



# Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11

*Damon DiMarco , Nicole Blackman (Contributor) , Thomas Kean (Foreword)*

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Damon DiMarco's *Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11* eternally preserves a monumental tragedy in American history through the voices of the people who were in Lower Manhattan and elsewhere in New York City on that fateful day.

The stories DiMarco has collected come from a diverse group of human beings: individuals who managed to escape from the Towers; the bereaved of 9/11; the policemen, firemen, paramedics, reporters, and volunteers who risked their lives to help others; eyewitnesses who stood in shock on the streets below the Towers; WTC structural engineers, political experts, political dissidents, small business owners, and, of course, children whose lives will be forever impacted by the horror and chaos they witnessed.

In the tradition of Studs Terkel, DiMarco's moving oral history chronicles the stories of everyone from the small group of people who miraculously made it safely down from the 89th floor of Tower 1 to the New York Times reporter trying desperately to fight her way through the fleeing crowds into Lower Manhattan, to the paramedic who set up a triage area 200 yards from the base of the Towers before they collapsed to the ordinary citizens of New York City who tried to get on with their lives in the days following the tragic event.

This expanded second edition of DiMarco's literary time capsule includes follow-up interviews that track contributors' lives in the years since 9/11, as well as dozens of never-before-published photographs.

## Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11 Details

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# From Reader Review Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11 for online ebook

## Jamie says

I wasn't sure if I could emotionally handle this book, but I am so glad I gave it a chance. As sad as it was, overall, I was glad I got the chance to learn about some of the lives of the people lost. In addition, the stories of heroism and volunteerism were welcome perspectives and while they do not take away from the tragedy that was/is 9/11, they certainly help one realize that those are two ways we can triumph over terrorism and move forward to continue picking up the pieces.

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## Peggy Walker says

I wanted to read something looking back on the events of 9/11 at this time of the 10th anniversary. This was the update from 2007. There is another one that is more recent from 2009. I very sincerely recommend this book for a series of snapshots of that day and the aftermath. These were oral histories taken within days or at most about a month after 9/11. It is divided into sections roughly equivalent to the distance from Ground Zero. The first section was taken from people in the Towers who survived. Then stories from people immediately outside the Towers. There is an amazing section on the volunteers at Ground Zero and what they accomplished. There is a section from family members and friends left behind. My least favorite section was at the end with statements from people commenting on the culture of the Middle East and why America has become so hated. That is worthy of discussion, of course, but I feel it is out of place in this extremely poignant memoir from people immediately affected by the tragedy. There are some photographs taken at the scene as well. Extremely well done and highly recommended.

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## Lauren says

We all remember what we were doing. Many people call it a Kennedy moment. I was doing homework. I was 6 or 7 at the time, so I don't recall much about what happened. But I remember my mom crying, I remember watching footage on the news, the Towers falling, the airplanes grounded, EVERYONE calling everyone they knew. And I was scared it would ruin my Birthday(Sept. 15).

Tower Stories is divided into 5 different parts: At the Towers; Outside the Towers; Ground Zero and the Volunteers; The Aftermath; and Viewpoints. Different viewpoints, different walks of life, different races, all trying to describe what they went through, what struck them the most. Taken as a whole, it becomes an overwhelmingly obvious fact most people just wanted to help in some way. Of course, someone said (Being me, I really couldn't tell you a 4th of the names in Tower Stories), it brought out the best in some and the worst in others.

Personally? I came away with a greater understanding and sympathy for everyone involved in the crash. But, you know, Someone said that it was the US Government's fault we got attacked in the first place. I take issue with that. When we start blaming the Government for the crimes of terrorists who drive planes into towers, we really are in trouble. As an anonymous note outside of Professor Gerges's office [one of the contributors to this book] said,

"To my fellow Americans,

No American actions, however flawed, contributed to the misfortune of the Middle East peoples-nothing in this world ever justifies the slaughter of one, let alone thousands of innocent civilians.

