

RAY: I was talkin' about this at a book signing just the other day. Little basement shop on East Third, run by a coupla student radicals who think I'm catnip in a cardigan. I was in there signin' books. Some paperback thing. The author never showed, so I sat down at the table and started signin'. Had to do something—the line was out the door and down the block—so I did my bit. People shook my hand, poured their hearts out. Some kid told me he'd heard me on the radio, talkin' about the "War on Terror"—God what a beautiful phrase that is!—I bow to the sheer devious wonder of it!—Because you and I both know we can no more fight a "war on terror" than we can "box with anxiety". You can fight a war against a "scary feeling" for as long as it suits you—and then declare victory any time you want, saying, "I don't know about you, but I think the scary feeling has pretty much gone away. Anyway, this kid tells me he's gonna write his dissertation on me and my search for the true story behind the collapse of Building Seven. People forget that although TWO buildings were hit by airplanes on that terrible morning, there were THREE buildings that fell to the ground. And the third one to fall—building Seven—World Trade Center Seven—had received only "minimal damage", and had no more than a "few isolated fires" and YET: At 5:20 PM on the evening of 9/11, building Seven suddenly collapses in the most goddamn perfect fall that you have ever seen—a fall that remain perfectly inside the footprint of the building—a fall that looks to all concerned—including Dan Rather (who gave me this sweater, by the way)—looks to be the perfectly executed demolition of a 47 story building. Gravity man: It's not just a good idea, it's the law!

ADAM: Ray listen—These things you say, the claims you make, on some level they count—they have an effect, and they are not harmless. However bizarre they sound to others, the fact is, if you really want to know—these wild theories actually do as much damage as the events which triggered them. It's true that Oswald shot Kennedy—but the shot that mattered was fired by the conspiracy nuts: They shot holes in the official story and thus destroyed the faith of a nation. Or in the case of 9/11: the hijackers create the carnage, but it is the conspiratologists—all those gutless grandstanding little headjobs—They are the ones who foster the real, true ongoing terror.

JANET: I'd walk by all those people in Union Square, looking at the handmade signs: "Have you seen so-and-so?" And I swear—everyone knew someone. They all had someone. Someone they lost. And I didn't. There was a consultant at the foundation. His name was Elliot. He's be there for meeting every week or so. One day someone mentioned his girlfriend. How she'd worked for Morgan Stanley, in the north tower, had tried to call him, but..... The next time, I saw him I just....mentioned this. It was so stupid—I mean, I didn't know this guy at all. And then he asked me to have coffee. It was nice. He talked about her. How much he missed her. We made a regular date of it. It started to get a little more personal. I mean, he knew I was engaged, I'd told him about Adam—but he just really liked spending time with me.

And then I had this thought. It just hit me. He made her up. This loss. To get sympathy from people—from women—and God, that pissed me off—so I went online, to the site, where victim are listed...and I looked up Elliot's girlfriend....and she was there. Just like he'd told me.

And right then—I know, I don't care how this sounds—right then I wanted to tell people: "I knew someone. I lost someone. She died in the north tower and I knew her and I've been helping her boyfriend through his grief." The next time I saw Elliot we were at a bar and he tried to kiss me—I had wanted him to for weeks—but when he finally did it: I was disgusted. I wanted to be sick. Because I had NO feelings for this guy at all—I would never have given him the fucking time of day—except for the fact that he knew someone—and now I finally knew someone. Someone who'd been there.

PALMER: That one is for Mickey. Least I can do. Buy him one....and hope that wherever the hell he is, they got a cold Beer waitin' for him. We worked together, drank together—knew each other's shit and always had each other's back. But the funny thing.....on the morning it mattered—the morning it mattered the most—we got separated. He was supposed to be with me, out on the streets, but he got hung up in Seven—20 flights up in Building Seven—because the planning, let's just say that the planning was less than good. And so later that day I was holding a passport and walking toward the building that I knew my friend was in. And this building started to...bend....and float....and swallow itself. If not for the planning....he'd be here....Mickey'd be here, sippin' on that beer.

I don't have his bones, all right!! Wish to hell I did. Even a fragment. Even just one—because God, how people want PROOF. I looked —used my clearance—got onto the site, they were already hauling away the steel—and I was digging around on the pile—ON MY KNEES—looking for a trace. A fingernail. The tiniest of things. They found 'em at Ground Zero—they're still finding them—more and more bones as they dig—but right now the only proof I'VE got is this: At 5:07 PM I was speaking to Mickey on a secure line—and at 5:20 PM that building fell... and he never once reappeared on this earth.