

Minister of Health, Education and Social Welfare

On August 15th, 1979 there had been a meeting of top administrators in which the drill following a disaster was discussed. Shelters were identified and the roles of various persons clarified.

On the evening of Tuesday August 28th it was certain that Hurricane Goliath would ravage Barbados early Wednesday morning. Goliath was by far the most powerful hurricane of the century. Its winds exceeded 150 miles per hour and it was enormous in size, extending 150 miles north-to-south and 100 miles east-to-west. In Cariba we expected some rains and high winds in the southern areas.

On Wednesday morning August 29th I learned from the radio that all flights to Barbados had been cancelled. I left my home at Belfast and drove to the four storey Government Building which houses all our ministers. It was raining heavily and very windy. Very few people were at work. I met the Minister of Agriculture, the Attorney General, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs and an electrical engineer from the British Technical Assistance Agency. He was stationed in Cariba. We made a call to Puerto Rico and learned that Goliath had changed course and would hit Cariba at noon. That was about 8:45 a.m.

The Minister of Home Affairs made a radio broadcast advising the population and telling people to stay at home. The electrical engineer was asked to dispatch a cable alerting the world and seeking help. By 9:10 a.m. the roof of the Cariba Defence Force had been ripped away. We decided to return to our houses and planned to meet at Police Headquarters the day after the hurricane. The Attorney General and I drove home. The wind was howling and rain was pelting down. Small trees were flapping in the wind like paper. We reached home (which had a lot of glass) and went to a neighbour's where there was a basement. That was about 10:40 a.m. Crossing that short distance was exceedingly difficult - the wind must have been about 60 m.p.h. A few roofs were already spiralling through the sky.

Goliath raged from noon to 5 p.m. There was a quiet lull from 3-3:30 with beautiful blue skies. Then with frightening suddenness and thunderous force the winds erupted from the opposite direction. At about 6 p.m. I went for a walk with a few neighbours. Almost every roof was gone. We walked to the village, Mahaut. Several houses had been tossed on to the beach and crumbled. Others had been moved intact into the road. Roads had broken away. Electric poles were flung in every direction and wires tangled everything. Trees and boulders were all over. Few people were in sight. We heard that they had gone to higher ground. The old folks who were able to speak said that they had been through two or three hurricanes, but that they had never experienced anything like this.

It was getting dark. We returned home. There was mud and water everywhere. Our roof had flown too, and a few had caved in. The pipes were dry. There was no electricity. There was no telephone. It was still raining. Little children were crying, older ones were swapping tales of what they had seen. Adults were open-eyed and open-mouthed.

Electrical Engineer, Londish Technical Assistance  
Agency

I had followed hurricanes (on the other side of the world they're called cyclones) for years as a sort of hobby. I knew that as they approached land they changed direction. I tried to convince my friends on Tuesday night that we were in real danger. They laughed at me. On Wednesday morning I looked at my barometer and figured we were in for it.

I went to the Ministerial Building early on Wednesday morning. I met the Minister of Agriculture, the Prime Minister, and a few others. The Minister of Agriculture confirmed that information from Puerto Rico and Barbados verified that Cariba would be hit. He and I agreed that I should send out a message warning the world that we would be severely damaged and seeking help. I was drafting the message/about 7:15 a.m. when Cable and Wireless went dead. The message never got out.

I had a numbing feeling of futility. We parted company and I returned home. By 10:15 a.m. I realized that I was in for the most awesome experience of my life. The power of the wind was phenomenal. The needle of the barometer dropped and dropped and then started up the other side of the face. I was never so scared. The wind was like a million razors. It defoliated every plant in its path. Nothing escaped. It flung roofs and squashed houses; it toyed with huge trees, flapping them about then heaved them from the earth and crashed them whenever it pleased. Huge well-built concrete houses were pushed from their foundations and cracked down the middle.

The noise was eerie. It was tormenting. It told you just how insignificant man is. It told you who really holds power. I prayed fervently for the first time in thirty years. The glass doors in my living room rattled and whined and rattled without rest. As the eye passed all was still and you could see clear blue sky above. Then with phenomenal abruptness the winds blasted at full force from the other side. Everything wobbled. The rain was blinding. It went on and on.

Then it stopped. I looked out and saw an entirely new landscape. I recognized nothing. There were no roofs. Houses were twisted, tangled ruins. Cars were smashed and overturned. There were no leaves. Rubble was everywhere. Lightposts were across roads and across gateways. Wires flapped everywhere. Huge trees were all about, broken, uprooted and horizontal. Zinc mangled everything. I couldn't accept what my eyes received.

At about 6:00 p.m. the Minister of Agriculture and a few other Cabinet members visited me. They wanted me to contact a Londish warship that we could only just see far out at sea. There was no electricity. It was already getting dark.

