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Gene Kuziw  
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## START OF TAPE

Mark Schoepfle: Well, Gene, the first question — by the way, if I can mention that this is an interview with Gene Kuziw. How is that pronounced?

Gene Kuziw: Kuziw.

Mark Schoepfle: Kuziw, and with Mark Schoepfle on January 29th for the World Trade Center.

Mark Schoepfle: My first question, Gene, is from the moment you were aware of something happening, what happened? What were you doing and what happened?

Gene Kuziw: I was in the Ellis protection office filling out paperwork. I just came back from a fire. I was on a wildland fire team out in Utah. And I was filling out the paperwork when I heard over the park radio in the background that some kind of explosion — and grabbed my camera and ran out to the fuel dock on the north end of the island, the parking lot area, and in fact saw smoke coming out of the trade tower. And this was before the park opened to the public. The first passenger boats did not unload yet, so this was just staff on the island, and contractors.

Gene Kuziw: And we just — I just assumed — and others around me assumed that there was some kind of smoke condition or fire or maybe a helicopter, but we didn't really see any debris or I didn't see any debris at the time, just smoke coming out of the building. And you know, there are many helicopter tours in the area, so we thought maybe — I thought maybe that was a possibility.

Gene Kuziw: And a few minutes later we heard a very loud, low roar of a plane and I looked over to the right and I saw across towards Governor's Island — just saw this plane coming in very low. And I just focused the camera on it. Just before impact I got that picture, I showed you, just before impact. And at that point one of my colleagues screamed out that we're being attacked, and it was pretty unbelievable.

Gene Kuziw: Added to that, the sound took a couple of seconds to travel. So, we saw this event take place and we saw a big ball of fire and the plane was just absorbed into the building. And it appeared that it just went right through because the flame just came out the other end. So, I thought it just passed through and continued traveling and possibly landed somewhere down by city hall area. But then a couple seconds later you just heard this tremendous explosion and we just stood there in disbelief for a few minutes.

Gene Kuziw: And they called for evacuation of the building, closing procedures. So, we all kind of gathered at the flagpole area and the park police with assistance of some of the staff began doing closing procedures. And at the time I still stuck around by the fuel dock to take some additional photographs. But then I thought of the statue, and if this was indeed some kind of terrorist event, I wanted to see what, if anything, happened to the statue. So, I ran to the east end of the island, and fortunately she was still standing there. And we all gathered by the flagpole area while they were trying to determine what to do next.

Gene Kuziw: And as it unfolded — that it indeed was a terrorist event — they got word of a plane going down in the Pentagon and airports were shut down nationwide. All air space was restricted. Being that I was one of the EMTs that day — that was not my primary function, I'm an interpreter here — but myself and the other EMT decided to begin to gather medical supplies as it was apparent that there would be many people in need of treatment. And Ellis Island was identified as a triage area to the New Jersey command center in Jersey City. So, we started to gather medical supplies from the EMS room and brought them out to the front near the dock area where we thought they would be unloading patients.

Gene Kuziw: And I went over with one of the EMT — with one of the first responders and the EMT — we went to get additional medical supplies from Liberty Island, which was pretty unsettling. You know, we're all nervous about something happening at the statue. So, we got to the island, ran in, got some supplies, and as we were — as I was loading up a stretcher with supplies, the EMS room was right next to the communications center, and the person at the — in the communications center just started screaming, holy shit. And that's when the first tower collapsed. So, we ran in and watched it on video. And then just past the monitor we were just looking out the window and just saw it happening.

Gene Kuziw: Then we got some of the supplies, headed back over to Ellis Island, and continued to set up a triage area. And you know, I'm still trying to work out the time frame. It just happened all so quickly and at the same time everything was just in slow motion. And the first boat with patients arrived and they had some firefighters with some crushing injuries and smoke inhalation. And then there were people who were covered in soot and debris with some minor lacerations. And several boatloads came mostly with walking wounded, people who just needed to get out of the area. And it became apparent that there weren't too many patients, or they weren't bringing them to us.

- Gene Kuziw: So, at one point the Jersey City Medical Center came with a mobile command center. So, they set up a — they took over incident command from that point on. And dozens of EMTs started to arrive and paramedics and even emergency room physicians were called onto the scene, onto the Ellis Island.
- Gene Kuziw: And I heard one of the law enforcement rangers say he is going in to the city on Liberty III, which is one of our workboats, and I requested to go along because if you're going there you might need — somebody might need medical attention. So, I grabbed some gear and got permission from the lieutenant to head over there. And we started to make our way over towards Lower Manhattan and we decided to go — the boat captain decided to dock near the World Trade Center area — I think it was referred to as the North Cove Marina — because that's where all the emergency boats were with the lights and sirens. And as we got near, it was apparent that we were unable to dock because there was just no room to dock there. All the police boats and fireboats were there.
- Gene Kuziw: So, we headed back to our main docking area which was the Marine Inspection Office at the south end of the Battery. And as we approached, I looked at the dock and there was one person standing there at the dock. And it was one of my colleagues, Charlie Deleo who was a volunteer, but he worked for the park for over 30 years, and they call him the Keeper of the Flame. He took care of the statue's torch, changing the lights. And Charlie was there covered in soot and debris, and I had a mask on, so I didn't really — wasn't able to communicate with him. But I gave him a bottle of water I had taken along, and kind of embraced. And he was just standing there. He told me later that he just wanted to stand there and watch the statue. And he just stood there for — I don't know how long he was there.
- Gene Kuziw: But once we got off the boat and we started heading into Battery Park area to see if there was anything, we could do to assist people. By that time, I made contact with some people from some ambulance companies and basically, they said that there's no — there were no patients. They were just — they've all been — all the patients were taken out already and they're just trying to get people out of Lower Manhattan. And we realized that there was really nothing else for us to do there, so we made our way back to Ellis Island.
- Gene Kuziw: And once we got back, the EMT — the EMS coordinator notified me that they were no longer planning on bringing any patients because there weren't any.

Gene Kuziw: They were planning on bringing deceased and they were planning — and they basically were setting Ellis Island up to be a temporary morgue facility, which I thought was a bad idea because there was no refrigeration on the island. But they cleared out one of the maintenance sheds in the back, which held heavy equipment and large trucks and whatnot, and basically were going to store bodies and body parts and whatnot. But fortunately, nothing ever arrived. They never came for whatever reason. They decided to, I guess, bring them to Liberty State Park directly, or I'm not sure what happened but they never came.

