

The Day the Country Stood Still

Look at that jet, cried Sam! It is going to fly into the World Trade Center! Sam and I were in the city on a field trip from our school, “Elbert Elementary”. We had planned this trip for two years and were very excited to finally see “the city”! We had traveled into the city the day before and had already spent one night in New York and it was amazing.

Sam and I were walking beside our teacher, Ms. Peel, when she saw the jet flying low. Oh no!, she cried, “The jet flew right into the side of the North Tower”. “What happened with the jet?” “I do not know”! said Ms. Peel. “But we better get back to our hotel where it is safe!” “Look!” cried my other best friend Brielle, “People are jumping out of the building!” All I could do was cry at this point.

My teacher quickly gathered us together and we decided to run back to our hotel room. Thankfully, the hotel we were staying at was in Brooklyn right after the Brooklyn Bridge, so we did not have an extreme amount of time to run.

The city had become complete chaos as the emergency vehicles were zooming past us as we walked. While we were walking, we heard another explosion. “What in the world was that?” I said. “Please tell me that was not another jet”! “It sure sounded like it”, said Brielle. All of us tried to look over at the trade center while we crossed the bridge. “Hey Brielle”! I spoke. “It does look like the other building is on fire”. All she could do was respond with a sob. No one else could talk. We were too scared!

When we arrived at our hotel, we turned on the “Today Show”. However, we mostly wanted to look out of the hotel window watching the smoke from the Towers.

Then I heard something that caught my attention on the TV. The “Today Show” said that we were under a terrorist attack because a plane flew straight into the Pentagon! While my classmates were watching the TV, Sam, Brielle, and I saw the South Tower come crashing down.

The horror of watching one of the most famous buildings come crashing down was the worst thing I have ever seen or felt in my life. I was devastated, hundreds of people had to still be in that tower. A few minutes after 10:00, I was looking at what used to be the South Tower, and I heard that another plane crashed in Pennsylvania. My head started spinning! Our country was at war! At 10:28, the same thing happened with the North Tower, it fell straight down. More horror, more devastation was occurring in the world around us. This is the story of why we have what is now known as Patriot Day. But for me, it was the most horrifying day of my life.

We were all terrified as we hurried back to our hotel room. Ms. Peel kept checking on us, making sure we stayed together. She looked as scared as we were. Sam kept asking questions, but nobody had answers. Brielle just held onto my hand tightly, her eyes wide with fear.

As we ran through the chaotic streets, I couldn't shake the images from my mind the jet crashing into the tower, people jumping out of windows... It was like a nightmare come to life. I felt sick to my stomach, my legs heavy with dread.

When we finally reached our hotel room, we collapsed onto the beds, too

exhausted to speak. The TV flickered with news of the attacks, but I couldn't bear to watch anymore. I just wanted it all to be over, to wake up from this terrible dream.

But it wasn't a dream. It was real. And as the hours passed, the reality of what had happened sank in deeper and deeper. The world as we knew it had changed forever. I couldn't sleep that night. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw the towers falling, heard the screams of the people trapped inside. How could something so awful happen in our country?

The next day, as we made our way back home, the streets were somber. People hugged their loved ones a little tighter, strangers exchanged sympathetic glances. We were all united in grief, in shock, in disbelief.

As we reflect on that day, year after year, I remember the fear, the sadness, the sense of loss. But I also remember the bravery, the resilience, the way people came together in the face of tragedy.

Patriot Day will always be a reminder of what we lost, but also of what we found – strength in unity, hope in the face of adversity, and the unbreakable spirit of our nation.