

File No. 9110232

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN MARTIN

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. MARTIN

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Today is 12-5, 2001. The time is 1939 hours. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Kevin MARTIN, Fireman second, Engine 239. We are in the quarters of 239 and the interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. There is nobody else present in the room.

Q. At this time, I will ask Fireman MARTIN to relate the entire experience that he had from the date in question.

A. We received a ticket approximately five minutes after the first transmission, transmitted the box. I think it was a fifth alarm assignment. I'm not sure what assignment it was. We went to Hamilton Avenue at the Battery Tunnel. That was the staging area. Engine 279 was in front of us and I believe it was Ladder 131. We saw one building fully involved and the second tower had just been struck by the second plane, so we saw the debris from the staging area.

Shortly after that, they waved us into the outbound lanes of the Battery Tunnel, where it was stop and go traffic. There was a fireman walking through

K. MARTIN

the tunnel on the catwalk, Steve Siller, and we passed him. He mentioned that he would probably get there quicker walking because of the traffic. Then traffic started to move again and he decided he would hop on with us, so he hopped on.

We came out of the tunnel on West Street. We started to go up West Street. We noticed airplane parts. There was tires, just a lot of debris, a lot of body parts, things like that. The chauffeur was trying to figure out where he was going to go and the officer told him to continue further up West Street.

When we got close to the intersection of -- before that, Steve Siller got off the rig around 90 West Street, in that area, between there and Liberty Street to look for his company. We proceeded up to West and Vesey. 24 Engine chauffeur needed water. He was having water problems. So we went past the phone company, I believe it was just past the Verizon building, Clark Street or something like that is where we took a working hydrant and we supplied water to 24 Engine.

After that we went back to our rig, got our roll ups and our tools and proceeded down just under that north walkway, where we saw Deputy Commissioner

K. MARTIN

Feehan. He told us to make sure that 24 Engine had water and I believe to supply the sprinkler system to the garage. I think that's what he said. That's what -- the officer made sure that everything was right, that it was -- he mentioned to us to be aware that there were jumpers, you know, to avoid the jumpers. We proceeded on the southbound lanes. That was his instructions, I guess to the command post to get our orders.

We were almost in front of the Marriott Hotel, on the southbound lanes, when one of our guys saw the building coming down. So we dropped our tools and we ran for cover. We got under the north walkway. Myself and Peter Brown got in front of a Tower Ladder. I don't remember what the Tower Ladder was. The officer and Billy Wheeler got in front of a rescue rig, so we were on the north side of the north walkway just underneath it when the first one came down.

After the dust cleared, we looked down the block. Didn't really see much except debris all over the place. Steel 30 foot girders in the street, like lawn darts, and a ton of debris. It looked like 3 to 5 stories of rubble. That's the way it looked. It was almost like a blizzard. At that point all our tools

K. MARTIN

were buried under that. So we turned around and we went back up to our rig to stretch a precautionary line, and just regroup, we didn't -- because there were broken gas mains and everything.

As we got back to the rig, the second one came down. So at that point, we just took refuge in I think it was the phone company building, I'm not sure, in the lobby, to dodge that. When it started to clear, we went back down the street. It was just multiplied -- it was just that much more debris all over the place. There was a Tower Ladder in operation at the corner of West and Vesey. We were trying to assist them with oxygen, roof ropes, search ropes, whatever we could do. It looked like they were taking members off the roof of 6 World Trade Center. I don't know if they were operating on that roof. I didn't see them prior to when we were hooking up, but there was fire. There was fire in there.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I'm just looking on the map to see which building is 6 World Trade Center. This one?

FIREFIGHTER MARTIN: It's a small annex. This is about where we were under the middle of the walkway on the southbound lanes, so that's

K. MARTIN

where we took cover.

Q. You guys took cover from --

A. The collapse of the first building.

Q. The first building that collapsed, which was this one?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you were still there, in that area, when this one came down?

