



Max Lance

Student, Class of 2002

*Interviewed by Doug Steffen
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Max Lance was a senior at Staples High School on 9/11 and Editor-in-Chief of Inklings, the school newspaper. He went to the University of Southern California and graduated in 2006. He is a “reformed” comedian and currently a writer for Sony Pictures Entertainment in Los Angeles.

What specific class were you in when you heard the news?

I don't remember being in class because we didn't have the Internet, TV, and smartphones - not to sound like an old man, of course. But we didn't at the time. The news traveled more word of mouth cast-around; everyone was talking. Not a lot of students had all of the specifics. The school, if I remember correctly, made an announcement over the intercom saying an incident in the area had happened. We at the time had no idea that it was a terrorist attack, but that we would all be okay and the necessary procedures would be taken. We had sort of known and heard things that people told us, but there was a ban on televisions in the school so we didn't really know what was going on. I guess they didn't want the students to know too much. We ended up going home early, I think, and it was left to our parents or someone close to us to explain the details to us.

How did 9-11 affect that school year?

It brought the whole school and class together in a way that I had never seen before. It created an effect of solidarity. All the high school bullshit - no one cared about that anymore. People came together for the greater good. It really was a key event in bringing together the Westport, Connecticut, and Staples community.

How did your life in Westport change due to 9-11?

What hits home for me is that, it's Westport, and a lot of kids' parents work in the financial district and still do. The guidance counselor's office was open and obviously they were there to talk to people. I was a senior and the Editor-in-Chief of Inklings - Staples' news team- and at the time so I felt responsibility. It was a tragedy in the traditional sense. That had never hit Westport in such a personal way like that, especially on a large scale. Westport is such a bubble. It is one of the wealthiest towns in Connecticut, if not the country. And I would say on that day, tragedy woke a lot of people up. There's a much bigger world out there.