**9/11 Readers Theatre – Fall 2018**

September 11, 2001

I was playing barbies in my room.

Mom was in the kitchen cooking and watching the news as always.

It was strange for me to be up so early, but that morning I was.

It was startling, Mom’s screams of horror coming from the kitchen.

I was only 7 or 8 at the time, but I ran to her aid regardless.

I didn't understand why she was screaming though, it was just planes flying into a building.

I didn't understand that it was real life, that all those people died.

After all, movies had huge explosions like that all time.

Never did I imagine it could happen in real life.

A little bit of my innocence died that day.

 Mariah

I’m so bored

Every.

Single.

Channel.

It was a news show.

I saw the towers smoking

the heard the people screaming

but I was young

I didn’t know what it meant

There was no terror yet

I was too young,

too innocent to understand the horrors that occurred on that day

but I knew there was something wrong

and I only wanted to watch the afterschool cartoons

 Bryan

The sirens start to wail

We assume it’s another

basic call.

Captain says

one of the Twin

Towers has been

hit by a plane.

I think about my wife

Was it her tower?

clouds of dust.

It’s my wife’s tower.

Captain’s moving his lips

but I hear nothing come out.

We’re inside the

second story now.

Another loud bang

comes from the outside.

My partner says

to leave.

My walkie says

The second tower’s been hit.

On my way outside now

All I see is white.

 Jonnie

A silence was called for.

The news came a little late for us.

The teachers would only turn on the TVs in the middle school classrooms.

There were sounds of feet running up and down the hallway,

A general sense of quiet chaos

As no one would speak above a whisper.

Then a voice came over the speaker.

The principal,

Who hardly ever addressed the entire school

And called for silence.

She called for prayers.

And I learned later that my mother,

Who had already called my sister,

had driven all the way to my school

And parked her car

So she could be near me while she prayed too.

 Tiffany

My mom takes me to work on that morning

She is busy working

I run out of her sight to play with the birds I see

I run in the direction where the bird is flying away from me

Then I slipped

I fell over

Water splashes

I can’t breathe

I try to get out

I later find out that I slipped over into a well

Luckily my mom’s coworker saved me

By a big fish net

Lesson learned

I will never run away from Mom again.

 Huy

You don’t want to leave someone behind.

You see the panic, the dread,

and you want to stay.

But they told us to keep moving.

They said, “Don’t look back,

there’s no time to feel sorry.

You, you need to get out

and don’t you want to go home to your families

and don’t you want to have a future

and don’t you want to continue wanting things in life?

Don’t you want to have a life?”

They said, “You’re lucky you survived”

and “You’re so brave”

and “You should be thankful,”

but I don’t.

2,996.

That’s the number of people who should have been lucky,

who should have been alive,

who I should have stayed behind for

and looped their arm through mine

and told them, “Let’s keep moving.

Let’s be lucky together.”

But I didn’t.

They say, “You survived.”

But since then, it feels like I’ve died.

 Charlene

I wake up and get ready for school

My breakfast is a glass of milk and pan de dulce

Just like every morning, but not

Mama and Abuelita are watching the news

There’s a tense air

While she brushes my hair.

There’s been a plane crash.

Someone must have had an accident

I hope it’s not too bad

I get to school, it’s quiet

Not too many are on the playground

I go stand by our lines

Kevin Tran says it wasn’t an accident

Yeah right, he’s making it up.

It’s just bad luck

Mr. Petersen says we need to talk

Tells us that there’s been an attack

Kevin Tran was right

What does this mean?

Why are people crying?

Why am I crying?

I’m scared, but I’m not sure why.

Mr. Petersen says

it’s alright, we’ll be safe

Says we need to be strong

We will survive

Mrs. Garcia rings the announcements.

There’s a moment of silence.

We’ll still have class.

Well it can’t be that bad, right?

I didn’t know that was the day

Our world would change forever.

 Vi

I wake up to the sound of my mother calling my sister and me.

Time to get ready for school.

I walk out to the living room like it is like any other day of the week.

My mother is sitting on the couch, frantic, talking to my grandmother on the phone.

Ten minutes later my sister and I get the news that we aren’t going to school today.

We’re happy.

We go to watch TV with our mom, only to realize it is the worst reason to skip school today.

Two skyscrapers are burning and smoking on the news and I’m wondering what’s TV

It doesn’t hit me that this is an act of war.

It just hits me that mean people have killed hundreds and there may be more to follow.

Like adults and children alike I’m scared and confused… And waiting.

 Eric

Aaron Rodgers

I was barely six years old.

I remember the day my mom drove me to Rucker,

Listening to the radio,

When suddenly the radio changed.

