

SIX MONTHS THAT CHANGED A YEAR

9/11 The planes strike – as Martin Amis memorably describes them – ‘sleeking in like harsh metal ducklings’. Tony Blair publicly drains every drop of blood from his wife to help the injured of New York. Taking his time, George W. Bush formulates a measured response... which turns out to be the most expensive bollocking ever unleashed against shepherds. *But are we starting to forget?* Figures show that even as the second tower fell, people were switching off their

televisions, complaining they’d seen it all before.

Today in these pages, we help you make up your own mind about the absolute necessity of fighting the ongoing war that is Operation Improving Bloodbath...

An Absolute Atrocity Special by Armando Iannucci and Chris Morris

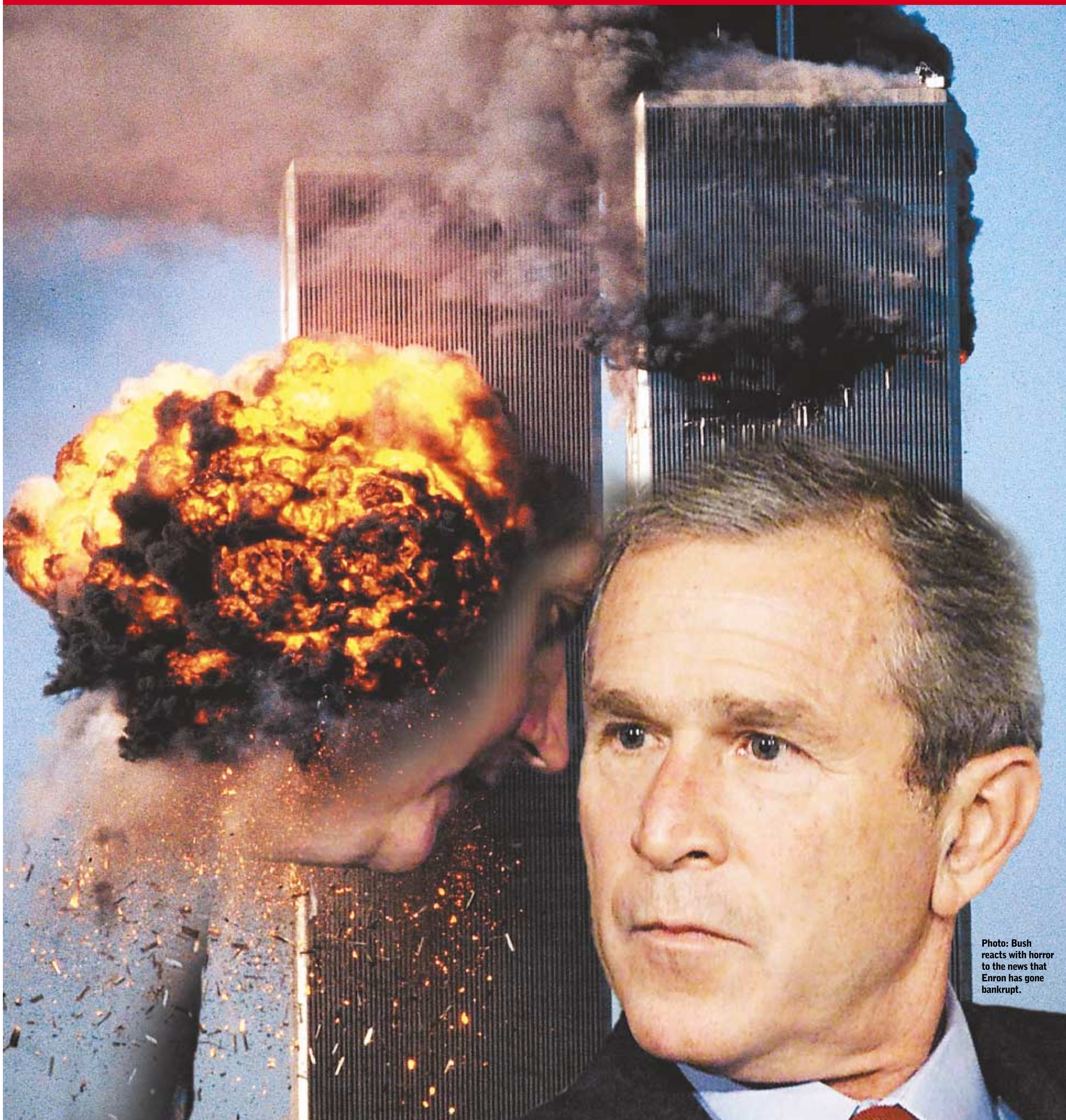


Photo: Bush reacts with horror to the news that Enron has gone bankrupt.

