

Topic: 911

Abstract: What started off as a normal day in school would turn out to be one of the most historically significant events in this young man's life as he becomes a witness to one of the most devastating terrorist attacks in the history of America. That fateful day opened this young man's eyes to the horrors of war and the ideals of terrorism that would become a part of his everyday life over the next decade. Over the upcoming years this young man would grow a strong sense of patriotism as he grows up in a nation filled with war and controversy. Then out of seemingly nowhere the war that had become such a normal part of his everyday life would seemingly start coming to an end as the death of Osama Bin Laden is celebrated across the nation. This is a perspective that is often overlooked as you read the events of 9-11 through the eyes of a normal American sixth grade boy.

Keywords: September 11, 2001, Terrorism, War, Controversy, Perspective, America, Al Qaeda, Taliban, and Patriotism.

I awoke to the same taunting beeps of my alarm clock on another seemingly dull Tuesday packed with school and football practice. I went through my normal morning rituals of bathing, brushing my teeth, getting my football gear together, and grabbing a quick bite to eat before I headed off to school. Of course I was late as usual; as I had to meet up with my friends so we could bike off to school together. As we arrived we hurried off to our classrooms telling each other where we would meet up during break and lunch just like every other day. I went into my classroom and sat down at my assigned seat awaiting as my teacher pulled out her roster getting ready to take the attendance. After she took the attendance my teacher went to the board to write down the daily quiz of the previous night's homework as I got mentally prepared while I wrote down the date. The date was September 11, 2001.

I breezed through my quiz and passed it to my neighbor to be graded. After we were done grading each others quizzes my teacher started to discuss the day's lessons when all of a sudden the principle came over the intercom system telling the faculty to

keep the students in the classrooms at all times and breaks and lunch were cancelled until further notice. Not thinking much of it except for the fact that our breaks and lunch were just cancelled we went on discussing the day's agenda when spontaneously the vice principle came bursting into our classroom with tears rolling down her face telling the students to remain in the classroom and stay calm and that our teacher needed to report to the main office for an urgent meeting. Now just barely starting our sixth grade year we thought of what could possibly be going on knowing full well that someone could of broken out of the prison which was a little over a half mile down the rode from our school. We also had thoughts of a school shooting as the second coming of Columbine would take place at our school with that incident still freshly planted in our minds seeing that it hadn't even happened more than two years ago. Then our teacher came bursting back into the classroom about twenty minutes later distraught and scrambling around the classroom looking for the remote control and when she found it she turned on the television. The first thing I saw over the television was President George W. Bush inside of a classroom not unlike our own addressing the nation of the events that have ensued on the other side of the country in no place other than America's most recognized city; New York.

The images on the television that kept rolling over and over were almost incomprehensible for the mind of a sixth grader. Images of three of America's greatest landmarks going up in balls of flame as they were devastated by commercial airliners slamming into the sides of Twin Towers one and two and also the Pentagon which is supposed to be the head of our military might and national defense. Images that were seldom seen in nightmares kept rolling on the television as people were leaping out from

ridiculous heights to escape the heat of the burning jet fuel only to ultimately fall to their demise. People were running away from the Twin Towers in bloody and shredded suits that were once neat and tidy. Cops and firefighters were running into the buildings to save people at their own peril only to never return to their families again. I had no idea of what to do or think as I was watching hundreds of lives being taken over the same box that I watched my cartoons on. Then the unthinkable happened the Twin Towers were irreversibly erased from the face of the earth as they crumbled down into a gigantic heap of steel and concrete right on top of those who hadn't been fortunate enough to escape or were trapped on the floors that were above where the airplanes had hit. The havoc went on through the entire school day as all we did was watch the same video clips and pictures flash before our eyes over and over and over again waiting for the next breaking update that would bring us that bit of information that we had to know. This act of terrorism would shape my generation and as I know now would influence the upcoming decade that would be filled with war and destruction but also with triumph and resiliency.