My mom stopped the truck and I remember the look in her large eyes.

Rene Rodgers

What happened Mom? My son did ask.

I was startled,

My hands gripped the wheel,

The skin around my knuckles shifted to a pale white pigment.

I looked at my boy,

My son of only six years old,

Too young to know the true horrors that had occurred.

And I smiled.

Nothing. I told him.

Nothing for him to worry about.

Mrs. Block

I was just getting my papers ready,

Had everything planned for the day when I heard the news.

A plane had struck the world trade center.

An accident, everyone thought at first.

But when the second plane hit the second tower

We knew that it was no accident.

I was worried.

Would it happen again? I thought.

What should we do?

Is the country going on emergency locked down?

What about my students?

Donald “Donny” Manzo

I looked at my friend Aaron.

Hey Aaron. How are you today? I asked.

Alright. He says. But my mom isn’t

What happened? I asked.

She listened to the radio.

Papa

I had just begun to eat my oatmeal when I saw the news.

I called Granny from the kitchen.

We were both shocked by what we say.

 Aaron

“Did you hear? A building blew up in New York City!”

CJ Riles is a big fat liar.

He’s always telling lies

No one ever believes him.

“It blew up this morning! Didn’t you hear?”

That’s crazy even for CJ

Mrs. Allen is my favorite teacher.

She has an amazing smile

Her room has a reading corner by the window where I like to sit

Mrs. Allen is at our classroom’s door right now

She’s whispering with the other teachers

She’s not smiling this morning.

I’m 9 years old this year

I don’t need my mom to take me to school

I can walk the whole way or even take my scooter

My mom walked to get me this afternoon

She’s acting really weird

CJ Riles is a liar. A big fat liar

He’s lying, Mom.

Right, Mom?

 Anna

I remember parts of this this day very clearly – mainly the morning. For reasons too long to explain, I was living with my parents in the suburbs of Minneapolis and working in downtown Minneapolis. My morning ritual was for my dad to drive me to the park and ride at the bus-stop so I could take the city bus to work. As it happened, I worked at a radio station which always had the news streaming so the announcers could report “breaking news.” I remember this guy, Brian, running past my desk saying that airplanes had flown into the twin towers on purpose. Chaos followed. Everyone who worked in downtown Minneapolis was advised to leave the city in case it too was a target for a terrorist attack. I called my parents and told them I was going to take the next bus, that went in the direction of their house, out of downtown. When I was close to my parents’ house I called my mom and she came and picked me up. I remember getting back to their house and they had on their little 13” black and white TV. The scenes were being replayed over and over of the planes flying into the twin towers. The TV announcers were trying to make sense of what was happening. My last vivid memory, of that day, was the members of Congress, were on TV, singing “God Bless America” and my mom crying.

 Kay

Me (Kindergarten)

Today was very weird.

All of my friends were being pulled out from school.

I was excited to see my other friends from the different classes,

But I guess I wouldn’t be able to get to see them today.

Miss. Teacher was very upset.

She wasn’t even teaching us anything.

She said we can sit and do play time.

That’s when everyone started to get called to the office to go home.

It even looked like my teacher was ready to go home too.

I kind of wanted to go home too,

But I did want to see my friends.

My mom came really soon.

I’ve never seen my mom so sad and worried.

Why was she so worried?

When she dropped me off she seemed really happy.

At least I was able to get to go home.

My mom even let me have all my favorite snacks

When I got home, daddy and brother was even there.

I was so happy to have everyone home!

 Sara

**Robert Rogers**

It’s not hard to see how the Pentagon looks like a war zone.

Police cars, military vehicles and helicopters take over the scene.

Firefighters start to occupy the already congested parking lot.

I was waiting for directions, me and the other firefighters did not know if we would be able to

enter the building and do our job.

Hours later we received orders to protect ourselves from inhaling smoke,

we were instructed to put on our oxygen packs because we would be fighting the fire from inside out.

No one knew where anyone was

and body bags were already laid out.

