NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

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The New New York

As the Smoke Clears From Lower Manhattan, People Here Are Looking Up—at Firemen, Cops and the Sk

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NEW YORK

The couple speak their marriage vows beneath one of those glorious October skies, the city in the ripeness of autumn. Bride and groom smile and kiss, hundreds laugh and clap, bows dance across violin and cello.

They are the New Yorkers for whom life is good and fine and filled with pleasure.

David Moore, a Park Avenue equities trader and a guest at the wedding, a man with two children and a pretty wife, looks around and his mind's eye limns the scene as though in grainy black-and-white newsreel. The tuxes, the dresses, the forced gaiety. They could be the Viennese in 1914. German Jews in Berlin, 1936.

"I felt like we were stuck in an old movie," he says. "Everything looks the same but everything feels different. We know the world is changing. In our new world, the music plays and you look at airplanes gliding over Central Park and you start doing evacuation drills in your mind."

The towers have crashed, the clouds have settled, and the New York of Sept. 10 recedes. The velvet-rope-lined, stock-market-reading, no-we-have-no-Nobu-tables-for-you city yields. Now it's checkpoints and Cipro fever, layoffs, and that skyline with the gap-toothed hole.

Walk the sidewalks of the Upper West Side and downtown Brooklyn and people crowd the sidewalks and children screech and the scent of falafel wafts off the sidewalk stands. You might imagine that nothing really happened.

Now ride the A-train to Chambers Street, to the vast pyre that burns and belches and smokes still, like an inextinguishable fire in a ring of Hell. Try to ignore the acrid and terrible smell.

Subway eyes fix you frankly, so un-New York. *What's in that bag? Why is that man with the overstuffed suitcase standing there like that?*

Young men at the Hi Life Bar on East 72nd Street laugh too loud and, after many drinks, cry too easily. "Peo-

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A Hole in the Apple: City Struggles to Carry On

NEW YORK, *From C1*

ple drink a lot," says bartender J.T. Taylor. "Every night is Friday night now." Young women head to work toting bottled water and sneakers. They slip on white masks as they tromp up the steps of the Broadway-Nassau Street Station, and over salad greens they exchange tips on the best walking routes out of Lower Manhattan. Just in case.

Dinner conversation tarries defiantly on the prospects of school and the boss and those Yankees. Then somehow it winds back. What if they dropped a vial here? Set off a bomb in a tunnel? It would be so easy to . . .

An open-air morgue stretches south of the Midtown Tunnel on First Avenue and the Daily News runs daily agate of funerals like so many afternoon races at Aqueduct. The hot e-mail in New York tells you where to score black-market Cipro, $5 a pill.

For those without cable, television is down to just one station: WCBS. Citywide, everything else faded to snow when the transmitters went down with the World Trade Center.

The American Kennel Club reports that sales of puppies are up 30 percent, and the best boarding kennels report that business is off 30 percent. Nobody wants to worry about a stranded pooch when the next attack comes.

Sex is apocalyptic, except when it isn't. No one gets a kick from anthrax.

The city's paranoids, therapists agree, seem much improved—they always knew someone was after them.

Degrees of separation peel away. The fireman on Broome Street knew 32 of the dead. Angelo Piumefreddo, the barber in Park Slope, knew 13. You knew none, until you knew one.

Then you find yourself at a funeral.

The children have heard it and seen it, and they follow America's chase after Osama bin Laden like a serial thriller. On Sept. 11, a blond and cowlicked 8-year-old boy stood in his schoolyard in Carroll Gardens, a Brooklyn neighborhood of pasta shops and plaster statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He watched the airliner swoop low and waited for it to rise and swerve away.

He said the explosion looked like pizza dough.

Now he draws three-dimensional pictures of the World Trade Center. At night he dreams of flying around the shimmering towers.

To live here before was to feel the city's vastness, and embrace its anonymity. Now everything and everyone is compressed.

Arguments flare on subways. Men and women have at it in their curious shorthand. No one's in the mood for anything anymore. Even your own fears get tiresome.

And yet . . . on a midday morning recently, 800 people crowd into the Romanesque Church of the Holy Trinity on West 82nd Street. Five weeks ago, firefighter Ruben "Dave" Correa ran into a burning tower and this is his funeral.

