

Things Keep Blowing Up

Several weeks prior to the following incident, I had walked with two young Kibbutzniks over to Moshe Dyan and Ilan Ramon's graves. As we headed down the hill afterwards towards McDonalds across the valley, a mother of two kids blew herself up. We decided to skip McDonalds. On Monday Dec 5, I went to HaSharon Mall in Netanya with a 34 year old kid named Ofer and his 24 year old fiancé Karen from the Kibbutz to look for some computer speakers for an elder Kibbutznik.

The three of us were inside the doors just before noon looking at the store map when some bomber blew himself up behind us outside the glass doors. The only thing that happened to Ofer and me was persistent ringing in the ears and a haunting smell of cordite as well as some small glass cubes down our shirts. Karen had some bleeding scratches on her neck and arms from flying glass. Five people were killed, a couple dozen hospitalized. The closest I've ever come in all the time Cathy and I were there or now was the night when the two young boys and I were walking down from the graves of Moshe Dyan and Ilan Ramone the Astronaut near the Kibbutz. We heard the explosion and saw the smoke and dust over at Aloneme McDonalds where the mother of two kids blew herself up. We "decided" not to go there for falafels as it would be "closed" now.

On Tuesday morning I went as usual to the School at Na Ha Lal and was tutoring some Palestinian kids in the lab as part of a peace initiative. The head "mistress" came up and asked to see me in her office.

When we got there, there were two official looking people. One was an officer from the Israeli security police and one was a Canadian official. The principal left the office and the Canadian official said the Canadian gov was directing me to leave Israel. Long story short, my name has appeared on a list of possible foreigners to abduct. How do they know? I wouldn't know. Why?

She said, "Did you write this in the Jerusalem Post?" I said "yes!" "And did you also write this in the JP?" I said "yes". It was one about the beauty of seeing *"Through My Eyes"*.

I'm not sure you guys see the post, so I've included below.

"Did you go to have dinner in the West Bank town of Janine with a Palestinian family?" she asked. "Yes" I said.

"Have you been going there to tutor". I said yes.

"Do you know this programme you are working with is quite controversial". "No" I said, "I knew it was a little controversial".

She suggested I had kept "too high a profile". If this all sounds incredible to you all back home, it just sounded completely unbelievable, stupid and wrong. For a while I thought maybe I was being "punked".

"What if I choose not to leave?" I asked. She said very politely, "The Canadian government can choose to see that your VISA is not renewed in several weeks. You can resist this and try to stay here but the Canadian gov. is only trying to look out for it's citizens abroad."

"How many people are on this list?" I asked. She said "Quite a number". "Has anything ever happened to any of them?", I asked.

"Not since the intefada, but things are heating up again with the settlement expulsions", she said.

"Did this have anything to do with the bombing in Netanya?" I asked.

"No that was a random act!" said the Israeli guy.

"Can I come back if I leave?", I asked. "We would recommend you leave for at least six months and when you do return do not stay at Ginegar or work here in this area or go to Janine. But personally, I wouldn't come back until things have cooled down quite a bit, unless you really need to."

"That could be forever", I said. "Unfortunately, you may be right", she said. Then they asked how long it would take to pack as they had a seat for me on the 1730 El-Al flight to London and she would like to drive me to the airport.

"How would I explain it to everyone?" I asked.

She said, "We generally explain it was an urgent family matter". I was on the plane and arrived in London a few hours later.

Oh well so much for Israel. I had such a "sweet gig" going on to a few hours a day tutoring as well as volunteering in the evening's tutoring Russian immigrants who are now trying to learn English.

I had contemplated digging the old Uzi out of the armory and perhaps training to carry a handgun, but then I realized I've become allergic to guns, killing and shite since 1973.

Several days after arriving in England, on Sunday Dec 11 at 0600H, we were blown out of bed by a massive explosion at the Buncefield fuel depot 7 km away line of sight. Ric and I hustled downstairs because we thought earthquake or else something had blown up in

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the house. Nothing. Then we went outside to see if it was a car accident, only to be greeted by a 200 foot column of flame over the way at Hemel Hemstead. My sister in law said, "Scotland Yard's going to ask you to leave if you keep this up".

at: London Charles Easmon 1 Harley Street,
London W1G 9QD (44 20) 73078756 London Michael
J. Clarke 15 Basil Mansions, Basil Street,
Knightsbridge, London (44 20) 75898965 Please have
your passport and number available. Beth

> p.s. Here's a follow up from our government.

-----Original Message-----

From: [dfait-maeci.gc.ca]

Sent: Thu 12/8/2005 9:37 AM

To: Read, Lance

Subject: ConsularAffairs Israel

Dear Mr. Read Thank you for your co-operation in this security matter. I want to assure you that the Canadian government has only the best interests of it's citizens at mind while they travel abroad. There is one thing I should add to our conversation of two days ago. CSIS agents, the RCMP, Israel and Canadian governments anticipate possible strong negative reactions to the movie, "Munich", Directed by Steven Spielberg to be released this coming weekend. Please search info under "Munich movie" on the web. There was no way the Israeli government would be reissuing transit permits to you for visits to the West Bank and Janine specifically in the near future. You said this was becoming part of your routine thus your current pursuits would have been jeopardized. Thank you once again for your co-operation and decision to leave Israel at this time. It is a relief personally to know you are safely abroad. Please stay in touch for information at Consular Affairs if you decide to return to Israel in the future.

<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/rep-ort-en.asp?country=135000#3> Beth

-----Original Message-----

From: [dfait-maeci.gc.ca]

Sent: Thu 12/29/2005 11:07 AM

To: Read, Lance

Subject: Consular Affairs Israel

Dear Mr. Read As you may have noticed today's press release in regards to the hostage taking in Gaza, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,251-1961881,00.html> I would like to take this opportunity once again on behalf of the Canadian government, to thank you again for your decision. I can tell you at this time that the agency deemed you were at greater risk than we had disclosed at that time. As I mentioned while you were in Israel, the Canadian government has designated counseling physicians available if you feel a need to discuss this matter in person with a Canadian representative in London. Please contact them directly