

Terror!

Suicide attacks kill thousands, stun nation



A hijacked American Airlines jet immediately before it slammed into the second World Trade Center tower Tuesday morning in this televised image.

■ Hijacked airliners topple World Trade Center towers

■ Jet slams into Pentagon; yet another crashes in Pa.

■ Military put on highest alert; air travel shut down

■ Bush orders full-scale hunt to find terrorists

The Associated Press

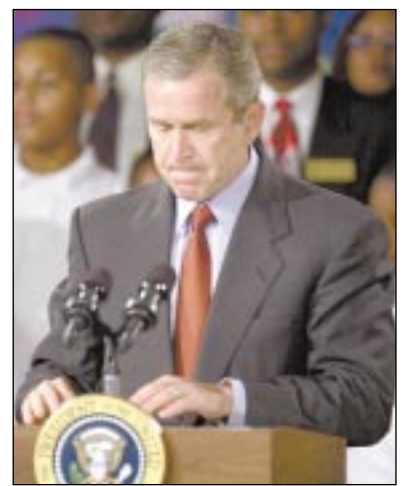
In one of the most horrifying attacks ever against the United States, terrorists crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center in a deadly series of blows Tuesday that brought down the twin 110-story towers. A plane also slammed into the Pentagon as the government itself came under attack.

Thousands could be dead or injured, a high-ranking New York City police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Authorities had been trying to evacuate those who work in the twin towers when the glass-and-steel skyscrapers came down in a thunderous roar within about 90 minutes after the crashes, which took place minutes apart around 9 a.m. But many people were thought to have been trapped. About 50,000 people work at the Trade Center and tens of thousands of others visit each day.

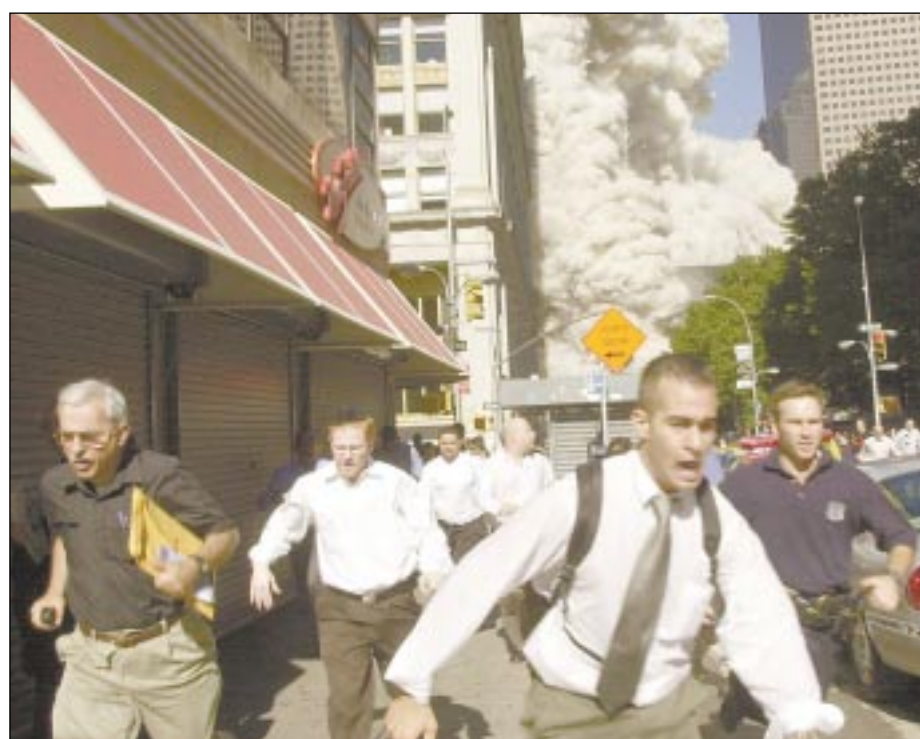
American Airlines initially said the Trade Center was hit by two of its planes, both hijacked, carrying a total of 156 people. But the airline later said that was unconfirmed. Two United airliners with a total of 110 aboard also crashed — one outside Pittsburgh, the other in a location not immediately identified. Altogether, the planes had 266 people aboard.