Gene Kuziw: At that point we just basically stood around and it was very frustrating because we had probably well over a hundred trained medical personnel on the island and really nothing else — nothing for us to do but wait. But they were bringing lots of other people who were walking wounded, who just were in Lower Manhattan. They were bringing them over just to get out of Lower Manhattan. And so, the rest of the staff were helping out with taking names, making sure that people got some food, a change of clothes — because everybody was covered in this debris and soot.

Gene Kuziw: And this went on for several hours into — you know — into the evening. And at that time, they basically let the rest of the staff go. Well, before the whole triage thing, they basically released the staff to go home. And whoever wanted to stay could stay and help. So many people left. And that was it for the day — for that day, you know. I left. I don't even know what time it was. It was about 6 o'clock.

Gene Kuziw: I mean, there was — you know, there were phone calls. I was trying to reach my wife on my cell phone. And I managed to get my father up in the Catskills, and he didn't even know what was going on and I told him just to turn the TV on. It was hard to get anybody on the cell phone because the antenna — one of the main repeaters was on the trade towers. But there was one spot I found on the island that I guess it lined up with a repeater somewhere in New Jersey, so if I stood in that area I could talk on the phone.

Gene Kuziw: So, my wife was very concerned of course — told me to get home immediately, and I told her that I'd get home as soon as I could. And she told me, whatever you do don't go into the city, because she knew what kind of person I was. And I promised her I wouldn't and kind of got the frying pan over the head when I got home, and I told her that I did go into the city. And I promised her that night that I wouldn't go in again. And four days later I got another frying pan over the head because I went in to Ground Zero a few days after that to try to help with the rescue. But as far as that first day, that was it for September 11 as far as the park.

- Mark Schoepfle: A couple of things just if I can back up for a moment.
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: If I got right what happened is that you were sitting in the Ellis Island protection office doing paperwork —
- Gene Kuziw: Correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: — because of your fire fighting over in Utah. So, you'd already been away for what, a couple of weeks there?
- Gene Kuziw: I was away for 16 days in Utah and we were at — I was on a security detail. And I was at the base camp and somebody came over to me and they said do you know what happened to the statue? Did you see the paper? So, I, you know, didn't know what happened. A few weeks prior, a daredevil landed a torch — landed his parachute on the torch of the statue and got tangled up on the statue's torch —
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, I see.
- Gene Kuziw: — a few weeks earlier. So, it was kind of odd.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, there'd already been some pranks going on beforehand.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah. And he had tried that one time earlier. I believe it was in the spring or the summer, he tried the landing and wasn't able to.
- Gene Kuziw: And actually, when I was coming back from Utah on the airplane I was in, you know, my fire gear and I had a Leatherman, you know, one of those pocket knives, and a lady on the plane complained to the stewardess that somebody had a knife. So, she came over — the stewardess came over to me and asked if I had a knife on my belt. And I showed her what it was, and she was like, oh, that's just a Leatherman. And it's just kind of ironic that now you can't even bring a toothpick or any little pins or anything onto planes. And that was just a few days prior to the 11th.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well then, what had happened there was that you heard the explosion and you were showing me some of the pictures.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: Will you look at those just for a moment again?
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: Because you had said that you had heard this loud — you were already looking at the — oh, let's say we've got this first picture here where you've got the smoke just coming out of the first tower.

- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: And you weren't even sure at that point what had really happened, right?
- Gene Kuziw: Correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Because it could've been a daredevil gone wrong. Weren't really sure it was a terrorist act or anything like that.
- Gene Kuziw: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And you were focusing the camera. Then you heard this roar of a plane coming over while you were still standing there.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, uh-huh.
- Mark Schoepfle: And then did that — when you caught on the second picture here with the plane?
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, yeah. I followed it. I actually followed it with the camera for about two or three seconds. And almost as if it was, you know, if it stopped just in time for me to take that photograph. I just snapped. I could've snapped it when I saw it earlier, but I wanted to see if it was heading in that direction. And sure enough, I just got the shot off just before impact, maybe a second.
- Mark Schoepfle: Just before impact. And then you've got a third one here of the fireball coming out both before and after.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah. Uh-huh.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And you can see the debris coming out here on the one side and debris actually coming out on the other side.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: What did you think at that point?
- Gene Kuziw: It was almost like a cartoon, just something unreal that you would see on a cartoon, just like it really didn't even happen almost, you know. That we looked at each other like there's no way that just happened.
- Gene Kuziw: We didn't just see that. In fact, one of the — one of my colleagues said, we're being attacked. And that's really when I thought, oh my God, we indeed are. I mean, it's no coincidence that a plane went into the building, another plane. I mean it was just incredible. And I pretty much just kept my finger on the camera just taking pictures. I got, you know, a lot of close-up shots. And I just picked a few of the better ones.
- Mark Schoepfle: The more memorable ones.



Gene Kuziw: Right.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And then you shifted over later on, you were saying to cover the statue, right?

Gene Kuziw: Yeah. We went — this photograph of the statue with the tower still standing but on fire was when we were going over to Liberty to get medical supplies.

Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Gene Kuziw: And I took several shots as we passed around the statue. And also, I took a lot of close-up shots of other helicopters, which turned out to be police helicopters. And there was one boat in the harbor, a small watercraft, about a 25-foot small personal boat. And that was really the only boat in the harbor, so I thought it might have been suspicious, so I zoomed in and got picture of the numbers, the registration, and it turns out that person sold a lot of the photographs to, you know, Life. So, I saw a lot of the photographs from that individual in newspapers and whatnot.

Gene Kuziw: And you know, then the towers were gone. And I recall a day later — I mean, the area was smoking for several months, for a couple of months afterwards. And about a week afterwards, I was going from Liberty back to Ellis and I wanted to get a picture of where the towers were. And as the boat's going around, I just kept waiting for the towers to appear, and it was just strange. All you saw was smoke coming out of that area. And fortunately for us, for the most part. the smoke was blowing to the east over Brooklyn. But a couple times it was over the island and it was a choking smoke. And if you weren't wearing glasses, you know, it would bother your eyes from particles.

Mark Schoepfle: It was that dense?

Gene Kuziw: Yeah. Not even that, you'd smell it. You wouldn't see it necessarily, but there was just debris falling, just like small debris.

Mark Schoepfle: Fine ash and stuff like that.

Gene Kuziw: Fine ash, asbestos, whatever.

Mark Schoepfle: You mentioned then as just after the second one had hit, you were — you had all shifted back over to starting evacuation and a closing procedure.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: What is this closing procedure like?

