

# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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## 9/11 20 Years Later

PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS MAGAZINE

SPECIAL 9/11 2021 EDITION

# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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# FORWARD

**C**apturing a true sense of preparedness and resiliency will always fail if it does not capture the stories and authentic voices of those who experienced it. This special issue of Parents With Preparedness is dedicated to those undefeatable spirits, both present and lost, who responded on 9/11/2001 to unimaginable events on domestic soil. It is for their children, and theirs to know what happened and why, to understand that recovery and healing is a process that is far from linear and that navigation through it is personal and cannot be proscribed.

The memories and reflections of loss on

9/11/2001 for many are indelible, unchanged by the passing of two decades or the increasing complexities of this world. Anniversaries are cathartic for some, and are inspirational for others. We hope the narratives shared here serve both purposes.

Why PWP? Simply because understanding is the first step in educating this generation of future leaders and for the generations which will follow.

Dr. Kathleen Kiernan

Founder [PWPORG.ORG](http://PWPORG.ORG)





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# FDNY: *FATHERS AND SONS, A LEGACY PASSED ALONG*

By Jim Johnson

On September 11, 2001, FDNY's Thomas Richardson and Richard Blatus were Battalion Chiefs working in different areas of New York who had only recently gotten to know each other despite being sworn in on the same day more than 20 years earlier.

Two decades later, the FDNY's Chief of the Department Richardson and Assistant Chief of Operations Blatus have ascended to the pinnacle of the department's leadership and are close friends, and each have sons – Thomas John (TJ) Richardson and Michael (Mike) Blatus. These sons have recently chosen to follow their fathers' legacy by joining the FDNY, albeit in different roles than their dads.

Both Richardson and Blatus survived 9/11, when so many of their FDNY fellows did not, largely by circumstance of duty assignment or schedule. Richardson, working at an outer borough firehouse, was off that day and did not arrive at Ground Zero until September 12. Blatus was working at FDNY headquarters just across the Brooklyn Bridge from the

World Trade Center in Manhattan but took his 9-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, to a specialist to treat a minor schoolyard injury and arrived at Ground Zero shortly after the collapse of the north tower. Blatus said his boss, Chief Peter Ganci, and many of his friends and colleagues who responded to the terrorist attacks at the Twin Towers were killed, and knows he would have likely been among them had it not been for his daughter's injury. In a submission for the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's 9/11 20th anniversary commemoration publication, Blatus described the devastation at Ground Zero in the immediate aftermath of the Twin Towers collapses, including the loss of most FDNY command staff, several special operations officers, and the attempts by top fire officials to regroup and locate hundreds of missing firefighters. The final death toll of firefighters lost was 343, a staggering number leaving generations of grief for families and colleagues.

Richardson said he and Blatus were charged, along with others, to fill in

for the special operations chiefs who perished, and they worked for months afterward in rescue and recovery at Ground Zero. They were also charged with stepping into the FDNY leadership void in the years after the 9/11 attacks, and Blatus said those leaders who survived 9/11 "rose to the top."

Blatus said the responsibility of leading FDNY helped prompt him and Richardson to attend the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) Master's program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA.

Richardson (Master's cohort 0901/0902) graduated from the program in 2010 and received the Curtis H. "Butch" Straub Award for exemplary academic achievement and leadership. His thesis "Identifying Best Practices in the Dissemination of Intelligence to First Responders in the Fire and EMS Services" was nominated for the CHDS Outstanding Thesis Award. Blatus (Master's cohort 0701/0702) graduated from the program in 2008 and produced the thesis "Altering the Mission Statement: The Training of Firefighters as Intelligence Gatherers." Blatus said his





overarching goal as a top FDNY official is to build up the department for the next generation, so young firefighters like his son Mike and Richardson's son TJ will always have a world-class, traditionally-laden organization, and one that is like working with family.

TJ Richardson and Mike Blatus have known each other since they were kids. They grew up together due to their fathers' close friendship, often joining their fathers on work trips and even as kids learned to see the work as do practitioners. In many ways, their young careers also mirror each other in the sense that neither started out intending to follow in their fathers' footsteps by working for the FDNY. Each pursued other careers initially before joining the department in their mid-20s. Ultimately, though, the gravitational pull of the family pride and passion both fathers have for their beloved FDNY convinced each of the men to join that family.

TJ Richardson, 28, joined the FDNY as an emergency medical technician (EMT) in February 2019 and currently works in Queens. He says he aspires to become a firefighter/paramedic like the 29-year-old Blatus, who joined the FDNY in 2016 and works in South Bronx. TJ Richardson, who grew up on Long Island, actually began a career as a train conductor, and he was 25 before he told his father he wanted to be an FDNY EMT, which his father had suggested when TJ was a teenager. It took some time for TJ to realize this was the career path he wanted to take. The elder Richardson said his son told him he saw how happy his father was going to work every day with a smile. Although tired at times, the smile was the same at the end of long shifts; the pride just showed through the exhaustion.

TJ Richardson said he was motivated by the opportunity to serve the way his father has for his entire career. "There's nothing greater than a life of service," he said. "I wanted to serve the city I love. When the FDNY called, I came running." TJ said he doesn't remember much about 9/11 since he was still in elementary school at the time. He commented that his Dad talks more about that day now than before, perhaps because of the approaching anniversary, and he learns more from him each time. The comments are always related to how the FDNY brotherhood came together in a time of such enormous crisis and supported each other. His Dad always talks about the men he knew – both those who were lost and those who survived and worked on "the pile" as the collapsed WTC towers became forever known.

When TJ passes his firefighter exam, he will become a third-generation FDNY firefighter following his father and great-grandfather. His grandfather also served as a Long Island volunteer firefighter.

The elder Richardson admits he worries about the pressure on his son of following a well-known father in the department. He advised his son to just "go to work, put on your uniform, and do the best job you can," and said he has heard from TJ's peers that he is doing a "pretty good job." "All we want for our children is for them to do the best they can," the elder Richardson said. "(FDNY) is a dangerous job, a dirty job, but it's an honorable profession." TJ Richardson called his father his "biggest role model" and added, "If I can be half the man he is, I'll be happy." The younger Blatus said he always had an interest in joining the FDNY growing up and regularly visited his dad at the firehouse, which he described as a "home away from home." After graduating high school in 2010, Mike Blatus competed in college soccer at Concordia College in Bronxville, NY, and Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie, NY. He then certified as a New York State EMT in 2014.

He worked for Transcare Emergency Medical Service for two years until he was selected to attend the FDNY EMS Academy in January 2016.

After graduating from the academy, Mike Blatus was assigned to Station 18 in the South Bronx. He was nominated in 2017 by his station captain for inclusion into the FDNY's paramedic program. He graduated from the rigorous nine-month New York State Paramedic Program and was promoted to the rank of Probationary Firefighter and inducted into the department's Probationary Firefighter School on Randall's Island, NY, in 2018. After graduating from the school in the Top 10 of his class, Mike Blatus was assigned to Engine 92/Ladder Company 44 in the Morrisania section of the South Bronx, where he currently serves with pride.

Mike Blatus is the second generation on his father's side to work for the FDNY, although he said he is the third or fourth generation to do so on his mother's side. But, don't tell Mike Blatus working for the FDNY is a "job." He doesn't see it that way. For him, it is an unparalleled pleasure to work for what he calls the "greatest department in the world." "I like not having a (regular) job; I love going to work (with the FDNY)," he said.

