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Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

I Haven't Forgotten

On September 11, 2001, I realized what it felt like for those that woke up that Sunday morning in December to the news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese or the western cowboys that awoke to the news that the Alamo had fallen to the Mexicans. I was angry and afraid at the same time. The mixed emotions were almost too much to bear.

That morning began like any other Tuesday morning. My mother came in, turned my lights on, and ripped my sheets off me to wake me up. I groggily walked into the bathroom and hopped in the shower. The shower was ten minutes long because I took the first five minutes to wake up.

I got out of the shower and walked back to my bedroom with a towel wrapped around me. I dug into my closet for something to wear. I finally found a pair of blue jeans and a t-shirt. I stumbled into the kitchen to get a bowl of cereal.

We were out of milk, so I had to settle for a Nutrigrain bar and a glass of grape juice. I sat there drinking my juice and staring out the window, watching the sunrise. Suddenly I remembered that my algebra teacher had assigned homework the day before and that I hadn't had the energy to do it.

I ran to my room and grabbed my backpack. I was pulling my algebra book from my bag when my mother walked in and asked what I was doing. I hung my head sheepishly and told her. She simply laughed at me and told me I had thirty minutes until the bus would get to the

house. So I ran back to the kitchen where I had eaten my Nutrigrain bar and began working on my problems.

The bus pulled up as I was finishing the fourth or fifth problem out of ten. I shoved all of the work into my bag and ran with my sister to the bus. It was loud and bouncy on the bus, so I couldn't do any more of my algebra homework.

My first class was English, and we watched a recorded news program called "Channel One." It lasted for about fifteen minutes, and I did about two more algebra problems then. My English teacher was very paranoid about kids doing homework in class, so I couldn't do any more problems in that class.

I was on my way to my next class, physical science, trying to figure out how I could get away with doing my homework in that class when a kid came running down the hall screaming that a plane had crashed into the Eiffel Tower in New York. I wasn't paying much attention to him. I figured it was just a practical joke.

When I walked into a silent classroom, I realized that it wasn't a joke. He was just misinformed. The only sound was a CNN broadcast on the television. I heard, "We have confirmed reports that a 747 airplane has just crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center buildings." I dropped my books and walked to my seat. Not long after I sat down, another plane hit the south tower. We watched as the smoke billowed from the two towers of the World Trade Center for the entire hour.

The bell rang to end class, and I walked silently to my next class. I will never forget the silence in the halls of the school. No one said a word. Everyone understood what had happened: America was under attack.

As I sat down in my U.S. civics class, I watched the latest developments. Apparently,

while we had traded classes, another plane had crashed into the Pentagon. I didn't know at that time what the World Trade Center was; however, I did know what the Pentagon was. Now I was horrified. In a matter of an hour, I had witnessed three terrorist attacks on my home.

That class ended, and I walked to my algebra class. I stared at my uncompleted homework as I walked down the hall. Homework seemed small now. I had panicked over something trivial. I was ashamed. As I walked into the teacher's classroom, I wadded the paper up and threw it in the trash.

I sat down and stared at the TV through tears. I wiped my eyes in disgust. I had believed for the longest time that I wasn't supposed to cry. I was a boy. And boys don't cry. I felt weak until I looked at my teacher. He sat silently at his desk. He stared at the television screen, and I noticed that he had tears streaming down his face.

A moment later the news anchor announced that another plane had crashed. But, somehow, this one was different. It hadn't reached its target. It had crashed in a field somewhere in Pennsylvania. I didn't know what to feel. I was proud that the plane didn't reach its destination, but I was sad that the passengers died. I tried to believe that they went down fighting.

For the rest of the day I went from class to class, watching the news. I didn't open a single book. I didn't take a single note. I simply sat down in a chair and stared at the television.

The ride home on the bus was silent as well, all except for the radio that the driver had tuned to a local news station. When I got home, I poured myself a glass of grape juice and sat down in front of the television in my living room. When I found out the President was going to make an address, I asked my mother to take me to Wal-Mart. I wanted to buy a tape so that I could record the address.

I bought a tape, and that night my family and I sat down to listen to what President Bush had to say. He started off with “Good evening. Today our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist attacks.” He went on to say, “Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature.”

I applauded hysterically when he said, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists that committed these acts and those who harbor them.” I began to cry when he quoted Psalm 23 and ended with this quote, “We go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world. Thank you. Good night and God bless America.”

The next morning I woke up to the sounds of bagpipes playing “The Star-Spangled Banner.” I threw my covers off and ran to the television. I saw that England was honoring the dead by playing our national anthem. I cried again. I made a vow that morning, the morning of September 12.

I promised myself that I would never forget. I would not forget the eighty-one passengers on American Airlines Flight 11, which crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. I would not forget the fifty-six passengers onboard United Airlines Flight 175 that slammed into the south tower of the World Trade Center. I would not forget those fifty-eight innocent people that helplessly gave up their lives on American Airlines Flight 77, the flight that hit the Pentagon. I would certainly not forget the heroes of United Airlines Flight 93, who gave their lives so that one plane wouldn't make its destination. I would never forget the 2948 people that were killed in the World Trade Center, the youngest of which was a 2-year-old girl named Christie Hanson and the oldest of which was the 85-year-old Robert Grant Norton.

I promised myself that I would never forget. I definitely will never forget the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001.