

MY 9-11

ONE MAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH
THE UNEXPECTED EVENTS OF
SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

WWW.MY9-11PROJECT.ORG

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001



**“IT IS AS BEAUTIFUL A LAND AS ONE
CAN HOPE TO TREAD UPON.”**

- Explorer **Henry Hudson** upon discovering what was to become **New York City**

**“EVERY PERSON SUFFERED TRAUMAS THEY DON’T
TALK ABOUT EASILY. EXPERIENCES ETCHED INDELIBLY
ON THEIR SOULS, THOSE MEMORIES ARE AS VIVID
TODAY AS THEY WERE TEN YEARS AGO.”**

- Richard Agudelo

MY 9-11, ONE MAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE UNEXPECTED EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001: A BOOK, A SHOW, AND A SOUNDTRACK

My 9-11: One Man's Journey Through the Unexpected Events of September 11, 2001 is a multimedia project commemorating the tenth anniversary of the World Trade Center tragedy.

On September 11, 2001, photographer Richard Agudelo was living in lower Manhattan, not far from the Twin Towers. Before the gravity of the day's events could be fully felt, Richard joined a team of first responders comprising of police officers and other civilians like himself. With camera in tow, Richard occasionally paused from his volunteer duties to capture the aftermath's debris and unsettling mood.

This unique project came to be in the fall of 2010, when Richard stumbled upon forgotten rolls of film he had shot on September 11, 2001. *My 9-11* chronicles his experiences on that day as a resident of New York, civilian first responder, and member of the city's arts community.

Through his lens, the project reveals a largely untold story: that of the civilian first responders who risked their lives to join rescue and clean-up efforts. The steel and construction workers who selflessly rushed to the tragic scene at Ground Zero weren't federal employees. They continue suffering from health problems affiliated with breathing in toxins, yet they remain ineligible for federal health care. Luckily, Richard wore a dual respirator mask during the entire 72 hours he served as a civilian first responder, and thus far has experienced no adverse health risks from being in lower Manhattan.

My 9-11 is also a 501(c)(3), which was founded to provide financial assistance to organizations that help first responders pay for medical treatments, alleviating major—and undeserved—financial burdens. It's the least we can do to honor the courage that resulted in health-damaging consequences. We stand by the people who gave so much of themselves without ever asking for anything in return.

We at *My 9-11* invite you to aid in the full realization of this meaningful project by becoming a *My 9-11* Founding Member. The individuals and institutions selected for involvement are highly respected in their fields, and they represent the proper sense of New York pride. *My 9-11* offers its founding contributors the benefit of being associated with a significantly respectable endeavor.

It has been said that you never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have. The senseless and tragic events of September 11, 2001, left the people of New York with no choice but to be strong. And the strength they demonstrated in the wake of unprecedented tragedy leaves no questions about their fortitude and resilience.

Thanks for your interest in *My 9-11: One Man's Journey Through the Unexpected Events of September 11, 2001*. Please see the following pages for further description and a sample of the project's compelling visuals.

THE MY 9-11 PROJECT HAS SEVERAL FACETS TO IT:

A BOOK, PRINTED AND BOUND IN THE UNITED STATES. The book features Richard's written account, along with his photographs and visuals of the artifacts he came across throughout the day's rescue mission. Audio and digital versions of the book will be available.

A GALLERY SHOW THAT WILL OPEN IN AUGUST AND RUN THROUGH THE REST OF 2011. The show will be located at 163 Charles Street, approximate to the West Side Highway—what came to be known as the Highway of Heroes because it was the road rescue workers most used. The gallery will feature high-quality prints of the book images as well as displayed artifacts.

A SOUNDTRACK INSPIRED BY THE IMAGES. Some of today's most talented and important musicians will provide a musical score for the photographs. The compilation will be available through PledgeMusic, the *My 9-11* website, and iTunes.

AN ONLINE COMMUNITY, WHERE PEOPLE CAN SHARE THEIR STORIES. In addition to housing project information, the My 9-11 website will offer a place for people to interact with one another about their personal experiences on September 11, 2001. The online community will play an instrumental role in raising funds for civilian first responder organizations.

EXCERPTS FROM THE FORTHCOMING BOOK
MY 9-11

**ONE MAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE UNEXPECTED
EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE AUGUST 2011.

