

The Towers

Cast

Sam

Joe

Rita

Mitch

Gwen

Gary

Scene: The stage represents a large interior office space, containing modern office equipment. There are a set of windows upstage center. There are two doors to enter the office and a third door within the set to represent access to a shower/washroom. There are desks, tables, sofa, and coffee machine. The windows look out the south side of the north tower and we can see the north and west sides of the south tower. The year is 2001.

Scene 1

Set- looking through a darkened interior office area with a large window, window cleaners are outside the window.

Sam Say it ain't so, Joe?

Joe Cut the baseball crap! Gimme that!

Sam You shoulda grabbed it before you got set up. Whattaya gonna do when I'm not here for ya...when I'm working wid the other cradle...

Joe If ya aint here, I won't use ya, wuld I? 'Sides, you gotta be here. Safety says always two.

Sam Why you git so mad when I tgease about your name and baseball?

Joe Cause when those boys sold that series, it was like they fixed our innocence, they gave us an idea nobody had really thought a doin and made us see what people can do, what y'll do fur money. I don't want to be reminded all the time.

Sam I never git tired aw lookin at da city from up here. And this side doesn't have the water wind.

Joe It's a perfect fall day, cool, clear, and calm. Be a great day for flying...

Sam You could see it coming for miles

Joe Hardly a sway to this one today

Sam Steady she goes. I remember last week on the north side of the north tower we were moving six feet in every sway.

Joe You should'a felt it before we had these fancy new cradles. Ya needed to brace cause you hit the wall purty hard.

Sam These towers are sitting on top of a garbage dump, aren't they? Didn't they just keep pushing it off the south end of the island..into the Hudson?

Joe They drilled 70 feet into the bedrock. That's why there's steel beams in the center of each tower.

Sam And then they put the stairs and elevators around them in the middle, all cozy and snug

Joe But out here on the edge we usually feel it..

Sam The calm before the storm

Joe I never get tired lookin at the offices. Sure, they are all basically the same, but its the differences I look for. Look at this one. You can tell which one has a woman boss.

Sam How can ya tell dat?

Joe Da little things all add up to female-colors, flowers, furniture arrangements, men set up so they have the power of the desk for authority, woman set up away from the desk so they can talk more friendly-like.

Sam Nah, I don't buy it. Dere are too many men like women and way too many women like men to ever say what man or woman do.

Joe Well maybe you are right. Look at us-we're so different and both men.

Sam The only real difference is money, those who have it and those who don't.

Joe In there, they all have it.

Sam Out here none of us have it.

Joe We have the American dream. Work hard and we'll have it.

Sam The American nightmare. Work hard and die.

Joe All this talk about work reminds me.... We gotta be on the north side righta way.

Sam Yeah yeah let's get to it.

Scene 2

Set-interior office, window in background, doors left.

Rita enters through elevator doors, turns on lights, equipment, computers, coffee, and a FM radio signal.

Radio ...so traffic is flowing again across the Brooklyn bridge but we have one less driver who wants to talk on the phone and attempt to drive at the same time. Be careful out there. We're rolling into the top of the hour with, "See you in September", a great fall song....

Phone rings

Rita Good Morning...I'm sorry. She's not in yet...Yes I'll have her call you, Tom. (places the phone back)Let me see...(checks watch or time)...she has her phone still off ...in the jog yet, no...getting the Starbucks coffee, yes, then she's just about to appear...Hey, what's going on outside the window?(crosses to window) Is it the cleaners? Oh, how can they do that? It makes me start to get sick just to think about it.

(Doors open, Gwen enters, in jogging clothes and carrying a large carafe of coffee)

Gwen Mornin Hey Whatyalookinat? Here's the real coffee. I'm off for my shower (She exits stage right.)

Rita Gwen, Tom called and he's made his flight in Newark for San Francisco. Oh, She's gone already. I'll get her when she comes out again. Now where are those other two? They probably ended up in the same elevator so they could start their fighting earlier... Now I have to...package Gwen's presentation for the 10 o'clock event.

(She sits in front of computer monitor, sends message to photocopier, crosses to machine and checks first package out..)

Radio ...today is the United Nations International Day of Peace and the first day of Culture of Peace week...

(Main doors open, Mitch steps out, formally dressed-tie, suitcoat banker/businessperson look.)

Mitch Good Morning Rita. Everything ready for this AM?

Rita Just looking at the first copy and good morning to you Mitch

Mitch Atta girl. This morning we are going to make a lot of money, more money than yesterday and maybe more than tomorrow. This is what it's all about. (Moving to the window) I love it way up here. It makes me feel safe and secure.

Rita The only time I feel safe and secure is when I forget I'm up here. It's usually swaying

Mitch I love to start my day in the Windows on the World Restaurant on the 107th floor
Gives me that old-on-top-of-the-world feeling

(Staff Door opens and Gary enters, in t-shirt, old slacks, sweating, disheveled)

Gary I am exhausted, done for.

Rita Why do you insist on running up the stairs?

