

Anderson Cooper, CNN Anchor Broadcast

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Well normally we end our broadcast with something ridiculous, something to kind of make you smile before going to bed but it didn't seem appropriate this week so tonight just a personal thought as we end. It's understandable that in the hours since Osama bin Laden's killing there'd be so much talk about him, so much coverage after nearly ten years of waiting, ten years of imagining where he was, what his life was like, wondering if he would strike again. It is a relief to know he's gone. It's like exhaling after holding one's breath for a painfully long time. We all want to hear as much detail as we can and that's natural and understandable.

Some day, however, in the not-too-distant future, I hope we no longer give bin Laden the satisfaction of ever speaking his name or even remembering him in our nightmares. I keep thinking of him now buried at sea, wrapped in a white cloth bag in a weighted bag slid into the icy ocean. They say it was done according to Islamic tradition, that upsets some people and I understand why but the message it sends is that we are a country that does not drag the bodies of our enemies through the streets. We do not behead them for the entertainment of others; we do not mutilate their corpses. I think of his body sinking into the sea, disappearing into the dark depths of the ocean, this man who terrorized so many for so long has simply disappeared. The ocean is a very big place and in the end Osama bin Laden was a very small man. There will be no grave marker for him, no place for fanatical followers to come and pay their twisted respect.

He is gone. We cannot nor should we ever forget the horror that this man unleashed but as the months and year pass I hope that his name is hardly ever uttered. I hope his picture disappears as well. As the years pass and the years ahead I hope that it is not the wasted life of this mass murderer we remember. I hope instead we remember the lives of those we lost. I hope we remember Leon Smith, Jr, one of the brave New York City firefighters who rushed into the burning Twin Towers. Being a firefighter was his dream. His fellow firefighters told the New York Times he was known for fixing the cars of just about anyone in the firehouse as well as the cars of their wives and girlfriend, even if it meant making those repairs after coming off an 24 hour shift. Leon was 48 years old and left three daughters behind. I hope we remember Samantha Lightbourn-Allen, a budget analyst at the Pentagon. She was 36, a mother of a 16 year old son, a 12 year old daughter, a born-again Christian.

Friends say she spent all her spare time with her kids and in her church. Samantha also left behind a twin sister. And Craig Damian Lilore, he was just 30, worked in finance for Cantor Fitzgerald, high up in the North Tower. The Times said he also had a law degree. Craig was a husband and a father to a newborn son Joseph Craig. That's him therein the photo. Craig had recently bought a boat but had never had a chance to name it. His brother-in-law told the Times they'd give it a name and call it Craigger. In the years ahead, I hope it is their names we speak, not bin Laden's. I hope it's how they lived their lives we remember in addition to how those lives ended. I hope we remember all that they did and all they never lived to do.

If you'd like to take a few moments tonight to learn more about those who died on 9/11, you can go to our website at ac360.com where we have a list of remembrance. Goodnight