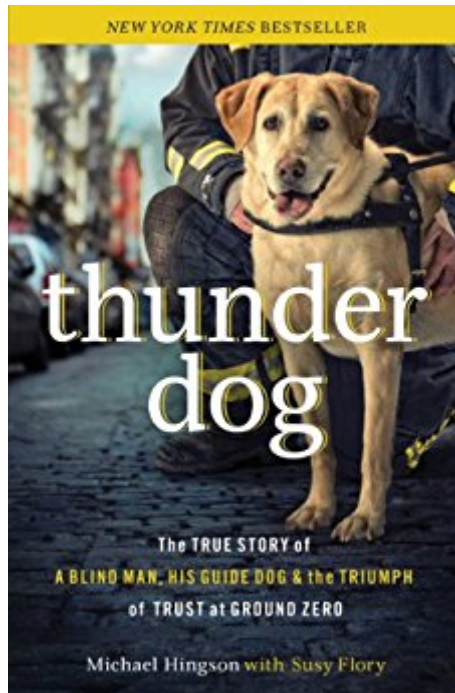


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# Thunder Dog: The True Story Of A Blind Man, His Guide Dog, And The Triumph Of Trust



## Synopsis

Faith. Trust. Triumph. "I'm sorry," the doctor said. "He is permanently and totally blind. There is nothing we can do for him." George and Sarah Hingson looked at each other, devastated. Their six-month-old son, Michael was a happy, strawberry blond baby boy, healthy and normal in every way except one. When the Hingsons switched on a light or made silly faces, Michael did not react. Ever. "My best suggestion is that you send him to a home for the blind," the doctor continued. "He will never be able to do anything for himself." Forty-seven years later, a yellow Labrador retriever puppy was born in the whelping unit of Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael, California. The puppy's name was Roselle. On September 11, 2001, she saved Michael's life. This is Roselle's story too. "From the Introduction Every moment in Michael Hingson's and Roselle's lives seemed to lead up to this day. When one of four hijacked planes flew into the World Trade Center's north tower on September 11, 2001, Michael Hingson, a district sales manager for a data protection and network security systems company, was sitting down for a meeting. His guide dog, Roselle, was at his feet. Paired for twenty-one months, man and dog spent that time forging a bond of trust, much like police partners who trust their lives to each other. Michael couldn't see a thing, but he could hear the sounds of shattering glass, falling debris, and terrified people flooding around him and Roselle. However, Roselle sat calmly beside him. In that moment, Michael chose to trust Roselle's judgment and not to panic. They were a team. Thunder Dog is a story that will forever change your spirit and your perspective. It illuminates Hingson's lifelong determination to achieve parity in a sighted world and how the rare trust between a man and his guide dog can inspire an unshakable faith in each one of us.

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## Customer Reviews

With the events of 9/11 forever etched in my memory, I was eager to read "Thunder Dog" by Michael Hingson with Suzy Flory. As the subtitle tells, it's "The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog & the Triumph of Trust at Ground Zero." Reading a story about a man who survived the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center is compelling enough. But add to the story the fact that the man, Michael Hingson, is blind, has a guide dog Roselle and has to descend 78 stories on foot to get to safety and you have a gripping survival account by an unforgettable pair. The story is well told, with a moment by moment account of Michael and Roselle's escape, along with colleague David Frank from their office located on the 78th floor in Tower I of the World Trade Center. Interspersed with the details of that fateful day are stories of Michael's life. Michael was born two months premature and was blind due to pure oxygen he received as part of the standard medical treatment for premature babies. Michael's parents didn't listen to the doctor's advice about putting him in a home for the blind. Instead they brought him home and raised their son no differently from his older brother Ellery. Before he ever had a guide dog or white cane, Michael was expected to grow, learn and explore his neighborhood on his own two feet. This boy had a spirit of adventure and he learned to ride a bike and even drive a car. Michael's feisty can-do spirit helped to prepare him to survive the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Through Michael's story we learn about the bond between a blind person and their guide dog.

On September 11, 2001, Michael and his seeing eye dog, Roselle, walked down 78 flights of stairs in the North Tower of the World Trade Center and survived. The story of this day is told throughout the book, interspersed with the story of the author's life. As the author states, "The real story, in my mind, isn't how I got out of the World Trade Center...it's how I got there in the first place." (p. xiv.) As I began this book, I was impatient to hear the story of September 11th and was a bit irritated with

the interruptions of the story of the author's life; however, the more I read, the more I appreciated this way of telling. The story of how Michael seized life shows the attitude, education and faith that provided a means to cope with this horrific challenge. One cannot be told without the other. Michael never saw himself as disabled, just different. He rode his bicycle around the neighborhood, excelled at math and competed for a job with an office in the World Trade Center. Even as a youth, his audacity led to his receiving his first seeing eye two years below the minimum age to enter the program. This book holds not only the story of one man and his dog on one day; it is the story of a blind community, the story of Guide Dogs for the Blind, a story of technology and a story of friendships and love. In these stories we learn of courage, teamwork, patience and faith. This book is published by a faith based company. The first mention of Michael's faith comes on page 120; however, God's hand is evident in every page. Even though he made it out, Michael does not claim to know why he survived and others did not. He just makes the most of each day. Highly recommend. P.S. Check out the wonderful appendixes! Great stuff!

This unique tale about a remarkable Guide Dog who led her handler down 78 floors of stairs to safety during the World Trade Centre attacks is both interesting and well written, and has made us sad that we don't offer half paws, as it really does deserve slightly more than a 3. However, a couple of things stopped this book getting the full 5 paws up. For one, the dog featured in it too little to, in our opinion, really classify this as a 'doggie story'. True, Michael made it out of the World Trade Centre with his Guide Dog at his side, but she seems to be mentioned as a mere afterthought at times and this book was, we thought, more about overcoming the difficulties posed by blindness than about Roselle as a character. Having said that, we did enjoy reading about her antics before and after the event, and are sure that is deserving of all the accolades she has earned in the past ten years. Sadly, Roselle died in June 2011, so will not be accompanying Mr Hingson on any of the publicity for the book about her bravery. I doubt that will make much of a difference to the 'campaign trail', as it seems this book is more about educating people about disabilities than about Roselle herself. I found Mr Hingson's constant lecturing about how the blind wish to be treated and how he lived a normal life despite being blind began to wear on me after a while. (Especially since he seems to demand equal treatment and then highlight this by detailing an occasion where he had to kick up a fuss to get things his way, therefore making people go out of their way to accommodate him.) Equally, I doubt the value of the essays and glossary etc included as appendixes to the text.

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Thunder Dog: The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust at Ground

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