For the second time that day I was clothed in fear and futility. There was nothing I could do. I hoped. And I prayed.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Education  
and Social Welfare.

I had attended a meeting on Tuesday 28th August, 1979  
in which we discussed the roles of all relief health  
personnel. We had a booklet setting out each person's  
duties. That was on Tuesday afternoon.

On Wednesday, I was at work as usual. So was the  
Minister. At 8:30 we got news that Cariba would be  
hit. The Minister of Home Affairs made a broadcast.  
By 10 the winds were furious. I left for Goodwill  
and my Minister for his house four miles away.

Shortly after I got home I got a call from the house-  
keeper in charge of the nurses Hostel: "most windows  
had blown away, nurses are frightened, the roofing on  
the hospital's corridors had all vanished, we need  
a workforce". That was about 10:30. I telephoned  
the Chief Technical Officer of the Ministry of  
Communication, Works and Tourism and he promised to  
send a work group there within half an hour.

At 11:00 I was in the cellar of my house. I could  
see across the savannah. Roofs were racing across  
the open grounds. Flying zinc sheets guillotined  
small trees and wrapped around others like foil. I  
tried to go upstairs to see the condition of my own  
home. I saw the sky. Furniture was smashed, smaller  
items had vanished altogether, clothing, sheets etc.  
had been sucked away by some powerful vacuum. Nothing  
was left. The neighbours and their three children  
joined us in our basement. Rain poured through the  
flooring on us for three hours. We spent about five  
hours in the cellar.

At about 4:00 p.m. the winds fell. I came out at  
5:00 p.m. The massive flamboyant trees that I had  
known since my childhood had been uprooted and  
crushed. Their branches blocked the roads. Every  
one of those beautiful trees had been torn up,  
defoliated and broken in several parts. There  
were large piles of debris all over the place.  
Everything was in ruin. I could not see a single  
house with a roof - and my neighbourhood was  
Cariba's largest area of modern housing.

Gradually other people crawled from beneath their hiding places. They walked about sharing their experiences - all tales of woe, all unable to believe the destruction they saw. Some went into town to see the damage there.

People were hungry. The darkness that crept upon us was thick, wet and ugly. I returned home and saw that I had nothing left. For I had not yet insured the house which I had just bought. My car, luckily, was undamaged. Several had been smashed by boulders of flying roofs. Many others had their windscreens and rear glasses sucked out and broken. Then I realized that my family would have to sleep in the car for some time. I was worried about my mother and father who were not far away. And about my aunt too who lived in town. But it was too dark to try anything at that time. There were no phones and no electricity.

## Matron, Goodwill Hospital

Some time late in August the Minister of Home Affairs had summoned people to a meeting regarding preparation for emergencies and relief services. I did not receive a report of those discussions.

On August 29th we knew that we would get some wind and rain as Hurricane Goliath passed Barbados. So when we experienced some strong winds shortly after 9:00 a.m. nobody was troubled. Then there was a lull and all of a sudden with no noise or bother, the roof of the corridor just lifted up and flew away. Then the wind started howling and the rain came. By 11:00 it was in full force. I couldn't see. No-one could put his head out. Zinc sheets were singing through the air. The corridors were blocked with rubble: they were impassable. Then the corridors started flooding.

Somehow a few people managed to reach my office (which has nothing but administrative material) seeking treatment. The roof had gone from half of the small 8' x 8' room. Rain poured in. We had to deliver a woman's baby in the middle of the hurricane. We used my desk and squeezed into one half of the room.

I heard the noise of an explosion when the roof of Casualty caved in. The rain was blinding. We could only just reach some of the medicines in Casualty. Everything was soaking wet. I told the nurses in Casualty to come to my office. There was a lull after 3:00 p.m. Then it raged again. We couldn't leave the office until about 6:00 p.m.

We had been unable to communicate with any of the wards or any other part of the hospital. I just hoped that the nurses were doing their best. By the time I checked, the kitchen staff had disappeared. They had prepared food; but they'd gone with the keys.

By 6:30 p.m. most patients from the male surgical ward had been moved to the maternity ward. I looked

in there and was satisfied that the nurses had done all they could. The men were crying for food.

A man (I later learned that he was a policeman) came up the hill leading a group of men. They started to move the debris and he kicked in the door to the kitchen. They helped distribute the food.

The hospital was virtually roofless. All the houses were roofless. There was rubble everywhere. Trees, boulders and lightposts blocked the roads near the hospital. The damage was exhaustive. By 7:00 p.m. I was exceedingly worried about my mother and my sister's two little children who were staying with my mother at my home in town about three-quarters of a mile away. A few nurses from the country were very worried about their families, but realized that they could not reach home in pitch darkness over blocked roads. They were fearful of landslides. Several nurses from closer were anxious to go home. None of them asked. We had no lamps and no candles. It was already quite dark.



