

NBC Nightly News with Tom Llamas

09/08/26

6:32:08 p.m. [TEASE]

14 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Honoring a 9/11 Hero]

TOM LLAMAS: And honoring a 9/11 hero, the man in the red bandana credited with saving more than a dozen people during the attacks at the cost of his own life. How he is being recognized 25 years later.

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6:45:15 p.m. [TEASE]

9 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; The Man in the Red Bandana]

LLAMAS: And the honor for a 9/11 hero. How the man in the red bandana saved so many lives and now is being honored 25 years later.

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6:52:41 p.m. [TEASE]

11 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; The Man in the Red Bandana]

LLAMAS: All right, when we come back tonight, the man in the red bandana. His story of mystery and heroism on 9/11, the honor he just got at the White house, our exclusive with his mother, next.

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6:56:44 p.m.

2 minutes and 31 seconds

LLAMAS: Finally tonight, as we mark 25 years since the September 11th attacks, we were remembering the bravery and courage from that day, including the man in the red bandana, credited with saving more than a dozen lives. His identity was originally a mystery. Now 25 years later, he's been awarded one of the nation's highest honors, and his mother is telling Aaron Gilchrist what it all means.

AARON GILCHRIST: He was one of the heroes who emerged on one of the nation's darkest days. Welles Crowther was 24 years old, working in the South Tower of the World Trade Center

when the planes hit. [SIRENS] The equities trader and volunteer firefighter rescued 18 people at the cost of his own life. [APPLAUSE] President Trump today paying tribute to that bravery.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: The highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

GILCHRIST: Welles's mother, Allison, receiving the posthumous honor. [TO CROWTHER] What does your son receiving that medal, mean to you?

ALLISON CROWTHER: Oh, it's a huge honor.

GILCHRIST: Today, a simple red bandana connects Allison to her son. He had one growing up, and in 2001, kept one tied around his wallet.

CROWTHER: I said, "Welles, are you still carrying that thing? You're working on Wall Street now."

GILCHRIST: Like thousands, Welles didn't come home on 9/11. When his remains were recovered in 2002, Allison could bury her son, but she still was desperate to know what happened to him. Then, she found a newspaper article with a familiar detail.

CROWTHER: This mysterious man wearing a red bandana, a red handkerchief, going around, putting up small fires, saying, you know, stand up, if you can stand, stand up now. If you can help others do so, follow me, I know the way." And I said, "Welles, there you are."

GILCHRIST: Kelly Reyher was in a South Tower elevator when the second plane struck. Badly burned, he remembers crawling into a smoke-filled lobby and hearing a clear, commanding voice through the darkness.

KELLY REYHER: I remember him being in the stairwell and calling everyone to the stairwell and opening the door to the stairwell and saying, "The stairwell is here." Oh, heeding that advice is what saved me."

GILCHRIST: Welles used his red bandana to shield his face from the smoke as he went back and forth, helping more people. [TO CROWTHER] How proud are you of your son for what he did on 9/11?

CROWTHER: I'm so proud. I'm so proud of him. I'm so proud of him. You know, it's the price of greatness, losing him, but I'm — I'll always be so proud of him.

GILCHRIST: Aaron Gilchrist, NBC News.

LLAMAS: A real hero and all this week, we'll be honoring those heroes and remembering those we lost on 9/11.