



By George Beck

# TRIBUTE TO 9/11

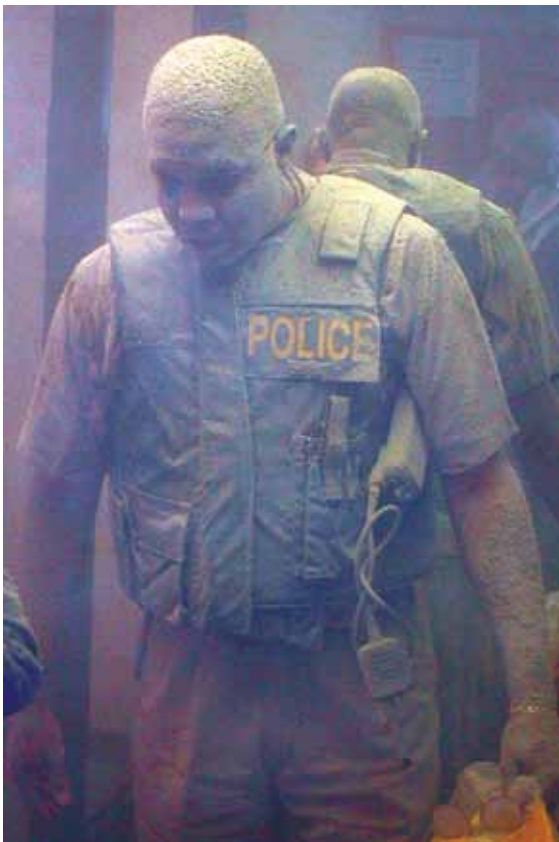


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**T**welve years ago, tragedy struck our homeland. Many of us recall exactly where we were as the moments of the attacks unfolded. In the space of two hours, we watched, horrified, as both World Trade Center Towers collapsed, the Pentagon burned, and United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Our country scrambled to defend itself as the number of casualties rose. The attacks claimed 2,977 dead while injuring another 6,000. For firefighters and law enforcement personnel, September 11, 2001 became the deadliest day in history with 343 and 72 killed respectively. Analysts eventually estimated the loss of lives, property damage, and lost production in the goods and services sector at \$100 billion. If we factor in the resulting collapse of the stock market and the period of economic instability that followed, this number explodes to nearly \$2 trillion.

Without question, 9/11 was one of the worst days in our nation's history – perhaps *the* worst. And without question, it is a day we can never afford to forget.

The days that followed the attack were grim. Our nation grieved, as did all free countries of the world. Still in shock, we rallied to help with the rescue and recovery efforts while struggling to identify and punish the persons responsible. Amid this clamorous landscape, Damon DiMarco, a writer, actor, and playwright, wandered the streets of Manhattan gathering interviews with policemen, firefighters, paramedics, volunteers, the bereaved, and survivors of the towers. His mission, he says, was simple. He wanted to write down their stories before they became lost, so that future generations could understand what happened in the voices of people who were there.

DiMarco's oral testimonies were published in the book: *Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11* with a foreword by Thomas Kean, Chairman of the 9/11 Commission. NBC's Today Show called it one of five Must Read Books About 9/11: "Arguably the most successful attempt at capturing the enormity of the events of 9/11." The respected reviewers at Publishers Weekly called the book, "Monumental... DiMarco's contribution to the memory of that horrific day is enormous, the testimonies collected here form an amazing, one-of-a-kind account."

*Tower Stories* helps us recall the immediate aftermath of 9/11 when ordinary Americans came together to do extraordinary things for each other. In those days, we put aside our differences to create an overwhelming, united response. American flags flew outside nearly every home across the country and from our car windows. Support for law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical services was intense, as was the power of the message our country sent to the world:

*We have been wounded,  
but we will grow stronger.  
We are the beacon  
of freedom and truth.  
America will prevail.*



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## A PLAYWRIGHT REMEMBERS 9/11

Twelve years ago this September 11 is a blip on the radar of time by some standards, an eternity by others. These days, I often hear people say, "We all remember where we were on 9/11."

But do we?

I recently spoke to Damon DiMarco, who said this: "According to U.S. Census Bureau, 83 million Americans or 26 percent of the population were age twenty-one or younger in July of 2013. These citizens have vague recollections of the attack at best. The youngest in their age bracket have no memory at all – they were two or three or four years old. As our population continues to age, a day will come – not long from now – when no one alive will remember 9/11. This event that changed our society and the course of history will fade into a kind of myth. A footnote lost in textbooks. I don't want to see that happen. I believe we must do everything we can to make sure the voices of those at the scene remain with us, and are heard."

As an actor and a playwright, DiMarco has a plan to do just that.

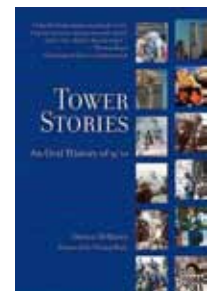
For centuries, theatre has served as the perfect medium for preserving oral histories. In tribute to victims and survivors of 9/11, DiMarco has begun adapting his book into a play that can be performed in public schools, colleges and universities, municipal libraries, and theater groups around the country.

"It's one thing to read about history," DiMarco says. "It's another thing to watch history come to life in front of you through living, breathing people. No one can change the past, but we can educate the future."

Over the next two years, the piece will undergo a development cycle where DiMarco collaborates with professional actors, directors, and producers to generate the best script possible from his large bank of material.

The *Tower Stories* play will premiere in September 2016 on the 15th anniversary of 9/11.

For more information about the *Tower Stories* project or to make a tax deductible donation that helps develop the play, please visit, [www.towerstories.org](http://www.towerstories.org) and click on the tab that says Hatchfund Play Campaign.



## OUR FUTURE RENEWS TODAY

DiMarco's work is important in that it gives us a chance to preserve our common history. Voices from the *Tower Stories* project will speak to generations yet unborn in centuries far ahead of us, and it will help them to understand.

Meanwhile, as we await the premiere of DiMarco's tribute play, let us all take a moment of silence this September 11.

*To recall our memories  
of that day.  
To remember our brothers  
and sisters who made  
the ultimate sacrifice.  
And to honor the cause for  
which they gave their lives:  
Our country. Our freedom.  
Our hope.*