

## On Top of the World: Cantor Fitzgerald, Howard Lutnick, & 9/11: A Story of Loss & Renewal

Tom Barbash



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On the morning of September 11, 2001, nearly seven hundred of Cantor Fitzgerald's one thousand New York employees were at their desks on the top floors of One World Trade Center when a hijacked passenger plane struck eight floors below. Not one of them lived.

Their friends and colleagues who survived did so through random luck: They missed a train, had a business trip, took a sick day, or, in the case of CEO Howard Lutnick, dropped off his son at his first day of kindergarten.

*On Top of the World* tells the story not only of that tragic day but also of the complicated and emotionally charged events that followed in its wake. It is an intimate, often harrowing look at how private families processed a public atrocity, how corporate war-room strategy sessions saved the company from liquidation and the efforts of opportunistic competitors.

The book examines the media scrutiny that followed Lutnick, a man who lost his brother and so many friends, who struggled to be at once the compassionate leader the grieving families needed and the toughminded CEO his decimated company required. Finally, *On Top of the World* tells the story of a group of men and women -- some of whom were just starting out, others who had succeeded well beyond their expectations -- who were building homes and raising families together, who hired relatives and friends, and the brothers and sisters of those friends. That their business has survived and even flourished -- and that an initially uneasy but ultimately significant covenant has been formed between those who lived and the families of their lost friends is a powerful testament to the ability of a community to endure.

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