

From: [Michael and Sonia Kaye](#)
Sent: Saturday, November 29, 2008 3:23 PM
Subject: Fwd: a friend

Tom Ehrlich's brother in Mumbai

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

From: Tom Ehrlich [<mailto:tom@slateproperties.ca>]
Sent: Thursday, November 27, 2008 9:46 AM

I thought I would share this with you guys since you all know my brother Jonathon.

Jonathon was in the Trident Hotel in Mumbai yesterday when the terrorists attacked. The Trident is adjacent to and connected to the Oberoi. By the grace of god he managed to escape and is on his way back to North America as I write this email. This is his account of events and some of his thoughts.

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

From: Jonathan Ehrlich [<mailto:jon@livecurrent.com>]
Sent: Thursday, November 27, 2008 2:27 AM
To: johanna ehrlich
Subject: Hey

Hey guys.

Got all your notes. Thank you. I'm ok. A little shaky to be honest but really just happy to be here. I can't thank you enough for your notes. You have no idea what the mean to me. Hope to see and speak to you all soon.

I wrote the following on the plane.

It's 3.33 am Thursday Nov 27th. And I am writing this from Jet Airways flight 0227, First leg of the Mumbai ? Brussels - Toronto ? Vancouver journey . It is a stream of "adrenaline" piece. I apologize in advance for the grammatical errors. But I wanted it raw and unedited.

First, some context.

I have always been truly blessed. Lucky to be born to the most love a child could ever wish for. Luck to be born into a family that prided itself on teaching me how to be a man. Lucky to have been protected and sheltered by three strong, decent brothers. Lucky to have found and married the kindest heart on the face of the earth. Lucky to be blessed beyond blessed with four healthy, beautiful children. Lucky to have wonderful friends who tolerate my idiosyncrasies.

Tonight, these blessings, these gifts of love and life bestowed upon me, this incredible good fortune, saved my life. And I honestly don't know why.

The details.

I am in Mumbai on business. I'm staying at the Trident hotel. It's sister hotel, the Oberai, is right next-door and attached by a small walkway.

I had dinner by myself in the Oberai lobby after some late meetings.

I retired upstairs to my room. About 10min later my colleague, Alex Chamerlin, text-ed asking me to join him and his friend in the Oberai lounge for a drink. I started to make my way out the door but decided that I was really too tired. I had a 7am flight, and needed to be up at 5. Rest beckoned. I closed the light, got into bed and quickly fell asleep. Lucky life-saving decision number 1.

About 1hr later there was knock at my door. A few seconds later, the doorbell rang (they have doorbells for hotel rooms here ? who'da thunk?). I thought ? who the hell is knocking at my door? Turn down service? This late? Forget it. So I just lay there and hoped they would go away. Lucky life-saving decision number 2.

Five minutes later I heard and felt a huge bang. I got up and went to look out the window. A huge cloud of grey smoke billowed up from the road below. I thought. Fireworks? I didn't see anyone milling about so knew something wasn't right. I started to walk to the light switch when - BANG ? another huge explosion shook the entire hotel.

Oh fuck, I thought. Is that what I think this is? I opened the door to the hallway. A few people were already outside.

I heard the word "bomb".

Oh shit. Oh shit I thought.

I'd like to tell you that I calmly collected my myself and my things and proceeded to the exits.

I didn't. An adrenaline explosion erupted inside me and almost lifted me off the floor. And I began to move. Really move.

I went back inside, quickly packed my stuff and went back into the hall.

I ran to the emergency exit and started making my way down the stairs (I was on the 18th floor).

There were a few people in the stairwell. I was flying by them. I swear I could have run a marathon in 2hrs. I felt like pure energy.

About halfway down, I called my friend Mark, told him what had happened and asked him to get me a flight ? any flight ? the hell out of Mumbai.

I got to the lobby level. There was a crowd of people in the corridor. No one moving. No one doing anything. No hotel staff. No security people.

Shit. I thought. We are sitting ducks.

I decided to get out of there. First, into the lobby.

I stepped through the door into the silent lobby. My first sight was a blood soaked plastic bag and bloody footsteps leading into the reception area. I proceeded forward. The windows were shattered and glass was everywhere. There wasn't a soul around.

