Stan Jastrzebski
This is "The Journalists We Became: Public Radio Post 9/11," a special from KBIA News. I'm News Director Stan Jastrzebski. In his 2025 history "On Air: The Triumph and Tumult of NPR," Steve Oney describes how the morning of September 11, 2001, changed the network forever. NPR hadn't prioritized breaking news, and so it wasn't much set up to do it. It wasn't out of character then for Morning Edition host Bob Edwards to do what he did: announce a plane and hit the World Trade Center, and then move on to previously scheduled programming. Oney reports there were those within the network who worried about breaking format, even briefly, and thought that would make him sound too much like CNN or other cable news channels, whose constant use of a banner saying "breaking news" they thought struck a reactive, breathless tone that NPR had tried to differentiate itself from. But September 11th kicked off two consecutive weeks of constant NPR breaking news coverage of the aftermath of that day's attacks, the network changed, the national dialog changed, not always for the better, and local stations were left to determine how they would proceed. Many NPR stations, including KBIA, often interspersed NPR news and talk programming with classical music in those days, but the events of 25 years ago, along with a transition to digital radio frequencies that thinly split the broadcast spectrum, heralded the dawn of a new day of public radio in the United States. We'll hear in the next hour how we got here. We'll hear from people who reported around the country on that day, as well as those who have helped with sense making here in mid-Missouri over the last quarter century, and that is where we are going to start in this hour-long special. Our first of many guests in this hour is Shakir Hamoodi, who holds a PhD in engineering, also a master's degree in Islamic studies. He's currently an Imam at the Islamic Center of Central Missouri. Imam Hamoodi, thank you so much for being here. We really appreciate you taking the time. Tell me about your thoughts, not only of that day, but of kind of the last 25 years of having a discussion about what Islam is in the United States. There were a lot of misconceptions, and some of them may still remain.

Imam Shakir Hamoodi
Well, this is a different question, unfortunately, because I thought you would ask me about the…my first, you know, moment in that attack. I was on my computer, and the first attack was already gone one minute maybe earlier, but I saw on the air, the second attack, the second plane, and the first thing I did was to visit three schools where my kids were: Jeff Jr. and and Gentry and Rock Bridge. When I reached Rock Bridge, finally I found the principal himself was going to the to spread the same message that I was appealing to the to the staff and the principal: Please make sure that Muslim kids are safe. And kindly enough, the the principal of Rock Bridge at that time, he vacated the whole Friday for me to go and talk with the whole children there, the whole students there, in their auditorium, three stages.

Stan Jastrzebski
So that would have been about three days later after the attacks.

Imam Shakir Hamoodi
Three days later, yes, and I continued to really talk to teachers and students what Islam is, what Islam is not, and probably that is what you ask me, Islam is a religion, is a way of life. Whatever you hear in the media, unfortunately, we are in a setting of a media. Whatever you hear in the media that has agenda, really, you really need to put a question mark on it. You need to go to the source, otherwise you will be misled, and probably your kids will be misled. So why don't you go to the source and see

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what Islam is and what Islam is not? To to just connect an act or an actor of violence or terrorism with the whole religion, or with the whole followers of the nation two billion Muslims, you know, or with the race, this is absolutely unfair. Otherwise, we could have joined, you know, many names in the history, old and modern, with with Christianity, with Judaism. With this is not fair.

Stan Jastrzebski
What do you remember of the local conversation from that time? What were the kinds of things that you found yourself saying to others?

Imam Shakir Hamoodi
In fact, what we did then immediately after after that act, the University of Missouri and the faith community came together. And we held a conference in the Baptist Church in the Ninth and and Elm Street and Locust, yes, Locust and and Ninth, where the faith leaders came along with the university, and we call that faith slash Educational Collaboration Conference, from which a committee under the same name was formed, and that committee we visited the houses of worship once a month for a breakfast every Saturday or the first Saturday of the month, and we really explain the faith and answer questions, and see what whatever whatever issue is there to to resolve. In fact, in in the city of Colombia, as a Muslim community, we have been enjoying. I came to this country in 1985, and since then, we have been enjoying a very good relationship with the faith community, with the university, with with with the city, with everybody, with the police. I mean, we really appreciate this. Contrary to many other cities, in which after September 11 they really faced a lot of calamities and a lot of name calling.

Stan Jastrzebski
I'd like to bring another voice into our conversation. We have on the phone Mark Haim, the director of Mid-Missouri Peace Works, a local activism organization. Mark's lived in Columbia for more than 50 years. Mark, thank you so much for for joining us today. We appreciate you being part of the conversation.

Mark Haim
Thank you. Good day. It's good to be with you.

Stan Jastrzebski
Imam Hamoodi was just talking about the conversation at the in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. What are your recollections from the conversations you had at that time?

