

from *September 11, 2001: Attack on New York City*

by Wilborn Hampton



ABOUT THE READING Wilborn Hampton has covered many significant events in U.S. history as a reporter and currently works as an editor and critic for the *New York Times*. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, Hampton interviewed people who were in New York City that day and published the interviews, including his own account below. Hampton said, "The only way to begin to understand the horror of what occurred on September 11 was to recount it through the eyes of those who experienced it firsthand."

VOCABULARY

acrid unpleasantly sharp or bitter smell

smallpox highly infectious, often fatal disease characterized by a high fever and aches

anthrax an infectious fatal disease of warm-blooded animals caused by bacteria



As you read the passage below, think about how the terrorist attacks affected people who were in New York City on September 11, 2001.

For LuAnn and myself, like the rest of New York, there was no escaping September 11. Turning off the television did not help. Walking to the grocery store or the cleaners, we would see reminders everywhere of how many people had died. Within hours of the collapse of the Twin Towers, fliers with pictures and telephone numbers of people who were missing began appearing. The fliers often contained information about the person, and by September 12 there were thousands of them everywhere—store windows, street lamps, the sides of buildings. As I left home to walk to work or pick up milk at the store, I would stop and read some of them. Each told a heart-breaking story.

A residue of fear covered the city like clouds of

The Twin Towers in New York City were two 110-story matching skyscrapers that were built in the 1970s, defining the city's skyline. Both towers were destroyed by terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Smoke and ash coated New York City for days after the attack.

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acrid smoke and ash that still hung in the air. No one believed that the attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon were isolated strikes. There might be another attack any day. Some terrorist groups were believed to be working on small nuclear weapons.

Would the next attack be with **smallpox**, the plague, **anthrax**, or some other deadly disease? Or would it be on a nuclear power plant?

Mayor Giuliani was constantly urging New Yorkers to continue with their daily lives or else the terrorists would have won an even greater victory. LuAnn and I went to work, although it was hard to find much enthusiasm in our jobs. In the days and weeks that followed, we went to Yankee Stadium, ate out in restaurants, went to the opera, a museum, and the theater. We were not looking for diversion. It was the only way we knew to fight back.

How might the writer's actions serve as ways "to fight back"?

ANALYZING LITERATURE

1. Main Idea What events does this passage describe?

2. Opinion What do you think it was like to live in New York City at the time of the attacks?

ACTIVITY

3. Imagine that you are a news reporter. Use an online resource or a magazine article to conduct research about another person who survived the September 11th terrorist attacks. On a separate sheet of paper, write a list of ten questions you would like to ask this survivor to learn about their story.