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 15

New York City is a special place in late summer. September is my favorite month in the city because the weather is almost perfect. Sometimes we get an Indian summer that keeps us all wearing T-shirts longer than we thought, and we can't help smiling like we got one over on the gods of weather. Other times the chill that foreshadows winter sets in early, calling us to bundle up in sweaters as we go to work. Either way, we New Yorkers win. Our city is magical, and it will forever lure people to its 22.96 square miles—people who are looking for adventure, fortune, and, very often, an improved vision of themselves.

September 11, 2001, dawned pristine. Sunshine lit up a cloudless sky, and a light breeze kissed the city good morning. It was a welcome embrace after the previous day's torrential rain and bruised skies. September 11th was a day to pop out of bed, go to work, and enjoy a little of that back-to-school energy that late summer days can evoke. Among the New Yorkers who got up that morning, rushing out into the sunshine to catch the subway, a cab, or even the Staten Island Ferry to get to work, were thousands of civilians making their way to the World Trade Center in New York's Financial District.

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 16

I wasn't panicking, but I was definitely aware that something was very wrong. The energy on our block wasn't right, and the reactions of our neighbors across the street were unsettling. I turned on the television, hoping to gain some clarity. I flicked through the cable news channels—CNN, MSNBC, FOX—but nothing was being reported. Luckily, New York City has a local news station, New York 1, which always has the latest local breaking news before anyone else. As I predicted, NY1 was covering a story unfolding in the Financial District. They had a live shot from a camera that was Uptown but pointed Downtown toward where we lived. The live feed showed what looked like a small hole in the side of one of the Twin Towers. Surprised, I said out loud, "Who could have rammed their private plane into the World Trade Center on such a beautiful day?" I was enraged, thinking of the idiot who could have done so much damage to the iconic building and the people in it. And in my neighborhood. I knew that people must have died thanks to this moron. The commotion in the streets began to escalate.

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 20

Once the cloud of dust and debris from the second tower's collapse began to clear, I decided to tear the tape off the window and look around. Peering down, I discovered a beat-up police van parked directly in front of our building. Police officers were going in and out of the van, back and forth from Dick's Hardware store. I asked Sue to sit tight while I went down to see if they needed help. I had to do something, and I knew that even an extra pair of hands couldn't be a bad thing. Sue had her Nextel/Motorola world phone, and I had mine, so I felt safe leaving her alone. I went downstairs and spoke with

the officers, asking if they needed help. They said they needed supplies: shovels, pickaxes, rope, flashlights, batteries, sledgehammers—anything that would help move the rubble and locate people. They told me to get moving if I really wanted to join in the rescue. When we had finished loading the van with supplies, one of the officers said, “OK! Get in, let’s go!” I exchanged looks with two or three other civilians, we shrugged our shoulders, and we all jumped into the van. I must admit I got an adrenaline rush at the idea of doing something important. With Sue safe at home with the ability to reach me, I left that morning to do whatever I could in the rescue efforts. Doing something, anything at all, felt better than just watching and waiting.

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 21

It was like waking up inside of a nightmare. I wasn’t on solid ground; I didn’t have a sense of location. And everyone was in danger. Mid-spin, I glanced up and noticed the façade of one of the Towers, sitting in the middle of the street like it was some strange and misplaced growth. It was cinematic. This sight fascinated me as much as it broke my heart. There was almost a serene beauty about it. The façade looked like a sculpture that was deliberately installed there. It was both odd and stunning.

I turned again, and only when I saw the famous J. Seward Johnson, Jr., statue of a businessman with his briefcase did I get re-oriented. We had made it to the intersection of Liberty and Church Streets. We were in front of where the towers should have been. It was a corner I often passed to get to the subway. How could this be possible? Two gigantic towers had come down just minutes ago, and I was now standing in the empty space, in the giant scar they’d left behind...

