

118 Witnesses to Explosions in the FDNY Oral Histories of 9/11



“ I thought it was exploding actually... Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up.”

— John Coyle, FDNY

On August 12, 2005, more than 12,000 pages of oral histories from 503 FDNY firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians were made public after *The New York Times* sued the City of New York for their release in response to the Bloomberg administration’s decision to withhold the records from the public.

The FDNY had recorded the oral histories between October 2001 and January 2002 at the instruction of the City’s fire commissioner, Thomas Von Essen, who wanted to preserve the accounts of the FDNY’s members “before they became reshaped by a collective memory.”

Following the release of the records, researchers began examining them for any evidence as to the cause of the Twin Towers’ destruction.

In August 2006, Dr. Graeme MacQueen, a retired professor from McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, published the article, “118 Witnesses: The Firefighters’ Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers.” In it, he identified 118 FDNY members (out of the 503 interviewed) who reported witnessing explosions that evidently—based on corroborating evidence—were the actual cause of the Twin Towers’ destruction.

MacQueen’s article and the criteria he used in analyzing the eyewitness accounts can be found in the *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, Vol. 2, August 2006.

Excerpts from the 118 oral histories are presented below in alphabetical order of the interviewees’ last names.

(1) Banaciski, Richard (oral histories number 9110253)

In respect to the South Tower:

"We were there I don't know, maybe 10, 15 minutes and then I just remember there was just an explosion. It seemed like on television they blow up these buildings. It seemed like it was going all the way around like a belt, all these explosions...Not thinking that this building is coming down. We just thought there was going to be a big explosion, stuff was going to come down." [pp. 3-4]

(2) Becker, Brian (9110019)

South Tower [as experienced from inside the North Tower]:

"I'd say we were in the 30th or 31st, 32nd Floor, or something like that, and a few of the guys were lying wiped out on the floor, you know, taking a break with their masks off and lying in the hallway when there was a very loud roaring sound and a very loud explosion, and the — it felt like there was an explosion above us..." [p. 12]

[Again on the subject of the collapse of South Tower as experienced in North Tower]:

Q. "What did you hear when the building starting collapsing the second time? Did you feel — just started coming down? You didn't hear anything, feel anything?"

A. "We felt — our whole building that we were in, when World Trade Center 2 collapsed, that was the first one to collapse. We were in World Trade Center 1. It was a tremendous explosion and tremendous shaking of our building." [p. 20]

North Tower: "So we just ran as a unit to the overpass again, and we took a look up, and it was like one — it was like, holy shit. It was like — because it was like — I guess the building was kind of — I don't remember specifically, but I remember it was, like, we got to get out of here. So I think that the building was really kind of starting to melt. We were — like, the melt down was beginning. The collapse hadn't begun, but it was not a fire any more up there. It was like — it was like that — like smoke explosion on a tremendous scale going on up there." [p. 17]

(3) Boeri, Richard (9110302)

South Tower:

"We had our backs to the tower and under that pedestrian bridge walking south, myself, Eddie Kennedy and the officer, when you heard the crackling. You looked up and you saw the one floor explode on itself and the top start to slide." [p. 4]

(4) Brady, Gregg (9110184)

North Tower:

"We were standing underneath and Captain Stone was speaking again. We heard — I heard 3 loud explosions. I look up and the north tower is coming down now, 1 World Trade Center...At that time, when I heard the 3 loud explosions, I started running west on Vesey Street towards the water." [p. 7]

(5) Burke, Timothy (9110488)

South Tower:

"Then the building popped, lower than the fire, which I learned was I guess, the aviation fuel fell into the pit, and whatever floor it fell on heated up really bad and that's why it popped at that floor. That's the rumor I heard. But it seemed like I was going oh, my god, there is a secondary device because the way the building popped I thought it was an explosion." [p. 8]

(6) Cachia, Edward (9110251)

South Tower:

"As my officer and I were looking at the south tower, it just gave. It actually gave at a lower floor, not the floor where the plane hit, because we originally had thought there was like an internal detonation explosives because it went in succession, boom, boom, boom, boom, and then the tower came down." [p. 5]

(7) Camacho, Fernando (9110318)

South Tower:

"As we came in through the revolving doors, the lights went out. A second or two later everything started to shake. You could hear explosions. We didn't know what it was. We thought it was just a small collapse. As I looked straight ahead of me, I saw total darkness. Everything was coming our way like a wave." [p. 4]

(8) Campagna, Frank (9110224)

North Tower:

"That's when it went. I looked back. You see three explosions and then the whole thing coming down. I turned my head and everybody was scattering." [p. 8]

(9) Carlsen, Craig (9110505)

South Tower:

"I guess about three minutes later you just heard explosions coming from building two, the south tower. It seemed like it took forever, but there were about ten explosions. At the time I didn't realize what it was. We realized later after talking and finding out that it was the floors collapsing to where the plane had hit. We then realized the building started to come down." [p. 6]

North Tower:

"The second one coming down, you knew the explosions. Now you're very familiar with it." [p. 10]

(10) Charles, Jason (9110486)

South Tower:

"...we start walking over slowly to the curb, and then I heard an explosion from up, from up above, and froze and was like, oh shit, I'm dead because I thought debris was going to hit me in the head and that was it. Then everybody stops and looks at the building and then they take off." [p. 14]

North Tower:

"...we don't even get to the back of the building. We start walking back there and then I heard a ground level explosion and I'm like holy shit, and then you heard that twisting metal wreckage again. Then I said shit and everybody started running..." [p. 29]

[After both towers have fallen he is in another building trying to evacuate it when he sees the television.] "Those guys had a TV set and that's when I found out we were under attack, because prior to that I thought Tower 2 blew up because the engine from the plane hit Tower 2 and exploded inside. It was like stupid, but that's what I thought." [p. 35]

(11) Chelsen, Roy (9110475)

North Tower: [He gets out of the NT and then this happens.]

