

JULES NAUDET'S FIRST PLANE SHOT WAS STAGED

A Clue to the Truth about 9/11 ?

3. Conveniences



Just **one** example (24:13 into the DVD) of what could have gone wrong with the impact shot — if, as he is doing here, seconds before the plane's arrival, Naudet had been kneeling (or sitting, even ?) in the street, for no apparent reason. Kneeling or standing is irrelevant, anyway, when a pedestrian could still have ruined the shot by being **closer** to Naudet than this one, or carrying a child on his shoulders, or waving, or all the above — but probably not taller, because Naudet is extremely tall (well over 6 feet), and that may well have been a factor in choosing him to film the event. He is at the same location as the actual shot, in the same company, filming in the same direction, at almost the same time — etc — but ... someone's head is in the way. One simple fault, and the shot is kaput. If Naudet only had to avoid one fault in the crucial six seconds, he could attribute it to skill or luck ; not with dozens. All photographers risk things going wrong, especially when filming outside, with unpredictables like strangers walking about in front of them and behind them, but it usually works out perfectly OK — when they have some experience, and are filming something conventional. This cameraman, said to need practice, was filming a jet unexpectedly flying into a gigantic skyscraper three quarters of a mile away, sandwiched into the canyon between two New York streets, with a 430-foot tower on one side, hiding the plane for most of its overflight : not very conventional, even for someone with 30 years of live action photography behind them. The more unusual, the higher the risk of things going wrong, and the improbability of skill or luck as an explanation of why they **didn't**.

The 69 circumstances listed in this section, that made the filming of the first 9/11 plane a lot easier than it might otherwise have been — if possible at all — strongly suggest that they did not all simultaneously coincide by chance, but were in fact the result of deliberate planning, which means foreknowledge.

The point should be made that the film is often described as "accidental," but Naudet was consciously trying to capture the plane when he filmed it — he wasn't filming something else when the plane first appeared on screen. The "accident" is in why he was there at that time, and that was actually a whole series of coinciding simultaneous accidents — if they were accidents at all — the ones listed below.

Even something as simple as No. 1, hardly conclusive on its own, shows that Naudet was in a small minority: it reduces the chances of his being in this situation by accident. There may not necessarily be anything suspect about being out on the street, not going anywhere in a hurry, on a Tuesday morning in New York, but that is not what the overwhelming majority of the city's people were doing, for perfectly good reasons. But this is not just about minorities of minorities of minorities, ad infinitum: it is about factors that are **convenient** to filming the plane and its impact. He was outside, for example, because the people who knew this was going to happen knew he would have to be outside to film it, and every other one of the 69 is a similar demonstration of a planned, staged event: every potential problem anticipated and dealt with, in the same way a fictional film is made — except that this is supposed to be a documentary.

All 69 could have been different, but all 69 happened the way they did because they were designed to happen that way. For example, Nos. 13, 16, 17 and 47 show that whoever organised this knew how, where and when the plane would be flying. This does not involve all that much information: flight path straight towards floor 95, north face, North Tower, arriving about 8:46:30. What more would you need ? With those details known in advance, the rest of the filming plan could be worked out, and rehearsed (without the actual plane, of course) — with these results...

