

C H A P T E R 1

"We Have Breaking News" **The First Plane**

"Man, he's really low"

Eric Shawn, Senior Correspondent, Fox News Channel, New York

Since the morning was so bright and crisp, I caught a bus down Fifth Avenue instead of taking the subway. I thought I would be spending the day investigating a new and curious development with TWA Flight 800. It had been five years since a fuel-tank explosion brought the plane down just off Long Island, but a nagging mystery had surfaced, which I intended to investigate.

After I got off the bus on Fifth Avenue near Fifty-first Street, I heard the echo of a jet—louder than usual, closer than expected. Its

sudden appearance caused a few of us on the street to crane our necks toward the sky. It was heading south. As the plane passed over me I thought, "Man, he's really low."

"Loud, low, and very determined"

Tom Flynn, Producer, CBS News, New York

As I sat in my garden in Greenwich Village, having coffee, reading the paper, ready to go to work, I heard what seemed to be an airplane. It was loud, low, and very determined. You know the sound of a plane that's trying to save itself: it whines and screeches. There was none of that with this plane.

"Sounded really close"

Joan Fleischer, Account Executive, WINS-AM, New York

I was up on the roof of my six-story apartment building in Tribeca with my dog. I was really relaxed, peaceful, sort of daydreaming, soaking up the rays, and enjoying this time when I heard an incredibly loud plane that sounded really close. As I looked up, I was shocked to see a plane directly above, going incredibly fast, significantly tipped to the left, and definitely about to crash. I had my cell phone, and I called 1010 WINS, the all-news station where I work, to tell them a plane was about to crash and to send a reporter downtown.

As I was guessing where it would land, it flew directly into the north tower of the World Trade Center. Its speed propelled the plane completely inside the building.

"A roar and a shriek"

Don Dahler, Correspondent, ABC News, New York

I live in Tribeca—about four blocks away. My girlfriend was working on her computer at the desk, and I was walking toward my

kitchen to get a second cup of coffee. We heard a roar and a shriek all at once, and then a muted explosion. I said, "That's got to be a missile!" We stepped to the window.

Within half a second of the explosion, I could see flames come out of a huge hole in the building. I said, "They've hit the World Trade Center," not knowing who "they" were or anything else about it.

"A flash and a fireball"

Tom Kaminski, Helicopter Reporter, WCBS-AM, New York

I was in the helicopter, near the George Washington Bridge, and we had just made a turn to the south. It was 8:48 A.M.—time for what would normally be my last traffic report of the morning. I saw a flash and a fireball from the top of the World Trade Center. My pilot thought he had seen a plane near the building. He radioed the tower at LaGuardia Airport: "LaGuardia, did you just lose one?" He got no response.

The fireball quickly turned into a cloud of smoke. I was about to describe on air something that I hardly knew anything about. All I did know was that something had made Tower One look like it had been slit with a giant switchblade.

I started my report by saying, "Something has happened to the World Trade Center," and I described the smoke and flames that had begun to pour out. I spent the next several minutes on the air. My mind was working fast, trying to fill in the blanks.

"The hole is fifteen stories from the top. There are eighty-plus stories below that."

How many people worked in this building? Thousands, right? How the hell were the people at the top going to get out? How many of them were (as I hoped) running late?

We flew directly in front of Tower One and confirmed that something had gone in from the north side.

"Flaming debris"

Marcella Palmer, Reporter, WCBS-TV, New York

Imagine the sound of two Mack trucks moving at top speed, with a full load of nitroglycerin, crashing head on. That's what I seemed to have heard. Then nothing. Silence.

Ivan, in the driver's seat, and I stopped chatting for a second. "What was that?" I wondered. Nothing, perhaps—just New York being New York during rush hour. Ivan tried to revive our conversation, but why were those people running from the building screaming, covering their heads, taking quick glances upward, then hauling ass? Why was that little white car ten feet in front of us crushed and on fire? Was it a car bomb? Was anyone hurt?