"All of a sudden we heard this huge explosion, and that's when the tower started coming down. We all started running." [pp. 8-9]

(12) Citarelli, John (9110264)

South Tower [This is included only because the word "explosion occurs in his discussion of the North Tower.]:

"Right as he said that, I heard a loud roar, "boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom," and it was getting louder. I looked around, and we were looking at each other. What is that noise? I just looked out the window of the lobby. I could see stuff out of the window of the lobby hitting the street, and I just dove into the corner of the wall." [pp. 4-5]

North Tower:

"I turned, I took maybe a couple more steps, and then I heard another explosion, it sounded like. I looked up, and the north tower was starting to come down." [p. 11]

(13) Cook, Louis (9110103)

North Tower:

"I made it up onto the — I guess you call it the concourse level, the mezzanine level, and onto the foot bridge when I started to hear — I thought I heard an explosion of some sort, but I kind of dismissed it. I figured, ah, it's just something burning upstairs...and then I just remember feeling a rumble and hearing this rumbling sound that was really intense. It actually shook my bones...So I ran." [pp. 6-7]

(14) Cooke, Alan (9110040)

"...what happened at that time, it seemed like an explosion was coming from there. I thought an explosion was coming from there. That's when everybody started running... [p. 5]...I thought I was going to die. I really did. I thought what happened was that there was an explosion at the World Trade Center. Then I thought there was another one at the Seaport. I thought that was a secondary... [p. 6]

(15) Coutsouros, Dean (9110049)

North Tower:

"I happened to be looking up at it, and from the fire floor down, it was just like a really loud crackling noise, it sounded like a million firecrackers, and just a wave, right from the fire floor down, just a wave that started to come down." [p. 3]

(16) Coyle, John (9110406)

South Tower:

"I started running after him and looking over my shoulder. The tower was — it looked to me — I thought it was exploding, actually. That's what I thought for hours afterwards, that it had exploded or the plane or there had been some device on the plane that had exploded, because the debris from the tower had shot out far over our heads. [pp. 7-8]...But nobody knew what had happened. I still thought it had exploded, something had exploded. ...At that point I had no idea what had happened. It seemed that the thing had blown up." [p. 10]

North Tower:

"Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up. So I was fully expecting anything else to blow up." [p. 12]

[After being near WTC 7's collapse he's speaking to his family on the phone.] "While I was down at Battery Park I finally got through on my phone to my father and said, 'I'm alive. I just wanted to tell you, go to church, I'm alive. I just so narrowly escaped this thing.' He said, 'Where were you? You were there?' I said, 'Yeah, I was right there when it blew up.' He said, 'You were there when the planes hit?' I said, 'No, I was there when it exploded, the building exploded.' He said, 'You mean when it fell down?' I said, 'No, when it exploded.' I still didn't realize what had happened. I totally thought it

had been blown up. That's just the perspective of looking up at it, it seemed to have exploded out. But that I guess was the force of the upper stories collapsing down." [pp. 15-16]

(17) Cruthers, Frank (9110179)

"And while I was still in that immediate area, the south tower, 2 World Trade Center, there was what appeared to be at first an explosion. It appeared at the very top, simultaneously from all four sides, materials shot out horizontally. And then there seemed to be a momentary delay before you could see the beginning of the collapse." [p. 4]

(18) Curran, James (9110412)

North Tower:

"We started filing out and following the line of the building. I got just to underneath the north walkway. A guy started screaming to run. When I got underneath the north bridge I looked back and you heard it, I heard like every floor went chu-chu-chu. Looked back and from the pressure everything was getting blown out of the floors before it actually collapsed." [pp. 10-11]

(19) Curran, Paul (9110369)

South Tower [Experienced while low in the North Tower]:

"With that, all a sudden the tower went completely — a horrendous noise, a very, very tremendous explosion, and a very heavy wind came through the tower. The wind almost knocked you down." [p. 5]

(20) Darnowski, Kevin (9110202)

South Tower:

"At that time I started walking back up towards Vesey Street. I heard three explosions, and then we heard like groaning and grinding, and tower two started to come down." [p. 8]

(21) Delendick, John (9110230)

South Tower:

"We heard a rumbling noise, and it appeared that that first tower, the south tower, had exploded, the top of it. That's what I saw, what a lot of us saw. [p. 5]...I remember asking Ray Downey was it the jet fuel that blew up. He said at that point he thought there were bombs up there because it was too even. As we've since learned, it was the jet fuel that was dropping down that caused all this. But he said it was too even."

Q. "Symmetrical?"

A. "So his original thought was that he thought it was a bomb up there as well. [pp. 5-6] ...We didn't know the building came down. We just knew the top of the

building exploded and didn't know what happened to the rest of the building. You just couldn't see anything." [p. 7]

(22) DeRubio, Dominick (9110064)

South Tower:

"After a while we were looking up at the tower, and all of a sudden someone said it's starting to come down."

Q. "This would be the north tower coming down?"

A. "This would be the first one."

Q. "Or the south tower?"

A. "This one here. It was weird how it started to come down. It looked like it was a timed explosion, but I guess it was just the floors starting to pancake one on top of the other." [p. 5]

(23) Deshore, Karin (9110192)

South Tower:

"I had no clue what was going on. I never turned around because a sound came from somewhere that I never heard before. Some people compared it with an airplane. It was the worst sound of rolling sound, not a thunder. I can't explain it, what it was. All I know is — and a force started to come hit me in my back. I can't explain it. You had to be there. All I know is I had to run because I thought there was an explosion. I was unaware what was happening. I thought it was just a major explosion. I didn't know the building was collapsing...I just felt like the darkness the loneliness and being alone was the worst thing I ever experienced in my life and not being able to breathe. There was no air. Whatever this explosion was simply sucked all the oxygen out of the air. You couldn't breathe and the feeling of suffocation..." [pp. 10-11]

North Tower:

"Somewhere around the middle of the World Trade Center, there was this orange and red flash coming out. Initially it was just one flash. Then this flash just kept popping all the way around the building and that building had started to explode. The popping sound, and with each popping sound it was initially an orange and then red flash came out of the building and then it would just go all around the building on both sides as far as I could see. These popping sounds and the explosions were getting bigger, going both up and down and then all around the building.

