

## Jules Naudet's 9/11 Film was Staged

by Leslie Raphael  
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### Introduction

At 8.46 am on September 11, 2001, at the intersection of Church and Lispenard Streets in Manhattan, one of two French film-making brothers, 28-year-old Jules Naudet, was filming a group of firemen from Ladder 1/Engine 7 at 100 Duane Street, checking for an alleged suspected gas leak, when he captured what was thought to be unique film of American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston flying into the north tower of the World Trade Center, three quarters of a mile away. Two years later — the delay still not satisfactorily explained — a Czech immigrant called Pavel Hlava produced his own video film of the event, shot from south-east of the tower and much further away, at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Naudet's film, with its almost straight-ahead view of the plane hitting the tower, is still in many ways unique, and far superior to the "new" film. Naudet claims his film exists only because of pure luck — as would seem to be logical, given that this was the first attack of the whole "9/11" sequence, and was totally unexpected. When United Airlines Flight 175 flew into the south tower twenty minutes later, it was captured by several photographers who were filming the aftermath of the attack on its neighbour, but who had not, of course, filmed that attack itself. After the first attack, the second one was easy to film — but how else could the first one have been captured than by luck?



There is an answer to that question, but an extremely disturbing one. I believe the Naudet film of Flight 11 is a charade, staged to appear accidental. However bizarre that claim may appear to be, the evidence that justifies it is there in the film (the DVD version, issued in September 2002, titled "9/11 — The Filmmaker's Commemorative Edition"), and I challenge anyone watching it and following my arguments to reach any other conclusion. No-one can dispute that this is an extraordinary piece of film — because of its uniqueness as well as its content — and that there must therefore be an equally extraordinary explanation for how it came to be captured. I believe — for the reasons in this essay — that those who had both the motive and the effrontery to carry out these attacks also had the motive and the effrontery to film the first one for propaganda purposes, passing it off as the product of luck, complete with a contrived cover story, the one told in the Naudet film. The second plane would have been filmed anyway, but having "accidental" film of the first one as well was obviously too good to resist. It was too important an event not to somehow record on film and, with the help of professionals from the industry, which has had a long and close relationship with the intelligence agencies, it would not be too difficult to disguise the fact that the scene was arranged — the film equivalent of the (long-outdated, but similar) steganographic technique of hiding a coded message in a microdot, where it would not even be suspected. (The absence of film from the Pentagon that morning, where security surveillance appears — if only to the chronically gullible — to be limited to the one car park camera that allegedly got stills of the explosion, with the wrong date and time, must have some other explanation.)

Unfortunately — for them — the people behind this disguise operation were anything but professional, and it does not take a genius to deconstruct the whole thing, when the joints holding it together are so obvious, to anyone who can see not only what is in the film, but — just as important — what is **not**. Even the still photograph reproduced above raises questions. Where, for one example, in a Manhattan street scene at 8.45 am on a working Tuesday, is the moving traffic? The vehicles in the picture are all parked, and given that two of them belong to the Fire Department and are displaying emergency lights, it would be illegal to overtake them, or park behind them in the same block. Anyone, professional or amateur, who has tried filming street scenes knows about the problems moving vehicles can cause, and that the best solution is filming when there are none — but that normally means waiting for traffic lights to change. Or, even better, the situation in the Naudet film — a junction blocked by authority of the Fire Department, whether traffic lights change or not; a trick not available, it has to be said, to most ordinary photographers — one so unusual, in fact, that it immediately attracts suspicion. Furthermore, this photographer is not only filming at an officially blocked junction, he is filming the firemen who blocked it, as their guest — a 28-year-old beginner, treated the way a documentary film legend like Fred Wiseman might be; the suspicions multiply.

At the scene of a potential emergency, a photographer without credentials from the Fire Department would have been told to stand well clear, along with other pedestrians: he would not get the kind of privileged access Naudet gets. And if the white mail van parked at the south-east corner in this film had been turning right up Lispenard Street, between Naudet and the north tower, just as the plane flew into it, not only —



— since he is in the middle of the road — would he have had to get out of the way rather fast, the plane's impact could not have been filmed. How very convenient that, at the appropriate time, the van was still parked at that corner, the only other vehicles that could have caused problems belonged to the Fire Department and Naudet's view of the tower was unimpeded by either vehicles or people — including the firemen, all conveniently standing well away from the film action to the south.

How many firemen, precisely? According to Firehouse magazine (April 2002), three units responded to the gas leak call — Duane Street, Engine 6 from Beekman Street and Ladder 8 from North Moore Street — and James Hanlon's commentary tells us there were thirteen men on duty just at Duane Street alone that day, with only probationary Tony Benetatos left in charge of the firehouse when the call came in. There must have been at least twenty firemen at this intersection, yet no more than three are ever in shot at any one time. Where were the rest of them? All hiding behind Naudet, camera-shy? And where were the police at this emergency roadblock? The First NYPD Precinct's HQ is at 16 Ericsson Place, just across West Broadway from Lispenard, and round the corner from Ladder 8. Why did no-one contact the police? Why did the brothers choose Duane Street, out of the 224 firehouses in New York, or the 51 in Manhattan? One version says it was because it was one of the oldest in the city, another that the Naudets held interviews with several Fire Academy students and decided Benetatos was the perfect candidate; so it must have been sheer luck — again — that he just happened to work at the same firehouse as — explanation three — their "old friend" James Hanlon. What a coincidence. Or perhaps someone just didn't bother checking script continuity. Ironically — or not — Benetatos' mother, Rev. Patricia Ray Moore, a Presbyterian pastor, says she is convinced

the Naudet film was scripted, and "I think it was my boss." I would agree about the scripting, but not the writer: I would suggest someone in the pay of some branch of the US Government.

On that subject, I want to emphasise that this essay does not claim to be able to prove who was responsible for 9/11. The point of the exercise is to establish that the Naudet film must have been staged by people who knew about the attacks in advance: who those people might be is a different subject. I have my own ideas on that, but they have little or nothing to do with the Naudet film, other than observing that it seems rather unlikely that two French infidels would be working for a Muslim fundamentalist group -or that that group could penetrate and subvert the Fire Department of New York, which at some level seems to have been involved in the planning of 9/11 — and the Naudet film. If the film was staged, it strongly suggests that that planning must have been internal, but anything beyond that has to be guesswork, albeit educated. They wouldn't have done it if it was going to be simple to prove who they were: unless, of course, you buy the instant solution of the al-Qaeda confession — so much easier than having to animate the brain cells. Or maybe you prefer the Noam Chomsky argument: it must have involved hundreds of people. It would have leaked out — before it happened. So why doesn't that apply equally to al-Qaeda? Why did none of **them** talk? Zacarias Moussaoui was arrested before it happened: did **he** talk? If twenty or thirty Muslim terrorists could pull it off, without leakage, why not twenty or thirty senior US military officers — who would be in a better position to do it, and under the constraints of military discipline?

