

Sharonda Buck
bucks@ecu.edu

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At the time of the terrorist attacks, I was a commuter student here at ECU. I remember sitting in my parked car on Eastern Street before my first class listening to one of my favorite morning radio shows and hearing them say that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers. At first they thought maybe it was a small plane and that it was an accident. I went to my two classes for that day, not realizing how serious things were because I don't think anyone in my classes knew and my instructors did not say anything.

It wasn't until I went to work after class that I finally heard what happened. As soon as I walked in the door, I saw one of my supervisors crying. I asked her what was wrong, and she said there had been a terrible accident. At first I thought she was referring to one of my coworkers, but then she and my coworkers began telling me about the planes that struck the WTC and the Pentagon. It was like I couldn't comprehend what they were saying. Why would someone do this to innocent people? How could this happen in America?

Our site manager decided that we would close down for the day because everyone was too distracted or too emotional to work. I went home and watched the news with my now husband. We had argued about something the day before and hadn't spoken to each other that morning since I had already left for school when he got home from work. I had completely forgotten that we'd even argued (he reminded me a few years ago) and to this day neither of us can remember what we fought about. Whatever it was seems pretty insignificant now to the tragedies that occurred on that day.

Even now, twelve years later, I still get a little emotional when 9/11 rolls around. My husband vividly remembers the anger he felt watching the news that day and how he wanted to

sign up for the military that very moment. I've watched the live ceremonies online nearly every year, and we've watched the same documentary "102 Minutes that Changed America" countless times. A few years ago, we visited the memorial site in Shanksville while on vacation in Pennsylvania. Seeing the spot where Flight 93 went down really brought home for me all the bad things that happened on that day and how life hasn't really been the same since. It's made me more aware of how dangerous a time we live in and the perception people from other countries have of Americans. It's hard to know that there are people in this world who want nothing more than to hurt Americans and celebrate when things like 9/11 happen. Last year there was an attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya killing 4 Americans on the 11th anniversary of 9/11. It's just another reminder that our citizens are not safe in some countries overseas, and that's a terrifying thought.

I have two sons, ages 14 and 7, my oldest was only 2 years old on September 11, 2001. I could not imagine being one of the people on those planes and knowing I would not see him again. My husband went on a trip with his mother to Boston just a week or so prior to the attacks; if they'd been a week late in taking their trip, my husband and mother-in-law could have very well been on one of the planes hijacked from Logan Airport. It gives me a chill to think about it, even now.