

Dear Benefactors ,

I was fortunate to be among the first evacuated by the 82 Airborne Division late last Friday (Jan 15) morning after a long sojourn from Port au Prince to Leogane, and then back again. I am currently working at the InterVol headquarters in Rochester to get relief to my dear friends in Leogane. We already successfully deposited over 3,000 lbs of medical supplies and plan to continue sending shipments.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXV8C87XE3E>) What I experienced in Port au Prince and in the improvised field hospitals of Leogane has given me new perspective on my life and is motivating me to continue the fight to bring basic food, clothing, shelter, and medicine to Haiti. I plan to embrace the proverb, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" and draw upon this experience in the future. I believe that what I happened to me last week deserves to be shared. It's for this reason I have agreed to post this story.

God Bless,

Joey Leary

I arrived at Hotel Montana in Petionville (which collapsed almost entirely), Port au Prince around 9am on Tuesday Jan 12 for the 6 month bi-annual meeting of the partner organizations working to eradicate Lymphatic Filariasis in Haiti. This included IMA World Health, Zanmi Lesante, University of Notre Dame, Center for Disease Control, Haiti's Ministry of Health, USAID, and RTI.

I was representing InterVol, a Rochester NY, NGO founded by a Notre Dame Alum and Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Ralph Pennino. I moved to Haiti in August 2009 after graduating with a Pre-Med degree and a minor in Anthropology. My Anthropology mentor, Prof. Karen Richman lived in Leogane, Haiti for 2 years studying Haitian Immigration & Vodou. Before I went to Haiti I deferred my medical school acceptance to Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine so I wouldn't have to re apply. While I was in Haiti I volunteered for InterVol and the Notre Dame Haiti Program simultaneously. I had been very active in Notre Dame's Haiti Program to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis as an undergraduate at Notre Dame. Our most recent 2009 valedictorian, Brennan Bollman, was widely recognized for her work with the program in Haiti. I, in many ways, was following in her footsteps. The Notre Dame Haiti Program had me coordinating ND alumni doctor trips, guest visits, organizing mass hydrocele surgery camps, and collecting public health data on a GPS device, while InterVol had me setting up

teleconferencing equipment, (InterVol donated this equipment to the Notre Dame Haiti Program) arranging shipments of medical supplies to Notre Dame's two affiliate Hospitals (Hospital St. Croix & Hospital St. Francis de Sales) in Haiti. I spent my free time shadowing US doctors who came to visit, playing soccer in the streets with friends, playing basketball, dancing on the weekends at the disco's, practicing my Haitian Kreyol, and exploring other cities whenever possible....

We (The Notre Dame Haiti Program) had a large group that day at the Hotel Montana despite the fact that several of the representatives from the CDC were not able to make it. Fr. Tom, Jean Marc Brissau, Dr Desir, Dr. Lantagnac, Dr. Feyette, Logan Anderson, Sarah Craig, Dr. Milord, Claudy Bertrand, Wilfred, Papiyon, and I, represented the Notre Dame contingent at the Hotel Montana from 9 am to 4:15 pm. The meeting was scheduled to last until 5 pm (after the earthquake) but because the presenters from the CDC couldn't make it, the meeting concluded early.

Dr. Desir, Jean Marc, Dr. Latagnac, Papiyon, myself, and the representative from Zanmi Lasante, left the Montana at about 4:30 pm and headed to the Haitian Ministry of Health offices. We dropped off the official from Zanmi Lasante. Then we headed for Leogane on a route which took us through Port au Prince's largest park, Champs de Mars, which sits adjacent to the National Palace and Parliament. Still back at the Montana, Fr. Tom and the rest of the Notre Dame group decided to relax. Apparently each of them ended up on top of one of the Montana's many rooftop pavilions. After the earthquake they were trucked to the US embassy by the UN and evacuated to the Dominican Republic.

As we drove down a four lane street adjacent to the Haitian white house/national palace we were thrown into a panic when a mob of 50 – 75 men emerged at the upcoming intersection outside the Haitian palace/white house and began hurling rocks at the nearest cars, both stationary or attempting difficult maneuvers in order to escape. The moment that I realized that we were going to be attacked, the shaking began.

The initial earthquake at 4:52 pm was reported to be a 7.3 on the Richter scale. This earthquake allegedly lasted 30 seconds although I only remember the quick moment of confusion that overcame me when I watched at least five buildings, both in my direct line of vision and periphery, collapse simultaneously around the twenty acre or so park. I now realize that had the mob not caused us to come to a stop in the middle of the road we would have been two hundred yards further down the road and in between two, three story, buildings which collapsed. Similarly, had the earthquake not occurred I would have at least had to run from an angry stone throwing mob for my life.

When the shaking stopped my world was spinning in a way that I can only compare to the concussion I sustained several years ago, specifically the feeling I had as I regained consciousness. The feeling that something terrible has occurred and help needs to be called for; yet in both cases had no ability to execute with my body what my mind desired... I managed to get out of the car, carefully avoiding an abandoned jeep slowly rolling by in neutral. My thoughts immediately fixated on the fact that I was alive and lots of people around me were surely dead. My brain, as if in a frantic attempt to keep things this way, began to scheme of other impending threats; namely tsunamis, stampeding, starvation, dehydration, tropical diseases, violent theft, etc... When my brain finally retook control over my body I was able to successfully dial my mom's number and call her. I spoke to her briefly but communicated the essentials: location, state of mind, and love for her. I left a message expressing the same sentiments on my dad's phone. I texted Kara, Courtney, Meghan, and Marah, to see if they were alive. I only got a response from Marah. It was reassuring to hear from her because I knew she was in Port au Prince, but I was troubled to not hear from the others knowing that texting was possible. I was unable to communicate with anyone again until Thursday night after I reached the US embassy.