For the record, my own opinion is that 9/11 was commissioned by that cliché of American politics — the military-industrial complex: the one Eisenhower warned us about — and he should have known — he was one of them; and that the lead role in organising the attacks (and failing to respond to them) was played by the Pentagon, in particular the branch of the armed forces that took zero casualties when that building was hit — the US Air Force — in which formerly served General Richard Bowman Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (until his retirement on 30 September 2005) and prime 9/11 suspect. Considering method, motive and opportunity, the USA's military leaders have undoubtedly the opportunity of being able to fail to defend the country -at best — or to actually attack it themselves — at worst. Killing people is, after all, their job, and in the nuclear age — now 60 years old — the Pentagon's version of morality is, and always has been, what works. The multiple deceptions of 9/11 — like having Bin Ladin playing his part as the Muslim Lee Oswald, or Hitler, or Satan, or whoever — would have gone to the specialists in that area, George Tenet's CIA. But none of this derives from the Naudet film, and I would not want it thought that that was my case. The case is only that it was staged.

It is, of course, possible — theoretically — that all the circumstances in the film were genuine, if unusual, and that it was captured by chance. The most incredible things do happen that way sometimes, and we have all heard the stories. They do not normally involve capturing the last two seconds of a plane's flight before it ploughs into the joint tallest building in New York. That sets this story apart from the likes of four generations of father and son all having the same birthday. A jet being used to attack a skyscraper is an unusual enough event on its own, without being asked to accept a second bizarre proposition happening at the same time — that someone managed to get full-frontal film of it, while making a documentary about firemen checking a gas leak. How often has that been seen on the streets of New York in the last 50 years? How many fingers would you need to count it? And how many of the cameramen were French? Why not have it captured by an Albanian Jehovah's Witness, standing on his head on a bicycle, while

juggling three camcorders, blindfolded? Because what is most unusual — and most suspect — about the Naudet story is that its unusual circumstances are all highly **convenient**. The scene could not have been filmed by someone in normal circumstances — and wasn't, to prove the point. It had to be an unusual situation — but it would have been far more credible if there had been only one or two unusual elements in it, and none especially convenient to the photographer. Naudet himself has suggested the intervention of "History" to explain his achievement — but we might ask why that intervention did not prevent the plane from hitting the building, instead of letting him film it happening. Why would an omniscient God need a videotape, or want **us** to have one? But someone in the propaganda business might. Half a dozen pieces of luck coinciding would produce a credible story: when ten times that many are involved, the odds magnify astronomically. You have to take into account that the conveniences in my list do not all have only one alternative — but even if they did, their cumulative effect would be enough to justify my claim that staging is more credible than accident. The Occam's Razor standard says the simplest, most obvious, explanation is normally the correct one, and in this case complicity causes far fewer problems than accepting 65 simultaneous accidental conveniences. In probability terms, one fraud beats a 65-part miracle.

I cannot claim to be able to **prove** my proposition, except in that sense — but that is the sense in which things are proved in a criminal trial: to the satisfaction of a jury weighing the evidence — beyond a reasonable doubt. I do not believe there is a reasonable doubt that this film shot must have been prearranged, because luck is so improbable an explanation. There is no smoking gun in the film — only circumstantial clues and absences. But I don't need a smoking gun — I only have to demonstrate which is more probable: either Jules Naudet performed the greatest miracle in the entire history of photography, with not one film or still picture remotely comparable to it — no other event of such historical importance, or as unlikely, given its brevity and unexpectedness, to be captured on film, ever **has** been filmed; or, like so many other miracles before and since, it is a total fraud, the product of dishonesty. The Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination started off as film of a public event — a Presidential visit to Dallas; the explosion of the Hindenburg in 1937 — as in the "Oh, the humanity!" film — took place at a public event. There was no public event going on in Lispenard Street in Manhattan on 11 September 2001: no-one (or almost no-one) was expecting a President or an airship — or a hijacked jet. If someone had been filming the Grand Hotel in Brighton in the small hours of 12 October 1984 while making a documentary about the Metropolitan Police, and captured a bomb going off, there might be questions asked as to how the film-maker could be so "lucky" — or whether he might in fact be in league with the IRA. Not an exact analogy — the IRA has never had any interest in filming its bombings, for example -but roughly equivalent to Naudet's achievement. Another example might be a Japanese photographer in August 1945 capturing a large bomb being unloaded from an American plane called the "Enola Gay." No such film or photograph exists — for obvious reasons — and if it did, the reason would be that the photographer was working for the US armed forces. I think that, as it happens, is the explanation of the Naudet film — although I do not necessarily accept that Jules Naudet was the photographer. He claims to have been, and he may have been, but, like my proposition, there is no proof in the film — only circumstantial evidence. One could equally point out that, if my argument is a conspiracy theory, so too is the official version of what happened on 9/11. The only two people to date with upheld convictions were both found guilty of **conspiracy**. One of them pleaded guilty, meaning no evidence of that conspiracy would be put to the court in a trial, and in the other case the evidence

was admitted to be circumstantial, so it arguably remains only a **theory** - until the major conspirators are convicted.

How probable is it that not only did Naudet (or whoever) capture Flight 11 — as if that were not enough on its own — but that he and his brother Gédéon then went on to record the rest of that day's events — and survive them? Who else could be almost simultaneously inside the towers, out on the streets and back at Duane Street firehouse, eight blocks away, than a pair of miracle workers like these? They even managed — by pure accident, of course — to record the totally unexpected collapse of No. 7 World Trade Center, seven hours after No. 1 fell. The people who helped to produce the Naudets' "9/11" film seem not to know the meaning of the words "subtlety" and "taste" — but I am not a film critic. I am making an accusation of complicity in mass murder, based on the few seconds of film of Flight 11 that I think prove the case. One could be forgiven for thinking the film might have been shot by a recruit of Bin Ladin's based in New York, given al-Qaeda's fondness for videos and cassettes (which they somehow manage to deliver to al-Jazeera, time after time, without ever giving away their whereabouts). They would obviously have had the required foreknowledge, and it certainly suits their interests, or their alleged ones, in shocking and terrorising people. But fear propaganda is a weapon on both sides of the War Against Terrorism, and governments have far more experience of it than terrorist groups. The US and British governments used fear of non-existent WMD to justify their illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003, and fear of another 9/11 could keep the scaremongers in business for another twenty years — so much so that it seems obvious to some of us that the whole thing is as fabricated as the threat from Iraq. We **know** they lied about that: what else have they been lying about since 2001? 9/11 itself — the biggest lie of the lot? But, again, while these ideas may help explain the Naudet film's function, they are not proved by it.

### **The film sequence**

... in numbered edits (timings in seconds), with audio, classified as follows:

VO — Voice-Over (overdubbed commentary by James Hanlon)

Int — Interview (edited into film)

Live — sounds on original video, as taped on 9/11 or reconstructed

1. (4.2) Interior of Duane Street firehouse — fireman's jacket, etc  
VO: I was off that day. 13 guys from my firehouse were on.
2. (2.6) Close-up of Tony Benetatos' helmet ("Prob [Probationary] Firefighter 8361")
3. (2.1) Firemen's jackets, etc  
Live (unidentified firemen): Around 8.30 ... Engine ...
4. (1.1) Close-up of alarm bell ringing  
Live (unidentified): Ladder ...
5. (1.4) Firefighter Pat Zoda interviewed  
Int (Zoda): I believe the run came in ...
6. (2.5) Firemen responding to call  
Int (Firefighter Nick Borrillo): ... we get the run for the gas leak ...
7. (2.0) Borrillo interviewed  
Int (Borrillo): ... or an odor of gas in the street, actually, I think it was.
8. (2.2) Firemen leaving firehouse  
Int (Firefighter Dennis Tardio): It was Lispenard and Church ...
9. (1.1) Tardio interviewed  
Int (Tardio): ... odor of gas.

