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Trapped in Terror

Broadcast: 15/04/2009

Reporter: Trevor Bormann

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They were hiding for their lives, hunted by gunmen who'd brought India's biggest city to a standstill.

In this chilling 'insider's' account of a terrorist siege, two Australian business people tell of their remarkable survival trapped inside Mumbai's Oberoi Hotel, during the attacks last November.

Foreign Correspondent reveals the intimate 'video diary' of wine company executive Garrick Harvison, who evaded terrorists for 42 hours during the standoff. Scared and distressed, Mr Harvison speaks of his fears in a series of clips recorded on his mobile phone.

'The most difficult part is not knowing what is going on the other side of that door' he says.

Mr Harvison at least knew that the two young Pakistani terrorists were luring foreigners from their rooms to murder them.

The story charts his exasperation at not being rescued early.

Into his mobile phone he records another message.

'You don't know how many terrorists are left in the building, how many hostages they've still got, how many they've killed.'

Trevor Bormann's story also looks at the plight of another Australian Debra Bayne, who had to listen to



Flames erupt from an upstairs window of the Hotel Oberoi

terrorists killing hotel guests in a neighbouring room.

'There were periods where you knew they were there around you, and you had to stay hidden and not move' she says.

Mumbai is a city still bearing the scars of its own '9/11'. More than 170 people were killed when a group of young terrorists struck hotels, cafes, hospitals and a railway station.

Bormann showcases the resilience of a city that's home to Bollywood - a huge metropolis bursting back to life, if forever shaken by three days of terror.

Update

Many viewers who watched this story were moved by the plight of widow Karuna Waghela, whose husband was killed in the Mumbai attacks.

Karuna is currently being cared for by charity organisation '[India Helps](#)', which is hoping to raise enough money to achieve their [long-term plan](#) to help Karuna and her children.



Businessman Doug Markell was a former local councillor from Sydney, and spent a lifetime in community service. He was holidaying in Mumbai with his wife Alison and staying at the Taj Mahal Hotel when terrorists struck. Alison Markell wrote to 'Foreign Correspondent' to give her account of the night of 26th November.

My husband, Doug, and I were guests of the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel on that fateful night at the end a three week tour with Tauck Tours and were planning on returning to Sydney the next morning. We had retired fairly early and were reading in bed when the firing started. Grenades and automatic gun fire raged throughout the night. We were contacted by reception at about 11 p.m. to inform us that there was a security alert and that we were to remain in our rooms, not let anybody in, turn off all lights and lock the door and above all, not to leave our room. At about 3.45 a.m. on the morning of the 27th, we heard what sounded like the roar of a jet aircraft, glass crashing and the hissing and sizzling of electrical fire. My husband looked through the peep hole in the door and was shocked and horrified to find that the corridor was engulfed in flame. At that point, we made the decision to flee the room as we feared the hotel was likely to burn down and we would be caught in the fire.

The corridor was very hot from the flames, electric wires were on fire and the smoke was dense. We covered our mouths and made our way as quickly as we could along the corridor. As we approached the magnificent stairway under the dome, where we were hoping to escape, we ran straight into the gunmen, or gunman (I don't know how many terrorists were on the 3rd floor at the time). My husband was shot and fell to the ground and I fell on top of him. There was another round of automatic gun fire which hit me on my left arm and killed Doug. I lay there for a short time in utter shock. I now think that if I had moved straight away, I would have been killed as well, but I guess they thought I was dead too. It was dark and though I was in shock and bleeding from my wounds, I felt as though I had to try and escape somehow. At that point as I got to the top of the stairs, three Indian policemen were lying dead with their rifles across their bodies. I stepped past them and somehow got down the stairs into the lobby where there was carnage. At the end of the lobby corridor, a staff member of the Taj beckoned me to run to him and he hid me in a luggage holding cupboard until such time as they thought it was safe to transport me by ambulance to hospital.

I was treated in the emergency department and transferred to a ward where I was able to contact the Australian High Commissioner and my family. Later that day, John McCarthy and his assistant took me to the Australian Consulate.

The Indian staff of the Taj who assisted me (two of whom accompanied me to hospital) were so brave and in some ways, I owe them my life.

I thought you may be interested to hear my story of the worst night and day of my life.

Sincerely,

Alison Markell

Transcript

GARRICK HARVISON: [To mobile phone camera] 'As you can hear there's a lot more gunfire so there's something going on out there.'

BORMANN: Australian businessman, Garrick Harvison, is hiding for his life. Outside his hotel room, two gunmen are tracking down guests and killing them.

This is what it's like to be a victim of terrorism. Over the next forty hours, Garrick Harvison's mobile phone video diary will record an insider's view of a deadly siege.