Jean Marc, Dr. Desir, Dr. Latagnac, Papiyon, Wilfred, and I, huddled together in a part of Champ de Mars park where nothing could fall on us. We made a pact to stay together. Papiyon was sent to drive the car to a more safe location after we placed our laptops under the back seats. We sat in the park together and weathered several more strong aftershocks while debating things like whether or not a tsunami would actually come, whether or not the president was inside the palace and consequently dead, whether or not it would be safe to spend the night in the park, whether or not we had enough food, water, and energy, to walk back to Leogane (40km), and whether or not we should move to higher ground at risk of exposing ourselves to falling objects. Basically the debate was: tsunami versus the possibility of more earthquakes. The discussion, jumping back and forth between Kreyol and English angrily, was interrupted by the sound of thousands of people standing up simultaneously around the park and starting to run into the surrounding city towards the mountains. Those who were fleeing were yelling, "the ocean is coming!" in Kreyol. We didn't run. We hung together by a tree. Our decision was the right one in hind sight. The fact that the ocean never showed up, didn't change the fact that I felt as though I might be trampled in the stampede. I remember watching the horizon, and listening, for the three story wall of water that must have been coming. In my mind it wasn't just that I was going to die, it was that I was going to die standing idle and while ignoring my own sense of reason which was telling me that a tsunami was on its way and that I needed to climb to the mountains.

I was able to convince our little group that it would quickly become lawless and unsafe in Port au Prince and that we needed to leave as soon as possible under the cover of darkness and while people were not fixated on the obvious affluence amongst our group of dress suit clad professionals. An opportunistic street vendor nearby allowed us to store up some food for our immanent journey back to Leogane. I had to discard my book by Jeffrey Sachs, "An End to Poverty" in order to make room for the chicken.

We set out from Champs de Mars around 9:30 pm in the direction of Hospital St. Francis de Sales, where the Notre Dame Haiti Program has offices and supplies, in order to get much needed water. We walked rapidly. Eighty percent of the people we encountered were walking into Champ de Mars while we were pushing to walk in the opposite direction. With so little information about the magnitude of the disaster, especially the epicenter, this sort of nonconformist behavior was, like not running during the tsunami scare, difficult. Two women from Leogane who were both friends of Jean Marc wanted to walk with us back to Leogane. We knew that there was no way they could make it based on their physiques. Convincing them to stay was difficult and ugly. None of the men wanted to be slowed up by these women's needs.

We walked through streets of rubble, impassable wrecks composed of many cars, screaming women, shouting men, frantic people going in every direction. Fear was almost palpable. I tried to focus on Jean Marc's back as we walked to Hospital St. Francis de Sales instead of the misery around me. Dr. Desir scolded me for speaking in English and told me that I needed to speak Kreyol only from now on. Dr. Latagnac grabbed me because he didn't think I could see a pothole in the road because it was so dark. I could see it and was offended by his fatherly need to look out for me. I told him "m ka we... m genyen kje Ayitian... pause... pou fi tou" -> "I can see... I have Haitian eyes... pause... for girls too" Everyone laughed.

When we arrived at Hospital St. Francis de Sales the courtyard was already filled with injured men and women. They were lying everywhere. They fixated on me as I entered the compound since more often than not white men in Haiti are doctors. Unfortunately for them I was not a doctor, and the real doctors with me were only focused on one thing: getting back to Leogane to see families. I can't express how uncomfortable it was to enter that compound of suffering and ignore it all completely while walking business-like to the offices that we went to every week, stand there while someone jingled keys, and unlocked the door as if nothing had changed.

Entering Hospital St. Francis de Sales was scary. It was the first time I had entered a building since the earthquake. Water was a priority. We had one, 5 gallon, drum. I opened it and poured as much as I could into my Nalgene bottle. I drank it all and refilled it. I recognized that it could have been a long time until I drank clean water again. I urged the others in the group to drink heavily. I selfishly went outside and peed

on the wall hoping to make room for more water as I thought of the twenty mile walk ahead.

When we had finished drinking and provisioning we gave the two overweight women an ultimatum. Eventually they listened. Maybe they didn't... but anyhow we left and they weren't with us. We walked like mad men from that time on. It was so dark that I couldn't see the pavement in many places. This was hazardous because there were large potholes, sometimes two feet deep, in the road. The adrenalin was finally getting some action.

The guys stopped after about one hour to buy sodas from a street vendor. I couldn't believe that the man was still selling his supply and not storing it up for the impending crisis. It was as if he didn't realize that Haitians like him would be starving and without water in less than a week.

I was still worried about a tsunami and secretly wished we were walking parallel to this street but about one mile further inland. I wouldn't have had a problem with this, but couldn't get my group to agree. I seriously thought about ditching them to go up into the mountains above the road on several occasions. I did insist that we all stop at the UN base for a few minutes as we walked by to ask for information. We had no idea at the time how widespread the damage was in Haiti. When I asked the guards they indicated that they didn't speak English. They were Brazilian. Finally one English speaking guard told me that they hadn't heard anything and that they didn't have any way to communicate.

It was also about this time that Jean Marc was able to get news, via his phone, of Fr. Tom, Sarah, Logan, Dr. Milord, and Claudy. It was relieving to know that this bunch was more or less ok. Claudy was transported to a hospital in Petionville on helicopter for a broken leg and is now recovering I am told without a cast.

After the UN base, we came upon an unusually large crowd for as far away from Port au Prince as we had gotten. We had probably gotten to Carrefour. We began asking bystanders what was going on. All the people were saying that, "the road is out." At this point nothing was going to stop us, or at the least prevent us, from investigating for ourselves. The road was definitely out, with a thirty yard in diameter circular piece of road missing. For strong men and women it was not impassable. We decided that we would follow the lead of several others and climb around the sink hole using the prison-like widow bars of the adjacent buildings to cling to.

After the sinkhole excitement, fatigue started to hit our group hard. Every time a car or truck passed by we had to rush to the side of the street so as not to be hit. We would wave at them to indicate we needed a ride in the direction they were going. I wasn't very optimistic about our chances of having someone stop for us, but I was wrong. A truck with a flatbed in the back stopped and we all climbed on gratefully.

