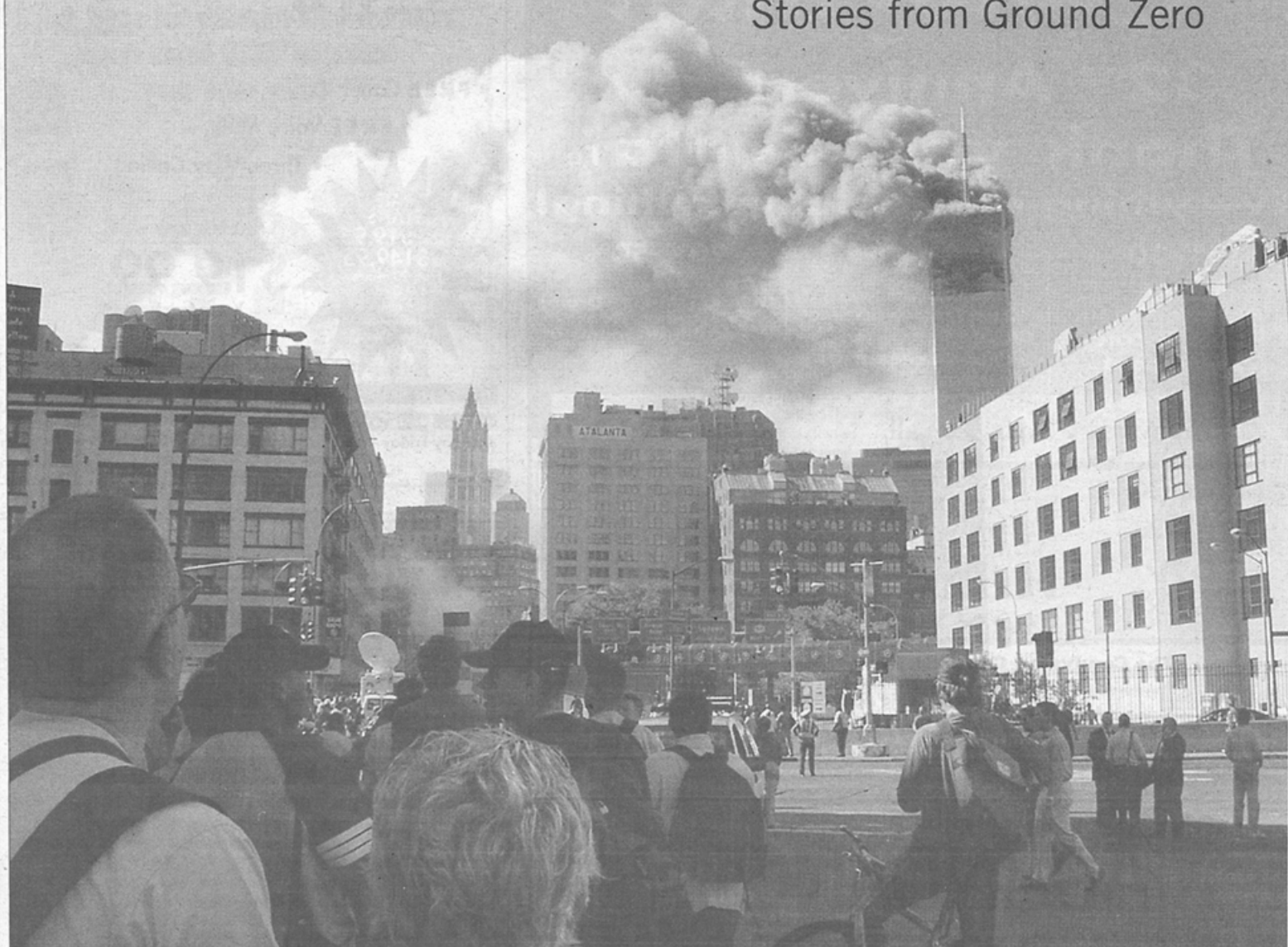


SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Stories from Ground Zero



It was barely 7 am New Mexico time that the news began to trickle in of almost incomprehensible terrorist acts. What we know, as we go to press Tuesday evening, Sept. 11, is little more than you do. Two planes crashed into the World Trade Center, a third into the Pentagon, another in Pennsylvania

near the town of Somerset.

