

**9/11 Commission**  
**Investigator Notes**  
**NYC Office Box 4**

**William Rodriguez**

Comments: Investigator notes related to William Rodriguez testimony. Testimony is still restricted.

Memorandum for the Record

Person Interviewed: William Rodriguez  
Porter

Date of Interview: June 8, 2004

Location of Interview 9/11 Commission Headquarters  
26 Federal Plaza  
New York, NY

Interviewed By: G. Delgrosso  
J Miller  
9-11 Commission

Prepared By: J Miller

On June 8, 2004, William Rodriguez was interviewed concerning his observations and activities on September 11, 2004. Rodriguez indicated he was a porter at the World Trade Center (WTC) for approximately twenty years. He advised his primary job was to clean the stairwells in the North Tower as an employee of American Building Maintenance (ABM), a WTC contractor.

Rodriguez said on September 11, 2001 he reported late to work which was unusual for him. He said he was in the B1 sublevel ABM office speaking to Anthony Saltamachia when the plane struck the North Tower (WTC 1). He immediately thought the explosion was caused by a generator. Shortly after the first explosion a second explosion rocked the building and caused the office's false ceiling to collapse. Following these explosions Felipe David, who was severely burned, ran into the office. Rodriguez said there was a third explosion and he believed then the explosions were caused by an earthquake.

Leading David out of the building Rodriguez indicated he found a waiting ambulance and placed David in it. While outside of the building Rodriguez said he heard over a security radio that the building had been hit by a plane. He stated he made his way back into the building to help however he could. He said he took a security guard's radio from her as she evacuated the

building. Rodriguez said he went down to the B1 level to ensure everyone was out of the building. Water from the sprinkler system was flowing into the sublevels. He found two men trapped in an elevator stuck between the B2 and B3 levels. The men in the elevator were hip deep in water. Rodriguez said he found a nearby ladder and was able to help the men to evacuate. He identified one of the men as [REDACTED] a WTC painter.

After leading these men out of the area, Rodriguez said he went to the lobby near the express elevators and found a group of firemen who were looking to ascend. Rodriguez said he had assigned keys for all the stairwells. Since the elevators were not working he said he began to lead the firemen up the A stairwell. He indicated as they climbed he opened the stairwell doors to told anyone on the floors to leave. He indicated there were a number of people already in the stairwells. He said as he and the firemen found varying smoke conditions on the floors. He said the conditions ranged from no smoke to heavy smoke. Some floors also had considerable water from the sprinkler system and other floors were dry.

Rodriguez stated since the firemen were carrying their equipment this slowed them down so Rodriguez was normal several floors ahead of them. He said as he climbed he could hear people screaming who were trapped in elevators. He said he could not tell what floors they were trapped on but could hear the shouts. He said he learned there was a person in a wheel chair on the 27<sup>th</sup> floor and went back to the firemen to tell them about this person.

When the firemen got to the 27<sup>th</sup> floor they were exhausted and just laid on the floor. Rodriguez said the man in the wheel chair was Ed Beyea, who was assisted by his friend Ed Zelmanowitz. Both men died in the collapse. Leaving the firemen, Rodriguez went up to the 39<sup>th</sup> floor where he ran into two other fire fighters and a fire chief. He could not identify the units of any of the firemen he meet on this date. He said he also ran in Port Authority Police office David Lim somewhere near the 36<sup>th</sup> floor. Additionally, he said he heard on a radio while he was on the 39<sup>th</sup> floor, that "we lost the 65<sup>th</sup> to the 44<sup>th</sup>". Rodriguez believed this transmission referred to an internal collapse of floors.

It was decided to head down to the B stairwell. He said when he returned to the 27<sup>th</sup> floor the firefighters had Beyea in a rescue basket and were going to

head down. Rodriguez said when he got down to the 18<sup>th</sup> floor the building shook and the stairwell lights started to break. He later learned this was the collapse of WTC 2. When he got down to the lobby he saw three fire fighters entering the stairwell to ascend into the WTC 1. He said there was falling glass and other debris and that the large marble plates were gone.

Rodriguez said when he got near the exit, he heard the police yelling to him to run and don't look back. He said he look at the Marriott and saw that it was half gone. Then WTC 1 started to fall and he ran to the nearest fire truck and took cover under the truck. He said he was lucky the truck did not crush him. He believes he lay under the truck covered by debris for a couple of hours before the FDNY found him. He also indicated he believes he was the last person out of the North tower.

Rodriguez said he has been honored for his actions on 9/11 and is considered a hero in Puerto Rico.