## Superintendent of Public Health Nurses

I was at work when the word came that we should close the clinic and go home. I got home at about 9:20 a.m. Small trees had already started to fall. I got in and locked up. The noise of the wind was terrifying. I couldn't see anything outside. I could not see beyond four feet. Everything was one blind, wild, grey mist.

After 5:00 p.m. when I looked out I scarcely recognized my own neighbourhood. There were no roofs. There were no leaves. The wind had peeled the barks from the trees. Our majestic green mountains were all bare. Everything was brown with white sticks standing where powerful trees had lived. Several houses had collapsed. I couldn't believe my fortune: nothing had happened to my house except some damage to a guttering caused by flying zinc from a neighbour's roof. Not a drop of rain got into my house.

At about 6:00 p.m. I collected some milk and biscuits and went to visit my neighbours. They had lost their roof and they had three children. The water behind my house was about three feet deep and raced quickly down the hill. I managed to reach. I found them sitting on tables and standing on beds trying to avoid the water in their house. We started to bail it out. One of the children had a cut. Some other people with cuts started to find me. I thought of going to the Health Centre for some medicines to treat those who were injured.

There were no lights, no telephones, no water. Roads were blocked. It started to get dark.

A Senior Staff Nurse.

On the way home from a cocktail party on Tuesday night (August 28th, 1979) I mocked my father-in-law who was busily putting up storm windows. I assured him that no hurricane was coming to Cariba. He told me that I was too young to remember what a hurricane could do.

About 6:30 the next morning we learned that Hurricane Goliath would hit us. My husband rushed to the store at which he worked and started putting up storm shutters. My eleven year old boy was on the verandah all excited. By 7:30 my in-laws called us to stay with them and share the fun. At 8:00 a.m. my husband's boss told him not to bother with the rest of the shutters. My husband brought them home and put them on our house. By 9:00 a.m. the zinc roofs were really flapping and my son was having the time of his life.

We went to my in-laws. Just after 10:30 when we saw how dangerous it was looking we decided to call our relatives who lived upstairs our home to tell them to go downstairs where it should be safer. When I picked up the phone it was dead. I got frightened. Then windows started breaking with a high pitched noise. Nothing was hitting them - they were just breaking. The house was being flooded. We had to leave. It felt as if the floor was going to cave in or lift off. It was unstable. That was about 11:30 a.m. We had to cross about three feet to the next house. We couldn't see. It was very, very difficult. Zinc was flying all about. I could hear it slicing through the air and slamming into some object.

At about 5:30 p.m. I went out with my father-in-law. Everything was in ruins. A roof had slammed into his brand new Suzuki and smashed it to pieces. He seemed to age in about five minutes as he stood, motionless and stared at it. He had planned to insure it earlier that same day. The Cariba Botanical Gardens, widely recognized as one of the best tropical gardens of the world, no longer existed. All of the largest, elegant trees lay on their sides with the secret of their roots exposed to the sky. Some root

systems, twelve feet in diameter, were torn from the earth as the large trees which had comforted so many thousands of picnickers were tossed around. One fell on a big school bus and squashed it into the ground. The forest of a garden was without a single leaf. It seemed that Caribans were more saddened by the devastation of their historic gardens than by their own private catastrophes.

House tops were everywhere. Light poles leaned at every angle. Roads were blocked. Hundreds of people seemed to be crowding into the streets from everywhere. Several adults were crying. Others seemed lost. Children were excited and frightened.

We eventually managed to grope our way to our own home at about 8:00 p.m. It was full of people, about 30 of them, seeking shelter. Some of the roof from the upper floor had been torn away. Everything was wet. There was a buzz of noise with everyone talking at once. I was about to set out for the hospital which was about 200 yards away. It was still raining and pitch black. A policewoman assured me that the hospital had all the help it needed and that I should stay with the nouseful I had. She said that there were several men from the police force and army at the hospital.

## Conference Nurse

When we left Barbados on Monday 27th August, 1979 we knew that Hurricane Goliath was on a course to hit that country. The mass media in Barbados constantly issued instructions, warnings, advice, information about shelters and guidelines about the roles of emergency and voluntary personnel.

On Tuesday the warnings remained the same. Our Regional Nurses Conference was opened on schedule on the 28th by the Acting President of Cariba.

We continued our proceedings on Wednesday morning. The weather had turned ugly. The Cariban nurses telephoned and explained that unless the weather improved they would be unable to join us. At 9:00 a.m. we heard a broadcast on local radio advising people to stay home. We had difficulty finding a convenient room. The wind blew wherever we went. By 10:00 a.m. the noise of the wind was fearsome. It was a totally continuous raging howl: a non-stop demonic force. I had never heard such a frightening sound. As one roof flew off we realized that this was not just bad weather: we feared we were in the hurricane. We moved to another room and the roof was soon torn away.

