



BIOGRAPHY

JONATHAN DIENST - REPORTER WNBC 4 NEW YORK

Emmy-award winning reporter Jonathan Dienst joined WNBC in 2001 and leads the station's investigative reporting team in covering justice and law enforcement stories. Dienst routinely breaks stories on subjects ranging from terrorism, to white-collar cases, to political corruption, to local crime. Dienst also files reports for "NBC Nightly News," MSNBC, CNBC and "The Today Show." He has also appeared on "Dateline."

Dienst's coverage of terrorism and security issues in the New York area is unrivaled. His many firsts include: the Fort Dix Terror Plot; the Kennedy Airport Gas Line Plot; the only video of 9/11 terror suspect Zacarius Moussaoui; charges against the men who plotted to bomb the Citicorp Center and other New York landmarks; the Herald Square subway bomb plot; the international threat targeting NYC subways; the FBI sting of the "Missile Man," the British man convicted of trying to buy and sell shoulder-fired missiles to terrorists; U.S. terror charges being filed against radical British cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri; the arrest of Sheik Rahman's attorney Lynn Stewart and two others on terror-related charges; and the arrest for Sheik Al Moayad convicted of helping raise million of dollars for terror.

Dienst has also filed countless breaking reports surrounding the aftermath and the investigation into the 9/11 attacks as well as the anthrax attacks. He was also first to report the small plane crash on the Upper East Side was likely an accident, not terrorism, breaking the news that the plane belonged to Yankee pitcher Cory Lidle. Dienst also broke the story that a huge explosion that destroyed a townhouse along Madison Avenue was not terrorism, but was likely a suicide attempt by a doctor involved in a bitter divorce. In the Virginia Tech Shooting Case, Dienst was first to report that the shooter sent a box containing his manifesto to NBC News Headquarters in New York.

His reporting on corruption cases in New York and New Jersey has also made national headlines. Dienst was first to report that two former NYPD detectives were arrested for being "Mafia Cops" and WNBC's cameras were the only ones in place the day the arrests happened. Dienst broke the story that former FBI agent Lynn Devecchio was under investigation for allegedly leaking information to mobsters.

Dienst also broke the story that attorney general candidate Jeanine Pirro was under federal investigation for allegations she tried to illegally eavesdrop on her husband while he was possibly having an affair with another woman. Dienst obtained transcripts of wiretaps that show Pirro's alleged attempts to enlist the help of former NYPD police commissioner Bernie Kerik. Dienst also broke many stories about the rise and fall of Kerik -- a hero throughout the 9/11 crises only later to be convicted for accepting cash and gifts while a city official.

Dienst broke the story about the federal investigation and arrest of Assemblyman and union leader Brian McLaughlin. McLaughlin was accused of accepting payoffs and stealing taxpayer money totaling more than 2 million dollars. Dienst also broadcast an in-depth investigation into allegations of abuse of inmates by officers inside New Jersey's Bayside prison. The series of reports included never seen before video and documents from inside Bayside. Federal investigators in charge of reviewing the inmates' allegations said they had never seen the video and documents WNBC uncovered.

In October 2002, Dienst received national acclaim for a 40-minute commercial free report investigating alleged wrongdoing by New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli. The report included new evidence, documents, interviews and video that raised troubling questions about the Senator's relationship with convicted fundraiser David Chang. In addition, Dienst and WNBC's legal team helped lead the fight to unseal court papers about Torricelli's ties to Chang. Senator Torricelli announced he was dropping out of the race four days after WNBC's report aired. Dienst was also first to report on a streak of judicial corruption in Brooklyn, breaking the story of the arrest of then Judge Victor Barron. WNBC's cameras were again in place when police and federal agents arrested Councilman Angel Rodriguez for taking bribes. At the time, Rodriguez was one of the city's most powerful council members.

On local crime stories, Dienst often helps lead WNBC's coverage, breaking the news that a bar bouncer was the suspect in the brutal death of John Jay College student Immette St. Guillen. He also broke the story of the arrest of a suspect in the death of the Upper East Side dancer Catherine Woods, and once again WNBC's cameras were the only ones in place when the suspect was arrested. Dienst broke the story that a homeless man trying to steal copper wire from an abandoned warehouse was arrested in the huge Brooklyn waterfront fire, the largest fire in New York since 9/11. He also helped lead the station's continuous coverage of the July 2003 shooting inside City Hall, scoring many firsts that day including identifying the shooter who killed Councilman James Davis and the motive behind the murder. Other firsts include the capture of millionaire fugitive Robert Durst, the arrest of former NBA star Jayson Williams and many New York area Mafia round-ups.

Dienst has reported extensively on allegations of corruption on Wall Street, breaking news on many of the nation's biggest white-collar crime stories. He broke the story that WorldCom CEO Bernard Ebbers would face criminal charges in the largest corporate fraud case in U.S. history. Dienst also alerted CNBC viewers to the arrest of Imclone CEO Sam Waksal and his later guilty plea. Dienst was also first with news that criminal charges had been filed against other Worldcom and Adelphia Communications executives. He was first to report about the Justice Department's "strong criminal case" against Martha Stewart and that an indictment was likely.

Dienst was first to report the CEO of Comverse Technologies fled the country rather than face criminal charges. Dienst also tracked down the fugitive CEO of Symbol Technologies. The accused white-collar crook allegedly stole millions and fled the U.S. when he learned he was going to be indicted. Dienst and his cameras found the "Millionaire on the Run" hiding in an ocean front villa in Sweden out of reach of U.S. law enforcement.

Prior to WNBC, Dienst worked at WPIX/Channel 11 News from 1996-2001. In addition to covering police and the courts, Dienst also covered politics, national and international news for the station. While there he helped spearhead coverage of the crash of TWA Flight 800 and also covered the police brutality case of Abner Louima. He got the first interview with Newshawn Williams, the so-called "AIDS man" who in the interview admitted for the first time of possibly infecting many more women with the HIV virus than initially feared.

Before WPIX, Dienst was a member of the staff that helped launch New York 1 News in 1992. At NY1 he helped lead the station's coverage of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the Sheik Terror Plot. Dienst also worked as a reporter for NBC affiliate WSAV-TV in Savannah, Georgia where he reported on the city's skyrocketing murder rate and several police corruption scandals. Dienst has also written articles for Newsday, the New York Post, and worked behind the scenes at Fox 5 News in New York.

Dienst works with two of the station's leading producers. Joseph Valiquette is a lawyer and former FBI official who spent 30 years with the FBI. He was one of the original members of New York's Joint Terrorism Task Force. He now helps oversee WNBC's coverage of federal cases and special investigations. Producer Alice McQuillan is a former Daily News reporter and true crime author who spent ten years covering the NYPD out of 1 Police Plaza. McQuillan helps oversee WNBC's coverage of law enforcement stories and special investigations.

Dienst is the recipient of numerous awards including: Deadline, Emmys, the New York Press Club Gold Typewriter, Associated Press/NY State Broadcasters, Edward R. Murrow, Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Long Island Press Club, the "Daniel Pearl Journalism Leader Eagle Award" from the Respect of Law Alliance, Inc., among others. Dienst has served on the Board of the New York Press Club and the local of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

Dienst is a graduate of Colgate University and received a Master's Degree in Journalism from Columbia University. He lives in New York with his wife and their three children.