- 10.(4.2) Firefighter Joseph Casaliggi interviewed  
Int (Casaliggi): You know, you don't think anything of it, you just — you get on the rig, you say "All right, it's an odor of gas."
11. (2.0) Fire truck pulling out of firehouse
- 12.(4.6) Inside Fire Department car (a Chevrolet Suburban SUV), with unseen driver on left, Naudet in seat behind and Battalion Chief Joseph W. Pfeifer in right front passenger seat.  
VO: Jules was riding with the Battalion Chief, Joseph Pfeifer, videotaping.
- 13.(3.2) Jules Naudet interviewed  
Int (Naudet): It's just another call — I'm riding with the Battalion Chief.
- 14.(4.1) Inside car — close-up of Pfeifer from back seat  
VO: It was basically camera practice. See, Jules had only ...
- 15.(3.7) Inside car — less close than previous shot  
VO: ... been shooting for a few weeks. Before that, Gédéon was the ...
- 16.(2.9) Inside car — looking out front windscreen  
VO: ... main cameraman.  
Int (Naudet): Every time the battalion goes ...
- 17.(3.0) View of front of car, shot from a vehicle immediately ahead of it  
Int (Naudet): ... I go. You know, I just need to practise ...
- 18.(1.8) Inside car — driver parks at junction of Church and Lispenard  
Int (Naudet): ... so, I shoot ...
- 19.(5.9) Out on street, kneeling, looking south at Pfeifer and two other firemen ; they move left out of shot, revealing World Trade Center looming in distance behind where they had been — and, standing at traffic lights looking towards camera, the man seen with the firemen shortly after (Edit 23); camera holds on this view.  
Int (Naudet): ... and I don't stop.  
Live (Fireman in next shot): See, right here.
20. (2.3) Looking up Church Street — two firemen at north-east\* corner are trying to find where gas leak might be
- 21.(4.5) Close-up of gas detector being pointed at grate in street  
Int (Pfeifer): We checked the area with meters ...
22. (1.6) Pfeifer interviewed  
Int (Pfeifer): ... and it was kind of routine.
23. (4.1) Looking north-west at group in street — fireman and bystander, another fireman just out of shot to the right, and Pfeifer, checking grate with meter; sound of plane arriving, the two in front turn and look up, Pfeifer turns to camera, photographer pans left and captures impact, zooms in for close-ups of damage  
VO: It was 8.46 in the morning. That's when this stopped even resembling a normal day.  
Live: (voices in background saying "Holy shit!" several times, etc).  
Int (Firefighter John O'Neill ): Right then and there, I knew that ...
24. (4.0) O'Neill interviewed  
Int (O'Neill): ... this was going to be the worst day of my life as a firefighter.
25. (1.2) Back inside car — blurred view of surrounding buildings, etc.  
Live (Pfeifer, on radio): Go to ...
26. (4.2) Inside car — Pfeifer, filmed from back seat  
Live (Pfeifer, on radio): ... go to the Trade Center  
Int (Pfeifer): Immediately, I knew that this wasn't an accident.
- 27.(4.1) Inside car — view of WTC in distance, through window
28. (5.0) Inside car — Pfeifer  
VO: Chief Pfeifer made the first official ...

29. (6.4) View of WTC through front windscreen, with close-ups  
VO: ... report.  
Live (Pfeifer, on radio): We have a number of floors on fire. It looked like the plane was aiming towards the building.
30. (8.3) Inside car — Pfeifer  
Live (Pfeifer, on radio): ... transmit a third alarm. We'll have the staging area at Vesey and West Street.
- 31..... Fire truck beside car — etc., etc.

\* NB: Throughout this whole essay, for the sake of simplicity, directions are only approximate — as if Church Street is aligned true north-south and Lispenard true east-west, which they aren't; Church Street and its neighbours are actually about 30 degrees off true north-south. This does not invalidate any of the arguments.

### **The conveniences**

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 in the middle of the street, not on a pavement, where he would risk pedestrians walking in front of him, bumping into him, etc.
3. He is in a north-south street, giving a view of the Twin Towers — not, for example, further west along Lispenard Street, with the 430-foot AT&T Building in front of him, blocking the south view — which even the 40-foot building on the east side of the street would do, as demonstrated in the photograph at the start of this article, which does not even show the full height.
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 would 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. 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 too 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. 34.
5. He has a camcorder with him, unlike most people — even professional photographers don't always have their equipment with them.
6. 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.
7. The group are all standing still, unlike most New York pedestrians — or firemen — who tend to be going somewhere.
8. The gas leak has just been dealt with seconds before the plane appears, and nothing of any great importance happens in the interim, which allows the photographer to immediately switch to filming the new subject.
9. The plane flies alongside the next street west, when it could have been 20 blocks away — but would they have heard it?
10. 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. The plane could have turned up behind him, or at an awkward angle, instead of passing straight in front, from right to left, north to south.

11. 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 flying 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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 noise, smoke and danger?
15. 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?
16. 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.
17. At a junction of two one-way streets, where the northwards street has been blocked, he only has to worry about traffic coming from one direction — the one he is filming towards — west.
18. There would not be much through traffic from that direction 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.) But he needs to be able to guarantee **no** traffic.
19. The photographer shows views of the junction in all directions — except east: he apparently wants to avoid even briefly turning his back to the plane (south — edit 19 in film sequence list; north — edit 20 ; west — edit 23) before there **is** any plane.
20. 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 in the sunshine — perfect filming conditions.
21. 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.
22. 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.

23. He isn't — as shown earlier in the film (edit 19 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.
24. He isn't — also as shown earlier in the film (edit 21) — filming towards the ground when the plane passes, or capturing the plane would have been far more difficult.
25. 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.
26. 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 deal with it. 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 ostensible 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 Thomas Spinard told a Fire Department 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?)
27. No-one in the film distracts his attention by talking to him, and the cameraman's own voice is never heard; voices close to the camcorder microphone could even have drowned out the plane. The firemen might have noticed it, but would the cameraman?
28. 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 whole tower. When the plane's 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% has a clear view of, on the face closest to him.
29. He judges the point where the plane reappears so precisely — left and up simultaneously — rather than left and then up, wasting time — that no adjustment is required, up or down, left or right, when he might have overshot, undershot, or had to raise or lower the camera, blurring his picture of the impact.
30. 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.
31. He captures the point of impact almost exactly in the centre of the picture, when it could easily — and far more credibly — have been off centre, at the edge, or barely captured at all.
32. 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 since 1989) 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.

33. 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.
34. 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.
35. 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 reappeared earlier, which might involve trying to follow it with the camera; further north, and neither plane nor target would be visible at all.
36. He condenses a plane flying half a mile 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, condensed 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 record it happening: photographic minimalism at its most minimal.
37. 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, being much closer to the tower, having to swing the camera right up to the top 20 floors — even if the firehouse faced south, which it doesn't, meaning he would have had to run outside and across the street.
38. 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.
39. 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.
40. 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 carry on trying to film it when it was already tiny, and getting tinier by the second?
41. 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.
42. 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.
43. The plane's flight is horizontal, and low enough to allow the engine noise to be heard on the ground, when it could have targeted the tower diagonally downwards, and not been audible until the last couple of seconds.
44. 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.