Inside

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR AWARD-WINNING COVERAGE:

POLLY TOYNBEE **My 14 months undercover in an al-Qaeda training camp**

PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE **How I parachuted with the Marines into Kabul and found a bearded Polly Toynbee shouting anti-American obscenities**

ROBERT FISK **How I smashed my own face in shouting ‘Don’t help me, I deserve this’ in front of thousands of bewildered refugees**

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS **How to drink Kabul dry in 72 hours and still keep your forelock fetchingly draped over your forehead**

DECCA AITKENHEAD: **How I got spazzed off my baps on Afghan Spangles to the sounds of DJ Smack Poppy’s bangin’ US Barrage**

ARTHUR SMITH **How I missed the plane**

PIERS MORGAN **How I became the new Hugh Cudlipp by digging up James Cameron and Malcolm Muggeridge and sitting their corpses behind desks at the Mirror**

JULIE BURCHILL **How I liberated Kandahar with the news that Tony Parsons is a bastard**

ALSO...

The resurgence of Kenneth Branagh since 11 September: pure coincidence?

THANKS TO ARTHUR MATTHEWS AND WARP RECORDS

Terror's march backwards

9/11: THE ATTACKS CHANGE FOR EVER THE BRITISH CONVENTION FOR PLACING THE DAY BEFORE THE MONTH IN DATES

WHAT BUSH DID

09:05... Bush informed of second WTC crash and quips 'tell NY air traffic control three strikes and you're out!'. This comment fails to capture public mood.

09:06... Emergency conference in school office as aides explain appalling gravity of situation. Through closed doors President is heard screaming: 'Phone Al Gore and tell him he won.'

09:07... He then orders 60 kilos of cocaine and shoots a White House dog for no reason.

09:43... Pentagon attacked.

09:44... Panic: Whitehouse officials attempt to preserve national control and command structure by slicing off Dick Cheney's head and putting it in a bag of ice cubes. ...meanwhile the President is helicoptered to Orlando then airdropped into Vermont... seizing a jet pack, he blasts himself into the sea off Newfoundland where he is collected by speedboat, hammered unconscious, miniaturised and injected into Laura Bush's foot.

13:23-14:12... The nation is unaware that it is being governed by a man who is now smaller than an e.coli and tumbling around in his wife's aorta.

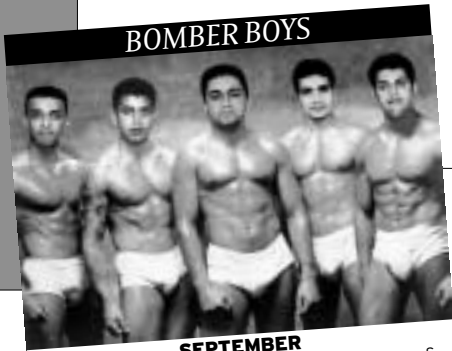
15:42... President retrieved by mosquito from Laura Bush's thigh and allowed to regain size under morphine.

16:12... A cleaner enters White House basement to find the President and George Bush Snr both naked in barrels of crude oil. They are deep in conversation.

16:41... Fortified by constant telephone contact with Larry Hagman, a much calmer Bush chairs war cabinet in Delaware.

20:30... Wearing a lucky Iraqi foot given to him by his father, Bush addresses the nation and solemnly vows that he will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed the attacks and Arabs.

The immediate aftermath of the attacks generates fear and paranoia across America. Angry shoppers beat up a woman who's put a towel on her head to dry her hair, while people whose faces look like aeroplanes are subject to 24-hour curfew... Citizens for whom this is 'a bad time' include Tiara Ryzst, Tray Njinkampps, Mo Jardine, Moss Lamb, the Twain-Towers family, and Will and Tray d'Senta.



FBI deny there was any way they could have predicted the 9/11 attacks from the 'Bomber Boy 2001' calendar which featured pictures of the hijackers posing nude, sold over 50,000 copies across the States, and showed no dates after 11 September, which itself was marked 'attack New York and Washington and go to heaven'.

The US public is still so sensitive to images of New York that Woody Allen is forced to remake Manhattan shot for shot but with all views of the city taken out. Furious that the new version, Quebec, will lack resonance, the director comforts himself by giving the part of Diane Keaton to eight 17-year-old girls.