Well, *we* were about to be hurt. Flaming debris was falling on top of Ivan's truck. Oh, no! I looked up. Flames were shooting from the top of Tower One. A bomb? Our first instinct: call it into the newsroom; get away later.

Our cell phones weren't working properly. But then I did get through to the assignment desk: "We're here! Right in front of World Trade! Let us do a phoner [phone interview] with the anchors."

"Then again," I thought, "maybe we should get the hell out of here. What if another bomb goes off?" But I stayed on the phone. As soon as I was about to tell New York what I thought I'd just seen, I lost my signal.

I looked to my left—a gut-wrenching dose of reality. Someone's arm was there on the sidewalk. Just sitting there.

"Let's go!"

"Come back to me"

Dick Oliver, Reporter, WNYW-TV, New York

I was near City Hall waiting to do a live shot on the mayoral primary. We were in commercial when we heard a *wishhhhhh*. I didn't know what it was. Then we heard a crash, and I said to my cameraman, "What the hell was that?" Because the trees were in bloom, I couldn't see a thing.



WNYW's Dick Oliver reports from City Hall Park. (Courtesy WNYW-TV)

I ran down the block to Park Row, where the trees opened up, and I could see smoke pouring out of the World Trade Center. I started screaming to the control room producer, Beth McCauley, in my microphone: "Beth, Beth, Beth, come back to me, come back to me." My cameraman had enough cable to bring the camera to my location. I kept yelling, "Come back to me, come back to me!" Finally, anchor Jim Ryan tossed to me live. I said there had been an explosion in the north tower of the World Trade Center. I said, "Wow, it looks like either something hit it or something exploded out of it."

"Eerie crystals"

Jim Ryan, Anchor, WNYW-TV, New York

I was on the air, anchoring *Good Day New York*, when the plane hit. We immediately aired the picture being taken by Dick Oliver's live camera in the City Hall area. It showed thick, black smoke billowing from the upper floors of the north tower. The camera caught strange,

erie crystals floating downward out of the smoke. It was broken glass from the windows.

"Word is that a plane has hit the World Trade Center," Oliver then reported.

I commented that it could have been an accident, but, if so, it had happened in broad daylight under perfect weather conditions.

"A three-alarm fire"

Sharon Raifer, Executive Producer, New York 1

My assignment editor came out to the "pod," the area where the producers and writers work. He said there was a three-alarm fire in one of the World Trade Center towers. I gave him a look that asked, "How big a deal is this?"

All he said was, "I think it's bad."

I went into master control to have them call up the camera we have on top of the Empire State Building. It looks downtown, and you could see the Twin Towers in the distance. When the shot came up, we saw thick black smoke billowing from the top of the north tower. We quickly put that picture live on the air. Our morning anchor talked over the pictures. We thought it was just a fire.

"We have breaking news"

Edith Chapin, Deputy Bureau Chief/Managing Editor, CNN, New York

I had already spoken on the daily morning conference call with Atlanta about the expected coverage in New York that day. My colleagues and I were just listening to the rest of the network plans when our property manager came running into the newsroom saying he had just witnessed the crash from an office on the other side of the building.

I immediately broke into the conference call with the news. "This is New York. We have breaking news to report. A plane has hit the World Trade Center."

"I told everyone to go"

Peter McGowan, Assignment Desk Supervisor, WNBC-TV, New York

I got on the two-way radio and sent all units to the Trade Center. I had six crews working at the time. I was also calling for our helicopter team. I finally got them and sent Chopper 4. Crews were on the radio asking me where they should go. I told everyone to go to the Trade Center.

"What's going on?"

Max Culhane, Producer, ABC News, New York

I had been covering the "Seventh on Sixth" fashion show in Bryant Park. We were standing by to do our last live hit [report] about pregnant runway models at 8:50 A.M. But no one was talking to us.

I called the *Good Morning America* control room and said, "What's going on? Are you guys taking us or what?"

"No, there is some breaking news," an associate producer said. "You guys are clear."

We flipped our monitor to the "on-air" feed. I saw the first tower with smoke coming out of it. Every crew started packing up.

