

Steve Riggle describes “Between the Gates”

The first time Becky and I went overseas, went to minister in a prison in the Philippine Islands. While there, we were attacked by four prisoners, ropes put around our necks and knives put to our throats. We were loaded into a van as the prisoners attempted to break out of the prison with us as their hostages. The situation ended with the prisoners trying to kill us by stabbing us to death and the guards firing their weapons into the van trying to kill the prisoners who were using us as shields.

I was stabbed five times in my back, once in my shoulder, and once right by my heart. I came as close to dying as you could. Becky was stabbed up and down her arms and a four inch patch of her hair was yanked out, and she was shot. The bullet tore through her upper leg blowing out four inches of her femur bone, muscle and tissue. With the bone protruding from her wound, Becky tried to push the bone back in place and hold it there as she was carried out of the van.

We were in a remote area and were taken to a local barrio clinic. The facilities and doctors there were not equipped to handle such life-threatening injuries. They put wide tape over my wounds and said “*that’s all we can do for you.*” I was given little hope of surviving; and Becky had lost so much blood she was near death as well.

We were then hurriedly transported to Makati Medical Center, the main hospital in Manila. The scene in the emergency room was very chaotic as doctors and nurses tried to save our lives. Many missionaries had arrived and were helping the medical staff as well as praying for us. The doctor working on Becky said to her, “you may lose your leg”. She replied, “O no sir, I will not lose my leg”.

My breathing was very shallow and labored. The doctor informed me he had to release the blood that was filling up my lung cavity and making it impossible for me to breathe and that he couldn't give me any anesthetic or I would die. He told me to hang on to the side of the bed and he ran a sharp medical instrument up

into my lung cavity on each side to release the blood. They then took me into emergency surgery where they made a ten to twelve inch incision across my abdomen to try and repair the damage done by the stab wound near my heart.

Eighteen days later, I became a walking miracle as my hemoglobin count went from 6.1 to 13 overnight. I went from almost no chance of living, to actually leaving the hospital and able to return home.

Once back home, Becky spent nine months in a body cast, had five major surgeries and spent nine more months learning how to walk again. It was a long, hard process, but through it all many more testimonies to God's faithfulness would emerge.

Between The Gates is titled for the entry to the prison between two security gates where the van was held for much of the intense negotiations between the guards and the prisoners who were attempting to get the main gate opened so they could escape. It is also about what was going on in us as we faced certain death.

Upon reflection, we understand that Between the Gates is symbolic of our lives- all of our lives. The time we have on earth between our physical birth and death is a gift from God. He sees our every moment, He hears our every cry. He is the Light in our darkest hour, and He is our way of escape.

The actual incident was as violent, intense and bloody as you could imagine. We've found just telling the story doesn't compare to seeing the actual photos from the scene. By creating a compelling feature film about this incident, and weaving in the story of our lives, we feel this movie has the potential to change lives and show others that God is there for them, no matter their situation.

Steve Riggle