

September 11th, My Doorman, and Us **by Charles B. Wendel**

I was intending to write about issues related to risk management and some of the unique challenges bankers face today. That can wait.

This past Friday night, on September 11th, I took an elevator down to our package room to pick up some deliveries. Since the packages were large, the man working the desk, Armato, a slight Cuban 40 year old who always exudes a great attitude, said that he would bring the packages up later. He is usually our day doorman but was working an extra shift. It was hard not to notice his blue muscle car that was parked nearby, but I had never noticed the Marine Corp license plates.

When I commented that I did not know he was a Marine (and never would have guessed), he pushed his chair out from behind his desk and banged his fists on his legs, creating a metallic sound. He told me that in the 1990s he had a parachute accident and been shot in Cuba near the Guantanamo Bay base. I had no idea in part because he walks with no limps, is always quick to carry a package or open a door, and is more proactive than anyone else working in our Miami building.

What's this got to do with banking? He and men and women like him faced what for many of us would be unimaginable challenges and not only survived those challenges, but refused to let the disasters they faced define them.

Too often business people, certainly not just bankers, like to whine and make excuses. They complain about their bosses, their customers, the regulators'; they avoid decisions acting as if those decisions are life or death in importance.

As I was writing this, a friend, another former Marine, sent me the attached video presenting a former soldier, Travis Mills, who was blown up in Afghanistan; he is a quadruple amputee. Another profile in courage. And a great sense of humor.

We all know men and women like these men who have shown courage. Certainly September 11th provided us with hundreds of examples, most of which we have forgotten. Can't we show a bit more courage in our relatively speaking mundane jobs? Take some more chances? Stop playing politics? As Travis said, we can't control our situation, but we can control our attitude. And, Todd Beemer last words, "Let's Roll."