



I'm Not Leaving

Carl Wilkens

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Why did Carl Wilkens decide to remain in Rwanda in 1994, with a genocide swirling around him? How did he and his wife Teresa maintain communication during the one-hundred days of terror when Tutsis were being hounded to death by Hutu militia extremists? How does the only American who chose to stay-in order to protect two Tutsi household workers-look back on that fearful time? Working from tapes made for his family, which chronicle daily events from the sublime to the horrific, Carl reconstructs in fascinating detail both personal and political events triggered by the April 6 plane crash assassination of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. He takes us through the poignant good-bye to his family, as they join the mass exodus of expatriates leaving this dangerous situation. He affirms his presence in the neighborhood he has known for four years, by standing barefoot in the middle of the dusty road, waving farewell. - Helen Kweskin,

I'm Not Leaving Details

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Elliot Mullen says

The non-fiction book I read, called "I'm not leaving" by Carl Wilkens, was about the Rwanda Genocide, and how Carl Wilkens was the only american to stay in Rwanda during the genocide. Before reading this book, I did research on the Rwanda Genocide, so I knew what Carl Wilkens was talking about. When I was ready to read the book after I had acquired some background knowledge, my expectation was that It was going to open my eyes about the horrors that some third world countries have to endure, and make me have a new perspective on things. The title itself told me how powerful of a book this is, and how much the author cared about the people of Rwanda. As I read through the book, my mind was truly oppressed with many countless emotions, emotions of sorrow, anger, and despair. I read about innocent people of Rwanda dying because they were of a different religion, and therefore needed to be killed for it. After finishing this book, I remembered my expectations of the book, and realized it surpassed my expectations, more so than I could have possibly imagined. Not only did it show me the horrific events that went on in third world countries and gave me a new perspective on things, it made me question mankind. Not only did the United Nations barely help the people of Rwanda, they sat back and watched as things took a turn for the worst, and turned their backs on hundreds of thousands of Rwandan people. The author of this book, Carl Wilkens, saved more lives than the United Nations did. This book could not be any more accurate of the Rwanda Genocide, because the author lived it. He woke up most mornings in Rwanda to gunshots and people with machetes roaming the streets. The facts did not outweigh the propaganda, because there was no propaganda. The author was not biased at all to one side, because he wanted people to know the truth and what really happened. However, he was very angry at President Clinton and the United Nations for not helping Rwanda more, but later he forgave them, because his "anger was not going to accomplish anything." Throughout this book I only found very detailed, organized, and truthful information about the Rwanda Genocide, with no traces of repetitious jargon. The author wrote the book as a story, from when he arrived to when he finally left after the genocide, and put in the most detailed information that he could as possible. He did not want to write repetitious garbage about the event so that he could fill up a few extra pages. He wanted to inform the reader as extensively as possible about the Rwanda Genocide and how it could be stopped in the future. This non-fiction book made me reevaluate the humanity in Mankind, and helped me understand the horrors that happened and can happen in third world countries.

The author's tone in this book was a mixture of inspiring and condemning. He talked about horrible events that occurred during the Rwanda Genocide, and condemned and blamed many people who did not try to stop it or completely ignored it. For example, he blamed the United Nations and the United States (more specifically Bill Clinton) for not helping to save countless lives. The author was also inspiring however, as he inspired people to help out a country, or even a person during a horrible time. For example, he started fundraisers and causes to help Rwanda, and gave people who wanted to help a way too. He also gave hope to people during the Rwanda Genocide and people in other areas, making people believe in a future for themselves. The Author's viewpoint is through his own experiences during the Rwanda Genocide, and gives the most truthful information about the event. I recommend this book to reader's who are interested with horrific events that have occurred in the world, and also to people who become deeply invested into real events that have occurred. I recommend this book to those kinds of reader's because it is a very serious, saddening book, that you have to deeply invest yourself into to fully achieve the best knowledge and experience from it. This book is not for everyone, and if some readers can not handle very tragic events, I especially do not recommend this book to them, as it is very a tragic and horrific read, and could terrify them more than it was intended to. I did enjoy this book, and I hope other's do as well. I met Carl Wilkens, who wrote this book, and he really experienced everything that he talked about in the book, and truly did save many people.

