treatment.

Then we felt a rumble. My partner, who was the driver, told me that he thinks there's another collapse, so we have to egress by foot and leave the vehicle, and it was a rapid, running egress from the area with other police officers, firefighters and civilians to avoid the debris and dust cloud.

Q. Do you know exactly where you left the vehicle, where the vehicle was parked?

A. Yes. Approximately, looking at this thing, I believe it was beside 6 World Trade Center. Yes. So a little south of Vesey Street on the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay.

A. We continued. I ended up walking up to Chelsea Piers. Then I walked back down to try to find my partner. I didn't find him for hours, but he was

okay. The vehicle was in bad shape as far as dust. It had to be cleaned off. Then we moved the MERV van over to another location. I'm just trying to remember the actual street.

Q. When you first arrived, did you see a lot of debris, a lot of chaos?

A. Yes, a lot of chaos, a lot of smoke. You couldn't really see.

Q. Was there a lot of debris on the ground or engine parts, body parts?

A. No, no, I didn't see any of that. I didn't see any of that, no. We were on the West Side Highway, so I think we were still a distance from that.

Q. All right. So after the first collapse, you relocated?

A. Well, no. The first collapse had already occurred.

Q. So you were there for the second collapse?

A. The second collapse, yes.

Q. Then after the second collapse, you relocated down to --

A. Well, as I was saying, when we were crossing the 59th Street bridge, that's when the first collapse occurred. So by the time then we got into Manhattan,

we went to the West Side Highway and we stopped the van, we stopped the MERV van, and we started treating some firefighters. Then the second collapse happened.

Q. Okay. Then you egressed.

A. Then we had to egress by foot.

Q. How long after did you go back to your vehicle?

A. That took a while. I believe it took around three hours. Yes, around three hours to get back there.

Q. Did you see any chiefs that you recognized who were in the plaza or wherever you were?

A. In that immediate area, no.

Q. No officers?

A. No, I didn't see it. No. Other than when I walked up and walked to Chelsea Piers. That's the only time I really saw EMS people. I only saw vehicles passing.

Q. Were they parked and covered with debris or were they voluntaries just lining up to go in?

A. At Chelsea Piers?

Q. On the walk up.

A. On my walk up I mainly just saw some dust-covered vehicles but mainly just emergency

vehicles going in and leaving the area.

Q. Then what did you do after you got to Chelsea Piers?

A. I got to Chelsea Piers. They were just lining up. It seemed like there was a lot of confusion there. But I couldn't find my driver. I had to check all around to see if the driver was there and he wasn't there, so I started going back, I started walking back to the area.

Q. You left the MERV down there?

A. Yes. The MERV was left down by Vesey Street, yes.

Q. So you walked. Did you ever find your partner that day?

A. I did find him. He said he just ran a different direction. We had got split up and I did find him hours later.

Q. Did you triage people at Chelsea or did you do any work at Chelsea?

A. At Chelsea, no. They were just lined up there.

Q. So that was the end of the day?

A. No. We went back. We went to the MERV van. It had a lot of dust on it, but the driver had

relocated it to another location. Man, if I could just remember the street. It was the street that JFK Jr. lived on.

Q. Okay.

A. But that street, we were there, and then from there, from that location, then we started -- we set up for triage there and we were pretty much there most of the day, then, most of the day, setting up for triage, and that's where we ended up viewing the collapse of 7 World Trade Center, which was another time when we ended up having to egress a little bit.

Q. So about what time did you end the day?

A. The day was ended -- I worked 23 1/2 hours straight. So, if I started at 7:00, it ended like at 6:00 in the morning by the time we got back.

LIEUTENANT DUN: That concludes the interview with Chevalo. Thank you very much for your time.

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File No. 9110438

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JOSEPH RIVERA

Interview Date: January 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McCOURT: The date is January 14th, 2002. My name is Tom McCourt, investigator for the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at the World Trade Center command post. Being interviewed is Captain Joseph Rivera from Division 4.

Captain Rivera, would you identify yourself, please.

CAPTAIN RIVERA: Captain Rivera, shield number 9815 of the Division 4, Queens division. I'm the duty captain assigned there.

Q. Captain, could you please tell me the events that transpired from your perspective on September 11th, 2001?

A. What actually transpired -- in fact, I'll start from the beginning. On September 11th was my first day assigned to the borough of Queens. I was transferred from the borough of the Bronx. I was to report to their division office at 0800 hours in the morning, which I did.

While there I was awaiting the arrival of Chief Carrasquillo to have a one-on-one with him, which is when the incident occurred. He

called me up and told me that he was on his way in and that we would meet downstairs and head into the World Trade Center incident.

We met downstairs, got into his vehicle. We responded, he, myself, his aide and an EMT. I have no recollection of the name.

Q. Do you remember who his aide was?

A. His aide was Sal San Sangeniti was his last name. I don't remember who the EMT was.

We were in route to Manhattan. We exited the Midtown Tunnel. When we exited the Midtown Tunnel, the second plane had already hit. We arrived there roughly about 9:30 in the morning.

When we got there, we left the car on West Street down by I believe it was Rector. I'm not sure. I think it was Rector. And we walked our way up to where the command post was, which was opposite building number two, Two World Trade Center.

Q. What was the action going around at that location at that time? What was the activity?

A. It was total mayhem. There were people

running all over the place. There were body parts on the floor that we noticed. There was rubble. There was just total chaos.

As we were walking up to the command post, we were trying to get a gist of was going on. When we finally got to the command post, we met with Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles and Lieutenant Moore, who were already there along with other fire officials and some firefighters. This wasn't inside the building; this was across the street on West Street.

Q. West and --

A. West -- I believe it was between Liberty and Vesey.

Q. Okay.

A. On the other side of the street.

While there, we were looking up at the fire and we heard a loud rumble; and when we looked up, that was the start of the collapse. When the building collapsed, ironically we had a building behind us that had an underground garage, and we all ran into that underground garage. In that underground garage we were trapped for approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

There were a number of injuries, minor injuries. A lot of us were breathing in a lot of that powder, whatever you want to call it. Anyway, we managed to get out of there. A firefighter found a stairwell that brought us up about two and a half stories.

We managed to go up two and a half stories, come up out of the building from the rear and managed to go around up towards -- what is this over here? Up towards North End, running down toward North End to where we established a command post on Chambers and West.

Before that we also got caught in the second collapse. While we were running, we were running and trying to find cover in some of the surrounding buildings. Every time we got close to one of the buildings, they were telling us there was a gas leak and we should get away from that building.

Chief Carrasquillo was under the impression that we may have left some people behind, so we went back to make sure that everybody was accounted for.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. After the first collapse.

Q. After the first collapse.

A. So when we went back, making sure that everybody was accounted for, we got caught in the second collapse, but we managed to get out of that right away.

What we did is we ran towards the water around to North Street and up towards Chambers and West, which was where the command post was established. While there I took command of the MERV and all of the volunteers that were coming, hospital staff, doctors, nurses, et cetera.

Q. When you went back to check for the missing people, did you find everybody that was missing?

A. Everybody that was with us was accounted for. That was Chief Carrasquillo, chief's aide Sal San Sangeniti, Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Moore.

Q. Anybody injured at that point?

A. Lieutenant Terranova.

Well, the one that was injured was Lieutenant Moore. All the rest were overcome by this powder, this thing that we were breathing.

Then from there we were on for a good 25, 26 hours, the regular operation.

Q. Right. You stayed there the whole --

A. Yeah.

Q. Until the next day?

A. Yeah. We were able to go home and come back the next day and start it all over again.

I wasn't injured. I breathed in a lot of the stuff. Luckily I wasn't injured.

I don't know what to say. I think we were all traumatized. I think the only real injury that I remember was Lieutenant Moore.

Q. What was the extent of his injuries?

A. I think it was a leg injury. He hasn't been back on duty, but I think it was a leg injury.

Q. Is there anything else that you can add or you might want to add to it?

A. No. So many things happened. After we left the building that we were trapped in, a number of things had happened. There was a building there that had senior citizens supposedly trapped in the basement, so we were trying to get them evacuated. Then they told us

not to, that it was probably safer to keep them in the basement because of all of the dust in the air.

Then there were other people that would run to us with minor injuries, cuts and bruises and stuff. We were trying to give aid when we were in route to -- actually running for our lives, running away from the site to the command post.

Q. Did you experience any radio problems or communication problems or anything like that at all?

A. I think everybody experienced radio problems. We were trying the contact each other to make sure everybody was accounted for. We couldn't get across. Too many people on the radio. The radio traffic was horrendous.

Q. All right. There's nothing else you can add --

A. No, that's it. A half hour felt like 30 days. But that's it. That's all I can think of now.

Q. Okay, Captain. Thank you very much.

MR. McCOURT: The time is 557 hours.

That concludes this interview.

File No. 9110439

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN VIOLA

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's January 10, 2002. The time is 1230 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER VIOLA: Steve Viola, firefighter 2nd Grade, Engine 47.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Engine 47, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Okay, Steve.

A. We parked about three blocks up from the towers, and we walked down underneath the pedestrian bridge. It took us a little while to get across into the hotel because of the debris coming down, but we ended up getting in there, and the chief, the deputy chief in there, had all the engine companies go to the left, all the truck companies go to the right, and he brought all the officers over to him and told them their particular assignment and told us to switch to Channel 3. I remember that.

I think it was the security guy, a guy that

worked in one of the towers, took us. He said there was an elevator working, and he took us into the north tower, and there was one elevator out of 6 in the bank working.

22 engine went up before us. 13 truck went up before us, and then one of our guys -- one of the guys from 13 truck. Our guy went in with 13 truck, and he was coming down with the guy from 13 truck to bring the elevator to us, and when he was either going up or coming down the elevator, that's when the south tower collapsed, and it sounded like a bunch of explosions.

You heard like loud booms, but I guess it was all just stuff coming down, and then we got covered with rubble and dust, and I thought we'd actually fallen through the floor into like the PATH tubes, because it was so dark you couldn't see anything, and from there it was a little hazy from there on, but I remember our lieutenant trying to take us back out through the Marriott the way we came, but that was -- we couldn't go through that way, and we ended up coming out through -- I guess it was the base of the north tower out onto West Street, and ended up -- me and another guy put on one of the ambulances, and we were just waiting to leave on the ambulance.

We were in there -- I don't know how long we were in there. For awhile, because one guy, they thought he had a broken neck, and they actually went back, because one of our guys was still in the elevator, so they went back to see if they could get him out, and then while we were in the ambulance, the driver came out and said, "Get out and run to the river," because that's when the out tower was coming down.

And we ended up getting down to the water, right behind -- I think it was a school building, and after the big dust cloud passed over, we made our way up West Street, like six, seven, eight blocks, and another ambulance came and picked us up. How far up that was, I'm not sure.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. No, that's basically it. We never really got to go up, so I never really got to do anything.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: This concludes the interview. It's approximately 12:37.

Thank you for your cooperation, Steve. I appreciate it.

THE WITNESS: You're welcome, chief.

File No. 9110440

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN DRUMM

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 10, 2002. The time is 1345 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DRUMM: Firefighter John Drumm.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Assigned to Ladder 16 of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Ladder 16, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, if you can just tell in your own words what happened that day.

A. The first time I found out about the whole incident, we were in the kitchen of the firehouse when someone came in and told us they just had heard a plane crashed into the twin towers. We went out to the house watch from the kitchen, listened to the department radio. About a minute after getting into house watch, Engine 39, which I was assigned on that day to -- I was

assigned to work in Engine 39 on September 11th. About a minute after I went out of the house watch, Engine 39 got sent on the run.

Q. Let me just stop a second. Okay. Go ahead, just from where you were.

A. 39 got the run, like I said, a minute after walking in the house watch.

Two of us got into the back step of 39 and two other members drove down the high-rise rig, high-rise number 2, and we made our way downtown. While we were on our way down, we heard over the department radio in the rig that the second tower had also now been hit by a plane.

After heading downtown on Second Avenue, we came across on Houston. After we were coming across to the west side of Manhattan on Houston, looking southbound along the major avenues, I could see both towers --

(Interruption.)

A. As I was saying, when 39 was making their way downtown, we had used Houston Street to go across to the west side. And as we passed other major avenues, you could have a clear view

downtown. I was able to see both the north tower and the south tower, both in flames and plumes of smoke over them.

We came down the West Side Highway. We parked the rigs just south of Vesey Street, on West Street we parked. As we were getting out of the rigs, there was a chief that was instructing the chauffeur of 39 and the driver of the high-rise to move them further down West Street, more in the front of the north tower.

I'm not too sure, after hearing the chief say that, how the rigs were moved, being a member of the inside. We just grabbed our rollups and headed for the building.

We headed towards the north tower. We were assigned on the run to report to the north tower. We made our way into the building through the northwest corner of the building. The windows on the first floor were all broken out, so we didn't even go down to the doorway. We just went into the corner of the building, which all the glass was blown out, and used that way to get into the building.

As we were approaching the building, we

had walked underneath the passenger bridge that's just south of Vesey and hugged the wall, because on our way into the building there was a lot of debris falling and, as everybody knows, there were also people jumping. On our way in, we were able to see a few of those people. So we were hugging the wall of the building just on the northwest corner of tower one to avoid the debris.

We made our way into the lobby of the north tower, where we saw a command post being assembled and a battalion chief or a battalion aide had seen us coming in, and he instructed us, 39 Engine, to team up with 65 Engine, which we did. He also instructed us to use the B stairwell to ascend. We were instructed just keep climbing until you get upstairs to where you can help other companies set up your lines, stretch and go into operation.

We made our way up the stairs from there, the B stairwell. The highest point we climbed was the 31st floor.

Q. Wow.

A. As everybody knows, there was civilians

coming down at the same time on our way up. There was one behind the other on their right of the staircase, and we stayed towards the center of the staircase, the firemen, on our right, the center of the staircase, and made our way up.

We met some very nice people on the way up. They offered the firemen water and actually I want to put that in the record because it was a nice thing. One civilian offered to carry my rollup for a while at one point. I said, "Thank you very much, sir, but I'll get it."

We helped a few civilians get down a little bit. Most of the civilians we passed were able to walk on their own. A few civilians I met on the way up were actually being helped by civilians too. A woman who was a burn victim, one of the firemen helped clear the stairway at that time because they were carrying her and it took a larger width of the stairwell. So we cleared all the civilians out of the way for that, just made sure the civilians stayed in order, which they did. They were very orderly.

When we got to the 31st floor, at that point -- we ascended as fast as we could, but

there were other firemen in front of us and slowly but surely making our way up. When we got to the 31st floor, Lieutenant McGlynn, who was the officer of Engine 39 that day, had instructed us to stand by on the 31st floor where he was going to wait for further instruction or try to hook up with a nearby chief.

I'm not too sure exactly what he was trying to find out everything. But he was probably maybe seeing if they wanted to start stretching lines from a lower standpipe. But he had told us just to stand by while he waited to talk to a chief.

While on the 31st floor, as I said, we were told to stand by by Lieutenant McGlynn, our officer for the day, waiting for further instruction. As we were waiting, we waited in the hallway on the 31st floor out of the stairwell to stay out of the crowd of civilians and all, not to clog up the stairwell. We waited for our instructions in the hallway of the 31st floor.

We also first went in there to make sure also -- when we were about 12 floors below

that there was a transmission that there was several members and police officers on the 31st floor that had chest pains and difficulty breathing. Being an engine company, we went in there to see if there was any CRFD work we could do on the members.

As we went into the stairwell, also waiting for instructions to be given to Lieutenant McGlynn, everybody was being taken care of on the 31st floor, all members that had chest pains and difficulty breathing. Someone had already gotten to them and was giving them oxygen.

So besides making sure everyone was okay, we were waiting there. Maybe we were on the 31st hallway for approximately five minutes when all of a sudden a large crashing, thundering, roaring -- it's almost impossible to really explain with those words, but it was so much more noise than I could ever really explain clearly.

The members that were nearby, we all went and got down on our hands and knees on the floor, not knowing what this was, walls, floor.

I had no idea. I had no idea what was happening until I got out of the building later in the day I had found out what happened. Later in the day I found out what was going on when all of us were on the floor and all that roaring was going on was the south tower collapsing.

While on the 31st floor and still in the building, I didn't know that. As I said, I didn't know the south tower came down until I was out of the building and away from the collapse.

But while we were on the 31st floor, everyone was down. Everybody was on their hands and knees. It was almost confirmed by -- it made me feel comfortable of not knowing what it was that one fireman was standing up -- I'm not too sure if he was a rescue member. I think I remember seeing a blue patch on his helmet. I'm not positive of the number. I think it was a blue batch on his helmet, and I think it was a rescue member.

He was telling all the members in the hallway, maybe about 20 or 30 firefighters in the hallway at the time, to relax and calm down, that it was only the skin of the building. I remember

that clearly, this firefighter saying that. That relaxed me a little bit, not that I probably even thought that it was the south tower collapsing or what it was, but it was just something very disturbing.

In a way he comforted me a little bit. But as I found out later, it was not just the skin of the building coming down; it was the south tower.

After the noise had stopped, there was a transmission on the radio that I had. I was in a position on 39 control that day, so I had a radio so I could hear it myself on my radio. There was a transmission that I'm guessing was repeated about five times: "Imminent collapse, imminent collapse of the north tower. Immediate evacuation." At least five times I heard that.

Q. A lot of guys didn't get that. That's good that you got it.

A. Yeah. Now I don't know how everything happened with -- how the radios were with the members on the upper floors, but on the 31st floor I was able to hear that they wanted the north tower to be evacuated.

We were waiting for the officer's order before taking up and start walking, maybe a couple minutes past where he was confirming, listening for further transmissions or talking to other officers that were in the area. He wasn't sure that's what they wanted us to do.

We started to descend the building at that time and went right back into the B stairwell and descended down all the way to the lobby in the B stairwell.

On our way down it was a lot clearer, the stairwell, of civilians. On the way up it was one behind the other order -- orderly but one behind the other of civilians on the way down the staircase. After standing on the 31st floor and the collapse of the south tower happening and making our way back into the stairwell, there was a lot less civilians. Most of the civilians hopefully at that point were already down. But there were still a few we ran into on the way down.

One woman we assisted. She was having trouble breathing. The only air we had left was a cylinder. One of the members had a cylinder

and I helped to purge it to let the woman get a hit off our mask. So we gave her the mask. She was able to walk after that, and she was with two civilian men that were going to stay with her the rest of the way down.

On the way down we also ran into -- most firemen that we saw were heading down the staircase at this time, but approximately the 20th floor I remember running into Captain Ill of Ladder 2 and Officer McGlynn, my officer for the day, talked to him a little bit, asking him if he had heard the transmission.

Being right next to Lieutenant McGlynn, I was able to hear that conversation. Captain Ill said yes, he did hear it, and he was just making sure that everybody was out before he was heading down.

With McGlynn knowing that he heard the transmission, we continued to climb down. As we got down to the lower floors, we walked a little bit slower. It was very congested with firemen down at the bottom of the staircase making our way out. But eventually we got down to the lobby.

Lieutenant McGlynn was leading. I followed him. We walked back in the same direction out of the stairwell B, which is between the elevator bank, back to West Street. So we were heading to the exact spot where we came into the building, which was the northwest corner of the building.

Lieutenant McGlynn came to a stop, I'm assuming this was to check that all his members were out of the stairwell. I looked at Lieutenant McGlynn on my way past him, thought I made eye contact with him. He actually didn't see me.

All the firemen in front of me were still walking, so I followed them out the northwest corner of the building, which wasn't even a doorway, just all the glass on the lobby floor had been blown out. So it was a clear passage through there, the exact same corner of the building we came in.

We hugged the exact same wall of the building that's just north of the north tower. I'm not too sure what that is, whatever that building is. Building five?

Q. The customs building.

A. Yeah.

Q. I think that's building six, but it's the customs building.

A. Building six. It's the building that's on the corner of Vesey and West.

Q. Yeah, right.

A. There's a big sidewalk in front of the north tower, but I just hugged the wall of that for the same reasoning --

Q. So it would be this building.

A. Yeah, we came out of this northwest corner of the north tower, and this was right along the sidewalk. So we just hugged this wall of the U.S. --

Q. Customs building.

A. -- customs building. And when you follow this wall back to the West Side Highway to the street, it's right where the passenger bridge is.

So when I got to the passenger bridge, I was probably walking at a normal pace, not running, all the way to that passenger bridge from the building. And as I approached the

passenger bridge and just got underneath it, there were two firemen that were standing there, looking back up toward the building.

As I approached them, all of a sudden I heard a bunch of firemen, including these two guys I saw, start yelling, "Get out of the way! Go, go, go! Don't look back! Don't look back! The building's coming down!"

Of course like anybody else, instinct takes over and I look back. As I was underneath this passenger bridge, I can see the north tower at the top starting to come down. With that and everybody yelling just go, whoever I listened to -- I guess I listened to -- one fireman said, "Let's go north on West Street."

So right from the passenger bridge I kept going back, and why I was going that way too was you go back to your rig after a job or whatever. That's where our rigs were when we left them was Vesey and West. So I was heading that way anyway. Thank God he also said north and I continued on West.

As soon as he said that, I looked, saw the building come down, and just took off running

north on West Street. I ran as far up as Stuyvesant High School. About just north of Vesey Street is I guess when the building was very close -- at the ground, and now the dust cloud was starting to push up West Street.

Just north of West Street I guess I started seeing the dust cloud. One fireman I saw in the middle of the street continued holding cylinders, but laying on the top of the cylinders was a mask. So he probably assumed that maybe the whole thing had a mask in it, complete mask.

He said, "Run, grab a mask!" I ran over to the container. He had grabbed a mask, but the only thing else that was left in the container was --

Q. Cylinder?

A. A cylinder. I just kept running. But just after that container, which was like at the corner of Vesey, the smoke just came right over us. So from Vesey Street until Stuyvesant High School, we were searching through this dust cloud.

I had left my mask up on the 31st floor. When they said to evacuate, they just

said drop everything. So I dropped my mask, dropped my rollups, and just said let's get out of the building. So I had no mask when this dust cloud came. So I used my hood as some type of vent to keep some of the stuff from going in my lungs.

Probably from Vesey all the way to Stuyvesant High School I was in the dust cloud, actually searching my way up West Street. I was still thinking of training in proby school, you know, hug the walls until you find a window frame.

I found the curb and a parked car. Thank God the car was faced the right direction, and I was using the front end as the direction to point north. I kept walking that way, because I could not see anything. All I could hear was everyone screaming and yelling.

There were one or two firemen that had tripped on the way up. I picked them up. They weren't hurt. They just tripped over something probably on the street. I picked them up and kept going.

But eventually when I got to about

Stuyvesant High School, I was able to see through the dust cloud. I made my way inside Stuyvesant High School where I was coughing for a little while. I don't know if I was there maybe half an hour, clearing my mouth out with some water. Some of the teachers were bringing water over to me, and the security guards were helping out.

As I got my senses back together and all and had help from people to strip off my gear and cool off, I guess, and civilians were helping me out. Finally -- I don't know how long it was, maybe half an hour -- I stopped coughing and was able to gain my senses and feel myself and everything was all right. I started thinking.

I didn't know at the time but I found out later in the day that when I left the north tower in the lobby I had thought my officer had seen me, Lieutenant McGlynn, and he hadn't seen me. When I continued out of the building, the other members of Engine 39 made their way out of the staircase and saw Lieutenant McGlynn. Lieutenant McGlynn asked them if they had seen Drumm. That's my last name. They all said, "No, I didn't see him." "Did you see him?" "No, I

didn't see him."

I would never have known if they came out. Thank God all four of them are alive. But they had gone back into the staircase to search for me --

Q. Oh, Jesus.

A. -- not knowing that I came out of the building. To find out more -- I believe they've been interviewed too and it's on the record. But I think they made it somewhere, they told me, maybe around to the fifth floor and thank God that the staircase was able to withstand the weight that it stood.

They had their trauma and I don't want to tell you a story that they'll tell their own if they haven't all right. But they had an ordeal. If they didn't come out, I probably would have never known that they had gone back in for me. But thank God they're alive. That means a lot to me that they had gone back in for me. It means a lot more than I know that they're still alive.

I think that I can go on with the story in detail, so I think that's pretty much my

experience from getting the run at the firehouse to getting out of the building. I guess after getting out of the building and getting my senses back together at Stuyvesant High School, I geared back up and started heading back down. I don't know if my radio was turned down or turned off. I wasn't listening to the radio when I was in the high school coughing.

I made my way back out to the street. The radio was still working. I turned it on or it was on. I started listening to the radio as to what the heck was going on. I knew the north tower had come down, but not until really I was done running at Stuyvesant High School had I found out that the south tower was the noise I had heard when we were still on the 31st floor. That's when I realized that both buildings were down was after I came back out into the street from Stuyvesant High School.

Over the radio I was hearing the chauffeur of 39, Arthur Meyers, trying to raise Engine 39. I heard that message from him several times. Eventually I was able to get through the radio. The radio was of course very busy.

Eventually I was able to just get in a couple words with him. I knew who it was. He asked my location. I told him who I was and where I was. We met up at -- I don't know if it was Vesey or -- what's the next one up?

Q. Barclay.

A. Yeah, somewhere near Barclay, near Barclay and West Street, I ended hooking up with him. Maybe a half an hour after or an hour after the collapse, I ended up finding him. He went on to try to raise Engine 39 for a while longer. Then the radio was just so busy. There was no response back from 39.

What we were thinking then -- we didn't know what to think, because the radios weren't working. We didn't know where they were, because I didn't know that they hadn't come out of the building. I thought they were with me and the rest of the crowd of firemen that, like I said, walked out of the building to that passenger bridge. But I thought they were with me the whole time.

So we couldn't raise them on the radio. We just decided to stay together the rest of the

day. Pretty much nothing after a while. We stayed together. Maybe a couple hours later I ended up running into some of the truck guys from Ladder 16 at Vesey and West. Lieutenant Dan Williams was the first one I saw, actually.

I didn't believe it until I saw each one of the engine members, but Lieutenant Williams was the first one to tell me they were okay, at least that they were alive. That is when I started to find out, because there is a restaurant that is off of West Street down in Battery Park City. But near Vesey, a block in off West, there was a few members.

Lieutenant Williams said, "Go to the front of this restaurant on the corner, one block in off of West on Vesey," where I met up with one of the members who was actually out on rotation, but he was here at the time.

Firefighter Bob Bacon was the first one I saw. He was one of the four members that had gone back into the building for me. That's when I found out the story of what they had done. I was really upset at that point that I knew they did that but also glad that they all came out.

Two of them I think had gone to the hospital. Nobody had any really bad injuries except abrasions, cuts, problems with breathing. I believe two of the members, Jeff Coniglio and James Efthimiades, I believe they went to the hospital from the scene right away.

When I saw everybody eventually, they all got the biggest bear hug I ever gave anybody. But I finally heard the story that afternoon from Bob Bacon. I saw him. Then later in the day I saw Lieutenant McGlynn. Actually I just hooked up with him just before -- up near Stuyvesant High School where they were reassembling us at one point. I just hooked up with him, didn't even get to talk with him, when building seven, was that what it was?

Q. Yeah, building seven.

A. At like 5:00.

Q. 5:00, yeah.

A. 5:00 in the afternoon. I just ran into him and was about to talk to him about the story, and everybody is yelling "Run!" again. We made our way up away from West Street a little bit. We were actually heading into the school anyway.

They were trying to reassemble I think inside. So we ran into the school. Then I'm talking to him.

I think the next day I saw James Efthimiades. Then I saw Jeff Coniglio on Thursday. I finally was happy I saw all the members were alive.

I believe that -- everything is so small details from my experience on September 11th.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else you want to add? Anything else?

A. No. I mentioned seeing Ladder 2.

Q. Yes, you mentioned seeing Freddie Ill?

A. Just by the time we got downstairs, there was very few civilians I saw. I guess all the work we did on our way up keeping them orderly -- from what I saw on the way down, very, very few civilians were left, and they were coming with us. Everybody I was with felt on our way down all the floors were clear and there was no other civilians in the building.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Okay. That's the end of the interview. The time is 1420 hours, and that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110441

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER HUGH METTHAM

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 10th, 2002. The time is 10:45 hours. This is B.C. Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER METTHAM: Fireman Hugh J. Mettham.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of Ladder 18 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 18, and this interview is regarding is events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Hugh, go ahead and tell your story.

A. The morning of September 11th starts like most mornings in firehouses around the city. Firefighters make coffee, catch up on firehouse news, check the apparatus and find their riding position for the tour. This is all interrupted around 8:47 by a plane that crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center.

Little did Lieutenant Borega, Firefighters Charlie Maloney, Harry Coyle, Steve Merenda, Ralph Cardino, Kevin Murray and I

realize that this incident would change all of us, the Fire Department, the city we work for, and would become the most tragic and eventful day in New York City history.

Ladder 18 is located on the lower east side of Manhattan and is housed with Battalion 4. On September 11th Battalion 4 responds after the initial plane crash. Ladder 18 responds eight minutes later, approximately 8:55, on the fifth alarm to box 8087, World Trade Center, north tower.

Over the department radio we hear that people are jumping from the upper floors and that the whole building is being evacuated. Charlie Maloney, who is very knowledgeable about fires and building construction, mentions to us that he has a funny feeling and doesn't like the sound of this.

Lieutenant Borega tells me, the chauffeur for that day, to respond to the World Trade Center by the FDR Drive through the West Street tunnel at the battery. Just before reaching the West Street tunnel, the south tower is hit by another plane.

Even though we hadn't witnessed the crash, the planes and thick black smoke from the impact could be seen before entering the tunnel. We all sensed the terrible reality that we were heading into something much larger and more horrifying than a single plane crash.

Lieutenant Borega immediately looks at me, and we both verbalized something about a terrorist attack. My foot starts to bounce on the accelerator pedal, dancing with anxiety.

It was just south of Liberty on West Street that we first encountered debris from the plane crashes. I steered away from Liberty Street and head north on West Street, away from possible impact from falling building parts and jumpers.

Since we were heading to the north tower, I parked the apparatus under the pedestrian walkway bridge that goes over West Street. The bridge affords us protection from debris falling off the tower while we make our way to the command post in the lobby. Still we have to hug the outer portion of the tower, hoping that nothing falls on or near us.

Once inside the lobby of the north tower, we prepare for a long climb. Lieutenant Borega goes to the command post to get our floor assignment. While waiting we watched the chaotic scene unfold before us. Jumpers fall from the sky and crash on the pavement outside the large lobby windows.

The fire commissioner moves through the throng of firefighters, telling us to evacuate the building, seeming to imply not to worry about putting out the fires.

Fire Chaplain Mychal Judge is silent, seeming to be praying for all of us, his eyes not looking at anyone in particular but silently speaking to all to be safe.

At this time Harry Coyle nudges me and whispers, "Kevin's father is in one of the towers." I think of the tremendous emotion and anxiety I have and know that Kevin has to bear with the extra burden of having a relative on the upper floor of the tower.

Lieutenant Borega returns to the command post at the lobby and tells us to start on the third floor and work our way up to help

evacuate people. We will check the stairways and floors and assist civilians who are trapped or need assistance coming down.

I am surprised and a bit relieved that Ladder 18 is not climbing far. But the words "Make your way up" clearly means that we are eventually going to climb.

We decided to drop and leave our spare air cylinders in the lobby. The extra weight is not needed. We all sense we must conserve our energy and climb slowly and quietly. I grab a few bottles of water from the abandoned newstand and hand some to Harry. Water will be needed.

As we enter the stairs, we meet people evacuating the upper floors. Some are wet and exhausted. I am impressed by their behavior, no shouting or pushing but openly concerned about the firefighters' welfare and for others still coming down.

When we reached the fourth floor, Steve and Ralph forced a few doors, and no one is found. Charlie, realizing that some of the lower floors are probably maintenance areas, tells us to take a quick look around and then to go up.

We enter the fifth floor. Once again we are in the maintenance area. Lieutenant Borega tells us to find all the stairwells and staircases that lead down. We discover that three staircases are in use evacuating people.

Suddenly the north tower starts to rumble and shake violently. We all head to stairwell B and huddle near the door while the floor we are on shakes and rumbles for 30 seconds for more. Lights go out, and we are thrown into total darkness. Stairways and hallways fill with smoke and dust as the rumble and roar subsides.

All of us start to speculate on the cause of the rumble. It could be another plane crash or localized collapse. Someone in the darkness mentions a bomb. There is little time now to ponder what just happened. What could shake the north tower so violently?

Lieutenant Borega tells us to start a lighting relay with our flashlights to assist the civilians that are leaving the staircases and converging with us on the fifth floor. Apparently smoke and dust had filled it up or down the staircases and elevator shafts, causing

civilians to look for another way down.

Communication abruptly stops on our department radios. Only a few mayday and urgent messages are heard and then abruptly end. Charlie Maloney decides to go down stairway B to see if the staircase is still usable. The rest of us guide and redirect civilians from stairwell A and C to stairwell B and wait for Charlie's words to send them down.

Stairwells A and C are heavily charged with smoke and dust and appeared to be unusable at this time. We are concerned that we are unable to contact Charlie. But with growing anxiety among civilians on the fifth floor who want to evacuate, we guided them down to the lobby.

At this time with no other civilians coming down any of the stairwells, Lieutenant Borega tells us to leave the fifth floor and says, "Let's get out of here." I questioned Harry Coyle about Charlie's whereabouts. He assures me that Charlie went down stairwell B and is probably helping people leave the lobby. As Lieutenant Borega, Steve, Ralph, Kevin, Harry and

I descend, I can only hope that we will meet him there.

The scene in the lobby now is complete chaos. Small fires and smoke rise from one area. Marble sections that line the walls have smashed. Cable, glass and elevator parts litter the area. We maneuver around the debris looking for Charlie and are met by a rescue firefighter saying that there are Fire Department members trapped on the 11th floor.

Ralph and I exchanged glances. We turned around and start to ascend the B staircase again to assist in the rescue effort. Ralph says to me, "Boy, we're tempting fate now." We reached the sixth or seventh floor and are met by many firefighters coming down the stairs, informing us that the upper floors are collapsing and that there's a heavy odor of gas and fuel.

Fearing for our safety through the rapidly deteriorating conditions, Lieutenant Borega tells us to head back to the lobby. Hoping that Charlie has left the building, we meet Engine 28 in the lobby. Harry and I mention to one of the members of 28 that Ladder 18 is

leaving the tower. Lieutenant Borega also tells Engine 28's officer that we are leaving.

Debris can be seen falling outside the lobby's broken doors as both companies attempt to leave. Once again we are forced to hug close to the outside perimeter of the building, fearing that debris might fall on us.

We reach the pedestrian walkway on West Street, and Harry sits down on the back step of a fire engine to catch his breath. Steve and Ralph continue north on West Street, unaware that Harry is feeling sick.

I look at Harry and then glance over his shoulder. I am stunned by the terrible destruction just south of the north tower. I try to come up with some explanation for it but can't. Something is telling me to leave this area right now.

I tell Harry, "If you can get up, I think we should move now." Harry nods, says something and then rises from the back step of the engine. Lieutenant Borega, Kevin, Harry and I start to walk fast in a northerly direction on West Street.

15 seconds later, near the corner of Vesey and West Street, we hear a terrible roar behind and above us. The upper section of the north tower begins to collapse and push out a wave of smoke, ash and debris.

We run in fear of our lives. The entire north tower collapses, and we are not going to outrun the tremendous cloud of ash and debris that is toppling down and bulging outwards.

Kevin and I dive under a fire truck while Lieutenant Borega, Harry and Steve take refuge behind or under other parked apparatus. I hug the ground in a fetal position, protecting my eyes and face from pellets of concrete that are bouncing off my fire helmet and body.

A dark cloud of dust and ash engulfs the undercarriage of the fire truck. I gasp for air and pull my hood over my mouth and nose. The noise from the collapse is intense.

Shall I continue?

Q. Sure.

A. Unexpectedly, the loud crashing sound subsides. It is strangely quiet. [redacted]

[redacted] I raised my head and move backwards, holding my hands up and touching the bottom of the apparatus chassis. I move about eight feet until I am able to get off my knees. I yelled at Kevin that we are not buried.

The dark brown cloud begins to diminish. I make out outlines of vehicles ahead. Kevin moves next to me. Squinting and peering through the haze, we try to focus our eyes while stumbling and moving north on West Street.

We leave the terrible fire and destruction behind us and start to look for Lieutenant Borega and the rest of Ladder 18. A few minutes later emergency workers and firefighters can be seen moving in all directions. One stops and tells Kevin and me to sit down on the curb. He pours water on our heads, and we try to clean away some of the grit that is lodged around our eyes.

With our vision improved, Kevin and I continue to look for Ladder 18. Lieutenant Borega, Charlie, Harry and Steve spot us about

ten minutes later. It was a tremendous relief we see all of them, especially Charlie Maloney who had left us earlier inside the tower.

We also find Bobby Newman from Battalion 4 who tells us how he narrowly escaped from the collapse of both towers. He surely looks that way with both of his shoes blown off his feet.

I asked Lieutenant Borega where Ralph is. He says, "We have to continue looking for him." Steve mentions that Ralph is running ahead of him when the north tower collapsed but isn't sure where he hid or escaped to. It would be many hours before we heard of Ralph's whereabouts. He ended up in Engine 7 and Ladder 1's quarters on Duane Street after being hustled into emergency pickup truck that headed north to 14th Street after the north tower fell. He's rattled but okay.

Ladder 18 is extremely fortunate. All of us make it out of the north tower. The hours we spent after the collapse seem now to be a complete blur. That destruction and fire after the collapse dulled our senses and overwhelmed

us.

The shock of witnessing the mass destruction and chaos close up after just escaping the towers brought on a sense of futility. What could we do to help? All we could do is just hope that other firefighters, police, rescue workers and civilians made it out. We knew that it would take an extraordinary rescue effort to find and reach anyone alive.

I go on to thank everyone from the 4th Battalion and Ladder 18, from our most junior members to our most senior firefighters who have shown courage, dedication, compassion and humility in the most trying of times.

I am fortunate to work in a great battalion and firehouse that through these difficult times has done what was necessary. Your courage and compassion started the moment the WTC was attacked and lasted through the long sad months of autumn which were full of memorial services and remembrances.

All of you should be proud to be firefighters in Ladder 18, the 4th Battalion, in New York City.

That was my report of what happened.

Q. I can't ask you any questions on that. That pretty much covers everything.

Is there anything else you would like to say that wasn't in your thing?

A. No. I mean, the thing was with the radios we never heard anything as far as getting out.

Q. Okay.

A. When communications stopped, we heard nothing as far as evacuate or anything else.

When we got down to the lobby the second time, we left the building. We left the north tower through the exit on West Street. When we left, it was with many other firefighters, many other people still in the lobby. No civilians. It seemed to me mostly emergency workers and firefighters.

Q. Were they trying to get out at this time?

A. They were in the lobby. I think maybe they were waiting for other people to come down or they were waiting for orders or anything else.

When we arrived down to the lobby, we

met 28 Engine, and at that time we were concerned about ourselves, we were concerned about finding Charlie Maloney. We saw 28 and said we're going, we're leaving right now.

They must have looked at us and we saw the severity of the situation and we said we're leaving right now. They followed us out.

Q. They did, huh?

A. They did.

Q. Thank God.

A. Yeah, that was fortunate. The unfortunate thing was that there was a lot of other companies, a lot of other firemen still in the lobby. The only regret I have is that those firemen and fire woman or whatever, rescue workers, they probably could have left also.

Q. Yeah, once it started coming down, it was too late.

A. That's the hard thing about it, knowing that there were so many other people still left in that lobby --

Q. Who could have got out.

A. -- that could have got out.

Q. Thank you for the interview, Hugh.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 11:05, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110442

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM WALSH

Interview Date: January 11, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 11th, 2002. The time is 12:00. This is B.C. Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

LIEUTENANT WALSH: My name is Lieutenant William Walsh. I'm assigned to Ladder Company 1.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 1 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Bill, if you would please tell us what happened that day in your own words.

A. Okay. All right. I reported for work about 8:00 that morning to start a 24. We received a run about 8:30 in the morning for a gas leak up at Lispenard Street and Church. We were operating at that box along with Engine 7, Battalion 1 and Ladder Company 8. I believe 55 Engine was there also, maybe Engine 24. I'm not sure.

After about 15 minutes, we conclude our operations there. Lispenard is about one block south of Canal Street. I believe the chief gave the code for a gas leak, 10-40, code 1. All the units were about to go 10-8 when we heard this loud roar. Everybody thought -- or at least to me it sounded as though there was going to be a Con Edison steam explosion. This was about a quarter to 9, I'd say.

So everybody looked up to where they thought they heard the sound coming from, and we saw an American Airlines plane. To me it looked as though it was going treetop level right down West Street. Then he appeared to rise a little bit.

We were under the impression -- he looked like he was going down, but we didn't hear any mechanical difficulty. We couldn't figure out why an American Airlines plane would be so low in downtown Manhattan. We sort of expected him to veer off and go into the Hudson.

But he just rose a little bit, his altitude, leveled off, and he was headed straight for the Trade Center. So just before he got to

the Trade Center, it seemed as though he gained power. We were just watching this airplane on target for the World Trade Center.

All of a sudden, boom, he disappears into the Trade Center. You hear this sickening noise as if two pieces of fiberglass had hit. You hear this loud explosion. He just disappeared into the Trade Center.

You could see a huge fireball come out from where he hit. I guess it was about ten stories high of brown smoke coming out and thousands of pieces of paper being thrown through the other side of the World Trade Center.

So immediately everybody got into the rig. We automatically responded down to the World Trade Center. We went up one block north to Canal Street, made a left, went straight down to West Street. Then we headed south from there. I imagine we got down there in less than two minutes.

So when we had gotten down to the front of One World Trade Center, which happens to be West Street -- that's the main entrance -- what I observed was a lot of ash on the ground, a lot of

paper on the ground, no vehicle traffic whatsoever, no civilians whatsoever. It was like the area was a ghost town. I guess there was pieces of burning debris on the ground. I really couldn't say what it was.

On the way down there, what I heard over the radio was a Battalion 1 chief giving a report that a large plane had hit the World Trade Center. I heard the officer of Engine 10 saying to send every available ambulance to downtown Manhattan because a plane had just hit the Trade Center. Engine 10 would be first due. Ladder 10 is first due. I didn't hear any transmissions from them. Me, Ladder 1, is second truck.

So we had parked the apparatus right in front of the glass overhang on West Street, which is the main entrance to World Trade Center number one. We all gathered our tools, and we headed to through the front door.

Now, the front door is a revolving door. There is a vestibule of about ten feet, let's say, and there's another revolving door. There I noticed two civilians that had more than third degree burns.

They were in pugilistic position. They were black, burnt. Their skin and their clothes were burnt off. They were smoldering, and they were trying to get up. They were just moving around. I had estimated they had less than half a minute left in their lives. So we had just passed them by.

What I observed as I was going through these doors and I got into the lobby of the World Trade Center was that the lobby of the Trade Center didn't appear as though it had any lights.

All of the glass on the first floor that abuts West Street was blown out. The glass in the revolving doors was blown out. All of the glass in the lobby was blown out.

The wall panels on the wall are made of marble. It's about two or three inches thick. They're about ten feet high by ten feet wide. A lot of those were hanging off the wall.

Q. Wait a second.

(Interruption.)

A. What else I observed in the lobby was that -- there's basically two areas of elevators. There's elevators off to the left-hand side which

are really the express elevators. That would be the elevators that's facing north. Then on the right-hand side there's also elevators that are express elevators, and that would be facing south. In the center of these two elevator shafts would be elevators that go to the lower floors. They were blown off the hinges. That's where the service elevator was also.

Q. Were these elevators that went to the upper floors? They weren't side lobby elevators?

A. No, no, I'd say that they went through floors 30 and below.

Q. And they were blown off?

A. They were blown off the hinges, and you could see the shafts. The elevators on the extreme north side and the other express elevator on the extreme south side, they looked intact to me from what I could see, the doors anyway.

So we reported to the lobby command post. Engine 10 was there. Ladder 10 was there. The lobby seemed to fill up with firemen very quickly. I was reporting to the 1st Battalion Chief, which is Chief Pfeifer. At that time he was with the 1st Division Chief, which was Chief

Hayden.

Two of those chiefs were trying to collect information, which was very difficult for them, because as far as I could see the class E system I do not think was working. I can't say for sure, but these chiefs depend upon the information from the class E system, and I don't think that the class E system was working properly.

Normally there are World Trade Center building personnel that come down and they hand you Trade Center radios, which you can stretch the length of the World Trade Center. These people were not around. So as far as I know -- I was there for at least ten minutes -- there were no World Trade Center people to assist these chiefs.

The Division 1 aide, which was Chris Waugh, he was in the lobby. He was setting up the board, the command post board. I remember one time Chief Pfeifer, I made eye contact with him. He was about to tell me something and then he changed his mind quickly and told me to hold on.

We were there for it seemed to me like about ten minutes or so. Then finally the Division 1 aide said to everybody, "Just go up any stairway that you can and handy talky me what stairway you went up."

So I headed for the B stairway. I did not want to deal with elevators. So Ladder 1 --

Q. Were there any elevators working or no? Probably not, I assume.

A. I couldn't tell about the express elevators. The elevators that I mentioned before that were on the extreme north end and the extreme south end, I don't know about those elevators. But I headed for where the service elevator was, which was in the center where the lower floor elevators were, the ones where the doors were blown off them.

So I had known where the B stairway was, and Ladder 1 had opened up the door to the B stairway. Within several seconds we noticed civilians coming down in an orderly fashion and some water coming down the stairs. I assume that this water was either broken standpipes or sprinkler pipes that had gone off.

I had my thermal imaging camera with me, and then I realized that I did not have my search rope. I figured that I didn't need my thermal imaging camera to find fire at this point but I did need my search rope.

I instructed my members to wait in the lobby next to the B stairwell. I went outside to my rig, and I swapped my search rope for the thermal imaging camera. I came back, and we all of us started heading up the stairs.

My OV, which was Steve Olsen -- I don't think you mentioned him before. We'll get into that later.

Q. He was interviewed already, probably.

A. He didn't mention it.

Q. I just have guys that haven't been interviewed. So anybody that was interviewed I don't even know about.

A. He went up ahead of me, which is something I didn't like. But anyway, he's an aggressive firefighter. He went up ahead of us. As we started making our way up the stairs, it was a little bit slow going. You had to pace yourself because you knew you were going up 90

flights of stairs.

This battalion chief had asked us to turn off some sprinkler heads that had activated on the fourth floors and other floors that I can't remember. So we started turning off sprinkler heads.

I believe that we took a rest on maybe floor number seven and then again on floor 12. We made our next stop on floor number 19, which is as high as we had gotten. We were all sweating and debilitated at that point.

Do you want me to get into who I saw?

Q. Yeah, sure. That's good information.

A. I remember seeing the officer from Ladder 5. His name is Lieutenant Warchola. I remember seeing him on the stairs with his company. I remember seeing Captain Jonas of Ladder Company 6. We had passed each other on the stairs. They would take a rest; I would pass them. We would take a rest, and then they would pass us. But those two officers I remember seeing as we passed each other on the stairway.

After turning off some sprinkler heads and sometime waiting for my crew members to

rejoin us, because the pace was very slow going up the stairs because if somebody had stopped ahead of you, whatever floor that was above you, you had to wait until the line had started again. Everything was fairly orderly as far as the civilians descending and the firemen ascending.

I remember a Port Authority chief. He was black, and I believe he had either one or two stars on him. I remember him trying to get together his men on the stairwell and it looked as though there was about four or five of them at the time. I had mentioned that this was the B stairwell.

This happened on about floor number 10 or so. He was trying to regroup his men, and he wanted them off the floor at floor number 10 or 12 or so. I guess he wanted to give them instructions.

Ladder 1 had made its stop at floor number 19, because at floor number 19 you could tell that were soda machines there, candy machines, as soon as you opened up the stairway door and looked inside into the occupancy.

I think the guys were breaking open the

soda machines to take water, juice and cookies from the other vending machines. We were all sweating heavily at this point. A lot of us took off our helmets and masks and turnout coats.

I believe that Ladder 6 had also stopped around that area also on floor number 19. I had to wait for two of my members. I had to wait for Damian Vancleaf, and I had to wait for a member of Ladder Company 10. I believe he was the OV that day.

He was going to be operating with me because, I guess he lost his unit somehow. I guess being the OV he just assumed that he was going to be operating the elevators and it didn't work out that way. Anyway, he was straggler, so he attached himself to me.

So I had to wait for Vancleaf and this OV from Ladder Company 10. They finally joined us at floor number 19. I can't say how long I was there. I believe it was about like 10:00 that I had gotten to that point. We were on I guess you would call it the West Street side of floor number 19. Engine 5 was on the east side, which would be abutting World Trade Center number

2.

I had heard through the Engine 5 officer a mayday, because one of his members believed he was having a heart attack. He said something about chest pains or something. I'm an EMT, so I went over there across the floor on floor number 19. I guess it would be exposure 3 side.

I inquired about this member, but he seemed okay to me. He seemed to make a quick recovery. Maybe it was just a fast chest pain. He was having chest pains. He was okay.

So I tried to gather my members, because they didn't like the progress we were making at this point. They felt as though we should be a little bit higher up.

Lieutenant Fody, who was assigned to Engine 7 -- he's now a captain of Engine Company 6 -- he was working overtime that day in Engine Company 9. He was on the floor with us taking a rest. I think he might have started up the stairs, the same stairwell that we were using. I believe he left about ten minutes before I did, and this was about 10:00 we're talking about.

At this point I think my chauffeur -- I was trying to collect all my members, and I had all of my members, with the exception of Firefighter Olsen, who I knew was on the 22nd floor because I tried to find him through the handy talky and he told me that he was on the 22nd floor. I said, "Wait for me on the 22nd floor. Don't go any further," because I wanted all my members in a group.

So we were about to regroup now, and it must have been about -- I guess it was about 10:15 at this point. My chauffeur, Firefighter O'Neill, he said he had to go to the bathroom. He was looking around the floor for a bathroom. He finally finds one.

We're waiting for him. We must be waiting for about five minutes or so. I guess I was still on the exposure 1 side, the West Street side, in the hallway. I could look to my right and see 19S, and I could look to my left and see 19N, which apparently meant north and south.

About this time, 10:15, 20 after or so, I feel a rumbling of the building. It felt as though -- I got knocked from one side of the

hallway to the other side. It felt like you were in a subway car standing up and the subway car was making a turn and you were getting shifted back and forth. That's the way that it felt.

We later find out that this was World Trade Center number two collapsing. It had hit World Trade Center number one, and I guess it hit the Marriott Hotel. I didn't know this at the time, because we were in the stairwell, which is basically soundproof and no windows. So I didn't know that the second World Trade Center had been hit by the second plane.

All this time I operated on the tactical channel, Channel 1, at this point. I felt as though it was a localized collapse. The lights went out, and the ceiling panels fell down, dust fell down. The emergency lights stayed on.

I could look around and see pieces of debris in the hallway. It didn't seem like much debris in the hallway, but there were pieces of debris in the hallway. I did not have any access to any windows at this point because I was in the hallway. No windows were around us to the

outside. You didn't know what was going on outside.

So I was about to collect my members and start heading --

Q. Did you know the second tower had been hit by a plane?

A. No, no.

So I started collecting my members, and I was about to go up the stairway and I heard maydays to get out of the building. I didn't really know who gave the mayday. It could have been one chief giving it to another chief who was operating on the command channel and that chief might have given it out -- I'm not sure. I just heard, "Get out of the building."

So I collected all my members and informed Firefighter Olsen to get out of the building. He didn't acknowledge me. There was a lot of handy talky traffic going on at the time. Four of my members went down ahead of me, and then I was the next one to go down.

As we were going down the stairs, on the lower floors there were firemen taking rests. I couldn't identify the companies. I assume that

they were Brooklyn units, units that came subsequent to us. They were hanging out on the stairwell and in the occupancy, and they were resting.

I told them, "Didn't you hear the mayday? Get out." They were saying, "Yeah, yeah, we'll be right with you, Lou." They just didn't give it a second thought. They just continued with their rest.

So I made it down to the lobby, and the lobby looked as though it was in the same condition as I had left it as far as the debris all over the lobby. I looked out to West Street, and south of me I could see the rubble of a building. I would later find out it was the rubble of Two World Trade Center that had fallen down.

I decided to head north. I could see like four of my members that had run ahead of me. I was at the glass overhang, and I could hear bodies hitting the glass. As a matter of fact, I could see it, bodies jumping, hitting the glass overhang in front of West Street, which my rig was right in front of that also. There was

debris on my rig. My rig looked smashed at this point. Again, nobody was in the street, and there were no cars in the street.

I got outside of the building. There were bodies falling down, and there was some debris falling down. There was a lot more ash in the street. From the entranceway to the World Trade Center going north, there's a pedestrian overpass, and I wanted to make it there. I think it was about 50 yards up or so. This is going north on West Street now, just before Vesey Street. There's about a 50-yard run.

I just held my breath and just hoped that nothing came down and hit me, and I ran to this pedestrian overpass. There was a fire engine there hooked up to a hydrant, and there was the chauffeur that was there. I didn't really get a good look at the chauffeur or get a good look at the engine company that was there.

I made it to the pedestrian overpass, where I stayed there for a while. I was trying to collect my thoughts, because I couldn't understand what was going on. Then there was this person who had a badge around his neck. He

was in civilian uniform, but I think he had a blue windbreaker that identified some agency that he worked for.

Q. OEM?

A. No idea. He was a black person. He said we were in the collapse zone. I had just assumed he knew more than I did at this point, so I just started walking fast. When I reached Vesey Street, which is only about another 20 yards up or so, I started walking very quickly now, north, up West Street.

I think I was about a block away or so, maybe even less, and I turned around to take a look at the top of the World Trade Center. There was lots of smoke or dust where Two World Trade Center was, but I didn't focus on that. I had no idea that the second World Trade Center had gotten hit. I focused on World Trade Center number one.

The wind was blowing south that day, and you had a clear view of the World Trade Center. I could see where it was heavily on fire. I assumed it was about the 95th floor or so. All of a sudden, it starts coming down.

That put a panic into me.

I just dropped my tools, and I started running north as fast as I could. But then the debris started coming down, and to me it sounded like the roar of a freight train. In the background you could hear beams hitting beam like an erector set falling down.

All the dust and ash had finally hit the ground and started mushrooming the width of West Street and had started going east, and then it started mushrooming towards me. I started running as fast as I could, but I was overtaken by this. I was blown down. I thought that was it for me. I thought that I was dead.

After everything turned black and after several seconds, maybe 10 or 15 or so, I opened up my eyes. I was covered with ash. I could see like little pockets of fire around me. I thought I was in hell or purgatory at that point. I realized that I had survived.

I got up and I continued to run north. I lost all of my equipment. My mask fell off, my helmet and my lights and all of that. So I just ran north, and I ran as far as I believe it was

Harrison Street or around that area, which is about four blocks north or so.

That's where I ran into Captain Tardio of Engine 7. I ran into other members of Engine 7, other members of Ladder 1 that were working. Everybody had survived that was working that day from this house, Engine 7, Ladder 1.

Then Captain Tardio and I believe a member of Engine 6, Billy Green, were walking together. I finally met them. Captain Tardio seemed stressed out because he was under the assumption that he had lost two of his members who were tending the rig.

We got his turnout coat off, his mask, his helmet. I told him I would help him look for these people. I think I had gotten in touch with other members of my company, of Ladder 1. I had either physically seen them or heard them over the handy talky. So I knew all my members had made it.

So Captain Tardio, myself and Firefighter Olsen started to walk south now, and we were going to search for these two members that were missing, Firefighter Spinard, who was

the chauffeur that day, and Firefighter Cassaliggi, who were with them.

Later we would find out that Firefighter Spinard had escaped and Firefighter Cassaliggi was taken to the hospital shortly before number One World Trade Center fell.

So I continued to walk south. I think Firefighter Olsen and Captain Tardio had stopped to get some water, but I kept on walking south. I believe at Vesey Street I ran into Battalion Chief Pfeifer. I asked him if he was okay. He asked me if I was the same. I told him that of the two members that we thought we were missing he said that he had seen Firefighter Spinard. So Firefighter Cassaliggi was just missing at this point.

Chief Pfeifer asked me if I had seen his brother, who was the lieutenant of Engine Company 33. I said I would notify him if I run into him.

Then I ran into Battalion Chief McKavanagh, and he asked me if I was okay, because I was somewhat dazed at this point. I had lost all of my gear. So he told me that

there was a triage station here at Ladder Company 1, Engine 7, I should go back there.

He asked me for my handy talky because he was with Lieutenant Wiebicke, who was assigned to Ladder Company 1, we were coming off duty, and he could use my handy talky. So I gave him my handy talky.

I went down as far as Vesey Street, and it was all a big dust cloud. I heard over other people's handy talkies that there were electrical fires and gas fires. It was just a dangerous situation down there. I felt as though I was insecure at this point.

Q. Understandable.

A. Not in full control of my faculties here.

Then there were other building on fire, we would hear over the handy talky [redacted], where I ran into my chauffeur, Firefighter O'Neill. We rested for a while.

I also ran into Lieutenant Bob Rocco.

I believe he's assigned to Ladder Company 9. He came in off duty.

I think I was there until maybe 12:00 or so at Harrison Street and West. Like I said, I was with my chauffeur. I guess the other members of my company had already gone back to quarters. Myself and Firefighter O'Neill went back to quarters. We walked back to quarters. I believe I got back to quarters about 12:30 or so.

I just reconfirmed that the whole house had made it, that the whole house survived. There were numerous off-duty members here. Everything was pretty much under control. It was already set up, this triage center.

There were other firemen that I didn't recognize. They would be taking some of the gear from the company. I guess they were called in from home, didn't have any gear. They knew this firehouse and decided to take whatever gear that they could and head down to the World Trade Center there.

I was impressed -- after this collapse had what happened when I was on my way back, I kept passing by tons of firefighters and EMS

personnel and construction workers and civilians. It reminded me of the minute men, these people that day. They were just helping out. Anyway, that's besides the point.

I had gotten back to quarters about 12:30. I went to the back room and just watched CNN for a while. That's all.

That's about it. Do you have any questions for me?

Q. Yeah, one question I have is when you looked at the north tower when you could see it, was there any indication before it was coming down? Did you see cracks in the side or anything?

A. No, I didn't.

Q. There was no indication that it was going to collapse before it actually started collapsing?

A. No. I believe the hole that I had seen in the World Trade Center -- I don't know if I said this initially, but the hole seemed about three stories high, that this plane had made a three-story hole in the World Trade Center.

The fire seemed to be confined to about

maybe one or two floors.

Q. Really? Is that all?

A. Yeah. I was throughout the whole floor. It was the north side there was heavy fire, and the west side there was heavy fire throughout maybe two floors or so. I couldn't tell what was on the south side or east side because I never got there.

There was never any smoke in the building. I never incurred any smoke in tower one.

Q. I have another question. When you could see the building -- because a lot of people have said they didn't see the building. Could you see what floors people were jumping from or was there smoke coming out of all the floors above the fire?

A. When I had gotten there -- I'm talking about later on.

Q. Later on?

A. Just before it collapsed. Was there smoke coming from all the floors?

Q. Just curiosity.

A. To me it looked as though everything

was confined --

Q. To the two floors?

A. -- to the two floors, to the three floors or so. I've seen pictures of the Trade Center on fire, and right in the middle of this when the two of them were standing. It seemed as though it was heavy smoke throughout the whole upper floors.

But when I had looked at the World Trade Center after I had gotten out of the building, it didn't seem to me that that was the case. Obviously it was, but it didn't seem the case to me. I just remembered seeing two floors of heavy fire from the north side of World Trade Center one and the West side of World Trade Center one. All of a sudden things collapsed one floor, and then within a second or so it just imploded.

Q. Thank God you got out.

A. Maybe I was out of the building maybe three minutes or so and it came down. I don't know how that happened, but it just did.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. When I was in the B stairwell, one of

the firemen from another company had told me that the second tower was hit with another plane. He said that the Pentagon was hit with another plane, and he also said that the United Nations was hit with another plane.

Well, throughout my experience on the job whenever you get into a heavy fire situation, you always hear these rumors that never turn out to be true. I thought that this was the case, because I had never heard it from anybody else that day that the second World Trade Center was hit, not over the handy talky, nowhere.

I didn't hear anything and of course did not see anything, because the B stairwell didn't have any windows. Whoever I had rescued on the floors, they didn't have access to windows either.

The B stairwell was pretty much soundproof anyway. I didn't know how soundproof it was until I compared it against the Two World Trade Center falling on us. That was just a rumble in the background along with the vibration of the building shaking.

But I thought it was a localized

collapse, and I thought that the Trade Center was a very sturdy building and we wouldn't have to worry about the localized collapse.

Q. Nobody really thought that they would collapse. Thanks a lot, Bill. That was excellent. That was a lot of detail.

A. The kind you guys are looking for.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 12:40, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110443

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TYRONE JOHNSON

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 11th, 2002. The time is 10:45 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER JOHNSON: My name is Tyrone Johnson, firefighter first grade, assigned to Ladder 24.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 24, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tyrone, would you please tell your story.

A. Okay. As the day started off, I came to work early. I was milling around house watch. Maybe about quarter to we were in house watch watching the TV. We saw the hole in the building of the north tower. At that time we didn't know what was going on, so we were just watching, watching. Then we saw the plane hit the south tower. After that we got dispatched to go down

to the World Trade Center.

I was chauffeur that day for Ladder 24. We went down the West Side Highway. I stopped the rig maybe two blocks away from the command post. We got our gear together, walked to the command post and waited for our orders.

As we were waiting for our orders, our company --

Q. This is the command post on West Street?

A. On West Street, the command post on West Street. We passed up the Fire Commissioner and Mayor Giuliani at the time. At that time we were standing outside for a little while. It was a bad sight because we were watching people jumping out of the building. At that time they told everybody to go to the back of the command post, which is a garage, to the rear of the command post, and wait for our orders.

Then maybe about five, ten minutes later, we were ordered to go into the Marriott Hotel. At that time the company and three other companies in front of us went inside the Marriott Hotel.

Once we got inside the hotel, we met a chief. I don't remember what chief it was. He gave us the command just relax for a while before you find out what you want us to do.

(Interruption.)

A. At the time we were waiting for our command to go to the Marriott. We went to the Marriott. We got inside the lobby. The chief told us take your gear off, relax, until you find out what you want us to do.

Maybe 10 or 15 minutes later he gave us the command put the gear on because we're getting ready to head upstairs. There were about three companies in front of us. We were the last company to go up the steps. Maybe about five minutes into the process of going up the steps, that's when the building collapsed on us.

At that time we were thrown all around the place. Guys were laying around, covered up. I was messed up and covered up. Beams were thrown. Guys were injured. Just maybe a quick couple minutes -- it seems like a lifetime, though -- a few minutes I uncovered myself, got a hold of the rest of the guys in the company and

we found our way out of the building.

We just searched our way out. We saw the light, and we crawled out of the building.

Q. Did you have to crawl up?

A. We had to crawl down, maybe down half a floor, and then crawl up to get out the door. Once we got out of the building, we started walking towards the water, which is on the West Side Highway. At that time walking maybe we ran across other firemen milling around.

Then we heard another rumble. Then I turned to my left and looked up. It was the second tower coming down. After that we just ran, ran, ran, ran. A black cloud of smoke just caught up to us while we were running towards the water. We got covered again. I got knocked down and covered again. I got up and made my way to the ambulance and I was taken to the hospital.

Basically that's it.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. I'm trying to think. It was like four companies that were in the lobby with us at the time. I only noticed two companies, Ladder 24 and 22 Truck. The other two companies, I didn't

see them leave the building.

But just to get out of the building, we had to lime over the beams, crawl through holes, all kinds of rubbish to get out of the building. Half the hotel was gone. Half the hotel was gone. We just happened to be lucky we were in the half that didn't fall down. We just climbed out.

Q. Okay. Thank you, Tyrone, for your cooperation.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 11:05, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110444

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES DUFFY

Interview Date: January 14, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 14th, 2002. The time is 1150 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DUFFY: James Duffy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter third of Ladder 24 of the New York City Fire Department. We're in the quarters of Ladder 24, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jimmy, if you would just in your own words say what happened that day.

A. We were in quarters when the first plane hit. People came out to the firehouse and told us that a plane had crashed into the twin towers. So we turned the news on.

The engine went down on the third alarm. We were still in quarters. After the engine went down, Captain Brethel and Father Mike -- Father Mike came across the street, got into his car, and Captain Brethel drove Father

Mychal Judge down to the Trade Center.

About five minutes later we saw on TV from quarters the second plane hit. As soon as the second plane hit, we went on the second fifth alarm.

Before this happened we put extra Scotts into the rig. We had a few of the depots. We put all the Scott cylinders from the depot on the truck. We wound up going down West Street. There was traffic on West Street, so we went on the northbound side going south on West Street.

We got down there. We parked on West Street about two blocks north of the towers.

Q. Just a second.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. We parked on West Street about two blocks north of the towers. We pulled up. As we were pulling up, 35 truck was pulling up also. They were getting off the rig at the same time we were getting off our rig.

We tried to walk to the command post, which was across the street on the west side of West Street, directly across from the towers. We

were reporting there. We report there. We saw different companies, my old company, 204. I saw 101 Truck. I saw Stackpole there. He was at the command post that day.

I just saw jumpers. I saw about 20 to 30 people jumping out from the upper floors and hitting rigs and the pavement and the ground and apparatuses, and the glass atrium of the Marriott they were hitting. I guess about five or six jumpers jumped at a time.

The chiefs were yelling to get more truck companies. So we sent our fire truck companies in. We were one of the truck companies to go in.

Q. Where'd you go in?

A. We were told to report to the south tower, but the only way to get to the south tower -- you couldn't walk down Liberty Street to get into the main entrance because of the jumpers and the falling debris, so we had to go in through the corner entrance of the Marriott, which is on West and Liberty. We went in there.

Lieutenant McLaughlin was the officer. He looked up and he was keeping an eye out for

debris, because we had all our equipment plus an extra cylinder. So he kept an eye out and he said, "When I tell you guys to run, just run." He was looking up, and we ran right into the lobby.

We got into the lobby, and there was still a lot of Marriott employees still there. They were getting huge things of water. We drank that. We were just waiting our turn to go into the south tower and report to the command post.

We were waiting around. 122 Truck was over there right next to us. 22 Truck was in the lobby also. Then we were just waiting to go into the south tower. As we were waiting, we looked up and all I saw was -- I heard this huge noise, and I saw hundreds and hundreds of people running towards us. They were running out of the south tower to the Marriott, to the lobby.

We just turned. We started to like run also. We got about ten feet before getting blown across the lobby. We got blown across the lobby, just got covered with debris. Apparently after we determined we were still alive, we got up and couldn't see anything at all with the dust and

everything.

One of the guys in the company, Tyrone Johnson, I saw him right next to me. So we stayed together. We were trying to get a way to get out. We didn't know if we were buried alive or not. We thought we were.

We wound up finding -- a metal rolldown gate came down where we came in, I think where we came in. We wound up pushing that up, and then we wound up signaling -- I had a flashlight. I was signaling to people come this way. I know there were quite a few Marriott employees still in the lobby, so we were trying to get all of the employees plus the firemen.

I remember hearing a mayday for Ladder 4. The officer was giving a mayday. He was knocked unconscious, and he didn't know where he was.

After we wound up getting out, we had to climb around this rubble. We were sliding down twisted metal beams and climbing up and just getting through all this debris and trying to help the Marriott employees as they were coming out also with us. That took a little bit of

time. I got separated from Tyrone.

Once we got to solid ground, I wound up hooking up with another guy from my company, Frank Ocello. When we got on solid ground outside, the second tower came down on us.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. We were out on solid ground, like right around the area. But when the second tower -- we just ran. We wound up running down towards Battery Park City down by the water. We just ran west, and we wound up down by the water, down by that marina down there.

My mask was blown off me, so we wound up -- there must have been about 50 firemen and probably about 20 cops down there by the water. We all ran into this restaurant. There was a huge cloud coming down to the water. We wound up going into this restaurant. There were civilians down there. I remember there were people with baby carriages and stuff like that. We went into the restaurant until the cloud cleared.

We also asked for a roll call, and they said there was a gas leak at Stuyvesant High

School, so they were closing that area off so we really couldn't get back to the rig. I guess we were on the south side of the towers. So we had to go to the north side to get back to the rig.

So we just did a roll call over the radio, and we just wound up staying, helping. We wound up staying for many hours helping stretch line off the fire boats to the rigs to help put the fires out. That's what we did.

I guess all the other members -- four other members went to the hospital. Me and Frank helped out and we wound up going back to the fire.

That's basically it.

Q. You don't want to add anything else?

A. No. That's it.

Q. Do you know, the four other companies that you were in the lobby with, did they all get out?

A. No, no, 4 and 22 Truck got out that was Frank...no, no.

Q. Jerry Riley?

A. Jerry Riley. And 122 got out all right because I stopped by that night. I stopped by to

see these guys 'cause they were right next to us. So they got out. I think 25 Truck was with those guys, and they didn't get out.

Q. Yeah.

A. They were supposed to report to Chief Barbara in the south tower.

Q. You said a lot of people were running out of the south tower. Any civilians?

A. Yeah, oh, yeah.

Q. Any firemen or all civilians?

A. I just remember people. It's really hard to say at this point. I know there were civilians. I thought I remember mostly civilians. There could have been some firemen. I don't know.

Q. When either tower came down, did you have any advanced warning?

A. Oh, no. I didn't know what it was when we were inside. I didn't know the building had collapsed, actually. I thought it was a bomb. I thought a bomb had gone off. That's why I really didn't know until after.

Q. Afterwards?

A. Yeah, that that's when it came down. I

wasn't expecting that. I thought it was a bomb or something that went off.

Q. Glad you made it.

A. Yeah.

Q. Thanks for the interview. Again, what we're going to do is we're going to try and put everything together and figure out as best we can what happened.

A. Yeah.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 12:00, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110445

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS SPINARD

Interview Date: January 11, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is 11 January 2002. The time is 1210 hours. This is B.C. Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER SPINARD: Thomas Spinard, Engine 7, firefighter first grade.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tom, if you would please say in your own words what happened that day.

A. Well, I just came on that day during a 24. I relieved the chauffeur probably about 8:20 or so. We got a box on Church and Leonard of an odor of gas. So Engine 7 and Ladder 1, Battalion 1, responds. It turned out to be a false alarm.

As we were at the box, a plane passes us overhead real low. You could hear it; you could feel it. We turned around, and it just impacted the building, building one. With that, everybody got on the rig. We started driving.

I drove over to Canal Street and made a left on Greenwich, went down Greenwich, passed right in front of seven, made a right. When I made the right, there was debris, windows, metal and I guess plane debris right on the floor there between seven and I guess that would be six.

Q. Yeah, that's six.

A. Where the foot bridge is, that little overhead. Yeah, I came down and made a right. There's that little foot bridge that went across. I went up West Street after.

Q. This is West Street over here.

A. Yeah, this is the foot bridge over here.

Q. You were at the north; right?

A. We came down Greenwich. There's that little chrome foot bridge. We went under that and found our way over there. We went up to West Street, made a left, made a U turn. I parked right in front of one and hooked up.

When we pulled up in front of one, we saw the lobby windows were blown out already. You could walk into the building without the doors, just where the windows were.

Q. Wait a second.

(Interruption.)

A. I went to West Street and made a left. I made the U turn where you can make the U turn in front of One World Trade Center. I pulled up right in front of the building. I stayed out. I didn't go under the overhang that they had there. I stayed out along the curb where the hydrant is.

I hooked up to the hydrant, and I started stretching back to the Siamese connection on the corner of three, not far away, about three lengths away or so; about two and a half lengths, it was. I started pumping. We didn't wait for anybody's signal. We just started doing our own thing then.

Q. Did you start doing high-pressure pumping?

A. We're not a high-pressure pumper.

Q. Oh, you're not a high-pressure. Okay.

A. No, Engine 7 is not a high-pressure pumper.

I believe we were the first engine hooked up. There was a rig right along the curb there. It was a ladder. It was a tiller, so I

don't know, whichever one, maybe 6 or something. I'm not sure.

There was a guy laying in front of it, a civilian. We also had two civilians blown out to the middle of West Street on the divider there. It's about two feet high with dirt and grass they were sitting up there. I don't think they walked up there. They were just blown up there. They were all women. They were naked. They were burnt up. They were alive, but they were -- maybe they made it; I don't know. The ambulance took them away. The guy down here who was laying down in front of the rig, the ambulance took him away also.

As I was hooking up, I had debris falling, people, glass, file cabinets. I saw a file cabinet come out. There were just chairs -- they were looking to break the windows with anything, I guess.

I couldn't call the captain. I was trying to call him the whole time. I couldn't get in touch with my captain on the radio. I estimate --

Q. When you were pumping, was water going

into the building?

A. Oh, definitely.

Q. Oh, yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. You don't know where it was coming out?

A. I don't know what was happening to it. I was pumping at 200 pounds, and I was getting a flow. Everything was fine, yeah. I had a good hydrant. I had, like I say, three lengths going in. It was right in front on the corner over here, that little set back. It was right there. Yeah, no, it was definitely pumping.

There was a lot of commotion going on. After a while I'm standing out in the street over here -- well, for a short while I was in the rig right in front of the building. Debris was landing next to it. Finally I said this is no good.

I had a proby with me -- I don't know who he was -- and I had my control man, who went into the building, his cylinder malfunctioned, emptied right out in two seconds. So I went to high-pressure hose. He came back out. He went to get another one, but at that point they had

taken the chauffeur's one off the rig already, somebody.

So now he couldn't even go back in because he had no cylinders, no nothing. I said, "Joe, just stay with me." That's what we did. I needed help anyway out there, so he stayed out with me. He watched my back while I hooked up, actually.

Q. Because of the debris, yeah.

A. Because when you went to the building, stuff was really coming down heavy, glass and everything. It was just unbelievable. In fact, even our line was getting little pin holes in it from the glass.

Q. From the stuff coming down?

A. Yeah. We tried protecting it, but there wasn't much to cover it with. Usually we put a door or something. But we didn't have anything.

There was a guard booth in the middle of the street, a glass reinforced like bulletproof. I said, well, this is good for some kind of a protection. It was right in the middle of West Street. So we went in there for a minute

or two. Then I started saying, you know what, even debris is landing close to here. Let's get out of here.

We walked over to the bridge, the --

Q. The north bridge.

A. Right here. I'm not sure what you're looking at. The north bridge.

While we were still in the middle of the street, another plane comes in, makes a big circle, comes around from like the Statue of Liberty direction, and hits two. We can't believe that another one is coming in. Joey got on the radio, "Another plane just hit the second tower." I don't know if he said mayday or what, but he yelled "Another plane hit the second tower."

At that point debris was flying all over, the fireball, fuel was coming down, fireballs were coming down. We just ran west and north. Then after a minute it calmed down a little bit, so we started to come back. We ran over to the rig, checked it to make sure it's still pumping okay and the hydrant's still good, we're still getting good pressure. Everything

was fine with that.

We're still around there. The people who were removed at this point by the ambulance were in the street. I saw three people down there. They were all removed.

I don't know what time later a loud rumble -- it sounded like an explosion. We thought it was a bomb. We ran under the bridge, me, Joe Cassaliggi and two police officers; I think one police officer and one Secret Service. We ran under the bridge. There's a column there, over here, right on the sidewalk, a big six foot round masonry column.

We get behind that, and number two tower comes down and debris comes right around us. Heavy debris is hitting the front of the column, light debris is make it around, dust and little particles, and then the dust cloud hits us. Then it got real hot. It felt like it was going to light up almost.

After a few minutes, we get up. Everybody's okay. We make our way into the American Express tower. We come out the back of the tower. They put us in an ambulance. They

start giving us oxygen, because we were all -- we couldn't even walk we were in such bad shape.

We were in the ambulance for a little while. They said we have to get out and evacuate because the other tower's coming down. We get out. We start running north on North End Avenue. We make it to the construction trailer, maybe over here someplace, one of these blocks. I think it was this block. The second tower, number one tower, comes down.

Now with this I'm still trying to call my captain. I can't get in touch with him. We only had one radio, because one radio we gave to 3 Truck. Being that me and Joe were together -- the control man radio, he took a radio, because we didn't need it, and we gave it to them. That was before anything came down. We were trying to call Engine 7. We never got an answer from them at all.

After the second one, they took Joe away in an ambulance. I said, well, I'm not too bad. I'll stay around. I walked back just to see if I could pull anybody out or put fires out or whatever. There were cars burning in the

parking lots over here, big paper debris fires going on all over the place.

That was it.

Q. I've just got to ask you a couple of things. Did you look at the north tower before it collapsed?

A. Did I look at the north tower before it collapsed? I looked -- no, because once number two came down, I couldn't see anything.

Q. You couldn't see anything. Okay. I thought maybe you could see.

A. I'm looking up at the fire and thinking, wow, we're going to have a tough job there and it will probably burn for days, but I never thought it would come down. It did.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. I didn't go into the lobby, but I could see into the lobby. It seemed like there were people burnt. Guys were saying there were people burnt on the elevator, people burnt in the lobby. I heard them say there was marble blown off the walls. I imagine the concussion came down the elevator shaft or something and blew everything out.

We were pumping -- we helped 55 Engine who were also in the street. They connected to a hydrant over here across the street. We connected to that and also helped them get a line in. I think there's one over here someplace too. Or 6 Engine maybe had it.

Q. Yeah, 6 Engine said they were there.

A. Yeah, they were right under the bridge; right?

Q. Yeah.

A. So we helped them. And Joe Torrillo was with us too.

That's it. It came down so fast, you couldn't even run. It was about seven or eight seconds. You heard that loud rumble. I looked up, but I still didn't see it come down. It looked like it got fat like a big clump. It wasn't a fire cloud; it was like another cloud around it. I just started running. I said, "Come on, Joe. This way." We ran to that bridge and we huddled, and that's it, it came down right around us.

Any questions?

Q. I was just saying, my brother-in-law,

he has a picture taken from a helicopter after Two World Trade fell. This whole area was engulfed, all the way over to the rivers.

A. You couldn't see.

Q. With dust and dust. I don't know how anybody could have possibly seen what was going on. I mean, the cloud was just -- you could see it right down the street. You could see the top of Seven World Trade in the picture. It's probably one of the famous pictures now that I remember. I'm almost sure it's before number one fell.

A. Because I thought the first 10 or 20 floors, I didn't think the whole thing -- I'm looking at it, and I don't see it missing, because of the cloud. It's maybe 10 floors that collapsed or just the roof. I didn't think the whole thing came down. I still didn't believe it.

Then when I got far away from it, I looked back and said, oh, shit, I see smoke but I don't see any kind of building over there. I went like, whatever, two blocks. I walked up to Murray Street, and you could see a little better

when you're far away than when you're right under it.

But the visibility was zero. It was like a black cloud. We couldn't even find our way to the doorway here. There was a lieutenant that saw us -- that was behind the glass. He saw us run there as it came down. Then when it settled down, he yelled, "Hey you guys. Over here, over here," because we couldn't find our way. Between all this shit that had piled around over here around the column, because the shit was just flying, like tin, like mostly lightweight stuff. None of the heavy beams came that far. They landed around over here.

Then I thought it was gonna light up. That's how hot it got.

Q. You figure everything was heated from the fire.

A. I'm figuring, shit, now I'm going to burn to death. I lived with this, and I'm going to burn. It didn't get that bad. We got out of there, and they worked on us and that was it.

I met up with a chauffeur from 55 Engine. We took him to a trailer here,

construction trailer, cleaned him up. I forget his name. But his eyes were in real bad shape. He wore glasses. I don't remember if he left them on or off, but he was terrible. He couldn't see. Nobody could see, but he was really bad.

The next day I went up to St. Vincent's Hospital. They said a guy had a cornea transplant. It wasn't him. I think it was a civilian. But somebody that had debris in his eyes.

Q. I know I couldn't open my eyes the next day. My wife had to put water on them.

A. I went home that night. The next day they sent me back. I was on 90 West Street, Engine 7, Ladder 1, putting out fires on the seventh, eighth and ninth floor for about three or four hours with nothing, no cylinders or nothing. You just didn't have them.

Q. Part of that dust might have been pulverized glass that nobody --

A. Yeah, right, it could have been pulverized glass. Everything was disintegrated. You know what the doc said? The cement is actually, it's because there is lye in it.

That's rough stuff. When I went to my doctor, he said, "You may develop asthma. Right now you're okay, but your lungs are like borderline." Because I was failing the test that we give. I went to see a doctor at NYU, like an hour-long test, and I just passed it.

Q. What's it called?

A. It was medication.

Q. Like the methyl-something test?

A. They gave me a test. Then they medicated me, and I had to wait 15 minutes and then take the whole test over again. But it wasn't like a cold air thing; it was some kind of medication.

