



ASSIST's Helping Hand Newsletter

Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors

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2023

Nairobi—The First Day

By Worley (Lee) Reed



US Embassy Nairobi,
Kenya August 7, 1998
Post Bombing

ASSIST is dedicated to helping injured survivors of terrorism with legal, medical and financial assistance based on available organizational funds. ASSIST endeavors to fill the gap between government entitlements and real need.

The American Society for the Support of Injured Survivors of Terrorism, Inc. Newsletter is published quarterly at Lake Wales, FL. The Chief Editor is Bret W Reed, Administrative Officer.

ASSIST is a IRS Approved 501 (c) 3 Public Charity. Contributions and dues are tax deductible as prescribed by law. Please see your tax professional for details.

Please send correspondence to ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859-2135

Most of us have sat in front of a TV and watched a war movie. While we watch the death and destruction, we are also detached from the reality of war by simply observing the movie from our home. Ironically, war seems real in one sense, but it is distant and disconnected from our lives.

I will attempt in the next few newsletters to change your reality concerning the Nairobi Terrorist Bombing, August 7, 1998. I will describe the smell of cordite in my nose that reminded me of firing my shotgun when I hunted pheasants with my father. I want you to hear the cries of anguish from injured

and buried victims. You will experience my thoughts and motivations. I will try to place you in a new reality, where you will believe you are really in Nairobi on August 7, 1998.

First, I must give you a concise background on myself to explain why I took certain actions during the first day of the bombing.

I grew up in a small central Ohio farming town. I attended college and became a professional US Army officer. I first attended the Infantry Officer's

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www.assist-survivors.org

We are grateful to the US Department of Justice and the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) for their support and leadership in the area of victims' rights.

Nairobi—The First Day

(Continued)

Basic Course at Fort Benning, GA. The course taught me leadership skills used in the chaotic conditions of war. They taught me to stay calm in high stress situations so I could make logical leadership decisions.

After the end of the Vietnam War, I left the Army with the rank of a Major and became a State Department Diplomatic Security special agent. The training and experience as a special agent added to the skills the Army taught to me. Later, I transferred to the Security Engineering group (SEO) to use my scientific skills to protect diplomats overseas. In the years leading up to the Nairobi attack, I experience two major Beirut Embassy bombings and a few smaller terrorist attacks.

Nairobi translates to the “place of the cool waters.” The city grew from a waystation on the East African Railway system to be the capitol of Kenya. While being located near the Equator, the city had mild weather due to being 5,889 ft above sea level. Due to the former British and current modern African influences, the city’s infrastructure is above average for Africa. Being on the Equator, the sun rises at 6 AM and sets at 6 PM.

On August 7, 1998, my wife, Joyce, and I woke up about 5:30 AM in our compound townhouse to the sounds of songbirds. Kenya is home to variety of song birds. An inviting cool breeze blew through the windows. You could hear neighbors walking their dogs who were secured in their homes at night to avoid leopard attacks.

We left our compound driven by our driver, John, to arrive at the Embassy at about 7 AM. I traveled often in my job, so we hired John to drive Joyce when I was not in Nairobi.

bi. This morning we noticed that the usual number of boys selling newspapers were absent from the streets.

Joyce worked in the Communications vault located at the top of the modern, high-rise Embassy building. My offices were on the third floor (2nd European floor). The Embassy was quiet this time in the morning, so it was a good time to read cables and write reports. Cables are official messages sent by a secure system between Washington DC and other diplomatic posts worldwide.

This morning I was scheduled to meet a moving contractor at the General Services Officer (GSO) compound at 10:00 AM. We were shipping some equipment and materials to Pretoria, South Africa. I wanted to use my time wisely to catch up on my cables traffic and to respond to cables as required. The GSO compound was a 30-minute round trip, and I had planned to meet Joyce for lunch at 11:30.

At 10:00 AM, I stood in front of the Embassy waiting for the car my secretary had ordered and the contractor who had decided to meet us at the Embassy. I was distressed that the car arrived at 10:15 AM with all but one of my staff in the car. My secretary suffered from a bad back and wanted help if the contractor wanted heavy items moved. This increased my dismay since I thought their time could be more wisely used. I was also told that the contractor had changed his mind again, deciding to meet us at GSO.

The trip to GSO was through the normal heavy vehicle and foot traffic. Downtown Nairobi reminded me of New York’s Times Square. When we arrived at the GSO compound, we met the contractor who used only two minutes to view our warehouse items for shipment. This meeting defines short meetings.