Mark Haim
Very immediately, within minutes of hearing what happened, we knew what was coming our way. We knew it would be a cause for war, and that very morning, Peace Works, Fellowship of Reconciliation got together and decided to organize a candlelight vigil. That evening, we sent out by noon on September 11th. We had sent out emails to our base and sent out news releases, and by that evening, somewhere between three and 400 of us gathered in Peace Park.

Stan Jastrzebski
Did you find that there were people in town who were were actively opposing your message?

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Mark Haim
Oh yeah, we started doing a regular rush hour peace demonstration vigil, and some people showed that they hadn't learned that it took two fingers to make a peace sign. So we we got some flak, we got some negative responses, but we also had thousands of people supporting what we were doing. People might remember that leading up to the war on Iraq that took place in 2003, lead up to that, we had signs, yard signs, up hundreds and hundreds of them saying peace is patriotic, no war, and if if they listened to us, many people would be alive today who aren't, and much suffering would have been avoided, and trillions of dollars wouldn't have been spent that could have been much better used for health, for housing, for education, you know, there's no shortage of things that need money. The transition to a green economy, all these are critically important. But instead, trillions of dollars, literally over these 25 years, has been siphoned off by the military-industrial complex. Some people have gotten very rich over it, and others have lost their lives or are suffering.

Stan Jastrzebski
I'd like to ask you both about your your views of the way that different media have covered this. We talked in the open about the fact public radio really wasn't set up to cover breaking news and had to make a very immediate shift of how they decided to allocate resources and try to cover a breaking story that was changing on a daily basis. What, Imam Hamoodi, was your experience with talking to whether it was local media or others who who contacted you? What was your experience in terms of having to manage a message? You said a little while ago you thought the media tended to have an agenda. Were were there ways that that got better or worse over the course of time?

Imam Shakir Hamoodi
Well, I think very recently it got worse. In fact, very unfortunate. From the moment of September 11, the word Islam and Muslim terrorism comes on the on the media, without really checking, without being sensitive to millions of people who are American, to hundreds of millions of Muslims throughout the world, so the the media has a huge responsibility in what they put on the air. Otherwise, innocent people will probably pay the heavy price. I know at least my children, you know, have paid some price when they were in the school because of what they hear in the media. And imagine, you know, many mosques have been burned to to the ground, and many many Muslims have been attacked. Many ladies who wear their their Muslim attire have been attacked and called names, so the the the media has a responsibility, and they have to act accordingly.

Stan Jastrzebski
Mark, what about you? What was your experience with how the message was managed through various media?

Mark Haim
Well, Columbia is somewhat exceptional in that we have the journalism school here. We have a more informed set of people who are providing news through KBIA and through Channel 8, through other outlets that the journalism school is involved with in terms of programs and events. That said, you know there are certain built-in biases that we all come to, and the idea of doing any kind of journalism that's objective is really, you know, not recognizing how much our internal biases come into play. I will say

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though that I'm really pleased we have KOPN as a community radio station. It gets to air programs like Democracy Now that really challenge some of the you know accepted norms that you know are not necessarily as unbiased as they could be.

Stan Jastrzebski
You're listening to “The Journalists We Became: Public Radio Post-9/11,” an hour long special from KBIA News. I'd like to thank our first couple of guests, Mark Haim of Mid Missouri Peaceworks, and Imam Shakir Hamoodi from the Islamic Center of Central Missouri. Thank you both for your time, and remember that you, our listeners, can call in today 573-882-9822 is the phone number if you want to give us your recollections of that day or of the past 25 years and how you remember that KBIA and others have changed. And we will be back in just a couple of minutes. You're listening to KBIA.

Jennifer Wright
Thank you. More of this special 9/11 reporting and remembering from KBIA on this 25th anniversary of 9/11. KBIA is dedicating this hour to the retrospective. If you'd like to support KBIA, you can give online at kbia.org or call 882-9136. Save the date for the art of welcome, building communities that last Monday, September 14th at 3 p.m. at the Missouri United Methodist Church on South Ninth Street in Columbia. This panel discussion with researchers, community members, and leaders from immigrant-serving communities will explore what it takes to create welcoming communities for all, especially in areas with demographic change. Hosted by the MU Cambio Center and Kansas City's Dela Lam, this event is free and open to the public. Learn more at cambio.missouri.edu. Join the Missouri Prairie Foundation and its Grow Native program at the Conservation Expo at Cooper's Landing, September 12th and 13th. At this family-focused event, visit booths of more than 30 conservation organizations. Observe a working sawmill in action. Sign up for the tremendous bike ride on the Katy Trail and enjoy food truck offerings and live music, pony rides and art activities for children, as well as Missouri River boat rides will be available. Learn more at Cooper'sLandingMo.com.

