

The Libyan Crisis & Me

I've been thinking about re-writing this story for nearly 35 years. When it happened, I was in recovery for about 3 weeks, so I typed everything out while recovering. Somehow over the years the document was lost and my detailed record of this incident with it. Now I have the opportunity to re-commit this event to the page, so I am pleased to produce this long overdue version of: The Libyan Crisis & Me.

In the spring of 1986, I was living in London but had still never been to the European mainland. I discovered the local newspapers were filled with tiny, cheap classified ads offering inexpensive flights to all over Europe for last minute travelers. I finally committed myself to a three-day French excursion based on these dodgy ultra-low fares with cautious excitement. I had always wanted to have a picture of myself in front of the Eiffel Tower for some reason, and now I was ready! I booked the trip over the phone with my new bankcard before I learned it was *my* duty to pick up the ticket in person, in Croydon.



Ugh.

I found the dilapidated travel offices in an iffy neighborhood and ended up paying 34 pounds for a round trip ticket to Paris with transfers included – quite a deal. I just needed to get myself to Gatwick Airport for the late Friday afternoon flight.

When the end of the week finally came around, I left work early and took the tube home for my bags. All my other roomies had already gone home for the weekend, so I had the shower to myself, used the phone while naked (confirming my Paris hotel reservations) and sang Cure singles aloud as I finished packing. I was in a great mood.

Time was pressing so I left post haste to make the train to Gatwick. I barely made the flight because the airplane was some distance from the main terminal. I had to take a minibus to get to the secluded hanger in the nick of time.

I should have been suspicious immediately when I saw there was no logo or brand on the aircraft. It was some kind of prop plane from the 60s - loud and rickety with corrugated aluminum siding. The small crew onboard didn't have a uniform - no suits, ties or even ironed shirts, just basic black street clothes. The clientele was mainly hardcore backpackers, smoking tourists, and chatty college guys with an occasional frumpy girlfriend tagging along. But no matter, I was going to PARIS!

We were soon sputtering down the runway into the sunset and slowly climbed into the air.

The flight over the Channel was shaky, but brief. Too brief. Just 30 minutes into the flight I felt us descending into the French countryside - nowhere near any city as far as I could see. Soon it was obvious we were landing at a ridiculously small airport, and the weird gravel runway confirmed this. The plane was fishtailing all over the place and I was terrified frankly! But some of the (now drunk) college kids loved it and cheered when we finally came to a stop in a dark corner of the tarmac.

And this was when things got REALLY strange.

The 'airport' was closed. Envision a long, older flat building with a couple of abandoned luggage trucks and a few small aircraft tethered nearby. It was nearly dark now, but still no light from the

terminal could be seen. And it was noticeably quiet once the engines stopped, so everyone looked concerned and confused in the eerie stillness.

Suddenly our pilot appears, opens the passenger door and uses a rope ladder to descend to the runway. Huh? He walks to the terminal, pulls out some keys and begins to flip on the lights - eventually returning to the plane driving a portable staircase for the bewildered travelers.

As we disembarked, the so-called flight attendants and the captain welcomed us to France and stamped our passports. There was no process, no questions - I could have been carrying a nuclear warhead under one arm and a pound of cocaine with the other. No one would have stopped me.

After the passengers were processed, they gathered in the empty waiting room, boozing it up with stale snacks from the vending machine and bitching about the situation. Next, our luggage sailed past us on a motorized cart driven by - (you guessed it) the pilot! He disappeared around to the front of the airport and returned about 15 minutes later driving a huge old tour bus. Now he was our chauffeur! What a Renaissance guy.

Onboard the bus, I reexamined my ticket. Turns out you should always read the fine print. The ticket promised a trip to Paris, but apparently the flight was only half of it, and now we had a two-hour bus journey ahead of us - which no one expected, and everyone complained about. A night rain began so those who didn't party during the bus ride fell asleep, including myself.

When we finally got into the City of Light, I was punchy from traveling and slow to get going. I learned that we had crossed an international time zone, so it was actually past 9:00 PM – bad news. The hotel I booked was clear that they would accept no visitors after 10:00 PM, so after a quick bite at McDonald's (I had to, don't ask) I set out on the wet cobblestones to find my accommodations. Another shower hit so I ran into a leafy park and I decided to wait out the increasing rain by taking my first few photographs.