I went inside and told everybody that the other building or there was an explosion occurring up there and I said I think we have another major explosion... [p. 15]...So here these explosions are getting bigger and louder and bigger and louder and I told everybody if this building totally explodes, still unaware that the other building had collapsed, I'm going in the water. [p. 16]...I'm still standing there trying to figure out what my next

move should be, when the same sergeant says fucking shit, it's coming at us, and that's a quote. Again I didn't see what was happening behind me, but knowing of all the explosions I thought here was another explosion coming and this sound again and this wave of this force again." [pp. 17-18]

(24) DeSimone, George (9110129)

South Tower:

"The next thing I know, we heard a little bit of a rumbling, and then white powder came from the first collapsed building. I thought it was an explosion initially. We got hit with the powder. We tried to run." [p. 6]

North Tower:

"After that, I still thought it was an explosion. I thought it was some kind of thermal explosion where I'm either going to get burnt — and I had kind of ideas that it was going to be something like Hiroshima where all this heat was coming at me and we were going to get burnt — or if the heat didn't burn me, I thought that all the parts coming out of this building, the windows, metal, all the things like that, that I might be severed in half. [p. 7]...I don't think we understood the magnitude of what was going on. I was fearful that there were bombs in the building. That was my first thought, being the military kind of guy that I am." [p. 10]

(25) Dixon, Brian (9110166)

South Tower:

"I was watching the fire, watching the people jump and hearing a noise and looking up and seeing — it actually looked — the lowest floor of fire in the south tower actually looked like someone had planted explosives around it because the whole bottom I could see — I could see two sides of it and the other side — it just looked like that floor blew out. I looked up and you could actually see everything blew out on the one floor. I thought, geez, this looks like an explosion up there, it blew out. Then I guess in some sense of time we looked at it and realized, no, actually it just collapsed. That's what blew out the windows, not that there was an explosion there but that windows blew out. [p. 15]... As I just got in under the entrance there, I got just a little ways back and it was just like — you hear the noise, a boom, and then a blast of air." [p. 16]

(26) Donovan, Michael (9110205)

South Tower:

"I got up, I got into the parking garages, was knocked down by the percussion. I thought there had been an explosion or a bomb that they had blown up there. The Vista International Hotel was my first impression, that they had blown it up." [pp. 13-14]...

Q. "So you knew the south tower came down? You knew it collapsed?"

A. "No, you couldn't see it. I thought the Millennium Hotel had been blown up." [p. 17]

(27) Dorritie, Robert (9110299)

South Tower:

"I guess we got about three-quarters of the way across when we were deciding which way to go into the south tower. That's when I looked up, and the tower started coming down, which at the time I said I thought it was a secondary device. I had warned the guys about secondary devices on the way down..." [p. 4]

(28) Drury, James (9110098)

South Tower:

"We were in the process of getting some rigs moved when I turned, as I heard a tremendous roar, explosion, and saw that the first of the two towers was starting to come down." [p. 6]

North Tower:

"...we started to hear the second roar. That was the north tower now coming down. I should say that people in the street and myself included thought that the roar was so loud that the explosive - bombs were going off inside the building. Obviously we were later proved wrong. [p. 7]...seeing that first tower come down was unbelievable. The sound it made. As I said I thought the terrorists planted explosives somewhere in the building. That's how loud it was, crackling explosive, a wall." [p. 12]

(29) Duffy, James (9110444)

North Tower:

Q. "When either tower came down, did you have any advanced warning?"

A. "Oh, no. I didn't know what it was when we were inside. I didn't know the building had collapsed, actually. I thought it was a bomb. I thought a bomb had gone off. That's why I really didn't know until after."

Q. "Afterwards?"

A. "Yeah, that that's when it came down. I wasn't expecting that. I thought it was a bomb or something that went off." [pp. 9-10]

(30) Duggan, Kevin (9110345)

South Tower:

"...we were standing there, and then we just heard this real loud roar. We looked up and we could see the south tower. Looked like the middle of it was just exploding out, and at that point, one of the officers just said, Run..." [p. 7]

(31) Fenyo, Christopher (9110295)

South Tower:

"About a couple minutes after George came back to me is when the south tower from our perspective exploded from about midway up the building. We all turned and ran... [p. 5]...At that point a debate began to rage because the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges. We had really no concept of the damage on the east side of 2 World Trade Center at that point, and at that point many people had felt that possibly explosives had taken out 2 World Trade, and officers were gathering companies together and the officers were debating whether or not to go immediately back in or to see what was going to happen with 1 World Trade at that point. The debate ended pretty quickly because 1 World Trade came down. [pp. 6-7]

North Tower:

"There was an explosion at the top of the Trade Center and a piece of Trade Center flew across the West Side Highway and hit the Financial Center..." [p. 3]

(32) Fitzpatrick, Brian (9110256)

North Tower:

"...that's when we heard a tremendous noise and it was coming from the south tower, and we looked up and it was coming down...I remember making it into the tunnel and it was this incredible amount of wind, debris, heat. I remember falling down, getting back up, and the guys were just falling all over each other. [pp. 3-4] Then we exited out by the marina, the North Cove Yacht Harbor, where we all basically just took a knee and we waited a couple of minutes. Everybody was in shock. We didn't know what happened. We just thought it was debris or an explosion or a secondary explosion or another bomb inside the building or another plane." [p. 5]

(33) Fitzpatrick, Thomas (9110001)

South Tower:

"All we saw was a puff of smoke coming from about 2 thirds of the way up. Some people thought it was an explosion. I don't think I remember that. I remember seeing, it looked like sparkling around one specific layer of the building. I assume now that that was either windows starting to collapse like tinsel or something. Then the building started to come down. My initial reaction was that this was exactly the way it looks when they show you those implosions on TV. I would have to say for three or four seconds anyway, maybe longer. I was just watching." [pp. 13-14]

(34) Gates, Gary (9110065)

South Tower:

"I looked up, and the building exploded, the building that we were very close to, which was one tower. The whole top came off like a volcano. [p. 6]...So the explosion, what I realized later, had to be the start of the collapse. It was the way the building appeared to blow out from both sides. I'm looking at the face of it, and all we see is the two sides of the building just blowing out and coming apart like this, as I said, like the top of a volcano." [pp. 6-7]

(35) Gombo, Jerry (9110100)

South Tower:

"...it felt sort of like an earthquake. The sky darkened and you heard this thunderous roar. It was like a volcano, if you will, not that I ever experienced a volcano, but I guess that's the way I could describe it, and this cloud just coming down. The ground was shaking and this roar..." [p. 12]

North Tower:

"No sooner did we get, I would say, several yards down Vesey Street heading east to west when the second tower came down, and once again this huge mushroom cloud..." [pp. 18-19]

(36) Gorman, Gerard (9110420)

[After both towers have collapsed.]