Megan Tomlinson says

I'm Not Leaving by Carl Wilkens provides detailed and first hand experience of the situation in Kigali before and after the genocide. To summarize, the genocide occurred in Rwanda and was the mass murder of Tutsi and moderate Hutu by members of the majority. Wilkens' was director of the Adventist Development Relief Agency at the time and as a foreign national was designated to leave Rwanda for safety. This is where his adventure begins, Wilkens' sends his family off to safety and despite the issues it could cause with his organization, he stayed in Rwanda to secretly deliver supplies to Tutsi people. With little help, other than few government soldiers who occasionally provided assistance, Wilkens' heroism led him to orphanages and churches where he saved countless lives at the face of death.

Wilkens begins his story with a background of the period before the genocide, then leading up to the genocide and finally he focuses most of the book to cover his fight with the majority over the course of three months. It is an extremely touching and well-written story documenting the courage of those who fought against the genocide and the struggle they went through to help those facing death. What makes his journey so incredible is the massive failure that occurred internationally to do nothing about the genocide, yet one man could make enough of a difference to save hundreds of lives. His story shows the importance of the relationships he built that led him to where he was on his journey and even how those relationships saved his life. For example he states, "I have no doubt the relationships our children built in our neighborhood were the single most important factor that inspired our neighbors to stand up for us"(Wilkens Chp 4).

On top of that, Wilkens' did an excellent job of chronicling not only his personal account of the everyday struggle, but also the political side that took place. I really enjoyed how the book was written, from his personal perspective that helped to put the audience in his shoes and experience the terror of what was occurring, it makes it much realer for the reader. As far as purchasing the book, I would highly recommend it as all proceeds go towards his cause and is available generally for less than five dollars.

Heatherlyn says

I think I enjoyed this book so much more after knowing I had a personal connection to someone who met and travelled with Mr. Wilkens. Soon after completing this book, my friend, Tim, gave a talk about his experiences in the summer with Carl, and then we got to Skype with Carl. It was incredible speaking with him and talking about what he believes is going on now in Rwanda and how people feel there.

Alexis Patterson says

Would you stay in a dangerous area with your family knowing that you could be killed at any given moment? That is exactly what Carl Wilkens did in the book *I'm not leaving*. Carl Wilkens and his wife Teresa decide to stay in Rwanda during one of the most famous Genocides known to man. This Genocide was the extermination of all Tutsi and moderate Hutu members by the Hutu tribe in Rwanda Africa. Although the Genocide started in 1990, it really took off in the year of 1994. One thing that you are going to learn is that the protection of family and friends is vital for Carl and his wife. They have two Tutsi members in their household Anitha is a young woman who works for them and Janvier is their watchman. Carl and

Teresa understood the importance of keeping them safe. You see a lot of protection in this book. For example, One night a lot of people came to kill Wilken's family but his neighbors saved them by saying that their kids play with Wilken's Children. There is a lot of bonding together in this story. You learn that true friendship is never broken. Carl Wilkens was the only American who decided to stay in Rwanda in order to keep his Tutsi friends safe. Carl Wilkens is a part of the Adventist development and relief Agency in Rwanda. Carl stopped armed men from killing children in an orphanage. I recommend this book to anyone looking to learn more about the Genocide in Rwanda and how Carl Wilkens' courageous choice made him famous among not only Americans but all over the world. I would definitely recommend looking up the Genocide in Rwanda which is what I did before reading "I'm not leaving". Doing research about the event in the book really gives you a base before you start reading the book. It is a lot to take in but this story is full of life lessons and facts that will blow your mind.