Some members of the Conference bundled in a corner with cushions and towels over their faces ostrich-like seeking protection from the flying glass. Two others braced tables against a strong glass door. Through it we saw the terrifying force of destruction. Huge, age-old royal palms were twisted and snapped off in a moment, then careened into the sky. Large trees were shaken, uprooted and tossed aside. Zinc sailed through the air like tissue paper. Breadfruits bulleted across our view. Roofs swirled into the sky. Little houses crumbled and splattered into the streets. We were all scared. Some started praying. Then the glass doors were splintered.

We tried to reach the church across the road. It was a snelter. One person did and returned with the report that the door was locked. A guest asked whether there was a wine cellar. A few moments later the hotel manager led us to a storeroom. We had to persuade some nurses to make the short trip outside in order to get into the cellar: There had been a lull and they knew it was the eye of the storm passing and were terribly frightened. We linked arms and got into the cellar before the wind resumed its destructive

purpose.

There we felt more secure. There were 21 of us in the small cold room. Wet, frightened, tired and scared. Some nurses started drinking wine. Others prayed. There were blankets, lamps, matches, kerosene, tinned food, mattresses and fire buckets.

As it eased some of us visited our rooms. The powerful hotel was a complete ruin. I thought of the thousands of little board houses perched precariously on stones and forced the thought out of my mind. In the rooms panes of glass louvres had stuck upright in my mattress. My knees wobbled. My clothes and sheets had been sucked out of the room and were no where in sight. The sea had carried mud and sand 80 feet up and splashed it into our rooms. Telephones were in splinters. Furniture was scattered and smashed. Toiletries had disappeared.

I looked where Cariba's powerful tropical mountains stood. I couldn't believe my eyes. There was not a single green thing. The well clothed majestic green mountains were stripped bare. They were nude. It was an ugly vulgar site. I felt as if I was looking at the past. There was no future. Everything was finished.

The church we had tried to reach for shelter had crumbled. The massive beams of the large roof had caved in. If we were there we would all have been squashed. I felt very close to death.

It was dark when it stopped. Two girls started out for the hospital against our advice. They were on their first visit to Cariba and didn't know where the hospital was. They returned forty minutes later, one with a twisted ankle, and the other with a nail prick and a sliced hand. They reported total destruction, impassable streets, dazed, shocked, stunned, homeless people. There were no lights. Shops were being looted of everything.

I thought of getting word to my husband that I was alive. The telephones were dead.

## A Visiting Medical Doctor

Two days after Hurricane Goliath hit Cariba, on Friday 31st August 1979, I arrived in the island. As a native Cariban, a main concern for me was naturally the status of my immediate family - my parents and brothers. The reports of Goliath's ravages were worse than alarming.

As we approached the country it was all brown. It had been shredded of its lush green forests - the thickest in the islands. I could not believe my eyes. It was far worse than I imagined. The mountains were bare. Huge trees had been devided and reduced to thin white skeletons. That scene was alien to the tropics: it was a landscape without leaves. It was like winter ... a tropical forest of leafless stalks. It was horrible. The white stalks against the naked brown mountains looked like one massive cemetery. Perhaps it was.

The villages were a picture of pity. Houses had been smashed like match boxes under a heavy foot. Lumber and zinc were in confusion. Sections of roads had ripped away. Huge landslides camouflaged the roads elsewhere. I closed my eyes. I could not absorb anymore of that devastation. My home had been ravaged.

I guess partly because of being a doctor and partly because of being well known at home it was easy to secure a helicopter ride into town. My relatives were all alive and their houses were like the others, with only a plastic covering where the roof had been. The real loss was in my brother's large store which had been smashed by Goliath and gutted by looting. Everything was gone. That hurt the family. They withdrew, as if in abject surrender. Despair was thick and clammy.

I realized that this was no time for self-indulgence. There was no sewerage, no water, no electricity, food was all but done, there was neither law nor order: it was a classic disaster zone and all the wretched consequences threatened to vanquish the crippled island. So when on Friday night the Minister of Health asked me to act as Chief Medical Officer I was pleased to accept the invitation.

## Surgeon, Goodwill Hospital

For some reason that I have never been able to recall, I was late leaving home. I had driven less than a mile when I realized that the rain was no ordinary affair. Then I remembered that Barbados was supposed to be having a date with Hurricane Goliath. When I met a fairly large tree lying across the road, I decided to turn back.

I only just made it home. All the vegetation was in turmoil. I thought that if this were the edge of Goliath, Barbados had my sympathy. By the time I got home my two mango trees had been uprooted and flung aside. I saw my breadfruit tree demolished. It was twisted like a ribbon and bent into a knot. It stayed that way. I couldn't believe my eyes.