Like the elder Richardson, the elder Blatus also expressed some concern about the effect on his son of following a well-known father into the FDNY but said he's proud of the job Mike is doing. "How could I be more proud?" Rich Blatus asked. "It's not just joining the department but working in medical treatment. He's always had the knack to take care of people." According to Mike Blatus, after he graduated from college and talked to his dad about joining the FDNY, he said he told his father, "I have some big shoes to fill." Mike's father said, "No, you don't. You have your own shoes to fill." ■



## ABOUT JIM JOHNSON

Jim Johnson works as a public affairs specialist at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) in Monterey, CA. He writes for and edits the Center's publications, including the alumni magazine Watermark, as well as the CHDS website and press releases.

Johnson worked for three decades in journalism, including 15 years at The Monterey Herald, before joining CHDS in April.

# PAPER FADES, MEMORIES NEVER WILL

By Kathleen Kiernan, Ed.D

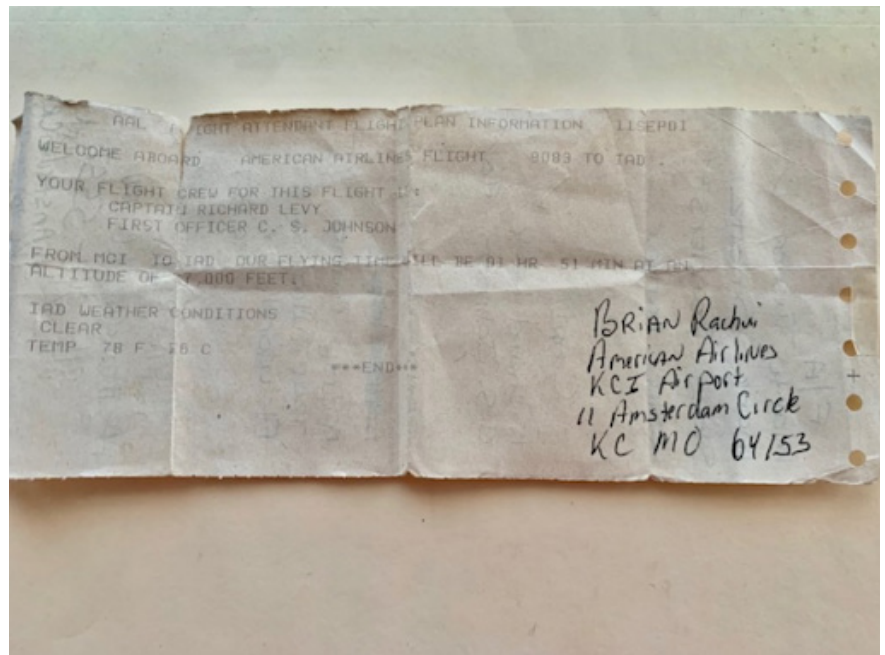
I have had the absolute privilege of a full career in federal law enforcement being led by selfless individuals who were always mission-driven, and later, having the opportunity to lead in the same way. Law enforcement is a fascinating career as it affords one the opportunity to bear witness to the very best and the very worst of human behavior. If we are lucky, we can do that without being consumed by the evil parts, and instead, find solace and a bit of joy in the ability to help others and make the world a safer place. As we approach the 20th anniversary of a series of events which changed the way we look at the world, I reflect back for a moment to 1993 and the first attempt by a foreign adversary to destroy the World Trade Center, which occurred on February 26th, 1993 shortly after noon on a busy Friday. My recollection includes the overwhelming inhalation sensations from smoke and ash, leaking sewage from burst pipes, and the relentless sounds of car horns initiated by the blast wave and the deployment of airbags.

The FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF); NYPD and ATF worked seamlessly together with a common mission and a shared sense of urgency. When the bell rings, everyone in law enforcement responds without question.

Interestingly, the first news reports erroneously attributed the incident to a bombing in the subway which quickly changed as the responders arrived at an extraordinarily complex scene which left six dead and hundreds injured. The adversarial attempt to topple one tower into another failed, in part because the original architectural design included extra stability pillars to protect the structure from shifting in an earthquake. Had similar vans with a similar amount of improvised explosives been placed at each pillar — instead of adjacent to one — they may well have achieved their goal. Despite careful planning, the use of the only entrance to the garage not on camera, and the knowledge of where a delivery van could be parked for short periods without inspection, they missed that architectural detail. Eight years later, it did not make a difference at all.

At that time, I was on rotation from my parent agency (ATF) to the Central Intelligence Agency, Counterterrorism Center (CTC) and soon became part of a global team pursuing those culpable for the planning and execution of the attack, and those who financed it.

On September 11th, 2001, ATF was hosting an intelligence conference in Kansas City,



MO., initiating the launch of a newly formed Intelligence Directorate for which I was appointed as an Assistant Director. It would be the first time many of our agents and analysts from across the country would all be together at the same time in the same location—and the last. As the terrible events of 9/11 unfolded, the conference quickly transitioned into a command center. We then navigated the complexities of getting our team of agents and analysts home to their duty stations and to their families. At that juncture we did not even know the fate of our personnel stationed at 6 World Trade Center. My first decision after the change to a Command Center posture was to have everyone (myself included) call home, assure loved ones of our safety and tell them that contact would be limited and returns delayed. This helped relieve a considerable amount of stress on both ends of the telephone and to provide the undiluted mental acuity for absolute focus. It was an unintended but invaluable best practice.

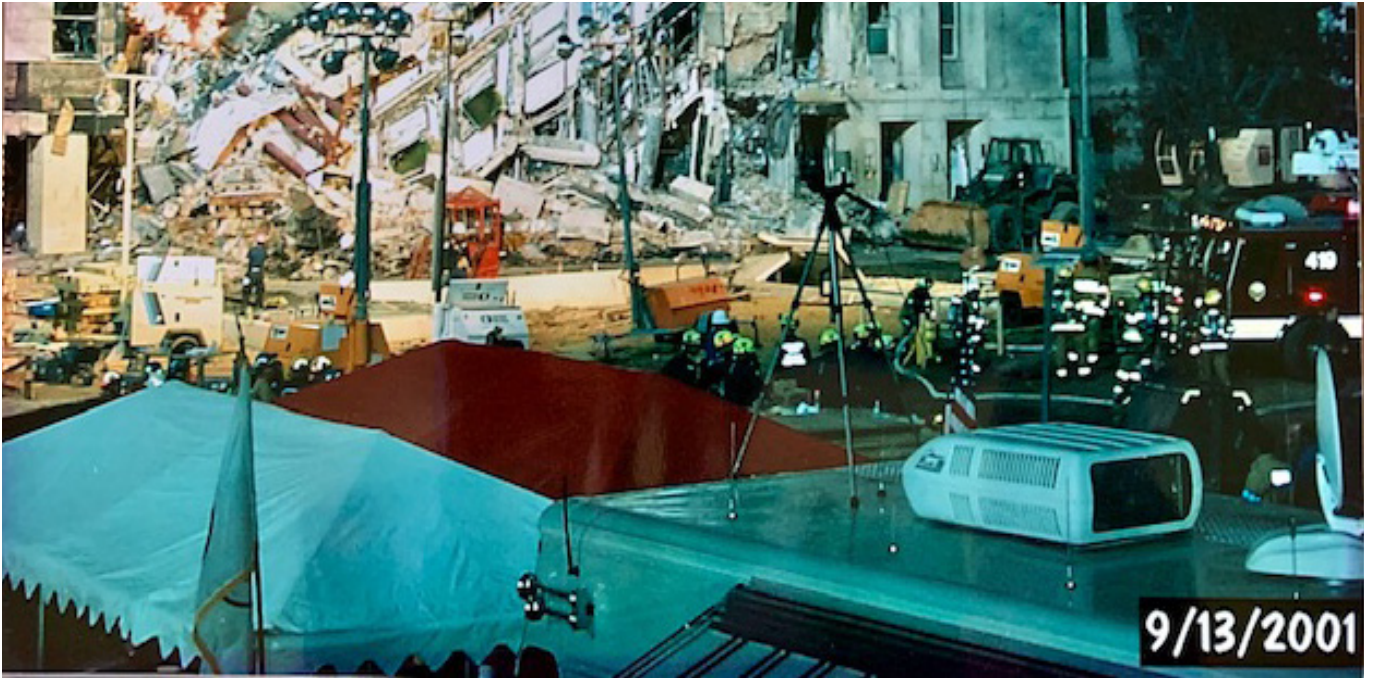
Thanks to the relationship of one of our senior special agents with a pilot from American Airlines, which originated as the result of another tragedy at the Oklahoma Federal Building bombing On April 19th, 1995, American Airlines diverted a flight carrying their Peer Support Team to DC for colleagues and families of those lost on AA Flights 11 and 77.