These photos were taken with a 35mm Zenit camera from Russia that I had bought in a secondhand store in London. It was a good deal, and a fine SLR camera for time lapse photography. I set the unit high in a tree and started a slow exposure of a traffic circle, hoping to get a cool pic. Then there was a hard impact to my head, a flash of white light with pain, then blackness.

When I woke up my head hurt a lot. There was sticky blood on my hands, in my hair and on my shirt. My money clip, wallet and passport were all missing - and my backpack, camera bag and clothes were nowhere to be found. I was also soaking wet and chilled from lying in the rain. I slowly realized I had been mugged, and as that reality set in, so did concern about my survival.



The abstract art on my tattered white 'ABACAB' Genesis concert T-shirt made it difficult to see, but it was streaked with blood. I finally found the source when I scratched the back of my head and felt an egg sized lump that was cut and bleeding. That's when it hit me, I was in real trouble, and I began to get the shakes from the fear, wet and cold.

I now felt unsafe in the park and wanted to get amongst people and find help, but the weather was turning from rainy to stormy. I found my backpack was ripped in half in a bush and then my empty camera bag. It suddenly occurred to me my camera was still in the tree! A few moments later I had it in my hand, and I found the lens cap and filters too. I snickered at the thought that my most valuable item was missed by the thieves, they must've wondered where the camera was! But my joy was short lived because the wind picked up and a thunderous downpour forced me to grab my stuff and seek shelter.

The closest place I could find was a construction site, so I slipped underneath a fence and found temporary refuge among the piles of building materials.

I had not been sitting there more than a minute before I heard the unmistakable sound of a gun cocking behind me. I turned around to see the black silhouette of a security guard, calmly pointing a small caliber pistol at me. Frankly I was too startled to be scared, so I put my hands up (as one does) with lots of *'je suis désolé'* and *'je vais aller'* coming out of my mouth in broken French.

The Frenchman coolly responded (in French) that he was going to call 17, the number I supposed for the police. He said something into a radio, then I heard a dialing sound and a muffled conversation. After that he put a cigarette up to his lips and offered me one. I declined and was about to speak when he nodded at me to be quiet and lit his fag. We waited for the inevitable arrest.

As we sat there, I noticed the storm didn't seem to be preventing a LOT of people from going out, all continuously passing by – what a busy city! Most appeared to be protestors - some with flags, others with signs. I also heard the sound of helicopters occasionally, quite low and disturbingly loud. With my massive headache I couldn't make sense of it all, but I knew something big was happening. Yet I struggled to stay awake as it was well over half an hour before a police van finally pulled up and I was confronted by the officers and detained.

The police in the van were in riot gear, which seemed a bit of overkill for one skinny Englishman. After a brief conference with the security guard, they put me in the van and looked at my head injury. I knew some 'Tourist French' and asked what was going on because they appeared concerned. After explaining I was mugged, they became a bit friendlier and started asking questions.

I explained my story in the van with as much French as I could remember - but they didn't seem impressed. I told them my passport, money, keys and plane ticket were missing, but I still had some clothes and a pre-paid hotel reservation waiting. After some discussion, the police decided to take me to my hotel, as it was mercifully on their way.

Just as we arrived, the crew got an important radio call. They quickly pushed me out of the van and told me to get inside the hotel, get medical help, and sort out my affairs at the police station in the morning. Then they sped away.

Unfortunately, this is the part of the story where the hotel refuses to even answer the door for me, despite eye contact through the windows. I pitched a fit in the storm, screaming like a crazy person in the rain while still drenched in blood!

Honestly, I wouldn't have let me in either. So the Frenchman called the police on me - again.

This time the cops arrived in about 5 minutes - the same group of officers in the same van - and they were pissed. The officers now treated me roughly. They shoved me in the back of the van and into a cage - slamming the door between me and the free passenger area. I was now a pig in a pen – and this was clearly not the holiday I planned.

As the men argued about what to do with me, I was able to pick up that both the American Embassy and the American Consulate were 'fermé' (closed). Their looks of concern were real, but I was so overwhelmed I cannot give you much more detail except that I ended up at a crowded police station handcuffed to a bench.

When I say the precinct was crowded, I mean packed! And the smell of something horrible and acrid filled the air – my eyes were watering and itching. It was the odor of tear gas, and it was all over the

hordes of people in plastic handcuffs packed into the station. Slowly I had the revelation that there had been a riot earlier, and the protestors seemed upset with Americans in particular. Without a passport or ID, I will suddenly become Canadian if asked.