1. The photographer is outside, not — like most people in Manhattan at any given time — in a building (like the firehouse he was in 15 minutes before) or a vehicle (like the car he was in 5 minutes before), where filming a plane would be far more difficult.
2. He is standing in Lispenard Street, not on a pavement, where he would risk pedestrians walking in front of him, bumping into him, running past him, etc.
3. He is looking down a north-south street, giving a view of the Twin Towers — not, for example, further west along Lispenard, with the 430-foot AT&T Building in front of him, blocking the south view — which even the 50-foot building on the east side of the street would do, as demonstrated in the pictures in Appendix 4, which do not even show its full 5-floor height (see also Diagram at end of Chapter 6).
4. He is at a crossroads, which puts the full width of an east-west street (Lispenard) between him, at the north-east corner, and the traffic, blocking the south end of the intersection. If he had been at the south-east corner, or if the roadblock had been in a north-south street, but not at an intersection, the stalled traffic might not have completely obscured his view of the tower, but he could have been standing too near it, and might have had to film the impact above the top of a 7-foot mail van or fire truck, which would look too convenient. Using an intersection provides an excuse for getting him right back from the traffic and filming from the other, north side of the street. And if the cameraman has to be at the north-east, so does the gas leak. Why at this particular intersection, and not, for example, the next one down, Church and Walker ? Because this one has the huge, and hugely convenient, AT&T Building — see No. 38. [Coincidentally, Lewis Rudin, co-chairman of Rudin Management, who bought the building ("The Hub") from AT&T in 1999, died nine days after 9/11.]
5. He is in one of the few streets in Manhattan, if not the only one, where he could photograph a building (a pair of buildings, in this case) in the street next door, three quarters of a mile away, in the middle of his picture and equidistant from buildings on the sides of the street he is in, with only fresh air between them — and above them — and no other buildings from next door visible. You didn't get this view from West Broadway next door to the west, and Broadway on the east side had no view at all of the Trade Center at this distance from it. Anyone who worked around Church and Lispenard would know about this amazing view, but what are the chances of someone accidentally having it as a backdrop the day a plane flew into that building next door ?
6. Any building visible from the street next door, from that distance, would have to be at least 800 feet tall, which excludes all but a dozen in the whole of New York. The only reason these buildings are visible at all is because they are the tallest in the whole city, and this picture is the normal Manhattan street scene it is made out to be. In a million pictures of New York taken at random from street level, how many would accidentally show the tallest buildings in the city — three quarters of a mile away — in the middle of the picture — equidistant from the buildings on either side — with empty space to left, right and above — from a street next door to them — with skyscrapers of its own ? I would suggest — with emphasis on the words "random" and "accidentally" — not a single one. But if not random, and deliberately composed that way — as many as you like.
7. If he was in West Broadway, he would only be able to see the north face, and his film of the plane would look too convenient, but from even one street away, with the towers' corners visible — and only their top quarter — it is impossible to tell how close he is to them: he could be on the other side of the city. Even New York inhabitants might not be familiar with the view from Church Street, or realise that this is only one street away from the towers — and the film does not mention the fact.
8. The picture has also been composed vertically: 1. the street traffic, 2. the Tribeca Hotel and the building beyond it, further down Church Street, 3. the Twin Towers. There might have been no middle layer in this sandwich — he could have filmed the plane immediately above the top of Chief Pfeifer's SUV — but having other buildings in between increases the distance between the target and any possible distractions at ground level.
9. He has a camcorder with him, unlike most people — even professional photographers don't always have their equipment with them, and the film emphasises that it was unusual for Jules to be the cameraman — it would normally have been Gédéon.
10. He is already filming with it when the plane appears, when he might still have had to switch it on, load a tape, change the battery, etc.
11. The group members are all standing still, unlike most New York pedestrians — or firemen — who tend to be going somewhere.
12. Pfeifer — for no apparent reason, but with perfect timing — straightens up and stops checking the grating with his meter just **eight** seconds before the plane turns up (see stills at end of Part 2), but how the alleged leak has been dealt with, or whether there is one, is left hanging as the firemen and onlooker stand around vacant, silent and fidgeting for the next eight seconds; and nothing else happens during that mysterious hiatus — someone saying "False alarm — everybody back to Duane Street !" for instance — which allows the photographer to immediately switch to filming the new subject. When Pfeifer first stands back he reaches for the probe on his detector as if about to fold it down, but then changes his mind (perhaps because of an off-camera prompt) and leaves it sticking out. Folding it away would mean he had finished using it, and had reached a decision on the leak, one way or the other : either it was a leak, and something had to be done about it — a something that would probably still be going on when the plane arrived — or there was no leak, and they had no reason to be still standing there — but they would be **leaving** when the plane arrived. The probe therefore had to be left up. He finally folds it away just one second before the plane's arrival, as if that's the gas leak dealt with — subject closed — no leak, after all, and they were just about to head back that very second — perfect timing again. [Similarly — see Part 2 — Gédéon pans back up to the Trade Center towers, for no apparent reason but with perfect timing, just **five** seconds before Flight 175 turns up and smashes into the South Tower. Just before that, he films the crowd for about five seconds, then rapidly gets fed up with them : why ? His brother might have been in there, looking for him. Why does he pan back up so soon, and so conveniently ?]
13. The plane flies alongside the next street west, when it could have been 20 blocks away — but would they have heard it ?

