

URBAN LEGEND WATCH

THE MYTHS OF SEPTEMBER 11

The good, the bad, the ugly... and the truth.

We were all scared, and—let's face it—we were ready to believe anything. For the anniversary of the attacks, *Maxim* tracked down the truth behind the rumors that clogged your in-box.

RUMOR: A band had to yank an album that showed the Twin Towers exploding.
REALITY: According to urban myth site Snopes.com, this happened to two groups. The Coup's album (right) featured a band member detonating the WTC; the cover was never released. Dream Theater's album (far right) came out *that day* and showed the Towers on fire. The album was recalled.



DREAM THEATER

LIVE SCENES FROM NEW YORK



RUMOR: If you fold a \$20 bill just right, you can see a burning Pentagon on one side and a smoldering World Trade Center on the other.

REALITY: The Twin Towers (above) look creepily familiar. The Pentagon (inset) looks like a wadded-up 20.

RUMOR: Dead bodies strapped into airline seats were found near Ground Zero.
REALITY: Identifiable wreckage from the planes was recovered, as were a pair of severed hands mysteriously tied with plastic cuffs. But no bodies in seats.

RUMOR: A camera found at Ground Zero snapped a pic of a man on the WTC roof seconds before a plane hit.
REALITY: This rumor came from a faked jpeg that flew around the Net after the attack, but the kind of plane, approach angle, and time of day are all wrong. And the roof was closed that morning.



RUMOR: One of Nostradamus' prophecies reads: "Two steel birds will fall from the sky on the Metropolis. The sky will burn at 45 degrees latitude."
REALITY: Century 6 Quatrain 97 of his prophecies actually reads: "At 45 degrees the sky will burn, / Fire to approach the great new city." Yeah, it's kinda eerie, but New York is closer to 40 degrees latitude, and there's no mention of any steel birds.

RUMOR: Workers found a Bible, completely unburned, in the wreckage after the Pentagon was hit.

REALITY: It was unburned...but it was a dictionary. So unless God's a problem solver, it probably doesn't mean anything.

RUMOR: After the attacks, a Canadian journalist published an essay praising America.
REALITY: The chain e-mail you received dozens of times is a pretty faithful copy of an essay written by Canuck Gordon Sinclair. The catch? He wrote it in the early 1970s.



RUMOR: After the first tower was hit, an announcement in the second tower told people to return to their offices.

REALITY: This has been verified by people who ignored that advice and lived.

RUMOR: A man in one of the collapsing towers "surfed" down on a wave of debris. He survived with minor injuries.
REALITY: Um, no.

RUMOR: Unidentified groups shorted airline stock just before the attacks.

REALITY: It happened, and it's still unexplained. In the days leading up to 9/11, stocks for the two hijacked airlines, United and American, were shorted 12 to 25 times the normal volume. Authorities have yet to find evidence of ties to al Qaeda.



RUMOR: A photo taken of the towers shows the face of Satan in the smoke.
REALITY: This picture, snapped by an Associated Press photographer, was *not* doctored. The smoke does look like a face—but we think it looks like Santa.