This is the story of one of the most audacious and devastating terrorist attacks of recent years, but it's also a tale of personal courage, of survival and the resilience of a city that has no choice but to move on.

[In street] 'But this is Mumbai after all – home to Bollywood – cultural and financial powerhouse of India. But on the 26th of November, the world watched as the city was struck by absolute terror.'

As darkness fell in the Colaba district, ten heavily armed young men trained by radical Islamic group Lasker-e Taiber were in rubber dinghies preparing for landfall. They spread out in pairs across the city, some towards luxury hotels. Next to the landmark Trident Hotel, sits its smaller sister hotel the Oberoi. An eleven person trade delegation from New South Wales was checking in at the Oberoi, some had already retired for the night.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'All of a sudden there were explosions in the hotel, massive noise, sounds of certainly what I thought was gunfire and grenades going off.'

BORMANN: The terrorists swept through the lobby of the Trident Hotel killing seven staff. On this security camera footage one gunman blasts a computer behind the desk. The two Pakistani men in their early twenties then made their way to the foyer of the Oberoi. The open atrium plan would make it very easy for just two gunmen to control the whole hotel.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'Smoke bombs in the hotel were set off, must have been very quickly after the first round of shooting and grenades went off.'

GARRICK HARVISON: 'I looked down to the lobby and I just saw this guy running across and firing shots and that's when it really hit home and I thought you know, we're in trouble here so I just ran to my room and barricaded myself.'

[In hotel room] 'You can hear the gun fire in the background. I'm not too sure who's firing that.'

BORMANN: They were trapped but still in touch with the outside world. Callers to their mobile phones and the news channels were telling them of their chilling predicament. The terrorists were stalking the corridors hunting westerners.

Debra Bayne was joined by another Australian delegate. They smashed windows in their 19th floor room to escape the smoke.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'We sat for the next half hour or so either end with our heads outside just breathing to stay alive.'

BORMANN: Another Australian businessman, 49 year old Brett Taylor, was already dead in the lobby.

GARRICK HARVISON: 'I'm not sure exactly what is going on, but hope it's something positive for me and for all the other Australians and all the other captives in here.'

DEBRA BAYNE: 'There were periods where you knew they were there, around you and you had to stay hidden and not move.'

GARRICK HARVISON: [On mobile phone in hotel room] 'As you can hear, there are more gunshots. I just hope that's coming from the good guys. It's been... the most difficult part of this whole process is just not knowing what's going on, on the other side of that door as you don't know how many terrorists are left still in the building, how many hostages they've still got, how many hostages they've killed. All you can do is just sit tight and hope and pray that everything's going to be okay.'

The thing that really kept me going was just thinking about my wife and kids and wanting to hold them as soon as I got home and thinking that I can't leave them in this world. I've still, you know I've only lived 31 years of this life and I still want to live another seventy years so I just had to get through it.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'And the nights are hard, listening to people being shot, listening to explosions next to your room. It's hard in the dark. For some reason you feel more afraid.'

GARRICK HARVISON: [On mobile phone in hotel room] 'Well it's quarter past nine. The state of my hotel room... this has been my bed for the last two days. And as you can see, I try and stay away from the windows... but that's the Trident Hotel just there. I've got the bed sort of blocking the hallway... which I've pulled back a little bit... and that's the front door. I've got some chairs barricading that and obviously try and stay away from the door. The bathroom... which if it does, push does come to shove, I'll be lying in that little bathtub just there. And hopefully it doesn't come to that and I'll get the hell out of here pretty soon.'

'My understanding was that they had gotten behind the lobby at the front desk and they were calling room by room to try and get people out of the rooms.'

BORMANN: 'Did your phone ring?'

GARRICK HARVISON: 'My hotel phone rang yes, yes. And thankfully I didn't answer. I... somehow just common sense kicked in and I knew that the hotel was still under terrorist control. It wasn't under you know, Indian armed forces control... and then I thought why the hell is someone ringing me from the lobby? You know, they should be ducking for cover.'

BORMANN: The terrorists had now lured several guests from their rooms and had moved them to the 19th floor in a room next to Debra Bayne.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'We would hear shootings, we would hear explosions and at times we could see bits of glass dropping on the window ledge outside our window and then we heard from people who sent us sms' that it was true that they had taken hostages on our floor.

The level of explosions was becoming quite constant and shooting was becoming quite constant around my room.'

BORMANN: Surviving guests were facing a new phase of the standoff. Sixteen hours after the siege began, Indian commandos were moving in.