45. 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.
46. 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 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.
47. 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.
48. The gas leak could have been — most are -inside a building, but was allegedly out on the street.
49. 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.
50. All the firemen are standing in front of him or on his right when the plane passes, when they, or one of them, could have been on his left, blocking his view of the impact. There were 12 from Duane Street alone, yet no more than three, including Chief Pfeifer, are ever in shot at any one time: where are the rest of them, where are the men from the two other firehouses who answered the call, and how could every one of these 20-plus firemen manage to avoid accidentally getting in his way?
51. 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.
52. The gas leak is 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.
53. He could have recorded 10 seconds of the flight, but not the last 10 seconds ; he could have recorded the 10 seconds before the last 10 but then lost view of the tower; that did not happen.
54. 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.
55. 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 just the right distance — about 1,300 yards.
56. He would have to be quite close to the plane, so as 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, and if their engines weren't switched off.
57. 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.)

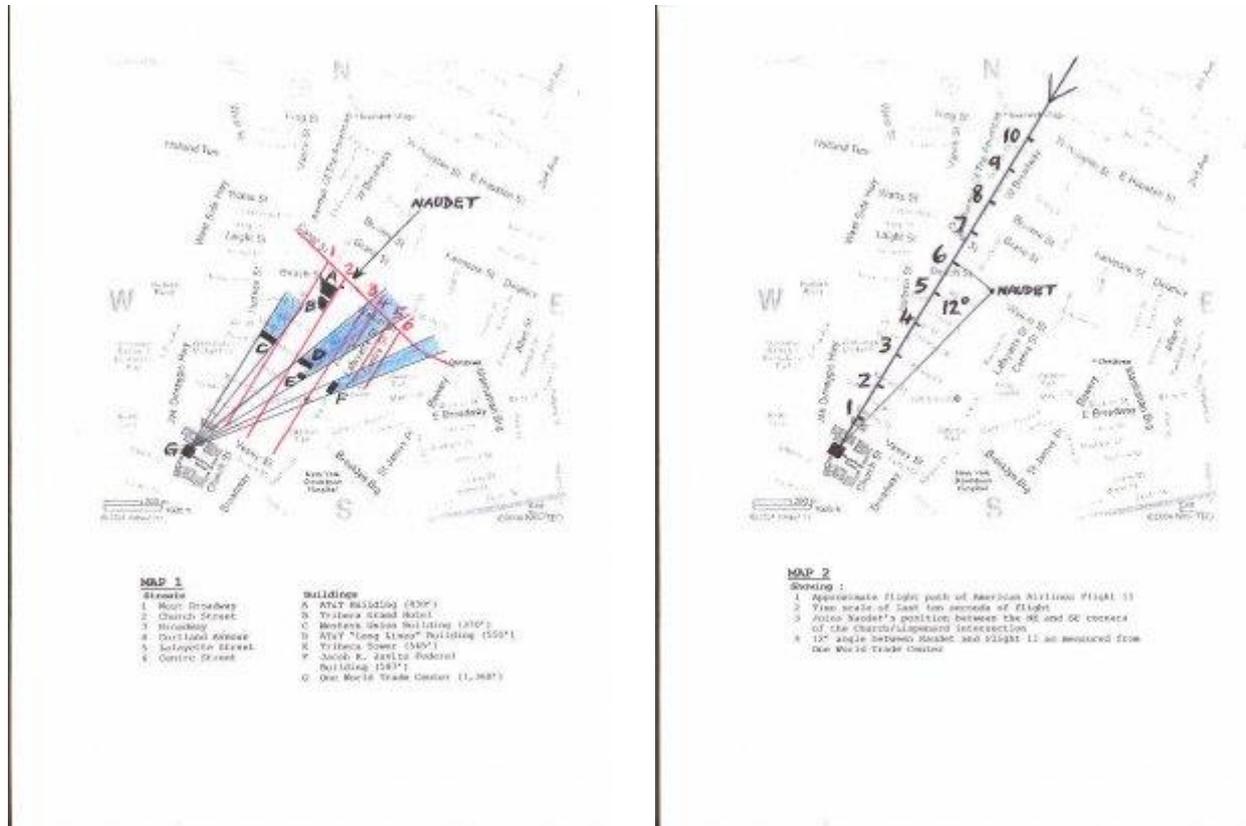
58. He would want to visually condense the flight to the minimum, so as to avoid camera motion — the best way being to get right behind the plane; this film is shot from right behind the plane, with the visible flight condensed to 20 degrees.
59. He would want to leave out all of the flight but the last 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.
60. He would want to leave out most of the tower, and only capture the area of the impact — the rest of the tower would only be taking up valuable filming space, 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.
61. 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. He and his brother are documentary film-makers, jointly credited for cinematography in their only previous film — "Hope, Gloves and Redemption: The Story of Mickey and Negra Rosario" (1999) — despite Jules' claim to have almost no camera experience.
62. 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.
63. 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 etc.
64. 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 unpreparedness — although the perfect motion and the perfect view at the end of it, having the tower in the middle of the frame, suggest otherwise.
65. 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 41-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 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 clearly identifiable as a plane, and that was the point of the exercise — filming the damage, and what caused it.

## The maps

Now please refer to Maps 1 and 2 (click on them to enlarge)



and consider the proposition in reverse. This, of course, contravenes the scientific standard — or would if it was the only method I was using. It is intended as a confirmation of the standard, in the same way as you would reverse a mathematical process to prove it was correct in both directions. In this case we have a fact at one end and a hypothesis at the other — but the exercise proves they are at least consistent. If there are other hypotheses that fit the facts, I would like to hear them.

Assume as given the information that a civilian airliner will be deliberately flown into the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8.46 am on the morning of 11 September, 2001, hitting the tower head on at 450 m.p.h. after flying in a straight line towards it, at a constant height of about 1,200 feet, impacting at around floor 95 (15 or so from the top of the tower) — to contain the death toll to roughly 2,000 (can there be any other explanation for the height?); we need propaganda film of this event, showing the last seconds of the plane's flight (just in case there are no eyewitnesses, in which case the fire could have been caused by something inside the building) and allowing a close-up of the damage to the building after impact, which means filming from somewhere north of the tower. Obviously, the film has to be disguised as "accidental," so a cover story has to be contrived, and a suitable filming location chosen. This is no doubt exactly how the Naudet film was organised — by setting requirements, and trying to solve all the problems involved — in a brainstorming session like the one in the film "Wag the Dog," about a fabricated war, ironically — starring Robert De Niro, who, even more ironically, was

somehow persuaded to introduce the Naudet film, and lend credibility to it, when he or his management should have known better.

