

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I was working in a high-rise building overlooking the Pentagon. Not yet employed at the SEC, I was at the location of a client of my previous firm in Rosslyn, Virginia – just to the north of the Pentagon. When the news broke of the trade centers being hit in New York, we huddled around a small television in the break room trying to make sense of what was going on. A client employee came into the room and informed us that the Pentagon had also been hit. Nobody believed him. I seriously thought he was just trying to scare us. It was true. We looked out the window to see smoke billowing out of the bowels of the Pentagon. It would be quite some time before I came to a full realization of what had transpired that day.

Like most of my colleagues, my first thoughts turned to my family. After ensuring that they were safe and assuring them that I was also safe, I put things in order at work and went home. This experience helped me realize in a very dramatic way what is most important to me in my own life and the life of my family. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go with those who were personally affected by the tragedies of that day. Being an eyewitness to the events of September 11th, the most vivid impressions to me are how our great country was able to pull together as one nation under God, the outpouring of support in behalf of the victims and family members, and the hope for a promising future in the hearts of so many which has long been a hallmark of the United States of America.

Bret Johnson
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