



THE HUMANITY IN  
ALL OF US



# NEW YORK CITY

## September 11, 2001

- ▶ We know the story. We saw the horrible images shown over, and over again that day 20 years ago. It forever changed our lives, reshaping all Americans.



8:46 am, September 11, 2001, the first airplane originating from *Boston's Logan Airport* hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.











► This is a different story, one that is not well known. In fact, until I was gifted tickets to see the Broadway Musical, I was totally unaware of how one little town far away showed the world that in the face of extreme adversity, humanity brings out the best in each other.



## Gander, Newfoundland

Newfoundland is the poorest Province in Canada. It lies in the Atlantic Ocean northeast of Maine and Nova Scotia.





On September 11, 2001, when the United States abruptly closed its airspace, Gander, Newfoundland, became a safe harbor for 38 international aircraft, 6,700 passengers and crew, 17 dogs and cats, and a pair of great apes.



Gander International airport is the first North American airport on the transatlantic route. That day it took in 38 wide-body aircraft mostly heading for U.S. destinations and around 6,700 passengers and crew from 90 countries.

The airport was originally built by the US military in 1938 shortly before World War II as a waystation for planes flying to Europe. The airport was mostly used during the 60's, 70's, and 80's, for most transatlantic trips.



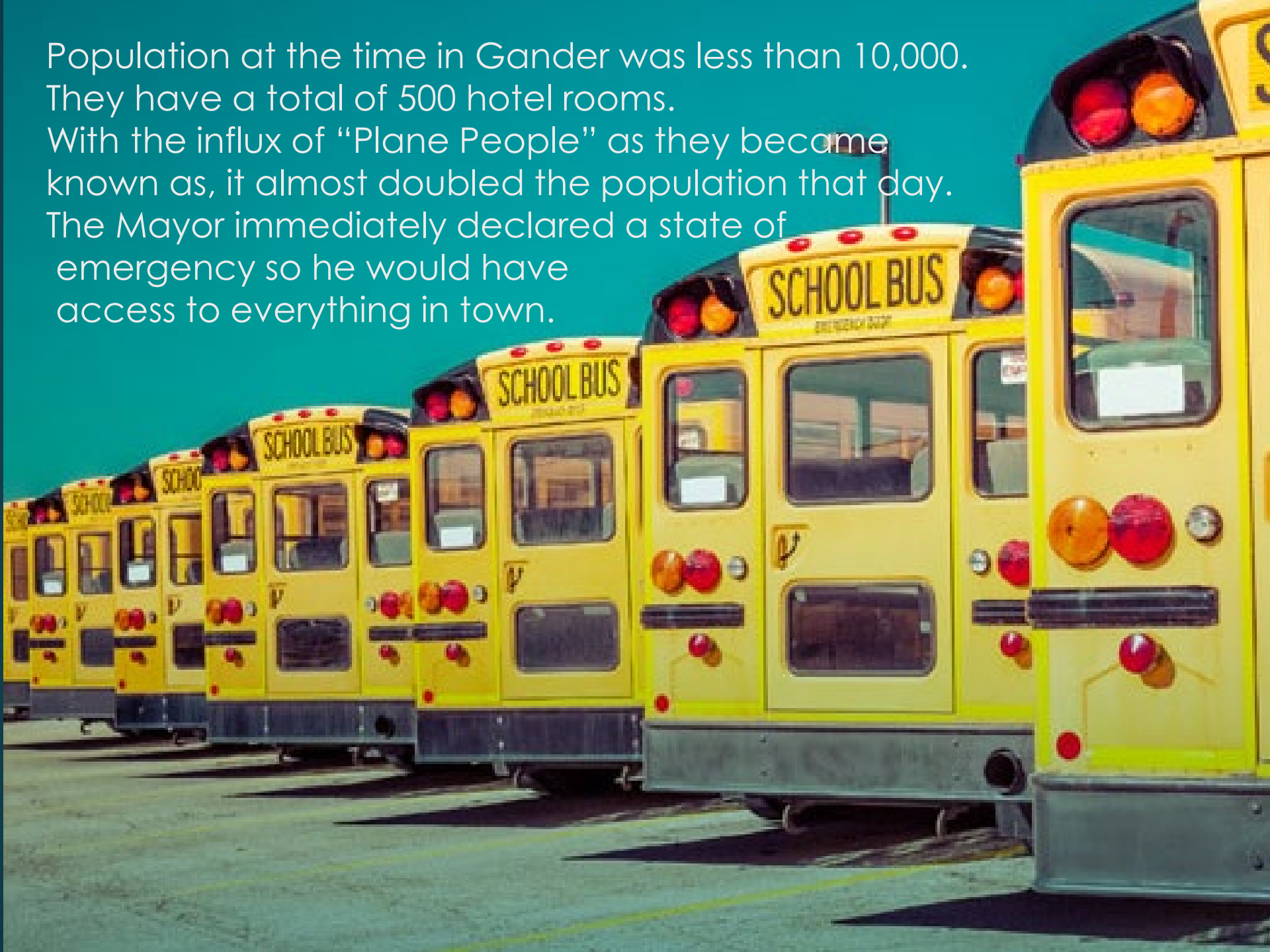




On 9/11 the planes all came in fast and furious, and after stacking up like sardines, the planes actually started to sink into the pavement because of all the weight and the warm temperatures.



Population at the time in Gander was less than 10,000. They have a total of 500 hotel rooms. With the influx of “Plane People” as they became known as, it almost doubled the population that day. The Mayor immediately declared a state of emergency so he would have access to everything in town.





Passengers were left on the planes for close to 30 hours per order of the FTA. When finally able to depart, scrutiny through customs was intense due to the unknown of who had attacked the U.S. and why. The local bus drivers who were on strike put down put down their picket signs to pick up the 6600 passengers and deliver them to hotels, homes and shelters all over Gander.





The mayor decide the flight crew should get the majority of hotel rooms to be well rested when flight was allowed again. But, every person from the time they got off the plane and were handed a packed lunch, was made sure to have a place to sleep, toiletries, food, comfort, and access to phones to call home. The towns people continuously showed up to take people to their homes to shower, they gave them tours of the town, and poured their love into those stranded individuals.

“In a world seemingly fraught with division, terrorism, and hate, you are not supposed to look at people’s color, religion, sexual orientation, look at them as people”.

That is what the town of Gander did on September 11, 20 years ago.

