
How 36 Reporters Brought Us the Twin Towers' Explosive Demolition on 9/11

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How 36 Reporters Brought Us the Twin Towers' Explosive Demolition on 9/11

Editor's Note: At the end of this article is an appendix that contains video clips of the 36 reporters who brought us the Twin Towers' explosive demolition on 9/11. Readers can go directly to each video clip by clicking on the reporter's name in the list that follows here. The reporters are, by network, ABC's [George Stephanopoulos](#) and [Cynthia McFadden](#); CBS's [Harold Dow](#), [Tom Flynn](#), [Mika Brzezinski](#), and [Carol Marin](#) (appearing on WCBS); NBC's [Pat Dawson](#) and [Anne Thompson](#); CNN's [Aaron Brown](#), [Rose Arce](#), [Patty Sabga](#), and [Alan Dodds Frank](#); Fox News' [David Lee Miller](#) and [Rick Leventhal](#); MSNBC's [Ashleigh Banfield](#) and [Rick Sanchez](#); CNBC's [John Bussey](#), [Ron Insana](#), and [Bob Pisani](#); WABC's [N.J. Burkett](#), [Michelle Charlesworth](#), [Nina Pineda](#), [Cheryl Fiandaca](#), and [Joe Torres](#); WCBS's [John Slattery](#), [Marcella Palmer](#), [Vince DeMentri](#), and [Marcia Kramer](#); WNBC's [Walter Perez](#); New York 1's [Kristen Shaughnessy](#), [Andrew Siff](#), [John Schiumo](#), and [Andrew Kirtzman](#); USA Today's [Jack Kelley](#); and two unidentified reporters ([1](#) and [2](#)) who attended a press conference with Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki.

The widely held belief that the Twin Towers collapsed as a result of the airplane impacts and the resulting fires is, unbeknownst to most people, a revisionist theory. Among individuals who witnessed the event firsthand, the more prevalent hypothesis was that the Twin Towers had been brought down by massive explosions.

This observation was first made 14 years ago in the article, "[118 Witnesses: The Firefighters' Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers](#)." A review of interviews conducted with 503 members of the New York Fire Department (FDNY) in the weeks and months after 9/11 revealed that 118 of them described witnessing what they interpreted that day to be explosions. Only 10 FDNY members were found describing the destruction in ways supportive of the fire-induced collapse hypothesis.

The interviews of fire marshal [John Coyle](#) and firefighter [Christopher Fenyo](#) explicitly support this finding. Coyle remarked in his interview, "I thought it was exploding, actually. That's what I thought for hours afterwards. . . . Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up." Similarly, Fenyo recalled in his interview, "At that point, a debate began to rage [about whether to continue rescue operations in the other, still-standing tower] because the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges."

News reporters constitute another group of individuals who witnessed the event firsthand and whose accounts were publicly documented. While many people have seen a smattering of news clips on the internet in which reporters describe explosions, there has never been, as far as we know, a systematic attempt to collect these news clips and analyze them.

We decided to take on this task for two reasons. First, we wanted to know just how prevalent the explosion hypothesis was among reporters. Second, anticipating that this would be the more prevalent hypothesis, we wanted to determine exactly how it was supplanted by the hypothesis of fire-induced collapse.

In this article, we present our findings related to the first question. In a subsequent article, we will examine how the hypothesis of fire-induced collapse so quickly supplanted the originally dominant explosion hypothesis.

Television Coverage Compiled

To determine how prevalent the explosion hypothesis was among reporters, we set out to review as much continuous news coverage as we could find from the major television networks, cable news channels, and local network affiliates covering the events in New York.

Through internet searches, we found continuous news coverage from 11 different television networks, cable news channels, and local network affiliates. These included the networks ABC, CBS, and NBC; cable news channels CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, and CNBC; and local network affiliates WABC, WCBS, and WNBC. We also incorporated coverage from New York One (NY1), a New York-based cable news channel owned by Time Warner (now Spectrum), which we grouped with the local network affiliates into a local channel category.

Unfortunately, we were not able to find coverage spanning most of the day for every channel. Thus, while the collection of news coverage we compiled is extensive, it is not comprehensive. To fill in the gaps where possible, we included excerpts of coverage that aired later in the day if we found that coverage to be relevant. We also included one excerpt from USA Today’s coverage that we found to be relevant and three excerpts from an afternoon press conference with Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor George Pataki that aired on almost every channel. In general, the times at which these excerpts aired are unknown, though in some cases we were able to identify an approximate time.

The news coverage we compiled and reviewed totaled approximately 70 hours.

Table 1: Television Coverage Compiled

<i>Networks</i>	
ABC	3:50 AM to 6:07 PM
CBS	3:52 AM to 12:00 PM + one excerpt at ~12:15 PM
NBC	3:51 AM to 6:30 PM
<i>Cable News Channels</i>	
CNN	3:32 AM to 12:00 AM (midnight)
Fox News	3:51 AM to 5:00 PM
MSNBC	3:52 AM to 1:42 PM
CNBC	3:50 AM to ~4:16 PM
<i>Local Channels</i>	
WABC	3:50 AM to 10:50 AM + nine excerpts from various times
WCBS	3:50 AM to 11:33 PM, 11:40 AM to 12:04 PM + six excerpts from various times
WNBC	3:50 AM to 10:30 AM (switches permanently to NBC network at 10:30 AM)
NY1	3:50 AM to 11:20 AM

Note: We invite anyone who has portions of the television coverage we were not able to find to send them to us at [This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.](#) We will incorporate anything we receive and update this article accordingly. For anyone who wishes to replicate our work, the entire collection of footage can be downloaded [here](#).

Criteria for Defining ‘Explosion’ Versus ‘Non-Explosion’ Reporters

We sought to answer one main question in our review of the news coverage: How many reporters

described the occurrence of explosions — both the raw number of reporters and as a percentage of all reporters who covered the Twin Towers’ destruction — and what was the nature of their reporting? To answer this question, we needed to establish clear criteria for identifying what we will call “explosion reporters” and “non-explosion reporters.”

We should make clear that this article addresses the statements of reporters only and does not address the statements of anchors, except in the case of one anchor (CNN's Aaron Brown) who had a direct view of the Twin Towers. In our next article, we will address statements made by anchors, who were also interpreting the Twin Towers' destruction but without having witnessed it firsthand.

Because the airplane impacts were often referred to as explosions, we were careful to exclude any instances where it was not absolutely clear that the reporter was referring only to the destruction of the Twin Towers.

As we studied the news coverage and began to recognize patterns in how the Twin Towers’ destruction was reported, we developed three separate categories of reporting that would classify someone as an “explosion reporter”: (1) eyewitness reporting, (2) narrative reporting, and (3) source-based reporting. Below we provide definitions of each.

Eyewitness Reporting

“Eyewitness reporting” is when a reporter is an eyewitness with a direct view of or in close proximity to the destruction of one or both of the Twin Towers and perceives an explosion or explosions in conjunction with the destruction — or perceives one or both of the towers as exploding, blowing up, blowing, or erupting. Although we usually excluded the word “boom,” which could apply either to an explosion or to a collapse, we included it in one case because the totality of what the reporter (Nina Pineda) described indicated that she viewed the event as being explosion-based.

We did not include reporters who described only a “shaking” or “trembling” of the ground. The perception of the ground shaking was widespread and constitutes important eyewitness evidence, but it does not necessarily reveal much about how the reporter interpreted what she or he was witnessing. Among reporters who mentioned demolition, we excluded the ones who merely compared the destruction to a demolition whenever it was clear that the reporter believed it to be a collapse caused by structural failure. We also excluded reporters who used the word “implode” or “implosion” whenever it was clear that the reporter used it to describe the building collapsing in on itself, as opposed to a demolition.

