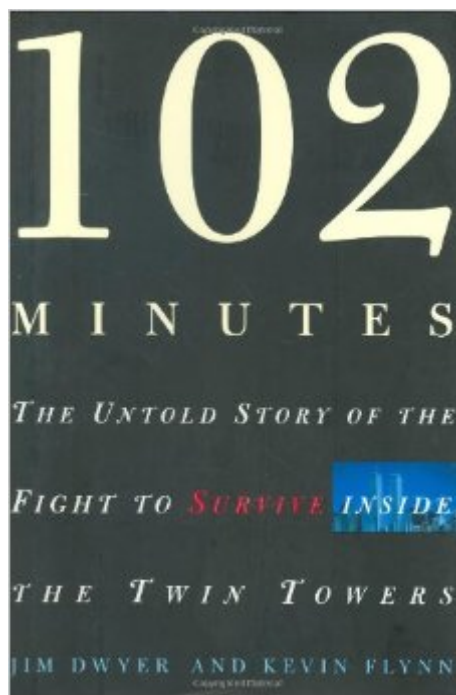


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102 Minutes: The Untold Story Of The Fight To Survive Inside The Twin Towers



Synopsis

The dramatic and moving account of the struggle for life inside the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11, when every minute counted. At 8:46 am on September 11, 2001, 14,000 people were inside the twin towers-reading e-mails, making trades, eating croissants at Windows on the World. Over the next 102 minutes, each would become part of a drama for the ages, one witnessed only by the people who lived it-until now. 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 have taken the opposite-and far more revealing-approach. Reported from the perspectives of those inside the towers, 102 Minutes captures the little-known stories of ordinary people who took extraordinary steps to save themselves and others. Beyond this stirring panorama stands investigative reporting of the first rank. An astounding number of people actually survived the plane impacts but were unable to escape, and the authors raise hard questions about building safety and tragic flaws in New York's emergency preparedness. Dwyer and Flynn rely on hundreds of interviews with rescuers, thousands of pages of oral histories, and countless phone, e-mail, and emergency radio transcripts. They cross a bridge of voices to go inside the infernos, seeing cataclysm and heroism, one person at a time, to tell the affecting, authoritative saga of the men and women-the nearly 12,000 who escaped and the 2,749 who perished-as they 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 than 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. So I don't know if we had 3 minutes left, or 5, or 15. I don't know. But I do know if it were not for Frank and Mak and Pablo, myself and dozens of others on the 89th floor definitely would not be alive. For Frank's family I can only think of the scene from "Private Ryan" where General Marshall quotes Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby: "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom." Rick Bryan New York, NY

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. I doubt if there is a more harrowing story than the one about Stanley Praisman, who was evacuated from the 81st floor of the south tower only to be told to return to his office and see the United jet come speeding toward him in the office window. These are the moments none of us can forget, and Dwyer and Flynn capture them with all their humanity intact. Essential reading.

As a survivor of that day, I was on the 98th floor of Tower 2 this book says it all. This is a gripping, well told, accurate account of the horror of many many lives. The authors put into words what so many of us could not for those frightening and unbelievable 102 minutes. A must read for all Americans.

The journalists Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn have captured 102 of the most terrifying minutes any group of people have ever faced. The authors focus tightly and breathtakingly on the events in and directly around the towers from the moment of the first plane's impact until the last tower comes down. There is nothing but that story and it is told with great skill from a great many viewpoints, both from workers inside the tower and from rescuers entering the towers. They combine their account effectively with just enough information for the reader to get a little background into the personalities involved and the various elements that structurally in the towers themselves which added to or relieved the crisis. This book's strong focus on the fight for survival within the towers makes it an invaluable resource and a testament to what happened that day.

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