

TRAGEDY

I watched as the wiring crackled, sending small sparks drifting to the ground like small glowing meteors descending from the heavens.

This house was a dump. The pipes rattled, the electricity needed a full rewiring, and the whole place stunk of must and damp.

This was a house in such bad condition that even the insurance companies wouldn't touch it. But insurance was a joke anyway. We all knew it, in fact, the ignorance of the insurance companies was how I made a living.

I looked down at my wristwatch; ten minutes to wait.

People laughed at me when I told them my degree was in 'Fire Science', and they were right to. Sure, it was a niche topic, one which opened very few doors upon graduation, but I'd found a way to earn a crust using the knowledge I'd picked up over the years.

I'd met him at a pub down in Hackney; he was well-to-do type that had fallen on hard times and could no longer afford his penthouse suite.

What a pity, such a nice place as well, and insured to the rafters.

For a princely sum, I'd agreed to create a time delay device, one which

would cause an electrical fire at a specific time, burning his penthouse suite to ashes. The insurance companies would pay out a fortune, and we'd all be better off for it.

I'd entered the building through the fire exit and walked up the stairs. It was exhausting, but it was the only route that was devoid of cameras. I'd entered the apartment with the key he'd given me, and set about rigging the electrics.

I looked down at my wrist watch once more; 5 minutes left.

I remember looking at his penthouse suite. Floor-to-ceiling windows, marble floors and bed sheets of Egyptian silk. What a pity it would all burn.

I looked about my flat, with its wallpaper which was peeling from the damp underneath, the loose wires which hung from the ceiling, and the boxes of homemade explosives I used for my work. Soon enough, I'd be free of this place.

I looked down at my wristwatch; five, four, three, two, one...

I grinned, as the sound of sirens grew louder and louder. They'd never put the fire out, the room was too high up for hoses to reach.

I smiled broadly, looking up at the hanging wires; soon this would all be gone.

At once, a crackling sound came from the wires, as a shower of sparks

erupted from them. The sparks fell upon the sawdust filled boxes which contained the explosives, and quickly erupted into flame.

I leapt from my bed, desperately looking for a fire extinguisher, and quickly realising that I had none. The fire caught the loose wallpaper and climbed the wall rapidly, blocking off the exit to the door.

I rushed out of the door, standing on the balcony as smoke began to fill the apartment.

I pulled my phone from my pocket and called the emergency services.

“I need the fire brigade immediately. Apartment 491, West Road.” I barked.

“We will be there as soon as possible sir,” She said.

“I need them now!” I cried, “I’m trapped on my balcony.”

“Sorry sir,” She said, “We will be there as soon as possible, many of our fire engines have been deployed to tackle a large fire downtown.”

I lowered the phone, looking out across the city as the flashing lights drove away from West Road, towards the big tower in the city centre;

the penthouse suite glowed against the night sky, chunks of burning debris falling like glowing meteors descending from the heavens.