

[Captain Hughes]: I guess that false sense of security, you never get that back, that sense of security that you had. Even to this day, you don't have that feeling of safety. The world changed from that point on.

[MUSIC BED FADES IN]

[SFX 1]

[SFX 2]

FROM W-H-J-E, THIS IS FIRST RESPONDERS 411, GETTING YOU THE INSIDE SCOOP ON FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE CARMEL AREA.

[SFX 3]

I'M TATUM PRATI

[MUSIC BED FADES OUT]

[SFX 4]

[Tatum]: I don't remember 9/11. But my mom has told me about her experience. At the time, we were living out near Boston, Massachusetts. She had no idea anything was happening until her sister called.

[Mom]: That's when we saw that one of the towers was not there. So at that point one of the towers had already fallen. And we were looking at the TV in disbelief that that couldn't really be what we were seeing.

[T]: And then for some reason, my dad decided he still needed to go to work.

[M]: We thought he should stay home, but he felt like he needed to go into the office.

[T]: But as soon as he got into the city, they sent him back home because Boston was being evacuated.

[M]: All the companies were getting their employees out of the city because they didn't know what was, you know, if they could be a target, I guess.

[T]: So then my mom had to pick him up.

[M]: It was a strange drive because there were not, it was, the roads were very packed and congested, but everyone was very civil. You knew that everybody was in kinda the same mind frame of what is going on, so everyone was much more polite but, you know, with a purpose of trying to get to their loved ones. It was eerily quiet on the roads 'cause people just wanted to, you know, get home.

[T]: The whole day was just really scary.

[M]: It was disturbing when you did see people jumping from buildings 'cause that was shown that day live because they didn't... I don't think that even they were expecting that they were gonna capture that on camera at the time. I do believe they sort of stopped airing that at one point. But in the beginning, you were seeing that. It just made you feel for those people because you know that had to be a really difficult choice for them.

[T]: Like my mom, Captain Chad Hughes of Fire Station 46 didn't know anything was happening until a fellow firefighter told him.

[CH]: One of the firefighters came in, we were out in the bay where the trucks are, said that a small plane, it was reported like a cessna type airplane, had ran into one of the towers.

[T]: So they turned on the TV.

[CH]: Just see this 737 jumbo jet coming in. And it just comes as the newscasters were talking. It hits the second tower, and you're just like, that was no accident.

[T]: For many people including Captain Hughes, the beginning of the incident was pure shock. No one knew what was going on. That was until the second tower was struck.

[CH]: To see that second jet hit the tower, we knew that this was no longer just some mistake that a small airplane accidentally ran into a skyscraper. We knew it was something much larger than that.

[T]: Those who were actually there were having a terrible time. Worse than just terrible. It was a nightmare. It was still a nightmare for everyone else who was just watching on TV.

[CH]: For that large-scale, you know, that happened in New York, but it happened to everybody. I think we all felt that. It was very chaotic. And, you know, that was nerve wracking. And it was one of those where you call home, make sure everybody, where's everybody at, what's going on, everyone just kinda hang tight and glued to the TV, almost frozen if you will to see what's going on here. That was by far the, on large-scale incident, the most upsetting scenario that I have encountered before or since as far as just the unknown.

[T]: My mom said that a lot of people were scared because of the unknown. No one knew what was happening or what was going to happen. That fear of the unknown really affected Captain Hughes.

[CH]: That's something you say, well, firefighters are not supposed to be afraid. I was afraid that day. It was unnerving. 'Cause it was afraid of the unknown. We'd never experienced that, so it was scary. That flat out, it was scary. Obviously, it's a day you'll never forget for just being on duty.

[T]: As a firefighter himself, one of his concerns was the firefighters on the scene.

[CH]: With something that large scale, we knew there would be hundreds of firefighters responding to that incident. I knew the loss of life for firefighters was great. And when it was

343, I thought it'd be a lot greater than that. I really thought there was thousands of firefighters just killed. I just watched that on TV.

[T]: The loss of so many firefighters impacted Captain Hughes because he can relate to them. But so many more people lost their lives. There were almost 3,000 deaths and more than 6,000 people wounded. Because of this awful event, that sense of security we once had is not as great as it was before.

[CH]: I guess that false sense of security, you never get that back, that sense of security that you had. Even to this day, you don't have that feeling of safety. The world changed from that point on. The world changed for me. 2001, you know, September 11th, I was 30 years old. Like I said, a young officer in charge of that station for the day. And, you know, the world's just never been the same since then. Not saying that it's bad today, it's just different. Things are just different. And that's unfortunate because before then, not that the world was perfect, but there was that little bit sense of security.

[T]: The day was just altogether unbelievable. Looking back on it, Captain Hughes still can't believe that both of the towers fell. Like many others, he can't fathom that it ended the way that it did.

[CH]: For the firefighters and the police officers and all the civilians that lost their life, it was just a true tragedy in every sense of the word. It's something that you still carry with you. Nine eleven was really quite a day for us.

[T]: 9/11 was a tragedy for the United States. And it's something that we all carry with us. For WHJE, this has been Tatum Prati. More stories like this can be found at whje.com.