 Marmar

I ate breakfast and my mom didn’t ask

about what I was going to do in school

So I left with my backpack

We never listen

to the radio in carpool because

the little kids whine

In class Michelle was crying

Michelle is mean so I don’t care

She is standing by the wall and

she keeps crying and I am bothered

Because my teacher doesn’t make her stop

and we were basically teenagers

and we don’t cry

I don’t know what time it was

when someone said that a plane crashed

Michelle is still crying

and she tells the teacher about her aunt and uncle

and she is so scared

She is scared that they died

Michelle is mean but also

she whines a lot and

her whining is always annoying

and today it is extra annoying

because everything feels weird in the classroom

My teacher tells me that

Michelle is scared

and I can’t make her stop crying

because something really bad happened

I didn’t know that the plane crash was bad

until my teacher talked about the buildings

I was embarrassed because I didn’t know

Everything felt weird in class that day

and the teachers looked weird and

in math we got to watch a movie

I was glad because

I never do my homework

I think people went home instead of going to class

and there were police people

at drop-off

My brother is little so he got a sticker

but I’m almost a teenager

and teenagers don’t get stickers

Teenagers know that planes flying into buildings

is really bad and really serious

I still don’t really get it but

I’ll be serious at home

for my mom and dad

because I don’t want anyone to think

that I’m a little kid anymore

 Kelly

The radio alarm clock goes off at 7:00 AM, California time. Instead of music or commercials, we hear, “Once again, if you’re just tuning in, The United States has just been hit with the worst terrorist attack in its history. More after this.” And THEN the commercials start. Hubby and I usually hit the snooze button several times. I look at my husband and say, “Well, I can’t sleep now.” Being unable to tolerate waiting for the news to come back on, I get in the shower. A few minutes later, Hubby comes into the bathroom, shaken and teary eyed and says, “It’s so bad, Marie. It’s like a movie.” I ask, “What? Did they blow up the White House?” He says, “You just have to come and watch the news.” He can’t tell me. He just cannot put into words what has happened.

I go to the living room and watch the TV and I see the worst thing I’ve ever seen. By this time, the events are a couple of hours old, but since New York is ahead of us by 3 hours, most West Coasters are just waking up to the news. So I see the replay of the first plane sliding into the tower, like butter. And it’s surreal. Did that just happen? How can that happen? There’s no place for it to go. But it did. And I think, “It must’ve been an accident.” But Hubby looks at me with dread in his face, shakes his head and says, “Keep watching.” The second plane goes into the second tower. And I, who have committed myself to not taking the name of the Lord in vain, say, “Oh, God, oh God!” over and over again. Then I look at my husband and ask, “Who did this?! Don’t they know it’s suicide?”

I look over at my two-month-old son and wonder what kind of world I have dragged him into. For the first time in my life, I understand why people say they don’t want to bring children into this world.

The rest of the day is foggy. In the car at red lights, I look over and see other people crying. I’m crying. We all look at each other like we are in this horror together, and in that there is solidarity.

 Marie

(Mom)

It could have been me.

A delay changes one flight,

which changes another,

And I narrowly avoid fire.

I just settle home when I receive the email.

Urgent, watch the news. Any channel.

I see the world change in an instant

As coworkers, my friends,

Choke and burn and break.

I pray they run, but my heart shatters.

The towers fall in a mushroom cloud.

I cannot speak.

The flight number looks familiar.

It was mine, before,

And I had cursed the woman behind the desk

For taking it away from me.

If not for single plane's delay, I would have left

My children.

My children.

My children ask me what we are seeing,

My tears draw them to my bedroom, and,

for the first time ever,

I cannot make them understand.

They see first-hand I cannot protect them.

They worry that the world will go to war.

They do not know how close my world came to ending.

It could have been me.

 Jack

my older brother had walked me home after school

it was normal

we passed the house with a nose on the tree

we passed the house with the cats on the porch

we passed the park we never played at

once we got home

my eight-year-old brother opened the door

to the scene of my father’s eyes wider than a river

and my mother bawling into her hands

there were still toys all over the ground

she couldn’t even clean up

 Daniel

It’s September 11, 2001, my mother is packing the last of our items, we have over ten suitcases,

and yet all eight of us are leaving behind so much. We will be going to visit my grandmother soon,

we all know that we must cherish these last few visits, for we don't know when we will get a

chance to return, or see our Mama Belen. I am oblivious of what has occurred in New York, after

all I have yet to establish a real connection to that Nation. I was only two weeks old when my

family and I moved to Mexico, and now after 3 years I am to return to my place of birth, one of

which I have no recollection of. The US is enduring a grave tragedy, and I don’t know, I also

don't know the ways in which this will affect the country forever.

 Jesus Maria

My mom picked me up from school

early

and I thought, whining,

I don’t want to go to the doctor’s or the dentist,

but no, it wasn’t that.

And I went home and had all the time

in the world to read my library books,

and I thought, smiling,

something good must have happened,

but no, it wasn’t that.

 Jessica

people are killed all the time.

we even hire people to kill.

my grandfather served in the Air Force.

I never got along with him very well.

not too long ago,

the teacher told us all about

the bombs we dropped

on Hiroshima

and Nagasaki.

and

a couple years ago,

back when I lived in San Jose

there was an earthquake.

