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As I watched the tragedies unfold on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, I was certain of two things. First, I knew that the American and United pilots were not flying the airplanes; and second, I knew nothing would ever be the same.

I believe that flight attendants were the first casualties on that terrible day. Incredible bravery and heroism appeared on those airplanes and continued in the buildings and on the ground for days, weeks and months in the aftermath of the tragedy.

My heart goes out to every victim but my mindset stays where it all began—on the airplanes. From American flight attendants Amy Sweeney and Betty Ong who called AA Flight Service to relay as much information as possible to the United flight attendant Sandra Bradshaw who told her husband she was boiling water to throw on the hijackers, each one a hero that started off their day by putting on a familiar blue uniform and heading off to work—a day that should have been like any other, but one that changed everything.

Thank you, pilots and flight attendants on American flights 11 and 77 and United flights 93 and 175. You are all my heroes.

Sincerely,

Leisa Richardson  
Trustee  
American Airlines Flight Attendant, DFW, for 17 years