- Gene Kuziw: Well, at the end of the day, we have to shut the building down and we make sure that there are no visitors left in the building, to make sure everybody gets on the last boat off the island. So basically, we go up to the third floor and they start on one end of the third floor locking all the rooms, making their way to the other end. And then once the third floor is locked down, everybody goes to — and they have people stationed in all the stairways to make sure no one is going up while we're shutting down.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.
- Gene Kuziw: So, as I mentioned, there were no visitors on the island, but they still had to go through the closing procedure. So, it went pretty quick. And then everybody kind of met at the staging area, which was the flagpole, the flagpole area. And we stood there until — excuse me.
- Mark Schoepfle: If the coughing makes you uncomfortable, by all means take a breather or whatever you need to do because I do understand how that was from a couple of weeks back.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: And you were mentioning therefore that you were gathering medical supplies. What kind of medical supplies were involved in this? What were you all worried about that was going to happen?
- Gene Kuziw: Well, we were treating this as a mass casualty incident. And really, medical supplies for a mass casualty incident you just need a lot of bandages and dressings and water.
- Gene Kuziw: We pretty much took whatever we had in the EMS room and brought it outside, suction units, defibrillators, you know, all sorts of pressure bandages and extrication collars and backboards to carry people around.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. So, you were ready for a lot of that. Then you went over to — I'm just getting ahead of myself on my own notes here — you had then gone over to basically to pick up the supplies and then you'd come back to the island.
- Gene Kuziw: Then we went — we have an EMS room here, so we pretty much — I started to unload that. And then I had one other EMT and a couple of the first responders help him while I went with an EMT and a first responder to Liberty to bring more supplies over from Liberty.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah. Now you said you had EMT training and, but your main job is an interpreter.
- Gene Kuziw: Yes.
- Mark Schoepfle: What interpreting?

- Gene Kuziw: Interpretation division, we interpret the history of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. So, we give the tours for general public, school groups, and whatnot.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, neat. I want to get back to that in a little while if we could.
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: And the other thing you mentioned there that throughout this, sort of, you were — I'm getting the sense — you mentioned that you were exceedingly nervous about the statue. I think I'm getting the sense that you were kind of looking over your shoulder to see what was — what the next —
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: — shoe, when the next shoe dropped.
- Gene Kuziw: When I remembered to, because you kind of get this — you put the blinders on and you go into this mode where, you know, you have to do A, B, and C. But in the back of my head, I was always, you know, worried about the statue. And I think all of us were all concerned on some level about the statue before 9-11 because we always knew that it's a target because of its symbolism.
- Gene Kuziw: I mean it's the world's most recognized symbol of freedom and liberty. And the first attempt on the World Trade Center back in '93 was what sparked the park to initiate metal detectors and magnetometers.
- Mark Schoepfle: Go ahead.
- Gene Kuziw: So that was always, you know, always in the — always on my mind.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, you all were getting — had been kind of prepared on this beforehand
- Gene Kuziw: To some level I think everybody would not be surprised if the statue was also taken — I don't think anybody would've been too shocked if the statue had been taken out that day as well.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.
- Gene Kuziw: I mean, personally that's my opinion anyway.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, no. I mean that's a very real thing. It was what you all were looking at.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: And this was — you had to keep your eye peeled for this kind of thing and a little bit worried about it the whole time, right?

Gene Kuziw: Yeah. Yeah, uh-huh.

Mark Schoepfle: All right. Then another thing you had mentioned was that back at Ellis Island the first boatload did have a few crushed and very badly injured firemen, but that kind of tapered off. What happened there?

Gene Kuziw: Well, the one firefighter I was working on — they brought him off the boat first and they said get a collar on him. So, I knew there was the possibility of spinal injury. So, we got a collar on him, and you know firefighters have the turnout gear, which is very difficult to cut through.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.

Gene Kuziw: So, we managed to expose some of his injuries, and they were closed injuries for the most part. He had pelvic, abdominal injuries.

Mark Schoepfle: Internal injury-type things.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah, some outside — some lacerations but nothing major. So that was one that was probably pretty severe. And there was a female who had chest pains, who had a history of heart problems.

Mark Schoepfle: I see.

Gene Kuziw: And —

Mark Schoepfle: If we could just wait a moment. He's going to shift the side on —

END OF SIDE 1

START OF SIDE 2

Mark Schoepfle: All right. We were just at the point you had gone — you had looked at this first fireman and you saw that he was in a lot of — you could see that things had happened because he was in a lot of pain.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah, yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: There was the possibility of fractures in the pelvis and this kind of thing?

Gene Kuziw: Painful, swollen deformities.

Mark Schoepfle: I'm sorry.

Gene Kuziw: Painful, swollen deformities. I didn't see it was a break so I couldn't really — I can't diagnose that that's what it was. But it appeared he had some injuries to the pelvis and his leg was crooked, his knee was bent, he was unable to straighten it out. So, I managed to get his boot off on his bad leg. And then it took me a few minutes to cut his pants off, and basically just kind of splinted his leg in place.

- Gene Kuziw: I mean, there was just — debris was all over me. I had to get rid of my uniform that day because it was full of some — mostly just debris and dust.
- Mark Schoepfle: This was from people being brought in because —
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. And another woman had chest pains, you were saying.
- Gene Kuziw: She was experiencing chest pains. You know, I took her vital signs, gave her some oxygen. She didn't have her medicine. And that's all we could do for her. I mean, she wasn't a high priority because she was talking and moving. So, we were more concerned about people who weren't able to move. But you know, the firefighter, a couple other people had minor lacerations. But she was stable. She wasn't in severe distress. So, I didn't think — she was one of the first to go, I believe.
- Mark Schoepfle: Who else was there? I mean, were there others like — you mentioned some with minor lacerations and things. Were there any other serious cases?
- Gene Kuziw: Those were really the only — yeah, there were. There were — there was probably half a dozen to a dozen people lined up in my area, but I was working on the firefighter and then the lady. And there was just so many medical people around by the time the first wave got there that they were overwhelmed, and there was actually more of us than them. And you know, there wasn't much for us to do, so once the ambulance crew — the EMTs and the paramedics who were there with ambulances basically triaged the people and got them out. So, you know, it was a pretty quick — you know, they got them in, they assessed them, and then they got the serious ones out real quick.
- Gene Kuziw: So, I don't even know what the official number was of patients that we treated, but it was a couple hundred people around the island that day at least, patients. I don't know exactly how many we treated. I don't know what the official count was, maybe 30, 50.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's pretty sizable. But then after that point, you had noticed that it was mostly just walking wounded. So, was it clear that there was not a lot of need for you all there? Is that what kind of happened?
- Gene Kuziw: Well, there was just so many of us —
- Mark Schoepfle: Or like you were —