All were AA volunteers in civilian clothes led by Captain Richard Levy and First Officer, C.S. Johnson, Manager (KCI) Brian Rachui,

Flight Attendants: Marty Turner, Mark Smeltz, Steve Sanders and Leslie Farrar. The airport was of course empty; we handled our own luggage and Our Flight, AA Flight #9083 (upper right-hand corner of manifest) flew that evening to DC, likely the only commercial flight in operation at the time. We were picked up by a bus to which a blue flashing light had been attached and driven by the Pentagon which was engulfed in a raging fire and delivered to do our work by 11:30pm. By 11:45, I was at the SIOC; Strategic Information and Operations Center, run by the FBI, and led by Director Robert Mueller and supported by an amazing interagency group of law enforcement, intelligence, and prosecutorial professionals. I marvel still at the relentless strength of Director Muller, only four days into the job following cancer surgery and the dynamic spirit in all personnel, regardless of job title or agency affiliation.

ATF, like every other law enforcement agency across the country, and in many cases across the globe, deployed every available resource without constraint, **every resource**. There were no jurisdictional disputes at any of the three disaster sites. The only friction was from a reluctance to take a break or any leave, especially from the hallowed grounds which harbored the remains of the lost, until the idea of proof of life was reluctantly let go. The ability to improvise on demand — a skill embedded into the DNA of first responders — was ever-present as runners were deployed with paper instructions between response units as





coms went down at the Pentagon; helmets, boots and ungloved hands were used to move debris at the towers in New York, where even the most exhausted stood at rigid attention whenever human remains were found, honoring fallen colleagues and folks they had never even met. In Shanksville, PA., agents responded unable to do anything but quietly excavate the scene of the crash of Flight 93, heroically diverted from its intended target at our Nation's Capital. It is simply what these selfless men and women do, and it is instinctual, not part of any formal training. I have been fortunate to meet and be a neighbor of

Todd Beamer's parents who shared wonderful stories of his youth, his spirit, and his love for his kids and his family. It was no surprise to his parents that Todd rallied fellow passengers in an attempt to wrestle control of Flight 93 from the hijackers, without a second thought or moment of hesitation.

Twenty years has yielded an undefeatable sense of resiliency, an unmatched before or since desire to serve, with many leaving full careers to join the military, intelligence, and/or the First Responder communities. It also includes the children, those left without a parent on 9/11, becoming firefighters and

police officers with quiet courage. We lost, and continue to lose, many first responders as a result of their digging through the toxic debris for weeks, yet each would unquestionably do it again, it is what they do.

We have witnessed the evolution of the Office, later, Department of Homeland Security, the restructuring of the Government, and the passage of legislation that has stood the test of time. The Center for Homeland Security and Defense (CHDS) stood up and opened its doors to the best and brightest providing a safe haven to learn and to contribute to the literature base ensuring that we as a Country never forget our obligation to serve and protect. 🇺🇸

## ABOUT DR. KATHLEEN KIERNAN



Dr. Kathleen Kiernan is the President of NEC National Security Services, a global company dedicated to orchestrating a brighter world with cutting edge technology while creating shared value in communities across the world.

She is the Founder and CEO of PWPORG.ORG, a 501(c) (3) charity designed by educators to empower parents and children to invest in their own safety and security through education and community engagement. The team envisions a connected world in which there is a common understanding of and shared responsibility and accountability for protecting kids from threats to their safety.

Dr. Kiernan is a former federal law enforcement executive and a recognized expert in strategic thinking, strategy development, and facilitating critical incident management exercises for senior leaders across government and private sector organizations. These include national and international level policies related to criminality and terrorism; identity management, Active Shooter and Insider Threat; anomalous behavior detection; continuity of operations and crisis management. In addition, Dr. Kiernan serves as a SME for Risk Assessment and Gap Analysis efforts for some of our nation's most critical assets.

She was the Principal Investigator for an international project related to suicide bomber methodology; the results of which informed national level risk mitigation policies and the development of behavioral detection training, as well as countermeasure investment.

Dr. Kiernan is an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School. She is also a member of the AFCEA Intelligence Committee, Business Executives for National Security (BENS) and ASIS International. She is an Advisor for the Center for Advanced Red Teaming at the University of Albany, SUNY and for the John Lewis Academy at the John Lewis High School.



# A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE IMPACT OF 9/11

By Frank Larkin

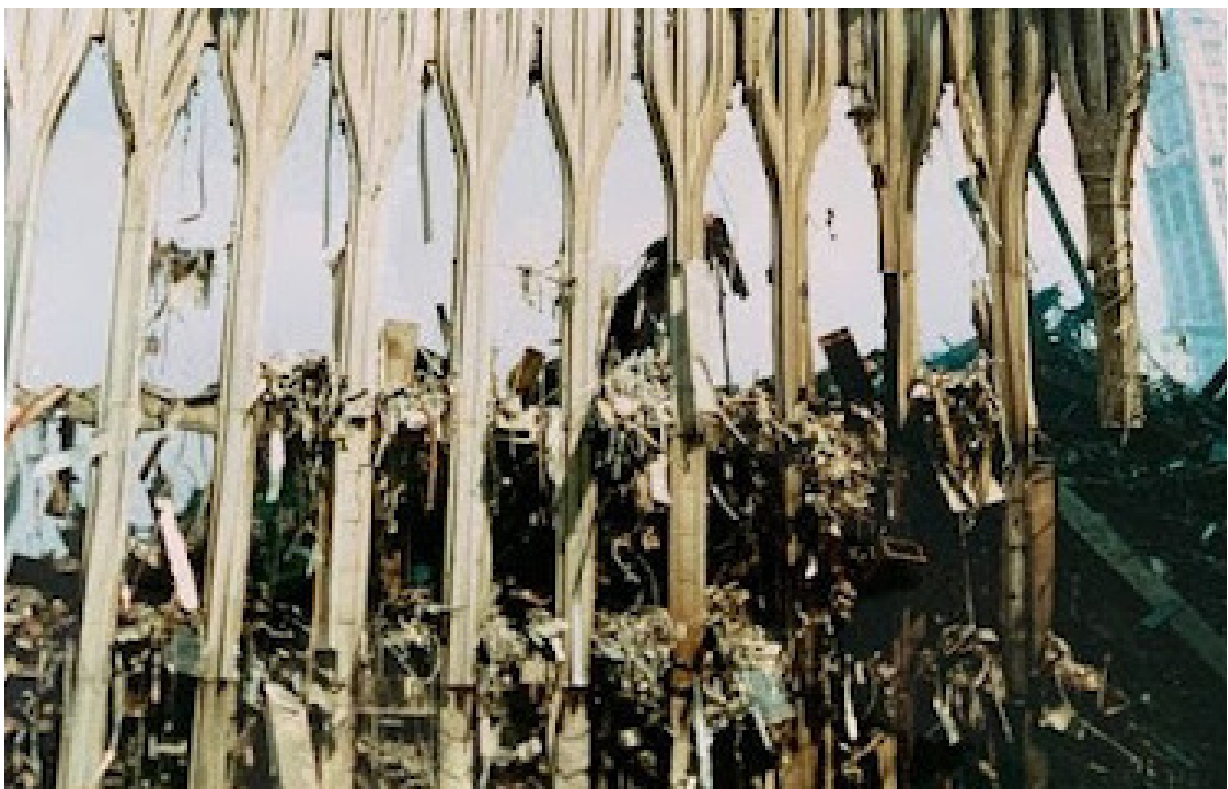
On September 11th, 2001, I was a US Secret Service senior supervisor/special agent assigned to our New York Field Office located in Building #7 of the New York City World Trade Center (WTC) complex. On that Tuesday morning of September 11th, I followed my daily routine, coming into the office around 6am to run along the Hudson River. It was a beautiful cloudless crystal blue day with a gentle wind blowing. As I ran back toward the World Trade Center complex, I remember remarking to myself how beautiful the twin towers looked and even thought how lucky we had been that nothing had happened to us considering all the conflicts popping up around the globe. I guess I was reflecting on the first World Trade Center bombing on February 26, 1993, that seriously damaged our New York Field Office. At the time, our office was in WTC Building #6. I had responded to New York City from Washington, DC, following the explosion with equipment and other personnel to assist the office with recovery operations. Several of our agents had been injured in that attack.