14. The cameraman is already filming westwards — almost towards the plane's closest approach to him, about 250 yards away — just before it arrives. This makes it easier to capture on film when it does arrive, by simply waiting for it to pass its closest point and disappear behind the AT&T Building before panning left. It could have turned up behind him, or at an awkward angle, instead of passing straight in front, from right to left, north to south.
15. The plane's closest point is where it is most difficult to film: the cameraman does not attempt to film its flight until it passes that point, and is flying away from him — much easier to film than towards him, at that speed, that close — yet he must have been able to see the plane arriving, beyond the Post Office building to the north-west, at least three seconds before he started attempting to capture it.
16. The plane is flying horizontally, in a straight line, making its direction easier to follow, when it could have been turning, or flying in circles, or climbing, or falling.
17. The gas leak call is at 8.30, putting the group on location at the right time, when it might have been ten minutes earlier, and by 8.45 they would have been back down in Duane Street, having dealt with it — or ten minutes later, and they would still have been driving up Church Street when the plane passed, heading in the opposite direction, impossible to film. (In a Fire Department (WTC Task Force) interview, 23 October 2001, Pfeifer claimed the call was "sometime about 8.15 or so" and that "We were there for a while." Half an hour for a gas leak ?)
18. The call (which was not filmed, despite the cameraman being at the firehouse when it came in) is about a gas leak, when it might have been about a fire — but would the cameraman have been able to film the plane if he was filming a fire, with associated noise, smoke and danger ?
19. How many other cameramen could have been "in the right place, at the right time" if, like Naudet, they had been conveniently filming one of the emergency services, whose job involves being in **any** place, at **any** time, allowing an instant pretext to be contrived ?
20. The cameraman is not troubled by traffic obstructing his view, any more than pedestrians: the junction has been blocked with fire vehicles — although, since the gas leak is at the north-east corner, they could have been parked up the east end of Lispenard — but that would not be convenient, when it would leave northwards traffic, like the white mail van parked at the lights, or one that might be heading up to the Post Office for a collection.
21. Parking the fire vehicles at the south end of this junction of two one-way streets (Church northwards, Lispenard eastwards) effectively blocks traffic both northwards and eastwards : under the traffic laws (see Part 1), other traffic is not allowed to overtake emergency vehicles showing their lights, or to pass in front of them and possibly stop them moving forward. As long as those Fire Department vehicles are parked where they are, lights flashing, no other traffic can move north or east, in front of Naudet, as he films the impact. Filming towards the west, he knows for a fact there will be no traffic coming towards him, despite the vehicles facing him at that end of Lispenard, outside the Post Office. Even without this absolute guarantee, there would be very little through traffic from those directions in any case, since from this junction eastwards, Lispenard Street is virtually a one-way cul de sac, stretching only one more block before ending where Broadway meets Canal Street. (Another reason the area is relatively quiet for Manhattan is that the subway and bus routes up Church Street turn off to the north-west up Avenue of the Americas, three blocks south of Lispenard).
22. How many other Manhattan or New York firemen were out on an emergency call **already** when the 9/11 emergency happened ? I have never read of any other firemen who were on a call when Flight 11 flew over. All of them were on duty at their firehouse when the news came in, and Duane Street and the others attending the gas leak could have been the same — but where would that have left the story about the film-maker capturing the impact, impossible from the firehouse ? How likely is it that the only firemen in the city who were out on a call at 8.46 were the ones who had a documentary photographer with them at the scene, and he was likewise the only person in the city who filmed the plane ?
23. The photographer could quite easily have been filming the firemen towards the east, but the film's only, and very brief, view in that direction is just after the photographer gets out of the car (Edit 24 in the film sequence list and left below). After that we get south (Edits 25 and 26), north (27 and right below) and west (30), but never again east. Why ? Because the less time he has until the plane's arrival, the more he wants to avoid having his back to it, and east is the worst direction to be facing, with the plane behind him.