We continue to watch the television, as replays of the destruction flash across the screen, as the president promises vengeance on the responsible parties, as experts speculate on how such attacks could happen in the first place.

What we have included in this issue are first-hand accounts we collected throughout the day from other alternative newspaper writers. We end with an essay from former Santa Fean Bethany Ball, who currently lives in the East Village.

An Altered Skyline

BY ALISA SOLOMON
The Village Voice

I emerged from the Chambers Street subway stop at 9 this morning into a crowd gaping up at the World Trade Center moments after its top floors had burst into flames. Some people were crying, a few women crossed themselves, but mostly people were exchanging stories in that almost affable New York-in-a-crisis way, collecting the tales that they would later tell their friends and maybe someday their grandchildren.

Until the second blast. As soon as we heard the muffled boom and saw flames kick along the walls of the tower, we knew in our bellies that America was changed forever. I wanted to throw up.

A panicky mob ran screaming up the street, some stopping two blocks north to gape some more. Theories started flying: "Terrorists," though few could say which kind, for what cause.

Sirens howled and quickly the streets became eerily empty of traffic. We could see some small figures—something orange, something flapping white—hanging off the building. Could they be people? The crowd let out a high-pitched primal squeal. I got the hell out of there.

I headed east in a nauseous daze—due for jury duty at state Supreme Court on Centre Street, propelled by one of those defense-mechanism impulses that makes you focus on the thing that is absolutely beside the point. I turned onto Duane Street, soon finding myself passing the Javits Federal Building. I started to run. It might blow any minute, I thought.

I spent much of this August in Israel and the occupied territories. I was there during the weeks the Sbarro pizza restaurant in Jerusalem was blown up by a suicide bomber, and left Haifa only a day before the bombing at a restaurant there. Though I witnessed during my travels through the West Bank and Gaza how those areas were the ones literally under siege, I began to understand the depth of Israeli fear. I lived in perpetual anxiety: sitting in a cafe, going to the grocery store, standing in any crowded area. Every time I boarded a bus I felt my heartbeat speed up. I never felt so relieved to return home from abroad as I did two weeks ago. At last I could drop the guard, leave the panic behind.

Or so I thought. Jury duty was over: The court was closing. So I began the citizens' march up Centre Street, merging with the throngs sent home. Cops waved us away from subway entrances and told us to keep walking.

I fell in with a group of young women, administrative assistants at 2 World Trade Center. One was still crying. She was about to enter the World Trade Center when the first plane hit.

"Arms, legs. Parts of people. They were falling on my head," she said. Her friend put an arm around her, saying only "shhh," and the whole block went silent for a moment. The third friend tried frantically to get a cell-phone signal. A secretary to three vice presidents at a Wall Street firm that opens at 9, she typically starts work at 8:30. "I have to get their days prepared," she said, shaken yet proud, almost as if she expected to be there again tomorrow. "My subway was late today and for some reason, for once as the train slowed down and waited, I didn't get mad," she marveled.

Her calls wouldn't go through. Neither would anyone else's. Block-long lines formed at pay phones as WTC workers tried to contact loved ones to let them know they were OK.

As we trudged along—strangers talking like old friends, people who managed to find cabs and offering to share them—I flashed on the grammar-school drills I went through in the '60s. The Cold War came to my Midwestern suburban school in the form of duck-and-cover exercises and, once a year, a practice evacuation. We were let out of school early and had to walk all the way home, filing out in neat lines and heading into the streets, kids peeling off as we came to their neighborhoods.

A real war has come to these shores now, bringing massive violence into America for the first time. The terrible human casualties of today's attacks haven't even begun to be counted yet. Some of the intangible ones to come are obvious—the First Amendment, for starters. The altered city skyline is only the most visible manifestation of the size of the change.

I finally got my turn at the phone. There were three anxious messages on my answering machine: One from my partner. And two from friends in Israel.



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SHRUB BUSH & HIS CLAIM TO BE COMPASSIONATE???

Shrub started off with a massive tax cut for the wealthy. It's estimated that the upper 10% obtain about 70% of this largesse. So the bottom 90% receive 30%. And it's even less for the bottom 50%, who may receive less than 15%. Is this compassion? Hardly!

The above tax cut for the wealthy may well remove ways to fund domestic programs. Programs like education, prescription drug benefits, a patient's bill of rights, a better minimum wage, and low-cost housing for the working poor.

