

-----Original Message-----

From: Marna

Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2001 1:27 PM

To: <undisclosed recipients>

Subject: **From Wall Street Home to Brooklyn**

Today would of been my second day back in the office since my vacation in Mexico.

When I woke up this morning, I still didn't feel in the work groove, so I left about 15 minutes late. When I got off the A train and began walking down Fulton Street, I noticed everyone was lined on the sidewalks looking in the opposite direction. I looked back and saw a crane and heard ambulances, so I just assumed that a workman had an accident or a Wall Street-type was getting ready to jump.

Ten seconds later, a loud boom sounded. Everyone began running in my direction down Fulton Street. It looked like and then felt like Godzilla had landed. I turned the corner and decided to go to my office. I got up in the elevators and made it to the 23rd floor of 160 Water Street when every one pushed me back and told me on the ride down that the noise I heard was a second plane crashing.

We stood on the corner next to our office and watched the flames pour out of both buildings just five blocks away. The metal on the World Trade towers was pulled back and slivered and looked like tinsel on a Christmas tree. Ash and debris were blowing at us. On the street, everyone was on their cell phones trying to get a signal. After about two minutes we all decided it was time to get the hell out of there.

At 9:15 a.m., I walked north to the Brooklyn Bridge. I've never seen so many people on the bridge - not even during a Walk-for-This or a Walk-for-That-a-thon. Women were crying "I just want to get home to my baby" as we continued to get our heels stuck in between the bridge's pedestrian walkway 2x4's. One third of the way over, and elderly black gentleman decided to befriend me and began telling me about the last World Trade bombing. We speculated about what might have happened as everyone continued to march over the bridge hitting the redial buttons on their cell phones. About 1/2 way over the bridge, a man began yelling that the Pentagon had been bombed.

That's when it all became too real to me.

I worked in the Pentagon in the early 80's. I was around when they blocked off the buses from running under the building. I was around when security checkpoints were added. We joked about working at Ground Zero, but it was just an occupational hazard. Working for people who would die for their country was cool back then.

By the time I made it to the end of the bridge, another loud

boom sounded. It couldn't have been another plane. When we turned to look through the smoke, it appeared the top of one of the towers had fallen, but none of us were sure.

I said goodbye to my bridge buddy at the Jay Street subway station. I was ready to park my ass on a subway and get home to drink beer. One Snapple and one stop later, all train service had been suspended.

When I came above ground, the soot and smoke was following me home. I walked a couple blocks down Smith Street and realized that my stomach was in knots and I had to get to a bathroom. I turned into the Rite-Aid and the few people that were in the store were standing and listening to a radio report describing the conditions of the towers. The bathroom was closed. Several doors down I stopped into a super market (super meaning 8 aisles which is big for Brooklyn) and the guys took pity on me w/my briefcase and let me go to the basement to use their employee bathroom.

Slightly rejuvenated, I headed back out only to discover the smoke was worse. I walked down Baltic past the Gowanus Housing project. Kids had bandanas over their noses and mouths. Any other day, I would assume they were off to rob someone. Today they did it to keep the soot out.

When I hit Third Avenue I turned and joined an army of financial district comrades who were walking zombies like me. Ambulances rushed by, cars honked, and we were the walking, living dead.

I turned up President Street, walking up the hill to my Park Slope neighborhood. The soot continued to blow and a black haze was beginning to creep further into Brooklyn. I passed an elderly woman who was keeping occupied by sweeping the sidewalk in front of her brownstone. In a typical Brooklyn accent, she commented to me, "You know, it is December 7th!"

My dad was born December 7th and was drafted for World War 2. I turned and looked down the hill. I couldn't see lower Manhattan at all. I wondered what he would think about all this if he were alive. I remember being young and him saying, in a very Archie Bunker way, "Those slant-eyed bastards." Who could we blame it on today?

I finally made it up to 7th Avenue and turned right. The kids were playing in the elementary school playground. Life appeared to be normal here, except the sidewalks were packed for a weekday. Two blocks later, I decided to stop into Tarzian Hardware and pick up a flag pole. When I walked in, the young workers were all huddled watching the TV. "We should run up to the hospital and donate blood," they commented as they watched the carnage. I walked straight past and looked for the flag poles. I wanted to be media-ignorant for as long as possible. The store was out of flag poles.

Outside the hardware store, I passed three black kids in standard hip-hop clothing yelling "fucking Arabs." Yeah, if my dad were alive today, I bet that's what he'd be saying too.

I continued down 7th Avenue and noticed a middle-aged eagle scout in full Boy Scout regalia holding a poster board sign which said "Please Give Blood." I took the detour into New York Methodist Hospital and lost my shit in the lobby. There were lines of people volunteering. I wiped away the tears, filled out the forms, was told to return in two hours.

Six more blocks and I'd finally be home. I stopped at another hardware store and it was closed, so I continued on.

I got home at noon and immediately called my mother. She cried and said they have all been trying to get through to me. I then talked to my friend from Vegas, my brother, and my sister-in-law. My phone was bound to ring all day, so I just decided to get online and write. I still don't want to watch the TV and I don't want to know what happened. At least not yet.

I sit here drinking a beer realizing that on any other day, freedom after work would mean taking my panty hose and bra off. Today it has a different meaning.

Now I'm going to take a curtain rod and take my father's retirement flag and hang it outside. If he were alive, I think that's what he would do.

+==+==+

Marna Bunger

September 11, 2001

1:00 p.m.