Suddenly a new fear of driving during an aftershock arose in me. I had seen plenty of crashed cars on the seven mile walk leading up to this point to know that it could be a problem. I held on extra tight as I stood up on the back of the truck. We raced down the road between Carrefour and Leogane, swerving for fallen rocks, hitting bumps that were actually deep cracks. In retrospect these could have been fault lines. As we approached Gressier the driver slowed and turned off of the main road. He told us he needed to handle something. We figured we would just have to wait for him. While we were standing up in the back of his now stationary truck a strong aftershock ripped through the ground. No one fell off, but I we were fortunate to have been parked again. I remember glancing out at the ocean, only one hundred feet away, to see if the boats in the bay were rocking in a manner indicative of a tsunami. I was thinking that if I saw a dramatic fluctuation in the water level out there I might have five minutes to scramble up a hillside or at least climb something.

No Tsunami arrived. This had to have been about 10:45 pm because when we got a flat tire twenty or thirty minutes later on the road I remember thinking about the 11:30 pm rumor that people on the streets had been talking about. The rumor, who knows how it began, was that at 11:30 pm a second huge earthquake would hit. This rumor didn't make any sense to me because I didn't think there was any way to predict earthquakes, and in my opinion the aftershocks were earthquakes themselves. I remember thinking at that time that, "No you can't predict earthquakes but you can predict tsunami's..." and perhaps someone with a radio heard an international announcement and got the facts confused.

As we stood on the road, parked, changing the car's tire it was 11:15 pm. I again considered ditching the group and running up into the mountains nearby. I had enough chicken from the vendor and water from Hospital St. Francis de Sales to last at least a day. I really thought that each of these aftershocks, not to mention the 7.0 earthquake, could have triggered a tidal surge capable of wiping out the coastal regions. I again chose to stay with the group for practical reasons and longer term considerations. The bottom line was that I was very scared.

As we stood there in the middle of the road we decided to try to catch another ride. After ten minutes had passed only two additional vehicles passed us. Both slowed to investigate but continued on toward Leogane without us. Our group suggested that I stand in the front because they all agreed that drivers would be more likely to stop for a "blanc" = "white foreigner". The next car stopped and its driver agreed to drive us in his van to Leogane. We thanked our first driver and left him to his tire and sped off toward Leogane. 11:30 had passed which provided a strange sense of relief.

Remarkably all of the bridges between Carrefour and Leogane were still intact. We drove in past the Sri Lankan UN base, a pancaked UNPH school, a mostly collapsed Anacauna High School, and more. Remarkably the Union of Voudisants three

story building still stood towering over the roundabout that indicates one's arrival in Leogane. The van took us to the soccer field which was being used as a refuge for the displaced (80 -90% of people) and wounded. I jumped out and ran through the pitch black to Hospital St. Croix to look for my best friends Kara and Courtney from the Children's Nutrition Program who lived in second story apartments inside the hospital compound, and Suzie and John Parker who ran the Hospital's guesthouse and lived on the first floor below them. On the way to Leogane in the van, the radio had broadcast that the hospital had "te crazy net" – "crashed completely."

I yelled for them as I entered the compound. The whole town was spookily quiet. I heard the voice of Suzie Parker. I wanted to cry. I asked about John, Kara, and Courtney in one explosion of noise. She said that she had not heard from Kara and Courtney because they had similarly gone to meetings in Port au Prince for the day, but that her husband John was all right. I had been preparing myself the whole trip home for the news that Kara and Courtney were dead, and this seemed to indicate that there was a good chance of that. I realized that I might not know definitively for weeks about Kara, Courtney, or Meghan. She went on explained to me how when the earthquake started she was able to run outside but John wasn't fast enough. He was trapped under a tremendous amount of concrete but, miraculously, was only scratched. Suzie said that two of the Haitian hospital translators who were with her worked for three hours tirelessly with a sledgehammer breaking open a hole in the concrete to drag him out. The picture of his escape hole is amazing and terrifying. Realizing that he passed several subsequent 5.0 aftershocks in that state without Kara's apartment further collapsing on him is remarkable.

It was 12:30 am when I looked at my phone again and tried, in vain, to call the states. I tried about every one hour and then turned it off to conserve charge. I wasn't anticipating seeing electricity for weeks. John and Suzie gladly shared in eating some of my chicken from Champs de Mars. They let me fill up my canteen at their rapidly leaking water pump. They told me to get some rest because tomorrow was going to be a big day. They offered to let me snuggle in with them in the courtyard between the collapsed guesthouse, the collapsed apartments, and still standing, but vacant, hospital. I laid down, but had no hope of falling asleep. My mind was on fire with thoughts of survival, escape, foreign aid, all of my friends in Haiti, family, malaria, clean water, food, and more earthquakes.

I sat up most of the night. Life felt like a dream. The stars were so beautiful. I saw tons of shooting stars. I wondered why people weren't screaming in the streets anymore, because I knew that there were still hundreds of people trapped in rubble within five hundred yards of me. I wondered why I wasn't out looking for my friends in the streets and was sitting looking up at the sky pathetically. It was so dark, and I was so

afraid for everyone I knew. They say fear is paralyzing, but I never experienced it until that night of mental confusion and shock.

The next day I made up for those four hours of inactivity with a vengeance. At 5:30 am the screams and yelling began again. The sun is completely up at 6am and completely down at 6pm in Haiti.

I seriously doubt that "the morning after" or any of the details of the entire day of Jan 13 will ever fade from my memory. I stood up and I walked out into the street. It was my first daylight view of the destruction in Leogane. Reports now are saying 80 - 90% of the buildings were destroyed. I looked out at "Masaje", the bar across the street from the hospital that was the center of nightlife in the town. I realized I might never see Dominic, Lady, Mckenzie, Ti Frere, or any of the "regulars" there again. I headed for my home (the Notre Dame compound) known to the locals as the CDC and foreigners as The Residence Filarose, on the same route, between the hospital and the Residence Filarose, that I had taken five hundred times before. Today I had to climb over rubble that had poured into the streets. There were no shouts of "blanc" or "Joey" or friendly smiles that morning. Everyone was going somewhere. The streets were swarming. I was almost running toward the Residence Filarose. We had heard from Jean Marc the night before that it had not collapsed so I wasn't expecting to find any destruction. I walked past my buddies in the Zoe Club standing listlessly in the street. The expressions on their faces were incomprehensible. I gave some of the guys hugs, but had to keep walking. By this point I had seen many terrible scenes of people stuck in collapsed buildings, so my eyes focused straight ahead. I didn't want to see any more. The faces in Port au Prince were strange faces. The men and women suffering in Leogane were familiar strangers; girls I had danced with at Eve Andre's house, guys I had played basketball with at Suren School, English club, Saturday morning soccer, Saturday nights at Praktik, the nursing school, etc...

