

11th May, 1995

## THINGS ARE LOOKING UP

DEAR DIARY, I'm exhausted but happy – maybe happy's not the correct term. I think I'm content not happy. OK then, let's just say happy!!

I started a new job about two months ago and it's going really well and I think that's one of the main reasons why my life has changed for the better. Although I must say, being me and living my life is incredibly hard work sometimes. I've matured a hell of a lot over the last three years and I've become a focused young lady.

I come from a fairly pampered background; as the youngest member of a large family, I have always been well looked after. That was until I thought I was too big for my boots and left a nice house to live in a rough council estate. My parents were devastated because they knew I was making a big mistake. They didn't come to this country with the ambition of buying a house for their youngest child to leave that house to rent a minging flat from the council and it was minging which included cockroaches and neighbours who ran a crack factory. I was so green back then, a friend of mine said they cook crack next door and I said what's crack? I didn't know it then but leaving home was the single worst decision ever made in my life to date, but I was bored and in search of excitement. I got more than excitement. Without the boundary of my parents' home, I fell into the arms of an emotionally damaged boy. We went on to have two children which resulted in single motherhood.

Sometimes hard knocks make you stronger, although this is not a route I would recommend for strength and growth.

I'm working as a part time secretary for a firm of consultants in Knightsbridge which I'm really enjoying.

My weekday routine is the same every day. I get up at 6am and get myself ready first. I then wake up one child at a time, otherwise I'm juggling too many balls. Everyone's washed, dressed, fed and watered and I'm on the road by approximately 7.30am. I take the boys to their grandparents' house and then get myself to work for nine o'clock.

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

I work for really nice people and it's a new vibrant company who are turning over vast amounts of money so the offices are plush, the perks are fab and the wages good for part time work. I've already been offered an interest-free car loan. There's a reason for this, I think parking my battered Fiat Uno in their car park is lowering the tone as my manager has a Jaguar, the director drives a Saab Convertible and one of our consultants drives a Porsche!

I also get luncheon vouchers, all beverages are free and management take us out for a team lunch at a fine restaurant every two weeks. I've already been to the Ivy twice! I've also been introduced to some strange dishes while dining out, like foie gras marinated in champagne and honey sauce. Foie gras is something I'll never eat again as it comes from the liver of force-fed duck or goose and it seems a bit cruel. I've also had lamb shank in bitter chocolate sauce, Jerusalem artichoke soup, roasted loin of suckling pig, beetroot-cured salmon and over-the-top desserts like golden pineapple with coconut and lime sorbet. I've even drunk my first Long Island Ice Tea during one of our marathon lunches. That afternoon, I drank four so I had to leave my car in the parking lot at work and my brother had to collect me. Apparently on the drive home, I was singing *New Edition's Can You Stand the Rain*. I have no recollection of this rendition and it must have been very painful for my brother because I'm tone deaf. My brother is a record producer so I must have thought I was auditioning or something. The shame of it!

I finish work at three o'clock and then drive to my parents' house to collect the boys. I sometimes stay for dinner or mum packs goodies for me to take home. When I get home, if the weather's nice, I drop my bags and take the boys to the common.

The evening whizzes by because I have to do a lot of chores. The kids get miserable as the evening wears on because they're tired by seven o'clock. I get the boys ready for bed which seems to take ages but they're normally both asleep by 8.30 or nine o'clock. I have two hours to myself to have a long bath, read and treat myself to a melon Breezer and Chinese rice crackers.

Before I crash out, I pray and thank God that I'm alive and thank God for the health of my children and the help of my friends and family. I pray that Natwest will make a mistake and deposit large amounts of cash into my bank account. I also thank God that I have a job that I enjoy.

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

Living like this can be hard work, sometimes it's lonely, it can be isolating and frustrating, especially financially, but it's not the end of the world – things could be much worse. In fact they have been much worse; things are now definitely getting better.

## August Mayfield