At approximately 10:36 AM, I entered the vehicle to return to the Embassy, when I heard a sonic boom. I quickly scanned the sky looking for a jet



Dar es Salaam US Embassy August 7, 1998
Post Bombing



Nairobi—The First Day (Continued)

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fighter aircraft, which I knew the Kenyans did not possess. Instead, I saw the signature black cloud of a vehicle bombing. My year in Beirut, where vehicle bombings were routine, taught me that the bombings produce thin, black clouds.

I used the vehicle radio to call Marine Post One, a hardened post for the US Marine Security Guard that controlled access to the Embassy. A Marine was stationed at Post One 24/7. Instead of a response, the only sound on the radio was static. I then made a general net call to anyone who could hear me. An Embassy driver responded, "The Embassy is bombed! The Embassy is gone!"

A brief moment of panic swept over me because I knew Joyce was in the Embassy building. I gathered my staff in the car and told the driver to get to the Embassy as quickly as possible. I informed my staff the Embassy would need our help. After a long five minutes into the return trip, Joyce called me from a Embassy vehicle. She had survived the bombing by being in the Communications vault, which acted as a bunker. She had saved the life of one Kenyan woman as she exited from the building. I told her that we would be returning quickly. Our driver drove over sidewalks and did whatever was necessary to get us back to the Embassy.

When we arrived in the Embassy area, we had to stop about a city block away from the building due to bodies littering the streets. We exited the vehicle to a horrible scene. There were burned, dismembered bodies as well as burning vehicles. The Embassy and the neighboring Bank Building were severely damaged. The teacher's college behind the Bank had collapsed forming a mountain of rubble up to the third floor of the Embassy. The smell of smoke and burned flesh filled the air. As we walked carefully stepping over bodies and body parts to the front of the Embassy, we saw the survivors standing dazed and in shock. Their eyes stared straight ahead since their minds could not yet pro-

cess what had just happened to them. Joyce was the exception. She was lucid and covered head to foot in white dust. I hugged her, then told her I would start checking the damage inside of the building. I passed some survivors who were sitting on the entrance steps crying.

As I entered the building, I saw the bunker-like Post One had survived but everything else inside was destroyed. One could look through the entire building from front to rear. The smell of cordite, burning plastic and burned bodies filled the air. As I continued to the second floor, the amount of dust in the air made it difficult to see. The bomb had completely changed the building to the point that I was forced to check room numbers to know where I was in the building. As I found people on the floor, I checked for a pulse and did what the State Department Medical course taught us. I would gently shake their shoulder and say, "Are you all right?" If I got a response, I knew they were alive, if not, I got no responses.

With both elevators and one stairway destroyed, I used the only remaining stairway to travel between floors. The remaining stairway was damaged at one point, but you could still climb past it. Rubble covered the floors making it very difficult to walk. After checking the entire building including the roof, I returned to the survivor assembly area in front of the Embassy. The survivors were recovering from their shock.

TO BE CONTINUED ◇



Embassy on the Left prior to the bombing



NOVA's 50th Annual Training Event will be July 29 – August 1, 2024 in Washington, DC. We hope to see you there for our Golden Anniversary!

The Good Life Section



*We would like to wish everyone
a happy and safe holiday
season!*



ASSIST

Memorabilia

The ASSIST memorabilia below are available from ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859. Please add \$4.50 to your total order for shipping and handling. All profits from the sales of items goes to support terrorism survivors.



ASSIST Coin (front and back) \$10.00

ASSIST Lapel Pin \$4.00



ASSIST Hat Adjustable \$10.00



ASSIST T-Shirt \$10.00 L and XL Based on Availability of Size

ASSIST Calendar

Oct 9—Columbus Day

Oct 23—Beirut US Marine Barracks Bombing 1983

Oct 31—Halloween

Nov 4—Teheran “Students” seize US Embassy 1979

Nov 5—Daylight Savings Time (Set your clock
back one hour)