"...at that point I did not know the first building collapsed still. Didn't know. We thought it was a missile attack or something like that. We thought we were under attack. They didn't have any idea that this building could collapse. [p. 21]...[A couple of minutes before the NT collapse he's trying to figure out what the earthquake was that he just felt.] So on the overhang I remember seeing a frigging Bomb Squad cop and I asked him, what the hell blew up?" [p. 23]

(37) Gorman, Kevin (9110434)

North Tower:

"...and as I was looking at him I heard the explosion, looked up, and saw like three floors explode, saw the antenna coming down, and turned around and ran north." [p. 6]

(38) Grabher, Steve (9110241)

South Tower:

"I looked over my shoulder and you could see the whole top of the south tower leaning towards us. It looked like it was coming over. You could see the windows pop out just like in the picture, looked like a movie. I saw one floor of windows pop out, like poof, poof. I saw one and a half floors pop out. It looked almost like an explosion." [pp. 10-11]

(39) Gregory, Stephen (9110008)

South Tower:

“At that point in time I called Manhattan. I was answered. I asked them if they were aware of an explosion at the World Trade Center. I told them basically what I thought had happened... [pp. 8-9]...I thought that when I looked in the direction of the Trade Center before it came down, before No. 2 came down, that I saw low-level flashes. In my conversation with Lieutenant Evangelista, never mentioning this to him, he questioned me and asked me if I saw low-level flashes in front of the building, and I agreed with him because I thought — at that time I didn’t know what it was. I mean, it could have been as a result of the building collapsing, things exploding, but I saw a flash flash flash and then it looked like the building came down.”

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

A. “No, the lower level of the building. You know like when they demolish a building, how when they blow up a building, when it falls down? That’s what I thought I saw. And I didn’t broach the topic to him, but he asked me. He said I don’t know if I’m crazy, but I just wanted to ask you because you were standing right next to me. He said did you see anything by the building? And I said what do you mean by see anything? He said did you see any flashes? I said, yes, well, I thought it was just me. He said no, I saw them, too.

I don’t know if that means anything. I mean, I equate it to the building coming down and pushing things down, it could have been electrical explosions, it could have been whatever. But it’s just strange that two people sort of say the same thing and neither one of us talked to each other about it. I mean, I don’t know this guy from a hole in the wall. I was just standing next to him...”

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

A. “I know about the explosion on the upper floors. This was like eye level. I didn’t have to go like this. Because I was looking this way. I’m not going to say it was on the first floor or the second floor, but somewhere in that area I saw to me what appeared to be flashes.” [pp. 14-16]

(40) Hansson, Gregg (9110017)

North Tower: “Then a large explosion took place. In my estimation that was the tower coming down, but at that time I did not know what that was. I thought some type of bomb had gone off.” [p. 15]

(41) Harrilal, Mala (9110186)

North Tower: [He’s out in a boat by now, quite far from the scene.]

Q. “But you weren’t involved with that part, because you were already out of the area, you were by the boat loading people?”

A. “Right, because we heard the explosion.” [p. 7]

(42) Harris, Russell (9110015)

South Tower:

“I was on the side of the church. I looked and all this debris just started exploding everywhere, and I turned around to run...” [p. 7]

(43) Hirsch, Barrett (9110336)

North Tower:

“Then I noticed, like, the top of the tower seemed to shoot up a little bit and start to fall down a little bit, and that’s when Bill Simon and I, who was my partner, just bolted...” [p. 4]

(44) Hoppey, Timothy (9110229)

South Tower:

“...that’s when we heard the rumble. I looked up, and it was just a black cloud directly overhead. At that point I was thinking it was a secondary explosion. It looked to me like it was much lower than where the planes had gone in. [p. 5]...I thought the top half of the building was falling off, and I was thinking of it falling outward, not really imploding upon itself like it did.” [p. 6]

(45) Hyland, Paul (9110374)

North Tower:

“I just saw the top half of the north tower sink and sort of just sat down on itself, sat down, and then just started shattering and just blowing out like a Christmas tree.” [pp. 11-12]

(46) Ippolito, James (9110342)

South Tower [As experienced from within the North Tower]

“...we were taking a break on 30, and that’s when we heard a rumble, outside explosion, and I think that was the other building coming down...” [p. 5]

North Tower: “Started to walk towards it, and that’s when the building came down. I heard an explosion and turned around and the building was coming down.” [p. 8]

(47) Julian, Timothy (9110386)

South Tower:

“...that’s when I heard the building collapse.

First I thought it was an explosion. I thought maybe there was bomb on the plane, but delayed type of thing, you know, secondary device.”

Q. “I was convinced for a week it was secondary devices.”

A. “You know, and I just heard like an explosion and a then a cracking type of noise, and then it sounded like a freight train, rumbling and picking up speed, and I remember I looked up, and I saw it coming...” [p. 10]

(48) Kennedy, Edward (9110502)

South Tower:

“We took two steps, there was a tremendous boom, explosion, we both turned around, and the top of the building was coming down at us. With this I just turned to Richie and said run. [p. 7]...When the building exploded, they ran down Liberty towards the water...” [p. 9]

(49) Klee, Stephen (9110300)

South Tower:

A. “No, I was just trying to find out — no, there was no — it was still dusty out there, and you really couldn’t see. I didn’t even realize that two came down. I thought another bomb or a plane hit the building. That’s what I thought it was.” [p. 7]

(50) Kozlowski, George (9110308)

North Tower:

“As we were walking, we heard — we thought it was another plane coming. It was like a big shhhhh. A thousand times louder than that. It sounded like a missile coming and we just started booking. We took off like bats out of hell. We made it around the corner and that’s when the shit hit the fan right then and there. We heard that loud and then ba boom. I just — it was like an earthquake or whatever. A giant, giant explosion. [p. 8]...Then this big gust came and I just went flying, maybe 30, 40 feet. Tumbling. I got up, got on my hands and knees because all of the white shit was all over me. I just kept crawling. My ears were like deaf, you know, when you hear a giant firecracker or something.” [p. 9]

(51) Long, Kirk (9110509)

South Tower:

[The collapse is experienced from inside the North Tower]

“When the building shook, I was right next to an elevator shaft with Andy, crawling down the hallway. I was waiting for a flame to come up from the basement because I believed something in the basement blew up. Nothing like that happened, so I was waiting for a flame to come down from a plane. Nothing like that happened. Still at that time I never knew that the south tower had gone down.” [pp. 4-5]

(52) Loper, David (9110349)

South Tower:

“Then all of a sudden there was like a loud — almost like a rushing sound, a roar, and we looked up and we could see it looked like an implosion and the building kind of went in and out and kind of like shook...We were looking up and then this thing started coming down...” [p. 10]

(53) Lynn, John (9110389)

South Tower:

“...our attention was drawn to the south tower. There was some kind of explosion, you might say, up in the area where the fire was. Actually, in hindsight, that was the start of the collapse.” [p. 3]

(54) Macko, Michael (9110506)

South Tower:

“We were making our way down West Street. We got just about south of the north overpass, about 50 feet past that, when the first collapse occurred. I looked up. I was awed by — I thought it exploded at the top. Everybody I guess at that point started running...” [p. 4]

(55) Mallery, Paul (9110312)

South Tower:

“I said it sounds just like this, this is exactly what it sounds like, here’s another one, thinking it was a third plane. Meanwhile the sound to me was four distinct events. They all sounded the same. The two plane crashes and the two collapses, except the collapses lasted longer. [p. 8]...I don’t know if this is nuclear attack. I don’t know what this is any more.” [p. 9]

(56) Malley, John (9110319)

South Tower:

“As we walked through those revolving doors, that’s when we felt the rumble. I felt the rumbling, and then I felt the force coming at me. I was like, what the hell is that? In my mind it was a bomb going off. The pressure got so great, I stepped back behind the columns separating the revolving doors. Then the force just blew past me. It blew past me it seemed for a long time. In my mind I was saying what the hell is this and when is it going to stop? Then it finally stopped, that pressure which I thought was a concussion of an explosion. It turns out it was the down pressure wind of the floors collapsing on top of each other.” [p. 5]

North Tower:

“At that point I didn’t know the building came down. I thought I was still in the explosion. I didn’t know the whole building had come down.” [p. 9]

(57) Marrero, Julio (9110162)

South Tower:

"...I heard a loud bang. We looked up, and we just saw the building starting to collapse. I looked over and started to scream at my partner, which he was inside the vehicle...I was screaming from the top of my lungs, and I must have been about ten feet away from her and she couldn't even hear me, because the building was so loud, the explosion, that she couldn't even hear me." [pp. 4-5]

North Tower:

"That's when I just broke down and cried at Bellevue Hospital, because it was just so overwhelming. I just knew that what happened was horrific. It was a bombing." [pp. 15-16]

(58) Martin, Patrick (9110510)

South Tower:

"...it was right then that we heard the noise. My lieutenant said he looked down at the first floor, and he auto [?] see the first floor of the south tower like exploding out. I looked up. I looked up, and the sky was filled with that debris cloud. You could see the debris coming down, pretty much toward us." [p. 5]

(59) Martinez, Edward (9110494)

South Tower:

"...because of the fog that was there, you couldn't see above. Your distance was limited. Once I heard that, I heard like a big explosion, a tremendous explosion, let me put it that way and rumbling sound. At that time I started seeing things coming down." [pp. 4-5]

(60) Martinez, Orlando (9110183)

South Tower:

Q. "This is the first building collapsing?"

A. "Right. There was an explosion and after we started running..." [p. 9]

(61) McArdle-Schulman, Maureen (9110110)

South Tower:

"And the building had red fire, a ring of fire. They started pumping and bouncing and I'm standing there staring. Finally somebody yelled "run." [p. 7]...I just called him [her husband] and told him I was going in the tower. The tower just imploded. [p. 11]

North Tower:

"We're standing there and I look up. The second tower starts with the ring of fire. Some puffing and bouncing." [p. 12]

(62) McCarthy, Linda (9110213)

South Tower:

"So when that one went down. I thought the plane was exploding, or another plane hit. I had no idea it was coming down. But I couldn't see it gone, because I couldn't see it really in the first place with all the smoke...So I didn't know what it was. I heard like an earthquake. I said run for your lives, run." [pp. 6-7]

(63) McGimpsey, John (9110477)

South Tower [from inside Marriott Hotel]:

"We didn't know actually what was going on. We weren't sure if those noises were — sounded like another plane, bomb, something like that..." [p. 5]

(64) McKinley, James (9110072)

South Tower:

"Then all of a sudden I heard this huge explosion, I didn't know what it was cause nobody was telling me anything...I was this close to it, and I didn't know what was going on. After that I heard this huge explosion, I thought it was a boiler exploding or something. Next thing you know this huge cloud of smoke is coming at us, so we're running." [p. 4]

(65) Mejias, Michael (9110149)

South Tower: [Apparently he is confusing it with the North Tower]

"The building started collapsing, the north tower started collapsing. It tipped down first and then the thing fell within itself. It was an amazing sight to see. It was really unbelievable. I thought I was watching a movie with special effects...But it didn't really — we were safe because we were surrounded by other buildings. If the tower would have fell towards West Street instead of imploding on itself, we would have had a problem, but, you know, it just came within itself, just tipped." [p. 8]

(66) Meola, Joseph (9110287)

South Tower:

"As we are looking up at the building, what I saw was, it looked like the building was blowing out on all four sides. We actually heard the pops. Didn't realize it was the falling — you know, you heard the pops of the building. You thought it was just blowing out." [p. 5]