- Gene Kuziw: — that — and one of the reasons — I don't know what the final number was is because I had left, you know. I had gone to the city and that was probably about an hour or so or an hour or two that I was away from Ellis, so I really wasn't sure how many people were treated after I left.
- Mark Schoepfle: Right.
- Gene Kuziw: And one of the reasons I left was because I knew that those people with ambulances could do good for the people there. Meanwhile, I had access to a boat so I could go to the city and try to help some people there. So, in fact, that boat was our ambulance.
- Mark Schoepfle: So off you went to — they kind of took over at the island, the emergency medical people, and you had heard a law enforcement ranger was going back to the city, so away you went.
- Gene Kuziw: I went with him and the chief of maintenance.
- Mark Schoepfle: And then this was at the — yeah, okay. Right. And this was Clark Deleo?
- Gene Kuziw: And then Charlie Deleo —
- Mark Schoepfle: I'm sorry, Charlie. Man, I can't even read my own writing. I'm sorry.
- Gene Kuziw: — was down there at MIO, at the Marine Inspection Office dock. A few days later Charlie had a heart attack.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, this you hadn't mentioned.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, he had a — stints put in and he was okay. I found out yesterday he went back for another procedure. But I imagine quite a bit of it had to do with the stress and emotion of seeing what we saw that day.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, you were back then — you went back after being a while in Battery Park. You went back to Ellis Island to basically set it up as a morgue, but that didn't actually happen.
- Gene Kuziw: Right. Basically, they said that they're going to be bringing over bodies and that if you want to volunteer to help them bring the bodies over to go to that area and get some Tyvek suits which they brought over several cases of suits from protection.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, but when that didn't happen, the efforts kind of shifted to just bringing people in, both the public — I think, I imagine a lot of just the public and other Park Service people, getting them fed.
- Gene Kuziw: Right, right.
- Mark Schoepfle: You know, getting their names down, getting food and clothing to them and that kind of thing.

- Gene Kuziw: Right. And getting them off of Ellis into a hotel somewhere. And they had some buses coming to take people away.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, I see.
- Gene Kuziw: And they bused them to — who knows, I'm not sure where. They probably brought them to one hotel where they maybe interviewed them and got their information then.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, this was toward the end of the day and then finally you had a chance to start calling your dad to let him know what was going on?
- Gene Kuziw: No. I was calling him actually real early on, but the phones weren't working. And I found a spot on the island even before — this was before the triage actually occurred. And as I was going to Liberty on the boat is when I connected with my dad, and my wife, and then my brother, my sister, my sister's kids. My sister, her family, and my grandmother live in Manhattan in 14th Street. So, it was far enough away but still pretty close.
- Mark Schoepfle: Still pretty darn close.
- Gene Kuziw: Because at the time I didn't know — at the time I was still convinced that that second plane went through the building and just kept going and taking buildings out toward city hall area, which that was kind of like the trajectory it was going.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, you knew about these two planes. What other information were you getting?
- Gene Kuziw: We heard over the police dispatcher over our park radio announced that the Pentagon was hit. And you know, then there were numerous other stories — not stories, numerous other reports that there were planes that were missing and then the airports were shut down in the area. And then when I heard all flights in the United States have been grounded, that's when it really, really started to sink in how big this event is. And that's pretty much it as far as the information about what was going on around the country.
- Mark Schoepfle: That's pretty much all you knew. And your day pretty much ended you said, what, 6 o'clock or so, thereabouts?
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, around that time.
- Mark Schoepfle: And you went on home and faced the wrath of your wife for going into the city.

Gene Kuziw: Well, I — as I left the park, I saw hundreds of ambulances parked on the other side of Ellis Island bridge and that was kind of the staging area. And the roads were empty because the Holland Tunnel — all the tunnels were closed. Actually, that was another radio transmission, that all tunnels and bridges were closed in and out of the city. And that's another reason why they had to bring people off by boat because there was no other way to get out of the city.

Mark Schoepfle: Oh, okay.

Gene Kuziw: So later I found out that ferry boats were bringing people down to South Jersey and north up to Weehawken and Hoboken and just all over just getting people off the islands.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.

Gene Kuziw: Off of Manhattan Island. So, they weren't letting anybody in or out of the city by train, by tunnel, or by bridge. And so anyway, I'm driving home and the road I was on was closed because it led directly to the Holland Tunnel, so I was the only car on the road, which is kind of strange. I didn't go directly home. I stopped by the — I ride in a volunteer ambulance squad in Union, New Jersey. So, I stopped by the EMS building to let them know what was going on. And they were basically just waiting to be called by the incident command in Jersey City. So, they were on standby. And I just — I couldn't deal with any more that day, so I just went home after that and —

Mark Schoepfle: Sure.

Gene Kuziw: — just kind of watched TV. Watched — I don't think I've ever seen so much CNN in my life.

Mark Schoepfle: I'll bet.

Gene Kuziw: But I pretty much just got home and was happy to see my wife and my child. Fortunately, he's only three. So fortunately, he didn't know what was going on. We never played the TV — we never had the news on. Even though he was too young to really understand what happened, I just didn't want him to see any of those images.

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, don't underestimate a 3-year-old.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, you mentioned —

Gene Kuziw: A friend of mine died. He was a port authority police officer, John Scolla [phonetic]. I didn't know at the time. I found out days later he was missing.



Mark Schoepfle: Well, what happened then in the days after?

Gene Kuziw: Well, the event occurred on a Tuesday. My days off are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. So, before I left, I wanted, you know — I told them if they need me to come in, I will come in. And they said, no, it's okay. The park is going to be — and I don't recall exactly when I got the information that the park is going to be closed until further notice. But I came in Saturday for my regular duty and the EMS coordinator for the park, who is actually the only permanent EMT here, was activated with the Coast Guard. So, he was there Tuesday, but then, you know, he was activated later that day. So, he's been gone ever since. He's still not back.

Mark Schoepfle: Wow.

Gene Kuziw: So, I assumed his duties, and in the weeks following, the park was closed for the public. But after a few weeks they had the staff come back and they had people in my division, in interpretation, helping out the museum division since there was no public, you know, to talk to. They had us doing other things. And I was fortunate enough to get detail — I was detailed to the EMS division. So, I was acting as an EMT.