24. It cannot be to avoid being dazzled by the sun, because, as the film clearly shows, he cannot even see it — he and the entire width (and length) of Church Street are in the shade, while the Trade Center towers are well sunlit.
25. The cameraman is with a group of firemen, of all people, just as one of the most disastrous fires in US history breaks out, when he could have been with, for example, a group of office workers — in, for example, the World Trade Center.
26. He manages to record a plane actually crashing — incredibly rare, if not unique — when no-one captured either Flight 77 hitting the Pentagon or Flight 93 crashing in Pennsylvania later that morning, or — for example — the crash in Queens two months after 9/11, or the crash of a DC-8 in Brooklyn in 1960. There are reasons why people don't film plane crashes, unless a plane's obvious distress gives photographers — if any — prior warning : if "normal" ones with no warning are unusual enough, why would anyone capture one as bizarre as this ?
27. He isn't — as shown earlier in the film (edit 26 in film sequence list) — kneeling in the street filming firemen hiding the Twin Towers when the plane passes, or they would have blocked the view.
28. He isn't — also as shown earlier in the film (edit 28) — filming towards the ground when the plane passes, or capturing the plane would have been far more difficult.
29. He is standing, stationary, undistracted and facing the subject when the plane passes, when he could have been kneeling, walking, concentrating on filming something important or with his back to the subject.
30. The men in front of him when the plane arrives behind them are all standing in silence, and apparently only pretending to be busy, and it is never established whether there actually **was** a leak, or if so, how to handle it: the commentary tells us nothing. Chief Pfeifer fiddles with his gas meter and sticks his hand in his pocket, and his fireman colleague leans over the grating, as if, like the bystander beside them, looking for the world's first visible gas leak. If they had been genuinely occupied, it would have been a distraction from the plane — which, unlike the photographer's alleged subjects, could hardly be called aimless. (In a 2002 interview, Pfeifer claimed that "they" — not "I," not "we" — phoned Con Ed, the utility company, but there is no evidence in the film of him or anyone else making that call before the plane arrives, and after it the gas leak seems to be forgotten about — having served its function as an invented excuse. In January 2002, firefighter Tom Spinard (Engine 7, Duane Street) told a WTC Task Force interviewer the call "turned out to be a false alarm." So when did **that** become apparent — one second before the plane turned up ?)
31. No-one in the film distracts his attention by talking to him, and the cameraman's own voice is never heard — until after the impact; voices close to the camcorder microphone could even have drowned out the plane. The firemen might have noticed it, but would the cameraman ?
32. He has no view of the south or west sides of the North Tower and only a distorted view of the top third of the east side ; the only part of the building he has a clear, direct view of is the top third of the north face — less than 10% of the tower's four sides — the very part the plane hits. When its impact could have been on any side of the building, down to **at least** the 50th floor — more than 50% of the tower's exterior surface — most of it hidden from the cameraman — how convenient it should be in the middle of the only 10% he has a clear view of, on the face closest to him. (See Appendix 4, Picture 3d).
33. He judges the point where the plane reappears so precisely — panning left and up simultaneously — rather than left and then up, wasting time — that only very minor adjustment is required at the end of the pan, when he might have overshot, undershot, or had to considerably raise or lower the camera, blurring his picture of the impact — unless he had pre-set the focus.
34. He judges the plane's speed (and the length of the building) so precisely he catches it just as it comes back into sight: neither too early — which would look premature — nor too late to capture the impact.
35. He captures the point of impact almost in the centre of the picture, when it could easily — and far more credibly — have been off-centre, towards the edge, or barely in the picture.
36. In a TV interview in 2002, he claimed to have been so close (but still managing to avoid mentioning he was in the next street, as if he could fail to be aware of it, having lived in New York for 12 years) he could read the plane's markings, making the accuracy of his judgment even more astonishing, if he was looking up at the plane one second, and down at his camcorder's viewfinder the next, to pan left.
37. He films a plane flying at 450 m.p.h. with a stationary camera, when most photographers would have to move the camera — and/or themselves — to track a plane in motion ; in this film, the camera motion stops when the plane motion starts — when it first appears, that is — when most film of planes has both together.
38. He manages this feat by having a 430-foot building hiding the plane until it is far enough away to film from almost straight behind it, with plane and target so close together it disguises the fact that the focus of the film is the target, not the plane about to hit it.
39. He is at the north end of this building, which hides the plane for most of its remaining flight — until the last couple of seconds — when if he had been further south, it would have appeared earlier, which might involve trying to follow it with the camera; further north, and neither plane nor target might be visible at all.
40. He condenses a plane flying 500 yards into an angle of 20 degrees, between its reappearance at the south-east corner of the AT&T Building and the impact point on the North Tower — the last two seconds of a 46-minute flight, compacted to an eighteenth of a full circle, before the plane hits the only twelfth of the building clearly visible to the only cameraman in Manhattan to film it happening : truly, photographic minimalism at its most minimal — with total concentration on what is known, in a different branch of the film industry, as the Money Shot.
41. He could have been at the Duane Street firehouse, but filming the plane would have been far more difficult, with only three seconds' warning, and there would have been no possibility whatever of filming the impact — only the plane flying past and disappearing behind the buildings on the south side — assuming he had been on the north side, opposite the firehouse, to begin with.
42. He could have been in West Broadway, but the plane would have been just about overhead, with no AT&T Building providing an excuse for not even attempting to track it in motion.
43. He could have attempted to zoom in on the plane before it hit its target, but might have lost it with the tiniest camera motion magnified, and missed the impact shot, or blurred it.
44. At the plane's speed, it would have been a mile away within eight seconds ; if he was so curious about the plane, having lost his chance to capture a close-up and seen it disappearing behind a huge building, how much was he hoping to be able to see by the time it reappeared ? What made him want to try to film it when it was already tiny and getting tinier by the second ?