Rodriguez advised that approximately three months before 9/11 he was working on overtime in the mezzanine/ concourse area when he was approached by Mohammad Alsheri, one of the hijackers. He said he was sure of his identification of Alsheri. Rodriguez said Alsheri came up to him and asked him, "How many public bathrooms were in the WTC complex." Rodriguez stated after 9/11 he went to the FBI with this information but he did not remember the agent he spoke with or what the FBI did with the information. He indicated he has not heard from the FBI since he meet with them at the 9/11 Family Center.

According to Rodriguez the A and C stairwells connected on floors 42, 48, 76 and 82, while stairway B was self contained. He said there was no roof access except with card access and a key. Rodriguez said he remembered the following information was given to tenants during fire drills, "Go into the hallways- make sure everyone is out-Do not take elevators- wait for instructions." He also indicated the fluorescent paint in the stairwells was a good idea. He questioned how effective it was since the stairwells were dirty and the initial paint had never been given additional coats of paints. It was also Rodriguez opinion that the security of the stairwells was lax. He said he often saw people in the hallways having sex, smoking and doing drugs.

James Miller

William Rodriguez

6/8/04  
M

Cell  
N

9/11 Personal  
Privacy

Worked in WTC 20yrs - now  
Porter Maintenance for 1 -  
WTC - 2

3 Stairwell

late

- Basement

Master Key assign

5 mast Keys for Bldg - Gene

ED Strauss/APD

Sued PA -

Once worked on 57th FL

33rd fl closet - personal

American Bld maintenance - B1

Goed to ABM office - speaking

Anthony Saltasmachia - sounds like

Explosion / Thrust generator

2nd exp - Bld shakes - false ceiling collapse

14 Prop in ABM off

Person runs in - face/arms - peeled off from <sup>elevator</sup> fire

Calls OCC - a 3rd exp - floors moves

thinks earthquake - lets get out

93- stuck several hours in elevator

across fire

75 ft fire platform - leads out puts David in  
ambulance

Security Guard radio - "Plane hit Bld."

looks up - sees hole - debris

Felipe  
David

UR

P2

B1

WR goes back - takes radio - loudly cough  
Sees Maurin in golf cart - takes him down  
Sees Delving truck on B1 Tower

Employee entrance for Marriott - S. Guard  
tells her to get out. Sees  
Jim Barnett - near 2 - get out  
Water all over - Sprinklers

OCC - no one in  
Runs back to B1 -

2 people stuck bet B2-B3 - water up to hips  
in elevator (freight) - finds long ladder - gets  
- 2 out (Painter - [redacted] Dr Delving man  
got to amb

Went back in B1 see him "Says Plane hit  
Bld" - ask do y have key.

?

Goes up B to lobby - Exp elevator - fireman  
he takes them up - Cus going down  
up to 3rd fl - takes over A stairwell (South) - People  
goes up opening fls. Sees people on fls did not  
know how to get out.

Fireman - with eq. - slower than him  
Some fls hard smoke / Some clean  
" " " Sprinklers " don't

People stuck in elevator - heard screaming  
20th fl - someone says on 27FL - in wheel  
goes down to Fireman - go to get him  
27fl - exhausted - FF take off eqs -

9/11 Personal  
Privacy

WR  
6/8/04

On B 8th  
radio

P3 - left FF on floor laying down - break into  
water machine. Calls man in FF  
Radio calls - to get out - Jerry Barran John Kuzell  
Shut off radio  
Go to 33rd on C Stumell  
Open closets - gets out dust mask  
Hears on 34th fl - noise like heavy gun moving  
35fl - empty  
36 - line comes from opposite side - has flash bright  
other equipment

On B - then WR - 39th fl - find F (Barr) & JFF  
2 collapses - inside collapse - "We lost 65" on radio  
Collapse 11:41 AM

Ed  
Bayer

DD  
Somerby

FF  
equipment  
impeded

Zelmsow

27th FF still on fl  
to Handicap pers in rescue basket / said "Ordnance  
to get handicap out" Down B stair - hear  
people screaming / On 18th fl 2 collapses  
falls -- Bell swivel - lights were breaking  
Hand rails out  
Gets to lobby - 3 FF run up to them  
Halls all smoked  
Blw doors popped open - no one can  
Starts toward west - no glass intact  
FF Bodies on FL

pushed  
aboard

Sees 2 EMS / FL - ~~near~~ near 78th & elevator  
Police yell to him don't look back - bodies  
On 33rd fl - body taken down by others  
dead - falling glass - See 1/2 Mustang gone  
Near "run run" - violent shaking

WR P4  
6/8/04

Before WTC  
2nd floor  
could see  
the shot  
and

- Fred - went under truck  
31 gone - cement hits - right under muffs  
lost person out WTC  
Thought he lost legs - trembles  
FF also under truck.  
Stay under rubble couple hours  
Dust / In ambulance gets O2  
Has a safety jacket on works with FF looking  
for bodies  
When WTC 1 goes he is on way JC  
Want back next day.