"10-13"

Mike Sheehan, Reporter, WNYW-TV, New York

I was speaking with uniformed cops who were assigned to the Catholic schools teachers' strike I was covering, when I heard several screams over the police radio for help. The code, "10-13," meant a cop was in trouble. Seconds later, the dispatcher announced that the crash was confirmed: a plane had hit the World Trade Center. So much for the strike. My cameraman and I jumped into our car and headed for the FDR Drive to go downtown.

"A fireball so immense"

Bob Pisani, Correspondent, CNBC, New York Stock Exchange

We were in front of Stuyvesant High School on West Street when my driver suddenly slammed on the brakes and screamed, "Look! What happened?"

I looked out the window and saw a huge fire coming out of the north tower. The debris was shooting out of the side of the building in a wide arc, and there was a hole in the side of the building. I had never seen a fireball so immense. I grabbed my cell phone and called the control room.

"It's Pisani. I don't know what's going on, but there's a huge explosion on the top of the World Trade Center," I said.

My producer paused. "Do you know what happened?" he said.

"I don't know. I'm getting out of the car. I'll call you as soon as I find out anything."

"The shudder"

Mark Hilan, Anchor, WNYC-AM/FM, New York

I did not hear the crash, but I did feel our building shudder. Seconds later, a colleague burst into the studio and breathlessly announced that a jet had flown into the World Trade Center. My first thought? "That explains the shudder—and we've got a new lead story."

I calmly walked out the studio door and headed toward that window from which I always check the weather. The sky was mostly a crystalline blue, the towers still a shimmering white—except for a black gash torn through the north building's outer skin and bright orange flames shooting through spaces where the windows should have been.

I remember walking slowly back to my studio, trying to find the breath I knew I'd need to broadcast our first report on what I'd just seen.

"Sirens were blaring"

Bob Pisani, Correspondent, CNBC, New York Stock Exchange

Hundreds of people had come out of their offices at the Trade Center complex. Sirens were blaring, and the first police were arriving to clear the streets. But no one was leaving. There was a sense of worry, but not panic. We all stood there, shoulder to shoulder, just watching the flames and the debris fall off the side of the building. I tried to call the control room again, but my cell phone was dead.

"Breaking news now!"

James Faherty, Anchor, WINS-AM, New York

I was seated behind the studio microphone, listening to a prerecorded report on some lawsuit *du jour*, when a 1010 WINS assignment editor's voice, in extremely urgent tones, came over my earpiece: "A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center! Breaking news now! Go to Joan Fleischer, live on the phone!"

I interrupted the taped segment that was airing, and announced the bulletin. Fleischer, a 1010 WINS account executive, lived just blocks away from the World Trade Center, and was standing on the roof of her building, cell phone in hand.

"As if I were reviewing a movie"

Joan Fleischer, Account Executive, WINS-AM, New York

Although I work in the sales department, they were going to put me on the air. I heard anchorman James Faherty's voice asking me what was going on. I tried to tell him.

I felt as if I were reviewing a movie—reporting what I was seeing scene by scene. I almost expected Bruce Willis to arrive in a heat-resistant helicopter and land on top of the tower to rescue all the people.

I told James that smoke was still pouring out of the tower, and at the same time, glass and paper were flying all around from the building.

It looked glittery and non-threatening. James asked me questions about the size of the plane. I knew that it wasn't a small plane, but I couldn't tell him whether it was a 747 or 767. I just knew that it was big.

"Our first picture"

Jane Clayson, Anchor, CBS News, New York

Our executive producer said in my ear, "There's been a plane that's flown into the World Trade Center." About twenty seconds later, we had our first picture up. We have a camera fixed toward downtown. The first thing we saw was smoke billowing out of that tower.

"Frantic message"

Jon Scott, Anchor, Fox News Channel, New York

The voice was tense, the message urgent: "Jon Scott, need you on set—NOW!"

My normally unflappable senior producer shouted the frantic message from the control room. I heard it through the wireless earpiece I was already wearing. I answered through the wireless mike on my lapel.