The drain pipes around the house were pulled away as if by some invisible giant. Then that same hand set to work on the roof: it took all of five minutes to tear away half of the roof. Water poured everywhere. Everything, everything was flung helter-skelter. Pictures were swiped from the walls, furniture was spun like a top, all our crockery was reduced to rubble in one loud crash. Only my wife's scream offered a feeble competition.

My fifteen year old son's sense of adventure soon changed into awe and then to deep fear. He was terrified by the power of nature. He seemed to have felt lost when he could get no reception at all on his powerful shortwave battery radio. He knew that electrical power had gone some time before and that the telephone was long dead. And he knew that we were ten miles from town and a good three-quarter mile from any neighbours.

Half of my books were ruined before I could move them. All of my wife's delicate orchids disintegrated before our eyes. My son's rabbit hutch with about nine animals was smashed to pieces. We couldn't save even one of them.

I thought of the hospital. I wondered how it would resist the attack. Then I remembered that there was no Chief Medical Officer. I started trying to guess at how many lives would be lost and what sort of strain the hundreds of injuries would place on the hospital. That's when the coconut tree fell across the car, sinking the roof on to the back of the front seat and breaking both the front and rear windcreens.

When the howl finally stopped, I saw a new countryside. There was nothing green. The trees stood like tombstones... leafless stalks on brown mountains. Everything had been stripped away. I had never seen such force or such devastation.

I could reach no one. I was certain that the seven mile trip to town would be impossible - there would be scores of trees and boulders across the road, not to mention the likelihood of a few substantial landslides. No one could reach me. Our food was all wet, but we had enough for a few days.



Chief Public Health Inspector

The morning looked terrible. I went to work but I was glad of the news to return home. I got home just before 10:00 a.m. Shortly after that all hell broke loose. One minute I had a roof and the next minute I had sky. Only the rafters remained. Water poured in. We had a pool in the living room. We climbed on to the dining table. We tried to strengthen the doors against the incessant battering of the wind by putting furniture against them; it made virtually no difference.

We were all soaked. Clothes blew out of cupboards and flew into the air like paper. By 1:00 p.m. we didn't even think any longer of being dry. Nothing, nothing, nothing was dry. Water from higher up the hill poured right through our yard cutting a small gully where we had a much-loved little garden. Everything that could break, did.

The chaos eased for a while and came back more furious than before. It seemed to be toying with the country... smashing whatever it pleased.

By the time it really stopped it was early in the evening. I tried to decide whether I should make an attempt to contact the Office or deal with the home front first. My wife was as disturbed and upset as I was. Our three children were quite frightened. I decided to stay at home and do some patchwork.

Everybody's place was in the same state as mine - roofless and soaked. Young fellows were collecting zinc and board from all over. It was impossible to establish who was collecting whose roofing material. But a lot of collection was going on. Several fellows in small groups assisted the older folk. The group helped with very minor repairs. There was a thoughtfulness and a sense of community that I had not seen in years.

We slept under the stars and on tables. We were all stiff, tired, uncomfortable and hungry at 5:30 a.m. on Thursday. None of us had really slept.

I don't know how it happened. But I was in a helicopter by 9:30 a.m. to make a tour of the island and report to the Prime Minister. The helicopter was from a Londish warship. I knew Cariba very, very well. Yet I could not recognize a thing. The entire landscape had been changed. I couldn't recognize one village from the next. I could see no plantations at all. Whole sections of road had disappeared - along the coast it had been chopped away by savage, mountainous seas and in the interior covered by massive landslides. I couldn't assess anything. All I could report was a tale of total grief. Beautiful, lush, ever-green Cariba had been reduced to an ugly brown ash. It was as if a fire had raged from one end of the country to the other. Nothing had escaped. Everything had been ravaged. The place was burnt.

Only the rivers still ran. There was no sign of life. It seemed as if whole villages had been taken up and put elsewhere. My country which I knew as well as my home was a strange puzzle to me. There were no point of familiarity. Except the rivers. The devastation was complete.

## Cariban Nurse

I had been on duty on Tuesday night, so I was asleep on Wednesday morning. When the rain started it did seem unusually heavy and gusty, but I just made myself snug and tucked in.

I jumped out of bed quite suddenly when a window blew in on me and rain just poured in. I was startled. I could only see a grey swirl outside. I felt frightened. I tried to calm myself with the thought that my years in England had made me unaccustomed to tropical weather. My entire family had migrated when I was about ten and I had only returned in February out of curiosity and a wish to be in a real West Indian community.