Nov 7— Election Day

Nov 11—Veterans’ Day

Nov 23—Thanksgiving

Dec 7—Pearl Harbor 1941

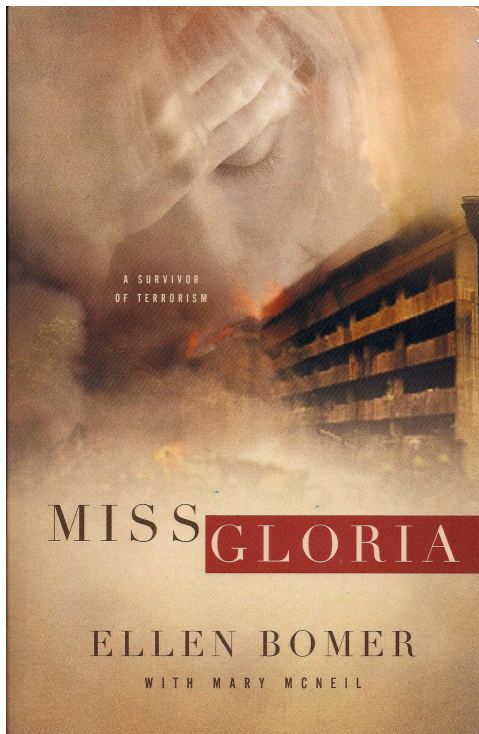
Dec 12—Kuwait City Truck Bomb US Embassy 1983

Dec 7-Dec 15— Hanukkah / Chanukah

Dec 24—25—Christmas

Dec 31—New Year’s Eve

Note: If we inadvertently omit an important
date, please contact us and we will correct
it.



Miss Gloria details the struggles and triumphs of a wonderful lady blind-
ed by the Al Qaeda attack on the United States Embassy, Nairobi, Ken-
ya on August 7, 1998. We highly recommend this book as a must-read.

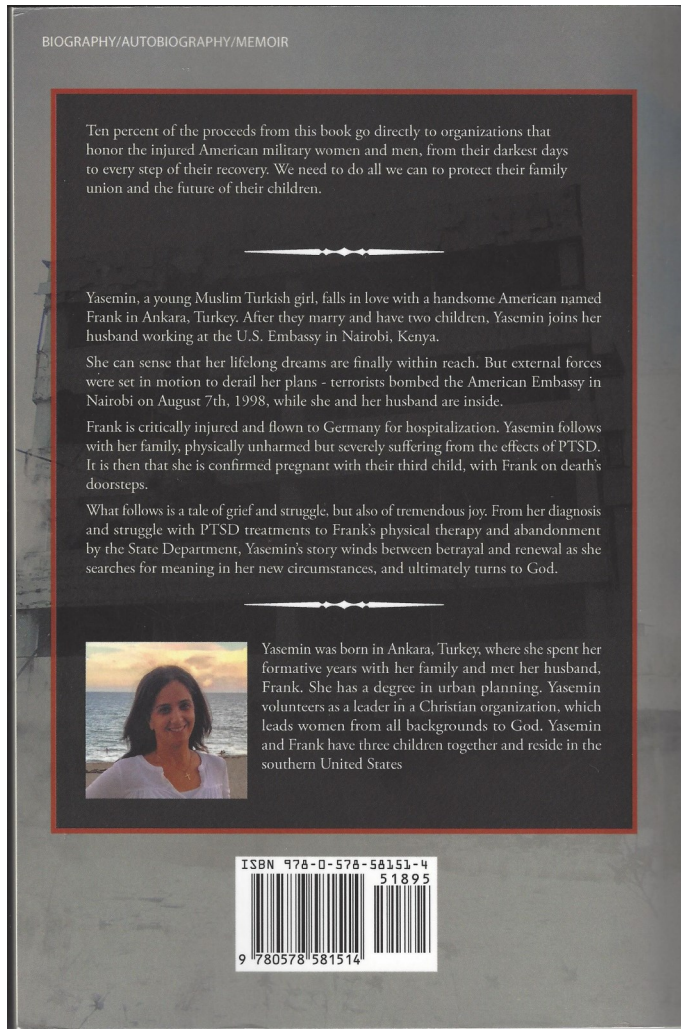
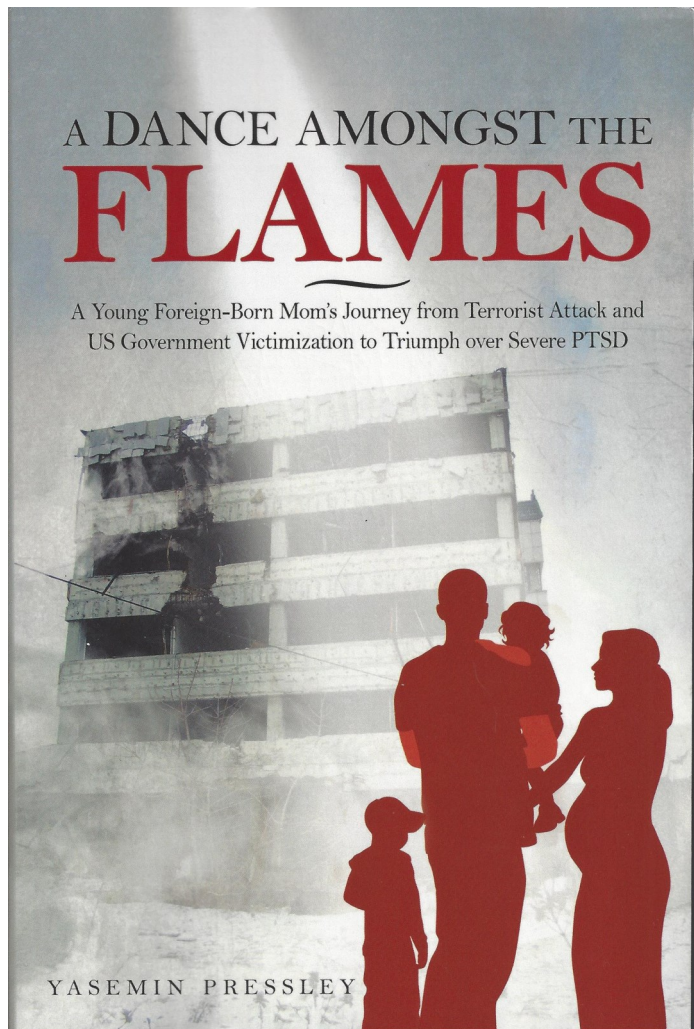
The book is available from the publisher: Redemption Press, 1730 Rail-
road St, Enumclaw, WA 98022 www.redemption-press.com as well as on
Amazon Dot Com. [http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-
Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?
ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria](http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria)