Q. Wheezing.

A. The guy medicates you right then and there. You inhale it, you wait 15 minutes.

Q. Yes. I think they try and bring on --

A. You take it again --

Q. It stops you breathing, though. It tries to make you labor in breathing?

A. No, it didn't do that. I think it tries to open it up, and it sees the difference, tries to compare the difference between the first

and the second test. I was out like five weeks medical leave. I feel better now, but I still keep wheezing. I'm still taking the inhaler.

(Interruption.)

Q. Thank you for your cooperation, Tommy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: That's the end of the interview. It is now 1325.

File No. 9110446

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL YAREMBINSKY

Interview Date: January 14, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 14th, 2002. The time is 1215 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER YAREMBINSKY: Mike Yarembinsky.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Mike is a firefighter first class assigned to Engine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, if you could please tell your story in your own words?

A. We got the box at 9:00. Engine 1 got assigned on the fifth alarm. We took the West Side Highway to get down to the Trade Center, and on the way down we saw smoke coming out of both buildings.

At one point as we were getting closer, the smoke looked like it was lightening up. We

thought that they were getting some water on the fire. But by the time we had arrived, it had darkened down again.

We parked the car on the West Side Highway. I don't know the street, but I believe it's the block north of the Trade Center on the West Side Highway, the north tower. Each member took a fold-up and a cylinder, and we started approaching the building.

We entered the building on the west side doorway. We got into the lobby --

Q. That's the north tower?

A. North tower.

When we got in the lobby, the first thing we saw or that I saw was there was a body covered up in the lobby, a dead body. We walked over to the command post. The command post was on the north side of the building in the lobby. My officer went over to the chief and found out our assignment. I don't know what chief. I don't know what battalion.

The assignment was to go with 16 Engine to the 70th floor to operate a line. We took the B stairwell up, and we were making our way up.

There were a lot of civilians coming down. The civilians were handing us water and this and that. The civilians were very calm.

So we continued up. At about the 11th floor, we stopped to take a break. We were maybe on a one-minute break. We stopped on the 11th in the hallway out of the stairwell. Then after about a minute or two, we decided to keep going up.

When we got to 22, we heard there was a Port Authority command post on 22. So we were stopped there. My officer wanted to find out some information, my officer Lieutenant Andy Desperito. He went over to the command post.

We noticed in the hallway that the elevator shaft had been blown out. There was nothing there, no doors, no framing, nothing. When you looked down, all you saw was the cables for the elevator and the brick work that was surrounding.

Q. Was it burning?

A. No burning, no smoke coming out of it.

When he came back, on his way back when he was walking towards us, the entire building

started to shake. This is when we were on the 22nd floor, in the hallway. Initially we thought that our building was coming down or some part of it was collapsing. What we found out right after that was that the south tower had just come down.

So the lights went out in the hallway. I guess the emergency lighting stayed lit in the stairwell. I remember that the civilians at that time were becoming less and less. So we decided it was time to go. We were going to continue up to the 70th floor.

So at that point we had some guys who had dropped their masks and stuff, so we were putting all our stuff back on. We were totally geared up, getting ready to go back up, when a Port Authority man came over to us. He must have been an administrator because he had a suit and tie on. He told us that the south tower had fell, that this was a terrorist action, and that we should leave the building.

We were still going to go up because we were waiting for our own order from the department to go down or whatever the case may be. Maybe less than a minute after he told us we

should evacuate, we got the order from the department. This was as per my lieutenant telling us.

So we decided to go down. We started to go down. It seemed like 16 Engine was in front of us, and me and Lieutenant Desperito were in the back of Engine 1 it was like Engine 16 in front and then the rest of the guys and then me and the lieutenant.

At this point on our way down, there were like no civilians in the stairwell. I saw maybe a couple of stragglers. There were two guys. I asked them how they were doing. They had handkerchiefs over their mouths. They said they were fine. They were walking down calmly.

Those were the only two I saw, until we got to the sixth floor when me and the lieutenant ran into who we think was Josephine, which is who ended up with 6 Truck down there that we found out later. He told me he's going to lend a hand. I don't remember 6 Truck being there. I remember two Port Authority police being there. This is approximately the sixth or the seventh floor.

He said he's going to lend a hand. He

told me go down, get the guys together, move away from the building, and he'd be right down. So I continued down. He stayed there. I got down to the lobby.

When I got down to the lobby, I noticed all the windows had been blown out and there was dust all over the floor, still not realizing that when they said that the south tower had fell, they meant the whole building. Nobody really comprehended that at that point.

I remember looking out to the street, and there was nobody out there. I really couldn't figure out what was going on at that point, why there was nobody there. I said, this is a big operation. There should be more rigs outside, this and that.

I went over. I had left the fold-up because we decided only every second man between the two companies was going to take a fold-up, and the other guys would take cylinders. When we got to the 11th, the guys that had the cylinders took fold-ups. We traded. So I had left my fold-up down by the command post.

I went, I picked up my fold-up. I saw

one of approximate members of my company, Kirk Long. I said, "Kirk, come on. We've got to go. We've got to go out of the building." The windows were all blown out, so you could walk through the frame. We exited the building out of the northwest point of the north tower and started walking diagonally towards where our rig was.

On the way to the rig, we saw the other two guys from our company. They were already outside. We said, "Come on, guys. We have to stick together." We got over to the rig. I threw my stuff up in the rig, my mask, and I threw the fold-up on the rig.

I remember looking up and seeing numerous jumpers, one right after another. I maybe wanted to go back, but it was a crazy thing. You're very helpless.

So we just continued to walk away from the building on the West Side Highway north. I don't know how much time elapsed, but I would say between one and three minutes -- it's hard to judge how much time elapsed -- when somebody yelled out "It's going." I looked up, and I saw

the building started to come down.

I can't tell you what street I was on. I remember running north on the West Side Highway, kind of diagonally towards the water. I turned the corner as the dust was starting to hit me, and I got myself into a building.

At that point all of us had split up. I didn't know where anybody else was. I was looking. There was a bunch of firemen that went into that building also; none of my guys, though.

After that I looked outside. It was pitch-black. A fireman came in with a mask. He took it off. I put it on. I went outside. I wanted to look for the rest of the guys in my company.

A couple minutes passed. The dust started to settle. I took the mask off, dropped it in the street, and I commenced to walk up and down the West Side Highway from Chambers to the site, and I can't tell you how many times, looking for the guys in my company. It had be at least 45 minutes passed, me going back and forth, looking for guys, asking people, "Have you seen anybody from Engine 1?" because I didn't know

what happened.

Finally I did run into two guys from Ladder 24. I hung out with them for a little while. I asked them if they saw anybody. They said no. Actually they said the chauffeur, Joe Falco, from our company got hurt. They put him on a boat to New Jersey. So I knew he was okay.

I guess maybe another half hour passed and finally I ran into the guys from my company. I wanted to find out what happened to the lieutenant. It was still up in the air. We didn't know if he made it or not.

We started walking back to the site with another fireman from 12 Truck, and we were going to help out down there at the site, this and that. We were about a block away from the site when somebody said someone had found Lieutenant Desperito.

So I asked, "You found him? Where is he? Is he all right?" He said, "No, I'm sorry. He didn't make it." I said, "Are you sure it's him?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Describe him." He described him to a T, so I knew it was him.

Q. Where did they find him?

A. They found him in I believe it was the hotel next to the Trade Center. I can't tell you exactly, because I didn't see where they found him. I don't know where they found him, because they had already pulled him out by that point. They said they found him in a hallway in the hotel or near a stairwell in the hotel.

But I had spoken to a Port Authority guy that was with Andy the whole way down. He said that they were trying to get out the mezzanine level, the overpass that leads to the Financial Center. They said that's when the building started coming down. He said they were about ten feet apart. This guy apparently made it, and Lieutenant Desperito did not.

I don't know if they were saying they found him in that section of overpass or maybe he got blown in through a window to a hotel. I really don't know exactly where he ended up, because I heard a couple of different things.

That was a little bit of an emotional impact, so we took a little breather. Then we said, okay, let's see if we can help out down there. We started walking over closer, and then

somebody else said Father Mike didn't make it. [redacted]

We stuck around a little bit longer, and we just looked for a couple of people that we knew. We talked to a few people. We went over to a chief -- now, this is a lot of time that had elapsed. We might not have left there until about 2:00 in the afternoon. We were walking around, and we told the chief that we were going to leave and go back to quarters and we never came back.

Q. That's it?

A. That's it.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. Nothing else that I can recall right now. That's pretty much the whole story.

Q. That's pretty interesting. Very good. Okay. Thanks a lot for your cooperation, Mike.

A. You're welcome.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 12:45, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110447

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JAMES MCGLYNN

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is January 10th, 2002. The time is 9:28 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Lieutenant James McGlynn of Engine 39 regarding the events of September 11th. There's nobody else in the room, and we're in the office of Engine 39. What follows is the interview.

A. I was in this office when it came over the PA system that there was a report that a plane hit the World Trade Center. So I turned up the volume on the department radio and turned the TV on. You could see from the silhouette that it's obvious that a fairly large-size plane has hit the World Trade Center, the north tower, and that it was obviously going to be a major fire disaster, a huge loss of life.

Pretty much about the same time, over the department radio I heard an officer giving a report to the dispatcher to send all available units, send as many EMS ambulances that they could, that there was going to be a major loss of life.

Pretty much about that time we were dispatched on the third alarm with the high-rise rig. The high-rise rig is an additional apparatus that we have in quarters. It's mainly used to support high-rise fires. It provides different tools such as fans, electrical generators, hour cylinders, things of that nature.

We left here pretty much immediately. We responded with five guys instead of four. It was right at the change of tours. One of the guys was an experienced chauffeur, and he said he wanted to take the run in. I wanted an extra guy to drive the high-rise rig who had some experience. He said he wanted to take the run, and I said, "Fine, let's go."

So I responded with five guys. We headed down Second Avenue. I can just remember looking up and seeing the smoke coming from the north tower, large smoke billowing out, heavy, heavy thick smoke. So we knew obviously that we were going to have our hands full.

One thing I noticed was the traffic was for some reason very light. We went down on

Houston Street I would say within -- from here, this on 67th Street. We were on Houston Street somewhere in the area of eight or nine minutes, and this is at rush hour. It can take you that much time to go around the block at this time. This particular day for some reason or other traffic was light.

We were heading across Houston before we made the left on West End Avenue. At that time I saw the plume of heavy fire engulf the north tower, what looked like the north tower. I thought it might have been a secondary explosion, it might have been a bomb. I didn't know what it was. It turned out later that I found out that that was the second tower being hit.

From my approach, they both were kind of lined up, so you couldn't distinguish one from the other, especially when you just saw the top 20 floors or so that were just totally engulfed in smoke.

We pulled up. We arrived, I would say, probably from here to there -- it originally came in 8:45. We were dispatched at 8:52. I think we were down there right around a little after 9,

because we were there maybe a minute after the second plane hit.

I saw Chief Ganci and his aide as I got off the rig. His aide said, "Watch out. There are people jumping." We pulled up right along side the north tower on West End Avenue. The aide said, "Watch out. People are jumping." I just said okay.

At that point I decided to walk under a pedestrian crosswalk. Now, from this map it looks like it's over here.

Q. That's the north walk bridge on West Street.

A. Right. There's a second one down here.

Q. At Liberty Street.

A. To my knowledge, there's one much closer here, but maybe I'm mistaken. Maybe the map is off. But to my knowledge, it's much closer here, because I remember walking under the pedestrian bridge.

As we were walking, I was watching out for people jumping, because we got right about here and I had people stop and wait. I said okay, let me take a look up and see if I see

anybody coming down, before we ran from this point into the building.

Q. Where did you park the rig now?

A. The rig was on West End Avenue.

Q. This is West Street, and West End Avenue is way over here.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. So you were on West Street?

A. West Street, yeah.

Q. You were near the north walk bridge someplace?

A. Yeah.

We basically reported to the north tower with my guys. Everybody had their rollups, an extra cylinder, the standpipe kit. We reported into the command station there. As soon as we walked in, one of I guess the aides said, "Start walking up the B stairwell with your men and team up with Engine 65."

We walked all the way up. We started walking up and stopping, I would say, about every ten floors or so because of getting tired. I said there's no sense getting all the way up there and being exhausted. So we were stopping

about every ten floors to regroup, passing people who were evacuating at that time, civilians.

We made it up to approximately I believe it was the 31st floor. On the 31st floor we felt the building began to shake. It appeared that that building was starting to come down.

Q. Your building?

A. The north tower.

Q. Right.

A. [redacted]

Q. He didn't appear to be excited?

A. The building was shaking at this point, so I believe he was crying. But he was definitely upset. I don't know whatever happened to him. I don't know if he ever made it out.

After the building stopped shaking, there happened to be a chief there. I asked the chief, "What's going on?" There were different things being said among the guys. Like one guy from rescue was saying he was thinking it was just the facade of the building, that nothing was going to happen to this building, that we were safe. I said, "Well, I hope that's it."

It felt kind of like it wasn't immediately right around you. The fire was on the 80th floor. We were on the 31st. Any time I've heard of a collapse, it was never an entire building like this turned out to be.

Anyway, I said, "Okay, Chief, what's going on?" He's on a different channel than I am. I figured he was getting different information. I believe he got information that the south tower was down, and he just said we're evacuating and that's it. Okay, fine. That's

enough for me. Let's just evacuate this building and see what's going on.

I was thinking maybe he knows something more than I do, but I was also wondering how we were now going to fight a fire for a building that's on the 80th floor if we're abandoning the World Trade Center. This is not good. Obviously you can't do a surround and drown on the World Trade Center.

So we just basically started walking down the stairs, and at this point we passed some civilians, not many. It was mainly firemen who were evacuating. We stopped to help some civilians out to give them some air that had some problems. The stairway was fairly clear.

We passed some units on the way down. The only one I remember specifically was Freddie Ill from 2 Truck. I said to Captain Ill, "Let's go. We're evacuating. Let's go. Let's get out of here." He said, "Is that on your orders?" I said, "No, it was a chief on the 31st floor." He said, "Okay. Just let me get my guys."

Anywhere, there was some confusion down there as to whether the order was given to -- I

found out later whether to evacuate, and then I heard was rescinded and then it was issued again. That's all what I've heard is rumors. I can't say that that's exactly happened.

So we continued down the stairs to the lobby. We made it out into the lobby. When we made it to the lobby, I could see outside how bad it was, how the street was now full of concrete dust and fallen building parts.

It's obvious now, what happened was that vibration that we felt was the south tower collapsing. It wasn't this building. It was the south tower that had come down.

I saw what was going on outside, and I said, okay, this is really bad. I grabbed my guys and said, "Let's do a quick roll call and make sure we have everybody. Everybody stay together." When I took the roll call, I realized that I was missing one guy, John Drumm, detailed to the truck.

I asked the guys when the last time they saw him, and they said the last time they saw him was the second floor. We had been helping some people down along the way, and I

assumed that maybe he got stuck with somebody and wasn't able to get them down the stairs.

We went back into the stairwell. I said, "Okay, let's go see if we can help John out." We went back into the stairwell. We walked up three or four flights. Again I said, "Are you sure you saw him on the second floor?" They said, "Yes."

We yelled on the fourth floor, we yelled on the third floor, the second floor, yelled on the handy talky. No response. I said, "Okay. He must have kept going." At that point we turned around and decided to exit. We said, "Okay, let's get out of here." When we turned around to exit, the building came down.

I believe I was between the second and third floor on the half landing, and it started to shake and vibrate. Then I heard the sound of floors imploding one on top of the other. You heard it coming, and you heard it getting louder and louder and louder and louder and things are coming down on top of you.

I hit the floor, and I rolled to the wall and just kind of covered up into a fetal

position and started saying my prayers. Finally that stopped, and the debris started coming. When the loud banging stopped, I said, okay, at least I'm not going to get crushed or I'm not going to get crushed on impact.

Then the debris kept coming, and it started covering me up and I thought, oh, God, I'm going to die and just get buried alive. I said I would just rather die quickly than get buried alive. Then that stopped.

Then I felt this strange thing like air rushing up. The only thing I thought, "Am I falling? Am I going to heaven?" I didn't know what was going on. I think my only explanation is that that was the outside of the building tumbling to the street and then forcing air in and then it having nowhere to go but it came up. That's my only possible explanation of what happened there.

Then that stopped, and I just waited around and kind of nothing else happened. I stood up, kind of brushed myself off and kind of felt all my body parts. I said, "Well, okay, I'm alive and I'm okay." It was kind of a shock;

there was nothing missing, nothing broken, nothing.

Q. You were in the stairwell at this time on the second or third floor, somewhere over there?

A. Yeah.

Q. Could you see daylight? Was the building collapsed? Was it black?

A. No, at this point it wasn't black. It was kind of like a twilight. There was some very little light. Initially it was very dark. Then all that, the smoke and the dust and everything, lifted and you could see.

Q. Daylight?

A. There was still smoke and there was still dust. It wasn't pitch dark, but it wasn't like daylight.

Q. Right.

A. Then finally after a while I began to see light come in.

Keep in mind, obviously, that that whole area when you see the films, whatever, that whole area was just filled with dust. So there was going to be very, very little visibility.

But after a while when that settled, that's when we realized what happened. That's when we realized and we started to see light come through, and it came through what was left of the building. That's when you realized that this whole building had come down and really what was happening. I still didn't think that the whole building came down.

At this point I talked to my two guys below me. We're okay. I had three guys with me. Two guys below me were okay. One of the guys was with me. He was okay. Everybody basically around us was okay.

One guy from Ladder 6 was with me, Chief Picciotto was with me, and Ladder 6, a couple guys were right above me. Also at that time Chief Prunty -- I started giving maydays over the handy talky, about a hundred maydays, and no answer, no acknowledgment, no response. You just kind of waited around a little bit.

Shortly after I gave the maydays, Chief Prunty contacted me on the handy talky, and he was trapped. He gave me a general idea where he was. I said, "Chief, okay." He told me that he

was trapped and he was losing consciousness and he wasn't doing well. I said, "Chief, just hang in there. We're going to come and get you. Just hang in there."

I was able to walk up a flight of stairs. The stairs, instead of being in a normal position, they were kind of pushed out like they were against the walls, and there was no way out down. That area was blocked off. I could go up, but there was -- Ladder 6 was above me. They said, "Stay where you are. There's nowhere to go up here."

Keep in mind that just walking on this thing, you're afraid the whole rest of the thing was going to come down. They said, "There's no way you can go from up here. Just stay where you are."

There was a door there. I was able to force the door with the guy from Ladder 6, the door leading out of the stairwell onto that floor. We crawled in. I looked around in there. I thought there would be possibly some way out or something like that, not having an idea of the full impact of what happened.

No, can't go anywhere there. I crawled back out. I tried to reach the chief again and said, "Chief, hang in there. Rescue is coming." I just tried to give him some kind of encouragement to hang in there and see if there was anything we could do.

Q. This is all handy talky contact?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you really have any idea where he was?

A. No, not really. I knew he was in trouble. I asked the guys below me, do they know where he is? They could hear him without --

Q. The handy talky?

A. -- the handy talky.

Q. So he was near you.

A. So they could hear him, but they couldn't get to him. They were in a very precarious situation also. They were in an area where they were on this area, and right next to them was just this hole and the hole went down like 30 feet or something.

I just said, "Okay, hang in there." At this time you're still thinking that, okay,

there's going to be help arriving soon, not really grasping the full impact of what happened, just saying, okay, let's just hang in there.

He could talk. He was breathing. He said he was pinned. I said, "All right, listen, we need some outside help here. We can't do anything." There was no way I could get to him. I said to my two guys below, "Can you get to him at all?" They said, "No." I said, "All right. Just try to talk to him. Try to keep him conscious. See what you can do, and let's just see if we can get some help."

This was very early. This was probably 11:00 or so.

The dust and everything after a while began to lift. You saw a little bit of light come in. When you saw light, you began to get a better picture of what happened. When I say "light," I saw like a beam of light of a couple inches or something, not something where all of a sudden it was daylight.

You just saw a beam come there, and that's when you knew where you were kind of. You knew there wasn't 50 or 60 floors on top of you

or 100 floors on top of you. We were on the third or fourth floor, and it was a 110-story building. There could be 100 stories on top of us, which means --

Number one, I saw light. So I said, okay, that's a good thing. At the same time I know I'm seeing light and I'm saying that means that this building is down.

So we just kind of stayed there, tried to make contact with other units. At some point probably maybe an hour or so after that -- I don't know if it was Captain now Chief Jonas made contact with some outside units or maybe it was Chief Picciotto. I'm not 100 percent sure who made contact.

But there was contact with outside units, and they said, "Okay, we know that you're there, but we can't come for you right now." They said they had a 40-story building, which I guess was --

Q. Was it Seven World Trade that was on fire? Across from the north tower.

A. I think it's this, Northeast Plaza.

Q. Northeast Plaza?

A. That came down too; right?

Q. Uh-huh.

A. I think that's what it was. That came down. Well, they said that's fully involved at this time. This was a fully involved building. I said, all right, they're not coming for us for a while. Now you're trapped in this rubble, and you're trying to get a grasp of an idea of what's going on there. I heard on the handy talky that we are now fighting a 40-story building fully involved.

Now you're trapped in rubble and the guys who are there are fighting the worst high-rise fire in the history of New York or history of the world, probably. I don't know, 40-story building fully involved, I guess that was probably the worst.

Q. I would have been tempted to start cursing and say, "Come and get me and forget the fire."

A. Well, I was saying to myself, well, you know, they said they can't come for us. I was thinking of Chief Prunty because I'm saying, all right, I'm alive. I was, needless to say, scared

to death that something else was going to fall on us, that this building was going to come down and we were all going to die, after surviving the worst of it.

At the same time I'm thinking of Chief Prunty, who is a floor or so below me, and there's nothing I can do. [redacted] We couldn't go down; we couldn't go up.

Q. How were your guys at this time?

A. Amazingly they were pretty good. Bob Bacon was with me. He was banged up a little bit. He had blood from his teeth. I think he chipped a couple of teeth. Two guys below, I don't know how they're in this darkroom, dark area.

Basically what happened with them, Chief, is that they were in the lobby and they entered the stairwell. They opened the door to the stairwell, and I think they stayed there when myself and Bacon went up looking for John Drumm.

Since they opened the door and stayed in that stairwell, that saved them. Chief Prunty stayed in the lobby, and he was directing people out of the building at the time. Before that I was standing out there too saying, "Okay, let's go, let's go. Come on, let's go." He just was in the wrong place, because the lobby came down. When the building came down, he was in the lobby and there was nothing to stop it.

The only thing in the stairwell, it's kind of strange, just because that guy who was in rescue on the 31st floor, he said the safest place to be is in the stairwell. Well, that makes sense. Sure enough, we just happened to be in that stairwell when it came down. Purely God or accident, whatever, that's where we were.

When that stairwell came down, what happened was what forced the stairwell to stay up except the building materials collapsed and made that give way. But where we were, that part of the building just fell around it. I could draw you a diagram.

I could show you that all that was left -- just roughly say here's the World Trade

Center. This is 110 stories. We were somewhere in here, and this is the stair. When this whole building came down, this is all that survived, this little nub --

Q. Unbelievable.

A. -- of about, I would say, five stories. That's where we were. We were in there.

What happened is the rest of this stairwell, when the building collapsed, took this with it. But at this point all this stuff just kind of --

Q. Peeled off to the sides. There was a mountain on the top. That was a protected area.

A. When we came out, right here there was this gully. It went something like this. I remember when we finally came out, we had to walk down into this crater. I just remember looking out here and seeing like right here people looked so close, but when I walked down they looked like far away. It was like are my eyes playing tricks on me? Why do they look -- your senses were off.

Q. What formed those gullies on the side? I mean, obviously there were eight basement levels below that, probably, so this is more or

less like a collapse from the building parts --

A. Right, all the stuff, right.

Q. -- just pushing everything down next to the building.

A. Right.

So basically we just stayed there and waited and tried to make contact. Finally we made contact. I think Jay Jonas -- I don't know exactly who, but I know he made contact with Chief Visconti. The thing was we were trying to tell them where we were. We just kept telling them we're in the B stairwell.

I remember everybody had the same exasperation I did. We must have told them a hundred times: "B stairwell in the second floor, third floor, fourth floor of the north tower. I mean, B stairwell, second, third, fourth floor, north tower. B stairwell, north tower." "Where are you?" "North tower, stairway B, second, third floor."

You could hear they didn't understand where we were. I'm keep going, "My God, why aren't you listening?" Then they said, "Where's the north tower?" I was like, "What do you mean,

where's the north tower? The World Trade Center. There's Two World Trade Centers."

Even though we knew there was a collapse, the idea that both of these buildings were totally down --

Q. Just fallen.

A. -- and this was all that was left was something that was just --

Q. You couldn't understand that?

A. No. It was unimaginable.

Finally what happened was one of the guys from Ladder 43 and I'm sure other companies set up these wire ropes and were able to find us. Chief Picciotto had a bullhorn or something, I think, that he used. I guess you can make some kind of siren device with that or something. They were able to key in as to where we were. Then they made contact. Ladder 6, as I said, was right above us. They had that woman Josephine.

When they made contact and I said, okay, I sent my guy up, Bob Bacon, and I still had two guys below. I had to tell people where Chief Prunty is. Glen Rohan from 43 Truck -- I sent Bacon up with the guys who were in the

hallway when they said, okay -- when they finally made contact, then we knew how we were getting out. They were getting out by going up. 43 made -- I didn't have that kind of view, so I didn't know how we were going out at this point, were we going from the sides, from below or what.

Finally 43, okay, yeah, we're getting up. Come up the stairs. Okay. Go up the stairs. I sent Bacon up. One guy from 43, Lieutenant Rohan, came in, came down the stairs. I know Glen. I said, "Glen, glad to see you. How are you?" He said, "How are you?" I said, "I'm all right."

I said, "Listen, I've got two guys below here that we've got to get out somewhere." I showed him my flashlight. I said, "I'd dig right below here, but I'm afraid to touch anything. I'm afraid the rest of this is going to come down."

That's when he told me -- he said, "Well, there's not much left on top of here." I still was just like -- it was indescribable. There's not much left up here.

Anyway, he came in. I didn't want two

guys standing on top of this half landing, because I was afraid it was going to collapse. There's a crack in the floor, and I said, "We have to enlarge this a little bit. If we enlarge this, then I think we can get them out of there."

I asked them, "If we enlarge this crack, can you guys get out of there?" They said, "Yeah." One guy, Jimmy -- keep in mind, he's the younger kid. He said, "Yeah, I can just crawl through that."

This other guy, Jeff Coniglio, who is always making jokes about his weight, he said, "Lieutenant, there is no way the fattest man on the job is going to fit through that hole." I just said, well, thank God he's making jokes about this because I'm about to collapse. I'm about to lose it. I said he's making jokes; I know his spirits are good.

Basically then Glen enlarged the hole. He also, through his construction experience, recognized that there was an elevator shaft alongside of him and was able to, with the Halligan -- that wall there was not cinder block; it was sheetrock. So they banged a hole through

that and passed a rope down and then were able to crawl up through there and get those two guys out.

These two guys came out, and then Glen Rohan and one guy from rescue and 53 and 43 came down. Through the elevator shaft or somehow or other -- I'm not exactly sure how -- they were able to find Chief Prunty, but of course at this time he had passed. They just said, forget him, he's gone. I don't think they got him out of there for a couple days.

Q. Who pierced the sheetrock wall?

A. Glen Rohan, Glen Rohan.

Q. And where did he puncture it and for what reason? He was above you?

A. He basically at this point was -- I'm not a hundred percent sure of what happened, but he looked down and he was trying to figure out how he was going to get these two guys up because -- Coniglio from his view would give you a better understanding, because I was kind of standing behind. The wall next to them was double sheetrock. He recognized that. Like I said, I think he used to work construction. He

said, "We can go through this."

I know it had something to do with puncturing that wall. Like I said, I never saw exactly where they were, because I didn't want two guys on that half landing. I said one guy on this is enough. With his flashlight he looked down. I was kind of standing on the stairs at this point. He gave them directions. He said, "Listen, this is the best way to do it."

I think it just was an easier way. I don't know exactly what he saw. Maybe there was debris. Maybe there was no way they could get up that way. Maybe it was easy to enlarge that hole. He told me once before, but I never followed exactly how they got out.

So basically then after they made contact or when they found Chief Prunty's body, there wasn't too much else to do. Getting him out was now going to be recovery; it wasn't going to be a rescue. We told them upstairs what was going on and that they needed some equipment to get him out.

At the same time they wanted everybody out of there. They didn't want anybody in there

because --

Q. They were afraid of collapse?

A. Uh-huh, especially since he was gone there wasn't much sense.

I walked out at that point and just kind of looked around. I saw the devastation. It was just mind-boggling just something you couldn't imagine. Both these building were down. Granted, they were both on fire when we walked in, but they were still the World Trade Center. When you come out, it looked like something out of a war movie. It looked like something in a picture of Nagasaki or something, blocks and blocks of rubble.

Q. You can't believe it.

A. No, especially in that area. I used to work in the south Bronx before. This was --

Q. Lower Manhattan.

A. Richest area in the world.

I just climbed out of there and followed the ropes down, followed the I beams up and over. At the same time we were walking out, and sure enough, that building was still involved. I'm like, is it going to come down

next?

Just when you thought it was over, you're walking by this building and you're hearing this building creak and fully involved in flames. It's like, is it coming down next? Sure enough, about half an hour later it came down.

Q. No kidding.

A. I mean, thank God everybody was out of there at that point.

I just wandered around, found my men, told them that everybody was out, everybody was okay.

Q. You got all your guys?

A. Everybody was out. That's the most amazing thing about it. We were all there. We hear of all the companies that lost total companies. That's the strange thing about it was when you came out that you just had this tremendous joy that you survived it.

At the same time you heard the numbers of people missing, you're talking about like 50 companies, you're talking about 300 people. No, they're going to find them. They found me, found us. It's going to be --

The next thing it's the next day or so and nobody was found and you realize that was it.

Q. You walked out of the building. You walked down that depression and up?

A. Yeah.

Q. You came out like north of the north tower? You were up around Vesey Street somewhere over here next to the fire building, the building that was burning? You walked up this way and you found your guys on Vesey?

A. Yeah, I think I walked down Vesey or whatever and down here.

Q. To West Street and then north?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Where did you wind up? Going to the hospital or went to quarters?

A. I stayed there for a while. Where is Stuyvesant High School?

Q. It's over here someplace.

A. I walked. And there was some other school up here, College of Insurance? No, it was north of there. I walked up here somewhere, and I think a lot of guys -- where is everybody at this point? Were they over here? Murray?

Q. Yeah, I think the staging area was somewhere in here.

A. Right around here, and this seemed like miles, because it was just -- I walked up here, kind of stayed here for a while. I was looking for some people. Then I ran into two guys, and they said they were up here somewhere. So I walked up there and I found them and basically just told -- saw people.

I stayed there for a while, and people started telling me about people that were missing and stuff. Oh, they're going to find them. They're going to find them somewhere. They're in the voids and stuff.

Then finally I walked back, because the command post was set up somewhere. I just wanted to let everybody know at the command post that we were all okay and were found and everything is all right. So I checked in at the command post, let everybody know that everybody was fine.

Then there was the triage unit or whatever, the medical unit, and I just had my eyes washed out, because they were just filled with dust. I just wanted to get the dust out,

because I had scratched the cornea once before and I didn't want to go through that again. So they cleaned it out and they said everything was fine. I said, good, okay, let's go.

I basically stayed there, I guess, until 6:30, 7:00. Then 16 Truck was coming back, and I said, okay, I'm going to go back to the firehouse. Basically that was it. I came back here.

[redacted]

Q. Unbelievable.

I have a question to ask you. When you first came in the lobby and whoever told you to go up and join up with the other engine, what did you think they were telling you to do? Fight the

fire? Bring your rollups? This was going to be like a firefighting thing? I was wondering what their thought process was.

A. Their assignment was to head up the stairway and do what you can.

Q. That's it.

A. My mind at this point was, all right, we're not -- I don't think we're going to be able to put this fire out. If I get up there -- I mean, 80 floors, this is not going to be --

Q. It's going to be a long time.

A. This is not going to be a one- or two-line operation.

Q. Right.

A. Let's just get some men up there. Maybe we can hook up a couple two and a halves. Our primary thing is obviously life. If we see people that can't walk out, then we have to carry them out.

I don't know of any engine company -- I don't know the closest people got up. In your experience what was the highest anybody got up?

Q. 40th floor I think is the highest I heard, the 40th floor. I think the squad or the

rescue or somebody reached the 40th floor. But I didn't hear anything above that. Most guys reached about 31. The early companies that got there were on around the 30th floor.

The companies were basically on the 31st or 33rd floor, something like that. The quickest-running companies, the ones that reached the highest, when the order was given to get out of the north tower, and then they reversed and they came down.

I did hear a story. The story was that most of the companies that I interviewed, anyhow, got up to about the 31st floor before the south tower collapsed, and then they got orders to start reversing and come down.

A. Do you know what chief was on the 31st floor in the north tower? I'm not sure.

Q. No. I think that they were telling me some chief. They didn't recognize what chief it was. The people that told me from 6 Engine, he didn't recognize the chief. I'm trying to think. Because like the local chiefs were down to the lobby or something like that.

These were like secondary chiefs that

made it up and were running around inside the building and that got that message on the command channel. Then they started telling people, "Get out. Get out. We're not going up anymore."

I can't remember what guys told me. I don't remember them telling me Chief so-and-so. I think they were more or less saying a chief was up there, and he told us get out.

That's about it?

A. That's about it.

Q. That's about it.

CHIEF MALKIN: It's now 2215 hours. I thank the lieutenant for this interview. This is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110448

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARMANDO RENO

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13th, 2002, and the time is 12:55 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Armando Reno from Engine 65 in the quarters of Engine 65.

Q. Armando, please tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We received the box approximately 9:00 o'clock. Already had the rigs fully loaded with EMS equipment and flashlights because I knew from previous experience in '93, I was there for that explosion, you need a lot of flashlights there. Anyway, we had a good response time going down -- heading west up 42ndnd Street to West Side Highway, went downtown. There was really very little traffic.

I stopped by the north tower, let the guys off. I was the chauffeur for 65 Engine and I pulled over to the first hydrant I saw, and I picked up a chauffeur from 1 Engine also. We started to hook up to the hydrant, but we saw a better hydrant closer, right on the corner of Liberty and West. As I went to pull away, somebody took my mask off the rig on the side, so

I was yelling and screaming back and forth, and I couldn't figure out who took it. They left.

Anyway, I went to Liberty and West to look at the standpipe connections there alongside the hotel, and obviously they handled the whole building, all the standpipe connections for the whole complex. Also, I drove a high-pressure rig and I thought maybe, you know, it looks like it might be needed because the 80th floor the plane hit, and the second plane didn't hit at this time yet, the south tower.

I was working by the south bridge. There were numerous car fires there. I was located by the south bridge and the chauffeur from 1 Engine was with me. There were two lengths of a 2-1/2 inch line stretched off the hydrant there on the south side of Liberty Street. We were putting out the car fires, or attempting to, and there was no -- the water had no effect on the car fires at the time. I started thinking about getting the foam off the rig, and I also noticed there were numerous bodies by Cedar Street, and I was thinking of getting the EMS equipment off the rig, putting gloves on and starting to get the bodies, putting them in bags. Well, body pieces. I have a hard time talking. They had to pull a tooth in my

mouth. That's it. I lost a tooth.

About five minutes later I got hit by -- there were numerous people coming out of this hotel, International Hotel there around the corner, and we were directing them to the south side of West Street, directing them west.

Q. The west side?

A. Across, yes, go across West Street, directing them to go across, to make tracks, get going. There were two firemen there with me. I don't know what happened to them. They were also helping direct these people. Also, I had told the chauffeur from 1 Engine, there was a can and a nozzle from those two 2-1/2 inch lines, I mean the lengths, to come around the other side of the bridge and protect the bridge also from the car fires, and he came around, and that's the last I remember. I couldn't tell you any more.

Q. You didn't know about the collapse, like you didn't hear it or anything?

A. Didn't hear it at all. Didn't hear it, you know, what happened there or anything else at all. I remember --

Q. You ended up under the overpass, when you were found, I mean? Where were you found?

A. I was found at the foot of the overpass, sort of right by Cedar Street someplace, around there. Up heading east on Liberty, maybe about 200 feet.

Q. Okay. So what do you remember? You were knocked unconscious. What do you remember next?

A. The next I remember, guys attempting to take me out, actually pulling me out really. I remember telling them stop for a moment and I adjusted my body a little bit and they pulled me out, and the next thing I remember is my son in the emergency room. He's a Fire Department EMS employee and he fixed the collar. The doctors put the collar on me wrong. I had a cervical collar on. They put it on wrong. He had to fix it for me.

Really, that whole week in the hospital, I remember very little. I don't remember seeing any Fire Department personnel other than the guys from my own company coming up to see me, and that is really it. The limousine ride, the guys in 65 Engine picked me up in a limousine and took me home, and even that I just remember a little bit, coming to the firehouse and then going home. I just remember very little of that.

Q. From conversation with other people, do you know what happened to you? After that head beam

collapsed, like what hit you or anything?

A. I don't know what hit me. I don't know. But it really made an impression on my back. I got a couple of wounds, it looked like shrapnel wounds across my back, like a depression. It looked like a handrail, like someone hit me with a handrail across my back. I don't remember. I couldn't remember nothing.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right. Well, the time now is 1:04.

Q. Oh, you have something else to say?

A. I think there was a Chief's car. I remember a Chief's car, a battalion car, coming down Liberty Street and turning onto West Street. I remember that pulling around because I was thinking, well, if you stretch a line from the rig because you might need more water, and I was looking back at the rig and I was thinking of all that (inaudible) and where the car was I have no idea, where they came from or where they went or anything. I don't even remember looking at the battalion number on it. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thank you, Armando. The time now is 1:05 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110449

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH PETRASSI

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13th, 2002, and the time is 1:15 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Joseph Petrassi of Engine 65 in the quarters of Engine 65.

Q. Joe, just tell us the events as you recall them of September 11th.

A. Okay. On the 11th, at approximately 9:00 o'clock a.m., we got the ticket for the World Trade Center. I believe it was the first fifth alarm. We went up to the west side and proceeded to go to the Trade Center. We could see the fire when we hit the West Side Highway. You could see it from the rig. We continued up and our chauffeur dropped us off at West Street and Vesey. We got off, we grabbed our roll-ups, grabbed an extra bottle and we went into the north tower.

At the north tower there was a Chief that directed the Lieutenant to take his men and work his way up, and that's pretty much what we did. We started heading up.

Q. Did you walk or take the elevator?

A. No, we walked. We had our roll-ups and bottles and we walked up, and I believe it was around the 20th floor that we stopped to take a breather. I'm not sure if it was at the 20th floor or 22nd, that's unclear, but we felt a shake, the building shake, and things just started getting like different. A little bit after that the Lieutenant said, well, we've got to make our way down, and we pretty much took whatever people were in the stairway, came down with them.

Q. Were there many people in the stairs?

A. Yes, the stairs were pretty full.

Q. Coming up and going down?

A. Going down. Well, when we were going up, people were coming down. But I think when we started coming down, it seemed like there was maybe a little more urgency to it. That was it. We made our way down to the lobby. The lobby looked like it was blown out, like the elevator doors. We came out of the building and we were looking up and the tower seemed to blow out, but it was on fire, and the Lieutenant said to run and we ran north up West Street. You could the feel the stuff hitting you on the back as you were running. It felt like it was right behind you. I just dove under a truck or some apparatus or something. I

remember diving, but I couldn't even tell you what it was. Then everything went pitch black, everything went silent. I was disoriented. I didn't know where I was. I really didn't know what was going on. It took a couple of minutes to get my thoughts. Then I started calling out to the company. I was calling out anybody from the company. Eventually, we got together and we found each other. That was it. We went to the area. We were directed by some Chief to go north, to keep going north, and we were ordered to stay there.

Q. Okay. When you were in the lobby, is there anybody that you recognized that you knew or a company that was still in the lobby?

A. That I personally saw, no. But there were guys that did see them. I had mentioned at the time that --

Q. Do you know what company?

A. 2 Truck, Captain Ill. I think he might have been like on the 7th floor, that somebody had mentioned that as we were going down they had called to him. Just from hearing guys from other companies who told me they had seen a couple guys from 2 in the lobby. But I personally can't -- I don't remember specifically seeing anyone that I could say that I saw them exactly

where.

Q. Okay. Is that it?

A. Yes.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:20 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110450

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRIAN RUSSO

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is January 13th, 2002, the time is 2:25 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Brian Russo from Engine 91 in the quarters of Engine 91.

Q. Brian, just tell us what you remember from September 11th.

A. Okay. I worked the night tour on the 10th and I was due to get off at 9:00 a.m. I hadn't been relieved yet. When the run came in, actually, 91 Engine responded. I actually responded with the rack unit because that detail had come in. So I responded on the initial fifth alarm for the first Trade Center. I believe that was the north tower. I think the box came in like 8:48 in the morning. We responded.

We arrived at the scene on the corner of Vesey and Church, adjacent to the north tower, across the street, in that direction. There were numerous rigs. It was myself, another firefighter from 91 and a covering Captain. We didn't have any gear. All we had was our turnout coat and boots and helmet, no radio, no masks. So we couldn't really monitor the radio

handy-talkie traffic.

Proceeded to walk south along Church towards Liberty Street surveying the scene. There was debris, fires breaking out, numerous bodies. Then when we hit Liberty Street, we made a -- if you're looking south, we made a right onto Liberty heading towards the West Side Highway. This is after the second plane had hit the tower, hit the south tower.

We arrived. We had just seen a fireman get hit by a body, I believe it was Danny Suhr from 216, and they were pulling him away from the building, and we decided to take cover on the south side of Liberty under a scaffolding. There I remember seeing the members of 58 Engine. It was about four or five guys from 58 with their roll-ups, and there was so much debris coming down that they decided to head into I believe the hotel, the Vista Hotel. That's where we left them.

We continued to walk towards the West Side Highway and then over to the command post, which was on the West Side Highway, on the west side, right in front of the World Financial Center. So we met up with the rest of the members from 91. We were instructed to secure a set of irons. We tried to get a couple of

extra masks, whatever gear we could find, and we were going to be sent into the north tower with an engineer to search the lower levels.

There were numerous companies there. I remember seeing Chief Ganci, he was there, you know, other guys from 91, other companies. I couldn't tell you exactly which companies were where, but since I didn't have a radio, I couldn't really monitor who was going into what building and who was assigned where.

As soon as we started heading towards the building, that's when the first -- the south building came down.

Q. Which building were you heading into?

A. We were heading towards the north tower, I believe, and that's when the south tower came down. Most of the guys ran back across the West Side Highway into one of the Financial Center subbasements. I guess it was a parking garage it would have been. I guess I was a little bit removed from them, a little further north, so I decided to run up West Street, the West Side Highway there, West Street, and I just headed north. That's where I was going. That's when the cloud hit. I got knocked down underneath the pedestrian bridge. Then you just hunkered down waiting

for the smoke to blow over.

After the smoke had cleared considerably, I went back to where my company had been because I didn't realize that they were on the other side of the building. They had gotten out, but I couldn't find anybody. So I headed back south towards the towers. A couple guys from I believe it was -- I remember seeing Lieutenant Ray Murphy from 16 Truck and other men from 16. The guys were kind of a group and headed back down and see if they could find anybody, find out what was going on.

Then just pretty much met up -- I remember seeing Lieutenant Casey from 91, hooking up with him, and I just went down, tried to see if I could do anything, looking for people, victims, whatever, and searching down there. That's when the north tower came down and that's -- I mean, you just headed back up the West Side Highway, once again, trying to avoid all the debris coming down.

After that they decided to pull everybody out and I know -- what building was it? Building 5, I believe, the other tall building there, the third building that came down, they were evacuating people. So everyone just pushed up West Street all the way up

towards the high school there. I forget the name of the high school.

Q. Stuyvesant?

A. Stuyvesant, yes. That's kind of where they ran the operation from there. In between the north tower and the south tower coming down, I believe I saw Chief Ganci somewhere along the way there. I don't know where he was heading to, but I saw him somewhere along the line. I wasn't sure. I'm not too clear of when that was. But other than that, that's pretty much it. Besides those few people I remember, everything else was you couldn't tell who was who, and wondering whether we were ever going to find pieces and stuff like that.

Then we tried to get back down later on to do some more searching, looking for people, but they had blockades up by then, so they weren't really letting people back down, and we just sat and waited to do something later on pretty much. That's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, Brian. Thank you for your help. The time now is 2:34 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110451

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD RATAZZI

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Richard Ratazzi, firefighter from Ladder 16. The location is the quarters of Engine 39.

Q. Rich, please give us the details as you recall them from September 11th.

A. We had just gotten off duty the morning of the 11th. Myself and Firefighter Curatolo, we were watching the -- we had heard the second alarm on arrival for the south tower. Excuse me. The north tower, the tower that got hit first. We were watching in-house watch when the second tower got hit. When the fifth alarm went in right off the bat, the truck was called. The engine had already been called because of the 10-77.

The truck got called shortly after that when it went to a fifth alarm. Lieutenant Murphy drove into quarters right after the rig had left. He told us we're gonna go down, three of us. We wind up going in the back of a police car. We had grabbed spare mask assemblies from upstairs. We had two of them.

There was three of us in the car. When we got down there we were parked -- the police dropped us off on West Street and we proceeded down West Street. We checked the rigs. We found 16, we checked the rig. We got two cylinders off of that. We had gotten face pieces here.

We proceeded down. We found a fire patrol. We got a third mask out of fire patrol and we grabbed some tools off of 16, what we could find, and we proceeded south on West Street. We wanted to meet up with 16 and we were gonna go to work with them, if we could find them. We were headed south. I believe, according to the Lieutenant, we were looking for the command post. We came under the north crosswalk on West Street. We got in front of the Marriott when what sounded like another plane coming in. Everybody was -- a group of guys, I can't remember which companies they were all from, everybody just stopped and looked up and that's when the middle of the Marriott blew out at us. Everybody took off running north. At least myself and Rob and Lieutenant Murphy did.

I ducked on the back step of Rescue 1, which was under the north crosswalk. They ducked in front

of Rescue 1. I don't know whether it was under the rig or in one of the rigs. Then in a couple of seconds everything got black. I heard a gentleman yelling for help. I didn't know if it was Rob or Ray so I yelled out to him, "Keep yelling. I'll find him."

I came across what wound up was either a plane clothes cop, a security guard or a civilian. I'm not sure. He wasn't injured. He just had to find his way out. So I lead him back out to West and Vesey. Once he got out to members out there I turned around, proceeded back down West Street where I eventually met up with Lieutenant Murphy and Firefighter Curatolo who had come across I believe -- it was a fireman. I believe it might have been a chauffeur to an Engine Company. I'm not sure which company. They told me to drop my tools and assist him back out to EMS, because I believe his shoulder was all broken. It was approximately about two blocks back up to Vesey.

I left my tools there. They said they were going to stay together so I left my tools. I took him back out to Vesey. When I came back there was no sign of my tools, there was no sign of Lieutenant

Murphy or Firefighter Curatolo. I proceeded to look around. There was a lot of rigs in the area. I was looking for flashlights, any lights for people searching or anybody in general. There was nobody around. I eventually came across a chief that came out of the loading dock on West Street and I informed him that I was missing two guys from Ladder 16 and that we didn't have radios, and he informed me that the area had been evacuated and that ladder 16 had been evacuated and they went through the loading dock and out to the water, the Battery Park marina area. I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "Yeah. I don't know which Chief it was.

So I proceeded down through the loading dock. I went out to the water. I found nobody from 16 Truck, but what I didn't know was Ladder 16 was the last truck at the command post waiting to go to work and the Chief was actually talking about them and not Lieutenant Murphy and Firefighter Curatolo who I was with. So I proceeded assisting a couple of guys, I don't know from which company. I was taking Firefighter Reeg from 44 Engine up to EMS. So I assisted in getting Firefighter Reeg up to EMS. I switched the fire patrol mask for a Fire Department

assembly that was up there and I proceeded back down Vesey Street, going back towards West Street. I got up as far as a little bus stop and the house for the parking garage or for the parking lot that was on the corner of West and Vesey when the north tower came down.

So I turned back, I ran up Vesey towards the water. I got blown off my feet. I looked up, I was in front of what I believe was the Merrill Lynch building or the entrance. There was a glass atrium entranceway that had the statue of like four people. The four glass doors were open so I ducked into there. I shut the glass doors behind me and a wall of black smoke and soot and everything else came past us. It was about ten to fifteen people came running through the building that I guess were working there. They weren't firemen. They were looking for a way out. I informed them to stay with me, that the street was here and once everything lifted, if you go out, go left towards the water.

When it all lifted, they went left. I hooked up with two guys, I believe they were from Queens. I informed them who we were missing and we went back down West Street thinking they might have come north

again on West Street. We got up to the corner of West and Vesey. We were up by 5 Truck when a gentleman threw a chair out of, I guess, the 6 World Trade Center. He was on the floor below the top, the second set of windows in from the corner of West Street and Vesey. He threw the chair out the middle window. I remember he was wearing a white shirt, black tie, had a mustache, black hair, like nothing had happened to him. It was about the only windows left intact. Like his office door was closed. So we yelled up to him not to jump, that there would be people coming to get him. Which there was companies on the way down going up there.

At the same time we heard yells for help from the crosswalk, the north crosswalk which had collapsed. We came upon what I believe was a photographer and two other people. The only one that was injured was the photographer whose leg was busted and he was laying against the vehicle. So we went back down Vesey to get a back board by the marina -- by the water. Excuse me. We grabbed two EMS workers, we came back down and we got him on the backboard. He was a rather large individual. He started throwing up, he started going in and out of

consciousness. We tried to give him a little air from the mask. That made him even more nauseous. He wanted to sit up so we kind of rolled him on his side. After that he was pretty much out of it. We got him up, we tried to get him over the debris. We had a problem lifting him up and over the debris. We yelled for help. Two women Police Officers were standing a little north of us. They finally came over and helped us and we brought him up to EMS up on Vesey and then after that we let the guys know that I had to go get some oxygen because I was having a problem breathing and I was having a problem seeing from all the debris in my eyes.

They informed me -- actually somebody had taken me into one building. When we got in there they informed me that the EMS was moved up towards the Battery Park area. So I went back on Vesey towards the water looking for oxygen and came across Chief Callan. I informed him who I was missing. He seemed to be in somewhat of a state of shock. He was being assisted by I believe it was EMS. So I proceeded north because they were moving EMS north to North End Avenue. So we got up to I guess by the time everybody stopped, I guess it was up by

Stuyvesant High School.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: I think that might be Chambers.

A. Which might be Chambers and North End, where I was assisted to by EMS. The lady gave me some water and I started throwing up. She told me just keep drinking it and throwing it up if I had to, to get everything out. She asked me after about ten minutes how I felt. I informed her that I was still lightheaded but I didn't have the headache that I had. I let her know to save the oxygen. I was gonna go back out towards the street.

I went into I guess where they were setting EMS up in the building. I found the sink, I was flushing my eyes out. I got another drink of water, I was throwing that up. I proceeded out to the backside of the school, I ran into Firefighter Drum and Firefighter Meyers from Engine 39. They assisted me back out to West Street, because I believe they were evacuating that area. There was a gas leak.

When I got out to West Street, I guess it was the Hotzolah Ambulance Service was there. They wound up flushing my eyes for about 15, 20 minutes

and giving me oxygen and then they proceeded to take me to St. Vincent's where I pretty much got a scrub down, checked out. They didn't really do anything and released me. I then went into the Emergency Room to see if I could find any members from my company. The only one I had come across was Chief Cassano and I called his family and informed them that he was all right. I stuck with him. He told me to stay with him and he wound up giving me a ride back up to the firehouse here where I stayed for an hour and then went back down to the command center on West 67th Street where we sat there for a couple of hours. That's about it.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you for your help, Rich. The time now is 1116 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110452

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN SNOW

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002, and the time is 12:22 p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter John Snow from Engine 21, in the quarters of Engine 8.

Q. John, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. Okay. We got assigned on a fifth alarm, responding to the north tower. We got down there, I'd say, pretty quickly. I believe we parked the rig on Vesey, near the north passenger walkway. We responded in and we took -- the captain said take some extra oxygen air bottles with us. So we got our roll-ups and we went into the north tower. By then I guess it was really bad on the upper floors, because we weren't inside the lobby long before they started jumping. You could hear the tremendous sounds, hitting the concrete. And it seems like it took a little while before we got orders of what to do. Because when we were in the lobby the second tower had already been hit and people started

running and yelling, "There is another plane coming at the building." So we didn't know at the time it was finally a military plane. We thought it was another hijacker or whatever. We didn't know it was hijackings at the time so people were just running around the lobby of the north tower, thinking that we were under another attack and then that turned out not to be true.

So I guess it was another, I'd say, ten minutes before we finally got a assignment. I remember the captain saying, I guess the Chief told him, we're not trying to put the fire out now. We're going to try to save people. So we, along with 22 Engine and 13 Truck, we went over to the elevators and myself and I think it was Mike Byrne, he opened -- someone had said that there was someone inside an elevator in the lobby and we managed to pry open the elevator and there was a woman in the back. She was scared to death. We got her to come out. And then 13 Truck got an elevator to work, because we were assigned to go up to the 27th floor of the north tower. This was the out from 13 Truck, he started operating the elevator. Guys went up in two or three trips. I guess within five minutes 22 Engine,

13 Truck and myself, 21 Engine, we were on the 27th floor. We took it to the 24th or 25th floor and then we walked up a couple of flights and I'm not really sure of the time frame as far as how long we were in searching that floor, but I knew there was a tremendous crash of the south tower coming down, but we didn't know at the time it was the south tower. We just thought it was upper floors maybe that -- maybe an upper floor that had collapsed, because there was a tremendous crash and everybody just hit the deck. Nothing happened after that so we really weren't sure what was happening. We weren't really getting any radio communications and so the Captain just said, you know, we kept searching the floor. It didn't seem like there was anyone on that floor.

And then I guess after another couple of minutes the Battalion Chief, I'm not sure of his name, but I think he was with the 12th Battalion, he came on to the floor and he said, we're evacuating. He said, "This floor is clear. We're evacuating everybody out." So we just started going towards the exit and Captain Burke said, all right -- he figured the stairwells were gonna be crowded. He said, "If we get separated or whatever, we'll all

meet at the rig." So we started our way down and the stairs were very crowded. Guys were helping civilians still coming down. There was a person in a wheelchair. So the descent down probably took fifteen to twenty minutes. I didn't have a radio, but Mike Byrne had a radio. He said -- I don't know how far behind the Captain was from us, but he had talked to the Captain a couple of times on the way down the stairs on the radio and the Captain said to him a couple of times to meet, we'll all meet at the rig. I guess the last time he talked to him was when we hit the lobby floor. He must have said, I guess, "Everybody meet at the rig."

I remember when we got to the lobby floor 65 Engine had just gotten down also and that's when one of the guys of 65 told me the other tower had collapsed, because I still hadn't known it up until then. And we saw some guys from 2 Truck in the lobby. They said they were just waiting for their Captain and they were gonna be getting out.

So there were still some people from those fire floors that were trapped upstairs, I think a couple of people still hadn't jumped. Somebody was saying in the lobby, "Somebody got hit about a jumper. You

guys gotta be careful even leaving the building."

So we started moving out towards West Street. It was myself, Mike Byrne, Jimmy Foley started walking towards West Street and I guess we just hit West Street when we heard the roar or the rumbling. We just looked back and heard the rumbling of the tower coming down and everybody just ran up West Street towards where an overpass was.

Q. Was that the north overpass?

A. Yes. Heading north. It was kind of like you knew that the dust and everything was catching you. The guys just started diving, tried to dive behind something and then dust and other debris just overcame everybody. Everybody was just trying to get cover behind something and then just, you know, it kind of took a long time for all of that to lift. And then everybody was just trying to think of where everybody else was. Did all our guys make it, get out? You know, just communications were pretty bad so we just tried to hope that everybody got out. It took a while before we finally gathered all the guys back together again and the only guy, you know, that eventually hadn't got out was the Captain. We weren't sure about our chauffeur because it took a

while before we were ever able to get in contact with the chauffeur, because he was running from the rig because our rig got pretty much destroyed and he said he was lucky. He had just walked away from the rig a little ways when it was coming down so he had a chance, he was able to run far enough so he didn't get hit with all the debris.

Then just everybody -- the next couple of hours it's kind of foggy, but everybody was just kind of like walking down towards the collapse. You know, trying to find out where everybody was. So everybody was pretty much in shock or whatever. That's as much as I really remember about everything.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, John. The time now is 1232 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110453

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK CONNOLLY

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Patrick Connolly from Ladder 16, in the quarters of Ladder 16. The time now is 1135.

Q. Patrick, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. Basically I live in Queens and my house looks right at the tower, and I was jogging and not too far from Haz-Mat 288 and saw the first explosion and immediately, you know, saw what was developing and knew it was something pretty serious. My brother Brian who works for Ladder 17, he was at home so I decided to run to his house and just let him know, make sure he was aware of what was going on. When I got to his house we turned on the TV, and when we turned on the TV we saw the second plane hit.

So we decided right then and there that we were just gonna go in on our own accord and he had said to me he was gonna go in. He had to go to the Bronx to get his bunker gear. I said I had been issued my

two sets of bunker gear the night before from the Quarter Master. So I said, "We'll just use my stuff." We used a 1620 key over on haz-mat and got a helmet and a pair of boots from -- because you only get bunker gear with a pair of boots and a jacket, two sets. So that's what we did. We went to haz-mat and they were all gone already at that stage. We looked on the vacation list, took the helmet from one of those and we made our way through the Midtown Tunnel. My brother drove us -- my other brother drove us to the Midtown Tunnel.

We got off there, we jumped into a police bus going in and that police bus drove us to the intersection of Canal and West Broadway. Just as we were entering into the Midtown Tunnel the first tower collapsed and, you know, kind of just getting ready as we were riding in and my brother's telling me, "I don't know what to expect."

And we got off at Canal and West Broadway and we're looking down on the tower. There was a lot of debris in the area. From up there, from the collapse of the first tower and we decided to walk. We you can walked about a block and then a Police Ford Explorer picked us up. It was a mounted,

actually that had a horse carriage on the back of it, and they drove us three blocks north of the Trade Center, which would have been the intersection of West Broadway and Warren Street. And we got out there and he said he couldn't take us any further. So as soon as we got out of the car then the debris field was a lot thicker and basically you could see the tower burning and stuff, but you couldn't really -- you couldn't pick out fine details and we just saw people running around aimlessly. So we were just grabbing them and shouting at them and pointing them in the right direction. A couple of people couldn't -- they were just sitting down. They refused to get up. We picked them up and carried them out a little bit and then they kind of got the message and they moved on of their own accord.

We walked down and we saw somebody and we asked them where the firemen were and they said down and to the right, which would have led us right to the command center. Down to Vesey Street make a right turn. That's what our approach was. When we got to the intersection of Park Place I think it is and West Broadway there was a EMS bus there, a EMS SUV

and we looked inside and we saw a Scott mask and we saw a search rope and we saw a medical bag. We thought they would come in handy so we broke the window and took that stuff out. The Scott mask, I tested it and it didn't work so I just left it where it was. We took the search rope and we took the medical bag, and we just proceeded to walk south on the north basically, but walking south towards Vesey Street.

So when we come to the intersection of Vesey Street and West Broadway, you have to go left or right. We were going right heading towards the West Side Highway and as soon as you turn right, about seven steps after you turn right there is an overhead foot bridge that would lead from 7 World Trade Center into 6 World Trade Center. We were coming over just there, right there and as we approached that, the underside of it, I said to my brother, "I said, this thing is gonna come down on top of it." And he said, "Then we'll just run to the other side of it." So as soon as we got under it we ran to the other side of it and the debris was falling so we were kind of cautious when we came out. We came out and maybe about one step past it

and as we came past it my brother had said to me -- you know, the whole way down he was explaining to me that this is nothing like what you deal with, what you're expected to deal with. He said, "There is a lot of people gonna be hurt on the outside." He was a policeman so he was all concerned about a secondary device.

So he was saying that, you know, he kept drilling that into my head: "Secondary device," "Secondary device," "Secondary device." You know, it's not over. There is something else that's gonna happen. He goes if that first tower came down, he said, this might go down too. He was telling me not to go into the buildings. He said, basically, if you see firemen we're gonna look for them and help them immediately and if we see pedestrians, whoever we saw we're gonna help them.

Basically, when we got underneath to the other side of that foot bridge, to the west side of that foot bridge, he said to me, "You know, we should probably split up at the next corner in case we get jammed up in this thing together." And I was just like, you know, totally naive. I just said, "No. You're crazy."

And as soon as I said that, I felt the ground shake and I looked up and the whole top of the tower was starting to fall and my brother turned and he didn't even look up. He turned and there was already about a foot of debris on the floor and as he turned he went to push off with his legs, but he was pushing too hard and he slipped in place and fell. And I reached down and as I turned again I reached down and caught him right in the back of the pants and I threw him. I lifted him off the ground and I threw him up to his feet and I threw him too hard and he actually fell down again underneath the foot bridge and he got up again and I got up again and I basically came -- the foot bridge was there. I got to the corner of West Broadway and as soon as I got to the corner of West Broadway, I made a right turn. As soon as you make a right turn on West Broadway right there, not even a foot north on West Broadway there is a service entrance to 7 World Trade right there and I saw another fireman standing right there. He was standing right there. Chides me like "In here, bro. Dive in here." The door was closed, but it was inset, you know, 18 inches as is normally, a normal 36-inch door would be. As I make

a left, I saw my brother who was directly behind me. And I just left my feet. I drove for the one corner and as I dove for the one corner I saw that my brother was out here, right out in the wide open spot.

The next thing, I just started getting crushed from above. I was just getting hit. But nothing hard. Like just, you know, considerable smacks and stuff like that, but nothing that you couldn't take. Nothing that was pulverizing me. And I took my T-shirt, shoved it into my mouth, held my nose closed, took one last breath and waited to die.

Apparently it got a little bit harder and the noise got really severe. It sounded like a severe wind storm, a severe rainstorm. The next thing I know, like maybe a half a minute passes by and it suddenly got very quiet again. So I get very quiet. I kind of threw my shoulder like that and all the things that were on top of me kind of shifted off and I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe that you're alive. I tried to scream for my brother, but I had the shirt in my mouth. I tried to pull the shirt out a little bit, and all the air was forcing into my mouth so I shoved it back in again.

I knew that the door was there on my left-hand side. That's the only thing I knew. I didn't see that other fireman. The who was calling me, I didn't see him. I didn't see him, I didn't hear him, but I knew the door was there. So I hit it like that (indicating), like three times like that and then I heard three knocks coming back from about 5 feet off, which was where my brother was. So I kind of felt better about that. At least I felt he was okay because we couldn't communicate really through talking and I just kept hitting the door and hitting the door and hitting the door, and eventually maybe ten minutes later I felt my brother's arm grab my arm. So of course obviously you're emotional, you're grabbing each other and hugging each other and going through the whole gamut of emotions and while we're doing that, the door pops open.

We're not sure, you don't know what to think. Is it an explosion? Is the building starting to settle and forcing the door out? We didn't know. And then as the door opened up the fireman that was calling me was on the other side of the door. Somehow he forced the door and was pulling us into

the space, into the -- now basically into the belly of 7 World Trade and he explained that he was a Fire Marshal, named Joe Brosi and my brother Brian, he knew Joe before he was a Fire Marshal working 17 truck. So he and my brother, they were partners. It was like a real strange coincidence. Obviously a very happy one again to get together. The radio, Joe's radio, he was the only one that had a radio. He was the only one actually working that day. His radio was starting to go crazy. I heard maydays on his radio and I heard, you know, there was a lot of confusion on the radio and I was all excited and they thought, Brian and Joe thought that we were in a fall out shelter, but it was getting dustier and dustier. The conditions were getting -- the visibility was starting to deteriorate a lot.

The only thing I knew, that I wanted to do was I wanted to go back out the door that we came in and make a left turn and walk straight up West Broadway out to safety. They were a little bit more controlled. They decided to stay put about five minutes. And think things through and they were gonna go down. There were some interior stairs and they were gonna go down to probably more like a bomb

shelter area and I think when Joe looked, it looked like it was destroyed. So we decided that we would tie the search rope off to the doorway and the three of us hand in hand decided that we would walk out. And as we came out we started to walk north and slowly but surely and up and over and under steel and cars were -- cars with tires and cars were popping and they were just starting to light up spontaneously and there was near zero visibility at this stage. It was better though than it was right after the collapse. And then we walked up two blocks. We walked up, there was a hot dog stand there. We broke the window in the hot dog stand, took bottles of water and we were washing our eyes, because our eyes were burning. We made a left on Park Place. We got to the corner of Park Place and I'm not sure what street that is right there, but basically that intersection here, right in that corner right there there was an office building and we ran into that office building and we ran in and we were washing our face and getting all this stuff out of our eyes and we reached over and there was a doorman there and we asked him, "Is everybody out of the building?" He said, "Well, I just want to check

the second and the third floor." So we said, "well, we'll just get cleaned up and we'll help you out." So we went in, we got cleaned up and we helped him out searching the building. Then we came down again. When we came down, we're right over here at this stage (indicating).

Q. So that's the corner of Park and -- we're not sure what street that is.

A. Right.

Q. Okay. It's between West and --

A. -- and West Broadway.

Q. And West Broadway. Okay.

A. And one block -- exactly one block west of West Broadway or one block east of the West Side Highway. And right when we were there at that corner you looked back on what is going on and somebody had screamed that one of the buildings, surrounding buildings was coming down as well. So we told that guy, "You gotta come with us." He was pretty hesitant. We said, "You gotta come and that's it" and he decided to join with us and he started to move.

As we started to move north on that street I ran into staff Chief Mike Butler, who was a friend

of our family's and immediately grabbed him and he was looking -- he wasn't really in great shape either. He just basically was kind of all dusty just like we all were and just kind of trying to put some sort of plan of action into place and he said, "Pat" -- he said, "Pat, you set up over there for ladders and give me another line over there for engines." And that's what we did. We just tried to get people together and get ladders on one side and engines on the other side, when a call came through again that there was a bomb in the area. Then we all got to the West Side Highway and we ran towards Manhattan community college. That's pretty much where we stayed then like everybody else until about midnight that night when we were one of the first companies to go back in searching on the main pile of debris. And that's pretty much it. I didn't see any -- you know, because of the timing of everything, approaching it from the north side it was really, really quiet. There wasn't many -- there was no apparatus at all on West Broadway. There was nothing at all. No firemen really at all on that street. I didn't see any of them at all. I didn't see any of them in front of me. I had hoped

that we were gonna meet up with them. Unfortunately, I don't have any information regarding to who and when and where, and that's about it.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, Pat. Thank you for your help. The time now is 1150 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110454

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KENNETH DAVIS

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT DUN: The date is January 15, 2002. The time is 1540 hours. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

PARAMEDIC DAVIS: Kenneth Davis, paramedic, Shield No. 3204 of Battalion 22.

Q. In your own words, could you please tell us what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001.

A. The morning of September 11th, I was going to do some volunteer work for Mark Green in Manhattan, and we met in Long Island City at the union office. From the union office we were going over to the city, a bunch of us in a van, and we took the 59th Street bridge. As we were driving over the 59th Street bridge, just looking out the window, we saw a plane hit the World Trade Center, what we thought was a plane, and out of disbelief, I was like did anybody else just see that? They're like what? I said a plane just hit the Trade Center. Everybody was like, oh, yeah, right. When they looked, you could see the flames and the smoke starting and they're like, wow, it must have been one of the little planes. I said, no, it looked like a jet. So now everybody was in panic because we didn't know, it was a clear day and we figured, well,

is it terrorists, is it accidental? It was such a clear day, you can avoid it but...

So we went over to Mark Green's office and we got on the phone and called to see where they needed us. We figured if something big like that, you'd find out where everybody's got to be. They asked us to go up to Metropolitan to pick up an ambulance up there and whatever equipment they could give us. A bunch of us shot up there in a van. From there we went down the FDR Drive towards the Trade Center and there were just thousands of people running towards you on the FDR. It was surreal.

So we got down to South Street, to the ferry terminal, and set up a triage station. There was a doctor there, an anesthesiologist, I believe Mark Heath was his name. I know he shot a lot of video on his digital camera while he was there also. I helped him set up triage in an area upstairs in the ferry terminal.

Q. Were you receiving a lot of patients at this time?

A. Not what we were expecting because a lot of people were just getting out of there.

Q. Running by you.

A. Just running. Basically, you saw people that were wounded and you were grabbing them because they were in such a state of shock that they didn't know what was going on any more than you did and they just wanted to get out of there. Some people, as you were grabbing them, they didn't want to sit still for anything, so you were just grabbing their clothes and using their clothing as bandages and just say okay, fine, hold this and keep going, you know, don't go back that way. I saw some patients at the ferry, and the building had already collapsed, the first tower, so we went down, a couple of us, to the site to see if we could help down there, and it was just sheer madness. You couldn't see anything with all the dust in the air.

Q. Did the first building go down yet?

A. Yes, the first building had already come down.

Q. Okay.

A. What made it really bad was just trying to breathe. It's not fog, it's ash, and you could only see so far. But, literally, we didn't have masks yet or anything because we just were there. We found bottled water or whatever and cracked hydrants. You were just scooping water into your mouth and spitting

mud out and people were running by you and they're running in every direction because they didn't know which way to go.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and confusion?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any officers from the service?

A. There were police officers everywhere, firemen everywhere, apparatus all over the place. It was kind of like a discotheque, the easiest way to describe it, the lights from the trucks and the fog machines, that's how it looked, and people screaming and just running and you're tripping over each other.

Q. So did you leave your vehicle at the South Street Seaport?

A. We were transported up. They had taken a couple of patients to the hospital.

Q. Which one? Beekman?

A. I believe Beekman. So we hopped a ride up and jumped down from there and ran up there.

Q. And went on foot?

A. Yes.

Q. So at this time you had no longer --

A. I no longer had a vehicle. But they were everywhere. Some were crushed already, melted

looking. But they were everywhere. The keys were in them. You could get in if you needed it and go. But it was a mess, going through the ashes, some places a foot thick, two feet thick.

Q. This is still the first building?

A. Yes. The second building had just started to come down and you could feel the rumble in the ground, and we were like, it can't be the train because you know it's not running. So we all started to run down the street and the building had come down.

Q. Which way did you run?

A. Honestly, I don't remember which street I was on. It was just, like I said, it was chaos, and running down the block I had tripped and fallen and my left knee blew out and I fell on it and I was in a lot of pain. I was just holding it and a fireman and a police officer grabbed me and dragged me up the street. But meanwhile, while I was laying there, I reached down to see what I had fell over and it was somebody's lower leg that had apparently got blown off them in the explosion. So that was pretty sick to say the least.

I got up the street, got some tape from one of the firemen up at the corner that had some supplies,

I taped up my knee and I kept working. Again, it was just trying to get people out of there, get them to different hospitals and whatever.

Q. Did you see any EMS officers that you recognized?

A. At Ground Zero you'd see so many people.

Q. Do you remember in what location around Ground Zero?

A. Over on the side of -- well, I saw some people by Trinity Church.

Q. So that's down here. Trinity is down this way.

A. Then over on the other side by City Hall.

Q. City Hall is over this way.

A. Yes. They were setting up in a building. They were starting to set up inside one of the buildings over there.

Q. So you were more on --

A. On this side, yes.

Q. The east side; you were on the east side?

A. Right. The eastern side, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. It was on Broadway, I believe, a building on Broadway. They were setting up inside the building

that they wanted to get patients in there and that building started to tremble a little. So they said, hey, let's get out of here, too. So everything we had just brought in there we started handing back and forth like a big convoy, just handing it back and forth to each other out of there. Then they were going to set up in City Hall Park, and I said you can't, it's outside, you can't have patients in all this soot, you can't breathe. So then they were moving them down to another building over that way and I said, well, they had enough people there. My knee is really hurting. I said, if something else collapses, I'm not going to be able to run, so let me get back down to the ferry terminal and help there. So that's when I went back to the ferry terminal.

Q. That was South Ferry?

A. Right.

Q. Because they had (inaudible)?

A. Yes. This is Whitehall Street, whatever it is.

Q. South Ferry.

A. So we were over there and we had the triage set upstairs, and basically it was just a lot of bumps and bruises that we were seeing because a lot of people

were just getting on boats and ferry boats and leaving and they had barges that pulled up, people just got on them to get them out of the city, to get them over to Brooklyn or to Jersey, wherever they took them. But it was a lot of bumps and bruises, a few broken bones, gashes, cuts. It was not as many patients as we really thought we were going to see.

Q. Did you see anybody that were missing that you know of?

A. Not that I know of. I know people that are missing or have been declared dead and I know of them. I don't recall if I saw them or not that morning because some of them I was close to, I honestly don't remember if I saw them that morning or if I'm just remembering them in my head because I saw lots of people there. It's just crazy. It was craziness. You'd hear the alarms from some of the firemen's Scott packs going off.

Q. Did you have a radio that day?

A. No. I didn't have radios they give out, and if you had one, you couldn't get through to anybody because everybody was screaming.

Q. That was the thing, because they're trying to clarify, people who had radios, were they able to

communicate?

A. I don't think so. Like every fireman that I was around that had one --

Q. Mayday Mayday.

A. It was all Maydays, it was guys yelling we're over here, we're over there, we got one here. It was nuts. The police that were down there were really -- they were phenomenal. They were just grabbing stuff and helping everybody. The firemen, they're used to doing the disaster stuff, but it was just so overwhelming. But the police were really -- they were a lot of help. I would say, hey, can you grab this and they were like yeah. It was really good.

Q. So about what time did you wrap up?

A. Well, I went back to the ferry terminal after I got hurt and I stayed there until almost 11:00 o'clock that night before they told me it's now time for me to go to the hospital. I would have stayed. I guess the adrenaline keeps you going.

Q. Did you go to the hospital?

A. Yes. I ended up going on the ferry over to Staten Island to St. Vincent's. They x-rayed me, medicated me and all, and I went home. Since then I've had to have surgery on my leg.

But it was pretty intense over there. I know guys that were looking for their ambulances when they went back, they weren't there. Somebody could have just used it or whatever. But it was weird. You'd go down the street and see parts of an airplane, the wheels, that were in the middle of an intersection in one corner and it's part of a plane. You don't expect to see that in Manhattan.

LIEUTENANT DUN: Okay. This concludes the interview with Kenneth Davis. The time now is 1550 hours.

File No. 9110455

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOSEPH JEFFERSON

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today is January 16, 2002. The time is 7:40. My name is Richard Dun working with the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with...

PARAMEDIC JEFFERSON: Joseph Jefferson, paramedic from Battalion 26, Shield No. 2410.

Q. In your own words, can you just tell us what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001.

A. Basically, we were doing our tour of duty or we were in the beginning stages of our tour of duty and we were at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, we were in the Bronx, which is about 173rd Street and Grand Concourse, when we heard that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. We were still basically finishing up. Then we heard that the second plane hit. We were in contact with the dispatcher, who said that she needed some units to go down there. So we were dispatched to go down to the World Trade Center. So we left from there and went down to the World Trade Center.

Q. Did you take the streets or did you go to the highways?

A. We took the streets to the highway, basically.

Q. Okay. When you got down there, how was it?

What was it like when you pulled up or when you got close to the site?

A. Well, once we got -- we took the FDR and we came around the back, the back way, up West Street from --

Q. South Ferry.

A. South Ferry, that exit. When we got down there, it was just almost like a death silence. I guess you could say it looked like a war zone I guess.

Q. Did you see a lot of debris?

A. You could see part of the plane or what we thought might have been. There were cars on fire. There were body parts.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos, people running, trying to get away?

A. From the angle that we approached, from that side, there wasn't a lot going on. There were numerous vehicles that were heading towards Ground Zero, I guess, which is what we call it now.

Q. At that point, when you got there, did the first building collapse already?

A. No. We got there before the buildings came down.

Q. Before the buildings came down. So the

buildings were still standing?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So as we drove up, I guess we got to -- I'm looking at the picture now. I'm trying to see where is West.

Q. This is going uptown and that's downtown.

A. So we were coming up this way and there was somebody --

Q. Liberty and West? There was a triage station.

A. We actually never made it up to the triage center. This is the tower right here, right?

Q. Right.

A. This is the first one that came down?

Q. Right.

A. As we got to about here, traffic was being diverted to go from the northbound lane to the southbound. They were setting up the vehicles there. We turned to go up that way and a firefighter came running out from one of the towers and he was basically saying are you guys medics? He flagged us down, are you guys medics? We're like, yeah, what's going on? He said, well, one of our firefighters is down and we

need some help. We have EMTs in there and they're screaming for medics. So I stopped the vehicle, came around, grabbed my trauma bag. My partner got out of the vehicle and said you want me to grab the other stuff or what? So I said okay, yeah, grab it and run ahead a little bit to see what they have.

Q. Is that where you left your vehicle and that was the last time you saw the vehicle or you got back to it?

A. We got back to it.

Q. Oh, okay. Because people left vehicles.

A. Right. So I guess the vehicle was parked on like the side street.

Q. On the west side before Liberty?

A. Right. So as I went down that block towards the World Trade Center, No. 2 building, they were bringing him up on a stretcher and we actually met him on the corner there, and they had their vehicle and the BLS vehicle was there and they were in the back. So I jumped in to see and it was the firefighter who had I think got hit by someone that had jumped out.

Q. Do you remember his name?

A. No. I don't recall. [redacted]

[redacted]. Plus I don't know where my partner is. My partner never met me at the vehicle. So she said, well, just go to the hospital. So basically what I did was I went back into the vehicle, I grabbed my equipment and I exited the vehicle, closed the door, and the BLS took him to the

hospital with about four firefighters.

So I went back to where I believed the vehicle was supposed to be but it wasn't there. So I said where's my bus? Anybody seen 302? Anybody seen 302? He said yeah, yeah, he went off that way. I said what? He said yeah, your partner took the vehicle. I said no. I was like he didn't leave me. I know he didn't. So it was like where is he? So then I was looking around, I turned back around, and right about where I had met the other guy, my partner pulled the vehicle up here --

Q. To Liberty?

A. To Liberty.

-- to try and meet us and somehow we missed each other. But the vehicle was there, but he wasn't. So I went to the vehicle, I went to open the door and the door was locked. I went around to the other side to try and see if I could get the equipment out, and as I was standing there, I heard this rumbling and I looked up and the building was coming down.

Q. That was the first building coming down?

A. That was the first building, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So I took off and I ended up hiding on -- I

ran past -- I guess that's 90. The building that was the next over is 90 West. I remember I passed that building (inaudible) into the building. So I turned around to run into the building, but the stuff was coming down so fast that I wasn't able to get into the building. So I ended up hiding in the windowsill trying to cover up and basically the stuff was coming past me like an avalanche, you know, it sounds like a freight train. So I looked back and I saw like this big piece of wall about -- it had to be about maybe four feet long and about three feet wide or something like that, it came across my back, knocked me down to my knees. I was like, God, I'm going to get buried alive here because there wasn't that much space. I tried to break the window to get into the window and there was a fence, a gate inside of the window, so I couldn't climb into the building through there. So I was just there waiting until it all stopped.

Once it stopped, you know, I'm sure it sounds very familiar, it was like just nothing, just silence and you couldn't see because of the cloud of dust.

Q. Did you have a radio that day?

A. I had a radio.

Q. Were there any transmissions going on?

A. At that point I didn't have the radio.

Q. Okay.

A. But it was just silence. Then, trying to breathe, it was like you started coughing and gagging. Then you started hearing people calling out for help (inaudible). I stood there for a couple of seconds and then I heard a couple of secondary explosions and some vehicles were engulfed in flames, you know, they were on fire. So I go this is not the place to be. I hope I'm talking up loud enough. I grabbed my trauma bags and put it back on my shoulder and I started feeling around. I called out for help a couple times for myself and then I realized I'm supposed to be the help. Then I started telling people come towards my voice, come towards my voice, because I knew I was on West Street, I didn't know exactly where, but I knew that, if they were further into where the buildings were, they should probably come out towards this way and walk up towards the South Ferry.

I saw a female cop. She had a flashlight, so she was able to help direct the people who went into one of the buildings, and they had already had some water and they had garbage cans filled with ice set up. So some people came in and began to like wash

their faces off and stuff like that. There was a vehicle parked, Vehicle 440. It was parked like in front of that building. So I went inside that vehicle and hooked up with an EMT, she was from Jacobi, with a guy who was injured a little bit, he had hurt his leg. So I treated him.