Hundreds stand on the sidewalk, too, holding briefcases and shopping bags. Some are in jogging clothes. There's the bartender, J.T. Taylor, and his actress friend. Sixty schoolchildren. Two housing inspectors and Sid and Lois from Riverside Drive.

None of them knew Correa.

An hour passes and the wood doors swing open. The priest walks out followed by the family, but there is no coffin because there is no body. Just a dented helmet and dress blue hat set upon white linen.

A fire captain motions and bagpipes heave and wail and everyone begins to cry. High on a sixth-floor walk-up, an old man climbs onto his fire escape to watch. He stands erect and holds a long salute.

This is life in New York after the fall.

The Working Class

What's it feel like to work in Pompeii? To breathe the dust of catastrophe?

It feels like work. Rosario Encarnacion shrugs. He has burly shoulders and a trace of a mustache and he shifts from foot to foot in front of the metal gates on Nassau Street. The early morning shadows are long and cold, and he's a $6.50-an-hour day laborer waiting to scrub clean the office buildings around Ground Zero.

"The windows and desks are so grimy, there are two inches of soot," he says. "We run these large industrial vacuum cleaners and an air purifier."

When the towers collapsed, vast Vesuvial clouds rolled up and down the streets of Lower Manhattan, a choking compound of pulverized concrete and paper and asbestos and human biomass. The clouds rose 80 stories high, then fell for days like snow.

Powder and a terrible stink insinuated themselves into marble lobbies and lofts and airtight offices. The smell is inescapable. It was in the halls of the federal courthouse last week when a judge sentenced four al Qaeda terrorists convicted of bombing U.S. embassies in Africa.

Rosario and his colleagues must clean all this.

They ride in on the subway at 6 a.m., from Tremont Avenue in the Bronx, and Jackson Heights, Queens and East Harlem and Red Hook.

There's no shortage—New York bursts with a job-hungry proletariat. They work 10 hours, and afterward their throats are sore, their noses run, their eyes water.

The bosses say the work will go on until Christmas. That's okay, they need the money. And besides . . .

"You can't put it out of your mind what happened," says Maria Paulino, a petite woman with rich brown hair pulled back. "We're scrubbing and you look out the windows at that wreckage. You want to help."

Julian Medina is long and lean, a Bronx kid. He got a tour of the World Trade Center site, and admits he cried. He fishes his mask out of his pocket. "This isn't right, all this death," he says. "I would join the Army to fight whoever did this."

A cop in a gas mask motions, time to go. Medina shows his identity card to three National Guardsmen. He and an army of cleaners slip through the police barriers and walk west on Park Place, toward Ground Zero.

Too Much

He was the man who saw too much. He worked next door to the World Trade Center. He heard the roar of plane engines, he saw the fireball, and the smoke. He watched people falling, holding hands, alone, on fire, smiling.

He walked over the bridge home to Brooklyn. He was covered in gray ash. He sat alone in his living room and stared at the television. He could no longer make sense of the world.

So he slit his wrists and walked through the brilliant sunshine to Maimonides Medical Center.

"This was a healthy man with no psychiatric history," says Harry Berkowitz, the psychiatrist who counseled the man when he came through the doors of Maimonides. "His existential crisis was literally unbearable."

Today, the man who saw too much will go back to work.

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Fashion Therapy

Disaster found Jesse Garza at the Mondrian hotel in Los Angeles. He was in this fabulous room, lit by California light. Then CNN flashed to the burning towers and he hugged himself and started walking in circles.

He wanted to crawl into a hole. He's watching this horror and his expertise—he's a personal shopper who can pick the $10,000 ensemble to die for—seemed so beside the point. Then he turned off the television and told himself: No.

Now more than ever.

"I flew back to our office in New York," he says, "and told my clients: 'Don't stay at home with a robe on, sobbing and looking like hell. Sure, find inner peace. But be strong and put your best face forward.'

"I'm on a mission now."

The men at Visual Therapy on West 57th Street—Garza and Joe Lupo—won't rest until they deconstruct the new fashion zeitgeist.

For now, they think they've nailed New York: After the Fall. Shiny is very out. Prada and Gucci should just take the season off. What's needed is somber but sensual, luxurious but not loud. Subdued edge.

