

The Boys at Monday Breakfast *by Harry Zirkelbach*

Voltaire wrote, “The art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature causes the cure.”

On this day 09-11-2011, in the Journal kept, I wrote, America changed today. That moment, I had no idea how prophetic that would become.

On Sept 11, 2001, I was having breakfast as on each Tuesday, at Zaidy’s Restaurant, 1st Ave and Adams Street. For near twenty years, our group of six to ten, met each Tuesday for Breakfast. Today we began gathering at 7:00 a.m. as the doors opened. We order breakfast, casually consider every conversation as important to the originator, though it was not uncommon to deride an idea, topic, but never the presenter. Friends for years, we share gathered thoughts, drift comfortably into these final years.

As usual, a single TV focused on a Network New York News Channel. Then one in the mix mentioned that the News anchor reported that a small plane had struck a downtown New York building. More news later. We all recall the B-25 hitting the south face of Empire State Building during WW II.

We return to our topic at hand, and the Network continued the trivia in progress. By the time we leave for our separate ways, the early extent of the events of 9-11, as it became known forever, were just coming to the Network and our attention. We leave, then returned to our tedium. It would require days for each of us there that morning to fully understand what had happened to America.

Meanwhile ... That day I record nothing else about the events of that New York Morning. In the evening of the same day Barbara and I attended a Tony Bennett Concert at Fiddler’s Green beginning at 7:30 p.m. There was no mention was made of 9-11.

And on this date, I casually recorded in my Journal, a tale recited by a Wisconsin youngster days before.

“I had this dream. It seemed endless. It was frightening. As in all great dreams the scene developed slowly, during which I became aware that I was standing at the edge of horror. Naturally the scene has no real edge, fading into dark mystery in front, over and beside me. I was aware that I was stationary, obviously focusing on what was impossible to see or understand. As time dissolves I am aware that a body stands beside me, on either side.

“Only sneaking a random peek do I come to recognize them as Tom Cruise on my left, Sylvester Stallone on my right. Neither peeked at me, nor the other, and no words were spoken. Visibility gradually increased. So did the heat, becoming unbearable.

“Through the murky distance it became apparent there was an endlessly high, wide, wall glowing red with heat. Then closed doors could be distinguished; three of them. The ever heating silence continued. In time the door opposite Cruise opened.

“The scene was ugly. Fully occupying the large open doorway emerged the most unattractive woman I had seen, or imagined.

“Huge. Skin and fat hung from her face, arms, waist, legs, all dripping some kind of slime. When she opened her mouth to smile, ugly became really repulsive. All this leered at Tom Cruise. After a bit, an ominous voice announced in measured terms

‘Tom Cruise for your treachery, vileness, lack of compassion, degradation, you have been judged and condemned to an eternity’ – and at that the woman in the open door leapt on Cruise and dragged him into the space she had left. The door was shut with a clang, plus screaming and violence of intensity not heard before.

“This scene is repeated with an even uglier woman who captures Stallone after he is named and denounced. Oh, the screaming. I am alone. Thought this would overpower me.

“Then the expected. The door in front of me opened and there stood Nicole Kidman, youthful, beautiful beyond description. I am partially absorbed with the two preceding denouements, plus the apparition in the door-way before me, when that chilling voice pronounces ... ‘Nicole Kidman.’

“I don’t know which of the two screams awoke me, sitting up in bed, soaked in sweat, ashes and ugly sores.”