hoping to be able to see by the time it reappeared : what made him early on trying to film it when it was already tiny and getting tinier by the second :

45. He is standing on the same spot when the plane hits the building, three quarters of a mile away, as when it almost flew over his head six seconds before, when he might have had to walk, or at least lean — more than just pan 90 degrees — to capture an object that had moved that distance at that speed.

46. Between the sound warning and the impact, he has a convenient six seconds to capture the event, when it might only have been two — or gone on for sixty, if, for example, the plane had flown around the target and come back for the collision — as the Pentagon plane did later. Six seconds is just about perfect — neither too short nor too long.

47. The plane's flight is horizontal, and low enough to allow the engine noise to be heard on the ground, when it could have dive-bombed the tower diagonally downwards, and not been audible until the last couple of seconds.

48. He has a completely unobstructed view of the small part of the tower he could see, when there might have been other buildings or street furniture in the way — like the traffic lights at the south-east corner, or — not shown in the film — the suspended lights at the north-east corner.

49. The plane hits the first building visible ahead of it after it first appears on film, when it could have hit the second one (the South Tower), a third one not visible in the film, etc — or none at all. Again, nothing extraneous — it appears on screen, hits the first obstruction in front of it, period. No frills, no decorations, no detours, no sidetracks, no mess — the camera doesn't even move after the plane appears. The contract said "Capture plane hitting tower," and that's what we get, concentrated into one two-second static burst — as if there had been only one shot in Dealey Plaza, and Zapruder had captured the exploding head in the centre of his frame, as the car passed between two lampposts — purely by chance — except that Zapruder **knew** he would be filming a passing car, and where the lampposts were. This photographer had not the foggiest what he was about to film — allegedly.

50. The North Tower is hit first, when it could have been the South Tower — but filming a head-on view of that from the same distance, without using zoom, would put the photographer in the Hudson River. None of the actual views of the South Tower impact were from that angle or distance — and that's why.