I was playing *Sonic the Hedgehog*

on my Sega Genesis

and after our house stopped rocking

I wondered if Sonic

could run from an earthquake.

people are killed all the time

why is this any different and

why is Mom so stressed and

why is Mom crying and

why won’t mom let me go to school?

and how will I explain my absence to my teacher?

she knows about the atom bomb

why doesn’t Mom?

 Anthony

I was on my bed when I overheard my mom talking with my dad about something on the news

I heard them say poor families who now have to remember this awful day for the rest of their lives” She said “How unexpected and yet there was no way to know and no way to prevent it before it was too late” . Then my dad said “ I can’t help but put myself in the shoes of a victim, knowing that the whole building was going to come down anyway, I too would have jumped from the top. I’d save myself time and suffering. May god keep them now” I didn’t exactly know what happened, or what they were talking about, but I too asked God to help them.

 Alondra

It was before we were to leave for

school, not yet late, nor early

A gasp and whispered prayers from my

 mom

A faint question from me, What’s

 going on and why?

Suddenly class, hushed whispers

Confused children, quiet adults.

A moment of silence.

Video footage played

 over and over again.

Was it better to die in the building

 or die from jumping?

Death, crying, missing people.

Grieving, lots of it.

And some hope buried underneath.

 Guadalupe

When CCTV news broadcasted the 9/11 attack

I stood in front of my father’s house.

Through the window, I asked my dad

what happened?

He told me terrorists bombed the Twin Towers

in New York.

I did look at the screen

the buildings were collapsing,

I was shocked

How could this happen?

America was not safe anymore.

 Lichun

I told my parents I wasn’t going back

to school after the terrorist attack.

Dad said:

“Of course you are!!!

You can’t just hide at home.

What’s the matter with you, Son?

You can’t let those terrorists win.

We’re Americans! The land of the

free and the brave.”

 Jesse

Goodbyes are hard for me –

I never want to leave someone I love

 without saying goodbye

What struck me most as I, in the

computer classroom at Western Carolina University where I

was teaching,

where the previous instructor had left CCN playing –

saw people jumping to their deaths

saw the planes with the passengers

 unaware that these were their final moments

crash, crash, burn, die

They didn’t get to say goodbye…

Later I watched the clips about the flight

 that crashed in a PA field

heard the cell phone messages of those

who called to say goodbye/to tell their

families/friends, “I love you.”

in 2001

I didn’t have a cell phone…

 Dr. Warner

It could have been

A day like any other

If it had not been for

the smoke

I could not see through

The same smoke

that robbed me

of the air I took for granted

The news lady spoke in

 riddles

My mind could not solve

A plane.

A crash.

Death, many deaths.

More news came

of Fallen angels

and fathers who would

never come home again.

I locked myself inside

My fear my only companion.

It rained in colors gray and black

And if it weren’t for this,

it could have been

a day like any other.

 Kelsey

Me and my classmates are coloring in our coloring

 books.

I color in the purple dragon with green horns.

Mrs. Teacher brings out the big TV.

I did not know that we were watching a movie today be we get happy.

She tells us all to be quiet, like she usually does when she’s mean,

And presses the button on the

 remote.

On the screen there are two buildings falling down

I stop paying attention.

(Shannon’s mom) The TV at work turns on and my coworkers

and I watch in horror. The Twin Towers burst into

flames and one of my coworkers starts sobbing.

Tears well up in my eyes. What has this world come to?

 Shannon

(A police’s sleepless nights)

The fire, the explosion

The screams that could tear off one’s lungs,

The sound of the sirens,

The man who threw himself

 out of the window

 close to the sky,

The last phone call…

This event, everything about it

is still fresh in my mind

Still haunts my dreams

whenever the night comes

 to visit me.

Like 9/11 just happened yesterday.

I was there, as helpless as the

 people trapped in the building.

 Silently praying to any Higher Being

to save these innocent people

and rescue my pitiful soul.

 Han

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck

The hell’s going on

Saw the kid off to school, didn’t kiss the wife

Why the hell didn’t I?

Can the tower hold out? Need to find…

 Elevator, no… stairs, can’t use elevators

Do I have enough time?

 Left my cellphone in the car, can’t say goodbye

The fuck’s that sound?

 This New York tower’s falling down

 My fair lady

 Rodrigo

I was in fifth grade when it happened,

but I had no idea. I had family in

New York, but I had no idea. It was

the talk of the Nation, but I still had

no idea. I had no idea because that morning

our power went out. Our TV was off.

Our connection to the world lost. Everyone

was falling apart, but I had no idea.

 Dylan