Ten strangers, one isolated island, and a secret each of them would kill to keep. The Arrow Rock Lyceum Theater presents Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None, September 25th through October 4th. In this classic mystery, the guests begin to die one by one. Who's next? Who can be trusted? And whodunit This story will keep you guessing until the very end, tickets are available now at lyceumtheater.org.

We're dedicating this hour to the retrospective 9/11 reporting and remembering. If you'd like to support KBIA and coverage like this, donate to our pledge drive at kbia.org or by calling 8829136 or 800-292-9136. Our pledge drive goal is 236,000, and we've raised 4753 so far. Take advantage of our challenge now by calling 8829136. Our retrospective continues now. 911 reporting and remembering on KBIA.

Stan Jastrzebski
And welcome back. I'm KBIA News Director Stan Jastrzebski. We appreciate you being with us on this one-hour special retrospective. Remember, you can call in at 573-882-9822 with your recollections of that day. Time now, though, to bring in two other guests. Fred Anklam here in studio is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, currently the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting at the Missouri

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School of Journalism. Fred was an international desk editor at USA Today on 911. Also on the phone with us, Kathy Kiley, the former Lee Hills Chair in Free Press Studies at the Missouri School of Journalism. Kathy was a Washington correspondent for USA Today on 911. Thank you both for being here. We appreciate it.

Fred Anklam
Appreciate it. Good morning, Stan. Good morning. Looking forward to the conversation.

Stan Jastrzebski
Fred, let's start with you. Tell me your story. I've heard this before, but our listeners haven't. And Kathy, I'll ask the same thing of you at the end of a moment. Tell me what you remember of that day being proximate to what was going on.

Fred Anklam
Well, yeah, thank you, Stan. It's a moment that still stays with me. Gorgeous fall day in Washington D.C. and I was the news director for the international edition. Got the kids off to school. My wife was curator at the Newseum, which was across the street from USA Today, which was then right on the tube towers, right on the Potomac River. You could look down across Arlington Cemetery and see the Pentagon. We saw it every day from where we worked up there. And I got in the car to drive, turned on the radio as I do, and heard news that a plane had struck a tower in New York. And I'm thinking, okay, how am I going to get the news for this into our international edition? And about that time, the news of the second plane hitting. So I'm driving a back road to Roslyn and stop at a stoplight, Walter Reed and Glebe Road in Arlington, Virginia, and I've got a little Honda Civic. I've got the moonroof open and plane flies right over my head. I can't believe how low it is. It's flying at very high speed and paralleling 395 running north. No plane ever flies in that direction. They fly up and down the river, and I immediately knew there was a problem. I actually saw the tail number. I can't remember what it was now. I picked up my phone, cell phone, and dialed 911 to say there's a plane, you know, flying way off course. Got a recording. So I go through the light, and as I go through the next neighborhood, I can see the fireball from the Pentagon. So it's just incredible to think about being present in the last moments of some people's lives who had no control over what was going to happen. I can talk more about how I proceeded to cover this. I don't know if you want to talk to Kathy about what…

Stan Jastrzebski
Yeah, we actually we'll catch up with that in a second. But Kathy, what about your remembrances of that day?

Kathy Kiely
Yeah, I like Fred. Remember the weather. It was a beautiful day, and you know, ever afterwards, when I encounter weather like that, I think I, in my own mind, it's 9/11 weather, and because it was so incongruous, of course, given the events that unfolded. But I was getting ready for work, and Stan, you'll be very happy to know I was listening to the radio, and that's when I first heard that a a plane had hit the World Trade Center, and I thought that was odd, assuming New York had the same weather we did. And then I heard a second one hit, and at that point I put on the television, and I knew this was not an accident. So I hurried up, got ready. I walked to work, and I ran into a colleague from the White

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House press corps, and we were talking. And then, when thinking nothing's going to happen for us today in Washington, the focus will all be in New York. And when I arrived at my office, I was almost run over by our Pentagon correspondent, who was running out the door, and she shouted at me, "I'm heading to the Pentagon. A bomb or something has gone off." And by the time I got 10 more steps into the newsroom, one of the editors was shouting at me, "Get to the Hill!" And I looked at him and I said, 'You want me to be there in case it blows up?!' And he said "Yes!" So I gathered my gear and I started walking out. And I was with our Supreme Court reporter Joan Biskupic, who now works for CNN. And we started. We went out the building, and I looked at her and I said, 'Joanie, I don't think today would be a good day to take the subway…' because, of course at that point we had no idea what was going on or how extensive this attack was. So we walked the 11 long blocks up Pennsylvania Avenue, and it reminded me of covering a hurricane because if you're a reporter, you're always heading out to the ocean while everybody else is running the opposite direction,

Stan Jastrzebski
Heading toward the danger.