I dressed quickly and then went into the corridor banging on all the other nurses' doors in the hostel. A few of them were quite excited, but others were really worried about their families and their homes. By about 11:15 a.m. no one was excited anymore. The hostel was unsafe, but we couldn't leave it. Rain just poured everywhere: it was like being hosed down. The wind ripped at everything. Doors were torn from their hinges with one swift bang; windows were pushed in with a cruel ease; cupboards were overturned and smashed, linen was pulled from beds and curtains vanished into the wet, grey violence that surrounded us. By noon we were completely exposed to the full power of that vicious force: the entire roof of the hostel was removed in one horrible tearing roar. It just peeled off like tin-foil.

Then I heard something buzz through the air. We were all huddled together. We realized that the hospital was without a roof! We wanted to go and help the poor patients. But we simply couldn't move - The noise of the wind was frightening: it went on and on. It was as deafening as it was destructive.

There was a brief clearing in the afternoon and we could see the havoc that lay around us. The entire hospital was a shambles. Roofs, or parts of them were all over the compound. There were gaping holes

where windows had been. The roofs were nothing but skeletons of rafters.

We raced towards the Matron's office. Some nurses started talking of seeing about their families. They wanted to leave. Before Matron could answer, the winds suddenly burst upon us again. By now we all realized that we were not simply getting the side winds of Hurricane Goliath that was scheduled for Barbados; we were getting the full treatment. We had a repeat performance of the morning's devastation.

We were no longer concerned about what would blow out next or which roof would fly. Property suddenly became quite insignificant. The real question was whether we would live to the end of it. Fear filled us. We just wanted it to stop.

Some nurses were crying about their children, others about their parents. That was my one relief - my parents were far out of the reach of this devilish force.

At about five it stopped. I rushed to the wards. Everything was confused. There was no order whatsoever. You looked and you knew immediately that you had to start from scratch.

Then I heard a patient call feebly "Nurse, we are hungry. We haven't had a thing since breakfast this morning." I went to tell the Matron and overheard three or four nurses telling her that they really had to try to reach their families as soon as possible. They wanted to leave right away.

Outside young people were moving parts of roofs and small trees out of the road. They were calling out to old folk and checking in their basements to ensure that people in the neighbourhood were alright; that is, alive. They helped some older people to the hospital. A few of them tried to tack doors over the huge holes in some houses. Others came up to the hospital to see the miserable state of things and to offer their help.

I couldn't get myself to think of the work that confronted us. That was a horror ahead of us, no less than the one that had passed.

Patron

Several people have walked up the hill to the hospital seeking food and shelter. They are hungry - adults and children.

7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
August 29

Conference Nurse

You learned from your transistor which you had tuned in to Radio Antilles that after more than twelve hours of total silence, Cariba had just re-established contact with the rest of the world. A lone Ham operator had transmitted a message of extensive devastation and called for relief services from neighbouring countries and international organizations.

10:50 p.m.  
Wednesday  
August 29

Patron

You learn of a decision to move some patients into the National Bank. The evacuation is set to begin immediately. The army and volunteers are expected to do the job.

11:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
August 29

Conference Nurse

Two of the three nurses who went out returned. Their tales of destruction were startling. They had met a Cabinet Minister who had promised to get messages to their governments, reporting their safety. They had helped with the evacuation of patients from Goodwill Hospital to the National Bank.

11:50 p.m.  
Wednesday  
August 29



Permanent Secretary

Your body is full of aches from your attempt to sleep in a car. Each member of your family is dazed and irritable. Your mind is still staggering from the shock of your massive loss. You have had no news of your relatives. You have heard of the wanton looting that took place during the night.

5:15 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

It has been impossible for you to contact any member of your Ministry or other Cabinet Ministers. The roads are blocked. Everything in your house is wet and unprotected. Windows were blown out and the roof torn away. All your linen and most of the clothes of your family have disappeared. Everything is wet. The piano which your wife cherished so much is ruined.

5:20 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

As you look outside you see people trekking up the hill toward the hospital. You got very little rest during the night. There are about 40 people in your house. They half-slept all over the place. They want to wash. You have only two small buckets of water which you collected during the rain last night.

5:30 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

You and the Attorney General set out to walk to Roseau. It is difficult and dangerous. People are collecting lumber and zinc. Nails are staring up at you, sharp-pointed in bits of wood. You see scores of people carrying neat packages. That sight relieves you: help has arrived.

6 :10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Permanent Secretary

Word reached you that no-one can find the key to the hospital's drug room. Out to sea you observe a warship sailing to and fro. The swells are still heavy.

6:15 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Conference Nurse

More than twenty of you spent the night in the cellar. Living was exceedingly cramped. Few people got any rest. The group is beginning to stir. There is no running water. People want to wash. There is one very discreet inquiry about the organization's provision for evacuating its staff.

