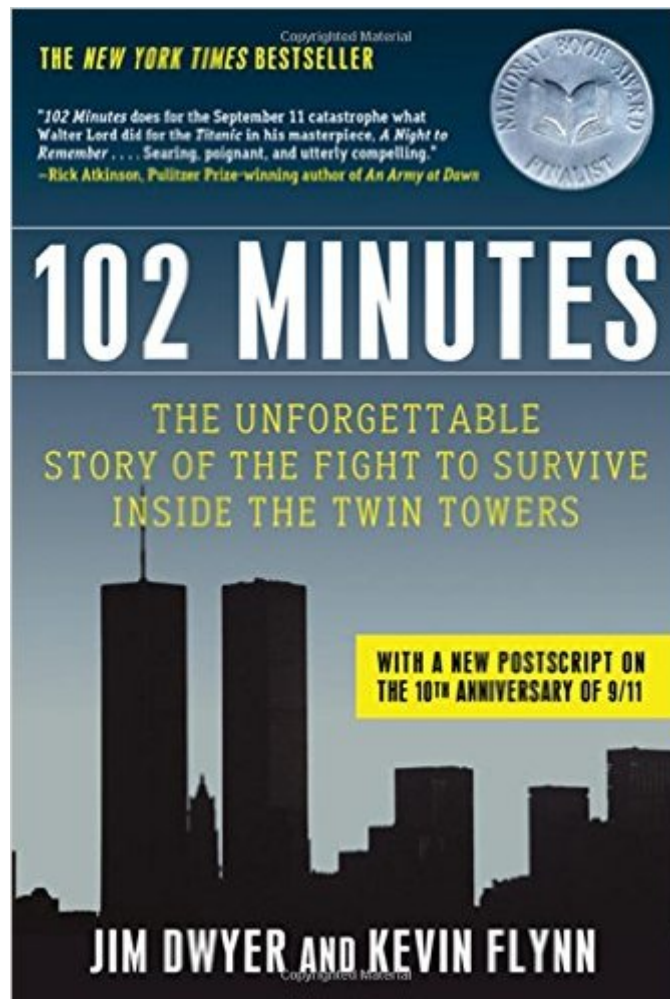


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102 Minutes: The Unforgettable Story Of The Fight To Survive Inside The Twin Towers



Synopsis

"102 Minutes does for the September 11 catastrophe what Walter Lord did for the Titanic in his masterpiece, *A Night to Remember* . . . Searing, poignant, and utterly compelling." •Rick Atkinson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *An Army at Dawn* Hailed upon its hardcover publication as an instant classic, the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller *102 Minutes* is now available in a revised edition timed to honor the tenth anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001. At 8:46 a.m. that morning, fourteen thousand people were inside the World Trade Center just starting their workdays, but over the next 102 minutes, each would become part of a drama for the ages. Of the millions of words written about this wrenching day, most were told from the outside looking in. New York Times reporters Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn draw on hundreds of interviews with rescuers and survivors, thousands of pages of oral histories, and countless phone, e-mail, and emergency radio transcripts to tell the story of September 11 from the inside looking out. Dwyer and Flynn have woven an epic and unforgettable account of the struggle, determination, and grace of the ordinary men and women who made 102 minutes count as never before. *102 Minutes* is a 2005 National Book Award Finalist for Nonfiction.

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Customer Reviews

Finally the story of what really happened inside will live forever. I've only been through it once but so far Dwyer has most of his facts straight, as far as I saw. Without intending to dishonor those who died that day, but out of respect for the truth, I will say the author is, believe it or not, kinder to the

Fire Department then he might have been. Remember the term soldiers in Vietnam used for some of their missions? A cluster* operation? That more accurately describes the NYFD that day, with plenty of exceptions, obviously. Look at page 251: "If history is to be a tool for the living, it must be unflinchingly candid." Those paragraphs will cause sorrowful, heated arguments for a long time, but that's the truth. And again, whether they knew it or not, the authors might have been much harsher towards the NYFD 'brass'. Not only did hundreds of firefighters die needlessly, but so did many more people simply because the firemen slowed down the evacuation by clogging up the stairways. I will also say that to some extent this factual reporting of the matter does not capture the sheer horror we went through. Yes, you do get a sense of what it was like via many, many passages throughout the book. No question about it. And it is true that on the staircase people were quite collegial about the whole thing (1 WTC, above 40, at least), even throwing around nervous jokes. But between those times the horror of *knowing beyond certainly* death is imminent overwhelmed everyone, again and again and again. It simply cannot be described, nor, do I think, imagined. As I was searching through the blackness in the hallways for the other exit door I wondered how many breaths of smoke filled air one had to take before passing out.

This is a vividly rendered book, not remotely exploitative and yet so unflinching in the reportage that it demands your attention and ultimately earns your heart. Authors Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn, both from the New York Times, make this inevitably moving book suspenseful, almost surreal and ultimately a reflection of the human condition under the most dire of circumstances. As comprehensive as the revelatory "9/11 Commission Report" is, the stories in this book represent the missing perspective of that horrifying day, the voices of those who survived and perished in the World Trade Center. What the authors are effective in capturing is how endless those 102 minutes seemed to the people inside the buildings, how the period between the first crash and the collapse of the north tower was so chaotic that the full scope of what happened was unknown to those trapped inside. Because we were able to watch the news coverage relentlessly that morning, the book clarifies that what was happening was far clearer from the outside than from the inside. Those inside had no way of knowing what happened to them or why, and certainly no way to know if they would live or die. There are stories of personal ingenuity and heroism, like the window washer who used his squeegee to scrape away a wall and manually bored himself and five others through a tiled wall in the 50th floor men's room. There are stories of paralyzing fear, such as the series of 911 calls from the various floors when the south tower started to collapse. And sadly there are stories that will be disappointing for the very acts of desperation they represent, such as people being

pushed out of windows so that others could position themselves for fresh air and possible rescue.

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