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 26

We let the van rest for a while and went searching for victims. We walked deep into the site and listened for calls of help, screaming to see if anyone could hear us through the rubble. The closer we got to the middle of Ground Zero, the more intense things became, and we had to take breaks because the heat and smoke were too much to bear. At one point I was bent over with my head in the debris, shouting for anyone to answer. I stood up too quickly, lost my balance, and nearly fell into a gaping hole. Shaken, I realized I was overcome from the nonstop activity and the lack of food and water. I regained my balance and sat down to get my composure. As I rested there on some sort of mangled steel beam, I looked around, dumbstruck by the chaos. I stared in amazement for what felt like an eternity. All activity crawled by in muted slow motion. I heard the creaking of the building’s remains, the crackling of fires, the hoarse yelling of workers, the sirens, the screeching, the bending and scraping of steel, and the constant chirp of the emergency locator alarms that firemen were wearing so they could be found in case of a floor collapse. It was a symphony of madness. I had become fixated on the chirping when someone approached me, shook me, and asked if I was OK. Jolted, I nodded my head, got up, and went back to work.

EXCERPT FROM PAGE 28

We approached the exit ramp and I noticed American flags blowing atop the Brooklyn Bridge. I was reminded of the line in “The Star-Spangled Banner”: “And the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.”

I’m a passionate music fan and have always loved “The Star-Spangled Banner” and its reason for being written. Francis Scott Key’s inspiration, which came from seeing the flag still flying after heavy bombardment from the British Army during the Revolutionary War, truly resonated with me that day. I found the comfort and reassurance that I needed to keep pressing on longer than I knew I could. Never in my twenty-seven years had I imagined facing a terrorist attack in my own neighborhood. I thought this kind of thing was saved for the movies, or had been stamped out after World War II.

