

11th September, 2001

TOWERING INFERNO

DEAR DIARY, as someone who works irregular hours, I sleep mostly during the day time.

I'm very bad for the environment because I sleep with my TV on. It's an old habit which comes from my fear of sleeping in complete silence and darkness. Like most children, I shared a bedroom with my sisters and when the second one left home when I was 18, I didn't enjoy the silence at bedtime. I either had the radio on all night or the TV and it's carried on since then.

This morning at around 8.30am, I fell asleep with the TV watching me as usual. When I woke up, I thought the news was on because it's normally on at around the time I wake up to collect the children from school. When I looked at the television, I realised that it wasn't in fact the news but a film. But I always wake up to the news and couldn't understand how the TV had switched over to a Channel Five film. The film was like the towering inferno. An aeroplane had ploughed straight into one of the towers of The World Trade Centre. There were sirens blaring with fire men and police shouting – it was chaos. There was a massive explosion and people were running around, screaming hysterically, covered in debris. The film had caught my attention but I was still a bit tired from sleep and even a little confused because it looked like film footage and a news report rolled into one. Shortly after seeing the first plane crash into the building it happened again. By now, I realise this is not a film, it's the news.

As much as I was trying to keep up with what was going on, it seemed all too surreal for me to grasp. Within seconds of me sitting up in bed to find out if what I was seeing was for real, my boyfriend George called and said watch the news and then hung up!

Within no time at all, my mum called and asked me if I'd seen the planes crashing into the twin towers on the news and after that the phone continued to ring.

I've never seen anything like this before. I guess films make us think that the things that never happen can happen. But today, on 11 September 2001, it looks as if fiction has really come to life. But this vision of two planes plunging into a building involved real people. Not cast members, extras and stuntmen falling out of windows onto crash mats. Not pampered actors and actresses who get paid \$12m to run into sugar glass and cover

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themselves in fake blood. Real people died, they had mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters and grandmothers and grandfathers and friends and neighbours and colleagues.

At the moment, I know nothing as to the reason why this has happened. I don't think anyone I know has been affected by what has happened but I know for sure, this thing that has happened will affect the world. This thing cannot happen to mankind without it having a ripple effect on me and everybody who occupies space on this planet.

I'm intrigued to find out how and why this tragedy happened. One plane crashing accidentally is one thing but two planes in a row seems like something sinister's going on. I just pray it was an accident and not the act of man trying to control man with fear.

August Mayfield