Here is an example of eyewitness reporting:

David Lee Miller, Fox News, 10:01 AM: *“Suddenly, while talking to an officer who was questioning me about my press credentials, we heard a very loud blast, an explosion. We looked up, and the building literally began to collapse before us. . . . Not clear now is why this explosion took place. Was it because of the planes that, uh, two planes, dual attacks this morning, or was there some other attack, which is — there has been talk of here on the street.”*

Narrative Reporting

“Narrative reporting” is when a reporter refers to the Twin Towers’ destruction as an explosion-based event when speaking of it in the course of his or her reporting. This could be a reporter who was an eyewitness to the destruction or a reporter who otherwise understood the destruction to be

an explosion-based event.

The main distinction between eyewitness reporting and narrative reporting is that eyewitness reporting involves an eyewitness describing his or her direct perceptions, often uttering them spontaneously, while narrative reporting involves interpretation and/or outside influence, either of which inform the reporter's developing narrative of what took place. (In several cases, reporters go from engaging in eyewitness reporting around the time of the destruction to engaging in narrative reporting later on, with their direct perceptions informing their developing narrative).

This distinction is not meant to imply that one type of reporting is more valuable or reliable than another. In this analysis, eyewitness reporting tells us about what reporters perceived and immediately interpreted during, or shortly after, the event. It thus gives us more information about the actual event. Narrative reporting, by contrast, tells us how reporters interpreted the event after having more time to process their perceptions and to synthesize additional information from other sources. Narrative reporting thus tells us about the collective narrative that was developing among reporters covering the event.

Here is an example of narrative reporting:

George Stephanopoulos, ABC, 12:27 PM: *"Well, Peter, I'm going to give you kind of a pool report from several of our correspondents down here of basically what happened down here in downtown New York between 9:45 and 10:45 when the two explosions and the collapse of the World Trade Center happened. At the time, I was actually in the subway heading towards the World Trade Center right around Franklin Street. And after the first explosion the subway station started to fill with smoke. The subway cars started to fill with smoke, and the subways actually stopped. They then diverted us around the World Trade Center to Park Place, which is one stop beyond the World Trade Center. We got to that train station at around 10:35, Peter, and it was a scene unlike I've ever seen before in my entire life."*

Source-based Reporting

"Source-based reporting" is when a reporter reports on the possible use of explosives based on information from government officials who said they suspected that explosives were used to bring down the Twin Towers.

Source-based reporting is similar to narrative reporting in that it involves outside influence. The main distinction is that source-based reporting is based on information from government sources. Information from government sources inherently indicates how government agencies were interpreting the event and is sometimes given extra weight by reporters and viewers.

Here is an example of source-based reporting:

Pat Dawson, NBC, 11:55 AM: *"Just moments ago I spoke to the Chief of Safety for the New York City Fire Department . . . [He] told me that shortly after 9 o'clock he had roughly 10 alarms, roughly 200 men in the building trying to effect rescues of some of those civilians who were in there, and that basically he received word of a possibility of a secondary device — that is, another bomb going off. He tried to get his men out as quickly as he could, but he said that there was another explosion which took place. And then an hour after the first hit here, the first crash that took place, he said there was another explosion that took place in one of the towers here. So obviously, according to his theory, he thinks that there were actually devices that were planted in the building. . . . But the*

bottom line is that, according to the Chief of Safety of the New York City Fire Department, he says that he probably lost a great many men in those secondary explosions. And he said that there were literally hundreds if not thousands of people in those two towers when the explosions took place.”

Non-Explosion Reporters

The main criterion we developed for classifying someone as a “non-explosion reporter” was that she or he reported on the destruction of one or both of the Twin Towers and did not engage in any of the types of explosion reporting defined above. To qualify as a non-explosion reporter, it was not necessary for the reporter to explicitly articulate the fire-induced collapse hypothesis. The mere absence of explosion reporting was enough to classify someone as a non-explosion reporter.

The challenge here lay not in identifying the absence of explosion reporting but in defining what constituted “reporting on the destruction.” In the end, we decided this should mean that the reporter had to *describe the event of the destruction* and not simply mention it in passing.

We should note that a reporter’s use of the word “collapse” did not necessarily qualify that person as a non-explosion reporter. Many explosion reporters described the occurrence of an explosion followed by collapse and they used the word “collapse” in their reporting (David Lee Miller, quoted above, is a prime example). Thus, use of the word “collapse” is not incompatible with being an explosion reporter and did not qualify someone as a non-explosion reporter.

Also, if a reporter made a statement that qualified him or her as an explosion reporter and then subsequently made a statement explicitly supporting the fire-induced collapse hypothesis (which is the case for WABC’s Joe Torres), we classified this reporter as an explosion reporter because he or she engaged in some explosion reporting at some point during the day. In this analysis, being classified as an “explosion reporter” does not imply a permanent stance. Rather, it just means that *at some point in the day* he or she reported the occurrence of explosions or the possible use of explosives in relation to the Twin Towers’ destruction.

Before we move on to the next section, it is important to note that because non-explosion reporters had to *describe the event of the destruction* and not simply mention it in passing, the only way to make a valid numerical comparison between explosion reporters and non-explosion reporters is to include only those who engaged in eyewitness reporting. According to the criteria we developed, explosion reporters who engaged in narrative reporting were not describing the event of the destruction but rather were referring to it as an explosion-based event in the course of their reporting, i.e., in passing. A comparable classification does not exist for non-explosion reporters, because we excluded those who only mentioned the event in passing (most commonly using the word “collapse”).

Numerical Analysis of ‘Explosion’ and ‘Non-Explosion’ Reporters

In total, we identified 36 explosion reporters and four non-explosion reporters in the approximately 70 hours of news coverage we reviewed. The 36 explosion reporters and their statements are listed in Appendix A. The four non-explosion reporters and their statements are listed in Appendix B. In addition, there were three borderline cases that we determined could not be clearly classified as either explosion or non-explosion reporters. Those cases are listed in Appendix C.

Of the 36 explosion reporters, 21 of them engaged in eyewitness reporting, 22 of them engaged in

narrative reporting, and three of them engaged in source-based reporting. Recalling our definitions from above, this means the following:

- 21 reporters witnessed what they perceived as an explosion or explosions during the destruction of the Twin Towers or they perceived the Twin Towers as exploding, blowing up, blowing, or erupting.
- 22 reporters (eight of whom also fall into the eyewitness reporting category) referred to the Twin Towers' destruction as an explosion or an explosion-based event when speaking of it in the course of their reporting.
- Three reporters (two of whom also fall into the narrative reporting category) reported on the possible use of explosives based on information from government officials who said they suspected that explosives were used to bring down the Twin Towers.
- Four reporters reported on the destruction of the Twin Towers and *did not* report explosions in any way (either having witnessed explosions, having interpreted the destruction as being an explosion-based event, or having been informed by government officials about the possible use of explosives).

In terms of the percentage of explosion and non-explosion reporters, 21 of the 25 reporters who directly witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers, or 84%, either perceived an explosion or explosions or they perceived the Twin Towers as exploding, blowing up, blowing, or erupting. In comparison, four of the 25 reporters who directly witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers, or 16%, did not report explosions in any way.

The tables below list each reporter and each instance of reporting according to the time at which each report was made.