Q. Okay.

A. What else? I mean, it was so much. As I was treating him, another EMT came in and he was hurt. A medic was bringing him and she said Eddie's hurt bad. He had a gash in his back and his arm was broken. So I splinted his arm.

Q. Eddie who?

A. Martinez.

Q. Martinez.

A. The EMT, his last name was Joseph.

Q. From Jacobi?

A. From Jacobi. Lamanna was the medic that brought Eddie over there. But as I splinted his arm and treated him (inaudible). As I splinted his arm, I was helping (inaudible) and stuff like that and we told him grab some equipment because I don't think that this would be a good place, it might be a collapse, it's damaged or crushed, if not totally destroyed. So I

said, if anything else falls, because I didn't know how much of the building fell, I didn't know whether it was just the top or whatever, I said I don't want us -- being inside the vehicle is not going to be the safest place, so let's just grab some equipment, couple up the 02 and bandages and stuff like that and let's get into this building. Basically we were moving towards, like I said, back towards South Ferry. I hadn't seen any supervision or anybody, basically, except the few people that had been...

So as we went into the next building, I said let's go into this next building, wait a couple of seconds. Other people were coming in. That's when I met up with my partner. We basically experienced almost the same thing. He was hiding in another windowsill because he was unable to get into the buildings. But after that a few more people came in and we said, listen, we're going to try and get you guys out of here, just stay put for a second and just make sure that it clears up a little bit and we're going to get you guys as far to safety as we can.

Eddie Martinez started feeling a little bit worse. I thought that he might be developing a pneumothorax because of the size of the gash in his

back. It was pretty deep. I sent him with Karen Lamanna and another voluntary EMT in a stair chair with oxygen towards the treatment area. I heard there was some kind of treatment there at South Ferry. I said get him down there, they had some buses or whatever, and I said I'm going to double back and help the people that were left.

Q. Building 2 still didn't come down yet?

A. No. After they went down --

Q. South.

A. South. I went back and I said okay everybody, let's get a head count and see how many people are in here and we're going to start -- so I went back out -- I said stay here and let me just make sure the coast is clear, and as I was going out to go, that's when the second building came down. So I ran back in the building. It felt a little bit safer because it was one of the big buildings. So I sent them as far back into the middle of the building as possible. The windows were shaking. It was like all over again.

After that subsided, a couple more people came trickling in. After cleaning them up, we did a head count and we had like about 20 people. So little

by little, as it cleared up, we brought them down, went into another little place, you know, it was like taking them section by section, and we got all the way down to where there's like a health club or something that was down there.

Q. New York City Health and Racquet?

A. Right. We got them there and I told them listen, I said remember my name, I'm Paramedic Jefferson, I said I'm going to get you guys out of here, I don't know exactly how, but just stay put. There are some bathrooms facilities here and there are some phones, if you want to make a phone call or something, do that, and I'll be back in a couple minutes and we're going to get you out of here.

So my partner and I left there and started walking down towards south and, funny thing, a lady in a mini school bus drives by and she's like, excuse me, I need to find the Brooklyn Bridge, I need to get across it. I said, ma'am, I can't promise you I can get you across the Brooklyn Bridge, I said, but I need your help. I have about 20 people that I need to get over to the hospital, would you mind giving some assistance? She said I don't know, I've got to ask my boss, I've got to ask my boss. So she calls and

initially he goes no, no, get back to the house. It's like can you tell him -- he has to have heard on the news, we're in the middle of a crisis here and we really need his help. So she says the paramedics really need the help, and he was like okay. It's like what is he going to say?

Q. You could have commandeered them.

A. Basically, that's what we ended up basically doing. I said tell him that you're giving us a hand. We need the use of this vehicle. So we took it back to the Health and Racquet Club and we got all the people and got them lined up. We had a lady with a baby, this was like an infant, still only maybe a month or two old, a guy with two cats and a lady with a little dog. It ended up being like about 22 people that we put inside the school bus and we drove them up to Bellevue Hospital in the school bus.

After that we doubled back and came back down. We got as far as the Brooklyn Bridge. I said I'll take you to the bridge, ma'am. I can't promise you that you'll get across, but I can take you there. So we brought her back down there and my partner and I walked from the Brooklyn Bridge back to the World Trade Center, and we treated some other firefighters.

Q. Did you ever make it to a treatment center or a triage center?

A. For us to get looked at?

Q. No. From the Brooklyn Bridge, you went back. You just were free-lancing in the street, helping people?

A. Once we got all the way back there, we ran into one of the chiefs. I forget the name at this time. But basically, once we got all the way back down there, it was still kind of chaotic, but there was still a little order --

Q. There was an EMS officer around at that time?

A. Yes, there was an EMS officer around at that time.

Q. Okay.

A. He said, listen, I want you to gather all our people, try and keep them together here. He sent out a couple of groups to scavenge some equipment together and so we had a little treatment center that we were setting up right on -- I think it was actually right on Liberty towards the water.

Q. Liberty and West. South End Avenue.

A. We were like up in here.

Q. South End Avenue.

A. So that's where we staged and basically we were treating people and we were helping. I didn't even realize the extent of some of our own -- I think that was -- we stayed there -- I don't even remember exactly what time we left, but I know my partner's shoulder began to hurt more, my wrist was a little swollen, I had a cut, I got a couple of stitches.

Q. So you basically stayed a lot after, like after 9:00 o'clock, roughly?

A. I think we eventually got back here about 9:00, between 8:00 and 9:00, 10:00 o'clock, somewhere around there.

Q. That's good enough.

A. We were there well into the evening.

Q. All right. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. Anything like what? I mean, while I was there, all that we could do was really pray that we would come out alive, everything was happening, and it was just basically God's mercy that we were able to survive.

LIEUTENANT DUN: Okay. That concludes the interview with Mr. Jefferson. The time is 8:00 o'clock.

File No. 9110456

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT WILLIAM TRUOCOLLO

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today's date is January 16, 2002. My name is Richard Dun. The time is 0700 hours. I'm with the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with William --

A. Truocollo.

Q. Truocollo?

A. Battalion 26, shield number 1585, working 18 Charlie.

Q. Can you tell me in your own words the events leading on September 11, 2001?

A. We were assigned to the tower collapse, at which point we went down the -- we went local to Manhattan, because the West Side Highway was backed up. Once we got down there, we parked in front of 125 Barclay and that's where we met Chief Wells. He told us to get everything on a stretcher, all our equipment, and we walked with him and he staged us at Liberty and West. Just pretty much watching people jump or fall out of the towers. I don't really remember radio transmissions because there was so much noise. But we maybe were there 10 minutes.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos when you pulled up?

A. Yes. I mean we didn't know where to go initially. The Chief happened to pull up right next to

us.

Q. Were there a lot of civilians running around?

A. Yes, there was people running all over the place. A lot of emergency vehicles going back and forth. People almost getting hit by police cars and everything shooting around over there. So from the whole time we were down there, when we went to the staging area, maybe about 10 minutes, 15 minutes. We were told, grab the stretcher, we are going into -- I don't even remember. I think we were going into the Marriott to stage in there. I was just looking up to make sure nobody fell or jumped on us. We got in front of the -- I believe it was the Marriott. I just heard somebody yell run. I tried to run back towards the staging area.

Q. Was that the first collapse?

A. Yes. I woke up. I was partially underneath a -- I don't know. It had to be some type of motor vehicle, because I could see the exhaust and there was a firemen digging my leg, because my legs got buried, the rest of me was underneath the car. That was it.

I remember he pulled me out and I actually thought a plane was coming because of the roaring sound. That's when he told me the tower collapsed. We

went into what was supposed to be a safer location and we were there maybe not even 5 minutes when they evacuated us and then we heard -- I heard another collapse. I don't know if that was 7 or if that was the other tower.

Q. That was probably the other tower. 7 collapsed much later.

A. Later. I was already -- we went through the -- past the West Side Highway and they put me on a boat, the Jersey City police harbor boat and that was it. I went to Jersey.

Q. That was the end of your day?

A. Yes. I mean I was admitted there. I had various injuries and everything.

Q. Because I interviewed your partner (inaudible) than getting hurt (inaudible), triage or anything (inaudible).

A. Yes. Like I said we were staging, we went over there. We were told by Chief Wells we are going into the triage area. The last thing I remember even telling my partner, I was looking up at the towers and the last thing I said was, you know, I don't think we should be near these buildings and that was it. That was really it.

I didn't treat any patients. It was just chaotic. We were just running and screaming. Nobody wanted to be where we were at. Everybody was trying to get away from it.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview. It's 705 hours.

File No. 9110457

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH CONZO

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today is January 16, 2002. The time is 5:45 a.m. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with --

A. JOSEPH CONZO, EMT, shield number 2577, assigned to Battalion 26 in the South Bronx.

Q. At this time in your own words, could you describe the events leading on September 11, 2001?

A. On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to 18 Charlie, tour 2, out of Battalion 26. We responded to the World Trade Center from the Bronx. I'm not sure of the approximate time, but it was after the first plane crash.

En route to the World Trade Center, the second plane hit, half way down there. Going down the West Side Highway, we responded down the West Side Highway and we got down there. I was fortunate enough to park my vehicle 301 by 125 Barclay Street, about 2 or 3 blocks from the World Trade Center.

From there, there was multiple volunteer units, multiple fire apparatuses, PD, so on and so on.

Q. When you got to the scene, was it chaotic, a lot of people?

A. It was pretty much chaotic. Just multiple

units just coming in and stuff like that. We were told to respond to a staging area which was directly across the street from, I think the Marriott. Directly across the street. That's where everybody was staging up with their equipment and the first Chief I encountered was Chief Charlie Wells, along with Captain Karen DeShore.

Q. Were there a lot of patients, walking wounded around?

A. At that time no, it was just multiple fire suppressions and PD and EMS units. We were all told to stage across the street with our equipment. We were told to put on our helmets, our turnout coats and stuff like that. At that time, there was just multiple fire personnel, fire suppressions running in and out of the buildings, stuff like that. Both towers were burning at the time. There really wasn't any debris coming down from our side and that's it.

As we staged across the street, Chief Charlie Wells grabbed my partner and I and said we are going into the building. From this map here, we entered the Marriott Hotel on Liberty, on west side and Liberty and as soon as we were entering in there with our equipment, we heard what seemed to be a third plane hitting, but I found out later it was the collapse of

the World Trade Center 2.

As that was happening, Chief Wells instructed us to run. I ran into the building and Chief Wells and my partner ran back towards the staging. I was fortunate enough to seek cover under a table there while the building collapsed and subsequently escaped unharmed.

Q. Were you trapped?

A. Yes, I was trapped for about -- I don't know, a good 15, 20 minutes. It was just total chaos. It was myself and three other firemen. The entrance we had came in was totally sealed off, another entrance was totally sealed off. It was totally pitch black. Dust, debris, just complete serene atmosphere. The only noise that was going on after the rumbling was the firemen's passive alarms going off.

Fortunate enough for us, a wall had collapsed down into the street. We were able to climb out. I didn't even know I was out in the street until I walked into a light pole. That's how black and dark it was.

After getting out and searching for my partner and Chief Wells, I couldn't find them, I proceeded across the street into a store there where I cleared my face and just started searching for

survivors. I fortunately found my partner about 10 minutes after getting out of the building. He was completely buried under debris and stuff like that. I found him and a fireman.

I grabbed him, we proceeded to walk towards the water and I linked up with Captain DeShore, [redacted] and a few other EMTs. We helped evacuate some injured firemen and civilians on to these boats that were coming over from Jersey. I don't know, about 15 minutes after that, the building that we were in collapsed, the second collapse happened.

From then on, my partner was already on the boat.

Q. The second building, was that 7 World Trade Center?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. So that's the third building?

A. Okay. Yes, third building. My partner was already on the boat to Jersey, because he was injured. Karen DeShore, a few other EMTs and firemen were on the boat, and I stood there and I was fortunate enough to commandeer a golf cart, a gator, which was the only thing that could possibly maneuver, so I started evacuating patients to the ferries and stuff like

that.

Later on, after evacuating a lot of people from the waterway there, I ran into Chief McCracken and became his personal driver, and gatored him for the rest of the day. Then I stood the rest of the day down at South Ferry.

Q. So around what time did you end your day?

A. I ended the day about 1 o'clock that morning.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?

A. No, that's basically it. We did the best we could. Not I nor anybody else that I spoke to who was down there even imagined these buildings collapsing. We staged where we were told to stage and we just followed orders. We did the best we could.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with JOSEPH CONZO. The time now is 550 hours.

File No. 9110458

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY BROWN

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is January 15th, 2002. The time is approximately 9:20. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, safety command, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

MR. BROWN: Tim Brown, OEM, detailed out of Rescue 3.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Pertaining to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tim, if you would, just take me to when you first heard about it and then how did the day's events unfold for you.

A. OEM's offices are in Seven World Trade Center, so we were there when the first plane hit. I was on the third floor. I was eating breakfast. The electricity went out in the building for about three to four seconds, and then it rerouted and came back on. I knew something major had happened, although I did not feel any vibration or hear any crash from where I was sitting.

The folks that were in the cafeteria where I was that had a window seat all got up

pretty much at once and started running. I asked them what happened. They said a plane just crashed into the tower, which was the north tower.

So I ran down the escalator to the lobby level, where I saw my direct boss, Calvin Dreydon, who is the deputy director for operations for OEM, going down to the street level. He told me to go up to our office on 23 and make sure that we were getting our EOC up and running and that our communications was being properly supervised. We call it our watch command.

So I went up in the elevator to 23. First I went to my desk, got my portable radio. It's a police radio, fire radio and OEM radio. I went into our watch command. The supervisor, Mike Lee, was there running operations, so we were fine there. I went into the EOC. We had the supervisor, Mike Berkowitz, there running that, so I was comfortable that we were doing our job properly.

I went down to the street level. There was a lot of debris falling in the street, which

is Vesey Street. My car was parked on Vesey between the federal office building, the post office, and Five World Trade. I went to my car to take off my tie and my shoes, put on boots, helmet, and a Mayor's office jacket.

I went back to the corner of West and Vesey, where the police department was calling mobilization. Our car two, John Odermatt was there. I told him that I was going to go through Six World Trade into One World Tower to the fire command post.

I walked in the walkway between five and six to get a three-sided look at One World Trade Center to see what it looked like. The whole plaza area was burning debris, plane parts and bodies; a lot of fire in the plaza area.

I communicated with a Port Authority cop who yelled at me and told me to get out of there, it was too dangerous. Of course he was standing there. I don't know who that guy was.

I went into the lobby of One World Trade Center. A lot of people were self-evacuating very orderly, quickly. People were helping each other, and they were streaming

out as quickly as they could.

The one thing that was limiting their escape the most was probably the size of the escalators. They were bottling up at the top of the escalators, trying to get on the escalators, trying to get down. But it was orderly.

I believe you have to go down a level to get to the fire command post. So I went down that level. I went past the core of the building where the stairwells were. There were a lot of firemen there. By "a lot," I would probably say 30 or so firemen there.

The people I remember seeing were Terry Hatton and Chris Blackwell. Terry Hatton from Rescue 1 and Chris Blackwell from Rescue 3. I gave them both hugs. Terry said to me, "I love you, brother. It might be the last time I see you." Then he went in the stairwell. Then Chris Blackwell looked at me and said, "This isn't good, Tim." That was the last I saw him also. Those are the two guys that I remember seeing, although there were a lot more people there.

From there I went to the fire command station where my boss was, Calvin. I believe at

this point Rich Schirer was there. I think I saw the Commissioner there. I think we had a tape, kind of, of the people that were there.

Q. Yes, I think so.

A. Yeah, I think the tape came in after I left.

Q. Yeah, it could be.

A. I was probably there for three minutes at most. We did right away -- one of the thoughts that crossed my mind almost immediately was to get air cover from the military. We weren't sure this was a terrorist attack, but we knew there was a good possibility that it was.

So we had sent that message pretty quickly back to our communications folks to try and get in touch with the White House and with FAA and try and get some help.

There were a lot of people streaming in and out, a lot of firemen coming in.

The second plane hit. Again I did not feel that. We did not know that happened until a fireman came into the lobby and told us that another plane had hit number two, the south tower. Calvin directed me to go to the command

post in the south tower to help the Fire Department with their operation there and to let him know everything that was going on.

I'm not exactly sure how I got there. I remember going out through a broken window and running I believe south along the West Street side of the complex as fast as I could so I wouldn't get hit by anything.

I remember running across a parking lot. It was across from the hotel, which would have been the southeast corner of Liberty an West. There's a parking lot there. It was near the pedestrian walkway and all that.

Q. There's a large parking lot.

A. Right.

Q. The building that was up there, would it be a Church?

A. It was gone from there.

Q. Yes, obliterated.

A. Okay, okay.

Q. It was just a very huge parking lot, black top.

A. Right, okay. I was over there.

Q. I was a lieutenant in 10 and 10.

That's why I remember a lot.

A. Okay. So this is your neighborhood, then.

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay.

So I remember running across a lot of debris. I didn't have on fire gear, so I remember trying to avoid the fire as much as I could. I ran into the doors of the Two World Trade on the Liberty Street side.

I saw Chief Burns inside there. He was the first fire personnel that I saw in the lobby. I asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He was like, well, it's just like -- there was nothing anybody could do except try and get people out.

So we tried to encourage -- I remember seeing a six-person team from ESU in that lobby. I directed them to wait. I directed them to wait and not to go upstairs until they reported in to Chief Burns so we had some accountability of who they were and where they were going to go. They finally did communicate with Chief Burns, and then they went upstairs.

Again, an orderly evacuation of two. A lot of people were leaving.

We finally set up -- prior to this I believe it was the west side of the core of the building there were elevators. Someone had come to me and said that there were people trapped in one of those elevators.

So I ran around the corner, and the hoist way doors were open, but the elevator car was only showing about two feet at the top of the door. You could see all the legs of the people that were in the elevator. I would guess there were about eight people in the elevator.

The elevator pit was on fire with the jet fuel. People were screaming in the elevator. They were getting smoked and cooked. There weren't a lot of firemen there at the time. I grabbed some of the Port Authority employees and asked them where the fire extinguishers were and told them to get as many fire extinguishers as they could so we could try and fight this fire. As they were doing that, firemen started showing up, and I started asking them to get big cans, let's try to put this fire out.

I turned around, and I came face-to-face with Mike Lynch from Ladder 4, who I knew. I worked for Ladder 4 for a year. He was one of the young guys there then. I knew Mike was a very competent guy. I said to Mike, "You've got this?" He said, "I'll take care of it." I left the elevator knowing that he would take care of it.

I went to the command board -- which before this I went to the phones which were in the southeast corner of Two World Trade in the lobby area, trying to call the White House and trying to call Albany and trying to make sure that we had some kind of air cover and some kind of help in the air.

I could not get through to Washington because of the things that were going on. I did get in touch with S.E.M.O. up in Albany, and they said they were already ahead of us and they had already spoken with people, trying to get us air cover.

So being comfortable with that, I went to the command board which they were setting up right next to the doors on the Liberty Street

side, the south side of Two World Trade, inside the lobby. At that command board were Chief Burns, Chief Jack Fanning, and I remember seeing Carl Asaro also there. So at this point I just stayed in the background, because things were crazy.

Someone, a fireman, came in through the lobby, through the doors on the Liberty Street side, and told us that there was already a fireman who was killed on the Liberty Street side by a jumper, a guy from 216. Although we knew it was serious, we knew that disaster was beginning to happen.

Now the people coming down the stairwells were not so healthy anymore. A lot of people coming down were burned very badly. A lot of people were broken and bloody. There were people helping people, like carrying people.

We had been directing people to go to Seven World Trade where we had set up a triage area, and I was directing them to go underground as much as they could to get to seven. But a lot of these people that were coming down now were not ambulatory and overwhelmed. So the lobby

started filling up with badly injured people, people that were dying.

So watching all the confusion, I always try to think of what I can do to help. I said, well, we have no EMS in the lobby, and we're going to have to move these people or everybody is going to be stuck in the tower and we're not going to be able to evacuate.

I told Chief Burns that I was going to go find EMS and bring them back into the lobby, which is something that saved my life. I went out to the Liberty Street side. I saw Mike Lynch again at Ladder 4's rig, which was pulled right up next to the building, taking the Hearst tool off the rig.

He yelled to me to help him get it off the rig and carry it in, so I started running toward him. Before I could get to him, another fireman had come up and started helping him. So I said, "Are you all set?" He said, "I got it."

I ran to continue my mission to find EMS. I found EMS staging underneath the pedestrian bridge at West and Liberty. I saw my friend Charlie Wells. I got under the pedestrian

bridge where they were standing so we were protected, and I said to Charlie, "We need you guys in the lobby of number two." He looked at me like I was crazy. He said, "All right. Just give me a minute to get helmets on people, and we're going to go in with you."

So I waited I'm thinking around two minutes there. He got two paramedics, himself and me. I said, "Okay. Follow me." We ran to the south side of the hotel to stay close to the building, trying not to get hit. We ran along the edge of the hotel.

When we ran by the southwest corner of the hotel, I noticed that the doors to the Tall Ships restaurant were wide open and there were people inside there.

As we ran towards the rear, which is the three side of the hotel, and rounded the corner to go into Two World Trade Center, in the doors, we heard the roar above us. I know I never looked up. I don't think anybody ever looked up. But there was no question what it was. It was a very tremendous sound, which I think we hear on the tapes.

So we just turned and ran for our lives. Now it was the flight/fright thing, because everybody knew we were all going to die. We ran back along -- I knew right from the start that I was going to go into the lobby of the hotel to try and get protected.

As I ran by the medics, I yelled at them to follow me. Charlie and one of the medics, who I don't know their names, followed me into the lobby of the hotel. The other guy ran back toward the pedestrian bridge. Charlie tells me everybody lived of that group.

We ran into the lobby. No sooner did we get into the lobby of the hotel, which was crystal-clear when we went in, then it went completely black in an instant with the dust.

The roar was just getting louder. The dust started blowing in our faces. I'm guessing around 30, 35 miles an hour the wind was. Everything started blowing toward us that wasn't nailed down. You could not any longer run into the wind because you were getting pummeled by stuff. You couldn't see anybody to communicate. You couldn't hear anything. It was becoming our

grave.

So I turned around and started running back toward the door where I came in. Intellectually I knew we couldn't go outside, because we would get killed by the steel. So now I knew we were trapped. I wound up crawling on the floor as the wind got stronger and the roar got louder.

I found what I'm guessing was a 12 by 12 boxed out steel column, which I tried to become one with. I got as close as I could to it. I hugged it, hoping that anything would tent over me. I just held onto it.

I had a helmet on. The helmet got blown off by the wind. I'm no meteorologist, but I'm guessing that the wind at its height was around 70, 75 miles an hour. I had to hold onto that steel column with all my might so I wouldn't get blown out into the street, not realizing it was probably all over, thinking about my brother and things like that.

I thought it lasted four minutes. Somebody told me it lasted a much shorter time than that. But it stopped. You could hear an

eerie silence at first, and then you could start to hear people starting to move around a little bit, people that were still alive. I was amazed that I was alive.

You still couldn't see anything. I went back toward what I thought was the door where we had come in from Liberty Street. As I got over there, I ran into a truck with its lights on. By the front of the truck, I thought it was a box truck. I did not recognize it as a fire truck, although it could have been. I thought it was a bomb. The headlights were still on, very eerie.

I turned around and ran the other way, thinking that it was a bomb, telling everybody to run the other way. We ran into a steel rolldown gate that was down. Someone had said we can get out this way, so now there were more people around.

So all the men -- I couldn't tell you if they were civilians or firemen. It seemed to me there were a lot of civilians here. Our fingers were going underneath the door. We tried to lift it up. After we got it up two inches,

you could see all the fingers coming the other way, because there were people trapped on the other side of it.

We got that door up about two feet, and there was a girl behind us that said we found a way out. So everybody formed a chain. There was a fireman that knew he was already outside in the rubble, but he was okay. He was screaming at us to come toward him, "Come this way. Come this way."

So we went that way, which was the West Street side of what was left of the building. We went across. Then I just wanted to get away from the building, so I ran across all the rubble over to the American Express building, where I went in the lobby there. I just wanted to get to the river and to be able to get a view of what was going on.

I went into that lobby, and all the doors were locked. I couldn't get through those doors. I tried to break the glass doors, and I couldn't break them.

I had the police and fire radios in my back pocket, so I did not hear what was going on,

really, on them. I had the OEM radio in my hand, and my boss was calling for help. He was trapped. That's what brought me back to reality.

I went back out to West Street, ran north on the West Street side over the rubble, trying to find him, thinking that he was dying, trapped in the rubble. I went by Chief Feehan, who I know for a long time, shook his hand. He said "Be careful, be careful," to me. I kept running. I remember him being on West, north of the American Express building. He was alone at the time.

I went up to Vesey Street and made a left going west on Vesey Street toward the river. I found Calvin at four World Financial Center. A fireman had already rescued him and pulled him out. He was with EMS.

Then my other boss, car 2, John Odermatt, grabbed me and said, "Timmy, we have to go and try to reestablish city government. You've got to come with me. Calvin is okay." So we left Calvin in the hands of EMS and went back north on West Street.

At some point -- I'm not sure where --

I either went in Barclay Street or Murray Street over to West Broadway and trying to find our command bus, which was a little bit further north on West Broadway. I started walking north on West Broadway when number One World Trade Center started to collapse.

I looked back over my shoulder. Everybody started running. That collapsed. I knew that my friends were in there. I just ran north on West Broadway. I used a telephone, a land line, because I couldn't use the cell phone to call my brother to tell him I was still alive. That phone call was made an hour and 42 minutes after the first plane hit. So I know that's the time line.

Then we wound up just up at 24 and 5 with the Mayor and other folks up there. I saw Terry's wife up there. I had an unhappy encounter with her.

Basically that's it. We just tried to regroup after that. That's everything I remember.

Q. A lot of guys that were in the --

A. Lobby.

Q. -- restaurant, 131?

A. 131 Truck?

Q. Yeah. I was wondering if you ran into them.

A. They were in the lobby and they were --

Q. I guess the gate was between the restaurant and the hotel lobby. When they closed the restaurant, they use the gate to segregate the restaurant from the rest of the building.

A. Oh, okay.

Q. They said that they got that up. They went out to Liberty Street on the corner.

A. Oh, okay. So they were coming toward me as I was coming toward them.

Q. Right.

A. You couldn't tell who was who or anything like that.

Did any of those guys die? Mostly everybody that was in that lobby area --

Q. In that general area of the lobby, the guys got out.

A. Further north than the lobby.

Q. North and south. It seemed like you were in the middle.

A. I think I was in the south end of the lobby. That's that part that's still standing.

Q. I'm saying, if you were on the south side or the north side, it looks like you --

A. Lived.

Q. -- survived.

A. In the middle where two came down, it sliced it in the middle. You have guys that were in the north part that lived also?

Q. Yeah, Tommy Gallagher was in the north part, and Brian, when the first collapsed.

A. Right. Then the second one. I heard there's videotape, actually, of number two -- of the hotel in between the collapses. So you have two parts of the hotel standing, and the middle is gone.

Q. Yeah.

A. You can see it?

Q. Photos, not video.

A. Okay. Photos.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is approximately 9:45.

File No. 9110459

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JAMES WALSH

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 16, 2002. The time is 1215 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name.

LIEUTENANT WALSH: Lieutenant JAMES WALSH.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: He is assigned to the Engine 3 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 3 and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Jim, if you'd just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. Starting from the beginning, at the time of the first plane hitting the north tower, a bunch of guys in the firehouse had yelled something about a plane hitting the north tower, and then at that point the boxes started coming in, and at 8:48 the battalion gets a run to go for the 1076. Engine 3 wasn't actually on the 1076 at that moment, but all the members of Engine 3, including myself, all assumed we were.

My engine chauffeur had rushed up to the house watch area because somebody heard 1076 and Engine

3 goes. I yelled do they want us to take the high-rise rig? My engine chauffeur already was on the voice alarm contacting the dispatcher and saying do you want us to bring High-Rise 1? The answer coming back on the voice alarm was take everything you've got.

We later found out from people that -- a dispatcher I know had told me that you actually weren't assigned at that moment. You were assigned two minutes later and without the high-rise rig.

So then at that point Engine 3 was following Battalion 7 out on the response with High-Rise 1 going southbound on Seventh Avenue. After you cleared around 13th Street and St. Vinny's Hospital, the World Trade Center comes into view, and as we were looking at it, you know, you're getting a pretty good look at it from here. One of the things my chauffeur said to me eventually as we were going down Seventh Avenue was do you think this is an accident? I'm looking at it and I said I don't know, but I know for a fact that's not a small plane that caused that hole in the building there.

Going down Seventh Avenue, we approached Canal Street and Battalion 7 made a left-hand turn. I'm not sure if they were going to take West Broadway

or what street they were going to take down, but as we approached I looked up at the situation and said to my chauffeur, I said that looks like it's going to be traffic. Let's take the West Side Highway right there or West Street. We made the right, High-Rise 1 followed us, and we started going down West Street. Again, we still had a very good look at the building from where we were, and at that point we saw up the tower actually jumpers had already started coming out of the building.

Again, the traffic condition on West Street was -- for five to 9:00 in the morning on a business day, it was like something had already happened and there was almost no traffic, so we were not hindered at all by going down West Street. We went down until we hit Vesey Street and my chauffeur, literally, overshot, he was flying down the block, flying down West Street and past the north tower, and I said to him, Bobby, you just passed the fire building, and we ended up almost parallel to the south tower.

We got out of the rig to turn my chauffeur around and we were going to bring him back up West Street towards the north tower and my chauffeur, Scott Holowach, for High-Rise 1, he got out of the rig and

yelled to me I'm going to park the high-rise rig underneath the north pedestrian walkway going from the Financial Center or American Express Building into the north tower. He was referring to protecting the rig from all the crap coming down is the way he stated it.

They turned the rigs around. We got them turned around. I was walking back up West Street. My engine chauffeur found a hydrant someplace up there in the (inaudible). My high-rise chauffeur, he got out of the rig. He started coming back towards the rig, stood there, and he was about to pull his (inaudible) and he just ended up standing there and looking out towards me. As I was coming up West Street, I started hearing sounds getting very loud, and I never bothered to look back because the sound got extremely loud. It was the roar of the jet plane, which I didn't really know. It was the airliner coming in. I remember running back up West Street towards where my chauffeur was from the high-rise rig, and running at the same time I was trying to get down at the same time it seemed like.

Then I heard the explosion, continued running up to Scott, and I said what was that? I was under the impression that maybe it was a fighter plane because it got so loud. He said, no, another airliner just hit

the south tower. I turned and looked and I could see all the damage already. At that point, I guess, the one thing I could say is, as I had said to my chauffeur, I don't know if it was an accident. Now I knew this was no accident, that something was going on.

My chauffeur grabbed a hydrant in the median of West Street there. He was going to hook up to it. In the meantime, I know that my high-rise rig chauffeur talked to Chief Ganci and told him that another plane just hit the south tower, and Ganci almost probably couldn't believe it himself until my chauffeur, Scott Holowach, pointed at the building to him. At that point Ganci came around and told me, Lieu, get Engine 3 out of there. We're going to set up a conga line of ambulances on West Street for the casualties that we're going to have for this thing.

I know my chauffeur was probably looking around, when I told him he had to move the rig, that he was probably looking for another hydrant. At that point I said, Bobby, don't worry about getting a hydrant. Just get the rig over there. He ended up parking it on the grass over by the financial building, I believe north of the pedestrian walkway and -- almost

at the corner of the building there at Vesey and West, where that building meets.

He came back. He was getting the high-rise rig all set up. He was going to start getting the tools that we were possibly going to use. At this point Ganci had already given me one order. Chief Downey showed up and we're telling him we've got the high-rise rig, and he basically ordered us to stand fast, he didn't know how he was going to use us yet.

They were starting to set up the command post in the driveway of the American Express Building. Then eventually they made the order for having the staging area in the driveway. We had my four guys there, and the one or two decisions that I made that day that affected (inaudible). The one thing I was going to say is that the Chiefs started staging with Downey and they had the command post table out with all the command units checkers on it. (inaudible) up from the driveway and my guys started walking in that direction and I basically stopped the four of them, there were four firemen and I want you to go 100 feet north by that doorway over there. [redacted]

[redacted] They were getting about 50 guys there separating engines and trucks on one side. I wasn't really thinking of a collapse.

Q. You were thinking more of an attack?

A. My biggest concern was I felt, like I said, we knew this was no accident now and I'm thinking that if a van or something comes around the corner parked with explosives, I said, if they saw a bunch of firemen standing someplace, that might become their target if they came around the corner. I mean, I remember telling a police officer at the scene don't let the civilians that we get out of these buildings linger around, make sure they keep moving away because, again, I believed we were seriously under attack at this point and you didn't know who was going to try and do what to us. I mean, it could have been somebody that could have acted like they just came out of the building and

I'm confused. That's how I was thinking. That's what I was telling my guys. I said, if something else happens, here's where I think you can go to get away. I went over and stood in the command post area, basically in the driveway, and left them there about a hundred feet north of me.

We were there for a long time. I would almost sit there and tell you that -- my recollection probably isn't exact, but I almost thought Ray Downey was there the whole time. But I have been told since that he showed up in building one.

Q. Yeah, he was in the north tower.

A. So I didn't know that. But it seemed like he was there, they had the staging post there, there were a lot of Chiefs there. Ray Downey was back at the staging area in this driveway which was either in front of the American Express Building or one of the Financial Center buildings. Ray Downey turned around, looked at us and said, I need three engines, three trucks and a Battalion Chief to take the north pedestrian walkway in towards the north tower.

A lot of time has elapsed since the last statement I made before he put captains -- you know, we were just standing there for a long period of time. He

said that to us, he said it three times, and I'm pretty sure he was emphasizing use the pedestrian walkway to get into the building, he's trying to make sure that we don't get hit with any more jumpers. I'm sure we could use the pedestrian walkway as protection. I think the moment he finished saying it the third time, I heard the sound and we looked. It sounded like gas or an engine or something, and it was the south tower starting to collapse, and I think it was -- the sound I heard was the sound of the fire and gasses being compressed by the top part of the building above where the plane hit coming down and pushing the smoke and gasses out. I think that's what I heard.

The last sound I heard, I was probably about five feet from Chief Downey. I feel like I had an instinct in me that I wanted to run past him and up the driveway to get to my guys, but I saw the top of the building moving and I just turned and started running underneath into the garage. I didn't think it was a good choice as I was running there.

The building didn't fall the way you would think tall buildings would fall. Pretty much it looked like it imploded on itself. I looked over my shoulder once after I was running. I didn't hear it coming

down. I believe it must have been blocked out. What I saw was it looked like the garage door was gone. It was just all black.

As I kept running, I felt the air rushing and I actually felt the dust envelop me. I kept running in the other direction thinking there had to be a doorway or a stair someplace on the other side of the building and it was a stairway up. That I remember and the next thing that happened to me was when I got -- as I was approaching the doorway, I know I was in my mind and heart saying please be open, ran to it, and just as I got to it, the door swung open and a fireman's head popped out. I jumped into that stairway and literally there were like 35 or 40 guys in the stairway, which I don't remember seeing them running out in front of the building.

At that point now, I'm making my way up the stairs, I'm getting past a few firemen and things like that, I get past them and I heard somebody say we need a tool. I yelled out, not that anybody heard me, I said is there an officer's tool (inaudible) and I kept making my way up. All of a sudden the door was open. The guys were moving out of that door, but we were still inside the building. We moved towards the next

door, which went into an area in the back of this building someplace almost opposite of the marina. When you look out, there's a little park land there.

The first two guys hit the door, they opened the door the first time and they pulled it shut right away. It was like looking at nighttime. It was 10:00 o'clock in the morning. It looked like it was night when they opened the door. I remember saying, probably not convincingly, we have to go out there, guys, and it was just a matter at that point, now, I had left my four guys someplace else other than what I was told to do and I thought maybe I had cheated myself and I was worried for them for them. So that's why I had to get out.

The guys did open the door again. At this point I know I was making my way towards the door, and going out I heard some people say put your mask on. I heard people saying different things, this and that. But at that point all I cared about was getting around the complex of the Financial Center buildings. I went to North Avenue through that park land, came up to the corner of Vesey, and when I got to the corner of Vesey, I could actually see daylight down Vesey towards the Trade Center complex again.

As I started walking down Vesey, there were a lot of people moving around, mulling around, and I'm looking for my --

Q. Firemen or civilians?

A. Both. I'm looking for both. I'm looking for my guys now and I'm making my way east on Vesey Street from North End Avenue and I'm towards the west side again. Surprisingly, the four guys that I had put by the doorways, that's the spot where they came out on Vesey Street, it was through a lobby area where all four of them popped up.

Q. Did you ever try and call them on the handy-talkie or was that just impossible?

A. There was no radio traffic, actually, that I can tell you I remember hearing. It was like I didn't care about anything I had on me anymore. My helmet gone. I didn't care what I had. I was just looking for them. As I started making my way up Vesey Street, they came out of that building onto Vesey. I found all four of them.

Q. Whew, that's something.

A. Yeah, I know. My chauffeur, he was the one guy who I didn't move because he was probably taking care of the high-rise rig. But I found the four of

them and then we went and looked for Bobby. We found him someplace closer to the corner of Vesey and West. He literally popped out of a hole and was all covered in white dust and everything else, and now I had all my five guys back.

I remember looking around a little bit. I saw a fireman from 12 Truck, Terry Finneran. He wasn't working. He was already down there, I guess, on his own, in his own gear, and I saw him and I saw a couple of other guys, people that I didn't know who they were, and I just made the statement, guys, we've got to get away from this thing. Let's start heading towards the Hudson River.

So we started moving from Vesey and West and headed west on Vesey back towards North End Avenue, and before we got to North End Avenue, the north tower started coming down. So almost like at that point I was looking for other people that were in the area, but I wasn't going to keep my guys here. That was basically what happened.

Q. Did it turn dark night again?

A. No.

Q. Or were you far enough away?

A. I think we were far enough away that -- it

was amazing that I would tell you that the south tower came down and everything from it was in the area like over towards the west side. When the south tower came down, after running and coming out on the west side of the Financial Center buildings in the park land area and facing the marina, you could barely see the marina through the dust. It was like nighttime. All of that dust seemed to come west towards the Hudson.

When the north tower fell down, we were on Vesey heading towards North End Avenue, and it was like, when that building fell, watching it fall, from where we were, it looked like -- I can't tell you how the south tower fell, only from seeing it on replays. That one looked like it really came down pretty straight like it really imploded on itself. The north tower looked like, when it started to fall, it looked like the top fell more towards the north and didn't implode as straight down as the south tower is basically all I'm saying.

Q. That's the way it looked on the tape, too.

A. When you look at it, and when we looked at it from Vesey Street and North End Avenue, it looked like it fell that way, a little bit towards the north.

At that point there, the next thing that

happened was we ran across some firemen. A couple guys from 24 Truck we came across, one guy with a broken nose who wouldn't even let us help him clean it. They were helping another firefighter. I think he was kind of limping. He also ended up -- somebody was talking about a firefighter that was having chest pains. Now we're basically on the promenade near the Hudson River.

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. So then we were trying to help him out with -- we had no CFRD equipment with us at this time. Somebody was trying to give him some water, trying to calm him down. We took his gear off him I remember, and I think that we saw a few of the guys walking around. A Jersey state trooper had said to me that the ferries are here and he said get all uniformed -- he said they're for everybody, but what he said is, if you get any uniformed personnel, they're going first. I know he said that to me.

At this point, like I said, for a lot of the time there was that eerie silence. The only way I could describe it to you where in that one point after the collapses or in between the collapses, it was like being out in nighttime during a winter snowstorm with

nobody around you. Again, I wasn't hearing radio traffic, which -- there was plenty when I did start hearing it and like people were asking what happened. I knew, where I was, I couldn't help those people. We were trying to help whoever we had.

We came across Battalion Chief Raynis, who I didn't even know where he was assigned to at the time, but he had said to me at this point that they were again staging at Chambers and West, which meant that they were going to take everybody that they could find and bring them up to Chambers and West and restage anyone they found, I think, basically. I know as we got up there my own feelings were I couldn't believe we went up there to get ordered to come back down to start helping again because it's like I realized we probably should have never left in the first place.

Then I started hearing a few radio transmissions about -- intermittently, I heard somebody sitting there and saying we need more water, we got lots of car fires or something like that. I had no idea where they were at this point, but they had lots of car fires.

After that, we were back down there. We were in trying to help again around the collapse areas. I

remember we were walking over with Firefighter Derek Wilson carrying some kind of tool into the area again. We actually walked under the pedestrian walkway that was the north one. It was partially still standing, actually being held by the high-rise rig on the west end of it, where it was parked underneath it, and at this point there was some stuff going on there.

Eventually they had ordered everybody away from the area again because of building 7. They were doing all kinds of roll calls at Vesey Street now, and this is later on in the afternoon. Basically, that's all we had to do. I mean, that's what we did that day from that point on, and then later on, I guess we were down there until about 10:00 o'clock that night with the guys putting water on fires that were there and even trying to get sources of water. So anyway...

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. I don't know what else to tell you at this point actually. I mean, it's like that's where we were. It's like I said. I mean, I got very lucky telling my guys to stay in one spot. I mean, it was for a different reason than what actually happened. Then the other thing was -- I guess the thing I'm confused about is you hear so many stories about the

north tower personnel and you hear guys that have actually told you they're not sure if they were told to evacuate after the south tower came down, because my first instinct after I found everybody was now let's get away from this scene again before this one comes down, not knowing they were coming down.

Q. Well, they did. A lot of guys heard the order to get out of the north tower. A lot of guys got out of the north tower.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: This concludes the interview. The time is 1230 hours.

File No. 9110460

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KENNETH ESCOFFRY

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 16, 2002. The time is 1320 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ESCOFFRY: Firefighter first grade KENNETH ESCOFFRY.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter Escoffry is assigned to Ladder Company 20 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 20. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Kenny, in your own words, if you will just tell us what happened that day.

A. On the morning of September 11th about 8:45, I was relieved, and a few of us were standing in front of quarters when we noticed a plane came directly over the firehouse maybe around 8:45, somewhere around that time. One of the guys mentioned that the plane looked like it was really low. Before we could really think of

what he said, the next thing we heard an explosion. We saw the smoke.

So the guys in the firehouse suited up and jumped on the rig. We didn't get a run on the teleprinter yet, but they went towards the direction. I guess they got the run as they were moving towards the direction.

At first we thought it was just a plane crash. Four of us were left in the firehouse. We turned on the TV, and we noticed that the plane hit the World Trade.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. I was saying that the plane had crashed into the World Trade. Four of us jumped in the hazmat rig, and we proceeded down to the World Trade to see if we could help. Two guys went up the staircase from the squad, and myself and George in the truck, we reported to the command station, because we had no tools, no radio, no masks, nothing.

When we pulled up, we saw heavy fire, smoke. People were jumping. So we figured we couldn't do much up here without equipment. So

we decided to go to the command station, where Chief Hayden and Chris was, and we asked Chris, the aide, if he knew what floor 20 was on. I believe he said they were up on the 27th floor, somewhere up in that area.

Q. This was in the north tower, the command post?

A. The north tower.

We hung around in the north tower in the lobby for a while. There were jumpers. After a while, body parts were flying into the lobby. Chief Hayden asked myself and George to check out a report of a fire that was on the second floor, the mezzanine.

We went up to the mezzanine level, and in the corner, which was exposure 4, we noticed it looked like it was jet fuel that was just running down the side of the building. The fire wasn't spreading or anything.

Within that 30-second time we were up there, an EMS worker asked us to come into the staircase to help him remove a person that collapsed in the staircase. After going into the staircase, within another minute or so, there was

a loud explosion. I believe that's when the second plane hit.

Q. Let me ask you a question. Do you know what staircase it was? Was it A, B, C staircase?

A. That was the staircase in exposure 4. I'm not sure.

Q. You're not sure. Okay.

A. Once that explosion happened, the door to the staircase slammed shut. When we went back and pushed the door open, we couldn't breathe. The dust particles was all in the lobby. So we kept the door closed, and people that were evacuating down, we wound up evacuating them off that staircase, through a hallway that led back to the exposure 1 side of the building.

We evacuated them from there to the second floor, which was the mezzanine, and took them down to the lobby. We took them around to the mezzanine and over the catwalk that went to the building north of tower one, which I believe that's probably building six.

Q. The one that goes across?

A. Yes, north. The catwalk that you could actually see the cars pass under.

Q. Okay. This one here that goes across West Street?

A. No.

Q. This one over here?

A. Yeah, this is West Street. Where is tower one?

Q. Right here.

A. The catwalk I guess went across this street here, Vesey and whatever street this is.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. We led the people across, and they evacuated that way.

About an hour later me and George decided let's go out, because we were having difficulty breathing because we didn't have a mask. On the way out between tower one and six, we heard something like an incoming missile, and we started to run. That's when the second tower came down.

Q. Tower number two?

A. Right. That was the first tower that came down.

I was knocked down. When I got up, there was a hose -- I followed a hose out to the

street with water flowing from it. So I washed my face and washed out my mouth. I knew George was behind me, so I called back. Finally he answered me. I told George to come towards my voice. We went back to the pumper and he washed his face, washed out his mouth. We proceeded to wet down our hood and put it over our mouth and nose.

We walked it seemed like about five or six blocks before we could even get to somewhere that we could breathe. We got up and started to walk back and forth looking for our company, hoping that maybe they got out. So we spent maybe the next 45 minutes washing up and walking up and down the side, hoping that our company would came out.

Q. This is West Street?

A. Yeah, West Street.

We didn't see our company. Nobody saw them.

I guess somewhere by the time we washed up and were walking up and down the west side looking for our company, the second one came down. So we never really got back towards the

tower. We wound up walking to 1 and 7 and tried to get back in touch with Ladder 20. We tried to call back at our company, but all the phones were down so we couldn't get in touch with anybody.

So we decided to walk to 8 Truck. We walked to 8. Lieutenant Woods and some of the other officers were over there. That's when I realized from watching the TV exactly what happened. At first I thought maybe just a section of the building came down. Once I saw the TV, I realized the whole building came down.

That was it. The whole day we never caught back up with 20. Somewhere later on in the day we worked our way back to 20 Truck.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. The farthest we got was maybe like the third, fourth floor, helping to evacuate the civilians. Like I said, we had no lights. The civilians were coming down the staircase. It was dark. We spent maybe 45 minutes in the staircase helping people finding their way out. It just got so bad, we couldn't breathe anymore. We decided to start making our way out. Fortunately we did. Maybe 30 yards from the West Side

Highway, that's when the first tower came down.

Q. Thanks a lot for your cooperation. I appreciate it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 1345 hours, and this concludes this interview.

File No. 9110461

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL Morabito

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 15, 2002. The time is 1030 hours and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview.

Q. Would the following individual please state your name.

A. Michael Morabito.

Q. Michael is a fireman third grade, assigned to Engine 228 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 228 and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Mike, if you would just tell us what happened in your own words.

A. Okay. I was working and the alarm came in. It was a third alarm at the World Trade Center. We didn't even know a plane had crashed into it. It wasn't like a rush right away. We were relocated to Engine 205. So we were hanging around a little bit getting everything ready to go and then we saw on the news that a plane hit the building. So then we responded immediately.

We reported to Engine 205 and while we were in their quarters we saw the second plane hit and then shortly after that we had responded to Manhattan. First they told us take the Brooklyn Bridge. We started to go towards the Brooklyn Bridge. And then there was a little confusion. They said, no, take the tunnel. So we were stuck traveling back and forth, thank God, and we had taken the tunnel, the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

As soon as we got out the entrance, out on the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, we got hit with the first dust cloud and we had no idea what happened. We stood there for like a minute or two and then the dust settled and then we got out and helped two other people that were there. There were some civilians, there was some Port Authority. We gave them masks and everything to help calm everybody down a little bit.

We spent maybe five minutes there or so and then on the radio they said to proceed to the staging area. So we got back in the rig. We headed up West Street as far as we could. I don't really know what street we were on. I think it was maybe West End something, and parked the rig because we

couldn't go any further. And we grabbed all our gear and started walking to the building, towards the towers. We were probably about a block away when we heard a giant rumbling sound. It sounded like jets were going overhead and then we looked up and we saw the tower start to fall and we just ran. We outran the dust cloud and got back in the rig. As soon as we closed the doors on the rig we got hit with the second cloud and then it was pitch black for like five minutes. As soon as that cloud cleared we got out and there was some personnel, Fire Department personnell running around.

We saw one of the doctors from Metro Tech was there. He was bleeding a little bit. We talked to him. He said he was okay and stuff. And then a lady came running over with an infant that she had covered up and she said, you know, she was nervous. So we got her in the rig. We gave the baby oxygen and we covered it up so that no more dust would get him. And we helped a few other people in the area. And then when everything settled down a little bit we grabbed our gear again and proceeded to head toward the Trade Center again.

We were waiting, we hooked up with another crew

or two and we were down by where marine 6 I think was, by the water and we were waiting. We didn't know where to go. We were waiting to respond. We had no orders by anybody yet.

And another Engine Company had come with just three guys on it. It might have been a satellite or something, because they had all hose on the rig and they said they needed two guys to help. So me and I think it was a control man who was a detail that day had gone with them. We told our boss we were gonna go with them. We had our radio, we would stay in contact and we're going with the other company. We had taken a hand line and went up West Street, started putting out all car fires and we were heading all the way down to the municipal building. When we got there we were with rescue 5 and we were holding a hand line with them as they were doing the search. They found one fireman. That guy that they pulled out with his tooth broken. I don't know what his name was. They found him, so we helped pull him out. You know, made a chain, took him out, and then we held the hose line. It was me and I think two guys from Rescue 5 and the rest of Rescue 5 was searching and then there was a fear of collapse of

the municipal building, the building with all the scaffolding. So they finally pulled us out of there and then we pulled back, and then we had a little break for a while.

At that time, I hooked up with my original company, all my guys and guys from the house after recall. And me and one of the guys from here, Mike Lyons, we went back in searching. We went through all the rubble and went under the overpass where all the rescue rigs were and as we were searching I came across another firefighter who was -- who said that they were trapped. Ladder 5 was trapped in the tower, what was left of the tower. So me and Mike Lyons went over to -- climbed to where the stairwell was and we hooked up with a guy from Rescue 5 and a guy from Rescue 2 and we helped rescue one civilian who was trapped on the 6th floor and pulled him down there from --

Q. From the south tower?

A. From I think it was the north tower.

Q. South tower would have been like on Liberty Street and West?

A. I really don't know where. It was where the guys were trapped, who brought out the lady.

Q. Oh, okay. The north tower.

A. Yeah. It was the north tower. That's it. That was what, Ladder 5?

Q. Ladder 6.

A. Ladder 6. They were below us with the lady. The lady was down there. We saw her. There was already a couple of guys there with her and she was calm and they said they had a chief down there and they were trying to get out the guys from Ladder 6. So we had to climb up and this guy is trapped at probably about the 7th or 8th floor and he was just sitting on a piece of concrete when the whole building came down. He was just lucky when he survived. And a guy from Rescue 2 climbed up above him, tied him up. I had shimmied out like a piece of conduit and he lowered him to me and I pulled him over, because we were over a big hole, and I pulled him over to Mike Lyons and a guy from Rescue 5 and pulled him over and, you know, his ankle, I don't know if it was broken or if it was fractured and we helped 6 carry him, because at that time there was really no one else there and we carried him up and down this big crater and everything. I don't know how far we went. It was pretty far. But then by

the time we got across, then there was a whole line of firemen coming off so we passed them on to him and then we had gone back to our company and we waited there for a while and then 7 came down. They were running back in. I think we --

Q. They don't really want to know about 7. Wow, that was pretty good. That was good you were there. When you were coming up West Street, was there a large number of civilians coming down West Street?

A. Yes. When we first got there, after Tower 1 had collapsed, a lot of people had run through the tunnel and we were trying to calm everybody. We thought that the tunnel had got hit. We didn't know what happened. We were just trying to tell everybody to stay calm, don't even go anywhere yet. You know, we don't know if the tunnel is hit or what they're hitting.

Because there was a lot of rumors going around as you were going. That they hit the White House, they hit the Pentagon, they hit Air Force 1.

"Right now you're safe, so stay here and we'll see what's going on."

Then we proceeded up West Street. Yes, there

were a lot of civilians but they were in an orderly manner. They were walking all along -- I know when we got out and we went by the water over there, I don't even know what that is. I guess that's behind West Street. Where Battery City is or whatever.

Q. The Hudson River.

A. Yeah. They were all walking by there. They were all in an orderly manner and everything and then we were just telling them to head towards Brooklyn. That's where everybody was going. And babies or babies and kids and people like that we were putting onto Marine 6. We told them just to get on Marine 6. Because they had some stuff there to help them, because there was still a lot of debris flying in the air and everything.

Q. Very good. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. No. That pretty much does it. I'm trying to think of stuff --

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: That's right. Thanks for your corporation. That was pretty interesting. The time is 11:00 o'clock and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110462

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT RUDOLF WEINDLER

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is January 15th, 2002. The time is 1755. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant Rudy Weindler of Ladder Company 40 of the Fire Department of the City of New York in the quarters of Safety Battalion 1 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Lieutenant, can you tell me what happened to you on September 11th?

A. Yes. On September 11th, I was off duty. I was in Nassau County and within sight of the World Trade Center. When I saw the smoke coming from the Trade Center, I got in my car and drove from the Rockaways to Long Island City, where I left my car and got into a Fire Department van which was leaving the Long Island City shops and going to the scene of the fire.

I arrived at City Hall Park sometime between 10:30 and a quarter to 11:00, and I went to the quarters of Engine 6 and borrowed some fire gear, helmet, turnout coat, pants, boots, gloves, flashlight. There was nobody in the quarters at the time. The doors were open.

So I started to walk towards the Trade Center, and apparently the towers had just collapsed or one -- I'm not sure which ones collapsed. All I know is the dust cloud was just coming east and people were scrambling all over the place.

I started walking towards the Trade Center down I believe it was Vesey Street, and I ran into a Fireman Ron Kemly, who I believe also had borrowed some gear from somewhere and was unattached to anyone. So we hooked up something and we began moving down Vesey Street. At that time the dust cloud was still flying around. The smaller buildings of the Trade Center were on fire. All the cars in the street were on fire, and there was a Fire Department pumper in the block, I don't remember what the company number was, but it was also beginning to burn. The tires were burning.

Fireman Kemly had told me that he heard somebody calling for help. We looked around, didn't see anybody at all in the street. As I said, there was a lot of smoke and a lot of dust and things flying around. Then he heard another call and we found a woman, a middle-aged woman, inside the Fire Department pumper whose number I really don't know, and she was burned, I assume from the jet fuel. I don't know how.

She was really talking incoherent. So Ron and I carried her, took her out of the pumper and carried her back east towards City Hall where we saw an EMS ambulance and just basically gave the woman to the EMS workers.

We then proceeded back down Vesey Street towards the Trade Center, where we saw several other firemen who were in various stages of gear, no gear. Some I recognized; some I didn't. At that point we were standing, I believe, on the corner of -- well, it was the southwest corner of the Church Street Post Office, and several of the firemen said they heard someone, again, screaming for help. They said they saw a police officer at a window in I believe it was 5 World Trade Center. I never saw the man. I heard the screams for help.

We went up an escalator to the plaza of, I believe, 5 World Trade Center. When we got up there, we heard some gunshots. It sounded like he was trying to alert us by shooting his gun. Again, I never saw him. But when we got to that plaza, the building was fully involved. There were no more screams and there were I-beams and stuff hanging all over the place, so we made a conscious decision to go back down to the

street level.

The next thing I did was we saw a fire starting to show at windows in 7 World Trade Center, decided to go in and try and see if there was anybody in the building and/or put out the fires, and we did a search from floor to floor of 7 World Trade Center passing fire on floors 3, 7, 9. The standpipes had no water. We tried to extinguish a few fires with cans. When we got to 11, there was just too much smoke and we decided that, without water, if we went any higher, we'd be on fool's mission.

So we left 7 World Trade Center, back down to the street, where I ran into Chief Coloe from the 1st Division, Captain Varriale, Engine 24, and Captain Varriale told Chief Coloe and myself that 7 World Trade Center was badly damaged on the south side and definitely in danger of collapse. Chief Coloe said we were going to evacuate the collapse zone around 7 World Trade Center, which we did.

At that point there were fires in, I guess, all of the smaller buildings in the Trade Center complex. The only place we had any water was in the Church Street Post Office, where we hooked up some house lines. They were just a bunch of firemen, some

of them I know, most of them I didn't, just trying to get water on fires in the smaller buildings of the Trade Center. Mostly it was futile.

At that point we -- I forget who it was. We needed water into a tower ladder, I believe it was 146's tower ladder, to put a curtain of water up between 5 World Trade Center and the Millenium Hotel. It took quite awhile. Somehow we got water. I don't know where it came from. The chauffeur from 146 or somebody else positioned it to put water up between the Millenium Hotel and 5 World Trade Center. From that point, we went into the Millenium Hotel, did a little search of a couple of floors. It was already evacuated, as far as we could tell.

After we left the Millenium Hotel, we went -- I'm not even sure what I did after I left the Millenium Hotel.

At some point, 7 World Trade Center collapsed. We were down the block. We heard it starting to go. We ran into a loading dock of some building on maybe Vesey Street or Dey Street. I'm really not sure where. We waited out for the dust to settle a little bit. I did have a Department radio. I heard a Mayday. I didn't know where it came from.

When I tried to contact whoever gave the Mayday, I got no response.

We moved back down the block into the dust cloud and realized that 7 World Trade Center had almost completely collapsed causing some fires now in the Church Street Post Office. We had entered the Church Street Post Office from a pile of rubble that used to be 7 World Trade Center. We knew we had water in that building prior to that collapse and hoped that there would still be water because there was fire on several floors. Again, we hooked house lines together and extinguished fires on several floors in the Church Street Post Office. I'm not sure what the address of that building is. That went on for a while.

Then we exited that Church Street Post Office and from that point went up on the pile and started searching voids, looking in holes and voids and trying to get into basements and into some basements below, I think, 5 World Trade Center, where we could actually walk down levels of a parking garage, I guess, just looking and listening. Never heard anything. We pretty much got to points where we thought it was just too dangerous to be and then backed out and looked for another place.

This went on, to the best of my recollection, until 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock the following morning, when I walked down to a little hospital by 6 Engine. I'm not sure what the name of it is. I had my eyes washed out and a doctor looked at me and several other guys, and then they wanted us to stay, but we just left. We laid down in 6 Engine for a couple hours, I guess, until the sun came up, went back to the site and started that process of either digging on the pile, searching voids. We formed up with teams of guys that I had worked with years ago in Brooklyn. At that point it was just either working on the pile, working with ironworkers cutting steel, not really knowing or not really having any game plan, just sort of going to where you thought you might be able to help somebody.

I really can't say where any Fire Department rigs were. It's all pretty much a blur to me. On a few hours rest, I ended up working on the pile until the sun went down again. At some point in the middle of the night, I walked uptown, got on a train, went to Harlem, laid down in my quarters, 40 Truck, for a couple hours, then back down to the pile, I don't know, some commandeered bus or van or something like that.

Q. You said at the beginning you went to the

shops and got a van. Did somebody drive the van with you?

A. Yes. I had my personal car that I had driven and left on the sidewalk at the shops. The first person I saw when I pulled up on the sidewalk was Lieutenant Vasquez. I had worked on light duty there once. I said how do I get into the city? He said there's a van coming out. A van pulled out. I don't know who was driving it. He said he was going across the bridge -- he said he was going through the tunnel to the site, and I just jumped in the van, left my car on the sidewalk, jumped in the van.

Q. So it was just you and the guy driving?

A. Me, the guy driving, and then there was another officer in there. There was a guy driving, a Lieutenant, whose name escapes me, and myself.

Q. You said you were heading towards the Trade Center on Vesey Street when the building came down and there was a big dust cloud. Do you know Vesey and what, approximately?

A. All I remember is, when I was in 6 Engine's quarters -- I jumped out of the van. The van came off the bridge right by City Hall. I don't know what their plan was. I don't know where they were going. My plan

was to get some gear before I did anything. So I jumped out of the van right at City Hall and I ran down to 6 Engine to get some gear. Then that took me a few minutes. I don't know if that's when the towers collapsed. I really don't know. All I know is that, when I came out of 6's quarters, the dust was everywhere. So I don't know if that was the first, the second. I really don't know.

Q. You said you saw a pumper. You don't know which one it was, but do you know what block it was on?

A. I believe it was on Vesey Street.

Q. Vesey and what?

A. Just west of Broadway.

Q. Okay.

A. It was definitely west of Broadway.

Q. You said you saw it when you first got there after you hooked up with the other fireman and then later on you saw some guys that you recognized?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what companies they were from?

A. Yes. Actually, I saw Jimmy Duffy, Captain of 23 Truck, and Abe Haiman, Captain of 30 Truck, and I believe Jimmy Hodges, who was a covering Battalion Chief from the 11th Battalion at the time. I hooked up

with them after Fireman Kemly and I had gotten the woman from the pumper and brought her back to EMS, then started back down I believe it's Vesey Street, and then, when I saw Jimmy Duffy and Abe Haiman, that's when somebody from across the street was yelling that there was a policeman in the window of the Trade Center.

So I think all of us that went up to that plaza, Jimmy Duffy, Abe Haiman, Jimmy Hodges, Ron Kemly and myself, I believe we all went up to that plaza, but there was just nothing to be done. It was just all fire.

Q. Now, you said you came out of 7 and you saw Chief Coloe?

A. Yes.

Q. And Captain Varriale. Do you know which side of 7 you came out of?

A. We came out of --

Q. Facing the towers?

A. No. There's a street that runs between Church Street Post Office and 7 World Trade Center, which would be the east side of 7 World Trade Center. We came out of the door on that side. I met Chief Coloe and Captain Varriale on the northeast corner of 7

World Trade Center.

Q. Did they have radios, do you remember?

A. Don't remember.

Q. You said after that you ran into some more firemen that you knew from Brooklyn?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether they responded to the tower or came in off duty?

A. Came in off duty. Some of them were from 290 and 103 and some of them were from 214 and 111.

Q. But they were definitely off duty; they didn't come with their companies?

A. They didn't come with their companies.

Q. Okay.

A. Actually, the guys from 111, it was maybe six or seven guys and no officer, and one of the guys said we'll just hang with you and we'll see what happens. I had the radio, so that was a big asset at the time.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you don't have anything else, this will conclude the interview.

LIEUTENANT WEINDLER: Okay, Chief. Thank you.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thanks for your time.

File No. 9110463

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ROBERTO ABRIL

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today is January 17, 2002. The time is 0800 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, your rank and your command please?

A. Paramedic Abril, Battalion 49.

Q. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 49 in Astoria station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Would you please give us your perspective on that day, on what happened on that tragic day?

A. We were working. We started to work at 8 o'clock. We got a job for an OB comp, somewhere in Astoria, and we went to aid, to help one of the BLS units here, I think it was 5 Adam, with a patient. We ended up going 82 to Elmhurst.

When we were 81 at Elmhurst, we received -- the guy on 6 Zebra told us that we were assigned to the World Trade Center, because a plane had hit one of the buildings. I didn't believe it to begin with and I told Carlos that we had to go to the World Trade Center because there was a plane that crashed into the

building.

We took off 63 from Elmhurst. We went down Woodside Avenue to Queens Boulevard and took the Midtown Tunnel through.

Q. Just one question. Sorry to interrupt you. Who was your partner on that day?

A. Carlos Lillo.

Q. Carlos was your partner?

A. We went down to the Midtown Tunnel, but at that point, there was only one plane had hit one of the buildings and the other one was still intact. So we went out to the other side in Manhattan. We went across 34 Street to Tenth Avenue. We went down Tenth Avenue and we took Broadway, West Broadway down to the World Trade Center.

We were stopped at West Broadway and Vesey by one of the Lieutenants there, he told us to bring our vehicles around to where everybody was staging. Instead the staging of the vehicles took place at Washington and Vesey.

At that point is when Carlos took his gear and said well, I'm going to go ahead and go to triage while you park the vehicle. We didn't know -- it looked serious, but we didn't know it was so

traumatic.

I parked my vehicle. I asked the Lieutenant if I should leave the keys. He told me no, just to stay by the vehicle, but there were plenty of people pulling me aside to help them out. I remember a lot of leg fractures and extremity fractures. I found myself triaging people. Many of the Metro Care ambulances were sent away with patients, but I mean, when the Lieutenant disappeared, there was nobody else at the triage where they had parked all the vehicles. There was nobody else there.

The initial collapse, not the actual collapse, but the top part of the building collapsed on top of these firemen and cops on West Broadway and Vesey as I was walking towards the building. I was unable to make it any more, because there was a lot of dust.

We witnessed a lot of stuff. We witnessed people falling off the buildings. We witnessed a lot of firemen dying from the initial collapse. You know, all this time Lillo was trying to get to me. He got on the TAC two channel on the radios. He told me that he was on West Broadway in the middle, between World -- I think it was 6 World Trade Center and the north tower.

That's when he told me to come over and meet him, so what I did was I went around 6 World Trade Center to try and meet him and at that point is when the north tower collapsed and I couldn't make it there any more.

On the way back, again, a lot of people were pulling at me, telling me to help them and I got some of these people in the ambulance. I kind of drove up a couple of blocks, I think it was Warren Street, I see it now. I think it was Warren Street, where I stopped and let them out and then I went back trying to look for my partner, but I found myself picking up more people and putting them again on Warren Street.

Then I went back a third time. Then I found myself stuck treating an old lady that was in a wheelchair with her daughter I think it was. I tried to -- wheel her back to the ambulance. On the way back to the ambulance, I met up with a couple of other paramedics that they said they were from the Bronx. We were trying to -- it was all chaos. We didn't know what to do, where to go, so between the three of us, we kind of got together and tried to get some of these people out.

Finally again, put some of the patients in

this ambulance. I think it was when the south tower collapsed is when we took our last set of people, but it was some of the parking police department, those people that give out the tickets. The last three that I took out with these paramedics and we took them out to, I think it was Canal Street or one of those streets, about 10 blocks away from the actual site.

I went back, but at that point I couldn't go back any more, because it was too much dust. It was a lot of smoke and actually there was a lot of people that needed help. I couldn't go back.

My main concern was to get my partner. I couldn't find him. I kept saying if anybody saw him, but I guess everybody was busy.

Q. Did you happen to find out where Carlos' last location was where he was operating at?

A. Physically I didn't go. I couldn't get there because of what I just said. But he told me it was between the building that we initially saw. He told me between the two buildings, come into the north tower, and that's what I was trying to do. So I figure he was between the 6 World Trade Center and the north tower. Somewhere around there.

Like I said, there was 3 collapses. The

first one that the top of the building collapsed. I see here is the northeast plaza building. That building collapsed first.

Q. That was the south tower?

A. Yes, that would make it the south tower, yes. So the top of that building collapsed. Like I said, I witnessed 5 people got killed there. Then it was too much dust. That's when I think I saw Captain Rivera there too. I asked him if he had seen my partner and he said listen, I'm going to go back in there.

Q. Who was that, Captain Rivera?

A. Yes.

Q. Joseph Rivera?

A. Yes, JR.

Q. Okay, JR, fine.

A. I told him listen, I'm missing my partner. We got separated for some reason and I need to go back. I need to find him. He says don't worry about it. I'm going to go back in. You take care of these people and I will go back in and find him. He did. He went back in. That was about it.

When we were -- they didn't let us go to Citywide. They told to us stay on Queens west. The

reason how I know that is because there was a lot of traffic and I remember in all the chaos, I wanted to make sense of why people were still going to Rikers Island. Why are people still going to minor injuries when we need a lot of help here.

I remember listening to the radio, to all the normal traffic that you would have, when I know these people would need help. When the initial collapse happened, all my masks ran out. I had like 20 of those -- I think they are class A or class one masks that we always carry. But I gave them out and as soon as -- 5 minutes they were all gone. I remember keeping, I said listen, I got only two left. I had one for myself and one for my partner. I can't gave give them away any more. Then I remember getting on the radio and saying listen, can somebody bring some masks, because I need a lot of masks over here.

That was about it. When I turned around and I tried to help these people before the north tower collapsed, the first big collapse, we were helping -- we were at, I think the American Express building. We had people that were burnt. We had people that had fractures and other people with psychological type of problems. We had staged them there, because there was

really no control over anything at that point. That's when the north tower collapsed. It was when I heard Mayday, Mayday. Some of the firemen that were running back were telling us run, run, run. We started to run and now that I think about it, some of these people with fractured limbs, they kind of took off running.

That's it. Then after that, we just started to drive and we started to treat these people and I lost my partner. That was it.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that you can think of?

A. About the whole thing?

Q. Yes. Personal stuff.

A. At that point, what I didn't understand was why is it that we were triaging people on the first floor of this building that has a plane on top. I couldn't understand that. When I had a chance to walk in to see what was going on, there were actually close to 5 DOAs on the street. Some of them had no legs, some of them that had no arms. There was a torso with one leg, with an EMS jacket on top. I guess somebody wanted to just cover it. There was a fireman that had been hit by a body. I really didn't understand why is it that we were triaging people on the first floor

instead of going somewhere else.

What else did we do? Then after that everything came down and we were away from the dust cloud and everything, we were somewhere around, I think it was West 23 Street, somewhere around there. You could still smell the dust and smoke and we just wanted to come back. We kept going back, but at one point it was useless because most of the people that could get out were already walking back and there wasn't too many people other than the regular hysterical people, there was no really injuries.

Other than -- maybe we treated a couple of eyes injuries, cops that were coming out. There was one cop that was actually crying blood. There was blood dripping down from his eyes and later I found out, the doctor explained to me that when you get concrete in your eyes it becomes rock and when you close your eyes, your cornea, your eye is bleeding. So I guess -- we just flushed the eyes and they kept going.

That's pretty much it.

MR. MURAD: Paramedic Abril, I would like to thank you for this interview. The time now is 015 hours. This concludes this interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110464

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT KEVIN BARRETT

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 0700 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name?

A. KEVIN BARRETT, shield number 1465.

Q. Your rank?

A. EMT.

Q. What is your assigned command?

A. Battalion 49.

Q. Okay. The location of the interview is being conducted at Battalion 49, Astoria. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Can you just give us what happened that day in your own words?

A. Sure. Came into work, you know. It was a typical day, so it was my wife's birthday. I was going to, you know, I was talking to my partner, deciding what I was going to do for her. Take her out to dinner and stuff like that. Did our little routine, got breakfast, reading the papers and approximately about 9:15, we were told to go to the 59 Street Bridge and stand by and wait for further instructions.

We were told to switch to Citywide and upon

listening to Citywide, they came over and confirmed a 1040 at the World Trade Center. 1040 is an airplane crash. We were sitting there waiting for instructions, sitting there with Lieutenant Scaringello and other units that were told to stand by the bridge and approximately about 9:20, 9:25, we were told to respond in to the World Trade Center and stand by at Vesey and West Street.

Upon hearing that we responded in. We followed another unit and we followed ESU truck 4 straight down into Manhattan to the World Trade Center.

Upon listening to Citywide we were told, being we were a HAZMAT unit, we were told to go to a different location. So upon arriving at the area, we told the Lieutenant, who was directing everybody, said we are a HAZMAT unit. He told us to make a right and to be honest with you, I don't remember what the street name was, even looking at the map, it was just so -- I was getting into what we had to do, my assignment.

So we get there. I saw Captain Janice Olszewski. I told her we are a HAZMAT unit, you know. We are here, 49 Henry, and she said okay, you stand by with me. Have your partner get your truck ready and we

will use your ambulance as a supply truck if we need anything.

Upon coming down, everything was going good, people being brought down to us, being triaged. I was working with the Captain, Lieutenant Bruce Medjek, and was trying to organize everything a little bit better. I ended up talking to Paramedic Carlos Lillo. He kept asking me where is my wife, have you seen my wife. Have you seen my wife. I said Carlos, don't worry, she is going to be okay. She is around. We will find her. Concentrate on doing what you got to do, do what we are here for.

Upon that, a lot of civilians were coming and trying to answer their questions and the cops asked me do you have any fire line tape or anything that we can block the road off. I said yes, I have HAZMAT tape, so I got the HAZMAT tape out of my truck. I cordoned off the area. So the civilians, all the nosy people wouldn't come in and bother us so we could do our job.

Approximately 9:50, we heard this loud noise. I looked up and it sounded like another airplane was coming in. That's what it sounded. It sounded like a large engine, like you're sitting on the seat on the wing of the plane. That's the best way I

can describe what it sounded like.

We look up and we saw tower two coming down. We just all ran. I lost my partner. I lost everybody I was working with that day. Let me backtrack for a second.

When we were putting up this HAZMAT tape, I turned around and I said to Carlos' partner, Paramedic Abril, I said where is Carlos. I mean -- by that time Carlos was gone. We don't know where he went, but we think he went in to look for his wife. We don't know.

Q. Do you know what tower -- was both towers still up or did he run -- do you know what tower he was heading towards?

A. No. Both towers were still up when we were --

Q. At what point did you actually lose Carlos?

A. I would say maybe roughly about 9:45. Somewhere around there. Just Bobby and I just turned around and he was gone. It was just -- I remember Bobby telling me he gave me his pager, because he has an alpha numeric pager and he said I will call you and let you know where I am. We never heard from him again.

Then like I said, when tower two was coming

down, we just all scattered and a young lady was getting trampled on. I picked up her up and I said come on, let's go. We only got up around the corner. She went one way, I went another way. The last thing I remember is it started getting, gray, gray. It turned pitch black and I get up, I turn around, like I couldn't move. I figured out I was underneath a car.

I got up and I was just -- got out from underneath the car and I realized I was underneath a police car, praying how lucky I was.

Q. That's when the south tower came down?

A. That's when tower two came down.

Q. Which is, you are referring to --

A. I guess the south tower.

Q. Okay, because the north tower is still up, right?

A. Right.

Q. It was the south tower that came down. Okay, go ahead.

A. Then I got out. I got out from underneath the car. Made sure I was okay. I didn't see any blood or anything like that on me. There was two gentlemen behind me. I wanted to make sure they were okay. They were okay. I said okay.

We walked into a store and we just, you know, got some water, cleaned out some of the stuff out of our throats, because we were all just coughing and gagging and all the stuff that we inhaled and ingested. I asked to make sure they were okay. They were.

We walked into the store and I just started looking at people to make sure everybody was okay. All of a sudden, I hear my name called out and I end up hooking up with my partner again, which was another miracle in itself, because we just ran. [redacted]

I got into the store and we just -- I saw my partner and I was like you are okay. He was okay. He wasn't hurt either. Then we were going to go back out. We went back out to check to make sure we were going to go back down to the area, make sure everybody was okay, see what we could do and that's when the

north tower started coming down.

We ran again. By the time we ran, we just got -- I don't know where we were, what we were doing. We just kept running. After the north tower came down, we were able to find EMT Moussa Diaz, another one of our co-workers out of our station. The three of us just hugged each other. It was like a miracle that we all survived that. It was just something I will never ever forget as long as I live. I was unable to get in touch with my wife, let her know I was alive, get in touch with my parents, anybody. My cellphone was dead. Couldn't make calls out because the towers -- the lines were down.

Finally at about say one o'clock my mother-n-law was able to get in touch with my cellphone. I told her call my wife, call my mom. Let her know I'm okay, I'm alive. I don't know what time I'm coming home at all. I was able to get in touch with my wife about 6:00 that night at my house to let her know I was okay, you know.

It was just a beautiful day turned into a disaster. I felt like I was in a movie at first, when you see everything, you know, typical movie. You would see a movie and everything is like a storm and a

tornado and everything just turns gray and pitch black and I'm in the middle of this. It was like I thought it was a dream and then it was reality.

Q. All right. Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview?

A. No. Just that I'm lucky to be here to talk about it.

MR. MURAD: Okay. EMT Barrett, I would like to thank you for allowing us to give this interview. The time now is 709 hours. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110465

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MOUSSA DIAZ

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. MURAD: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 545 hours. My name is Murray MURAD of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. MOUSSA DIAZ, EMT, 3203 for the New York City Fire Department, EMS.

Q. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 49, Astoria station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. EMT DIAZ, just give us your perspective on what occurred that day.

A. What happened was we had a job, pregnant complications, so I called for back up medics 49 Victor, Tour 2. We brought the patient over to Elmhurst Hospital. Upon getting our ACR signed, Carlos Lillo came running over and told us a plane just hit the tower, you know, let's come up available as soon as possible and head down there.

Got on the radio, we got in the ambulance and got on the radio, and we told them we were going to be responding, so we followed 9 Victor en route to the tower from Elmhurst Hospital in Queens.

Q. Keep going.

A. Elmhurst Hospital in Queens. From there, we

drove down to the Midtown Tunnel. Took the Midtown Tunnel. Our destination was Barclay and Vesey. From there me and my partner -- 9 Victor went their way. Me and my partner went towards 1 World Trade Center, where the command post was.

Q. What was your partner's name, who were you working with that day?

A. Paul Adams, shield number 2212. We were directed to go to either Barclay and Vesey, right across the street from the 1 World Trade Center. That's where we met Captain -- I don't know her name. We had our first patient that had about 70 percent degree burns. We assessed her. We transported her to St. Vinny's. We came back from St. Vinny's, back to the same location. The Captain had told me there is a lady with a cardiac condition, so we sat her down on the stretcher.

All of a sudden we heard a big boom and I looked up and the tower started to collapse, so I instructed the patient, I told her make a run for it. From then we all ran. I lost my partner and a big black cloud of debris started coming around the corner from, I believe it's 5 World Trade Center.

Q. When you said you heard a boom, what tower --

can you describe which tower --

A. I believe it was tower one, because we were right in front of it. Right between, there is a street. There is like a path. We were against the building. 5 World Trade Center. I believe that was what it was, and 1 World Trade Center. It was directly above it and that's where the command post was.

When we heard the big boom, I looked up and I just saw the building collapsing. My patient was on the stretcher and I unstrapped her and I said make a run for it. We ran around the corner. Everybody just started trampling. I fell on the floor, and that's when a ball of dust started coming in between the blocks of buildings and my visibility was gone for a while. I ran into a pole, couldn't breathe and a cameraman, a guy had a camera I couldn't see and all I saw was a bobbing light. I ran over to the cameraman and he grabbed me and we started feeling for -- things -- things seem, you know -- we were losing air, trying to feel somewhere where we can get in and trying to open car doors and then we felt for a city bus. We opened up the door, went in, I was looking for buttons to turn it on. We turned this bus on and we started taking people inside the bus to get a little refuge,

because there was no visibility.

From there, I thanked him for saving my life and stepped off the bus. Everybody else stepped off and we started running. Then another cloud came. We had some visibility and I had some sense of direction where I'm running towards. I ran towards -- I believe it was Federal Plaza. By the courts. I took refuge there here, by the Federal Building, the US Post Office. We ran up towards this way. We took refuge there. I got the fire hydrant that was open and I got some water to clear my face and stuff. We had like a little command post. People running up to me. I was by myself and asked me what should I do. I just had them sit down, because there was asthmatics, there was pregnant people, nothing really major.

From there, I went back because my partner was gone. I went back, I walked back and I walked back down West towards the location of the command post, but it was impossible because there was no visibility towards that area. That's when I saw EMT Barrett running out and EMT Monchery running out. They were from my Battalion. They were all dusted up and we just, you know, started hugging each other and stuff.

From there, I believe one of them had a

radio, because I lost my equipment and everything. We heard that people needed help down at -- I think it was down Broadway and -- I'm not too sure. Couple of blocks over.

We went there and there was an ambulance. The Captain that was in charge of the command area was there and an ambulance. I don't know the people's names. We drove to a corner, because there was somebody in distress like two blocks down. It was just a guy that was in our situation, but he was stable and started to go on his way.

From there, they drove me to the West Side Highway to get checked out. I got triaged over there, mini triage, and I stayed there until the duration, until 1 in the morning basically.

The rest of the people from Battalion 49 that were there, we all went under the ambulances and we went down back to the station.

Q. Just a couple of questions. Actually, so you were there when the north tower collapsed. Was the south tower down already?

A. No, I was there -- I don't know which the first tower that went down.

Q. You were there for the first -- so that was

the south tower that came down?

A. Probably, yes.

Q. Then you were there for the north tower, also, collapse?

A. Yes, I was there.

Q. Radio, did you have any radio communications?

A. I lost my radio when I got tr -- because when I was on the stretcher, I had the patient on the stretcher. I unstrapped her and I told her run. I unstrapped her and I told her to run and the people just started trampling on you. My helmet was gone because I didn't have it strapped on tight enough. My radio, my equipment that was on the scene was gone. My ambulance was parked a block and a half away and if I would have went there I wouldn't have made it. If I would have went towards the ambulance I definitely would have -- I was about a block and a half way away from --

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add at this time?