Hours passed as I sat handcuffed to a well-worn bench with a passed-out drunk beside me. He smelled bad and farted a lot, even though he was unconscious. Out of boredom, desperation and curiosity, I went through his pockets - I'm not quite sure what I was looking for, but eventually I found a paper clip. Could that be useful? Maybe I could pick the lock and open my cuffs with it! I laughed inside at this James Bond movie idea, but this crazy thought unfortunately stuck in my head.

I should mention at this point that everyone in the station had some kind of paper in their hand. I had a yellow sheet and even with high school French I had no idea except it was an arrest warrant with the name – *Geoffrey Scott Pierson* versus the reality of *Jeffrey Scott Pearson*. The people leaving the place had a green paper and those hauled off to jail had the pink one.

I needed a green one.

Another hour went by, and I absentmindedly played with the paperclip in my handcuff while the waiting area began to thin down a little. The rain had stopped and lots of people were outside the station smoking and talking.

Suddenly an officer with a machine gun came towards me - but I wasn't his focus. Instead, he took a yellow paper out of the hand of the sleeping tramp next to me, read it, uncuffed him and sat him upright in a corner - jamming a green paper in his pocket. They had a short, sleepy conversation but afterwards the bum tipped over again and was snoring loudly on the floor.

It was about this time I felt a click in my handcuffs and to my astonishment I had picked the lock! So I immediately closed them back up in a panic.

What an idiot. I had it, then I blew it. Fuck me.

A policewoman was now beginning to work her way down the benches towards me, talking to everyone about their situation I would guess. I redoubled my lock-picking efforts, I figured if the paperclip worked before, it could work again.

This time it only took a few minutes before the click happened again, and I froze only a moment. When the woman was distracted, I tucked the free cuff in my sleeve, calmly picked up my stuff and snatched the green paper from the bum as if he had taken it from me. Then I headed straight towards the exit with bravado and a look of annoyed relief on my face. I flashed the smoking officers my green paper and they waved me through. The moment I rounded the corner, I ran for my life.

I ran so hard and so fast it seemed supernatural. The combination of fear, pain and adrenaline made it feel I was sailing through the streets. But it had been raining and the streets were still quite wet. My right foot slipped into a jagged sewer grate and the impact twisted my foot from my ankle. I hit the pavement hard, cutting my lip and chipping a tooth. The pain had me seeing white again, and I heard myself screaming at the top of my lungs.

A tipsy but well-dressed Frenchman appeared and took pity on my situation. He was an elegant man in a cream-colored suit, a hat and lots of jewelry. He spoke English and helped me up, insisting I come to his nearby apartment for shelter from the rain. I was not in any condition to object, so we limped over a couple streets to his modest flat.

It was weird to suddenly be in a warm, dry room with soft lighting and even softer music. The gentleman tended my head wound, bandaged my ankle (which was blue and bleeding) and cleaned up my bloody mouth, concerned about the tooth. He provided me with wine at first, but later bourbon to help with the pain. I don't remember his name, but he seems like a *Fernando* to me.

We got into a drunk discussion about my adventure and that's when I discovered the United States had recently defied the French military authorities and upset the whole country!

Specifically, US bombers and fighter jets had flown over French territory without permission or notification on their way to attack Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi for terrorism. French politicians and citizens were outraged - which is why hundreds of protestors surrounded both the American consulate and embassy and why I was screwed. Suddenly it was all too clear, I had become involved in an international incident! Lucky me.

After maybe an hour, the pills, the bourbon, and the bandages helped a lot - as did the icepack which reduced my head egg to brain marble. Still, Fernando continued talking, and drinking - tending my wounds, stroking my hair, and planning what we should do next. His idea was to take me to his summer home in Lyon and contact his personal physician about my injuries. We could leave in the morning and would be there by noon while I slept in the car. Afterwards, there could be weeks of recovery and he felt his vacation home was better suited for this than his apartment in Paris.

All this talk was beginning to feel a little uncomfortable for me and I began to have a series of new concerns about Fernando and his agenda. I noticed that the photos in the flat were mostly him with younger men in exotic locations, looking more like lovers than friends. But as he was an older gentleman, inevitably age, time and strong alcohol got the better of him and he passed out.

