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Written by Tony Mussari  
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### ***What Is America? We Must Never Forget.***

***Memory is the mother of all wisdom. -Aeschylus***

Our *What Is America?* series started shortly after September 11, 2001, when Kitch, Erin Hovanic and I produced our first episode at Ground Zero in New York. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon. We had no credentials, but I was able to talk my way into the site where I recorded material for four hours. It was, without question, one of the most transformational experiences of my life.

As I looked at the massive destruction, I thought about the husband of one of my former students who lost his life in this place. With the sights, the sounds and the smell of the devastation of The World Trade Center recorded in my mind and in my heart, I decided that I would dedicate whatever resources and opportunities I had to tell this story in a Windsor Park way with compassion, concern and without commercial motive.



Since then we have produced 25 episodes for this series. It has taken us from the World Trade Center in New York, to Point Thank You on the upper West Side, Shanksville, Pennsylvania, The United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, The Healing Field in Wilkes-Barre, PA and Washington, D.C. where we followed Captain Patrick Murphy when he returned from Iraq.

The first several programs of this ongoing series were dedicated to Janine Snyder.

During the past eight years we have been frequent visitors to Shanksville. We have produced many episodes of *What Is America?* there. Every year since the series began, we have taken a delegation of students and friends to Shanksville, PA. We visit the temporary memorial and we screen an original episode of this series at the United Methodist Church.

In the past four years we have screened a series of programs entitled *Changed Forever*. These episodes focus on how visitors to the site have been changed by the power of this sacred place.

This year we will visit Shanksville with the Brighter Light Choral Ensemble, and we will screen an episode we recorded there in September 2007 when we screened *Changed Forever, Part 4: The Peace You Find Here Is Eternal*.

In keeping with our pledge to never forget, we constructed a memorial water garden in Windsor Park that features the Angels of Freedom. It was appropriately named The Angel Garden by Esther Heymann during her visit here with her husband Ben Wanio, Doug Adam and Chivon MacMillan, Flight 93 Ambassadors Chuck and Jayne Wagner and Janie Kiehl, and the creators of the Angels of Freedom, Eric and Tammy Pierson and their children.

In 2007, Windsor Park became the official home of the National 9/11 Remembrance Flag in the Wyoming Valley when the flag's co-creator Joanne Galvin presented the flag at our annual Irish Teachers Festival in Windsor Park.

*What Is America?* is our attempt to heal some of the wounds created on September 11, 2001. It is our attempt to remember the sacrifices of the brave men and women who went to work on that day and never came home. It is our attempt to celebrate their heroism. It is a reminder of the price they paid for our freedom, and that is something we must never forget.



Aeschylus was right: *"He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God."*

You will find many of the *What Is America?* episodes in the Now Playing section of the Windsor Park Theater.

If you are interested in sharing your ideas for our *What Is America?* series, please contact us at [TMussari@gmail.com](mailto:TMussari@gmail.com) or [Kitch152@aol.com](mailto:Kitch152@aol.com)