The vast majority of Manhattan's population at any given time is either inside a building — home, school, workplace, etc — or a vehicle — car, bus, subway, etc. Of the small minority who are outside on the street, on foot, most of those are moving towards a destination. It would be virtually impossible to capture the impact either from inside a building or vehicle, certainly a moving one, or while walking, so the photographer has to be outside, on the street, stationary. The most convenient pretext for being in a certain place, at a certain time, is to use people who have to be at **any** place, at **any** time — one of the emergency services: firemen, for example. But firemen don't normally carry cameras with them. Solution — have someone else filming them, for a documentary. But the film couldn't be about a fire, if we need to capture the plane: it would be too distracting and too dangerous. The plane would only be audible and visible for about ten seconds from any one point in the city; ten seconds of extraneous noise near the camera could completely drown out the plane's engines. What we need is a silent emergency — a gas leak, for example. Since we want to avoid filming the plane in motion, which might blur the impact shot, we need an excuse for only filming the last few seconds, preferably from behind the plane — but not straight behind it, because that would look too convenient; as would managing to grab a camera, or start filming, just before the impact. The best method is to have the plane hidden from view temporarily — plausible enough, in a city as full of tall buildings as New York. Not that you need a tall building to hide a plane — or even the World Trade Center towers. If they were the only buildings in New York, and the rest of it was flat, it would be easily possible to hide them from one person's view by having someone else standing in the way — an adult in front of a child, for example — or, as shown in the Naudet film, a fireman filmed from a child's height. Or the camera's view could be blocked by having the lens coated in dust — another scene from the Naudet film, as it happens. Not to mention other filming hazards like lampposts, traffic lights, road signs, tree branches, birds, etc.

The number of streets that can be used for filming is extremely limited, and for these purposes I would reduce it to the six north-south streets shown in Map 1 — in eastwards order, West Broadway, Church Street, Broadway, Cortland Avenue, Lafayette Street and Centre Street.

Objections — and answers to them:

Why not from somewhere west of the flight path?

Because it would mean filming eastwards, towards the sun. That whole region is completely excluded for that simple reason: it has to be east of the plane, with the sun behind the camera, to avoid any possibility of flashes of sunlight ruining the impact shot.

Why not from somewhere north of Canal Street?

Because, as can be seen in the still from the Naudet film, the tower — and the plane — are quite small as seen from Lispenard Street; they would be even smaller from further north. He could have used his zoom lens to get a closer view, but that would also apply to Lispenard, where we get no close-up until after the impact. He could have shown the plane's markings in the film with his zoom lens — but didn't.

Why not from an east-west street?

Look at the still again. Only the antenna on the north tower is above the height of the cafe sign at the south-east corner, and the two tallest buildings in New York are apparently smaller than one only five floors tall. A 20-foot building on the south side of an east-west street, at that distance from the Trade Center towers, would completely hide them, unless the street was 25 yards wide — and very few buildings in Manhattan are only 20 feet tall. There may be streets in New York with no buildings on the south side, but not many in this part of the city. This close to the Trade Center, north-south streets are a far better proposition for a view of the towers — the closer the better, without being too close, southwards or eastwards. Intervening buildings are a problem in both directions, south and east.

Why not from further east — say, the Bowery or the Brooklyn Bridge?

For two main reasons: because the plane would be further away, smaller and less audible, especially with the traffic on the bridge, and because the impact shot would be from an angle of 45 degrees or more — not the best view for a close-up.

Why not from nearer the tower, say Duane Street?

Because of the time factor: it would half the amount of time available to capture the plane, since Duane Street is only three seconds of flying time from the north tower (Map 2). It has to be done from somewhere nearer Canal Street, giving about six seconds. That period could be extended by filming the plane arriving from the north, but it would involve tracking it in flight as it approached the camera and flew on towards the target — too wide a panning angle - if, in the first place, the plane's noise gave enough warning to film it approaching before it passed the photographer. It would be better not to attempt filming it until after that point.

Why not from West Broadway?

Partly because of the 370-foot-tall Western Union Building (C on map), which hides the north tower from view (the "blind area" shown in blue in Map 1) until about White Street, where the impact point starts to become visible. Even if filmed from somewhere between White Street and Canal Street, the plane would be too visible for comfort: it would look far too convenient that the photographer just happened to find himself almost right under the plane, with its target directly in front of him. From the junction of West Broadway and Lispenard, only about the top 250 feet of the tower would be visible above the Western Union, with the plane hitting 150 feet from the top. If Church Street, with the top 400 feet visible, looks too convenient, this would be even worse. There would also be the major problem of how to film a plane flying above the photographer, especially with no large building to hide it behind. The Western Union itself can be rejected, only four seconds of flying time from the tower.

Why not from Broadway?

Because, as the map shows, the part of Broadway from Canal Street southwards as far as Worth Street is a blind area, because of two buildings — the AT&T "Long Lines" Building (D on the map), 551 feet tall, and the Tribeca Tower (E on the map), 545 feet. South of

Worth Street, the time factor and the angle factor come into play — and distance, a quarter of a mile from the plane.

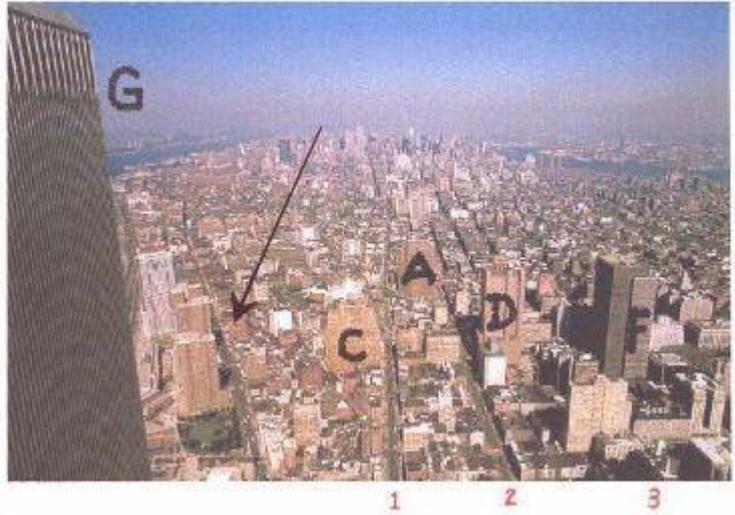
Why not Cortland Avenue, Lafayette Street or Centre Street?

Cortland is excluded because it is entirely within the same blind area that excludes the above part of Broadway. Lafayette is partly inside that blind area and partly inside one caused by the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building (F on the map), 587 feet tall, which also excludes half of Centre Street. Either street might still be suitable: there is a "window" in both giving a view of the WTC, but it would mean filming it between the Javits Building on the left and the Tribeca Tower on the right, which might look a little too convenient — presuming, that is, none of the intervening buildings on the west side of Broadway were an obstruction; there is also, again, the distance problem, Centre Street being 700 yards from the plane. The sound might well carry that far, but the further away, the less likely to be audible above ambient noise. The only candidate left, having effectively disposed of everywhere else, is far superior to any of the above in several different ways: the top end of Church Street, south of Canal Street, is firstly not in a blind area. Not only does it have no large buildings hiding the Trade Center — except right at the top, where it meets Canal Street — but the two giant buildings that cause that problem from Broadway and West Broadway are both hidden from sight from Church Street — the Western Union completely hidden behind the Tribeca Grand Hotel (B on the map, and under the north tower in the still photo), the "Long Lines" Building barely visible (above and to the left of the traffic lights in the still). It is the closest street to the plane, after the too-close West Broadway, and allows a full six seconds of flying time from the plane's target. Without checking a map, even people who live in Manhattan might not know — and the film predictably fails to point out — that those towers in the distance are at the end of the next street to the west; filmed from that street, their location would be obvious. Most importantly, Church Street has the 430-foot AT&T Building (A on the map) — more than tall enough to hide a plane flying at 1,200 feet 250 yards away, and long enough to hide its flight from Lispenard Street southwards, until two seconds from impact. It would also telescope those two seconds of flight into a 20 degree angle, in a stationary picture. The easiest way to pick this out as the best filming location is one that is no longer available: doing it in reverse, by studying the view from the topmost floors of the north tower of the Trade Center, using a zoom lens if necessary, to see which part of which street supplied the best combination of all the factors required. It takes a bit longer using a two-dimensional map, but it can still be done.