6:15 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

The Attorney General screams at someone. You realize it's a policeman whom he sees carrying a refrigerator in a push cart. You realize that all those neat packages were looted. You are surrounded by looters busily walking home laden with stolen property.

6 :20 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

## Conference Nurse

There is disagreement among the eight senior nurses attending the Caribbean Nurses Conference regarding their appropriate role in the circumstances. Some want to go and give medical assistance. Others argue that the appropriate role is an advisory one. There seems to be some competition for leadership in the group.

6:45 a.m.  
Thursday,  
August 30



Matron

You are exhausted. Except for about an hour's troubled sleep you worked all night. There was a second delivery in your office at 1:00 a.m. The few nurses around you are very tired. They suffered the same trauma and they too have been at work since Wednesday morning. Most nurses have disappeared. Only about eight remain. People are beginning to flood in seeking treatment. A crowd is forming. The corridors are still blocked with rubble. There is mud everywhere. Everything is wet.

7:00 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

You hear that people are collecting lumber and zinc from the streets. There is talk of widespread looting of all stores.

7:10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Conference Nurse

The hotel has a cistern with some clear water. The kitchen is not badly damaged. There is a store of food and there is meat in the freezer.

7:10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

You are met by a driver whom you recognize. He tells you that the Prime Minister wants you at a meeting that morning. The driver explains that his jeep is almost half a mile away. You are asked to hurry. Walking is dangerous. You wonder when you will be able to return home and whether you should let them know.

7:10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Matron

Three nurses from the Caribbean Nurses Conference  
arrive at the hospital and offer their services.

7:35 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Electrical Engineer, Londish Technical Assistance

The helicopter from the HMS/ is circling and / Felicity preparing to land in the Presidents Grounds. The Prime Minister shouts in your ear and asks that you coordinate the requests and receipt of international aid.

8:10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Patron

Three nurses from the Caribbean Nurses Conference  
arrive at the hospital and offer their services.

7:35 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

You learn that the Prime Minister plans to have a meeting with his Ministers and volunteer relief personnel.

7:40 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30



Conference Nurse

There is what seems like a sea of people at Police Headquarters seeking treatment. With very few exceptions, they are all from Roseau. There is only one first aid kit in the station... cotton, some dressing, bandages. There is no water. Patients are walking in for treatment.

8:15 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

You eventually reach the President's Grounds..  
A helicopter has just landed and someone from it has  
just introduced himself to the Prime Minister. The  
Prime Minister immediately calls a senior staff nurse  
who was nearby and you overhear him tell her "prepare  
a list of the drugs we need for this gentleman; he  
is the Medical Officer of the H.M.S. /And you /Felicity  
coordinate the medical aspect of the relief services."

8:20 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

The Matron suggested that you attend the meeting. You were on the President's Grounds. The Prime Minister spoke to the Medical Officers of the H.M.S. Felicity who had just alighted from the ship's helicopter. The Prime Minister called you and instructed you to provide the M.O. with a "list of the drugs we need. And you coordinate the medical aspect of the relief services."

8:21 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

The engineer from the Londish Technical Assistance Agency has been asked to send off cables. He wants to get your list of priority medical supplies immediately.

8:25 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

You observe a man with a towel around his neck. He has been sitting still and moaning gently for some time. He is at Police Headquarters. You lift the towel. His jugular is almost completely severed.

6:35 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Electrical Engineer, Londish Technical Assistance

Cable and Wireless are still not operational.  
You have only the Ham operator. Through that  
medium general pleas for relief have been sent  
to all voluntary groups, intentional organizations,  
since late Wednesday night. You have no information  
on the reception or response to those messages.

8:45 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

You cannot locate your Permanent Secretary. You learn that the Medical Officer at the hospital has made no contact with it. You hear he suffered terrible losses and is in/bad state. There has been no word from the Superintendent of Public Health Nurses or the Chief Public Health Inspector. Someone tells you that the hospital has been totally destroyed. You learn that Police Headquarters has been opened as an emergency clinic. It is already crowded. You hear of the Ham set and that there is a generator at Police Headquarters providing limited power in that building.

2:45 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Minister of Health

The helicopter reports that there is no sign of life in the villages to the south or east. This is all the terrain it traversed. In that area over 90% of the homes are roofless.

8:50 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30



Minister of Health

People are using the rivers for everything: bathing,  
sewage disposal, drinking. You have seen this.  
You cannot contact the Chief Public Health Inspector.  
You have not seen any of his staff members.

8:55 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Senior Staff Nurse

A patient at Police Headquarters reports that his whole village (Scotts Head) has disappeared. He was badly sliced on his arm by a zinc sheet. He reports seeing a close friend chopped at the waist into two complete pieces. The top half retained life for /time.

9:10 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Electrical Engineer, Londish Technical Assistance

At Police Headquarters you realize that the lone  
Ham radio is your only communication device.