I got back to the office after my run and was coming out of the shower when the

building shook, and the lights flickered. A few seconds later, an announcement over the speaker system alerted us that there had been a massive explosion in WTC#1, and we were to evacuate the building immediately. I quickly got dressed and went to my office to get phones and radios to help coordinate our evacuation/relocation. I remember looking up from my 10th-floor window at WTC#1 to see a huge hole in the north side of the building boiling out with fire. I immediately left my building and moved onto the plaza toward the New York City Mayor's emergency command post forming up on the street below WTC#1 to serve as the US Secret Service (USSS) police and fire liaison. I am a licensed and practicing paramedic with many years of incident command experience. Simultaneously, other USSS agents were moving toward the lobby of WTC#1 to assist with evacuation and care of the injured. All our agents are medically trained to the first responder level or higher. As I was moving closer to the command post, something caught my attention, and I suddenly stopped, narrowly missing being crushed by a person who had jumped from one of the fire floors high above. Tragically, this unknown person impacted the ground directly

in front of me. That was the first of five times that day where I should have been dead or seriously injured. It etched an enduring impression in my memory - the sight of fellow human beings raining out of the sky as they had courageously made their final, very intimate decision driven by searing fire. They, like us, all came to work that Tuesday morning following our everyday routines, instantly immersed in this horrible conflagration without any warning or sense of direction or outcome.

I was with the Mayor, and the NYPD and FDNY commissioners when the second plane struck WTC#2 from the south side. Debris launched at us as if shot out of a cannon. Command personnel had been gathering on the street just north of WTC#2. We later learned that one of the engines from the plane that struck WTC#2 flew over the top of us and embedded itself into the street two blocks behind where we were standing. Until the second plane hit, we were still trying to confirm that the explosion high up on WTC#1 was caused by a plane as the early reporting was very chaotic. But now, with the second hit, we knew that it was a plane and that we were under attack. There were now two major incident scenes that instantly overwhelmed on-scene resources





that inadvertently influenced the separation of the police and fire commands. Much of our ability to communicate and coordinate by radio went down with the collapse of WTC#1, where many of the city's emergency communications antennas were located.

I had a team of agents with me and moved to a new location east of the WTC complex, where the NYPD command post was being re-established and resources assembled. Without warning, I remember hearing a loud growling rumble followed by screams to "run...get cover." I dove under a fire truck just as the ground and air around me erupted with a force and pressure that I had never, ever experienced. Instantly, everything went black, and the air was so hot and thick that I had to put my face into the armpit of my jacket to breathe. I eventually climbed out from underneath the truck to an eerie silence and entered a surreal environment unrecognizable due to the heavy cloud of dust, smoke, and debris in the air. Small fires had started on the street from the plane's fuel that began setting cars and trucks on fire. People began emerging from the cloud covered with grey soot, all wearing a death mask void of any expression. I accounted for and re-assembled my team of agents and started to move toward the WTC plaza to assist with finding and evacuating the injured when we heard the unnatural sound of metal bending.

At the same time, fighter jets were making low passes over the area. We were on the east side with the wind blowing the smoke and fire over the top of us. We had no idea at this point that WTC#2 had totally collapsed. We could not see anything but the top of the radio tower on WTC#1 through all the smoke. Moments later, shouts of "run for cover" came out as Tower #1 was coming down. I took refuge behind a corner of the post office building and again was hit by a tremendous force of energy and pressure as I crouched for cover. Again, everything blacked out and breathing the air felt like inhaling concrete. As the dust slowly settled, a wall of fire surrounded the WTC complex as more jet fuel ignited everything in sight that could burn. We could see people on the other side of the flames blocked as they were trying to get out of the complex. My crew and I commandeered an old FDNY fire engine already connected to a fire hydrant and quickly stretched out hose lines. From my limited fire training, I figured out how to get water pumping through the hoses, and we soon were tamping down the flames so people could get out. It was another point in the day marked by the realization that there were no firemen visible anywhere, there was no screaming, just the sound of things burning and exploding on the street.

I lost about three hours that day where I do not clearly recall what happened or what I was doing. We came across a firefighter, a building maintenance technician, and a civilian, who were all severely injured. There was no one to call for help, so we loaded them into an abandoned ambulance that had all its windows blown out and thankfully had the keys still in the ignition. It was the first time that day that I put my hands on an injured person. I had wanted to preserve my ability to remain situationally aware and command my team. However, the severity of injuries to these individuals demanded that I jump in and initiate resuscitative efforts for them to have any chance of survival. An off-duty Port Authority police officer became my driver, and a couple of my agents helped me attend to the injured. I remember that we drove south toward Battery Park. The wind was blowing dust and debris through our windowless ambulance as we were working on our patients. Our police officer driver had heard that Battery Park on the southern tip of Manhattan was a staging area for ferries transporting the injured to the New Jersey side of the river. As we arrived at the ferry terminal, we were met by scores of people in clean uniforms, who had a look of shock on their faces as we emerged dust-laden and bloody from the back of this windowless ambulance. Later, I got involved in several other rescues, but it soon became apparent late that afternoon that we were not finding any more people alive.





I eventually left the WTC complex late in the evening after our 49-story office building (WTC#7) had collapsed from the fire that ate away at its base when WTC#1 fell into its lower floors. I learned that I was initially reported as missing and knew that I needed to make it home to see my family. I walked through the door of my home around midnight, wearing oversized sweats given to me after being de-conned (decontaminated). The look on the faces of my wife, daughter, and son told me that they had suffered severe emotional pain throughout the day, wondering if I had survived, as they had already learned about the loss of other neighbors around us. My wife told me that my eyes were beet red as I was wrestling with a cough that would ultimately persist for another three months. We all hugged and cried. I sat down to watch the TV replay of what happened, realizing for the first time that the two towers had totally collapsed. It was a sobering recognition that my team and I were so close that we could not see what had unfolded around us, but miraculously not close enough to get swallowed up by death that stole almost 3,000 innocent and vulnerable lives that day.