3 months before this letter interviewed by FBI  
on said 3 told 3 months before 9/11  
Mohammad Al Shari  
How many public bathrooms do you have  
available -

On 27FL - PAPD - got one of their radios -  
no communication - gave it back

On 911 directors /

Going down  
Connect 4248 76 82 / Could go from A-C stairwells  
B - stairwell self contained

- Roof access - Card access (Buzzer in) + Key.  
Had small elevator from 107 to Antenna



6/8/01 PS Dills - "Go into Hallways - make every light out  
Don't take elevators ~~Wait~~ Wait for instructions  
(had as push button box to FSD)  
Frames in doors - broken - could not open

Workers at WTC - joked about they will take down  
- bld.

WTC

PA - Fluorescent lights (paint) - in beginning  
(great - got dirty - no maintenance  
lights - ;

← 96th/82 fl lights out  
Stamwell security poor / - Sex / Drugs / Smoking  
Fl paint - L -

← Dirt / Sheet rock / -

Inge light in elev didn't work  
When winds heavy Flight elev not used

NARPI.org

27. ~~3rd~~ FL PA - emergency center - Moore in  
ACC - had all recording - cameras / access  
control.

Records \* for FSD -

Wobble alarm - on constant

"Heard alot of small exp - believes it to be  
gas in W of World & 46th fl Diesel tank (small)

Plb - OCC - Key

No elections key

- Counterpart -

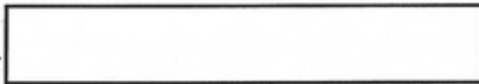
ABM - 3 shifts - an Days

No change in WR

Silverstein took over 82nd fl. -

- Took out trash can near elevators - security.

Carmen } Isuffin  
Arturo }



9/11 Personal  
Privacy

FDR

BMS - Loani } (Blind Guy)

(BMS) -

JAMES GORDON MEEK  
The New York Daily News

A hero janitor who helped victims escape from the World Trade Center's north tower before it collapsed told the 9/11 panel that he came across one of the hijackers in the building a few months before the attack.

William Rodriguez, 43, of Jersey City met with the commission for the first time last week.

A 20-year Trade Center employee who swept stairwells, he swears he saw United Airlines Flight 175 hijacker Mohand Alshehri in June 2001 and told an FBI agent in the family center at Ground Zero about it a month after the attacks. He never heard back from the bureau.

Rodriguez said he was working overtime one weekend cleaning rest rooms on the concourse and mezzanine levels when Alshehri approached him.

"I had just finished cleaning the bathroom and this guy asks me, 'Excuse me, how many public bathrooms are in this area?'" Rodriguez told the Daily News.

"Coming from the school of the 1993 [Trade Center] bombing, I found it very strange," Rodriguez said. "I didn't forget about it."

After Al Qaeda's attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Rodriguez recognized Alshehri's mug in newspapers.

"I'm very certain, I'll give it 90%" that Alshehri was casing the towers before the attacks, the WTC ex-porter said.

It is believed that American Airlines Flight 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta cased New York City targets, including the Diamond District, but Rodriguez may have given the 9/11 panel the first eyewitness testimony about a hijacker inside one of the towers before the terror strike.

Little is known about the Saudi-born Alshehri, 22, or his travels after arriving in Miami on May 28, 2001. Alshehri used the alias Abu Dujana, the name of Islam's mythic Red-Banded Warrior, who fought for the Prophet Muhammed. It's a name other Al Qaeda attackers also have used, including one who claimed responsibility for the train bombings in Madrid on March 11 of this year.

Rodriguez is credited with saving lives on 9/11 and for helping immigrants get 9/11 funds. He kept mum until now because he assumed the FBI was investigating his lead. FBI officials say they have never heard of Rodriguez but do not discount his story.

The revelation, if true, comes as the panel meets this week to scrutinize - again - the military's Sept. 11 response. FBI agents and CIA officials also will testify about the post-attack probe of the plot.

### **3. Next panel question: Could fighters have stopped 9/11?**

JOHN J. LUMPKIN  
Associated Press

The nation's law enforcement and intelligence agencies did not discover the plot. Airport security screeners did not find the hijackers' weapons.