"This is perhaps the most audacious terrorist attack that's ever taken place in the world," said Chris Yates, an aviation expert at Jane's Transport in London.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Bush pauses in a moment of silence after hearing of the attacks on the World Trade Center. The president cancelled his planned visit to an elementary school in Florida before boarding Air Force One.



People run from the collapsing World Trade Center tower Tuesday morning.

TO OUR READERS

Up-to-the minute news reports on all aspects of this breaking event are being constantly updated on bakersfield.com.

The Californian will publish an expanded special report in its Wednesday morning editions.



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Please turn to TERROR / A3

EXTRA EDITION: AMERICA UNDER ATTACK



CHAO SOI CHEONG / AP

Smoke billows from one of the towers of the World Trade Center and flames and debris explode from the second tower, Tuesday. In one of the most horrifying attacks ever against the United States, terrorists crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center in a deadly series of blows that brought down the twin 110-story towers.

TERROR

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"It takes a logistics operation from the terror group involved that is second to none. Only a very small handful of terror groups is on that list. ... I would name at the top of the list Osama bin Laden."

President Bush ordered a full-scale investigation to "hunt down the folks who committed this act."

Troops mobilize

Within the hour, the Pentagon took a direct, devastating hit from a plane. The fiery crash collapsed one side of the five-sided structure.

The White House, the Pentagon and the Capitol were evacuated along with other federal buildings in Washington and New York.

Authorities in Washington immediately called out troops, including an infantry regiment. The Situation Room at the White House was in full operation. Authorities went on alert from coast to coast, the U.S. and Canadian borders were sealed, all air traffic across the country was halted, and security was tightened at strategic installations.

"This is the second Pearl Harbor. I don't think that I overstate it," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb.

In June, a U.S. judge had set this Wednesday as the sentencing date for

a bin Laden associate for his role in the 1998 bombing of a U.S. embassy in Tanzania that killed 213 people. The sentencing had been set for the federal courthouse near the World Trade Center. No one from the U.S. attorney's office could be reached Tuesday to comment on whether the sentencing was still on.

Bin-Laden role debated

Afghanistan's hardline Taliban rulers condemned the attacks and rejected suggestions that bin Laden was behind them, saying he does not have the means to carry out such well-orchestrated attacks. Bin Laden has been given asylum in Afghanistan.

Abdel-Bari Atwan, editor of the Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper, said he received a warning from Islamic fundamentalists close to bin Laden, but did not take the threat seriously. "They said it would be a huge and unprecedented attack but they did not specify," Atwan said in a telephone interview in London.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, thousands of Palestinians celebrated the attacks, chanting "God is Great" and handing out candy.

American Airlines initially identified the planes that crashed into the Trade Center as Flight 11, a Los Angeles-bound jet hijacked after takeoff from Boston with 92 people aboard, and Flight 77, which was seized while carrying 64 people from Washington to

Los Angeles.

'We are being hijacked!'

In Pennsylvania, United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757 en route from Newark, N.J., to San Francisco, crashed about 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh with 45 people aboard. United said another of its planes, Flight 175, a Boeing 767 bound from Boston to Los Angeles with 65 people on board, also crashed, but it did not say where. The fate of those aboard the two planes was not immediately known.

United's pilots union said United Flight 175 crashed into the Trade Center. But the airline had no immediate comment.

An emergency dispatcher in Westmoreland County, Pa., received a cell phone call at 9:58 a.m. from a man who said he was a passenger locked in the bathroom of United Flight 93, said dispatch supervisor Glenn Cramer.

"We are being hijacked, we are being hijacked!" Cramer quoted the man as saying. The man told dispatchers the plane "was going down. He heard some sort of explosion and saw white smoke coming from the plane and we lost contact with him," Cramer said.

Evacuations were ordered at the United Nations in New York and at the Sears Tower in Chicago. Los Angeles mobilized its anti-terrorism division, and security was intensified around the naval installations in Hampton Roads, Va. Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., was evacuated.