Bush announces the start of Operation Bomb Islamics. He tells the US that coalition members agree this title is not offensive to 'good Muslims'. This is confirmed in a hastily written episode of The West Wing in which a good Muslim is played by Jeff Goldblum.

US bombs hit a Red Cross emergency centre on the outskirts of Kabul, but the Pentagon refuses to apologise, blaming the Red Cross logo for 'looking like the

crosshairs on a viewfinder'. Spokesman Paul Wolfowitz says: 'I'd ask this clearly self-loathing organisation to change its suicidal insignia before they kill us all.'

The Red Cross complies immediately and changes its logo to a blue baseball hat.

Rising concern over humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Henry Belt, renowned as the most mordant scurgist in Fleet Street, produces this cartoon (below) which is said to have made Alastair Campbell 'weep like a bereaved child'.

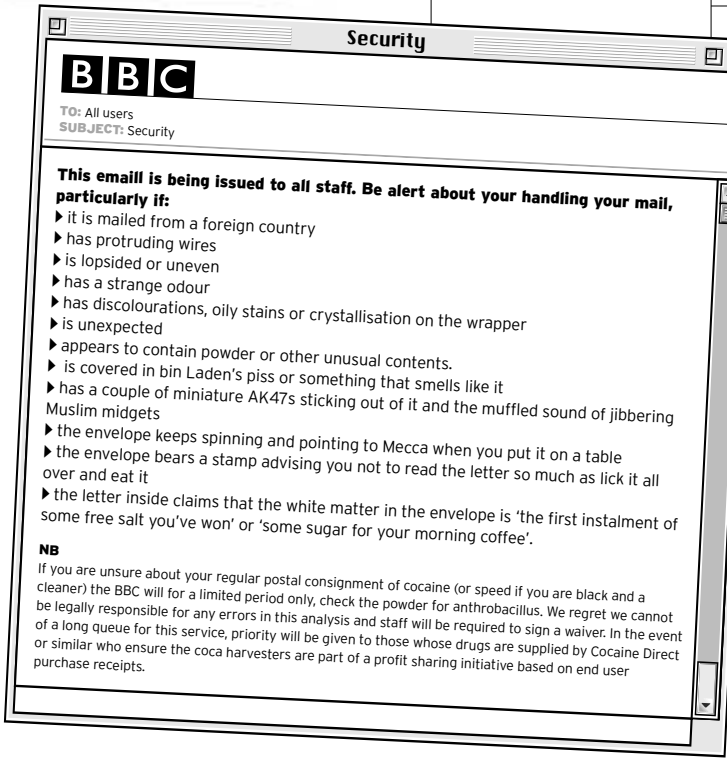
Less than two weeks into the bombing campaign, the US admits its new range of smart weapons may be too intelligent. Sources say the \$7m Supersophic missiles have a range of only 50 metres because less than a second after launch the onboard computer has worked out that violence only leads to more violence

and that all war is futile. Realising there's no point any more, the weapon either deliberately crashes itself into a beautiful woman or flies back home to America to spend the rest of its days buzzing around a farm. The Pentagon orders that, from now on, missiles must be 'no more intelligent than a steelworker'.

Blair announces support for the US intention to bomb during Ramadan but confirms that out of respect for Islam, all food parcels dropped during this period will be empty.

Anthrax scare in Britain – BBC advises staff.

US confidently announces the 'further complete death' of Osama bin Laden. Defence chiefs credit the new Fairhunter talking missile which pays local Afghan shepherds to report the location of enemy forces. If leads turn out to be false, Fairhunter returns to the shepherd and blows him up. (Diagram of blowing up shepherd at www.observer.co.uk/he-lied/geyserofguts)



Success of 9/11 attacks giving al-Qaeda acute 'second album' difficulty. FBI sources say the poor quality of follow-up activities reveals al-Qaeda's dreadful fear that they will never top the impact of the 11 September atrocities. In a recent

attack described as 'a shoddy and lame retreat', one man attempted to crash 100,000 paper darts into Chicago's Sears Tower. He was arrested without a struggle after throwing just seven darts through the fire escape window of a nearby office

block. Similar plots in Washington and Los Angeles were also foiled although a visiting Egyptian did successfully hurl a lobster at Jimmy Connors.

