

Bill
Taylor

Lion Rescue - Return to Dallas
Part II

The reaction of my wife and kids to our reunion of the bus was different. Emily looked at me as if she didn't believe I was really there. She said "Gosh, its good to see you again sweetie" as if she had waited years for my return. My kids on the other hand were more casual. They didn't yet really know or realize exactly what had happened and what ~~the~~ Paul and I and the rescue team had been through. Their comments were about missing me at Christmas and New Years after they had left Tehran. There was a lot of hugging and kissing and getting used to each other again. Emily looked at me and acted like I had returned from the dead - like she had never expected to see me again.

Then, I had a surprise of sorts for them. I gave Emily a Topaz ring that I had bought for her in Tehran for her Christmas present. I gave Jacqueline and Jennifer gold necklaces which had medallions for their month of birth, their zodiac signs. I had worn these out of Iran, around my neck to make sure they didn't get lost or taken away from me. Keane Taylor had given the ~~present~~ jewelry to me when we lined up at the Hyatt hotel in Tehran following our escape from the prison. I also had some presents for Chris and Vicki

which I had purchased at the airport in London. They told me I had lots of presents waiting in Washington DC for my return home. I realized then that a lot of time had passed since my family had left Tehran in early December and that we had some catching up to do as a family, especially Emily and I.

For some reason, I ~~can't~~ remember how my son Christopher looked that day there on the bus. He looked wonderful and very grown up in his suit that he had gotten for Christmas. He looked just like he did in the picture that Emily had sent me while I was in prison, a picture I kept above my bunk in my cell. It had been my personal link to my family, my rally point that I used to keep my morale up during the long days and nights.

The kids were also excited to see the Chiapparones and the Gaydens and their families too. We were all friends and it eased the tension of the situation somewhat to have other people to say hello to there on the bus. The kids were also excited by all the attention we were getting. They knew something big had happened and were enjoying being in the middle of it. They didn't know yet what was in store for us next.

After a while we were taken into the airport to a lounge area. A group of people were there that I recognized from EDS. I remember thinking how strange it was that these people happened to be at the Dallas airport that day - must be a coincidence I guessed. Then, we walked into a large room packed full of people, people I knew and some I didn't know. The rescue team and their families walked in single file through the huge throng of people who were standing in groups and also sitting on the floor. Many of the people I recognized at the time and later saw in pictures, but at the time it wasn't quite registering with me what was going on. I wondered why and how all these people from EDS had come to the airport to meet us.

Events took over and I began to understand. When everyone was in place, Ross began to explain to us and to them why we were there and what had happened. Each member of the rescue team was introduced and several people including Paul and I and the Colonel had a chance to thank everyone for coming and to thank Ross and the rescue team for pulling off their miracle. It was quite a moment for me and my family. I was really impressed that so many people had come. I looked around

the room and saw familiar faces I hadn't seen for years. Many of them like Tom Marquay and his family were friends from the first day I had joined EDS in 1965. His sons were big teenagers now, not the little 2 and 3 year olds I remembered from his stay during the early EDS days in Washington. People were there from every level of EDS and from every division. It was exciting to see them there sitting spellbound listening to Ross tell the rescue story.

I looked around at the rescue team members and their families and wondered what had driven them to volunteer to come back into Iran to save Paul and I. Most of them had wives there and many had kids in their arms. I particularly ~~remember~~ remember John Howell, our lawyer, and Bob Young, our country manager from Kuwait. Both of their wives looked very young and held little babies. I know it had taken a lot for many of these men to leave their wives and families and they had undertaken considerable risk throughout the rescue.

It was an interesting scene in the room. The people were packed into the room. It was hot. Bright spotlights had been turned on to film the proceedings and they drove up the room temperature even more. I supposed the reception may have seemed long to many of the people in the audience who had been waiting for several hours.