A. We went back over to here, to 140, the telephone company. The rig was right about here someplace.

Q. That's at the corner of -- he is indicating West Street and Barclay Street approximately?

A. Yes, I think it was right here. It was either this corner or that corner. I don't remember.

Q. Okay. That would be on the east side of West Street somewhere at Barclay Street.

A. Yes. Okay, after the second one came down, and it started to clear, we came out here. We came back down and now this was all down, where we were just under is all gone.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He is indicating the north walkway foot bridge that would have been largely collapsed at that point.

MARTIN

A. We had an ESU truck, right here, that was on fire. It had reports of ammunition and stuff in it. There were even car fires, as far over, I don't know what was here. There was a hotel or something over here. There was a lot of cars on fire over here.

Q. Right. That's North End Avenue and Vesey Street and that's some distance from the collapse?

A. Yes, there was a lot of cars on fire there. There was scaffolding around the phone company. That was on fire. There was a section of the building that was knocked out, a beam, a steel girder went through the side of it. 7 World Trade Center was on fire. So we were working right in here with the hose line --

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I don't mean to interrupt you, but when you tell me and you are pointing, I understand you, but the tape recorder --

A. Okay. At Vesey and West, there was some extension to the scaffolding, which we tried knocking that down, and there was a lot of search -- there was a lot of work going on over in the entrance to the -- I don't know if it was an entrance. I think it was a wall. There was just a ton of debris over here, 6 World Trade Center. They were working just to search,

MARTIN

to see if they could find anybody. But the Tower Ladder was operating right here at this corner, West and Vesey, and it was taking people off 6 World Trade Center, I believe off the roof.

Q. Did you guys do anything about all these fires, these spot fires? Did you stretch lines, were you able to do anything?

A. There were lines buried under everything. We couldn't get a rig to operate. All the rigs that were in the street would not work. It was mostly basically we were trying to find extra cans and things of that nature, water cans, just for paper fires. I mean there was stuff all over the place: That's to the best of my knowledge, that's about all I can remember.

Q. Okay. Did you guys go to a fire house after this or did you regroup or were you released from the scene or what happened?

A. No, we wound up at the Manhattan College, community college, was it? We had to go up there and they had to wash out our eyes. Everybody had scratched corneas and everything like that. But that was a while later. I mean we were right here.

Q. At West and Vesey, how long do you figure you operated, a couple of hours?

MARTIN

A. It seemed like a couple of hours. I mean we didn't leave until 9 o'clock that night and we went to a hospital right here, after this, to get our eyes checked by doctors. But that was basically it. I can't remember much else.

Other companies were coming in and they were conducting searches in this area, but they were trying to get heavy equipment in there, because that's what you really needed.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Sure. The area in question is on West Street all along the property of the World Trade Center. That's what the fireman was indicating just now.

Q. I have a question for you. How long a time when 2 World Trade Center fell, the first building fell down, till the dust cleared and you could start to see? You said before, there was a cloud of dust --

A. It was a while. As a matter of fact, when the first one came down, we thought we were actually buried under that walkway because it was pitch black and Pete Brown, who was with me, said it's not too bad, we will dig our way out. There is a hole there. That was actually the sun penetrating through, so we thought we were buried.

MARTIN

Q. Do you know what's important, do you remember seeing where other specific companies were or the command post with Chief Ganci or do you remember seeing anybody you can identify?

A. The only company we were operating with, was basically the chauffeur of 24 Engine. I don't even know if he was the 24 Engine chauffeur. It was 24 Engine and whoever the chauffeur was. I didn't get a name. I don't know who it was. That's who we were assisting and then we were on our way down to the command post and the first one came down. So everything else was pretty much a blur.

Going up West Street there were other companies, but we were distracted, there were just bodies all over the place and parts and it was just clothes and flesh. I remember a guy getting off the rig and stepping, like he was stepping -- I thought he stepped in dog manure. It was bodies. Yes, I'm done.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I want to thank you for this interview. The time is now 1952 hours. This concludes the interview.