Western capitals are disrupted by a wave of hoaxers claiming to have sent anthrax through the post. The police report particular difficulties with people claiming to be hoaxers who turn out not to be hoaxers at all. Says an angry NYPD spokesman:

'False hoaxers are blocking the lines so the real hoaxers can't get through...How can we catch genuine hoaxers if false hoaxers prevent them from making their hoax in the first place?'

Washington informs Tony Blair of attack on US.

Airlines report no one willing to fly... Bush insists this is a sign of defiance and commissions Hollywood to make films in which being scared to go on an aeroplane

is an act of bravery. Filming immediately commences on an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie called Absolute Refusal about a businessman

who cannot face boarding a plane but heroically makes a meeting in Cairo by crossing the Atlantic on a pedalo.

Speculation about US retaliation grows. Expert opinion is divided over whether the 'medievalist' regime of Afghanistan should be bombed back to the Stone Age or forward into the twenty-first century. The prevailing

hawk argument runs: 'There's a big stone at the back of the Stone Age and we'll bomb them so hard back into that, they'll bounce all the way forward to 2002.'

The pop singer Michael Jackson is refused permission to lie down and sing songs from his new album into the World Trade Centre rubble.

Tony Blair declares that Britain must share in America's pain as Education Secretary Estelle Morris announces plans for children to drop French and instead spend two hours a day chewing gum. ...And as a mark of respect, all future Prom concerts will feature orchestras using baseball bats instead of bows.

Bush cheers American nation by launching Operation Death Unto Allah. Concern from coalition partners that this might constitute some sort of gaffe.

There are delays in sending American special forces to Afghanistan when the entire air force refuse to fly in a plane.

Twelve days after the collapse of the World Trade Centre, amazed rescue workers uncover an entire office floor that is still doing business. Despite falling 890 feet and being buried under 12,000 tons of rubble, all workers at Leeman Sachs Trading Inc are unharmed. They have remained at their desks since the bank's Tokyo HQ saw TV pictures of the burning towers, called

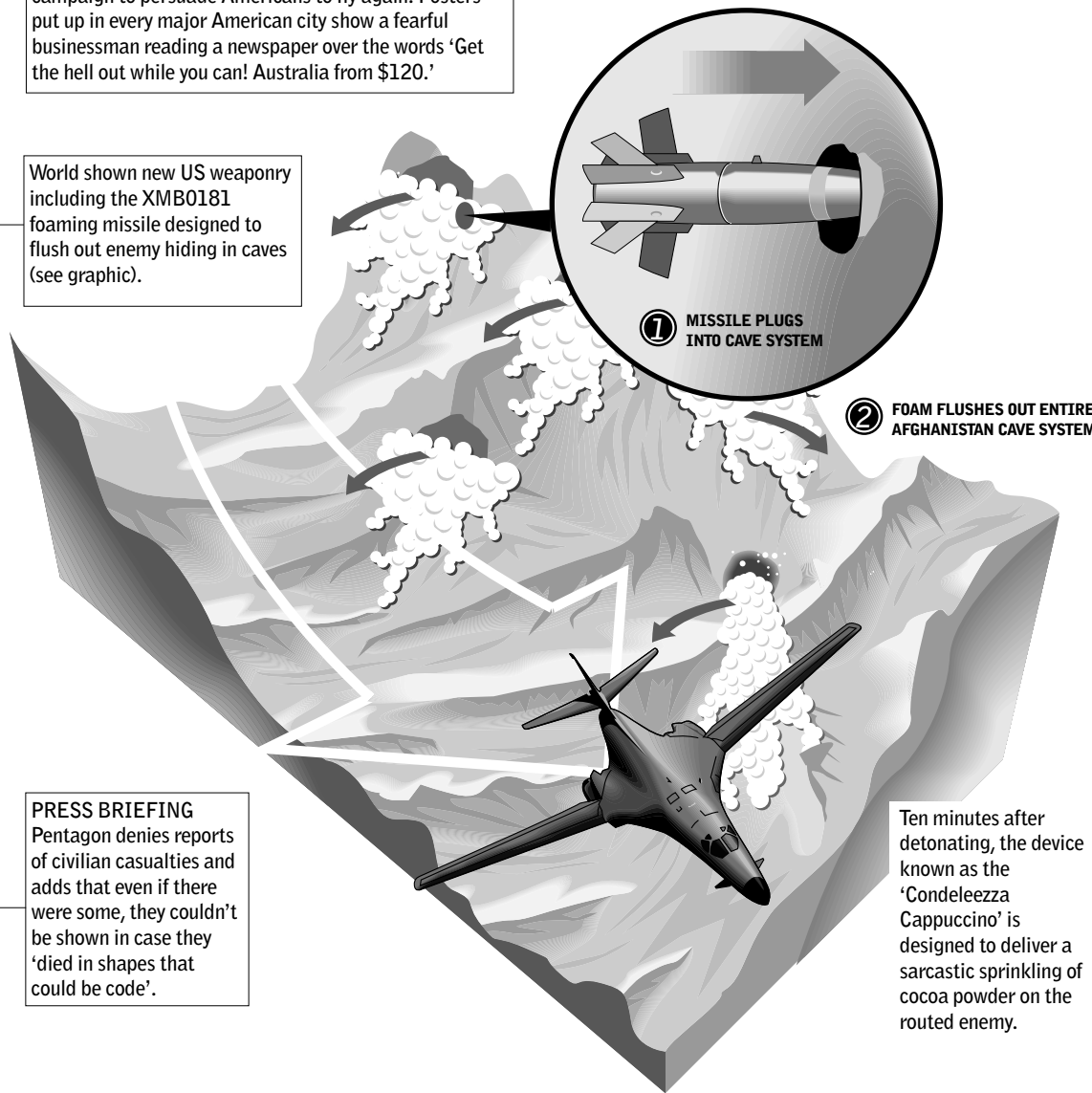
them up and ordered them to keep working. 'We were still sitting at our desks when we landed in the rubble,' said one dealer. 'I actually completed three transactions on the way down.' In fact trading at the buried floor has been so good since 11 September, the bank may sue the New York Fire Dept for digging them out.