Table 2A: Eyewitness Reporting by Explosion Reporters

<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Channel</i>	<i>Times of Reports</i>
Ashleigh Banfield	MSNBC	9:59 AM
Aaron Brown	CNN	9:59 AM, 10:02 AM
N.J. Burkett	WABC	9:59 AM
Walter Perez	WNBC	9:59 AM, 10:00 AM, 10:27 AM
Kristen Shaughnessy	NY1	9:59 AM
David Lee Miller	Fox News	10:01 AM, 10:32 AM
Harold Dow	CBS	10:05 AM
Rick Leventhal	Fox News	10:05 AM, 10:06 AM, 10:12 AM
Michelle Charlesworth	WABC	10:10 AM
Andrew Siff	NY1	10:12 AM
Nina Pineda	WABC	10:17 AM
Rose Arce	CNN	10:29 AM, 10:43 PM
Cheryl Fiandaca	WABC	10:38 AM, unknown time shortly after 10:38 AM
Patty Sabga	CNN	10:57 AM
Tom Flynn	CBS	11:03 AM
Mika Brzezinski	CBS	11:15 AM
John Bussey	CNBC	11:52 AM

Ron Insana	CNBC	12:41 PM, 1:08 PM
Anne Thompson	NBC	12:43 PM
Joe Torres	WABC	Unknown time
Marcella Palmer	WCBS	Unknown time

Table 2B: Narrative Reporting by Explosion Reporters

Lina Pineda	WABC	10:18 AM, 10:19 AM, unknown time
Cheryl Manduca	WABC	Unknown time shortly after 10:30 AM
Shleigh Banfield	MSNBC	10:34 AM, 10:35 AM, 1:33 PM, 1:26 PM, 1:27 PM
1st Unidentified Reporter	All Channels	12:43 PM (Giuliani and Patani press conference)
Marcia Kramer	All Channels	12:44 PM (Giuliani and Patani press conference)
2nd Unidentified Reporter	All Channels	12:54 PM (Giuliani and Patani press conference)

*These reporters also engaged in eyewitness reporting.

Table 2C: Source-based Reporting by Explosion Reporters

Reporter	Channel	Times of Reports
Pat Dawson*	NBC	11:55 AM
Rick Sanchez*	MSNBC	12:07 PM
Jack Kelley	JSA Today	Around 5:30 PM

*These reporters also engaged in narrative reporting.

Table 2D: Non-Explosion Reporters

Reporter	Network	Times of Reports
Don Dahler	ABC	10:00 AM
Bob Bazell	NBC	10:08 AM
John Zito	MSNBC	10:36 AM
Drew Millhon	ABC	11:09 AM

How Reporters Reported the Twin Towers' Destruction

The picture that unmistakably emerges is that the great majority of reporters who witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers either perceived an explosion or perceived the towers as exploding. This hypothesis of the Twin Towers' destruction then continued to be prevalent among reporters covering the event, who essentially viewed the destruction of the towers as an explosion-based attack subsequent to the airplane strikes. We learn from the source-based reporting that the same hypothesis was also held by officials in the FDNY, the New York Police Department (NYPD), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) — three of the most important agencies involved in the response to the attacks. In particular, with regard to the FBI, we are told the explosion hypothesis

was the agency's "working theory" as of late in the afternoon on 9/11.

Unlike members of the FDNY, most of whom provided their accounts during interviews conducted weeks or months after the event, it was the job of reporters to spontaneously communicate their perception and interpretation of events. Thus, when their reporting is compiled into one record, we are left with a rich and largely unfiltered collective account of what took place. Considered alongside the FDNY oral histories, these reporters' statements, in our view, constitute strong corroborating evidence that explosives were used to destroy the Twin Towers.

Regarding the four non-explosion reporters, in addition to the fact that there are so few of them, we find that their individual accounts add little support to the fire-induced collapse hypothesis.

Two of the reporters were quite far away from the Twin Towers at the time of their destruction relative to most of the explosion reporters: Drew Millhon was "about 10 to 12 blocks north of the World Trade Center," at the intersection of Varick Street and Canal Street, while Bob Bazell was at St. Vincent's hospital on West 12th Street, approximately two miles from the World Trade Center. Meanwhile, Don Dahler, the only reporter who explicitly articulated the fire-induced collapse hypothesis, nonetheless likened the South Tower's destruction to a controlled demolition, saying: "The entire building has just collapsed as if a demolition team set off — when you see the old demolitions of these old buildings." The fourth non-explosion reporter, John Zito, was quite close to the South Tower when it came down. He did not describe an explosion, but he also did not attribute the destruction to a fire-induced collapse. It is worth noting that Ron Insana, whom Zito was with, vividly described seeing the building "exploding" and "blowing" and hearing a "noise associated with an implosion."

Conclusion

Returning to the first question posed at the top of this article, we conclude that the hypothesis of explosions bringing down the Twin Towers was not only prevalent among reporters but was, in fact, the dominant hypothesis.

Furthermore, the 21 instances of eyewitness reporting, all of which contain spontaneous descriptions of the phenomena the reporters witnessed, strongly corroborate the overwhelming [scientific evidence](#) that explosives were used to destroy the Twin Towers.

In a subsequent article, we will examine how the hypothesis of fire-induced collapse so quickly supplanted the originally dominant explosion hypothesis.

Appendix A: Statements by 36 Explosion Reporters

These statements are organized by channel in the same order as presented in Table 1. Within each channel, they are organized chronologically based on the time of the first noted statement by each reporter. A video containing all statements by all 36 explosion reporters is available [here](#).

1. George Stephanopoulos, ABC

12:27 PM, Narrative Reporting

"Well, Peter, I'm going to give you kind of a pool report from several of our correspondents down

here of basically what happened down here in downtown New York between 9:45 and 10:45 when the two explosions and the collapse of the World Trade Center happened. At the time, I was actually in the subway heading towards the World Trade Center, right around Franklin Street. And after the first explosion the subway station started to fill with smoke. The subway cars started to fill with smoke, and the subways actually stopped. They then diverted us around the World Trade Center to Park Place, which is one stop beyond the World Trade Center. We got to that train station at around 10:35, Peter, and it was a scene unlike I've ever seen before in my entire life. As we tried to get out of the subway station and walk up into the street, it was pitch black, midnight black, snowing soot all down through downtown Manhattan. This was about two blocks from the World Trade Center. You couldn't see a foot in front of your face at that time."

2. Cynthia McFadden, ABC

5:56 PM, Narrative Reporting

"We've been told that all victims now who are taken out of the blast site are going to be taken here first. . . . Part of the problem initially was that when the first rescue workers went in — and we have talked to some of them, some of the second wave of rescue workers — the first wave of rescue workers who went in were trapped, many of them killed by the second blast. . . . There have been hundreds of people at area hospitals, as you note. But they don't believe that anywhere near the full weight of this has yet been uncovered, that there are hundreds and thousands of people who have been injured in this blast, and that's the people that they expect to bring here."

3. Harold Dow, CBS

10:05 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

"Yes, I arrived on the scene about an hour and a half ago. Believe it or not, there was another major explosion. The building itself, literally the top of it came down, sending smoke and debris everywhere. I tried to run to get away from all of the debris. A number of other people here are trapped in the subway here in a shoe store, trying to get away from most of the debris. It's just an incredible sight."

4. Tom Flynn, CBS

11:03, Eyewitness Reporting

"At that time, maybe 45 minutes into the taping that we were doing, which was maybe a half hour after, there was — it was an explosion. It was way up where the fire was. And the whole building at that point bellied out in flames, and everybody ran."

5. Mika Brzezinski, CBS

11:15 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

"Dan, we're three blocks from the scene and we saw it all after the first two hits. We saw the explosion and also the collapse of the tower."