If you are seeking someone to help you manage
your terrorism compensation or other funds, UBS has
helped us find creative and safe investments. Our
contact is Ms. Holidaye Hayes, telephone: (202) 585-
5372.

This is an unpaid endorsement by the ASSIST Staff, and does not necessarily
reflect the opinion of the ASSIST Board or ASSIST membership.

ASSIST has a new website: [http://
www.assist-survivors.org](http://www.assist-survivors.org) . It is being
built.



BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY/MEMOIR

Ten percent of the proceeds from this book go directly to organizations that honor the injured American military women and men, from their darkest days to every step of their recovery. We need to do all we can to protect their family union and the future of their children.

Yasemin, a young Muslim Turkish girl, falls in love with a handsome American named Frank in Ankara, Turkey. After they marry and have two children, Yasemin joins her husband working at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

She can sense that her lifelong dreams are finally within reach. But external forces were set in motion to derail her plans - terrorists bombed the American Embassy in Nairobi on August 7th, 1998, while she and her husband are inside.

Frank is critically injured and flown to Germany for hospitalization. Yasemin follows with her family, physically unharmed but severely suffering from the effects of PTSD. It is then that she is confirmed pregnant with their third child, with Frank on death's doorsteps.

What follows is a tale of grief and struggle, but also of tremendous joy. From her diagnosis and struggle with PTSD treatments to Frank's physical therapy and abandonment by the State Department, Yasemin's story winds between betrayal and renewal as she searches for meaning in her new circumstances, and ultimately turns to God.



Yasemin was born in Ankara, Turkey, where she spent her formative years with her family and met her husband, Frank. She has a degree in urban planning. Yasemin volunteers as a leader in a Christian organization, which leads women from all backgrounds to God. Yasemin and Frank have three children together and reside in the southern United States.



A Dance Amongst the Flames is a highly recommended new book about the unique experiences of a terrorism survivor. The book is available at your local bookstore or through Amazon® at https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr_1_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1 . A preview of the book can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikt9Hk01818> .

The American Society for the
Support of Injured Survivors of
Terrorism, Inc.
4371 Dinner Lake Blvd
Lake Wales, FL 33859-2135

Phone: 407-361-0546
Fax: 863-949-4645
E-mail: wreed3@tampabay.rr.com
<http://www.assist-survivors.org>

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