This kind of fashionable rationalization for evil is called "blaming the victim" and it must be exposed for what it truly is: mental poison that only adds insult to injury. America shoulders no blame for the evil perpetrated to her on September 11th. The people who freely choose a path of absolute wickedness, of terror, bear complete responsibility."

But, you know, yes, there were viewpoints I didn't agree with, but this book was all about the different people that make up America and obviously there's going to be some who rub you the wrong way. That's one of the beautiful things about America. We can all disagree, but we can still get together and talk, SHOUT, at each other without fear of imprisonment and harm. God Bless America.

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### **Kristen says**

I am obsessed reading all the history and book about 9/11. I think the survivors stories and voices should be heard by many. We also have the duty to never forget. The book was separated into five sections: At The Towers, Outside The Towers, Ground Zero and Volunteers, The Aftermath, and Viewpoint, along with a in-depth Timeline of that day. All of the stories were well written and made the reader really imagination what it was like to be there on that day, weeks, and months later, even though you can't possible imagination what the people and the citizens of America went though that day. All the stories were very memorable with different things I never thought about before (For example: Many of the citizens in New York feels that tourist should be taken pictures of Ground Zero because it a just a sacred place where loved ones are still there), but the one the stick out for my was Patrick Charles Welsh who wife Deborah was on Untied Flight 93 because I remember her character in the movie Flight 93 and Untied 93.

#Neverforget

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### **Roxanne says**

When the towers fell I had woken up late due to working late and my parents had this event on tv. I felt horrified and sick to my stomach. This story tells everything from what happened, to the survivors, the first responders etc. It took me months of nightmares to get over this and one of my friends died there.

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### **Vicki G says**

I cannot handle any more of this book right now. I was under the impression there was a section where he interviewed people who lost relatives and in all 211 pages that I read I came across not even one of those interviews. I'm up to the third section and he's still talking about people who made it out alive; some of them harmed physically, some emotionally but none so far that were dead, like my loved one is.

I'm HAPPY they lived, that's not what I can't handle. But I'm finding it almost intolerable to listen to them all complain about how bad it was and the obvious evidence that they lived through it but he didn't.

I'm not as strong a person as I thought I was bc I can barely tolerate people who complain about living through something that took everything he had to offer, including his very life. I simply can't handle hearing one more person talk about how awful it was but not how good it was that they lived. Only a few have

mentioned it. Maybe they think it's implied. With me, unfortunately, it's not that simple. I've lived around people who think they're long-suffering; guessing they were also happy about something would be incorrect.

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### **Nancy Kennedy says**

Damon DiMarco talked with people immediately after the 9/11 attacks, literally walking the streets and stopping passersby. The accounts he records have the ring of authenticity and immediacy. The author is channeling his inner Studs Terkel here! The stories read exactly as people talk, although I'm sure a great deal of editing was required. Mr. DiMarco is a fine writer who has made a valuable contribution to 9/11 literature.

Although difficult to read, the book is one I am glad to have read. Toward the end of the book my attention flagged, though, as the accounts widen out to include people whose stories seemed peripheral to me. After mourning the endlessly horrific ways people died, I didn't really care about the structural beauty of the Towers as expounded by an engineer, how Verizon got the stock market back up and running or the viewpoint of someone who was in L.A. at the time. And I really didn't want to read ruminations on the ethics of profiling airline passengers in the days immediately following the attacks.

I also had hoped for more insightful follow-up interviews. I want to know how the interviewees felt and thought about 9/11 today, not what plays they'd had produced in the intervening years, what shows they'd acted in or how many kids they had. The author may have been limited by who he could locate or what people wanted to say; one conversation with a paramedic who went on to be a skilled search-and-rescue medic is a great follow-up. Perhaps the author is working on updates like that to coincide with the opening of the Freedom Tower. I hope so.

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### **Hollie-Mystery Girl 27 says**

I recommend this book as a lesson to all of us to live, help, and love whoever we can. The stories in this book are inspiring, heartbreaking and extraordinary.