It may be a piece of genuine luck that the Tribeca Grand, opened in May 2000, is only eight floors tall, when its "sister" hotel, the SoHo Grand, between Canal and Grand Streets, opened in August 1996, is 15 floors. What would a 15-floor building in front of the AT&T do to Naudet's view of the north tower? Look at the still photo and work it out. But, fortunately, there wasn't one: if there had been, perhaps a different location would have been chosen. As it is, the Church-Lispenard junction may not be the only option, but it is by far the best. How strange that that should be exactly where Jules Naudet managed to find himself, with a camcorder, in the right company, facing the right direction, at the right time, on the right morning, on the right side of the street, etc etc, ad nauseam. What are the odds of the only photographer in Manhattan to capture this impact being in the best possible place to do it, and in all the right circumstances? Is this remotely credible?

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Manhattan, looking northwards from the observation deck of Two World Trade Center, the South Tower, showing the view to the north-east, the best area for capturing the last seconds of Flight 11, and (lettered as in [Map 1](#), from left to right, C, A, D and F) the four biggest buildings — and biggest potential problems. Note that the photographer has to be at street level: no-one inside a building would be able to both see the plane and discern its direction, in time to capture it (someone on a rooftop might, but would that be a credible story?). Note also that the only



Click to enlarge

streets clearly visible are north-south, Broadway (3) being barely visible at all. This also applies in reverse: if you can't see the street from the Trade Center, you can't see the Trade Center from the street. The small red spot to the right of the A (the AT&T Building) marks the approximate position of Jules Naudet, at the junction of Church (2) and Lispenard. The black arrow shows the approximate path of the plane as it flies over the Western Union Building (C) towards the North Tower (G). Building B in [Map 1](#), the Tribeca Grand Hotel, is missing from this view because it was only built in the late 1990s; likewise, E, the Tribeca Tower, was only built in 1991; the only effect of adding these two to the picture would be to even further restrict the filming options.

## **Conclusion**

Why does the film never mention that the tower was at the end of the next street west, or that the plane was so close to the photographer? Because it would look too convenient. Why was the film never claimed to be unique until a year later, when it must have been known within a day of being shot? How could anyone else have filmed it without realising it, or — Pavel Hlava, for instance — wanting to publicise it? Naudet's film was shown on television at least as early as September 12, 2001, in both the USA and UK: if it had been described as unique at that time, it might have raised questions about its authenticity much earlier. The film is said to have been "accidental," but Naudet did not film the plane accidentally: he was consciously trying to record it. This "accident" was actually a whole series of coinciding "accidents," of time, place, traffic, etc, that allowed him to do it — far too many to be credible, and none of them drawn attention to in the film.

Although the full-length film, "9/11," is not my main subject in this, it does have many more suspect sequences. For example, when we see the front of the Duane Street SUV being driven up Church Street for the gas leak call (Edit 17 in the Film Sequence listing), the implication is that this is the actual event on the day, so Naudet must be inside the car (although the glare in the windscreen prevents identification): so who filmed the car from outside it? This scene is obviously a reconstruction: apart from the ethics of doing that in a documentary, it raises the question of why Naudet, who was at the firehouse when the alarm call came in, did not film the whole episode from then on, instead of reconstructing the scene using later interviews with the firemen. He was there himself: why do we have no film of it actually happening? And why, once the live filming does start, at the junction, just before the plane arrives, is he apparently kneeling in the street as he films the firemen

standing in front of the Trade Center towers — which he holds the camera on as they walk out of shot, as shown in the still photograph in the heading? He was there for one reason — to film the firemen: why is he prematurely filming the Trade Center, as if he somehow **knows** it is about to become the subject of the film, seconds before it does? And why, when James Hanlon's commentary was overdubbed later, and this is our last ever view of the towers intact, is nothing said about it? It can only be an "establishing shot" - to make the (unspoken) statement that he can see the Trade Center from where he is — because it would look suspect if our first view of it was when he panned left to film the plane hitting it. But it looks suspect anyway, because unless he knew that was going to happen, why would he need to make the statement? How **could** he have made it? "I can see the Trade Center." So what? How could he possibly have known the answer to "so what?" before the plane supplied it? And why was he kneeling? Who knows? Possibly checking his view for height. Is there some innocent explanation?

Just as bizarre, watch Pfeifer's reaction to the plane when it arrives, recorded on film: the other fireman and the bystander turn and look up at it, but Pfeifer, by contrast, turns and looks towards the camera, turning his back to the plane, as if totally oblivious to it. It seems he can see and hear something more interesting than what is grabbing everyone else's attention; or maybe he is deaf, and doesn't hear the plane — or blind, and doesn't see it, or the reaction to it of folk standing right next to him — distinct career disadvantages for a fireman. Every description of this event you will read (except this one) says that everyone there looks up at the plane: not true — Pfeifer doesn't. And **why** doesn't he?

Most bizarre of all, perhaps, is the scene where the north tower collapses, and Jules Naudet has to move fast. "And I don't even have time to think at that point. I just — I just run." How many of us would choose to hold on to a video camera while running for our lives from a collapsing skyscraper? But Naudet is devoted to his art: he doesn't care that he could always buy a new camcorder, but not a new life. He hangs on to his machine, and leaves it running — and it's still running when he (surprisingly gently) hits the deck, with Pfeifer allegedly on top of him. Only damage — some dust on the lens. How about that? Saves his life **and** his camera, and films it happening. Quite something, on top of recording the mass murder of 3,000 others who didn't have his literally unbelievable luck. I would have instinctively flung the camcorder and anything else I was carrying — I would have had no interest in filming what might well have been my horrible death: but I don't have photography in my veins, like Jules Naudet — the man who was earlier filming in Lispenard Street because he needed "camera practice" (see film sequence No. 14).

How could he follow filming his own miraculous dice with death? How could the brothers follow a film like "9/11"? Maybe that's why there has been no new film for four years: in fact, since the brothers were the honorees at the 2nd annual United Firefighters Association celebrity golf benefit at Lake Success on Long Island on 23 June 2003, with Evander Holyfield, Jerry Orbach, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and others, Jules and Gédéon Naudet have effectively dropped off the radar: no film projects, no news, no interviews, no photographs. The Emmy and Peabody laureates have gone back to obscurity — and the world of journalism seems not to have noticed, or cared. How could they just forget the makers of such a cinematic tour de force? The Flight 11 shot alone was worth an Academy Award.