I arrived at Belval Plaza and entered the gate. Nearly two hundred people had already congregated in the huge open field surrounding the FISL Nursing School Compound. I saw some of the nursing students I knew sitting around the entrance to their school. Men and women were starting to be being lain out on the ground in front of the front gate. I waived to all of the Residence Filarose inhabitants: Precene, Gary, Wesley, Jo Anne, Akila, Nicole, Jean Marc, Michelle, Sebastian, and Mitch, making note that they were all ok. I was amazed to see that the Residence Filarose didn't have any visible damage, although parts of the cement walls around the compound had fallen. I remembered Fr. Tom telling me that Leogane was on a fault line and that the Residence Filarose was designed to withstand earthquakes. I ran inside to collect my most important things. I was factoring in looters, food provision, possible evacuation, and the immediate need for my first aid kit and scissors.

I put together a small bag with the essentials. The essentials included my wallet, passport, contact information, my US phone and charger, my Haitian phone and charger, two flashlights, my canteen, and some power bars. I was hurrying frantically because I knew that there could be another tremor and I didn't want to be inside, because I needed to get my meds to the nursing students, and because I needed to bring medicines from Hospital St Croix to the nursing school where all the seriously injured were congregating. When I emerged from the Residence Filarose lots of the refugees outside were looking at me. I was the only white person in one thousand. Precene shouted, "are you leaving us?" I responded, "No! I Need this bag to go get the medicine at the Hospital and take it to the nursing school." I set out on my bike with my huge Osprey hiking bag on my back and my smaller "essentials" bag inside of that. I gave Parnice and Big Mama, two of the nursing students who are my friends, the first AID kit that my dad had sent me down with to get them started. I kept the Tamiflu since I knew that I might have problems when I returned to the US and I figured Swine Flu was the least of their concerns. Maybe I will turn out to be wrong since the flu thrives in refugee settings. As I rode past all of the refugees I knew that they believed I was abandoning them. This was tough, but compelled me to ride even faster to the hospital for supplies. On the way I bumped into one of only three Haitian doctors working in Leogane that day, Dr. Desir. I told him what was going on at the nursing school. He wasn't aware of any medications available at the hospital so I shared with him my news of the guest house pharmacy.

When I arrived back at the hospital courtyard, fifteen minutes later, John and Suzie Parker had a group pulling medicines out of the collapsed mini-pharmacy. The building could have collapsed at anytime, but the need for those medications was too great not to take the risk. Twenty or thirty men women and children had gathered around the courtyard, some frantic, some stunned, some unconscious, while Lorenz and some of the hospital translators attempted to organize the medications that were being pulled out of the rubble. Guesley looked frantic and asked me about Kara when he first saw me. I had a tough face on and told him that I had no idea and that I heard the Children's Nutrition Program group went to Port au Prince. I assured him that they were alive to make him feel better even though I sensed there was a good chance they were not. He told me that he was leaving to go to Port au Prince to look for her. I told him to take the road closest to the coast that goes through the oil refinery because the sinkhole is blocking the old route. He thanked me and left. Dr. Desir, the Notre Dame Haiti Program Medical Director, showed up with a truck shortly after to help transport even more of the medications to the two improvised field clinics/refugee camps that were forming rapidly in town: the Cavalry soccer stadium and the FISL nursing school. I helped him for a bit sort supplies but was distracted by the horrendous wounds that were coming in.

The Cuban doctor from Hospital St. Croix was holding six inches of a screaming boy's scalp away from his skull so that he could scrub the bone with butadiene. I recognized one of the best basketball players from Suren school sitting on a bench waiting for attention. He was insanely good at basketball and was in amazing shape. I wasn't planning to try to help patients then because of my limited knowledge of how to handle compound fractures, head trauma, internal bleeding, deep lacerations, etc... but someone came over to me and tugged on my arm and said, "doctor please help him." I told her that I was not a doctor but she was almost screaming at me and I remembered him from basketball. He looked pretty fine from my vantage point so I was expecting to just see some cuts or bruises. The look on his face was one of fear, confusion, and utter helplessness. He turned his head when I asked him what was wrong with him. "Ki pwoblem ou genyen?" He turned his head and exposed a piece of his scalp and skull hanging away from his head exposing a large chunk of brain that was pushing out through his opened up head and leaking cerebral fluid down his neck. I wanted to cry, vomit, and scream for help all at the same time. I kept my composure and interrupted the Cuban doctor, now suturing the boy's entire scalp back over his freshly scrubbed cranium, to tell him that we had an awful head injury waiting. He shrugged. I left to continue my job organizing meds to transport back to the nursing school, but walked past a little boy with two sharp gashes in his head that penetrated his skull and allowed for a glimpse of his brain, and several others with broken bones, some compound fractures, laying on the ground.

I took my bag ahead on my back pack to the nursing school since a bike is faster than a car in Leogane. I was feeling good about the new impression I was leaving on the people as I rode by; one of, "I'm not leaving and help is on its way". When I made it to the nursing school again the number of refugees and injured seemed to have doubled. The gate leading to the inside of the nursing school was swarming with all sorts of urgent and terrible injuries. Several students were manning the gates to keep people from forcing themselves inside. There was a group with a stretcher going around and identifying the worst and most urgent to be let through the gate where Michelle, a visiting US nurse practitioner, was waiting along with fifteen to thirty nursing students to do whatever they could to help. With the arrival of my supplies and Dr. Desir's truck, the makeshift clinic came alive with activity. I decided to find a simple job for myself to do in order to be most helpful. I decided that I would stock up a supply of water for the makeshift hospital. They didn't have any at that moment, so I grabbed two, five gallon, buckets and went in search of clean water. I was optimistic about this because I knew that Leogane has had quite a few wells drilled around its community over the recent years. I was happy to find some running water only two hundred yards down the road from the Belval Compound. It apparently is tied into a network of pipes in the surrounding mountains which create the pressure differential necessary to make it work. What types of bacteria and parasites were in the water I'm not sure of. I waited about thirty minutes to fill up ten gallons of water. I struggled back to the compound.