They don't have investment bankers asking them to create velour-lined gas masks, not yet. But . . .

"You want to take more time and care to pick out the right clothes and feel as good as you can *right now*," Garza says. "Because when you step out the door, you never know what you're breathing in, do you?"

If it's a last breath, may it be well clothed.

High Anxiety

She's asking, no, make that begging. No, truth be told, this Upper East Side mother is on the telephone screaming and crying and demanding that the doctor take out her stupid little prescription pad and please, just this once, write the Cipro prescription.

Laura Popper, a prominent Upper East Side pediatrician, will have none of it. She's getting 20 calls a day asking for Cipro prescriptions, but she won't write any. Can't anyone here get a grip?

"Everyone worries about how the kids are doing, but my experience is that they're holding their own," she says. "It's the parents who have gone crazy, totally nuts."

Popper has taken to paraphrasing Alcoholics Anonymous to worried parents: Have the strength to recognize what you're powerless over. Much of her clientele is peculiarly susceptible to the hysteria of sudden powerlessness.

They are people who know no want. They move from apartment buildings with doormen to car services to private schools to private lessons to private jets to Hamptons homes walled off by vast hedges and steely servants.

"They are accustomed to being able do *something* about anything," she said. "There's a lot of people who thought they were immune."

Popper has two children and a husband, and in New York's early anthrax days she had the interior monologue: To buy a mask or no? To prescribe Cipro for her family or not?

"I said to myself, 'Wait a minute, take a breath.' Unless I wear a gas mask 24 hours a day, it won't save my life. So why am I thinking like this?' " she says. "The fears are not wacky but they are irrational."

The phone rings. She excuses herself to take another Cipro call.

"Do you want my short conversation about this prescription?" she asks the caller. "Fugeddaboutit."

Armored Emotions

Rob and Max Snyder stroll through the Metropolitan Museum, father and son going through the hall of armor. They see knights atop steeds, silver pickaxes and jeweled swords, and samurai warriors peering from behind centuries-old teak masks.

Five weeks back, Rob, who teaches history at Rutgers University at Newark, was riding the escalator down to the commuter PATH train under the World Trade Center when the first airplane hit.

Rob nearly died, except he didn't. Now he's walking through the museum room holding hands with his son, who seems lost in 8-year-old reveries.

Max tugs at Rob's sleeve, and says: This is the coolest room. Because, Max explains, if the terrorists smash a plane into the museum, we can put on the armor and we'll be safe.

Won't we?

Youthful Abandon

So sweet to be young and immortal in this city. There are restaurants and theaters, and every cacophonous corner holds a story. Except that now Kelly Barnhart and her friends take time to witness the signing of one another's will.

"I have a knot in my stomach every morning now," says Barnhart, 24.

Amy Weingart, 25, pushes the hair off her face. "My office building is so tall, I worry the whole way up on the elevator."

"If there's a siren now, you *freak*," says another woman. "Did you know the guys in the lobby of my office wear gas masks?"

How to digest this new New York, where planes smash into buildings and spores ride in with the mail? Three recent George Washington University graduates try it over drinks at the Hi Life Bar. It's all they talk about now.

They work on Wall Street, though not yet in the sort of jobs that promise diving vacations in Tortuga. They live in Queens or in studio apartments in Manhattan with terrific views of air shafts.

They are young and ambitious, the sort for whom New York City emits a homing beacon. When crime dropped and dot-coms sprouted, the city became their playground.

That's over.

Weekends are stages of grief. The first weekend was devoted to watching CNN on the couch at home with a cover pulled up tight. The second weekend was for close friends, and drinking too much, and crying.

The third and fourth weekends were about bacchanalian denial, chased by nightmares of bombs and clouds of poison gas. Now a wary calm descends. Read the New York Times and listen to NPR. Watch the sky, memorize the location of stairwells and keep a bike at the office.

Little friends in a bottle help you sleep.

"Everyone has an escape plan," said Barnhart. "You go somewhere, you think, 'How would I get out?' "

"If it happens, I have my sneakers," says Weingart. "I can run."

And it's not over. Layoffs of junior associates are coming in finance and advertising and media, a tsunami set off by the earthquake of Sept. 11.

