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OUTRAGE



MIKE BUSCHER / Associated Press

It was a clear day Tuesday, but clouds of **foul dust** on the Manhattan skyline were markers of **death and destruction**. Terrorists had hijacked airliners and slammed them into the World Trade Center, causing the mighty twin structure to crumble. A similar scene unfolded at the **Pentagon**. For America, it was a day of monstrously coordinated carnage.

Thousands dead, a nation staggered as terrorists strike New York, Washington

By JAY BOOKMAN
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We occupy a different reality than we did a day ago. Thousands lie dead, many still buried in the smoking rubble in New York and Washington.

Millions grieve. Two landmarks of the Manhattan skyline have been obliterated, and an atmosphere of war pervades Washington. A nation slow to anger has been brought to justified fury.

But fury against whom? Retaliation, when it comes, will have to be as coolly calculated and well targeted as Tuesday's attack. The memory of our dead deserves no less.

In American history, only one comparable event springs obviously to mind: Pearl Harbor. Those of us who could only guess at the effect of Dec. 7, 1941, on our parents and grandparents now understand much better. They must have felt then what we feel now: an initial disbelief and stunned horror, followed by a stern resolve to see justice done.

In the wake of Pearl Harbor, we at least knew

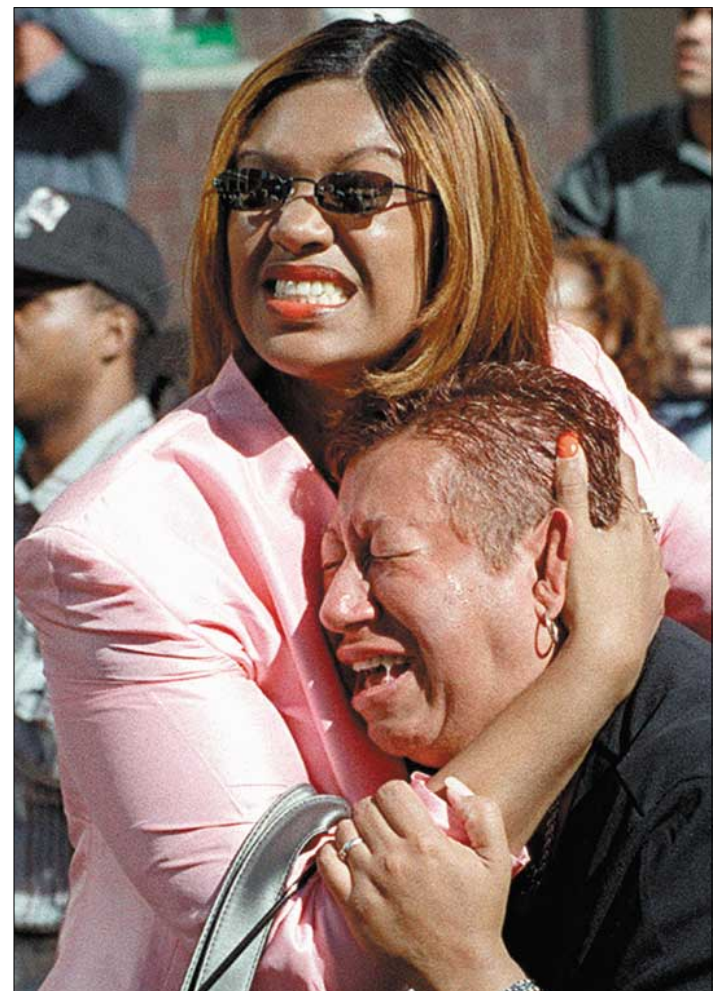
our enemies. Not this time. Not quite yet. It's frustrating to be sucker-punched in such a devastating fashion and not know for sure who threw the punch.

The terrorists chose their targets well. They hit the twin towers of U.S. power: the heart of commerce, in the World Trade Center, and the heart of our military, at the Pentagon. Any illusion of this nation as Fortress America, able to insulate itself from the troubles of the world, crumbled along with those buildings. It was humbling to see people stumbling through the debris-strewn streets of mighty Manhattan, survivors of a carnage that had long ago grown familiar, on a lesser scale, in scenes from Beirut, Sarajevo, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The most sophisticated, technologically advanced nation in the world had been brought to its knees by an attack of brutal simplicity. But for a day, and only for a day.

Last night, members of Congress joined in singing "God Bless America" on the Capitol steps, and President Bush reaffirmed the nation's strength and resolve against evil. This morning the sun came up again, and with it came a new day. The rebuilding and healing begins.

And the day to settle accounts will come.



ERNESTO MORA / Associated Press

Watching the **death throes** of the World Trade Center, two women cling together in disbelief Tuesday.

- ▶ Log on to ajc.com for constant news updates throughout the day.
- ▶ Coverage of news unrelated to the attack begins today in section B.

