

9/11 Whistleblowers: William Rodriguez

by [James Corbett](#)

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As a janitor holding a master key to the North Tower of the World Trade Center on the morning of 9/11, William Rodriguez risked his life till the very moment of the building's destruction helping those trapped inside the Towers to escape. But carefully curated from most mainstream reports on Rodriguez' remarkable story is an equally remarkable fact: This 9/11 hero is in fact a 9/11 whistleblower, someone who has contradicted the official story of the September 11th attacks from day one. This is his story.

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TRANSCRIPT

When people talk of the bravery exhibited by ordinary men and women during the traumatic hours of the 9/11 attacks, they are talking about people like William Rodriguez. Indeed, of the many stories of selflessness and courage to have emerged from that fateful day, it would be difficult to find one more

heroic than that of William Rodriguez, dubbed the “last man out” because, as a janitor holding a master key to the buildings, he risked his life till the very moment of the Tower’s destruction helping those trapped inside the Towers to escape.

RAMON TAYLOR: *William Rodriguez was working as a janitor at the World Trade Center when the towers were attacked. Using a master key, he ran to open as many doors as he could before exiting and becoming buried alive.*

WILLIAM RODRIGUEZ: *So they started looking under the rubble, and once I got pulled from under the rubble I was—After, I was in shock. Why? Because I couldn’t find any of those buildings.*

SOURCE: [9/11 Survivor Recounts His Experience](#)

SADE BADERINWA: *Rodriguez had one of only five master keys to unlock the doors in the middle stairwell and lead firefighters up floor by floor.*

RODRIGUEZ: *So I went and I picked up the man in the wheelchair and I started going down. The building started to oscillate so hard.*

BADERINWA: *He saved several lives that day. Then suddenly Rodriguez heard a terrible rumbling like the sound of an earthquake.*

RODRIGUEZ: *A saw—it was a total disaster. And all I hear is “Run! Run! Run!”*

BADERINWA: *Like so many others, Rodriguez ran from the cloud of debris and drove under a fire truck.*

SOURCE: [William Rodriguez on the news on 9-11-06](#)

WILLIAM RODRIGUEZ: *We went up by the stairs with the Port*

Authority police to start rescuing people. A lot of people were coming out, but there was a lot of people that stayed there. And we brought a lot of people on wheelchairs and a lot of people on gurneys, all [the] people that couldn't make it because there was no elevator service. The elevator went out.

SOURCE: [CBS – 9-11 William Rodriguez interview 9/11 NIST FOIA – WCBS Dub2_30](#)

REPORTER: The World Trade Center towers were built as a class “A” building. That means that, in the case of a fire, every third floor in both towers is closed to prevent a backdraft. It is the reason that Rodriguez’ master key was so crucial to getting people out.

RODRIGUEZ: It was hard. The amount of heat that was generated because of the fire was coming down. The smoke . . . It was an acrid smoke because you could feel it on your throat.

REPORTER: He saw firefighters carrying a hundred pounds’ worth of equipment on their backs waiting for a freight elevator that would never come. That elevator was demolished. So Rodriguez led them up another way, using a back pathway that only he knew. After the sky lobby collapsed he finally listened to police who told him to get out. He was not prepared for what he was about to see.

RODRIGUEZ: When I look around I find all the bodies of the people that jump out of the building. They came out of the building and they say “I saved myself!” And a piece of debris came in and killed them.

SOURCE: [9/11 Tribute – Custodian William Rodriguez](#)

As one of the heroes of that day, a man whose story encapsulates all the tragedy and drama of 9/11, William Rodriguez is no stranger to the glare of the media spotlight.

Not only has he been interviewed for dozens of news programs and reports on the events of September 11, 2001, and been featured as a spokesman for the survivors at multiple events and on many reports, he has also been awarded for his courage that day and even invited to a White House dinner where he was honored by President Bush for his bravery.

But carefully curated from most mainstream reports on Rodriguez' remarkable story is an equally remarkable fact: This 9/11 hero is in fact a 9/11 whistleblower, someone who has contradicted the official story of the September 11th attacks from day one. According to Rodriguez, the first explosion that he felt that day was *not* the impact of the plane nearly 100 stories above him, but an explosion below him, from one of the sub-basement levels.