"I'm here. What's up?"

"A plane just crashed into the World Trade Center."

"I saw the plane!"

Eric Shawn, Senior Correspondent, Fox News Channel, New York

I turned west and stopped to chat with some television crew members setting up their live trucks for that night's primary elections. One guy on a phone yelled out, "A plane hit the World Trade Center!"

I ran, heart pounding, down Fifty-first Street, right onto Sixth Avenue, through the Fox News doors, and down into the newsroom.

"I saw the plane!"

I rushed to the studio, out of breath, sat in the chair, and put the microphone on.

"Beep, beep"

John Del Giorno, Helicopter Reporter, WABC-TV, New York

The assignment desk calls us out to cover breaking news several times a day. Usually the call comes from the desk over the Nextel radio with the familiar "beep, beep." They wait for my reply. We are conditioned to dread the "beep, beep." It means we have to go out and work.

I heard the infamous "beep, beep." Only this time it was different; it was followed by my name, "John," in an inquisitive but urgent tone.

I sat back on the couch in our Linden, New Jersey, hangar, and for a second considered calling them back on the phone. But the phone rang. It was one of our assignment editors.

"John," she yelled, "a plane just flew into the Twin Towers! Just . . . just flew right into it! Go now!"

"We're gone."

"Sound the newsroom horn"

Christine Velez, Freelance Assignment Editor, WABC-TV, New York

It was my job to sound the newsroom horn. "Umm, folks, I need you to stop what you're doing. There's some sort of fire at the World Trade Center. The chopper is heading to the scene. I think we need to cut into programming."

From my podium, I was staring into faces filled with disbelief and confusion. With shaking hands and a trembling voice, I made calls to every rescue agency I could think of. With my free ear and hand, I radioed and paged every single person on our field staff—anchors, reporters, camera crews, managers, people I'd never even met. I declared the emergency and sought—demanded, at times—all the help we could get.

"A stunt?"

Phil Hirschhorn, Producer, CNN, New York

My executive producer asked if I could head straight downtown and check it out. We thought we were being sent to an accident, most likely a prop plane or Cessna brushing up against the seemingly indestructible buildings. From researching the 1993 terrorist bombing, I knew the towers had been built to withstand the impact of a 707. Just two weeks earlier, a French daredevil had landed in a parasail on the Statue of Liberty, hoping to bungee jump from the Lady's torch. Could this have been a stunt gone wrong?

"Scanner was going crazy"

Keith Lane, Cameraman, WNYW-TV, New York

I just said to the desk, "I'm going." I ran out of the newsroom, passed the elevators, and took the steps. I kept running until I got to my station's microwave truck. I jumped in and immediately put on the radio scanner, tuned to police and fire frequencies. I also put on News-Radio 88 [WCBS-AM] in the background.

The scanner was going crazy. It started to confirm that a plane had hit the tower. I called the desk and told them that police on the scene were confirming that it was a commercial airliner.

I called my wife and told her a plane had just hit the Trade Center and I would definitely be home late.

"My worst nightmare"

Robert Dembo, Director of National News, NBC News, Secaucus, N.J.

I can't tell you how many times in the course of talking about news coverage I had said, "And what are we going to do if a plane flies into the World Trade Center?"

It was always the ultimate argument—the doomsday argument—used sparingly but effectively, in the face of budget cuts or personnel reductions. So when I walked to the "netdesk" [national assignment

desk] seconds after the attack, I was stepping into my worst nightmare. My first words were urgent: "Send everyone!"

Then, grimly, we set to work implementing doomsday plans.

"The phone rang"

Tom Brokaw, Anchor, NBC News, New York

I was at home, and it was about five minutes to nine. I had just finished a workout and was getting ready to shower and head to the office. The phone rang. Our personal secretary, who works for us one day a week at home, is the wife of a cop. She yelled at me from downstairs, "A plane has just hit the World Trade Center!"

I immediately thought it was probably an accident. It didn't occur to me at that moment that it was terrorism. No one said it was an airliner. I assumed it was a smaller airplane.