Linda says

If you want the unvarnished gore of the horrific events of the Rwandan genocide you need to read another book. In this book Carl introduces us to the people around him during this time and allows us to see what he experienced. It is a story about humanity, both the good and the bad. It is a story that brings into sharp focus the importance of simply taking action. Who would think of asking a "bad guy" to help save some of the people his "bad guy group" are determined to kill? Carl thought of it, and he followed through and asked; and lives were saved. I never imagined I would read a book about this topic and come away feeling hopeful; but I did. Carl didn't accomplish everything alone. He had a keen eye for seeing whether someone could be trusted, and he had the ability to bring together the right combinations of people just in the final possible moments, and there are plenty of those moments in this book.

Carl is a great speaker and between his lectures and his stories hopefully humanity can get just a little farther down the road of learning from history and learning not to repeat it.

Alexander says

I'm Not Leaving is a book written by Carl Wilkens, in a first person perspective of what he witnessed to be genocide, the stomach churning, unpleasant word that most of us would rather not think about as it brings many different (and horrifying) pictures to our head. Wilkens was one of the very few American people who decided to stay in Rwandan territory while the tribe of the Hutu targeted and tragically killed the Tutsi tribe, which was a small inferior tribe at the time. The reason why Wilkens stayed back to watch the horror unfold was to write about the genocide, in a way that will call to others and open the rest of the world's eyes to what happened back in 1994, and show how courageous the victims were, how morals were affected throughout the events. The book gave a good perspective of both sides of the predicament, and showed what an atrocity this time was for Rwanda. I admire Wilkins in his efforts to stay and get to the bottom of what exactly is going on so that he could let the rest of the world know, and although I probably wouldn't have just sent my family off in a departing truck and stayed behind, I was quite astonished to read that Wilkins went to that extent. I was also very awe struck at the fact that Wilkins received some help from the same people responsible for the massacre itself. Wilkins family was also terrorized, however, as a mob of the Hutu came to them with no second thought on murdering each one of them. What was truly admirable was how the Rwandan people came out to defend the family, because of how nice the family was to them and how they attended to them and reached out when they needed a hand. This book was overall quite interesting, and a must read. The book opened my eyes to the fact that there is a world outside of ours, more dangerous, more

ruthless. And as humans we need to help those who are not as fortunate as us to live in such a country.

Amanda Peña says

I'm Not Leaving., written by Carl Wilkens did meet my expectations. This book is about the Rwanda Genocide and what Wilkens experienced as the last U.S. citizen who stayed in Rwanda during the genocide. When he came by Freedom a few weeks ago, he made it clear that this book was written to provide his point of view during the genocide and that it would be best for all us to also look into other books and documentaries about the genocide, so that we could have a better understanding of it all. In history class, we had watched the documentary, "Ghost of Rwanda" to learn about the genocide and listen to the point of views of the people who helped the endangered during the genocide.

Carl Wilkens is a very compassionate, brave, and genuine person and those characteristics are also portrayed in his writing. The way he writes is the way he speaks, and it says so much about Wilkens. He is an inspiring person and is consistently doing his best to better the given situation, as seen in the book and the way he spoke during his presentation. One example of his character can be seen through his courage and bravery that had him decide that he should stay in Rwanda during this horrendous time. Another example that represents his bravery is when Wilkens spoke to one of the three head men that were responsible for the genocide, Prime Minister Kambanda. He asked the Prime Minister that the soldiers do not go and kill the people in the orphanage that he volunteers at. After hearing the request, the Prime Minister made sure that his soldiers did kill the workers and children of the orphanage. I believe that the most appealing aspect of this book is that in a world full of hate, there is a place for love and humanity, and that is evident through the selfless actions of many people during the genocide.