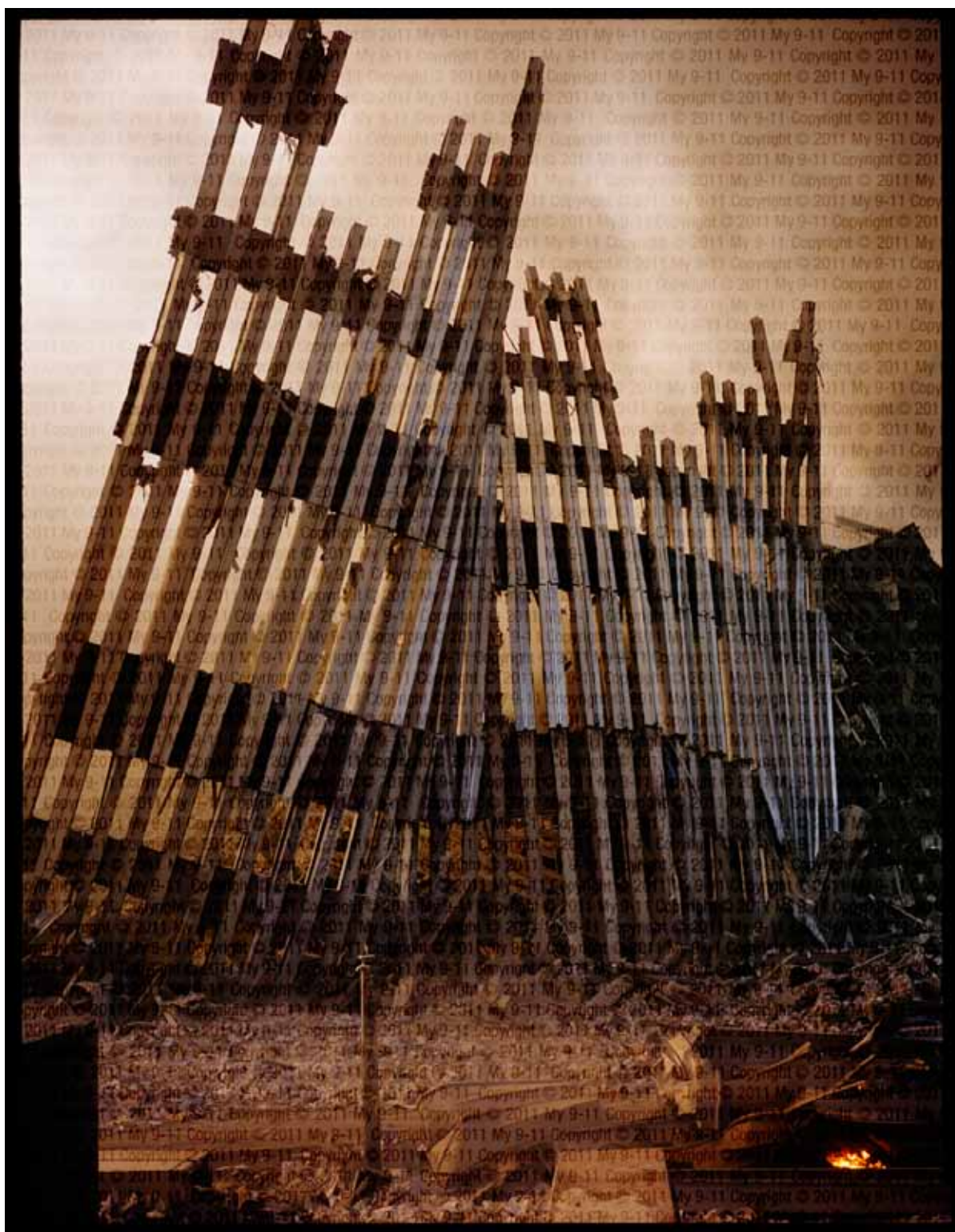


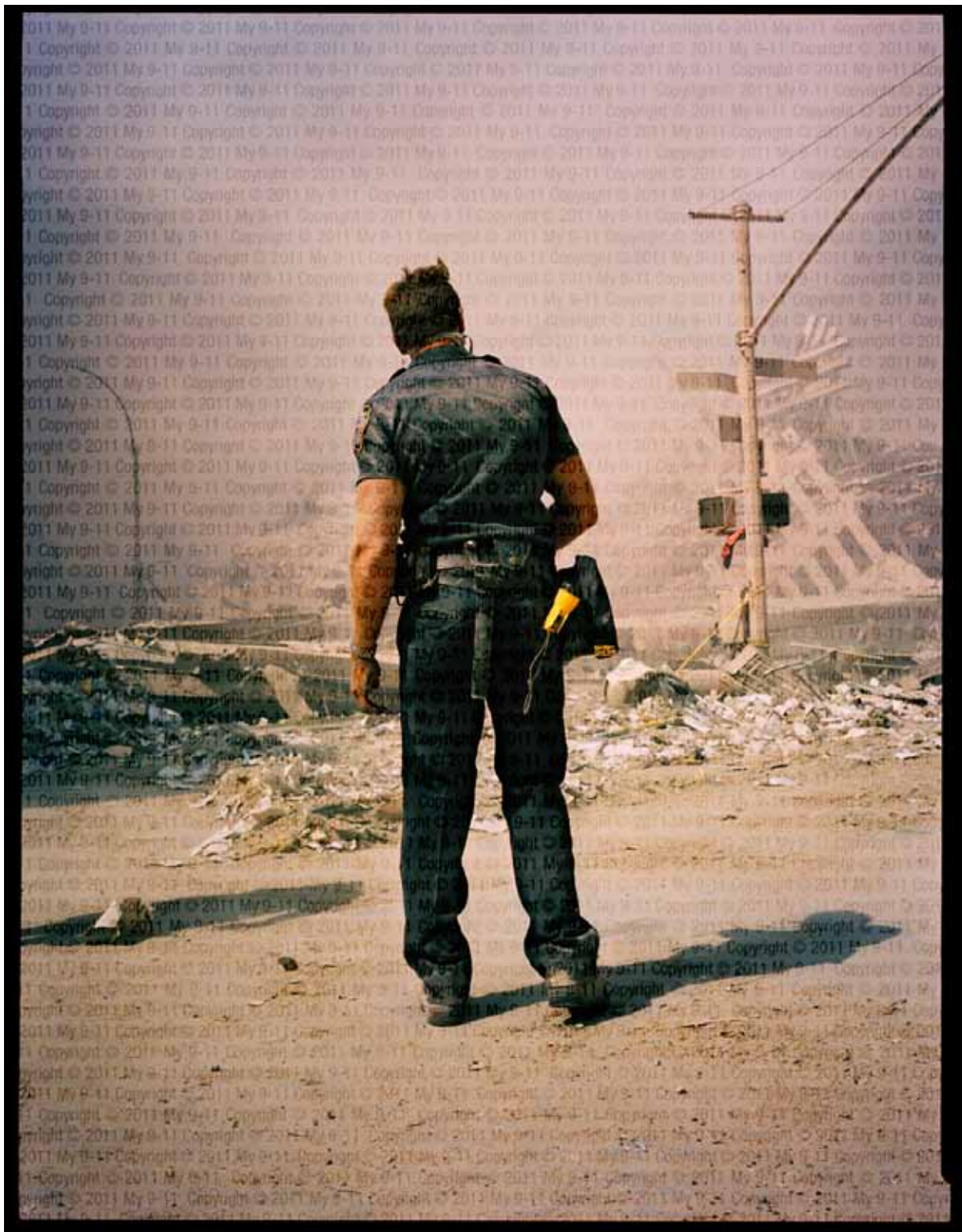
EXCERPT FROM PAGE 29

All day I had been in worker mode, not thinking about anything else other than how to help. I suddenly realized that some of the people I had brought down to Ground Zero were clearly in over their heads. I decided to walk Sue and a few other civilians back to our apartment on Pearl Street. The way we chose to walk was normally a familiar route. That night, however, it was anything but—brown soot coated all the buildings and newsstands. It was as if we were in an archeological site. As I looked around, I felt like I’d been dropped into a moonscape of terror. There were abandoned cars in the middle of the street, shoes and women’s handbags and papers everywhere. Aside from the debris, we were completely alone. Every now and then, I would reach down and grab a sheet of paper from the ground and stick it in my messenger bag. The street I chose, Maiden Lane, slopes down from the World Trade Center site. As we continued our silent walk, I stopped a few times to look back. It was like staring up at a smoldering volcano, waiting for its next eruption. Even though the dust had settled and nearly everything was visible, a constant haze, the thinnest brown, still lingered in the night air.