A. Not at all.

MR. MURAD: Time now is 0600 hours. This concludes the interview. I would like to thank EMT DIAZ for this interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110466

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JOHN LUONGO

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1340 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting with interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name?

A. John Luongo.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: John Luongo is the captain of Engine 84 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 84. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. John, if you would please state in your own words what happened that day.

A. We were relocated from here to 16 engine? Yes, 16 engine on 29th Street, I think. It was on the east side, so we were just -- when we left here, we knew that both towers had been hit. We knew what was going on downtown.

As we backed into 16's quarters, the first -- the south tower was collapsing. The guys were recalled, and anybody who had stayed -- whoever was in their firehouse was watching it on television. As soon

as the south tower collapsed, we were assigned to the box. We were instructed to report in on West Street and report in to the command center on West and Vesey.

We made it to the west side. We headed down West Street. We got -- I'm going to say down around Stuyvesant High School. I'm not exactly sure where we stopped our rig, what street that was, but we just couldn't drive any further. The street was just clogged with rigs. Maybe Warren. Warren, Murray, around there.

When we got off the rigs -- I don't know the battalion chief's name, but there were chiefs instructing us not to go to Vesey at that point, but to wait. I think they were creating a staging area down around Murray or Barclay, but that kept changing. They kept pushing us back and forth.

We had our roll-ups. We had extra bottles. We had search ropes. We had all our equipment. We were standing on West Street. Again, I'm not a hundred percent sure where exactly we were, how close to Vesey we were, but we were pretty close, because then while we were waiting for further orders, the north tower collapsed, and as it started to collapse, I just told my guys to hightail it out of there.

I just watched the collapse. I didn't know if the building was going to go one way or the other. I didn't know whether there was going to be a debris field, how far the debris would go. I was just watching the collapse, and then in a matter of seconds we were just enveloped in darkness, at which point we just heard a lot of screaming, not on the radio so much, but people yelling.

Some guys dropped their masks to be able to run quicker. They were having trouble breathing. It was just pitch black. I just walked to the side to one of the dividers, and I just followed the divider north until we hit daylight.

At that point, we were up around, I think, Manhattan Community College. I think we walked that far to get out of the dust. I got the rest of my guys together. We were all okay. Mike Oates, who was driving that day, asked me if he could try and drive over to -- what is it, East End Avenue?

Q. By the water?

A. Yes.

Q. By the Hudson River?

A. Yes, which he did. He brought our rig around, down River Terrace, North End Avenue,

whichever, and then brought it around, and we actually wound up on Vesey with the rig.

We got into the relay from the fire boat. We hooked up to a hydrant initially, and that was -- we were running away from water. We had some, but we were running away from water, and then we got involved in the relay. We were supplying 224 engine a little closer to the site. They were probably right on West and Vesey. We were by the American Express building, and there was a couple of other engines between us and the water all hooking up into this relay, so eventually what we did with the engine was supply a manifold, and then a manifold was supplying --

Q. Hand lines?

A. Hand lines. There was a tower ladder operating for awhile, and then once we had all our rig and everything all set up, then we were just operating under the command of that, the West and Vesey command post, doing recovery, searching -- you know, search and recovery work, just on the periphery, though. We never really got into the main --

Q. The main collapse?

A. Pile. And I recalled Engine 39's chauffeur trying to get in touch with his officer, and he was

doing it for awhile. It was quite awhile that he was trying to get in touch with him. I don't know if anybody knew where they were at the time.

I don't recall any Maydays or any actual transmissions from people who were trapped. That would have certainly triggered -- it was just -- it seemed like there were too many radio transmissions, and a lot of disjointed stuff, and a lot of unanswered transmissions.

There was -- I know there were rescue operations going on, and a lot of the rescue operation were taking over the radios, but I don't -- I remember Freddy LaFemina. I remember hearing him. I think he -- they might have gotten some guys out of either the hotel -- I forgot.

I know there was a fire involved, and they weren't able to get the fire out, and there were a couple of guys trapped, but I think they finally got them out.

Then I remember a lot of transmissions where people saw turnout gear, but the -- whether it was a rescue or recovery and most of -- most -- well, most of the responses were that it was a recovery, and they were told to forego the recovery until the site had

been secured, and then, like I said, we just -- we left there about midnight, so for the rest of the day we intermittently walked, like I said, searched around. We didn't find too many body parts where we were. Most of it was down below where we were, and the engine stayed there for about two or three days.

Q. Just pumping?

A. Just pumping, yeah. People -- we would just get a company to relieve us, and we left, and we went down a few days later, and comandeered our own engine and brought it back, and they had given us a spare rig to work with up here, but we went down and got our own rig back and went back into service a couple of days later.

We were in service with the spare for a while, but I don't recall any -- you know, anything other than --

Q. That's good. It's kind of funny. Most people don't recall anything specific. I think everybody was so concentrated on whatever they were doing, they really weren't thinking about anything else. That seems to be the general thing.

A. Well, I know. When you are on the job and hear your radio is on, depending on who you are and

what your job is, if you are a battalion chief, you're more in tuned to listen to an officer. If 84 says something, you might be more inclined to listen to that then if it's 84 alpha.

Q. Right.

A. Or 34 OV, he's going to be talking to his officer. Not that it's information you don't want, but you can only do one thing at a time, or two things at a time mostly, so if different units were talking to each other, you didn't pay attention to it because it wasn't involving you.

If someone called a Mayday or called something or -- like I said, the reason I remembered 39 engine was that he was so persistent, and he wasn't getting any response.

Q. They all made it out.

A. Yeah.

Q. Which was a miracle. They went back looking for a guy that was out already.

A. Really.

Q. They were out of the building, because I interviewed one of the guys, and they couldn't find this guy who was out, and he thought that the officer saw him get out, and they went back looking for him.

A. Really.

Q. Anything else you wanted to say?

A. [redacted]

Q. They would have gotten there early.

A. Yeah.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: That concludes the interview. It's 1:50.

File No. 9110467

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE HOLZMAN

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 17, 2002. The time is 1215 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Firefighter George Holzman.

Q. Of Ladder 47 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 47. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. George, if you would please tell the story in your own words.

A. We relocated a few minutes after 9 o'clock to Ladder 6. We headed downtown. I was the chauffeur, so I was very aware of the traffic situation and just trying to get down there. I think everybody else was anticipating what had just happened. We hit quite a bit of traffic on the way down, especially near the Triborough Bridge. We finally got on the FDR. We got about, probably down to the low teens, when traffic just about came to a halt. We decided at that point to get off the highway and filter our way through the side streets.

When we got off the highway, the two towers were still standing, we realized that another plane had hit at that point or something else had happened to the other tower. We proceeded towards 6 Truck. Joe Lowney, the Lieutenant, knew the area from when he was a proby, so he was getting us through the neighborhood. We stopped to help a lady who wasn't necessarily involved in the Trade Center collapse, but just had some medical problems from I think all the upset --

Q. Give me a second George, to make sure -- okay, go ahead.

A. We stopped the rig and everybody got off the rig. I moved to the officer's seat to monitor the radio, trying to take down whatever information, which was lots of information at that point, where the command post was. I think we all just naturally assumed that we weren't going to be spending a lot of time at 6 Truck, considering what had happened.

At which point, the first collapse occurred, or I assume that from all the Maydays and because we were surrounded by buildings, we weren't aware that the whole building had collapsed. We all just assumed that a piece had fallen. There would be Maydays because of

that. We probably were with the lady about 5 to 8 minutes. I called the Bronx dispatcher, I asked him to send us an ambulance, realizing that Manhattan really had their hands full.

Before I knew it the guys were getting back on the rig. Apparently the lady felt a little bit better. There was a clinic in the nearby area. We boarded the rig and headed towards 6 Truck. We just pulled up to 6 Truck. We were trying to get in the front door. We received a run to somewhere in the area of Fulton and Broadway. I parked the rig by St. Pauls Church. We were confronted with quite a few injured people, people that just were confused and dazed by the whole set of events. I think in a lot of ways, we were as confused by the impact of this, not realizing that the whole building had actually come down. We just assumed that a piece of the building had come down.

We worked on those people. We helped them in whatever way we could. The officer and the irons and can team went into the building, searching for this smoke condition. Radioed out to me that tell the dispatcher that 1020, the box, it most likely was just smoke from the area.

I started walking back towards the rig, the

OV and the roof guy were helping me take care of people and I started walking towards the rig to tell the Manhattan dispatcher what was going on. When what we thought was another plane had hit another building, because we were on the side of the building that was pretty smoky and debris, cloud. The remainder was in our face most of that time. We assumed or we thought that there was another explosion, another plane had hit. We didn't know what had happened. To be quite frank with you, I don't think we realized how close we were to the Trade Center, geographically speaking.

At which point we grabbed everybody we could and headed probably about a block into Fulton where we found an office building that we could get into. We took whoever we had with us in there. We took all our medical equipment. I radioed the Lieutenant to stay in the building. That I don't know what had happened but it had been catastrophic, to stay in the building until we figured out what was going on.

We stayed in communications all the while, just letting everybody know we were okay and we were still around. We were in the building for probably two or three minutes when we realized that there were probably a lot more people outside. So we donned our

masks and the three of us went out and we brought in probably another 6 or 8 people, including a quite pregnant Asian lady who I kept screaming at her, please, whatever you do lady, don't have this baby. I think she actually believed me. She realized that this wasn't a good time to be having a baby.

Anyway, we got everybody straightened out. I think there was one Firefighter we brought in, but you know, it's a shame how you just have no notion of who these guys were. He had quite a bad laceration to his hip. He went through a pane of glass in a building, one or two buildings up, and then for some reason retreated from there and then we found him out in the street, so we tended to him. I guess all together, we had about 15 people in there. Within probably 10 or 15 minutes, when things started to clear, we decided as a group to meet up with the officer and the irons team and we asked this group of people that we had to take the pregnant lady to, I think Downtown Beekman or whatever hospital was there.

Q. Beekman.

A. Because we were about two blocks away or somewhere in that area, so as a group they headed off, because there were quite a few injured and what not.

So everybody kind of helped each other and they took off. We met the officer. We headed towards the buildings, the Trade Center. We went down -- I believe we said Barclay to Church with our first attempt to try to do something, but it just didn't seem like there was any potential to do anything there. We looked up towards West and we saw an engine and a truck on the corner and we actually saw a Battalion Chief, so we decided let's head over there and we will get some direction and see what we could do.

The Chief asked us to force our way into any buildings we could. They wanted to charge the stand pipes or to have the ability to know where the stand pipes were and eventually charge them. We stayed in that area doing that for a while as well as searching under vehicles and whatever else we could do. Whatever you could do was what we did. There was no master plan at that point.

We stayed there for quite sometime. There were a lot of vehicle fires, there was a lot of debris that we were searching for people. Mostly civilians we thought at that point. That was I think what was in our heads, people that had fleed the building. Well, I will wait for that. I mean we were looking for

civilians in our heads.

We stayed there for quite sometime when I don't even know who, I think it was someone, Lieutenant Lowney spoke to, asked us to leave the area, they were concerned about 7 World Trade Center collapsing. At that point we made our way back to actually where our rig was, was right by St. Pauls Church. We went to the command post, told them we had a rig, which they seemed to be happy to hear. It seemed to be the routing point for all the recall guys.

So we stayed there for not too long a period of time, but I want to say about an hour, somewhere in that area. Finally they told us to head over to the command post on West Street or the West Side Highway, I guess, where we went. Probably within a half an hour of getting to there, the 7 World Trade Center collapsed, so it must have been late afternoon at that point, 5 o'clock or somewhere in that neighborhood.

We stayed there probably an hour. We had something to eat, we got our eyes cleaned out. Guys got cleaned up, got out of their bunker gear, washed off, tried to clean their bunker gear as best as they could. I guess about an hour after that, we were sent down to the command post, which was right by the

Customs building. We stayed there probably half an hour, 45 minutes I would think. We were hoping to be able to accomplish something, but they felt that we had been there all day and they really wanted to get some fresh troops in there.

They sent us back to the command post, where we probably spent another hour and then were finally relieved. We figured we would be going home and they sent us back to 6 Truck. We went back to 6 Truck. We stayed there for the tour. We were relieved in the morning and that's really it.

Q. Very good. Anything else?

A. No, not really, other than it just being a horrific day and an awful lot of peoples' lives.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: I know, and thanks a lot for being candid with us. We are trying to get something organized here. Thank you very much. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110468

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH LOWNEY

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 17, 2002. The time is 1155 hours and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name. Lieutenant Joseph Lowney.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Lieutenant Joseph Lowney is assigned to Ladder 47 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 47. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would just in your words describe what happened that day.

A. Well, we were relocated to Ladder 6. En route to Ladder 6 we were stopped by an unconscious civilian in the street, and I don't recall the exact street. We stopped to aid the civilian. We rendered first aid to her, oxygen, and called for EMS. Then we were able to leave her and we headed towards Ladder 6's quarters.

Once we got to Ladder 6's quarters, we received a ticket for a response for a building fire on Fulton Street at Broadway. I don't recall the

address. We responded to that building, arrived at that building, and were met by many injured civilians that were fleeing away from, I guess, the World Trade Center at that time. Some of the men were working on the people, helping them, and the rest of the crew started to examine the building for a fire.

As we went through the building, there were even more occupants in the building that were seeking our help, and while we were searching that building for the alleged fire, the -- I guess it was the second building had collapsed at that point. At that point there was pretty much havoc in the streets. Everything went black and there were many people that needed assistance and we kind of basically just were rendering first aid to people.

At that point we were unable to reach the Manhattan dispatcher via radio, so what we did was we broke into an office in the building that we were searching and we used the land line. We tried to call the Manhattan dispatcher via the land line and we were unable to reach them via phone as well. So we called the Bronx dispatcher and were able to contact them to let them know that we were okay and what our status was and what we were doing.

At that point then, we continued to assist people, rendering first aid and assistance. They were looking for direction by us. At that point then, we worked towards the site of the collapse.

As we got on the other side of Broadway, I'm not sure of the streets down there. Do you remember?

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

Q. Hold on one second.

A. Okay. So when we got on the other side of Broadway, we worked our way down Barclay Street. As we got to West Street, we were met by an Engine Company stretching a line down West Street, and we were asked by some Chiefs to force entry into some buildings there so that they could use standpipes. We worked on that for a while and assisted in stretching lines down West Street, and I'm not sure of what the Engine Company was even at that point.

There was a tower ladder that was parked in the street, I think on Barclay Street and West, but there was nobody on it, and we used that for radio communications. Actually, at that point we heard the dispatcher calling on the radio for any unit that was operating that was relocated. So I contacted the Manhattan dispatcher and told them that we were

operating at that point.

From that point on, we were kind of ordered out of the collapse area because they were concerned about another building collapsing. I wasn't exactly sure at that time which one it was.

We worked our way back towards the command post that was situated at Broadway and around Fulton, and from there, we had a rig, and we had to wait quite a while, but eventually the Chief had sent us down to the West Side Highway and Chambers Street, to the other command post, and at that point they just made us stand fast until, I guess, roughly around what?

A VOICE: 7:00 o'clock, I guess?

A. Yes, around 7:00 o'clock. At that point they had let us go down towards the site, and when we got to the collapse area, another Chief ordered us back out because we had been there all day and they didn't want our services at that point. So they told us to head back towards the command post by Chambers.

At that point, that was late in the evening, I guess about 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock. Then they had released up from there and the Manhattan dispatcher had sent us back to the quarters of Ladder 6.

Q. Okay.

A. That's about it.

Q. Is there anything else?

A. Well, while we were back at Chambers Street, we were triaged, I guess, from EMS. We had received some medical care. We were getting our eyes washed out. I think that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Okay. All right. Thank you. That concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110469

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN HOWE

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 15 hundred hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Kevin Howe.

Q. Kevin Howe is a fireman in Engine 84 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 84. This interview is regarding events of September 11, 2001. Kevin, in your own words, if you would say what happened on that day.

A. Okay. I'm going to start in the fire house. Approximately 8:50 I heard a second alarm announcement in the Borough of Manhattan, 1 World Trade Center and the voice -- the men put on the TV at that time. We were watching and watching it and a short while later as we were watching it, we see the second plane hit the building and we knew it was terrorism, and now it wasn't just a small plane that hit. That's what everybody thought initially.

When that happened, my wife called on the phone. She's, you know, worried, don't get killed.

You make 60 thousand a year. With that I was on the phone and we got the bee-boops. I just said I got to go. What it was we relocated to 16 Engine on 29 Street on the east side. So when I got out to the rig, I was the back up chauffeur or so I thought that day. I went out to the rig and Mike Oates was getting ready to drive. He had just completed chauffeur training school and I remember it had a real meaning then, because I had already been told I was driving and I put my stuff on the rig like I'm a chauffeur. Now the chauffeurship had a real meaning this time, you know, you're gonna do the work.

But anyway, in the confusion, I left behind my bunker coat and I put my stuff on the rig, or so I thought. Mike Oates was the new chauffeur. He took us down to 29 Street. We backed into quarters and you know, I was just thinking I got to get a coat, I got to get a coat. I pulled off, what turned out to be Princiotta's coat from 7 Truck, is it.

Q. 7 Truck.

A. I took his coat and we went down and we watched it on what seemed like a couple of minutes in their kitchen. Then we got the bee boops to go to the Trade Center. From there I remember it taking a

while. It seemed like a long time to get across town. We got across town, went down the west side, West Street, and I was in the back of the rig sitting backwards and I don't recall knowing if the building had collapsed.

I got there. We pulled up several blocks away on West Street and I got out of the rig and there was dust everywhere and we went and did what we had to do. We had to get our rollups and bring an extra air tank. Myself and 84 Engine started making our way towards tower number 1, which we had a pretty clear view. I'm not sure how close we got to it. As we were walking up closer, there were a lot of civilians going the other way and we were walking up and my thoughts were how the hell -- how am I going to make this climb. This is at least 70 stories, no way. I'm thinking no way. I know there is a way. 10 floors at a time, you take a break. With all the equipment and rollups, that was my chief concern at that point, like how the hell am I getting up there.

As we got a little closer, I remember seeing how much fire there was and there seemed to be like 8 floors of fire and I thought there can't be any stand pipes system. As I am having these thoughts as and I'm

walking up, and we are getting close enough where I'm actually seeing -- I saw two images jump from the building, you know, 2 people, civilians and I'm thinking to myself this is fucking horrible, this is the end here, you know.

With that, I was able to -- I'm hearing like a rumble and I'm looking up and I'm seeing the antenna start to do this type of nonsense, swaying a little bit it seemed, and sure enough the building was coming down. That was tower number 1, the north tower. As it started coming down, we saw this ferocious amount of black cloud, a brown cloud that was chasing everybody. It was chasing us also. I remember I just dropped my equipment. I don't know what I did with my mask, which probably turned out to be foolish. I was just trying to lighten up and get out of the way. We ran. I ran along with everybody else. Our entire company. Getting out of the way of that building, because at that point, you don't know what's the collapse zone -- you don't know if it's doing a straight down number or if it's going to cantilever and topple. You really didn't know what the collapse zone was and you were basically running for your life.

I remember getting -- running like a couple

of blocks and trying to find the Engine, regrouping and try to regroup and see what our plan of attack is now. We are all shot. It's still -- it's very fuzzy. I met up with the rest of the company and I remember we took the rig. We got on the rig. Did we get on the rig? We went around -- we did, we went around to the west. I don't what the last street is.

Q. Towards the water?

A. Towards the Hudson River. Drove down towards Vesey Street and we are taking a look and we made a left on Vesey. At that time there was a lot of fire going on. I think it was the Customs House was roaring. The 7 World Trade Center was roaring. All we could think is we were an Engine Company, we have got to get them some water. We need some water you know.

With that, we positioned the rig, I don't know, 3 quarters of a block away maybe. A fire boat was going to relay water to us. I don't know if I have things in the right order, whatever, if we were getting water out of a hydrant first. Jesus Christ --

Q. Captain said you were getting water. You were draining a vacuum?

A. It was draining away from us. Right. We had to be augmented. I think that's when the fire boat

came. I think the fire boats supplied us. Of course you don't see that. You just see the (inaudible) way and you know, we are hooking up and we wound up supplying the Tower Ladder there. I just remember feeling like helpless, like everybody there was doomed and there is -- I just felt like there was absolutely nothing we could do. I want to just go back a little bit.

When we had first entered down Vesey Street, I heard a command post or a Division looking for 6 Truck and this came to my attention because that was my former company. I was with 6 Truck and 9 Engine up until March last year when I transferred in. I was very worried about those guys in 6 Truck, yet I didn't want to abandon my men with the Engine, because we were doing our job. We were supplying the Tower Ladder and we were doing our own thing.

I don't know what else. Do you want me to keep going what we did that day?

Q. Pretty much -- after the collapse, that's pretty much. You know, like after you were relaying water, that's enough.

A. It was just -- I remember a couple of guys coming from on the roof. This guy Russell and myself

went out looking. We were searching for anybody or anything we could find. It was just mayhem and it was just a feeling of helplessness. If there was anybody, they were underneath big beams and girders and there was nothing humanly possible. I got to say, shortly after I heard them looking for 6 Truck, my radio died, my control man radio. That died and I wasn't getting any more transmissions. Guys were saying that they had to turn their radios off or whatever, because they were hearing people that were missing or lost or you know, or hurt. I guess it's kind of a blessing I didn't have -- my radio wasn't working and I wasn't aware that it wasn't working right away because we were all together.

So I'm trying to think of anything else, if I left anything out. I finally called my wife at 1:30 and she was happy to hear from me. I called from the bar across the street.

Q. The Mexican place?

A. I don't know, was it a Mexican place?

Q. I called from the Mexican place.

A. It looked like it was a nice bar you know, before it got taken over. I don't know. I'm trying to figure anything else I can remember. I remember them

bringing -- they had an ambulance on Vesey and I believe it was Chief Ganci's body that they put in the ambulance. That was the first casualty that I saw.

It was just a very depressing day. It was a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.

Q. I think we all kind of felt that.

A. You know, I don't know. Initially when you were there, you thought -- I said to myself there is no way anybody survived that, there is just no way.

Q. By some miracle 6 Truck and 39 Engine --

A. That was an incredible miracle. I saw the guys later on. I gave them hugs and everything. I was like, I couldn't believe it, you know. I don't know if it was the 6 -- guys that were stuck or the 6 recall guys, you know what I mean, but I was real happy to see them. I can't think of anything else that --

Q. That's good. That's good. That's all right.

A. Yes, I guess so.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. If you need anything else. I do remember us being pulled off the pile. We were down by the pile to search or looking around.

Q. Searches, searches?

A. Right. Searching for people or whatever. I remember being pulled off the pile like just before. It wasn't just before. It was probably an hour before 7 came down.

Q. It was about an hour before. Maybe an hour and a half.

A. I remember when 7 World Trade came down and everybody was like shell shocked. I mean this was a 47 story building. We all ran. We were like oh, my god, here we go again. It just gave us the creeps. But -- I don't know. After that -- and I really don't know what else.

Hopeless and helpless. Those are the catch words of that day.

Q. Yes, I think everybody.

A. You got to be getting tired of these interviews right?

Q. Well, you know what it is. It's somewhat interesting. Everybody saw a little something different, so to me it's interesting.

A. I know there is stuff I'm leaving out. Not consciously, but I just know things that we were doing and you know. Yes, I just remember that dust. It was (inaudible) masks. I was like, you know, I had to

ditch my mask trying to lighten up along the way. Meanwhile I should have been wearing it, you know what I mean.

Q. It was still a good idea to get away from that.

A. This is true. I was thankful, very happy to get home the following morning, you know. Thanks a lot.

Q. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

A. Let's get some coffee, coffee break.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: This concludes this interview. It's 1515.

File No. 9110470

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN HEER

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. DUN: Today is January 18, 2002. The time now is 8 o'clock. My name is Richard Dun. I'm working for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. John Heer, I'm an EMT, Battalion 22, Staten Island.

Q. Okay. On September 11 can you just in your own words describe what happened on that day?

A. From around -- we left the station around 8:40. Around 8:45, we started getting calls, I started heading over towards the Verrazano Bridge for staging. They wouldn't send the job over, so we started heading down there, wondering what it was.

Before we got to the Verrazano Bridge, they said to set up the staging on the Brooklyn side of the Verrazano Bridge. Before we got over to the Brooklyn side of the bridge, they said they changed staging also to the opening at the Battery Tunnel. At this time I got a cellphone call from my wife telling me a plane hit the towers.

So I started trying to fix the PD radio, so we could listen to PD, see what was going on over

there, because I told them we were going in and we knew we were gonna be in the Battery Tunnel at that time, me and my partner John Rothman. By the time we got to -- we were just about to head into the tunnel, saw the smoke coming out of the one tower. I was looking down playing with the radio. I looked up and saw another explosion come out of the second tower. I didn't actually see the second plane hit. That's when we went down into the tunnel.

We came out the other side. We were on, what's that, West Street, and we were directed to make a right. We pushed right up into staging up on West and Liberty, where you actually felt the heat from the building. There was a bunch of crushed cars, bunches of just other stuff laying around on the street. Cops directing people, in and around. We stood there for a little while so I could grab some equipment, stand out, I was like the first --

Q. Was there a lot of debris falling still at that time?

A. Yes, we should not have been there. We knew we should not have been there, but there was some Lieutenant, Captain, whoever was there, telling everybody to hang out, that's where we are setting up

staging. Line up the units. Fine, so we stood there. That was like one time I grabbed the helmet and actually stuck it on. There was stuff. You heard it. I don't know if you remember as a kid you used to melt Army soldiers and they go ssst-pop. You hear that sound. That's what was coming off the building.

So after, I don't know, 10, 15 minutes, I don't remember the time, somebody said to us, you know, we really should not be here, you know, this is actually bad. There is stuff falling all over the --

Q. Was that an officer?

A. This is a Lieutenant. Lieutenant or Captain. It was an EMS Fire Department officer, yes. But he was definitely EMS. He said we should -- he was in a little bit of a panic, which is understandable. So we moved down around by South End. We moved up Liberty Street to South End. Just went around the corner and parked the bus there. This time we opened up the bus, we figured let's get the stretchers set up, and basically throw all we could on the stretcher. Long board, pulled the stretcher out and left it there.

There was a liquor store over there. The guy says anything you guys need, come inside, use the phone, the bathroom while this is all going on. I

thought -- and the guy in the deli next door to him says look, can I close yet. I want to go home. I was like, well, do whatever you want to do, I don't care. So this time we started watching people jumping out of the building. My partner counted about 20. I saw maybe like 5 or 6, something like that. Still the same thing. Watching stuff hit the ground. Trying to listen to the radio.

Another unit pulled up. Some guy pulled up to us. He had a cut on his head, so a private unit gave him to us. Says here, we're gonna transfer him to you, or he can sit in my bus and do nothing if you want to. I'm not going anywhere right now for a while. Hatzolah was pulled in front of us. They had a lady having an anxiety attack, so we took our guy with the scratch on his head, and told them to take him too -- because our plan initially was let's go in and grab some patients and get out of there, because this is going to be nuts. So I wound up doing the right thing for some strange reason. That's -- I guess when we just started hearing the tower come down.

Q. Did you see any EMS officers that you recognized at the scene?

A. No, there was nobody there I recognized

whatsoever. We were around a bunch of, as I said, there was -- Hatzolah was there, there was some other privates. There were a few EMS officers. Nobody I knew. At one point a Firefighter came over to us, asked us for a sheet to cover up a body part that was on the street. I'm sure he had -- that was before the tower came down, so -- and that's bad.

Q. The tower was still up though?

A. The tower was still up. You could see when we were around the corner you could see the top of the south tower. You could see the top. It just starts -- you hear the crumbling, like an engine roar and something started coming down like that and people just started scattering up the corner. People just started coming up to us panicking and stuff, so we put them in. We didn't start putting people into the liquor store where the guy wanted us. We started putting everybody into the deli where the guy didn't want us. He wanted to close up. But he was really nice once we all got inside. So we started pushing people in there, grabbing anybody, because the cloud started coming, standing by the door. This time I dropped my radio.

Q. Was there good communication on the radio --

A. It was anarchy on the radio. I'm sorry. We

started hearing stuff -- the first time I ever really heard somebody screaming Mayday, which was for real. Everybody started screaming Mayday, Mayday, over and over again. I just was trying to hold the radio while we were running over the building, putting people in. You couldn't hear anything because people were screaming at us. So we are pushing them in the deli. I dropped the radio. Ran in, you know, it's taboo to lose a radio.

So anyway I ran back outside to get the radio while my partner starts screaming at me. Forget that. Went back inside. I think the deli guy was pretty much anything you guys want? We are trying to push people in the back, through the door. All this time, all you can see out of the window, it was just black. Everything was pitch black so we started -- we are going to get trapped in here. We are not getting out, we didn't know what was going on. Pushed people to the back of the store. My partner started saying like, there is no way out of here. I just like started telling him there is always a way of out of these places. They have to have by law some back entrance.

That's when we got everybody settled to the back where the cold cut racks was and stuff like that.

It still was completely black and some lady came out from the back door and said there is a hotel out back and there are people trapped up there. Me and John Rothman were the only ones in uniform that looked like anybody. Everybody else was civilians, so everyone is coming up to us and at this point we thought we were dead. We weren't getting out of there. I have kids, so I wasn't going to sit and die sitting in the deli.

I went in to the other building, went in through some back door and was went up some stairs and started screaming at the, you know, see if there's people. Started hearing some little voices in the background and stuff. So I was with John, and once again, he started screaming you opening those freaking doors? You don't know what's in there, feel the handle. That's kinda something you learn on TV.

So it was a family, a few families, all cuddled in a corner on, like on the second story. They said it was a hotel, I have no idea what it was. They were lying there. I was like you know, come on down this way. We got a deli down here, you can get water, whatever you need. We are all going to hang out down there and see what's going on. So I pulled them down. I guess there was -- because, I guess, I don't know,

between 8 or 12 of them. I really don't remember.

That's when I found a back door that -- thinking there is a way out. So I pull the door open because (inaudible) and see it was just the cloud came back in so I slammed that door shut.

By this time out front, it started clearing up a little bit so we realized we were not blocked and we can actually get out. It was -- so some Lieutenant or somebody. I don't know who it was. I don't remember. I knew it was an officer, said we was going to start putting people down in the basement. I'm like --

Q. EMS?

A. FDNY I think. So we're gonna start putting people in the basement. I said everybody get off the floor, we are going to the basement for safety, because we didn't know what was going on. We didn't know if another plane was going to hit, if a bomb was going off. Some people go down. Other people are like look, I'm not going to the basement. I said look, I don't care. If you don't really want to go in there I'm not gonna tie you down and pull you down there. I have enough stuff to do here.

Went outside. It was like that, a snow

storm. It was like muffled -- it was a muffled kind of -- like when the snow is really heavy and you are just seeing shapes moving out there, hearing Scott packs. This is where I split up with my partner, John Rothman, for a while.

Actually, before I split, sorry, I'm jumping the story here a little bit. He gave me a potholder with citrus seltzer water on it, because that's all that was in the deli. Hold this over your face, so we could breathe.

Went outside. John Rothman says, hey, I found Chief Grant. So it was like all right. Where is he. He says walking around, he's a little AMS right now. He is over in the other deli. There was another deli down the street a little bit. Here I grabbed the O-2 pack and went down and hooked him up to some O-2. So I'm saying to Chief Grant -- I really don't know him because I just transferred out of here. He says you know, are you all right. He is like just staring with a glazed look in his eyes, which is understandable.

Once again, my partner, John Rothman, takes off out of this store to look around for something. Chief Grant takes the non-rebreather and unhooks it from the O-2 tank. Just walks out with a

non-rebreather on his face. He was like all right, he is all right. He is going to walk around a little bit, fine. Go walk around. I packed up my stuff. I started to find John. I said let's get the unit and get out of here. You know, it was moving down the street. I don't know how far we can go. You can't see anything down here. I don't want to start running over people.

So the truck is obviously covered with all kinds of crap and the stretcher and everything was out. I told him let's throw the stretcher in, you don't know if we'll need it. We threw the stretcher back in the bus, closed the doors up. This time the Lieutenant, I think he said Lieutenant, I don't know his name. This is the same guy before that told us -- we told him we were going to move around. We tell him we are heading down here. So, you know, we told him get in the bus, we are going to drive down the street.

We winded up getting in the bus --

Q. Is this still before the second collapse?

A. This is before the second collapse. We drove up to Albany Street, which is the next street, made a right, went heading down towards the water where there

is like a little circle statue or something there. We hung out there. We got out, this time some guy came up to us, his radius-ulna was broke. We splinted it up. Let's get out of here, but we did the fastest splint job possible, and I said look, don't move your arm too much. He was a security guard or something. We wasn't a uniform status. There was some kind of uniform he had on. So I said don't move too much. Let's get out of here.

By this time, jumping ahead a little bit. We went down, left the bus there, turned it off. Went down to the water, made a left. Started heading down towards Battery Park. That's where everybody was going, because the cloud was all coming up from this way. We are still kind of getting some air so you could breathe, because you couldn't breathe. We got down to a certain point. There were boats pulling up.

Actually before the boats pulled up, sorry, there was a Chinese restaurant or something there, and somebody opened the door and there was about a 4 foot wall there that was -- I don't know how you are supposed to get into this restaurant, because that's the way we climbed over the wall and we started looking over and there were some firefighters, started pulling

them up, because they were down by us. Families, little kids and stuff like that. Little kids started asking me, you know, why is this happening. I was like I don't know, I don't know what to tell you. You be with your family. It wasn't even her family. It was some guy was just, people were helping her out.

Pulled them all into this restaurant. That's when some boats started pulling up along, I don't know what pier that is over there. I have no --

Q. Glen Cove?

A. No, we were down here, all the way towards this plaza, then there is something up here, over here --

Q. The Waterway piers?

A. Oh, okay. There were wood rafters. Boats pulled up there and they hacked open the gates with axes. So we started loading more people. Told them, just get on a boat and get the hell out of here. We didn't know what was going on here. We are going do get hit again.

Before we even got into the Chinese restaurant, that's when the second tower started coming down. That's why I say, my story jumps around a little bit.

But the second tower, which is actually the first tower, tower one came down. We just heard a rumble and the smoke started coming around and people started running. I was like I wonder what they are running for, I can't even see anything any more, and so they took off. I slowed down by old ladies and stuff. You feel bad, you are racing and running past like 70 year-old ladies walking with canes. I said, you can't do that. As I said, we didn't think we were making it out anyway so we just ended up doing the right thing.

Started loading people on to the boats. We had another officer with a broken tib-fib fracture or something. She was splinted up with cardboard or something like that. We carried her over to the boat with -- I don't know if it was Hatzolah or some other private units. They are like are you getting on the boat with her. I'm like no, but if you guys want to go, go ahead, so the privates hopped on with her and they got out of there. Because I didn't even know where my partner was, again. He was not there again.

By this time, another 15 or so minutes, my cellphone started working again for a split second, you know, you heard that happen. Called my wife. She was like is everything all right. Yes. So she decided

this was the time [redacted].

We started packing up, some -- I don't remember what Captain it was. His face is familiar. I'm really bad with names and he was around on a golf cart over there. He said, look, we're bugging out of here. We are moving out. We are heading down to the Battery Tunnel. I'm sorry, not Battery Tunnel, Battery Park. They are setting up staging over there. I'm like cool. So I said, yo, John, there's nothing for us to do over here. You can't see anything. There is nothing going back up there, because you couldn't see anything.

So we're gonna start heading back down there. We are like, all right. We will do that. Let's go around and see if we can get the unit. We go back around up -- we walked back up to get the unit, because we were useless, just walking around, when all our equipment and everything is up there. This time all our windows were busted out. All our equipment was gone. All of our personal shit was gone, except for actually this mug, because I had to save my sci-fi coffee mug. So I'm walking around with this coffee

mug.

We get down to Battery Tunnel. I start walking down there -- and a de-fib. I had this mug and the de-fib. We came to a clearing, there was like a clearing, and there was a Lieutenant there. Once again I don't know the names. John would probably know who he was. He always does. The Lieutenant saw us walking down, he starts running up to us. [redacted]. He ran up to us, he said are you guys all right. He grabbed our equipment and carried it for us. I thought that was the coolest thing that you could do at that time.

He gave us some water and we hung out over by a rail for I don't know how long. Then we just started listening to the radio, Coast Guard coming up. There are jets flying overhead now. Every sound you hear, everybody is panicking and running everywhere.

Q. Both buildings are down?

A. Both buildings are down. If anybody screamed, or anybody ran in a little hurry in any direction, everybody was just following them. It didn't matter what was going on. Long story short, I

guess. Finally get to the ferry.

Q. South Ferry now?

A. Yes, South Ferry. Not much really in between, pretty much hanging out, talking about stuff. Trying to get a sense of humor about the situation. Some people already moving around in those little carts.

We went out for long boards for a little bit, to -- the only place that had long boards at that time was Bellevue. A bunch of their own employees were just sitting there staring at us, and we're like, to hell with that. We are going over there. So we took a bunch of long boards. Headed back downtown. Hung out there for a while. Listened to the President's address. You know, that was really inspiring. Somebody put it over the PA system, one of the bosses.

After a long story, we finally said it's 11 o'clock at night, we're heading back to the Island, we're not really doing anything. It's only some walking wounded. Got to Staten Island, we didn't know how we were getting back to the station, so a bunch of firefighters, actually rescue 5, there was 2 firefighters. They were the only two that survived, were on the boat with us and we were all really quiet.

It was a morbid ferry ride back.

We hopped on a train. I didn't know where else to go. We hopped on a train. We got off at New Dorp. We called them up, called the station for somebody to pick us up. At this time I didn't know what was going on in the outside world besides what was going on in Manhattan. They were like yeah, we will send somebody down to New Dorp to pick you up. Get off the train there at New Dorp. All right. We get off the train. Nobody shows up. We call them, they are like oh yes, we are still waiting for somebody to show up. I'm like fine.

Then one car pops by. He says you guys need a ride anywhere. I didn't realize we are all covered in this shit still. Some little kids are asking us all about this. It's what you see on TV. That's pretty much what it is. That's the extent what was going on. Another car pulled up, so we're like no, no, we are still waiting for a ride. Finally, the third, fourth car pulls up and asks us let me drive you anywhere you guys want. My family is here. Giving us their story. They wanted to hear -- there was nothing really to tell them.

Anyway some gentleman did pick us up in a 4

by 4. Drove us back to the station here. Then I left, went home. [redacted] I went downstairs and turned on the TV and that was the first time I saw it all. It's screwed up. That's about it.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with John. It is 8:15 a.m. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110471

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS DONATO

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is January 17th, 2002. The time is 1612 hours. I am Battalion Chief Jim McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Tommy Donato from Ladder 85. This interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 85, and it's regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tommy, if you will please state your name and just recall the events that took place as best as you can remember them.

A. My name is Tommy Donato, Ladder 85.

As far as I remember that morning I came into work my regular tour. I started seeing some stuff on the TV of the first plane. I remember calling my wife and saying most likely I'm going to get called there and I'll call you later, is basically what I said. That was before we got actually called to the job.

Then after the second plane hit, Ladder 85, as far as I remember, was sent. As we were on the Verrazano, I remember looking over to the left and seeing the billowing of smoke. I

believe one building had collapsed by the time we were on the Verrazano. I'm not positive if that actually happened or not.

We get to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We were going to go through the Battery Tunnel, but because civilians were walking out, they said we couldn't go in. So they turned us around, and we took the bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge.

As we get over the Brooklyn Bridge, we headed down -- I'm not really sure on the street. I remember heading down the street and pulling the rig over to the side. We filled the stokes basket with up with as much equipment as we could possibly fit of what we thought we might need. Then we walked.

We walked down the street that we were parked on and waited for what to do, an assignment what to do. We were standing around not knowing exactly what to do.

Q. Could we stop for one minute. I'm going to see if I can quiet the outside noise.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Now you can resume, please.

A. So then a couple firemen were

approaching us. They said the chief said they were commandeering some radios, so I had to give up my radio. They were taking them from truck companies that had multiple radios. So we were left with I think two or three radios after that.

At the time we were told to go set up the tower ladder -- I think was around 11:00; I'm not sure -- to put out one of the fires that was burning in one of the smaller black buildings. I think it was World Trade Center Five or Four maybe.

A couple things that stuck out in my head on that when we went to go set up, Ladder 7, which I worked with a couple years ago, was set up, and they were dumping water on the fire. Then one of the members from Ladder 7 came up to me and said something like, "Did you see the guys from Ladder 7?" I said, "Yeah, they're right there." He said, "No, those are the guys that just came down. Did you see anyone" -- he named the names of the guys that were working that day. Then I said I didn't see anything.

Then we started to set up our tower ladder. Something that sticks out in my head --

I'm struggling with this, but what sticks out in my head is as the tool measurers were coming down and we were setting it up, this salty old fireman comes up to me and he said, "Did you check the manhole covers?"

In the middle of things falling all over the place, buildings burning, this guy remembered to check to see if the tool measurers were coming down on a manhole cover, which kind of surprised me.

So then they aborted us from setting up the tower ladder because they were worried about now seven coming down. So then they pulled us away. This is where I kind of start remembering a lot.

We came around, I think we took Murray Street down the west side, and we stopped the rig and pulled over to the side and we all got out of the rig. We were standing, waiting for seven to come down. We were there for quite a while, a couple hours.

During that time a couple of the members felt like we were being useless just standing around. We wanted to do something. So

we started trying to walk down, trying to get into the pile. We kept on being turned around from chiefs, because they didn't want us near seven.

Prior to seven coming down, this is the first chance that we -- we were starting to get hungry, so one of the members that I was with, he said we heard there was a box of fruit or bananas down the block, so we started walking down the block.

As we were walking, we had to actually get a little closer to seven. So we turned and looked at seven, and that's when all the marble siding started popping off the side because it was starting to go down.

I think we ran down I think it was Vesey Street -- yeah, it was Vesey Street that we ran down. Seven came down. We ran back to 85. As far as I remember, 85 came down -- I don't know what this street right here is.

Q. Greenwich. That's Greenwich.

A. We made our way to the base of seven. That's where we set up the tower ladder.

As we were coming down Greenwich -- was

it Greenwich? I'm not sure. It was either West or Greenwich. There was multiple cars on fire throughout the block. All the hydrants, there was no pressure in any of the hydrants that we were around. There was a pumper set up on one of the streets, so we tried to stretch a line off the pumper because there was no pressure in the hydrant.

Tommy Delpino, the firefighter who was driving that day, suggested that we tap off the standpipe system in I think it was The Bank of New York, or maybe it was 75 Park Place. It was one of the buildings that was there. So we started stretching a line off that.

By then the radios, the batteries were dead. We had no communication. My captain at the time was on the front of the line with two other guys that I don't know. They're from a different company.

So I was actually acting as the radio communication between Delpino, who was at the standpipe, and the captain who was at the end of the line. He would tell me stop the water. I would run back and tell him. Then I would run

back to help with the line. Then I would run back and tell him to shut down.

We worked our way putting out the car fires, which I don't know if there was ammunition, because there was a lot of cop cars, but there was explosions. Tires were exploding. There had to be about 15 or 20 car fires. We put them out as we worked our way down.

So then we were able to get 85 to the base of seven where seven had just collapsed. We set up 85 and started dumping water. It had to be around 7 or 8:00, and we stayed there until 7 in the morning the next morning, alternating the members in between the bucket and just dumping the water on the base of seven from the north side.

That's basically how the day went.

Q. Okay. By any chance do you remember who you gave the radio to when you gave up your radio earlier?

A. No, no.

Q. No?

How about the pumper that you said was on Greenwich Street, do you remember what company

that was?

A. It seemed like it was an extra pumper, because it was like a 505 or a 515 number.

Q. Do you remember the name of the companies of anybody else that you operated with or saw besides you had mentioned 7 earlier?

A. No, I don't remember companies that were on the line. I don't remember any companies that we worked with that day. The guy from 7 was kind of walking around in a daze, looking for his guys. In fact, I met him like twice or three times that day. He kept on asking me, "Did you see anyone from 7? Did you see anyone from 7?" He mentioned the guys who were working that day.

When I rotated, I stayed in my same group, group 2. So Danny Suhr who was in 216 I worked with all the time, because I was in group 2. We lost him. All the guys in 7 were guys that I -- some guys you don't see. Some groups you just hardly work with. These are guys that I spent time at their summer house and stuff. So when I heard that they were missing, I was quite upset.

Q. Had you seen any of the guys from 216

at all?

A. 216, no I did not see any of them.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that might be helpful to us or that you would like to add?

A. No, not really.

Q. Okay. I want to thank you very much for all your help in providing us with this information.

CHIEF McGRATH: This will conclude the interview, then. The time is 1622 hours.

FIREFIGHTER DONATO: Thank you.

CHIEF McGRATH: Thank you.

File No. 9110472

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN ROBERT SOHMER

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 1539 hours. I am Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Captain Sohmer of Ladder 85 regarding the events that took place on September 11, 2001. This interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 85 in Staten Island.

Q. Captain, state your name and relate the events as you recall them?

A. Captain Robert Sohmer Ladder 85. We responded from quarters at approximately the time that the second building was struck. We had a very easy fast response. Our response area was to the Battery Tunnel, where we were supposed to meet other companies and proceed through the Battery Tunnel to Manhattan.

We got to the Battery Tunnel, we were the first company there. There were no other companies that were on the scene and we were stopped from proceeding at that point by the tunnel police, the TBTA police because they had feared a bomb had gone off in the tunnel.

We tried raidioing the dispatcher at that

time for other instructions, or anything else they wanted us to do, but the radio traffic was so heavy we couldn't get through at that point. Other companies had responded in at that point and we were then instructed to go to the Brooklyn Bridge and respond to Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge and get other orders from that position.

When we got there, we finally found where a command post was located, and that was at Broadway and Park, probably by Saint Ann's Street, is that what it looks like right there? I think it was opposite Trinity Church right there. At that command post there was numerous members there, some off duty, some on. They were trying to structure that command post at that time there.

They were trying to separate companies that had actual apparatus and guys who were just off duty. When they found out we had an apparatus, we were instructed to respond to between 4 and 5 World Trade Center. The second building had just collapsed, around that time we got to the command post, and we had seen members who were coming up from the street and at that time we had gone down, operated between 4 and 5, searching, using our Tower Ladder. We operated in that

area for I would say approximately an hour to an hour and a half.

We operated in that position for I would say approximately an hour to hour and a half probably. There were 3 tower ladders operating at that point. We proceeded to search the areas we could. We operated our Tower Ladder on 4 and 5 extinguishing fire and we had members in the buckets. We had other members searching where we could search in that area for any victims or anything else we could find at that point.

As the day went on they started worrying about 7 World Trade Center collapsing and they ordered an evacuation from that area so at that time, we left the area with the other companies, went back to the command post on Broadway, where we were instructed, they were looking for companies to go to the west side to operate on the bridges, to cut members out that they had confirmed were pinned and trapped under the bridges on the west side.

A Battalion Chief was assigned to us. We took our apparatus to West Street to the north bridge, on that side over there, where we began to operate. We had identified different members who were deceased and trapped in rigs. We were about to proceed our

operation there and this was in the afternoon, I would say approximately maybe 2:00 roughly, where we started to operate and then they asked us to fall back again due to the potential of 7 World Trade Center collapsing.

At that time, we had fallen back to probably opposite Stuyvesant High School, I believe it was on the west side there.

Q. That's uptown a little bit.

A. Right. They had us fall back to there. We stayed at that position until exactly when 7 collapsed. When 7 collapsed, we responded again. We had an Engine Company, a spare Engine Company with us and ourselves. We responded to just behind 7, which was, I think it was Greenwich, was it Washington or Greenwich? I think it was Greenwich. Is this Greenwich?

Q. It could be. I don't have a bigger map.

A. We turned the corner, 7 had just collapsed, the block that led into 7.

Q. Pretty sure that's Greenwich.

A. Greenwich and Park was covered with debris, there were burning autos and all debris. It was starting to extend into the buildings on both sides of

the block. We went to hydrants in that area. We had off duty guys in our cells, but the hydrants had no water. We did whatever we could. The rigs actually were starting to become in danger of lighting up themselves.

We called trying to get water returned to us over here. Finally one of the members thought, we used it for a good period of time, we forced the door on one of the buildings there and used the water from the roof tanks. It was left in the gravity tanks. We took a two and a half line out of one of the doors. We were able to advance down Greenwich, stopping, putting fire out in the street, the cars and from getting into exposures.

We backed our rig into position at 7 World Trade Center. We searched the area of the buildings that were in the vicinity all there and then from approximately 5:45 p.m. that day, the 11th, until about 4 in the morning, 5 in the morning, we operated our Tower Ladder on 7 World Trade Center. Basically that was the extent of our day.

Q. Okay. Just a couple of questions if I might. Do you remember the Chief's name that you worked with when you worked over by the pedestrian

bridge?

A. No, I don't know. He didn't have a Chief's jacket on. He must have went to a fire house, grabbed his stuff and he was -- he actually had a fireman's helmet on and another coat. I never caught his name.

Q. How about any names of the members that you were trying to dig out that were under the bridge?

A. I'm trying to think. We got down to the position. The company actually stayed up at a certain point because we couldn't get the apparatus physically down. I walked down to the position with the Chief where we were going to assess what we need and how close we wanted to get with the apparatus.

They were worried about 7 at the time. The decision was made not to do it, not to get anybody else hurt. That's when we backed up and they said let's wait for this other building before we continue any work, because where the bridge was was in the direct path of 7. It was the north bridge where we were looking initially.

Q. Do you recall any radio transmissions or anything that might be helpful in possible location of units or members?

A. The radio transmissions were so fast and

furious. Anything specifically, at night I had heard them working on somebody who was trapped. They seemed to be in the south building. I believe I heard 78 truck at one time calling for -- saying that they had somebody there. I'm not sure, but I'm pretty sure 78 truck called for help, but my radio seemed to function for most of the time. Most of the other radios had gone out, but it seemed to me that the rescue effort that I seemed to have heard was in the south side some place, off Liberty, from what I do remember of it.

For some reason I do remember 78 calling.

Q. The units that you operated on Greenwich Street with?

A. I think it was 505 or 525 was one of the spare engines. 153 Truck worked on West Street for a while. I saw them over there by 7 World Trade Center. Then there was a second Tower Ladder that backed into position with us, which was -- I guess we operated mainly there at that point.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that you might want to add that might help us in researching this?

A. No, basically not without going into every minute. Once we got our assignments, for the most part

we operated between 4 and 5. We operated with the Tower Ladder there effectively on those buildings that were within our reach. Then the other part was unfortunately we couldn't do anything at the pedestrian bridge but the concern of 7, which they had no idea which way it was going to collapse and they just knew it was going to collapse and they positioned us outside of it. We positioned outside of it so we could -- there weren't many apparatus around.

The apparatus were functional. We grabbed them and had a good stop as we came down that Greenwich Street right there, because there was no concentration of units. Seemed most people were there. The guys we had off duty and on duty. We were the only truck, I believe, operating at that time. But there was a lot of fire advancing north up Greenwich and it was -- it worked out good for us, it was a good position.

Q. When you first arrived and you were on I guess you were on Church Street between 4 and 5 World Trade Center, you said there was a lot of firemen in the area, do you remember anybody specifically or companies that you might have seen?

A. I think there was 7 Truck was one of the tower ladders operating on one of the buildings right

there. There was a company that was north of us operating on 5. We were in the middle between 4 and 5 operating alternately there and wetting down the area into the Trade Center area itself where the rubble was still hot.

The company to the south of us was -- it was a double digit -- I don't know if it was 14. I'm just stabbing at numbers now. It was just so much debris between cars, it was hard to see what was good and bad, stuff like that. But that was our main position right there. I would say from approximately about at least an hour, hour and a half between 4 and 5. They made us evacuate due to the fear of 7 coming down.

That's when we went back to the command post, got the other instruction to work with this Chief, where we went to the west side, got as far down as we could. The Chief and myself went down to that area where we they wanted us to work. Seeing what we would need; torches, air bags, anything else like that to operate at that bridge. The concern there again, it was later in the afternoon, 2, 2:30, like I said. The fear then was 7. 7 was free burning.

Search had been made of 7 already from what they said so they had us back up to that point where we

were waiting for 7 to come down to operate from the north back down.

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Thank you very much for all the information that you provided us. This will conclude the interview then and the time is 1552 hours.

File No. 9110473

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS ORLANDO

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 18th, 2002. The time is 1200 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ORLANDO: Thomas Orlando.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thomas Orlando is a firefighter first class in Engine 65 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 65. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Thomas, will you please tell your story in your own words.

A. From when we left here?

Q. Yeah, from when you got the run, yeah. Did you know that a plane had hit the towers?

A. We were in quarters and we were watching on the TV that a plane hit the twin towers. Then we got the run on the fifth alarm. We got on the rig and started responding down there.

The chauffeur went down West Street. On the way down there, en route, we heard on the radio that another plane hit the second tower. At that time we figured to ourselves that we were under attack and that we were going to something that we never went to before.

The chauffeur stopped the rig. We got there in, I'd say, about ten minutes. We stopped the rig I'd say about 100 feet north of the north tower on West Street. We all got off the rig. We grabbed our rollups. I was the control man. I had the control bag. The officer told us take an extra mask, which we were told to do, an extra cylinder, actually.

So we took the extra stuff, and we walked over with the officer to I guess it was the street. There was a command post in the street which was in front of I guess north of the north tower again. I don't know where --

(Interruption.)

A. We stopped the rig before the overbridge. We walked over to the chief who was running the operation at the time. I don't know his name. We checked in. Our officer told us

that we were to go into the north tower and start working our way up.

We entered the building on the West Street side. We entered the north tower. We kept walking in. We walked into the lobby. The elevators were not working, so we started up the stairway the stairway at the time, I don't recall the number. We started working our way up.

We made it up -- every five or six or seven floors we just took a little break because there were a lot of people on the stairway, a lot of people coming down, just to catch our breath and whatever, take a little breather.

We finally made it up to probably around the -- I would say the 18th floor when we took a little break. At the time the building was shaking. It was hit with something. At that time we thought it was another missile attack, so we all just ran into the stairway and just helped cover us and other civilians and firemen until it stopped shaking. We didn't know what it was at the time.

After everything cleared, about might be five minutes, myself and the officer and maybe

a few other ones proceeded to work up to the 20th floor. At that time we were told that the other building --

Q. Did you hear it on the radio?

A. I didn't hear anything on the radio, other than a mayday. My fellow partners said they did. I did not hear it. I was control man. I had a radio.

Q. Some guys heard it; some guys didn't.

A. Right.

We were told that there's been a collapse -- they didn't say what collapsed -- and to start working your way out. My officer, who was great at the time, had a lot of experience and he knew something was up. So he just said, "Let's go. We're going out."

At that time we started to proceed down from the 20th floor. We met the other guys who were with us on 18. We started to work our way down, with the civilians and other firemen, helping each other back and forth.

I did pass some people that I know. Captain Freddie Ill was on I think the 13th floor. We saw him. We asked him what was going

on. He said he'd be right down. They were doing something. They didn't mention what they were doing. Obviously they didn't need a hand, because they didn't ask us for help. They said they'd be right down. I guess his company was on that floor.

So we worked our way down, helping civilians, other firemen. It was a very slow walk. On the way down I guess it was the dust from the south tower -- we thought it was smoke -- started coming up. The lights went out. There were no lights at the time in the stairway. It was dark. We thought it was smoke from whatever it was, but it was actually the dust from the south tower. We still didn't know it collapsed.

I'd say it took us 25 minutes to get out from the floor we were on, which was the 20th.

Q. When you got out, did you go out the same way you came in?

A. Yes. We got into the lobby. Some people were just hanging out, making decisions which way to go, trying to find their way out.

Usually when you go out of a building, in my case we usually find the fire engine. We move out to the fire engine to see what was going on, which was parked at that time where we dropped off, north of the north tower.

We came out of the building. I do remember a firefighter from I think 4 Truck asking one of us for masks because he had to go up to the 42nd floor; to do what, I don't know.

Q. You don't know the guy?

A. I don't know the guy. I don't know his name. One of our guys gave him his mask. It wasn't me. One of our other guys gave him his mask. He said he had to go up there to help rescue, which I think was on the 42nd floor. What they were doing, I don't know. I don't think the guy made it out; I'm not sure.

Then we came out of the building. My officer and two other firefighters were in the lobby for a second. We became separated for maybe a couple of minutes. As we walked out, we were watching out because there were still things dropping out of the north tower. We just ran, scattered a little bit to the front, which is

West Street.

Chief Al Turi was there with a megaphone, Chief Al Turi, who saved an awful lot of people. He was just yelling for everybody to clear away from the building. He was screaming "Just keep moving. Don't stop." I still didn't know the south tower collapsed, because at that time when we came out all the dust and everything was clear. There was a little dust in the area, but it was blue sky. You can't see, actually, the south tower from where you are.

Q. Yeah, right. There's that big --

A. Right, right. You can't see it because it supposedly collapsed downwards. So we couldn't see the south tower had collapsed.

We just kept walking. I'd say we waited by Al Turi for a minute or two. I got in touch with my officer, who was still in the lobby. They came out and they met us. Once they met us, we crossed West Street. Al Turi was still there with the megaphone yelling for everybody to keep clearing away from the building, don't stop, just keep walking, move, move.

I don't know if some guys went south. I'm not sure. I know we went north because that's where our fire engine was and that's where we were going to go. As we started to walk, we just passed the bridge, the first bridge, which was on whatever it was.

Q. On West Street.

A. Yeah, the bridge. We just passed that. We were a bunch of firemen. Somebody just yelled, "It's coming down!" We just looked up, and the tower started to collapse. We looked up, and everybody just scattered all different ways.

I went up West Street. I just kept running up West Street, because that's where I figured I had to be to be away from this. Some guys I guess dove under cars. I know my officer and they went up the street which is right there; I think it was Vesey. Where are we?

Q. Vesey. They probably went that way; right?

A. Where is the south tower?

Q. The south tower is over here.

A. Where's West Street? We came here?

Q. Yeah, here's the north tower.

A. The north tower. So I would say -- there's a street right here next to Merrill Lynch.

Q. Okay.

A. I would say over here. Maybe Vesey Street, right. They must have went up Vesey Street. Because this rig was actually destroyed; right?

Q. Yeah, that was destroyed.

A. So they must have went up Vesey Street. I went straight up West Street.

Q. West Street.

A. I didn't even know what was going to happen, but we got separated. Then the building came down. I just turned around and I just saw this big black thing around me, which I didn't know at the time what it was. I thought this was it. I thought it was a fireball or the building around me. I just said I didn't think I'd make it; there's no way.

Then it hit me with a force, which was incredible. That was actually the dust storm. It just was total darkness, no sound at all, nothing at all. I just stood there for a second.

What am I going to do? I started walking around, walking into walls, walking into cars. You couldn't see nothing.

I finally just walked to an area where I saw an ESU car. I got up to it and I held onto it. I closed the windows in the car. I was going to go inside of it, but I said no, I better not. I held onto it in case something else happened. I didn't know what was going to happen. I was underneath whatever it was.

So I waited there for like whatever -- it felt like forever -- until everything cleared. After everything cleared to a point where I could see, I started to walk back to the area. My company was -- obviously they must have come out and passed me. They must have gone up the West Side Highway to where they were supposed to go. I walked back in, into the area, to see what we could do and if I could help and stuff.

At the time the magnitude didn't hit me. You don't think that there's people trapped. You think that everybody got out. I'm here, so everybody else got out. You don't think of the magnitude of the collapse.

At that time I came back here, and there was a bunch of firefighters over by the rig. Frank Gribbon was there. He was a chauffeur, so I started hooking up lines to help another chauffeur. We were putting out all the car fires that were exploding. I did that for probably around an hour and a half.

I couldn't see nothing. My eyes were shot, cut and stuff. I was just physically gone.

I was doing that for a while back and forth. Right in this area of Vesey Street, there was a whole bunch of car fires. We were putting them out. Then a chief -- who he was, I don't know. He saw the way I looked. I was talking to Ronnie, a guy from 16 Truck, the chauffeur -- 16 Engine, actually.

He asked, "What are you guys doing?" I said, "Well, we're just operating some hose lines." He said, "Were you guys in the collapse?" I said, "Yeah, we were." He said, "You guys are out of here. Just leave the area." He took my name down. He said, "I don't want to see you in here again." He made us leave the area. Why --

Q. They were probably trying to get a head count.

A. Right. He made us leave the area. He took my name and said, "If you were there" -- he made us leave the area.

I walked down to the west side and I met my company. At the time they knew I made it because we had radioed a transmission. I told the officer where I was. I said, "Lou, I'm over here." I knew they were out of the site already. I said, "I'm helping with car fires, doing what I can with whatever I have left."

Like I said, that's basically it. I remember going up -- there were two guys from 24 Engine who rolled up at the time and hooked up with us. They came up by themselves. They had no masks or anything. They hooked up with us. We said, "Where are you going with no masks?" They said, "We're going to go up." I said, "You guys are crazy, going up there with no masks."

They hooked up with us. I guess being with us it saved them, because they didn't go up any farther. They came out with us.

Q. They went up --

A. They went up with us. We said, "Why don't you work with us?" Our officer said, "Why don't you work with us? We'll work together." They worked with us, and they came out with us. I saw them later in the triage area. We were hugging and thank God they were with us.

Other than that -- then I came out of the area and they wouldn't let us back in. We just stayed there until seven or eight hours until they released us.

That's basically off the bat what I remember.

Q. Anything else?

A. No. Guys I've seen -- I know a lot of guys passing us, guys who were running up there. There was a chief who was actually upset at us because we were taking a breather on one of the floors. He was like, "What are you guys doing?" The officer was like we're carrying all this stuff.

Q. Yeah, you've got to go up 80 floors.

A. So where are we going to go? Whether he lived or not, I don't know. He actually ran past us also. Then we saw him a little while

later on one of the floors. He was puking and stuff. So we said, "Chief, why don't you just relax a little bit. Where are you going to go?" He said, "No, I've got to go," and he left again. So whether he made it or not, I don't know.

Q. They may have told him go up there and tell us what you've got. So he was determined to get up there, and you can't run up 80 flights of stairs.

A. No, you can't, you can't. He wasn't in great shape. He was an elderly guy -- not elderly but --

Q. Older than me?

A. There were guys who were running up there just like -- and the civilians were great. They were coming down, giving us water, telling "You guys are great." We helped out a lot of people. They were all bunched up in an area, and we were just saying, "Stay to the wall. Just keep walking. Don't stop. Let us go up. You guys come right down." They were giving us water and Gatorade.

There were some people we saw who were bleeding. Some were burnt. We weren't sure

whether we should help them. They were moving down. The best thing to do is let's keep moving, don't stop. Then on the way down we did the same thing, helped each other, firemen. Some people took our masks for some air, civilians. We did help out that one lady that 6 Truck helped out.

Q. Josephine?

A. I think we helped one floor with her. We just got her one floor, and then they took over. I guess they walked the rest of her. She was heavy, so we just couldn't do much with her.

Other than that, that's basically what I remember.

Q. Okay. That's fine. Thanks a lot for being candid with us. Thank you, Tommy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 20 after 12, and that completes the interview.

File No. 9110474

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

F. F. ROBERT SALVADOR

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 18, 2002. The time is 1325 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta, the safety battalion, New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Firefighter Robert Salvador, Engine 28.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the location -- we are at the quarters of Engine 28, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11.

Go ahead. Tell the story in your own words.

A. The alarm came in. We heard the explosion. My initial thought that the explosion was something out of the kitchen. It was approximately 8:47, 8:48.

We ran out to the front. We were getting on the rig. We knew it was an explosion, and then we heard a 1060, an emergency. A 1060 came over and said a plane just hit the north tower, commuter plane. So we really manned the

rig, and then we finally got the ticket as we were pulling out of the quarters.

I proceeded down first the FDR Drive. On the FDR Drive, traffic was backed up all -- as far as we know, as far as I could see. The left lane was open for emergency vehicles, and we were following a couple of police cars, and we made it to the tunnel going to the west, West Street, from the FDR Drive. As we came out of the tunnel, the battery, the tunnel was in front of us. The cops were waving us in, and we proceeded in, and there were numerous parts of bodies and body parts all over the street, and we encountered -- we had seen five or six floors of fire from the north tower, confirmed fire.

I proceeded on. I dropped the lieutenant and the five firefighters off in front of the north tower. There were no hydrants in front of the building because they were taken already, and there were numerous amounts of engines and trucks in front of the building already. I turned up Vesey Street and proceeded to, I guess, West Street where Building 7 is. I made a left turn. Right there was a hydrant.

I proceeded to hook up, and as I was hooking up, the second plane hit the south tower. Debris flew into the streets and I remember ducking behind the rig because of all the debris that was coming, you know, from the south tower.

Then I stretched into the north tower. I started pumping water into the north tower, and by that time, I noticed there was another engine company there. It was Engine 4, and they were supplying the north tower from another standpipe. There was -- they were east of West Street from where I was. I was the only rig on that block that I could see right at that moment.

Numerous amount of people jumping and landing in the street, landing in front of my rig, by my rig. I say I don't know what time. The time frame I don't remember, but I remember a few firemen on the concourse level and a chief with a white helmet and I guess an officer, and there were maybe six or seven firefighters on a concourse level when the south tower was collapsing, and it came down so fast that the

cloud either -- I turned around to start to run.

Either the cloud engulfed them or they ran towards Church Street, I don't know, but I ran, and the cloud just swept me and picked me up and threw me 20 feet, and I crawled under two parked cars, and I said my prayers.

After that was over, it was completely darkness. There was no radio transmissions at all. I remember feeling -- I got up, and I was -- made my way to the wall. Something landed on my ankle, and my ankle was hurting. I was feeling my way down the Building 7 towards Barclay Street, I think it is, and I picked up two civilians. I think one was a doctor and one was a D.E.P. agent, because he had a yellow jacket on. I think we both held arm in arm, and we heard someone calling from a building, and we made for the building, and we got out of the street.

It was total darkness, and you couldn't see a thing. I stayed in that building for about ten minutes. I made my way back out of the building back towards my rig. My rig was completely full of debris, and the motor was --

the motor was conked out. The motor wasn't on, so I know it was pumping water, so I took it out of pump. I tried to start the motor. It wouldn't kick over. I did it again, and then the north tower started coming down.

I heard the same -- same pancaking, like a machine gun coming and glass flying, so I closed -- shut the door, got out of the rig, and ran -- started running across the street. I wanted to run up Church Street, but I couldn't make it to the corner, so everything was on top of me, so I just took my turnout coat and put it over my head and knelt in the corner, and the heat was so tremendous that it took all the oxygen out of the air.

I couldn't breathe. It was so hot. I started feeling my way on the side of the wall. I guess it was the post office wall. I made my way to a little more deeper opening, and I remember somebody opening the door for me, and then the oxygen inside the building, and no oxygen outside blew the doors in down the stairs, and we were lost in the loading dock for I don't know how long, because it was totally darkness.

We found our way on top of the -- on top of the loading dock, and it started to clear a little bit, and in the corner -- we found six people huddled in the corner, so all frantic, and I tried to tell everybody to calm down. We got to get out of here, and we made our way up towards Church Street.

We came up into the center of the post office. As we came out, it was completely darkness out there, and I told everybody that, you know, as soon as we come out of the building, run north. That's left out of the building. I don't know how I figured that was left, but I did, and we got out of the building. Everybody run left.

So as soon as we came out of the building, all the people that were in the building ran left, and I noticed an ambulance. I could just see the silhouette. Me and this white-shirt guy, a Port Authority cop, I guess, jumped in the ambulance. The ambulance took us all the way down to Chambers Street, and I got out, and from there I went and walked up to the next two blocks, and I jumped in an ambulance,

and my leg was swollen. That's all I remember.

Q. That's pretty accurate. Anything else you want to say?

A. No, that's all.

Q. Okay, thanks a lot, Bob. I appreciate your cooperation.

The time is 1335, and that's the end of the interview.

A. I do recall before the towers came down, before the south tower came down, 21 engine pulled up next to me, and they took whatever cylinders and whatever roll-ups, and they took my search rope and whatever tools I had.

That was Captain Bill Burke, and then 21 engine made a left on Vesey Street going up towards Church. I don't know if he grabbed a hydrant or not, but that's the last I seen of 21 engine, and then I also encountered Jeff Giordano, because he was on foot. He came and took my Scott mask, my spare Scott mask, and that's it.

Q. What company is Jeff?

A. 3 truck.

Q. 3 truck, and he took your Scott?

A. Right.

Q. Anything else?

A. That's it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Okay, this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110475

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROY CHELSEN

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 18, 2002. The time is 1345 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER CHELSEN: Roy Chelsen.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Roy is firefighter first grade in Engine 28 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 28. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Roy, would you please tell your story in your own words about what happened that day from when you received the alarm.

A. We were actually sitting in the kitchen, the lieutenant and I, and we actually heard the first explosion. We both looked at each other, and we were like, "Oh, what was that?" It seemed like right after that the alarm came in and we were on our way downtown.

We took the FDR Drive down, and you could actually see the building pretty much the

whole way down. The whole three-quarters of the way up was engulfed in fire. We went down underneath the Battery Tunnel. We came up. It was still like flags falling. It seemed like it was very quiet. I noticed that Bob, the chauffeur, was kind of swerving around. Later on I heard he was going around bodies.

He dropped us off underneath the second bridge.

Q. The north bridge?

A. The north bridge up by the north tower. He dropped us off there. We looked up to make sure nothing was coming down, and we proceeded in. I think the revolving doors were kind of busted up, so I think we went through a window.

We reported to the command desk, the command post there, and we immediately started going up. They just said, "28, start heading up."

Q. Do you know what stairway you went up?

A. We went up stairway B. I believe it was stairway B.

From there on we really didn't hear too much transmission going on that I can remember

hearing. I had the nozzle position. I had no radio. But I don't remember the lieutenant telling me anything. Later on I heard that there were a lot of maydays and a lot of transmissions going on, but we didn't hear any of it.

One of the only transmissions I do remember hearing, because we were sitting on approximately the 20th floor, that there was another plane on its way. At that point we were still not sure that it was a plane that had hit the tower. There was some talk from the civilians coming down that a plane hit. The consensus was that it was a small plane; Never thinking it was a 737, whatever it was, 767, whatever it was.

We made our way up to 29 or 30. We were again resting again. All of a sudden just -- I don't know if the sequence is right, but everything went black, and all the power went out. There was just this rumbling. I felt like it went on forever.

I believe 4 Engine was with us, there was 28, and I believe 8 Truck was with us. We all just huddled into the staircase. We were

holding on thinking -- I'm a big person. I'm thinking the floor's going to collapse or the ceiling's coming down, but I thought that was it.

When the rumbling finally stopped, all of a sudden we felt this gush of air coming from everywhere. Just from every direction there was like wind blowing. What I heard later on, that was just the concussion of the air coming back up from tower two.

From there I believe we heard -- there was a chief that came down with a bullhorn, telling everybody to get out. I think he was from the 11th Battalion. That's what I'm hearing.

Q. He came down the stairs?

A. I think he was up a couple floors ahead of us. I don't know if he was with us the whole time. I know we were paired up with 4 Engine. 5 Engine was with us, but I heard later on that somebody in their company had a heart attack or chest pains.

Q. Yes.

A. They took him down. So I don't know who was with us the whole time. But he did come

down and tell us to evacuate.

From there it was just asses and elbows. We all just started running. I didn't even have my mask on anymore. We just dropped everything. Actually between 20 and 30, 4 Engine and ourselves kind of joined together there. So we dropped everything and started running down on 30.

We got down to 19 or 20, and I know there were some cops down there. We found some civilians down there.

Q. Port Authority cops?

A. Port Authority cops. I saw city cops. They had their masks on, but they had ESU uniforms on.

Q. Right.

A. They were all huddling about. Everybody was still coming down. We were kind of waiting, getting everybody together again. A friend of mine in 8 Truck told me, he said, "Look out the window. Tower two is gone." At that point nobody knew what was going on.

At that point we were coming down stairway C, I think.

Q. You went across?

A. We went across, yeah.

Q. Was stairway B clogged?

A. Stairway C, I heard -- stairway B didn't go all the way up or -- for some reason from 20 over, we switched.

Q. Okay.

A. Then I heard coming down they said stairway C is pretty well wiped out down there, so it doesn't go down. I think that's what I heard, because from there on we went B. From 20 down to 1 we went on stairway B.

Q. Okay.

A. We kind of formed a line for the civilians, and we led them down the stairs because it was pitch-black and it started to get smoky. We led them down, 4 Engine, ourselves and I believe 8 Truck again.

Q. Did the cops come down with you?

A. I don't know. I don't know. At this point it was just like I want to get out. I heard that tower two is gone. I said, let's just get these people and let's get out of here.

We all grouped together again, like I

said, and we started going down. We got down to the lobby. The lobby is like gone. There were probably 20 or 30 guys down in the lobby mulling around.

Q. They weren't trying to get out?

A. They were just -- no, no.

We went to where the command post was. We were standing there. Our officer was like, "Well, let's stay here." I kept saying, "Lou, I'm going to get out. I want to get out of this building." I said, "We can go out where we came in." There was a brick wall outside tower --

Q. The north tower.

A. The north tower. There was a brick wall. I said we can run along the wall and go underneath the bridge there and then shoot up West Street. He said, "Is everybody here?" I said, "Yeah, the company's all right here." With that we -- I think 18 Truck ran out with us, and we just hauled ass.

We got out and we got under the bridge. A couple bodies came down, flying down, just in front of our guys. We just got under the bridge and like, okay, it's safe, it's good. All of a

sudden we heard this huge explosion, and that's when the tower started coming down. We all started running.

We lost everybody there again. I don't know what happened. I saw my cousin. We gave each other a big hug. That's when everything started hitting the fan again. I heard some guys dove behind cars. I just kept running up West Street.

As soon as that thing hit us, I think it knocked -- I'm not sure what knocked me over, but I ended up on the ground. Like Sal said, it was completely black. Now I can't breathe. You start running. I'm out of breath, and I didn't have my mask. It was on the 30th floor. I just started choking. I couldn't breathe because I'm sucking all that shit in. Somehow I happened to see a fireman walking to my right. He had a mask, and I grabbed it. He helped me with it until we walked out.

Then two guys from an ambulance grabbed me. They started giving me water. They had me hooked up to an IV. But then everybody started running again, something about a major gas leak.

Q. That's what I heard. A chief said they thought there was a major gas leak.

A. I said get this thing out of me. I'm running again. I can't sit here. So they took it out. I'm running with my hand on my arm, and I'm running north again. We finally met up with the rest of the crew on West Street.

I've just got to say, on our way down we saw 9 Engine with that woman.

Q. Right.

A. We saw her.

Q. 6 Truck.

A. 6 Truck, I'm sorry. We saw 6 Truck. We also saw 18 Truck. I think they were on their way up to. We said to them, "They told everybody out of the building," and then they came with us.

Q. That's it?

A. Yeah.

Q. Wow, that's pretty good. Well, thank you, Roy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1455, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110476

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN KEVIN CRONICK

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF CONGUISTA: Today is January 18, 2002. The time is 1115 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Conguista of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Fireman first grade Kevin Cronick.

Q. Fireman Cronick is assigned to Engine 3 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 3. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Okay Kevin, could you please tell us what happened that day in your own words.

A. I arrived at West Street with the rest of the company, Engine 3, and we disembarked from our apparatus. We proceeded to locate over toward the command post, where I believe it was Chief Ganci was the Deputy Chief in charge. Then we were just assembling there for further orders. We just sort of hung around there while things developed and the Chief was just waiting to assign us a duty, you know, somewhere, which he hadn't made any decisions at that point.

As other companies arrived, it started getting a little crowded by the command post, so Lieutenant Walsh made us move to the adjoining building, the building adjoining the command post. We were standing fast in front of that building. I remember seeing Captain Brethel had approached us just to give us some words of encouragement and told us to make sure we all stay together and that we didn't get separated at that stage. Then he left us and walked back towards West Street and that was the last time I had seen Captain Brethel.

Then shortly thereafter is when I heard this loud rumbling noise and we looked up and saw that the building, or the south tower of the Trade Center was collapsing. Then we just turned around and took refuge inside the building we were standing in front of. The building collapsed. Then after it collapsed, once we felt that it was safe to come back outside again, we came back out to the front of the building and we recovered our equipment, whatever we could find, went looking for our officer and any Chiefs in charge and we all made -- we all moved around to Vesey Street. It seemed to be the focal point where everyone was gathering.

Then from that point, we had moved further down Vesey Street toward the river, because there was a fear of the gas mains possibly exploding, which was the way I understood it. That was it. We got down to the river. We pretty much just kind of gathered our thoughts and tried to get everything, all the companies together to find out who was missing and who was still with us.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. When the second tower collapsed, we were just down by the river I think.

Q. Did the dust cloud get that far?

A. Not really, no. It never reached that point. That was pretty much where we remained until we moved back into the area.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. That's correct. After the second collapse.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. After we left the river, we went back toward Vesey Street and we all stayed on Vesey Street pretty much for a good part of the day and then they wanted to get an idea of who was missing and who was still there. They proceeded to have all the companies join

up and have a roll call to see who was missing and who was still out (inaudible). That was pretty much all I can remember at this point.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGUISTA: All right. The time is 11:30. That concludes this interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110477

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JASON MCGIMPSEY

Interview Date: January 18, 2,002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The date is January 18, 2,002. The time is 1045 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Jason McGimpsey.

Q. Jason is a 6th grade Firefighter assigned to Ladder 12 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 12. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Jason, in your own words please tell us what happened that day from when you got the run to the fire.

A. We got the run. We went over there with one extra guy, who ended up on the rig there. We went over. I don't know exactly where we parked when we got there. Got out, and they didn't have an extra mask for me, so I had to go find a mask. I kind of got a mask together as we were going in.

Q. Where did you first report?

A. We first reported to -- we went into the building and we thought we were in the south tower

because there was a Chief there that wanted all the officers to report to him. He said he designated the building as the south tower, so I thought it was the south tower at the time. Our Lieutenant went over there and got our assignment to go to -- start at the 14th floor and work our way up and make sure everybody was clear.

So we got up to the 14th floor, started to work our way up and we just got to the 19th floor when the first building collapsed. We were --

Q. You were in the Marriott?

A. In the Marriott, yes. At that point, we were trying to get -- it was kind of chaotic, the lights went out after the first collapse. I was trying to get all my gear together and somebody yelled out just forget everything, just go down, just get the hell out of here. Go, go. So everybody just kind of high tailed downstairs trying to get everybody together.

Q. Were you with any other units or you were just Ladder 12?

A. There were other people that were with us, but I didn't know who they were or how they ended up there or anything like that. We got down to about the fifth floor. We couldn't get down any further. There

was debris there. So we were trying to figure out how to get out of there. We took like a corner room and there was another company that was with us, but I don't remember which company it was. We were trying to figure out how to get out of there.

We were going to have to single sign out the window, but the rope was on the 19th floor. We were thinking about using a hose line and we decided that wasn't such a good idea, so they said that somebody has got to go up and get the rope.

Initially I was going to get it because I brought the rope. So another guy, I was the junior man, so they wouldn't let me do that. Another guy stepped up and said he was going to get it. I was going to go with him and the officer said to stay here. We are going to go up and get it. The two went up to get the rope. As they were going up --

Q. Who is this, Lieutenant Petti?

A. Lieutenant Petti and Angel Juarbe. They went to get the rope and we stayed trying to figure out what we were doing. Tried to get in touch with the command post. We forgot before we went in there, they switched us to channel 3 and just because of everything going on, nobody thought to go back to Channel 1. We were

trying to get the command post. There was no answer. We were trying to get anybody to realize. There was no answer.

They had a Mayday come in for a guy from 4 Truck, Brennan, from 4 Truck. [redacted]

Q. Were you aware that the south tower had collapsed?

A. We didn't know actually what was going on. We weren't sure if those noises were -- sounded like another plane, bomb, something like that, but -- it just was a big, we didn't really know what was going on because we were inside the building and then walking around we knew it was bad, just from looking out. We could see just from out the windows and everything. But as they went up we found a way out through the debris down to the next floor down, so we were -- everybody started to go down.

As they were going down, one of the guys wanted to wait for them. He actually -- before we started down, the other guys radioed back. They got the rope, I believe, I think they got the rope, but they were going to go after the guy with the Mayday.

Everybody was going down to the fourth floor. One of the other guys, Mike Mullan, was going to go up and see to help them out.

Q. Did the guy who gave the Mayday, did he say where he was?

A. I can't remember if he did or not. [redacted] Mayday Mayday Mayday. Nobody was answering. So that's just the way --

Q. I was just curious.

A. They went to try and find him. As Mike was going back up, I wanted to go with Mike and one of the senior guys, he told me to stay next to him the whole time. I went up to him, I said look, maybe I should go with Mike. He said no, just stay with me and he went down and I guess it happened, the first collapse. I didn't see there was a couple of civilians that they found. So they went down and I just didn't want to leave Mike, I went to go with Mike.