On my way back from outside struggling with two, fifty pound, buckets of water I saw Marah! I still don't know how she got back to Leogane from Port au Prince, but I gave her a hug. She was my best friend at the nursing school who I had passed the time between Christmas and New Year with in Le Cayes at her family's house. She had a tough stoic look on her face like she almost always did. She didn't hug back with much enthusiasm. She said her family was okay as we walked to the compound together. I didn't ask about her aunt and cousins Fera and Rachel who she passes the weekends with in Port au Prince because I had seen their home and knew that it didn't stand a good chance. We both had lots of work to do and parted ways. I had to fight my way through the nearly rioting mob of horribly injured and maimed people in order to get my water in the gate. I was exhausted and realized that I would need some help, if not someone completely different to do this job. I spent the next hour walking around giving water to all of the most seriously injured folks inside the compound. By 8am there were probably forty people laying inside the nursing school gates. I found a bottle of 1,000 Ibuprofen in the mound of medical supplies in the center of the lawn which I decided would compliment my water bucket nicely. I made one complete sweep of all the patients, giving all those who needed it water and some very mild pain-reliever. It probably made people feel better regardless, like a placebo might. By 10am things were getting out of control. Word apparently had travelled all over town that patients were being treated here and we had medications. The number of people at the gate yelling to get in doubled and the number inside probably went up to sixty. Only about ten at any one time were receiving attention from one of the nursing students. It was at this point that I felt I could no longer spend my time distributing water and Ibuprofen. People had urgent needs that I could tend to: bones to be splinted, splints to be made, wounds to be scrubbed, bandages to be changed, etc... I began by working at Michele's side doing whatever she instructed me to do. The next thing I knew I was prescribing amoxicillin (by this I mean digging through a big cardboard box of miscellaneous meds we had dug out of the already makeshift pharmacy in the collapsed part of the hospital until I found something useful to hand out) and cutting off the mangled remains of an old woman's pinky finger with scissors while she looked away. The bone, muscle, and 50% of the skin had been cut. The finger was obviously dead as it hung awkwardly by a tendon and some skin. Instead of letting it be ravaged by maggots and cause gangrene of her hand I got the nod from Michele to cut it off. I tried to wash the wound with betadine before I did anything. There was a piece of string that had gotten stuck in the wound. I knew that it had to be moved to prevent infection so I reached into the flayed finger and pulled the string. It wouldn't come out so I yanked harder. I got it out but it splattered little bits of blood all over my face. In the meantime the woman wasn't even moaning. She had a foot swollen three times the size of her other one, but it wasn't broken when I checked. I tested the scissors on some cloth nearby because they didn't seem very sharp and if I was going to do this I wanted to do it fast; hopefully two quick cuts. Her finger obviously needed to come off,

but in good conscience I could not cut someone's finger off without explaining the situation and asking permission. After all, many Haitians don't believe in Western medicine, let alone something as invasive as this. I said, "Si mwen pa koupe sa, ou pral komanse trey malad! Sa se mouri déjà Wi ak mwen bezwin koupe. Eske sa OK?" She nodded and tried to look away. I removed the drawstring from a little bag laying around with my pocket knife. I tied it around the nub even though there was almost no bleeding at this point despite the wound. I was committed now. Other nursing students, some in shock, some helping, paused in amazement or horror at what it seemed I was about to do. Family members of other patients who were screaming at me to help their mother or brother etc... even for just one moment, realized that I WAS FUCKING BUSY and couldn't help them right now! I was committed now. Even Michele looked over from the bone she was scrubbing. Snip... tendon, snip... flap of skin. It hit the grass. The woman stared at her finger. I covered it up with some trash so she couldn't anymore. I poured some more betadine on the wound and went looking for antibiotic ointment. One of the nursing students gave me a little container which I squeezed onto a piece of gauze which was all I had at this point to bandage. I cupped the nub into the gauze and cream and used the rest of the string to tie it in position. I later found out that the cream the nurse gave me was antifungal cream and not antibacterial cream, and that we actually had sutures on the other side of the nursing school. I did the best that I could, and this one was very lucky to get a five day course of amoxicillin.

As soon as I stood up I was hit with the same angry man who spoke broken English. His wife had a single broken leg and it had not yet been splinted. There was no bleeding, which put him almost at the bottom of the list of urgent patients. I thought he was going to hit me. He was right in my face yelling, "what you gonna do for my wife? You walk by and never see her! you help everyone but me! You can't do that man!" ... I tried to ignore him but he was a big guy and was at his wits end. I don't remember why he stopped hassling me, but someone must have gone to check on his wife.

The sequence of events of this day are blurry. From this point on there wasn't anything I could say to people to convince them that I wasn't a doctor. They didn't care. They saw me cut off that woman's finger and wrap it up. During this interim period I saw four compound fractures (no other scrapes etc...) where the tip of the tibia and fibia both tear through the skin of the ankle where it should meet the foot. In all four cases the foot was at an awful ninety degree angle bent inward. It makes me hypothesis that perhaps the sheer tork of the 7.3 earthquake was enough to break these, presumably walking or standing still, people's ankles in this way. THEY WERE ALL THE SAME. Michele explained that all that we could do was scrub the bone, keep it moist, and try to wrap the foot and ankle. She said we would need a doctor or orthopedic surgeon to put the bone back inside the skin. It was so awful seeing these patients and knowing immediately that what they needed was so far from being available. Michele tried to teach me how to recognize a pulmonary embolism on a

man who's chest and stomach had been crushed. He appeared to have internal bleeding and Michele could hear a scratching noise in his stomach between lub dubs. There was nothing we could do for him. I had to tell him in Kreyol for Michele. I watched a girl with the side of her face swollen to four times its normal size size on the ground. Ironically not far away a perfectly unharmed Haitian women was screaming at the sky and shaking her body as if seizing. A Red Cross transport plane flew overhead in the distance which was the first sign of help any of us had seen or heard of. We didn't know where it was headed. There was another girl with an obvious head injury. Michele was examining her pupils. She explained that there was nothing we could do for this girl, not even Ibuprofin because that alters the presentation of head injuries and sometimes increases the hemorrhaging. The mother was desperate and wanted some of the Ibuprofin which she saw that we were giving to almost everyone. I told her, "Nou pa ka fe anyen pou li paske li gen yon pwoblem avek tet li. Malady tet yo se lot de malady lot kote yo. Li pa ka pran medicama la paske lap domi." – "We can't do anything for her because she has an injury to her head. Head problems are different from injuries in other places. She can't take medicine because she is sleeping."