If Shrub's kowtowing to the wealthy removes the above domestic programs, is this COMPASSION???

Shrub favors the military. Its yearly allotment is now 310 BILLION. Not enough, says Shrub. Wm. Pfaff claims that the allotment for the Pentagon is determined by the Pentagon — not Congress or the Executive.

A huge problem worldwide is the circulating number of small arms. The UN held a meeting to stop this trade, which results in 500,000 deaths per year. DUBYA refused to be a part of reducing these deaths. COMPASSION???

Most of the world is for eliminating the planting of land mines. Not Shrub. COMPASSION???

Most of the world is for stopping the dissemination of biological weapons. Not the Shrub. COMPASSION???

Almost all, including most of our European allies, are against the infamous anti-missile system. Not Shrub. Not Rumsfeld.

Most of the world is for reducing emissions leading to global warming. Not DUBYA. MORE COMPASSION???

Is mandating testing the best tactic for improving our schools? Not if one does any thinking about this problem!!! Shrub & STUPIDITY.

So there you have it. Scant or nothing Shrub & COMPASSION.

Paid for by the Agency for Sensible Politics, R. G. Wells, Chm.

P. S. A near ZERO for Shrub and COMPASSION.

In the Air During the World Trade Center Attack

BY BRUCE DOBIE
Nashville Scene

Albie Del Favero, founding publisher of Nashville's alternative newsweekly, the Nashville Scene, boarded an American Airlines flight early Tuesday to New York. He was to attend a company board meeting in a Manhattan office. Instead, from the air, he witnessed one of history's more barbaric events. This is his account, as relayed from a pay telephone in Long Island:

There was nothing unusual about the flight. Everything was normal. We were on our approach. Then the stewardess said, "Look, the World Trade Center is on fire. There's smoke billowing out."

There weren't many people on the flight, so I move to the left-hand side of the plane and get an aisle seat.

Soon, everyone on the plane was starting to talk about it.

Really, it was unbelievable because when you fly into New York on a gorgeous day, it's just beautiful. And it was a gorgeous day—not a cloud in the sky. It was sort of bizarre because the smoke wasn't moving—it was just hanging in the air, sitting there. And all of a sudden, this explosion just occurs. It was this incredible ball of fire. And that was the second plane. At that point, the guy behind me says, "I was supposed to stay there tonight." He worked for JP Morgan or something, and he was supposed to be spending the night in the World Trade Center.

Still, at that point, nobody is freaking out. But everyone is saying they think it might have been a bomb. It was such an odd thing. Nobody is panicking at all. And in fact, people are still not clued into the fact that this is such a tragedy. They're still at the level of dealing with this as an interruption, or as a hassle. So, there was the back and forth between it being a tragedy to being a hassle.

So the plane lands naturally. Nobody says anything. At that point, nobody really knows anything. But the guy behind me gets on his cell phone and calls and finds out it's a terrorist attack. So, then I called Sara [Del Favero's wife], because I think she would be worried about me, and she finds out I'm OK. She had heard from CNN that an American Airlines jet had gone down, so she was upset. But as I am getting out of the plane, I still really didn't know the extent of what had happened. As I'm walking out the airport, I pass by a television in a bar, and they're showing footage of the Pentagon having been bombed, and by then I'm understanding this is big.

Still, I'm thinking I'm headed into Manhattan for my board meeting. I was walking out to get a cab to go into the city. But then everyone is told that all the bridges and tunnels into the city are closed. And at this point, airport security guys start ushering us out of the airport. And then they just start saying, "Go home. No more flights. Go home.



No more flights."

Like we're supposed to go home. That's when all these New York-style fights break out with everyone screaming at each other.

So they usher us outside the airport, and we stand there for like 30 minutes. And we're sitting there outside LaGuardia looking at the two World Trade towers on fire. And then all of a sudden, we're looking around, and then somebody goes, "They're gone." The buildings had collapsed.

So then, the security guards move us even further out from the airport, out to some access road or interstate. A bunch of us just go stand by this ramp. Then someone says, "All airports in the country are closed." And all I start thinking is, I want to go home.

Three of us then caught a cab, and we pooled some money, and we just headed away from Manhattan rather than toward it.

