Dianne Reed

Oasis Attack

29 May, 2004

LIVING PAST TERROR

Five years ago, Dianne Reed barely survived a militant attack on her compound in Saudi Arabia in which 22 others died. Helena Frith Powell meets the American who moved back to the Middle East to prove that peace can win over violence.
May 29, 2004 – Early Morning

- The day’s attacks began at the Shell Office by four armed terrorists resulting in collateral damage at the adjacent compound. A British National was killed & his body drug through the streets for several kilometers. Children were also killed here.

- The next location attacked was the Petroleum Center office complex where several were killed including an American who had been living & working in Saudi Arabia for 28 years. He was just a few months from retiring.

- They then proceeded to the main Oasis compound, parked their car out of sight & gained access by walking through the employee entrance of the main Oasis compound dressed as Saudi Military.
As they entered the residential compound
  – They moved from house-to-house

Many international workers were killed
  – India – 8
  – Philippines – 2
  – Sri Lanka – 2
  – Egypt – 1
  – England – 1
  – Italy – 1
  – Sweden – 1
  – South Africa – 1
  – United States – 1

Our home was in the Oasis Compound
  – It was the last place to be attacked

I was shot in both legs while running

Following the attack, I was taken to SAAD hospital
  – Two minutes from bleeding to death when I arrived in the emergency room
Terrorists at the Door

- Attacker attempted to break down the front door:
  - Shot lock with AK-47 & tried to kick down the door
- I ran out the back door through the garden gate
- Tried to make it to the Guard House
- Attacker saw me
- Fired AK-47 at me
- Grazed my left leg:
  - Direct hit on my right leg
  - Lost my Fibula
  - Compound fracture to my Tibia
  - Significant muscle, tissue, nerve & vascular damage
I Tried to Escape

- I fell just short of the Guard House door
- When I fell the attacker fled
  - I pulled myself up over the curb…
  - To the door of the Guard House
  - It was locked!!!
- My friend, Heidi, (a nurse) arrived
  - Found me at the door
  - Thought I’d been killed
  - Went around the building, unlocked door & helped me inside
- An attacker dropped his Keffiyah
  - Heidi used it as a tourniquet
- A compound security guard called an ambulance
- I then called my husband Owen
Arrival at Hospital

• I went by ambulance to Saad Hospital
• Fully conscious & aware of everything
  – Significant blood loss
  – Received 8 units of blood before surgery
  – Went to surgery where the tibia was set, arterial graft performed and other repairs done to save my leg
• Doctor told Owen my excellent physical condition would almost assure my leg would be saved
  – I would make a full recovery with some possible long term nerve damage
Dr. Cornelius “Cory” Burger

- South African Doctor treated me:
  - In-country only two weeks before attack
  - Had 15 years gunshot wound experience
- His skill combined with his bedside manner was the best that could be found anywhere in the world
- We moved to Abu Dhabi Jan 2005
- “Cory” moved to Al-Ain near Abu Dhabi in early 2006
Years of Recovery

- Skin graft 48 hours after initial surgery
- External “fixator” used to set my tibia
- Received internal steel plate
- Began physical therapy
- Tibia healed, steel plate remained 2 yrs.
- Resumed exercise & physical activities
- 2005 moved to Abu Dhabi
- 2006, Dr. Burger removed the steel plate
- 2007 1st reconstructive surgery
- 2008 2nd reconstructive surgery
- 2009 3rd reconstructive surgery
- 2010 Final reconstructive surgery
Events That Motivated Me To Make A Difference

• Many hospital visits from Saudis my husband worked with
• Visits from high ranking Saudi officials and condemnation of the attack by all Saudis that visited me
• Visits from many nationalities in the community many of whom I had only met once or twice
• All visitors had a common goal in life: to live peacefully and harmoniously with all people regardless of nationality
• There is far more love and compassion in the world than hatred
• Hatred and intolerance is taught, it does not come naturally
Events That Motivated Me To Make A Difference

• Our young Bangladeshi housekeeper offered to work for free until I healed
• My friends of many nationalities quickly volunteered to do anything to help and many brought me food specific to their culture to encourage me and help me heal
• Most people base their opinion of other cultures on what they hear and read from newspapers and TV news stations rather than interaction
• The best avenue to break down walls of misunderstanding and lack of trust between cultures is through interaction, dialogue, tolerance and understanding

FAWCO Leipzig Regional Conference November 16, 2019
Current Realities

• Unfortunately the incident at the Oasis compound was not an isolated one. As you can see from the graphs on the next two slides, such acts continue to occur worldwide averaging 11,311 per year from 2006 through 2017 resulting in 235,769 deaths (19,647 per year average).

• In today’s world it seems most people want others to tell them how to think and act rather than research, interact and come to their own conclusions.

• Hate is not something you are born with it is something that is taught.
Current Realities

From statista.com

FAWCO Leipzig Regional Conference November 16, 2019
Conclusion

• This long journey would not have been possible without the Love and encouragement of so many friends, family members and those I have had the privilege of meeting along the way.

• I am resolved to continue to share my story to break down barriers and promote peace and tolerance between cultures.

FAWCO Leipzig Regional Conference November 16, 2019
Pearls Of Wisdom
Audrey Hepburn – Beauty Tips

• For attractive lips, speak words of kindness
• For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people
• For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry
• For beautiful hair, let a child run their fingers through it once a day
• For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone
Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope & confidence!

Helen Keller
The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams!

Eleanor Roosevelt
A woman’s strength comes from being able to adapt and yet still be strong enough to fight back!

Sabrina Newby
A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground!

Cheyenne Proverb
Treat the world well. It was not given to you by your parents but lent to you by your children!

Native American Proverb
I touch the future. I teach!

Christa McAuliffe
The first to apologize is the bravest, the first to forgive is the strongest & the first to forget is the happiest!

Unknown
Thank you for your attention and the time to share my story with you!