

BEHIND THE CURTAIN continued...



Deborah Wilson lives in Montana but she can still hear the ambulance sirens in New York City.

Wilson, 65, was on standby status and staying at her crash pad in a quiet neighborhood in Kew Gardens, Queens, in March when COVID-19 was ripping through the city.

“The most horrific part of being in New York then was constantly hearing the sirens and ambulances,” she said. “It didn’t stop. That’s when I realized this was a big deal. It went from peaceful to utter chaos.”

It wasn’t just the constant noise but what it represented: people who were extremely sick, fighting for their lives, being rushed to the hospital.

Wilson jumped on a flight back home to Montana on March 25th after being released by JetBlue. She took a Delta flight. No one wore masks. At the time, JetBlue rules prohibited mask use by employees in uniform and Wilson was in uniform. At the time, the Centers for Disease Control was advising people not to wear masks. It didn’t reverse course until early April.

A few days after arriving home, Wilson started feeling fatigued. Then came severe headaches, a cough, and internal pain from one of her kidneys and high fever.

“You can’t even explain it,” she said. “It’s not like a flu. It was awful. I was in so much pain and so tired I was probably sleeping 18 to 20 hours a day.”

For nearly a month, Wilson thought there was a very real possibility she wouldn’t survive. She even gave her husband some instructions on what he should do if she passed. Then, slowly, she began to improve. By mid June her stamina was not 100%. But it was getting better every day and she was making plans for the future – returning to work in the fall and then moving to Italy with her husband for year.

“We want to tour Europe for a little bit and we figure if we live there we can pull it off,” she said.

