

## 7 Seconds

Written by Dan Diamond, MD

Thursday, 21 January 2010 07:58 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 April 2010 09:59

---

Bill and I were up very early to take the pastor and his wife to the airport. It was very emotional putting her in a exclusive Leer Jet. Her husband was overwhelmed with joy. His smile went all the way around his head. Then to top it all, the pilot asked him if he wanted to go as well!!! He was blown away. He hugged me like I just saved his life. Hmmm. I can still see his smile. It's only a 90 min flight in a Leer Jet. It was a happy ending to an amazing story. She was picked up at the airport by an ambulance and, as you read this, she is already in the hospital getting the care she needs.

At the hospital today I was able to define my departments and assign department heads. The departments are Triage, Intake, OR, Inpatient Floor B, Inpatient Floor C, Inpatient Floor D, Supply/Pharmacy, Operations, and Security. I have an outstanding team, they have rallied and made tremendous progress today. The OR looked like a real OR. We have had, however, significant troubles with the generator. It is too small and frequently the breaker trips. When that happens, the autoclave that sterilizes the instruments shuts down and has to be restarted. It has caused some frustrating delays. We ended up shutting down all of the breakers to the entire hospital except for the autoclave. We have big-boy huge generator on a palate but we don't have the cable to hook it up. There is only one forklift in town that can move it to the best location and it is at the US Embassy. All the UN lifts are being used to off load the supplies at the airport so we might be able to pull that one off soon.

I spent a good amount of time scrambling trying to find supplies and have made some great finds at the UN. We also agreed to take up to 15 post-op patients from their tent if they would send us their cots. I've been trying to find some cots today with a goal of about 250 cots. Don't tell the staff, they aren't quite ready for that many patients yet but we are growing rapidly. We also started using a regular charting system today. All patients are formally checked in and have a chart. Orders, notes and meds are all recorded. We are nearly JCAH certified! We even have radios so the Dept Heads can communicate.

We went to one of the large hospitals today and it was overwhelming! No words will be adequate for what I saw. There were people everywhere. They were lying on mattresses and cots and blankets in the halls, on the grass and in every nook and cranny. They were in slings and splints and bandages. It looked like one of those end of the world movies. Remember, today is ONE WEEK after "The Thing". Such suffering! The hospital was overrun with about 1000 patients immediately after the earthquake. Then it really hit me I realized that this quake was only about 7 seconds long.

7 seconds.

Count it out. 7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Imagine, your house is gone, your leg is broken and something is

## 7 Seconds

Written by Dan Diamond, MD

Thursday, 21 January 2010 07:58 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 April 2010 09:59

---

sticking out of it, the person sitting in the parked car across the street is killed instantly when the building next to yours completely EXPLODES and you can't find your kids. 7 seconds. Your life is forever changed.

We gave a Haitian physician a ride home tonight. Here in Haiti she serves as the medical director for the group Feed the Hungry. I met her earlier in the day at a meeting of the Global Relief Association (GRA). Medical Teams International ( [www.medicalteams.org](http://www.medicalteams.org) ) is a member of GRA. It is a group of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that work together in a unified effort in times such as this. Anyway, back to Dr Marlene. She told us her story about how she said it wasn't that bad. She was standing outside when the quake hit. She thought it was a large truck at first but then she soon realized that there was no truck. It didn't knock her down. She said it wasn't that bad, but then she walked down the street and found a major building collapsed. She found one man with two broken legs. She used a door as a stretcher and took him to the hospital only to find that hundreds of people were pouring into the hospital. She said that she knew she was in the midst of a major disaster when she saw all of the babies and children screaming because they were injured, bleeding and scared.

Dr. Marlene took us to see what was left of her house. It actually was more of a mansion. Well, it used to be. It was as if her home had been cut in half with a giant knife. Half of the house was there but the other half was completely collapsed. Her father buried inside. We prayed for her as we stood there in the middle of the street with downed power lines all around. She was a very strong woman, filled with the power of God. She had lost her home, lost her father, had gone from living in a mansion to living in a tent and yet she was looking beyond herself to the needs of those she served.

I stood there and cried.