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TERROR COMES HOME



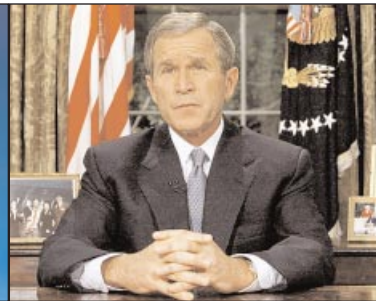
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A DAY IS SEARED INTO
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'Our nation saw evil'

THOUSANDS DIE IN COORDINATED ATTACKS

A farewell from the skies by cell phone

By MARC FISHER AND DON PHILLIPS
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — There was not even the grace of instant death. Instead, there was time to call from the sky over Virginia to loved ones, fingers pumping cell phones, voices saying quick, final goodbyes.

Herded to the back of the plane by hijackers armed with knives and box-cutters, the 64 passengers and crew of American Airlines Flight 77 — including the wife of Solicitor General Theodore Olson, a Senate staffer, three D.C. schoolchildren



and three teachers on an educational field trip, and a suburban family of four headed to Australia for a two-month adventure — were ordered to call relatives to say they were about to die.

About an hour after takeoff from Dulles International Airport on Tuesday morning, Flight 77, a Boeing 757 headed for Los Angeles,

became a massive missile aimed at the White House. The target would change suddenly, but the symbolism was equally devastating.

When the diving plane carved out a massive chunk of the Pentagon, its passengers had experienced unspeakable terror. Untold dozens died, and the nation's greatest symbol of security lay shattered, thick plumes of smoke camouflaging a gaping hole in its heart.

Barbara Olson, an author and former federal prosecutor who became a noted TV commentator during the impeachment of President Clinton, called her husband twice in the final minutes. Her last words to him were, "What do I tell the pilot to do?"

"She called from the plane while it was being hijacked," Theodore Olson said. "I wish it wasn't so, but it is."

The two conversations each lasted about a minute, said Tim O'Brien, a CNN reporter and friend of the Olsons who is acting as family spokesman. In the first call, Barbara Olson told her husband, "Our plane is being hijacked." She described how hijackers forced passengers and the flight's pilot to the rear of the aircraft. She said nothing about the number of hijackers or their nationality.

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A gnarled shell of what was once one of the World Trade Center towers stands out over the rubble in New York's financial district. At least 200 firefighters were killed when the buildings collapsed, and 78 police officers were missing.

AP PHOTO BY SHAWN BALDWIN

Bush offers solace as U.S. mourns

By MARTIN MERZER
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

Addressing the nation after one of the most horrific days in American history, President Bush vowed revenge Tuesday night for the full-scale terrorist attack that toppled both towers of the World Trade Center, pulverized a wing of the Pentagon, destroyed four hijacked jetliners and killed thousands of U.S. civilians.

"The search is under way for those who are behind these evil acts," Bush told the nation after returning to Washington, his plane escorted by military fighters, after he spent hours sheltered in an underground bunker in Nebraska. "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."

"Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature," he said. "And we responded with the best of America — with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could."

"Thousands of lives were suddenly ended," he said, and there was no doubt that the ghastly blitz of terror inflicted massive damage.

It destroyed two 110-story symbols of the nation's financial power, and it wrecked part of a huge, five-sided building known worldwide as the seat of American military might.

More than 50,000 people might have been in the World Trade Center, and no one knew how many were buried under mountains of debris that still

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Disaster personal for hundreds in Triangle

By BILL KRUEGER
STAFF WRITER

Airports throughout North Carolina were shut down, businesses closed early, phone lines were jammed and the soldiers and Marines in the eastern part of the state were on high alert. Hundreds of residents attended prayer vigils, and others stood in line for hours to donate blood.

The horrid and frightening images of smoldering, crumbled buildings came from New York and Washington, but the shock was felt throughout the Triangle and North Carolina on Tuesday. It was not clear Tuesday when Raleigh-Durham International Airport would be back in business.

Mike Radigan of Petersburg, Va., was on his way to RDU to catch a flight to Florida when he heard about the attack on the World Trade Center.

"I'm turning around and going home," he said. "I'm shaking."

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