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NATION/WORLD

MITCH ALBOM: Remembering the day before the day

September 10, 2006

BY MITCH ALBOM
FREE PRESS COLUMNIST[Email this](#) [Print this](#)

Tomorrow, we remember.

But today, we lament.

Tomorrow, Sept. 11 -- the five-year anniversary -- we see the deluge of grizzly images, we hear speeches from politicians, we make vows to avenge those who perished, we make grim promises to fight on in the war on terror.

But today is just as sad an anniversary. Today, in some ways, aches even more.

If Sept. 11 was the day we never saw coming, Sept. 10 was the day we will never see again.

And we miss it terribly.

We miss when you could pull up at an airport without bracing for a military exercise.

We miss when toothpaste was not considered a weapon.

We miss when the most well-known Muslim names in America were professional athletes.

We miss when a "cell" was a biological term.

We miss when politicians didn't make you feel that you're one of us or you're one of them.

We miss when one party didn't call the other party cowards and consider that a foreign policy.

We miss Sept. 10.

The tragic reminder

We miss when going to New York City meant a mandatory trip to a Broadway play, not a mandatory trip to a large, sad hole in lower Manhattan.

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We miss when seeing someone reading the Quran didn't make us nervous.

We miss when we actually *celebrated* how free and open our borders were.

We miss when Al-Jazeera was just another TV channel we'd never heard of.

We miss when we saw war crimes and said, "Our soldiers don't do that," instead of, "Well, look at what the other guys do."

We miss when Islam was just another religion in the world.

We miss when pilots used to let kids come up to see the cockpit.

We miss when movies would open with shots of a skyline and two giant blue towers.

We miss when we never thought of sending anthrax through the mail, or lighting a shoe on fire, or putting explosives in sports drink bottles.

We miss simplicity.

We miss Sept. 10.

A troubled future

We miss when "jihad" was a foreign word.

We miss when belts could stay on.

We miss when we didn't war amongst ourselves over a war somewhere else.

We miss when we thought paying for gas was just an expensive habit, not a means of enriching our enemies.

We miss when we spoke to our Arab neighbors and didn't hear a voice in our heads whispering, "I wonder whose side they'd be on?"

We miss when you didn't have to show ID for everything.

We miss the feeling that there wasn't a large cloud hanging over our future, and our children's future, and our grandchildren's future, a feeling that nothing could be trusted, that you were never really safe, that this enemy which is only too happy to die for its cause wants to make sure we go first -- and this enemy is not going away.

We miss sleeping soundly.

We miss not being so smart.

We miss our naiveté.

We cry on Sept. 11.

But we miss Sept. 10.

Contact **MITCH ALBOM** at 313-223-4581 or malbom@freepress.com. Order tickets for the charity launch of Albom's new novel, "For One More Day," at 248-433-1515 or ticketmaster.com. The Sept. 27 event at Fox Theatre features Tony Bennett, Hank Azaria and Joe Dumars. Tickets are \$40 and include an autographed copy. www.freep.com/mitch.

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