

TIME TUNNEL:

**THE TWIN
TOWERS**

RICHARD TODD

Time Tunnel: The Twin Towers

By Richard Todd

Copyright © 2019 Richard Todd Miller

ISBN: 978-0-578-52240-1

Library of Congress Control Number:2019907460

Dedicated to the heroes of 9/11

-- TOP SECRET --

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DREAMLAND RESEARCH FACILITY
[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM THRU

28 OCT 2008
TIMELINE 001

GENERAL AARON CRAIG
COMMANDING GENERAL
DREAMLAND RESEARCH FACILITY

FOR FILE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Mission, 27 October 2008

The purpose of this memo is to acknowledge the mishap that occurred on 27 October, 2008 in the course of the first [REDACTED] mission, as well as to outline preliminary contingency steps. The cause of the accident is unknown at this time. Due to compromised security at the [REDACTED] Complex that occurred as a direct result of the accident, a thorough review of the cause is problematic in the short term. It is unknown whether the cause of the problem lies in the [REDACTED] displacement technology or is the fault of human error or lapses in judgment.

The first priority of this office is to secure the facility. Once this is accomplished, senior staff will be directed to execute a comprehensive evaluation of system and personnel in order to determine the proximate cause of the accident. Once the cause is identified and resolved, recommendations will be solicited from senior staff regarding options to correct the damage caused as a result of the accident.

At this time, the status of Lieutenant Colonel [REDACTED] is MIA. It is not known at this time whether Lieutenant Colonel [REDACTED] has knowledge of the Colonel's location or present status.

The events that transpired yesterday are a direct result of my orders. I assume full responsibility.

Respectfully,



Aaron T. Craig
FG, USA
Commanding General
Dreamland Research Facility

-- TOP SECRET --

Soho Grand Hotel

New York, NY

September 10, 2001

09:12 hours

Kyle Mason opened his eyes. Next to him was the cavity of a vacant white pillow. The head that had rested there was gone. In its place, a strand of long black hair lay tucked into the pillow's ample folds.

He heard shuffling and looked up. At the foot of his bed, a tall young woman with brown skin and near waist-length black hair was pulling a maroon blouse around her braless torso. She buttoned up only halfway, allowing the tails to fall over her jeans.

"I didn't want to wake you," the beautiful woman said with a loving smile.

Kyle sat up in bed, returning her smile, rubbing sleep and sandy hair from his eyes. The sheet fell away from his chest.

Padma's eyes lit up. She thought Kyle looked like a god.

While the Army had buffed him, Special Forces had chiseled his six-foot-plus frame into an angled physique that his skinny former self had not thought possible.

Padma sat down on the end of the bed to pull on her boots.

"Where are you going?" asked Kyle.

"Out for coffee," replied Padma.

“We can get room service,” said Kyle, pretending he didn’t know what she was really up to.

“I prefer Starbucks,” replied Padma, looking at him over her shoulder.

“You prefer American Spirits,” Kyle said, referring to her favorite cigarettes.

Padma shot him a look, then got up and walked around to his side of the bed. Behind her was an overcast south-facing view of New York City. The colossal Twin Towers of the World Trade Center filled the window’s landscape view.

Padma placed her hands against Kyle’s cheeks and leaned in to kiss him. A fresh diamond sparkled on her ring finger.

“I like married women,” Kyle said between kisses.

“I like being a married woman,” smiled Padma.

She stroked a fresh tattoo on the inside of Kyle’s right forearm. The crisp, black character was the feminine form of “Padma” in Sanskrit. The tattoo, less than a day old, was outlined with Kyle’s inflamed red skin.

पद्मा

Padma reached for the dog tags hanging around Kyle’s neck.

“I’m married to Major Kyle Mason,” she said. “My parents are going to be so pissed.”

“Pissed because you eloped or pissed because you married beneath you?” Kyle asked.

“Yes,” she replied.

Padma stroked Kyle’s chest with her fingers.

“It’s not you,” Padma explained. “You know they like you. They’re just old-fashioned. “They wanted me to marry a doctor or a lawyer in a traditional ceremony.”

“What’s it called?” asked Kyle. “Viv...viva...”

“*Vivaah sanskar*,” Padma replied. “I wear henna. You ride in on a white horse.”

“I’d look good on a white horse,” Kyle said.

“No doubt,” affirmed Padma.

“So, you wear henna. Do you wear anything else?”

Padma leaned in to kiss Kyle.

“Nothing else for you, love,” she said.

Their kisses heated up. Kyle reached into Padma’s blouse. After permitting him to fondle her for a few moments, she took his hand and kissed it.

“Hold that thought. I’ll be back in 20 with coffee.”