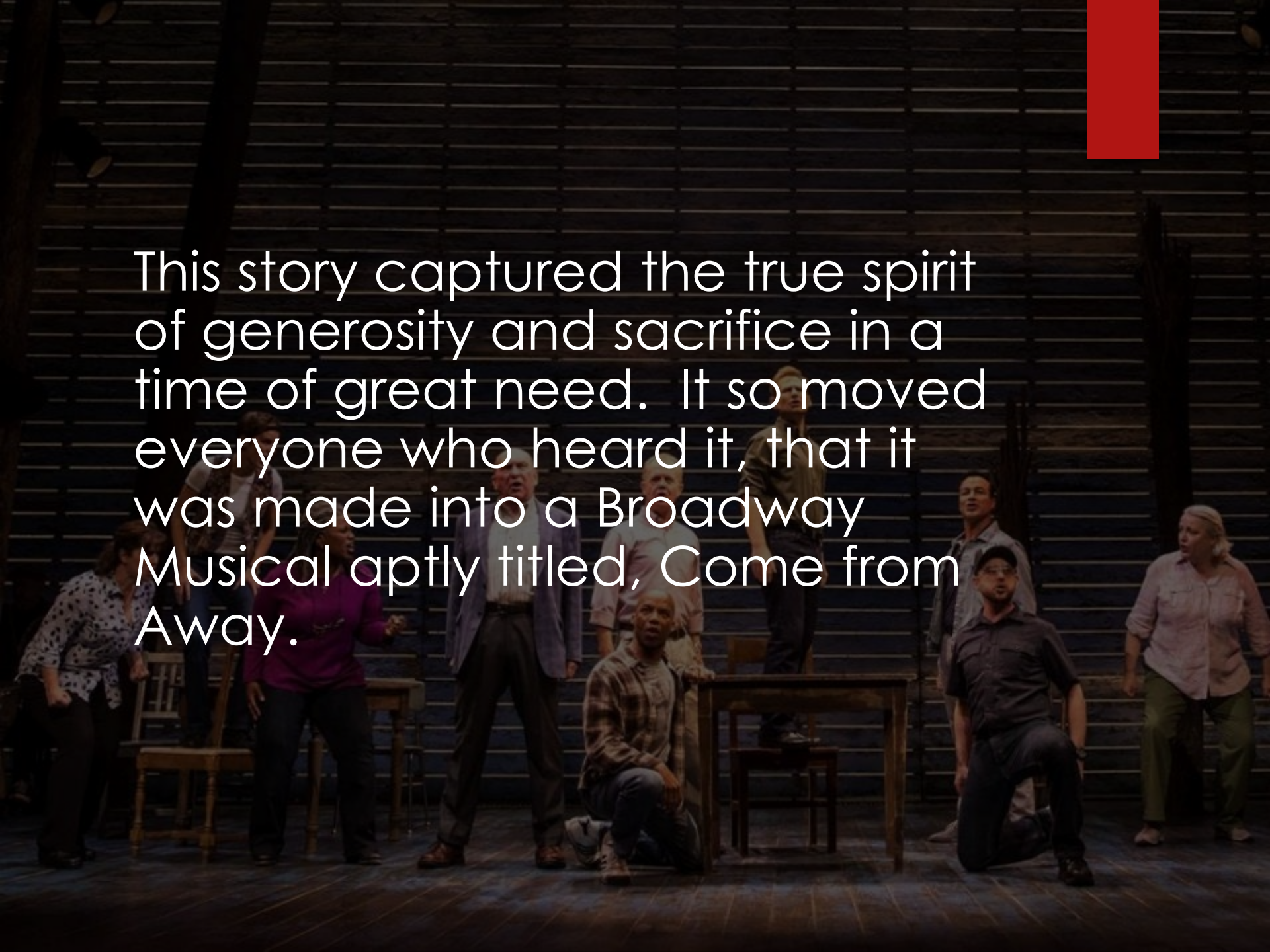






Relationships were formed with the townspeople and the “Plane People” that have lasted over the last 20 years. Some go back periodically to visit the people who took them into their homes. There was even a marriage that came out of those 5 days.

► Nick and Diane Marson met in Gander on 9/11 when he asked to sleep on the cot next to her in the high school gymnasium. They married 2 years later.

A group of people, likely actors, are posed on a stage set that resembles a rustic, wooden interior. The set features dark wooden walls with horizontal slats and a floor made of wooden planks. Several wooden chairs and a table are scattered across the stage. The actors are dressed in casual, everyday clothing, and their expressions and poses suggest a scene of emotional intensity or a significant moment in a performance. A solid red vertical bar is positioned in the upper right corner of the image.

This story captured the true spirit  
of generosity and sacrifice in a  
time of great need. It so moved  
everyone who heard it, that it  
was made into a Broadway  
Musical aptly titled, Come from  
Away.





My desire is to travel to Gander, Newfoundland, to meet and interview those people, who 20 years ago put their lives on hold for 5 days and gave everything they had to make complete strangers feel at home.

It's time to share a feel-good story with my co-workers.



► I will begin my trip with a stop in New York City to visit the Memorial Museum that was built on the site of the 2 towers, and to commemorate 20 years ago, all those who made the greatest sacrifice for others to live.



► I have read remarkable stories, that illicit a wide range of emotions of what occurred those 5 days in Gander 20 years ago. My plan is to share my recorded interviews with my co-workers with the hope of conveying the spirit of all those who made such a difference to so many, that all came from away.

