

8:46 A.M.: North Tower Attack

“We have a lot of smoke at the top of the towers of the World Trade Center.”

WCBS Newsradio 880 traffic reporter Tom Kaminski describes the disaster unfolding at the World Trade Center after the crash of hijacked Flight 11 to anchors Pat Carroll and Jeff Caplan from Chopper 880.

Pat Carroll: Tom Kaminski, Chopper 880.

Tom Kaminski: All right, Pat, we are just currently getting a look at the World Trade Center. We have something that has happened here at the World Trade Center. We noticed flame and an awful lot of smoke from one of the towers of the World Trade Center. We are just coming up on this scene. This is easily three quarters of the way up. Whatever has occurred has just occurred within minutes, and we are trying to determine exactly what that is, but currently we have a lot of smoke at the top of the towers of the World Trade Center. We will keep you posted.

Jeff Caplan: Tom, we just saw that smoke go up at about the same time you did. It was like one huge puff—

Kaminski: That’s exactly what we had seen. We had turned around, Jeff, we were at the George Washington Bridge. We had seen a fireball, and I can tell you it appears as though something has gone into the World Trade Center. I’m looking at the north side of what is the North Tower, so I guess that’s Tower Number One—correct me if I’m wrong—but this is about three quarters of the way up—maybe even three fourths of the way up—Tower One. There is smoke now billowing out of the top of the World Trade Center. I’m looking at what appears to be broken windows. I want to say that this is about ten stories down from the top, maybe a little bit more than that. But there now appears to be smoke pouring out of a gash of the north side of the World Trade Center. My heavens, this has just happened within several minutes. We’re going to try to get a little bit of additional detail about this, but currently lower Manhattan is, as of right now, going to be a big, big trouble spot, to say the least. The inbound side of the Lincoln [Tunnel], about a thirty minute delay, the Holland [Tunnel], about a forty minute delay. Let’s go back over to Craig Allen, WCBS—

Caplan: Tom.

Kaminski: Yes—

Caplan: Before we go to Craig, can we stay with you for a second?

Kaminski: Absolutely.

Caplan: We’re going to describe what we saw, because we have a distant view of the Trade Center from our studio here in midtown Manhattan. What we saw was one giant plume of smoke. Not a very dark color smoke, but a light color smoke—

Kaminski: All right, Jeff, what we had seen—we were at the George Washington Bridge beginning to make our way south. We saw what appeared to be literally a fireball at the top of the World Trade Center. I’m just coming up now. Looking at the north face of the World Trade Center, it appears, at least from this vantage point, that something has hit it. Something has gone into the World Trade Center. I do not have that confirmed in any way, shape, or form, but there is a gash across, I would want to say, about ten stories down from the top of the World Trade Center—

Caplan: All right, Tom—

Kaminski: —from right to left and making its way down. Yes, Jeff?

Caplan: Okay, we’re going to interrupt you here. We’ve found an eyewitness who is going to talk to us about what they see. Smoke, at this point, is billowing from the top eighth, let’s say, of the One Tower.

Carroll: And now we’ve seen what it’s like from the air in the word pictures of Tom Kaminski. What’s it like—

— TRANSCRIPT ENDS —

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