Gene Kuziw: So anyway, I come back Saturday the 15th and they brought in a team of CISD, Critical Incident Stress Debriefing team, you know, to talk to the park employees. And they just arrived, so I wound up taking them into the city. I took them to Federal Hall, which was the staging area for the park police. And I took them in to Ground Zero, and that was my first time there. And then I took them to Castle Clinton, which was all closed and locked up, and then took them back to Ellis.

Mark Schoepfle: This was just so that they could do interviews or what?

Gene Kuziw: They wanted to — I mean, they officially were going to start their debriefings Monday. So, this was a Saturday. So, they — I guess they'd come in the night before. They just wanted to assess the sites — Federal Hall, some damage occurred there. So, I guess they just wanted to assess, probably just see what was going on.

Mark Schoepfle: Did you get to see what they were doing? I mean, as a debriefing team, what were they doing there?

Gene Kuziw: During the debriefings?

Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.

- Gene Kuziw: Well, they spoke to the entire staff. Initially they had just a — this is what we are and we're here to talk to you about this event that occurred, and you know, all the feelings that you're feeling are natural feelings that you're feeling. You know, you're supposed to feel this way because if you wouldn't then you should be worried. But — and then they had little sessions for each division.
- Gene Kuziw: And because I was with the EMS, I was stationed on Liberty Island, so I didn't really get to take part in too much of that. But I managed to sit in on one session because I was doing sign language interpretation for a couple of the hard-of-hearing employees, for them. So, they're basically here to support us and just to hear us talk and discuss our feelings and how we're dealing with it, how our families are dealing with it, and whatnot.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. This was Saturday then all day?
- Gene Kuziw: No. This was the week following.
- Mark Schoepfle: Oh, the week following.
- Gene Kuziw: Saturday, Saturday I spent basically with the team at Ground Zero.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Just to make sure I had that right. So, you worked with the debriefing team. What else?
- Gene Kuziw: On Saturday?
- Mark Schoepfle: Or just Saturday and the week following.
- Gene Kuziw: Saturday and — after that I basically stayed at Liberty on my — during my days, between Liberty and here, as the EMT for the park and for the park police. The park operated on a Monday through Friday, 9 to 5. I worked Saturday through Tuesday. And Saturday, Sunday, I'd be at Liberty, and then Monday and Tuesday I'd be here, but pretty much just acting as an EMT. And you know, there were events that took place just shortly after that — I mean, everybody was a nervous wreck.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure.
- Gene Kuziw: Anytime we saw — there was a boat in the harbor. I mean, first off, all water traffic was suspended for I don't know how many weeks, only to emergency boats. And there was one day, and I don't recall which day it was, where I was in the communications center. The dispatcher was not in, so I was dispatching. And it was around 4 o'clock I got a call over the radio from the Brooklyn park police dispatcher that he heard over the New York City police radio that an unauthorized aircraft has just entered restricted air space. So immediately everybody went into alert mode.

- Gene Kuziw: A minute or two later he calls back over the radio saying that a second unauthorized aircraft has entered restricted air space. So now we're waiting. All the cameras are focused on the statue. Turns out a few minutes later it was military helicopters, were doing maneuvers without permission. But just the amount of chaos that caused in the city was incredible.
- Gene Kuziw: And then of course we had the — a few days after that there was an incident down in Kentucky, Tennessee where a bus was highjacked. A gentleman slit the throat of the bus driver and then the whole bus overturned and everybody — well, I don't know how many people died, but the high-jacker died so they weren't sure, you know, what happened with that. But that was just a few days later and everybody thought that — I thought that that had something to do with this.
- Gene Kuziw: And then we had the plane go down in Queens where some of the park police in Queens, you know, responded. And one of the park police officers was injured during that. One of our staff members had family on that plane as well.
- Gene Kuziw: So, a series of events, just one after the other, and then the 15-year-old flying the plane into the bank down in Florida. It's just been incredible.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, from the description, the 15-year-old flying the plane into the bank in Florida is fairly recent, right?
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, you all are still kind of on edge about this, you would say?
- Gene Kuziw: I don't think that I'm ever going to be looking at — if I'm at the statue, I'm still looking up at airplanes flying. Especially since the plane went down in Queens, the FAA changed the flight patterns for the planes to fly more over the Hudson River so they're not over a populated area. So subsequently they're flying over the statue more.
- Gene Kuziw: And specifically, Continental Airlines, because I can read their tail, I can read their logo, they're that close, are flying probably — definitely under a thousand feet, very close to the statue. A couple of times I actually — my body tensed up, you know, thinking there would be an impact. They've been that close. So, I think myself and I know other employees also shared that, you know, planes, the noise of planes still bother them. And you know, the effects of critical incidents sometimes don't take — will take six months, up to a year to show.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure, sure.

- Gene Kuziw: So, this could be affecting people — well, I think it will affect everybody, the entire nation forever. But especially those that were involved or you people that were involved or witnessed the events.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Well, this was happening — a lot of these things were happening you say that Saturday and in just a few of the weeks following.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: What then went on?
- Gene Kuziw: Well, the park remained closed to the public for over three months. During that time, some of the employees were detailed at their own requests to other sites. We were given an option of taking temporary details for those who felt they just needed to get away. And a lot of people just went on with their regular jobs. Being that nobody was allowed at Liberty Island other than the park police and the EMTs, those who normally worked at Liberty Island, the rest of the staff were given other duties here on Ellis Island. As I mentioned, the interpreters who usually gave tours to the public, some worked on interpretive programs and ideas. Others helped the museum catalog slides, cleaning exhibits, dusting collections, etcetera.
- Mark Schoepfle: What would you call that, just what, maintenance?
- Gene Kuziw: Busywork.
- Mark Schoepfle: Busywork.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah. I actually conducted two training sessions during that time. I taught two classes of first responders and emergency response. So, I certified 11 people in the park.
- Mark Schoepfle: What does that involve? I mean, I'm not even sure what a first responder is, to tell you the truth.
- Gene Kuziw: Well, a first responder — well, you know what an EMT is, EMT, Emergency Medical —
- Mark Schoepfle: Don't assume anything on me.
- Gene Kuziw: Okay. Emergency Medical Technicians undergo about a 250-hour training in emergency medical service. First responders is basically a — it's a lower level of training. It's a lot of the similar things, but it's not as in-depth. The one that I taught was a 56-hour intensive course in emergency management of patients. And then you have — I mean that includes CPR and what to do for a trauma, how to treat patients for trauma, for shock, etcetera, medical emergencies. So that's what the first responder class is.