PHOTOGRAPHS

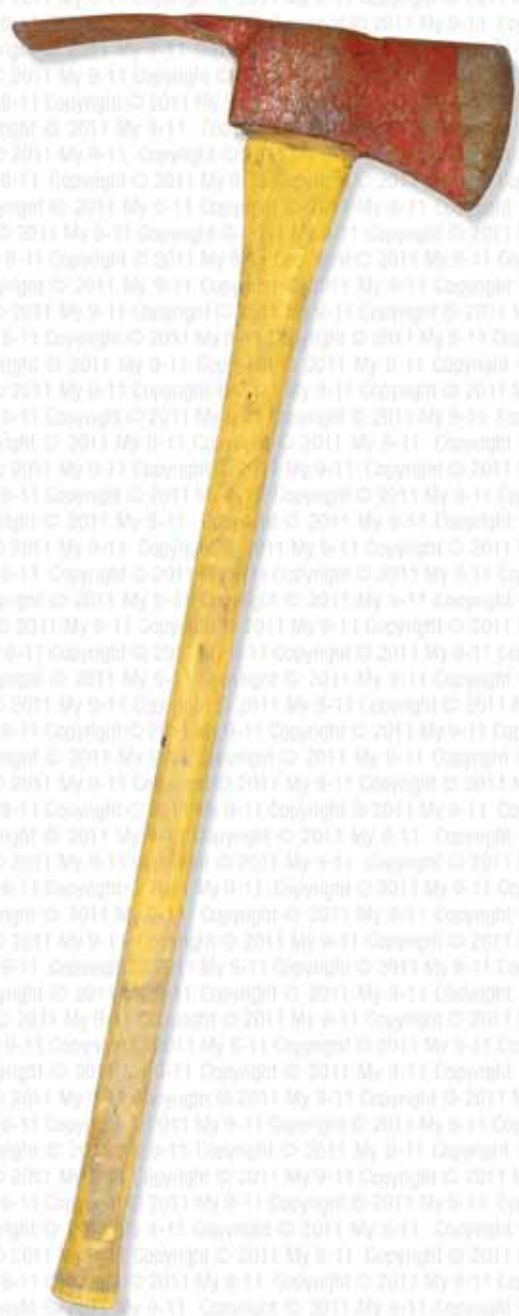








ARTIFACTS







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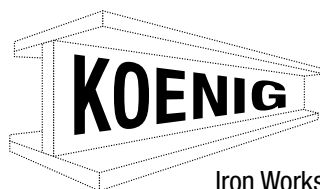
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LIMITED-EDITION BOX

On the following page you will see our limited edition case, a custom design by New York Iron Workers in New York. Handcrafted in steel and aluminum, the case is emblazoned with a scaled version of the World Trade Center façade on its top. Its blackened steel sides feature riveted bolts on each corner, honoring the construction of the original Twin Towers and giving attention to the two front drawers. Each drawer bears the World Trade Center façade in cast aluminum and contains pieces of the *My 9-11* project—the top drawer carrying a signed copy of the printed book; the bottom drawer containing eleven signed limited-edition fiber prints, all beautifully packaged in a velum sleeve. The *My 9-11* project will be limited to one hundred special-edition cases, each one signed and numbered by the author.