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for our arrival. Personally, I don't have any recollection ~~of~~ how long we were there. After I had spoken, I had moved to the rear of the room with my family and was listening intently to Ross, the Colonel and some of the other team members speak. In some cases, I was hearing for the first time in an organized manner who had participated and what they had all done as a team. Towards the end, I began to withdraw mentally from what was going on around me. Physically, I was exhausted and my body and mind were starting to unwind and return to normal from the emotional high we had been on for days or perhaps weeks.

Some of my ~~droopy~~^{droopy} feelings were caused by the heat and the stuffy air in the room. I really felt grubby dressed in clothes that I had been wearing for almost a week. The coat I had ~~on~~^{or} belonged to the Colonel and was his contribution to me in Tehran when we dressed for the escape trip into Turkey. I had on a thick cable-knit white sweater and blue jeans which I had scrounged from the closets in the Dvoranichik's villa where we had hidden in Tehran. Although Bill is smaller than I am, I had lost 15 lbs in prison and was able to get into his clothes. I probably had on his underwear and socks too. My shoes were leather hiking boots which one of the rescue team had given to me in Tehran. Originally, the boots had been purchased by Ralph Boulware or Ron Davis when they went into training for the rescue in Dallas.

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I really felt dirty and looked forward to washing my hair, taking a shower and most of all shaving and brushing my teeth. I didn't care how I looked, but I was tired and hungry and ready to get out of there and get cleaned up. It hadn't occurred to me that the clothes I had on were the only ones I owned; that everything else had been left behind in Tehran.

One feeling I had as we stood there and listened was one of safety. I was back in the United States, a long way from Iran. I was in Dallas, the heartland of the US and the headquarters of EDS. There wasn't any place safer for Paul and I in the world. And, I was with my family. Paul and I had come back. We were a long way from our jail cell in the Eghareh prison in Tehran. A nightmare was finally over, or so it seemed at the time. I hugged Emily and the kids.

Finally, the ceremonies were over and people were starting to leave. We walked out of the room too, saying hello to our friends as we squeezed through the crowd. Many of the EDS employees were there with their spouses, some of whom I knew some were strangers I had never met before. All of the people were wonderful. They welcomed us back as if we were part of their own family. Some of them shook my hand, some passed me notes saying "Welcome Home" and things of a similar nature. Others hugged Emily and I and told us

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how happy they were that we had escaped from Iran. Many of the people seemed well informed about the Shah leaving the country and about the Revolution. I was surprised at the time that they understood most of what had happened in Iran.

People were there that I knew well like Mitch Hart, the ex-president of EDS. I knew Mitch had been in Washington lobbying at the Carter White House to try to get us released. I later learned he had gone to dinner with Emily and my mother and father and had been the one to break the news to my parents that I was in jail in Iran. He was someone I had worked with closely over the years in numerous crisis situations in EDS.

Ron Sperberg was there too - with a big cowboy hat. After all, we were back in Texas. He had been a close friend and associate over the years at EDS. Emily and I had gone to U-palco with Ron and his first wife back in 1969 and we knew each other's family members well. He and I had offices together in Dallas before I went to Iran. It was good to see Ron again.

Ken Kiedlinger and his wife Claudia were there and made a point of saying hello to Emily and I. Ken and I had been good friends over the last 10 years and I had always liked and admired him. It meant a lot to see him there and may have influenced

my subsequent decision ~~to~~ regarding what to do next in EDS for after a short vacation, I went to work for Ken as his marketing director in the Medicaid health care area of our company.

There were many old friends there at the airport. Some, I hadn't seen in years like Tony ~~Weyman~~ Weyman. We had worked together in Baltimore Maryland back in 1967 when Tony first joined EDS. We greeted each other's families like it was a family reunion.

There were also some reporters there at the airport. They were like hungry wolves looking for a story! They pressed through the crowd to ask their questions, and this was something I wasn't prepared ~~to~~ to handle. Fortunately, Ross and some of his staff were prepared for the press and knew how to handle the situation. Emily ~~remembers~~ remembers Ross telling one very aggressive reporter to leave us alone and to show some consideration for us since Emily and I had been separated for almost two months. Then, the airport and EDS security people moved in and helped separate our family from the reporters and other strangers.