



Chi-Ann Lin

Teacher

*Interviewed by Sophia Weinberg
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Chi-Ann Lin was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1979. She studied at the University of Connecticut. In 2001, she began her teaching career in the social studies department at Staples High School.

Where were you during the attack?

I was with a freshman class in Staples High School.

How did you learn of the attack?

The secretary popped into my room and mentioned some sort of devastating plane crash in New York. When she said that, I was in disbelief. I didn't ask for her to repeat it. There was no explanation of whether it was accidental or intentional.

How did you react immediately in class?

I was in disbelief; I thought she might have been wrong. I was worried because I knew someone, my best friend, actually, who worked at the financial center. She wasn't there that day, though.

How did the attack impact your life?

I feel like we live in a different world now. It's a benchmark in our history: this is now post-9/11. It's terrifying to have to worry about things you didn't have to worry about before. We were so close to so many people in New York; so many people have ties. Some of my colleagues had connections to people in New York.

Would your life be any different today if the attacks hadn't happened?

Yes. I never stopped to think about it. Personally, I love to travel around the world. And now I'm sometimes worried because so many places are under the threat of attack. So many beautiful countries and cultures are in the world, yet people don't want to travel to them because of this threat.

I also feel a great responsibility now when I'm teaching Islam.

What did you think about terrorism before the attacks? Did the attacks change your view on terrorism? If so, how?

It was not a concern before the attacks. It's now present every day. We turn on the news and it's there.

How did you inform your students?

We got a slip of paper that was supposed to be read to the kids. It was a universal message. Some kids wanted to get in touch with their loved ones. None of my students were directly impacted, but it was still a concern.

Did you have a cell phone?

Yes. Cell phones were not common, but I had one and contacted my family in Manhattan.

Before 911, in your classes, had you talk about terrorism?

I had only been here for a week or two.

In the coming days, what was class like?

I didn't know what to say to them. It was hard to put words to the emotion. But people were drawn together.