RODRIGUEZ: *That morning I was supposed to be there at 8 o'clock in the morning every day. I called my supervisor because I was not going to work I was gonna take a sick day. Made it there at 8:30 in the morning, go straight to the lobby, down to the basement.*

The building has six sub-levels of basement: B1, B2 . . . all the way down to b6. Basement six, basement five, all the way up to basement one were all Port Authority areas. Some of them have parking for tenants, some of them have storage. B1 office . . . B1 level is where they have the support office for my company, the cleaning company, American Building Maintenance.

So I was talking to the supervisor, and at 8:46 we hear "BOOM!" An explosion so hard that pushed us upwards in the air. Upwards. And it came out from below us. From the mechanical room that was right below us. And it was so loud and so powerful that all the walls cracked, the false ceiling fell on top of us, the sprinkler system got activated, and everybody started screaming so loud because they didn't know what was going on.

And the first thing I'm going to say is that a generator just blew up on the B2 level—the level below me. And everybody's screaming. And when I'm going to verbalize it, six to seven seconds after, we hear "BAH!" The impact all the way on the top of the building of the plane.

Two different events separated by almost seven seconds. Separated by time. And now, I work in the building for 20 years. I know the difference of the sound coming from the top and one from the bottom.

So when everybody started—"What the heck is going on?"—a person comes running into the office saying "Explosion! Explosion!" His hands extended, all the skin pulled from under his armpits on both arms. Hanging! And we thought it was clothing—it was part of his clothes—until he gets closer. He was coming like this, like a zombie. "Explosion! Explosion!" And when I looked at him, I realized it was his skin. Like when you take off a glove and you let it hang. And when I get to see his face, all this part was hanging off his face and everybody started screaming in horror. And I say "Don't move!" The guy was a black guy named Felipe David. Worked for a company called Aramark.

SOURCE: [William Rodriguez's story](#)

Rodriguez' story provides startling and credible eyewitness testimony that undermines the official myth that there were no explosives in the Twin Towers that morning. Rodriguez is insistent on a number of points: That there was a loud and distinct noise at 8:46 AM, that it came from *beneath* them in the sub-basement level and blew them *upwards*, and that it noticeably *preceded* the sound of the plane impact above them. This has led Rodriguez to conclude that there was an explosion in the sub-basement *before* the plane impacted the North Tower, something which the 9/11 Commission and other official government investigations into the attacks denies.

And, importantly, Rodriguez has been telling this same story—including the same detail about Felipe David—since the day of 9/11 itself.

AARON BROWN: *William Rodriguez is a maintenance worker at the Trade Center, I believe. In any case, he's on the phone with us now. Mr. Rodriguez, can you hear me?*

RODRIGUEZ: *Yes, I can hear you clearly.*

BROWN: *Tell me where you were when—well, which of the two buildings were you in?*

RODRIGUEZ: *I work on the Building One. The one that got hit the first time.*

BROWN: *Tell me what happened.*

RODRIGUEZ: *I was on the basement, which is a support floor for the maintenance company. And we hear like a big rumble—not like an impact, like a rumble—like something . . . like moving furniture on a massive way. And all of a sudden we hear another rumble and a guy comes running—running—into our office, and all his skin was off his body. All his skin. We went crazy. We started screaming. We told him to get out. We took everybody out of the office, outside to the loading dock area. And then I went back in. And when I went back in I saw people—I heard people that were stuck on an elevator—on a freight elevator, because all the elevators went down. And water was going in and they were probably getting drowned. And we get a couple of pipes and open the elevator and we got the people out.*

SOURCE: [William Rodriguez interview, CNN, 13:33, 9/11](#)

If it were only William Rodriguez who heard, saw and experienced explosions inside the Twin Towers that morning, then such testimony would be easy enough to rationalize away. Maybe Rodriguez had become confused in the chaos of that

morning. Maybe he had interpreted the sound and explosion incorrectly. Maybe he was lying to gain attention.

But William Rodriguez is not the only person who heard, saw and experienced explosions inside the Twin Towers that morning. In fact, hundreds of people, including office workers, police, firefighters and others have reported explosions all throughout the morning, from before the moment of plane impact all the way up to the explosive demolition of the towers themselves.

