

# 3 Lives, 87 Floors

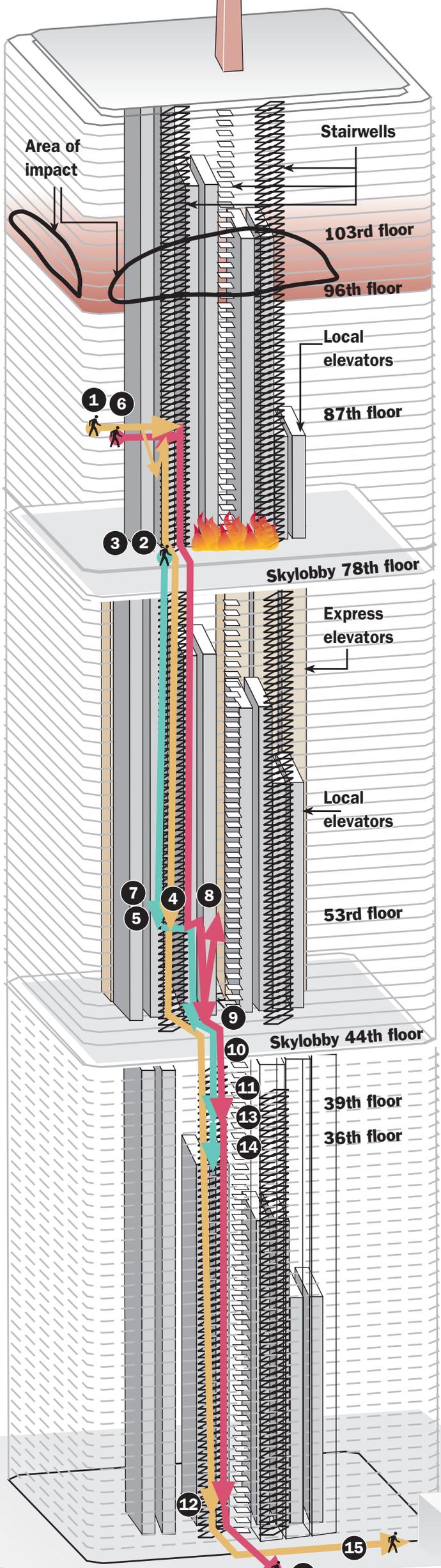
The jetliner hit the World Trade Center's north tower at 8:45 a.m. Tuesday. An hour and three-quarters later, the tower collapsed. Here is how three men, working on the 87th floor at the time of the attack, made their way from the tower:

**Key**  Adam Mayblum  Hong Zhu  Harry Ramos

**North tower,  
1 World Trade Center**

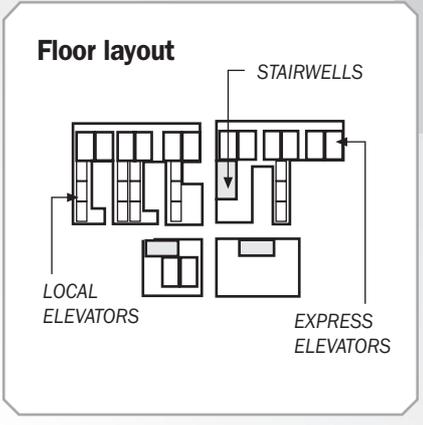
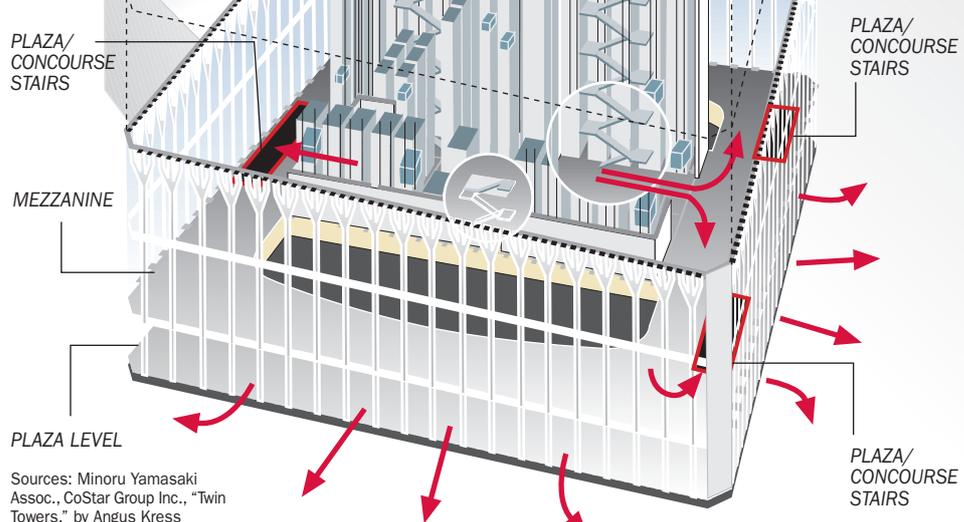
## Impact—8:45 a.m.

- 1** Adam, managing director of May Davis Group, knows he must evacuate. He tears off his shirt to make masks for fellow workers and stumbles through the smoke to find a stairwell on the 87th floor. He descends two floors but decides to go back for his partner, Hong Zhu.
- 2** He doesn't find Hong and starts down again. He reaches the 78th floor, where the stairwell ends. He sees a stranger spraying a fire hose on a wall of flame. He doesn't know what happened to the stranger.
- 3** On the 78th floor Adam sees Harry, a trader in his firm and an acquaintance. Harry is helping others into another stairwell. Adam starts down again.
- 4** He continues to the 53rd floor. His cell phone rings. It's his parents, hysterical. "Relax," he says. "I'm fine."
- 5** He overtakes Victor Ward, a heavysset man sitting on the stairs. He tells Victor he will send back help. He continues down.
- 6** Hong starts down from the 87th floor right behind Adam, but the two don't see each other.
- 7** At the 53rd floor Hong meets Harry, who is trying to help Victor. They prod Victor down to the 52nd floor.
- 8** Victor will go no farther, so Harry and Hong decide to try the elevator. A Port Authority official tells them not to get in. Hong conducts a test by getting in and pressing 44, the floor where the local elevator ends. It works. He returns to pick up Harry and Victor.
- 9** Harry, Hong and Victor reach the 44th floor. But the shuttle elevator that would take them to the bottom does not respond.
- 10** They start down the stairs again.
- 11** Near the 39th floor, they feel the south tower collapse.
- 12** Adam is on the third floor, and the lights go out. He continues in the dark.
- 13** Hong, Harry and Victor are on the 39th floor when they feel the rumble of the collapsing building. Victor sits down. Hong tells him to slide on his behind.
- 14** At the 36th floor, they meet a fireman climbing the stairs. He tells Hong to get out. Hong continues down. Harry stays with Victor.
- 15** At about 10:15, Adam reaches the bottom and exits into a courtyard, then walks north toward Houston Street.
- 16** Hong gets out. At 10:28, the north tower collapses. Adam and Hong never see Harry, Victor or the fireman again.



## Tower exits

Each tower had 97 passenger elevators and six freight elevators



Sources: Minoru Yamasaki Assoc., CoStar Group Inc., "Twin Towers," by Angus Kress Gillespie, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and staff reports

(Not to scale)