6. Pat Dawson, NBC

11:55 AM, Source-based Reporting

“Just moments ago I spoke to the Chief of Safety for the New York City Fire Department, who was obviously one of the first people here on the scene after those two planes were crashed into the side — we assume — of the World Trade Center towers, which used to be behind me over there. Chief Albert Turi told me that he was here just literally 10 or 15 minutes after the events that took place this morning, that is, the first crash. . . . [He] told me that shortly after 9 o’clock he had roughly 10 alarms, roughly 200 men in the building trying to effect rescues of some of those civilians who were in there, and that basically he received word of a possibility of a secondary device — that is, another bomb going off. He tried to get his men out as quickly as he could, but he said that there was another explosion which took place. And then an hour after the first hit here, the first crash that took place, he said there was another explosion that took place in one of the towers here. So obviously, according to his theory, he thinks that there were actually devices that were planted in the building. One of the secondary devices he thinks, that took place after the initial impact, he thinks may have been on the plane that crashed into one of the towers. The second device he thinks, he speculates, was probably planted in the building. So that’s what we have been told by Albert Turi, who is the Chief of Safety for the New York City Fire Department. He told me that just moments ago. . . . But the bottom line is that, according to the Chief of Safety of the New York City Fire Department, he says that he probably lost a great many men in those secondary explosions. And he said that there were literally hundreds if not thousands of people in those two towers when the explosions took place.”

3:02 PM, Narrative Reporting

Dawson asks a police officer: *“How would you describe your efforts to organize to the rescue effort now, given that we saw a sequence of events this morning? A sequence of crashes, then explosions, and then the collapses.”*

7. Anne Thompson, NBC

12:43 PM, Eyewitness Reporting

“And I was walking on Broadway at Fulton, and suddenly we heard an explosion. It was the first tower coming down. And down Broadway you could just see this wall of debris flying at us. . . . It looked like a war zone. Debris, dust ankle deep, cars on fire, cars turned askew in the explosion. . . . Then at about 10:30 it looked like everything was all clear. I started to walk out. I walked down Broadway towards Canal. And we heard the second explosion. . . . At that point a fireman came into the building and said we all had to stay in one place. He then told us all to get out of the building because they felt if there was a third explosion that this building would be in danger.”

8. Aaron Brown, CNN

Note: Although Aaron Brown is a news anchor, we include him among the explosion reporters because he was positioned outside and witnessed the events directly, and his direct perception played a major role in his evolving interpretation of the event.

9:59 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“Wow! Jamie. Jamie, I need you to stop for a second. There has just been a huge explosion. We

can see a billowing smoke rising. And I can't — I'll tell you that I can't see that second tower. But there was a cascade of sparks and fire and now this...it looks almost like a mushroom cloud, explosion, this huge, billowing smoke in the second tower. This was the second of the two towers hit. And I, you know, I cannot see behind that smoke obviously, as you can't either. The first tower in front has not changed. And we see this extraordinarily (sic) and frightening scene behind us of this second tower now just encased in smoke. What is behind it...I cannot tell you. But just look at that. That is about as frightening a scene as you will ever see."

10:02 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

"Again, there has been a second explosion here in Manhattan at the Trade Center. We are getting reports that a part of the tower, the second tower, the one a bit further to the south of us, has collapsed. We are checking on that. . . . What we can tell you is that just in the last several minutes here — two or three minutes — a second or third, I guess, technically, extraordinary event has happened here in lower Manhattan. You can see this extraordinary plume of smoke that is, or was at least, the second tower of the World Trade Center."

9. Rose Arce, CNN

10:29 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

"I'm about a block away. And there were several people that were hanging out the windows right below where the plane crashed, when suddenly you saw the top of the building start to shake, and people began leaping from the windows in the north side of the building. You saw two people at first plummet and then a third one, and then the entire top of the building just blew up, and splinters of debris are falling on the street."

10:50 AM, Narrative Reporting

"It looks like a large chunk of that debris has hit a building very close by, about two blocks away next to an elementary school, causing another explosion. . . . So as people are coming up the street running from the scene of this new explosion you can see them slipping on the ash and literally having to drag each other up the street."

Note: We include Rose Arce's statement at 10:50 AM as narrative reporting because it indicates that she initially perceived and then continued to interpret the destruction of the Twin Towers as explosions.

12:26 PM, Narrative Reporting

"As you walk through the ash you can see debris from inside the World Trade Center itself, a very eerie scene, pieces of paper from people's desks, office supplies many, many blocks from the site the actual explosion where they now are fearing that there may be yet another explosion because of this potential gas leak."

10:43 PM, Eyewitness Reporting

"People were rushing to the windows. They were taking clothes — one thing looked like a blanket that they were waving — and then suddenly there was another, an explosion, and you saw folks start to jump out the front window of the building and plunge. I saw at least six people do this. Folks were

pushing each other. Some people were screaming for help and then just falling out.”

10. Patty Sabga, CNN

10:57 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“About an hour ago I was on the corner of Broadway and Park Place — that’s about a thousand yards from the World Trade Center — when the first tower collapsed. It was a massive explosion. At the time the police were trying desperately to evacuate people from the area. When that explosion occurred it was like a scene out of a horror film.”

10:59 AM, Narrative Reporting

“The scene was like a ghost town in the Financial District. Very eerie. You saw people being wheeled on gurneys away from the site of the explosion. . . . Now, at the time I was back on the corner again of Broadway and Park Place. At that time, the police started running toward us telling everybody to move who was left on the street. I looked up and that’s when I heard the — [coughs] pardon me — that’s when I heard the explosion. That’s when the second tower came down.”

11. Alan Dodds Frank, CNN

11:07 AM, Narrative Reporting

“Aaron, just two or three minutes ago there was yet another collapse or explosion. . . . But at a quarter to 11:00 there was another collapse or explosion following the 10:30 collapse of the second Tower. And a firefighter who rushed by us estimated that 50 stories went down. The street filled with smoke. It was like a forest fire roaring down a canyon.”

Note: We include Alan Dodds Frank’s statement at 11:07 AM as narrative reporting because it indicates that he interpreted the destruction of the Twin Towers as possibly being an explosion-based event.

12. David Lee Miller, Fox News

10:01 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“Jon, the scene is horrific. One of the two towers literally collapsed. I was making my way to the foot of the World Trade Center. Suddenly, while talking to an officer who was questioning me about my press credentials, we heard a very loud blast, an explosion. We looked up, and the building literally began to collapse before us. . . . And I am now standing in a black cloud of smoke. . . . I’m on a pay phone on the street right now and I literally cannot see more than quarter-block away. That’s how thick the smoke is. I’m on Murray Street and West Broadway for those who know Lower Manhattan. Not clear now is why this explosion took place. Was it because of the planes that, uh, two planes, dual attacks this morning, or was there some other attack which is — there has been talk of here on the street.”

10:32 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“Jon, just seconds ago there was a huge explosion, and it appears right now the second World

Trade tower has just collapsed.”

13. Rick Leventhal, Fox News

10:05 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

He asks a police officer: *“Do you know if it was an explosion or if it was a building collapse?”*

Then he asks: *“How many people would you say were on the ground when the building exploded or collapsed?”*

10:06 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“When the building did collapse — or whatever it was that happened — it was a huge explosion, a huge rumbling cloud of smoke and fire came a cross Church Street and started billowing this way. . . The FBI is here, as you can see. They had roped this area off. They were taking photographs and securing this area just prior to that huge explosion that we all heard and felt.”

10:12 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“And we were standing here when there was some sort of collapse or explosion and everyone started running in this direction.”