FEMALE BYSTANDER: *What was it like?*

TYRONE JOHNSON (FDNY LADDER 24): *Horrible. The whole building just collapsed on us. Inside the lobby.*

MALE BYSTANDER: *Was that a secondary explosion?*

JOHNSON: *Yes, it was. Definitely a secondary explosion. We was inside waiting to go upstairs and on our way upstairs the whole fucking thing blew. And it just collapsed on everybody inside of the lobby.*

MALE BYSTANDER: *That must be the first tower coming down—*

JOHNSON: *I don't know about the first one, but the second one . . . It was terrible. Then there was a third one, too, after that one.*

MALE BYSTANDER: *There was an explosion after that?*

JOHNSON: *Yes, there was. Everybody was just inside the building, waiting to go upstairs and it just let loose. Everything just let loose inside the building.*

MALE BYSTANDER: *So what you're telling me is that there was the plane or whatever hit the building, then a secondary explosion—*

JOHNSON: *There was like three explosions after that. We came*

in after the fire—We came when the fire was going on already. We was in the staging area inside the building, waiting to go upstairs. And then an explosion. The whole lobby collapsed on the lobby inside.

SOURCE: [9/11 FireFighters – THREE Explosions After Plane Hit WTC](#)

REPORTER: And you were working there?

KENNY JOHANNEMAN: Yes, I was right there. I was in the B—I was down in the basement. Came down. All of a sudden the elevator blew up. Smoke. I dragged a guy out. His skin was hanging off and I dragged him out. And I helped him out to the ambulance.

SOURCE: [9/11 Eyewitness to Twin Towers Basement Explosion?](#)

REPORTER: Arthur Del Bianco is one of the lucky few, able to tell a tale of survival from a hospital bed.

ARTHUR DEL BIANCO: All of a sudden there was, like, “BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!” Like bullet shots. And then, all of a sudden, three tremendous explosions and everything started coming down.

SOURCE: [9/11 Eyewitnesses to WTC Demolition Explosions](#)

EYEWITNESS: I think a bomb went off in the lobby first, then a plane hit the building. Then another plane hit the other building. But when I was coming through the doors on the other side of the Trade Center, something—either they blew the lobby up, or something. Because it blew the glass out of the doors and knocked us all down and I got a—smoke and everything on me.

SOURCE: [9/11 Eyewitnesses to WTC Demolition Explosions](#)

Fireman 1: We made it outside, we made it about a block—

Fireman 2: We made it at least two blocks and we started running. Floor by floor, it started popping out–

Fireman 1: It was as if they had detonated–as if they were planning to take down a building. BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM–

Fireman 2: All the way down. I was watching it and running.

SOURCE: [Bombs + Explosions at the WTC Complex on 9/11/01](#)

These stories, collected haphazardly by reporters at the scene that day, paint a very different picture of 9/11 than that portrayed by NIST and the 9/11 Commission. Rather than a progressive collapse due to fire and burning jet fuel, these stories suggest that what was happening inside the Twin Towers that morning was in fact a series of explosive events. Explosive events that were powerful enough to cause internal collapses within the building well below the point of the plane impact and fires, and even, according to multiple witnesses, events that *preceded* the impact of the plane.

But is there more systematic and rigorously collected evidence of these explosions? Is there a repository of such testimony that would confirm what Rodriguez and many others have affirmed since the day of 9/11 itself: Namely, that there *were* explosions taking place inside the buildings that morning?

In fact, there *is* such a repository. In the wake of 9/11, New York Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen ordered the [collection of oral testimony](#) from firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians who responded to the attacks that morning. That collection, amounting to more than 12,000 pages of testimony from 503 people, was then promptly sealed. It took a [lawsuit and four years of court battle](#) for the collection to be finally released to the public.

One of the researchers who spent time poring over that

testimony was Graeme Macqueen, a retired associate professor at McMaster University and the Former Director of that university's Peace Studies Center. What he found in that repository of oral history, and presented in a [scholarly article for The Journal of 9/11 Studies](#), was an unmistakable pattern: Time after time, these first responders reported experiencing explosions in the Twin Towers. Explosions that cannot be accounted for in NIST's official explanation of the towers' destruction.