Kathy Kiely
Exactly, all the feds were pouring out of these office buildings that line Pennsylvania Avenue, and we were just walking up towards the Capitol and the Supreme Court, which of course are right across the street from each other, and while we were walking, I heard a sonic boom, and I looked up and I saw a fighter jet. And just like Fred, I was stunned because you don't fly over Washington D.C. downtown Washington D.C. because of all the monuments. And I looked at Joan and said, "I sure hope that was one of ours. And it was. It was, you know. I think later we pieced it together. I think it was one of the jets scrambled out of Norfolk to head off an attack on the capital.

Stan Jastrzebski
Well, let me stop you there because you're talking about piecing things together, and let me ask you both: There is so much that goes through our heads as reporters in a moment like that, and there are 1000 questions to answer, and 1000 people you think of to call for each one of those 1000 questions. Fred, as you're on the desk and you're trying to do an international edition of the paper, how are you prioritizing what to do in that moment?

Fred Anklam
Yeah, that's that's a very good question. We we basically had about two and a half hours for this deadline, so I'm focused mainly on the deadline. I'm not, I'm actually kind of stunned every time something new occurs, such as Shanksville, where the plane went down. So, but I'm focused on we've got to get stories done. What does AP got? What reporters can help me out right now. I'm actually turned around and went home. I had been issued a laptop for the first time the previous week, and I sat down at home using a VPN, and that's how I laid out the first edition and worked through the stories that were happening. There were a few people that had made it to our building already. The local officials came in and said "The USA Today building's a target potentially, evacuate the building." All the newsroom people just sat there and did their jobs, and so that's what that's what I recall. That is just trying to focus on the first deadline. Later, after about two more hours, I went into the newsroom and started picking up more of the pieces and helped with the regular edition of the paper as well.

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Stan Jastrzebski
Kathy, you were talking about walking around, running into colleagues, running into all these people you knew from your time reporting.

Kathy Kiely
Well, I think that's true. And and one thing I will add to what Fred was saying, and which our younger listeners would find surprising, this was pre-smartphones, so there was no such thing as texting, and cell phones almost immediately became useless. So in order to communicate, you had to find a landline. So it was very very difficult, you know, logistically I would say, because there were, I don't know whether the bandwidth was completely taken over by emergency operators, which would certainly be the first responders, which would be understanding, or there were there were things tamping down cell communications for security reasons. But that was an additional layer of difficulty, and the other. But what I will say is, when the Hill was just, it was kind of like Congress al fresco. You know, the everybody, members of Congress, senators, House members, staff people, reporters, were all. Kind of milling around in this lawn area between and parking lot between the Supreme Court and and the and Capitol Hill and no and everybody was doing exactly what you said, trying to share what information they had. Eventually, the members of Congress were kind of herded into a an area over to the Capitol Police headquarters, and they would come out now and then and talk to us and tell us things. But it was it was completely chaotic, and and the you know what you realized I think at the time was how totally unprepared we were for something like this. It was just unthinkable.

Stan Jastrzebski
Well, my thanks to both of you for for helping us try to make sense of of it this morning, and for giving us your time and your remembrances. And thanks for for being a part of this this conversation.

Fred Anklam
Sure, my pleasure.

Kathy Kiely
Likewise.

Jennifer Wright
You're listening to KBIA's 911 reporting and remembering a special feature on the 25th anniversary of 911. More to come. The Boone County Office of Emergency Management presents the Ready Festival Thursday, September 17th, from 3 to 7 p.m. at Cosmo Park. This community event highlights emergency preparedness with live demonstrations, interactive activities, and valuable resources from local response agencies. Attendees can explore more than 70 vendor booths, enjoy family-friendly activities, receive preparedness kits, and visit local food trucks. Learn more at boonmo.gov/oem.

Advance your career and make a positive change in the community by earning a master's degree or graduate certificate 100% online from Mizzou's Department of Human Development and Family Science. Choose from tracks in positive youth development, family and community services, or early childhood and family policy. Get started today with rolling admissions, flexible coursework, and

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hands-on advising. Mizzou HDFS will support you as you take the next step in your passion to help children, families, and communities thrive. Learn more at hdfs.missouri.edu. Take a self-guided tour of the arts at Mizzou on Wednesday, September 16th, from 5 to 7 p.m. and enjoy music, design, performance, and art at various locations on campus. Check in and receive a map and schedule at info stops on Lowry Mall. The tower, the tour is free for community members of all ages. Visit mizzou.us/arts after hours to register. Thank you for joining KBIA's 9/11 reporting and remembering anniversary of 9/11. KBIA is dedicating this hour to the retrospective. If you'd like to support KBIA and coverage like this, please donate to our pledge drive at kbia.org or by calling 882-9136 or 800-292-9136. Our pledge drive goal is 236,000. We've raised almost $5,000 so far, and you can take advantage of a special challenge this morning when you call to make your pledge of support at 8829136. We now return to our retrospective conversation: the special KBIA's 9/11 reporting and remembering on KBIA.