Will Weingart escape from New York?

No.

"It's better to be where people are thinking about all of this," she says. "I couldn't just go back to the suburbs. I used to live in a bubble, but not anymore."

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Angelo Fiumefreddo, the barber with the deadpan stare, gives a haircut to a regular, a little boy about 7 or 8 years old. The scent of shaving cream hangs in the air and the oldies station plays Elvis. The boy's mom, a normally vivacious woman, sits on the bench saying not a word.

Angelo finishes and she stands and stares at him. She's shaking.

"I lost my husband," she whispers. "He died in the towers."

Angelo holds up his hands, the emotion makes him feel helpless. He and his two brothers, John and Vito, they've had this barber shop on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope for 43 years. The place is an anchor in this family neighborhood.

They lost 13 customers on Sept. 11.

"What do you say about that sort of loss? I don't know what to say," Angelo says. "You just hold 'em."

The New City

It never got its props, Battery Park City. Its cobblestone streets, the marinas and gardens and spectacular Hudson River views were—*are*—beautiful. Twenty-five thousand people lived and played and raised their children within the shadow of the World Trade Center.

The snobs called it plastic, faux New York. This is a silly snobbism. Steve Kerstein and his wife moved into a two-bedroom apartment here several years ago. He was happy to be in the city but not at its elbow-rubbing core.

From his 30th-floor apartment he looked at the gleaming midsection of the World Trade Center. Now he sees a bombed-out moonscape. "I'm out of here," he says. He leans out his window, a husky young man hanging over and gesticulating at devastation. "Don't you think it's pretty clear my neighborhood was vaporized?"

Such talk gives landlords the hives. They spin out happy talk: Our tenants are brave (true). Our tenants love this place (true). Our tenants won't leave (demonstrably false).

Close your eyes and ride the elevators, walk the halls, and go to the playgrounds—you hear nothing. Some buildings are half empty. Dozens of apartments are for sale. A neighborhood that had slowly stitched itself into Lower Manhattan has had its connective tissue cut.

Joy Hou, 26, moved here from California in 1998. She worked three minutes away, at Lehman Bros. in the World Financial Center. Her drugstore was in the World Trade Center Mall. The Greenwich Street restaurant row was a 10-minute stroll.

At Battery Park City now, everything takes an hour: an hour to go to the drugstore, an hour to get groceries. To get to the Greenwich Street restaurants, she walks a mile south to Battery Park, where troops camp on the lawns. She heads north past the open-air graveyard.

She watches television and hears city officials talking about the return to normalcy. Right.

"City officials keep talking but this isn't normal," she says. "The rest of the city maybe, but not here. Every time I come here, I'm depressed.

"It creeps me out."

Rebuilding

How does a city reconstruct its confidence? How to repair a hole drilled through a heart?

You can shop. Or scream for Yankee Paul O'Neill to hit another homer. Or party until your eyes go fuzzy—leather-clad dudes and stiletto-heeled babes head periodically to Ground Zero, at midnight, with shakers full of martinis. The cops

[illegible] you prepare for rebirth.

On Sept. 11, he was asleep upstairs from his restaurant, Roc, on Greenwich Street. His restaurant is five blocks north of the towers but he never left.

"What can I do, run away?" Wiry, intense, he shakes his head. "I'm not that kind of guy."

He took out his best pans and cooked food on burners in front of his restaurant, for the neighbors and workers. "I put out my tables with the white linen, for some atmosphere."

Four weeks later, after repainting and replastering and doing the floors, he reopens.

Roc seats 65, with big glass windows and a handsome bar and some of the best Sorrentine food this side of Sorrento. Cadolini faxes reservation confirmations to customers, in hopes they might use the document to cajole their way past checkpoints.

Opening night. A foul wind blows from the south. But inside Roc's, the air is fine and the tables are four-fifths filled. Cadolini's a dervish, all hugs, kisses, pats, are you happy, is the pasta al dente?

At 11 p.m. Rocco walks to the door.

"Tonight, I tell people we face this way"—he balls his fists and fixes his stare to the north—"and remember that we still are here.

"But in a year"—now he faces south toward Ground Zero—"we will face this way to the future. It's our obligation, as New Yorkers."

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