Gary I use the sky lobby up to the 79th. I just want to simulate jogging. No end or goal like fitness or physique construction, I just want the feeling... So Mitch the moneyman offering penitence to Mammon for daring to take time to sleep, wastin all that time sleeping when you could have been acquiring money or have you decided to end a empty life by simply leaping?

Mitch ..wouldn't work. I'd simply land in the window washers' cradle. They are on their way down. Besides, today we are going to haul it in. Big time.

Gary What is really important here is the quality of the idea, it's a remarkable fit, it utilizes comparative advantage, it merges their diversity in a complementary way. The fact we are all going to make a lot of money is secondary. The efficiency in resource use even makes it environmentally valuable.

Mitch What is important here is the money. The money to pay your salary, the rent for these offices, the value of our company shares, all this will be because of the money made on this deal.

Gary Your accounting ledgers are suspect even before we add the costs you won't even recognize. If profit making companies had to account for environmental costs, the real costs of transportation, the true cost of labour including education and health, there would be very few profit making companies.

Gwen (entering from shower door, with towel and hairbrush) Hey you guys getting the last touches, the polish on this 10 o'clock?

Rita The tree carcasses are appropriately blackened, collated, and impaled with staples. We are ready from that point of view

Gwen ...and the rest?

Mitch All done Everything I could think of...from every angle. My nerves are stretched so tight I have my own private radio station

Gary Reelax partner Go with the flow, Zen out, chill, groove, let Karma do its work.

Gwen That's what worries me. If we really had to pay our dues...

Mitch Now don't start going Christian on me. We get it cause we're better, stronger, tougher, that's why we deserve it.

Gary Deserve it? Yes and that's why we are going to get it.

Gwen What's wrong with working hard, trying to be better, why that's almost holy.

Gary See! The melding of economics and religion. Marketplace fundamentalism
The jihad for profits. A holy war against sharing and cooperation.

Gwen Oh, come off it. The Bible doesn't talk about those things that way.

Mitch Power, its all about power and we got it.

(Loud sounds, explosion, breaking glass, fire, set may appear to sway, characters and props fall to the floor, lights flicker off-on, then stay on)

Rita(moving to restore computers, equipment, etc.)What, what was that?

Mitch Is today's package still okay?

Gary Nothings okay. I'm going to see (Exits out main door)

Rita (moving to window) There's smoke going by the window. Somethings on fire.

Mitch Make sure we have everything for today

Rita (Cellular phone rings) Hello? Yes, Don, I'm fine...I don't know....Yes we felt it move. I thought it was going to topple over but it righted itself...Let me see and I'll call you back. Love you too.

Gwen (slowly sitting up, holding her head) Oh, I feel woozy. I really hit my head. The floor was coming up as I was going down...dizzy.(Tries to stand-sits back down)

Rita (going to Gwen) Let me help you to the sofa and I'll get a cold cloth for your head.

Gary (entering through main doors) We have big trouble. Fire, smoke, at least the ten floors above us have been destroyed, those people above these floors are trapped. Maybe a bomb, maybe an accident.

Mitch (Cellular phone rings) Hey, Wally, what's up?.. Yeah, I'm fine..... A plane, a commercial passenger airline...that's quite a mistake...how could a pilot not see a 110 story skyscraper?.... Yeah, well it happened. (Ends call)
My buddy, Wally, with the FAA, says there are reports an airplane hit the Tower. It was an airplane.

Gary Kamikaze. Maybe we are under attack.

Mitch Sure, typical paranoia, conspiracy, conspiracy. Look we have a very important day and I'm not letting anything get in the way.

Radio ...reports that the north tower of the World Trade Center has been hit by an airplane...

Rita We have to get out of here. The smoke is getting...Gwen, can you walk? What's that smell?

Gary (Crossing to window, swiping hand on wall, smelling hand, licking hand)
Smells like aviation fuel. It's dripping from the floors above.

Mitch This cannot be happening, not today.

Gary This is happening. They are coming. I can hear the sirens. Hey, how ironic, the headquarters for the Emergency Response is located in this building. They should be responding by now.

Rita (Cellular phone rings) Hey, Don...Yes we are just about to leave...They've halted evacuation of the south tower?...worried about people getting hit by debris from this building.

Mitch Why are people leaving the south tower? They were not hit. Neither where we. It was above us. We can't leave. We have a chance to make millions today. I am not going anywhere except to that meeting at 10.

Gwen (rising unsteadily from the sofa) Look, out the window, there's another plane!

Gary It's banking, turning toward us...it's heading for the south tower.

Rita Don, get out of there, there's a plane heading toward your tower

Mitch It must be going 500 miles an hour. It's going to hit between the 75th and 85th floors.

Rita Don, run, run, go, go, go, gooo

(Explosion, shattering glass, again characters and props are thrown about)

Rita (rising from floor, retrieves phone) Don, Don, are you there, honey?
There is nothing...he's gone. (She collapses)

Gary Two planes. This is no accident. This was planned. We are being
attacked.

Mitch By who? Who could do this? To us, America

Gary The south tower took more damage. The windows are all gone. The
fireball was huge. Look the fireballs have exploded at the sky lobby floors
and I bet its going to go all the way down the center shaft and explode in the
lobby. Whoa, there she goes!