- Gene Kuziw: So, we taught the — the park — it was a great idea. I'm glad that Frank Mills said that we should train some of the staff and I supported his idea. So, we got some people trained in that.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay, so there was a certain amount of what you were calling busywork, you know, the cataloging and this kind of thing, and then the classes to the first responders to get more of them certified.
- Gene Kuziw: For medically trained.
- Mark Schoepfle: What else?
- Gene Kuziw: What else was going on? The park also initiated some additional training — weapons of mass destruction training because, of course, a few weeks after that we had the anthrax scare began. And actually, Daschle was at Liberty Island the Sunday before the first letter was found. He was actually the first nonemployee — the first visitor to the island after 9-11 that I know of anyway, I think the first VIP. So, we had the anthrax scare happening. So, we had some training in weapons of mass destruction.
- Gene Kuziw: We had the Jersey City Fire Department came over, which we have a relationship with. And the Jersey City Medical Center as well came over to do some fire drills. We did an evacuation on Ellis Island with Jersey City Medical Center and the fire department. They brought in their apparatus, you know. The fire engines came. Ambulances came. They had smoke machines set up in the building.
- Gene Kuziw: So, the park initiated an evacuation, and then they — the fire department came and stretched line. They pulled the fire hoses.
- Gene Kuziw: They had the infrared cameras and they went into this smoke-filled room, which was created with the artificial smoke. And they had some dummies that they put around the building, so they found. It was a full-blown evacuation drill. It was great. It was a great learning experience, and so they did some of that kind of training.
- Gene Kuziw: I'm just trying to think what else. Of course, I'm sure management had their hands full dealing with the concessions — concessionaires being that they were closed. I know that a lot of people lost their jobs who worked here at the food service and the gift shop area. And so, people were affected. All the planning that the poor people in management must have had to go through, all the meetings in Washington and trying to get the park back open. And three months later the park reopens with new security measures in place. But they're still not letting anybody actually in the statue, but the island is open. Liberty Island is open, but they're not letting anyone in the statue.

Mark Schoepfle: I wanted to ask a couple of questions about the reopening in just a minute, but I think we're due for another tape change.

Gene Kuziw: Okay. So, I really didn't have —

END OF TAPE 1

START OF TAPE 2

Gene Kuziw: — vision, and just two days ago I have been officially detailed as the EMS manager for the park. So, the interpretive division now runs the EMS program as well. So, I'll be — full time — I'll be dealing with the EMS.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, you said you had some of that training and it was a learning experience. What does that mean?

Gene Kuziw: Which, what do you mean?

Mark Schoepfle: Well, you had mentioned that during the time when things were shut down, one of the things you had had was the —

Gene Kuziw: Oh, the evacuation drill.

Mark Schoepfle: — the evacuation drill and stuff like that.

Gene Kuziw: Well, every time you have a drill you always see where you could improve what needs to be improved, and in that way, it was a learning experience.

Gene Kuziw: So, having an emergency plan on paper is one thing, but actually going through it physically and seeing what needs to be addressed and how things could be better, what works, what doesn't work. So, it was more of a logistical learning experience.

Mark Schoepfle: So actually, you had had an evacuation plan. Was this the same one that you had mentioned earlier that you'd — evacuation procedures, or was this a bit bigger thing?

Gene Kuziw: A little different because when we do our closing procedures —

Mark Schoepfle: Oh, I'm sorry. That's what I meant.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah, it's just a normal, okay, let's lock up all the doors. This emergency evacuation is in a sense the same as closing, but there's an emergency going on. So, you have to — you have sirens going off, you know, lights, strobe lights blaring, and then you have other things going on.

Mark Schoepfle: Close faster with lots of possible confusion and stuff.

- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, yeah. And even though we did that, that was still without the public. So, in effect it was an evacuation drill, but there was really no public to evacuate, so we basically went through the motions. And I think it was very successful.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, these were the things that happened in the three months that you had before you reopened. And you mentioned that you had reopened and with new security measures in place. How is this reopening? Do you see things getting back to some kind of normalcy or what?
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, I think every day brings us a little bit closer to — never it will be the way it was, but I think reopening this site was very cathartic. I was not here the first day it reopened, but from what I understand it was understandably so very emotional — and many firefighters came and police officers who lost brothers and sisters during the attacks. So especially this site — it's so important to the collective psyche of this country and the world, you know, to show that they can't shut us down.
- Gene Kuziw: So, I was very glad personally — and I can speak for myself and some colleagues in the front lines of interpretation — we'll have to relive that day for years to the public because the first question they ask is not where's the bathroom anymore, it's where were the towers. So, the first couple weeks we were opened, I would share some of my experiences as I've shared with you.
- Gene Kuziw: But reliving that every day, all day long, just became too trying. So, people ask me, "what did you see, where were you, did you see any body parts?" They ask you, you know. Visitors ask that kind of stuff. I tell them, no, I was off that day or I'm new here. I just wouldn't be able to deal with that for too long. So, we'll see how — and you know, everybody will handle that their own way. But our manager basically told us we can choose to answer those questions, or we can respectfully decline to answer questions pertaining to 9-11.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, this brings up an interesting question though. And it's certainly been on the minds of a lot of people. What would we do about memorializing? You know, what do we do about keeping this memory? There's already talk, for example, about some kind of memorial on the trade center sites.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: Certainly, the same kind of talk at the Pentagon. An actual, and I'm told — I don't know this reliably for sure — but I'm told that there's talk of the Pennsylvania crash site as well, of bringing land out for a memorial there too.

Gene Kuziw: From your personal experience — I mean, you were on the ground about as close as people are going to get short of being within the 14th Street area, what would you think about that? I mean, what would you do to get that, what we're talking about here out?

Mark Schoepfle: That's the wrong question. What would you do, first of all?

Gene Kuziw: For a memorial?

Mark Schoepfle: Well, I'm talking about for that kind of context. Also, the idea of answering the questions and this kind of thing. Maybe I should ask — maybe I'm loading things a little too fast here, but maybe on the answering questions. How are you eventually going to deal with that considering our ever-sensitive public?

Gene Kuziw: Well, fortunately I've been detailed as the EMS manager, so I won't have frontline contacts with the public for now. Not saying that I don't like interpretation or would not do it. As long as my immediate supervisors don't hear this, I'll be fine. But I think that really is on a case-per-case basis because some visitors will approach you in a way that you would be able to answer them and wouldn't mind answering them. And some people just ask — it's just morbid curiosity. And it's just the way they approach you will dictate if I'm going to answer them or how I will answer them.

Gene Kuziw: I believe, though, the Park Service will probably have something to do with a memorial since we take care of national memorials. So, I think once maybe a physical place where people can go to actually memorialize the event, maybe that's where most of the focus will be as far as answering those kind of questions at that site.