As the days advanced, I became the USSS Ground Zero supervisor and liaison. On Friday, September 14th, I was asked to brief and share with President George W. Bush what it was like to be on the street that day. Together we looked up at the smokey sky where three huge skyscrapers once stood. I told him that life and death that morning were often decided between whether one simply stepped to the right or the left. I left Ground Zero and New York City on December 7th, 2001, but not before witnessing that day a heavy construction crew pull an I-beam out of the ground that was still steaming hot on the end as they wet it down with water. I had been transferred back to Washington, DC, re-assigned to take over White House complex security operations for the USSS.

Two weeks after September 11th, my 14-year-old son Ryan came to me and asked if I could take him down to Ground Zero. Ryan had witnessed that day unfold from a ridgeline just west of New York City on the edge of the town where we lived. When I came home on the night of 9/11, Ryan had given me a huge tear-filled bear hug. However, over the next couple of weeks, he got quiet and began to withdraw. Ryan told me that he needed to go down to the WTC complex to understand what happened. He had been there many times in the past for different memory-filled events. I initially resisted, as did his mother, who promptly said, "No way...bad idea." Something told me that he needed to do this, so I took him down to Ground Zero and dressed him up in a police jacket, hard hat, and a respirator to hide his identity. We had an agreement that if I detected any signs that he wasn't handling



the trip, he was out of there. Two weeks after 9/11, Ground Zero was a very ugly place on many fronts as it had transitioned from a rescue to a recovery operation. I escorted Ryan for three hours around the immense debris field, explaining where buildings once stood and what had happened that day to the best of my recollection. When we finished, he had a look of determination in his eyes and said that this trip to Ground Zero helped him understand.

Ryan graduated from an Annapolis area high school in 2005 and began diving year-round as a salvage diver in and around the Chesapeake Bay. One day he came home and announced that he had enlisted in the Navy and then added that he had volunteered for SEAL training. I thought my wife was going to take my head off, as she was holding me responsible for this surprise announcement. I assured her that I was not prompting him, but did assert that he needed to cut his own path in life, that this was his decision. I made sure that Ryan knew what he signed up for and what he was getting into, introducing him to several recent combat-hardened frogmen. When I asked Ryan, "Why?" He replied, "I am going to be part of the solution; what happened to us on 9/11 can't ever happen to us again."

As Ryan entered the Navy, I retired from the USSS after 22 years and soon found myself being recruited back into the Department of Defense to work on the counter-IED (Improvised Explosive Device) threat that was taking down and maiming so many of our warriors deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. The IED was the main weapons system employed by extremist terror elements looking to paralyze our freedom of movement on the battlefield and erode national support at home through graphic visual recordings of explosive attacks on our forces. Ironically, I started with the SEAL Teams 30 years prior ... the same age as Ryan. I had come full circle to eventually support Ryan and his SEAL teammates as they confronted the IED threat and the extremist networks. As

a senior leader for DoD's Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) and Director of the Counter IED Operations-Intelligence Integration Center (COIC), I traveled many times into the war theaters supporting both conventional and special operations forces. One day my wife said something that hit me dead center in my heart. She said that while I was overseas, she had dinner one night with her girlfriends who were all complaining that the school bus was never on time to pick up their kids, about their husbands coming home from work late and not being able to get the week at the beach that they wanted. One of my wife's girlfriends turned toward her and asked about what was going on in our home. My emergency-room nurse wife replied without emotion, "Oh, we're fine; Ryan is in Iraq, and Frank is in Afghanistan."

Ryan started Navy basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in May of 2006. The following spring, he entered Basic Underwater Demolition-SEAL (BUD/S) training in San Diego, receiving his SEAL Trident in October 2008 as part of Class #268. Ryan had numerous combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as an 18-D special operations medic and SEAL sniper. He eventually served as the lead petty officer (LPO) for Special Operations Urban Combat (SOU) training. SOUC was the pre-deployment training phase for SEAL platoons deploying to overseas assignments. The training realistically mirrored the environment that the deploying platoons would encounter. As the LPO, Ryan continued to be exposed to blast overpressure and physical forces from weapons firing, explosives, tactical simulations, and helicopter operations. In the spring of 2015, Ryan began seeking help for severe insomnia that further evolved into increased anxiety, memory loss, headaches, loss of coordination, vision problems, and other uncharacteristic conditions that were progressively eroding his physical and mental health. A year later, Ryan was honorably discharged from the Navy after being diagnosed with PTSD and related conditions. Ryan continued to spiral down from what he once was, a highly regarded and revered SEAL operator. He informed us that he wanted his brain donated for traumatic brain injury/Breacher's Syndrome research if anything ever happened to him. Ryan died by suicide on April 23rd, 2017, from invisible wounds suffered in service to the Teams and this nation. At the time of his death, he was dressed in his SEAL Team-7 t-shirt, wore red-white-blue board shorts, and had illuminated a shadow box beside him with all his medals, insignias, and other symbolic memorabilia. After a postmortem examination of Ryan's brain, we learned that he suffered from an undiagnosed severe level of microscopic brain injury uniquely related to military blast exposure. He suffered this military blast exposure in both training for combat and combat operations.

Ryan died from invisible wounds that were not invisible to him or our family, just invisible to the system and society largely blind to them. I have stood firm that Ryan died from combat-related injuries in service to this nation; he just didn't die right away.

The twentieth anniversary of September 11th, 2001, will be an emotional rekindling of memories for the Larkin family in many ways, as it will be for others like us who have witnessed and supported their loved ones be part of the solution. It is an emotional time now for all of us as we witness the rapid decline of Afghanistan, as we wonder if it (Iraq and Afghanistan) was all worth it. That debate and weight of consciousness will lay on the political leadership that comprised multiple Administrations and Congresses over the past 20 years of war and global conflict. As for my son and his teammates, they achieved personal accomplishments. They experienced a high adventure that goes beyond common definition or comprehension. Unless you were there alongside them and walked in their boots, you will not understand. Not one of them would trade away being a SEAL and the honor to wear the Trident. They did the job that we asked them to do regardless of the reason or the outcome.

Conventional and special operations warriors, men and women from all parts of our society, made up an all-volunteer force that swore an oath to protect and serve us - every day. Their selfless demonstration of personal strength and resiliency needs to be a guide-on for our society as we move forward to confront other inevitable challenges and threats. We as a nation need to have the same strength, resiliency, and commitment to ensure our national security. As for these revered warriors who have served us, we need to be there for them every day. Many of them return from their service burdened by both the visible and invisible wounds of war. A recent Brown University study reported that our nation lost 7,057 warriors post 9/11 to the Global War on Terror (GWOT). As an often-neglected footnote, the same study

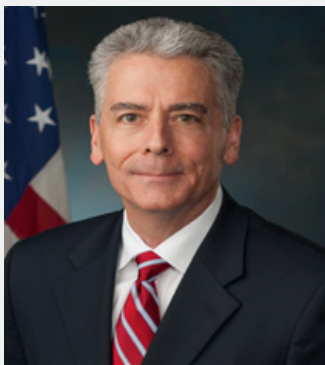
highlighted that over 30,000 warriors and veterans were lost to GWOT-related suicide since that beautiful Tuesday morning of September 11th, 2001.