14. Ashleigh Banfield, MSNBC

9:59 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

Chris Jansing (news anchor): *“It does appear that there has been a third explosion in the area of the World Trade Center. There was first one plane that hit one of the Twin Towers. A second plane, each about one hour ago. And now a third explosion. Ashleigh Banfield is in Manhattan. Ashleigh, did you see or hear anything just moments ago?”*

Ashleigh Banfield: *“God. Oh my god, Chris, this is incredible. I’m looking right at it.”*

Jansing: *“What are you seeing, Ashleigh?”*

Banfield: *“Well, I saw the explosion, for one.”*

Jansing: *“Could you feel it?”*

Banfield: *“I can smell it. Everyone around screamed at the time it happened. It’s just unbelievable. I can’t see that it’s another building. It looks almost in the same position as the second bomb, or second explosion. It’s unbelievable.”*

Jansing: *“What’s the scene around you? What are people doing?”*

Banfield: *“Most people, as I said earlier, are absolutely aghast.”*

Jansing: *“Are they running?”*

Banfield: *"No one's running. No, I'm not close enough at this point to be seeing that. I wouldn't be showered with debris from my position here. I'm too far north of it. But I have a bird's eye view of what's happening. The route that I'm on is the emergency route right now, so all of the emergency vehicles are streaming past us. But as I was looking up I saw the entire explosion. It looked exactly like the first two. Unbelievable. And everyone who watched it around me screamed. It was just a chorus of "oh my gods" from everyone standing around. I'm walking, so what I'm hearing are a lot of people whose cars are parked, who've got their radios tuned to local news stations and trying to catch up on just exactly what's happening. But now I'm seeing people running. But I really don't think they're running from the area. We're too far away to be in the direct line of any debris. But we certainly had the most perfect vantage point for that explosion. It was unbelievable. And the smoke now is so thick. It's just incredible."*

10:54 AM, Narrative Reporting

"Well, we just heard another explosion go off a couple minutes ago, Chris, and saw a bunch more people sort of running this way. A woman on her bike was screaming as it went off. And there was a New York City officer who was plain-clothed walking by with a radio. I tried to stop him to ask what happened. And all he said was 'car bomb, car bomb.' And then I couldn't ask him for any information. He said, 'I have no time for this.' We haven't seen anything since. But the cloud of smoke is still extremely thick right around the direct vicinity of the World Trade Center. I am now about, I'd say — what do you say, we're about five or 10 blocks north of it now? About five or 10 blocks north of it, and just unbelievably the sun has come out. There's blue sky above us. We started with sheer blackness. When that cloud of debris and of smoke came out, when the explosion happened, we couldn't see anything, we couldn't breathe. We tried to make our way a few blocks up and we've made contact with some other NBC crew here."

10:55 AM, Narrative Reporting

"It's terrifying here, Chris. When that last bomb — or when that last collapse happened, and the cloud came out, it was like something out of Hollywood. . . . It's really eerie seeing the people who got caught in that blast, because everyone looks like a ghost."

1:35 PM, Narrative Reporting

"What did you see in the epicenter when you came out of that explosion?"

1:36 PM, Narrative Reporting

"At the very start of the day when this happened, we were right in the epicenter where the explosion was. Right now I'm covered in the debris and the dust from the explosion itself. I was hit with a cloud of debris and smoke."

1:37 PM, Narrative Reporting

"That is 7 World Trade Center. Apparently on the south side, that's the side that's not facing us, about halfway way up it's still burning pretty badly, because it was rocked with a lot of the explosion from the force of the Twin World Trade Centers, when they came down. A large concern is what's going to happen with that brown building now, which is why we keep getting moved further and further north. You can see people down on the street moving towards us. Even media who originally were allowed to have more sort of free rein to report this story, we're being pushed out as well as,

because there was some concern that there might be additional explosions, possibly other bombs.”

15. Rick Sanchez, MSNBC

10:52 AM, Narrative Reporting

“You have to understand that when this first happened, they certainly didn’t imagine that there would be second or tertiary explosions. So they parked some of their vehicles in those areas. And many of those vehicles — people in those vehicles have lost their lives.”

11:26 AM, Narrative Reporting

“Well, we’ve been told, as matter of fact moments ago, to try and get out of this area, because they’re moving everyone out. And the fear is, of course, that there are gas leaks, natural gas in this area that either fed into or out of the buildings that have exploded. And now those lines are open and may rupture.”

12:07 PM, Source-based Reporting

“Well, I’m in that area, if you’re familiar with this area of where West Broadway and Hudson come together, right at Chambers. That would put us about a block and a half away from the site of where the explosion was. That area has just been evacuated because police have found what they describe as a suspicious device. They fear that it might be something that could lead to another explosion. Obviously, there’s a real sense of caution here on the part of police. I spoke with some police officials moments ago, Chris. And they told me that they have reason to believe that one of the explosions at the World Trade Center — aside from the ones that may have been caused by the impact of the plane with the building — may have been caused by a van that was parked in the building that may have had some type of explosive device in it. So their fear is that there may have been explosive devices planted either in the building or in the adjacent area. And that’s why they’re being so cautious in this vicinity right now.”

12:09 PM, Narrative Reporting

“This is why it’s so difficult for them in this area where we are. Imagine, they came here originally to deal with a crisis. They set up some command centers, and they had many of their chiefs and many of their supervisors in the area of the building. The second and third explosions literally have wreaked havoc on those field forces and those command centers. So they’ve had to back up. And now they’re trying to see how they can approach it again.”

16. John Bussey, CNBC Contributor, Wall Street Journal Reporter

11:52 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“I was getting ready to talk with Haines [inaudible], and the fire was raging in both buildings. I looked up at the south building, the second World Trade Center to be hit, and explosions were coming down the building. It looked as if charges had been set on each floor and they were in succession going off. Now, this is probably not what was happening. It just looked that way to me. The building just blew out floor by floor, and it probably had something to do with the structural damage that was done by the planes hitting it. When I saw the floor-by-floor explosions happening, I dove out of the office where I was because the windows looked directly over the World Trade Center. We are in the

World Financial Center directly across West Street from the two Trade Centers. By the time I came up from under a desk where I sought shelter, the entire floor, the entire room where I was completely dense with cement and smoke. You could not see.”

Note: Here Bussey has started to interpret the phenomena he witnessed as the building simply collapsing. However, it is clear from this and from his other accounts of the event ([Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)) that his initial interpretation was that explosives were destroying the building.

11:55 AM, Narrative Reporting

“We were so close to the building that you could feel it hitting your shoulder [as it rained down](#). But we were on the safe side of the building — much, much safer than where the firefighters were on the other side of the building, exposed directly to the explosion.”

17. Ron Insana, CNBC

12:41 PM, Eyewitness Reporting

“Well, I was heading down after we had learned of it, about 9:00 or 8:55 this morning, I had called in to see if we should go down and aid the coverage. And I was on my way down. We got fairly close to the building, and I ran into a camera man from MSNBC and we were trying to get across town past the World Trade Center to the Westside Highway, which is on the lower southwest corner of Manhattan to hook up with our colleagues from CNBC. And as we were going across one of the restricted zones, the building started to explode, I guess the only way I could describe it. It was hard to tell if it was an actual explosion, but the building began to come down. . . . We heard, we heard — I wouldn’t call it an explosion. We did notice that the building began to blow at the top, and that material began to come down. . . . And as we turned to run, material just began to fall. And like that scene in Independence Day, where wind was just whipping down the street in the wake of an explosion, that’s exactly what we experienced. It went down the street, curved around corners, and blew with a fair degree of intensity, again, Tyler, until the sky was completely black.”

1:08 PM, Eyewitness Reporting (appearing on NBC)

“As we were moving towards the building we saw the top begin to blow out in a plume of smoke. And we heard the noise associated with an implosion.”