While donations pour into New York, a suppressed report reveals that a huge benefit concert held last month for victims of the Pentagon attack raised just \$21. The show, featuring REM, Bon Jovi, Beck and the Rolling Stones, took place in a

purpose-built, 50,000-seat arena on the Pentagon lawn but despite saturation advertising only attracted 74 fans. Sources say that the Pentagon attack, already notorious as 'a TV dud', is now badly in need of a relaunch.

American Airlines launches a controversial emergency campaign to persuade Americans to fly again. Posters put up in every major American city show a fearful businessman reading a newspaper over the words 'Get the hell out while you can! Australia from \$120.'

World shown new US weaponry including the XMB0181 foaming missile designed to flush out enemy hiding in caves (see graphic).



Bush announces: 'It may take another 98 years to find bin Laden unless we've got him already.' In a TV address, standing next to a large veiled object, the President continues: 'For security reasons I cannot reveal whether this titanium steel canister does or does not contain the terror atrocity, Mr bin Laden. But I give the American people my word: bin Laden

has definitely been or will be captured. I have ordered that this box be placed, with its contents either full or empty, at the foot of the Lincoln memorial, and opened in 2099. In the meantime, I would ask you to remember that any future video statements by Mr bin Laden could well have been recorded before we put him in this containment. Unless he isn't in there.'

US on maximum alert as the FBI announces 'credible' intelligence suggesting al-Qaeda is planning to trample thousands of Americans to death under rampaging hippos. Bureau chiefs believe a build-up of four million mother hippos could be hidden north of the Canadian border and say a mother hippopotamus will charge at anything that comes between it and its calf. The alert follows the recent discovery of a baby hippo in a White House cupboard. Meanwhile, seven young hippos are said to have walked into a Chicago department store while an eighth was mysteriously presented as a gift to the actor Ben Affleck. Hardware shops in most states report they've now run out of anti-hippo suits.

Described as 'ill-conceived', a Broadway production in which New York firemen perform The Vagina Monologues closes after just three days.

New figures reveal that the number of people who perished in the attacks on 11 September may be as low as three. Counsellors are on standby to help New Yorkers deal with the trauma of being more upset than they needed to be. Pressure mounts on Mayor Giuliani –