Reply

Art King says

Since those awful 100 days in 1994, I've heard Carl speak several times about his experiences during the Rwandan holocaust. I thought this book would be a good recap of what happened. I wasn't prepared for what is actually here. In this slim book, Carl tells the unadorned story, day-by-day. He doesn't sanitize it or Hollywoodize it, he just tells the story. Here is stark terror, chaos, loneliness. Here is life and death decisions piling up on one another. Here is one man living out the most basic precept of what it means to be a Follower: Choosing to act for the welfare of another person. In the face of great personal danger, Carl saved the life of the housekeeper. He saved a lot of others too - surely more than we will ever know.

This isn't a "preachy" book. It doesn't try to tell me how to solve the problem of evil in the world or cajole me to be better person. It does something much more powerful. It SHOWS me how these things are done.

James Rolon says

I'm not Leaving

In the book "I'm not leaving" by Carl Wilkens, I must admit it was not my favorite read. When reading the synopsis of the book the author states "It is about the choices people made, actions people took, courage

people showed, and sacrifices people gave in the face of the genocide", although the author did indeed give individual stories on how everyone he encountered showed some type of courage and sacrifice; I expected a lot more detail on their stories and how the genocide was effecting them. I also feel that the stories written with-in the book were often redundant. I already knew what to expect in the next chapter with out even reading it. He would speak on how he would go to the orphanage to bring water and food to the kids, and on the way there he would sometimes get shot at. However, don't take it that he wasn't courages, Carl Wilkens was a very courageous man in the actions he took to help those surrounding him. It doesn't take just anyone to put their own life ahead of others and sacrifice not seeing their family and living in peace to help the less fortunate. However, I feel Carl Wilkens could have taken a better approach to explain what really went on during those "88 days of violence". What did spark some of my interest in this non-fiction novel was how the act of kindness can go a long way and how infectious it can be. This one man was able to get so many alibis in helping him with his journey. Even those that were apart of the destruction. My favorite story was actually when he was helping Angelique's injury. Day by day he would stop by her home to clean and take care of her wound not knowing she was an Interahamwe. He then questions himself "If i had known what she had done, who she really was, how would i have treated her wounds? Would i have helped change her dressings..."(Wilkens, 168). A man who sacrificed everything to help those he barely knows, questions himself if he would help a women in need. I believe even with the knowledge of who she really was, he still would have done everything in his power to help her because that was just the man he was. Although I do not agree with him leaving his family and potentially leaving his kids fatherless; I do believe this is a man of dedication, courage, and aspiration. His story was most warm felt, and gave a lot of insight on how there are still people out there who do care and are willing to do almost anything to make sure their actions affect those in a positive manner.

Mireya Adame says

I'm Not Leaving by Carl Wilkens is memoir of a man who decided to live in Rawanda during the genocide of the Tutsi in hopes that by staying he could at least help out the two people who were working in his home. Wilkens' intention with having published this book is for people to begin to understand what it was truly like through the eyes of someone who was actually there and that this will help spread awareness of how grave a genocide can be in hopes of preventing them in the future. In this story, there is a huge emphasis on how the choices and actions a person commits can have great impact not just on yourself but on others around you. He emphasized a few moments that could have made a huge difference. He even starts the story after giving a brief introduction, mentioning one of his hardest choices he had to make, staying in town among the attacks while he managed to get his family to a safe premise. Another few examples and when he mentions if the UN forces hadn't been their creating false hope would people have fled sooner and thus had less lives lost; or could Wilkens and his family's lives have ended if their neighbors hadn't stood up for them because "their children played with ours". This story really left me impacted. It is hard for one to understand that amid all the cruel and spoken acts of murder and torture, there are still those who have courage and preform acts of kindness. These humanitarian acts are always left in the dark when genocides are mentioned, only giving us, as the author mentioned, "cold statistics". This book is definitely one that leaves you wondering about all the other noble and compassionate causes that were left unsaid.