GRAME MACQUEEN: *There is other eyewitness explosion evidence that corroborates Rodriguez, at least in a general way. Meaning that there were people talking about explosions in the basement. There were lots of people talking about tremendous explosions and fire in some of the elevators—blowing the doors off elevators.*

And some of this testimony can be found on the internet. I found some of it in the FDNY oral histories. You know, firefighters talking about the doors being blown off elevators.

And so there was some kind of very destructive event. Also the windows in the lobby, which were very strong windows, were blown out by the time most of the firefighters got there. And as one of them said it looked like a plane hit the lobby.

There were other explosions that went off over the next hour or so, before the buildings started to come down. And when they came down, there were patterns of explosion from around the point of plane impact all the way down. Apparently we were supposed to believe that the building was coming down because of structural failure. But again, these were timed very well to go off in a particular way.

This is one of the reasons we know that these were explosions and that this was a controlled demolition. There were

patterns. And they were explosions that were extremely strong, taking out these massive buildings and pulverizing them in less than 20 seconds. This was not structural failure.

Rodriguez' story was not some fanciful invention that he spun during the most dramatic and horrific hours of his life; it is a story that fits into a pattern of explosive testimony related by many other witnesses that day. It is also a story that is deeply uncomfortable for those in the government and the media who were eager to celebrate the acts of bravery New Yorkers committed that day, but who will never report the explosive truth about the events at the World Trade Center that demolish the official government conspiracy theory of 9/11.

It is remarkable that Rodriguez, immediately recognized and celebrated for his heroism on that day, would continue to insist on his story even as the official story—the one that insisted there were no explosives used that day—began to take shape. But he did. For years, Rodriguez used his speaking opportunities on mainstream media and at memorials and commemoration events to inform the public about explosions in the Twin Towers that morning.

Unsurprisingly, despite the attention and accolades he received for his remarkable story in the early days of 9/11, he soon found himself becoming *persona non grata* in the mainstream media because he refused to go along with the official lies about what happened that morning.

RODRIGUEZ: *It says, "Safety Fire Department of New York."*

ANASTASIA CHURKINA: *A rescue jacket he wore over his torn shirt. A lantern from the rubble.*

RODRIGUEZ: *It doesn't work, but another memory from 9/11.*

CHURKINA: And a piece of marble from high up on the 44th floor. This saved for a decade.

RODRIGUEZ: I put it in my pocket because it was just such a shocking realization.

CHURKINA: As well as memories that he relives every single day.

RODRIGUEZ: And I was pulled on the rubble and I started looking for all the people and I only found pieces of human beings.

CHURKINA: William Rodriguez, a janitor in the twin towers for almost 20 years and 9/11 survivor who saved hundreds of lives on September 11th by unlocking door after door for firefighters and dragging out at least a dozen people with his own bare hands. Known as the “last man out” before the World Trade Center collapsed, his unlikely story had the media glued to him like bees to honey. Becoming a voice for the victims, Rodriguez was honored as an American hero only to be left homeless in the aftermath of the tragedy.

RODRIGUEZ: Funny thing: I will give the 800 number on camera, and when I called the 800 number they denied me the help.

CHURKINA: And shunned by the mainstream media soon after.

RODRIGUEZ: Censorship. I believe that censorship started from the very beginning, because when I was telling my story they told me, “Oh, cut this out. Cut this out.”

CHURKINA: No longer sweetheart of American broadcasts, William now talks mostly to foreign outlets. The reason: His version of 9/11 differed from the official scenario.

NEWS REPORT: It was the first hijacked plane that hit the—

RODRIGUEZ: “It was the first hijacked plane.” No, hello! That was an explosion before the plane hit the tower.

SOURCE: [9/11 survivor censored by media](#)

Even more remarkably, Rodriguez went beyond simply telling the truth about what he witnessed that day.

Little known even to those who are familiar with his story is that Rodriguez has used his notoriety and media opportunities to advocate for 9/11 survivors who are suffering from the health effects incurred in the aftermath of the towers' destruction. He has even taken the fight for 9/11 truth to the political arena, forcing the government's hand in convening a public commission to investigate the attacks, something that the Bush administration fought tooth and nail to prevent.

