

Sally Regenhard:

We still don't know what happened in those buildings.

Narrator:

The jersey widows were not the only ones seeking answers and becoming frustrated.

In New York, Sally Regenhard, who had lost her firefighters son Christian in the buildings collapse was forming the Skyscraper Safety Campaign.

Sally Regenhard:

The 9/11 emergency tapes and recordings, plus five hundred interviews done with the fire department right after 9/11, all that material has been withheld from the public.

Narrator:

Sally partnered with widow Monica Gabrielle, who lost her husband Richard at the world trade center.

Monica Gabrielle:

Why did the buildings fall; how could, how could skyscrapers just like crumple to the ground in ten seconds?

Narrator:

Never before or since had fire caused a steel framed building to collapse.

World Trade Center building number seven, never hit by an airplane, also collapsed that evening.

Monica Gabrielle:

The largest structural collapse in world history; the largest loss of life on American soil since the Civil War and not one governmental or elected official wanted to know why and how this happened?

Narrator:

Realizing strength in numbers, nine eleven families rallied at the capital to press for answers

Kristen Breitweiser:

We need a full independent investigation. We must ask the tough questions and seek out the difficult answers. We must as a country grow and be made stronger and safer by the bitter lessons learned on September eleven.

Mindy Kleinberg:

We are asking you America, to stand behind us.

I was terrified to talk in front of anybody. This is not something that any one of us had ever done before.

Narrator:

The rally united once isolated families. Bob McIlvaine, who lost his son Bobby, came from Philadelphia to join the group.

Bob McIlvaine:

Being from Philly, it's like you're out of the loop. I was floundering by myself just talking to people trying to find anyone.

Monica Gabrielle:

That was um, the first time we all got together in a new direction to push for the commission.

Narrator:

Sharing many of the same questions and concerns, a coalition of family members began to take form. It's called, a formal investigation.

Mindy Kleinberg:

Call your congressman told them that you want to be safe

VP Cheney:

An investigation must not interfere with the ongoing efforts to prevent the next attack.

Newscaster:

President Bush signed legislation today creating an independent commission to investigate the September eleventh attack on America.

Narrator:

Buckling under pressure, the White House was finally agreeing to a deal, but in a stunning series of revelations, it soon appeared that the White House was stacking the odds against an investigation it had not wanted in the first place.

To monitor the commission, leading victim relatives established the Family Steering Committee. The group provided the commissioners with hundreds of well researched questions, for which they expected answers.

Bloomberg, Mayor of New York:

That's the official start, the first public hearing of what is going to be an extraordinarily difficult and important job.

Narrator:

In March 2003, four hundred and forty one days after the attacks, the official investigation began. in New York.

Bloomberg:

Welcome. I'm mayor Michael Bloomberg, the city of New York.

Narrator:

From the outset, many families were concerned by how the investigation was being conducted.

Lorie Van Auken:

We begged and pleaded that people should be put under oath. At the beginning, they were not.

Bloomberg:

... will describe our city government...

Narrator:

As the hearings progress, the families were becoming more and more frustrated by what they perceived as softball questioning from the commissioners.

Lee Hamilton, co-Chair, 911 commission:

... appreciated already...

Lorie Van Auken:

... sir...[noise] the questions that we the families wrote, these are the people that were coming to testify today, and the questions were not asked.

Hearing observer 1:

... it was a complete waste of time, it was a bunch of people throwing accolades at each other and asking the same questions one a after the other.

Hearing observer 2:

... skirting around issues, not being refined enough in their questions...

Bob McIlvaine:

...it's a stonewall, it's to cover up as far as I'm concerned, I'm very bitter, very angry.

Narrator:

Still, no one was prepared for what they then uncovered about Philip Zelikow, the executive director of the 9/11 commission...

Patty Casazza:

...he who had the power to say where the investigation was going, who would be interviewed, what would go into the 9/11 Commission Report, what wouldn't.

Kristen Breitweiser:

We have found out that [he] not only served on the transition team of the Bush administration, that he was a person who wrote a draft memo for the set up of the Bush administration's National Security Council, that he was an individual who wrote the preemptive war strategy that was eventually used for the war in Iraq, that he is a close friend of Condoleezza

Rice's.... we want him to resign.

Narrator:

Philip Zelikow refused to resign, and Chairman Kean dismissed the families concerns over conflicts of interest.

Robert McIlvaine:

What did the August sixth members say? And then she would start going off...

[Condoleezza Rice on the witness stand]:

Condoleezza Rice:

it was historical information based on old reporting there was no new threat information and it did not in fact warn of any coming attacks inside the united states...

Robert McIlvaine:

And what was the title of the memo?

Condoleezza Rice:

I believe the title was bin Laden determined to attack inside the United States.

John Kerry:

Now it's beyond the campaign so the promise I had to keep this out of the campaign is over. Mister president you knew they were in the United States. you were warned by the CIA; you knew in July they were in the United States; you were told again by briefing officers in august that it was s dire threat; didn't do anything the harden border security, didn't do anything to harden airport security, didn't do anything to engage local law enforcement, didn't do anything to round up INS and consular offices and say we have to shut us down, and didn't warn the American people....what did you do... nothing.