Corey Rigsby says

The book I'm Not Leaving by Carl Wilkins is not just about a mass genocide that happened in Rwanda. It skips around the genocidal violence and we see stories about compassion, justice, and love. The book doesn't

focus on the hatred and slaughter that went on. It jumps into the lives that Wilkins met while he was living there. All of the stories you read involve relationships that Carl makes with his neighbors and because of these, they end up saving his life. When the mass genocide started people ran wherever they could to get out of harms way and find safe havens. Wilkins shows us something different. He remained there because he cared about the people in the town. The friends he made in his house become his real friends and he feels compelled to stay behind and make sure they are safe. By staying behind and making sure they were safe, their lives were spared. He talks about how he was able to relate to the killers in Rwanda as humans, because by doing so, he was able to protect many orphans and people under his watch. His heart is what we find to be the most impactful. To bring justice to the town was a job that risked his life in order to help saves others. There is such awe found in this book because the stories show that standing up for something you believe in when everyone else wants to run away and protect themselves. It's not required for us to do, but it is what we are called to do. Although Wilkins focuses on the genocide and the inaction of the United Nations and world governments, it also focuses on the idea of hope, unity, and strength seen in the eyes of the remaining foreign people and civilians. But the stories are all tied together with the message of helping the human race and too not just lookout for yourself.

Caitlin says

I had the honor of meeting Carl and Teresa Wilkens last August, and they are some of the nicest people I've ever met. Reading Carl's story was inspiring. It's got me thinking about the work I'll be doing in Uganda in two weeks. While I won't be driving through bombs and gunfire to deliver supplies to orphanages, I will still be helping those who need it. I just hope I can come close to doing how much Carl was able to throughout the 1994 genocide.

It was also interesting to hear about the Hotel Des Mille Collines out of the Hotel Rwanda context. It helped me realize how big of a deal Paul Rusesabagina's work truly was.

Rachael says

4. As Good as Gold:

This book met my expectations. Considering that it was an autobiography/first hand account of a historical event, there was no errors in statements and the "research" was reliable. The content of the book toiled with my emotions which is a quality that I enjoy when reading a book. It spoke about all of the ups and downs of Carl Wilkens' stay in Rwanda and it was fascinating learning about how he got by and survived through the genocide. Although that it is first hand accounts and there is room for bias thoughts and opinions, I thought that the things shared were not swayed one way or another and were informative.

5. Like Water in a Desert:

The author's tone throughout the book was compassionate and inspiring. On the first page upon opening the book is the dedication where Carl Wilkens wrote, "To my Teresa Lynne, She didn't stand with me, I didn't stand with her, we stood together". These first words of the author which were not even apart of the story really stood out and set the tenacious and inspiring tone for the rest of the book. On another account, the author ended up managing to stall some Hutu extremist from murdering hundreds of children in an orphanage. Although the author does mention some accounts of feeling scared or anxious, his willingness to help others and determination over rode those thoughts which allowed the inspiring tone to shine through.

This book is one to mess with one's emotions, but is also truly touching and inspiring to the heart. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves a heartwarming story, but is not afraid to face the facts and hear some of the rough tales about the genocide in Rwanda.

Keyana says

It's such a shame that I didn't completely love this book considering I had the privilege of meeting the author during my high school history class a couple of months ago. The writing wasn't terrible but at times it felt like his thoughts were not articulated well on paper. Carl Wilkens is very passionate and enthusiastic in person and I was disappointed because the writing didn't leave me feeling as engaged as when I heard him speak. Besides that the themes and overall stories he tells in this book are really powerful and show us how strong and resilient people can be despite living through horrifying ordeals. Even with all of the violence throughout the genocide, the many people who chose act rather than flee are a prime example of how community and faith give us strength to be compassionate towards one another in times of crisis.

Pashew Majeed says

Carl Wilkens has a very powerful story to tell. I was inspired by his courage and love of the other. I never forget when I asked him if I could hug him after he gave a talk for students at the University of Cincinnati. He moved people while talking.