51. He and the firemen — and the alleged gas leak — could have been on the west side of Church Street, but the towers would have been completely hidden behind the AT&T Building, making capturing the plane virtually impossible (see Map 3).

52. The gas leak could have been — most are — inside a building, but was allegedly out on the street.

53. The pan is only 90 degrees, when it might have been 180 or more — if, for example, he had been facing east and swung round anti-clockwise, towards the firemen, increasing the risk of blurring the picture.

54. All the firemen are standing in front of him or on his right when the plane passes, when they, or just one of them, could have been on his left, blocking his view of the impact. There were twelve from Duane Street alone, yet no more than five firemen, from any house, are ever on screen at any one time: where are the rest of them, where are the men from the two other houses who answered the call, and how could every single one of these 20-plus firemen manage to avoid accidentally getting into the impact picture ? When the plane hits the tower, not one fireman is in shot, yet this junction is supposedly swarming with them.

55. The phone call was not, like many of those received by FDNY, a hoax call, or the firemen would have left the scene before the plane arrived.

56. The gas leak is apparently dealt with before the plane turns up; if the plane had turned up just as they arrived at the junction, it would look premature, and suspiciously convenient — even more so than having Subject A dealt with first, before Subject B. In real life, Subject B would be more likely to interrupt than wait for an earlier subject to end.

57. He could have recorded (on film or audio) ten seconds of the flight, but not the last ten seconds : he could have recorded the ten seconds before the last ten but then lost view of the tower, and/or the plane ; that did not happen. He is only interested in capturing the flight's end — the rest of it is totally irrelevant to him — and he knows where its end is going to be, so he only has to make sure of having a view of the tower.

58. If you wanted to arrange film of the impact, followed by a close-up of the gash in the building, a photographer north of the tower would be needed; this photographer is to the north, only 12 degrees east of the plane's flight path, measured from the target.

59. He would have to be not too close, to get a proper view of the top of the tower — and to avoid danger — but not so far away he had no view at all; this photographer is at a reasonable distance — roughly 1,300 yards — six seconds of flying time. He could have been one second away, or twenty seconds — both totally useless for filming the plane. He might have been so close he couldn't fit the tower into his picture, or focus on it properly: sudden unexpected events often are either too close, too far away, too small or too big, to capture on film — but the dimensions and the focus of this one were just right, somehow. Not everybody could get a decent picture of a Boeing 767 with wings 150 feet wide and a tail 50 feet tall smashing into the top floors of a giant skyscraper 1,200 feet off the ground, at 450 miles an hour — not your average holiday snap — even if they **knew**, hours in advance, it was going to happen: how on earth could you possibly take a picture of that ? And if you knew, how could you take the picture so as to disguise the incriminating evidence ? How could you make it look accidental ? Could it, in fact, credibly be accidental ? But that's the central issue of this whole essay.

60. He would have to be close enough to the plane to hear the engine noise above sounds closer to him — music, traffic, etc; this photographer was one street away, at a crossroads with no moving traffic — but two parked fire trucks, more than capable of burying plane noise, if close enough to the cameraman, and if their engines weren't switched off.

61. He would need to avoid tracking the plane in motion, so as to record the impact clearly; his pan left means he blurs only the building, not the plane, and the entire filmed flight is contained in just one stationary frame. (Or perhaps the reason for not filming the plane from close to it might be to avoid **clarity**, rather than blurring — to hide the fact, for example, that it was not a Boeing jet, or not a 767, or not American Airlines, or not Flight 11).

62. He would want to visually condense the flight to the minimum, so as to avoid camera motion — the best way being to get right behind the plane; this film is shot from right behind the plane, with the visible flight condensed to 20 degrees.

63. He would want to leave out all of the flight but the last few seconds — the rest of the flight would be an irrelevance or a distraction, and only the impact needs to be captured; he films only the last two seconds.