Radio ...all airports have been closed amid reports of hijacking. Reports suggest
there have been multiple hijackings of commercial airlines....

Gwen Tom, he's on flight 93. I have to find out if he's ok.

Rita He called to say he had made the flight so we know he is on the plane
and I know Don was in the south tower...and they had halted evacuation,
the majority of the 10,000 people in that tower where still in that tower.

Mitch What are we going to do? How do we salvage this today?

Gary Stop worrying about money and think about your life!

Mitch This is my life.

Radio ...all bridges and tunnels leading into New York City have been closed...

Gary I'm going to see what's going on, what other people are doing...(Exits)

Mitch What was that? Something went by the window..(He crosses to windows)

Rita (Crossing to window) Look! It's people. They are jumping from the top floors.

Mitch They are trapped. They can't get down and the smoke must be overwhelming
them.

Gwen Oh, the sprinklers are coming on. We are going to get soaked.

Rita No it is just water running through the walls from above.

Mitch You are both right. It is water from above and the sprinklers, all mixed with gas.

Gwen (Answering phone) Tom, oh Tom, the towers have been hit by hijacked airplanes, We are on fire, people are jumping...What? What are you saying-you have been hijacked...Well they are using the planes to kamikaze targets, they are suiciding themselves and murdering everyone on the planes. You will have a target, too... Tom...Tom...Tom.
He had to go, he was going to be noticed. They have been hijacked.

Rita So that makes three planes for sure. How many are there? What else do they have planned?

Radio ...all domestic flights have been halted and all domestic aircraft are to be grounded.

Gary (Entering main doors) We might be trapped. The one stairwell has a doorframe so twisted there is no way to get the door open and the other stairwell is blocked. The swaying and the impact has collapsed floors of wallboard and drywall into the stairwell. People are trying to clear a path. It's crazy out there. One guy jammed a nail right through his hand digging... What's this? People! They are jumping?

Mitch I saw one woman go by clutching her purse...

Gwen Tom's flight has been hijacked...

Radio ...reports just in suggest the Pentagon has been hit. Eyewitnesses claim to have seen a low flying plane slam into one corner of the Pentagon...

Rita It's still going on. There was another attack.

Gwen Is it Tom's flight? It couldn't be...I have to call

Gary This is a very sophisticated and well organized attack. This took millions and years of planning. Where was our security, our intelligence?

Radio ...White House being evacuated...

Mitch Well whoever it is they have changed things fundamentally. America will not take it. We'll hit them so hard...

Gwen (on phone) Tom, you are alive. A plane has hit the Pentagon. You have to be heading for a target as well....oh...you are what?...I love you...I'll miss you... He's gone.

Rita What, what is going on?

Gwen The passengers have had a meeting and decided to storm the cockpit to regain control of the airplane. They would sooner go down fighting than allow them to attack something else.

Mitch What's that sound? Look, the south tower is going...

(Sound like a jet airplane very close, followed by a sound like a waterfall-the sound of thousands of windows breaking and glass falling, and then the slam of each floor into the next one all the way down.)

Gary It sounded like a waterfall-all the windows exploding, glass falling...Where did it go? There is nothing left...

Mitch There is more smoke in here now. We have to get out of here and find a way down before we go down just like they did.

Rita The number of people jumping is accelerating. The smoke and fire on the top floors must be intense.

Mitch (answering phone)Wally...yeah, we are still here. The stairwells are jammed with debris. We are trying to dig through...Yes, the south tower has collapsed, it just disappeared...how many hijacks?...Flight 73 to San Francisco went down in Pennsylvania...no survivors. Yes, we know it was hijacked.

Gwen He's dead. They did it. They forced that plane into a crash. They won.

Mitch (still on the phone but talking to people on stage)CNN is showing the top 15 floors are glowing red, people are jumping, they appear trapped in the upper levels...100's of firefighters and police were heading up the south tower when it collapsed, a portion of the Pentagon has collapsed, all foreign incoming flights have been diverted to Canada...no, we have seen no firefighters yet...

Gary We have to go. Rita, help Gwen get ready, see how well she can walk. I'll go see what progress has been made on the stairwells.(He exits)

Mitch (still on phone)The UN has evacuated 10,000 people from the Plaza...Okay, gotta go.

Rita Yes, come on, Gwen, we have a responsibility to survive. There have been too many wasted lives today. Can you walk well enough to...

(Lights flicker, then go off)

Gwen The electricity is gone. In darkness, in smoke, in water and gas, in fire-how will we ever make it?

Rita If we want to be, then we must do-

Gary (Returning through main door) There is a path through the east stairwell. People are moving down. We need to go now, right now.

Gwen My purse, where-

Gary There are no taxis. Let's go. Let's get out of here.

(They assist Gwen, and all exit)

(A moment later, Mitch returns)

Mitch I need those papers. The world will go on. There will be a tomorrow. And in that tomorrow I will need money. Where is the-,what

(Ceiling tiles begin falling)

Mitch The ceiling is buckling. Whoa, the floor is heaving...This tower is going down.

(Complete darkness)