

The events of the morning of September 11 will forever be with me. You see, I saw the carnage first hand. I've told the story too many times to count, in print, on television, via e-mail and first hand. I told it in every awful detail. But yet another terror-stricken detailed eyewitness account is not important here in these pages. You've seen the news footage. You've probably seen it too often. What's important now is perspective, something I have been negotiating with myself since September 11.

But to understand my point let me tell you the short version of the story. Here it is. I saw the World Trade Center up close from an Air Canada flight from Toronto at about 9 a.m. on that fateful morning minutes before landing at La Guardia airport. I spent the next three days in the small town of East Hampton absorbing the shock with the locals, listening to their stories and feeling their anguish. Then, with a band of stranded Canadians who were my travel companions that fateful day, we returned home by car, crossing the Rainbow Bridge at Buffalo at 3 a.m. the following Friday morning.

Here's what I have learned about myself, about Canada and about the human race in the time since. They are simple truths.

This story is not over. Every time I think that it is and I start to heal, I hear yet another tale of terror. For example, Victoria, the property manager of my apartment dropped by a couple of weeks after I returned from New York. Victoria's friend worked at the Pentagon. She and her unborn baby were killed in the attack.

In fact as the months go by this story will continue to unfold locally, nationally and globally. Steel yourself to that reality. The world has changed. We need to accept that and get on with our lives as best we can.

