

# SURVIVOR RISES FROM THE ASHES



**NEW LIFE:** Marcy Borders, the WTC survivor in this iconic 9/11 photograph, fell into despair and addiction but has cleaned up her act and regained custody of son Zay-Den.



## 9/11 gal clean & sober

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She's finally shaken off the demons of 9/11.

Marcy Borders battled severe depression, became addicted to crack and saw her two children taken from her in the 10 years since a photographer snapped this iconic image of her, terrified and covered in dust, fleeing the World Trade Center attacks.

But Osama bin Laden's death helped changed all that, said the former Bank of America worker from Bayonne, N.J.

"[God] got rid of my biggest fear," said Borders, 38, who learned shortly after entering drug rehab that Navy SEALs shot dead the 9/11 mastermind.

"The treatment got me sober, but bin Laden being killed was a bonus. I used to lose sleep over him, have bad dreams about bin Laden bombing my house, but

now I have peace of mind."

Borders was a month into her new bank job on Sept. 11, 2001, when a hijacked plane hit her the north tower where she worked.

Panicked, she ignored a boss' order to stay at her desk and fled out to the street. She was paralyzed by what she saw.

"There were wounded and the injured" everywhere, she said.

Then the north tower collapsed. "I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. The world went silent," she said.

A stranger pulled her to safety in a building lobby — where a photographer snapped the ghostly picture of her covered in dust that was published worldwide.

Afterward, "It was like my soul was knocked down with those towers," she said.

"My life spiraled out of control. I didn't do a day's work in nearly 10 years, and by 2011 I was a complete mess. Every

time I saw an aircraft, I panicked. If I saw a man on a building, I was convinced he was going to shoot me.

"I started smoking crack cocaine, because I didn't want to live."

In mid-April, Borders said, she hit rock-bottom.

"I knew I'd be dead in weeks unless I did something," she said.

Borders checked herself into rehab on April 23 — and eight days later was sitting in a recreation room when residents started saying, "They got bin Laden!"

Borders, who left rehab on May 20, said she now believes she's solidly on the road to recovery.

She's moved back with her partner, Donald Edwards, and has regained custody of her 18-year-old daughter, Noelle, and 3-year-old son, Zay-den.

"The last 40 days have been the best since Sept. 11," she said. "We've got our family back. The kids have got their mom back."

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