Meanwhile, I decided that I was not going to Lyon, and I needed to get away from Fernando now. Sneaking slowly, painfully, around his flat, I found my camera and bag but not my clothes. Eventually I left without them but stole a handful of change on the way out to balance the karma.

His door was shut quietly, the steps were taken lightly, and I gently closed the main entrance without a sound. I dragged myself away for several blocks before I found a broom handle/walking stick that helped my stride. But I faded quickly as exhaustion took over.

When the rain picked up again, I took shelter in the alcove of a large stone building with impressive architecture. I used a garbage bag and my walking stick to make a little tent in the doorway and soon fell asleep - my post-adrenaline high was gone and the bourbon and painkillers were at full strength. I think I slept a couple hours, but when I woke up I thought I was dreaming. What a strange sight...

It was a quiet, gray morning and there was a heavy mist hanging in the air. I felt creeped out and ill-at ease immediately. Some distant voices got my attention and through the fog I could barely make out a line of dozens of people! As I stood up to get a better look, it seemed they were all staring back at me as well. It was an odd gathering for seven o'clock in the morning, but apparently Saturday tickets to the Louvre were scarce and the line forms early.

That's right, of all the buildings in Paris to nap next to, I choose the Louvre - 'cause I'm a classy guy!

I realized at this point I really needed to get myself together because I couldn't immediately think of how I was going to get help. Or get to the hotel. Or back to England. Or even eat. I started to panic a little as the meds were wearing off.

Problem was, I was still a bit dizzy and my legs didn't work very well, so I ended up hobbling for five minutes and sitting for five minutes time and again. I tried to think of a plan, of what to do while I was dragging myself around Paris, but I confess the novelty of the city enchanted me and I ended up being just another aimless tourist – at least for a while.

I took some pictures of the tourists queuing at the Louvre to distract myself. After a walk to the river, I gave myself a moment. Finally, I could look around the beautiful capital. The dawn light slowly revealed all the classic scenes of Paris - the Seine River, the Arch de Triumph, Notre Dame, Sacre Coure all that stuff.

The city colours bloomed as the first sunbeams cut angled shadows out of the night. I was lucky to catch a few incredible 35mm shots, including a time lapse photograph which ended up published in my college newspaper. It was a welcome distraction, but my mind was still racing for a real solution.

I got a bit melodramatic and thought, “Well, if I'm gonna die, the hell if I'm not getting my picture taken in front of the Eiffel Tower. I will get through this, and I will treasure this portrait forever. So we're doing this, let's go gimpy!”

I took a few more pics on the way. The last few frames on my 36-exposure Kodak 35mm film reel are pictures of me taking a vintage 1986 selfie in front of the iconic tower using the timer.

Frame 34 is a photo of my camera bag (which I set out for focus) but then accidentally took the shot. At least it was in perfect focus, nice depth of field. Frame 35 shows the exact same framing with me in a ripped, (now) pink Genesis T-shirt with stringy wet hair half covering a full PTSD expression. It's slightly blurry but features a perfectly focused camera bag in the foreground.

Frame 36 features a somewhat focused Eiffel Tower with the same sharp focused camera bag obscuring the base. This was my attempt at a joke, as if the monument was on my bookbag. Hilarious.

I went to snap another photograph of a worrisome helicopter floating nearby, but the shutter release stopped midway - end of the roll. I rewound the film back into the canister and took it out of the camera. I was really sad I didn't have any more film. I thought about buying some but I had no real money anymore.

Without notice I began to cry. It got so bad I began to draw attention to myself as the citizens were passing by. I found an unlikely sanctuary in the middle of the Champs-Élysées. There was a pay toilet literally in the middle of the roadway, so I made my way over to it - but the door wouldn't open.

Of course, it was a pay toilet, and ten centimes was required. I found the coin in the handful of Fernando's change, grateful now for the crime. I opened the door and it 'spring-slammed' behind me, then locked. A light flickered on automatically and I was suddenly faced with a mirror full of OMG!

I quickly turned away from my mugshot and looked around for a toilet. But I could only find an odd sink on the floor – which was weird and puzzling. I slowly realized this WAS the toilet, and I tried to envision how to use it. I pushed a button I thought might raise the “shitsink”, but instead a little radio turned on with tiny French DJs bantering on a morning show.

Eventually I straddled the bidet and squatted, just as the song “Living in America” by James Brown squeaked out of the scratchy little speakers. I cried through the whole song - it’s a strange, vivid memory because at the end of it I pulled myself together and formed a plan.