So I told Mike I was going to go with him and Mike ordered me to go downstairs and just from that time, from the top of the stairs to the bottom I got to

the fourth floor and the second building had collapsed. Everything above our floor was lost in the cloud. Those three guys, they were lost in the cloud too.

From that point everything just turned black. I thought we were buried at first, so I masked up at first, because I don't know if it would be -- it was just everything just turned black so I thought I was buried. The second collapse was really bad because the whole building really shook and the noise -- it was -- it sounded like it was another plane. I was waiting for the fuselage to come in. It was so loud.

So after that, smoke -- the black started lifting and the light started coming through. The collapse had ripped apart the back wall of the stairwell we were on. So we were kind of like on a ledge of debris looking out once everything cleared up. We were trying to figure out how to get out. That's when I saw those three civilians were with us.

We were on the ledge. We were trying to figure out how to get out. There was a beam that was leaning against an I beam that was leaning against the building. So I yelled out to everybody that we got an I beam here. Not everybody heard me. So the guys that

heard me went over to the I beam and we brought one civilian down. We went down the I beam. It was really weird because at the bottom, there was nobody around and then once you started walking, you kind of ended up like there was nobody. So we just kind of walked out.

We all kind of got separated in the debris. I went out with three guys and down the I beam and we ended up meeting up on the west side by the water.

Q. What happened to the other two civilians?

A. The other two -- it got confusing, really, after the second collapse, it really got confusing. I know we brought the one down and the other ones must have been -- the other ones stayed with the other guys and it just got -- there was so much going on. The other guys didn't even come with us. They might have taken a different way to get down. I know one of the guys actually -- we weren't even sure of accountability, where everybody was. And I know afterwards everybody thought that I was still with Mike, so it was kind of confusing after that.

We came back. We were on the west side there. We had a little Fire Department boat pick us up, a two man boat. They brought us over to the Jersey side. I kind of got my bearings over there, made a

couple of calls, see if everybody was okay. Then once I got my bearings together, I hopped on a boat and came back.

Went back to the Manhattan side. The other two guys kind of just hung out back on the Jersey side. When I got back there I was trying to find -- I had been calling in, trying to find -- I was calling the Lieutenant and all the guys I wasn't sure about, trying to get in touch with them. Couldn't get touch in touch with them. I was looking for anybody in the company, trying to find anyone with the company, trying to find out what happened with the guys.

The company told us they thought because the senior guy that had me the whole time, after the second collapse, he didn't hear me yell to everybody for the I beam. I guess he went down -- at the time -- I didn't know everybody -- I thought everybody heard. He thought that I was upstairs with Mike still. So I tried to find him. Now I found him, just kind of got everybody together. Everybody figured out where everybody was at. We had accountability now. Told them the guys that were on the Jersey side. Then I ended up trying to stay. I stayed with the company for a while but my eyes got really bad after that.

I kept flushing them and I tried to stay as long as I could, but they put me in the hospital. That was it.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's all I can think of right now.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you very much. I appreciate your help. I'm trying to put this thing together. It's 11 o'clock. That's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110478

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC PHILLIP ASHBY

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. McCOURT: Today's date is January 22, 2002. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. Currently I'm interviewing Paramedic Phillip Ashby from Division 1.

Q. Can you just identify yourself please?

A. Paramedic Phillip Ashby, Division 1. Medication coordinator.

Q. Paramedic Ashby, can you tell me the events that transpired from your perspective on September 11, 2001?

A. Okay. At approximately -- it appears to be between 814 hours and 830 hours I responded from Queens to lower Manhattan for a plane into the World Trade Center. I got there --

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Myself. I parked my vehicle on what appears to be from this map, Broadway between Dey Street and Fulton Street. I ran down Fulton Street, where I immediately met the -- what I think was the first triage staging area for that operation.

I met the now Captain Olszewski, Lieutenant D'Avila. Who else was there? Bill Melarango, Lieutenant Bill Melarango, and a number of EMS personnel. We were doing triage in that area, in front

of the Millennium Hotel, actually at the corner of Fulton and Church.

We were doing triage, treating a number of patients. It's hard to count now, maybe, I guess probably say altogether maybe 40, 50 patients. Just triaging.

Q. What were you seeing?

A. Seeing a lot of burns, couple of sucking chest wounds. Just mostly burns, multiple burns. At that time I really didn't see anybody jumping out the building, although I heard people that have seen that. I didn't see any, because I was too busy working. I was looking up actually, because there was nothing for me in front of me to see when I looked up.

While there I couldn't quantify the time, to tell you exactly how long, but I heard a large scream. Then I heard a couple more screams simultaneously.

Q. People screaming?

A. People screaming, and I just ran. I didn't look around. I didn't -- I just ran because you have been around these buildings as long as I have, you recognize a real screams from a fake scream and you realize something that if somebody is screaming that hard, it's something coming out of the lower abdomen

that you just can't fake. It's just scared to death. I just took off.

Q. Which way did you run?

A. I ran up Fulton Street, stayed close to what would be considered the south side if you will, on the right-hand side of Fulton Street, if you are going east on the right-hand side of Fulton Street, next to the Millennium. That's when I turned around and I saw the building collapsing.

Q. You saw it collapsing?

A. Right. Well, about 3 strides until I run I actually turned around to see what I was actually running from after the fact. Not trying to get -- stop, making sure that I wasn't running from nothing at all, that I was running from something. I looked up and I saw the building lean over and that's all I saw. I just turned back around and tried to run even faster, but I stopped because where I was running to, the plume of smoke had already engulfed Broadway going north.

Q. So you were running into it or --

A. I was running towards Broadway, but it made no sense because it's like a wave, like water going down a canyon. That plume of smoke was just already coming down Broadway. I just, you know, said just -- I

stopped. I looked and I said that wouldn't make much sense. I'm going to run into what I'm trying to run from. I turned around and the plume of smoke just as high as this building was, coming at me from the corner of Church and Fulton.

Q. Behind you?

A. Right, just coming around the corner of Church and Fulton. So I just -- I tried to run into the building. To the right I think was a bank or something, right on the corner there. I'm not too sure. But the doors were locked, so I really tried to go to the left a bit. By that time it got so dark and I was so overcome by the soot and the pulverized rock, that I just laid next to the subway station, which would be right here. Right there is the subway station.

Q. Where is that, indicate it?

A. On Fulton and in the middle of -- about a third of the way up Fulton if you are coming from Church on the left-hand side.

Q. Heading towards Broadway?

A. Heading towards Broadway. I stopped by the subway station. Not wanting to go down in the train station, because I realized that if I was going to die,

I wanted to die above ground as opposed to being trapped and suffering and knowing that I was going to die anyway. I wanted it to be quick. I didn't want to go down to the subway station and wait to die down there, because I really did think that I was going to die. There was no two ways about it. I couldn't see anything.

About two or three minutes of sucking in what I would consider to be -- when you think about, it would be something like throwing in your mouth powder and just trying to breathe as somebody throws powder in your mouth. That's essentially what it felt like to me. I mean there was no way you can salivate enough to get rid of it. It just kept on coming down.

Q. Was there anybody with you or you were all by yourself?

A. By myself. By myself.

Q. No other civilians around --

A. No. As I'm laying there ready to die, I can't see anything now because of my eyes -- somebody pulled me and they pulled me up. I guess someone just came out of the Millennium Hotel or even the bank across the street and he is feeling his way, but he is in a better position than I was, obviously, because he

was not in the initial plume of smoke. He pulled me up on to Broadway and right between -- on Broadway between Ann and Fulton Street. Right (inaudible) or something like that over there on the corner. He pulled me into there.

That's when I was able to get some water and dust myself off and all that good stuff and really just consider myself fortunate. Just hacking up the dust for like an hour, two hours later -- I mean, you know, soot the color of this table here, which is cherry oak, cherry wood, for like an hour and a half. Actually more the color of that. More the color of that. A cross between these two. But whatever pulverized rock looks like, you know, I was coughing it up for about an hour and a half.

Q. Was there any debris field there also or was it just all of the soot and the dust and everything? Was there actual building material that came down?

A. By me, no. Well, let's put it like this. If there was I couldn't see it. I don't know if there was or there wasn't. But if there was I couldn't see it. All I know is that that was the only thing that was in my lungs. I know that I was limping after the fact, but the reason I was limping was not because anything

hit me, because I pushed off so hard on my right leg, that, you know, I almost fractured the thing. That's what I think. I mean I have heard stories about -- fear is something else. It really makes you really do.

Q. Fight or flight.

A. Exactly, and you don't really examine it so much as -- I pushed up so hard on my right leg that there is no doubt which leg that I had left the scene with. It was just a very remarkable thing. That's it.

Q. What happened at that point after that, did you go back to the --

A. [redacted]

So I thought somebody launched a missile from the East River, or over the Hudson to knock it down. I mean that's what I'm thinking. If they are, if they are still out there to launch another missile, I got to get the hell out of there, because we were in a war zone right, exactly. I didn't think -- I didn't go and try to figure out my high school physics or my college chemistry to figure out, you know, the fire and the brick and the melting and the boiling point.

Q. Going back to when you were coming, did you see the building on fire, could you see the state of the building while you were responding?

A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, it was something that was -- it was just -- (inaudible).

Q. You knew going in, you knew what you were going in for.

A. Yes. I knew. Put it like this. I wish I knew what I was going into. I saw what was happening, but it didn't compare to what I was going into when I was there. You know, the devastation was just something that being on the job for 13 years and like I said, being in the last bombing and being in train disasters and everything disasters, nothing could compare to what happened that day. Nothing. Nothing.

I hope nothing else, in my lifetime anyway, comes across like that either.

Q. By the time of the second collapse, were you still there?

A. By the time of the second collapse, I was at Pace. Right, I was at Pace.

Q. Pace University?

A. Pace University. I'm trying to get out of there again and as I'm trying to walk towards, not the Brooklyn Bridge, because I figured that would be another historic location for them to attack or launch a missile. I was trying to head towards the Manhattan Bridge and take my chances there. So I was at Pace and then -- actually I was walking towards the bridge when another building came down and I ran into Pace.

Because by now, you know, you don't need anybody to tell you what is happening. You know either -- I don't know if the second building came down, but I knew something with the same magnitude happened as happened with the first building that I saw. I ran into Pace and, you know, people were crying and everything else. I was just trying to just suck wind. You know, I went into (inaudible).

I was just bent over and trying to -- where

they keep the food warm, just trying to get at least some semblance of air into my lungs, which was already congested from all the soot. Just bend over with that refrigeration device under my nose, you know, because at that time I was just trying to get any kind of air I possibly can, because I knew that, you know, just from a physiology standpoint, everything was so thick with gook. They don't do lung transplants. So I kind of figured whatever I can do to help, it was on my own.

When that scenario calmed down and a lot of the plume of smoke went away, I came out of Pace, again, still not knowing that the building collapsed, thinking that somebody launched a missile and trying to get out from -- and I came over the Manhattan Bridge and came back here --

Q. To MetroTech?

A. MetroTech. Got treated at BHS. Then I went back, because that's the only way I felt that I could bring some kind of closure, because now I was fully briefed on what happened.

Q. You knew what happened.

A. I knew what happened. There was no doubt and I didn't think that going home would be the place for me to actually bring closure than coming back and

actually helping with the rescue or whatever it is, anything that I could do, would somehow bring me, being able to talk to somebody who was actually there. Not somebody who wasn't there. That's not what helped me, because unless you were there, you just can't imagine it.

That's what happened. I went back to the location. I spent another couple of hours late at night and then I went home. I came back the next day.

Q. How is your leg?

A. After three or four days it's fine. I mean I knew I was hurting. I figured, you know, listen, all in all there is nothing to complain about. Nothing to complain about. I'm walking. I stopped coughing up the soot that was in my lungs. Everything else is like I said, is a plus. I wasn't hanging out dangling.

Q. Anything you want to add that you might have glanced over?

A. Nothing. I mean the picture of me in Newsweek. There is a picture of me in Newsweek. That's it. A picture of me and Carlos.

Q. Carlos?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know where Carlos --

A. Didn't you see the picture? That's me bending over treating a woman.

Q. You were with Carlos right before --

A. Well, that's what the picture said. Did I see Carlos and know Carlos ran into the building, I can't say any of those things.

Q. You weren't focused --

A. Right, right. He wouldn't have to go into the building to have died in there. He could have died right there in that corner. It was not extraordinary to die. You can die right there in that corner. That picture, you know, placed him -- photographing the woman who I had taken off that chair. She just looked bad, and I put her on the curb, but she just looked bad. I mean she was not --

Q. Is she the one that was all bloodied up?

A. Exactly. I saw a picture of her actually in Time Magazine on the curb where I put her. That's if she's alive. I don't know if she is even alive today.

Q. You don't know her name?

A. I don't know her name. All I knew is I took her off that chair, I put her on the curb because that chair needed some real work, because she was not as bad as she looked. She was frail.

Q. Is that when you were doing the triage --

A. Right. Exactly right. That's where we were all doing the triage on that corner. Then I think Lois, who was a coordinator for Brooklyn, said that Ricardo Quinn's wife said that his hand was in that picture, because she recognized his bracelet. I don't know. She asked me did I see him, I said I don't know. I couldn't tell you who I saw. All I saw were the people screaming at me, which was Olszewski, because, you know, they were telling me that listen, you worry about patient care, you worry about triage. As a medic, you get involved in patient care, not triage. They ought to be giving you triage.

That's what I was involved in. So that's about it.

Q. Okay. Is that it? Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it.

MR. McCOURT: The time is 8:40. The interview started at 8:25. This concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110479

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER ROSIE

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 22, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg, Fire Department World Trade Center tasks Task Force currently at EMS Battalion 13. The time is now 13 hundred hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Peter Rosie, EMT, Battalion 13.

Q. This interview is being conducted regarding the events of the morning of September 11, 2001. Peter, you can begin.

A. My girlfriend woke me up and told me to turn on the TV. I live on Second Avenue and 9 Street. I saw that one of the towers was on fire, so I went up to my roof. Figured I would just get in the way, didn't want to go, you know. Then I saw the second bird hit, so then I knew I better get busy. Threw on my uniform, jumped on my son's bike and went directly to Bellevue. I was there like in 3 minutes.

They threw a radio at me and I was on 06 Ida with a partner. I didn't know the guy. Jagoda. His name is Jagoda.

We took off directly from there and headed down Second Avenue. I remember passing my apartment. Got on to Canal and then shot down Broadway and ended up at City Hall Park. That's when we had patients

coming towards us. I had no idea that the tower had came down at that time. I thought the debris and everything that I saw, you know, was from the fire. So I didn't have any visual of the tower coming down, but apparently it was coming down, because we got there at around 10 o'clock.

Then with all those patients coming at us, I was trying to triage like 5 people at the same time. 3 police officers, two female officers, I didn't know what was wrong with them. They were pretty hysterical. A male police officer with a cardiac condition and a male with his arm badly lacerated. He was bleeding pretty bad.

So I patched him up and there was a couple of other units there. We volunteered to take these patients on and I'm trying to see -- so I get them on the bus, you know, and start giving 02 to the cardiac condition. Everyone was pretty hysterical and I didn't get the story because I heard collapse, but I would never imagine that the whole tower came down. I just figured well, things had -- obviously -- would fall from the tower and that's how this guy got this trauma to his arm and he was going into shock. I tried to calm down the police officers as best as I can.

One of the female police officers just jumped on the stretcher, so I was holding on to the guy with the -- he was my main concern. He had the cardiac condition. I gave him O2. There wasn't much I could do other than that, take his blood pressure and monitor him, but I was concerned with this guy's arm, because it was barely attached.

So we shot to Bellevue and when they opened up the doors to Bellevue, just an army of people in scrubs. They were just terrific, you know, grabbing people left and right, triaging them, sending them to their respective areas. Went back to the station, hosed down the bus because it was a mess with the debris and BBP, as best as we could, restocked O2 and then shot back down.

Then I believe we got to Church Street and during this time -- I mean I have thought about it, you know, during this time, when we first -- that first time, when the first -- when the tower went down, I had no idea and we were off the site before I got any details, so I figured the second tower had collapsed as we were returning back to Bellevue with this person -- load of patients.

Then the second tower had collapsed by the

time we arrived at Church Street and Barclay. I remember, because I believe this is World Trade Center 7. This is tower 7 here?

Q. That's the Post Office. 7 is -- yes.

A. 7. So it was right here, Barclay. There was much more debris.

Q. Barclay and West?

A. Barclay and West, yes. It was just dead quiet. At that time there was pretty much -- out of control was -- everyone was just trying to get their bearings at that time, you know. So the Lieutenants I did run into, he tried to get everyone around and take names. That's the best thing we would could do is just get a good idea of who you had with you right there.

But then we had -- there was an individual down there who seemed like he was just like wandering around and so I went and got him and he just -- he was out of it. He had breathed in a lot of the dust and -- I guess he was an EMT, but he was kind of like on his own type of thing. He had his kit bag, you know, and his badge, but more or less, you know, he got out of there. He was pretty much out of it.

Q. That was down by Vesey?

A. Vesey and West. So we transported him. We

transported him to Beth Israel. Hosed down the bus again and made our way back to tower 7. We were here, then we were on this street. What is this? We were on Murray Street and --

Q. Let me get my other map.

A. Greenwich. Murray Street and Greenwich. Murray Street and Greenwich. The World Trade Center 7 had collapsed at that point. I can remember asking, because we had visuals before we left and then I had asked somebody, who was it, is it going to collapse and they said probably tomorrow. But on our return it had gone down too.

At that point we made our way to the staging area, you know, and became the -- what do you call us, we were the unit next to the -- what is the trailer where they take --

Q. The MERV?

A. The MERV. We were the hot something.

Q. Okay. The hot unit.

A. The hot unit, right. We were just transporting firemen back and forth all day. That was it.

Q. Okay. When you got up to the Bellevue station, do you remember about what time you got there?

A. You mean the first time?

Q. Yes, yes. You left your apartment and went to Bellevue.

A. I was at Bellevue at 9:40.

Q. Okay. When you came down over by City Hall Park, you had said that there were some other units there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember --

A. I believe.

Q. -- who they were?

A. I believe it was a Presbyterian unit.

Q. Cornell?

A. That's it, and a Hatzolah unit.

Q. Okay. The fellow with the arm injury, he was a civilian?

A. Yes. I actually got his picture in Time magazine. Not Time, but People magazine. It was funny, because I went to Barnes and Noble. I don't mean to get off track here, but it was pretty amazing to see my picture in there and the guy who I transported. If anything, during that -- if I think I made a difference, it was maybe that first run, you know. I'm sure I made a difference all day, but that

guy, he was pretty beat up.

Q. So from City Hall Park you went back up to Bellevue?

A. Bellevue.

Q. You came back on the next trip, your next trip in, and you were on like West and Barclay?

A. West and Barclay and then we were -- West and Barclay and we might have -- West and Barclay, not Barclay. Sorry. I was wrong. That's too close, because this was up in flames. Okay. So it was Murray Street.

Q. Murray Street?

A. Murray and Barclay. No. Murray and -- what was this again?

Q. This is Greenwich.

A. Murray and Greenwich, and from there everyone was trying to get their bearings, trying to figure out. At this point we didn't know where the staging area was, the main staging area.

Q. Right. The EMT that you were talking about that was by himself with the tech bag, was he a Fire Department employee?

A. No, I believe he was private, because he had that type of private badge, you know, the blue, the

fancy blue one, looks like a detective. He just had a bag full of collars and I wouldn't take him for city.

Q. When you got up here --

A. Oh, when I got here, then I ran into my partner Jason Charles. I believe you are going to have an interview with him.

Q. Yes.

A. I looked and I saw a fireman and -- but it was Jason wearing a fireman's jacket. Have you spoken with him?

Q. I haven't.

A. I saw him and I was really happy to see him, you know.

Q. He is on our list.

A. Yes, I saw him. He has quite a story to tell. I saw him and he gave me some aspirin, because breathing all this stuff I got a pounding headache, you know.

Q. Do you remember who else was down in this area of Greenwich and Murray from EMS or the Fire Department?

A. A Lieutenant Murphy.

Q. EMS Lieutenant?

A. Yes. Lieutenant Murphy.

Q. Would you know where he is stationed or ever see him before?

A. No, no. I remember his name, because later on that night, it must have been 2:30, he grabbed me and he said that he had 8 New Jersey busses, bright shiny busses from New Jersey. We are in the staging area and he wants them at Battalion 4. You know, with the lights and the road block and all this shit that's going on, I'm like okay, let me get my partner. He is driving. No -- forget it, you take them. So like, I remember, what is your name sir? Because here I'm with 8 busses and I've got to get them to Battalion 4.

I mean I live down there, but getting through this maze. So I was pretty stressed out by then, because I'm thinking I'm responsible for all these. I'm on my own in this bus and to get them to 4. Please let me find -- I was looking for Canal. Not Canal, Houston. I found Houston. I knew what to do from there and I got those busses at 4. I'm like here you go, thank you.

Now what do I do. Do I go back to Bellevue. Do I go back to the staging area and try to find my partner. So I said shit, just go back to where I came from. Just getting back was a bit of a challenge, you

know. On my own I think, like I'm listening to the radio and trying to get the big picture of what really occurred. It was weird because I didn't really have the full story, you know what I mean.

I got back and I found him. Once again we were -- then for the rest of the night we were there. I'm glad I got my partner back, because he would have wondered where the hell is my partner. He would have been stuck down there. I'm just glad that I was given that task and I completed the task and I got back and I found my partner and that was good.

I know you are more interested about what the occurrences at around 11 o'clock. So, sorry.

Q. No problem. No problem. Aside from Lieutenant Murphy, when you say your partner, you are talking about Jagoda?

A. Jagoda. He is Battalion 8. He is Bellevue.

Q. Anybody else down in that area that you remember seeing?

A. Around 11 o'clock?

Q. Yes. Well, when you were back here at Greenwich and Murray?

A. No.

Q. He was the only one?

A. He was the only one.

Q. How about?

A. Jason Charles is the only one that I recognized and that was -- I don't know what time that was. That was like on my third return back from transporting. I saw him you know. I couldn't give you any names. Really there wasn't that many EMS, you know. Hatzolah. I saw a couple of Hatzolah units and a New York Cornell, but I didn't see much Fire Department EMS.

I think because -- I believe there were mainly a lot more around the staging area, weren't there? You probably have a lot more knowledge than I do.

Q. Yes.

A. Compared to -- because we came in from this direction, at a fairly late period, you know. I think. So much I'm sure had gone on before all this from the time that the first bird hit and people were trying to get organized and here we are whizzing down just before it collapses, you know, from this direction. Didn't see much activity here, you know. Except for the Hatzolah and the Cornell.

Then it was so good to get to the staging

area eventually and see more EMS and ambulance -- what's going on.

Q. Right, right.

A. I was like, I was trying to do ACRs on all these people, do you know what I mean? I was like damn. There was -- you couldn't talk on the radio.

Q. The radios were down or just too much?

A. Too much traffic. I figured and I'm sure my partner figured, if you don't have anything really important to say, don't say it.

Q. Okay. Anything from that morning that sticks in your head particularly or any comment you would like to add?

A. On a personal note?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I was in the British Army for six years and I had two tours in northern Ireland. I had been familiar with explosions going on in Belfast. I was an NCO. It was weird because I thought I had left all that behind me. That was something that kind of no one knows about. There is no way you could really explain it to anyone unless you were actually there, you know.

Then this -- it's really horrifying over there, because it's not that big and it's more

intimate. There is a lot more to deal with. There is a lot more you can deal with compared to something like this. Then for this shit to happen, it was like kind of odd like -- I think I was a little bit more -- I was prepared. I was pretty focused. I stayed focused.

But it was strange because I was still not really awake. I jumped on my son's bike and got on that unit. Here's your partner. Here's your radio. Boom. We are going down and it was weird because we had such a clear avenue of approach. The police were just waving us on and we were shooting down there and seeing everyone come the opposite direction, so it was very surreal. It was like what's going on. It was like let's get there you know.

It was actually a good feeling, you know, that traffic control was so good. That people were being -- people were leaving the area and we did have a good avenue of approach. We were able to get there at a good speed. So it was good. We got there and I'm sure that first load of people, the police officers and the guy were happy to see us. I was just pretty proud of everyone you know.

So that's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 1320 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110480

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MELVIN RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 2212 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, title, shield number and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

EMT RODRIGUEZ: My name is Melvin Rodriguez. My badge number is 2267. I'm an EMT for the Fire Department, and my unit was 15 David tour 2 that day.

Q. Melvin, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. In your own words could you please tell me the details of the day?

A. The details of the day were I was supposed to go home at 7. Somebody banged in sick. I had to work overtime. I worked the unit called 15 David. We had a job. We took somebody to Our Lady of Mercy. I noticed there was something wrong when I got to the hospital and

there was nobody in the emergency room, because everybody was in front of the TVs in the emergency room outside in the lobby.

Somebody in the emergency room said your lieutenant, Angel Avila wants to speak to you. I picked up the phone, and he says, "What the heck are you doing? I need you -- you've got to be 63 to the World Trade Center. A plane hit the World Trade Center."

So we got our patient signed for by the nurse, and we went down to the Henry Hudson Parkway and went all the way down to Manhattan.

Q. When you were driving on the parkway, could you see the Trade Center at all?

A. I wasn't driving; my partner was driving. I was teching that day. As we pulled up to Manhattan, they told us to switch to the Manhattan frequency because we were on citywide. As we pulled up, we heard a lot of screaming on the radio. Somebody was calling, "Mayday! Mayday! The first one just went down."

We were down by Stuyvesant High School. There was a lot of dust. Everybody was picking up injured people covered in white soot. We had

a fireman -- there was a walking wounded facility across the street by Stuyvesant High School and we had a fireman that was covered in soot, screaming. He opened his eyes and you couldn't even see his eyeballs because he was so covered in so much soot. We took him to the walking wounded. We rolled him up. There was a ramp there, an elevator. We took him up there.

We went back down to our bus, and the lieutenants had us stay by Stuyvesant High School.

Q. When you say "we," who are you referring to? Your partner for the day?

A. My partner was Dwight Scott.

Q. Dwight Scott?

A. He was here in the 15th Battalion. Yes. That's his regular unit.

Q. That's his regular unit?

A. Yes.

Q. When you arrived on the scene initially, can you just indicate on the map that I provided for you approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. We were on the west side. It might

have been Barclay or Murray. It was around there, by Vesey, pretty close there, or maybe Barclay might have been it. I'm not sure of the street. It might have been Barclay; Barclay, Murray or Vesey. It might have been -- I think it was Barclay, yes, because it was right by the Stuyvesant -- wherever the Stuyvesant High School is, it was across the street from the Stuyvesant High School.

Q. Okay. Could you just indicate with a number 1 approximately where you think you parked the vehicle?

A. I think I was parked around here.

Q. Thank you.

So now you arrived and this firefighter --

A. We arrived. We got this firefighter. We wheeled him upstairs. They had a gym up there. It wasn't Stuyvesant High School; it was on the other side of the West Side Highway.

We took him up there, and other people in the medical role took care of him. We went back downstairs, and everybody was trying to use the phones to call home and say they were okay.

It was like a line there. All the phones were down. Communications were down.

We had no idea it was two planes. We had no idea it was terrorism. There was no communication. We just knew there was one plane. There was still One World Trade Center building standing, and it was on fire.

When we finished with the fireman, we were around Barclay or Murray. They might have made us move back. There was a gas scare. I don't remember the time frame, but everybody started saying keep your ambulances away from manhole covers and sewers. Somebody yelled, "Everybody run for lives. There's a gas main leak. There might be an explosion."

I got separated from my partner because everybody was running. An ambulance went by with broken windows and the back doors open. I jumped in the back of that ambulance. We ended up going by the Chelsea Piers.

I really don't remember if that was when the second one came down, because to be honest with you it was so chaotic. I just remember little bits and pieces of that day. I

don't remember everything in a sequence.

I remember the second one coming down, and we just stood there in shock. We were like, oh, my God. Everybody said, oh, my God. We had no idea this was going to happen, because we didn't know there were two planes. Me and my partner didn't; I don't know about everybody else.

There was no communications. I didn't find out there were two planes and this was a terrorist act until 18 hours later when I got home and I put the TV on and my wife -- because I called my wife as we pulled into the World Trade Center. I told her what happened. I love you, a plane hit -- she put the TV on, and then she found out it was two planes. After calling her, she saw the second one. She saw them coming down. So they thought I was killed.

So when I got home, she was crying, and we hugged each other. I finally took a shower because I had all this white stuff over me. I put the TV on and I realized, oh, my God, this is terrorism. We're at war. I thought this was an accident.

There was no communications. Everybody was so busy running around. A lot of us didn't know what was going on. That's why they say, oh, they were stupid, nobody should have been there, they should have known. Nobody knew nothing. We were just busy trying to help people. I didn't know it was two planes. To be perfectly honest with you, we still would have helped them, because it's only natural to want to help people.

That was the devastating thing about this. When the second one went down, we went in. You're expecting hundreds of people to be injured. You're going to help people. It was a dead silence. Everybody was dead. There was nothing but body parts all over the place. It was a helpless feeling. You're all pumped up to save the world, and there's nobody to be saved. Everybody's dead.

That's really what the shocking part about all of this was. The dead silence, the helplessness, the frustration, even guilt of being a survivor. You knew when you saw that second one come down all those people and the firefighters and everybody was dying. You

couldn't do nothing. You were helpless. That's what really hits you.

After the second one went down, they said there was an ambulance and the lieutenants were telling us not to go in. I remember telling my partner, "Listen, this is bullshit" -- excuse my language -- "We've got people in there trapped. We're going in there."

So six guys. I said, "Anybody got any balls, get in the back of my bus." There was supposed to be an ambulance called 19 something, and nobody heard from them. They were supposed to be behind the apartments over there by Battery Park.

So six guys jumped in my ambulance and said we're going in, we're going to call this operation our guys. We're going to get our guys out of there. We went in there, we found the ambulance, but there was nobody in the ambulance. Hopefully they got out.

Then we came back. You wanted to do something, and you couldn't do nothing. Everybody was dead. It was just a helpless feeling. It was just a helpless feeling.

I just kept on working overtime down there. I worked the morgue 18 hours my next pass day. In the beginning when you worked the morgue, it was a tent by the American Express building. We, the EMS people, we had to go through the body parts.

You know, you get a body bag in and expect a body. There were no bodies. They were bags. We had to open up those red bags with our hands. Of course we had gloves on. And you had to go through those body parts, looking for anything to associate that remains with a member of the service, whether it was looking for a littleblue thread, a piece of equipment. I did that for 18 hours, you know, and it was rough.

I remember the respect the coroner showed by ordering tables. They didn't want to be putting body parts on the floor, treating anybody with disrespect. That's something I remember, the respect they showed for the remains of all those people.

It was just a horrible situation. I don't know how else to describe it. It's just been a horrible situation. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Q. [redacted]

A. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Q [redacted]

A. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

It was just a horrible situation. I don't know how else to describe it. It was like living through hell. It was a sad, sad day. I don't know how else to describe it for you.

Q. I think you've done a pretty good job.

A. I thought I had seen a lot of horrible things in my life. In 13 years in the Bronx, I've seen the worst of everything as far as mutilizations, picking up body parts on a highway, 200 pieces, a guy run over by a tractor-trailer.

But working at the morgue and picking up hands with wedding bands on them, knowing that they belonged to some loved one and picking up torsos, wallets with pictures of kids. Those were Americans, you know, decent people who died innocently. It was pretty tough.

It's also brought the good out in people, and I think people are closer to God and people are -- I think we got too -- in this country we got too comfortable where we were so bored with our being -- having a balanced budget and living so good that we were so bored we

started fighting amongst each other: Your color is different than mine. Let me start with you. Or your religion is different. And this woke us up a little bit.

People say we got caught with our pants down. We got caught without our pants even on. You know what I mean?

I don't know how else to say it. It was just a horrible thing. But it brought a lot of good out of people. More people are going to Church now. I appreciate everything I have now, things I didn't appreciate: coming home and seeing my dogs in the yard and them licking me and seeing my five-year-old son. All the things I took for granted then I don't take for granted anymore.

I don't know what else to say. I just hope all those people that passed away are happy in heaven and at peace with themselves. I don't know what else to say.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview in regards to 9/11 up till about maybe 2:00 in the afternoon?

A. Up till 2:00 in the afternoon? It's

hard to get things in sequence because of the severity of the situation. It's like a horror movie you saw in, not slow motion, but fast speed. Your adrenaline was flowing. Sometimes bits and pieces come to you that you don't even remember. I'm like, oh, I remember that now, because your mind blocked out some of the things that were so horrible.

I remember when I was a kid I used to get the paper with the little drops of candy and you would bite the candy. I remember in the morgue picking up a face, just a piece of skin with teeth on it like that. The things you saw down there were horrifying.

Thank God now they don't have to do that. I remember the three people I worked with the first time I worked in the morgue, they had to be relieved. They couldn't take it. So I was there all by myself. I just tried to think these are families, people that were loved and they were good, decent people and somebody has to do this. If I could do it and show respect for their remains and treat them in a respectful way, I'm going to do it. That's the least I could do

for these people, besides pray for them.

I remember the priest saying prayers over them before we even opened the bags. Everybody that died in the World Trade Center, their remains were treated with respect. They had a priest pray for them, for their last rites, for their souls, that they didn't suffer.

And I think the families that don't know that should know that, that there was nobody who had a family member's remains treated disrespectfully, without prayer, without respect, and I think that's very important that the families should know.

If I could do something, I would want that to be known, that the families know that we treated their family's remains as though they were our own families, from the coroners who ordered those metal beds so nobody would be put on the floor to the priest there that prayed over the remains.

I think if there's one thing I could tell the people of New York is that their family members' remains were treated with respect and dignity. Maybe that will bring them some solace

in this whole sad situation.

That's all I can say.

Q. I thank you very much for conducting this interview.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 2230 hours. The counter on the cassette player is 484

File No. 9110482

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT NELSON VELAZQUEZ

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force currently at EMS Battalion 14. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT VELAZQUEZ: Velzaquez, Nelson, from Battalion 14 in the Bronx, Shield No. 372.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Interview start time will be 1308.

Q. Lieutenant?

A. On September the 10th, I worked the Tour 3, evening tour, in the Bronx. I proceeded to stay on for Tour 1, which is September the 11th, the night tour. I worked a double shift. Sometime around between 5:00 and 6:00 o'clock in the morning, when I arrived home, this was probably about the time when I went to sleep, and during the morning of September the 11th, I thought I was dreaming when I was hearing sirens and a lot of noise and commotion. The location where I was sleeping at my girlfriend's house has a view of the West Side Highway and West End Avenue on the lower east side, 62nd Street. My girlfriend turned on the News Channel 1 and she woke me up and told me that an airplane just crashed into the World Trade Center. So when I woke

up, I looked out the window and I could see what looked like hundreds of fire, police and different types of emergency vehicles heading south. It looked like there was no other traffic on the highway or on West End Avenue going south. There was a lot of commotion on the street and this is far north of the actual event.

So I immediately put on the same clothes I worked on the double and I ran downstairs and I got on my motorcycle and I went in my personal vehicle and I rode down to near Warren Street where there's a College of Insurance and that's where I parked my bike, in the middle of the block between West and Warren going -- I don't know the name of the street that's eastbound.

Q. That's Greenwich.

A. Greenwich, between Greenwich and West, and I started walking south on West when a cloud of smoke started to come in my direction. I believe the first building collapsed probably by the time I was parking my bike on Warren. As I started to go west -- I mean south on West, I started encountering a lot of people running in my direction. Some of the people I recognized as fire and police and mostly civilians. I noticed that the smoke started to settle and it was basically a stream of dust, and I remember grabbing one

EMS person and stopping her from running because she seemed kind of dazed and lost and I noticed there were vehicles in the cloud and I held her and I said, hey, it's already collapsed, you don't have to run anymore, and she was like frantic, like don't go over there. She was terrified. So there was an ambulance and a crew that was covered in dust and I just led her to them and they proceeded to deal with her, I guess. I told them to do anything just to keep her occupied, but I didn't want her to run any direction.

As the cloud started to settle, I went south, and there was like an overpass, a pedestrian walk, close to a building that was on fire. Apparently from the time I left my house to the time I got down there and parked my bike, a second aircraft had crashed and the first building had collapsed. There were people everywhere. It was total chaos. There was equipment all over the place. Basically, there were units coming in from a lot of different directions, private and EMS, and what I was trying to do, I met up with -- I somehow found an EMT by the name of -- now I can't remember, from Jacobi, Battalion 20, Fuentes I believe his name was or Flores. I can't remember.

Anyway, between me and this EMT and a couple

of vehicles, we tried to set up like a staging on West up against the sidewalk. Eventually, because of the dust, we had to move north about two blocks, and before we knew it I had about seven units and about twelve people. There were mismatch units, civilian, FDNY units. The communications was impossible. There was a lot of radio chatter and poor reception. So basically I had these units that we were already treating people. We didn't even get a chance to make ACRs. We must have treated about 30 people with respiratory problems and eye irritation. We tried to have them standing into the wind so that the wind could give them some fresh air.

A few minutes after, then the next building came down. I didn't expect it to come down. It was a total shock. It was a very terrifying feeling. There were people crying, people were dazed. I didn't run when the second building fell because there were still too many people, and I didn't have any of the people move the vehicles because I was afraid they might run people over. So it's kind of stand fast, and the smoke and the dust came by like a wave, and then we started trying to regroup again. We stayed there for a couple of hours, we treated a few people, then we wound up

moving north into the gym of the -- I think it was the medical college or Bronx -- Borough of Manhattan Community College, the gym on the second floor, and we started treating patients, we put out the mats, we started trying to dust people off before they came into the building, and we were treating quite a few people there. I noticed there were a few Bronx units from Lincoln. I remember Mr. Perez. I remember seeing Burgos covered in ash. They assisted me for a few minutes. Then there was a call to evacuate the school gym because somebody said there may have been a gas leak. By then we were already set up with school security staff. We set up hoses to hose people down just before we had to evacuate the building and we moved about another block north. Most of the vehicles, including the MERV, I remember, were south of Vesey or near Vesey.

During this chaos, there was a water truck, a Poland Springs water truck that was down there, and me and a couple people managed to go down there and take about ten bottles of water and we brought it to where we were at the staging we set up north of Warren, closer to the college gym, and we were irrigating people's eyes. Most of the people just wanted to

leave. A couple of units transported a few patients.

We stayed there for a couple of hours, just gathering every unit that passed by me, I stopped them to see if they had a purpose or where they were going. Most of them didn't know where they were going. They were just coming in from all over the place. I held them for a while, monitored the radio, and they would ask for a unit. Apparently there was another staging southeast of me. I'm not exactly too sure. I think it was on Church. They were asking for units and I sent a few units in that direction. Once I saw that the units were not being utilized where I was, I sent them to the pier on, I believe it was 23rd Street Pier.

Q. The Chelsea Piers?

A. The Chelsea Piers seemed to be like an assembly area. So I sent quite a few units over there because they were not being utilized. But the period of time that we were at West Street near the college we had a treatment center and there was also a staging.

After those units were sent north to the Chelsea Piers, I went south, where the command post was. Apparently I stayed there for a few hours assisting any way that I can. I believe there was a school, a public school they were using as maybe a

command post, and there were a few units there and I was directed to control those units and supervise them for a little while. It seemed like the sun was already starting to go down. I was supposed to go back to work at 1300 hours on the 11th for my Tour 3, which I never made. I wound up staying down in Manhattan for the rest of the tour until there were quite a few resources. I remember seeing a few chiefs.

Anyway, then from there I went home and that was basically my tour. My evening tour I stayed down there instead of my battalion.

Q. You parked your bike here on Warren, right, between West and Greenwich?

A. Well, I can't see the name of the street on the map.

Q. This is Greenwich.

A. Yes.

Q. And you said you had started coming down south on West?

A. On West.

Q. And you had said that you encountered the female EMT that was out of it --

A. Without a partner or a vehicle.

Q. -- and another ambulance crew that you put

her over with them?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where that was?

A. Roughly, I think it was near Barclay.

Q. Down around Barclay?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you recognize the crew at all?

A. I remember the female. I don't know her name, but I think she was from -- actually, I think she used to work in Jacobi. I think she works out of Bellevue now.

Q. That was an EMS crew member?

A. An EMS person.

Q. You continued south, roughly this first covered bridge?

A. Right where the bridge was.

Q. Between 3 and 6 Trade Center?

A. It looks like it's on the northbound side of West by 6 World Trade Center.

Q. And that's where you tried to form up a staging area?

A. Well, that's where I was encountering a few more people, but the scene wasn't safe. There was still a lot of smoke and dust and I believe these

adjacent buildings were on fire and there was still a lot of emergency vehicles coming in these areas and they were sort of blocked in. So we went up towards Barclay.

Q. So you were basically taking units that were already in this area --

A. They were coming from every direction.

Q. -- and brought them back towards Barclay.

Do you remember seeing any other EMS officers down there that you recognized?

A. Not initially. After the second building collapsed, a while after, and before -- I'm not sure if it was -- was that 7 that collapsed, the third building?

Q. I think so. That came down late. Well, not late, but like 5:00 o'clock in the evening the same day.

A. Right. Well, I remember when that one came down, I was at the command post that was I guess between Vesey and Barclay and there were quite a few supervisors and chiefs and a lot of fire suppression personnel. But most of my activities were a little bit north of that command post because we had to move several times.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thank you. The time is now 1323 and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110483

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NAOMI NACIONAL

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 14 in the Bronx, conducting an interview with --

EMT NACIONAL: Naomi Nacional, EMT 5228 shield.

MR. RADENBERG: Naomi is currently assigned to EMS Battalion 14. This interview start time will be 1417 hours, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Naomi.

A. I was outside Bronx Lebanon Hospital on the concourse when I heard on the radio station first before the announcement went over the radio saying that a plane crashed into the twin towers. At first I thought it was a joke because the radio station does a lot of things like that in the morning. My partner was like, "Oh, my God, listen to this, what happened."

Before we knew it, we heard the announcement over the radio. In a few minutes they assigned us, which is very strange, I

thought, because we were all the way in the Bronx, which is just kind of weird. We didn't hear them calling anyone else.

They called our unit, 14 Charlie, and we started heading down there. I was working with Julio Marrero. We took Second Avenue all the way down. I remember driving towards there and I remember seeing all the smoke. As we got closer, I just see the towers, and it looked kind of scary and stuff.

We actually got a call that was on a corner, not actually responding to the MCI. It was for a cardiac on the corner. I'm pretty sure it was something along the lines of Liberty and Trinity, that section over there. But we had a call.

I remember when we got there there was just so much chaos and commotion. There was no way we can find a person with a cardiac condition on the corner. It was just impossible. So we tried to explain this to the dispatcher. Them not knowing what was going on, they were just telling us, well, then come back to the Bronx.

We saw a lieutenant on the scene, and

we pulled up to, I would say Vesey and West. It was not in front of the towers on the left side but somewhere adjacent to where you could look and you saw them right on top of you.

We pulled up on the scene, and there were all kinds of people, fire trucks and everything. We saw the building on fire right above us. I stood in the bus, and the lieutenant on the scene was informing us where to go.

My partner got out of the vehicle and was speaking to the lieutenant, and I was trying to speak to the dispatcher, because she was telling us to come back to the Bronx. I was telling her that the lieutenant on the scene was telling us to come out and help out.

All of a sudden I heard this noise that was just horrible. I would say it sounded like a gate rattling or something like that. I look over at the people, and I go to look up. But I was sitting inside the ambulance, so not realizing that there's no way I could see. I saw nothing, but I heard it. Then I looked back, and I saw that almost everyone was gone. It was just like in a second I looked and no one was there.

So I got out, and I started running, because everyone started running. That was when the second tower collapsed. It was right at the beginning of the second towers collapse.

We were running, and I got completely separated from my partner. I didn't really know where to run. All of a sudden it was like a beige snowstorm. All these people were running and asking for help. I didn't know what to do. I didn't have any equipment. I didn't have a helmet. I had nothing. I remember that the stuff was burning my skin because I had short sleeves on because it was still warm then.

I leaned up against the wall and I covered my head, and all the dust and debris engulfed everybody. This one guy, he was a big guy. He was about your size. He jumped on me for me to help him. I didn't know what to do. I think he broke his leg or something because his leg looked all weird.

There was no way I could help him, because I'm not that big in comparison to him. For him to jump on me for me to try to try to carry him away from there was just not happening.

I remember I fell to the ground because he jumped on me. I leaned against -- I felt for the wall, and I leaned against it. I couldn't see anything. I don't know why -- I don't know if it was psychological or anything, but I couldn't hear anything. I don't think that I was deaf, but I think I blocked out whatever it was and I couldn't hear anything. I was just trying -- I put my face in my shirt to try to breathe. It was too late. It was all covered up.

Eventually it seemed like a long time, but I don't think it really was. I started realizing what was going on. It was just weird. I got up, and I was walking around and looking for anyone from -- any PD, any fire, fire guys, and I couldn't find anybody. I just found all regular civilians that were running to me.

It was to the point that I was so nervous because I couldn't help them. I wanted to either take the shirt off or doing something, because they were just asking me what to do and I had no clue.

I forgot really what happened. I know

I was in a bank. Somehow I was in a bank. I found my partner there. I walked right up to him, and I tapped him on the shoulder and he was like, "Oh, my God, are you okay? What happened?" I was like, "I don't know."

Then we were getting people into the bank. This woman was having an asthma attack, and we couldn't do nothing because we had no equipment. So I was basically just watching her really suffer.

Then after that I don't know what happened. It was like a lot of gaps and whatever.

I remember when the second tower came down, stuff kind of fell around me. I leaned against a wall, and there was stuff out here, to the right and to the left and in front of me. I stood in there for a while. When I came out, it was like -- I must have been really close to the towers. You didn't realize when you were running or when you were walking if you were going in the direction of the towers or away from it, because all you saw was -- it was a fog.

What I'm thinking, I'm pretty sure I

ran towards the towers instead of away from it, because I saw -- when that one collapsed, I saw less amount of people and more of the people I saw were people that were on the run, not really responding, or stuff like that.

I got out of wherever I was in, and I saw -- when all the debris was flying through the streets, I saw this one guy and he was helping a whole bunch of people. He was in a CVS. I think that was two or three blocks away. I had run a distance. He was helping all these people.

[redacted]

I thought it was kind of funny because I saw these firemen and cops running in there, and he was saving them. Some guy from the street that we underestimate, and here he is now like almost a hero, a regular guy.

I was in the CVS. There was a whole

bunch of cops in there and firemen in there. Eventually we got out of there. Somehow I was in a gym. I remember being in a gym where there were actual weights and stuff and people.

I found this one kid that I knew from -- he was in Battalion 46. His name is Chris Londel. He is now I think in a photography unit in Metrotech from when I last heard of him. He helped me out a lot. He gave me his helmet. He looked after me. I never really knew him.

I just saw him once, and we just recognized each other. It was like this unspoken thing that we just wanted to stay near each other, because we knew that we were or whatever.

We went around trying to help out people. We took -- it was weird, stuff like bananas and tried giving them to people so they wouldn't get nervous. I don't know what we were thinking. It was kind of strange. I was sticking with him.

I found this other guy. His name is Charles. I don't remember what his last name is. Or maybe that's his last name. I just remember Charles. He's from Battalion 16. I saw this

other guy, Carlton Smith. He's from 46 or 50 or something like.

It was just a crazy thing. I saw all the firemen, and they were all having this look on their face that they didn't even have to think about it. They just had to do whatever they thought was right and they didn't even know if it was right, just like complete look of doubt and belief at the same time.

As far as the towers, I don't really remember looking at them after that because you couldn't see anything. I just remember when I actually did turn around it was kind of stupid to me. I kept thinking to myself I always see in horror movies the girl will be running and turn around. Why does she turn around? What is she looking at? Keep running. I turned around and looked, and I thought why did I do that?

That's basically what I remember. Eventually I kept walking towards the highway, and I found a lieutenant. Supposedly she said that I was real out of it. It was just basically I was real tired. I wasn't hysterical or anything. I never really cried from the whole

thing. Fortunately I didn't lose any immediate family members and so forth.

Q. When they gave you the job for Liberty and Trinity, the cardiac, when you were coming -- when you were heading downtown, did you reach Liberty and Trinity?

A. Yeah, we reached it at some point, and then we -- I don't know if we turned around, because all the streets were completely like -- you couldn't even tell. There was just private ambulances, all kinds of fire trucks.

Q. Jammed up?

A. Yeah. I remember being at the point and saying there's no way we can find anybody. There was just mobs and mobs and mobs of people. There was no way we were going to get out and look for somebody. It was obvious we had to either find a lieutenant and ask them what we should do or whatever.

I remember being there. My partner was driving, so I don't know if he went down and turned around up Trinity and then made a left on Vesey, because I know that we weren't on the left side; I'm pretty sure that we weren't. I think

that's what happened.

Q. Was it at Liberty and Trinity that you found the lieutenant?

A. No, it was somewhere around Vesey that we found the lieutenant.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. No.

Q. Do you remember any other EMS units that were with you at this spot there?

A. Actually we didn't see many EMS units at all in the beginning. When I saw them was all after the buildings had collapsed and they came in. The beginning when we pulled up, I think I saw one. I don't remember what bus it is. From what I heard, I think only two ambulances were really destroyed, and I think one of them was the one I was in.

Q. The unit you went down there?

A. Yeah. It was bus 311. I don't remember any other buses that were there. I remember seeing one command car and one other ambulance.

Q. So you were on roughly Vesey and West. West Side Highway or -- this is actually West

Broadway.

A. I'm pretty sure it was West Broadway.

Q. West Broadway?

A. Yeah, because I don't remember seeing the highway. You know what I mean?

Q. Right, right.

A. I just remember seeing more and more buildings.

Q. So you were over here at Vesey and West Broadway when the first building collapsed?

A. I think so. I'm pretty sure.

Q. Do you remember roughly where you were when the second one collapsed?

A. I don't think I was that far.

Q. You were still in the area?

A. Yeah. I think I was only maybe not that far at all, like maybe Church and Vesey, because I had run, run, run, and then I went back to look for my partner or whatever I was doing with people and stuff. I think I ran the other way.

Q. Kind of back towards it?

A. I think so, yeah.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. I don't know what else to say. I'm just really sorrowful for all the loss, and I'm sorry for all the firemen. I just remember like their faces and stuff. The reason why I have this job is because I wanted to be a fireman since I was a kid. It was just strange. I don't know. As far as the World Trade Center and stuff like that, I don't really know.

Q. That's okay. No problem?

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1432, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110484

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KAREN LAMANNA

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 1448 hours. I am currently at EMS Battalion 14 conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC LAMANNA: Karen Lamanna, paramedic out of Battalion 14.

MR. RADENBERG: And your shield number, please?

PARAMEDIC LAMANNA: 1620.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Karen, if you would give us when you were assigned to the job.

A. In actuality I wasn't supposed to be working then. I was on overtime. I normally work 3 to 11. The day before I had signed up -- I had signed up for overtime originally on tour 1 the day of the 11th or the day of the 12th. But an opening came up for tour 2 in the morning, so I decided I'd take that. I like working tour 2. Anyway, I wasn't supposed to be here. I would

have been home.

Anyway, I came in. I got here about 7:00 in the morning. I was told at that time I was supposed to be riding a paramedic unit, but one of the paramedics didn't make it in. So they decided they were going to put me on a BLS unit, an EMT bus, 14 Mary in lieu of 14 Young, which was my normal unit, which is what I would have been normally working.

So I worked with Freddie Burgos and myself. We went into service, checked our vehicle. We went around the corner for a quick cup of coffee. We had just finished that, literally, and we were heading to our area. We got called on the radio, "14 Mary, switch over to citywide. We'll be sending you a standby." Okay. That was nondescript as much as possible.

The job came over. It came over as a possible explosion -- I think it was a possible explosion. Anyway, MCI at the Empire State Building. That's how we got the job originally. So we immediately switched over to citywide, told them we were 63, which is en route for the job, and off we went, flying like crazy to get there

because we knew that it was going to be something major it was going to be the Empire State Building.

While en route, before going over the Third Avenue Bridge, I was listening to the mate chitchat going on over the radio, the 12th and whatever else was being given. I looked at my partner and I said to him, "You know, this doesn't sound like the Empire State Building; this sounds more like the World Trade Center." Sure enough, 30 seconds later when the job comes over it's the World Trade Center.

At that point they thought possibly a small plane had hit the World Trade Center. They didn't know what tower at that point, or at least we didn't know what tower at that point where we were. So we went, oh, boy, that's going to be something major.

So anyway, we continued on. We headed down the FDR Drive. About halfway down the FDR Drive -- the traffic was getting very heavy. Everything was being shut down. About halfway down, all of a sudden we heard screaming over the radio, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, there's another

explosion, there's another plane." My partner and I looked at each other and went, "Oh, my God, we're in trouble now."

We continued down the FDR, and we got to the point where about a half a mile before the Brooklyn Bridge exit we were stuck in major traffic trying to get through. We were able finally to see the towers. All we saw was a lot of thick smoke, some flames.

We looked at each other and said this can't be happening. We felt like it was in a dream, that it was totally surreal. I'm like, okay, time to wake up now. Time to wake up. Needless to say, we weren't dreaming; we were awake.

Trying to fight our way through the traffic, with the help of the Police Department and all, we managed to get off the exit there for the Brooklyn Bridge, but we went down through the side streets.

I said to my partner, "I'm familiar with Manhattan somewhat, but when you get down onto the little streets like in the Wall Street area, it's like a maze." He said, "No, I pretty

much have an idea where going," because we were looking for the staging area, which at that point one of the staging areas was listed as Liberty and West, if I'm not mistaken. So that's where we were going to go.

We zigzagged along and went through all kinds of streets. Along the way a couple times we got flagged down, the people that were injured and had already made it away from the trade towers. But at that point there were so many private ambulances and volunteers and everything else that we decided, look, they can handle whatever comes their way right now. We need to get to the staging area. We're always told to go to the staging area. So there we went.

So we futzed around. We got lost a little bit here and there. Finally we saw an AMR ambulance, and he was zipping along. It looked like he knew exactly where he was going. We said let's follow him, and we did. He did know where he was going. We ended up coming out onto West Street. I'm not exactly sure where we came out originally, probably around Rector or thereabouts, because I know it stops. West

Street eventually stops and becomes a park somewhere.

So we came in right after -- like if you went from that direction, it would be from the park. Further down would be this street we came out on heading towards the World Trade Center on West Street. I think it was around Rector, but I'm not exactly sure.

We came out there, made a right-hand turn towards the World Trade Center. We went down past the first Marriott, coming from that direction.

Q. Roughly heading north now? Heading back uptown?

A. Right, yes, I was heading towards the World Trade Center. So there's a Marriott, then another building, something called like 72 Post or something like that. Then there was a little street, and then there was a steak house, Morton's steak house. Then there was another building, and right next to that building was I think Liberty, because the first overpass is there. Then on the other side, directly on the other side of that, is the second Marriott that

went down along with the World Trade Center.

Q. Yeah.

A. So when we first got there and pulled into the area, we were just on the other side of that walkway, that first walkway. So we were sitting pretty much in front of the Marriott, the second Marriott, the one that went down with the World Trade Center.

Q. Okay.

A. It was total chaos. When we first pulled up, there was dust and things burning all over the place already. There was just totally a lot of debris. Everybody was running in different directions trying to get equipment and everything else.

I don't remember seeing a lot of civilians at that point. I just remember zoning in on all the emergency personnel. I know that when we first drove up we were running over body parts. That much I remember.

But we decided at that point we needed to find a place to park, somewhat safe and out of the way and in case we needed to get out of there quickly. We needed to get our equipment and get

going towards the major scene.

So I backed up, and I ended up on this little -- it isn't there anymore now. It was like a little island per se. It was made out of cement, and there was some grass on it and things like that, which was right behind -- coming back now, right behind the walkway, the above, overhead walkway.

Q. Right.

A. First we parked there. There were a lot of other ambulances and fire trucks and everything around there. I don't know if you want to call it woman's intuition. I don't know what you want to call it. But I said to my partner, I said, "You know, maybe we should find someplace else to park. Maybe we'll wind up getting stuck in here. We need to maybe pull out a little bit further in case we need to get out of here in a hurry."

So we looked around real quick and we saw a spot that was open at the corner right in front of Morton's steak house right in front of that little street. I don't remember the name of the little street that was right there in front

of Morton's.

He's like, okay, I'll back you up into the spot. So he jumps out of the vehicle. We backed up into the spot. I no sooner throw the vehicle into park, I'm just throwing it into park, and the noise started of the first tower coming down.

It was the most horrendous noise I ever heard in my life, and it's even hard for me to explain now what it sounds like. I know I've heard people describe it as thunderous. I'm sure it was thunderous. It was just many different things.

So I started screaming at Freddie, "Get in the bus." I didn't know what was going on, but get in the bus. "Get in the bus! Get in the bus! Get in the bus!" He jumps in. We start to roll up our windows. Before we know it, it's completely black.

It's not like any darkness I've ever seen as far as at nighttime or anything. You couldn't see anything. There was no daylight. You couldn't see anything out of the windows at all. All we could hear is everything falling on

top of the ambulance, the hood and on top.

I started to panic a little. I'm like, "Oh, my God, what are we going to do? Let's get out of here." Freddie is like this and that, "You just stay calm. Calm yourself down. We'll be all right. Take a few breaths." I started to calm down, somewhat, as much as I could, but got my head together a little bit.

I said, "You know what? I'm going to put it in reverse. I'm going to see how far we can get out of here," because I didn't like the way everything was piling up at the ambulance. I figured any second something was going to come flying through the windshield.

So I did. I put it in reverse. But I really went slow. All I had to really do was lift my foot off in order to move a little bit, because I didn't want to take a chance that somebody even in the darkness was running behind us. Then I really would have felt bad.

So we went as far back as we could, and then we weren't going anywhere else. So obviously I had hit something. So I put it into park, and then we just sat there and held each

other's hands and just waited it out.

The noise finally stopped. It took a little bit, but it started to become daylight. I just remember saying, "Oh, my God, look at this. This is awful." I took a split second to look over to where we had just been parked, and if we hadn't moved the ambulance we probably would have been dead, because there was huge, huge beams and girders and everything else sitting right where we were. I could see there was an ambulance in front of us, somewhere in front of us, that was on fire a little bit ahead. It was just like everything was crushed and mangled and covered with that big white, gray dust.

We decided let's get out, let's get our helmets on. We hadn't even gotten that far yet. Let's get our helmets on, let's get our equipment, and let's get out of here and get to safety and see what we can find as far as patients along the way or whatever.

We no sooner jump out of the ambulance when one of the EMTs that I know from the Bronx drops right in front of me. I'm like, "Oh, my God, Eddie." He was in extreme pain and

everything. I'm like, what happened? He's like -- he doesn't know. He's totally in shock and out of it. He's screaming, "My arm and my back."

At that point I just scooped him up. We ran around to the other side of the ambulance. We sat him on the side of the ambulance for now until we could figure out and get our heads together and get helmets on and everything. He's complaining of his arm and his back. I looked at his arm, and I could see it was obviously broken.

In the meantime as we were doing all this, one of the EMTs from the AMR bus that we followed in came running over. I don't know who it is or was. He came running over and said, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, I can't find my partner. Have you seen my partner?" I'm like, "No. Who is your partner, number one. Number two, we're not even thinking that far yet."

I have one of us in front of me, and we're trying to get our equipment together. Something just happened. We're not exactly sure what happened. We're not seeing it like the people saw it on TV. We just knew there was a

noise -- I mean, we could surmise approximately, but we didn't really know, because we were so close that we still had a lot of buildings in front of us.

So he's freaking out. He's running all over the place. Then another medic from up here in the Bronx, Joe Jefferson, I ran into him. He had been separated from his partner. So he had very little equipment on him. So we took his equipment, what he had.

Mind you, I didn't go out as a medic that day. All I had was a monitor and a tube kit. We took the monitor and the tube kit and what little equipment he had, and I think we had the trauma bag on us too. Yeah, we had the trauma bag. But nothing as far as drug bags or anything like that or anything with syringes. What did we do with the trauma bag? You know what, I don't remember if we had the trauma bag or not.

Anyway, we just threw everything on the stretcher, and we put Eddie in the stair chair. While we were doing this, another I think he was an EMT from Hazollah, a volunteer, came running

over. He had been separated from his crew. We were like a rag tag bunch.

He said, "You know what, I'm going to go over to that building," pointing to I think it was 72 Post or whatever it was called, right next to the Marriott, "I'm going to see if it's safe in there."

By the time I backed up and everything, we were sitting in front of the Marriott pretty much, so it would have been the next building over. So he went running in, and he came back and said it looks safe, as safe as it can be. Who knows. We don't know what's going to happen now, this, that and the other.

So we just grabbed everything we could, grabbed Eddie and wheeled him over. We went into this building and took a really good look at him. It was like there were other people there, civilians and stuff from different places that had run into there, I guess, during the first collapse.

So we took a look at him, and he was really saying, "I'm really having a hard time breathing. I'm really having a hard time

breathing." By this time we were able to do a somewhat more complete assessment on him.

We splinted his arm, and we took a look at his back. He had a huge hole in his back on the right side. We made an occlusive dressing and put that on. He kept saying as time went on, "I'm really having a hard time breathing on the right side."

So Joe and I looked at each other and went, oh, God, this guy is going into pneumothorax and we don't have the equipment here to be able to do anything about this. I'm thinking, Jesus, he's going to die right in front of us and there's nothing much we can do. There's so much we can do when we don't have all --

So at that particular point we had made the decision, all of us, that we were going to move farther up towards the park, towards Battery Park, for two reasons. Number one, we weren't sure if we were completely safe where we were. Two, we had to find an ambulance or something to transport Eddie out of there.

So I took the stretcher full of

equipment. Joe took the stair chair with Eddie Martinez. My partner -- along the way we seemed to manage to find this big barrel, a tub, whatever, full of water. We said we're going to need that, not only for drinking but to irrigate eyes and whatever else.

So he's dragging that. I'm taking the stretcher full of equipment. Joe has the stair chair with Eddie, and off we go. Joe and Eddie were in the front, I was in the middle, and Freddie was in the back. We were all scattered. We were all about a quarter or half a block apart, but they're small blocks down there.

Q. Right.

A. So at one point I left the equipment because I wanted to go back and see how far back Freddie was to help move him along. In case he was having problems, I could deal with that and then we could switch off, so on and so forth.

So I went back and couldn't find him at first. I didn't know where he was. I'm like, all right, he'll catch up, type of thing. I didn't want to leave the equipment too long because the monitor was there. I don't know,

whatever. I'm thinking more about the equipment at that particular moment. So off I went back to the equipment.

I no sooner get back to the equipment and I go no more than five feet, and the noise started again, the second one coming down. Of course I didn't know it at the time, but here it was again.

At that split second -- right after that I look up. Now the stair chair is empty, and Joe and Eddie are gone. I don't know where they went to. In that second they were gone. At that point I look around to see if I can see Freddie again, and all I see is this big mountain of debris and smoke and everything coming towards me. I'm like, screw the equipment, I'm running, and off I go as fast and far away as my legs would take me.

I'm looking for someplace to duck in. I couldn't find anyplace to duck in. There was nothing really there. This stuff is really right next to me. It was really right behind me at this point. I had to make a decision to do something, anything.

All of a sudden out of the corner of my eye I saw a black Jeep with its headlights and brake lights on. I went over really quick, and it's under one of those buildings that cut through from one street to another. So it was only like a little underpass.

Q. Right.

A. I couldn't get in the car, so I just stayed next to it. At that point it was all over me. Everything was on me. I couldn't see, I couldn't hear, I couldn't breathe. This stuff was so thick that I was breathing in I thought, oh, God, I'm going to die. I said, I'm going to die here alone, how nice. That's what was running through my head.

It felt like forever, and every once in a while I would squeak out "Help," just so I could hear another human voice. I'm not hurt per se, but I didn't want to feel like I was totally alone. Of course no one answered me because they couldn't hear me, because I couldn't hear anything and I couldn't see anything.

I don't even know how much time went by. It took a while. It finally started to

dissipate just a bit, and I screamed out "Help" a couple more times, and I finally got an answer. They screamed out, "Where are you?" I'm like, "I don't know. Over here." I didn't know where I was. "Over here." He said, "Follow my voice." I'm like, okay.

I'm searching with my eyes again so I don't bump into anything. It's still pretty dark. I finally bump into him, and he's a firefighter from FDNY. I couldn't tell you who he was, to this day. I wouldn't know him if I tripped over him now. He was there.

Q. Right.

A. He said, "Okay. Follow me," because by that time now it's daylight again. It had dissipated. We just started walking out of there together. It was just a total mess. I mean, the debris -- the level of dust and debris was inches thick like a snowstorm, like three, four, five, six inches deep, whatever it was. Just the debris and fire and everything all over the place and people screaming and yelling and running.

I was having a hard time breathing. I was having a hard time seeing because everything

was in my eyes and in my throat and in my mouth and everything.

We walked a little bit towards the park, and we came across this truck that said FDNY command center. So we figured it was a good enough place to check in to. By this time the radio's going crazy. We couldn't get a word in edge wise, and they couldn't hear me. I tried to go over the air to tell them I lost my partner and whatever.

Not that anybody was really interested, only because they kept saying get off the air everybody, not to me but to everybody, because they wanted to make sure they got the important stuff through.

So we went to the command center and knocked on the door. A firefighter let us in. The first thing I said to them was "Are we safe in here?" He shrugged his shoulders and "I don't know." I said, "Well, that makes me feel so much better."

He was like, "Where are you from?" I said, "I'm from the Bronx. I work out of Battalion 14. I lost my partner, I lost my

vehicle, and what do I do now?" He was like, "Hang out here for now until we figure something out." I kept saying to him, "Well, are we safe in here?" I'm thinking, Jesus, I went through this twice. I can't go through this anymore. He's like, "I don't know." He was honest. He didn't know. I'm like, oh, all right, it still doesn't make me feel any better.

So then about a couple minutes later he said to me, "Well, I hear they're setting up a triage area." I'm like, "Okay, where?" He said, "Over at the Staten Island ferry terminal." Okay, where is that from here? I don't know that. I don't know Manhattan very well. He said, "Up a couple blocks or so into the park, in that area, Battery Park." I'm like, "Okay, just point to me sort of where, and I'll go. I can't stay here."

So he sort of gave me an idea. I said, "Well, thank you very much, and I'll find my way," because I just couldn't stay there. I didn't know what was going to happen, if something else was going to happen. Plus I needed to go where I knew EMS would be as far as

being able to help someone else too and so on and so forth.

Off I went. I got about a block and an ambulance went by. I'm like banging, "Wait, wait, wait, wait for me, wait for me." I'm screaming, like a stupid thing. They finally stopped, and I jumped in the back. There's a doctor and a couple of EMTs. They were off to find a baby with asthma. Where they're going to find this in the midst of all of this, I don't know. I'm like, all right, whatever.

So we ended up going another block or so as far as distance-wise, and we ended up near -- the vehicle stopped, the door opened, and there was Jerry, Jerry -- he's one of the division ALS coordinators -- Bacchus, Jerry Bacchus.

So the door opens, and Jerry Bacchus is standing there. I'm like, "Oh, my God, Jerry, thank God. Thank you. A face I know." It made me feel a little bit better to see somebody that I actually knew, because by this time of course I had been separated from Freddie and all the people I had been earlier. I didn't know where

anybody was.

He jumped in and started pulling things out and whatever. I was having a lot of trouble breathing, so he put me on a nebulizer treatment, because my pump just wasn't doing a thing. I have a little bit of asthma, but it only acts up when I get sick. So I did that.

In the meantime Chief -- a chief was there too. He used to work out of OMA. Now he's over at downtown -- at Gouveneer, Battalion 4.

Q. Hirth?

A. Huh?

Q. Hirth?

A. No, not Hirth. He's an older gentleman. He's at OMA. He's a newer -- he just made chief like right before that. He was a captain.

Q. Oh, Steffens?

A. Yes, Chief Steffens. That's it. Thank you. Chief Steffens.

He was there too. I had only known him from just OMA because I went there once. I saw him. He was trying to coordinate things. There were just a few of us here and there. There

weren't a lot of us at all. There was only ten of us, maybe, give or take; a couple of medics, and I think the rest were pretty much BLS.

At that point we started getting a lot of people coming towards us as far as having difficulty breathing and stuff in the eyes and everything, so we started treating for that. Then it was decided we would start putting people on boats and get them out of there.

So we were doing that. We were putting whatever we could on boats and just sending them wherever they were going: Staten Island, Jersey City, Jersey, wherever, just to get them out of there, because we didn't know what was going to happen even next.

While we were doing that I remember hearing a plane flying overhead. I'm thinking, oh, my God, not again, not again. I looked up, we all looked up, and there were F-16s. I was like, oh, my God. We were in trouble then. Okay, that's a first, F-16s flying over New York.

Anyway, we eventually got most of them off onto boats, that came to us, anyway. A lot of firefighters wanted to be treated, and they

went right back to the scene. There was just no way of keeping them out.

I also ended up running into Chief Brown, Bobby Brown. He and the person he was with were just walking aimlessly. I don't know where -- I think they might have been headed for the terminal eventually, but maybe not. Who knows. They were like in shock like the rest of us.

So I explained to him that I was with Chief Steffens over there in this port. There was a big port. I just remember the big port, a big circular port.

So we ended up spending a few hours there. Probably about 1:30, 2:00 in the afternoon some of these cell phones started coming back up again. People were able to get out a couple of calls. So I called my girlfriend and let them -- to let her know that -- she was hysterical. She knew I was down there. She could feel I was down there.

Q. Woman's intuition.

A. So I just told her -- I told her I was okay, I would get back in touch when I could, and

I gave her a few numbers to call to call people, because I didn't want to tie up the lines. That must have been around 2:00 in the afternoon.

Then about an hour later we finally -- all of us moved over because people started -- there wasn't anybody else really coming to us in that particular area anymore. So at that point we picked up and we moved everything over to the ferry terminal, and we spent the rest of the day there.

We didn't have too many people coming. We expected a lot of people. But as you know, there weren't that many people coming out, some rescue workers who had minor injuries, lacerations and things like that. Throughout the day, I had just some difficulty breathing and all. I had to go back on the neb a little bit.

Most of the time it was just sitting there in a trance like almost, just like shock, trying to take this in but not really understanding. We heard little bits and pieces on the radio that was in the ambulance. We found out that the Pentagon had been hit and supposedly they were looking for four other planes or

something. There was a whole big thing that they were going through. So we only knew bits and pieces.

Then around 4:15 or so, 4:30-ish? I don't know. Something like that in the afternoon is when seven went down. We couldn't see the building itself go down, but we saw all the debris and everything kicked up and the smoke kick up again. I went to someone and said what happened? They told me they heard on the radio that seven had just gone down.

So we were there just all day. I didn't get out of there until close to midnight. I didn't know anything about Freddie. For the most part I had been asking people all day. No one had seen or heard from him. Finally I ran into Chief Villani at 4:00 in the afternoon, and I was explaining to him that I was upset, I didn't know how my partner was that I came down with that day and everything.

"Who's your partner?" I told him who he is. "Oh, I saw him." I'm like, "Did you see him before or after the second collapse?" He said, "After the second collapse." I said, okay,

that means he's okay. He was doing the same, he didn't know about me type of thing.

So around midnight -- well, before that they were sending people out little by little. About midnight my turn came up. The problem was I had no vehicle. I had no way of getting back up to the Bronx. So what happened was I got transported to Battalion 4. From there I managed to hitch a ride to Bellevue. From there I hitched a ride to Metropolitan. From there I hitched a ride to Harlem, and from Harlem to Lincoln. I mean, the crews were really nice about it. They went a little bit out of their way, but it was extraordinary circumstances.

Q. Right.

A. So I didn't get back to the station until close to 12:30, quarter to one. I was just covered from head to toe and everything. I was afraid to touch my hair that it would fall apart, because it was so brittle. I ended up -- I had to take off all my clothes and stuff before I went home. I ended up just putting like a hospital thing on. I was like, whatever. I finally got all that done, and I headed on out of

there after 1:00.

By that time I had already spoke with Lieutenant DeSantis. He upset me a little bit during the day because at one point when I finally got -- those were the two phones calls I made. I made one to my girlfriend Lisa and I made one to him at 2:00 in the afternoon.

He gets on the phone and he's like, "Where are you?" I'm like, "I don't know exactly. I think I'm somewhere in Battery Park." I said, "I can't find Freddie. I don't know what's going on. He said, "Well, this is what I want you to do. I want you to find your partner, find your bus, and bring them back up so I can put them out as a line unit."

I'm like, "What? Do you hear me? I don't know where Freddie is. I don't know if he's dead or alive. I don't think I have an ambulance left." I said, "There's no way," and whatever. So I was a little upset about that. He didn't even bother asking me if I was okay.

I spoke to him later in the day. He was apologetic. He's like, "I'm sorry, I hope you're okay." I said, "Have you heard from

Freddie?" He's like, "No." "I'm just telling you right now, I'm letting you know I will not be in tomorrow. I only need one day. I'll be back. I just need one day. I need to get my head together and whatever and maybe do some -- CSID or something."

So the next day I went to CSID. I took the day off. Then I came back on Thursday the 13th. Of course they kept me for overtime, so I worked a double, so on and so forth. Then I went back that weekend, because I wanted to try to get some closure. I got a little bit, but how much you can get? I had to try to make peace with it a little bit. I ended up catching pneumonia, so I was out a little while with that.

It's just funny how your minds works and the things you think about or don't think about. I remember when I jumped out of the vehicle and found Eddie and brought him there but then the bus started to make a funny noise, because all this stuff got sucked into whatever systems.

So I went back to turn it off, and I made sure I turned the battery off. I locked up

the doors. I remembered, oh, my God, my backpack, should I take it? I'm going to take it. I took my backpack. I threw it on my back. I had that on my back all day.

It was just weird how you go through certain motions. The vehicle, as far as I'm concerned, was all locked up in the front. There was a lot of damage to the hood and other places to the vehicle. That was done -- that was between the two collapses. I didn't know what had happened after the second collapse. As far as I knew, we didn't even have a vehicle. Although that thing has nine lives. It came back again. We're not in it anymore. That was enough of 448 for me.

Although I do have one souvenir of that day that I don't leave. You know how they say American Express you shouldn't leave home without it. I have the key to 448. Of course they've changed the locks since then. But this is what I have left of that day to remind me. At least during the first collapse this vehicle saved my life, as far as I'm concerned.

They never made a stink about it, so I

walk around with it everywhere. I know it sounds a little silly but, I don't know, that's how I deal with it.

Q. Whatever works.

A. One last thing. I just feel bad for all the lives that were lost. I knew a couple of people that had just transferred over from EMS to FDNY. I didn't know anyone else per se except by reputation or whatever. It was a great loss, not only FDNY but PD but also, which were always forgotten, EMS we lost ten people, not all within FDNY, but voluntaries, different volunteers, privates, everybody. They're just as much as important as anybody else.

But my hearts go out to their families as well as all the civilians that were lost that day. How odd, I'm looking at a picture of the World Trade Center, I found it. Beautiful picture, though.

But yeah, my heart goes out to them. I thank God every day that I'm here. There's days I wonder why I'm here, why was I spared when others had so many -- I'm not married, don't have any children, but others did. So there are days

I wonder why me, why not somebody else. I guess it just wasn't my time, but sometimes I ask why.

Q. I have one question.

A. Sure.

Q. When you were heading down towards -- actually when you were heading down towards the battery, were you coming down the West Side Highway?

A. No. I was I think going east -- oh, I had come from -- no, I came from the east. So I came off the FDR.

Q. No, after the collapses.

A. Oh, after the collapses.

Q. With Jefferson and --

A. Right.

Q. -- Liberty.

A. Right. We started -- here's Liberty. So we started -- yeah, we were headed towards -- I don't know, is that considered the West Side Highway or is it still considered West Street? I think it's still considered West Street.

Q. Okay.

A. So we would have been walking down West Street towards I guess Battery Park. I guess

that's what it is. I'm not a hundred percent sure still to this day, but I think that's what it is, Battery Park.

Q. Yeah.

A. So we were heading towards Battery Park down West Street.

Q. Did you ever catch up again with Jefferson?

A. Jefferson I didn't see until weeks had gone by. But I had heard that he had suffered minor injuries but that he was okay. Eddie Martinez, it turned out he didn't end up getting a pneumothorax, by some miracle, I don't know how.

He got transferred -- put on one of the boats, not with us but somebody else put him on one of the boats, and he ended up over in Jersey City. He had to get some pins and stuff in his arm, and they had to do surgery to remove a lot of shrapnel out of his back.

He finally started making inquiries. He went looking for me and Joe Jefferson, because he thought we were the ones that found him originally after -- as far as I understand, he

got there just as the second plane hit. So originally his time line was a little confused.

Q. Right.

A. He didn't realize where he ended up afterwards, because he started farther over. As far as I know, he started over near Vesey, I think, up towards Vesey and Church. So he ended up way over from where we were.

I got his number. He left his number with my partner, my actual partner, Dale, and I called him up one day and we talked. We had a nice conversation. He called us his angels. We weren't. We were just there. We took care of him -- I mean, we spoke for quite a while. He thanked me. He wanted to get together some day. He was going up north.

As a matter of fact, I saw him -- we had a Christmas party for the benefit of the two FDNY EMS that we lost Lillo and Quinn. So he was there, and he was doing much better.

[redacted]

Freddie, by the time I got back, he had already left to go home. I didn't actually see him until Thursday. The 13th is when I first saw him the first time. We just went over and like hugged each other with little tears here and there. We both lived through something -- we both lived through the first one together, and the second one we had to do separately. Neither of us -- didn't leave our minds.

I need to go on duty.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1530, and this is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110485

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOEL PIERCE

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is January 23rd, 2002. The time is 1416 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck, Lieutenant with the New York City Fire Department. I'm at EMS Battalion 57 conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, and unit that you're assigned to.

A. Joel Daniel Pierce, paramedic 3927, 35 zebra, Battalion 57.

Q. Joel, were you on duty the morning of September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you tell me about the events of that morning?

A. My partner and I were sitting up by McCarren Park when we heard a signal 1040 go over the air. I didn't know what a 1040 was, so I pulled out my little Ready-Medic book and I looked at it and I told my partner it was an airline incident.

Q. Do you know who your partner was that day?

A. Eric Rodriguez, Paramedic Rodriguez, Shield 2526. So we heard multiple units being assigned

immediately from Battalion 31 told to switch to Citywide, so I said this has to be pretty big. So I switched over my portable to Citywide and you didn't hear much at the moment until you heard, I believe it was one of the condition bosses in the city screaming on the radio, basically send everything that the city has to offer because it was pretty bad. So I told my partner, who was driving that day, to drive down to the waterfront somewhere by Kent, and I believe we came off of North 12th. As we rounded the turn, we saw the north tower on fire and we were just awestruck by what we saw. We parked the vehicle on Kent, got out, stood there. My partner called his wife. I just stood there staring, and then I watched eventually the second plane, I saw it. It looked like it was circling coming south, then came back north, striking the south side of Tower No. 2. I got pretty sick to the stomach at that point. Eventually, the Brooklyn North dispatcher contacted us and advised us that we were heading to Manhattan at that time, to the World Trade Center.

We headed over the bridge, the Williamsburg Bridge, and my eyes were just fixed on what was coming out of the towers, the smoke. As we got down there, we didn't exactly know where the main triage area was or

staging area was. There was just so many people running all over the place, and my partner and I, we had no clue as to where we were going. Then we found ourselves over -- we came back around and we were on West Side Highway or West Street by Liberty noticing a bunch of ambulances parked on the west side of West Side Highway next to No. 1 World Financial Center.

So we pulled over, we set our vehicle up underneath the pedestrian walk on Liberty Street between West and I believe it's South End Avenue. We were there for a bit and I just stood there looking up at the two towers and I just watched people jumping. I must have counted about eight people. One of them was on fire as he hit the ground. I thought it was just a piece of burning debris coming down until my partner said that's a person jumping.

I was with some Captain. I don't know where he was from. I said, boss, this is not a good spot to be sitting. I mean, stuff from that far up can easily get caught in the wind and come over towards us. He agreed and we said let's get these vehicle around the corner on South End, and that's where we ended up. My partner drove the vehicle right over here, just around the corner of Liberty. That's where we put the

vehicle.