The mother insisted that "Li Kapbab... Li Kapbab" – "she is able... she is able..." but Michele insisted that she would throw up. We asked the father if the girl had been throwing up and he said yes while the mother said no. We had to recommend that they keep her comfortable and still. Someone showed up with a neck brace from nowhere and put it on her almost as consolation, and her parents carried her off on her board to undoubtedly die.

Next I was interrupted by a man who had goo oozing from his left swollen eye. I think something may have penetrated it. He spoke perfect English as some Haitians who have immigrated to the US and returned do. He seemed so resigned, but asked me if he could have some Ibuprofin. I gave it to him.

Michele and I began assessing a screaming six year old girl with a broken femur and a tibia-fibula fracture of the same leg. Her father spoke English and was remarkably calm and appreciative of our attention. Together Michele and I splinted both parts. Michele explained that in order for the femur fractures we were seeing to heal properly the patients needed to be in traction. Since the father spoke English she was able to tell him that because there was no traction available his daughter would be crippled for the rest of her life. I believe that is exactly how she said it. He just nodded and started to look for a place to move her out of harm's way.

I think it was about this time that I bumped into the patient who I really connected with/felt the most sorry for. It was sometime in the afternoon now and I was finally feeling a little fatigued and disoriented. For the immediate no one was yelling for me or grabbing my arms and trying to pull me to their loved one. As I stood there wiping my head and thinking oh my God, I got my next call. A frantic young man came

over. I somehow could tell that this wasn't the usual degree of panic and that whomever he was caring for had something especially awful. I went to see and my mouth dropped. In actuality this girl was better off than those bleeding internally or with compound fractures. She had just been pulled from the rubble (approximately 20 hours trapped). She had what I can only compare to a shark bite on her right calf. It was a gaping 1 ½ foot slash. Part of her gastroc muscle was flayed and the entirety of her calf was laying exposed, practically hanging out of her leg. The skin, usually taunt around the muscle, was recoiled leaving all the muscle exposed. Her hands were crushed and horrendously cut. The muscle in her right hand was hanging out of the laceration. None of her cuts were bleeding at the moment, whether it be dehydration, clotting, or the nature of the injury. I was surprised to note that her left hand had already been stitched up? This puzzled me? Who had stitched up one hand but left the other two worse wounds gaping open. (It turns out that my friend would soon recognize her as the girl who they had to turn away from the hospital because there wasn't anything more they could do for her there.) She was moaning but conscious. She was obviously dehydrated which was the first thing I told her friend to handle. It turns out she was starving too. Her friend gave her some rabbit meat that he had bought from a vendor who obviously didn't realize he should be storing up his food for his family and not selling it. I was completely unprepared at this point in the day to handle any of these problems. I searched for someone to help me. Michele was occupied with an internal stomach bleed. The chief 4th year nursing student said he would be right there but never showed up. I realized that if anything was to be done for this beautiful girl that I might have to do it. I started by rolling her onto her stomach, which was difficult with the state of both hands. I poured water and betadine onto her leg wound which was starting to dry out a bit. Then, as I began to get desperate for what to do next, a REAL DOCTOR showed up out of nowhere. He said he would be back. He had sutures, gloves, lidocaine, and disinfectant. I have no idea where that stuff came from. There was a late day infusion of supplies, namely sutures, bandages, and lidocaine, that arrived late that afternoon which must have come from some stash in the old closed hospital or one of the pharmacies around town. He used his gloved hand to reach down inside her leg and pull out dried chunks of blood. He snipped away dead pieces of muscle that were starting to get black. He used a damp piece of gauze to rub up and down on the exposed calf muscle. The girl was in agonizing pain. He cut away dead tissue and picked debris out of the inside of her leg. During this time I was holding her down and giving him whatever he asked for. Next he used oversized needles to inject lidocaine into some of the skin around the wounds... probably a little late to do any good... and began to sew up some of the muscle which had torn and recoiled down to her ankle. He did a beautiful job. One continuous stitch that connected to the muscle in a number of locations all pulled together to reconnect the muscle. When he was done with that he cut the finger off of a rubber glove and then opened both ends he put that into the wound to create a drainage opening. He began to sew the skin back

around the gastroc. He worked rapidly, starting at the ankle, (low stress area) and working his way up to the center of the calf. Unfortunately three sutures in a row broke and he said he couldn't close the leg up without steel wire sutures. The skin was too taut in this location. He had me grip the bare muscle (I had just found my first pair of rubber gloves of the day) and try to force it down under the skin. The suture broke anyway. He started again at the top and worked his way down from the other direction until the sutures started breaking again. Then he stopped and said that was all he could do and disappeared. I began re-sterilizing and wrapping the still exposed small envelope sized area where the skin was unable to meet over the muscle. I got it covered to the best of my ability and then turned my focus to the un-sutured hand. The doctor had looked at the hand and concluded that the tendons in her wrist had torn and that she would need microscopic surgery to reattach the tendons. The muscles of her hand were flaccid and had expanded which was why they were bulging through the five inch gash. I was about to attempt to sew the hand wound up based on all of the times I had watched it done, when a nursing student came over and said that she had learned how to suture. (It was about this time that I looked up and saw my two best friends from the Childrens Nutrition Program! Kara and Courtney... standing there behind me alive! We all had a 2 second teary moment and then it was back to work. They told me to come to the hospital tonight and left) The nursing student was far from experienced but was able to close up the wound while I used some forceps to push the hand muscle back down while she closed the skin over them. The sutures took an hour and the girl was moaning that she just wanted us to stop. It was as if she didn't care anymore. She just wanted us to stop fiddling with her. When we were done I remembered the nondescript bag in the mountain of meds, both useful and not, where I had found the amoxicillin for the woman whose finger I had cut off. Sure enough there was some left. I selfishly grabbed three bags which equated to about 2 weeks of antibiotics and gave it to her friend with strict instructions. That was the last I saw from her.

