

Chapter 2

THE ACCOUNT OF WORLD TRADE CENTER 1

2.1 8:46:30 A.M. EDT

On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a lot of people were going to be late for work in New York City, which for many started at 9:00 a.m. or later. It was the first day of school for many local children, and it also was a primary election day in New York. The weather was clear and comfortable with little wind to speak of, so some took time to do early morning errands. As a result, only about 8,900 of the typical 20,000 people were in World Trade Center (WTC) 1 shortly before 9:00 a.m.

At 8:46:30 a.m. EDT, five hijackers flew American Airlines Flight 11 (AA 11) with 11 crew and 76 passengers into the north face of WTC 1 (Figure 2–1).

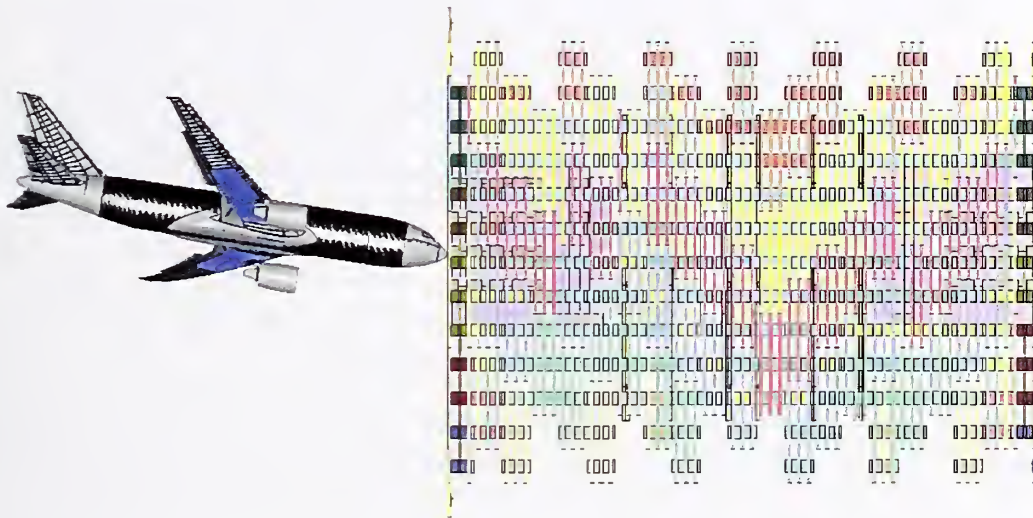


Figure 2–1. Simulated impact of American Airlines Flight 11 with WTC 1.

What follows is the result of an extensive, state-of-the-art reconstruction of the events that accompanied and followed the aircraft impact. Numerous facts and data were obtained, then combined with validated computer modeling to produce an account that is believed to be close to what actually occurred. However, the reader should keep in mind that the building and the records kept within it were destroyed, and the remains of the towers were disposed of before congressional action and funding was available for this Investigation to begin. As a result, there are some facts that could not be discerned, and thus there are uncertainties in this accounting. Nonetheless, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) was able to gather sufficient evidence and documentation to conduct a full investigation upon which to reach firm findings and recommendations. The reconstruction effort, the uncertainties, the assumptions made, and the testing of these assumptions are documented in Part II of this report.