I'm in Long Island, and things are weird. I got Sara to rent me a car, and I'm going to try to drive back to my home in Nashville. The saddest part about this is that one of my daughters called wanting to know if I was alright. My other daughter is on a school retreat. I hate to think my poor children are old enough to have to understand how tragic this whole thing is. When Oklahoma City happened, they were so young they didn't grasp it. But now they can understand. That makes me very sad.

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S E P T E M B E R 1 1 , 2 0 0 1

Chaos Erupts

BY LAURA MILLER
Salon.com

It began the way all disasters seem to when you're not in the middle of them, with a minor aggravation. At 8:45 a.m., my Greenwich Village apartment rumbles as I'm getting dressed; a low-flying plane. "Must be some kind of military exercise," I grouse, and then pause, realizing that since I moved from San Francisco three years ago I've never once had my windows rattled by flybys. Weird.

"This just in: There's been some kind of explosion in the top floors of the World Trade Center," said the WNYC announcer. I contemplate heading out to the street for a look. You can see both towers perfectly from Sixth Avenue and West 12th Street. But I probably wouldn't even be able to see the smoke. "We've got unconfirmed reports that a plane hit the north tower," he says a minute later, and I'm out the door.

A big, smoking wound gapes on the side of the north tower. Clumps of people stand in the street. A guy in a baseball cap tells me he saw the plane. "It was a passenger airliner," he says. "It was flying really low, and swerving. I didn't see it hit, but I heard it." Tiny shards of fire flicker in the hole.

I rush upstairs to listen for updates. This has to be the worst aviation accident of all time, I think. I'm pouring coffee, and I hear something boom. It can't be. "Another plane just hit the other tower," a frantic man with an Indian accent tells a radio reporter. No, that can't be right.



CHRIS RIZZO/REUTERS

The crash must have set off an explosion in some part of the tower. "A second plane has hit the south tower," says Highland.

I'm on the street again by the time I grasp that this is no accident. Huge billows of smoke cover the tops of both towers. Honking cars covered with gray dust crawl up Sixth Avenue through the huge crowds of people staring south. I go back and forth between the street and my CNN-filled apartment a half dozen times. I'm heading around the corner when I hear people scream. The south tower is down. I see the north tower fall on live TV, and by the time I get to the street people are stumbling around on the sidewalk weeping, and a man is shouting that everyone should head to the hospital on the corner. "They need blood!"

There's a big empty patch of sky on the horizon where I used to admire the towers tinted pink by the dawn. Gone. More people than I can count, or can even stand to think about, now have even bigger holes in their lives.

S E P T E M B E R 1 1 , 2 0 0 1

No Safe Place

BY BETHANY BALL

This morning I woke to a series of messages from friends expressing concern for my safety. When I opened my AOL account, one friend wanted me to write back immediately to let him know I was all right.

I called another friend who told me the World Trade Centers were down, that Manhattan was engulfed in smoke. I looked out the window of my East Village apartment and noticed that the sky was the bluest I'd ever seen in New York. It was nearly the color of the sky in Santa Fe, where I had visited the week before. I had no television stations, no radio, and my husband was in Nashville on business.

I left my apartment to see what I could see. From Avenue A I walked to First Avenue. Doves of people were walking uptown and I could see the great plume of smoke.

There were vast lines of people waiting for the ATM machine and public telephones. Cars and people were crossing Houston, dust trailing them. People stood around a car whose radio loudly broadcast the news. Some wiped away tears, one man smiled when he heard a plane just missed Camp David. Out of nervousness I suspect. We all scattered when we heard George Bush's voice.

God help us, this is not the time to be reminded who the leader of the "free" world is.

A man tells me he's trying to get to Stanton Island where his wife and baby are waiting. I tell him that my husband is in Nashville due to return Thursday, my 29th birthday, my first

birthday as Amir's wife. The man tells me I'd better not count on it.

It wasn't until I met my husband that I realized what an incredible privilege it was to be an American. To have thousands of square miles to spread out in, roam, explore, safely ensconced between two oceans.

He is Israeli and has friends from Israel living here, wanting to stay in the US, to stay out of the depressing, unwinnable situation that exists in their own country. It was because of this that I eloped with my husband to a tiny town in Maryland, wed by a 6'2" beefy county clerk with an Elmer Fudd high-pitched voice. We had only been together for seven months, but I knew I would follow him wherever he went, and better that we kept our options open. Better that he be able to stay here, rather than me follow him there.