9:27 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30.

Senior Staff Nurse

You learn that during the night the drugs and supplies from the Roseau Health Centre were looted. There is very little left.

9:40 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Conference Nurse

You suddenly realize that there are very few Cariban nurses at work at the hospital. There are less than five. And you didn't see any at Police Headquarters on your way to the hospital. More and more people are coming for treatment. Scores of nail pricks and dozens of cuts, abrasives, contusions... Some wounds are really very large and deep.

10:00 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Chief Public Health Inspector

A school teacher from Berekua who was in Roseau during the hurricane has been unable to return to his district and has been giving assistance as Police Headquarters. He claims to know Berekua intimately since he did a lot of social work in the area. He claims that except for a few shops and the new police station he would expect every building to be demolished. He estimated at least 80 deaths and three times as many injuries.

10:12 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

A farmer from Eris Estate who received a bad slice on his left forearm thanks you profusely for being so attentive to him. He expresses sympathy for the 'mountain of work' ahead of you and assures you that he passed 'hundreds upon hundreds of injured people on the road' as he made his way to the hospital.

10:20 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

You hear that a small group of volunteers and civil servants from the Forestry Department are trying to clear the main road towards the Deep Water Harbour. The wharf is intact but the storage facilities are a total ruin. The massive steel girders were twisted and knotted like ribbons.

10:30 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30



Minister of Health

You learn that the volunteers who have been using chainsaws to cut branches and clear the streets are having difficulties getting gasoline. Furthermore, the other chainsaws from the Forestry Department were left in one of the rural offices and are inaccessible. They could use a few more saws.

1:05 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30th

Matron

The H.M.S./was able to get much closer to Cariba. /Felicity  
A team of men from the vessel led by an officer  
reported to you. The officer wants to know your  
priorities: he and his men are at your service.

11:00 a.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

Scores of patients have been treated for nail pricks  
and cuts received from zinc.

1:15 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

A volunteer worker tells you that a patient from Trafalgar wants medical supplies to take to the village. He says it has been destroyed and everyone is injured. He wants everything he can get. The volunteer wants to know what he should send and where he can find it.

1:20 p.m  
Thursday  
August 30

Conference Nurse

A patient from Morne Prosper relates with much excitement and drama how he saw a number of houses collapse. He figures, for he knows the families well, that about 20 persons must be dead in that area alone.

2;25 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30th.

Chief Public Health Inspector

The Minister wishes to know whether in your view the assessment of what food must be dumped and what can be salvaged is a priority at this time. If it is, he would like to know how long such an exercise would take and when he could expect a report. The Minister emphasizes that he does not know whether food evaluation should be a public health priority, in the present circumstances and wishes to be guided by you.

2:34 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

You hear that the police have received word that there have been many deaths in Tête Morne. Several houses collapsed and it is believed that entire families have been wiped out. The road is impassable.

2:40 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Cariban Nurse

You treat a patient who tells you that he is from Delices. He is wide-eyed. He assures you that the whole village has been destroyed. He is returning home to bury his mother.

3:05 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30



Surgeon, Goodwill Hospital

You receive a report from a patient who states that a landslide at Dubuc has covered that entire village. He saw it himself on his way in from Stowe. He says the village just isn't there. He believes everyone was buried alive. Maybe 700 people.

3:20 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Conference Nurse

You hear that the patients in the National Bank  
have not been fed.

3:40 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

## Conference Nurse

There are patients of all types on the floor. Some had been transferred from the hospital. Others had been referred for observation from Police Headquarters. There are just two student nurses. The sewer is blocked and smelling. There are no windows. There is no electricity for the airconditioning. **It** is crowded. They are hungry. The nurses are confused and exhausted.

4:00 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Chief Public Health Inspector

You learn that the volunteers who comprise the Food Committee have advised the National Disaster Committee that in the present situation there is no time to inspect food. They have advised that in the interest of public health the safest policy is to condemn all food in those supermarkets and warehouses that were subject to flooding and which had no standby electrical generators. You know that all the warehouses were affected by some flooding and you know of only one supermarket that had a standby generator. It was damaged and has been unuseable since the hurricane.

4:30 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Electrical Engineer

You understand that some emergency supplies have been flown in to the airport. It is more than 40 miles away and the road is blocked at several places. It is said that the crates contain vaccines and other medical supplies.

5:30 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30

Chief Public Health Inspector

A Cariban Nurse reports that at least ten patients whom she treated yesterday related stories of seeing their neighbours digging holes and preparing makeshift graves for their relatives. The dead were just wrapped in curtains. The scenes they described were wretched, hollow and mournful. The effort of such a burial seemed to suck life from the relatives: they were said to work like zombies.

6:18 p.m.  
Thursday  
August 30th.