Stan Jastrzebski
And we are back. Thanks for being with us. Remember, you can call in with your recollections and your views of how journalism has changed. Public radio has changed. Many people around here have been listeners to the station for a long time. That number to call 573-882-9822.

Stan Jastrzebski
My next two guests, who I have in studio with me, Jeanette Porter, is a professor in the Missouri School of Journalism, who's published several studies in academic journals about mental health and minority representation in communication. Also in studio with us, Mark Horvit, who's the chair of the journalism professions department at the Missouri School of Journalism. But before that, worked as a reporter and editor at several newspapers in Texas and elsewhere. Thanks to both of you for being here. Really appreciate your time. Of course, Mark. I I went in and asked you the other day where were you on 911, and your answer was was very interesting. Tell the people what you told me.

Mark Horvit
Okay, sure. So, we had just relocated to the Dallas Fort Worth area. I was working at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and I was actually in a dentist chair having, and they had the radio on like they do and suddenly it cuts in and talks about you know the planes and the twin the towers in New York and so I was like gotta go, so we I headed into the office and you know it's it's what you do as a journalist even though we were in Texas and there was actually nothing happened. Where we were, you didn't know that at the time. We didn't know what was going to happen in Dallas. Fort Worth is a pretty big metro area, but what I what what we ended up doing as a news organization was we loaded up several cars with journalists and had them drive from Fort Worth, Texas, to New York to cover what was happening. And you know, even at the time, I was a little skeptical about what the point of that was, but I mean, the the reason we did it is because this is what news organizations used to do, when there was a big story, when something huge happened, when something important happened. You wanted to have your folks there. You wanted your audience to be able to to learn from your reporters, and so you know they got there frankly, and we're a bit lost as to what to do because you know there were lots of journalists and and learning an unfamiliar area. Oh yeah, yeah, they were just in some hotels. But the point was was that they we felt the need to go and to your theme for the for the show, those papers aren't doing that now. You know, there's that that that's that was probably one of the last really large events in this country that drew journalists from all over the country. That we just the industry doesn't have the

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capacity for that anymore. It it wouldn't happen. So you know that that's one thing that's always struck me is that that was sort of a moment in time when when the media was still, you know, it was important enough to have everybody convene on something that was important to our audience, and we just really don't do that anymore.

Stan Jastrzebski
And and trying to figure out how to tell that story for a local audience in Fort Worth, Texas, about something that's going on in New York-that's that's something you had to balance as an editor. How do we figure that out?

Mark Horvit
Right, right. I mean, that's what everybody was trying to think about. Is so, I mean, they're up there looking for: Are there any Texans? Are there? You know, we don't know who was who was killed in the. You know, people come from all over the the world to work, you know, in New York. So, we were looking for local stories. We were looking for people who had some connection to where we were, and and they found and they found some stories, and I mean I think hopefully for some people that helped connect what was happening, you know, in New York to to our lives in Texas,

Stan Jastrzebski
Doctor Porter. You were telling me you were in rural Virginia at the time of 911.

Jeannette Porter
Yes.

Stan Jastrzebski
And so you were you know in the same state, but potentially worlds away from what was going on in the D.C. area, you've written some interesting stuff about mental health communication and published in academic journals.

Stan Jastrzebski
As you and and you're someone who's a very keen journalism watcher as well. How do you put the the way that we've handled this, both at the time and now, as we think back on 911, how have we done as a journalistic society in terms of managing the the kind of mental health crisis of it all, would you say?

Jeannette Porter
Serving our audiences I think what we've most what we've best been able to achieve is giving people something to hang on to, right? Giving people facts when we had them, opinion when we didn't. Definitely a need for connection also as well, that was tremendously important in the days, weeks, months following the actual falling of the towers and and the actual explosions and the the death. I am originally from New York City, and so even as I was just going about my daily business in Amelia, Virginia, which is where I was, people were like, "Oh my gosh, are you know? Are you okay? Have you lost people?”

Stan Jastrzebski

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Did you know?

Jeannette Porter
Not right away. We called and checked. I remember Fred said it was a beautiful fall morning, and it was in Amelia as well. Phone rang landline, and my uncle said, "Turn on the television. And my uncle, who was living in Virginia, and we called around everybody that we knew of in New York was was there, was was accounted for. And then for me, it became about people I had worked with in New York, because there were offices down there where I had colleagues, but eventually I was able to tell. But even that, like the reinforcing of connections, became critically important. We started as a discipline, I think, also to pay some more attention to the mental health of reporters, the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, so on and so forth. We now one of my colleagues, Lisa Krantz, now has a lot of research into how professors are handling mental health issues and trauma. But I don't know. I feel like we were successful in making people feel a bit better by providing community. I think where we failed as a discipline, and I hope I don't get rotten eggs thrown at me for this, I feel where we failed as a discipline was in leading society to take the long view and the moderate view of how we got here, what happened, and what to do next.