Small wars are ignited at dinner tables whenever Israel and Palestine are mentioned. One friend of ours is in love with a Taiwanese girl, and I have thought to myself, what's the sense of that? Two people from two unstable countries—what safe place could they go? They would be better off if they married Americans, I thought to myself. Suddenly I could see how lucky I was, and how lucky my husband was. First of all that we were terribly in love, and second of all that one of us lived between two safe harbors. Somehow it had never crossed my mind to question this safety that I felt, especially when American interests, weapons, and money were stirring up trouble all over the world.

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wage their part of a decades old war: suicide bombs, car bombs and now, today with the scarred skyline of Manhattan blasted all over the world, 3,000 Palestinians dancing in the streets of the West Bank.

My husband, when he was a child, wanted to be a cowboy. His mother recently sent me pictures of him, curly haired and slightly bucktoothed dressed in the leather fringe and cowboy hat uniform of what were once our heroes. This cowboy thing is a major difference between us. I always wondered how we could have slaughtered so many Native Americans with our sophisticated weapons when they had only primitive ones. When Amir was a teenager he had one ambition, to be a Navy Seal. In Israel, to be a Navy Seal is like being a professional basketball player in the US. Later I was surprised by how much it impressed me, especially when he told me the labor he had endured during those four and a half years in the army.

Some years after the army he had become liberal, arguing on behalf of the Palestinians, getting in shouting matches with more conservative Israelis in Tel Aviv. By the time I met him, he had almost no opinion at all. He tried hard to ignore the Ma Ariv newspaper, or looked only at the sports page. Sometimes it angers me to discuss Israel with him. He is a brilliant arguer and minutes after he's convinced me of something I wonder what in the world it was he said. A blaze of words going nowhere for over 50 years now.

I had thought I might say something about how the Jews need a country, that giving up Israel, though surrounded by potential enemies—and few and few allies, is still unthinkable. How in spite of the perhaps unfair way they've treated the Palestinians, still, it is necessary that they live under some kind of protection. Especially just so few years after the horrors of the last World War.

But then, sitting in the coffeeshop where Amir and I met, owned by a Libyan (who claims he is Egyptian), I change my mind again. I talk to the owner, a close friend of both Amir and mine, who tells of the pain he feels over this American tragedy but then also about how unfairly the Palestinians are treated. "Israel has the chance to take the high moral stand. They, after being persecuted themselves for so long, are in the right place for it. But they are blowing it. All they have to do is stop wheeling and dealing with the Palestinians, stop hardlining them and provide them with economic aid so that they are not so marginalized, so ill-treated."

It is still not, he says, justification for what happened here. The wisest of us know that it is these very labels, Jew, Arab, Protestant, Muslim, Catholic that separate us and cause wars. It is all our little minor differences that we are so attached to, that cause us to take up arms and kill our fellow species.

Last March, walking down Fifth Avenue in front of Tiffany's with Amir's mother, a woman born in Morocco who made her way to "safe" Israel as a teenager, she suddenly grabbed my arm and stopped me. "Imagine," she said in broken English, "all the people on the streets and then boom, a bomb, and they are all gone. That is what it's like in Israel."

Neither America nor Israel will feel much restraint in whatever retaliation takes place in the next few weeks. Already many countries have expressed their support of America to "pretty much do whatever they want to do without diplomatic concerns," says the local CBS news affiliate, the only station available to me. And even here now, sitting in my friend's coffeeshop watching the almost beautiful plume of white gray smoke against the blue sky of Manhattan, I can't say who is right and who is wrong. I only know what most of us know: my immediate present. That I am happy to be here, selfishly happy still to be an American, to give my husband an enormous country for us to raise our children in. So that they will have every opportunity a large country and its economy has to offer. Happy that Amir's immediate family in Israel is safe. Happy that all my dear loved ones are, for now, safe.

Bethany Ball visiting Santa Fe last week.