Gene Kuziw: But there's no doubt that the skyline, the vantage point from Liberty Island or Ellis Island or from New Jersey, from anywhere from where you can see the skyline, if people are there, they're going to ask those kind of questions. So, you know, I don't necessarily think that if I worked at St. Paul's National Historic site up in the Bronx that they would ask those same kind of questions. I don't know if you were able to see the site from there. But because of this specific site where we work, those questions will be there forever I believe. How we will deal with that I don't know. It's on an individual basis. I'm not sure I'm answering your question.

Mark Schoepfle: No, you are. You're answering it very well and I asked the question very clumsily for a start because I think I glommed together several things as I was free-associating here for a minute.



- Mark Schoepfle: Because one of the things — and I'm glad you're bringing this out some more because it helps my thinking on it a little bit. I'm wondering if one problem initially that you're bringing up here is, how on the one hand can staff people as individuals who have had to confront this directly, how can they deal with this? And right now, the answer is, as far as the public is concerned, those who can deal with it are welcome to talk to the public. Those who are not, don't have to.
- Gene Kuziw: Correct.
- Mark Schoepfle: They can politely decline. Of those who do talk to them, they can field certain questions. They don't have to field others.
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: Am I correct on that?
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, whatever you're comfortable talking about. Okay.
- Mark Schoepfle: No, keep going.
- Gene Kuziw: I mean, even if you choose to decline to answer somebody, if they ask you, that's already on your mind that that's what they want to know. So, you're thinking — even though you're not directly answering their question, you're thinking about it, you know, about the event.
- Gene Kuziw: And they're bringing it up. They're reminding you again about it, so indirectly you're still dealing with it.
- Mark Schoepfle: And it's an unpleasant thing when they're doing this?
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: I mean, when they're bringing up this event like that it's unpleasant.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, a lot of times they're very callous and just want to know the gory details, if I may.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, "did you see bodies flying out."
- Gene Kuziw: Right, right.
- Mark Schoepfle: Would there be a point at some time or another simply for training in dealing with insensitive audiences?
- Gene Kuziw: I think our —
- Mark Schoepfle: I'm just thinking out loud.

- Gene Kuziw: At our work site, we deal with that daily at this site. Our staff, the people who work here at the statue are exposed to a wide variety of people from all over the world. And we deal with various situations, so if there's a staff that's able to deal with it, it's ours. I know that it would probably be wise — and I'd make the suggestion to six months — at the six-month mark that they would bring in another team of CISD folks to — just to make their presence known, to make themselves available. And at the one-year mark obviously they should be here as well. So, I think that's something that should be ongoing for as needed, you know, to support the staff. And it is — and I feel that the park is doing an adequate job in accommodating us, definitely.
- Mark Schoepfle: Is doing an adequate —
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, you've got, as with the opening, you do have — you're gradually getting toward some kind of normalcy because you were able to show people that nobody can shut us down.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: Everything is back, you know. We're making it a definite effort to get back to normal. It's the staff I think feels more of an equilibrium for it.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, yeah. I know one of my colleagues who was very affected, who the first day I saw him did not even utter a word to me and just sat removed and away from the rest of the group, and I was very concerned as was another colleague of mine. Later that afternoon he went to Liberty Island to get some equipment and he said that he reconnected with the site and he feels a lot better.
- Mark Schoepfle: Reconnected with the site. How have some of the other staff reacted during these times?
- Gene Kuziw: There were a couple folks who I know were in the military and I think might have gotten some kind of, I don't want to say flashback, but definitely recalled seeing unpleasant things, and this might have triggered some of those emotions. Some of the staff members have a very heightened sense — rightly so, for their own security and safety as far as the public is concerned.
- Gene Kuziw: But I think that the park took adequate steps in ensuring our safety on the islands anyway. Granted there's no guarantee on anything and I don't think any amount of preplanning will prevent something that's planned out well enough just like this knucklehead with the sneaker.

- Gene Kuziw: You know, so right after that incident everybody's shoes were coming off at the metal detectors. But you know, at what point are they going to be giving — conducting body cavity searches to come into the — you know, it's how much are we willing to tolerate?
- Gene Kuziw: But everything is in gradual steps. For a time, there were no vehicles allowed in through the tunnels. Eventually they allowed vehicles at certain times. You had to have more than one occupant. Trucks were subject to search. And as time grew on, that was deescalated. And now it's becoming, like I was saying, like you were saying, more back to normal, more of a sense of normalcy which we, you know, we need to do. We need to get back to.
- Mark Schoepfle: Looking back on this, what lessons do you figure that we have learned from all this?
- Gene Kuziw: I wouldn't even know how to answer that.
- Mark Schoepfle: Fair enough.
- Gene Kuziw: How great we are. How awful we are for someone to hate us so greatly. I mean, it's endless.
- Mark Schoepfle: Just like many of the rest of us then in a lot of ways.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: Just the way many of the rest of the public would think on this.
- Gene Kuziw: Sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: I think from what you've been describing you were working mostly with the Jersey Medical Center, the emergency response team, I think that you referred to them. Were there any other groups that you — and you were with the city police I think and that sort of thing. Would you say there were other groups that you coordinated with?
- Gene Kuziw: The 11th?
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah, and in the aftermath.
- Gene Kuziw: The U.S. Coast Guard.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay.
- Gene Kuziw: Secret Service, FBI. The U.S. Coast Guard had a presence in the harbor for many months. The American Red Cross.
- Mark Schoepfle: Did you deal with these folks? I'm sorry, go ahead.
- Gene Kuziw: I mean, there's numerous, numerous.

Mark Schoepfle: Did you deal with a lot of these personally? I know you were —

Gene Kuziw: I mean, I had interactions medically you know, performing medical procedures with some of them. I didn't personally interact with the Coast Guard. I mean, their presence was in the harbor and I was in contact with them when they needed some — sometimes they would come over to the island to get some supplies, some ice or something. I'm not sure I'm — I didn't work with them as far as their job.

Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Gene Kuziw: I had interactions with them. There are, you know, other agencies, just about every agency you can think of that would be associated with an emergency was there.

Gene Kuziw: Office of Emergency Management, and then on my personal level at home you know with the ambulance squad and the emergency teams, basically we're doing those types of preparations locally. So, we were mobilizing locally to react if needed to the city or to the — to, you know, any of the staging areas.

Mark Schoepfle: Okay. A last question or toward the last of the questions, and you've been really a big help on this so far, I know you said don't get you started on this, but what kind of appreciation did you all receive for this?