18. Bob Pisani, CNBC

2:42 PM, Narrative Reporting

“And the real panic, I think in my mind, occurred, Maria, I was outside when you were when the second explosion occurred, because so many people had been attracted to what was going on. The explosion threw debris on top of a lot of people. That was when the real panic began.”

19. N.J. Burkett, WABC

9:59 AM (unknown air time), Eyewitness Reporting

“And you can see the two towers — a huge explosion now raining debris on all of us! We better get

out of the way!”

20. Michelle Charlesworth, WABC

10:10 AM, Eyewitness and Narrative Reporting

“I can only hope that people got out of the area on the sidewalks below the South Tower before it came tumbling down. But it literally exploded and came down as though it had been hit. Plumes of smoke moving out into the harbor. . . . To give you some idea of where I am, I’m approximately 20, 30 blocks from where this latest explosion just happened.”

21. Nina Pineda, WABC

10:17 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

Bill Ritter: *“Nina, I want you to describe one more time what it felt like when that tower collapsed. What did it feel like to you on the ground there?”*

Nina Pineda: *“We were standing probably about three blocks away advancing toward the scene to try and gather some photos and some videotape. And it felt like the entire ground shook. It felt like what it feels like to be in an earthquake. The ground was shaking followed by plumes and plumes of overwhelming smoke and flying debris, ash, and pieces of the building. As the ground was shaking . . .”*

Lori Stokes: *“Was there sound?”*

Pineda: *“There was a tremendous booming sound, and then it just felt like a rumbling. But it didn’t sound like an explosion. It sounded like a loud rumbling. And then the next thing we saw were the streets — the way the streets looked were just overcome by smoke, just plumes and plumes of smoke like a bomb had gone off, coming up the street as people were racing to get in front of these clouds of smoke, and not doing too good of a job.”*

10:18 AM, Narrative Reporting

“And what were doing when the explosion happened was shooting pieces of the plane. There are pieces of the plane on Church Street.”

10:19 AM, Narrative Reporting

“Seconds before the explosion happened there was another kind of a renewed interest in really getting people away. Because, of course, out of curiosity everyone’s trying to get pictures of the World Trade Center on fire. They started screaming, ‘Get back! Get back! There’s another explosion happening.’ I guess they were being warned on their radios that the top was going to come down, because it was burning for the better part of half an hour. And they screamed to get people back. They started screaming, ‘Leave Manhattan if possible. Everybody leave Manhattan if possible.’”

Unknown time, Narrative Reporting

Pineda: *“The ladies that are with me were in the World Trade Center in the first building and*

escaped through the lobby where they report that they believe there was a bomb in the lobby.”

Michelle Scott (witness): *“And even the turnstile was burnt and it was sticking. And they just told us to run.”*

Igarlow Sweezer (witness): *“And we were coming out, we passed the lobby, there was no lobby. So I believe the bomb hit the lobby first, and a couple of seconds and the first plane hit.”*

Unknown time, Narrative Reporting

“If you can see behind me, this a moment ago you could see all the way through. But from that last explosion that Jeff Rossen was telling us about, it is now again dark. It was strangely and eerily calm here in the Financial District because everything’s been evacuated.”

Unknown time, Narrative Reporting

“The only thing left in the street are people’s shoes as they ran out of their shoes to escape the fire bombs and the explosions.”

22. Cheryl Fiandaca, WABC

10:38 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“I was right next to the South Tower. I was about two blocks away. It was just a small explosion, and then rocks and debris and everything started pouring down.”

Unknown time shortly after 10:38 AM, Eyewitness and Narrative Reporting

“Right, we were about two blocks away when the second explosion hit. And all we heard was just a small explosion. And then we saw a roar of an explosion, and all kinds smoke coming billowing out, debris falling down, people running, the firefighters and police screaming at everyone to run as the debris was coming down and hitting people.”

23. Joe Torres, WABC

Unknown Air Time, Eyewitness Reporting

“Ten o’clock this morning, photographer Glenn Mayrose and I, along with FBI agents, police officers, fire officials, we all thought for sure a bomb was set to explode underneath our feet outside 7 World Trade Center. We took off running for our lives north on Church Street. We had no idea the top of one of the Twin Towers had just exploded. . . . As others looked back in shock and horror, we started another interview with a Port Authority engineer who worked at World Trade Center and spoke to us about the strength and integrity of the skyscrapers. Then, suddenly, the second tower erupted right before our eyes.”

24. Carol Marin, CBS Reporter appearing on WCBS

10:59 AM, Narrative Reporting

Carol Marin: *“After the second tower went down, I was trying to make my way to a CBS crew or to try to help CBS crews if I could. And then, I don’t know what it was, John. But another explosion, a rolling blast of fire, a rolling column of fire towards us. My respect for fire and police already knew no bounds given the danger, it now exceeds what I thought it could, because a firefighter threw me into the wall of a building, covered me with his body as the flames approached us. And another police officer in New York named Brendan Duke, wherever he is, got me through smoke that neither one of us could see more than about a foot ahead of us. There are still people in there. Excuse me, I’ve breathed a fair amount of soot. The personnel, the police and the fire working in there are doing so against really dangerous odds. And they still don’t know if there’s something left to explode, John.”*

John Slattery: *“Where were you at the time?”*

Marin: *“I was — not being a New Yorker, you’ll have to help me here. I came around Stuyvesant High School, and that street at the north end. And I came up and asked if anyone had seen a CBS crew. And I was directed by a firefighter who said, ‘Walk down the middle of the road, because you don’t know what’s going to come down.’ At which point, we heard a rumble like I’ve never heard before, and a firefighter ran towards me. We ran as fast as we could. I lost my shoes. I fell down. He picked me up and slammed me into a wall and covered me with him until we could make it more to safety.”*

John Slattery: *“Was this from the first rolling blast or the second?”*

Carol Marin: *“John, I looked at my watch. It was about 10:44, is what my watch said. So it was after the second tower, I think the second tower explosion.”*

Note: The focus of Marin’s account is one of several widely corroborated explosions that occurred between 10:38 AM and 11:30 AM after both towers had come down. However, Marin’s reporting qualifies her as an explosion reporter in regard to the Twin Towers because she references “the second tower explosion,” and it is clear she interprets the towers’ destruction as an explosion-based event.

25. John Slattery, WCBS

11:44 AM, Narrative Reporting

“There were many tears. There was an awful lot of anguish. And then, with subsequent explosions, and when a portion of World Trade 1 hit the ground, there was an enormous burst, a cloud of smoke and debris that started moving north.”

26. Marcella Palmer, WCBS

Unknown time, Eyewitness Reporting

Marcella Palmer: *“We heard another explosion. And I’m assuming that’s the one that came from the lower level, since there were two.”*

Unidentified Anchor: *“Right, because it was like 18 minutes apart?”*

Palmer: *“Well, this is — no, the first explosion, then there was a second explosion in the same building. There were two explosions.”*

27. Vince DeMentri, WCBS

Unknown time, Narrative Reporting

“Very difficult to breathe, but look around. This must have been Ground Zero where this thing blew up. Car after car after car, buses, completely burned and obliterated straight down to the steel.”

28. Walter Perez, WNBC

9:59 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“We’re not sure exactly what happened, but it was another explosion on the far side of one of the buildings from where we’re standing. The reverberation — and another explosion on the right-hand side! Another building has gone up on the right-hand side of the road. People are now running down the street. We’re not sure if that was another explosion or if that was advanced debris.”