I washed my shirt in the floor sink, wringing it out over my head to wash the blood off my hair and mouth. The continuous cloth towel machine was old fashioned but very useful. I was able to dry my hair and wipe myself down, cleaning everything I could find. After two more songs I got to the point I was nearly presentable, so I took stock of what I had left.

It wasn't much. A 1983 Zenit TTL single lens reflex 35mm camera. Some chewing gum. 4.65 francs in coin change. An empty ticket envelope with the Air France logo (We did NOT fly Air France) a small notebook and pen which I had not used yet. A torn backpack with one sock remaining, and some more chewing gum. The camera bag had lens caps, tissue paper, lens cleaner and some expensive filters. My 105mm long lens was gone however – damn. But then I found a handwritten note from Tom, my roommate, reminding me to buy duty-free cigarettes with a ten-pound note attached. This could be useful.

This cheered me up with the idea to call home for help. Then I remembered that everyone was away for the weekend. My roommates had even discussed renting out our place because London hotels were so pricey, so there was no home team advantage.

The best plan I could reason was to get back to the UK as fast as I could. But without a passport, flying wasn’t possible. Rescue would have to involve a train or private car to Northern France– then a ferry across the channel. However serious questions remained on how I’d get back into England with the American embassy and consulate in turmoil and no Passport or ID.

About this time some Asian tourists asked me to take a photo of them, probably because I had my camera bag out with all my accessories. I took two shots for them with their disposable camera but then realized my own camera was the answer to most of my problems.

My ugly Russian Zenit 35mm would save me. I figured I could sell the camera and buy a train/ferry ticket back to London, with cash to spare for some food. It would hurt to let go of such a useful tool, but it represented my best chance of getting back home.

Just after nine in the morning, I found myself amongst some outdoor book dealers and old stamp collectors gathered on a greenway along the Seine. I got into a conversation at a book stall with a British ex-pat and explained my situation. He wasn’t interest in the camera, but he had good advice. He said to get to the Calais ferry and befriend an English family traveling by car – because authorities didn’t always check every passport for a family, often only the driver.

I was taken aback by his candor, but he seemed credible. I took his advice to get to Gare du Nord and take the first Calais train available. Dragging my injured foot behind me, I slowly made it to the Paris metro. I used the coin change for the subway fare, and on the trip north I announced my intention the sell my camera on the underground to everyone in the subway car.

The locals probably thought it was stolen and seemed suspicious; thus I was ignored. I was quite disappointed when we arrived at the train station, but on my way out of the metro a big man touched my arm and began asking questions. “How much for the camera?” “Does it work?” “Where did you get it?” “Why are you selling it?” The burly Frenchman had many questions but not much patience. As I was telling my story he interrupts me and says he’ll give 40 francs for it – that’s all he has. Without thinking I said yes and sold him my Zenit with accessories.

I should have found out how much a trip to London was *before* I made that deal. I almost instantly had sellers regret, but the big man was long gone. I was frightened I'd just made a terrible mistake.

After a long queue at the station ticket booth, imagine my relief when I discovered my passage to Dover was exactly forty francs. So much for food, but I was heartened nonetheless because theoretically I would be home before nightfall. The train left in about an hour, so I found a spot to people watch near the platform and waited.

To my shock I saw a familiar figure in the crowd – it was Fernando! Unbelievable! I turned my face away pointlessly as he was a good 20 crowded meters away, but it was definitely him - still in his cream-coloured suit, tie and hat.

For some reason my heart was racing, and I was filled with fear and concern - how could this happen? My mind tried to recall mentioning the Gare du Nord idea to him, but this plan was made long after we had parted ways. Why the hell was he here?

I watched him at some distance, and noticed he was hanging around track five, the same platform where my train was due in just a few minutes. Turns out all the London bound trains leave from number five - which begs the question – was he looking for ME!? I began to feel a little sick inside.

My train arrived on the hour for the 2:10 departure. The man in cream noticed the passengers disembarking, but carefully watched those getting onboard the train. I hesitated as long as I could, and at the last moment I got up purposefully and limped towards the platform. By this time it was less crowded, so I was more obvious and he saw me boarding the last coach.

Our eyes met just as I hiked up into the railcar, but I broke gaze when the whistle blew, then simply went inside. I imagine without a ticket he was out of luck, but he *could* be on the train. I was a bit paranoid at first while finding my seat, but mercifully he never showed.