Bad decision, I thought. I quickly retreated to the corridor. The crowd of people had grown.

We've got to get out of here I yelled. Let's go.

I looked around for the emergency exit and started running towards it.

I made my way through the bowels of the hotel and out into a dark alley. It was empty and silent. I looked to my left and about 100m away saw a few security guards milling about.

Run they screamed. I began to move toward them.

I reached the main street and was immediately swept up into the Indian throngs (for those who have been to Mumbai, you know what I mean). People everywhere. But they were all eerily quiet. No one was talking. No car horns. Nothing.

I started yelling "airport airport".

Some one (a hotel cook I believe) grabbed me and my bag and threw me

in a rusty mini-cab.

As I sped away, I didn't see a single police car nor hear a single siren. Just the sound of this shit-box car speeding down the deserted road.

Traffic was stop and go. I made it to the airport in about 1hr, cleared customs and buried myself in a corner of a packed departure lounge, called my wife, called my parents and brothers and started emailing those friends who knew I was in Mumbai.

Sadly, Alex - my colleague who texted me for a drink ? and his friend were not so lucky. The terrorists stormed into the lobby bar and killed several people. They took Alex and his friend hostage and started to march them up to the roof of the hotel.

About half way up, Alex managed to escape (he ducked through an open door and hid) but his friend was caught. And as I write this, that poor man is still on the roof of the Oberai.

Alex is safe but as expected, extremely worried about his friend.

I'm telling you right now. If I decided to meet Alex for that drink tonight I'd either be dead, a hostage on the roof of a building 30 hours away from everyone I love or - if I had the balls of Alex ? a stupid-but-lucky-to-be-alive jerk.

And remember that knock/ring at my door? Well, I subsequently learned that the first thing the terrorists did was get the names and room numbers of western guests. They then went to the rooms to find them. Ehrlich, with an E, room 1820. I'll bet my entire life savings that they were the knock at my door.

Thank god for jet lag.

Thank god for "cranky tired Jonny" (as many of my friends and family know so well) that compelled to get into and stay in bed.

Thank god for being on the 18th floor.

Thank god for the kind kind people of Mumbai of helped me tonight. The wonderfully kind hotel staff. That cook. My cab driver who constantly said "relaxation" "relaxation" "I help" and who kept me in the cab when we hit a particularly gnarly traffic jam and i wanted to get out and walk. And for other people in traffic who, upon hearing from my own cab driver that I was at the Oberai, literally risked life and limb to stop traffic to let us get by (as again, only those who have

been to Mumbai can truly appreciate).

Mumbai is a tragically beautiful place. Incredibly sad. But I am convinced that its inhabitants are definitely children of some troubled but immensely soulfully god.

I'm sitting on plane (upgraded to first class?.see, told you I'm lucky ?). Just had the best tasting bowl of corn flakes I've ever had in my life. Hennessey coursing through my veins. Concentration starting to loosen and sleep beginning to creep onto my horizon.

I still feel a bit numb. But mostly I feel like I've just watched a really really bad movie staring me. Because right now, it all doesn't feel real. Maybe a few hours of CNN will knock me into reality. But the truth is numb is fine with me for a while. If I do end up thinking about the what if's, I don't really want to do that until I'm much much closer to home. And I have 30 more hours of travel time to go.

But before I sign off, let me say this.

The people who did this have no souls. They have no hearts. They are simply the living manifestation of evil and they only know killing and murder. We ? all of us - need to understand that. Their target tonight was first and foremost Americans. Why? Because they fear everything that America stands for. They fear hope and change and freedom and peace. Let's make no mistake; they would have shot me and my children point blank tonight with out a moment's hesitation. Most of us sorta know that but sometimes we equivocate. We can't equivocate. Not ever.

I know that I want to go back. Lay some flowers. Wrap my arms around these people. Say thank you. Spend some money on overpriced hotel gifts and tip well. And generally give the bastards who did this the big fuck you and show them that I am not ? I repeat not ? afraid of them.

But first I need to go squeeze my wife. Dry her tears. Then have her dry mine as I hold my beautiful beautiful babies who will be (thankfully) oblivious to all of this. Because isn't that what life is really about?

I appreciate you taking the time to listen.

With much much love.

Jonathan