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WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER FENYO

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is

December 11, 2001. The time is 12:31. This is

Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion

of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm

conducting an interview with Christopher Fenyo of

Engine 35 in the quarters of Engine 35.

- Q. Chris, just tell us what you saw on September 11th.
- A. This is Firefighter 6th Grade Christopher

  Fenyo. I live at North Moore and Greenwich Street. On
  the morning of September 11, I had dropped my
  girlfriend off at the subway at Chambers and walked
  home, and at a quarter to 9:00 I was in the elevator of
  my building when the first plane hit. I didn't hear
  anything. We face north.

When I got into the apartment, I heard FD going down the West Side Highway. I pretty much figured the only ones that go down the West Side Highway are probably rescue, so I took a look out the window to see if they were going to a job nearby. I saw a few hundred people standing in Greenwich Street pointing up, so I figured there was a job and I'd go buff it out. I still had no idea.

So I took the elevator down. I walked out

onto Greenwich Street and I looked up and saw the north tower, this is about maybe five to 9:00. I ran back into my apartment, up ten flights of stairs, grabbed my backup gear and started running down Greenwich Street. At this point there were about ten floors of fire and my first thought was I have no idea how we're going to put this out. I got about three blocks running flat out and I saw a guy on a motorcycle and we both had the same idea. He told me to jump on. He drove me down to Vesey and West.

At the corner of Vesey and West, I went up to the first Battalion Chief I saw and asked him what I should do. He said to stand fast at the manpower pool and he pointed to a spot about 100 feet away from him where there were some men gathering.

As rigs came down the West Side Highway, I kept going up to them asking if there was an extra helmet. I finally got some luck with Engine 39. They were already in the building, so I was with the chauffeur, Arthur, for that time being.

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, and

Arthur went to hook up with another chauffeur to the

Financial Center. His rig was parked in the southbound lanes of the West Side Highway just north of the north pedestrian bridge.

At this point a Battalion Chief looked at me, saw 39 on my helmet and told me to move my rig in front of 1 World Trade Center to supply water to the standpipe. I said yes, sir, but I didn't want to move the rig. Even though I wasn't 39, I probably could have moved the rig. I back-pedaled, looked around the rig to see Arthur. As I was coming back to the front of the rig, the Battalion Chief, I guess he got a little impatient. He jumped in the rig and moved it himself over to in front of 1 World Trade Center.

About 30 seconds later, Arthur came back and looked at me and said where the hell is the rig? I said it's across the street. At that point the rig was essentially in a hailstorm of glass. There were bodies hitting the canopy of the Marriott at that point, I guess, right between 1 and 3 World Trade, or actually that was the canopy of 1 World Trade. He saw the situation, saw we weren't going to be able to hook up without getting hurt, so we ran across the West Side Highway, jumped in the rig, and we pulled it back across the highway to the southbound side just north of

the pedestrian bridge, as it was before, only now the rig was facing north.

When I stepped off the rig, probably about 20 after, 25 after 9:00, I ran into George Reese of 80 Engine, who was also off duty. He was responding into his second job when he came up from the subway. He had gone to the quarters at 10 and 10 and gotten gear. At that point I told Arthur that I had met someone from my company and that I was going to go with him. He said be safe, and I went off with George Reese to the command post on the loading dock between 3 and 2 World Financial Center, just underneath the Winter Garden, where Chief Ganci had his command post at the top of the ramp.

We were there for about ten minutes. George went off to talk to the Chiefs to find out what we could do. I was standing there alone. There were several companies down the ramp behind me. One of them I believe was 76 Engine, there was 211 Engine, about 50, 60 men, various states of dress.

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 into the garage. At that point I banked

down to the floor. We were trapped for a little while in there. We went off to the right. There's a big, big loading dock underneath there. You could probably fit three or four tractor-trailers with the doors closed.

We ran off into a dead end, realized it. At that point the smoke had gotten down to the floor and someone, who I found out later was the engine officer from 76 Engine, had put down a search rope. A lot of us got out through the staircase by that rope. At that point we discovered that we were inside a fire staircase with all metal doors, metal frames, opening outward, and none of us had tools. There were a lot of calls down to go get tools. But at some point there was a facilities guy there from the Financial Center who had a key. He let us out on the water side of 2 World Financial in between 2 and the Winter Garden.

At that point there was a lot of confusion. There was heavy ash in the air and on the ground. We made our way over towards the river. At that point there were a lot of guys cut up, some broken bones, a lot of civilians getting on the ferries. We helped some of the civilians get on the ferries.

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.

At that point we ran up through Battery Park, through the north part of Battery Park, where I lost George because I stopped to pick up a civilian who had sprained her ankle and wasn't able to run. At that point, after carrying her up to Chambers Street and the water, her friends assisted her, I believe, onto a ferry at that point. But we were out of the danger of the collapse of 1 World Trade.

I made my way around to Stuyvesant High
School. I still wasn't able to find George. I learned
later on that he was all right. He had hooked up with
another company and they had gone back and started
working on Vesey near the Customs Building. I made my
way with 211 Engine and a couple of other folks. We

essentially just picked gear from here and there, picked up masks, picked up gloves, picked up bottles, tools, and we worked the rest of the night. That's pretty much it.

 $\mbox{ BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. The time now } \\ \mbox{is } 12{:}39 \mbox{ and this concludes the interview.} \\$