Topic: Witnessing the World Trade Center Attack on September 11, 2001

Abstract: The attack on the World Trade Center was the beginning of several events to follow, including the “War on Terrorism.” The witnessing of this attack affected many individuals near and far. This is ultimately the story told in how it affected many, especially the students of San Benito High School. The accounts witness some historical events leading to the capture of Osama Bin Laden, as well as Saddam Hussein. This account gave personal feelings, as well as observations witnessed on this day.

Key Words: World Trade Center, September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda, Middle East, students

It was a beautiful Tuesday morning in September. The sun was beaming golden yellow through the very thin window pane. The coolness of the twilight resided in the air, covering it like a dense blanket with the morning sunrise. As I open my eyes, the grotesque sound of my alarm clock began piercing my ears. I reached the clock with slight annoyance only to realize that my slumber ended sooner than expected. As I rubbed my eyes, I looked over at the face of the clock that read “8:26 am.” Groaning, I remained motionless in bed. When I finally got up from bed five minutes later, I headed to proceed for my day. Thirty minutes later, I washed up and began my daily routine and turned on the television.

With the flicker of channels flowing by, I was searching for the local news to determine the weather for the day. Every channel blinking by had a special bulletin showing. When the curiosity finally set in, I decided to see what this major announcement was all about. After coming across CNN, the voice of the anchorwoman was weighed down by a heavy burden. In big white gold font, was the words “Attack on the World Trade Center.” I, at first, was unsure what the World Trade Center was. Little did I know that these buildings that were and important factor for world-wide trading and commerce.

As I watched attentively, I can see the images showing the tears, worries, and cries the civilians of New York City from such attack. The city was covered in so much dense charcoal-
black colored smoke, that it blanketed the sunlight from the morning sunrise. The Big Apple was under attack, and panic grew all over the city. The cameras were focused on the building, showing people plunging to their death from 80 stories above ground. The flames were rising from the remnants of the crash. It was a horrible sight to see. All in an instant, you see the flight of another aircraft crashing towards the other tower, followed by a loud boom and explosion. The newscaster began panic announcing the coverage of the crash. Screams surrounded the news anchor followed by people fleeing for their life. They began bumping into each other carelessly, attempting to quickly flee the scene.

Both buildings remained in flames now. It was such a horrible sight to see. There are no words that the anchorman could say to make the situation any better. The worst has been anticipated: The United States was under attack. Announcements were flowing that the Pentagon was being a target. Chaos was being created all over the East coast. Warnings were issued in all major cities, including cities in California. Fears of attacks in the West coast grew with every minute passing. Planes are coming from all directions, yet the U.S. has not reacted in any way.

Part of me felt that this was going to be the beginning of a major world war. As previously read in several History books, it’s a known fact that one incident creates a chain effect that could lead to major wars. President Bush was adamant about pursuing the Middle East to find those “who were responsible.” Yet, in my mind, being someone that does not follow the news about everyday world events, I began to wonder the reasoning behind pursuing the Middle East. Its well known that the Middle East carries a substantial amount of resources in crude oil. America’s demand for oil was so outrageous; gas prices were increasing to $4 dollar a gallon, the highest ever in history.
These attacks were just the beginning. Between focusing on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the fear of war lurked in the air. With an instant, the releases of the people responsible were announced: all originators from the Middle East. It was difficult to swallow the idea of war: drafts, deployment, family being torn apart from war, the increase of military recruitment, etc. I never imagined being able to witness such an event in which the United States would feel so vulnerable, yet here it is presenting itself on my television.

Within all the hype, the towers collapsed! Slowly but surely they all began crumbling down floor by floor. Pedestrians are running for their lives, slowly being consumed by the dust that covered every street and building in the vicinity. Everything from cars, to people, to buildings was covered with dust and remnants of the crumbling towers. A once sunny morning, was clouded by the collapse of The World Trade Towers.

The event continued throughout the day. I spent my morning watching the news attentively as I got ready for my day in school. My senior year in has suddenly been overshadowed by a sad day.

