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'Crashed' Plane On Vacant City Lot Is Nothing But A Movie's 'Prop' Jet

By Juli Cragg

Passers-by are doing double takes when they see an airplane on an empty lot at Locust and 21st streets, where it appears to have crashed.

The plane is one of the props for [ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK](#), a movie that director **John Carpenter** starts filming here today. Saturday, the crew will burn the old wreck.

Until then, Stoechner Security Service Inc. will guard the plane. It also is protecting the fenced-in lot nearby that contains cars used in the movie's chase scenes, and the warehouse where other props are stored.

When Don Roberts, fresh out of the Army, reported Thursday for his first night on the job as the security guard, he probably expected to be making the rounds of a big dusty warehouse. Instead, he was to spend the next eight hours keeping the decrepit plane company.

"I have never done this before, security," Roberts said. "And I have never watched a plane before. And I think it is really nice. I'd like to be there when the cameras start rolling."

Curious people walked up to pat the plane, peer at it's innards and marvel at how light the frame was. Robert's duty was to prevent them from walking away with pieces of the plane.

Several initially found the scene deceiving. One man said, "I told my girlfriend, 'Look, an airplane crashed.' But then I thought, no, I hadn't heard anything. I listen to the radio all day."

But Anette, 11, told her family and friends that she had seen the plane come down, spiraling "round and round" as it plunged to the ground. But she fell silent when pressed for details.

As the sun went down, it looked as if Roberts' turn at watch might prove as eerie as one of Carpenter's films - "The Fog" or "Halloween" for instance. He

could see street lights turning on for blocks around. But similar lamps, the only source of illumination for the lot he was patrolling, were still unlit.

"I'm waiting for them to come though," he said, with a nervous laugh. They finally did.

Roberts confided that he couldn't help wondering if the cars that slowed down at curbside were looking at the plane or at him. And he was there with "no gun, no radio, no flashlight, nothing."

But police frequently cruised by, he said, and he'd had some martial arts training in the Army.

He had a telephone number to call if he had any trouble. He hadn't found a telephone yet, but he knew a gas station was down the street. He didn't know how late it stayed open. He hoped there was a telephone outside.



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