Q. Where you made the X on the map?

A. Correct. Multiple vehicles along the side here. I remember seeing the Hatzolah MERV over here. I think that Rescue 2 pulled up over here, multiple Fire units. There were a lot of other units from Metropolitan, FDNY, EMS and other voluntary units pulling up, so they were all lining up and down this road here. The Captain asked me to make sure each unit was not going to block themselves in, at least one person would stay with their unit. I said sure. So I ran up and down, made sure they were setting up their equipment, have their IVs, if they're ALS, start setting up their bags.

As I came back to report to him, I saw that Chief McCracken, Chief Grant, their aides and some other officers were at the corner of Liberty Street and South End Avenue. Chief Grant noticed me, that I was there. I pulled him aside. I advised him what was going on over here and that I was going to head back over onto the West Side Highway over here and advise those guys to get around the corner over here. He said that's a good idea, let's get them off the highway. Just as I started walking back, just before that

catwalk on the corner, some maybe 20 feet, I guess, 50 feet, I heard this sound.

Q. You were on Liberty Street then?

A. Yes. It was right around here, I guess where the E is on this map. It's around this area, this general vicinity where the group was clustered, McCracken and all the other officers and their aides were. That's when we heard that sound, again, and I swear it sounded like another plane coming in, just that rumbling noise, that steadily -- that continuous rumbling that was getting louder and louder, and I think the last words I had were, oh, God not another one. So we all ran. We got ourselves in this little corner right over here, right by the hexagon here, and we all just kind of cowered underneath this little overhang right up against the lobby windows. There was no place to run.

Q. The lobby windows of World Financial?

A. Financial, yes. The hexagon part.

Q. Okay.

A. There's a little corner right over here, and that's where we basically just crowded together and kept our heads down and the rumbling noise just got immense at that point and I kind of looked up and all I

saw was this huge dust cloud going right between the two buildings here, between 1 and 2, right where the -- going literally between on Liberty Street, and it was just this huge wall, like this perfect wall of dust. It slammed into Gateway Plaza across the street from us and then it basically rolled right back at us and I said, oh, shit, this is it, here we go.

We were all holding hands with each other. Wherever you found a hand, you grabbed it and you just held on. Unfortunately, I had McCracken's hand and he's got some pretty big hands. He squeezed my hand pretty good. But I think we were all pretty fricking scared at that point. We were all praying quite loudly, too. I'm Jewish and I think I was saying Hail Marys. I was just joining what everybody else was doing. You just didn't know what was going on other than the fact that here was this cloud of dust coming right at you and you you're just convinced that this is it, this is over with, because you don't know what else is coming with it.

So basically I just held my breath and just waited and I just felt that blast of air and dust come right at me. The glass held up. We were pretty amazed about that. I took a breath, started gagging. There's

a deli right on the side here. There was an open door. All I saw was this door, so I like created a human chain of people and I just led them through this door, this little deli. I said just follow this and follow the building, head south.

I went back, I don't know, I tripped on something, banged my foot and some guy fell on top of me. I picked him up, pulled him away. I came back to where we were and along the side, the westernmost side, It was like I noticed a lot of the glass was still intact, you could see like maybe four or five panes of glass still held up, and then I heard somebody banging on the other side. So I believe it was myself and someone else, we smacked the window out, walked into the lobby area of 1 World Financial Center, yelled inside if anybody was in there, and this guy yelled out, yeah. I said can you see my flashlight? He's like yeah. I said, well, walk into the light. Not exactly the words you want to hear said. But he kind of got to me and I grabbed him and I dragged him over to where the broken window was and said get out through here and go.

I proceeded across the lobby to the other side, closer towards Liberty Street, the northeastern

corner, just on the other side of the pedestrian bridge crossing the highway, and I walked out. All the glass windows were completely smashed out on the east and north sides of the hexagon part. I walked out, walked around. I was like -- I just didn't say much at all. I was looking at all the burning vehicles. Nothing but burning vehicles outside, all the ambulances.

I walked off into the street area and I think that's where I found Chief Wells, Charlie Wells, who was kind of like crawling in the dust. I yelled out his name. He kind of picked his head up. I ran over to him, picked him up and dragged him over towards the World Financial Center, and I guess that's where the shock of everything really kicked in now because I just looked. I was like where the hell is the tower? Where is everything? Did they both come down? I didn't know. I just stood there and then he had to kind of verbally slap me, not physically, just like, Joel, wake up, wake the fuck up, we need you here, excuse me, we need you here on this, and I kind of snapped to it again.

I walked around, grabbed some helmets, cop helmets that were like laying all over the place, gave them to people who didn't have helmets, looked around,

see if I could find anybody, see if they needed help. Most people were walking wounded. I think that was it, really. A lot of people were uniforms just totally walking around like they were ghosts. They were like it was just amazing what just happened.

I helped out moving things around, getting people, making sure everything was okay, inspecting some of the ambulances, looking inside, didn't find anybody in none of them. I headed back towards my bus because I realized my partner was missing. We went back there. I found him coming to me and he's like where the hell were you? I was like where the hell were you? He told me that he was -- we went back over to the ambulance and we found it completely covered in dust and debris, the back window was smashed out. It looked like it took a beating, just all this crap that was on it.

He says there's an evacuation in effect; we're getting the hell out of here. I was like, yeah, okay. So he said the vehicle's dead, it's shot, because it was running at the time, so it must have sucked up all that dust and it clogged up the vents and everything. I figured the best thing to do was, because I'm hazmat trained, I'm trained with the SCBAs,

to grab my air bottle, he grabbed his, we grabbed our face masks, and then this ambulance was pulling away and we jumped in the back of that and we headed down South End, down towards the waterfront, as far as it would go.

Q. At this time only the first tower had collapsed?

A. The first tower had collapsed, correct. That's as far as we know. I mean, you couldn't see anything. It was just such a huge dust cloud, you just didn't see a damn thing, other than you did see some debris and it was like large pieces of building and just nothing but a dust cloud.

So we got down there. There was this church down there. We just kind of like all hung around, we just sat there, and we were like what just happened? I mean, we were just still -- everybody was in awe. More ambulances were showing up from multiple agencies. Again I was tasked with -- because I had no ambulance left. So it's like my partner and I were pretty much useless at the moment unless they actually were going to set up a true triage area. We had no equipment other than our air bottles. This one Lieutenant said go to each ambulance and make sure, if they're ALS, to

have their lights flashing, and if they're BLS, to have them turned off, and each ALS unit set up their equipment appropriately, get their IVs hung up and get ready for casualties. I was like sure. So I ran up and down doing that, made sure everything was all set up.

After I finished that, I came back and I found my partner puffing away at some oxygen. I go what's the matter with you? He said I got chest pain, and he's like don't you dare call the Lieutenant over. So I was like, yeah, okay. So I was like is it because of the dust? He goes yeah. So I figured it was because he sucked so much dust in, like myself, and he said my chest is burning from all the dust. Like all right, just chill for a moment, I'll be back. I came back and he looked even worse and I was like you're going to the hospital whether you like it or not, and he started arguing with me. I said don't fuck with me, you're going to the hospital. They had a physician come over that was down there volunteering. So he looked at him, looked at his EKG, did something, he said you're going to Vinny's and that's final. So I said, listen, just do it, go, be safe, don't be stupid. I'll be all right. So, actually, excuse me,

just before that, I was along the waterfront esplanade. I'm sorry.

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. Along the esplanade where people were coming down the waterfront there. There were a lot of people running down, so I was escorting down this way towards where the boats were to get them over to, I guess, Liberty Island or to the Jersey side or wherever the boats were taking them to. I saw this one boat with a camera crew on it. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but the Green Monster they call it. It's like a high-speed tour boat that races up and down the water around the island, gives a tour of the island. Well, I saw them. I waved them over and I told them, go around south, come around and turn to where the bulkheads are and start picking up people and get them out of here, and they listened to me. They actually did that. It was pretty good.

I remember seeing this one Lieutenant from I think Engine 229, that's the area up in Greenpoint where I cover mostly. So I was like you're from 229. He goes yeah, who are you? Oh, you're from that ambulance around the area. Yeah. He said, listen, do yourself a favor and get out of here. I think just as

I was heading south again, that's when the north tower collapsed because I remember seeing another huge cloud of dust basically just cover this whole area going to the west side, all over towards the Hudson River area.

I made it back down towards just before the Battery here. I don't know what street that is. But that's when my partner started having more problems and he was told you're out of here, after we were at this one park resting for a moment. Now we're with all those ambulances. I'm just sitting there doing absolutely nothing. He's gone, I got nothing, and I was getting very itchy. When I start wanting to do something, I get itchy. I'm like I have to do something. I can't just sit on my laurels and do nothing. That's just not my style.

I told this one Lieutenant, I said, I'm going back up there. I'm doing nothing here. This is B.S. Why are we sitting here doing nothing? He's like hang out here Pierce, don't you disappear on me. Then I stood around waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. It was just a waiting period and it was driving me absolutely fucking insane. I mean, literally, I was really going nuts. So I was like, listen. At one point I was like, I got no girlfriend,

no dependents. I'm not worried. I don't know if it's like a superman feeling or something, but I had to get up there because I know people needed my help and that was it.

So I spoke with another Lieutenant. I don't know who it was. Maybe Lieutenant Soto. I said I got to go back up there. He says, well, let me go with you a little bit, I'll see how far it is. He was like how far away is it? I was like around four blocks. I lied to him. It was a little farther than four blocks. But we got up there. He became the triage Lieutenant and I was his aide for the day between One Liberty Plaza and Engine 10/Ladder 10. So basically we just stayed there the entire night, just transporting patients back and forth, getting up to Liberty triage, where I did some work in helping out as well. That's what I did all night. I maybe had a two-hour catnap on the marble floor at One Liberty Plaza, woke up again, not even, you know, something like that.

I remember at one point I was back down, I think I was down by -- in front of Engine 10/Ladder 10 -- no. I was in front of Liberty Plaza and they said they needed morphine down there. They found somebody inside and they were going to have to take his

legs off and they need morphine. They saw me and they said are you a medic? I go yeah. You got morphine? I go yup. The guy who was with me, he said you're coming with me and they physically grabbed me. They said you're coming with us. They said you're coming with us, we need you now, we need your drugs.

At that point I found myself on the pile and I don't know if -- it felt like I was hallucinating because just looking around, I was up on top of that pile a good way in, it was hot and I was looking at all these holes down. It was like one wrong step and I'm dead. If I fell into that little hole, I'm dead and that was it, because I could see the flames below, you could see the redness. I knew if I went in, it was like the pits of hell. It was like Dante's Inferno, I guess you could call it. I was in the remains of the south tower, between the south tower and near the hotel, and it was something, just being there, all the way in. I don't know how far in I was. I must have been a good 200 feet in when I was going up and down these piles of debris. Then I got called out and I learned that they managed to free the guy's legs up, so that made me happy. I got out of there. I climbed all the way back, assisted with the hose pulling because

they needed a lot of fire hose in there. So I was part of the hose line with a lot of other firemen and all the rescue workers.

I took a break again, headed back over to 10/10, sat there, drank, had some fluids, and I think that's where I saw Chief Tramontana. He came over to me. He says are you all right? I just looked at him. I was like how can one not feel all right? Look what just happened. I almost had a brush with death. He said all right, just take a break, relax.

I worked through the night. I met up with some other people, EMT Bruce Hydock, Battalion 57, EMT Richardson, Battalion 57. Who else? EMT Jason Steele, Battalion 57. Those are the only familiar faces I can remember. In fact, it's funny because you couldn't even recognize them at first because they had to remind me who they were.

I took a minor break and went back down to 10/10, met up with this Lieutenant, I forgot who it was, and I said, listen, boss, I'm going to take a walk over to -- over by Liberty and see what my ambulance looks like. I started walking down Liberty, but that was completely blocked up between Greenwich and Washington from the debris from the south tower. So I

remember walking down Greenwich, down Albany, and coming back around. I found my ambulance and it was pushed over to the side, I think. I think some earth movers or something came over and pushed it over to the side out of the way.

I walked over to where I was taking cover, walked back, got something to drink, something to munch on, and I think that's when I was just like somewhere by Engine 10/Ladder 10, I kind of laid down for a moment on a long board, and I think that's where I really started to pass out, when I think Captain Olsen, I think it was -- I don't know who. I think it was Captain Olsen who ordered me to go to the command post, which was far up on the West Side Highway by I guess St. John's. I don't know where they set it up. By the school.

Q. The college or the high school?

A. There was a high school, some school, a public school.

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Maybe that was it. That might have been it. He walked me inside there, and then I found a cot over by some triage area and I just walked over to it and just completely fell asleep. I got up like two hours

later, walked over across the highway to the command post.

Q. How did you get back to your battalion?

A. I was driven back. Captain Burns saw me. A friend of hers was heading back to Brooklyn and he said he would give me a ride back, which he did. I headed back.

Q. Approximately what time did you get back to Battalion 57?

A. I don't know. Maybe 12:00 o'clock, I guess. I can't remember.

Q. Midnight you mean?

A. Day.

Q. The next day?

A. The next day.

Q. The next afternoon. Okay.

A. All I know is I was on the clock for about 32 straight hours. I was on the clock that long. Then I just -- a bunch of people approached me and [redacted] I showered up up there and cleaned up, had all my stuff put in red bags because there was just so much blood on

them and everything.

That was pretty much it for that day. Then I didn't go back there to work, on one of the standby units, the ALS units, for like about maybe two weeks -- I stayed away from there. I was definitely there for a long time. People were telling me you were considered MIA for a long time. That's pleasing to know, to find out that I was missing in action. But I was, I guess, to some people. My radio didn't work at one point. I guess -- I don't know why it didn't work. So they said they were calling for you like crazy because they didn't know where you were. I was like me neither. There were no street signs. Everything was smashed down.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add to the events of that day?

A. I don't know what there is to add, if I've forgotten so many things or if they stick in my head. Maybe some things are just being recessed away and then it's going to come out in the wrong moments. I've forgotten a lot of stuff. I've forgotten names of people. I guess my memory span is kind of shot to hell a little bit. I'm still coughing a lot and I don't even smoke. That's all I can think of right now.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. This interview is concluded. The time now is 1449 hours. Thank you very much, Joel.

PARAMEDIC PIERCE: You're welcome.

File No. 9110486

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JASON CHARLES

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is January 23rd, 2002. The time is 2112 hours and my name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name.

A. Jason Charles.

Q. Your rank.

A. EMT.

Q. Shield.

A. 5114.

Q. And your assigned battalion.

A. 13.

Q. Mr. Charles, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. No, I wasn't.

Q. Did you respond to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. In your own words, could you please tell me about the events of the day?

A. Yes. [redacted] We got to Madison

and 28th Street when we saw -- me and my son saw black smoke. I had thought it was just a regular structural fire. So I told my son, listen, let's -- my son, mind you, is only three years old. I said let's go check out this fire. So we start walking down the block and we get up to Fifth Ave. and a lady walks up to me and says a plane hit the Trade Center, and I looked at her like she was crazy. I said it might have been a helicopter, not a plane. So I kept walking. I got to Broadway and now I could see the smoke just traveling east over the city, and another guy walked up to us and said a plane hit the towers. So I speeded up my walking to Sixth Ave., put my son on a bike, and we got to Sixth Ave. and I saw the giant hole in Tower 1.

As I'm staring at the hole in Tower 1, I walked across the street, across Sixth Ave. to the west side of Sixth Avenue, to see Tower 2, and at the time Tower 2 was intact. It wasn't touched yet. I looked down at my son and I repeated to him I couldn't believe what was going on, and I told him, oh, my God, and I heard people calling, oh, my God, look, look, and as I looked up, the second plane hit the second tower and there was a humongous fireball rolling up the side of the building. What delayed reaction I heard was the

sound itself, the explosion itself.

So I looked back down at any son and said (inaudible), baby, we have to go home, thinking to myself, Jesus, they're going to need every last EMS personnel in the city to go down. So I hesitantly scrambled along the street. At one point I lost my son for maybe a minute and I looked for him and then I found him. I got him back on the bike. We rode back across the street. I started dialing numbers to call my brother, my wife. At the time me and her were broken up, so we were just getting back together. So I started looking for anybody to call to take my son.

So I remembered the baby-sitter. So I shoot back down 28th Street over to Second and Third, taking my time, making sure I didn't get into an accident with my son. So it took me probably about ten minutes from Sixth Ave. to Second and Third with my son. We get upstairs, I knock on the baby-sitter's door, and she immediately takes my son out of my hands. She doesn't even ask me what's going on. So she takes my son and I give her something else I had on my bike, and she goes you going down there? I go yeah. She goes you want to look out my window? I told her, no, I'm going to get a better view.

As I'm waiting for the elevator, for some reason, the elevators broke down, both of them. So now I'm waiting another five, ten minutes for the elevators and I'm like getting more and more frustrated as I'm waiting for the elevators, and then I said screw it. I threw the bike on my back and I ran down 19 flights of steps. I got downstairs, I jumped on my bike, I got myself together, I checked the gears of my bike, made sure I had air in my tires, and then I took off.

I took off to 27th Street because you can cut through the blocks between the buildings, and I took off 27th Street, made a left, cut down towards Second, and then made a quick right going towards the Trade Center. I'm riding on the curb and I see a fire truck to my left and I speed up peddling and I jump off the curb next to the fire truck, landing probably about a foot away from the truck. A firefighter on the truck looks at me and he's like holy, you know, like he couldn't believe it, and now I'm riding next to the fire truck speeding down Second Ave., which is a slight downhill. I didn't even get the engine number. It was an engine truck, but I didn't get the engine number.

So I'm racing down Second Ave. with all the emergency vehicles, like following behind a fire

truck. I come up onto a station wagon, I cut my brakes, and I just missed the station wagon, almost getting pinned between a bus. So now I'm flying, you know, I squeezed just between a bus and a station wagon to pull off to the left again to almost get hit by an ESU truck. So now at this point I'm passing 23rd Street and the space becomes tight between another bus and a van and I barely squeezed through that and I'm flying down the street, down Second Ave., and now I'm passing the Police Academy, which I think is on 21st Street, 21st Street between Second and Third, and I see a cop standing with the barricades, next to the barricade, and he's looking like he wants to go. He's like, you know, he looked like he was all amped as I'm passing him. He just wanted to -- it was like he wanted to jump in the next vehicle and go.

So I keep racing down there. I get to about Beth Israel Hospital, I don't know if it's 16th Street, 15th Street, and I start to lose all my energy. The first wave of emergency vehicles had left me at about 15th Street. I kept pedaling. I stopped at 14th Street because of the light. I wasn't about to get hit by another bus going crosstown. So I start peddling again as the light turns green and I start picking up

my speed a little bit and then I hear a second wave of emergency vehicles coming and they gave me the second adrenaline rush. So I started racing with them and I'm racing alongside of the ESU truck for a good block and then the streets just opened up and they start going and the ambulances start passing me. I think three FDNY ambulances and a Metro Care ambulance passed me, and then the rest of them were cop cars, fire trucks, and I guess a Battalion Chief, a fire division suburban.

So I get to Houston. Second Avenue now turns into Christie Street and I jump back onto a curb, and at that point all of -- the second wave of emergency vehicles left me and I'm flying down the street and I jump off a curb again, landing next to a minivan, which I just missed, or it missed me, and as I'm coming down the street, I'm not sure if it's East Broadway that crosses Christie Street, but a third wave of emergency vehicles come down and I could hear them at least three or four blocks behind me. They start passing me and I start rushing with them and they gave me a third adrenaline rush.

I'm rushing with them and we all get to Canal Street, where everybody came to a stop because -- I'm

not sure if it's Ladder 9 or Engine 9 was coming off the Brooklyn Bridge. It probably wasn't Ladder 9. But there was another ladder truck coming off the Manhattan Bridge and everybody stopped to let them go, and then I waved on the other emergency vehicles who were behind me to go ahead of me and they all flew down Canal Street for a block and hung a right on -- I don't know what street it was. But I know that, when I went behind them, as I ride behind them, now we're in Chinatown. As I ride behind them, I guess they were like special forces from the courts or the FBI building, in that area, federal cops or whatever, jumped in front of me and I yelled at him EMS, EMS, and he jumped out of my way and I kept riding.

At this point now I'm passing behind the courts. I got behind the courts and I go underneath like the Brooklyn Bridge overheads and I pull up on I think it's Reade Street, right next to City Hall, and then I see both the towers smoking like chimneys. I mean, it was like the worst sight in the world. As I pulled up onto -- I think it was -- I'm not sure what street, but it wasn't Reade Street, I'm not sure what street, but it was right next to City Hall -- I saw one person fall out the building. As I keep riding, I look

over to my left and there's just a crowd of people staring like they couldn't believe it, and I'm staring at them and they're staring at the towers. I see detectives and FBI agents running around the street like they didn't know what to do, what was going on.

So I had my ID out prior to that because I was trying to flag down a vehicle as I was racing down Second Ave. to stop. I mean, I knew they wasn't going to stop, but if they did, good, I would have jumped in with them. But nobody stopped. So I had my ID out prior to that and I was flashing all the detectives and FBI agents and they're just waving me through.

I get to Broadway, Broadway and I think it's Vesey, and I slam on my brakes because a lady cuts in front of me. Now, at that point, I just started like lightly riding to look for a Lieutenant, an EMS Lieutenant, and I ran into an EMS Lieutenant about once I got to Dey and Broadway. So I identified myself as an EMS off-duty, and she was like good, we're setting up triage. They set up triage between Dey and the next street north of Dey -- south of Dey. Sorry. So she starts setting up triage and I told her I was going to be back. I was going to lock my bike up. I locked my bike up on Dey between Broadway and Fulton and I go

back and I started triaging patients. I had no triage tags in my hand. So they had already had the triage tags arriving, so I started asking questions, you know, I had no ACRs neither. So I started asking them questions about their history, if they had asthma history or whatever.

Then I ran into another EMS guy who had a bike. I was sidetracked by him. He asked me where did I lock my bike up, and I told him over here. I took over to where my bike was. Me and him chained our bikes up together. We went back over there and we started triaging more patients. I ran into one patient who said she was having an asthma attack. Now, at that point I had went over to a Metro Care bus to ask if they had any albuterol. They didn't have any for whatever reason. So then I went -- I remembered where my Lieutenant went -- the Lieutenant I ran into. Sorry. I think she was from Battalion 4. I ran over to Fulton and Church Street, where there was another triage center set right in front of the towers, in front of the Millenium Hotel across the street from the towers.

At that point, I run down Fulton Street and a PA cop, Port Authority cop, stops me, and I flash my ID

and he's giving me flack about, you know, you're not going down here. I'm like, listen, I've got an asthma patient over there on Broadway. He's like no, you ain't going down there. She's not getting albuterol today. I was like all right, you know Rudy Charles? Rudy Charles is a Port Authority cop, my father. He goes no, not today. So I can see he was just being difficult.

So I ran back over to Broadway and I ran into a firefighter named Firefighter Anderson. If I'm not mistaken, he's an IC for the fire cadets, the fire cadet program. I used to be a fire cadet. That's how I knew him. He gave me a turnout coat to wear because I needed to be identified as a city worker. So he gave me the turnout coat and I ran back over to -- and he was standing on Dey and Broadway. I ran back over to Fulton and Church and the PA cop was still standing there and he runs over to me and I tell him, you know, stay the fuck over there, and he's like all right, the FBI is going to stop me. So as I'm walking by him, the FBI cops looked -- the FBI agents. Sorry. They're looking at me and they're like, you know, they just looked at me and just let me go through.

So I get over to the Lieutenant. He was

talking to a Chief and a Captain. I didn't get their names. The Chief had an eagle on his collar, so this was a deputy. So now I asked the Lieutenant was there any albuterol. She says go check the ambulance over there. I didn't get the ambulance unit or the bus number. There were two EMTs working on a severe burn patient, it looked like 30 percent of his body was burned, and they were working on him. I jumped on the bus and I asked for albuterol, and the guy turned around and he gave me albuterol and a nebulizer.

So I take the albuterol and the nebulizer and I run back over to Dey and Broadway, where the other triage center was. I get over there. Metro Care found their albuterol. Okay. So after all that running around, Hatzolah comes. They're coming in and now they have nine EMTs and I think two paramedics. I had told them we need at least three of your guys over at Church and Fulton because there's only two EMTs there, the Captain, the Lieutenant and the Chief, and he's like no, we're going to keep them here because everybody is coming here. I was like, guy, there's more people coming out of that building going to that triage center than those two EMTs can handle -- three. Sorry. It was three EMTs there. He's like no. I was like,

listen, right now I need your help. I don't need you to give me your -- what's that called?

Q. Sarcasm?

A. No. Superior complex. And he was like all right, all right. So then I said I'll be right back, and then I ran back over to the Lieutenant on Fulton and Dey -- I mean Fulton and Church, and I get over there and I'm like, Lieutenant, we got a triage center that has too many chiefs and no indians. We need somebody with status to go over there and let them know what's going on. So she's like okay and she sends an EMT over there. I think he was a medic. I'm not even sure. But this guy I remember, a white guy about my height, 5'10", 5'11", he had shades on at the time, spiky hair, I think he's from Battalion 4, too, he walked over to Dey and Church. He started to cut up Dey to go to Church, which is right next to the Century 21 store.

So now, I guess, I saw him cutting up there, so now I made the decision that I was going to go into the buildings and start helping everybody else out because I saw the firefighters standing over there carrying people out and there were a lot of EMTs over there who weren't FDNY. They were like, I guess, from

Bronx -- I mean like Brooklyn and Queens. So they were there and they had like EMT on the tape on their shirt and they were like helping people out. I started to head towards the building and these two EMT females, they had this heavyset lady. They were walking her over to the triage center. So she gets over to the triage center and she sees me and a Lieutenant and decides that she wants to pass out. So, all right, she passes out on the ground. So I started to walk past her because I'm like, well, they got her. Then I saw that the Lieutenant and the two EMS females were having a problem lifting her up. So I told the two EMS ladies to move and me and the Lieutenant picked her up. I grabbed her and the Lieutenant picked her up by the legs and we start walking over slowly to the curb, and then I heard an explosion from up, from up above, and I froze and I was like, oh, shit, I'm dead because I thought debris was going to hit me in the head and that was it.

Then everybody stops and looks at the building and then they take off. The Lieutenant dropped her legs and ran. The triage center, everybody who was sitting there hurt and, oh, you know, help me, they got up and everybody together got up and ran. I

looked at them like why are they running? I look over my shoulder and I says, oh, shit, and then I turned around and looked up and that's when I saw the tower coming down. I saw the -- it looked like the top maybe 70, 60 floors coming off the building, and I had stood there thinking maybe the towers were not going to hit me. Then I looked closer and two pieces of debris fly over my head about 40, 50 stories up, flying over my head, and I was like, shit, I'm out of here.

I grabbed the lady and I tugged on her twice and she wouldn't get up at that point. She got up on one knee, actually, and then she wouldn't get up. Then I let her go and I started to run, and I'm hauling ass down Fulton, up Fulton actually, running east. Actually, as I'm running east, I stopped and I told myself what are you doing? Jason Charles, go back for her. So I turned around and went back to the lady. I get back down to -- I mean, it was only like ten steps. So I took another ten steps back and I get back down there and she's gone, and I'm like all right.

So now I look over to my left real quick and I see two firefighters running at me with this horrified look on their face. One firefighter was trying to drop his Scott pack and it got caught. The

buckle that goes around the Scott pack around the waist got caught. So he was trying to -- he was unbuckling that while he was running. The other guy, he dropped it off his shoulders, but it looked like it got caught onto his arms, and then the dust hit them and then the metal crashed on them, and I turned around and I started running. I saw people -- as I'm turning around running, I picked up people who were coming out this corridor right in front of Millenium Hotel that leads you into like the mall plaza on Liberty. I saw people running out of there, like running against the wall, against Building 5, running north. Yes, running north.

So they were all -- they're running north and I'm running and in my head I'm like let's jump in that bus over there. I said, nah, just run. Then I'm starting to run and I see firefighters, you know, I mean, like when everybody started running, I'm seeing two firefighters drop their Scott packs, FBI agents took off, EMTs took off, and that told me this is a real situation, this wasn't nothing to take lightly. So that's when I had ran and left the lady, came back for her.

Now, as I see the two firefighters

(inaudible), I made the decision not to jump in the back of the ambulance that was parked right on the corner of Fulton and Church. I start running up the block. As I start running up Fulton, I see this lady who I left behind hauling ass up Fulton and her dress is like flapping in the wind, and I'm like look at her go, you know, and I'm just running and she had a nice lead on me, so she was like half a block up already. But I made sure I found her first before I left.

So I started running and now I'm panicking. I'm like, oh, man, I'm dead, I'm dead, and there's all these people in front of me and they're running slow and I'm like, oh, Jesus Christ, and I stopped running and I started walking real fast behind them because I wasn't going to push anybody out of the way. So there was an opening and I took the opening and I started hauling ass, but this older black guy falls in front of me and I jump over him and I stopped and turned around and two people scooped him up and kept running. It was like a football scene, like they scooped up a football and kept running with him, and they're running and then now I'm running. I almost started crying at one point. I'm like, oh, man, I'm dead, I'm dead, and I stopped running and said screw it, I'm going to die

right here, let me take it as it is. Then something said, stupid, run, you know, run and die running. So I started running again.

At one point -- at some point, I'm not sure, but the building -- that horrible twisting metal sound of a freight train or whatever -- it's the worst sound in the world -- stopped. But then it started again. Then I started hauling ass again, and at one point I stopped, like maybe 20 feet before I got to Broadway, still on Fulton, flying up to Broadway, and I let everybody run past me. I said everybody go, go, go. Now I ran the rest the way down to Broadway and then I looked to my right down towards Dey and I see at least a 40, 50-story ball of dust rushing at us. I'm like holy shit. I'm like all right, run, and I kept running and I ran towards Vesey, and then Vesey, the dust came around there, but for some reason the dust didn't come up Fulton yet, not as fast and hard and as dark as it did at Vesey and Dey.

So now I had that trapped feeling and I thought I was really screwed because I knew behind that was nothing but death. If you sucked on the dust, that was pretty much it. So I yelled everybody over here and I pointed to a store. The store's name -- it was a

delicatessen, actually. It's called Au Pain or Au Bon Pain.

Q. Au Bon Pain?

A. Yes, thank you, that famous delicatessen. I ran over there and like three other people followed me. One guy I remember stopping, like he was still on Fulton, running up Fulton. He had stopped dead in his tracks and covered his face. That was actually before the dust started rushing at us, but I thought I'd add that in. There was a guy, he just stopped dead in his tracks, he didn't want to run anymore, and I remember reaching for him and then the dust caught him and I kept running. But the dust coming up Fulton was a little lighter, and I don't know why it was light there, but it was dark as hell coming down Dey and Vesey.

So anyway, we run up to the store and I grabbed the door and I'm "open the fucking door," because it was locked and I had this look on my face like hurry up, like I was about to cry again, and the manager of the store scrambled through his keys and he ran over to the door and he unlocked it. By the time he got to the door, the dust caught us. I held onto the door and then I felt the door open and I opened it

up and I shoved the two people in and then I closed the door right behind me. I get inside the store and I start cursing and I almost started to pick a chair up and throw it, if you know what I'm saying, through the window, but that wouldn't have made no sense because when I looked behind the window, it was completely black. I mean, it was like looking into hell.

As I'm looking, I see one person, it looked like a white guy with glasses, walking up against the glass of the window. I'm like holy shit. So I run back outside and the door was locked again. I turned around to the manager, open the fucking door, and he's like, oh, I'm sorry. I said leave this shit open, and he said all right. He opens the door and I opened the door and I yell outside. I yell outside and it sounded like I was yelling in an empty room, like the acoustics -- if anybody ever heard the acoustics in an empty room, it was like that, and it was scary. I was like holy shit. Then I closed the door and not even five seconds later, three people came, it looked like flies, to the door, tu-tu-tu-tu, like they all bumped into it. I opened the door, rushed them in, and they came in and they couldn't see and I asked the guy for water. I said wash their faces down, and he was like

all right, and the manager and a few other people started washing their faces down.

Then more people started coming to the door and they started letting them in and they started washing their faces off. I washed one guy's face off. Then I told the lady, here, take over because I saw people -- the store now leads to the back. There's a back exit that leads into the building. I think the building we were in was 222 Broadway or 225. I'm not sure which one it was. 222 Broadway. So I go to the back and there's like 60 people in the lobby of this building and I'm like, Jesus Christ. I was by myself and I had no tech bag. The only thing I had on me was albuterol and a nebulizer, and unless I was going to blow into the nebulizer, you know, that was the extent of my medical care.

So at one point I started -- I tried to get the crowd's attention and a guy gave me a bullhorn. He gives me the bullhorn and I start announcing who I was, that I wasn't a firefighter, because I had on a firefighter's jacket, I wasn't a firefighter, I was an EMT and that my name was Jason Charles. They're like okay and they started listening. Somebody had asked me what happened and then two other people were like,

yeah, what happened? What happened? I was like, Jesus Christ, they don't even know. I was like all right. I was like ladies and gentlemen, Tower 2 just collapsed, the entire building came down, and they're like, oh, my God. People started crying and stuff like that. But I gave it to that entire crowd. They held it together. I wasn't like they panicked like in one of those movies and flipped out. They held it together. So I'm like okay.

So then my next question was -- no. Someone had asked me can we go outside? I was like -- and then I know this is like really unprofessional, but then, at that point, I was just really aggravated. I was like you know what? If you want to fucking go outside, you know what I'm saying, and suck on that fucking dust, be my guest, but I suggest that you all stay in here, wait until it clears out in another 15, 20 minutes, and we can all go east towards the river and get out of here. They were like all right, all right. So they started calming down, and I was like ladies and gentlemen, does anybody have asthma? Like 30 people raised their hands. I was like, oh, Jesus Christ. So I started separating the asthma patients from everybody else, and I put the asthma patients back in the delicatessen so I

could keep my eye on them had anybody broke out in a severe asthma attack.

At one point a medic came running in through one of the doors covered in dust coughing and I was like -- and there was a guy standing behind me and I was like, yo, big man, take him inside the delicatessen and watch him. He was like all right. So he walked him inside. Now, I'm still taking in asthma patients. I mean, it was like at least 30, now it looked like 40 because people just started popping up. So then they started -- they went in the delicatessen.

Then somebody brought to my attention a chick who had a laceration on her head, a woman, sorry, had a laceration on her head, approximately 20-year-old African-American female, and the lac was probably maybe half an inch wide, it looked pretty deep, she might have needed stitches for it. There was a guy who was applying pressure to her head with a cloth, and I was like let me see it, and he was like, yeah, she's bleeding pretty badly. When he lifted it up, it wasn't bleeding too bad. So she was pretty much okay. So I told him wait here. I'm going to go back outside and look for a tech bag or something I could use.

So I went back outside. At the time I had

the bandana around my head. I took it from around my head and put it around my mouth. So now I'm walking outside and I'm asking people are they okay because now at this point people are just dazed. It was like one of those nuclear war movies where people are just in a daze. So I walked into a few people and I'm asking them are they okay, are they okay. One heavyset gentleman, I had to ask him, are you okay, sir? Are you okay? He's like, yeah, yeah, I'm all right. I said, listen, sir. Either walk east to the river or walk into that delicatessen over there. He said all right.

At one point I came up to a bunch of officers who were sitting on the cemetery that's right there. They were all sitting on the wall like they couldn't believe what was going on. I had asked if anybody was hurt -- no. I had said who's hurt over here? Who's bleeding? Because I saw blood on the floor. There was an officer who had little minor lacerations on his hand. I was like, listen, guys, you guys got to get out of here because Tower 1 is going to fall because for some reason I had just known that the tower was going to come down at that point because when Tower 2 came down, the ground was actually shaking.

So then I started walking. I got back over to Church and Fulton and I looked to my left and I could see it, but barely, a big piece of metal sticking into the ground. It reminded me of for some reason Planet of the Apes, the new one. So I looked at it and I was like, Jesus Christ, and I saw a Fire Marshal and like two detectives walk out of the dust over there, and they came over, you know, they came walking out. Before that, before I saw them walk out, I found a Battalion Chief's helmet, and I looked at it and picked it up, and I remember seeing a Battalion Chief, he hauled ass up the block, so he was okay. I remember seeing him run on Fulton before the towers came down. I mean, this guy was an older guy and I never seen an old man move so quick. So he was all right. So I took his helmet and I looked at it and I was like -- and I looked at the towers and there was debris still coming off the building.

Mind you, before that, which I found a little weird, before the towers fell, there were a lot of people falling out of the building like, you know, I don't know, like they were just throwing themselves out, like they were just lined up and going, like paratroopers, and at one point right before the towers

came down that stopped. It was like the people that were coming out just stopped coming out the window for whatever reason. I found that a little weird.

As I was walking over to Tower 1 with the helmet in my hand, I had put it on my head. I'm like, you know, well, he's okay. I'm going to put this on and protect myself from anything falling off the building because I had nothing. Then I took it off again and I'm like, ah, I'm not going to put this back on my head, it's not even mine. So I'm like -- and the Fire Marshal, what is that? What is that in your hand? What are you doing with that? I'm like, okay. I'm like, it's a Battalion Chief's helmet. He's okay. He's like, give me the helmet. All right, here. I'm sorry, man. So I took it off because I think he had saw me because when I took it off and I looked behind me, he was already coming up, but he hadn't said anything. So I guess he put two and two together, you know what I mean. Me with a Battalion Chief's helmet doesn't quite look too well. So he's like, oh, and I'm like, listen, I'm EMS. He's like all right.

Then a detective came up and said we're pulling back to Chambers. I'm like word? He's said yeah because Tower 1 is going to come down. He said

the same thing. I was like all right. At that point I looked up at Tower 1 and I could see that she was leaning slightly but not much, and as I looked over to -- I looked at the tower, I looked at everybody else and everybody else is hauling -- everybody is walking up, walking south towards Chambers. So the officer offers me some water, I take it, I'm starting to drink it as I'm walking, and I'm walking because he said we got to pull back. I'm like wait a second. I still got those patients in the building.

So he started -- they walked, and I ran up to an ESU truck. Some ESU guys were putting on Scott packs and I was like, yo, you guys got an extra Scott pack so I can go in the building and help you guys out? They were like -- and they started looking for Scott packs, and they were like, yo, we're out of Scott packs. So I go (inaudible)? He was like yeah. I said you guys going in the building, right? He said yeah. The only reason why I didn't go in the building because I had knew that the mall level was completely dust and for me to go in there with nothing on would have pretty much been suicide. So I said all right. They said go up the block to Broadway, there should be another ESU truck over there.

So I started back over there, and as I'm starting back over there, I looked down -- I think it's Vesey right between Tower 7 and the Trade Center and there were like at least four firefighters over there. It looked like eight, actually, because there were another two walking down. They were long-boarding a guy who must have jumped off the escalator that's like right there on Vesey, and they're long boarding him. I'm like all right.

So I walk over to a fire truck and I take a sip of water that was coming out of the fire truck, and there was this female from England who was on the 90th floor of Tower 1, who told me she had just barely made it out of there. When the towers came down, she lost both her shoes. So she was walking. So I said, listen, I'm walking back to the building over here, you want to come with me? She's like yeah. I'm like all right. So we started walking back. She's walking barefoot because she lost her shoes.

So we get back over to 222 Broadway and we get inside and I'm telling everybody, listen, I couldn't find any equipment, but we're going to have to get out of here because Tower 1 is going to come down. This sergeant, a police officer sergeant goes don't

tell them that, don't tell them that. I'm like what? He was like -- I was like all right, whatever, forget it, then I'm not going to say it again. Then I go all right, ladies and gentlemen, if we're going to do this, we're going to get out here and we're going to walk east to the river, and I had said that twice, and then I made the mistake of saying west again and I was like damn. Then I said all right everybody, you know what? Screw it. Let's get out of here and just walk east now.

As we're all walking to the back of the building through the freight -- not the freight -- the loading docks in the back of the building. We get to the back -- we don't even get to the back of the building. We start walking back there and then I heard a ground level explosion and I'm like holy shit, and then you heard that twisting metal wreckage again. Then I said shit and everybody started running and I started running behind them, and we get to the door. For some reason, like straight out of a movie, two people ran through the door together and got stuck in the doorway, and I'm like, oh, my God, this is not the time. So they squeezed through and they got through and I squeezed through them and ran around them because

I just wanted to see which way the towers were falling.

So I get to the loading dock and I run outside and there's people running out the loading dock east to the river like little rats out of a cage, like chu-chu-chu. Then I get to the loading dock outside and I see this 50, 60-story dust rolling down the block again. I'm like holy shit and I sort of moved too quick and fell down, and as I fall down, I look at a police Sergeant -- or a Captain. Sorry. He got covered in the dust because he didn't make it to the doorway in time.

I fell down, and when I fell down, the dust went over my head, and I said shit and I jumped up gapsing for air. At that point everybody is screaming get the fuck out of here, and they're like close the gate, close the gate, and the gate was moving like a snail, it was closing so slow. So eight of us jumped on the gate and started using our weight to pull it down and it wouldn't budge. I remember looking over to my right and seeing another EMT. Naomi is her last name. She used to be out of Battalion 16. But I saw her. She was helping us pull the gate down. At one point someone yelled get the fuck out of here,

everybody get the fuck out of here, go, go, go, and everybody is yelling. It wasn't that yell like, you know, that roller coaster yell or you're yelling at somebody to discipline them. It was like that horrifying scream that everybody was relaying back and forward.

So everybody started hauling ass out of there, and I jumped back onto the deck and I'm like everybody get the fuck out of here and everybody is running. I must have been like the last person out of the room, and by the time I decided to get out of the room, being the last person out, the room was completely -- I mean the loading dock was completely dusty. It was like a fog. You couldn't see anything but the light that was illuminating the room.

So I got back into the lobby and the lobby was dusty and I'm like shit, I'm going to suffocate in here. I started panicking because I couldn't breathe and it was heavily dust to the side. You could see each other but you couldn't breathe. Now I'm panicking and everybody else is like looking for somewhere to breathe, and I remember sticking my face between an elevator door, like the elevator shaft, to try to get some air, and that wasn't working and I'm like shit,

I'm going to die in here now, suffocating, and then somebody passed me a wet rag. I put the wet rag on my face and I was able to breathe again. So I'm like all right, cool.

Then the same sergeant who told me not to tell anybody the towers were coming down, he asked me, you think we could die from this dust? I'm like right now? No. But eventually? Yes. He's like okay. So then we're all looking for a way out. So now the dust started to come down a little quicker than it did last time. So I walked outside and I'm just like, Jesus Christ. I couldn't even see. Particles were hitting me in my face. I'm like let me go back inside.

I went back inside and at one point I remember I saw a bunch of people run down to the lower levels of the building. So I started running down to the lower levels of the building and I see all these people in there. I went back upstairs to look for a Lieutenant -- a Captain, actually. I said, listen, Captain, I got like 60 people in this building. This is before Tower 1 came down. Sorry. This is before Tower 1 came down. I had told the Captain I had 60 people in the building. He said, listen, I'm going over to -- what's that around where the Liberty boats,

the boats to the Liberty.

Q. To Ellis Island?

A. No. Where the boats leave from Manhattan over to Ellis Island. He said he was going to be --

Q. The ferry terminal.

A. Thank you. He was going over to the ferry terminal and he was like you're on your own and he left me. I was like okay. That's when I started looking for a tech bag and stuff. That was before Tower 1 came down. So anyway, I ran into another -- I ran into a Lieutenant. He says I'm going to South Ferry. You can stay here if you want. I was like all right, that's two for two, you know what I'm saying? (inaudible) I understood that they were scared. So it wasn't like I could say anything behind him. So I was like all right, I guess it's up to me.

So I went back over to Broadway and Fulton at that point and I just knew both the towers were down. You couldn't see anything, but you just knew they were down. There was no shadow or nothing. So it was like I went back into the building and I said screw it, let me start evacuating the building. So I started going down to the lower levels and I ended up in the gym of the building, the nicest gym I've ever seen in an

office building. There were like eight guys in there and they're like what's going on? I mean, they were like what's going on but like is anybody leaving the building yet? I'm like, listen, you've got to go upstairs to Duane Reade -- because as a matter of fact, before I went downstairs, I heard all this commotion and I'm hearing voices and shit and I'm like anybody still in there? I went back to the loading docks because I heard the commotion because it's an area where you can go down to the basement levels before you go to the loading docks, and I heard all this commotion in that area and I couldn't for my life figure out where it was coming from. So I went up to the loading docks, I yelled again, no one responded. As I'm walking back to the lobby area, I see a crack and I see people moving around and I go what's that? Oh, shit, that's Duane Reade, and I'm like -- you know, there's people being handed wet rags with water by the Lieutenant and he's telling everybody to walk east.

Q. Is this a PD Lieutenant or an EMS Lieutenant?

A. EMS Lieutenant.

Q. An EMS Lieutenant.

A. An EMS Lieutenant. He's giving people water and a wet rag and telling them to go east to the river,

go east to the river. So everybody, you know, they're walking east. I'm like, Lieutenant, Charles, 5114, Battalion 13. He's like all right. He said something. He said we're going to get everybody else out of here. I went all right. So that's when I made the decision to go --

Q. Do you remember who that Lieutenant was?

A. No. I couldn't remember for my life who he was. But I remember going back to the basement levels to get everybody else out because I knew there was people still downstairs. So I wound up in the gym. Those guys had a TV set and that's when I found out we were under attack, because prior to that I thought Tower 2 blew up because the engine from the plane hit Tower 2 and exploded inside. It was like stupid, but that's what I thought. Then that's when I knew we were under attack. So I sat there for like 10, 15 minutes, looking at the TV set, and then I was drinking some more water and I was like crazy dehydrated because the bike ride alone wore me out, you know, my legs were just complete rubber.

So now I'm drinking water and at this point I'm with the EMT, Naomi. So we're getting everybody else out of the building. So we got those guys out the

gym, then I started going lower than that and started getting people out of the office. At one point I went to an office and people were still working. I'm like get the hell out of here. What the hell are you guys doing? They're like okay, you know, they're locking up their stuff. I'm like go. Don't worry about that shit. They're like all right.

So then I had started walking through the lower levels looking for more people and ran into a maintenance room, which was like the best luck in the world because I found boots, because at the time I had Sketcher shoes on and those weren't doing me -- they did me good running from the towers, but after that I needed something heavy-duty. So I found -- and like, you know, which was the luckiest thing in the world, size 13, which are like the hardest shoes to find. So I found those, I put those on, and I started -- me and Naomi and another guy, the maintenance guy, we started walking back. So we walked back upstairs. We walked back upstairs and we started telling people get out of here. So then I told Naomi, you know, listen, get out of here, you know what I'm saying? She's like nah, nah, I'd rather stick with you. I'm like okay, cool. So we stuck together for like at least an hour. At

this point I was just like walking around on the streets because there was nothing else to do.

So now we went into a building. At one point I went into a building and I ran into a few PD officers, they were like just sitting in there. I don't know what building it was, but it was next to J&R Music World. So we get into J&R Music -- I mean the building next to J&R Music World and they're talking and I overhear the cop telling everybody, yeah, it came over the radio that one of the planes are heading towards the Trade Center and that one of the planes were already hijacked. I'm like, to myself, I'm like, damn, they heard all this report of they hit the buildings. How come no one tried to evacuate the buildings in time? Whatever. At that point, I didn't know how many people died in the buildings neither, but I knew there were people in there. So we're chatting and stuff and then all right, whatever. So I leave them.

So now, a guy, a detective, for some reason lost his shirt, so he's like shirtless. So I ran back into the building to get him a T-shirt that was in the gym downstairs. I get the T-shirt, I run back upstairs, and he was gone. He moved. So then now me

and the detectives, we're bringing up T-shirts and sweat pants and stuff like that from the gym level because we knew that there was going to be some half-naked people running around, you know, cut, severely cut or whatever and we could use a lot of that stuff as bandages and tourniquets and stuff. So we brought most of that stuff upstairs and we put it in the lobby of the building. We took the Gatorade from the Duane Reade and stuff, we put it in the lobby of the building, 222 Broadway, and we left it there.

So I went back outside and I saw two firefighters like sitting on the ground. It looked like they were just winded, like that was it for them, they weren't going to do anything else. One was Oriental and a white guy sitting together. I went back outside. I ran into another EMS Lieutenant, I don't know who he was, and I was with him for the better part of the day, until I left. I never got his name or anything. But at that point he told me to go to this bus. They had a city bus with all EMS equipment on it, like the defibrillator, oxygen and all that stuff.

So I got on there and a paramedic was like do you need some oxygen? Do you want some oxygen? It looks like you need some oxygen. I'm said I'm all

right, I'm all right. He's like here, take some of this, it's free. I'm like all right. So I started breathing on the -- I took some 02 because I had a bad headache at that point and oxygen was doing nothing for me, so I put it down and I took it off. The Lieutenant was like, all right, we're going to go over to 225 Broadway, the building right next to the Duane Reade.

So we all grabbed some stuff and we lugged it over. We get into the building. We get to the building, actually. We didn't even get in the building yet because for some reason they wanted to get into Duane Reade. As opposed to walking right into 225 Broadway, they cut Duane Reade open and they used Duane Reade as like -- you know, because they had all the medical equipment and they had peroxide and alcohol and stuff like that. So if we get in there -- we could go in there just to cut into the building.

So now we're setting up triage in the building. They're setting up saline bags and sodium chloride and stuff, they're hanging them up. They had a nice little triage center going on. It looked like a little hospital. So at one point I disappeared because I needed to get some Tylenol. I got me an Excedrin from Duane Reade and popped two of those and the

headache went away. All right.

So at that point now, we were just waiting for patients and nobody was coming in. It was like, you know. Then we ran into another Lieutenant, Lieutenant Davis. I think he's from Battalion 4, if I'm not mistaken.

(Tape side two.)

-- towers and I heard six loud explosions, and those six loud explosions changed my mind real quick and I went back over to the triage center and it was like you know what? Let me wait here. I had no helmet. I had nothing that would have protected me from anything that hit me in my head. So I stayed where I was at.

I remember at one point, I'm not pretty sure what point it was, I ran over to a hardware shop that the Fire Department had broken into to use a lot of the masks that they had in there. They had the Scott pack masks, and I found a Scott pack mask that was laying there because a firefighter had took a new one and I grabbed his and I put filters in it and I used that to breathe with and see because the dust was just messing my eyes up.

So I went back over to 225 Broadway and I was

sitting in there, and now at that point we're just all talking, can't believe what's going on. At one point, amongst -- it was three EMTs and two paramedics that I can remember -- four paramedics. Two were HAZTAC and two weren't. It was just quiet and we were just sitting there waiting, and then me and another EMS guy, EMT, we were just like, yo, we can't just sit here and do nothing. So me and him, I never got his name neither, but me and him grabbed a tech bag and we just went outside. So we started heading over to where Building 7 was at and they were like Building 7 is going to collapse, you can't go over there, this and that, and there was another building that they thought was going to collapse that was like right behind the triage center, the building that we were in. So we started walking around.

At one point I was like -- at one point I almost broke down because I had thought my father was dead because he responded to the '93 bombing and he's a Port Authority cop, like I said before. He responded to the '93 bombing. He was on West Street in front of the tower. So I thought he might have been over there. So I said, if anything, I'm going to walk over there, try and work my way over there and look for

him. So I'm going -- like I started walking towards Chambers now to look for him because I'm looking for a Port Authority cop and I knew that that's where everybody pulled back to, which was Chambers.

So I started working my way over there and I run into a group of police officers who were sitting in front of BMCC, BMCC's garden. There's a garden and then there's an apartment complex and that's where they were sitting. So we had a conversation. They had no idea -- they knew what was going on, but they didn't know how bad it was over there. So I started telling them what was going and they were like, Jesus Christ.

As I started walking back over to Chambers, going south again to Chambers, because we were a little north of Chambers where we ran into the police officers, I started walking -- me and the EMT started walking south, I had ran into a firefighter. I think, if I'm not mistaken, he said Engine 9 or Ladder 9. That's where I got that from. He was looking for his boys and he couldn't find any of them and he had nothing on, only his bunker pants, and he looked totally bent out of shape. It was like at the time it didn't even occur to me to help him and look for his guys because I didn't know so many firefighters had

died in the towers like that. Then anyway, I was really concerned about looking for my father.

So I went back off and then I ran into Pete Rosie. I forgot what unit he was on. But I ran into him and he was glad to see me, I was glad to see him, it was a face that I recognized. So we started talking a little bit. We talked. I gave him some Excedrins because he had a bad headache, too.

So we walked, me and the EMT now, we walked over to West Street and Chambers where they had like all the EMS and firefighters and everybody was just there waiting, and I ran into Jerry Toyloy of Battalion 13. I ran into him. We were talking a little bit. I ran into another EMS guy from our station, but I forgot who he was. Then I started looking for my father again.

I ran into a carload of Port Authority cops. I jump in front of the car and almost got hit, and they stopped and they were like, you know, they looked at me like what the -- you know what I'm saying? I'm saying you guys know Rudy Charles? They were like, yeah, you're his son, right? I said yeah. You seen him? They were like, yeah, he's probably still over there in Jersey. I was like all right, all right, that makes

sense. Keep the older guys over there and bring in the new guys. So I found out he was okay and my day was a lot better. So at that point now it was just about helping anybody who came out.

For at least three, four hours after that, there was just nothing to do. The triage center we were in had to be evacuated because they were pretty sure that building was going to come down into it. So we all moved over to Pace University. At that point there was just nothing but cops. I don't know why there were court officers over there. It didn't even make sense that the court officers were there. This is my opinion. But they were there like just milling around. Cops, firefighters, everybody was just helping out bringing all the equipment over to Pace University. Then they had an even better triage center set up over there. They had like little beds and stuff. At that point I ran into a few EMTs I recognized. I went into Salguera from 16. Let's see. Who else did I run into? That was it. Then I ran into a few fire cadet buddies that I graduated with throughout the day and that was pretty much it.

At one point, I think it was Lieutenant David, he had said -- it was around 7:00 o'clock at

night. He had said for us to go home because they weren't going to pull anybody out, and I knew they weren't going to pull anybody out alive, but just in case they had a flood of bodies they were going to pull out, I could help. But at that point I was just very drained, pissed off, upset, sad, scared. It was like you know what?

So then I went back to my bike. I went back to my bike, which was on Dey, and she was completely a mess. Her tires were burnt off. She was completely dusted. So I took the chain off and I lugged her up -- I put the bike on my back and I started walking towards Chambers, and I ran into a firefighter, who questioned me about the fire jacket I had on. He had looked at me and he was like what are you doing with that jacket? I'm like I'm EMS. He's like, oh, okay. I'm like you think I'd be stealing a bike at a time like this? He goes, it's not the bike I'm worried about. [redacted]

Prior to that I did break open a command car just for -- you know, if anybody wondered why (inaudible). I broke into a command car. I had asked

a firefighter at one point to open it up for me. I asked him for an ax or a Halligan tool. He was like, well, who are you? I was like I work for EMS. He was like you got any ID? Just the way he said it pissed me off, so I didn't even show him ID. I walked away. I go over to a police officer and I go, guys, can you do me a favor and open up the command car for me? Without any questions asked, ID or anything like that, he went over to the command car, busted the glass open, and we got all the equipment out of there like that.

There were few little triage centers, as a matter of fact, throughout the day that were like set up that started being shut down and moved to a bigger triage center. I found out there was one in Liberty Plaza. So throughout the day I was just helping collect equipment. I was carrying the tanks, the oxygen tanks. The crate holds, I think, ten, twelve, and I carried like one of those a whole block before I decided I wasn't superman because those things are heavy. I asked for help and carried it the rest of the way. But before I would have to go home, I had to take that bike on my back and walk from -- at that point I was where Pace University was at -- all the way to Canal Street carrying the bike on my back, and that was

pretty much it.

I got home -- I got to 28th Street and I remember people just looking at me like, Jesus Christ, look at him, like they couldn't believe it. I went into a funeral parlor because they had a TV on and they were showing all this stuff that happened, and I had never actually seen the planes go into the towers because when I was in the gym, at the point when I was in the gym, I just heard we were under attack and that the Pentagon was hit and the Trade Center and Pennsylvania. But I didn't see the plane go into the building until I got into the funeral parlor like hours later, and I sat with them and they were like, oh, my God, you were down there? They're like, yo, you want some water? You want something to eat? You know what I mean? That felt good that they acknowledged me like that. I'm like no, don't worry about that. I just want to watch this real quick.

Then I got home, back to my at the time girlfriend, now wife. I got home and she was crying. I got home and my parents had thought I was dead because my mother is in Florida and my father, he was in Jersey. My brother decides to go to sleep at 9:00 o'clock, so he didn't know what was going on until 3:00

o'clock in the afternoon. He woke up to my mother yelling over the answering machine. He jumps up and he knew something was wrong because the way she was yelling. He goes over to the answering machine, 14 back-to-back messages. So he started listening to them. My wife had called. They were looking for me. Everybody was looking for me and my father, and they had knew my father was okay because that call came in at 2:00 o'clock, but they hadn't received a call from me until like 5:00, 6:00 o'clock. So they thought I was dead and my mother is making prayer and they're like, well, if he's gone, he went to hell. I'm like okay.

So after everything was said and done, I had to report back to work here the next day. I called my Lieutenant. I said I was off at 8:00. He said, well, you have to come back at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. I thought to myself the hell I am, you know what I'm saying? At that point everything started hitting me. It was just like it started to bother me and I just got really sad and depressed. I got back into work eventually about like 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon the next day, but I wasn't rushing back in because I was so tired and drained and it was like -- and to be honest

with you, I should have never left that day. I should have just stayed there until I passed out of exhaustion or something. I shouldn't have left because I was tired that day and those guys who stayed there like two weeks straight and I went home. So that's the only thing I felt guilty about. If anything I felt guilty, it was that. I mean, it was just like the worst day in everybody's lives. I mean, I couldn't believe it.

I remember what pissed me off going home was the fact that everybody was like laughing and looking like they were going out to the bars and still eating in diners. I'm like I know people are supposed to go on, but that was to me a little too soon. People were out there laughing in the streets and then there's laughing and they stopped to look at me like, oh, my God, look at him, look at his bike. It was weird.

That's pretty much it. I mean, anything else that will come to mind, I'm trying to write a little scripture about everything I went through that day. So, of course, stuff like that will come back to me later. I guess that's pretty much it.

Q. Okay. Is there anything you'd like to add to this interview?

A. No, not really.

MR. ECCLESTON: The interview is being concluded at 2212. The counter on the recorder is 775.

File No. 9110487

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN PAUL CONLON

Interview Date: January 26, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is January 23rd, 2002. The time is 1450 hours. This is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Captain Paul Conlon of Engine 216.

This interview is taking place in Brooklyn headquarters at Nine Metrotech, and it's regarding the events that took place on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Cap, if you would please state your name and just recall the events to the best of your recollection.

A. Paul Conlon, Captain, and I was working in 216 Engine S.A. on September 11th.

We saw the first plane hit on TV. We watched actually, from the roof, the building burn, the roof of the firehouse 216 Engine. Not knowing the area, I didn't know when we were going to respond. So I went down and started to do a riding list and a roll call and stuff in case we had to either respond or relocate.

Then I heard guys yelling, "Holy smokes." I went in the kitchen, and the second

plane had just hit. I watched that on TV. At that point I called the roll call in front of the rig. I gave out the riding positions, with the help of Dan Suhr. He was the senior man working. Actually I had worked with 216 the day before, so I met him the day before. He was working both days.

Dan had the control or the hookup, as he called it, Ted Murray was the chauffeur, Chris was the nozzle, and Tony Sanseviro was the backup. John Johnson was supposed to be detailed to another company; I don't know where. We got a message from the battalion everybody was going to ride with five. John Johnson was a proby. I gave him the door. He was going to be our fifth man.

Then we got the run to respond to the World Trade Center. I told the guys we are eighth or ninth due on fifth alarm. I told them to bring their shoes, we would be there a while. We take off. We took Broadway. We took the Williamsburg Bridge. I switched over to Manhattan frequency right way, because it was a Manhattan box.

As we were going up to the Williamsburg Bridge, I just pictured there was going to be a lot of traffic. The Williamsburg Bridge was closed to all traffic already except for us, except for the Fire Department.

So I went back to Brooklyn frequency, and I tried to get through to let them know that the Williamsburg Bridge is a good route into Manhattan. I tried two or three times, and I couldn't get through. I wanted to get back to Manhattan to see if they had any messages. I never got that message through.

I went back to Manhattan frequency, and they were telling us that units responding to Two World Trade Center, the fifth alarm for Two World Trade Center, report in to West and Liberty and report in to Chief Barbara at West and Liberty. I guess I was thinking they don't want to get us confused with the One World Trade Center response.

So when I heard that, I knew I wanted to approach from the south so we wouldn't be getting mucked up with the One World Trade Center response. So that's what we did. We got off the

bridge. We made a left, probably on Allen Street, heading that way, heading south. I think we made our way over to South Street, still heading south.

When we got around the South Street Seaport, it was all blocked up, not just with traffic but with construction material. We couldn't get down the block. So we had to go West a little bit.

Now we went down whatever block that is, maybe Broadway. I don't know, whatever it was, we went down the block. We got to about the south ferry, and we had some trouble getting through traffic. I got out of the rig to try to get us through, and Dan Suhr got out. He said, "I'll go to the left." I said, "I'll go to the right." We'll try to find a way to get out. We were stuck in gridlock.

I got a traffic enforcement agent. He stopped some traffic. So we get through, jump back on the rig. Now we got right there now. So now we're on West Street. We parked about three blocks from the World Trade Center, because there was a spot there to park. There were rigs there

already. I told the chauffeur to stop here, we'll park here.

We got off the rig, we parked, the guys got their gear, and we start walking up. We probably walked up about -- I thought it was two blocks or so. At this point a truck goes blowing by us. It was either 105 or 102. As I saw the truck go by, I thought, boy, we probably should have tried to park closer, because we're going to be doing a lot of walking. You kind of second guess yourselves sometimes. But we didn't.

So we walk up. We find Chief Barbara. Although they said West and Liberty, he wasn't north of the south pedestrian bridge; he was south of that bridge. So he was somewhere along West Street between Albany and Liberty when we reported in to him.

There were two other companies there, two engine companies, 205 and 217. Chief Barbara told me, "Quick tell your guys to put their gear down, open up their coats. We're going to be here for a little while." I turned around. We all had an extra cylinder with us, and the guys had their rollups.

I started to give that order. I put my cylinder down and starts opening up my coat, and the chief said, "Oh, nope, you're going to go into the lobby command post now." I said, "All right." So I buttoned my coat. I picked up my cylinder. The other guys never even put their stuff down. We said, "Okay, let's go."

He pointed to the lobby command post. Again, you could see the entrance. You can point to the lobby command post. He pointed to the entrance of Two World Trade Center. From where he was standing, you could see it. It was probably 200 yards or something.

I look at it. There's burning debris everywhere. There was an engine company north of us, north of that pedestrian bridge, putting something out, putting out a car fire or a large thing of rubbish or something. There was burning debris on the ground. There were people jumping.

So we're looking at the scene, and Dan Suhr said something like, "Let's make this quick." I was thinking the same thing. I said to the guys, "Let's go." We start walking. We walked in a diagonal line straight from the

command post to the entrance of Two World Trade Center.

We're walking. 216, we're kind of leading the way. Not so much leading the way, but we just happened to be walking first. The other guys were still putting their gear on, I guess. 205 and 217 were right with us, though, somewhere a little behind us, though. There were no companies in front of me as I walked.

We got about halfway there, and Dan Suhr gets hit with a jumper. He was right to my right and behind me. It was as if he exploded. It wasn't like you heard something falling and you could jump out of the way. He gets hit.

The guy's are like, "Oh, fuck." They drop their rollups. I drop the cylinder. Me and another guy look at each other, and at the same time we both said, "Let's get him underneath the scaffolding." There was scaffolding across the way on the north side of 90 West Street at that time. There was scaffolding up.

So we go to pick him up. He's a big guy. Other firemen stopped to help us pick him up. I didn't know who at that time. I've heard

who since. I think all of 205 Engine stopped to help us pick him up, and I think two members of 217 stopped to help us.

I don't know who helped actually pick him up or who helped do other stuff. We were taking his coat off. We were picking him up. Someone picked up his helmet and things like that.

I called, "Engine 216 to command post. Mayday. I have a member with life-threatening injury." One of the guy says he still has a pulse. They took his pulse right on the ground there. We got him under the scaffolding.

When I called the mayday, I also called for an ambulance at West and Liberty, because they couldn't have gotten an ambulance any closer to us. I didn't realize where Liberty was, really. I thought I was at Liberty. I guess I was at Albany.

I called for the ambulance. I called the mayday. We get him under the scaffolding. Two guys come running up with a long board. Two firemen came running up with an orange long board. They must have gotten it off their rig.

I think they were from 217.

We put the long board down. We put him on the long board. We take off his coat and his mask, whatever wasn't off already. The guys were doing CPR. The ambulance came up pretty quickly. They came running down the block, two medics, or they might have been EMTs. They were medics.

Two medics came running down the block with a stretcher. They put the stretcher down. We picked up the long board, put it on, we strap him on. One of the medics opens up his bag and starts going through his protocol. He's starting to take out syringes, you know. I said to him, "Let's just get him to the hospital," because very often they go through that protocol and it takes a long time. He said, "Yeah, you're right." So he closes up his bag.

We wheel him to the ambulance and put him in the ambulance. As we were putting him in, as the guys were putting him in, I called again, "216 to command post for a police escort," because it took us a long time -- we hit a lot of traffic getting there, and I just pictured them having trouble getting out of there.

Right as I called for it, a highway cop -- I talked to Chief Barbara again. A highway cop comes by, and I flag him down. He comes shooting over. I tell him what we want to do. I didn't know where they were going yet. I asked the EMT, "Where are you going?" He said, "St. Vincent's." I went back and said, "They're going to St. Vincent's. Is that all right?" So he winds his way in front of the ambulance.

When I got back to the ambulance, Dr. Kelly was in there. I don't know where she came from. She's still kind of just about about stepping out. She's looking at him. She goes to step out. I help her down. She looked at me, gave me a shake of the head like he's not going to make it.

Two guys from 216 are in there doing CPR, and I closed the doors and the ambulance takes off. I look around and it's me and the proby. That's the only guy that's left. I look at our gear where we dropped it, which is between us and the entrance. I think we can get that in a minute.

I said, "Let's go back to the rig and

we'll regroup. We'll find the chauffeur." So we start walking back, and the building came down. That was it. We just started running. I'm saying Hail Marys. I don't know if I was saying them out loud or to myself.

We start running, and we're on West Street, West and Liberty. We're right at the corner of 90 West Street. There's that blank area there that's a parking lot. There were cars parked there, I think, in the parking lot.

We start running. 15 Truck is parked in front of us as we start to run. For a minute I was going to dive under it, and I didn't. But I went around like the right side of it, and the proby went around the left side of it. He is taller than me and he's younger, so he's running faster, which is good. He's ahead of me.

But when we got around to the other side of the rig, you can't see anything now. I thought I may have seen him off to my left, but I wasn't even sure. I'm just running now. The dust is all around us, so I don't know where he is.

I make my way back to the rig, which

was probably parked I guess between Rector and Carlisle, as I'm looking at it, because we were about three blocks from the building. I got back to the rig. I found the chauffeur. I said, "Is the proby here?" He said, "No." Then I realize the chauffeur doesn't even know that Dan Suhr is probably dead.

I just said to him Dan's -- he said, "Where are the other guys?" I said, "Dan was hit by something. He's hurt. He's hurt pretty badly." I said, "He's hurt." He said, "How bad?" I said, "He's hurt pretty badly." I said, "The other guys went with him to the hospital."

At this point I said I've got to go see if I can find the proby. Civilians are coming up to us. They're covered in dust. The chauffeur takes out the EMS water and starts cleaning them up. I leave. I backtrack and went back to 15 Truck, calling out, "John Johnson." I had to look at my riding list to see his name, who was working. You know what I mean? "John Johnson," I'm calling out.

I go back to 15 Truck, because I knew I had seen him there, and I started working my way

up there. I looked under it. I started working my way north. I looked down a couple of these blocks. I don't see him. I went south of where the rig was a little bit. I don't see him. I go back to the rig. I said, "Is he here?" He said, "No."

Then all of a sudden he appears -- I guess 20 minutes -- I don't know how much time went by. He comes back. So for a little while I'm missing him too, but he's back. We're still helping people out. Then I said, "We've got to go back. There's guys buried."

We start walking back. At one point in there, a member of either 216 or 108 came running by with shorts on and a helmet. He was off-duty. He's heading north. My chauffeur starts running after him, so I'm running after both of them, saying to the chauffeur, "Come back and get your gear." He has no gear, you know. So he stops, turns around to get his gear.

Then the north tower is coming down. I don't know where we were, probably around Albany Street on West Street, when the north tower came down. We're not running now. We're

walking/running away from it, probably running. We hooked up with a paramedic.

The proby has his mask on, and he has his face piece on. I had a mask on my back, so I turned that on this time. We're mask sharing in the street now as we walk away. I'm sharing my mask with the chauffeur, who is on my left, and a paramedic, who came up out of nowhere, on my right. I told him, "Just breathe normally."

We're kind of walking. Then we stopped and were leaning and trying to breathe, sharing the mask. When the dust settles enough, we went back to the rig. This time it kind of repeated itself, but there were no civilians around anymore, just some cops and paramedics coming up to us. They're gagging and they can't breathe. We give them mostly water to help wash their eyes out, and they took sips of water.

I said to the other two guys -- they're looking at me like "What are we doing?" I said, "We've got to head back there. Obviously there's guys buried." They said yeah.

We start heading back. We probably got to around where the command post had been, maybe

not even. I don't know where exactly, somewhere north of Albany Street. There's a chief there. I don't know who he was. He had a coat on and shoes and pants, no bunker gear. He said, "We have no water." He's in shock like the rest of us. He said, "We have no water." He's got this face on. We said all right.

So we start walking back. As we were going there, another company came by, I think 286 Engine. They came by like double time. They came by like really fast. We're walking kind of in shock going back north again, and they kind of ran by us.

When I got to this chief, he was asking for water. We both got there at the same time, so we both turned around to go back to our rig to try to find water. I don't know where 286 went then, though.

We get back to the rig. We probably made a left onto Rector Place, looking at this map. I know we made a right onto South End Avenue. We checked like five hydrants on South End. They were all dead.

So I get on the radio and said, "Engine

216 to command post." We were going to tell them these hydrants are dead. I'm just picturing like there's some kind of command post somewhere and they're going to say, all right, South End Avenue, the main is knocked out. We have to go to the north -- I'm figuring somebody is figuring this stuff out.

I said, "The hydrants are dead," and there's no answer. "Engine 216 to command post." There's just silence. There's nothing. There's just complete silence. I call again. There's no answer.

Now I'm on the rig, and over the Manhattan frequency I heard a fire boat. I didn't hear where they said they were, but they said something about on location. I said to the chauffeur, "Let's just head to the river, go find the fire boat," and we will try to get some water. We tried to go that route.

That's what we did. We went up Rector Place, I think, got onto that esplanade. We went over curbs. We weren't on like a road, really. I see the fire boat. It must have been at Albany. It was at Albany Street. So we shoot up

to Albany Street.

Just as we pull up, another rig came down Albany Street, came West on Albany Street, right in front of us. So they hooked up to the fire boat, and we started stretching. We started stretching two lines: the fire boat line, which was like a five inch line, and a three and a half inch line from that rig that pulled up there.

Me and this guy who I was a fireman with, Danny Williams -- he's a Lieutenant in 16 Truck -- kind of hooked up. There were guys coming in all the time. It was very hard controlling what was happening. There were about 30 or 50 firemen stretched from the river to West Street, and they're trying to stretch these two lines.

They would get snagged on something, and we would have to say, "Stop. We've got to back up 10 feet." So we spaced ourselves. He went closer to West Street. I went closer to the river. We kind of stayed in touch with each other to try to get this thing going, to try to stretch these two lines.

Then there was a chief that showed up

down at the fire boat. He was helpful. He was trying to organize things down there. We told him what was happening.

After probably an hour and a half to two hours, we had a rig at Albany and South End, we had a rig at West, and then another supplying stuff towards the World Trade Center. The rig on West Street was supplying a tower ladder, it was supplying lines that were heading towards the World Trade Center.

Once that was all in place, I'm thinking it was a couple hours that had gone by. I said to the guys, "You've got to take a blow." I had to take a blow. I was ready to pass out. People were walking around with jugs of water. So we sat down by the river for about ten minutes and drank some water, took our gear off.

We put our gear back on. We went on South End Avenue basically up to the site. I guess we went through Two World Financial Center, out a window and onto the pile. I told the guys to wait outside. They were waiting out in the courtyard out there. I went out and took a look around.

There were companies operating on fires and this and that. I saw a rig down below. I didn't know what it was. It was like two stories below me. I went down and searched under it and stuff. I came back up.

I saw Nigro come out with I think 126 Truck from Queens. He was coming out onto the pile. He looked the way I felt. I said to him, "Chief, there's a rig down here." He said, "Return to the truck." He said, "All right, guys, that's the first place you can look. Check this rig down here."

I went back. There was a manifold set up in a window or something coming onto the pile. I figured maybe we could get a couple lengths of hose and hook up to that manifold and operate. There were some fires burning. Seven World Trade Center was still just smoke coming out at that time. There wasn't a fire.

I go back to try to find some hose. Fresh companies were coming in with lines and stuff. When I got back, it dawned on me that these guys are wondering how the other guys are. I didn't know if the ambulance made it, so I was

kind of concerned about that.

So I said to the guys, "Let's try to find out how Dan Suhr is doing." The chauffeur said to me, "Can we find out how Dan Suhr is doing?" I said, "Yes." I was worried about the ambulance. I was worried about all of them.

So we found somebody with a cell phone. I found somebody. The two firemen found somebody. I called the hospital. I couldn't really get through. They were much wiser. They called the firehouse, and they found out that Dan Suhr had died and that the other two guys were in the firehouse and that they were safe.

So the chauffeur comes back. I don't know how long he knew Dan for. [redacted]

We start heading back. I told him, "Go back to the rig, and I'll meet you there." So they walk down to the river. They're going back to the rig. I find the chief on -- I don't know

where. I guess on Liberty. I find the chief of the 11th Division, actually. I don't know his name.

[redacted]

Afterwards I realized how ridiculous that was to even ask. We lost 343 guys. I felt bad even asking. After he said no, I was thinking of course we can't leave.

I head back. Now when I get back to South End and Albany, there's 216 Engine hooked up. Somehow someone moved it. We're right in the middle of the relay now. There's the chauffeur operating the pumps. I said, "Ted, we can't leave yet." He said, "Yeah, you know, I don't want to leave anyway." We all had the same kind of feeling.

That was pretty much then. He operated pumps. I wanted to see who we were supplying. We were on Albany and South End. I walked across West Street. There was another rig on West. No,

our line went straight to 207 Engine, which was on Albany between West and Washington Street.

They were supplying one of the standpipes on 90 West Street, and they were supplying a hand line that went they said a couple blocks away there was a fire in the basement of a building. The guys were operating that.

That's what the chauffeur of 207 told me. He said, "We're supplying 90 West, and we're supplying the hand line" -- actually we were supplying two hand lines, one that went through a basement and one that went north toward Two World Trade Center. I said, "All right."

So I go back. Now I know who we're supplying. The chauffeur said, "We're down to half a tank." There were like three or four rigs around him. There was another rig right next to us in the relay, and I figured all the rigs are operating since this thing started and they're going to start to run out of fuel.

So I tried to call the command post to let them know we need fuel. I can't get through. So I walked back to Liberty. I hooked up with a

chief. I asked him how we could get some fuel. He said, "We're having trouble getting fuel." He said, "Sometimes fire boats have it."

So I walked back. I sent the proby down. He went down to the fire boat. He told them we needed fuel. About a half hour later, they showed up with a pickup truck with a 55 gallon drum of diesel, but they had no way of getting it -- they didn't have a hand pump or anything.

So we found a hose, and we started to siphon. We supplied 216 and all the other engines. There was another engine -- I forget who it was -- operating right next to us. So we've got fuel.

In the meantime a chief from Jersey comes up to me with a piece of paper with three names on it, and he said, "These are three firemen. They're in a hospital in New Jersey. In case you have them, at least you know, whatever." I don't remember who they were. So I walked back to Liberty, and I gave that to a chief I met over there. He said, "All right. Thanks. I'll take care of it."

Q. Do you remember the chief's name?

A. I wish I could. I'm sorry. I didn't know his name. I didn't know him. I met a couple chiefs that I knew. I met Jack Rooney. He asked me, "What did you do?" I told him. When I mentioned Chief Barbara, he asked me, "Where did you see him last?" And I told him.

Q. That was my next question. Where did you last see Chief Barbara?

A. I last saw him at the command post. Where he set the command post up, it was just north of Albany. There's a building there, One Financial Center. It was right at the corner of that building, his command post, and it was on the west side of West Street. This is West Street here, not really the West Side Highway.

The command post was just north of the corner of One Financial Center when I walked up to him. There was kind of a natural place to have a command post. There was a cutout, decorative concrete or something right there. This was an area that didn't have it. So he was standing there.

Q. That would have been just prior to the

collapse, then?

A. Well, when we reported in to him, he was there. When I called for an ambulance, I'm assuming he was there, but I didn't see him there. But when it collapsed, we were closer to the building than that location. So I don't think he was there.

I thought about it a lot afterwards. He must have walked towards the lobby command post. That's all I can assume. You know what I mean? Like we're walking into the lobby command post. He must have been behind us walking in or something.

After we put Dan in the ambulance and the ambulance took off, basically the building collapsed. We were at the corner right at 90 West Street. That command post is across the highway and a little further south than where we were.

That doesn't mean that he didn't get -- he hasn't been found, though, I guess, so he couldn't have been there. If he was there, they would have found him, because there wasn't a whole lot of debris there, I know from

afterwards. There was some steel.

That's where I reported in to him, Chief. I reported in to him at his command post, which was on the west side of West Street just north of the corner of One World Financial Center. That's the last place that I saw him.

Q. Can you think of any other radio transmissions that you heard that would be helpful?

A. Yeah. Well, I heard the whole transmission with the marine company chief -- what's his name -- that was trapped? I'm drawing a blank on his name. Santos or something? I'll think of it.

Q. Al?

A. Al, yeah. Santuro?

Q. Santuro? No, no.

A. Anyway, I heard him. He was trapped either in his car or under his car. When I was on the rig at one point and we're looking for water -- we talk about how dumb you are at sometimes -- I heard a transmission, a mayday, given.

Q. Al Fuentes?

A. Al Fuentes. Al Fuentes.

I heard the transmission of a mayday given I think by a fireman. It had to be a fireman. Over the department radio, though. The first thing I thought of, you don't give maydays over the department radio; you give only urgents, you know. Afterwards I realized, "For Christ's sake, if he's giving a mayday, he's trapped somewhere."

I didn't know the buildings collapsed until about 1 in the afternoon, that they came down completely. I knew there was a collapse. Until we were supplying water and I got there and looked and the dust had settled enough, I couldn't believe they both came down completely.

As far as other guys and other transmissions I heard, just a whole series of transmissions with Rescue 3 and Captain Tiso, who was trying to get to guys. He got in a little bit of trouble for a while.

Him and some other members, apparently they were up on the pile. They were in a bad spot. He stayed calm through the whole thing. It was amazing. But they had to backtrack their

way out, and there was fire lighting up behind them. They needed a line.

Q. Was before the second collapse or after?

A. No, no, that was after.

Q. Afterwards?

A. Yeah.

And 6 Truck getting out. They were trapped for a long time, and they finally got out. "6 Truck, you out?" "Yeah, we're out. We're out in the street."

After the first collapse as far as radio transmissions, I really don't remember hearing any radio transmissions. I would swear that there weren't any, but I know there were because I talked to other people that said there were.

Q. How about do you recall any radio transmissions before the collapse?

A. Not really, other than -- no. We weren't there that long before the collapse. We reported in, and we were sent in. Then I'm giving a mayday, and they collapsed. That's the way it seemed.

Q. You mentioned 217.

A. Yeah.

Q. You said they were with you. But was the whole company with you?

A. When I got to the command post, the command post was two engine companies and Chief Barbara -- that was it -- and I guess his aide, although I don't really remember even seeing his aide. I kind of just remember him. I had never met him before.

When we got there, 217 Engine and 205 Engine were there, and they were just standing fast. Now we get there. I reported in the tenth due, the fifth alarm. I don't know what we are. He said, "Fine."

Then when he sent us in to the lobby command post, he sent all three companies, all three engines. All three of us were going to go in. We all started walking. I was walking in front of the other two companies, so I don't know exactly where they were. But I know they were with us, because we all picked up our gear. They were picking up their gear, buttoning up their coats.