Law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMTs, healthcare workers, and other public service professionals or volunteers need the same level of reverence and recognition for their service to our communities and this nation. They have been our "domestic warriors," protecting our society daily with the same selfless commitment and compassion. We must NEVER FORGET the many sacrifices founded on the love that these valiant warriors, military or civilian, made for their teammates, families, and nation so that we may continue to live free, healthy, and secure.

Ryan loved being a SEAL, and he loved the SEAL Teams; we miss his physical presence every day. We are comforted knowing that he and his fallen teammates are still out there in a different form, protecting us every day. ■



## ABOUT FRANK LARKIN



Frank Larkin is the Vice President for Corporate Development at a software development company and national advocate for veteran suicide prevention and traumatic brain research. Frank was the 40th United States Senate Sergeant at Arms. As Chief Law Enforcement and Executive Officer of the Senate, the Sergeant at Arms enforces rules of the Senate; provides a range of technical and administrative services to Senators in their Washington D.C. and state offices, and maintains security in the Capitol and Senate office buildings. He had direct oversight of the US Capitol Police Department, a 2,200-member agency, and led numerous national security events.

Frank has been a member of the Federal Senior Executive Service for more than ten years, serving as both the Acting Director and the Vice Director of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization and Director of the Counter IED Operations-Intelligence Integration Center within the Department of Defense. He led the integration of technical capabilities, analysis, and human resources against the global IED threat and terror networks.

Frank served for more than two decades as a special agent and senior leader in the United States Secret Service (USSS). He conducted complex criminal investigations and protected four US presidents until his retirement as the Deputy Assistant Director for Protective Research and the agency's Chief Technology Officer.

In the private sector, Frank was Director, Program Management & Leadership, for the Raytheon Company, and more recently, worked at Lockheed Martin's Defense & Intelligence Solutions, responsible as a senior program manager for intelligence community support.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Frank served as a special warfare operator in the Navy SEALs. After his military service, he was a uniformed patrol officer with the Norristown (PA) Police Department, a homicide detective with the Montgomery County (PA) District Attorney's Office, and a Maryland State Trooper-Flight Paramedic. He has been a nationally licensed paramedic for 40 years and still serves Maryland as a volunteer medical provider.

Frank holds a BA degree in criminal justice and an MS degree in public administration from Villanova University. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the USSS Valor award, the Department of the Army's Exceptional Civilian Service Award, and the Superior Civilian Service award.



# THE (20 YEAR) LIFECYCLE OF THE 9/11 DISASTER

By Kevin Becker, PsyD

*'At 8:46 on the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation transformed.'*

This discerning opening line of the 9/11 Commission Report portrays an undeniable reality about life in the United States over the past 20 years. Since the loss of nearly 3,000 lives in the deadliest terrorist attack ever conducted anywhere, our country, and indeed the world, has experienced significant changes that can be linked directly to the attack. The transformations we have experienced since then are neither surprising nor complete.

In 1984, Zunin and Meyers, two academic researchers, outlined what they considered the psychological life-cycle of a disaster. Their model described the psychological trajectory communities experience over the years following the impact of a disaster. While they were primarily focused on addressing the impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes, in my global crisis response work, I have found their model to be applicable to a wide variety of community tragedies, including the September 11th attacks.

The Psychological Lifecycle of Disaster model allows us to visualize community recovery over the course of time. While the original model projected the recovery process over three years,

it has been my experience that, depending on a wide range of recovery factors, the model can be applicable over decades. Indeed, for those families who suffered the most devastating losses, the impacts and recovery process could be generational in nature.

As we can see in the model (figure 1), the initial 'impact' of a disaster or crisis brings about a significant physical and psychological blow to those at the center of the tragedy. This stage is quickly followed by a rescue ('heroic') period in which significant moral and physical support flows into the community from neighbors, strangers, and professional rescue or support organizations. Once the initial threat has been quelled, and a brief 'community cohesion/honeymoon period' sigh of relief ensues, the many volunteers and rescuers return to their home communities, their own lives, and in many cases to support others during the next, still to come, tragedy. This is followed by a period of 'disillusionment' and despair for those who remain in the impact zone and try to establish a new normal for their lives. Eventually, communities rise to begin the often erratic and frustrating long road back to their new lives via the rebuilding and 'reconstruction' period, which is both physical and psychological

## Psychological Lifecycle of a Disaster

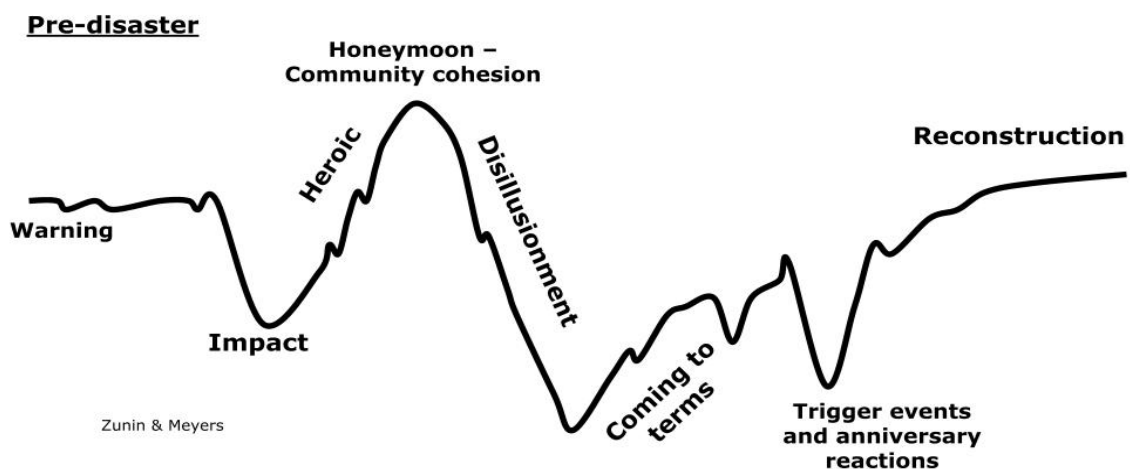


figure 1





in nature. In relation to 9/11, this reconstruction phase is still underway, 20 years later, and may be for years to come. But what is particularly significant about the reconstruction phase is that it typically incorporates new technologies, new information, new community bonds, and new preparedness strategies, all direct outgrowths of the tragedy.

Throughout the lifecycle, on an individual level, researchers in the field of positive psychology have found that those who responded to the attacks with positive coping strategies and anger were more inclined to show signs of posttraumatic growth than posttraumatic stress. On the other hand, people who responded with negative coping strategies and feelings of depression were more likely to experience higher stress levels. Positive coping can often be characterized as taking direct actions to foster recovery and rebuilding; identifying aspects of the restoration process that one can personally and directly influence, no matter how small.

Identifying the many positive and negative changes in our individual and collective lives resulting from 9/11 is virtually impossible. What's important to remember is that recovery from any traumatic incident is a developmental process. That is, it occurs over time in a non-linear fashion. Focusing on a single point in time, glimpsed from across the entire recovery timeline, reflects only that specific moment. For these types of life-altering events, we must take the long view to truly understand the positive and negative impacts of such enormous disruptions to our lives. And as such, at this 20-year post-9/11 vantage point, we should celebrate the progress and positive changes that have resulted, and equally profound, acknowledge the significant losses and pain we've endured. Doing so will help bond us as a nation and reinforce our resilience for the future challenges we will face.