Stan Jastrzebski
Rather than jumping to conclusions.

Jeannette Porter
Yeah, I mean, you know, I remember President Bush standing at the site saying, you know, the people who did this are going to hear from hear from all of us, and of course, people were furious, right? People were frightened. We lost our innocence. It was the first attack on our home soil since Pearl Harbor, and so we lost our innocence. You know, over there now became over here, that led to fear. Fear got transmuted to anger very quickly, and one completely understands that. But we, we ended up in Iraq, which I don't know that we pushed back hard enough on authorities and people who wanted to to execute policy that wasn't exactly that really had nothing to do with what had happened to us. Afghanistan made a certain amount of sense. Bin Laden had been hiding there, but Iraq had nothing to do with it.

Stan Jastrzebski
Mark, let me bring you back in and ask how your reporters processed what they saw and what they had to cover with you and with each other. What do you remember about the newsroom's kind of state of well-being as all of this was going on?

Mark Horvit
I mean, the truth is, for this and a lot of disasters that I was involved in covering, or my colleagues were, how's the reporter - that wasn't really top of mind at all. Really good friends of mine got in those cars and went up to New York, and you know, when they got back, all the discussion was about what they had seen and what they had reported, but it wasn't really about what have you? You know, the same group of people had just not that long ago been covering something much closer to home-the Oklahoma City bombing-and they were there much closer to the time and saw things nobody would want to see. But really, we didn't have those conversations till years and years later.

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Jeannette Porter
We stuffed it.

Mark Horvit
Yeah, so it was hard to process in the moment. Yeah, yeah, hard to process in the moment, and we stuffed it afterwards. We didn't. We didn't unpack it.

Stan Jastrzebski
Do you think we do- in the last 30 seconds we have left - Do you think we do better than that now? Did we learn anything from this experience, horrific as it was?

Jeannette Porter
I think our younger folks definitely do. Some of our veterans, I think, still struggle. I think it's a lot more top of mind overall in newsrooms now. It's a lot more top of mind in society. Period. We talk more in general about mental health now than we did 20 years ago. You know, right?

Stan Jastrzebski
Well, thank you both for that. I appreciate it, Mark Horvit and Jeanette Porter. Thank you for being with us today on our special and for giving your time and remembrances of that day and and for doing what you do now to try to help the next generation of journalists maybe figure it out a little better than we all did in the moment. So thanks very much. Happy to be here. You're listening to KBIA. You can call in with your comments at 573-882-9822, and we will be back in just a moment with more of “The Journalists We Became: Public Radio Post-9/11.

Jennifer Wright
Stay with us for this special remembrance on the anniversary of 9/11. We're dedicating this hour to the retrospective. Stay with us for more. Join the university concert series for Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back on the big screen while the Missouri Symphony Orchestra performs John Williams' legendary score live. Experience every lightsaber duel and space battle like never before. Join them Thursday and Friday, October one st and two nd at the Missouri Theater. Get tickets at concertseries.missouri.edu. Sponsored by Shakespeare's Pizza.

Cooper's Landing is hosting Conservation Expo 2026 Saturday, September 12 and Sunday the 13th. This free two-day educational event for the entire family will showcase a variety of nonprofit organizations and initiatives with the mission to advance Missouri conservation education and environmental stewardship. The event includes live music, food trucks, and boat rides on the Missouri River, hosted by Missouri River Relief. Learn more at Cooper's LandingMo.com. Join the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy for the James E. Fleming and Linda C. McLean Constitution Day Lecture, featuring historian Dr. Rachel A. Sheldon. Discover the surprising story behind the political Supreme Court of Forgotten History, and learn how 19th-century justices shaped politics from both. The bench and the campaign trail. The event takes place Thursday, september 17 at five at the State Historical Society of Missouri. It's free and open to the public. Register online at democracy.missouri.edu. We're returning to our special 911 reporting and remembering the special

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retrospective. If you'd like to support KBIA and coverage like this, you can donate to the Pledge Drive at KBIA.org, or by calling 8829136 or 1-800-292-9136. This is KBIA.

Stan Jastrzebski
And we're back. Thanks for being with us. Remember, you can call in with your questions and comments at 573-882-9822, I'm here with two voices you're going to recognize: Kyle Felling, our general manager here at KBIA, and Darren Hellwege, longtime Morning Edition host. Darren, how do you remember the the chaos of that morning and processing from mid Missouri what's happening in Washington and Pennsylvania and D.C.?