205 Engine, all of them I believe stopped to help us. Since then I talked to a guy over there and they said they all stopped to help us. 217, I think two guys stopped to help us, as far as I understand it. I'd like to find out more about who it was. I don't even know who stopped to help us. But I think two guys stopped to help us.

It wasn't like I was taking a head count at that moment. I just knew guys stopped to help us. I know two guys came running along with a long board. I'm assuming they ran out to West Street to get it. I don't know if they ran out to their rig or where they got it. But they had the presence of mind to get a long board, and that's what they did. I think they were from 217. I think they were the two guys.

I don't know where 205 went. Once we were under the scaffolding and once the long board came and we were wheeling him down the block, it was me and my guys, basically. Once we got him in the ambulance, there were no other firemen around but us.

The ambulance takes off and --

Dr. Kelly disappeared. I don't know where she went. During the day I heard that she didn't make it. I'm dying, because I said, shit, I was just with her and I saw her.

Other than Danny Williams of 16 Truck, I believe either 284 or 286 Engine was running along with us, and that was after both collapses. So before both collapses, I just saw 205 and 217 Engine, and I really didn't hear too many transmissions.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that you might want to add to this or anything that might be helpful to us?

A. Other than on our side of it, on the south side, there were a lot of people there hearing the same thing. I know Visconti and Fellini, they really took over on that side, the two chiefs, two deputies. There was no unit designations, just "Chief Visconti, Chief Fellini, what do you need?" "I need two engines," or whatever. They were going back and forth. There was no radio traffic for a while.

As far as the rest of the day, we just spent it running up and down and checking hoses.

Then once I got relieved, I got relieved there about 5:30. I went out on the pile for a while, looking around. I wound up eventually making my way home. I was there and went back to work the next day.

CHIEF McGRATH: All right. The hour is 1525. This will conclude the interview, then.

I thank you so much for all your help and all your support for this. Thank you very much.

CAPTAIN CONLON: Okay.

File No. 9110488

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY BURKE

Interview Date: January 22, 2,002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Today is Tuesday, January 22, 2,002. The time is 1611 hours. This is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Timothy Burke of Engine 202. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001 and is taking place in the quarters of Engine 202 in Brooklyn.

Q. Timmy, please state your name and just recount what happened on September 11 to the best of your recollection.

A. My name is Timothy James Burke from Engine 202. I was working September 11. I got in at 8 o'clock in the morning. The first plane had hit a little later. We watched it from the roof of the building. Then they called us to a staging area around quarter to nine, I think, which would be the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. From the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel staging area, we watched the second plane come in.

As soon as the second plane came in, they sent us into the tunnel. We spent a few minutes in the tunnel. Seemed like a lot of traffic in the tunnel. It was rumored that they were blowing up the tunnel then. We got through, we drove over what felt like

gravel, because there was so much glass and debris around. I saw a plane tire in an alley, body parts and people all over the place. We pulled up, as soon as we got up in front of the building, I think we were right in front of the Vista Hotel, they made a statement that we should keep moving forward, so our rigs -- we got back on the rigs, then we moved to position right in front of, looks like the Merrill Lynch building, which is 2 World Financial Center.

From there we proceeded to, that would be the staging area, which is the two garage tunnels. Their staging area was right at the throat of the garage tunnels. Our officer stayed with the command post and the engine and truck went into one of the garages where all the firefighters were starting to meet up.

As soon as that happened, the Chief ran over, started screaming that the engine should be on one side, the truck should be on another. That's the last I saw of 101. That's the last we saw from 101. Then they were split from us. There was just all engines on that side. A guy from 211 had a cell phone and we were all trying to call our families. At this point, this was a few minutes into the box, few minutes into us being there, I would say about 5, 10 minutes.

It seemed pretty bad that everybody was willing to get on the phone and try to call their wives to say good-bye or say whatever. Just the faces of people, you kind of knew that some of us were going to get hurt, because it was just too too too much going on. I had a radio and I was the nozzle man. I had a radio. There was a calling for water, they had no water, they had no water, I thought it was coming from Engine 10. I'm not sure. Then there was a call out that one engine was on the 19 floor, and that if they expect them to get to 34, it's going to be at least an hour. I forget the number of that engine.

There was a lot of chatter. There was chatter that a fireman was hit by a jumper, to keep your heads up, to keep an eye out on what was going on. We learned that was Danny Suhr. At one point, at the beginning of us getting there, at one point, we got off the rig. We got all our gear and we needed something else off the rig, so Bobby Norris and I ran to the rig and I looked at him and I wasn't going to go unless he went and he wasn't going to go unless I went, because it looked a little hairy, not that we wouldn't go. It was just we wanted to stay with each other, make sure everything was okay with each other because

there was a lot of stuff coming down.

That's when I saw the guy from Rescue 1, Anginelli, the older guy, and I wasn't sure what he wanted. He looked a little old and I was wondering what he was doing. He wanted an extra Scott pack if we had one on our rig. We searched the rig for a Scott pack. Then I found out that he is not with us anymore. I remembered just speaking to him.

Then we faded back to the garage and they started sending companies in. It was like they weren't grabbing officers at this point and saying get your company together. They were just grabbing full sets of men. We weren't a full set of men, we were just me and Bobby standing at the line. Our chauffeur was sitting with our detail from 20, Pete. His wife was in the building.

When the plane hit, he called his wife to say, when the plane hit tower one, he called his wife to say get out of tower two. When we got to the box, he was sitting on the side just worrying about his wife. He was ready to go but he wasn't sitting with us. So when they started taking companies without officers, they started grabbing full groups of guys. They were just grabbing guys on either side of us.

Then there were still a bunch of guys there. Still guys in the streets, still everything going on. Another Chief came over and said you are going to be there for a while, start loosening up, because there was already radio contact that guys were falling in the stairs with heart attacks and stuff. Things like that. Guys were going down, guys weren't making the stairs.

Q. Do you know any specifics, any companies?

A. No, it was just -- I don't know if it was radio or rumor, but when the Chief came over, he said everybody, you are going to be here a while. Loosen up, loosen up.

Q. Do you know who the Chief was?

A. No, I don't remember. I remember one guy there was Metcalf. He was -- I remember him from proby school. He was a Lieutenant in proby school, [redacted]

[redacted]

The other Chief ran over and he seemed like a Chief for a little while, he seemed liked a little older. He says everybody calm down, you are going to be here a while. Take your gear off, stay cool, you don't want to heat up now. Some of the guys started taking their masks off, the jackets off. I remember we made a nice pile of stuff. I remember where our pile was. Then we were sitting there and waiting to get called in, then the radios are going, calling for water, calling for this, calling for that, you know, different things going on on the radio that right now it's hard for me to remember exactly all the chatter. But it was very -- seemed chaotic but not out of control, you know.

When we were standing there and like I said, people -- you just saw people moving, all people moving and if you looked at tower one you saw jumpers. You could hear the sound of jumpers. When you looked at tower two, you saw more flames. So I'm standing in the street, you could look for jumpers to your left and flames to your right, because tower two was more involved.

At that point I was going, where the hell are

the choppers? That's my mentality, going where the hell are the jets, where the hell are the choppers. I am thinking there was going to be another plane and every time we heard noise people thought it was another plane coming in and so everyone would like flinch.

Then the building popped, lower than the fire, which I learned was I guess, the aviation fuel fell into the pit, and whatever floor it fell on heated up really bad and that's why it popped at that floor. That's the rumor I heard. But it seemed like I was going oh, my god, there is a secondary device because the way the building popped I thought it was an explosion.

When that happened, they all started fading into the garage, masses of people. I'm thinking this building is coming down. We are going to be covered by two buildings. I didn't know if it was a good idea to run for the garage at that time. I was really saying I'm going to be killed by two buildings, they are not going to find me until they uncover one building. So with the amount of people rushing me, we ran through the garage. We kept running through. The only thing we could think about was trying to get as far into the building as possible, which was weird. I just wanted

to get deeper and deeper, further and further away, which was my mentality.

The guys were following us, me and Joe. We all ran up till we got to like a -- what looked like a workman's shanty, because it was plywood locked up door. Just a temporary door. Usually construction workers keep their tools in there. It's something I know because I used to work in the construction field. It would be like a tool lock or something, just something temporary made. I remember trying to break into there, just to get that much further in.

All of a sudden the noises stopped, the sound of the building falling stopped. We all turned around and it was dark now. We really couldn't see. We got back to where -- we went back to the garage as far in it as we were, we were all full of the cloud. The cloud was in there. All eating the cloud, whatever it was like, very thick. I keep saying it was like a 3 dimensional object. It wasn't smoke. It was like everything. It was like a sand storm. We only had bunker pants on at this time.

I was with Bobby. I don't know what happened to anybody else, but it was very silent after the building fell. Then all the Maydays started happening,

the guys were screaming. You only tune into certain numbers. Like I heard 131 looking for their irons man. I just kept hearing that back and forth. Bobby Norris and I stayed together the whole time. We were like -- if I was going anywhere, it was with him and he was doing the same thing. I kept on saying to myself, where is 101, because that's my company. So where's 101?

I kept not hearing them and I knew it was a different group of guys that kept on saying they screwed up, something happened, they screwed up. Either they are all together or they are all screwed up. I kept hearing 131 looking for the irons man, the irons man answering back.

I think I heard Sean Albert from 279 call for his guys. I know I heard Sean call for his company. I think it was 279. I don't know. I don't remember exactly. I just remember 131, because 131 (inaudible), come on, speak. We didn't hear anything. I made a choice with Bobby to go get our gear. We felt that if we were going to be here for a long while, I want my helmet, my jacket, if I can get my cylinder. I actually had a size up of the garage because when we first got there we looked around the garage. So I knew

exactly how far it was from this one stairwell and when we found the stairwell I knew our gear was 15, 20 feet up and that would be 10 feet from the entry of the garage.

So I went for it. I went for my gear, Bobby came with me. We grabbed our gear, we grabbed each cylinder -- Scott packs and I grabbed an extra Scott pack. We both, we both started falling back. Somebody had ran a search group to a back stairwell, which was a pretty good idea. From the stairwell I knew, it would have put us right into the atrium. So we didn't know if that was a good idea to go in there, the atrium being that cafeteria in between the buildings. It's not really a cafeteria. It's like a table area where you can sit down and have coffee, whatever. Part of a mall you would say, because the bottom level was a mall.

The stairwell I knew would lead us right into that area. So we didn't think that was a good idea to take, plus we didn't have our officer, the chauffeur or the back up man and it was just me and the control man together. Then Lieutenant Calkins was looking for us. We were calling back to him. I think he was already outside on the -- outside where the Moran's bar side

is. I was right there, which is the Pier. Everything is whatchamacallit, landmarks, Moran's bar was the landmark. He was already out there, but Bobby and I were still inside. We actually thought of going back out the way we came in, but there was no visibility and when we got up for our gear, the aluminum facade was laying across the stuff. I thought it was duct work, because we had no visibility, and it felt like duct work. I'm going holy geez, the building came apart that much. There is pieces of duct work all over the place.

If there was visibility, we probably would have went out, knowing that we had an exit out the front, but there wasn't visibility, so we faded back again. That's when we got in touch with Calkins, and Calkins was calling back and forth to us. We finally hooked up. We went outside.

Q. Where did you meet the Lieutenant, in the garage?

A. In the garage, by the search rope. What Bobby and I did was one of us stayed by the search rope. The other guy would go out 10 feet and come back and we would work our way down, looking for things, looking if we could go any further from where we were.

This way we had an idea what was going on. We worked the search rope down to where I knew of a stairwell, because at least if we had to bail out I knew of one. We stayed at that point. That's where Calkins followed us, followed the search rope. We kept on saying we were on the rope, we were on the rope. He followed the rope down and found us. We proceeded outside.

When we had gotten out we were on the Pier side and that's another reason why it saved us, because we were isolated from the other building. We were here. We came out back here and we were here. The Winter Garden would be the atrium. So somewhere around here I had found a stairwell, but we didn't take that one. We took a stairwell that was over here. We popped out over here. There were just guys falling. I remember running. When the building first started coming down, I remember running and following guys from 204, because Ziegler had a cut on his hand, and I kept on telling him I was following his blood trail. So we made a little joke out of it, because he was doing pretty good.

That's before we lost all visibility. Then I don't know what happened to them. I knew 204 was in there with us, but I didn't know where 224 was. I

didn't know where anybody else was. I just remember Ziegler from 204 before we lost all visibility. We popped out over here, we all got together. There was 5 of us, the whole Engine Company, and 3 complete sets of bunker gear, because we had no tools, we had no anything. Just 3 cylinders and three complete sets of bunker gear, because everybody went -- like I said the Chief told us break down and take your stuff off, and then the buildings came down and nobody had really a chance to recover their gear.

Then one guy was screaming, let's all get together, let's all get together. The Lieutenant says the first building fell, the second building will. Let's keep moving. We left. We started walking on the Pier. When we got around Moran's bar over to where the floating hospital is --

Q. Stop for one second, okay.

A. Back on?

Q. Yes.

A. We got out of the building and --

Q. You were heading north?

A. We were heading north under the Lieutenant's instructions that the first building came down, the second one will. Let's keep moving. So we moved

around and we got to -- they had that ferry, that floating barge. We got there. The other building started coming down. We ran and at this point there was a good hundred firemen running, guys were tripping, we were worried about getting covered with debris. We actually got covered with the cloud again over on the Pier side up there.

We ended up getting separated a little bit again, but it wasn't bad because we were outside. When we got up to there, and I guess it's called River Terrace by this map. We were going up there, like I said the second building had fallen. Now we were cut off from the first building by being on the Pier side. So we had to walk around to get to around there, we had -- I think at this point is when we knew everything was all haywire.

Q. Did you hear any radio transmissions at that point that you recall?

A. Not that I recall. It was just hectic. Really was. We went up to the corner -- somewhere over here and there was two ferries. There was a couple of hurt firemen, we helped them on the ferry. I remember that. We were standing there and it was like I don't know exactly what time it was, but I knew it was the

morning and then we looked at the officer and we asked if we can go try and get some water or something for us and for whoever needed it.

We went into Stuyvesant High School, Bobby and I, and we commandeered a dolly. We filled it with sandwiches and juices and we started handing them out to whoever needed it. We just started helping people on the Pier side. We started helping firemen and civilians, on to the ferry boats. They kept going back and then all of a sudden when we got that dolly filled with all the stuff, we got back to the Pier side and the ferry came in with water. We threw water on the dolly, we wheeled that dolly for about a half an hour around the Pier and wherever we were going. We ended up at West Street, I would say probably around Murray. That's the corner where Stuyvesant High School is, if that's the street. I'm not really sure if it was -- I think we were further down than Vesey. I think we were at Murray.

We ended up over there and then all the second wave of firemen came in and you could see the difference between the first wave firemen and the second wave firemen, because the first wave firemen had the look in their eyes like oh, my god, you don't even

know what happened.

At that point we were just I think, everybody, the emotions were fried. Just wondering -- like, you wanted to do things, but we couldn't do anything. We got down there. At one point in the day we walked down there, we just got beat up with that sand storm again and we faded back. The rest of the day we were unloading trucks. We were just doing whatever little things we could do, but they were waiting for 7 World Trade Center to fall. I didn't call my wife until 4:00 o'clock that afternoon to tell her I was okay.

Then the Lieutenant called his wife because we couldn't get in touch with anybody or anything. We didn't know what the hell was going on. It was just people all over the place. Firemen kept showing up and they said anybody on the recall that wasn't there before the building fell, they looked like they were just going to work. All the guys who were there before the building fell had this gaze in their eyes, like holy shit.

Q. Was there any radio transmissions or anybody you might have run into that you might be able to add that might help us?

A. I don't know right now. Not really. Like I said, I seen Angelini looking for a mask.

Q. Did he get one, did you find one?

A. I didn't have one on my rig. I saw a couple of things in the water. They had no pressure. They had no water. I heard 131.

Q. You mentioned earlier that Engine 10 was yelling they didn't have any water. Do have any idea what their location was?

A. No, no. I think it was Engine 10 looking for water there. They had no pressure. There was people with no pressure fighting the fire. That's from what I remember.

Q. Do you know if they were in the towers or they were fighting fires in the street?

A. I'm not even sure. It was at the beginning of everything. It was basically I just remember hearing it. I just remember, holy geez, there is no water anywhere, because I heard everything was wiped out. They just kept asking people to hook up to the building from what I remember. They were trying to augment from as many places as they can.

Q. All right. Is there anything else that you can think of that you might want to add at this time

before we complete the interview?

A. I think I gave you a quick version.

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: You gave me an excellent version. All right. The time is 1636 hours. I want to thank you very much and this will conclude the interview then. Thank you.

File No. 9110489

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ANGEL RIVERA

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 1130 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER RIVERA: My name is Firefighter Angel Rivera.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter Angel Rivera is assigned to Ladder 12 of the New York City Fire Department. We are in the quarters of Ladder 12. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Angel, in your own words tell us what happened.

A. Okay. That Tuesday morning I came to work at 9:00 the 9 by 6 tour. So I was changing clothes and getting ready for work. There was excitement going in the firehouse: It's a bomb, it's a bomb, the World Trade Center is on fire. I never saw the plane hit, the first one, but I was watching the news and we were practically

glued to the TV set. There were rumors it was a bomb. Some of the people said it was a plane. Some people saw the plane. We actually didn't know what happened the first time.

We were here, just waiting to be called to go. The battalion chief was called first with Engine 3. They responded first. We were left behind. As the second plane hit the second tower, we were called. It was a fifth alarm on first call. We responded to the second fifth alarm going on.

Going down Seventh Avenue, everybody's looking. You can see the towers. It was terrifying what we were seeing from the rig: both towers, the black smoke pouring out. We got there. I think we came on Liberty Street and Water Street. That's where we parked the rig.

We got off the rig. We could see people jumping out. We could see body parts all over the place. We were told go to the second tower, report to the lobby. We went and we reported to the command post. I don't remember who the chief was.

Q. This was in the second tower?

A. The second tower, the second tower hit, yes. We reported over there. We were there about ten minutes before the chief told us go to the Marriott Hotel, go from the 14th floor up, search and evacuate all the floors.

So we walk all the way up, no problem. Then we hear the explosion and debris falling. We were looking out of the windows and see body parts all over the place. It was scary. It was very sad.

We searched 14, 15, went in one lobby, we came out the other way, we went in one stairway, came up -- when we hit the 19th floor, something horrendous happened. It was like a bomb went off. We thought we were dead.

The whole building shook. The brick coming out of -- the door to the hallway into the hotel blew off like somebody had thrown it all over the place. It shook all over the place. We were thrown on the floor.

We looked inside the lobby after everything calmed down, and everything was collapsed. The building was still shaking and we're still hearing explosions going on

everywhere, so we decided let's get out of here.

After we decided to get out of there, we dropped everything. We had a roof rope; we dropped it. We didn't think about retaining our tools. We just wanted to get out of there. We ran all the way down to the fourth floor where we ran out of stairs. There were no more stairs.

On the fourth floor we were all safe. Everyone was there, including a couple of guys from other companies.

Q. Do you know what companies they were from?

A. I think 38 Engine or something like that. I can't recall.

We met on that floor, and we were all safe. We were all like -- we could have been over here. What happened, we looked out of the window of the hotel, the wall, practically, because the window was all blown up. There was no way out. The only way out was the roof rope.

So Lieutenant Petti, who was in charge that day, and Firefighter Angel Juarbe decided to go retrieve the rope. Angel said, "I'll go get it." Lieutenant Petti said, "All right. I'll go

with you." So they went.

I gave them a call like five minutes later.

Q. Mention what channel you were on.

A. We were on Channel 3. It was very hard to communicate to the command post. We had no idea what was happening. We had no idea that everything was gone. We were on Channel 3 and calling. I said, "12 Engine, 12, where are you?" "We're there. We're on the way down."

On the way down they heard a mayday, "Mayday, mayday. This is Firefighter Brennan from 4 Truck. I'm trapped. I'm in the Marriott Hotel. I'm on the upper floor." Lieutenant Petti said, "Turn your pass alarm on so we can find you." He said, "I'm in pain. I cannot move. I'm losing consciousness. Please hurry." This is the last time I heard Lieutenant Petti say, "Keep talking. Keep talking. We're going to find you."

When we came down to the fourth floor, we encountered two civilians there, one older fellow and one younger fellow. Mike Mullan, which is another of our guys who lost his life,

was with us.

When Lieutenant Petti and Angel Juarbe tried to find this fellow from 4 Truck, Mullan decided to go -- he was with me on the fourth floor. We were safe. Mullan said, "I'm going to go up and give them a hand." The proby, a brand-new guy, wanted to go, and he asked me, "Should I go?" I said, "No. Just stay with me." The proby stayed with me.

Mike Mullan walked one flight up, and then the most horrendous thing happened. That's when hell came down. It was like a huge, enormous explosion. I still can hear it. Everything shook. Everything went black. The wind rushed, very slowly [sound], all the dust, all the -- and everything went dark.

We were rolling all over the floor, banging against the walls. We separated from each other. I thought I was alone. I thought I was buried alive. After a while -- we waited and waited and waited, and when the smoke and the dust started to give way, we could see a little light from where the stairway went. So we said, shit, this is the light of heaven or something or

this is the light to get out.

The older guy was beside me. I touched him in the dark. I knew there was somebody there. Shit, if we're going to die here, make it fast. When the smoke cleared up, we saw the light very, very slowly just getting clear. Jesus Christ. We were exhausted. We were depleted.

Q. Are you still in the stairway or did you get out into the lobby?

A. No, the guys that were in the stairwell -- I was in the lobby. The guys in the stairway just fell down. That was Heinz Kothe and two other guys. They fell down the stairs. They were trapped somewhere down below, and they managed to get out, dig themselves out.

Q. What company were they in?

A. 12 Truck.

Q. 12 Truck?

A. Yeah. Those were the other guys, who were all there in the lobby.

When that happened, these guys were trying to get down, trying to find their way to try to make a hole through the rubble to follow

the stairway, where the stairway was, to get to safety. That's when the second tower came down.

When the second tower came down, we had no idea what was going on. We thought another plane, another bomb, another as a second device. We thought, this is it, we are dead.

When that happened, as I told you before, everything was black. It was like being inside a storm or volcano or something, something horrendous. We said we're going to die, we're going to die, God help us. I thought that was it, after that it was no more, no more talking. That was it. We were all quiet and said where are we, what happened.

The smoke cleared up, the ashes or the cement or whatever. There was a little opening. All the rubble had fallen and had formed like a ledge. First we walked out and we could see all the buildings building materials, all the beams, everything. I said, "Jesus Christ."

We tried to walk through that rubble. It's very, very dangerous. I had an older guy with me. The older guy said, "What am I going to do?" I said, "Stay with me. I'm going to get

you out of here." He said, "But I'm an older man. I've just had heart surgery." Actually he said to me, "I don't think I can make it." I said, "Well, you're going to try, and we're going to make it." Actually he was very cooperative.

We walked out onto the rubble. We're thinking it can collapse also and we're going to be dead if we stand here too long. So finally we found out where there was a beam. Maybe God put it there. It was an enormous beam about 20 feet away from us that was against the building but to the level where we were, like it started where we were, all the way to the ground.

One of the guys said, "This is our way out." So we all went that way. But the other guys were eager to get out. You don't blame them. They all went that way. I have an older guy with me. What am I going to do now?

What happened, I told him, "Okay, do you see what they do? You're going to do that." He said, "No, I can't." "Yes, you can." He said, "Okay." I grabbed him by the collar here. I put him on the beam. I said, "Just make sure you keep your balance. Just slowly slide down

all the way down. I'll be right with you." So that's how we got out to the bottom.

When we got out to the bottom, there was a lot of debris, a lot of water, a lot of poles, more beams that we have to walk through to get to safety. We got out. There was nobody around. There was a mist.

Finally somewhere in the distance we could see some like people walking, and there were some firefighters that were walking around. The old man, I took him all the way out and I handed him to a cop, to a policeman, which took him out to whatever, to safety, and he was transported to New Jersey or whatever.

This man is keeping in touch with me. He found me through the Men'S Journal. One of the guys here was interviewed, and he gave all the accounts. He mentioned my name, that I was the last one out, carrying this older guy. This older guy, which lives in Florida, found the article. He called the firehouse. Ever since we've been best friends. He said, "Thank you for saving my life. What a coincidence to be saved by a firefighter named Angel."

That's what I can tell you, Chief.

Q. Anything else you want to say, anything at all?

A. That's it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you for your cooperation, Angel.

FIREFIGHTER RIVERA: Oh, you're quite welcome, Chief.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's now 11:45, and that's the end of this interview. Thank you

File No. 9110490

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG DUNNE

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 1225 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DUNNE: Craig Dunne.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Craig Dunne is a Firefighter six grade, assigned to Engine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. In your own words, Craig, please tell us what happened that day.

A. We got the ticket about 9 a.m. We were over at the Garden on an EMS run. We heard the box come in. We heard the first couple units down there on the scene. They were screaming that a plane went into a building and had numerous fire showing on numerous floors, numerous exposures.

We took up from that run and came back

to the firehouse. We got the ticket around 9:00. We knew pretty much that we were going to be heading down there. So we got our stuff down. We were pretty much on the rig. We just pulled up to the quarters when we got the ticket.

We headed down and we took the West Side Highway. I had the door position that day, so my back was facing the chauffeur. So I really didn't get to see much on the way going down to the towers.

We got there and parked the rig in front of the customs building just by the first pedestrian walk just north of tower one.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street, yeah. We were on the eastbound lane of West Street, eastbound side. There were a couple of parked cars. Lieutenant Desperito was with us. He told us grab an extra rollup, extra bottles and take our regular rollup and an extra rollup. He just said stay together.

We proceeded to go into the lobby of tower one. We got in there. The glass was down in the front. There was a gentleman -- you saw people that were jumping from the building. You

had to look up and make sure you didn't get hit by any jumpers or anything. We saw a couple of people that were burnt on the outside of the building. There was a gentleman that was burnt inside when we went in.

We went over and got into the lobby and went over to where the fire command center was, the board. The fire command board was on the wall. There were a couple of gentlemen behind there. There were a few chiefs in there. I don't remember who exactly was in there.

When we got to the command post, whoever was the incident command that day, they teamed us up with 15 Engine and they told us to head towards the 70th floor.

Engine 1 and 15, we started proceeding up the B stairwell, passing other people coming down; no firemen, just a lot of people. There was no smoke condition or anything like that going up.

We stopped at 12. Actually there was emergency service that was with us also. I'm not sure what truck it was. There were actually two emergency services trucks, four guys, and some

Port Authority police also.

We stopped at 12 and took a little break, let some of the people come down. That was maybe a minute or two. Then we proceeded to 22, where the Port Authority command post was, I believe was. That's where we were heading. I think we had -- the gentleman that was in charge of the Port Authority police was with us.

So we stopped at 22. Lieutenant Desperito and I believe one other member of Engine 1 tried to make their way down the hallway on the 22nd floor off the B stairwell to the command post. We were there three or four minutes. The elevator shafts were blown out, so they had to make their way around -- the fire came down the elevator shafts.

We were waiting, taking a breather. People were still coming down. All of a sudden we lost power in the building, and it felt like somebody was shaking the building. We didn't know what was going on, whether our building was coming down or something was shifting.

We all piled into the stairwell again. We were waiting for the boss to come to see what

we were going to do. We weren't sure if we were going up or going down. Other guys weren't sure what was going on.

We really didn't hear much on our radios. One of the Port Authority police, I believe they said they heard a possible collapse, possible terrorist activity.

We proceeded to make our way down the same B stairwell that we came up on. It had to have taken us about 15 minutes to get downstairs. There were no civilians until between the seventh and fifth floors. We didn't say the building was going to come down, because we didn't know. We were trying to push them out.

Q. Do you know who gave you the order to go out of the building?

A. Lieutenant Desperito.

Q. So you got the word from the command center?

A. I believe it was the Port Authority cop heard of a possible collapse. We got to like the third or fourth floor, and you could see a lot of like white powdery dust was coming into the stairwell. When we hit the lobby, there were

guys covered from head to toe in the white powder. I had no clue what was going on.

I got outside. We actually went out of the same door that we went in through the front lobby. I came out, and I was helping a gentleman out to the street. There was a couple of emergency services officers, and they grabbed us. They're like, "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!" We were like "What's going on?" He pointed to the left. Then the whole building was gone.

I didn't know the building came down until we got outside. I didn't even notice that building got hit. That must have gotten hit by the second aircraft on our way down responding to the box. None of us had any knowledge of that.

We made our way -- I think I was on the corner -- I headed north on West Street to the corner of Vesey and West, and we had everybody with us. I was actually going down the stairs with one of the other guys that was with us, Paul Bessler, that day. We wound up coming down together. The other guys were behind us a little bit: Kurt Long, Mike Yarembinsky and Lieutenant

Desperito. Kurt was actually behind me.

Lieutenant Desperito was with Mike Yarembinsky, and Mike was kind of waiting. He said, "Go ahead." He told us to meet outside, make sure everybody was together to meet outside and wait on the corner of Vesey and West.

I believe we were there maybe two minutes, two and a half minutes. We heard the rumble, looked up, and the antenna started leaning and the whole building started pancaking towards us, coming down.

I had my mask on my back. A lot of guys didn't have it. I ran like 10 or 15 feet. I stopped and I put my face piece on, so I didn't breathe all that stuff in. I was just running up West Street. It was a dark cloud getting darker and darker and darker. I wound up coming out somewhere down by Murray or Park Place or something like that. Then I went back.

That's it.

Q. Do you know what happened to Lieutenant Desperito?

A. He was outside the building, supposedly. I don't know the whole story. He

was outside the building, and I believe he got hit in the head with a piece of I beam, possibly. He got hit. He was outside the building.

Q. He made it out?

A. He made it out. He made it out of the building. He was almost there. Two of the firemen, I think one -- he's a lieutenant now. He said him and another fireman -- because he had his helmet on. They saw the Engine 1 headpiece. His helmet shield was still next to him or next to his helmet. He recognized that on the radio it said Engine 1. So they got him right away, they said.

I wound up going to the hospital that day. I had a pulled a groin muscle and my lower back and stuff like that.

Q. Anything else?

A. Like I said, we didn't even know the second building got hit. We really didn't see -- there was tons of people in the lobby. But really everything was going so fast, you really couldn't pinpoint. Even if I had noticed like people said they saw me in the lobby and it's like I remember talking to you, it's like it's --

Q. Like a (inaudible)?

A. Exactly, yeah. Everything is just kind of like fog.

Q. Okay. All right. Thanks a lot, Craig. We appreciate you assisting us. Hopefully we get something out of this.

A. Yeah, absolutely.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 12:45, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110491

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FRANK NOLAN

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 23, 2002. The time is 1100 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual. Please state your name.

LIEUTENANT NOLAN: Frank Nolan, lieutenant, Ladder 102.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The location of this interview is at the quarters of Ladder 102. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Frank, would you please give in your own words what happened that day.

A. Well, Ladder 102 responded to the staging area at Hamilton Avenue on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel.

After the first tower came down, 102 was ordered by B.C. Coyne of the 42 battalion to evacuate the north tube of the tunnel. While doing so, 102 walked the entire length of the tunnel, split up into two teams, one led by myself, Lieutenant Nolan, and one

led by Lieutenant Ciaravino, who was getting off the night tour. We just split into two teams.

I reported to Battalion Chief O'Connor of the 57, who told us to stay together and just search as many voids and we could, and Lieutenant Ciaravino led his own team. He was radio equipped, and I'm not really sure where he went.

We both split up into two teams and began searching voids. The first place we went to was -- I met up with a lieutenant from 10 truck, who took us to where the north tower lobby was, and we began searching voids and trying to follow the sounds of pass alarms, to no avail.

And that's about it. We worked for the next 20 hours or so until about four in the morning just removing bodies.

Q. You found bodies?

A. We found two civilian bodies, and we just helped remove them. Actually, I remember the guy's name, too, one of the guys' names, and that was it.

Q. When you went through the tunnel, you just walked through the tunnel, and when there was nobody in there, you continued on to the site?

A. Right. We walked through the tunnel. We

were told that there was infirmed and elderly who were struggling to get out, but as we walked, the people were just passing us, and we found nobody in need of our assistance.

They just continued to exit to the Brooklyn side, and we continued on to the Manhattan side.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. That's it. That's all I can remember that day.

Also, yes, I was -- after leaving Chief O'Connor and searching various voids, I would every now and then go back to the command post with D. C. Hayden, who was in command, and he would send us to various assignments, and that was it.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you for you are cooperation.

This concludes this interview. The time is 1110 hours. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110492

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DOUGLAS FERRETTI

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 24th, 2002. The time is 1400 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER FERRETTI: Douglas Ferretti.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Douglas Ferretti is a fireman in Ladder 47 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 47. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please give what happened that day in your own words?

A. We got the run. We heard about the Trade Center on the TV. We got the run down to the Trade Center. We got relocated to Truck 6 from Chinatown. By the time we got to Ladder 6's quarters, the first tower had already come down. Then we got the call to a building close to the towers to check for smoke in the building.

When we checked out the building, it

was due to the smoke from the towers. So on our way out, I was putting my stuff on the rig, and then the second tower came down. It was all hands for themselves. Everybody ran. I ran about two blocks. I saw a revolving door, and I went into the revolving doors, where there were about 15 to 20 civilians in there trying to get cover.

We waited it out from there on in. It was just trying to help people get out of the area.

Q. Did it turn black as night?

A. Yes. It was black about 10, 15 minutes, something like that.

Q. All you did is help some civilians out?

A. Yeah. That was about all we could do, really. We really couldn't get too close to it because we were directly down wind. We couldn't see anything. You didn't know what you were getting into.

Q. Anything else you can think of that might help us?

A. That's about it. That's about all that happened. That's it.

Q. Where did you guys go afterwards?

A. They had a staging area by the church there.

Q. St. Paul's?

A. That's the Church right here at the Trade Center? They had a staging area there. We hung out there for probably two hours. Nothing really happened, so we went on the other side of the wind. We went on the leeward side.

Q. What you understand was the dust particles? Were you doing a lot of coughing?

A. I had one of those dust masks.

Q. It worked pretty good?

A. Yeah. I had a good one. I had one with a valve in it.

Q. Where did you get that?

A. On the rig. My senior man, he had two of them and he gave me one.

Q. Wow.

A. I didn't take mine off. I tell you, when you took it off, it was abrasive. You could feel you were breathing something bad.

Q. Were civilians coughing?

A. Yeah.

Q. So it was irritating?

A. Oh, yeah. Your eyes are bleeding, you're coughing. I was --

Q. You think the wind would blow that.

A. I guess I was exposed to it for maybe 20 minutes before I put the mask on. You could feel right away that it could be detrimental to your health.

Q. If that's it, that's the end of this interview. Thanks a lot for your cooperation?

A. You're welcome.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1410 hours.

[redacted]

File No. 9110493

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LT. THOMAS PIAMBINO

Interview Date: January 24, 20002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 24, 2002. The time is 1200 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm a conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Thomas Piambino.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thomas Piambino is in Marine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Marine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Thomas, in your own words, if you would say what happened that day.

A. On 9/11, I was assigned to Engine 65, and approximately two, three minutes after nine, we responded to the World Trade Center box.

I had been watching it on television for the first few minutes, and we were aware of the fact that it was an aircraft that hit the building, but I wasn't sure at the time whether it was an accident or not.

Responded down the Westside Highway. We made

pretty good time going down there. There was no traffic, and we got there relatively quick.

On arrival, I saw both towers. Prior to our arriving, on the radio, I heard Marine Company 1 transmitting another aircraft had hit another building. I wasn't sure which building was which at the time, but when we arrived, both buildings had been hit. Both buildings were on fire.

I could see at least eight or ten floors, from my opinion, at that point in the street that were pretty much fully involved, and at least both buildings on the upper floors.

The chauffeur let me off on West Street on the west side of the north tower, and we got out and the chauffeur proceeded south.

Q. That's just a diagram.

A. You know, where he wound up, I have an idea now, but up until this point for the past couple of weeks, it really wasn't clear to me what he did with the apparatus while I went into the building.

We went in through the west side of the building right off of West Street into the north tower. We went into, I guess, the -- I think the windows were out already. They were already blown out

when we got there, so I don't even think I went in through a door. I'm pretty sure I went in through a window into the west side of the north tower.

There was no command post there, and they were just sending us up. I had no particular assignment. We had our roll-ups, Scott bottles and extra Scott bottles we were carrying.

We went -- I think it was Engine 39 we might have teamed up with, and, you know, there was a battalion chief there. I don't know what battalion he was from or what his name was, but we teamed up with 39, and we proceeded to go up.

Q. Which stairway?

A. Stairway B, and there were civilians coming down the stairway. The civilian evacuation, in my opinion, was kind of orderly. They stayed to one side, and we stayed to the other side and worked our way up.

I wasn't positive of what floors the fire was on. I didn't have any information. The handie-talkie information was pretty sketchy at best, and I don't know what point I heard this on the radio, but someone had said on the handie-talkie that there was a third aircraft inbound, and that is when I heard that, I specifically heard that, and at one point I guess -- I

don't know what -- where we were. In retrospect, I know what it was.

The south tower had fallen, but at that time I didn't know what it was. All I heard was a tremendous explosion. The tower I was in shook really bad. It really shook bad, and my opinion, I thought it was another aircraft that hit the building.

We continued to go up. The emergency landing I think went out. There were still civilians coming down the stairs, and in my opinion, there was no one thing. There was no one thing that made me decide to get out. I can't tell you. I can't pinpoint anything. It was just -- I don't know what it was. It was just the culmination of intuition or what.

I just decided it was time to go, and I thought this was odd, too, was that something must have happened, because I think a lot of people were at that particular moment -- the consensus was that we were getting out. I received no handie-talkie communications to get out.

Q. Did anybody tell you maybe?

A. No one told me to get out.

Q. Because some guys have heard it, some guys haven't.

A. No, I was -- absolutely nothing. There was no handie-talkie communications that I heard. Whether they transmitted them or not, I can't say. I didn't hear it. I didn't hear it.

We went as high as -- I had five men manning that day, so I had four firefighters with me, and my intent was to go to the fire floor and do what we could do, and we were taking it easy, trying to pace myself.

What I would do is I would walk up two floors and wait for them to come up. I would let them stay. I'd walk up another two floors. This way we were alternating, trying to pace ourselves to get up wherever it was we were going.

I didn't know. I heard some radio transmissions that might have been from rescue. It might have been -- I don't want to mention names, but it was a rescue officer, 80 something. 80 something floor rings a bell with me about the fire floor, heavy fire or something.

Q. You think they made it up that high?

A. That's what my memory tells me. How accurate I'm -- you know, how accurate I am, I don't know. 80 something rings a bell with me, and, you know, something about fire conditions.

Now, what tower that came from, I don't know. I don't know whether I was hearing it from the south tower or the north tower. I don't know. I don't know. We made it up as high as 20. I made it up as high as the 22nd Floor, and about that time, I met -- I think my men were maybe on the 20th Floor, and I started to come down, and at that point in time, I just said, "It's time to go."

The stairway still had civilians in it, and they were still moving out, and we took whatever civilians we could take with us downstairs. We were not leaving them behind. I mean, we were not passing them to get out of the building.

It was painfully slow going down, and in my mind -- again, this is only my perception, my intuition. I just kept telling myself, I'm running out of time to get out of the building. Kept to myself. I was just running out of time.

We proceeded down the stairway, and we had some civilians with us, and we managed to get them down to the lobby. When I got down to the lobby -- the lobby was in bad shape when I went up. It was worse when I came back down. All the elevator shaftway doors were blown out, and there was stuff coming down the --

just falling down the shafts, and the civilians had bogged down at the bottom of the stairs, because they were afraid to pass the elevator shafts, and there were piles of rubble all over the place.

We kind of quietly pushed them out without trying to panic them. In the lobby, I think I saw some people from 21 engine perhaps. I'm not positive, and we came out the same way I came in on the West Street side, on the west side of the building, the West Street side of the building. Again, went out windows that were out. I don't recall it being a door. I'm pretty sure it was windows that were blown out, and I met -- or I seen Chief Turi with a bullhorn out on West Street, trying to facilitate the evacuation of the building, telling the guys to get out of the building with the bullhorn.

When I made it down to West Street -- prior to even getting to the street, there was bodies on the floor from jumpers. My recollection is there were civilians. I saw no -- you know, I didn't see anything that was Fire Department, but it was civilians, and I tried to keep all my guys together, and I made it down to West Street.

There was stuff just falling off the

building, too. I mean, the building was just starting to fall apart, and when I made it down to West Street, there was a large building. They tell me now it was the Verizon building on my right-hand side, and my instinct was to keep that Verizon building between me and the towers, the whole company and the towers.

So we headed north on West Street, keeping -- staying close to the large building, and I don't think we were out of the building a minute, a minute and a half. We exited the building, and the north tower started to fall.

We were pretty much together at that point, the whole company. I know they were all out. I know specifically I had two guys with me that I know for sure, and I know the other two guys made it. The other two guys I had made on it out. I know they were out of the building. At that point, I really wasn't positive as to where they were, but I know two guys I had with me.

We started to go north on West Street as fast as we could. We weren't running, but we were moving, walking pretty fast, and then the north tower started to fall, and my perception was that when I looked back at the tower as it was starting to come down -- I was

booking -- was that there was -- I thought it exploded, and I didn't realize it had collapsed.

It looked to me like an explosion, and you could feel the -- you could feel it coming, and they were still running away from it. I mean, you weren't going to out run it.

At that point, we all split up. I mean, it was like run, and each one of us took refuge behind something, and I wound up taking refuge behind an ESU truck, I believe it was, a Police Department ESU truck, I think, and I just rode it out until first there was the explosion or the concussion, and then there was very, very strong wind, and then there was the black -- black -- dirt black cloud, and you couldn't see nothing, and it became very, very quiet, and when it became quiet, the only thing I heard after that was somebody crying.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you, Thomas, for your cooperation.

The time is about 1230 hours, and that concludes this interview.

File No. 9110494

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT EDWARD MARTINEZ

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 1303 hours. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 17.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Eddie Martinez of Battalion 17, EMT. Eddie Martinez.

Q. Okay. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Eddie could you start from --

A. All right. On September 11, we were dispatched to the World Trade Center for an MCI, a mass casualty incident. It was in the morning. We didn't know what was going on. All we knew was that on the news a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. So we headed down there. We headed down towards the towers.

We took the FDR down, which was closed off to traffic. They had a special lane for the emergency vehicles, so we made good time getting down there. Once we were dispatched to Vesey and West Street, Vesey and West Street, upon entering the area, what we saw was like a total devastation from, I guess from the first plane that struck the tower. There were burnt cars. We saw -- it was like a grayish -- it was

night. It was sunlight. There was a lot of light. It was a sunny clear day, but in that area it was a grayish area. The sun wasn't shining. It was like fog, like a big fog.

We saw, like I said, burned vehicles, some of them were on fire. The buildings were just destroyed. The surroundings, there was too much for the eyes to capture everything all at once. It was like overwhelming.

We were told to go to our staging area, which we attempted to do, then we would reverse back up. I don't know the street that we were on at that time, at that moment. Everything looked the same. I was the tech. My partner was driving at the time.

Coming out of the -- getting out of the ambulance to get the equipment to go to where our staging area was supposed to be, I commented to my partner that there were some burnt parts on the floor, which turned out to be flesh that were strewn all around the place. Everywhere you looked you see a piece of something. At the time I didn't know what it was until I came close to it. I saw it was a piece of flesh.

At that time we just -- they told my partner

to turn the ambulance around and they had a new staging area, which was further away from the building, and we just made a U turn and went up, not that far from where we originally were assigned to and once we were there, we were -- I started taking the equipment out of the ambulance and I told my partner that I will see him in a little while with the first patient.

Well, he stood with the ambulance and I put all the equipment on the stretcher and put my gear on, my helmet and my coat, and headed down towards the towers. I was in front of the towers. I had walked a little distance, some distance from the ambulance, and I was attending a patient, somebody was hurt, it was on the ground. There were other patients all around, but this one was -- he was hurt.

I was talking to him when I heard a loud, like a roaring noise, like a loud loud roaring noise. At the time I didn't know what it was. I just looked up. All I could see because of the fog that was there, you couldn't see above. Your distance was limited. Once I heard that, I heard like a big explosion, a tremendous explosion, let me put it that way and a rumbling sound.

At that time I started seeing things coming

down. I attempted to grab -- I grabbed the person that I was talking to and to get away from that area, but he slipped back down and at that time everything started coming down. So I attempted to run some distance, which I couldn't run, because it overtook me. Like I said, it happened like really quick.

I also felt myself airborne. I was airborne. I didn't get that far. I was airborne. I felt a force behind me and it slammed me down on the ground. I got slapped down on the ground. Everything started hitting me, whatever was falling. At the time I didn't know what it was. I thought maybe that the building that was on fire exploded. I didn't know. I found out later on that the second plane had hit another building, the second tower.

When I fell, I fell forward and with my hands extended. I still was getting bombarded with a lot of heavy whatever it was hitting me, concrete, whatever. I was getting hit hard and when I fell on the floor that I fell with my -- on my stomach, face down with my hands extended, something heavy fell on my hand and bounced off. At that time my arm was broken.

I also felt some sharp pains to my back and then I was inside some -- a dark cloud of smoke. It

was so dark you couldn't see your hand. It was choking. It was like choking smoke. At that time, I had no idea where I was. I didn't hear no voices. I heard nothing. It was total silence.

I'm trying to find my way out of there with my broken arm. Holding on to my broken arm with the pain in my back, I just started walking in the direction that I fell, because I knew if I turned around I would lose my way, so I continued in that direction. It seemed like forever that I was in there. I didn't know -- it felt like it was walking in like suspended animation, that's what it felt like.

I continued walking and I heard some -- a voice, because I kept yelling is there anybody here, is there anybody here. I just kept walking and I heard a voice that just kept saying follow the light. I saw the light through the thick smoke. The light was like at a distance, but it was clear enough -- it was light. It was a bright light. It was clear enough to follow it.

So I continued following it. It wasn't -- as I was following it, I remember I felt a lot of heat. I didn't know what that was at the time. I got out of -- I started seeing -- it was like a haze. I saw

-- it was a vehicle that was burnt up and when I got out of the smoke there was nobody around. Nobody with a light, nothing. There was nobody around. It was just total silence.

I walked a short distance and I saw Karen, that was one of the paramedics from my old station. I saw her. I came over to her and told her that I was hurt. At that time they got me, put me inside -- helped me over to an ambulance. I told them my arm was broken. At that time they checked my back and they found that I had a deep laceration to my back. I couldn't breathe on my right side. My left was okay, I felt air going through. But my right side was like -- I was having problems, a lot of problems breathing.

At this time they splinted my arm and they checked my back. They told me that I have a deep laceration to my back and they thought that I may have what they call a pneumothorax. Turned out, lucky for me, that I didn't have a pneumothorax, but I did have a lot of shrapnel inside my back. That's what was hurting me.

They were attempting to take care of my back, when one of the other medics that was on the scene -- he was leery about the place, because there was no safe

area at this time. There was a lot going on. There was a lot of noise. I remember hearing still a lot of noise. I don't know if things were still falling, but all of a sudden we heard another rumbling sound and again with the smoke, you saw the smoke coming down and everybody just ran towards safety.

I ran into, I don't remember the place I ran into. I know I ran into a place that once I got inside, there was total -- there was a lot of smoke inside and a lot of people were every which way. They were going every direction. Nobody knew where to go or what direction to go.

I saw a woman there and she was like frozen with fear, I guess it was. So I went over to her and I tried to help her out. I tried to comfort her and telling her that everything is going to be okay, just calm down, because she was like almost hysterical, so I was taking care of her for a little while until I couldn't do it any more. I just like, I felt myself getting -- my breathing was getting worse. It wasn't getting any better.

So then at some -- I don't know who it was inside. I asked them if they had any oxygen and there were some EMTs, I guess from a volunteer ambulance

corps. They came over and I got an oxygen mask on me. At that time they checked my back and his reaction was like, you have like a big laceration to your back.

My main concern at that time, although my back was hurting and I was short of breath, because of all that smoke that I inhaled, my arm had been splinted. I was holding my arm as a matter of fact, the splint wasn't holding, so I was just holding my arm.

But that woman just kept -- I didn't want nothing to happen to her. It was like, you know, a woman in her 50s or something, somewhere around there. So I -- she was more calm. I talked to her for a little while. She seemed much better. Then some medical personnel I think came over and I told them and they took her.

Then at that time they started running inward towards -- further into the building that I was in, because they thought that the building was going to collapse outside. I had no idea what was going on outside. I didn't know that a plane had struck. All I knew was that I was hurt. I said no, I'm not going further into this building. As a matter of fact, I want to go out of the building, because this is an

unsafe area here.

I remember going out and it seemed like I walked for, I don't know how long a distance, because there were no blocks any more. It was just one big road, one big mess. I just continued walking and people were -- I remember two ESU cops, I think it was, grabbed me, because I was already too weak to go any further. I couldn't. I felt like I was going to pass out.

During the time that I got hit, when I was airborne, when I got slammed on the floor, I remember my initial reaction was to stay awake and don't pass out. I just kept repeating it to myself. Just don't pass out, stay awake, stay conscious and thank God, I did. I never lost consciousness throughout the whole thing.

At one time I couldn't get up. I couldn't get up, because I was being bombarded with whatever was hitting me and finally when it stopped, it just seemed like hours. It was probably just minutes or seconds. I finally got up. That's when I felt the pain in my back and I knew my arm was broken, because I felt it break.

They took me, I went to -- I remember seeing

the cops coming over and I'm telling them that I feel like I can't go on any more and I was ready to fall. They grabbed me and they helped me away from that area. They put me on a boat that was going to Jersey City. That's where I ended up, in Jersey City Medical Center.

I remember coming out of that building that I was in and I saw a burnt ambulance, which later on they told me that our ambulance was burnt up. I don't know if that's the actual ambulance that I saw. All I know is I saw a lot of destruction all around the place; fire trucks and a lot of people that were hurt.

I was put on the boat along with some other firefighters that were there and taken to Jersey City Medical Center and they told me --

[redacted]

My partner, I wondered about him. He went in a -- I didn't see him. I was worried for him. When everything started coming down, I remember that he was with the ambulance. I didn't see him until two days later at the hospital. I had no idea what had happened to him. I asked some of the people about him. Nobody knew anything. Nobody had no information. All they knew -- well, everybody was in the same state that I was, in a confused state. Not knowing what had happened.

It wasn't until like two days later, because I was heavily sedated and on morphine, that I started -- they told me that the second plane had hit the building and that I was caught in the collapse of the building. 4 days later I was released from the hospital. I was there, yes, 4 days. Continued therapy until now. (inaudible).

Q. Okay. Do you remember roughly -- you had seen or heard on the news about the first plane hitting, right?

A. I saw -- I didn't hear anything about it

until around -- well, I knew that the first -- I knew there was a plane crash into the World towers. I didn't know what kind of plane it was. I thought it was maybe years ago that a plane hit the --

Q. Empire State Building?

A. Empire State Building. I thought it was a small plane, but I remember when we were going down towards the World Trade Center we were on the FDR Drive. I saw -- we got a clear view. I said this wasn't a small plane. This was bigger than I thought. Then later on was when I found out that it was a 747, or whatever, that hit that. I didn't know and like two days later is when they told me. I didn't watch the news until I got out of the hospital, until three days later. I didn't want to hear about the news, the newspapers or anything.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Benny Badillo.

Q. When you arrived at the scene, you said you came first to Vesey and West?

A. Yes.

Q. When you got there, do you remember any other EMS personnel down there at that point, any officers that you recognized, or techs, medics?

A. There were other ambulances from different agencies down there. I didn't recognize anybody offhand. Like I said, I was like following -- it was just overwhelming, what I was looking at. I saw other emergency medical personnel. I saw some PD and firefighters around, but I didn't recognize anybody that I knew, until after I came out of the smoke. That's when Karen -- she blurted out like -- I don't want to say because you had an interview. You have this interview.

She was surprised that it was me and I recognized her and her partner -- I don't remember her partner's name. That's when I recognized her and they took a hold of me. I walked over to them.

Q. When they had you move or had your partner move the bus, do you remember where or what direction the bus got moved?

A. I know, I believe he was facing towards the towers, because we went up -- we went like down, seemed like a little hill. We were going down and they told us move the ambulance away from the area. They had a new staging area because that staging area was unsafe, which I was glad that we moved, because anything there got demolished, where we were before.

So we made a U turn, went back like up a hill, not that far a distance, and it was facing the towers with the ambulance facing the towers and that's when I took all the equipment out, I told him I will see you later with the first patient and I walked down towards the tower. I was right in front of it when all that started happening. I remember (inaudible). I didn't know where he was. I lost him completely.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you would like to add or comment on?

[redacted]

[redacted]

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1327. This will be the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110495

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BENJAMIN BADILLO

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. Currently at EMS Battalion 17. The time is now 1410.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Benjamin Badillo, EMT.

Q. Mr. Badillo is assigned to EMS Battalion 17. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. All right. Prior to getting the assignment, we had just came off another assignment. We were located at 176 Street and Morris Avenue in the Bronx. When we went available they told us to switch to Citywide frequency and to go downtown and then after that, all the information came in via the computer.

So we started going downtown. I took the Cross Bronx, no, I took the Deegan down the FDR, and on the way down there, they were just -- when we got close enough, I don't remember at what point we were at, but you could see the World Trade Center on fire and all kinds of things happening.

I was pretty much horrified as well as my partner. I couldn't believe it was actually happening or that we were even going down there. You see things

like that on the news and stuff like that, but you don't expect to be in it.

So we are driving down the FDR, I was driving. My partner was just navigating at this point. We take the Battery Park tunnel and come up -- go under and come back around to West Street. We parked -- we got up to the World Trade Center. We got to -- it was right here somewhere. I know it was right before Vesey, pedestrian -- okay. We were between the two towers, so we made a U turn and parked on West Street right over here.

Q. By Liberty, just north of Liberty?

A. Yes, just north of liberty. At that point, we were being directed by a staging officer. I don't remember his name. We started getting our equipment together, on to the stretcher and everything. Helmet, jackets, everything we had we put on the stretcher. So as we started to go to the triage area, the staging officer told my partner, Eddie Martinez, to take all of the equipment, including the stretcher and everything to triage and the driver had to stay with the vehicle. So I stayed with the vehicle and that's pretty much the last I saw of Eddie that day.

Eddie walked with all the equipment around

the first -- second building, right between the two towers and that was the last I saw of him. So I was standing by the vehicle. I am looking around and I see cars just -- a couple of cars, not much at this point, destroyed and I could see some bodies right before we parked, between the two buildings, laying around in the street and right near our vehicle you could see -- I didn't know what it was at first. Then I'm looking at it and it was just body parts, just chunks of flesh you know, just spread out here and there. That was a little freaky. I have never seen anything like that.

I don't remember what time we got down there. I know it was a little after nine. Maybe 10 after nine, 15 after nine. It was around there. I don't remember exactly. I know the first flight had hit. I don't know if the second airliner had hit at that point. So I'm just sitting around at this point. I really didn't have anything to do but just wait.

About 5 minutes after just sitting there, I hear this really bad thundering sound. I didn't know what it was. It just sounded like thunder, but it was like different. When I look up into the sky, out of curiosity, I don't know what made me look, I could see the top of the building coming down. I paused for

about a second or two.

When I took my eyes off the building and back to the ground, I could see officers and a lot of people just running into the building, so I did the same thing, like any reasonable person would do, trying to save their own life. I ran inside -- I don't know if it was the Marriott Hotel or -- I don't know if the Marriott is shown in here.

Q. I believe it's in here. It used to be the Vista.

A. Yes, I don't remember if it was the Marriott or the building right next to it, because there were two buildings right near to each other. But as soon as I ran into the building, I took a right. I was just trying to get as deep into the building as I could in the lobby. A few officers ran in there and civilians ran in there with us.

As soon as I made the right, I tried to hide under a security desk and you could just hear everything came down. As soon as everything came down, the lobby and the lights -- the lobby filled up with smoke and debris. The lights went off. You couldn't see anything. It was completely dark. It was a really loud noise. I can't even describe it. But it was a

really really horrific nasty noise.

As soon as that happened, I couldn't breathe. It's like the next breath I took was full of smoke and debris. I know I wasn't like not breathing for a long time. I would say about 30 seconds to maybe a minute. I was very scared. I couldn't breathe out. I couldn't take a breath. I felt all that debris every time I took a deep breath, going deeper into my lungs.

After a little bit, I finally took a breath and I was able to breathe a little easier, but it was still burning a lot. I couldn't see anything. I was really frightened at this point. Luckily some of the officers had flashlights so we found our way.

As we made our way back out to the lobby, there was some light at the outer part of the lobby. There was a light there. I still wasn't too sure about where we were at. At this point, I called my friend Maurice Lewis, he is also an EMT here at Battalion 17. I told him to contact my fiance and my family and tell them where I was at and to go home and try to calm down.

I looked -- the phones weren't working too well. We tried but I couldn't get through. When we walked out, finally got out of the building, I didn't

know we were outside of the building, because it was completely dark. Next thing I know I heard a loud slam and a girl screaming. When I looked back, it was a girl from one of the private ambulance companies jumping out the back door of her ambulance, screaming, really scared. At this point I was scared. I freaked out for a brief moment. I guess anybody would.

Q. Right.

A. But I came to my senses pretty quickly. I was like I really have to calm down and get out of here. So this girl pulls me and an officer and she says oh, please come and check on my partner. He is sitting in the front. I don't know what happened to him, but he is laying on the side. We went to go check on him and he was just really badly burned. It was obvious that he was dead. Nothing we could do, so we kept on walking.

We kept on walking south towards Battery Park. On the way, I don't know how much time had passed before the second collapse, but we kept -- I was okay physically. At this point, I was breathing better and I could actually see my way around. I got on the radio. I was screaming for my partner, you know, I tried to go in there and look for him, but it was too

dark. There was even more debris where he was at. I started screaming his name, but there was nothing I could do. So I just kept walking.

On the way down, we just kept running into some people. We all got on one of the big MTA busses, the city busses and for some reason or another, we didn't get kicked out, but somebody said we got to get out of the bus or whatever. So we got out the bus. I held this girl close to me to make sure she was okay, because she was in bad shape. We were helping some people out. There were a lot of people with broken arms and legs, so we were trying to help them out the best we could. A lot of confusion, you know. I really didn't know what to do next. There was no direction. There was nobody telling you what to do. Everything was destroyed.

The first thought on my mind is where is the train station, so I can get the hell out of here and go home. But then again, I knew I couldn't go home, so then I remember seeing a command car driving around and there was a Chief and a Lieutenant and an EMT in there. I forget the Chief's name. It was Mark Steffens, Chief Mark Steffens. The Lieutenant. I always have a hard time with his name. But he was one

of my original instructors. I don't even remember anybody else's name.

They told me to get inside the vehicle and about two minutes later, we made a U turn heading south, because he was coming up north and then he made a U turn going south again, down towards Battery Park, and I could hear the second rumble and I already knew what it was. I knew it was the second building collapsing.

I just started screaming inside the vehicle. I was like get the -- you know, get out of here. Let's go, let's go. He was doing his best, but there were people running all over the place. You can't run people over.

We made it down to Battery Park. We are looking outside the windows and you could see all the ashes and debris and all kinds of stuff just going all the way down. It looked like, from what I have seen on TV, you know, when volcanos erupt and the ashes go all over the place and it is raining and snowing ashes. It looked like that. It was very very scary.

People were hiding at the -- taking cover, shelter by the fort down there or something. There is something down there near Battery Park. That's where a

lot of people retreated to. We were down there for about an hour or two afterwards.

When it cleared out, we were helping people evacuate on the boats, going to Jersey. I was asking anyone if they have seen my partner. I remember Karen Lamanna from Battalion 14, she said that she had saw him with another medic. [redacted]

After that, we kind of just hung out down there for a while. We got everybody out. We moved over to the Staten Island Ferry, where all the people load up to take the ferry and stuff. That was pretty much the rest of the day there. I stayed there for about two hours and then I managed to sneak away. They didn't want me leaving, but I was covered in dust. I couldn't breathe very well. I was spitting up a lot of black stuff, junky stuff.

So I snuck away with -- I saw Mike Kenna, who is also an EMT here and Charlie Vitale. I snuck away

with them just looking around. We were walking around, we just like -- I don't remember exactly what streets we took, but I know we went around the whole World Trade Center. This little square.

You could see -- I don't know which tower was it. I think it was the north tower, we saw the north tower, just like what was left of it, just burning and a lot of fire. There was ashes everywhere, everywhere. I don't know how far this thing went, but it was really bad.

Walking around, we came out to Rector Street. We saw one of the landing gears from the airplane. I was trying to look for my vehicle, because by this time it had cleared up a lot, so you could see a lot. I was trying to figure out where exactly I was. I couldn't find my vehicle. I mean everything was destroyed. I can't say it enough.

We walked around. I kept running into people. I ran into Felix Hernandez, another EMT here at the Battalion. There was a lot of people. I saw the Chief of EMS, Robert McCracken. He was telling us to retreat back to the triage area at the Staten Island Ferry, but I didn't listen. I just kept walking around. Like I knew what just happened, what was going

on, but I felt very confused, lost. It was a bad feeling. I just didn't know my way.

At this point, okay, we are still walking around and we are just running into a lot of body parts and we ran into a person's torso, just no legs, no head, no arms, nothing, just chest and stomach area. We were tagging body parts, whatever we could find.

Then like 15 feet away I found a head to go to the torso. I don't mean to be so graphic, but I would just like to describe whatever I saw. It was just the brains hanging out of the skull, just completely flapping over, like you just opened up a can or something like that. Out of curiosity, I don't know why, but I just put on a pair of gloves and I picked it up. I just started moving it around and you could see the face and everything, but it was all crushed and everything, no facial bones, no eyes, nothing, so we tagged it and we went along.

By this time the Chief found me, he caught up to me and said get back to -- I was like, okay. By that time, later on, a few hours later, back at the ferry, I found out that Eddie was taken to New Jersey Medical Center or something like that, that he was going to be okay and so that was a little -- and I had

gotten in contact with some of my family members. They were really nervous.

I just wanted to make sure everybody was home, my son. I called him up. Kids don't know any better. I just wanted to make sure he was okay. I stayed there until about 11 o'clock at night. I got a ride back to the Bronx and right back here to the Battalion. It was a really rough, long day and I was really stressed out.

I'm walking into the door and people are just looking at me like whatever, I just got out of a war zone or something. I was literally covered from head to toe. It was in my underwear, it was in my shirt, in any my ears, everywhere. So I looked pretty bad.

I jumped in my car and I went home. My fiance, I live with my fiance. She was pretty good. I started watching the news and I saw the planes hitting the towers. I didn't know it was like the worst part of the whole day. I couldn't believe they actually got that on camera and I couldn't believe just seeing it.

Then I got some more bad news the next day. That was pretty much the end of the day after that. I didn't want to come to work the next day, but being that I was physically okay, they made me come for

another 12 hours, which is all right.

The next day I just heard that one of the firefighters who used to be an EMT, Hector Tirado, was missing, and pretty much considered dead at this point. Then another good friend of mine, she was an EMT for St. Barnabas, Imelda Reno. I found out that she was confirmed dead. That really hurt a lot. Because I knew Imelda for quite a few years. She was really a nice young lady.

Lieutenant (inaudible), he saw I was kind of disturbed by all this. He put us out of service and he suggested that I go talk to a psychiatrist at Jacobi emergency room. I took a few days off. I mean I came in, but I just kind of hung out at the station.

I didn't want to be bothered with doing 911 calls or nothing, nothing. I just didn't want to do it. I felt pretty good, but it just kept coming back. I was having trouble sleeping. To this point I feel pretty good. I don't think about it as much.

I guess I don't know if it's from the World Trade Center events, but I still have some trouble sleeping. I have spoken to some counselor, psychiatrist. It helped a lot to see that my partner was alive and okay. So thank God for that.

That was pretty much it. The things I saw and felt.

Q. Okay. When you guys first got in to Liberty and West, it was about up here that you had parked the bus somewhere?

A. Right by here somewhere.

Q. Do you know where the triage area that Eddie was headed for was?

A. I heard it was Church and Vesey, but Vesey is up here. I don't know how -- I know Eddie walked between the two buildings.

Q. He went into the plaza itself?

A. Yes, the plaza itself. That's the last -- that's the last -- that's where he was headed, but I don't know. Vesey is kind of far up here. Where is Church? Yes, Vesey and Church. I don't know if they had another triage area in the plaza itself, because there were a lot of vehicles parked around the buildings and the towers and stuff. That's the last I saw or heard.

Q. Okay. Anything else you would like to add?

A. No, I just thank God I'm here to tell the story. It was the scariest thing I have ever seen in my life. I never imagined to be involved. Like I said

earlier, you sit at home, you watch these horrible stories on TV and you read about them in the newspaper, so many deaths, so many lives destroyed and to actually feel like -- that I'm a part of history you know.

I just can't believe that I was there. I couldn't believe that I was there. To this day I still can't believe it. Other than that, I'm doing pretty good these days. Trying to get everything back on track.

MR. RADENBERG: Good. Okay. Thank you. The time is now 1434. This is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110496

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC CAMILLE MARRONCELLI

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 20. The time is now 1534.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Paramedic Camille Marroncelli, Battalion 20.

Q. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Could you begin with when you were assigned.

A. Actually, we were assigned -- we got on to the West Side Highway as the second plane hit the second tower. We had just gotten on to the West Side Highway from the Cross Bronx and my partner was -- he was monitoring the radio. I was trying to get through traffic going down there. He said a second plane hit the second tower. We hit a lot of traffic going down there so we were delayed. Our response time was delayed.

We finally arrived down there and we took West Street going down. It was clear, the West Side Highway was cleared from, I think it was 79 Street when they shut it down, so we were clear all the way down, going straight on down. As soon as you could see the towers from the highway, as soon as we could -- we got

them in our eyesight, we could see that they were both burning. We kind of both wondered what we were driving into at that point.

We got down, like I said, we went down West Street and we got down as far as, I'm not sure, we were probably around maybe 6, 7 blocks from the towers. I don't know exactly the cross street location that we were at, but there were maybe 10 ambulances down there before us, but most of them were Metro Care units and Hatzolah units were down there. There was maybe two or three other Fire Department EMS units down there.

There were no Lieutenants, no bosses, we couldn't find anybody. We pulled up right where all the other ambulances were. Unfortunately, they were all facing the towers. I thought it was kind of odd that they would be facing the disaster. In the event that we had to get out, they had no egress.

Finally one of the bosses pulled up. I don't even remember what his name was. We were trying to get organized and he asked who was the senior person. It happened to be me there. I have a lot of years on the job. He stated to me that you are in charge of staging and triage. I said okay, fine. I had done some mock drills when I had been a boss in '95 in Manhattan and I

had no problem with taking command of staging.

I just directed all the units to get in the vehicles and turn them around so we would be facing away from the towers. We were in the process of doing this and that's when the first building came down. Most of the people that were in the ambulances trying to move them just continued driving up West Street. I was on foot.

I jumped into the back of a Metro Care ambulance, as a matter of fact, and directed the driver to just drive, but what happened at that point was that the cloud that came up West Street, it just engulfed the vehicle, so we had to stop. Unfortunately for me, they left me in the vehicle. Everybody was scared. It was just everybody was so frightened, it was like survival of the fittest at that point.

When I was able to finally get out of the vehicle, you still couldn't see, because it hadn't dissipated that much. It kind of like shuffled along until this cloud dissipated and you kind of jumped into action, because it was pretty hard to miss a paramedic on the back of your uniform. Everybody was coughing and couldn't see. I kind of sort of directed people to the ambulance units that were there. I directed them

to get all their sterile water, take it out and kind of showed some of the people how to irrigate their eyes and stuff and gave people direction, tried to elicit bystanders to help and so on and so forth.

I had to separate from my partner. I don't know where he went. We were just like -- everybody was in a fog at that point. Maybe 5 minutes had passed and I got my partner and we were trying to make some semblance of order. Look for a supervisor, find out what was going on, what we needed to do, where we needed to be.

Shortly after the first building came down, the second building collapsed, but at that point we were further up West Street, because we had moved from the first collapse, so we did the same thing. We got into the ambulance and we drove further up West Street. I don't know. We were there. It was just a lot of -- it was madness, it was confusion and it was -- I'm sorry, because it's --

We were directed at that point, not really at that point, but a while later, because there was just nobody to kind of give us orders where to go. When things settled a little bit they directed everybody to go to Chelsea Piers. So all the units went up there

and that's when they -- I mean we sat there. We sat there and we didn't do anything because there was no way for anybody to do anything. We couldn't near the buildings, we couldn't get near the rubble because of the smoke and the fire and everything else that was going on, so we just -- it was just a feeling of feeling helpless at that point.

Everybody was eager to do stuff, but there was nothing really to do on our end. From what I understand from speaking with people afterwards, people who were on the other end had transported patients and so on and so forth, but we didn't have any patients until very much later on, when we transported some firefighters, but that was not until like when the third building fell, which was way later on.

Q. About 5 o'clock?

A. Yes. 5 o'clock. It was in the evening, but from the point that the second tower collapsed until that point, we were down in Chelsea Piers. I mean they brought us into -- near Stuyvesant High School. I don't remember what time it was. Maybe sometime in the afternoon they brought us down there and they made us sit there in case we needed to -- as I said, we wound up transporting 5 firefighters. They had minor

injuries.

I don't know what else to tell you other than that it was very unorganized and it didn't get organized even into the evening over there with who was going to do what and how they were going to transport the patients and any kind of organization. They said set up Chelsea Piers at that point as a disaster area and it was like a mock hospital and they had everything and anything you needed in there, but still it wasn't being utilized, because we couldn't get anybody out from the towers and what not.

Other than that, I don't know what else I could tell you that would be helpful with regard to what happened. I'm probably missing stuff because I'm not -- maybe there is stuff that I don't want to remember. I don't know. It was -- as time goes on -- it's been what, almost 4 months now.

Q. 4 and a half months.

A. 4 and a half months now, but it's still very hard to talk about it, because it's just -- especially with people on this job that have -- I don't know. I was born and raised in New York and I grew up when they were building the towers. We used to travel to Staten Island when I was a kid and we used to take the FDR

Drive down to where the ferry is and that's where we used to take the ferry and as a kid I grew up with watching these things being built.

Just the whole idea of those things coming down, it's still to this day it's very disturbing. It's still pretty -- I mean I know it happened, but when I go down to the city, it seems like almost like you are in a dream. I'm in a dream when I see that they are not there. So to talk about it is difficult. I never thought that I would be a part of such a bad part of history in this country.

I mean on the job, it's a hard job sometimes, and I'm part of a lot of the things that happened because I help people. That's a good thing. Maybe I was able to help somebody. That's good. But to be there and to not have been able to do anything because of the situation, it was very disheartening, because you train for a long time to be there at a time when you are most needed in a disaster.

Unfortunately it was beyond anybody's control, what you could and couldn't do. I have been to all these drills and it's just very different when it's real. It's just everybody, like everything goes out the window and people just -- I mean because of the

extent of that catastrophe, how big it was, there were just so many people that couldn't make any sense of it, let alone act. It was just -- mentally and emotionally it was that disturbing, that it was so hard to kind of like get your thoughts together.

You react because it's second nature on this job and that's the only reason why people -- a lot of people rose to the occasion, because it is second nature. If you stood there and really had to think about what you had to do, you would have been more paralyzed than you were, because that's the time to act and not contemplate. Later on it's going to really kind of -- you contemplate it and it just becomes very disturbing; all the images and the images that we saw when we got down there; people jumping out of the building and it just seemed very unreal, but it wasn't, unfortunately. It wasn't unreal.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with Richie Natal.

Q. Is he an EMT?

A. He's a paramedic.

Q. When you first got down in the area, you said you were like about 6 blocks north of the Center on the west side. Do you remember what, aside from the

ambulances, do you remember any other buildings that were around there, that might be like a landmark?

A. No, no. All I saw were ambulances and fire trucks and apparatus and police cars and that's all I was like concentrating on, with all that excitement, because you get very caught up in the adrenaline. You just get very caught up with what is going on. Things that aren't really -- and I guess it was, things on the periphery really weren't important, because you had these two huge structures in front of you that were just -- that's where your eyes were. All eyes were on those buildings. You just couldn't take your eyes off those buildings. So whatever was around me, I really couldn't tell you.

Q. The other Department ambulances that were in the area, did you recognize anybody that was part of the crews from those units?

A. From the voluntaries?

Q. No, from the Department, the EMS ambulances.

A. Yes, there was one of the Battalion 15 units. I think it was 15 Boy was there. There was another medic unit there, but I don't remember who they were. I don't remember them at all. They might have been from Queens or something, but there was definitely

another -- because a lot of people from the station were assigned. Maybe we were one of the first arriving units down there because we volunteered.

My partner Richie is a bit of a buff. He was like let's go, let's go. I was like all right, let's go. Not to think that it would be something as catastrophic as this. A lot of Jacobi units were there. As I said, the only one that I recognized was this other unit, 15 Boy. It is an EMT unit.

Q. The Lieutenant that arrived there, you said you didn't recognize him at all?

A. No, I don't remember who it was.

Q. Any idea where he went after he put you in charge of staging and triage?

A. I have no idea. It was just, it seemed like, because there was so much to do, because everybody was just running around like chickens without heads. There was no semblance of order. It was trying to get people to -- a group of people to do the same thing for the same purpose, because it was very hard to get people organized.

They kind of parked their vehicles there and I don't know where they went, these people, so we had to get them to like -- because you couldn't move this

vehicle unless this vehicle was -- do you know what I'm saying? So we are trying to get everybody to move their vehicles.

Q. All blocked in?

A. Yes. They were all facing the towers. If we had patients, we need to be going in the other direction. But no, I don't know where he went. He had his hands full, as did everybody else at that point in time.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. No, other than I don't know, I think that there are a lot of the EMTs and paramedics that were down there were -- had every good intention. This is what we go to school for. This is what we train for, to take care of the sick and injured, and unfortunately, we were utilized, but not to the effect that we wanted to be, because circumstances that were beyond our control, but we were there ready and willing to serve and I think that for myself, being down there as early as I was and seeing the whole thing transpire before my eyes, if we could have done more, we would have.

I think that a lot of times we are just not given the credit. Just being there and having to

experience something like that. People should get credit for that. Nobody should have to see something like that in their lifetime. It doesn't leave you. It stays with you. Hopefully people use it in a good way. Something good could come out of this, the way people view things, then it wasn't all in vain.

Unfortunately we lost a lot of people, the Department lost a lot of people and the world in general lost a lot with that event. Especially the people in New York. Especially people that are native New Yorkers, that grew up in the city and feel like they helped to make the city what it is today.

So it's part of like your -- it's your home. You feel like you were violated. You take it personally. I took it personally. I think a lot of people that don't live in New York that feel as they do for the city. There is a lot of people that work for the city. Civil servants. Obviously we love our jobs, because it's not the best paying job in the world, but there is more to jobs than being the best paying job in the world and when you are a civil servant in New York, I mean there are a lot of people in New York that you have to take care of.

That's part of what I guess the love for the

city is, just being there to do what you are supposed to do when you are called upon. I think everybody that was from this Department, from EMS did their job and a lot of people did above and beyond their jobs.

MR. RADENBERG: Time is now 1554. This will be the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110497

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

RUSS STROEBEL

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 25, 2002. The time is 1130 hours.

This is B. C. Frank Congiusta of the safety division of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Lieutenant Russell Stroebel, Engine 278.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

We are at the quarters of Engine 278. This interview is regarding events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Russ, please in your own words describe what happened that day.

A. Okay, I was assigned to -- I was working in Engine Company 246 that day. We got relocated to Engine Company 234 now. We just came in around 9:30 or so. So we relocated to the quarters of Engine 234, and then about maybe quarter to ten we got dispatched to respond to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel on a fifth alarm assignment, so we were making our way down there, and there were a lot of people when we got to the Brooklyn Bridge coming off the Brooklyn Bridge evacuating

Manhattan, so we stopped there momentarily to find out -- or to gain any information from the police that were on the scene, and there was a report of the tunnel collapsing, so we waited there to see if it was -- could be substantiated, and I asked the dispatcher if he wanted us to respond via the Brooklyn Bridge. He said just stand fast, and see what we can find out.

So after a few minutes, we ended up continuing to go to the tunnel. We got to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel on the fifth alarm assignment, and we were there a few minutes, and then we got ordered to go back to the Brooklyn Bridge to respond via the Brooklyn Bridge, so we went with other fire apparatus to the Brooklyn Bridge, and then they wanted us to go over the bridge at well-spaced intervals, which we did.

So we ended up going over caravan fashion, and we went down Broadway to -- past City Hall, and we parked the apparatus somewhere around there, got off the rig and took CFR-D supplies, and we made our way down towards the towers, which I believe both had already collapsed.

We went into -- this is 5 World Trade Center? And we assisted in -- actually, we ended up getting some extinguishers -- the 42 chief, I believe

it was the 42. I'm not a hundred percent sure, but we were operating with them, and he had ordered us to round up any extinguishers we could, because there was a civilian trapped in the -- I guess it was in the basement part, because we went in the 1st Floor down the escalator, one story, and he was trapped in some debris from the collapse, and there were small pockets of fire there.

So we went out and got some extinguishers, what we could find, came back, and we were putting out the pockets of fire while the truck company was disentangling the civilian. They put him on the Stokes stretcher. We had CFR-D supplies. We put oxygen on him, and he was heavy, and ended up assisting pulling him up. They used a utility rope or a life rope, and they pulled him up the stairs and got him out.

After that, we got separated from the chief, and basically were looking to find out what we could do to help, so we came back out and went back to the rig, and then we supplied an engine that was supplying the tower ladder putting out fire, and they were moving.

We ended up -- we were there till about ten after three at night. We did some other things, just assisting with some hose stretching, whatever. It was

a little disorganized in terms of orders were given, and people were going back, and there was water supply problems, pressure problems.

Then was it 7 World Trade Center?

Q. Yes, collapsed.

A. That collapsed.

Q. Around five o'clock.

A. They had figured they knew that building was going to come down. It was just a question of time, and everybody was awaiting that.

When that came down, we were in a safe area in the building. The last thing we ended up doing was relieving Engine 47. It was supplying the rig that was on -- I think it was on West Street for whatever building that was in the back there that was burning.

Chief Esposito was running that sector down there, and so we were there basically until we got relieved about ten after three.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. I think, you know, just the tough part was, you know, everybody did what they could do. The tough part for me was just basically trying to maintain some sort of command structure and accountability, so the chiefs knew where I was, and I knew where my men were,

and that was -- because we lost the chiefs that we lost, that was weak. I mean, that made it difficult to try to -- like I said, I just didn't want to go out and do whatever. I wanted basically to feel like I was operating under a sector.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thanks a lot for your cooperation.

The time is 11:40, and that concludes this interview.

File No. 9110499

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CIMILLO

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly. Today's date is January 24th, 2002. The time is 1350. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter William Cimillo of Ladder Company 49, from the Fire Department, City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 68 in the Bronx, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th, 2001.

A. I was working on the engine for a guy, one of the members here, who went away. We had an accident on the Degan. About 8:30 in the morning. We came back approximately quarter to 9, when they sent us right back out. We noticed on TV that there was an incident down at the World Trade Center. We heard something over the radio, but we didn't know exactly what it was. When we got here, we realized what had happened was a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

They sent us, 68 Engine, down to -- we originally thought we were going all the way down

to the World Trade Center, they sent us to a staging area at 35 Engine in Manhattan. We got there and were there for maybe five minutes. A bunch of Bronx companies were there, about five of us, five companies: 83, ours, 64, somebody else. I don't know who it was.

When we got there, we were there for five minutes. They sent us right down, right down to the World Trade Center, on the west side. We responded down there. It took us a little while to get down there.

On the way down there, the first building had come down. We had no idea that the first building had come down at that point. We were on the rig. We heard something about a collapse, but everybody was thinking that it was just a floor or whatever.

We had no idea the first building had come down, or even that that first building was -- ah, that the second building was struck by a plane. We had no idea.

We get down to West Street, and there was emergency vehicles everywhere. So we had to park maybe eight blocks away. I'm estimating

about eight blocks away.

We grabbed our gear. We looked up and saw how much fire was in tower two, which was the building that got struck first. Since we were on the west side and that was the north tower, that's the building we could see clearly. We saw fire everywhere.

So we started grabbing our rollups. We figured we were going to hump -- have to put out some of the fire, realizing we're going to have to walk up numerous flights. We put our masks on, we grabbed our rollups, grabbed all our tools that we knew we were gonna need and proceeded to walk down West Street. As I said, we were parked pretty far back because there were so many emergency vehicles there.

I guess in the time it took us to go from 35 Engine to where we were, tower one had already collapsed, which we had no idea that that building was even down at that point. Nobody translated anything to us what had happened.