Jules Naudet makes filming the plane, a moving subject, look just as easy as filming the burning tower, a stationary one: simplicity itself. In reality, what could be harder than

capturing an unexpected and unrepeatable scene of a jet flying at 1,200 feet for two seconds at 450 miles an hour, from a ground level street in New York, the city of skyscrapers? How could such a film be shown many thousands of times, all around the world, without attracting the suspicion it deserves? Because — and the people behind it were doubtless relying on this — to most people who see it, the idea that the film was staged by their own government would be literally unthinkable: it would not even occur to them. Even those prepared to think the unthinkable — to believe the 9/11 attacks themselves were an "inside job" — might not realise the film was part of it, set up by the same people. How could documentary film of one of the attacks, shot by someone with no apparent link to the government, be suspect? Would they be stupid enough to **use** someone linked to them? The film's uniqueness demands an explanation that fits logic and objectivity, and if luck fails that test, which it does, we have to admit alternatives, however disturbing.

What could be more unthinkable than the most senior military officers in the USA planning terrorist attacks against their own country and falsely blaming a foreign state, as an excuse for invading it? Operation Northwoods, from 1962, may never have been carried out, but its creators fully intended it to be, and seriously expected their government to endorse it: not, one presumes, because they were certifiable, but because similar ideas must have been approved and successfully carried out in the past. With America now based, long-term, in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iraq, and everyone else under US domination — by general consensus, unthinkable (that word again) before 2001 — who can deny that, in those terms, 9/11 was a "success"? But hardly for those alleged to be behind it. What kind of success is it to make your supposed enemy not weaker, but stronger than ever? And how strange — or not — that should be the result every time the USA is attacked: Mexico 1846 — Cuba 1898 — Hawaii 1941 — New York and Washington 2001 — the attacks variously provoked, engineered or self-inflicted; where there's a need, there's a way. Every 50 years or so, the same con pulled on a US public that seems to learn nothing: you have to be totally brainless not to see the pattern, but that description would suit the millions of Americans, the shame and laughing stock of the civilised world, who all along have dutifully swallowed every word of the Evil Terrorist Mastermind story, straight from a Superman comic or a Hollywood schlockbuster, because they are incapable of handling anything more complex, like the real world around them.

In that real world, four years ago, George W. Bush promised to bring the perpetrators of 9/11 to justice. What happened to that promise? Let's look at his record. After the first ever 9/11 conviction, in Hamburg on 19 February 2003, Mounir al-Motassadeq was sentenced to 15 years for membership of a terrorist organisation and complicity in the 3,066 murders allegedly committed on 9/11; on 4 March 2004, that conviction was quashed. When his retrial on the same charges ended on 19 August 2005, he was acquitted on the murder charges but was given 7 years for al-Qaeda membership. His co-accused, Abdelghani Mzoudi, had been acquitted on all charges on 5 February 2004. On 22 April 2005, after more than three years of pre-trial hearings, Zacarias Moussaoui finally pleaded guilty in Washington to six counts of conspiracy involving the events of 9/11, saving the expense (and possible embarrassment) of a trial; he then immediately tried to withdraw his plea and claimed he had been involved in a different conspiracy, but not 9/11 — a claim given some backing even in the Kean Commission Report. On the very same day, 22 April 2005, 24 defendants (from the original 41 indicted, including Osama Bin Ladin) appeared in Madrid in a trial expected to last two months, with three of the 24 accused of being accessories to the murders of 9/11 — by now reduced to 2,973. In the event, the trial lasted less than three days — Friday 22, Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 — resulting in 18

convictions, but all murder charges and telephone evidence being thrown out, one of the three acquitted on all charges, one given 6 years for membership of al-Qaeda and the third, Imad Yarkas ("Abu Dahdah"), 27 years, comprising 12 for al-Qaeda membership and (as opposed to the 74,325 years — 25 for each murder — requested by the prosecution) 15 for "criminal formation," otherwise known as conspiracy — "providing funding and logistics" for those who planned 9/11, but **not**, according to the 447-page summary from the 3-judge panel, direct participation in 9/11.

That is the sum total of Bush's efforts to bring the guilty to justice: two convictions, a Spanish one of a minor figure in the conspiracy, on circumstantial evidence, and an American one with no trial, no jury and precious little credibility. It is entirely possible that even when Moussaoui is sentenced, some time in 2006, the sentence will be sealed — classified secret — as it was in 1998 in the bizarre case of another defendant who pleaded guilty to avoid a trial — Ali Mohamed, the al-Qaeda operative with a past life as a US Army instructor at Fort Bragg. The alleged "mastermind" of 9/11, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, has been in custody for nearly three years now, and Ramzi Binalshibh for longer than that: there seems to be no urgency in bringing them to trial, or even admitting where they are. As for Osama Bin Ladin, the Bush Government has long since frankly admitted they could care less where **he** is. We can discount the guilt by innuendo of the hundreds held in Guantánamo without being charged, with 9/11 or anything else, and the implied guilt of Saddam Hussein, against whom there never was **any** 9/11 case. Is this the justice — two highly dubious convictions — promised to the American people in September 2001 by the Commander-in-Chief who, at the absolute minimum, failed to prevent the attacks in the first place? Instead of the official version of events being proved in a court, we have had the Kean Report — just as 40 years ago we had the Warren Report — as a substitute for judicial process. The rest of the official 9/11 story amounts to hot air. The Bush government **has** no 9/11 case: not a single shred of evidence, put to a jury in a trial — which excludes Moussaoui — leading to the conviction of someone directly responsible — which excludes Yarkas — for planning 3,000 deaths. Given this abject failure — or, as I and millions of others believe, worse — far worse — perhaps my contribution might achieve something: it can hardly achieve less. If the real guilty parties have not yet been convicted, the whole question of their identity is wide open. The minor players convicted so far — or even the major ones — could very well have been the victims of manipulation by others still in the shadows. If the people who have so far only been accused didn't do it, who **did**? Given this state of affairs, no-one who thinks the US government itself organised 9/11 need offer the slightest apology for believing it — and they have Northwoods as a precedent, to prove that those at the very top of the US military establishment are capable of that level of cynicism — not just thinking it, but planning it, putting it in print and expecting it to be endorsed by a Defense Secretary and an Attorney General. Robert McNamara and Robert Kennedy may have had their reasons for rejecting Northwoods — perhaps not moral compunctions so much as the risks involved in something that, if exposed, would make the U-2 shootdown and the Bay of Pigs fiasco look like minor problems. By 2001, what made them major — the existence of the Soviet Union — was past history, the USA now had no serious enemies or competitors and Donald Rumsfeld and John Ashcroft were in office. When would there ever be a better opportunity? Does anyone with a brain and any sense of honesty seriously believe Osama Bin Ladin brought that about, or that a government like Bush's would sit around, staring into space, waiting for him to do it? They **made** the opportunity happen. Why would a real enemy — if they had any — give them a gift like that? Those who claim Bush did no more than capitalise on an accident really have to justify this fatuous image of the USA as a passive spectator, or a defenseless victim, when the historical record, quoted at length by

Chomsky and others, tells us the opposite. Was the Vietnam war, decades before 9/11, carried out by a passive, peace-loving state that believed in just minding its own business? How can anyone who knows about the rapacity and the lying hypocrisy of US governments possibly see them as poor little innocents, wide open to attack by a gang of terrorists living in a cave in Afghanistan? It would be hilarious if it wasn't so deadly depressing.

