

‘God Wants Me to Live’: Jewish Survivor Forgives Terrorist Who Murdered His Father on Bondi Beach

WARNING: Graphic accounts are included in this story.

BONDI BEACH, Sydney, Australia – The waves still roll in at Bondi Beach. Kids run along the sand. Surfers paddle out. Tourists snap photos. At first glance, it feels like any other day.

For Ya’akov Tetleroyd, however, this place will never be the same. “After I was shot, I was bleeding very heavily, very heavily,” he recalled.

He remembers the shock, blood, and confusion as a bullet tore through his elbow during the December 14 attack. “I’m fortunate that the doctor saved my arm and my life, and I’m here today,” he told CBN News.

Sadly, his father, Borris Ya’akov Tetleroyd, is not.

“In this world we mourn, that’s the way of the world, we mourn, and it’s a sad thing, and it’s a tragic thing,” said Tetleroyd.

They had come to Bondi Beach together for a Hanukkah celebration, an evening that quickly turned into a nightmare when gunfire erupted. His father was shot and killed beside him.

Weeks after the massacre, something that stunned not only the Jewish community in Sydney but Australians at large was when Tetleroyd decided to forgive the men who murdered his father.

“Do I want to be full of rage? Do I want to be resentful? No. The answer to those questions is no. Because it’s no way to live a life,” said Tetleroyd.



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He credits his Jewish faith for teaching that responding to hatred with more hatred only deepens the wound. Instead, he prays, grieves, and speaks about love, not because the pain is gone, but because it isn’t.

“There’s an idea that says, ‘One who does not forgive burns the bridge that he himself must cross,’” remarked Tetleroyd.

Just a short distance from where Tetleroyd lost his father, Arsen Ostrovsky almost lost his life.

“A miracle. In one word, a miracle. I probably shouldn’t be sitting here speaking to you,” said Ostrovsky, who leads the Australia-Israel Jewish Affairs Council.

Only weeks before, he had moved his family back to Australia after 13 years in Israel, believing it would be safer. He told his oldest daughter they were going somewhere free from violence.

“‘Abba, Daddy, does that mean no more boomies, meaning no more rockets, no more missiles, no more running back and forth to the bomb shelter?’ And I said, ‘Of course not, sweetie. We are going to Australia. That’s a long, long way away from the boomies.’ And I was wrong,” recalled Ostrovsky.

On December 14, he was at Bondi Beach with his wife and two daughters when the attack began.

“When the attack started, I was just over there toward that bench,” Ostrovsky pointed in the direction of where the gunmen

stood. "One gunman was on the bridge over there, and the other one would have been on the street side over there."

Authorities say the two gunmen, a father and son inspired by ISIS, were indiscriminately targeting what was meant to be a family celebration of Hanukkah.

In the chaos, Ostrovsky was separated from his family.

"I stood up to start to run toward my family when I got hit," Ostrovsky remembered.

A bullet grazed his head. Not knowing if he would survive, he sent his wife a selfie with two words: "Love you."

"The doctors told me afterwards that my survival is a miracle, that it was mere millimeters between life and death," said Ostrovsky.

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