10:00 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“At this point, as you can tell, there’s absolute pandemonium in this area because of what has just happened. Exactly what, I can’t confirm. But on the far side of the building, there seemed to be another explosion and also on the right-hand side, there was also another explosion. We’re not sure if that was extra reverberation from what happened at the World Trade Center or if that was an added explosion. At this point, there’s a lot of smoke, massive plumes of smoke falling from the building across the street. People that were running down the street or walking are now running away. We don’t have any information as far as what the most recent reverberations were. But from two blocks away you could feel what happened.”

10:27 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“As you can imagine, it was a pretty frenzied scene here. Just a few moments ago, I’d say about 20 minutes ago, we’re not sure exactly what it was, we have not confirmed it. But something either exploded or fell off the side of the one building that was attacked and caused a massive plume of smoke.”

29. Kristen Shaughnessy, NY1

9:59 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

“Oh, it is just coming down, Pat. It is just coming down. It’s exploding. It is billowing. Pat, the debris is flying. I’m going to run.”

10:42 AM, Narrative Reporting

“Good morning again, Pat. I am actually just across from City Hall, I don’t have to tell you. With that second explosion the dust did not seem as bad.”

10:43 AM, Narrative Reporting

“It’s unbelievable because you hear these explosions. In fact, I just heard another one — I don’t

know if it was like an aftereffect or what not — just while you were on the phone talking about the school closings. It wasn't as big, obviously, as the other ones. But it still sent a tremor all the way over here, and I'm obviously on the other side of the World Trade Center, on the other side of the city. And it's just unbelievable."

10:45 AM, Narrative Reporting

Kristen Shaughnessy: *"I'm hearing another explosion, just so you know. I'm hearing another rumble. It's not as bad as the other ones were. But, I don't know if you have pictures."*

Sharon Dizenhuz: *"We have a picture and we don't see anything beyond the enormous billows of smoke that have been there. But no additional bursts from our vantage point."*

Shaughnessy: *"Okay, didn't mean to interrupt, Sharon. What you can feel when these tremors come is that it literally comes up under your feet. That's what it feels like. That's the best way I know to describe it."*

30. Andrew Siff, NY1

10:12 AM, Eyewitness Reporting

Sharon Dizenhuz: *"Andrew, when you saw this happen, what did it look like to you at close range? Because to us it seemed almost like dominoes, you know, going floor by floor by floor."*

Andrew Siff: *"It was a little difficult to tell at first to figure out what was happening. We heard an explosion. We heard either an explosion or the sound of something making impact. We were in the middle. I was with news assistant Jason Post, and we were walking down West Street. And when we heard the sound we whipped around and saw just a buckling of the tower. And it just looked like it collapsed within itself. You could just see the top of the tower collapse. We can't tell what happened to the bottom half of the tower from here."*

31. John Schiumo, NY1

10:18 AM, Narrative Reporting

"There's another explosion as we speak!"

Note: Although the phenomenon Schiumo describes occurs between the destruction of the two towers, which happened to the South Tower at 9:59 AM and the North Tower 10:28 AM, we classify him as an explosion reporter because he refers to it as "another explosion" — thus suggesting he understood the destruction of the South Tower to be an explosion-based event — and because the explosion he describes may have come from the North Tower and been related to its eventual destruction 11 minutes later.

32. Andrew Kirtzman, NY1

11:11 AM, Narrative Reporting

"Mayor Giuliani appeared about 45 minutes ago on Chambers Street near Church Street. We began

walking up Church Street when the second building proceeded to collapse, and a huge plume of smoke flew up into the air, went up into the air, and the mayor and his party started running up 6th Avenue. A plainclothes detective threw his arm around Mayor Giuliani as we took off, not knowing what the repercussions of a second explosion would be.”

11:12 AM, Narrative Reporting

“And for about 10 minutes they tried to break into the fire station as the mayor stood by and the police commissioner stood by waiting to set up an operations center. That’s — kind of wanted to paint a picture of kind of the seat-of-the-pants operation that they’ve been forced to construct here because of the explosion downtown.”

33. Jack Kelley, USA Today

Unknown time apparently around 5:30 PM, Source-based Reporting

Jack Kelley: “Apparently, what appears to have happened is that at the same time two planes hit the building, that the FBI most likely thinks that there was a car or truck packed with explosives underneath the building which also exploded at the same time and brought both of them down.”

USA Today Anchor: “Now that’s the first time we’re hearing that. So two planes and explosives that were in the building, is that correct?”

Kelley: “That is the working theory at this point. That is still unconfirmed, but that is what the FBI is going on at this point.”

34. First Unidentified Reporter at Giuliani and Pataki Press Conference

2:43 PM, Narrative Reporting

“Do you know anything about the cause of the explosions that brought down the two buildings yet? Was it caused by the planes or by something else? Those second explosions.”

35. Marcia Kramer, WCBS, at Giuliani and Pataki Press Conference

2:44 PM, Narrative Reporting

“Mr. Mayor, could you tell us, do you expect any further attacks on New York? Is there anything to indicate that there could be more bombs, more planes out there? I know originally there was a report that eight planes had been hijacked. Four have only been accounted for. What about the remaining four? And is there any possibility that there could be bombs on the ground planted by someone?”

Note: Kramer was in the studio when the destruction of the Twin Towers occurred, but later went into the field to conduct reporting, including attending the afternoon press conference with Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki. While watching the destruction of the first tower from the studio in the morning, Kramer hypothesized that it was caused by an explosion or bomb, which explains the rationale for her questions during the press conference.

At 10:02 AM, three minutes after the destruction of the first tower, she stated, “Right now police have to determine if whether that explosion was caused from the initial impact of the plane or whether it was something that was exploded on the ground. Generally speaking, for a building to collapse in on itself like that, it would seem to indicate — obviously, this is just early speculation — but it would seem to indicate that there could have been an explosion, a bomb planted on the ground, that would make the building collapse within itself.” Then, at 10:14 AM, she stated, “Well, we have a number of updates. Number one: CNN is now reporting that there was a third explosion at the World Trade Center, probably an explosion from the ground that caused World Trade Center 1 to collapse on top of itself. Again, there was a third explosion. It is unclear what caused it, whether it was a bomb or whether the first plane that crashed into the tower had somehow been booby-trapped with a bomb that was timed to explode later after the crash had occurred. But CNN is reporting that there was a third explosion that caused World Trade Center 1 to collapse within itself and then collapse on other surrounding buildings.”

This is a brief glimpse at how CNN and one of the anchors at WCBS interpreted the destruction of the Twin Towers. In our next article, we will delve much deeper into how the anchors at each of networks interpreted destruction of the Twin Towers.

36. Second Unidentified Reporter at Giuliani and Pataki Press Conference

2:54 PM, Narrative Reporting

“So the only National Guard we’ll see will be in Lower Manhattan in the bomb site area, they won’t be patrolling the rest of Manhattan?”