We can look south from our apartment down across Manhattan, and I saw an awful lot of smoke coming up from down there. I jumped into the shower.

"Get on the air"

Wilson Surratt, Executive Producer, WPIX-TV, New York

"Got a signal!" came from the microwave receive room. On a monitor, smoke billowed from the north tower. It was real. I would not be leaving early.

I raced upstairs. I needed permission from my bosses to cut away from *Maury*. I got it.

Broadcasting a breaking news story feels like jumping out of a plane and then packing your parachute on the way down. It's a bit scary, and, yes, it's exciting. Breaking news usually involves reporting on someone getting hurt: an earthquake, a fire, a verdict in a murder trial. As a broadcast producer, you set your mind on your job. When it's done well, it's thrilling. Any producer who tells you otherwise is lying.

Get on the air—that's the first step.

"Go live and get down there"

Robyn Walensky, Reporter, AP Radio, New York

I was getting ready to head to Wall Street to cover the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange. I was watching Channel 7, *Good Morning America*. Charlie Gibson was interviewing Fergie, when all of a sudden my TV picture flickered. So I clicked over to Channel 4 and could not believe my eyes: the World Trade Center had a huge hole in it and was on fire. The anchors were saying a plane had hit it. I immediately dialed the AP broadcast desk in Washington, D.C. I asked, "Do you guys see this?"

The assignment desk supervisor, said, "Yes, we need you to go live immediately."

"I'm home. I'm not there."

"We don't care. We need you to go live and then get down there."

"I can see"

Don Dahler, Correspondent, ABC News, New York

Good Morning America was on our television, and it seemed as if within seconds they were reporting that a small plane had hit the building. I searched around for the telephone to call in to say that I was within sight of it and that from the sound and damage, it was obvious it was nothing small.

I called into the *Good Morning America* control room. I said, "I'm down here and I can see what's happening."

The producer called for a phoner, which is a way to patch me through to talk to the anchors. Within seconds, I was on the air by telephone talking with [ABC anchors] Charlie [Gibson] and Diane [Sawyer], trying to describe the scene.

"Seat of our pants"

Mike Donahue, Executive Editor, CBS Radio, New York

A desk assistant yelled at the top of her lungs: "Stations are calling! What else are we doing? What do we know?"

I yelled back, "We're doing anchored coverage. Now! Updates—five an hour until further notice."

The first few minutes were like any other crazy breaking news event—done by the seat of our pants and adding elements along the way, working the phones. Ah, live radio—controlled chaos.

"The war wheel"

Harvey Nagler, Vice President of CBS News, CBS Radio, New York

We instituted what we call "the war wheel." We did an update every ten minutes so that listeners just tuning in were only minutes away from getting a recap of the latest developments.

"Behind the anchor desk"

Dan Rather, Anchor, CBS News, New York

I had just stepped out of the shower when a bulletin came over the radio: smoke was coming out of the World Trade Center. There were reports that a plane had hit one of the towers. I stepped onto my balcony, where I was able to see faint trails of smoke. As I was yanking on my clothes and getting ready to bolt for the door, Andrew Heyward, president of CBS News, called to say that I needed to get down to the office fast. A big news story was breaking, but its exact nature was still unclear.

The first journalistic question was, "Where to go?" I had a brief but serious thought that maybe I should rush to the scene, call in by cell phone and report on events firsthand. I've always tried to be a reporter/anchor. I have a fairly regular debate with myself as to which of the two roles should come first.

The realization came quickly that I probably would not be able to get close enough to the scene to be effective and that my place was behind the anchor desk. There, I could bring experience to bear and, I hoped, do some good separating rumor from fact on a fast-moving story.

"We're out of here!"

Roger Goodman, Executive Director, Special Events, ABC News, New York

I was at JFK airport waiting in the United Airlines lounge to get on a flight to London for meetings on ABC's New Year's Eve coverage. Special Events Executive Producer Marc Burstein and Vice President for News Operations Mike Duffy were with me. Out of the corner of my eye I glanced at the TV and saw smoke coming out of the World Trade Center. The audio was very low. I said, "Oh, my God, it's a fire."