This long-term developmental view allows us to both 'NEVER FORGET' as many have said, and to 'NEVER STOP LEARNING' about what we are capable of when we work together in community. ■

## ABOUT DR. KEVIN BECKER



Dr. Kevin Becker is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in trauma and crisis for nearly 30 years. He is currently Senior Partner at Organizational Resilience International, a global crisis consulting firm. He served for ten years as Director of the Trauma Center in Boston, the nation's first comprehensive research, treatment, and training facility for psychological trauma. He has worked extensively with governments, organizations, and communities following major disasters such as 9/11; the 2004 Tsunami; Hurricane Katrina, the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, the Amish school shooting, the Sandy Hook/Newtown shootings, the Marshall County High School shootings, and the Boston Marathon bombings. He has authored globally-distributed manuals on caring for children and adults following disaster and tragedy. He is a frequent speaker and trainer on psychological trauma and crisis issues. His preferred methods of self-care are running and glassblowing.

He can be reached at [kevin@oriconsulting.com](mailto:kevin@oriconsulting.com)

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# CAN WE TRULY BE PREPARED FOR AN OVERWHELMING CRISIS? By James F. Albrecht

*EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON AND AFTER 9/11*

**W**e now acknowledge just how overwhelming and traumatic 9/11 has been on the American and global public, even those not directly affected. Many still experience post-traumatic stress and suffer illness and injury as a direct result of the response. But how the individuals dealt with that crisis as it unfolded has been a subject of great reflection over the past two decades. I was a first responder and Incident Command staff member on that fateful day, involved in rescue, recovery, investigative, and counter-terrorism efforts at the World Trade Center and across New York City for months after that.

I still recall 9/11 as if it were yesterday. At the time, I was an NYPD Captain assigned as the commanding officer of a large police station dedicated to safety and security on the subway system in the New York City Borough of Queens. We safeguarded over 50 subway stations and more than one million subway commuters daily. Our main task was preventing crime and ensuring that our citizens

and visitors to our beautiful city could commute through the city without fear. On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to the day shift, from 7am to 3pm, as the Duty Captain, which meant that I was responsible for responding to any major incidents throughout the Borough of Queens. I had volunteered to be the Duty Captain on that day since I had agreed to drive my parents, aunt, and uncle to JFK Airport to catch a flight to Las Vegas before my shift started that morning. I specifically remember the weather, since it was a beautiful September day, around 75 degrees with clear blue skies.

At approximately 8:45am, a colleague informed me that a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade Center towers. I found this to be impossible, as the sky was so clear, and I recall thinking that the visibility for pilots surely must have been perfect. As the Duty Captain, I grabbed my police radio and then did what most people did in response to that information; I turned on the police station television, put on a local news station, and watched with some police

colleagues. We intently listened to the police radio frequency, which transmitted major emergencies across the entire City of New York. There was an immediate call for extra police officers from Manhattan to respond and to deal with the unfolding situation at the World Trade Center. Still, no sense of urgency was conveyed to NYPD officers working in the outer boroughs.

At 9:03am, the situation at the World Trade Center quickly changed when another plane struck the second tower. I immediately called the NYPD Operations/Command Center at NYPD headquarters to ask if the information being reported by the media on live television was true and asked what steps we should take. Almost immediately, the police dispatchers informed on all police frequencies that a 'Level 4 Mobilization,' which involves a coordinated city-wide response of police personnel to the critical incident site, had been requested. As the Duty Captain, it was now my responsibility to respond and coordinate the deployment of NYPD personnel from Queens.





I immediately started to re-deploy police personnel across Queens via the local police radio frequency. I provided further instructions to the supervisory staff at the police stations under my direct supervision. I also ordered the police bus and one patrol car to stand by for swift mobilization. I had two teams of 10 officers starting their shifts at the time and opted to have them collect their mobilization and disorder control gear and immediately respond to the awaiting NYPD bus. I informed the local headquarters staff to call in the regional commanders and all key personnel from home and deployed uniformed personnel to key locations across Queens. Just as we were leaving, three FBI agents approached us and asked to join our cadre in the large police bus. At the same time, the police station lieutenant informed me that a third plane had struck the Pentagon. We all realized that a war against the United States had just started.

As we drove toward Manhattan, we noted that all traffic was diverted off the main highway. There was a line of ambulances, police vehicles, and fire trucks traveling full speed to the emergency. Just as we had a full view of the beautiful and impressive Manhattan skyline, I heard a police officer screaming into his police radio: "Watch out, the building is starting to come down!" I wondered what building the police officer was talking about but quickly turned to see the first World Trade Center collapse. My first thought was wondering how many police officers had just been killed. I stopped my patrol car and the police bus at the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel and picked up three FDNY firefighters who were desperately waiting to join the responding personnel.

Within minutes we arrived near the World Trade Center as the dust of the collapsing tower was settling down and permitted us some visibility. As soon as we disembarked from our vehicles, I assembled the police personnel and told them that we should be extra cautious as we walked into a situation we had never before faced. The police chief at the scene designated me the 'Administrative Officer' at the incident command post (which we set up in an abandoned city bus) and told me to assemble responding personnel and deploy them to posts at and around the World Trade Center. Just minutes later, the ground started to shake, and the second World Trade Center tower collapsed. Most of us took cover in a nearby subway station, and we watched as the dust cloud chased us down the subway stairs. It took a few minutes, but we continued walking to the World Trade Center once we regained some visibility. We witnessed a large-scale disaster site, with the surrounding area covered by white powder and a dust cloud that went on for miles. There was a general sense of genuine astonishment and disbelief. I actually worried about the hazards apparent in the dust cloud, but we had a job to do. We could not contact many colleagues, as most police radios were not functioning properly.

The police chief instructed me to start accounting for NYPD personnel who had responded. Since the police radios and mobile phones were ineffective, I literally had to use a landline telephone that I located in a subway station to call police stations and ask whether any of their personnel were missing. I prepared this list of names that obviously never in my career wanted to document. I continued to maintain the 'Command Log' with all pertinent information and was pleased that none of the police personnel who had responded with me were missing, though I collected many names on

that list.

For some reason, I started to think about my own family. My parents and relatives had been on a plane heading to Las Vegas. I wondered if perhaps it was their plane that struck the World Trade Center towers. I was able to find out the flight numbers of the three airplanes involved so far and was, for the time, feeling less somber as I learned my family was not on those flights. But we were also informed that another 12 flights in American airspace were not accounted for, so I was not totally at ease. I located a payphone and called my best friend's home. He wasn't there, but I was happy to hear that his family was all okay. I instructed them to close all their windows and put on the air conditioning, as I was concerned about the negative impact of the dust cloud that had enveloped the city.

Obviously, this crisis did not end on September 11th. The rescue operations went on for six weeks as a large fire burnt under the debris. The recovery process went on through May 2002. Most of the individuals who were killed were never recovered at the site. The crime scene investigation and identification of evidence lasted for three years. The counter-terrorism deployment continues today. The negative impact of these events is apparent 20 years later, as more than one thousand first responders have died from World Trade Center illnesses, unfortunately complementing the 420 first responders who died on September 11, 2001. More than half of the first responders who were at 'Ground Zero' have been diagnosed with cancer or other debilitating illnesses that include serious breathing and gastrointestinal diseases and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Clearly, the United States and the world have learned many painful lessons due to this tragic disaster. One honestly must ask oneself what could drive a small complement of individuals so filled with hatred that they could kill more than three thousand innocent people. We must all hope that the United States and governments across the globe are better prepared today to prevent and effectively respond to major disasters, whether natural or man-made. The US government did develop the Department of Homeland Security for that distinct purpose, has mandated the utilization of the uniform National Incident Management System (NIMS) for all jurisdictions and responding agencies, and has enhanced the capabilities of the Federal Emergency Management Administration to respond to and coordinate major crises. American states and many regional and local governments have since 2001 established an Office of Emergency Management to ensure coordinated planning and action. It would thus appear that 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic have forced government officials, public service administrators, private organizations, and individuals to acknowledge the relevance of effective, competent, and integrated transnational, interstate, regional, and local planning, mobilization, and response - At least, I hope so. ■

## ABOUT JAMES F. ALBRECHT



James F. Albrecht is a retired NYPD Captain, a first responder and incident command management member at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and many other major events across New York City.