Appendix B: Statements by Four Non-Explosion Reporters

1. Don Dahler, ABC

10:00 AM

Peter Jennings: *“[Don] Dahler from ABC’s Good Morning America is down in the general vicinity. [Don], can you tell us what has just happened?”*

Don Dahler: *“Yes, Peter. It’s Don Dahler down here. I’m four blocks north of the World Trade Center. The second building that was hit by the plane has just completely collapsed. The entire building has just collapsed as if a demolition team set off — when you see the old demolitions of these old buildings. It folded down on itself and it is not there anymore.”*

Jennings: *“Thanks very much, [Don].”*

Dahler: *“It has completely collapsed.”*

Jennings: *“The whole side has collapsed?”*

Dahler: *“The whole building has collapsed!”*

Jennings: *“The whole building has collapsed?”*

Dahler: *"The building has collapsed."*

Jennings: *"That's the southern tower you're talking about?"*

Dahler: *"Exactly. The second building that we witnessed the airplane enter has been — the top half had been fully involved in flame. It just collapsed. There is panic on the streets. Thousands of people running up Church Street, which is what I'm looking out on, trying to get away. But the entire — at least as far as I can see, the top half of the building — at least half of it, I can't see below that — half of it just started with a gigantic rumble, folded in on itself, and collapsed in a huge plume of smoke and dust."*

10:02 AM

Jennings: *"The southern tower, 10:00 eastern time this morning, just collapsing on itself. This is a place where thousands of people work. We have no idea what caused this. If you wish to bring — anybody who's ever watched a building being demolished on purpose knows that if you're going to do this you have to get at the under infrastructure of a building and bring it down."*

Dahler: *"Peter?"*

Jennings: *"Yes, Dan."*

Dahler: *"What appeared to happen from my vantage point, the top part of the building was totally involved in fire, and there appeared to be no effort possible to put that fire out. It looked like the top part of the building was so weakened by the fire the weight of it collapsed the rest of the building. That's what appeared to happen. I did not see anything happening at the base of the building. It all appeared to start at the top and then just collapse the rest of the building by the sheer weight of it. There was no explosion or anything at the base part of it. But I did see that the top part of it started to collapse. The walls started to bulge out, glass things coming out. And then it collapsed down on itself. And then it appeared to just fold down from there, from the very top."*

Jennings: *"Thanks, Don, very much."*

2. Drew Millhon, ABC

11:09 AM

"I was at the corner of Varick and Canal, which is about 10 to 12 blocks north of the World Trade Center, where roughly 300 to 400 people were gathered watching the flames and the smoke from both the World Trade Centers going through the air. And I began to cross the street and I heard a collective scream from this group of people. And I looked up and the first World Trade Center that collapsed was falling down. The shriek lasted for quite a long time. And then many of these people fell into tears, just crying and sobbing. 'I don't know where my mother is. I don't know where my friends are.' That sort of thing was heard all around this crowd."

3. Bob Bazell, NBC

10:08 AM

"I was actually standing and saw that collapse. And everybody here [at St. Vincent's hospital on

West 12th Street] just gasped. Even the medical workers and the ambulance attendants when they saw that, people who are used to tragedy, grabbed each other and hugged each other. And some started to cry.”

4. John Zito, MSNBC

10:36 AM

Chris Jansing: *“Were you able to feel the collapse of that second tower?”*

John Zito: *“The second tower, no. But the first tower that went down, I was very close, I’d say about five blocks away. And CNBC’s Ron Insana and I were trying to hook up with a truck or find any NBC contact down there. And we were very close to when that tower came down. And debris came showering down, and Ron and I both ran for cover. I managed to get inside an alcove of buildings. And all the scaffolding around collapse in front of me and broke the window next to me. And I climbed inside that and stayed in there for about 10 minutes. I couldn’t get out of there. It was pitch black outside.”*

Appendix C: Borderline Cases

This appendix contains three borderline cases that we determined could not be clearly classified as explosion or non-explosion reporters.

1. Minah Kathuria, NBC

Kathuria is a borderline case because it is unclear whether she suspects the destruction of the South Tower to have been a demolition or whether she is merely likening the destruction to a demolition in its appearance. In the case of Don Dahler, who is included in Appendix B as a non-explosion reporter, it is clear that he ultimately interpreted the destruction as a fire-induced collapse even though he likened the destruction to a demolition in its appearance.

10:11 AM

“We’re on the corner of Duane and West Broadway walking down towards the Twin Towers, and it just collapsed. It looked like a — it looked sort of like the building just demolished. Smoke, clouds — I mean, clouds of smoke everywhere.”

2. Brian Palmer, CNN

Palmer is a borderline case because he is asked by CNN’s Aaron Brown if it sounded like an explosion or just the sound of the collapse itself, and he does not favor one interpretation over the other, and he describes the sound as a “boom,” which was not strong enough in our view to classify him as an explosion reporter. We view Palmer as being distinct from Alan Dodds Frank, who, although he did not commit to one interpretation over the other, readily asserted the possibility that the destruction of the towers was an explosion-based event.

10:41 AM

Aaron Brown: *“Brian, did it sound like there was an explosion before the second collapse, or was*

the noise the collapse itself?”

Brian Palmer: *“Well, from our distance, I was not able to distinguish between an explosion and the collapse. We were several hundred yards away. But we clearly saw the building come down. I heard your report of a fourth explosion: I can’t confirm that. But we heard some ‘boom’ and then the building fold in on itself.”*

3. Maria Bartiromo, CNBC

Bartiromo is a borderline case because she repeatedly uses the word “explosion” and her description of what she witnessed corroborates the explosion hypothesis, but although she uses the word “explosion” to describe what she witnessed, she attributes it to the sound of the buildings collapsing.

10:14 AM

Maria Bartiromo: *“Now I’m standing on the floor of the exchange. But I just came back from outside and I am covered with soot. Basically, I was outside when that third explosion occurred. . . . The whole area turned pitch black when that third explosion happened. . . . I don’t know if you can see my jacket and my shoes, but I’m completely covered in white smoke from that third explosion.”*

Unidentified Anchor: *“Maria, do you know what that explosion was?”*

Bartiromo: *“That was about 10 — I’d say 15 minutes ago.”*

Unidentified Anchor: *“But do you know what caused it?”*

Bartiromo: *“No, I don’t.”*

Mark Haines: *“At the moment, Maria — and for the people with you — at the moment there are eyewitnesses who feel that another plane, a third plane . . .”*

Bartiromo: *“Yes, some people are saying that . . .”*

Haines: *“. . . hit the base of the South Tower.”*

Bartiromo: *“I was under the impression that it was just the actual collapse of the building. But some people are speculating that. I didn’t want to say that because . . .”*

Haines: *“We had — at the moment it happened — we had MSNBC’s feed up, and we could hear people shouting ‘a third plane, a third plane.’ And then there was an explosion — ‘another plane, another plane,’ and there was an explosion.”*

Bartiromo: *“That’s right. And I was outside during that explosion.”*

10:49 AM

“The second explosion I witnessed was about 10:00 AM, and that was, in retrospect, the collapse of that tower. And again, debris came at us. The whole area turned pitch black. All we could see was smoke. We couldn’t even breathe practically. We were closing our eyes. I actually went under the

building across the New York Stock Exchange.”

12:24 PM

“I walked outside a little while ago. There are dust, white dust, this thick on the floor. Debris and smoke just settling after the explosions. I mentioned to you earlier in the coverage that I myself witnessed two of the explosions. The first one that I witnessed was when the second plane went into the second tower. And truly it was out of a movie. This plane going right in, putting a hole into the second tower. The second thing that I myself witnessed, the further collapse of one of the towers. And this huge bang down on Wall Street. Everyone ran for their lives.”

1:01 PM

“I was outside a little while ago. It almost looks like there’s snow on the ground. There are piles, and really just a thick sheet of dust — white, white dust — from the explosion. . . . Then about 15 minutes later I went back outside, thinking that it was safe again. And lo and behold I witnessed the third explosion, which of course was the sound of the tower collapsing. And at that time, when I heard the tower collapsing — again, it was a huge, huge thump and explosion noise. You’re looking at the scene right now. And that’s what we were all watching. The building collapsed. We all ran for our lives. Metal and papers and debris were flying at us in the face.”

1:37 PM

“Then, 10 minutes or 15 minutes later, I walked out there again thinking that, you know, we had seen the worst. And, of course, then there was a third explosion. And that third explosion was the sound of the second tower collapsing.”

2:42 PM

“Bob and I took a walk together outside and we came back really, really covered with it earlier, when I witnessed that third explosion, the third explosion being the collapse of one of the towers.”

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