I turned up the audio in the lounge, and I heard the word "airplane." I immediately said, "We're out of here!"

We just ran, grabbed our luggage, and passed the ticket counter. "Ma'am, the three of us are not on that flight to London anymore."



"Does this mean I'm going to work?"

Rick DiBella, Supervising Producer, Fox News, Washington

I flipped on the tube at my home in Virginia and turned an inattentive ear to *Good Morning America* as I lay in bed, considering where to play golf. *GMA's* accounts were sketchy at first. A plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers, no confirmation on the size of the plane or the damage done to the tower. I gauged the news as many off-duty news people do: "Does this mean I'm going to work?" Fortunately, I wasn't in New York.

When the first images hit the screen, I remember thinking, "Too much smoke and damage to be a Cessna, probably an airline crash. Still, no need to go to work."

"I had no idea"

John McWethy, Correspondent, ABC News, the Pentagon

My phone had rung as it almost always does when weird things happen. Initially, I had no idea what was going on. It could have been

an accident. It could have been someone at the controls having a heart attack. It could have been a bomb.

I made two phone calls to people who have connections to the National Military Command Center, the nerve center in the Pentagon. They didn't know anything.



“Are you sure?”

Jane Clayson, Anchor, CBS News, New York

Witness after witness came on to describe what was happening. Most had called in. A few were spouses of producers on our staff, whom we had called. We were trying to get anybody we knew who worked down there, who lived down there, who could look up and tell us what was happening.

The first witnesses kept saying it was a commercial jet. [My co-anchor] Bryant [Gumbel] and I kept asking, “Are you sure?” I was thinking to myself, this must have been an accident. “You’re certain it wasn’t a small plane?” How on a clear day could a plane just fly into the Trade Center?

Witness after witness said, “I am positive it was a commercial jet.”

“Snippets of information”

Jon Scott, Anchor, Fox News Channel, New York

A cacophony of voices was coming through my earpiece. Producers were working the phones and supplying me with snippets of information to pass along to viewers. Some of what they fed into my ear was coming out of my mouth literally less than a second later.

One eyewitness said the plane looked like a 737. Impossible, or so I thought; no pilot of a large jetliner could plow into the World Trade Center. I mentioned the Egypt Air tragedy in 1999 and the National Transportation Safety Board’s belief that that flight had been deliberately brought down by a suicidal pilot. I also remembered that on any given day tens of thousands of people worked in those buildings.

"Just the facts"

Robyn Walensky, Reporter, AP Radio, New York

My eyes were on the TV screen. With my left ear, I monitored what was being said on TV. With my right ear I waited on the telephone for my cue. I made notes on a scrap of paper.

When the anchor came to me, I said: "A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center, Tower One. There is smoke billowing out of the building from the upper floors, thick smoke that you can see for miles. The plane actually seems to be in the building. Eyewitnesses say the plane was headed for the tower, then crashed right into it."

Just the facts. Then I grabbed my tape recorder and my cell phone and bolted out the door.

"My first thought"

Aaron Brown, Anchor, CNN, New York

After my car phone rang and I learned a plane had hit the World Trade Center, my first thought was, "Do I have a clean shirt in my office? Did I shave?"

"Have you heard?"

Tom Brokaw, Anchor, NBC News, New York

I said to a neighbor of mine on my way out of my apartment building, "Have you heard what happened?"

"They don't have the election results already, do they?" he asked.

"No, a plane has hit the World Trade Center."

I was running to get a cab. People were going into polling places, and they were oblivious to it.

"I started running"

Lauren Glassberg, Reporter, WABC-TV, New York

I live about fifteen blocks north of the Trade Center site. As I walked into the elevator, I was certain the fire would be out in a matter of minutes, and that I'd be covering the mayoral primary after all. I was glad to have my newspaper with me, thinking it would probably be a long, slow day.

But as I stepped out of the lobby, I noticed a crowd had gathered. I looked to my right and saw the flames. I started running.