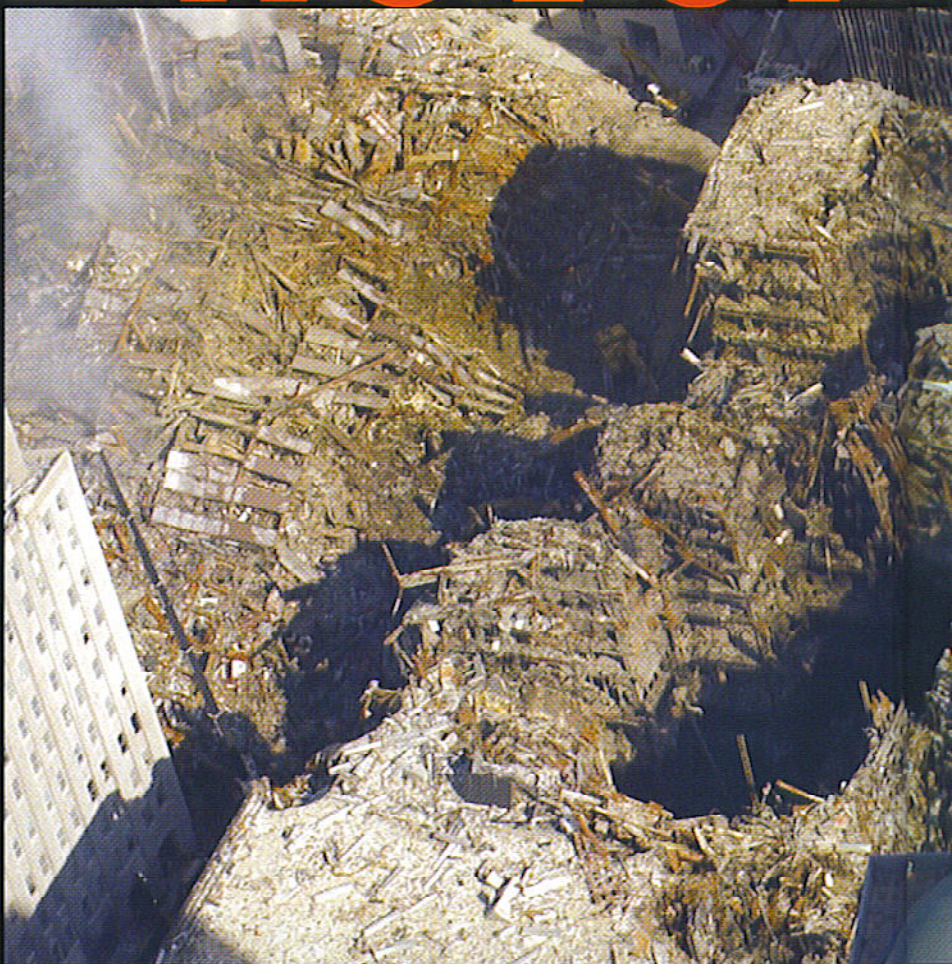
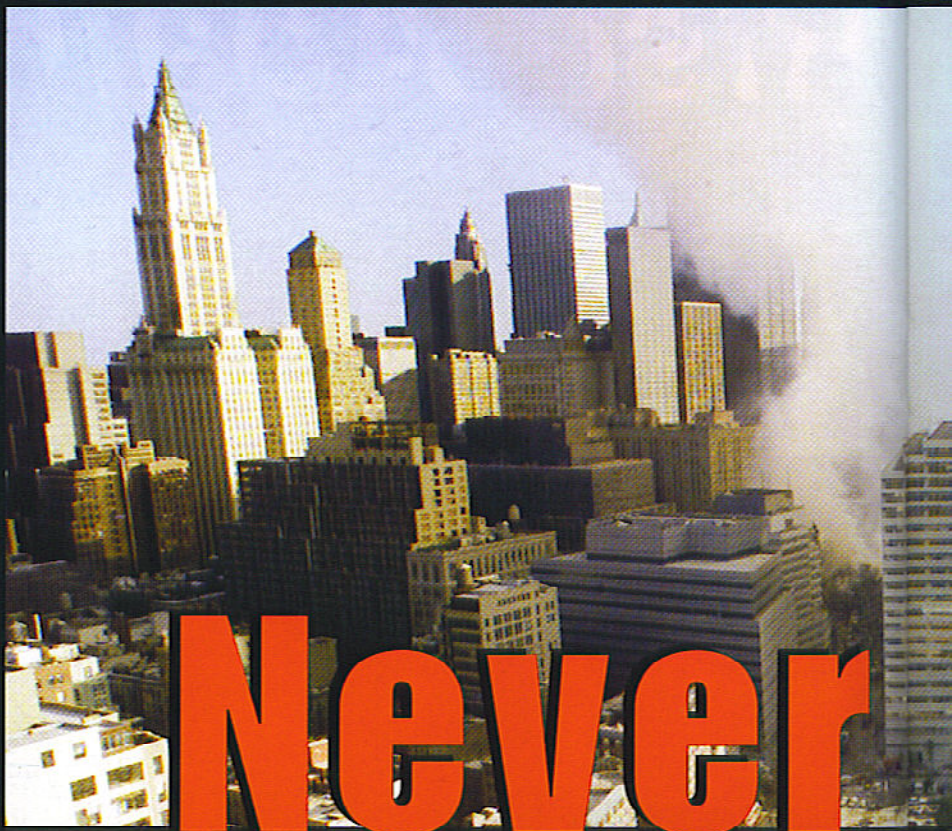
Since the attacks, I have been glued to the television and to the Internet. I marvel more than ever at technology and at instant communication because I have been able to learn more about the world in these few weeks than I ever learned in my four years at university. I know now who the Taliban are and what they have done to Afghanistan and its people. I know that George W. Bush is the right man, even if his politics don't always match mine. I have learned to differentiate between a Muslim terrorist and an every day Muslim. The latter are warm God-loving people. They have children and can love and can be afraid. This tragedy is not their fault. Please don't punish them for the deeds of extremists that fundamentally do not follow the good word of Islam.

We are lucky to have access to a wealth of information. Take advantage of it. When you feel the hate rising in you, educate yourself about the situation. The tools are at your disposal.

I am thankful for America. George W. Bush called Canada America's "brother." We are actually its little brother. Yes, we scrap like brothers. Yes, America is bigger and tougher than us. And yes sometimes we are bullied. Nevertheless, like a little brother we hurt when our bigger sibling is hurt. We need to reach out, soothe wounds and offer comfort. Cherish Americans. They are our brothers and sisters.

*Top photo:  
Smoke continues to fill the sky from the collapsed World Trade Center buildings, Wednesday, Sept. 12, 2001.*

*Photo by Robin Weiner*



7:45

American Airlines 11

Boeing 767 - 92 on board  
leaves Boston for L.A.

7:58

United Airlines 175

Boeing 767 - 65 on board  
leaves Boston for L.A.

8:01

United Airlines 93

Boeing 757 - 45 on board  
leaves Newark  
for San Francisco

8:10

American Airlines 77

Boeing 757 - 64 on board  
leaves Washington for L.A.

8:45

American Airlines 11

hits north tower WTC  
in New York City