

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF 9/11 NOW?

INTERVIEWS BY MICHAEL McCUSKER

TAYLOR DURKEE

Everybody had flags and was behind the country right after September 11. Not only have the flags disappeared, it seems everybody's gone back to their lives and forgotten what happened.

And it was supposed to take nine years to clean up Ground Zero — but it's been done in less than a year.

It was like a quick romance, and now it's over. The essence is that everything came and went pretty quick.

ANGELA VAN CLEVE

My faith in America has been renewed since 9/11 but the ignorance of some Americans has left me devastated. I mean the lashing out at Arab-Americans which was petty and undeserved.

September 11 brought Americans together and renewed a sense of patriotism. I've traveled more than usual this year and I'm glad to see the amount of security at airports. It gives me a feeling of safety and security.

President Bush handled the situation very well, especially when he stated it was an act of terrorists and was not reason to hate Arab-Americans. I think acts against Arab-Americans are also acts of terrorism. I think the people who committed them need to mature and gain knowledge.

I have a 9/11 CD of all kinds of recordings — older songs revised with President Bush's voice on it between songs: *I Will Remember You* by Amy Grant, *Get Yourself Together* by Elton John, *Only in America* by some country singer. I listen to it a lot.

LEE MILLER

The recent stock market episode reflects an implosion of the top-heavy manipulated (not free) market. The pancake of the twin (ivory) towers is a metaphor. How could we expect the criminal elite to exact reform in the domestic economy or provide security for the working class? Bush and clan are too busy protecting their corporate posteriors. We can't buy enough weapons to save ourselves when the real terrorists are in Wall Street and the executive branch of the government.

MERIANNE MYERS

I guess my feeling about 9/11 hasn't changed at all. It's horrifying and discouraging.

As a government, we've handled it badly. I feel at this point, the way things have gone and continue to go, that it's just as scary as 9/11.

As people we are fear-driven about the whole thing and that is allowing the government to get away with horrendous policies and behavior. The fear has set us up to give up many of our liberties in the name of security. We need to realize there is no security and we shouldn't be giving away our freedoms and the things we hold dear that make living here really fine.

I don't want to live in a place that has a head of 'Homeland Security'. That is a spooky concept. It's times like this that make a person really miss Jimmy Carter.

We must not reduce the world to a pissing contest. This is what we are doing.

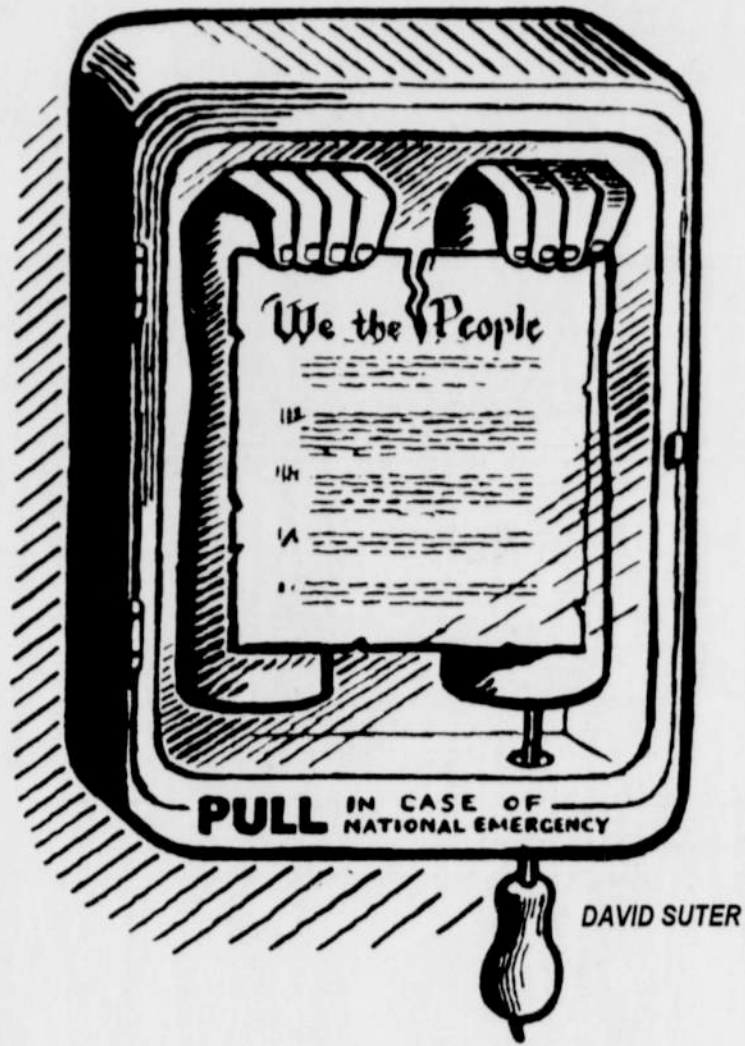
JESSI DUNKIN

I am antiwar so I don't agree with anything the government has been doing since 9/11. Most of it's just media propaganda.