RODRIGUEZ: *The 9/11 Commission is a book of 576 pages . . . 576 pages of lies. Because the 9/11 Commission exists because I went with three other people to Congress to ask that we wanted a formal investigation of the events of 9/11. And you may remember that the president said "We don't need an investigation. We know who did it." That was the wrong thing to say to the families. We had the right and we wanted to know. So we pressed for an investigation. They didn't want it.*

So we used a technique that they have used against a lot of the people with the excuse of the war. We put widows, we put wives, we put fathers that love their loved ones on every television show and every news network to ask for an investigation. And they couldn't handle the emotional toll that that will create on the American public. So we got the investigation.

I testified behind closed doors. They didn't want me to do the testimony in an open hearing. Everything else—everybody else—open hearings. You saw the hearings. Mine was behind closed—I agreed because I did not know what was the process and I thought up to that point that they were going to do the right thing.

We created a family steering committee and we gave the Commission 168 questions to answer. We only have 22 of those questions answered. We wanted to have a family member to be part of the Commission and they say, "We don't want to allow that because they will have access to national security papers" and a lot of flim-flam and baloney. We never got it. So we have to press for questions to be answered. We never get those answers.

Up to that point we thought that they were going to do the right thing. The final report shows up . . . What a surprise! My whole testimony was omitted. It doesn't appear. 27 people that I gave them to interrogate, they didn't call them. Not even one of them.

SOURCE: [What Really happened on 9/11? – William Rodriguez](#)

That the 9/11 Commission's work was subverted and undermined by conflicts of interest and deliberate cover-up is perhaps to be expected. But the efforts of people like William Rodriguez have been instrumental in advocating for those left quite literally in the dust of 9/11. Those whose stories are too problematic for the official 9/11 narrative to be given any credence or attention.

As Graeme MacQueen points out, the story told by William Rodriguez and the other witnesses to explosions in the Twin Towers that day is not a peripheral issue or a minor footnote in the story of 9/11. On the contrary, it is of central importance. Either Rodriguez and the other witnesses to explosions independent of the planes and fires are wrong, or they are right. And if they are right, we are forced to the conclusion that the official story of 9/11 is not just *mistaken*, but that it is a deliberate fraud that has been perpetrated on the American public—and the broader public around the world—for nearly two decades.

MACQUEEN: *Well, that would obviously indicate that somehow*

this building was wired for explosions and that there had been a plan made in advance of the plane attacks to destroy this building. And that means the official story about, you know, Mohammed Atta and the other 18 hijackers flying planes is an incorrect story.

That indicates that there was—to use the classic word—an inside job. Somehow, insiders—deep insiders—got in the building and readied it for annihilation on that day. And that also indicates that the story we’ve been told is false, and really knowingly false. Because, of course, Rodriguez and many other eyewitnesses to explosions were ignored, or silenced, or lied about by the official investigating agencies. Which means that the whole 9/11 story is a fraud.

Ultimately, the story of Rodriguez is important, not just for what it tells us about the official 9/11 narrative, or even for what it tells us about the way that power operates in society. It is important because it shows us what ordinary men and women are capable of in extreme situations. It reminds us that, in times of distress, we are still capable of coming together to help those around us. And it provides us with an example of someone who will not stop telling his truth, even when it becomes unpopular.

RODRIGUEZ: *Our wounds are still open. We’re still hurting. We’re still going through the process of traumatic shock syndrome—PTSD.*

You call me a hero, I call myself a survivor. For me, the heroes died on 9/11 in my opinion because they died helping others. I just had the only tool available for me at that time to do great things, so I was—I’m a survivor. I have that survival skill. Why did I survive and my friends didn’t?

And now 16 years after it hits me stronger because I see the families. I see new families that came out from people that I saved and I always wonder, you know, what would have happened

if those people that I lost—those 200 friends—will be alive today. It hits you. It hits you hard. So 16 years after, we're still dealing with the backlash of what happened on that day.

9/11 changed me. It changed the world. We all know that. But it changed me in more ways than I expected.

SOURCE: [The MSM Censored Full Story of William Rodriguez](#)