When I arrived to my first class of the day, lesson plans were postponed to watch the news. Teachers would ask questions regarding students having relatives living in the East coast. The fact that this event hit closer to home set in. What if I had members of my own family that witnessed that? How would I cope with the loss of a loved on buried under all that rubble? Counseling was recommended for any members of the student body that needed to speak to someone regarding the situation. Candle light vigils were held during the lunch hour to pray for those under the rubble.

Students, teachers and administrators all felt the impacts of these attacks. Local law enforcement was present on campus to ensure the safety of everyone on campus. It provided any
precaution on any suspicious activity. Despite their presence, one still felt afraid of the outcomes of these terrorist acts. It became the conversation of choice among my fellow students. Conspiracy conversations about how the government knew about these attacks, or about how the Al Qaeda was fully responsible for these attacks. Some promoted the decision that war was the next best solution; others felt it was not the best solution.

President Bush stated how “our country saw evil.” He stated how the ones “responsible who committed these acts, shall be brought to justice.” It was a speech that every American anticipated. Sending out condolences to those families who lost loved ones in the attack; “A day in which this attack will never be forgotten.” A speech needed to uplift in light of the tragic events that happened during the day. Questions were raised as to the extend we Americans will go to search for the attackers. Overwhelming evidence was found on how the Middle East was responsible for these attacks on American soil.

I clearly remember how the history of Osama Bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaeda, was responsible for the plans against the World Trade Center. A man, trained by the CIA, by our government, who now used the knowledge we imparted to commits acts of terrorism. It began to feel like a scam to me. I remember being confused as to how this information was so overwhelming, yet, we as American’s had no idea of these attacks on U.S. soil. Little did we know that we will endure 10 years of “War on Terrorism” to try to find this threat toward the U.S.

After my school day, I remember speaking to my mother about these attacks. She detested the Bush Administration. She was pro Clinton, and was always a democratic supporter. She would state at how the Bush family was always interested in the Middle East. How the surplus of the oil was always in the eyes of the Bush Sr. and now Bush Jr. was showing interests
in the Middle East. She would tell me about how we went to war in Iraq in the early 1990’s; known as Operation Desert Storm. Her biggest fear was that her oldest son would be called in from a draft. Although she never showed much worry, I could always tell by how invested she was with the news. My mother was never someone who can hide her emotions very well.

Followed by these attacks, was an action plan set by Congress to increase security in our country. The Homeland Security was created as a branch in our government. It allowed us to increase the monitoring of any potential threats done against the United States. Travelling became very thorough in searching your belongings. Little things such as soap, shampoos, were taken away and not allowed to be added in your luggage bags, in fear that I can be made into a weapon of some sort. Our very way of life was slowly diminished. It was becoming more and more difficult to travel outside the country. Several airline companies reviewed their safety procedures, as well as heightened security within the airports. Billions of dollars in profits were loss from those Americans fearing to fly after these attacks. Not only did it affect us in our everyday lives, but it also affected our way of thinking. It became increasingly difficult to do anything without suspicion.

Racial slurs were beginning to be targeted to those from the Middle East, who came to the United States to make a proper living. I remember watching the news in which several people lost their businesses, their homes, and even relocated due to the mistreatment because they were from the Middle East. The fact that this kind of behavior, found from reading in history books, began to increase in the United States. Judgments were made to those that did not deserve to be judged.

What’s the positive outcome of this attack: yet to be determined.
Thousands of people, including innocent civilians and U.S. soldiers have died trying to protect the country from any further foreign attacks. The finger was still pointed at the Al Qaeda group; yet, the reasoning as to why we still remain in the Middle East, ten years later is still a mystery to me. Saddam Hussein, as well as Osama Bin Laden, the two individuals sought to be the major threat toward the United States have been found, and brought to justice. The day of sorrow is still celebrated to remember those lost during the collapse of the World Trade Center. A memorial is in the process of being rebuilt, as well as the rebuilding of the towers.