Jimmy is also a Retired Police Chief who served three years as the Chief of Criminal Investigations for the United Nations and European Union police agencies in Kosovo (former Yugoslavia). He is presently a Professor of Criminal Justice and Homeland Security at Pace University in New York City.



# 9/11 – 20 YEARS LATER

*By Derrick Driscoll*

Everyone who has a birth year beginning with “19” clearly remembers where they were twenty years ago when they first heard of the terrorist attacks in New York City, Arlington, VA, and of course, the heroes who prevented a third attack over the skies of Pennsylvania. I had taken a day of leave from my job with the U.S. Marshals Service on what I thought was just a random Tuesday at the time to go buy a shirt and tie for a wedding I planned on attending that coming weekend. I turned on the TV that morning and heard Tom Brokaw’s voice on what was supposed to be “The Today Show.” Everything changed after that...much like the rest of the law enforcement and first responder communities. My colleagues and I were instructed to pack our bags for an indeterminate amount of time and report to a number of locations related to National Security. We did so without a moment of hesitation.

We remember the victims of those attacks and their families and friends. My wife lost a very close friend in the World Trade Center attacks. We remember the selfless first responders who charged into danger to rescue the injured, and of course, the courageous men and women of our intelligence and military communities who stopped at nothing to find those responsible for the attacks. We were all impacted. As we honor their sacrifice and service, it is also a time to examine what has changed and how we can best ensure the safety of our communities and, specifically, the safety of our families in the days ahead.

The War on Terror continues each and every day. Sometimes we see it on the front pages, but more often, it is fought behind the scenes, both domestically and abroad. The challenges, though, have never been more significant. Our local neighborhoods have become global neighborhoods, and communication has never been easier or faster. Security systems have become solution-oriented and more efficient while running on enterprise-wide networks. Transportation hubs and ports use biometrics to identify travelers and those transiting our borders. However, this same innovation has also provided anonymity to bad actors through end-to-end encryption. Devices and networks are routinely compromised, exploitation on all fronts is a systemic issue, and counter-biometric technology is used to mask identities. The good news is, as a former law enforcement official, I know from up-close and personal experience that our folks are up to meet each and every challenge. However, I also wanted to share some inspiring news from the perspective of my most important role, the dad of three elementary school-age children.

I don’t think we have ever seen such an advanced use and reliance on technology by our children as we do today. During the pandemic, kids have been asked to quickly adapt to new ways and to virtually connect with their teachers, friends, and family members. Devices are being introduced to kids at a younger age out of necessity, which means our conversations with them about the associated risks need to keep pace. The same devices and networks that terrorists use to plan attacks and compromise



systems, the same devices our military and the law enforcement community uses to catch those terrorist and criminal actors, are also the same devices and networks our children use. While technology is at the forefront of our thoughts, we also cannot forget about the physical threats related to school violence as our kids filter back into schools across the country. “See something, say something” is not just for combatting terrorism; it is a good philosophy for all threats that may harm our communities and our families. Having open conversations with your kids about their overall safety is not just good parenting. It’s absolutely imperative to their well-being.

As a parent, I know the days get crazy, filled with requirements and “must do’s”. It is essential to set aside some specific time during the week between school, sports, and outside activities to have these chats. You must have their full attention when explaining that the world is filled with mostly good people, but because there are bad people and we do not always know who they are, we have to be cautious when interacting with anyone we don’t know. Online gaming and social media platforms popular with teens are specifically challenging issues. So it is critically important, in a casual way, to ask your kids who they’ve played with or spoken with during the day. Showing that interest will make the discussion more conversational in tone, all while



reinforcing your values and throttling their access to the internet through parental controls on their devices.

This type of communication and monitoring can be a part-time job by itself, but one that will pay you back more than any full-time job you have ever had. Kids have become so internet savvy, especially over the past 12 months, and it is surprising how much they've absorbed. To reach them, our messages must be clear and uncomplicated. They must understand and apply the rules we set for them in an environment they are only beginning to grasp regardless of whether they're at home, at school, alone, or with friends.

The number one way we can keep them safe and away from harm only takes about 30 seconds per day. It's a parent's secret weapon. Tell them these two things each and every day despite how the day may have gone. First, tell them you love them more than anything in the world, and second, tell them how unbelievably proud you are of them no matter what they do. It may sound cliché, but if your kids know deep down they are truly loved, and their self-esteem is heightened because of actions and words their parents use, they are less susceptible to being lured down the wrong path by others. Additionally, if your children know and feel those two things, they are much more likely to tell you when something is wrong, when they see or hear something inappropriate, or when they think they may have done something wrong themselves. Saying those two things to our kids is our most powerful weapon in the fight to keep them safe, more powerful than anything you can buy, turn on or build.

Twenty years ago, we experienced a terrorist attack on our native soil, the likes of which we never thought we would see. Lots of innocent people lost their lives on that day because of those horrendous attacks, while others gave their lives in the days, months, and years after to ensure we would never experience that type of tragedy again. As we honor them by remembering their service and sacrifice, we need to continue their work to keep our communities and families safe. Keep the dialogue going with your kids, even on the craziest of days, and when you are beyond tired from work and the shuffling to and from all their activities. Know the people they encounter each day and how they are interacting with those around them. Most importantly, keep ensuring they know who to turn to when they have an issue, problem, or even a simple question, as that is our best weapon to ensure their safety. 🍷

## ABOUT DERRICK DRISCOLL



Derrick Driscoll is Principal, Strategic Alliances for Peraton's Civil & Health sector, where he leads the sector's federal government strategy and engagement. Driscoll is a highly accomplished former member of the federal government's Senior Executive Service (SES) with 27 years of law enforcement experience and leadership at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

Prior to joining Peraton in 2021, Driscoll served as the Deputy Director of the United States Marshals Service (USMS), with oversight of 4,000 Deputy U.S. Marshals, 1,500 administrative staff, and a 5,500-person contract security workforce. The USMS occupies a uniquely central position in the federal justice system and is responsible for ensuring the rule of law, federal judicial security, fugitive apprehension, witness and prisoner security, and asset forfeiture. As Deputy Director, Driscoll also was the agency's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Risk Officer.

Joining the Marshals Service in 1997, Driscoll served as a member of the Hazardous Response Unit (a rescue/response unit formed after the tragic events of 9/11) and the Strategic National Stockpile Security Operations Program. He managed the Agency's Joint Terrorism Task Force Program while also serving on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force and receiving five Director's Awards.

Driscoll received a graduate fellowship from the University of New Haven, earning his Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Security Management.



A photograph of three people—two women and one man—collaborating in a professional setting. They are gathered around a table, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is a Black woman with her hair in a high ponytail, wearing a light-colored blazer and large hoop earrings. The woman in the center is a white woman with blonde hair, wearing a tan blazer over a black top, with her hand resting on her chin in a thoughtful pose. The man on the right is a white man with a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt, also with his hand on his chin. In the background, there are white shelves with various books and documents. The overall atmosphere is one of focused teamwork.

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# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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