That evening after the initial chaos had subdued my family and I sat around the television watching as George W. Bush gave one of his most famous speeches where he stated, "Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts." The President then closed his opening statement letting the world know that we as a nation are still strong and ready for anything that was about to happen as he said, "These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong." That day opened my eyes to the reality of war and how easy it could be to attack another nation as strong as America with something as easy as driving a vehicle right into a

populated area or national monument killing thousands of people in one fatal swoop. On that night however I was never prouder to be an American as images of revenge flashed before my twelve year old mind as I thought of how I would avenge my country from this terrorist group that later I would know as the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

In the weeks to come all I saw on television, newspapers, and almost every other major source of communication was reports of the carnage that was left in the wake of what was now just referred to as 9-11. My father was constantly reminding everyone about how he was just in New York a few weeks before it happened on a business trip for his company and that on the last day he had visited Time Square and then later went up into one of the Twin Towers. President Bush was now deploying our troops on a campaign called The War on Terror which would turn out to be a war that is still raging on to this day. During this time period everyone was in support as America wanted vengeance on the mastermind mass murderer Osama Bin Laden. Everyday on the news I recall pictures of American troops carpet bombing deserts, strongholds, and even entire cities to the point that these areas were hardly even recognizable. I remember that the news was introducing to me this new weapon that the enemy has been deploying very successfully against our troops and they were calling them improvised explosive devices or IEDs. I dare say I remember it being a glorious time period for America through my eyes as we have just overcame devastation and were now taking the fight to our enemies as we went onto their turf and punched them square in the chin with our advanced weaponry and technology that would later serve almost no purpose as they successfully used A-symmetrical warfare and simple home made explosives.

I remember that about four to five years into the war most people were fed up with it saying that President Bush is being an idiot and we need to pull our troops out. There was quite a little quarrel going in our nation about whether we should pull our troops out or not but I still sided with the President thinking that it would be better if we stayed in the Middle East and saw this war to the finish. I have always been proud to be an American but this time period shaped me into a hardcore patriot as I would be the first person to jump into an argument at our countries defense and I would often find myself always being the only person agreeing with our President through my eyes. Then the grand-daddy conspiracy allegation came out that would put them all to shame; that President George W. Bush ordered explosives to be planted at the bottom of the Twin Towers and that somewhere down the road people started to believe that this was an inside job. People justified themselves for this argument by saying that there was no way that the towers could of fallen straight down like they did in demolition fashion and that the buildings in New York are built to with stand these type of events. Back then and still to this day it infuriates me to hear people say this because it just sounds uneducated, idiotic, juvenile, and ignorant. The Twin Towers were hit by two Boeing 747's one of the world's biggest commercial airliners and then the structure was burnt to molten magma by hundreds of gallons of jet fuel that could only be compared to as just that lava. Also, was the bottom part of the structures just supposed to hold the weight of the top part when it lost its support beams? So I would always wonder would these people really feel better if the Twin Towers fell sideways and killed hundreds if not thousands of more people. The funny thing out of all of this is that people just magically forgot that Osama

Bin Laden sent our country a videotape admitting that this was his idea and he took these actions against our nation.

The issues that were caused by this event still bother me to this day. As I've said earlier I love my country and I sincerely wish I could join the military if it wasn't for my medical complications. I almost will never shy down away from an argument when it comes to this event against someone that is saying that the war is a waste of time and that President Bush was an idiot or even that this was an inside job. I have always found it amusing that these same people that hate the war and thought that this was an inside job were the exact same ones that were encouraging our country to go into it in the first place and take vengeance for the victims of this travesty and this attack on our own soil. In my opinion, the day that we caught Osama Bin Laden was the day that most Americans showed their true colors. I can almost guarantee that the day before if I would have asked them a majority would say that we will never catch Osama and that the war is just a giant waste of time. But on that day when the news broke out all of a sudden people started chanting out "U.S.A! U.S.A! U.S.A!" All over Facebook and text messages, people were posting that we finally caught that devil and that he should burn for what he did. What a load of snot if you ask me I think these people are fools and hypocrites just trying to fit in with whatever side has the popularity at the moment or whatever fits into their own agenda. These were the same people that mocked their own country at any moment that was presented to them, and they are cowards for doing so. I don't think anyone should celebrate the death of another human no matter what they have done during their life. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "I mourn the loss of thousands of precious lives, but I will not rejoice in the death of one, not even an enemy. Returning hate for hate multiplies

hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”

Don't get me wrong I think war is a terrible thing but in these times I honestly do believe it is necessary even though the price for our security and safety may come at the life of another and I honestly try to never forget that and I will always be indebted to our great nation and servicemen that protect us from enemies foreign and domestic. To most people, 9-11 seems to have become a novelty memory of sorts that took place long ago like Pearl Harbor. In reality it was barely ten short years ago this year. This memory has been etched into my brain never to be erased as I can recall the expression of the people's faces around me, where I was, what I was doing, and the conversations that took place that day and the many years after.