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7am

8am

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FRI	Gene Valdes St. Francis Peace & Justice Commission	Glen Perry S.E.E.D.-New University
MON	Marsha de Chadenes Van of Enchantment-Museum of NM	Estévan Rael-García New Mexico State Historian
TUE	Mary Ernst Celtic de Santa Fe	Penny McMullen 150th Anniversary Loretto Sisters
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Venerable Constance Miller is an American-born nun in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She was ordained in 1978 and has been teaching Buddhist philosophy and practice in centers in Europe, Asia, and America since 1982. She helped Lama Thubten Yeshe found the Universal Education Association and served as its director for a number of years after its inception. From 1992 through 1996 she was responsible for the editorial department of Wisdom Publications in Boston. She is now working as the Education Services Coordinator in the FPMT's International Office in Taos.

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JULIA GOLDBERG

LIVE FROM NEW YORK

Thank God.

I can't call. I have no phone. I only have one TV channel and no radio. No phone. Subway lines, bridges, tunnels closed and channel 2 says New York City is on full terrorist alert. I've never been so scared.

The phone first rings at 7 am. I've overslept by an hour and my first thought is that my workout will have to be cut short. I don't get to the phone before it stops ringing. When I check the missed messages function, the number left is from the publisher of this paper. At 7 am. Someone is dead, I think, and call him back.

"Are you watching?" he asks.

It's an hour later, and I am starting to grind my teeth. I have been trying to get through, via telephone, to my family in New York for the better part of the hour. I am starting to get semi-hysterical. Yesterday, Sept. 10, was my mother's first day of work as a lawyer for the City of New York. Her office is one block from the World Trade Center. My father also is in New York, though I can't think why he'd be anywhere near the WTC. Finally, I leave a message for my sister in Seattle, Wash., on her cell phone.

The TV is blasting images of destruction. Two airplanes have crashed in the twin towers of the WTC. It defies comprehension. The Pentagon has been hit. A little while later, a plane has crashed near Pittsburgh. I keep trying the phone. My mother, my aunt, my father, my sister. Nothing. Finally the phone rings; it's my sister. My mother has called her from a pay phone on the street. My sister is crying, because my mother has apparently said something along the lines of, "If anything happens to me, I'm sorry I brought you into a world like this." For some reason, the melodrama of such a statement makes us both laugh. My sister says she's going to keep trying our father. We get off the phone. A few seconds later it rings, and it's my mother. I can barely hear her.

"If anything happens to me," she yells, "take care of your sister."

"Nothing is going to happen," I say. "You're fine."

"There is a line for the phone," she says. She'll call when she gets back uptown.

About an hour later, she calls back. Assured she is OK, I gently begin interrogating her. She heard the crash, she didn't see the buildings crumble. They evacuated her building. People were yelling, "Get out, get out." But they didn't need to tell her twice, my mother said. Her boss' baby was in day care at the WTC, she rushed in there when it happened. Thousands of people are walking across the 59th Street bridge. We always thought it would be the Russians, she said. We used to have air

raids. She is going to lie down, she'll call me later.

I went out and looked around. First thing I noticed is that the sky is the bluest I've seen in NYC. Huge plume of smoke blowing uptown. Went and hung out on First Avenue. People coming uptown in droves, some covered in ash. All the cars coming uptown on First Avenue. are covered with ash blowing off the backs of them.

I send the staff writers off: the State Capitol, which has just been evacuated, the National Guard. We try to talk to someone at LANL, but they've just been evacuated. I try to decide what to do about this week's paper. Normally, by Tuesday, the Reporter is nearly completed—it's due for printing in Albuquerque at about 6 pm. I watch the news for awhile. A blurb at the bottom of the screen announces a security meeting at the New Mexico State Fair. The mind boggles. I read an email from a woman we know who is in New York. It's the one I've quoted twice in this column. I call a meeting with our publisher, art director, production manager and copy editor and cancel the previously scheduled cover story. I get on the phone, begin gathering stories from around the country about the events of the day.

During a lull, I try to call my father 20 times in a row. I can't get through. I email a friend in Washington, DC. He writes back the following:

Things are like this: everyone out of work, all roads full of cars. Lots and lots of people have abandoned their cars and are walking home. Metro shut down. Column of smoke from across the river where the Pentagon is. People kind of stunned.

I finally get my father on the phone. He's fine. He says the streets are like Times Square on New Year's Eve. Not, he adds quickly, the party atmosphere, just the number of people walking.

Earlier in the day, I had called the Council for International Relations and spoken to its former president, Gordon Winkler. Winkler was 16 years old when the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor. "We didn't have a radio," he said. "We heard it on the radio. I think this is a day that I will remember like Dec. 7."

As will we all.