



**Greg Bosch**

**Staples Graduate, Class of 2002**

**Contacted by Abby Lustig  
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*Greg Bosch was born in July of 1984. He graduated from Staples High School in 2002 and continued his undergraduate studies at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he studied Computer Science and Business. He later attended graduate school at Lehigh, obtaining a master's degree in Computer Science. He is currently living in Fairfield, Connecticut, and works as a Software Engineer.*

***What class were you in when you heard the news? How did you find out?***

I heard that a small plane had hit the World Trade Center while passing between classes. I remember being outside the library. By the time my next class had finished, there was talk that it wasn't a small plane, but a large commercial airliner.

***What was the school day like after the word spread?***

To be honest, I don't remember the rest of the school day as much as I can recall later while at home. I don't remember hearing a lot of credible news during the day at school. The tragedy set in upon seeing video of the towers falling.

I recall my father saying that he could see the smoke rising from the towers from Burying Hill beach's parking lot in Westport.

***How did 9/11 affect the rest of school year?***

No one among my immediate family, extended family, family friends, friends or (as far as I know) families of friends, lost their lives on 9/11. Also, among that group of people, I knew no one that was actively serving in the military. I would suspect those most affected were those that knew someone that was killed in the tragedy or was now headed off to war.

I think it's fair to say that I experienced 9/11 and subsequent events (e.g., the war in Iraq), through the news and not first hand.

***Before 9/11, what had you learned about terrorism in school?***

I don't recall terrorism being discussed as a formal part of a lesson plan in any of my classes. However, it's also hard to recall so many years later.

*As a senior, do you think your class reacted differently than other grades?*

That's difficult to say. I would expect that something like this transcends grade-levels. By way of example: if there was a freshman that lost a loved one on 9/11 or had a relative deploy to Iraq, I would expect that individual's classmates, friends, team-mates, etc. would react differently than those that were, comparatively, more isolated from the tragedy. I don't recall anything specific.

*Once the information started to get passed around, the principal ordered the computers to be taken offline and the TV's to be shut down. Do you think that was a good idea?*

Westport Public Schools shut off the Internet so that students could not access the news on 9/11. I recall some teachers resorting to using AM/FM radios to keep up with the news. In some classrooms, teachers simply turned on the radio and let their students listen, rather than following the day's lesson plan.

I think it's difficult to criticize much of the decision-making that occurred in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

For example, have you ever heard of the Air Force Pilot Heather "Lucky" Penny? This [*Washington Post*] [article](#) goes on to talk about how there were no armed military planes to protect the air space around Washington D.C. on 9/11. Rather, upon the news, Penny and her wingman were ordered to down United 93 by ramming the airliner with their fighter jets. Today — the article explains — our military keeps at least a few aircraft armed and fueled at all times.

So... Did Westport Public Schools do the right thing by censoring the Internet. I don't know. But my point is that what we are talking about seems small in comparison.

Indeed, it was more difficult for individuals to understand what was going on. I choose to believe that who ever made that call did what they believed was the right thing to do.

And if your investigative reporting takes you this far, I would be interested "If something like 9/11 were to occur again, what is Westport Public School's policy regarding allowing students to listen to news reports and access the Internet?"

I wonder how the administration would handle similar events today. Let's hope we never have to find out.

*Did you have a cell phone? Did you contact anyone after you learned about the attacks?*

During my time at Staples, students weren't allowed to use cellphones on campus. (I'm not sure if that rule has changed, since.) However, on 9/11 students didn't get in trouble for using their cellphone. If you had one, you could use it. Nevertheless, many people found that the phone lines (cellular or landline) were overloaded and their calls would not connect. I didn't have a cell phone when I was in high school. I can't be certain, but I don't think data-plans were very popular — even among those that had a cellphone — at the time. With no Internet and no cellular data plan, it was hard to understand what was really going on.

***Would your life or the life of anyone you know be different today had the attacks not happened?***

I think all of our lives would be different. There are many reasons for this. However, these issues are massively complex, and I don't have the background or expertise to speak to them with authority. Nevertheless, here's what I suspect:

(1) I think the politics of this country would be very different. I believe there is evidence that suggests George W. Bush was re-elected to finish what was started in Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11. Similarly, there is evidence that suggests that Barack Obama was elected to end the war in Afghanistan and close Guantanamo Bay. Of course, neither President has been successful thus far.

(2) Legislation like the Patriot Act, which is currently being rebranded as the Freedom Act, was enacted. 9/11 gave birth to perhaps the largest governmental spying program the world has ever seen, which in turn brought fame to Edward Snowden for disclosing it. The NSA has likely recorded your telephone conversations and their justification for doing so, just like our justification for going to war with Iraq, was 9/11.

(3) I fly frequently. Airport security in the post 9/11 world is very different than it use to be.

It doesn't matter where you stand on the issues politically (Republican, Democrat or somewhere in between). Things are different.

***Is there anything else you would like to add?***

I believe school was dismissed at the regular time; but I may be mistaken. After school programming was canceled. I didn't see the footage of the towers falling until returning home.

At a more intimate level, I know a few people that served in Iraq and Afghanistan and others that serve in the military today. One individual, from college, was awarded both the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal for Valor during his service in Iraq and Afghanistan.