Pandemonium at Trade Center

At the World Trade Center, "everyone was screaming, crying, running, cops, people, firefighters, everyone," said Mike Smith, a fire marshal. "It's like a war zone."

Jennifer Brickhouse, 34, from Union, N.J., who was going up the escalator into the World Trade Center when she "heard this big boom."

"All this stuff started falling and all this smoke was coming through. People were screaming, falling, and jumping out of the windows," from high in the sky, she said.

"I just saw the building I work in come down," said businessman Gabriel Ioan, shaking in shock outside City Hall, a cloud of smoke and ash from the World Trade Center behind him.

Nearby a crowd mobbed a man on a pay phone, screaming at him to get off the phone so that they could call relatives. Dust and dirt flew everywhere.

Ash was 2 to 3 inches deep in places. People wandered dazed and terrified.

'Horrendous number of lives lost'

The planes blasted fiery, gaping holes in the upper floors of the twin towers. About an hour later, the southern tower collapsed with a roar and a huge cloud of smoke; the other tower fell about a half-hour after that, covering lower Manhattan in heaps of gray rubble and broken glass. Firefighters trapped in the rubble radioed for help.

"I have a sense it's a horrendous number of lives lost," Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said. "Right now we have to focus on saving as many lives as possible."

The death toll on the crashed planes alone could surpass that of the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, which claimed 168 lives in what was the deadliest act of terrorism on U.S. soil.

"Today we've had a national tragedy," Bush said in Sarasota, Fla. "Two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our country." He said he would be returning immediately to Washington.

The crashes at the World Trade Center happened minutes apart, beginning just before 9 a.m.

Heavy black smoke billowed into the sky above one of New York City's most famous landmarks, and debris rained down on the street, one of the city's busiest work areas. When the second plane hit, a fireball of flame and smoke erupted, leaving a huge hole in the glass and steel tower.

John Axisa, who was getting off a commuter train to the World Trade Center, said he saw "bodies falling out" of the building. He said he ran outside, and watched people jump out of the first building. Then there was a second explosion, and he felt heat on the back of neck.

WCBS-TV, citing an FBI agent, said five or six people jumped out of the windows. Witnesses on the street screamed every time another person leaped.

People ran down the stairs in panic and fled the building. Thousands of pieces of what appeared to be office paper drifted over Brooklyn, about three miles away.

Daily life comes to halt

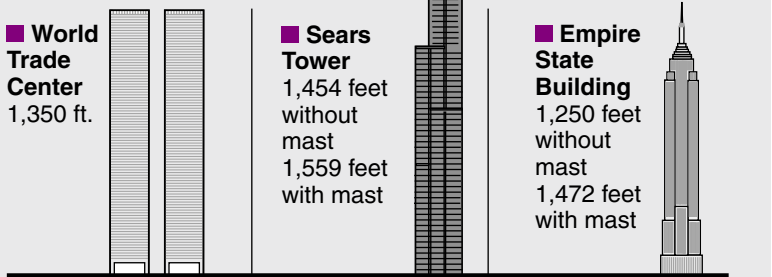
Several subway lines were immediately shut down. Trading on Wall Street was suspended. New York's mayoral primary election Tuesday was postponed.

World Trade Center

Building facts

- **Construction began:** 1966
- **Completed:** 1970
- **Dedicated:** 1973
- **Architects:** Minoru Yamasaki & Associates and Emery Roth & Sons
- **Owner:** Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- **Configuration:** Complex of six buildings, including two 110-story towers, the 22-story Vista International Hotel and three lowrise buildings, on a 16-acre site, which includes a 5-acre plaza
- **Major tenants:** Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Sumitomo Bank, U.S. Customs House, New York Mercantile Exchange and more than 1,000 other businesses and trade organizations
- **Space:** Total office space of 9.5 million square feet — one acre of rentable space per floor in the towers
- **Workers:** 50,000
- **Visitors:** Up to 200,000 daily
- **Parking:** Space for 2,000 cars

Height comparison



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Source: "New York Blue Guide," "Directory of Manhattan Office Buildings," "New York City Access," "New York City: A World of Travel Publication," "Comparisons," World Trade Center