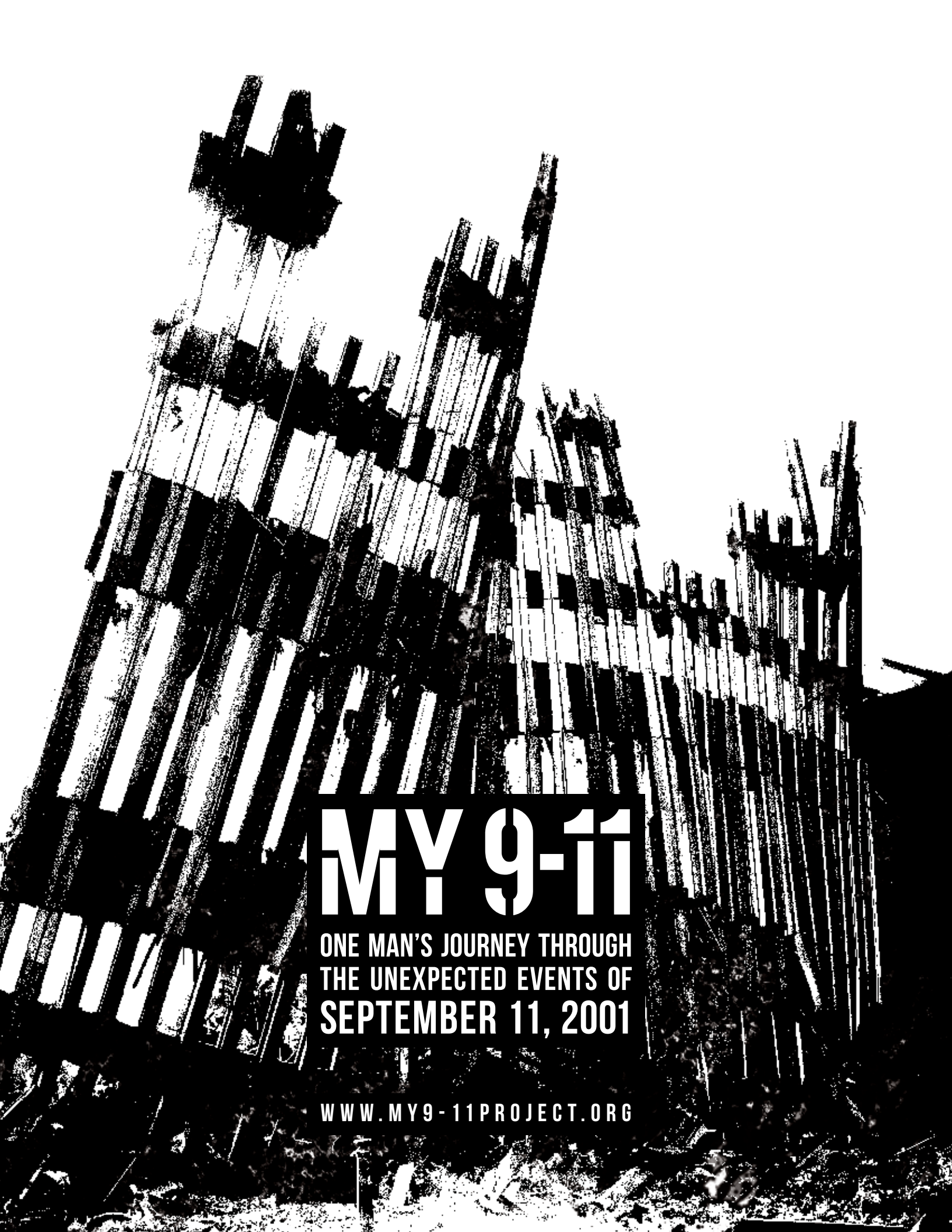
Handcrafted by



Iron Works



**A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS FROM THIS BOOK WILL
BE DONATED TO AID FIRST RESPONDER CHARITIES
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