(67) Merced, Mary (9110144)

South Tower:

"So I'm running, and I'm worried about the chief, that he's there. Nobody expected those buildings to implode. They were thinking, it's going to topple." [p. 12]

North Tower:

"Then everybody is going to run, because we didn't see where the building toppled because we didn't know it imploded because you couldn't see anything." [p. 16]

(68) Monahan, Craig (9110016)

South Tower:

"When it sounded like the explosion stopped, the steel hitting, when it all seemed to stop, this just like a fire storm of wind and material, a sandstorm kind of, just came and wailed by, really flew past us quick." [p. 8]

(69) Moriarty, David (9110228)

North Tower:

"I looked up, and it appeared as if the north tower — it almost appeared to be liquefied. The very top of it began to cascade out and down, almost in a rolling motion." [p. 7]

(70) Murad, Murray (9110009)

South Tower:

"Then it came down. From the implosion, we all got thrown and all that stuff came in the house... [p. 9]...I didn't want to take one because they had a couple of firetrucks that were hanging out right in front of him. I don't know what firetrucks they were, but they looked kind of beaten up from the explosion." [p. 10]

North Tower:

A. "All the debris from the collapse of—"

Q. "So it was outside? A. It was inside. From the implosion, everything just came inside." [p. 13]

(71) Murphy, Keith (9110323)

South Tower: [As experienced from the ground floor of the North Tower]

"I had heard right before the lights went out, I had heard a distant boom boom boom, sounded like three explosions. I don't know what it was. At the time, I would have said they sounded like bombs, but it was boom boom boom and then the lights all go out. I hear someone say oh, shit, that was just for the lights out. I would say about 3, 4 seconds, all of a sudden this tremendous roar. It sounded like being in a tunnel with the train coming at you. It sounded like nothing I had ever heard in my life, but it didn't sound good. All of a sudden I could feel the floor started to shake and sway. We were being thrown like literally off our feet, side to side, getting banged around and then a tremendous wind started to happen. It probably lasted maybe 15 seconds, 10 to 15 seconds. It seemed like a hurricane force wind. It would blow you off your feet..." [pp. 19-20]

(72) Murray, John (9110407)

South Tower:

"...we were standing there watching the north tower and not even paying attention to the south tower. Then you look up and it's like holy shit, the building didn't come down, it shot straight out over our heads, like straight across West Street. Holy shit, there is no fucking way we are going to out run this thing." [p. 6]

(73) Murray, Kevin (9110020)

North Tower:

"When the tower started — there was a big explosion that I heard and someone screamed that it was coming down and I looked away and I saw all the windows domino — you know, dominoing up and then come down. We were right in front of 6, so we started running..." [p. 15]

(74) Norris, Robert (9110071)

South Tower: [He hears what he thinks is a third plane, but it is actually the collapse of the South Tower]

"...I heard what was a third plane coming in. I heard the propulsion of an engine and then an explosion. We looked up and saw these huge chunks. There's one particular piece of this building that fell in its entirety that I'll never forget..." [p. 11]

North Tower: [He describes the North Tower collapse in a similar manner.]

"I remember being over there, and did I hear yet another — what I thought was a propulsion of a plane, and then an explosion, and then we all dove to the floor." [pp. 17-18]

(75) Ober, Michael (9110093)

South Tower:

"Then we heard a rumble, some twisting metal, we looked up in the air, and to be totally honest, at first, I don't know exactly...but it looked to me just like an explosion. It didn't look like the building was coming down, it looked like just one floor had blown completely outside of it...After hearing this and looking up and seeing the building, what I thought was an explosion, everyone was running..." [pp. 4-5]

(76) Olszewski, Janice (9110193)

South Tower:

"I didn't think it was safe. I didn't know what was going on. I thought more could be happening down there. I didn't know if it was an explosion. I didn't know it was collapse at that point. I thought it was an explosion or secondary device, a bomb, the jet-plane exploding, whatever." [p. 7]

(77) Ondrovic, Patricia (9110048)

South Tower:

"My partner and I grabbed our stretcher, went to put it in the back of our vehicle, and at that time, I think it was the lobby of the building behind us blew out. Everybody started running, I didn't see him again that day. He got thrown one way, I got thrown the other way...I was still on Vesey, cause the building that blew up on me was on Vesey...There was no where safe to go...I thought that they blew up our triage sector...The paramedic from Cabrini, that's where he was. I was just talking to him 20 minutes before everything blew up. [pp. 4-7]...At that point I got really upset. I said, do you realize they just blew up our triage sector? Everybody back there is dead, everybody back there is gone." [p. 9]

(78) Patriciello, Joseph (9110378)

South Tower:

"..I happened to be looking up and saw the explosion or the building fail with the ensuing fireball and cloud. It didn't appear to me at that moment the building was coming down.

But when the noise level began to pick up, it was obvious that something wrong was going on. We all proceeded to run..." [p. 4]

(79) Petrassi, Joseph (9110449)

North Tower:

"We came out of the building and we were looking up and the tower seemed to blow out...You could feel the stuff hitting you on the back as you were running." [p. 3]

(80) Piambino, Thomas (9110493)

South Tower:

"The south tower had fallen, but at that time I didn't know what it was. All I heard was a tremendous explosion. The tower I was in shook really bad." [p. 5]

North Tower:

"...and then the north tower started to fall, and my perception was that when I looked back at the tower as it was starting to come down — I was booking — was that there was — I thought it exploded, and I didn't realize it had collapsed. It looked to me like an explosion...I wound up taking refuge behind an ESU truck, I believe it was, a Police Department ESU truck, I think, and I just rode it out until first there was the explosion or the concussion, and then there was very, very strong wind, and then there was the black..." [pp. 9-10]

(81) Picarello, John (9110240)

South Tower:

"In about a second or two, you just heard like a ba-ba-ba-boom, and everything just came down and everything was pitch-black." [p. 6]

(82) Picciotto, Richard (9110211)

South Tower: [as heard from inside the North Tower]

"...drop your tools, drop your masks, drop everything, get out, get out, get out. My thinking was either — I thought a bomb hit the other building and brought it down, and if there's a bomb in that one, there's a bomb in this one." [p. 6]