Five blocks later, I convinced a deliveryman to lend me his bicycle.

"Totally barefoot"

Mika Brzezinski, Correspondent, CBS News, New York

I grabbed my stuff, trying to figure out what I might need. I was wearing a wine-red suit and black high heels. I went downstairs, popped into the newsroom, and, before I got three steps in, the national editor started waving his arms: "Go!"

Producer Mike Noble grabbed his bag, and we just ran out. We tried to find a cameraman—that wasn't going to happen—so we just jumped into a cab and went down the West Side Highway. Nobody was moving. Traffic was gridlocked, so we jumped out.

I said, "We are gonna run there." Mike's a smoker, so he wasn't that psyched. I took off my shoes and put them in my bag, and we jogged all the way down to about ten blocks away from the World Trade Center. All the way down we were running, sweating, hyperventilating, and passing crowds of people just standing on the street looking, and crowds of people walking away. I was totally barefoot. The road was not covered with glass or anything. I wanted to get there.

"You're working"

Frank Ucciardo, Freelance Reporter, WWOR-TV, Secaucus, N.J.

I grabbed a freelance cameraman who was videotaping from a vantage point in front of the J&R Music store on Broadway. I said "You're working for WWOR today."

I stopped at a pay phone to file a report back to the studio; then we started down the street.

"Special report"

Peter Jennings, Anchor, ABC News, New York

I had come in early, as I often do. Somebody at the news desk said, "Go sit down at the anchor desk," which I did. Within minutes, somebody said, "We want to go to a special report."

"On the roof"

David Mulewski, Engineering Supervisor, WABC-TV, New York

I immediately put more tapes in the machine. I rolled [recorded] extra copies. I knew this was going to be a big story. I got on the internal house paging system and announced to the newsroom that everyone needed to turn his or her attention to the helicopter shot. I called ABC's affiliate feed service, "NewsOne," and told them to roll on my chopper shot, as well. I ran to the control room to see the other live shots around the city. I looked at the shot from our mounted camera in Brooklyn and saw the towers and the smoke. I zoomed in and focused the camera tight on the first tower. I called our chief engineer, Bill Beam, to tell him what I was seeing, because I knew our transmitter operator, Don DiFranco, was on the roof of that building. Beam said they were trying to call him.

"He sounded scared"

Janib Abreu, Sports Anchor, WABC-TV, New York

I knew that I wasn't going to be doing the Michael Jordan come-back story for that evening's newscast. I went to the assignment desk. The phones were ringing off the hook. A woman called. It was the first call I answered. She said she had a couple of friends who were in one of the towers. "You have to call Jim and Patricia and help them. Please tell them what to do," she said. She gave me Jim Gartenberg's office phone number. He was in One World Trade Center.

I called. Jim answered. He asked me what he needed to do. I couldn't fathom what he was going through. I couldn't relate to it. He sounded scared to me. He said he was on the eighty-sixth floor. I told him he would be okay, that help was coming. I was scared. I asked Jim if he would talk to our news anchors live on the air. He said, "Yes."

I kept him on hold for a second and told him not to worry, help was coming. He kept asking me what he should do. Jim was interviewed on the air, and I didn't talk to him again. I was hoping that firefighters would reach him and his coworker Patricia in time.

I should have just told Jim to run like hell.

"Something caught my eye"

Jon Scott, Anchor, Fox News Channel, New York

Someone in the control room patched in a phone call to Vernon Grose, who had spent years investigating commercial airline accidents with the National Transportation Safety Board. Assuming this was an accident, I asked him how a pilot could have made such a catastrophic mistake. It was possible, Grose said. Pilots distracted by workload, or blinded by the sun, had made terrible mistakes before.

As I spoke to Grose, my eyes were glued to the live helicopter feed. The TV mast looming over Tower One was almost invisible

through the rolling cloud of smoke. Something caught my eye—something moving in the lower right hand corner of the monitor. It disappeared momentarily behind the banner graphic at the bottom of the screen, and then emerged again.