GARRICK HARVISON: [On mobile phone in hotel room] 'Well, it's 4.45 on... I think it's Thursday. I've just

received a text message from the outside that this is an intervention team coming in to storm the building so [chokes].'

DEBRA BAYNE: 'And then people tried to smash our door in. We had barricaded the door and the hall and we were hiding out and then there were stun grenades thrown into our room. I knew they were stun grenades because the glass.... the big pane of glass smashed.'

GARRICK HARVISON: [On mobile phone in hotel room] 'Well I think, hopefully things are starting to look up. We've just experienced a pretty severe gun battle as you can hear in the background. I just hope this is the good guys taking out the bad guys and we're going to be rescued.'

DEBRA BAYNE: 'Two rifles came through the pillows and a rifle was put at each of our heads and we were told by male voices with Indian accents to come out with our hands up. It was the Indian commandos. They didn't know that we weren't the terrorists - they didn't know where they were hiding out - and we didn't know that they weren't the terrorists. But when we came out of the door of my hotel room we had to walk over all the people who had been killed. Had to walk over their bodies and to see the carnage that we'd been listening to and hoping wasn't true. There were fourteen of us and they said we're now going to try and get you out of the hotel and to safety. So we needed to go down a fire escape, fire stairs, in the dark. One member of our group couldn't walk. The lady who'd been taken hostage was very, very shaken around. And when we got to the fire stairs we were told the terrorists... we knew the terrorists were still at large. It was pitch black, nineteen stories in the dark... trying to walk... But everybody took time, was patient and kind to make sure that anyone who needed help was given help.

So we were walking down the street trying not to run, not to fall over and an Indian commando held my hand until we got to the next secured building and then lots of Indian people were trying to give us cups of tea and food and look after us. Indian people were coming up to us and apologising for what had happened. They were so upset themselves. We're saying, well we don't blame you, you know?'

BORMANN: In their rampage, the ten terrorists had attacked not only hotels but hospitals, cafes, a Jewish centre and a railway station. More than 170 people were dead. They'd murdered police officers, taxi drivers and people on the streets. At the Oberoi, the two terrorists were still alive inside the hotel. They'd killed three hotel staff and twenty two guests. Tired, traumatised and exasperated, Garrick Harvison would have to wait another twenty hours for freedom.

GARRICK HARVISON: [On mobile phone in hotel room] 'It appears that the armed forces are taking on the terrorists. I'm not too sure of the outcome of the hostages. I just hope that they're all okay and I hope someone can come up here and rescue us and get us home. I just hope it's over soon, to get back to my family.

It was very hard for me to handle at the time. I couldn't understand it. I couldn't understand why the ten levels below me had been evacuated and the three or four levels above me had been evacuated at the time I couldn't and I believe, so I'm told, my floor was one of the last floors to be evacuated. They came to the door, they banged on the door, announced who they were. I said you know I'm here, I'm Australian. So you've got a machine gun there, at the same time you're so thankful to be rescued but it's the longest two minutes you'll ever go through because you just want to get out of this room. It's been your prison for the last 40 hours.

There were about five or six of us and we were held in this room for approximately an hour, then we were taken to a hallway, a safe hallway where we had three guards in front of us and three armed guards behind us and they kept us in this hallway.

[At hotel] Can we go? Go? [moving through hallway]

You know I went through I think every single emotion you know, known to me and my body. Elation at finally getting out, sadness in everything that happened, fear, you know weakness cause I couldn't do anything

about it and I just told myself you're getting out of here and that's what kept me going.

You know when fear and adrenalin's running through your body you just manage.'

BORMANN: Four months on, Indian's largest metropolis has the pretence of a city unaffected. The tourists and business people are back, any downturn here is because of the global financial crisis, but behind a resilient façade is a city still in shock and mourning.

There was another hotel attacked that night, the hotel of Mumbai, the 106 year old Taj Mahal. Seventy-one year old Australian Doug Markell died here, along with thirty other staff and guests.

KARAMBIR KANG: 'Well we were very fortunate that this part of the building was not badly damaged. Most of the damage that happened was towards the south of the building, which is to my left. When the attacks happened the staff were there, the staff did not want to run. They put themselves in front of the guests. They saved countless lives I would think.'

BORMANN: The rebuilding began the day after the bodies were removed from this hotel. Almost all of the 1500 staff returned and within a month the Taj was open again. No one is more strikingly committed than the General Manager himself. Karambir Kang is a private man and chooses not to talk about the fact that his own family perished. His wife Niti and their two sons Uday and Samar died as fire swept the hotel.

KARAMBIR KANG: 'I think Bombay is a city of dreams and where a lot of dreams are made and shattered every day and Bombay bounces back immediately. I think it's to do with the true spirit of the people of Bombay and the spirit of India which is embodied in everyone here.'