Gene Kuziw: What do you mean appreciation?

Mark Schoepfle: Well, just thank-yous, anything of that sort from management, from the public, from wherever, the appreciation for what happened. I mean, you know, the whole point of this is to be able to document what happened and get the message out.

Gene Kuziw: Ed Whitaker is the chief ranger of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and the first thing he said to me, the first words he uttered were if no one says this to you I want to thank you. And he was part of the CISD team. And he was very sincere and that stuck. And then I tried to get a job over there. That didn't stick. But so that was the first thing he did was to thank me personally as an individual.

Gene Kuziw: The staff received time-off awards. I don't know if this is what you're getting.

Mark Schoepfle: Whatever.

- Gene Kuziw: The staff received time-off awards for helping other divisions and I don't know which divisions received — I know in interp [interpretation], some or all of the staff received some kind of time off award for helping the park as we were not doing regular tours. I received an award for — a star award for conducting the trainings that I did and for taking over the EMS.
- Gene Kuziw: We were given — the people who worked that day were given a choice of a backpack or a polo shirt with the Statue of Liberty on it. I chose the backpack in forest green. That was an award.
- Gene Kuziw: I don't think that any of that is really important. There's really nothing that we did that really deserves to be appreciated. We just were being human. And I don't think that should be rewarded at all or appreciated. I'm not sure. I'm not sure.
- Mark Schoepfle: The reason I ask is that others have mentioned that they never received a bit of thanks or anything from the management and up above. And some have mentioned that as an issue and some haven't.
- Gene Kuziw: For some people maybe that's important to them for their — maybe that's important for them. It's not important for me. So, it could be, you know, some people need that. I don't need it.
- Mark Schoepfle: Sure.
- Gene Kuziw: It's nice to get a star award, you know.
- Mark Schoepfle: Yeah.
- Gene Kuziw: But I didn't need it. I was just doing my job. Well, I wasn't, but I was just doing what I had to do.
- Mark Schoepfle: Well, this has been very — it's really been great talking to you on this. Is there anything that I should have asked but didn't ask about?
- Gene Kuziw: Nothing comes to mind off the top of my head.
- Mark Schoepfle: Okay. Is there anything else that I can tell you that you'd like to ask about what we're doing?
- Gene Kuziw: I probably wish I could have given you a better answer as far as your question about the memorialization. I really didn't give that too much thought. And a lot of this —
- Mark Schoepfle: Nobody else has either.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah. Well, that was — I remember one thing. There's a committee, you know. I'm sure there's at least a hundred committees now — but the first couple of months I just couldn't think of anything to do with this.

- Gene Kuziw: And just the last two days I've picked up a newspaper from just after the event and I wasn't even able to look at any of that. So, a lot of the information is still being processed.
- Gene Kuziw: And probably the one thing — I mean, you mentioned — you asked about, but I really didn't get into detail was the Ground Zero area. And that probably affected me more than seeing the plane hit the building and seeing that carnage. And that I can't even verbalize what that was like. But the only thing that comes close was the first time I saw the Grand Canyon. It was such an immense piece of information to process that it's still being processed. And my computer isn't two-gig. I'm still on the 486 right now, so it's still being processed.
- Gene Kuziw: And maybe I'll have a better answer as time goes by and once I really give it some thought, but —
- Mark Schoepfle: Now I'm asking mostly because some have mentioned that we really ought to think about it. And so, it's one of the — in a response to the earlier interviews I've included it on the other interviews. I think a lot of people — there's no need to feel at a loss simply because there are not a lot of ideas on it. It's simply that some have mentioned it. And so, I thought, well, let's check it out and see what others are thinking on this. And what it's coming to is, well, the thinking isn't really far advanced at this point.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah.
- Mark Schoepfle: And it's interesting that some people are still thinking about just personally how to deal with the thing much less how to deal with memorialization of it.
- Gene Kuziw: Yeah, right.
- Mark Schoepfle: So, we've got a long track before we worry about, well, how do you deal with audiences that ask weird and insensitive questions? How do we — you know, the audience is going to come after those who have had personal experiences with it. Some are going to want to talk about it. Some won't. Is there a way in which you can sort of deal with the audience — I know we have to get training in things such as dealing with hostile audiences or hostile public.
- Gene Kuziw: Right.
- Mark Schoepfle: And that kind of training I'm just thinking ahead on or just getting together some kind of planning to say, well, how would we respond to these questions and what's the best way of doing it and that kind of thing, if there is a best way.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: You know, I'm just thinking ahead, but no, nobody's got any answers and I'm not sure there's any reason why anybody should.

Gene Kuziw: Well, there's the one-year date, which is an important mark I feel for many people that, you know, the Pentagon will be rebuilt by September 11th, 2002. And you know, that's a date they want to — a one year — it's just a date. It's just 365 days, but in a way it's the anniversary. It will be the first official memorialization of the event at the one-year mark.

Gene Kuziw: And I'll tell you what, come to think of it I did think of that shortly after. I was thinking of what's going to happen a year from now and one thing that I did was that I ordered a flag that's been flown over the Capitol for that day. You know you can do that.

Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Gene Kuziw: And I mean I'm an extremely patriotic individual. I always had a flag flying at my house before the event, and it kind of upset me in a way that now everybody is so much more patriotic and why weren't they beforehand, you know. So, I was the only house on the block with a flag in front of the house. Now every house has one, which is great, but slowly I see them coming down.

Mark Schoepfle: Right.

Gene Kuziw: There's less flags. There's less banners. There's, I guess as was mentioned, more of a sense of normalcy.

Mark Schoepfle: Things are going back to the way they were before in more ways than they probably should have.

Gene Kuziw: Yeah.

Mark Schoepfle: You've given me an interesting way to rephrase the question. The next people I will ask will be, you know, what should we do a year from now? What — okay, any more thoughts on what we should be thinking about a year from now? Okay. We're thinking about the idea of patriotism. What else?

Gene Kuziw: Don't know. I haven't thought of it yet.

Mark Schoepfle: All right. Well, I may be back.

Gene Kuziw: Okay.

Mark Schoepfle: Or keep in touch with you over — because it's an intriguing idea, you know. What does one do on a year afterwards? What does one think about? So, it will be a good way to get people to think about it. I hadn't thought of the question myself.

Gene Kuziw: Good.

Mark Schoepfle: Well, that very much concludes the interview. And I really thank you very much for the time that you've spent with me on this and sharing information.

Gene Kuziw: It's my pleasure. Thank you. I appreciate it.

END OF TAPE