Darren Hellwege
It was a perfectly ordinary morning until it wasn't, as I've already heard you guys discuss. Coverage of live breaking news was really not what we were about at that point, and I remember being on the air and didn't have the the screen on, and somebody called up and said, "There's a fire in New York City, and it looks big. Do you know what's going on? Just a listener, and I said no, and so I put the the TV on, and as soon as it's like everybody says, as soon as the second plane hit, you knew basically what was going on. I'm going to back up though because KBIA was in a very different place at that point. We did not have our connection with the journalism school, so we did not have this big room full of reporters. We had a news director, a guy named Jordan Out, who people may remember. He spent a long time at Missouri Net, and so I we had one guy that that had any journalism training, and then the rest of them were just producers like myself. And I just got on the intercom and said, "Everybody, come to the studio now! And it was me and Jordan and Mary Furness, who some listeners may remember, and Pat Akers, who recently retired after about 150 years here at KBIA, and I just said, everybody grab a grab a recorder and head out. And we sent one person over to the Islamic Center. One person was looking for terrorism experts here on campus and people from the university, and one was just on the streets getting vox pop, talking to people and getting their reactions, and we put it all together. Did a one-hour special that afternoon with the the local response, and I feel like we did a really good job with that, but it was like everybody else you've talked to in this. There was a little bit of scrambling and trying to do some things that we weren't necessarily used to doing every day. Things changed, and they have changed ever since then.

Stan Jastrzebski
What do you remember of what NPR sounded like that day, as they were, according to Steve Oney's book, just trying to figure out on the fly who they were going to become.

Darren Hellwege
There was a clip earlier this morning during Morning Edition of Bob Edwards. And Bob Edwards and Carl Kasell, these were old pros. These were trusted voices, and the moment when the first tower came down, and Bob had it on his screen, and he had been talking about something else. And the the silence, first of all, and then just the sound of his voice as he was saying one of the towers just collapsed, and it really was very challenging to deal with. NPR was not as as they say in the book about live breaking news right now. Give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the world type of thing. It was about long form journalism, and while that day was very complicated and did change things at NPR, I'm also really really proud of the way a they handled it that day under what was for them trying circumstances.

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But then in the days after, that was when you got reminded of why NPR is different. As we were talking about what the military is going to do, and we're hearing from military experts, and we're hearing from people that knew terrorism and who knew the Middle East and who knew New York City and Washington and could talk about the legal ramifications and the military and all of that and that was when we really did kind of start getting what made our coverage different and special.

Stan Jastrzebski
Kyle, talk to me about how you you differentiate your radio station and its coverage and your use of resources to make sense of this for a local audience of a couple hundred thousand people hundreds of miles away from what's going on. How do you how do you say yes we're doing this but maybe no we're not going to take this step over here.

Kyle Felling
I think, like everybody that day, we were making it up as we went along. Darren mentioned sending people out, including sending someone to the Islamic Center in downtown, and I was the person they sent there. All of 27 years old, no journalism training, no real background in doing interviews, no experience or trading in using a microphone outside of a studio, being put into that situation and just trying to figure out what to do and how to do it. So I walked from Jesse Hall, which is where our studios were at the time, down to the mosque here in downtown Columbia, and just knocked on the door.

Stan Jastrzebski
And what was the response?

Kyle Felling
Very, I think like everyone else, they were in a state of shock and unbelieving, and trying to to process what had happened and why. Strange position to be in. To I had no conception of what to ask or how to approach that, except to say, "What is your reaction? What are you feeling?

Stan Jastrzebski
And what were you told on that day?

Kyle Felling
I got very good good tape, I think, from them on the importance of community and just being human in this this moment of tragedy.

Stan Jastrzebski
Yeah, and I think that's one of the things that we're hearing from everybody today is there's this dedication to duty, but there's also the the human side of it, and sometimes we tend to kind of bifurcate ourselves as journalists and broadcasters and go, which side of of myself do I need in this moment? Did you feel some of that?

Kyle Felling
I think so. One of the other things that we really had to do was to think about how we approached it as a station. As you indicated earlier, we would typically do classical music from nine in the morning until

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3o'clock in the afternoon when All Things Considered came on. So we did stay with news all day that day, and for a good period of weeks after that is my is my memory. I'm sure I had a stack of classical albums there in the studio and ready to go at 9o'clock. When all of a sudden everything changed, one of really the crown jewels for NPR to me during that period was a program called Talk of the Nation, which we didn't normally carry, but we were under those circumstances. And I think that organization was maybe built to be a little bit more nimble and adaptive on the spot than some of the other news magazines. And was it Neil Conan? I think was hosting in those days, and those folks did a fantastic job. And we were very happy to carry that program.