In fact, I never saw him again, but it took a while for the wtf factor to wear off – what are the chances in a big city like Paris? It still weirs me out.

The ride north afforded me a delicious hour of rest and safety. I relaxed watching a happy family chatting in English nearby. I thought about befriending them as I still needed to get across the Channel - but for some reason I didn't have the heart. I found it a bit dishonest and distasteful, but I needed a new plan soon. My anxiety returned as our arrival into Calais was announced and passengers prepared to disembark.

Out on the platform it was a sunny Saturday afternoon as we rolled into the busy station. Unexpectedly, there was an additional 90-minute wait for the late ferry. When it finally arrived, everyone was quickly hurried onboard without checking IDs or passports - but it was made clear they would be checked in-route or upon departure. The ferry was quite full, with dozens of cars and trucks in the parking deck below. The drivers of those vehicles came out of the 'D' deck into the main waiting hall, so I watched those folks carefully at the exit until I saw an opportunity.

That opportunity came in the form of a hard rock band on tour. I hate I can't remember the name, but the members were all party animals in their 20s. They were a British outfit from Bristol with a blue airplane as their logo, and I remember Gerry and John were the chatty ones, the rest not so much. We quickly struck up a 'music' conversation and once we set sail, we all drifted to the back of the ferry for a joint.

A special intimacy develops when musicians smoke marijuana together, and within half an hour they knew my story and were ready to help. I would act as their manager in public and could hide amongst their equipment during the customs inspection. They took me down to the parking deck where their big panel truck held a huge amount of stagecraft. I was directed to the back behind some tall bass cabinets, and one of them had a false front revealing a decent amount of space to hide inside. Genius.

Obviously, this was not their first smuggling job and it worked beautifully. The UK inspection was cursory at best, and soon we were waved through, passing immigration and customs and onto the M25 to Bristol. Later they dropped me in Crawley where I got on a train to Victoria Station for six pounds twenty of Tom's money which arrived around ten o'clock. Fortunately, this left me the four quid needed to get back to South Kensington from Victoria and it was just enough for the bus ride home.

It was completely dark around 10:30 when I got back to my apartment. I suddenly realized my key was in Paris somewhere. I limped around the block to get the key from the owner, but he wasn't home and at this point I was so exhausted I was not thinking straight. I dragged myself back to the flat and by 11 o'clock I was desperate. With no one at home and no contacts nearby, I took a spade from our little garden and used it to smash the bedroom window with a terrible crash.

Immediately the lights came on and there was screaming by both a man and a woman, but I didn't recognize either voice. As I attempted to clear where the glass was to climb through the window, a young man in a bathrobe opened the door and demanded an explanation. I explained this was MY apartment, and that he and his girlfriend (I guess) were sleeping in MY room. As I explained I realized these were friends or perhaps cousins of my roommate Tom, I recognized them! As the truth was revealed I was relieved, and just too tired to be angry at my roommates for renting out the flat without my knowledge.

After things calm down bit I allowed them to stay, and I collapsed on my roommate's cot for the evening. I could hear the couple bickering for a while afterwards, as this certainly was not the romantic weekend in London they planned! But I was so exhausted I drifted to sleep during their argument and didn't wake up until after they left, just before noon.

Later, I telephoned my friend Robert (Nickname: Animal) about taking me to the hospital because my head was still pounding, and my foot was all shiny, swollen and blue. He picked me up in his little car and a long day at the NHS revealed I had a mild concussion, a broken tooth, and a severe ankle injury that might require surgery. I won't paint you a graphic description of my foot at the time, but it was a horrible situation that gave me a slight but permanent limp and would require weeks of recovery.

That recovery happened in Animal's 5th floor walkup flat (ouch!) which he insisted on (with the bad blood between my roomies a factor). I actually was not so upset about it, and loved that Animal had 24/7 satellite TV and a fifth-floor view - rare for a squat in central London.

He also had a typewriter which I used during my recovery to record this story in great detail in a 10-page novelette. Though the original manuscript was lost years later during a move, the fact that I had to write down these happenings solidified them in my mind and made it easier to reconstruct the true narrative as I have done here.

Ultimately, the roommate situation was resolved and my body recovered with my mind not far behind. But to this day, the Libyan bombing was the wildest adventure I've ever experienced and I appreciate sharing this misadventure.