



# AMERICAN SENSATIONALISM | 9/11 & the Wake-Up Call to Truth

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## **SEPTEMBER** | *Rick Hummer*

IF the Media has its way, and believe me, *they'll try*, then the end of the world will be met with sensationalism.

*Tuesday was a practice run.*

As the sun dawned over America's eastern shoreline on the eleventh of September 2001, New York City was in a strangely *thoughtful* mood. Even its streets were quieter than usual. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that a cold front had swept over the coast on the night prior,

bathing the warm and sticky wet of summer with rain and thunderstorms. The following morning delivered a pristine skyline draped in a surreal backdrop of oceanic blue. A full slate of races awaited voters on Staten Island and around the city. Children were *also* starting school that day. As the clock rounded towards 9AM, the temperature reached a clean and comfortable 65 degrees. From Brooklyn, parents espoused extra time to personally drive their child or see them off at the station, but the trains departing for Manhattan would not return that afternoon.





The atmosphere of that day is *truly* difficult to define.

At precisely 8:46AM, *most* New Yorkers experienced the wreckage to the northern facade of the World Trade Center's North Tower in precisely the same manner as the rest of us did—through a phone call from friends or by simply turning on the television. A *missile*, it was often first reported, or *maybe* it was a plane. By 9:03AM however, the moment in which the southern facade of the South Tower was pounced upon by a *second* plane (or was it a missile?), the uneasiness which had suddenly gripped the city, particularly among the countless Manhattan residents who quietly started inching their way toward the Financial District of Lower Manhattan for a better view, bled out in a collective symphony of moans.

Within half an hour, at precisely 9:37AM, a *third* collision was reported at the Pentagon in Washington DC, 227 miles to the south of Manhattan. By 10:03AM, a *fourth* airliner reportedly crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, southeast of Pittsburgh.

Chicken Little wasn't shitting us.

For the remainder of the day, a plume of smoke bellowed high into the sunny canopy above the Hudson, while a lazy wind blew southbound. Smells of the fire seemed to seep through every window, filling every room of every house in Brooklyn. Long afterwards, the stain from that awful September morning, particularly the pulverized steel and concrete which filled the lungs of many, simply wouldn't wash away. There are those who survived the plight of stairs down some ninety-five stories, nearly two-thousand steps, and

would long thereafter wake up at night with swollen ankles—no place left to run and nowhere deeper to descend but to Sheol and the shower.

From several hundred miles away, as the crow flies, Rick Hummer was an afternoon drive jock and also the imaging director for an entire cluster for CBS Radio in and around Charlotte, North Carolina, and driving to work when the first *plane* hit. “I heard Samantha actually say on the radio, ‘Hey guys, I don’t know what’s going on, but something just happened in New York City, and there’s a gaping hole in one of the World Trade Center towers, and they’re saying on the news right now that quite possibly a plane hit it.’”

Hummer picked up his cell phone and called in on the hotline, hoping to crack a one-liner. Samantha Stone answered.

“Where’s John at?” he asked.

“I don’t think you understand, Rick,” Stone said. *John* was their boss. *John* had just received his pilot’s license. “This isn’t a joke.”

Upon entering the building, Hummer “came into the front door, and the conference room had a big glass wall—you could see in; and they had the TV on up in the corner. Hardly anyone ever used it except for meetings.” There were already people gathered around, locking their heads upwards towards the flickering television, fingers inelegantly pronounced upon their lips and noses. The very moment he walked in to join them, Hummer looked up and saw an explosion.

The women in the room *screamed*.

He asked, “Was that a replay?”

“No, that’s another plane!” they said.

“The first thing I thought was: ‘the radars are off. *The radars are off*. They’re sending

them to the wrong place. Somebody reprogrammed the beacons for the runways.’”

Hummer thought of familiar faces, and immediately returned to his phone, hoping to call friends and associates waddling among the wreckage. “And obviously you couldn’t get through at all. Right away it was hard getting through to New York.”

Susan answered.

“You wouldn’t believe it! You wouldn’t believe all the people coming this way,” she told him.

“What is going on?”

“I have no idea!”

Susan was only ten blocks from the World Trade Center, pushing against the swelling tide of pedestrians scrambling to and fro. Hummer was on the phone with her the precise moment when the North Tower fell—when the howls of hell’s torment seemingly filled his ear.

OH MY GOD! *Susan cried*.

ALL THE PEOPLE! ALL THE PEOPLE!

Hummer recalled, “Just hearing her scream, I felt like I was there. I felt so helpless. I really thought something was happening to her. What I was picturing in my mind was this domino effect—all the buildings were going to fall down over each other. The whole fear thing came over me.” While Susan rushed about helping to deliver water and towels to those who were fleeing the cloud of pulverized steel and concrete, Hummer folded into the media’s sensationalism. “I went through that with everybody else, not looking at anything *but* the terror, the awe.”

It was that very night that Bush held a televised press conference. They had already come out and claimed Osama Ben Laden as the day’s grand orchestrator. “And