Kyle glanced at the lump under the covers. “If you’re not back in 20, it’s not my thoughts I’ll be holding.”

Padma laughed and grabbed her black duffle coat on the way out of the hotel room.

“I’ll be back soon, love,” she said.

Kyle beamed in her wake. He couldn’t believe his good fortune. He was newly wed to the most beautiful woman on the planet, and he was at the zenith of his career.

Against the wishes of Padma’s traditional East Indian parents, she and Kyle had eloped the day before in a private civil ceremony

at City Hall. New York's City Hall was, at once, the world's most and least romantic place to get hitched. With its long lines and numbered queuing system, it had all the allure of a traffic ticket processing center. Still, there was something exhilarating about the act of elopement—ignoring parents' commands like bad children.

Kyle jumped out of bed and picked up the phone to order room service. While on hold, he stood naked in front of the window, gazing at the metropolis. He hoped breakfast would be waiting for his bride when she returned. He knew she didn't normally eat much at the beginning of the day—he ordered wheat toast, fruit, and coffee. He wanted everything to be perfect during their short honeymoon in NYC. His generosity had already brought her to tears. She knew he had spent every last cent of his savings on her ring and their Soho Grand suite. Kyle's largess was not driven by pride—Padma's compensation was over ten times his military pay, and he had no illusions about who the breadwinner of the family was going to be. His Magi's gift was motivated by nothing more than a genuine desire to make his bride happy. Before she met Kyle, money had been little more than a number to Padma. With this gesture, he had made it meaningful to her.

What Kyle lacked in cash, he made up for in raw heroic talent. After graduating at the top of his class from West Point, he had become one of the youngest soldiers to receive a Silver Star for gallantry when his Humvee platoon came under fire from an Iraqi tank platoon in Operation Desert Storm. Though severely outnumbered and outgunned, a combination of quick thinking and guile translated certain defeat into a stunning victory for the

freshly minted lieutenant. Kyle knew he had been very lucky. He also knew that luck mattered.

With this tailwind from his Desert Storm experience, Kyle applied to the Army's parachutist course, aka "Airborne School," then to the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program. After a tour as an Army Ranger, he applied to become a member of the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment—Delta, more commonly known as Delta Force.

Padma was drawn to the danger of Kyle's job. Her world could not have been more different from his. She was a vice president at a Wall Street investment bank called Cantor Fitzgerald. Her life was consumed by numbers—numbers that translated into money.

At 35, she was a couple years older than Kyle. Padma had completed her undergraduate work at Columbia and then received her MBA from Stanford, graduating summa cum laude. Suitors from marquee firms like Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and JPMorgan pursued the gorgeous prodigy with lucrative job offers.

Padma found that she was very good at what she did, more than a match for the guys in the old boys' club, but she felt something was missing in her artificial world of numbers.

Padma had tried to explain her job to Kyle, but the convolutions of exotic derivatives made his eyes glaze over in half the time required to boil an egg. Padma loved their strangely conversed naivetés—Kyle was one of the world's preeminent masters of real life and death, yet he was so innocent about her cutthroat world of big money. She smiled knowingly when the guys in her shop beat their chests about their latest "kill." Padma knew better. She thought about her man with enormous pride, knowing the billionaire banker boys didn't have the first

clue what they were talking about. Kyle was her lightning rod to the real world—the physical world, where decisions were truly permanent. She loved him completely, and though she knew how much she would worry when he was away, the thought of what he did for a living sent an electric thrill up her spine. Though the tempo of her work was a burnout pace, and the dialect was machismo, no one had ever died at the World Trade Center in the line of duty of investment banking.

Kyle walked to the bathroom to cleanup, wrapping a towel around his waist. The bathroom was beautiful—a black-on-white toile at chest level, with polished black bricks below. It was large by New York hotel standards, with his-and-her sinks. Her toilet-ries and toothbrush were next to the right-hand sink—his toilet-ries faced hers on the left. His bathroom toiletries would never be lonely again. He loved everything about being married to her.

Kyle rubbed the beard on his angular jaw, which framed an easy smile. Green eyes stared back at him from the mirror. He brushed back his sandy hair, which he had let grow well beyond a standard military buzz. In order to blend, many Delta operators let their hair and beards grow, depending on their assignment.

Kyle brushed his teeth, and then lathered up to shave. He heard the chirp of the electronic door latch.

“What’d you forget, hon?” he shouted from the bathroom.

He lowered his head in the sink to splash water on his face, then reached for a towel. He looked in the mirror. Someone was standing behind him.

“FUCK!” he yelled.

In the mirror’s reflection, there was not one Kyle Mason, but two.