It was starting to get dark now and the guards had stopped letting people into the FISL nursing school compound. I helped move the girl with a broken femur and tibia/fibula from earlier outside into the tent village with her father. After that I decided I was done for the day and walked the one hundred yards to the Notre Dame building while fighting off tears. There was no time to be sad yet. There was too much still to be done. I got some food and clean water at the Residence Filarose. My food was still the chicken from the night before and the water from some melting ice in the, now turned off, freezer. I then hitched a ride on the truck with Jean Marc and Wesley who were driving to the soccer field. I saw Marah on the way out and waved thinking that I would get to catch up later tonight when I returned. It was pitch black now at 6pm and I got off and told Jean Marc that I would either see him at the RF or would sleep with my friends at the Hospital.

I walked five blocks from the soccer stadium to Hospital St. Croix. My hamstrings and ankles were painful from such strain the night before. As I entered the compound and shouted the names of my friends I caught them exiting the back of the compound on their way to the open field inside the St. Croix hospital compound. I would never have found them had I come any later. Cell phones were still not working and visibility was almost zero at night time. Kara, Courtney, Ashley, Lara, Suzie, John were all together. They had just finished taking turns washing with some of the water John was able to pump using the generator. He had switched the circuits to connect the generator, which was still working, solely to the leaky water reservoir. They had left it on for just enough time to fill a few buckets in order to wash. They stood by and waited while I took off my clothes and poured water onto my head. I'm not sure how effective I was in cleaning my body with those scoops of water, but it felt good. I decided not to put my dirty socks back on. My shoes still smell as a result of that decision. Suzie and John had salvaged some blankets from the remains of the guesthouse which we were planning to lay out on in the field next to the other refugees. Big hugs were exchanged. Courtney was excited to catch up and exchange stories with me, but Kara was distracted by her boyfriend Guesley who she was contemplating seeing for the last time.

Ashley is the stateside director of the Children's Nutrition Program. Lara is a nutritionist on the tenure track at the University of Washington St. Louis who was visiting to assess the program. They had both flown in the night before for annual meetings. Kara, Courtney, Ashley, and Lara were all together in Port au Prince eating at an open air restaurant in Petionville when the earthquake struck. Courtney shared with me quickly that they were all contemplating leaving very early the next morning in a Hospital St. Croix truck that still had gas in it to attempt to get to the airport and be evacuated

The horrible decision of "to stay" or "to go" began in my mind as it had in Courtney's and Kara's already. I had all night to lay awake thinking about it. In my mind, when I walked and hitchhiked twenty miles away from the airport and the US Embassy, I had made the decision to bunker down in Leogane until international aid arrived. As I laid there and hashed out the pro's and con's of attempting to drive to Port au Prince with Courtney, the other refugees broke out into Christian song. Suzie shared that this was a group from the nearby Episcopal Church.

The decision to drive BACK to Port au Prince was based on the following factors: empathy and love for my worried parents, concern for my needy friends in Haiti, my usefulness in the medical clinic in Haiti, usefulness organizing relief efforts in the US, the amount of money in my pocket, safe water availability, infectious disease, the probability of further earthquakes, possibility of tsunamis, potential civil unrest, chances of foreign aid reaching Leogane, the odds of being robbed on the trip through Port au

Prince, chances of roads being out and getting stranded in the city, and various emotions which I can't re-create.

The night was a relatively sleepless one, punctuated by early and late aftershocks. We tried to "eve's drop" and listen in on one of the neighboring family's radios which was getting poor reception all night. We heard that the international community was sending aid and that nearly 100,000 were feared dead. Little other remarkable information was communicated.

Kara, Courtney, and I, also had a very difficult decision to make with regard to our good friend Meghan who was still missing. No one had heard from her or Dr. Mersier whose home she was living in since the earthquake. We had reason to suspect that she was in the mountains up at a town called Fondwa. She ran the vitamin program for the elementary school in the town, and travelled there every Tuesday afternoon by herself. We figured that eventually when she had the opportunity she would make it back down to Hospital St. Croix where she would find Suzie and John, (ultimately this did happen) but none of us felt good about leaving Leogane with one of our best friends still missing.

Ultimately after the night in the St. Croix school soccer field (I played soccer here every Saturday morning at 6am for the past six months) I decided that I would ride along with Ashley, Lara, and Courtney, and make an attempt at getting evacuated. Kara was the last to confirm that she would be coming with us. I can't imagine the emotions Kara would have been feeling as she had to say goodbye to her boyfriend of over a year. John and Suzie decided that they wanted to stay and direct the relief efforts in Leogane which they felt strongly would be quick to arrive. They were correct after all in their gamble, but we thought they were making a dangerous mistake to expect foreign aid to reach Leogane as rapidly as it did.

I considered walking the one mile across town early that Thursday morning from Hospital St. Croix to my home to grab a few more items out of my room and to say goodbye to Jean Marc, Wesley, Michele, Jo Anne, Precene, Ti Gary, Evens, Marah, Anderson, Carl Henry, Gethro, Bitten, Naldi, Sebastian, Mitch, etc... I decided that I couldn't walk through the refugee camp of neighbors without being forced to attend to sick patients, couldn't non-verbally announce my departure by emerging from the Residence Filarose covered in luggage, couldn't say goodbye to everyone I grew to love in Haiti quickly enough to make it back to the Hospital in time to leave... So I didn't tell anyone and left with only the diaper bag Sr. Mary Spano had given me months before which contained my water bottle, my wallet, my passport, my Haiti cell and charger, my US cell and charger, and three additional street vendor purchased bags of purified water.