We were walking down there. They're like, "You're going into tower two. Get up as far as you can and help out." We're walking down

the block. We get to about -- less than half a block away from tower two, and I just remember looking up and the top of the building just teetered and I saw the radio tower wobble and the whole building just came down on top of everybody that was there.

There were companies that I don't know who they were that were 30 yards ahead of us that were a little bit unfortunate because they got caught. We were just further up behind to turn around. There had to be about 50 of us turned and ran in every direction we possibly can to save our lives.

The whole building came down. We got engulfed with that plume of smoke and debris and clouds, the cloud of dust. I finally made it into the lobby of a building, I think up by Stuyvesant High School.

I met up with the lieutenant and started looking for the members I was with. It took us about an hour or so to find everybody. Thank God everybody was all right.

We went back down afterwards. We dropped all our equipment when we ran,

everything. Everything we had in our hands, we just dropped we lost our masks, our rollups, everything. So we had no equipment at that time.

We went down to see what else we could do, but it was complete mayhem at that point. Then we went back to Stuyvesant High School and met up with everybody, and they just told us stay here, stay here, stay here. And we stayed there the rest of the day.

Q. Those companies that were in front of you, could they have been some of those Bronx companies that responded with you?

A. I'm not sure. I really can't tell. There were so many guys there and too many companies. Basically the Bronx companies that responded, we stayed in a group as we went down, because we all responded at the same time. We stayed in a group, and we were walking down West Street. We were just about to enter the building when it came down on top of us.

Q. Who was your lieutenant that you said --

A. Lieutenant Zanat.

Q. And he basically stayed with you the

rest of the day too?

A. Pretty much, yes.

Q. Okay. Unless you have something further, if you remember anybody else that was there that you saw.

A. The usual stuff. You see guys you know when you respond to these things. Other than that -- it was just complete chaos.

Q. Okay. If you have any else -- if you don't, then the interview is over.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

A. Thank you.

File No. 9110500

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL BYRNE

Interview Date: January 21, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is January 21st, 2002. The time is 1:48 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Mike Byrne from --

What company?

FIREFIGHTER BYRNE: Engine 21.

CHIEF KENAHAN: -- Engine 21 in the quarters of --

FIREFIGHTER BYRNE: Engine 16.

CHIEF KENAHAN: -- Engine 16.

Q. Mike, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. We got the ticket after the second plane hit. We went down and parked on Church and Vesey off from the north tower under that pedestrian walkway. We went into the tower, we were in the lobby a couple minutes. There was only one chief there. We really had no direction what to do.

Captain Burke decided we would either go up on our own or wait for someone. We went up, started our way up. We went to the bank of

elevators. We pulled a lady out of the bank, one of the banks. We used a rabbit tool. Most of the banks were blown off. The doors were charred and dismembered, some of them.

Like I said, we were in the lobby for a while. There were jumpers, a lot of jumpers. A lot of companies coming in and out.

We decided to take an elevator up. 13 Truck took us up. I'm assuming it was a low riser. It was one of the only elevators that were clear, and it looked like it was working. 13 took us up to -- first they took a couple guys from my company up. Then I went up with another guy, came back down and got us, went up to the 24th floor. The whole company was there.

We walked up three more flights to the 27th floor. I don't know the time we were up there for, but however long we were up there, that's when the other building came down. We didn't know it at the time. The whole building shook. We hit the floor. Guys were saying, "Pop the door. Pop the door. Pop the door." It stopped. No smoke, no nothing. We thought something was coming down the hallway, maybe.

Again, I don't know the time frame from that time that elapsed. We got a report maybe 69th floor, 64th floor, partial collapse. After that -- there was one chief, I believe, up there. I'm not sure. He told us to start our way down, make your way down, everybody out.

Since I didn't hear that on the radio. I just heard it from -- start your way down. We were there with Captain Billy Burke, who we lost. We're like, "Let's go, Cap. We're all out." He said, "Start your way down. Make your way down. We'll all meet at the rig." Again, we're like let's go. He said, "Start your way down. We'll all meet at the rig."

I had a radio. We started our way down I believe it was the B staircase. I'm not sure. It could have been A. I talked to him three times on the way down, once in the stairwell, once on the 19th floor as we were switching over from the B to the A or the A to the B. Again, I'm not sure. I spoke to him once in the lobby.

It was the same thing all the time, meet at the rig, meet at the rig.

Q. Did he say he was on his way down?

A. I didn't even get that, no. We still had no idea the other building came down.

On the way down, like you said, people we saw, we saw guys from 8 Engine. These guys from my battalion that I knew. I saw them on the 8th floor. I saw guys, like you said, you want to know guys names that were coming in. I saw guys coming in there.

Q. That were lost?

A. I saw a guy from this house, Lieutenant -- I forget his name. It's on the wall.

Yeah, we got out into the street. It was clear. I didn't even know what happened until I was in the street about a minute. We were walking north.

Q. You were on West Street?

A. We went north on West over the overpass. There were thee of us now walked out. We walked out with 65 Engine we were just looking around. I was basically dazed, what the hell happened, what the hell happened, what the hell happened. Did the building come down? As you're saying that, the other one started coming down.

I just ran up West Street, still going north. Other guys from my company ran across the street. You ran and it caught up to you, hit the floor and just waited and covered with shit.

That's about it.

Q. You can't remember anybody else whose name that you saw in the building that's missing; right?

A. Rob Parro. They found his body. He was with Freddie Ill. Three guys in the lobby, Denis Germain, Dennis Mulligan and George Dipasquale, all from 2 Truck. I saw them in the lobby.

One of our guys, as we were walking down the stairs, went back to get the captain again, and he started helping a guy from 13 Truck, the only guy from 13 Truck that made it out. They carried a civilian down.

Those guys from 13 took us up. I remember seeing 44 Engine in the lobby. I guess they came together. It could have been 22. I saw -- I forget his name, Lieutenant --

Q. Have they found his body?

A. No, I'm trying to think of it. I'm

sorry.

Q. That's okay.

A. He's on the wall there too. Kenny Phelan. That's the lieutenant. I saw him in the lobby. He was covering for a day. He just got made.

Q. Okay. If that's it, thank you, Mike.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:54, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110501

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS TURILLI

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is January 17th, 2002, the time is 1635, AND this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Thomas Turilli of Engine 47 in the quarters of Ladder 2.

Q. Thomas, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. All right. On September 11th, we were watching the news and they broke in and said that the first tower had been hit by a plane. We were watching that for some time, and then it appeared another plane had hit the south tower. At that point they automatically made it a fifth alarm and we responded.

We parked on West Street, I think it is, as far as this map is concerned. Yes. We were making our way in with my officer and the guys I was working with. Just a lot of glass breaking, there were like car fires going on on the side of the street. We actually went through an overpass and we were standing underneath that just waiting for the glass or anything, just so we can actually -- we were actually going in the hotel lobby. I'm not sure what hotel it is there.

Q. Marriott? Between the towers?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. That connects the two towers?

Q. Right.

A. We went in there and then we saw Chief Galvin and we saw other companies. I saw Ladder 2 there, 22 Engine, 13 Truck. My officer said try to find a stairwell if we have to walk, so me and another guy went and saw there was a maintenance guy working there. We went up to almost like, I guess like an atrium, and we walked up that way and I saw a maintenance guy there and he said you can pick up the stairs from the third floor on up after walking up like I guess an access stairs from the lobby up.

I came back out, told him we can find a stairway over there, and he said, all right, that they want us to go to the south tower, which is I guess the first actual tower to fall down. He said there was a report of fire actually on -- the lowest report of fire they had was on the 33rd floor at that point.

There was kind of a little chaos. We didn't know really where we were going to go, guys were deciding to take elevators, not to take elevators. There was a security guy there who said, actually, I

can get you up on an elevator if you want to follow me. So we went with 22 Engine, 13 Truck and us, walked I'd say about maybe 100 feet. We went through like a turnstile. But what he was actually doing is he actually led us through the lobby of the hotel into the north tower. We were actually, you could say, in the wrong tower at that point.

They went up. I actually had the control that day and 22 Engine went up. The elevator came back down, 13 got on and said, listen, if you guys want the elevator, we're not coming back with it. You've got to send somebody up. The officer actually said for me to give my radio to a senior guy there, Louie Cacchioli, and he took the radio off of me and he went up. We were waiting in I guess like a little almost like a cutout area of the lobby, an elevator bank. One elevator was only working out of like four elevators in that bank.

The door closed, they went up, and it just seemed a couple seconds and all of a sudden you just heard like it almost actually that day sounded like bombs going off, like boom, boom, boom, like seven or eight, and then just a huge wind gust just came and my officer just actually took all of us and just threw us

down on the ground and kind of just jumped on top of us, laid on top of us. There were rocks falling and all that. The lights were still on at that point and all of a sudden the lights went out and you couldn't see anything.

At this point, there's a guy from my firehouse on his way up in the elevator. They got up to the 22nd floor and 13 Truck got off the elevator. He said to the guy -- this is before the actual collapse happened. He said to him stay here with us, stay here with me, because if this elevator closes, I don't have any tools. As soon as he said that, the elevator closed and that's when the actual collapse of the building happened. He made his way out into a stairwell and he made his way down.

When we were down in the lobby, like I said, the lights went out, there was a lot of dust and all of that kind of stuff. After about a minute or so, everything kind of calmed down. My officer just told everyone relax, just hold onto each other. He was radioing the guy upstairs to see if he was all right. He was making his way down. He said he was in the stairwell with 13 Truck, he's coming down right now.

My officer knew how to actually get out and

we just held onto each other. There were security guards and some civilians, and he just told people, just hold onto us, like a human chain, just grab onto another person and we'll make our way out. We went about 20 feet, 25 feet, and we saw a light. It turned to be a light of almost like I guess a restaurant area. He said no, that's not the way out, and he said just keep on going straight. In about another 25 feet to 30 feet, there was windows, I guess, lobby, ground-level windows that were blown out, and we just walked out of there.

Two guys I was with said they were hurt and everything. So my officer, myself and the few guys who said they were hurt, we walked them across the street and we brought them to an ambulance. At that point we were kind of standing on the street and I looked to my left and actually I noticed the tower was down. I didn't even know what it was when we were in there. It just seemed like a huge explosion.

Then my officer said you all right? I said yeah, I'm fine. That whole time he was actually going over the radio with our control man saying you making your way out? He said I'm out in the street right now. I'm fine. So my officer said all right -- you

could hear Maydays going over the radio at that point. It was just so many, I really didn't know where they were coming from.

Then we started walking actually back towards Tower 1 and a cop and a Battalion Chief came up to us and said just start running the other way. The other tower is coming down.

Q. Who told you this; a cop?

A. A cop and a Battalion Chief. We were kind of like standing next to them. I stayed with him -- I was with the Battalion Chief at one point and I started running up the street and I kind of lost track of all the guys I was with. The two other guys who I actually brought to the ambulance, the ambulance guy said you've got to get out of the ambulance. They just started running towards the water. We started running, myself, the Battalion Chief, the cop, my Lieutenant was with me at that point, up West Street, and you just heard a rumbling, a huge amount of rumbling, and I just dove under a car, and I was with a guy from I think 138 Truck.

The tower came down, the second tower came down, and then just a lot of chaos, you know, the same thing it was like inside, it was dust and all that

other stuff flying around. I think it was like five minutes before things cleared up, and I saw a light and it was just the light of a rig, the flashing lights, and then it seemed like more and more guys were coming out of the cars or wherever they were hiding. I met up with my officer and the guys I work with, and they were just saying everyone just go back a couple of streets just to regroup and then we'll go from there, and that's about it.

Q. Okay. That's it?

A. Yes.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right. Well, thank you, Thomas. This concludes the interview. The time now is 4:45.

File No. 9110502

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD KENNEDY

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is January 17th, 2002, the time is 3:28, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with firefighter Edward Kennedy of Engine 44 in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Ed, just tell us the incident as you recall it on that day.

A. We weren't dispatched until the second plane hit. We were watching. It was in the house watch we were watching as -- you know, we turned the TV on like everybody else, saw that there was a hole in the side of the building, weren't sure whether it was a little plane or was it an implosion or an explosion. But as we watched the TV, all of a sudden the second plane flew in there and hit, and with that we knew right away, we thought it was an act of terrorism.

A minute or two after the second plane hit, we were dispatched to 2 World Trade Center. So as we got ready to go, everyone got in, we took off. Instead of going to 2 World Trade Center, they gave us information on the radio to come down 11th Avenue, that the police had cordoned off 11th Avenue, and that's the

way we went down. They had it all cleared. 53 Engine, as a matter of fact, was right ahead of us. We just followed them down.

We parked on West Street. I really don't know exactly where because there were so many rigs and stuff but back a ways. We had to walk down a few blocks to get down. The lobby command post at that time -- we took extra bottles with us, and the lobby command post was set up across West Street. I guess it had originally been in the towers, I heard, and the flames had come down into the lobby and they had moved across West Street up in front of I guess it's --

Q. The Financial Center?

A. -- the Financial Center. They had the command post set up there and they lined us up and they told us that there was a -- I thought it was a parking lot. From what I understand it was a loading dock. So they wanted the engines lined up on the entrance, the trucks lined up on the exit. So we lined up there. The officer had checked in already and we were standing across from 1 World Trade Center and looking up, I had the hose on my shoulder and my mask on and, of course, I'd never seen anything like it, 20 floors of fire. I'm looking up and I'm supposed to go to Yankee Stadium

that night and it's 9:30 in the morning and I knew right away, I said, whew, I ain't going to Yankee Stadium. I never thought the building, looking up at it, would fall, but I did figure that -- I knew right away that we couldn't put the fire out. I didn't think we would be able to put the fire out. I figured the fire would have to burn out. It was a minimum 20 floors of fire I thought.

As I looked up, some debris was falling and then people started jumping. The scary thing is, as the people were jumping, I was counting, and I got to 15 before an officer from 16 Truck finally said, guys, we're losing our focus. Don't look. We can't help those people. We have to focus on maybe putting out the fire or trying to help the people we can. Turn around and maybe look in.

That's what I did. I turned around and looked in and there was a priest there, one of the Fire Department chaplains, Father Delindick I later found out. I never knew who he was. But one of my members, the guys in my company asked him if he would give us absolution. He gave us a general absolution, said a few prayers, and he said to be careful and with that, shortly after that, people still were jumping and

stuff, an officer came and said 44? We were instructed to go down West Street.

So we left our roll-ups and our masks because we were going to go down West Street. We were ordered to go down West Street and make sure that a lane on West Street was kept open because vehicles were coming in via Brooklyn, coming around the east side drive, coming up the drive, all kinds of cops, emergency vehicles, fire apparatus and everything, and they wanted to make sure that emergency vehicles would be able to get through north and south on West Street.

So as we headed down West Street, I did get a look at the second building, which was far worse than No. 1. When we were standing across from 1, you really couldn't see to No. 2 as well as -- you know, you could see the smoke, but you really couldn't see how bad it was. When I looked, you could tell it was worse. It a lot more fire, it seemed, and it just seemed worse. But as we walked down, we were telling guys, you know, keep your rigs on the side. We walked in front of the hotel, keep your rigs on the side, make sure that we can get through.

As we walked down, there's another overpass on Liberty, right on Liberty and West. There's another

overpass. As we got to there, there was a Hatzollah ambulance there, two Jewish fellows, and they were a little nervous and they were asking, if we have no helmets, what are we going to do? We told them, well, don't walk out. People are jumping, debris is falling. My advice to you would be get in the ambulance and go south, get away from here, because stuff is falling down.

As we said that, I turned to our left, the officer was there, there was an SUV burning on the left-hand side. Now, there's an escalator that comes down off of that overpass. It's a walkway down. It was right next to that. His thoughts were, even though there was like 45 floors of fire, that this might in some way lap up into the air and maybe catch, you know, set that on fire. So when he said maybe we should put that fire out, two of our guys said okay and they ran from under that overpass. They went west. There were rigs park there, a squad and a couple other rigs, and they went over there trying to get Purple K extinguishers or some kind of extinguishers.

As I looked over by the Marriott, I could see 65 Engine was on the corner, hooked up, and hooked up into the Siamese. That's one thing I can definitely

recall that. I'm trying to recall a lot of different things, but that I definitely remember seeing. But as the guys ran over, I also saw that there was a company, I don't know where they came from, there was a company, they were hooking up to the hydrant which was right on the corner of Liberty. They had the same intentions. They had grabbed a length of hose, just hooked up to the hydrant and were starting to open up the hydrant just to put the fire out there also.

So when I saw that and I saw our two guys were going over, I said to the Lieutenant, well, I'm just going to walk south down here a little bit, tell these guys that are pulling in, 113 Truck had just pulled up and they were on the west side of the street and there was another rig coming up, and as I said to the guy with me, Richie Boeri and I, I said to Richie, well, okay, we're going to walk down there and just tell these guys not to block, you know, keep the road open. We took two steps, there was a tremendous boom, explosion, we both turned around, and the top of the building was coming down at us. With this I just turned to Richie and said run.

I ran half a block down, stumbled. My helmet came off. I was like a fox looking for a hole. I just

saw a car, saw the back of a car, dove under the car without my helmet, covered up and held my breath as all the debris and all the wind and everything broke the windows on top. I'm thinking I've got my back -- I don't have my mask. My mask I left up by the command post and now I've got my rear end underneath -- you know, the gas tank is right on my back and I'm thinking, if something falls on this, I'm dead, and I'm thinking, well, maybe something is going to come down the side and I'm just holding onto my head and just praying to God that nothing kills me.

So I was trying to hold my breath. I was trying to get the stuff out of my mouth. I opened my eyes twice. It was pitch black and it sounded like a hurricane coming through. The glass on the car was breaking and it was just, you know, as things settled, it seemed to me it was like 15 minutes. It probably wasn't 15 minutes, but it just seemed to me like it was about 15 minutes. I was underneath the car and then all of a sudden it kind of lightened up. You could tell it kind of calmed down, everything lightened up, and I was pulling stuff out of my mouth, trying to breathe. I had pulled up my hood to try and get it over my mouth so that I could at least breathe a little

bit.

I started talking on the radio to see if any of our guys. I called for the control man. The control man was with the other guy that I said that had gone to get the Purple K or extinguishers. When the building exploded, they ran down Liberty towards the water, and I only got in touch with the control man. The backup man -- I mean the nozzle man didn't have a radio. I said Mattie, Mattie, are you okay? He told me I think I have a broken ankle. I think I have a broken ankle. I said where are you? Where are you? He says I'm heading to the water. I'm heading towards the water. So I said, okay, you head to the water. I said have you seen Bobby? Have you seen Bobby Reeg? Have you seen Bobby Reeg? He said I don't know where he is. I don't know where he is. I said okay, Mattie, head to the water. We'll meet you at the water, I said, but you're sure you haven't seen Bobby? He goes I don't know what happened to him. I haven't seen him.

So with this I roll out from underneath and it's like snowing, it's like ash, it looked like snow, and as I rolled out from underneath the car, I noticed that the officer, my officer, who was a covering

officer, had run and he dove -- I dove underneath the rear of the car. He dove along the driver's side, along the curb, put his face down there, and he was there. I turned around and I saw him, but as I turned around and I looked in the street, there was a Chief yelling in the street. He was in a daze. I went over to him to see if he was okay and I touched his shoulder and he screamed out ahhh! I said whoa, this guy got a broken shoulder.

As I turned to my left, I turned around, Dr. Kelly from the medical office was standing right there. I asked her how did you get here? How did you get here, Dr. Kelly? How did you get here? With that, she didn't even have time to answer me because the guy that I was with, Richie, who I didn't even think of at first, had turned around and he was standing there and he had blood all over his face. I screamed to him, Richie, are you all right? Are you all right? He said, yeah, I just got a cut on my head. I got a cut on my head. But his face was all bloody. But I knew he was all right, so our main concern now is we're missing one guy. We're missing Bobby Reeg. I told it to the officer, he's all right, I'm all right. Mattie's got a broken ankle. He's heading to the

water. We know Richie is there. He's hurt but he's okay. Now we're trying to find Bobby.

Dr. Kelly said she's going to take -- some other firemen came over and they said they're going to come with us, they'll be all right, we're going to take them to the ambulance. Fine. So now we start to try and go back up West Street, but 113 was on fire, there were pockets of stuff burning all over the place, cars were burning. It looked like a war zone. So the officer and I decided, okay, we've got to go get Mattie. We'll see where Mattie is first, then we'll meet Mattie and we'll try and find Bobby after we get Mattie into an ambulance, make sure he's okay.

So we walked down Albany, but before we got to the water, there were people with broken legs and stuff, they were loading them in ambulances, and our eyes were really bothering us. We were spitting out stuff. There was an open store there. We went into a store. There's another road between Albany, as you go down Albany, before you get to the water, there's another street in here, which I'm trying to find out. End. It says End Street. End Avenue?

Q. That might be West End.

A. I don't know if it's West End Avenue, but

there's another street in there, avenue, and it's right by Gateway Plaza, right on the corner there. There was a store there and we went in there and we got some water, tried to rinse our eyes out, which really made it worse, but gargle and try to get some of it out.

I checked a couple of ambulances to see if Bobby was in the ambulance. He wasn't in the ambulance. So I got in touch with Mattie on the radio. He said he was over by the water. We walked down one block, down to the water along -- heading up towards the harbor because that's where he was, right on the corner by the harbor. He had come in that way. We met him and as we were standing there talking, we just sat him down on a bench, people started screaming and started running from that area of the harbor, the marina, and the second building started to come down.

Just lucky for us that there was a police car, a police van there, and we jumped into the police van. We got Mattie into the police van with a couple of cops, and the building was kind of shielding us from heavy debris, but debris still came over and the dust and everything, and at least we were able to breathe because the engine was running and it was air-conditioned and at least we were able to breathe.

At that moment I'm thinking, well, maybe I should go in the water because there were boats in the water. I'm starting to get a little paranoid now and saying maybe I should take my stuff off, jump in the water, get in a boat, at least I'll be all right, because I didn't know -- at that point I didn't have any idea, you know, I didn't see the other building come down. We just heard it rumbling and crashing and people screaming that it was coming down and we ran and jumped in.

I mean, I never knew the first building that came down, No. 2, I didn't know that the whole building came down because I really couldn't see. What I saw was the top of the building, the top quarter of the building come down, and I never knew until later on that the whole bottom, that the rest of it had pancaked down, because I couldn't see because of all the dusk and the smoke and even, I don't know, how many minutes later, however it was.

Basically, we got Mattie. After we had come out, we tried to rest him and everything was pretty chaotic. Somehow alongside this plaza here, what do they call it, around the plaza, it goes down to Battery Park, right along the water, the walkway there, there

was a guy with a golf cart and he had some people on it, and we got Mattie on the golf cart because he had a broken ankle, which really was hurting him a lot now. We put him on that and the guy took him down and what he did was he got on one of the boats. They stopped those boats along there and he got on a boat and he went to Jersey.

So now the officer and I figured we've got to try and find Bobby. So everybody we came across that we recognized, people from 16 Truck and whatever, we tried to look for Bobby and we searched for Bobby. We went back out to Albany Street and tried to walk up, and it was totally chaotic. We really couldn't get up that way. So we walked our way back up Albany, up by the marina and up through, and got down into Liberty Street. We were on Liberty Street and we came out into there and it just look like something that -- it looked like a bomb, of course, had gone off, almost like a nuclear bomb. That's all I could think of. I've never been at war. I equated it to being like when I saw something like when I was a kid and I saw Godzilla in the movies or something, when he crushes those buildings and stuff like that, that's what it looked like to me.

At that moment, we knew he was in that general area, but there were crushed vehicles, I mean, guys now were trying -- there was water there. I don't know where the water came from, but there was like puddles of water and stuff. I don't know if it was from hoses or whatever had been stretched. But guys were trying to climb up and look in all the stuff and stuff was still smoking and burning and stuff was teetering.

Finally, I don't know who it was, some Chief or somebody, somebody said, I want everybody on the radio, everybody back out, back out. So they wanted them to back out like into Liberty Street, back away from it. Guys were upset with that at first, but he said we have to assess the situation first. We want to make sure nobody else gets hurt. There was big metal beams and whatever they call those stanchions and stuff that were stuck in the ground, stuff was piled, stuff was teetering still. It really wasn't a safe scene. So whoever was in charge at that point on the radio was saying everybody back out, let's back out, let's size up everything, let's get everybody together, then we'll assess the situation and we'll go in and try and search and find out what's what.

So we did back out. We backed out back to the marina because then our eyes again were starting, especially the officer I was with. By the end of the day he was blind. He couldn't see at all. I was walking him around. But we went back to the marina and someone had set up a little hose there. At this time now there were boats starting to come in, like some police boats had come in there and stuff like that and they were taking people periodically, they were taking people. Now the fire boats were starting to come in and pull along, so a couple of us, we decided, you know, somebody got together or one of the officers said let's go, we've got to stretch some lines out.

So we stretched lines. We went back down by Albany Street and we had pulled out lines and we were stretching lines back out there and they started pumping and trying to put the pockets of fire here and there out. But I was between Albany, the marina and Liberty most of the day trying to find Bobby. Everybody we came across, we tried to get in there, and we walked. We finally were able to get from Liberty back down to Albany walking among the stuff and seeing stuff turned upside-down, but we couldn't find Bobby anywhere.

Finally, after about three or four hours, three hours of searching for him, I came across a guy that was the battalion aide from 13 Truck and I asked him if he saw Bobby, and he said he saw Bobby. He says he was alive. He says he knows he's hurt, he doesn't know if it's his shoulder or what, but he was slumped and they had put him in an ambulance. So that made the officer who was a covering officer feel a lot better, and at least I know, well, he was okay. I saw another guy that was driving, a guy in my company, I can't even think of who he was driving, one of the Chiefs that got killed, but he told me he definitely saw Bobby, too. Most of the day we spent -- we tried to get our eyes -- we tried to get into some -- there was a drugstore there that they had opened up and we tried to get some saline, we tried to get someone from the ambulance, they washed our eyes out because we were having the problem with the eyes and spitting up.

But right in here by Liberty, by Gateway Plaza, there was a hotel that's right there. That was on fire. Then again we stretched lines up there to try and get that fire, put that fire out. There was a fire on the 7th floor. We got the lines up there. There was enough water in the tank up there to just put out

that fire. It wasn't really big, but there was a fire up there.

We were just basically standing around trying to coordinate, trying to find out what's going on and helping people, whoever was hurt, and asking if you'd seen people, coming across people, you know, do you know what happened to this guy? Have you seen this guy? It really was a total disaster, so for a while it was out of control.

Maydays? I did hear a Mayday. I did hear a Mayday for 65 Truck, and the way I understood it, I thought he was buried in his truck. I later found out that the chauffeur from 65 Engine was the guy, when I said in my story in the beginning, by where the escalator was coming down, he had taken a length of hose off of his engine and hooked it right onto the fire hydrant and was opening the fire hydrant when the building came down and he was caught right by that escalator that was coming down from the overpass on Liberty. He was buried in debris underneath there, and the Mayday was coming from -- I guess somehow he got a Mayday out, and I thought that he was in the fire engine, but little did I know that the fire engine was buried and whatever.

That was the only Mayday that I remember, and to tell you the truth, the only guy that really stands out in my mind that I remember being on the radio was Chief Visconti. I remember him talking and giving directions and this and that. But this is as the day was going on and, of course, there were so many transmissions going over. I remember him screaming about 7, No. 7, that they wanted everybody away from 7 because 7 was was definitely going to collapse, they don't know when, but it's definitely going to come down, just get the hell out of the way, everybody get away from it, make sure you're away from it, that's an order, you know, stuff like that. I don't really remember too much of the transmission about 6 Truck, but I ran into 43 Truck and they were telling me the story about it, so I kind of knew about that.

But most of the day we were just doing what we could, stretching hoses here, hanging out by the boat, going over by the marina, washing our eyes out, going back up into this area by Liberty Street and Gateway Plaza, and most of the day was just doing what we could, what little we can. Somebody was coming over here, humping hose here, humping hose there, searching through debris, looking for people.

Finally, one of the guys in my company who was on light duty came, he found us and, I don't know, sometime around 6:00, 7:00 o'clock, we made our way up to try to find my company. I heard that they were there and that the guys had come down and I had made my way back up the west side through the back way here, over by 2 World Financial Center, behind there, by the Winter Garden and up, somewhere on Vesey, and made my way up to the school, what's that, Stuyvesant school, where they did my eyes, which felt good.

Then I ran into my company and I hung out with them for maybe an hour there, and then my officer told me, you know, you're doing no good anymore being here, you've been here long enough, to go back to the firehouse. I don't even know what time we went back to the firehouse. Basically --

Q. That's it?

A. That's it in a nutshell.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Ed. The time now is 3:48 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110503

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL BESSLER

Interview Date: January 21, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 21st, 2002, the time is 1:05 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Paul Bessler from Engine 1 in the quarters of Engine 1.

Q. Paul, just tell the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. Okay. I'll start with Engine 1's arrival to the building. We responded to the north tower and we proceeded up to the 22nd floor. When we got to the 22nd floor, there was a staging area for I believe it was the Port Authority Police, and our proby was having chest pains, and my Lieutenant, Andy Desperito, gave an urgent for Firefighter Craig Dunn, probationary firefighter, which kind of slowed us down a little bit. We would have continued up, but we wanted to make sure he was getting assistance. His urgent was given and it was answered. I don't know by who.

So we were going to proceed up. He was in good hands with the Port Authority cops. While we were in the hallway, we were taking a breather, the south tower fell. We all thought it was a secondary

explosion or maybe a plane, but we never knew that the south tower fell. We just knew, whatever it was, that it was really bad. So the lights had gone out and the ceiling tiles fell and we all turned our flashlights on and went into the staircase to get shelter because the shafts were open. On the 22nd floor, some of the elevator shafts were actually open. I don't know who had said it but they said, you know, get into the staircase, and we all went in the staircase. The emergency lighting was on.

Andy actually started going up the staircase, which, in my mind, I thought he's not going up the stairs. After what just happened, this is not good. There's something we don't know. He was on a mission to go up the stairs. The brothers were up. Just at that point, my radio came clear as day, "Imminent collapse. This was a terrorist attack. Evacuate." That's exactly what I heard. I think that was Chief Picciotto that was giving the order. We relayed that again, hoping that the brothers would hear it above us, and I remember the look on Andy's face, like apprehension that we were going to leave this building.

Q. What's Andy's last name?

A. Desperito. Andy Desperito.

Anyhow, he looked at me and told me to take Craig, the proby, and get him out safely, which I did. I grabbed Craig by the collar and said come on, we're getting out. I started going down the stairs, everybody behind us. We came a cross that woman, Josephine Harris, who was saved by Ladder 6. I stopped for a moment, and just as I did, the staircase kind of got clogged because we blocked the landing and just for a moment I looked thinking how can we help this lady? All of a sudden I hear somebody yelling go, go, we got her. I look up and it's Andy and sure enough he's going to help everybody, Andy, you know? We started going back down the stairs again because I figured, okay, she's not going to be left. We continued on our way.

We got to about the 4th floor and the emergency lighting now was dim, covered with white powder and whatever, and we caught up to the civilians. They were kind of backed up. What happened was, I guess, it was dark at the bottom of the staircase and I shined my flashlight and started yelling for people to move and, eventually, with our lights, they were able to see and it kind of flushed everybody out and all those civilians were able to get

out of the staircase ahead of us. I was expecting like a pileup. I didn't expect to be able to get out of the staircase, to tell you the truth.

When I got down to the lobby, now the lobby was a disaster. It was slippery. It was just -- you know, it wasn't the same lobby that I came into it seemed. We got to the lobby and there was a Chief. I don't remember who he was, but he screamed at us and pointed, and he pointed towards West Street, which we went out right to the building. When I got to the apron, I looked up to see if any more -- there was a lot of jumpers and people were still jumping and we looked up to make sure it was clear, put our heads down and we ran out.

Q. Just one thing. When you said he was screaming at you, he was telling you to leave?

A. Yes. Go, go, and pointing towards West Street, just yelling, go, go, go. I expected maybe to hang out in the lobby for a little, you know, not thinking I was in danger. So we went out. We realized. We said, you know, he's ordering us to get out, so we did, and that's how we kind of got separated from our guys because now he's telling us to go, so now there's a distance between the guys in the staircase.

So we get out to the apron, look up to make sure it's clear. I was with the proby. I didn't want anything happening at this point. We just crossed the barricades and started walking and there was all that white dust in the street. It was like a five-inch snowstorm, like just fresh powder. We were actually making footprints in it. I didn't see anybody outside except for just the jumpers. I mean, we really didn't see anybody and it was really bizarre. It was surreal. It didn't make sense. There were so many people on arrival and now there's nobody, and we never knew the south tower fell still.

Just as we got towards the walkway, I looked back because I heard what I thought was another jet, and it was the building on its way down already. My guys had just came out. They were on the apron and they were just going to cross the barricade and stuff was -- the debris was on its way down and we just ran. We had our masks on. Our face pieces were actually on because the proby was having problems with chest pains, having difficulty breathing, so even when we were on the 4th floor, I made him put his mask on and I did the same thing.

So we had our masks on and we were running

towards Vesey Street as fast as we could with all our gear, and as we were running, thinking we're never going to make it. It was just ridiculous to think you were going to make it. We both wound up getting knocked down by the blast, I guess, from like a pressure wave. It took us off our feet. My helmet flew off. We got up and just continued running, and then the dust cloud just engulfed us, and basically it was over our head like two or three blocks but down. It kind of went -- it's hard to explain on tape, but the dust cloud had gone further up the block, higher. The lower section was like a few blocks back. So it kind of stayed on us the whole way, and all the guys I knew were behind us in it and I never thought I'd see them again, you know.

We made our way out of there. I got Craig to an ambulance and they took him immediately, and just as they were putting him in and prepping him in the ambulance, they said there was a gas leak and we heard some secondary explosions and all the ambulances and ESU trucks kind of took off in the other direction. So now I'm running by myself in the dust with nobody left from my company, and I started calling on the radio, you know, anybody from Engine 1? I was just asking

anybody seen Engine 1? I didn't get any response at all. So it was just a lonely feeling. I didn't quite understand what really took place.

After a while I found a couple of guys that I know and they said that there were guys looking for me, so I knew that a couple of my members had made it. In the back of my mind, I just never thought -- I was hoping Andy Desperito was okay, but I kind of didn't think he was going to -- you know, it was too close for us, so anybody behind us, I really didn't think they made it. I found a couple of my members and found out about Father Mike and found out that -- I guess it must have been maybe 40 minutes to an hour, they already had found Andy. They found his body. It wasn't confirmed but it was confirmed to me by guys I trust.

We made our way back to the command post, which was now on Vesey Street, I guess, and we didn't know what to do. We were there, we had no boss, and we just kind of wandered around aimlessly thinking what can we do? We can't go look for our boss. We've already found him. Like what are we supposed to do at this point? So we decided we would just go back to the firehouse and try to deal with everything and kind of report the story and try to find out who made it, who

didn't, from the truck.

That's pretty much it. I mean, sparing all the details, you know.

Q. All right. Well, if there's anything else you want to add --

A. No, that's pretty much it. I got it wrapped up into a short story now.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Well, thank you, Paul.

FIREFIGHTER BESSLER: You're welcome.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:13 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110504

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FITZROY HAINES

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002, and the time is 11:53 a.m. this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Fitzroy Haines of Ladder 15 in the quarters of Engine 4.

Q. Fitzroy, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. The alarm came in at 8:45. That particular day I was going to work that morning the morning tour. I was there waiting to leave, me and another gentleman. When the alarm came through, the dispatcher said all units stand by. There's an explosion at the World Trade. That's all we got here.

That day Lieutenant Levy and Captain Farrell was working. They shot downstairs and said everyone get dressed because you know we're going. We're right here.

I was already down, not dressed, but I got dressed and I was the first one to come out. I noticed -- the buildings were to my left -- white smoke and paper floating our way. I yelled

back to everyone, "We've got something pretty big there."

Right before the rigs came and pulled out, Doug Oelschlager and Scott Kopytko pulled up. They were working that morning. Scott bumped me off the rig. I told him he had the eyes. He said okay, and he went with the truck.

I parked Oslagger's car, because he pulled up on the first bay here, parked his car across the street, then came inside. Being the World Trade, I figured it would be on the news. So I walked into the house watch, turned on the TV, and I saw that I guess it was the north tower was on fire. I just know it was which one of them, it was way up on like the 80th floor, whatnot.

At that moment another firefighter, Tom Ryan, who was going to be detail to someone else, came in and said, "They're going to need a lot of help. I'm going to go over there." I asked him if I could go, because I was off and I'm a proby. I didn't want to get in trouble. He said, yes, just stay close to him. I said okay.

I was already still in my bunker gear.

As soon as he grabbed his gear, we went out in the street, and Battalion 4 was shooting up the street. We flagged them down, and we jumped on with them.

The chauffeur wasn't sure if he should take the tunnel or the street. By the time he had an inkling, he was already halfway through the tunnel and he got stuck. Tom and myself had to jump out of the car and run -- rushed through the tunnel and clear out the tunnel, because at that end the cops didn't know what was going on. We really didn't know what was going on either.

By then I guess while we were in the tunnel, that's when the second plane hit. I still didn't know it was big commercial planes that hit. I noticed that it was like no traffic on the other side of the tunnel.

The police officer that was out there started sending the cars back through, because by then we couldn't have backed up because there were more emergency vehicles behind the chief. We just wanted to get everyone through.

As soon as the chief got cleared, we jumped right back in. We were coming up, and I

noticed that 15 Truck was by the Mayor, kind of far down from the Trade Center. I asked Tom should we get out here for our guys. He said no, stay with the chief.

I figured that was kind of weird that they were so far down. Come to find out later that they had cut an air hose and that's why they seized up a couple blocks down. I guess they got out and walked the rest of the way.

So we pulled up in front of the south tower because there was really no one in the street. We didn't see any command center. The chief told the chauffeur go down towards the north. As soon as we did, we saw the command post. I believe that was seven financial, right in the parking lot.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street. We were on West Street. It was more like --

Q. Near the Winter Garden atrium?

A. Yeah, right there. They were in the parking lot.

The first thing I thought was it took us all of about seven minutes to get there, but I

noticed that the Mayor, the Commissioner and a lot of other officials were already there before us. I thought that was kind of weird. I found out later that they were there for a meeting earlier. So okay.

I don't know which chief it was, but he put Tom and myself under I think it's Captain Brethel, I think was his name. He's the captain of Ladder 24 with Engine 1, I believe. He was supposed to be in charge of all the fat guys that are coming down to volunteer and whatnot.

The reason why we didn't go in the towers was because we only had one Scott pack and we were waiting for more gear and more cylinders to be released. So we were under the pedestrian walk bridge that's in front of first World Trade, about ten yards away from the command center. We were staged there. We were there for quite a while. The only thing I was doing was just counting the bodies that were jumping.

I would say after a good 20, 25 minutes, the captain came up to us and said, "You guys really don't need to see this. Just go down West Street like a block and a half towards Vesey

Street and stage there." So we walked towards Vesey Street, not all the way. I took off my clothes and staged there.

By the time I did that, that's when the south tower collapsed. Everyone just said "Run." I was in the street, but there were just too many people. I noticed there were too many vehicles and people coming down the street. I felt that was kind of dangerous. I jumped back on the sidewalk because I know the fence -- there's a chain link fence that runs all the way down West Street. I knew if I couldn't get out of that crowd that would be a safe reference point if I walked all the way down.

So I ran all the way down. A couple seconds just before the cloud came over me, I knelt by the fence and put my hood over my mouth and let it come over me. Then I got up and just followed the cloud out.

I found one guy that was sprawled out. I picked him up, helped him out. There was another female. She was just walking. I told her the right way to walk out.

I walked out of the cloud. I let it

settle for a little bit. Then I went back out and got my coat because I had staged it, and came back. By then I found Tom, who I went down with. We were down I guess around Barclay then, staged around Barclay street, because we were waiting for everyone to form back up to see if we could get anyone out of the first collapse.

But the main chiefs that were there were just telling everyone stay put, stay put. They were sending whole companies and units down to see if they could get anyone out of the collapse.

By then I noticed -- we found I believe it was Bob Humphreys, the Engine 4 chauffeur, was walking towards us. We helped him off with his gear and tried to wash the debris off some and whatnot.

We were there for like, I guess, 19 minutes or so. That's when the second one collapsed.

Q. Now you're at Barclay and West?

A. Yeah, Barclay and West. All this day I never left West Street. When the second one started to collapse, we went down further towards

the high school that's there. I think it's --

Q. Stuyvesant?

A. Stuyvesant or Lafayette?

Q. I'm not sure.

A. It's either Stuyvesant or Lafayette High School. That's where we went. We walked all the way down there, staged there. Pretty much the remainder of the day I was there, because the chiefs didn't want anyone going back in. They were trying to get a head count of who was actually there and whatnot. That was pretty much it. I stayed there for the remainder of the day.

Q. Thank you, Fitzroy.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 12:02, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110505

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG CARLSEN

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002. The time is 1:50 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Craig Carlsen from Ladder 8 in the quarters of Ladder 8.

Q. Craig, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. We were down at the medical office going for our annual medical. We got into the medical office. We heard that a plane had hit One World Trade Center, the north tower. When we got into the medical office, of course the TVs were on and everybody was focused on it.

It was approximately five minutes to 9. As we were watching the events unfold, we realized our company was down there for it. That's when we saw the second plane hit. At that point we decided to find out from -- we had our medicals, and find out if we were supposed to leave or stay for our medicals, which we got permission to leave, and we left the medical office.

We went out into the street and commandeered a couple of cars. Some people went in one car, and another person and myself had gotten into an ambulance along with another lieutenant that was down at the medical office, and we proceeded over to my firehouse to pick up gear, we realized we had to pick up the gear to go down to the job.

We pretty much got over into quarters of Ladder 8 at approximately 10 after 9 or so. We picked up our gear and proceeded down to the Trade Center. We almost caught a ride from Engine 235, and they had no room on their rig. They proceeded down, and we caught the next -- just a van that was going downtown.

As we got down to the location, we got dropped off a couple of blocks away. I don't really recall what street we got dropped off on, but I think it was Barclay and West. The lieutenant and I traveled down to where Ladder 8's rig was to find out, see if we could hook up with Ladder, looking for the command post.

I proceeded into One World Trade Center into the front lobby. Just making it into the

door, I ran into 3 Truck, members of 3 Truck, which told us that there were numerous people trapped in elevator cars and that they needed forcible entry saws.

So the lieutenant and I went out to look for forcible entry saws. Of course most of the rigs that were around the area, the first few rigs, there was really no tools even left on the rig at that point. So we had to go to -- I couldn't even tell you how many rigs we looked in before we actually found the saws.

On my way back in towards coming back to Ladder 8's rig, coming around the rig, I had found a saw. I don't remember exactly what rig was from. I came to a complete halt because something came down and hit the street, and I didn't realize what it was until I looked up further and saw that there were bodies coming down, quite a few of them, which had to stop me in my place because I couldn't really get back into the building because of it.

At that point the other officer that I was with, the lieutenant, decided -- we hooked up together, and we decided that we found where the

command post was now I guess relocated across the street on West, straight across from One World Trade Center.

We decided that before we went back in the building let's see if we could pick up some masks and a radio before we got into the radio, and also check in with the command post. By this time I guess it was probably 20 to 10 or so.

So we went over to the command post, which at that point my company that was at the medical office had just gotten there also. We all decided that we should just team up as a team before we went in to keep as a unit. Of course we checked in with the command post, and we were told to stand by. We checked in with Chief Ganci and a few other officers at the scene.

As we were waiting around, they told us to just stand by. They were doing something with the eight track system. They were trying to find out if they can figure out how they can control it. So they just us to stand by.

We waited around I guess 10, 15 minutes. As we were standing there looking up, we were getting an idea of -- doing like a

size-up and you could see there were numerous people hanging out of the windows. Of course other parts of bodies dropping.

I guess about three minutes later you just heard explosions coming from building two, the south tower. It seemed like it took forever, but there were about ten explosions. At the time I didn't realize what it was. We realized later after talking and finding out that it was the floors collapsing to where the plane had hit.

We then realized the building started to come down. At that point everybody at the command post took off into -- there were two garages across. I guess it was by Two World Financial Center next to the Winter Garden, just a little bit south of the north bridge. Everybody took off into an underground garage.

I made it in about 20 feet inside the door, and I tripped over an EMT who I guess broke his leg and was disabled. I pretty much just stayed there and tried to comfort him. Before I had gone into the garage, I grabbed a mask.

At that point, that's when the building started to come down. It was already coming

down, and you could see the force of air coming towards you. I was just trying to drag the EMT down the ramp. That's when the blast came, and now you're just trying to don the mask.

I don't remember -- time is now -- I don't have a clue with it. It seems like when it finished collapsing I heard somebody scream that we were trapped. We figured that the whole building came down on top of us and that we were trapped inside underneath the garage.

I decided to just crawl out to see how far, if anything was actually up against the building and what-have-you. I just crawled out and did a search of the area of the command post and whatever else as far as you could go. At that point, that's when we realized that we actually weren't trapped into the building.

We just waited for the dust to clear and did a search. I found a police officer lieutenant that needed help and took her out. I took her through the building and just her off on Vesey and West Street to other police officers, making my way through the building.

I started heading back down towards

number One World Trade Center just from Vesey and West, going towards the north bridge. On my way back down, I was just looking, and I saw my company coming out of the building or actually from underneath the north bridge, 8 Truck coming out. One, two, three, four, five guys. I was happy to see them, that they got out. I knew they were in the building, but I wasn't absolutely sure what building they actually went into.

As I ran into them, we just started heading back up north on West Street. We made it to approximately Vesey and West, which is just north of the bridge. Then the second building started to come down.

At that point everybody just took off in all different directions. As far as I know, we just went north up West Street. I would guess we made it up to Barclay, maybe, and whatever it was knocked us down, the force of the wind or maybe pieces -- I had a Scott pack on. It knocked me down. I had lost the face piece. I just crawled underneath a DOT truck, one of the trucks, and just waited it out. This time I

thought we were so close that I was not going to make it.

Pretty much the same thing, when it all started to clear a little bit -- you had a hard time just worrying about breathing. Same thing, when it started to clear, you did your searches, you picked up who you could, and just traveled northward.

Of course everything was covered up and you didn't really -- I don't recall what members that you picked up because it was pretty chaos. You did what you could, and that was about it.

Q. When the north tower was coming down, did you have any indication? Did you hear the explosions again? Did anybody warn you like they heard on the radio or anything like that?

A. I didn't have a radio, because we were coming from the medical office. So I never did get a radio. So I wouldn't have heard that, if somebody had said it.

You did hear the explosions. Of course after the first one -- the first one was pretty much looking at it like in awe. You didn't realize that this was really happening because

you kind of just stood there and you didn't really react as fast as you thought you were going to.

The second one coming down, you knew the explosions. Now you're very familiar with it. Of course when I looked up, all I could see was the antenna coming down. You pretty much just pick up and take off. Everybody was on their own, I guess.

Q. All right. Thank you, Craig.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:04 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110506

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL MACKO

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002. The time is 2:23 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Mike Macko from Ladder 8 in the quarters of Ladder 8.

Q. Mike, just tell the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. On the morning of September 11th, it was a few minutes before 9. I was listening to the radio in my yard, and I heard a report of a plane hitting the Trade Center, or sketchy reports of a plane hitting the Trade Center.

I went to the front of my house, where you could see the towers from my neighborhood, and I saw a large fire in the north tower. I'm pretty sure it was the north tower.

I called my mom, told her to pick up my kid. I figured it was going to be a real large job. I was going to go down and maybe help out in the street or something, do what I could. I knew the guys were going to need help down there.

I jumped on my motorcycle, stopped at

the local firehouse, which is Ladder 130. The officer there said they did have a recall. I got on my bike and raced off to Manhattan. I went through the Midtown Tunnel, made it to the firehouse in a relatively quick period of time. They had police lanes set up and everything through the tunnel. A lot of emergency equipment headed down to southern Manhattan.

I got to the firehouse. The firehouse was empty. I jumped into my gear. I went outside on Varick Street. An ambulance that was going down south on Varick Street stopped. I jumped in that. They made their way down what I think was Barclay Street. That's about as far as the ambulance took me.

He stopped. I got out. It was pretty much like a war zone at that point. I hadn't even known that the other tower had gotten hit at that point. I saw a few rigs. Not too many people around. I tried to look for some tools. I had my gear on. I didn't have a mask. I was actually looking for a mask.

Q. At this point the first tower was already down?

A. No, nothing was down at this point.

I made my way onto West Street, still looking for a flashlight, a radio, some equipment that I could use to maybe try and search or help out. I end up going south on West Street. I ran into a couple guys, one guy from Squad 18 and a detail that I've seen from the previous night.

We were making our way down West Street. We got just about south of the north overpass, about 50 feet past that, when the first collapse occurred. I looked up. I was awed by -- I thought it exploded at the top. Everybody I guess at that point started running, and I luckily ran north where I came from to try to run out from under this -- which happened to be a collapse, realized I couldn't. I was going to stay under the overpass.

I realized I couldn't get out from under the collapse. I dove under an ESU truck that was facing north on the west side of West Street. I dove under that and waited for the building to come down.

When the building did come down, I actually thought I was trapped, and the truck was

blown off me, pushed off me, I guess. It was not there. At that point I was just really shocked and didn't know what was going on at that point. I didn't know -- I was really, really shocked.

I ended up hooking up with a guy from 18 Engine or Squad 18. Scott, I think his name was. We made our way across West Street to the World Financial Center and broke through a lobby window in there and made our way out the other side of the lobby.

At that point I encountered some I guess emergency personnel that were trying to help, you know, guys that were coming out of the collapse at that point. I sort of assessed myself and found that I didn't have any real physical damage. [redacted]

What seemed to be a few minutes later, the other tower had collapsed. At that point I made my way along the water. I was more toward the water at that point. I ran across some guys from my company. We gathered up and to figure out who was missing and tried to get a hold of who was missing.

I ended up coming back to the firehouse. I found out one of our lieutenants was unaccounted for. We made our way back -- I made my way back down towards what is now called ground zero and worked down there with what seemed like maybe 100, 150 members and chiefs, trying to do what we could to help out the situation.

I worked down there until about 1:30, 2:00. I was pretty exhausted. It was a real hot day. I did some work on a line, gathered some equipment for Chief Pfeifer, got him a mask and stuff, got some rigs running, got a pumper running. All the rigs were shut off. I moved one or two rigs into position, got them pumping some water. A lot of fires burning.

That was about it. About 2:00 I was pretty exhausted. I made my way up to Stuyvesant. That was about it for my participation in the fiasco or whatever it was.

Q. Thank you, Mike?

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:29, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110507

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

MR. ANTHONY DeMAIO

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is January 28th, 2002. The time now is 944 hours. This is Lieutenant Monty Feiler with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area.

MR. DeMAIO: Anthony DeMaio, assistant deputy director, fleet services, 58th Street.

MR. FEILER: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're interviewing him regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is Investigator Fabiola Quevedo.

Q. You can go ahead and begin on the morning of September 11th, how you first became aware and what your actions were that morning.

A. Like work any other day here. It's a shop. I actually had left the building. I think I ran up to the post office and came back. On the way back from the post office, I saw there was smoke coming from one of the towers. When I

reached the shop, at that point no one knew what was going on, although it seemed like an accident.

Most of the guys, most of the supervisors, were already up on the roof so they had a clear view of what was going on. I proceeded up to the roof. At this point we didn't know what was really happening, although it looked like an airplane or something struck the building.

I came back downstairs. At that point it was on TV. They had the TV on in the supervisors' room. At that point we didn't receive any call yet from our boss.

Q. About what time was that?

A. This was right after that first plane hit the first tower.

I came down here from upstairs. At this point when I was down here -- as soon as I made it downstairs to find out what was going on, what we were doing, the second plane hit the building, the second building.

Sometime in the next couple minutes we got a call from the control room over at 34th

Street. That's when Tom McDonald, our boss, he requested that we all report to the area. Normally we do that on a fourth alarm duty or major accidents. In a major incident, one of us from either side, depending who was involved, responds. In this case he requested us all down there.

Me and Mike Felice, my boss, Mike Felice, left here, headed into Manhattan, which was -- everything was jammed up. We took the Midtown Tunnel. As a matter of fact, as we're going into the tunnel, there was four -- we were trying to follow a police car down into the tunnel. There were four firefighters on foot -- they couldn't go any further with their personal car, because everyone was told to report down there -- which we picked up and got them into lower Manhattan.

We dropped them off. We get down to West Street. We were pretty far down West Street, as a matter of fact.

Q. Do you know where you dropped off the firefighters?

A. The firefighter was on -- if I'm not

mistaken, it was on Broadway. As we were coming down, I think on Broadway. Broadway comes down; right?

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, it was on Broadway somewhere. He was not completely downtown. It was somewhere in the teens, I believe. We ended up dropping them all off at that point, because one of the guy's firehouses was there and then from there they all --

Q. Do you know their names?

A. No. I didn't know who they were. We just knew they were firefighters, because they were asking police in front of us for a lift. They couldn't go any further, and we ended up taking them.

I think when we pulled up it looked pretty far down. We were probably parked around I think it was Murray or Warren when we pulled up to the scene. At that point when we got out of the car, we realized that the first tower went down. There was no tower there. We already realized that something happened.

We were trying to raise our other

halves from 34th Street on the radio. No response. When the tower came down, we knew that they were there before us. We were starting to get a little concerned. There was no response. Communications were down. We weren't able to communicate with any of our mechanics. We weren't able to communicate back to the shop.

So we're starting towards the scene. It had to be maybe -- we were practically underneath it. We were on the other side of the pedestrian bridge. Definitely we were on the other side of the bridge. All of a sudden -- yeah, we were, because the pedestrian bridge goes over to the high school.

That's when we heard the rumble. We looked up, and the second tower was coming down. We turned around. We run out of here. I lose my boss. I couldn't find him for a while. I continued running north. Then after a while everything started to settle down, I started to work my way back.

At this point now -- we still couldn't find anybody. Now I even lost Mike. I couldn't find him. What happened was Mike had ducked into

the high school. That's why I knew where we were, because we were already past that bridge. When he ran back, he saw someone had made it into the high school, and he ducked into the high school. I didn't notice that. I just continued going up.

After everything settled down a little bit, some of the dust settled down, we started to work our way back again. At this point we found McDonald, Tom McDonald. He was all covered in soot and dust. He was all right. A few minutes later we ran into the other guys we were looking for: Tom Curty, Andy Diamond, I think Lou Morbelli was with them also. They were there actually before the first tower came down. They were there before we were.

Basically that was it up to the point where the tower came down. Then it was just like trying to find where everybody was. We didn't know where all our guys were. We knew there were a lot of guys down there, a lot of the guys from the emergency trucks respond. We spent a good time just making sure we found where they were and they were okay.

Then we just started to go through -- everything started to settle down, and we started to go through the place and try to make sense of everything. It was (inaudible).

Q. Where do you think you were at that point?

A. Most of the time after the building came down, we were probably underneath the pedestrian bridge, in that area.

Q. On West Street?

A. Yeah, on West Street. That's where they set up the command post.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. Once it was a little -- after a couple hours when everything started to settle down, we started to -- actually before that we did a walk -- we did a search. We searched through one side. We came like through the Merrill Lynch building, I guess -- no, the exchange, American Express building, which was across from the towers. We walked around through the back of that.

When we came up on -- over here somewhere. It was actually -- I forget the name

of the street. North End?

Q. Had the second building collapsed yet?

A. Yeah. No, what happened, like I said, we were walking towards the scene. That's when we heard the rumbling and the second building started coming down. That's when we ran.

Q. So you got there after the first building collapsed?

A. Yes, after the first building collapsed and just prior to the second building coming down.

Basically what we normally do at any operation, normal operation, is make sure that the apparatus is fueled, make sure that everything is running, there was no problems mechanically on it, whether it's apparatus or ambulances or whatever it is.

But in this case we had apparatus that was totally destroyed, partially destroyed, abandoned. We spent the next week basically trying to salvage anything that we thought was salvageable that we could kickback into service.

Our concern was that we lost so many pieces that if there's anything here that we can

get back into service, you know, get it back to the shop, get it cleaned up, get it working, and get it back to the house, at least they'll have something, because there was a lot of pieces gone.

That's what we spent the next week doing, basically, is finding apparatus that was abandoned, getting them to run. Most of them had all the glass blown out of them, full of soot, dust and debris. Getting it back to the shop. Same thing with ambulances.

Then we tried to make -- we kept a running log of what we found along the way that was beyond repair. We were pulling them into the shop whatever possible so we could keep track of at least what we had.

Basically that's what we did.

Q. Is there anything else you think is important?

A. That's it.

Q. On behalf of the department, I want to thank you.

MR. FEILER: We'll conclude the interview at 953 hours.

File No. 9110508

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

MR. MICHAEL FELICE

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is January 28th, 2002. The time now is 1003 hours. This is Investigator Monty Feiler with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area of command.

MR. FELICE: Michael Felice, department director, Fleet Services.

MR. FEILER: Regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can just tell us on the morning of September 11th how you became aware of the incident and what actions were taken.

A. Approximately 8:45 I received a page on my pager, and it stated that it was a third alarm, a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. I looked outside, and I basically saw it was a beautiful, clear day. The first thing that came to my mind is a small little Cessna flying around Manhattan and maybe the wing clipped the building.

So within minutes I received another

page, and it was a fifth alarm, a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. At that point we put the news on the television, and we actually saw smoke coming from the tower.

Basically what happened at that point I realized that it was more serious than a small Piper wing clipping the tower. I went up to the roof of this building, and I had a clear view of the tower and I can see smoke just pouring out of the tower. At that point is when the second plane went into the south tower. The south tower was struck with the second plane.

At that point I came downstairs and I picked up my coat and my handy talky. Tony DeMaio and myself responded to the incident, because we knew that there was going to be plenty of apparatus there. We were going to bring mechanics there to make sure that everything pertaining to fleet services was under control.

So we left together, and we had a problem getting through the Midtown Tunnel because of a major traffic jam. We also picked up some firefighters that abandoned their personal vehicle heading towards the Midtown

Tunnel. They came with us. They got in our car.

A Police Department van was in front of us, and they sort of made room for us to get by. Once we got by the major traffic jam right over here in Long Island City, heading to the Queens Midtown Tunnel, we were flying at that point. There was no traffic in front of us, and we shot through the tunnel, shot downtown.

We got to the scene, and I guess we probably parked -- we got down to West Street, and I guess we were around -- it would either be Murray or Barclay, somewhere in that area, because there were fire trucks lined up. We got as close as we can get.

Then we grabbed our jackets and our turnout coats and radios, and we walked towards the tower. Generally we would go up as close as we can get where the equipment is and see if anything was operating at that point.

While we were walking towards the north tower, at that point the south tower already came down. The south tower already came down, and we were walking towards the north tower. We probably would have walked right up to the

command post.

We passed underneath a bridge, a foot bridge. We passed underneath a foot bridge. I remember that. I'm looking at this tower, and Tony DeMaio was with me. I can remember telling him, "Tony, I don't believe what I'm seeing. I can't believe this, you know, the smoke pouring out."

All at once as I'm looking at it, I see chunks of the tower starting to come down and it was picking up speed. I can remember saying, "It's coming down." Right at that point firefighters were rushing past us. I almost got knocked over. I turned around and said, "Tony, run."

I can remember turning around, and things were flying out of my pockets. I couldn't worry about that at that point, because I was running. I ran to the left, and Tony ran to the right. I'm looking back, and I said, "God, look at this!" I can remember saying that. I could see this cloud following.

The corner of my eye, I saw firefighters diving into a doorway. There was a

woman standing at the door holding this door open, a steel door, and they were diving in. I said I'm going to go in that direction. So I went to the left, and I went that building.

When I got into the building, it was a school. Right after I got in, the door was slammed closed. At that point is when all the soot and debris was whooshing by. When I got into the building there, I see firefighters laying on the floor coughing up smoke and stuff. They were laying down on the ground.

I was concerned for myself at that point also because I said I don't know really where I am and how safe I am. All I know is outside there's a big building coming down, and is it going to come on top of this small building and just crush it? I don't know.

I was in there for approximately, I don't know, maybe ten minutes. It seemed like forever. Basically when we opened the door to go out, you can just about see your hand in front of your face at that point. There was a lot of dust still in the air. The building was down at that point, but the dust was all over.

I tried to raise Tony DeMaio on the radio, and I couldn't get him on the radio. I was getting nervous because I didn't know -- I knew he ran to the right, but I didn't know if he was able to get himself protected somewhere.

I was walking around looking for Tony and any of the mechanics. I knew that Tom Curty was there. About a half hour later is when I sort of met up with them. For that half hour I was trying to raise whoever I could on the radio, and I was getting no response. Finally we met up.

Q. What frequently were you using?

A. We were using -- you know, I don't remember.

Q. Was that the 400 frequency? The 800 or 400? The fleet services tower?

A. Right, right.

We met up, and we all got together. Probably by now like an hour passed by. There was so much soot and smoke and dust in the air you couldn't even at that point get too much closer to the tower where the tower was yet until things settled down a little more.

The rest, we just tried to recover whatever vehicles we could recover to get them back. We knew that there was a lot of vehicles that were gone and a lot of vehicles that were disabled that maybe could be repaired.

Then for the next week we did the best we could to get whatever vehicles we could repaired and back on the street so the citizens of the city can still have the protection that they had. We lost almost 100 pieces, and we probably repaired 200 pieces to get them back out on the street.

We were towing them into the shop here. All the windows were blown out, and the mechanics were digging in and getting all the dust and concrete powder out. We were cleaning with hoses, putting glass back in them and getting them back out, you know.

We spent the next week doing that. We were working 12 to 16 hours a day, 7 days in a row, 7 days a week.

Q. The firefighters that you dropped off, do you know where you dropped them off?

A. Yeah. One firefighter asked us to be

dropped off at his company. I don't remember the company, but it was on the way, and we just momentarily just stopped in the middle of the street, virtually. He said, "Okay. My house is right here." I said, "Okay. Good luck."

I said, "Most likely, your company's gone. They're down there." What I meant by that, "gone," I meant gone out of the firehouse; they're at the job. He said, "Okay." I said, "Good luck."

The other two guys, they came with us all the way down to the job.

Q. Okay. So wherever you parked your car -- you said it was West Street and --

A. It was on West Street, right on West Street. We got as far as we can get. Then it was just fire trucks and ambulances.

Q. Did you get their names?

A. Excuse me?

Q. Did you get their names?

A. Of the firefighters?

Q. Yeah.

A. No, I did not. It was just chaotic.

Q. Did you ever get to the command post?

A. No, never got to the command post. We were heading basically -- that little traffic jam we hit heading to the Midtown Tunnel. If we had been able to get right to the tunnel without that little bit of a traffic jam, we would have been at the command post, because we're only talking two minutes in time.

I didn't waste any time. There was no time wasted picking up the firefighters. We were stopped. They just abandoned their car. They abandoned their car on this viaduct heading to the Midtown Tunnel, their civilian car. They had a helmet in their hand and a coat, and they got in our car.

The two of them came right with us down to the scene. One of them we dropped off at his house. I forget what house it was. I didn't think of getting their names.

Everything was -- all I could remember was on the way was seeing people -- it was unbelievable. No one was crossing the street. People were just standing on the sides, looking at the tower. There was no traffic. Nothing was moving. We were flying downtown. Nothing was

moving. Nothing in our way. Everything was just stopped. People were just on sidewalks. They weren't crossing the street. I can remember that.

We weren't talking much in the car either on the way down. It was like everybody was nervous because we didn't know, you know. I've been to plenty of different things before, but nothing like that. Of course nobody has.

Q. Is there anything else you think is important that you want to add?

A. I can't think of anything right now.

Q. The department thanks you for cooperating with this.

MR. FEILER: We'll conclude the interview at 1015 hours.

File No. 9110509

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KIRK LONG

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 28th, 2002. The time is 1115 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER LONG: Kirk Long.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Kirk Long is a firefighter assigned to Engine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tell us your story.

A. The alarm came in while we were coming back from an EMS run. It was before 9:00 in the morning. They had stated that a plane went into the towers. As we passed Sixth Avenue, we could see the World Trade towers, and we could see smoke coming from the towers. I kind of told the guys on the back step it was probably a terrorist attack because it was too nice of a day for this to happen.

Arriving at the World Trade towers, we went to the command post. We talked to Chief Pfeifer. Lieutenant Desperito talked to him in the lobby.

Q. Of the north tower?

A. Of the north tower.

Q. How did you get in there?

A. We walked through the main doors. I'm not too familiar with that area down there. At that time there was a lot of glass laying around. Mostly we were watching people diving off the top of the building than we were watching where we were walking in.

Again, we went to the command post with Andy Desperito. They gave him the fire warden's phone to use when we got to the 11th floor, to the 22nd floor, which they told us there was a command post with the Port Authority on the 22nd floor.

We made it up to the 22nd floor. We stood there for a couple minutes. I believe Andy Desperito talked to the battalion through the fire warden phones. We did locate somebody at the end of the hall, but everything was blown

out. The ceiling had fallen. The drop ceiling had blown to the floor. Some of the walls were blown out. So Andy and I had crawled down the hallway to get to the Port Authority command post.

After that we went back to the members, and when the building started to shake. I don't remember anybody telling us to get out, but there was a Port Authority person with us and I believe he had orders to leave. Again, I think that's maybe why we were going.

Let me see what else.

Q. Do you know what stairway it was?

A. I believe it was B. Again, I was watching every person coming down, looked at their face, just to make them happy that they were getting out and we were going in and everything was okay.

We were also with 16 Engine on the 22nd floor. When the building shook, I was right next to an elevator shaft with Andy, crawling down the hallway. I was waiting for a flame to come up from the basement because I believed something in the basement blew up. Nothing like that

happened, so I was waiting for a flame to come down from a plane. Nothing like that happened. Still at that time I never knew that the south tower had gone down.

I guess at that time we talked to the Port Authority. I believe he had to leave, so I think we were going as well. So Engine 1 and Engine 16 start to walk down the stairs with the Port Authority. We came across a lady named Josephine.

I helped her out for a while. I really don't remember what floor she was on. I was helping her out. I was blocking traffic a little bit, so they told me to go ahead and go and the next group of guys were going to get her.

Walking down the stairs, sharing my mask with a PB officer, a girl. She was having a tough time breathing. So I gave her my mask to use on the way down.

Also I came across an aide from the 2nd Battalion. Castano I think his name was. I did some work in his house years ago on Staten Island. Like I said, he was in the 2nd Battalion. He was in the stairwell waiting for

the chief, and then he was going to come down with us.

Making our way down the stairs, there wasn't too many people around. We were like the only company coming down. We reached the lobby. Again, somebody there told us to leave. I can't remember that part.

There was a heavyset lady at the front doe trying to get out. There was so much broken glass. So I took my gear off, laid it on the ground so she could roll out and get out of the building. As I was leaving, there were still guys running in.

I get outside, still helping people out, still not knowing the south tower had gone down. We get outside, help some old man out. We helped him halfway down the block, I guess. We heard a noise like the plane was still coming in -- like another plane was coming in. We turned around to look, and that's when our building was going down.

I was covered up with debris. I couldn't see anything, couldn't talk, choking from all the dust. I had my cylinder, but of

course I was out of air from walking down all the steps and helping out the PB officer.

Another firefighter found me laying on the ground. He helped me to another building, which this was some clean air inside the building. There was a lot of mothers and babies there. I was ready to leave. They were a little shook up because I was covered up with all this dust.

I was leaving, and they started to cry. They didn't want me to go without them. So I stayed for maybe 10 or 15 minutes until it cleared up a little bit. Then I walked them over to the west side where there were boats and fresh air.

After that I cleaned up with the rest of the members of Engine 1, all but Andy Desperito, which I later found out that day that he made it out but he didn't survive.

Later we talked to the chief, let him know who was alive and who was missing. Then we reported back to Engine 1 just because of everything was going on. And that's about --

Q. That's about it?

A. That's about it, yeah.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. Not that I can remember now, no.

Q. Thanks a lot for your cooperation. I appreciate it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 25 after 11, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110510

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK MARTIN

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 2th, 2002. The time is 1230 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER MARTIN: Fireman Patrick Martin.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Fireman Martin is assigned to Engine 229 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 229 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Pat, in your own words, if you would please tell us what happened.

A. We heard the second alarm come in for the World Trade Center. We were still in quarters. From our quarters you can see the World Trade Center. We have a veranda. We went on the roof. We were watching. Roll call happened. We all went down to the apparatus floor. We thought that we might be going, so we were readying ourselves.

We were out in the street. I saw the second explosion happen on the south tower. I thought it was a radiant heat explosion to the building. I didn't see a plane hit, but we saw the large ball of fire. It seemed seconds after that we got dispatched to go to the north tower.

As we were responding, we heard the total recall come in. We took the Brooklyn Bridge over. We got one flat tire as we were going. We kept going. I guess we were traveling west on Vesey Street. We came to West Street. There was no way to go south. So everybody got off the rig other than the chauffeur. The chauffeur started heading north.

We started walking south on West Street. We got under the first pedestrian walkover. We could see the people jumping. We could see a lot of people jumping. You could hear them.

We were going down, and it seemed like there was a command post along West Street approximately -- I guess it would be this Merrill Lynch building. Maybe it was a little further down. They told us to move 105's rig. That was

the first assignment we got. 105 was parked in the middle of West Street, and they wanted to clear the way for the ambulances to get through.

So we put down all of our gear. I wasn't assigned chauffeur, but I am a chauffeur. So they had me get into 105's rig, and basically we backed it up maybe 100 feet or so to get it to the side of the road.

At that point there the lieutenant said, okay, just stand here. We'll get our gear together, and he'll go get reassigned. Time was weird. I don't know if he came back and had gone back or he was told to go to another command post. But we were standing there for a while. Basically we were on West Street in front of the hotel.

That's where we saw Timmy Stackpole standing there. We looked and he was just on the west side of West Street, basically, just north of the south pedestrian bridge. I don't know how long it was after that that the towers came down.

We were looking up. You saw the smoke coming out. We really didn't have an assignment yet. Our lieutenant came back. I can't remember

if he actually gave us an assignment of what we were going to do or what, but it was right then that we heard the noise.

My lieutenant said he looked down at the first floor, and he auto see the first floor of the south tower like exploding out. I looked up. I looked up, and the sky was filled with that debris cloud. You could see the debris coming down, pretty much toward us. We were standing underneath it.

At that point there we made 180 degree turn, and we started running south on West Street. I'm pretty sure we made it under the south pedestrian bridge. I don't know whether we got all the way to Albany Street or not, but we were able to make a turn and we were alongside the building.

We didn't know that the whole tower had come down until later on. We heard it and we knew -- the whole sky was filled with the debris. You could see it coming down. Whatever it was was coming right at us. So we went.

When we were there, there was a bunch of civilians there, a bunch of firemen. We were

all choking. The cloud came in, blinded, choking. We told a couple civilians to pull their T-shirt or shirt over their face.

I had my mask on. I didn't use it because I knew I was still breathing and I didn't know what was going to happen in the next ten seconds. So I said my Hail Marys.

There was pretty much a good quiet there for a while. There was an eerie kind of silence. Then you could start to see again. Civilians were starting to cry and carry on. I gave a little bit of air to people that were complaining that they couldn't breathe, told them to go toward the water, go west.

At that point I had no clue where my company was. There was nobody there. I started calling out for 229. I heard nothing.

Q. You heard nothing on the radio like to get out of the building or anything?

A. After the silence, the radio became really crowded. So my looking for my company didn't seem that important rather than the maydays that came through.

I headed down toward West Street where

I saw my company the last, and I found my lieutenant. I was control man of the day, so I had a radio, he had a radio. We decided to split up. He made me go further south. I went not much further and decided, you know, just calling out to try to find our company.

Again, time-wise I don't know how long it was. I never found anybody. He found two more guys. One guy was pretty much blinded by the dust. He couldn't open his eyes. So he sent the other guy and the guy who was really hurt with his eyes and took them to I guess it would be the Hudson River there. I guess there was a boat there that was going across to the hospital. He put the two of them on.

Then I met my lieutenant again, and he wanted me to go on the boat. I told him I wasn't leaving. We were still missing one guy. So after I told my lieutenant I wasn't leaving him alone, we split up again. This time I came up. I came up because we were by the water. We came up Albany. I went north on whatever street, End Street, to about Liberty Street and went back to the debris field. There was a lot of debris

here.

Then I heard the noise again. I don't even remember seeing anything of the north tower coming down. I don't know if I saw it or not. Climbed out of the debris field, and I was alongside Liberty Street. I know I made the turn here.

In the building there was like a cutout where I could get like underneath the building. There must have been a door there; I can't remember if there was. This time I remembered I was all by myself thinking, oh, now I'm going to die by myself. I could hear the building shaking as the building was coming down. You could hear the whole building shake.

Again, you couldn't see, you couldn't breathe. I pulled my hood over just my mouth and my nose to try to keep the heavy dust out. I didn't use my mask. I just waited until you could see again.

When you could see again, I looked on West Street. There was nobody moving on West Street. I couldn't hear. There was no noise on the radio.

I must have gone back toward Liberty -- toward End Street or End Avenue, because I couldn't get into West Street. I found my lieutenant. At this point here we couldn't find the other guy. He started asking for him on the radio. We were still missing one guy.

We looked around. We decided at that point we weren't going to separate each other. We were going to stay together now. We looked around the debris field. We looked around this whole area where we were. We couldn't find anybody. Time was moving along.

We couldn't get in touch with our chauffeur, so then at that point we decided to go -- we had to go all the way up to this park to get around, because you couldn't go along West Street anymore. So you had to go up. I think we were on the other side of -- I don't know. What is this school? The school is that far?

Q. The school is up here by Chambers Street.

A. No, that's way too far.

Q. You probably came around to Vesey, because then you could come on Vesey.

A. All right. Vesey was where everybody was kind of staging later on?

Q. Yes.

A. Yeah, we must have come around this park. Is this all building here?

Q. Yeah, that's all building.

A. Yeah, then it must have been here. Yes.

Q. You could have walked through this building.

A. I don't know. The tall park, I don't remember where it was. This was all gone. We found him I think it was further north like they kept on pushing him north. Then we did find him.

We stayed there for a little while, went back along West Street, and eventually -- I think the last guy we found on the north side of West Street. I don't know how he got there, but he said -- he didn't have a radio. He said he said, "229, this is Fireman such and such. I'm okay." He said somebody on the radio said, "Okay," thinking that it was us, and he started going to work. We never heard any of that.

Now there were the four of us. At that

point there we went back to the debris field. We did some hose stretching. We really were pretty done by that point to do any kind of rescue work. We helped guys stretch lines, and they had us stage at different spots along the way.

We were lucky.

Q. Anybody that walked away was lucky.

A. When the first tower came down, it was obvious if we would have ran one way -- if you went down Liberty Street -- we could have went to Liberty or north -- we were dead. We just ran this way, and it was the right way to go. We all went the same way; how, who knows.

Q. Anything else?

A. No, not that I can think of.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 12:50, and that concludes this interview.

Thanks a lot for your cooperation, Pat.

FIREFIGHTER MARTIN:: Thanks Chief.

File No. 9110511

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT HOWARD HAHN

Interview Date: February 1, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is February 1st, 2002. The time now is 936 hours. This is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

MR. FEILER: Lieutenant Hahn of Battalion 50.

LIEUTENANT HAHN: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview in the Division 4 conference room regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi.

MR. FEILER: Of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. What I'd like you to do is if you can just relate a scenario of what happened on the morning of September 11th, how you became involved, and go up to the second building collapse.

A. I heard the initial crash over my scanner. I contacted Captain Sickles of

Battalion 45. That day I was detailed to Battalion 45 as their conditions car. I went back to the battalion. I picked up Captain Sickles. He was on the phone with citywide. They told us to respond in to the scene.

We responded down to the staging area, which was at that time Vesey and West. Upon arrival I parked my car near north and Vesey. I went directly to the treatment area or triage area at 3 World Financial Center, American Express building. Captain Sickles went over to the command post or proceeded to the command post.

We started having a treatment area outside the American Express building. After approximately 10 or 15 minutes we felt that it was safer to go inside the American Express building, which we did.

About 10 to 15 minutes after we were inside the building, the first tower came down. At that point we moved towards the rear of the building, and then someone started telling us there's a possibility of a gas leak. So we started moving north along West Street, north

towards I guess Murray Street, when the second building started coming down.

At that point we started -- everything basically became chaos. Everyone went left, right. There was no control at all. Most of the equipment was left in the American Express building around the streets there.

After the second building settled, I heard over the radio that they were setting up a command post at West and Vesey, with that, I proceeded over to that area, and I started taking instructions from the -- I think at that time it was Chief Goldfarb.

Q. When you first heard the initial incident over your scanner, were you on duty?

A. I was on duty as conditions 45 that morning.

Q. You said you called --

A. I called Captain Sickles and advised him that I heard this on the scanner. I know he has a scanner too. He told me to respond back to the battalion. I know he got on the phone with the tour commander, who apparently I guess instructed us to go directly into the scene.

Q. Captain Sickles went with you?

A. Yes.

Q. In your command car?

A. Correct.

Q. At any time were you given any instruction over the radio or telephone where to respond to?

A. Over the radio we heard staging was set up at Vesey and West.

Q. You responded after the first building was struck but before the second building?

A. Correct.

Q. What route did you take down there?

A. We went through the tunnel, FDR Drive. We got off at I guess it was the Manhattan Bridge, because traffic started backing up. We started proceeding through I guess the Village or whatever it is down there, on the streets.

Q. Did you get any further instruction on the radio?

A. No.

Q. Did you stay on Queens or citywide?

A. At that time we were on citywide.

Q. When you got into the area, where did

you park your vehicle?

A. When I got there I parked on Vesey Street close to North End.

Q. By that time was the second building hit?

A. Most probably. I don't know the exact time. I think it was probably already hit.

Q. Then you made your way over to the American Express building?

A. I made my way over to the American Express building where Captain Pinkus was the command officer of that area.

Q. Did you see any other EMS people?

A. There were approximately -- at that time when I arrived there were at least eight units with stretchers and equipment at the American Express. There were numerous units already at the scene.

Q. Did you know any of them?

A. I'm trying to think. I know there was a unit from Roosevelt Hospital. I think it was 9 Boy. There was at least one Hazollah unit, with two ALS, maybe a city unit. I'm sure exactly. There were at least eight units on the scene with

their stretchers and equipment by the American Express building.

Q. You were able to set up patient care or triage?

A. We set up basically -- were setting up triage and patient care, that area. Then we started to move it inside the building as a safety zone. So we were inside the building approximately five, ten minutes before the first building came down.

Q. What happened when the building came down?

A. Well, when the first building -- originally we set up at the front of the building, just inside, so if we saw anybody coming we could get them inside. When the first building came down, we moved towards the rear of the building closer towards -- the furthest, towards Four World Financial, this area over here, back of the American Express building.

Then they were talking about possible gas leaks and so on, so we moved out of the building and we moved to some other buildings along I guess it was North End Avenue. There's I

know a school there that we went to. Then they evacuated that area because they were worried about gas leaks. We started moving all the way up, going up West Street.

Q. You stayed with Captain Sickles?

A. At that point -- no, Captain Sickles went originally to the command post. I was with Captain -- Jace -- Captain Pinkus. Chief Carrasquillo came in at one point, and we started running around. Then at that point it really became chaos and there was total loss of control.

Q. That's when the second building collapsed?

A. No, we basically were towards the rear of the American Express building I think more here when the second building came down. Then we started running. We were down near Vesey and West Street or Vesey and North End when the second building came down, but we were inside both times.

Q. Did you see any patients at that time?

A. There were no real patients coming to us. We had a couple patients that were full of dirt and stuff, so when the first building came

down we got inside, but at that point they really refused treatment, those patients.

Q. Your command car stayed --

A. My command car originally stayed at West and Vesey. As a hole cleared up, I moved it up. I was able to get around, and I moved it up to the command post. Then I went off to do other triage areas and so on. Captain Sickles gave the keys to my command car to Dr. -- the one who's in charge overall from the Fire Department. The one who took over Giordano's spot or whatever.

Q. John Clair?

A. John Clair. He gave my keys to the command car to John Clair. He took off for wherever, and I didn't see the car for two days, and my equipment was in it.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important? Any recollections you want to share?

A. It was a hell of a day. Initially the first three hours (inaudible).

Q. Were you ever able to use your radio or your cell phone?

A. My cell phone on and off I believe I

was able to use.

Q. How about the department radio?

A. Yeah, I was able to get through, but the transmissions was very hard. It was very hard to control. You're doing basically your own show.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add? No? Okay. In that case, we want to thank you for your cooperation?

MR. FEILER: The time now is 945 hours, and this concludes the interview.