(83) Quinn, Kevin (9110339)

South Tower:

"Looking up at the towers and it looked like it just basically imploded." [p. 2]

(84) Rae, Joseph (9110294)

South Tower:

"We started walking north to just about the second footbridge, which would be 6 World Trade, and all of a sudden we heard the explosion and the building started to come down and I ran..." [p. 3]

(85) Reilly, Gerard (9110435)

South Tower:

"So we probably were in the building maybe a minute in the lobby of the tower, whichever one we were in, and that's when it came down. But I thought it was an explosion in the hotel, because all the debris came down, it was pitch-black, the whole building shook. [p. 4]...I told him I thought it was a bomb in the hotel, because nobody said the building collapsed." [p. 5]

(86) Reynolds, William (9110288)

South Tower:

"After a while, and I don't know how long it was, I was distracted by a large explosion from the south tower and it seemed like fire was shooting out a couple of hundred feet in each direction, then all of a sudden the top of the tower started coming down in a pancake..." [p. 3]...

Q. "Bill, just one question. The fire that you saw, where was the fire? Like up at the upper levels where it started collapsing?"

A. "It appeared somewhere below that. Maybe twenty floors below the impact area of the plane. [p. 4]..."

Q. "You're talking about the north tower now; right?"

A. "Before the north tower fell. He said, 'No.' I said, 'Why not? They blew up the other one.' I thought they blew it up with a bomb. I said, 'If they blew up the one, you know

they're gonna blow up the other one.'" [p. 8]

(87) Richiusa, Patrick (9110305)

North Tower:

"...then it was dead silent. There was no noise after 1 Trade Center fell. It was like something out of a movie. It was really loud and then it was — maybe it was just my hearing from the blast." [p. 10]

(88) Rios, Juan (9119937)

South Tower:

"...I was hooking up the regulator to the O-2, when I hear people screaming and a loud explosion...So I just started to run..." [p. 3]

(89) Rivera, Angel (9110489)

South Tower: [The collapse is experienced from inside the Marriott hotel.]

"...when we hit the 19th floor, something horrendous happened. It was like a bomb went off. We thought we were dead. The whole building shook. The brick coming out of — the door to the hallway into the hotel blew off like somebody had thrown it all over the place. It shook all over the place. We were thrown on the floor... The building was still shaking and we're still hearing explosions going on everywhere, so we decided let's get out of here." [pp. 4-5]

North Tower: [Again from inside the Marriott.]

"Mike Mullan walked one flight up, and then the most horrendous thing happened. That's when hell came down. It was like a huge, enormous explosion. I still can hear it.

Everything shook. Everything went black. The wind rushed, very slowly [sound], all the dust, all the — and everything went dark. We were rolling all over the floor, banging against the walls... [p. 7]...When the second tower came down, we had no idea what was going on. We thought another plane, another bomb, another as a second device." [p. 9]

(90) Rivera, Daniel (9110035)

South Tower: [This witness is very close to ST when it collapses.]

"Then that's when I kept on walking close to the south tower and that's when that building collapsed."

Q. "How did you know that it was coming down?"

A. "That noise. It was a noise."

Q. "What did you hear? What did you see?"

A. "It was a frigging noise. At first I thought it was — do you ever see professional demolition where they set the charges on certain floors and then you hear 'pop, pop, pop, pop, pop'? That's exactly what — because I thought it was that. When I heard that frigging noise, that's when I saw the building coming down." [p. 9]

(91) Rivera, Terence (9110343)

South Tower:

"As I run towards it, I know that I'm not going to escape the — escape it, so I dive under — I don't know even know which rig it was. I dive under a rig. At the same time it felt like an explosion. I got bounced around underneath the rig." [p. 7]

(92) Rogers, Kenneth (9110290)

South Tower:

"...we were standing there with about five companies and we were just waiting for our assignment and then there was an explosion in the south tower, which according to this map, this exposure just blew out in flames. A lot of guys left at that point. I kept watching. Floor after floor after floor. One floor under another after another and when it hit about the fifth floor, I figured it was a bomb, because it looked like a synchronized deliberate kind of thing." [pp. 3-4]

(93) Rothmund, John (9110112)

South Tower:

"At that time we were looking at the top of the towers and all the rubble and people coming off, and all of a sudden you heard — it sounded like another airplane, or a missile. It was like a slow shake. The whole ground just vibrated and shook." [pp. 5-6]

North Tower:

"Again, we didn't know what was going on. We thought it was a bomb, you know, like planes were dropping from the sky or missiles were hitting. We didn't know what the hell was going on." [p. 14]

(94) Ryan, William (9110117)

[Seems to be after both collapses.]

Q. "What did you think you were responding to at that point?"

A. "Well, we knew we had fire. We knew we had partial collapse."

Q. "From an explosion or —"

A. "Yes. Well, we heard a loud boom when we were getting ready to dock the ferry. Probably the jet fuel igniting, I assume." [p. 3]

(95) Rybak, Stanley (9110263)

South Tower:

"...then the — then everything just came right through. The dust and the explosion knocked the windows out, and so I was momentarily on the ground." [p. 5]

(96) Salerno, Anthony (9110309)

North Tower:

"Putting out all those fires, in that interim, the second building had come down. I remember hearing a lot of explosions, the street turning completely gray, gray clouds of smoke all over the place. Everybody had stopped what they were doing and ran back up the block." [p. 4]

(97) Scaringello, Patrick (9110030)

South Tower:

"I started to treat patients on my own when I heard the explosion from up above. I looked up, I saw smoke and flame and then I saw the top tower tilt, start to twist and lean." [p. 4] North Tower:

"I was assisting in pulling more people out from debris, when I heard the second tower explode." [p. 5]

(98) Scott, Howie (9110365)

South Tower:

"We just made our turn to go in towards the lobby of tower two. For whatever reason, I just happened to look up and saw the whole thing coming down, pancaking down, and the explosion, blowing out about halfway up." [p. 6]

(99) Sheehey, Edward (9110226)

South Tower:

"We were probably just at West Street, just at the street. Then the south tower — we heard an explosion, looked up, and the building started to collapse." [p. 3]

(100) Simon, William (9110115)

North Tower:

"Then we hear a rumble, and we see a blast of smoke and a slight ball of flame coming out from the silhouette of the building, and we watched the antenna collapse into the building." [p. 9]

(101) Skillington, Richard (9110279)

North Tower:

"I looked up. I saw a helicopter, and I was trying to figure out what he was doing. Then the second tower exploded and started coming down." [p. 4]

(102) Smiouskas, Richard (9110210)

South Tower:

"All of a sudden there was this groaning sound like a roar, grrrr. The ground started to shake....It looked like an earthquake. The ground was shaking. I fell to the floor. My camera bag opened up. The cameras went

skidding across the floor. The windows started exploding in. [pp. 8-9]...I didn't know exactly what was going on outside. I'm thinking maybe the building snapped in half. I'm thinking maybe a bomb blew up. I'm thinking it could have been a nuclear." [p. 9]

(103) Spina, Thomas (9110445)

South Tower:

"I don't know what time later a loud rumble — it sounded like an explosion. We thought it was a bomb... and number two tower comes down..." [p. 9]

(104) Steffens, Mark (9110003)

South Tower:

"We got to maybe one block north of where the Battery Tunnel exits onto West Street there, and then, boom, a massive explosion. Right in front of us we saw what looked like a fireball and smoke. It was rolling this way." [p. 5]

North Tower:

"Then there was another it sounded like an explosion and heavy white powder, papers, flying everywhere." [pp. 6-7]

(105) Sudnik, John (9110198)

South Tower:

"The best I can remember, we were just operating there, trying to help out and do the best we could. Then we heard a loud explosion or what sounded like a loud explosion and looked up and I saw tower two start coming down."

(106) Sweeney, Frank (9110113)

South Tower:

"I bent over to pick up the hose, and I hear what sounded like firecrackers and a low rumble. I look up, and the south tower — I could see the top part of the siding overlapping the bottom side of the siding...I ran..." [p. 9]

(107) Swithers, Jay (9110172)

South Tower:

"I took a quick glance at the building and while I didn't see it falling, I saw a large section of it blasting out, which led me to believe it was just an explosion. I thought it was a secondary device, but I knew that we had to go. [p. 5]

...So I assumed that the vehicle had not been in the - what I thought was an explosion at the time, but was the first collapse." [p. 9]

(108) Timothy, David (9110156)

North Tower:

“The next thing I knew, you started hearing more explosions. I guess this is when the second tower started coming down.” [p. 12]

(109) Trojanowski, Stanley (9110292)

South Tower:

“After the collapse of number Two World Trade Center, which I actually thought was a bomb that went off because the north tower was blocking my view, debris and everything started falling, people were running... [p. 3]

...I made my way underneath the scaffolding again and just tried to outlast the collapse, which I thought was just another bomb going off.” [p. 4]

(110) Turi, Albert (9110142)

South Tower:

“The next thing I heard was Pete say what the fuck is this? And as my eyes traveled up the building, and I was looking at the south tower, somewhere about half-way up, my initial reaction was there was a secondary explosion, and the entire floor area, a ring right around the building blew out. I later realized that the building had started to collapse already and this was the air being compressed and that is the floor that let go.” [p. 14]

(111) Turilli, Thomas (9110501)

South Tower: [This appears to be at, or just before, the collapse of the South Tower. They are in the North Tower and have just sent some men up in the elevator.]

“The door closed, they went up, and it just seemed a couple seconds and all of a sudden you just heard like it almost actually that day sounded like bombs going off, like boom, boom, boom, like seven or eight, and then just a huge wind...” [p. 4]

[They get down the stairs.] “At that point we were kind of standing on the street and I looked to my left and actually I noticed the tower was down. I didn’t even know what it was when we were in there. It just seemed like a huge explosion.” [p. 6]

(112) Vallebuona, Thomas (9110418)

South Tower:

“...I heard ‘boom’, an exploding sound, a real loud bang. I looked up, and I could see the Trade Center starting to come down, the south tower, which I guess I was about a block away from. [p. 5] North Tower: And ‘ba-boom’ again, the same sound, the same noise, the same shuddering, shrilling noise of the metal falling as it cascades down.” [p. 9]

(113) Viola, Stephen (9110439)

South Tower: [Collapse experienced from inside the North Tower]

“Our guy went in with 13 truck, and he was coming down with the guy from 13 truck to bring the elevator to us, and when he was either going up or coming down the elevator, that’s when the south tower collapsed, and it sounded like a bunch of explosions. You heard like loud booms, but I guess it was all just stuff coming down...” [p. 3]

(114) Wall, William (9110285)

North Tower:

“At that time we heard an explosion. We looked up and the building was coming down right on top of us...” [p. 9]

(115) Walsh, James (9110459)

North Tower:

“The building didn’t fall the way you would think tall buildings would fall. Pretty much it looked like it imploded on itself.” [p. 10]

(116) Walsh, William (9110442)

North Tower:

“I just remembered seeing two floors of heavy fire from the north side of World Trade Center one and the West side of World Trade Center one. All of a sudden things collapsed one Floor, and then within a second or so it just imploded.” [p. 28]

(117) Wells, Charles (9110163)

South Tower:

“We got to the point of being in between the Vista Hotel and the World Trade Center, at which point we heard a — we felt a loud — a very strong vibration, shaking, and a loud noise like a subway train coming through a station at speed, like a jet engine at full throttle. It was a roaring sound...” [p. 6]

[After digging himself out of the collapse rubble.] “Everybody’s heads were all popping up now. Everybody is digging out, so I ran into a couple of firefighters and I said, ‘Well, you know, what the hell happened?’ ‘Some kind of an explosion,’ he goes, and that’s what I thought it was...” [p. 8]

(118) Williams, Daniel (9110289)

South Tower:

“I turned my face back towards the buildings as — looking up at the south tower. It seemed like the one floor exploded, but in retrospect I’m thinking that was the compressive force of the building coming down that blew it out. I remember yelling, ‘Run.’” [p. 4]