

# 'I Thought We Were Going to Die': US Missionaries Ambushed, Saved by Mysterious Man on Motorcycle

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DELRAY BEACH, Fla. – A sweetheart deal on petroleum between Venezuela and Haiti ended last July, which led to a 50-percent increase in the price of fuel. In response, Haitians took to the streets, burning tires and blocking roads.

In the following months, more than 70 protesters died in the riots. Amid all this strife is a rising tide of gang violence turning some parts of Haiti into No-Go zones, even for the police.

A group of Christian missionaries traveled to Haiti in April with computers and supplies for a community center they're helping to build.

Shortly after leaving the airport in Port-au-Prince, things went terribly wrong.

Fred Chalker, the founder of Living Waters Ministries was a part of the group. "About four hours or three and a half hours outside of Port-Au-Prince, we came upon a gang of people that were stopping traffic," Chalker said. "We were the first ones to hit it because we were the only ones there."

"I've been there a hundred, two hundred times, and never had any major problems, so this is not a normal thing that happened," he continued. "It's a very rare thing."

## **Armed Men Surround the Missionaries' Vehicle**

What concerned the missionaries most was that many in the crowd were armed.



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"The truck was just totally swarmed with men with guns and weapons. And they were pounding on the windows trying to break all the windows to get in," said team member Jackie Brandon.

"One man's standing there with his gun and he has two white lines down his cheek and to his chin. And it reminded me of voodoo," she said.

Team member Jeff Lee said, "We came around the corner and all of a sudden the road's blocked off, there's burning tires there's debris, it's a mass crowd of a hundred, hundred twenty people there, well armed with guns and as we started approaching they started shooting these guns up in the air. And I'll be perfectly truthful at that moment I thought we were going to die."

### "I Thought We Were Going to Die"

Drew Pasler was driving the second vehicle along with the team doctor, Doug Burbella.

"As we were approaching, you know, he said, 'slow down a little bit,' so I'm kind of cautiously approaching as I'm watching these people start pouring in from the side of the road swarming the vehicle in front of me," Pasler said. "It was when I saw a rifle come around the side. We thought they were going to execute everybody. So I started reversing and Doug's yelling, 'go, go go!' and as I'm reversing that's when we started hearing the guns firing that were pointed at us."

With their vehicle disabled by the gunfire, bandits quickly overtook the truck.

### "I'm Dying! I've Been Hit."

"And I could see there was a motorcycle next to us, and they had a machine gun and the window blew out behind my head. And a couple of seconds after that I heard Doug yell, 'I'm dying. I've been hit.'" Pasler said.

As the gang emptied both vehicles, the situation continued to deteriorate.

"And that's when I looked back to see [Doug's] face covered in blood and I could see he had two visible wounds and possibly more just based on the amount of blood that I saw," Pasler continued.

Then the gunman put his rifle up to Dr. Burbella's head. But before he could pull the trigger, something extraordinary happened.

### The Mysterious Man on a Motorcycle

Pasler said, "Maybe thirty seconds later after they'd taken my cell phone, I could see that they had my bag out of the truck, a man on a motorcycle just kind of pulled out of nowhere in front of me. And he looked at me and said 'it's okay, it's going to be okay.' in perfect English."

"Not even yelling," Pasler continued. "Just kind of a regular talking voice. He said something in Creole, two to three words, and everybody around us that had the guns just kind of stopped."

"Everything changed," Brandon said. "The whole demeanor of the crowd just stood back. I don't know what they saw, but they stepped back and the tension was gone."

But the crisis wasn't over. Doug Burbella was slowly bleeding to death.

"Once we arrived at the vehicle and they let us know 'Hey, Doug's been shot,'" Lee said. "I immediately jumped out of the vehicle. We picked up Doug; he said 'my neck is broken,' so we picked him up, I had Fred get on the other, we picked him up and slid him into the back seat of the vehicle."

### **Doug Records Last Words to His Family**

Leaving their disabled vehicle, they rushed Burbella to the nearest hospital, almost an hour away. Burbella wasn't sure he would make it, so he asked his friends to record his last words expressing his love to his wife and son.

Burbella was rushed from Haiti to Delray Medical Center, in Delray Beach, Florida. Surgeons removed bullets and bullet fragments from his neck and face. They said the fact he survived is nothing short of a miracle.

Now out of the hospital and recovering, Burbella wants others to learn from his ordeal.

"I want people to know that if God can carry me through this with no loss of any function, really, whatever problems you have, they're equally minuscule. It's a miracle. It's a shout-out to say your problem is equally small, and God can carry you through it."

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