The Cuban doctor, who I had worked with the day before while treating the girl with the calf wound, wanted to look for a friend in Port au Prince. He agreed to drive our entourage to the airport in the Hospital St. Croix vehicle. Before we left we took a few pictures on Lara's camera of Kara and Courtney's crushed apartments, the hole that John used to escape from the rubble, and several other destroyed buildings. Ironically, Courtney's laptop computer, passport, and money were all sitting and visible inside the remains of her apartment. The precarious nature of the damaged concrete ceiling above her valuables prevented anyone from daring to attempt to salvage them. Even I didn't want to risk it at this point. We knew that, as a result though, Courtney would have a difficult time being evacuated.

We set off anxiously to Port au Prince with a full truck. It was surreal leaving the town we all knew so well. There were not many vehicles driving around at this point and especially not ones filled to the brim with "Blancs" – "white foreigners". We got lots of stares. Because we had each hitchhiked through the first stretch we were not concerned about the road being out. Because of an incident the day before which Kara, Courtney, Lara, and Ashley had experienced with a road-block and a demanding guard we were more concerned about theft and the necessity of walking to the airport in the midst of miserable poverty, suffering, and death, than we were of impassable roads.

We took pictures covertly as we drove. We saw crushed buildings everywhere. There was an occasional body in the road with a sheet over it. We drove by a funeral procession. The streets were increasingly filling with people the closer we got to Port au Prince. We drove by many skeptical looking folks but no one tried anything to stop our car. Courtney and Ashley noticed a Tap Tap (Haiti's form of public transportation) with machine gun wielding pedestrians riding on the roof. They were driving the opposite direction. This drive was anything but relaxing. I had a sense that from here on out what happened was out of my control.

We made it through the oil refinery and into the Western coastal side of the city in good time. The crowds and traffic prevented us from moving rapidly though. At several points people around us were making better time walking. We had all been desensitized to the destruction at this point, having walked through it, touched it, smelt it, cried about it, feared it, so we weren't dwelling on the sights this time around. I don't think people whose experience of Port au Prince is limited to the recent television coverage can appreciate the level of EXTREME poverty that was found in that city BEFORE the earthquake.

Imagine crushed plastic bottles, wrappers, bones, rotting fish, fruit peels, feces, urine, 3 inches deep covering the ground. You might think that the trash was melting with the amount of water draining through it down out of the mountains in the horizon. The canals that were constructed were clogged with trash. Pigs grazed freely in these

rivers of waste. An occasional starving man or woman would be passed out amidst the hustle and bustle of shoppers. Because this particular space was the only public area in that region of the city it served as the market. Produce of every conceivable variety was sold on top of, and in the midst of, this squalor.

On this particular drive through the market there was the addition of broken cement, wailing, and dead bodies.

Because of blocked roads and detours we ended up driving through Champ de Mars where I, not even 48 hours previously, sat in a truck with Jean Marc, Dr. Desir, Dr. Latagnac, and Papiyon while the first earthquake wrecked its havoc. We snapped pictures as we drove by the parliament and national palace. It seemed at one point in the odyssey that we were going to be stuck. Two of the three roads at the intersection were blocked with debris. The third option was a standstill traffic jam of vehicles angrily trying to back up unsuccessfully. Fortunately, perhaps remarkably, one Haitian passerby saw our predicament and started to move the wreckage out of one of the streets. He moved two pieces of steel rebar just enough to let our car squeek by, and then smiled and waved to us as we headed down an unknown road, previously blocked, which was packed with people. I was sure that we were just getting ourselves more stuck, but surprisingly we hit a thoroughfare. From this point on it was smooth sailing to the airport. When we arrived, 10pm Thursday morning, we expected to see the United Nations and perhaps the US military. What we saw was one hundred, predominantly Caucasian folks, squawking around the airport door.

I think it's fair to say that we pre-maturely started envisioning our arrivals back in the United States. The next seven hours outside the airport (the building was damaged and unsafe to enter) out in the sun seemed to bring out the worst in the people around us. All day at the airport I witnessed ugly fear, self-centeredness, racism, and anger. Additionally the authorities demanded that Courtney travel to the US Embassy to have them process her missing passport before they would allow her to be evacuated. It was as if they thought we could just jump on the metro and be back in a few. By the time the sun started to go down our group had resigned to try again tomorrow. Finding a safe place to spend the night then became the issue.

Fortunately a Brazilian woman who worked for the United Nations agreed to give the five of us a ride to the US Embassy which was about three miles down the same road. We were very grateful since our other options for passing the night were starting to look like the field across the road or the parking lot. We arrived at the US Embassy around sunset. We were all allowed inside the massive compound which seemed to have been designed to handle crises like these. When I exited the metal detector and walked through the second security gate I finally felt as though I could begin to relax.

Remarkably I bumped into Fr. Tom Striet inside the US Embassy cafeteria watching CNN. Anderson Cooper, or one of the other celebrity disaster reporters, was broadcasting live from the side of a trapped young girl in the city. It was surreal watching the world press dramatize the sorrow and unfathomable losses that broken families and injured men and women, sitting next to us in that cafeteria, were really experiencing.

That night we were fed MRE military rations. We shared stories with other survivors. We called our families using my US cell phone. I could hear my mom almost break into tears as I announced cheerfully and a bit triumphantly, "Hi Mom this is Joey. I'm at the embassy in Port au Prince..."

That night I was woken from a sleep in the courtyard by woman from the state department. She told me that if I had a passport and didn't have any luggage that there was a spot for me on the next military transport. Fifteen minutes later (1 am) I was racing through the streets of Port au Prince in a fifteen van caravan of government bulletproof SUV's. They drove us onto the tarmac where the 82 airborne division had just arrived, checked our passports, and helped us get situated in the C130 which was to take us to Maguire Air Force base in New Jersey.

An aftershock shook our plane violently as the engines turned on.

Pictures from My, Courtney, Lara, Ashley, and Kara's journey Thursday to the embassy can be seen by clicking this link: <http://flickr.com/gp/34925215@N07/D0JH57>