But there are reasons for optimism. I say the Naudet film is one of the keys to 9/11, that will expose the true perpetrators. It is not just a documentary record of a crime, but an integral **part** of that crime. What can we do about it? For one thing, we can call for the issuing of an international warrant for the arrest of the Naudet brothers and everyone else involved in the filming of Flight 11. This includes the bearded man seen in the film next to the fireman at the Church Street junction, looking up at the plane. Who is he? If he is the person who reported the gas leak, his call must have been recorded, with his details: New York Police Department should have the records, which may be available — to a resident — under the city's freedom of information codes. What does the Creative Editor at Vanity Fair, David Friend (said to have known their father, Jean-Jacques Naudet, for years, and the brothers ever since childhood) know about this film? What exactly was his role as one of 13 credited producers? How involved in the fraud is former Battalion Chief Pfeifer (after 9/11 promoted to Deputy Assistant Chief of the Department)? Or is that unthinkable because his brother Kevin was one of the 343 FDNY fatalities — as unthinkable as the idea that the Pentagon could be guilty of 9/11 when it was one of the targets? How involved are the other firemen from Duane Street seen in the film? Do they still work at Duane Street? Were the firemen who used to work there transferred elsewhere in the months leading up to 9/11? Transfers are nothing unusual: neither Pfeifer nor Benetatos (the 23-year-old "boy" who became a man) still works at Duane Street. Does James Hanlon, the actor-fireman, last seen on screen in "Raising Helen" (2004)? He is said in his biographies — such as they are — to speak French (and to have a French wife, Sophie Comet, also an actor): so why, throughout the film, does he refer to "Jools" and "Gideon"? And where are the Naudets themselves — Jules Clément (born Paris, 26 April 1973) and Thomas Gédéon (born Paris, 27 March 1970) — and what are they doing these days? Have they given up the film business, four years after their last one (only their second ever) and ten years after graduating from New York University film school in 1995? Why such a low profile when they should be American, if not international, celebrities? I have written to all these people, to give them the chance to comment — or sue — without getting one response; only concerted efforts are going to produce the answers we deserve. We owe it to all the victims and their loved ones — and to ourselves. If you have suspicions about the Naudet film, put them to the people who made it and the people who appear in it: write to the Naudets c/o William Morris Agency, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019; to DAC Joseph W. Pfeifer at Fire Department of New York, 9 MetroTech Center, Brooklyn, NY 11201; to your Representative or MP, to journalists and newspapers, to TV channels that show the Naudet film or the Flight 11 shot, etc etc ... and if you have any comments or observations on this essay, or **constructive** criticism, to: [lesraphael@hotmail.com](mailto:lesraphael@hotmail.com) or Leslie Raphael, 15 Belmont Crescent, Kilmarnock KA3 2SH, UK.

If the Naudets themselves — wherever they may be — want to contribute, or if they have evidence that could establish the Flight 11 film was genuinely accidental, despite 65 conveniences, they are more than welcome to provide it.

**Postscript: the Hlava film**

The obvious cover story for an accidental film shot of Flight 11 would be having a tourist do it: virtually nobody who actually lives in New York films landmarks like the World Trade Center that are part of daily life, but tourists do. The obvious story is, however, as usual, too obvious. For example, when it turned out that only one tourist had filmed it, some people might ask **why** only one. For another, most tourists filming the towers from the outside would want to emphasise the height by filming close — too close to capture much of the flight of a jet flying into one of them -not to mention too close for safety. Jules Naudet didn't film the plane as a tourist, or from his home, or from his place of work — or even from someone else's place of work — at least, not the place they spend most of their working hours. But someone else did — because, it would appear, provision was made for the possibility that suspicions might be raised, sooner or later, about the first film: if that were to happen, Film Two could be released, to "prove" the Naudet film wasn't unique after all. This simple explanation of the mysterious two-year delay before that happened has the merit of being remotely credible, unlike the official story.

Not one, but two male immigrants — both with a Sony camcorder, and both with a brother in the story — captured the last seconds of Flight 11: another coincidence (or not) to add to the list, although the two films are notable as much for their differences as their similarities — one by an amateur, the other a professional, for instance. Pavel Hlava, a Czech from Ostrava who came to the USA in 1999, and his only-just-arrived brother Josef were in a Ford Explorer SUV driven by Pavel's employer, Russian-born Mike Cohen, about to enter the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, at 8.46 am on September 11 2001, taking a detour on their way to a construction job in Pennsylvania so that Pavel could show his brother the Twin Towers and film them for the family back in Europe. This photographer picked not just the wrong day, but the wrong time, to film the World Trade Center. Within seconds of the towers first appearing in his "video postcard," with Hlava zooming in for a close-up, what happens? Along comes Flight 11 and crashes straight into it — perfect timing — not, we're told, that he identified the dot in his film as a plane until two weeks later. Unlike Naudet's, this story has the cameraman allegedly unaware he had filmed the plane, despite hearing, seconds later, a radio report saying one had just hit that very building: didn't it occur to him he might have captured it? Why would it take him two weeks to check? Not least when he later, consciously and without any doubt in his mind, managed to capture the second plane, Flight 175, hitting the south tower, and then its collapse 56 minutes later. And why would he then, having failed to sell a film whose significance he supposedly didn't appreciate, leave it lying around in his apartment in Ridgewood for two years, where his son once nearly wiped the tape, playing with it? And why would he then, having allowed one TV showing of his film in September 2003, refuse to allow it to be broadcast in public ever again? Because his employer objected, we're told: "Three thousand people died in that place ... the day he's gonna sell that film, he's not gonna work for me anymore." And we all know how difficult it is for Eastern European immigrants to find work in the west: rather less difficult than believing this nonsense, or the rest of the Hlava tale. I say that both Naudet and Hlava knew what was going to happen that morning, and were told how to film it by controllers working for one of the US intelligence agencies. Their attempts to explain how they managed to capture their films are obviously contrived, and both photographers are frauds and liars.

What is it with brothers? The Hlava brothers, the Naudet brothers, the Pfeifer brothers, the Bin Ladin brothers, the Bushes, the Kennedys, the Dulleses, the Oswalds, the Cabells (one the Mayor of Dallas, the other the deputy to one of the Dulleses at the CIA until one of the Kennedys fired them both). At least four pairs of brothers in the Dallas story and five in the 9/11 one ... but maybe we shouldn't read too much into it. And let's also forget

those other little curiosities — like "Naudets" being an anagram of "Duane St." You really do not need to get into the numerological ramifications of the date 9/11, such as the fact that ground was broken for the building of the Pentagon on 9/11/41, to know that we have not been told the truth about that subject — or to work out that, whatever the truth is, it may well have something to do with two pieces of "accidental" documentary, both of them deeply suspect.

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An earlier version of this article is [here](#),  
with an interesting picture of the Naudet brothers.

A slightly revised version of this article is [here](#).

A later updated version is [here](#).