64. He would want to leave out most of the tower, and only capture the area of the impact — the rest of the tower is irrelevant, nothing is happening there, and if anything did, it could be a distraction, or an obstacle to filming; only the top third of the north face is visible in the film, the rest of the building being hidden behind others. The plane hits that very part of that face. The partial view also misleads as to how close the photographer is to tower and plane.

65. He would need to have some photographic experience, when no amateur could capture a scene like this, with its sudden, fast, perfectly-judged 90-degree pan. Jules and Gédéon Naudet are documentary film-makers, both listed as "Director, Producer, Cameraman and Editor" (see Appendix 4, Picture 37) in their only previous film, "Hope, Gloves and Redemption: The Story of Mickey and Negra Rosario" (filmed in 1998-99, issued on DVD (Echelon) in 2002, reissued (Pathfinder PH 90969) in 2004), raising questions over Jules' claim to have almost no camera experience (Edits 19 and 22).

66. He would need a cover story as a pretext for being in the right place at the right time to capture the plane; the documentary film about the firemen and the gas leak at that junction provide a plausible pretext — on first appearances.

67. His film was about firemen, when if he had been filming, as in his previous film, boxers, they would not have been out in the street first thing in the morning, they would not have had the right to block road traffic at a junction, they would not be able to provide instant transport down to the tower after the first impact or the authority to enter the building, etc.

68. He already has a perfectly clear view of the target from where he is standing, so he could have captured the impact without having to pan the camera left at all, but it would look suspect if he was filming the target just as the plane appeared in view; the camera motion suggests lack of preparation — although the perfect motion and the perfect view at the end of it, having the towers in the middle of the frame, suggest otherwise.

69. And this is a valid point on its own — if just one of these circumstances had not applied, this film might easily not exist. How likely is it that every one applied, not one went wrong, and that not one other person in Manhattan managed even one single piece of luck, to produce even an off-centre, blurred, monochrome photograph of the event, let alone perfect colour film of it ? A unique film might be credible — if it had faults — or, conversely, a perfect film, if we had others less perfect to compare it with — if not quite as imperfect as the Hlava film. How likely is it that this photographer achieved both uniqueness **and** perfection ?

The word "perfection," is, of course, relative: the film is "perfect" in the sense that it fulfils all the requirements. It is slightly blurred — but not nearly as much as it might have been; and it captures the sound of the plane, its last two seconds of flight and its impact, right in the centre of the picture, followed by close-ups, with no editing — the whole 44-second sequence is uninterrupted; and it does it in a way that looks plausibly accidental. The kind of perfection that involved showing us a clear, totally undistorted close-up of the plane in flight, with its "American Airlines" livery visible, would be the kind of perfection that destroyed any chance of luck being believable as an explanation.

An exercise like this involves weighing different factors against each other. You can never have absolute perfection in every department — sacrifices have to be made, and the main sacrifice here was that the plane had to be filmed from a considerable distance. It is still large enough to be clearly identifiable as a plane, and that was the point of the exercise — filming the damage and what caused it.



Would Naudet's shot of Flight 11 have been remotely credible if it had shown as much detail as the top right inset above (the same plane, registration number N334AA, photographed in pre-9/11 days) ? Or, for that matter, even as much as Pavel Hlava's shot (below) of Flight 175 about to hit the South Tower, filmed from the Manhattan end of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel ? But, as the magnified inset at the top left above demonstrates, it is still possible to identify as a plane, and pick out the main parts : at the top, the vertical tailfin ("stabilizer" in the US), catching the sunlight, with the fuselage continuing down to the left and, in the shade on both sides, the wings at a 30-degree angle, with left lower than right, to spread the impact over more floors. A shot any more detailed than this would have been far less plausible : Naudet did zoom in immediately afterwards for a full close-up of the impact zone, but filming the plane itself in close-up would have ruined his credibility — if not the shot as well, attempting to catch a target only visible for two seconds, most of it with nothing around the plane but blue sky to help gauge size and distance. The second plane could perfectly credibly be captured in far more detail, but with the first plane detail and credibility were mutually incompatible, so clarity had to go — or at least be substantially reduced.