BORMANN: India calls these attacks 26/11 – they were aimed to kill not only foreigners but ordinary Indians as well. Gunmen rampaged through hospitals and ran through slums throwing hand grenades and shooting.

Karuna Waghela's thirty-three year old husband, Bhuthabhai, was having dinner when the terrorists ran by and shot him. The victim's brother explained what happened.

BROTHER OF VICTIM: 'The first shot hit this wall. It hit here at the top of the wall, and my mother was saved. My brother and his small son were there – he's six years old. They had dinner, and were just sitting there and then the shooting happened.'

BORMANN: The Indian government has given the family of every victim a half a million rupees or about fourteen thousand dollars. Karuna is upset because the men in the family have taken her cash handout and soon she'll be banished from the house because she's considered to have no worth anymore. Becoming a widow is a cruel curse in this society. On the 26th of November, so many lives were ruined.

But this is also a city where art imitates life. In Bollywood, the usually self-obsessed film industry has found a social conscience after the attacks.

ANIL KAPOOR: 'Well I think this time you know people talk about the spirit, the resilience of Mumbai but this time it has really hurt us very badly.'

BORMANN: In the Oscar winning movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, a sceptical game show host grudgingly propels a dirt poor child into a life of fame and fortune. Actor Anil Kapoor says Bollywood needs to look at making a film about the terror attacks, if only as part of national healing.

ANIL KAPOOR: 'You know if someone was trying to sensationalise it, it just makes the film too.... just capitalise on this whole.... you know, what is happening. I think that's not acceptable but the audience today in India, the people in India are becoming very, very mature, very intelligent. They understand.'

BORMANN: Muslims and Hindus collaborate in this secular industry and yet no one it seems wants to the first

to make a movie on the events of 26/11. Titles have been registered for production, names like 'Taj to Oberoi' and 'Mission Taj'. But the actor known here as 'Mr India' is saying don't hold your breath.

ANIL KAPOOR: 'It's a racket. You register the title and no one makes the film, so please don't take those titles very seriously.'

BORMANN: This is a city good at concealing its scars. The constant reminder is the ongoing trial of the only surviving terrorist. Ajmal Kasab has offered police a detailed account of his group's plan to kill 5,000 people in Mumbai. His orders were to shoot until the last breath. Throughout the world, those who survived his gang's brutality are trying to move ahead with their lives.

DEBRA BAYNE: 'It hasn't put me off going to India, it hasn't put me off doing the things I need to do. I'm not ready to go back yet but I think as a person in the world today, it didn't hurt in some ways to see this is actually a part of these times.'

GARRICK HARVISON: [Playing with baby] 'Yeah I've certainly tried to rationalise it. I was annoyed that something could happen in our world, in today's world and annoyed that I was part of it. I don't ever feel that I was personally targeted but you know unfortunately it was wrong place, wrong time. It's unfortunate that it happened and I don't ever want to see it happen again but I think history has shown this is the world we live in unfortunately.'

DEBRA BAYNE: 'I don't believe you can ever rationalise hate. Hate is hate. There's a point of humanity that you actually have to give up to be prepared to cold bloodedly kill another human being and harm another human being and I know I cry, at times I cry profoundly, deeply because I feel sad but I feel it is part of the healing and part of me becoming stronger. This is the world we live in. These are the times that we live in and to just hide away from them, I'm not going to do that.'

BORMANN: The people of Mumbai are not hiding either. Last November terror arrived from just over the horizon and this city froze for three days. The defiant population of this poverty stricken part of the world has little option now but just to get on with life, to emerge each day and try to survive.

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Israel went to such extraordinary lengths to keep Melbourne man Ben Zygier and his unexplained offences hidden from public view and scrutiny. In this follow up to the explosive, global scoop Prisoner X – the Australian Connection we unearth answers to some persistent questions. What could Zygier have possibly done that called for such measures and why – even after his death – is Israel still determined to keep his activities under wraps. [More](#)

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It's a fiercely protected state secret in Israel.

No-one dares speculate openly about the identity of an infamous mystery prisoner or even enquire about what he may have done. A blanket suppression order has been issued on The Case of Prisoner X, even after his equally mysterious death in custody.

Who was he and what could he have possibly done to be jailed in a super-secure, stand-alone cell in a prison where his guards didn't even know his name? And what is it about the case that warrants a dramatic, all-points ban on coverage, even hinting that the ban itself didn't even exist. Now, some key answers as a Foreign Correspondent investigation follows a trail from Israel all the way to suburban Australia. [More](#)

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