I think the government is wasting our money, basically just showing off to the world — *We are this big superpower and we're going to kick butt!*

The whole thing is just dumb. George Bush can't even eat a pretzel without choking.

They say there won't be a draft, but if it comes to where the draft is imposed, a lot of my good friends would be gone, most of my family and some of my teachers.



DAVID SUTER

FRED ALFONSE

It seems we have to figure out how to solve the total problem, not go back and forth like Ireland and Israel; you do it their way and it goes on and on with no resolution.

Basically we're a peaceful seeking nation but somehow we end up having to pull out the heavy duty equipment to deal with situations like 9/11.

Stay tuned, I will have an idea for the solution next issue...

TERRY ERICKSON

It's all fake!

ROBERT LOBE

When 9/11 happened a fellow said things would change. I said they wouldn't, not permanently. But I think it's been used to reduce our civil liberties, and that can be permanent.

As horrible as terrorism is and 9/11 was, the concept of living in perpetual war is more terrifying than terrorism.

A great terror is AIDS, poverty and world hunger — and we aren't doing a thing about it. It's relegated to the back burner.

We'll always have terrorism. Even if everyone is living comfortably, there will always be terrorists.

THEDA SPACKLIN

When I think about September 11, 2001, I still shudder. I try to imagine what it must have been like for those thousands in the towers; shock, disbelief, the final relay to the end, thinking, "I might get out", the cell phone calls, the want of another kiss, another spoonful to feed baby, another minute at home learning with creation. No! Too bad folks!

My being still trembles over it. My heart still breaks painfully, like a parent whose child has acted out in murder.

I've sent all governments to prison for it, and I vow to do the least I have to for those devils. I pray each night to secede from this dis-union. I pray to the angel god and goddess to find strength; and find it.

I refuse to forget and call it forgiveness.

When the army for revolution forms, I'm in.

CYNDY LEE

Humiliation breeds revenge. The old world cannot evolve past the cycle of vendetta.

Stopping Al Quaida was an international effort. We bombed their camps, ousted the Taliban and cut off their money trail. Enough already.

Now there's talk of sending a quarter of a million troops to topple the "Axis of Evil." The same money could subsidize U.S. automakers into hybrid auto production. That would end our dependence on foreign oil and save lives.

PATRICIA LONGNECKER

First of all, 9/11 changed my life and the life of every American. We'll never be the same.

The targets of 9/11 were specifically the economic and military center of America: the World Trade Center housing large naughty greedy corporations; the Pentagon, home of America's war machine.

It was a shameful act on the part of the terrorists, and it is shameful to me that whatever we did provoked that act.

I am appalled at the reaction. The blind patriotism that is nothing more than political manipulation of the citizens of the United States.

It's become more complicated by the shame of the criminal behavior of American corporations.

People aren't making the connection because we are being diverted to blind patriotism. We are allowing the government to suppress news without being questioned. We're not being told anything. For all I know the war in Afghanistan is a computerized fraud and doesn't really exist. I don't know anybody who has been there. I don't know anybody who knows anybody who was there.

People have bought into the propaganda coming out of Washington, and in the name of patriotism we have become blind rude people. The 'Ugly American' has become uglier.

I don't go anywhere I don't have to go. I make a concerted effort to be polite and courteous to offset blind, rude and militant patriotism. I refuse to be an American with a 'K'.

LIAM DUNNE

9/11 happened. It doesn't matter what I might have to say about it. It's a fact, an event. It's over. It's history.

However, the inclusion of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance does matter. It's something that can still be debated.

Debate is always good because democracy is a work in progress. Debate on points of the Constitution is essential — the question is if we can reach conclusions in a reasonable manner.

