

“Nothing Much Going on Today”^[OBJ]

Interviewee: Peter Wehner

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Project: George W. Bush Oral History

Peter Wehner, deputy director of speechwriting for President George W. Bush, was in the White House on the morning of September 11, 2001. He recalls the normalcy of events before the 9/11 attacks began.

Peter Wehner: I went to the 7:30 staff meeting, which I would do for Mike [Gerson] when he was not there. One of the issues that came up was that there was supposed to be a congressional barbecue at the White House that evening, five o'clock or something like that. I remember consciously thinking, Boy, this is one of the more boring days of the Bush Presidency. There didn't seem to be a lot going on. There was a pro forma quality to the staff meeting that morning.

President Bush 41 came in at the end of that staff meeting. He had stayed that night and he came into the Roosevelt Room, to the door closest to the Oval Office, just to say hi. It was just for a minute or two, which was nice. He was gracious and it was fun.

I went back to my office on the fourth floor of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building and wrote an email to Mike based on the notes, just to recapitulate the meeting. The first line of my note was, “There's nothing much going on today.” I sent it exactly five minutes before the first plane hit. I sent it at 8:41 A.M., and I think the first plane hit the tower at 8:46.

End of excerpt.

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