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### **Denise says**

Incredible, emotional anthology of the stories of the victims and volunteers of 9/11. Their memories and recounts of that day and the days and weeks immediately following the attack take you closer than you would ever care to be to the terror, chaos and loss experienced at Ground Zero. At the same time, it's important to read and understand it, to never forget.

The way the citizens of New York, as well as others across the country, rallied to assist in the recovery efforts is nothing short of extraordinary. People gave everything they had to search for survivors or to support those on the front lines doing so. The hardest part about listening to these stories was experiencing the hope, expectation and preparation that survivors would be found, only to have no one come out alive. It was like it happened all over again.

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## **Shannon says**

For the most part this was an excellent book. Most of the stories are interesting and really do show a slice of history that needs to be preserved. I like that there are occasional updates about some of the storytellers.

What I didn't like is that there are 2 sections of the book I could have done without. The one about how 9/11 effected the..."average", maybe, New Yorker. The guy who's shop across the street from WTC isn't getting business and the guy who wandered around and saw flyers and an impromptu gathering of people. Also the "Viewpoints" part that has a slimy lawyer blathering on. In those two areas I would really have liked to hear more about D. C. and Pennsylvania or from survivors and first responders telling their stories. For it to be a true "Oral history" I'd think those areas would be better talked about.

Also some of the better known stories could be retreaded for future generations. The guy with the red bandana, Stanley P. Watching the jet from under his desk and the "Surfer" guy.

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## **Ris says**

Can't read too much in one sitting...rather read a chapter here and there. These stories are from very different and interesting points of view and this book really shows how we banded together as Americans to help each other after this horrible tragedy. I started losing interest about 65% through. I also did not care for the "viewpoints" section at the end at all. Politics give me tired head. (over all, I preferred the book 102 minutes)

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## **Kim Davern says**

This book had so many stories of loss, courage, dedication, love, bravery and kindness. I couldn't put it down and still can't stop thinking about it. I can't imagine what it was like to have been in the towers on Sept. 11 and to have escaped. And to think about the horrible experience of those who didn't. Some stories were dedications of people who died that day in the towers, on the planes or in the pentagon. Some stories were about the volunteers who helped so much afterward. The stories of loss, courage and patriotism were sad and inspiring. So much was lost that day...

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## **Donald says**

I could not put this book down. Very compelling oral history of 9/11, from survivors, rescue workers and volunteers, and family and friends of the victims. The editor, Damon DiMarco, wisely divided this 524-page book into five sections: At the Towers; Outside the Towers; Ground Zero and the Volunteers; The Aftermath; and Viewpoints. So it covers a wide spectrum—from the attacks and the fight for survival, to the rescue effort, to the clean up and rebuilding of communication networks, to the effect it had on families and New Yorkers and Americans, to finally what came afterward.

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## **Leigh says**

This book was a four star book for me until the very last chapter. True accounts from people in and around events from 9-11, specifically the Twin Towers. Amazing stories of self sacrifice, bravery, heroism, survival, and most of all the special and unique American spirit. I loved how the author provided all kinds of different stories from people in the building, people on airplanes, people who worked nearby, people who helped set up food and shelter for workers, people who helped get the phone lines up again, and even the perspective of a man who worked at the firm that built and constantly inspected the towers.

Unfortunately, all of these amazing stories were somewhat ruined by the very last chapter called "View Points." I do understand there are lots of view points to what happened on 9-11, however, I did not feel the author actually covered many of them. In fact the view points he did provide were more offensive than anything else. If you want to include a view points section you ought to include all kinds of different view points (as he did so well in the rest of the book).

All in all a decent read but I would skip the last chapter.

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## **Laura says**

This was a difficult book to read because it felt so immediate. These stories were told to the author within days and weeks of the events of 9/11 (with short follow-ups later on) and were just as raw and real and emotional as you would expect. If you want to read any book on this topic, I would recommend this one.

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