JIM HANSEN

This thing about 9/11 is exactly what happens after a revolution, like the Alien & Sedition Acts after the American Revolution, the 'reign of terror' after the French Revolution, or after Hitler was elected chancellor of Germany and instigated the Reichstag fire and blamed the communists. And the words they use are all the same.

All of it is done in the name of national or 'homeland' security. The USA Patriot Act is an example of how words are used to conceal their real intent.

You can go back further. The whole feudal order was based on security through war and based pretty much on the abnegation of all rights for the protection of the liege lord. That is what we are doing today — giving up our liberties for the perception of safety. For what we are told is security.

JOHN LONQUIST

The morning of September 11 when I awoke in my underwear and rubbed my eyes to watch the instant replay that was continuing from when I was asleep and dreaming, I failed to feel disbelief. My stomach groaned. Before my eyes was the end of the pessimistic rainbow. It was all so bad I knew it was definitely time for me to grow up.

I always imagined something like this would happen in my life. The way the world is has been leading up to it. I just thought it would happen later, when I'm old.

AMY CODESPOTI

Since last September 11 we have seen a deterioration of our freedoms — the freedoms we profess to protect by waging war against the rest of the world. People better wake up and realize we are handing our freedoms over out of fear.

Pretty soon we will all be suspects. Look at the FBI's 'TIPS' program on everybody informing on everybody else. We're all spies and being spied upon. I don't even write my mother E-mail commenting on my opinions of the war without worrying about it being filtered through the carnivore.

So then I ask what is this war about?

TROLLING FOR THE TRUTH

"The mustard's come off the hot dog."

~FRANCIS 'CHICK' HEARN (d. 8/2002)

The dogs in the streets of Ramallah bark at the moon between firefights, via a CNN live feed. American aircraft target an Afghan wedding party and Canadian soldiers. At least these laser-guided "dumb" bombs hit exactly where they were aimed, this time. Why is it called *friendly fire* when people get killed? Now allies must be included in the formula for collateral damage along with bewildered livestock and terrified refugees.

When 70% of the national treasury is spent on the Pentagon and 60% of the domestic economy revolves around supplying the armed forces, levies are excessive and the nation is impoverished. The middle class is an extinct species. Business naturally congregates around the Pentagon during a perceived emergency because outrageous prices can be charged. It takes 20 lbs. of food from home to supply the troops 1lb. in the field, and speculation becomes rampant. The elite get rich while the working person loses his/her savings, retirement and dwelling.

When only the elite benefit and the needs of the people are neglected, the government is obstructed. The society is so topheavy that it pancakes. For example, many innocent working people suffered when the World Trade Center towers fell. It's a metaphor for the future under Bush leadership.

The war on drugs is a war against ourselves, as if Vietnam came home to roost; substituting a perceived foreign enemy for a domestic one results in both doomed to failure. One war started just as the other ended, when the troops came home.

The evil is the legislated illegality, not the substances themselves or their use. This policy makes drugs worth more than gold. It destroys a generation. What kid is going to work for minimum wage when he can make more in an afternoon than he

can in a month? It corrupts law enforcement. A policeman on the take can make many times his wage. It imprisons a million harmless Americans a year. We put more nonviolent citizens in jail than any other advanced society. It stigmatizes people, who otherwise could work and take care of their loved ones. It has cost billions and is an unqualified failure. In places like Bolivia and Colombia the government is destabilized and paramilitary death squads plunder the countryside. The profitability causes farmers to burn more inaccessible threatened rainforest. The drug war is terrorism by the Bush administration, both at home and abroad. If Prohibition didn't work against alcohol, what makes these arrogant asses think it will work on anything else?

If Bush takes us to war with Iraq it will be a constitutional crisis. Only Congress can declare and fund war. The executive branch has arrogated power both after World War 1 ('Banana Republics') and after World War 2 (Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama and Desert Storm). Congress debates, resolves and receives consultation from the executive branch, then blows off its responsibility to fund and declare war. Just because it has been done before doesn't make it right. The results are endless military escapades, mercurial foreign policy and uncontrolled deficit spending. Vital social programs evaporate.

Bush's eyes are set too close together. This denotes a lack of native intelligence. He does not understand power of the Bully Pulpit. He gives advice to allies he won't follow himself. He repeats himself as if he didn't hear what he said the first time. Credibility is lost with both allies and Wall Street. He's leading the country to Hell. But don't blame him entirely. After all, we elected him — sort of. Be assured that if he wins another term, we might as well shred the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

~THE TROLL UNDER THE BRIDGE

