

**Statement of Joseph Zadroga Chief of Police Ret., twenty seven years on the North Arlington Police Department, N.J. Promoted through the ranks to Chief of Police. Give years Chief of the Bergen County Police Academy father and best friend of Det. James Zadroga NYPD.**

Hello. My name is Joseph Zadroga. I am the father of Det. James Zadroga, who passed away this year on January 5<sup>th</sup> at only 34 years old.

Jimmy worked thirteen years with the New York City Police Department, he worked the 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct for six years and six years with the Street Crime Unit.

When the Street Crime Unit broke up he was transferred to the Homicide unit working in the apprehension squad Jimmy was known within the Street Crime unit as a hard worker and dedicated to the job.

He was very street smart, and knew how to deal with the individuals he came in contact with. He would help anyone. He had a heart of gold and a smile to go with it. James wasn't the type to brag about his accomplishments.

Jimmy was highly decorated (forty citations) which I never knew about until I was made aware of them at his funeral by his partner.

On 9-11 he arrived home just when the towers were struck. He told his wife, who was seven months pregnant with their child, that he had to return to work to help.

James stated to me that was one of the hardest things to do, drive down the driveway while his wife was kneeling and crying for him to stay home, but he told her this was his job and he could never live with himself if he didn't go.

Jimmy worked close to 500 hours at the WTC with only the protection of a paper mask. Within weeks he developed a cough that would later be called the World Trade Center cough.

He also developed short term memory loss, acid reflux, high fevers, and would go into spells where he slept for days without eating or moving, he

had severe breathing problems and was placed on oxygen 24-7, all this while the police department refused to admit he was sick and returned him to work.

Jimmy's wife Ronda died two years before his passing from the severe stress of his illness and taking care of the household with bills piling up. Upon Ronda passing, he and his two-year daughter moved in with his mother and me.

We watched him progressively getting worse until he died at home, on the floor of his bedroom with his daughter sleeping on the bed. Due to the fact we were living in New Jersey, an autopsy was ordered by the County Medical Examiner.

Dr. Breton, Medical Examiner, reported that James died of severe lung condition (black lung) making him the first police officer whose death was diagnosed to be the direct result of working at the WTC site

Yet the City still refused to recognize that his cause of death was related to 9-11. The city even proceeded to belittle Dr. Breton in the press.

Since Jimmy's passing, his mother and I felt the best thing we could do was help make aware how all these heroes are being treated by the NYPD and Government.

We need our government too do the just and proper thing and help these heroes. We can't do anything for our son now but we want to help make sure that other workers get the treatment they need when they get sick. They all deserve a real commitment from our representatives to provide for long-term monitoring and treatment.

This statement was written by Jimmy about his feelings the first year after the event for his father-in-law a Minister in Fl. The church was holding a memorial for those that died and became sick on 9-11.

I believe Jimmy paid the price to have this on record.

My wife and I tried for four years to get doctors, press, TV networks and politicians to listen to us about the health problems and treatment of these hero's. Now that we got everyone's attention as the result of our sons death. We feel like we have the right to make suggestions to help the surviving hero's.

## SUGGESTION

We must make the first priority the treatment of the hero's to improve their health and save their lives. The studies should be secondary.

Don't worry about what it will cost, spend the money that is needed to improve the health of the hero's. I can't understand how this Country can place a value on a life. In my thirty years working in government I have yet to see a politician not get the money for a pet project they wanted.

Recruit the best doctors in the city in each field to treat the sick and dying.

In the future we will need organ for transplants and I don't want to hear that we can't help a hero because we don't have a organ to save their life. Set up a donor list for organs needed for workers. I know the Police, Fire and EMS and the good people of New York would gladly sign up. I'll be the first on the list.

The Federal Government must reinstitute the comprehension fund. The way I understand it many sick and injured didn't meet the dead line because they didn't realize they we're eligible for the fund. Beside assisting the hero's that deserve it. This will also reduce law suits.

Pay the cost of co pays and prescriptions that the insurance companies are not responsible for. Note! It was costing my son over \$1500 a month in prescription and co pays.

I strongly suggest that a review committee be established to act as watch dog. The committee should consist of doctors, survivors and public officials appointed.