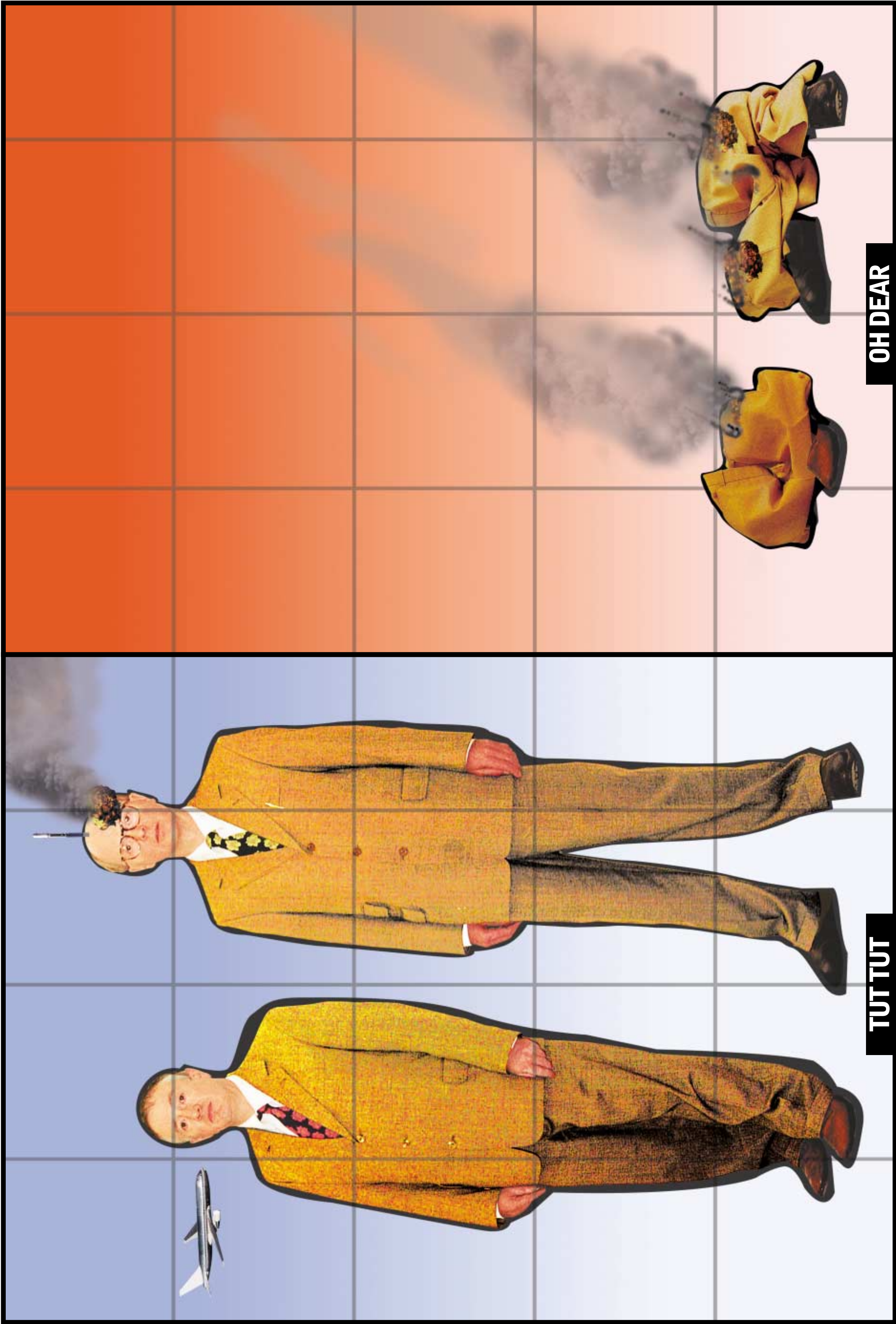
already criticised for his insistence that Ground Zero be kept shrouded in smoke – as the dust cleared briefly to reveal that the South Tower is still standing. Psychologists say original estimates of 6,000 were probably much larger due to 'all kinds of shit'.

Tony Blair triumphantly announces his UK delegation has persuaded the UN Afghan Conference that the broadcaster John Peel should be the new leader of Afghanistan. Says the Foreign Office: 'John will appeal both to the conservative Pashtun south – who prefer men to wear beards – as well as to the northern tribes who like music.' Blair says The Americans gave their approval after he told them Peel is 'the British Tom Hanks'. Peel will

be required to repair Afghanistan's shattered infrastructure, restore relations with Iran and Uzbekistan, unify the volatile stand-off between rival factions in the south-west, and continue with his Radio 4 series Home Truths on Saturday mornings, against his will if necessary. On the BBC's Newsnight, the US ambassador allows Jack Straw to confirm the news and then announces that Hamid Karzai has been installed in Kabul.

JACK STRAW GREETSS
ARIEL SHARON

Exclusive to The Observer: A specially commissioned piece of commemorabiliar



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