Stan Jastrzebski
I want to bring some other voices into our conversation right now on the phone. We have Beth Pike, an Emmy award-winning journalist, worked as a producer at National NBC News and ABC News, among others. Now the assistant director of communication at the State Historical Society of Missouri. Beth, thanks for joining us. What's your recollection of that day? Where were you? What did you see?

Beth Pike
Well, I I remember it very clearly. In fact, I was listening to Bob Edwards. I had showed up. I had a meeting downtown, and I went to Uprise, which at the time was on Broadway across from the city building. Went in to get a cup of coffee and maybe a muffin. I don't know, but the radio was on, and I heard some people talking like a plane had just because it was a little after nine, what 912 something around that, and they said the plane had hit the tower, one of the twin towers, and so I was kind of curious, like, oh gosh, that's horrible, you know, just thinking immediately in my mind, it was a small plane, it just, you know, terrorism was not at all on my mind, or and I think anybody else's, but I was one. I figured it was already going national, so I actually went across the street behind the city council chambers. There was thinking about you know immediately, did I know anybody in those towers? Do I have any friends who have friends and family in the towers, so you just start to worry about you know the whole situation.

Stan Jastrzebski
Yeah, and it sounds like you're you're speaking to the fact that I mean there was a lot of guessing that was going on. You said you talked about is the air force base is the arch going to wind up a target and and at the moment at that time I was an intern at a radio station in the Hancock Building in Chicago, you know the second tallest building in Chicago, and and everybody's going well. Tall buildings might be bad to be in right now. So, how did you deal with like turning the the sort of guesswork into reportage and trying to figure things out?

Beth Pike
Right. Well, for me, I was just really paying attention to what was going on because I get my marching orders out of New York, which of course they were obviously hadn't enough going on there. But Chicago Bureau is who I worked through, and we were-I was just on standby and just there to as if something came up where I had to get to it, I would be the closest one to get to it. If it happened, you know, in my area in Missouri, or you know, Kansas, or somewhere else that's nearby where I could get to it. So it's just really a waiting game at that point. I wasn't on the clock in terms of where they were. I was hired as a freelancer, so you know, I was just. But I guess you could say on call, on standby,

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should I need to, you know, go and and cover it. Sure, I did do with Oklahoma City bombing, but I did did not do anything with 9/11.

Stan Jastrzebski
Let me bring one more voice into our conversation. Lee Wilkins taught at the Missouri School of Journalism from 1990 to 2013. Has worked on several books about media ethics and Lee, let me let me just kind of close our hour with you talking about how we did ethically both in that time and how we've sort of handled it going forward in terms of you know Kyle talked about the the humanity of the moment married with the journalism of the moment, what's your assessment of of how how we did as a journalistic society in terms of our ethics?

Lee Wilkins
I'm going to talk a little bit about just it's the small decisions in some ways that matter. So the first ethical decision that we had to make at MU was whether or not the students who were on air on KOMU were going to wear American flag lapel pins, and that seems like a small decision, but it was a hugely important one because it took about two days for the students and the staff, faculty, to work their way through it, and ultimately it opened the door for us to be able to talk about what does it mean to be loyal, and what does it mean to be a professional journalist, and what are the other loyalties that you get to juggle while you're doing your professional job? And I mean, we've heard about people worried about their kids, as did I. People worried about their employers, as did a lot of people. People worried about their friends. These are all loyalties that professionals consider. They're all loyalties that we weigh it. How have we done? I think we're imperfect, but that's kind of the nature of journalism in many ways.

Stan Jastrzebski
And so, in our last minute or so, what do you think we should we should learn and teach going forward? What did what did that change about the way we build young journalists and the way we teach them to make sense of what everyone in this last hour has said was a really chaotic situation.

Lee Wilkins
I think there are a couple of I think there are a couple of really important things. The first one is that you do your job as a journalist if you find the humanity in the situation and all the people involved. It was not a time to be jingoistic. It was not a time to call people the enemy, and I think we still struggle with that as a profession and as a citizenry and everything else. Secondly, I think it tells, especially young people, you can never be too prepared because you do not know what you're going to wake up to or what's going to be around the corner from you, and you have to be ready for that.

Stan Jastrzebski
Thank you so much for that, and and my thanks in the last hour to all of our guests: Imam Shakir Hamoodi, Mark Haim, Jeanette Porter, Mark Horvit, Fred Anklam, Kathy Kiley, Lee Wilkins, Beth Pike, and to all of you for listening to this hour-long special, "The Journalists We Became, Public Radio Post-9/11. We've heard everyone talk about how things have changed. Change is constant; it'll continue to happen, and we'll be here for it on KBIA. I'm Stan Jastrzebski. Have a good day.

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