

Using Rwandan Video Testimony to Understand the Patterns of Genocide

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LESSON

Target Audience:

Grades 9-12
History/English

Time Required:

1-3 Days

Content Standards Addressed:

Common Core Standards
*Reading Standards for Literacy in
History/Social Studies*

1. RH.9-10.1 — Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
2. RH.9-10.3 — Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
3. RH.9-10.9 — Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
4. RH.9-10.10 — By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Lesson Goal

Students will utilize eight clips of testimony from two Rwandan survivors and a rescuer in order to lend human faces and personal stories to history while also exemplifying the patterns of genocide (Background, Violence, Response, and Aftermath).

Student Objectives

- To become proficient in understanding the four patterns of genocide by viewing the testimony of two Rwandan survivors and one rescuer.
- To strengthen digital literacy through examining and discussing visual history testimony.
- To provide a human face to history through use of visual history testimony.

Prior Knowledge/Background Information

This lesson was designed to be the main lesson, utilized with or without the first lesson (*The History of Modern Rwanda through Photos*) and/or the third lesson (*Researching Genocides and Memorial Creations*). This main lesson utilizes video testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education and from the patterns of genocide as described on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's website.

Materials

- Lesson plan includes:
 - unofficial working transcripts for teachers to give additional context to the excerpts of testimony
 - guiding questions to further unpack the content of the testimony
- Excerpts of testimony* from the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive:
 1. Kizito Kalima: Ethnic differences in school (2:04)–Warning Signs
 2. Kizito Kalima: Attacked by a mob (4:38)–Acts of Violence
 3. Kizito Kalima: importance of learning the lesson (2:44)–Legacy
 4. Freddy Mutanguha: Saying good-bye to his mother (8:29)–Acts of Violence
 5. Freddy Mutanguha: Rescued by a friend (2:10)–Responses
 6. Freddy Mutanguha: Burying his parents (6:07)–Legacy
 7. Carl Wilkens: Pre-genocidal violence (3:16)–Warning Signs
 8. Carl Wilkens: Neighbors speak up (2:17)–Responses

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Content Standards (cont'd)

Common Core Standards Reading Standards for Informational Text

1. RI.9-10.1 — Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. RI.9-10.2 — Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. RI.9-10.3 — Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
4. RI.9-10.4 — Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

Materials (cont'd)

Alternative Procedure:

*The full testimonies for Kizito Kalima and Freddy Mutanguha are available for viewing at <http://sfi.usc.edu/witnessesforhumanity/rwandangenocide/>

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Patterns of Genocide webpage: http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/genocide
- Patterns of Genocide (student handout)
- Biographies of Kizito Kalima, Freddy Mutanguha, and Carl Wilkens
- USC Shoah Foundation's *Guidelines and Considerations for Using Testimony in the Classroom*
- Student computers with internet access and headphones

Procedure

DAY 1—SHARING DEFINITIONS

1. Begin by presenting the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's (USHMM) webpage on defining genocide http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/genocide, encouraging notetaking, and reviewing Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention. There are 10 slides in all, but it is recommended to focus on the first 3 as they are most relevant. If there is more time and teacher wants to go deeper, or if this is for a US History class, students might want to review the Turning Points section (<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/rwanda/turning-points/genocide-fax-part-i>) which gives an example of a warning sign leading to the genocide.
2. Now have students take notes on the four patterns of genocide (http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/genocide/patterns/): Warning Signs, Acts of Violence, Responses, and Legacy. Students should not only define these patterns and write down examples shared but should be encouraged to share other examples from their previous class readings and viewings. For example, if the class read *Night* by Elie Wiesel during a course on the Holocaust, students might give as an example of Warning Signs the forcing of the Jews of Sighet to wear the yellow star or the curfew imposed after 6 p.m.
3. After defining and exemplifying the patterns, distribute the Patterns of Genocide handout to each student along with the biographies of Kizito Kalima, Freddy Mutanguha, and Carl Wilkens. Discuss the directions, then ask students to form groups the next day to watch an excerpt of video testimony from Rwandan genocide survivors and/or a rescuer.

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Content Standards (cont'd)

Common Core Standards
*Reading Standards for
Informational Text (cont'd)*

5. RI.9-10.5 — Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
6. RI.9-10.7 — Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Alternative Procedure:

Teachers might decide to assign all clips either to be watched by each student independently or as a whole class exercise.

Day 1 Procedure (cont'd)

Note to teacher in preparation for viewing excerpts of testimony:

Please be advised that the teacher must prepare students for the content of the testimony, some of which can be very traumatic. Teachers should preview the excerpts of testimony, read the transcripts, and refer to the USC Shoah Foundation's *Guidelines and Considerations for Using Testimony in the Classroom*, paying particular attention to the "In the Classroom" section (pp. 7-8).

Utilize the guiding questions on the transcript pages as additional discussion/journaling moments for students.

4. As homework the teacher can print the information found in the various tabs about the Rwandan genocide patterns from the USHMM's webpage at http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/atrisk/region/rwanda for students to read and take notes on prior to watching the testimony excerpts the following day.

It is also recommended to encourage students to read over the biographies for the following day.

DAY 2 and DAY 3—VIDEO TESTIMONY WORK

1. Now have students take notes on the four patterns of genocide <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/rwanda/rwanda-background> : Background, Violence, Response, and Aftermath. Students should not only define these patterns and write down examples shared but should be encouraged to share other examples from their previous class readings and viewings. For example, if the class read *Night* by Elie Wiesel during a course on the Holocaust, students might give as an example of Warning Signs the forcing of the Jews of Sighet to wear the yellow star or the curfew imposed after 6 p.m.
2. As an example of the activity on Day 2, show the first video clip of Kizito Kalima talking about the ethnic differences in school and discuss which pattern it fits and why.
3. Students spend time as necessary to watch the number of excerpts they were assigned and have a group discussion about where the testimony excerpts fit into the patterns. Students should fill out the information on the Patterns of Genocide handout for each testimony excerpt they were assigned.
4. As homework, teachers may have review the Patterns as they apply to another genocide on the site: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Democratic

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Republic of Congo or Sudan and South Sudan. It is also recommended to encourage students to read over the biographies for the following day.

DAY 2 and DAY 3 Procedures (cont'd)

5. To conclude the lesson, again refer to the recommendations in the *Guidelines and Considerations for Using Testimony in the Classroom* and the guiding questions that follow in order to further unpack and discuss the testimony.

Assessment

Use the following rubric (adjust to meet your class requirements):

Rubric:

-----/10	Class Behavior (On task, brings materials, etc.)
-----/15	Classroom Notes (taken while going through the online slides)
-----/40	Patterns of Genocide handout (Textual evidence to explain opinions, etc.)
-----/10	Class participation
-----/75	TOTAL

The background information, unofficial working transcripts, and guiding questions for each testimony excerpt.

1. Kizito Kalima: Ethnic differences in school (2:04) — Warning Signs

Background: This passage is about the power of words and how the first step towards genocide is dehumanization.

Kizito: *You know, you hear one, two people saying something; they call you a snake, “inzoka,” so because I was tall and skinny and that kind of labeling, you know, made me, you know, feel unsafe around other kids. And that’s why I was asking my family, and even though my father never, ever, I mean, he wasn’t a person who would always tell me this is a Hutu, this is a Tutsi. He always tells me that everybody’s all the same; they’re all Christians; he was a Christian man. But I started sensing that when I was, you know, 10, 12, from 10 years old, that’s when I knew exactly what it was. In school, of course, in primary school, they would ask me every single morning that we will go to class-- we’ll sing the national anthem, we’ll pray and they would call the names to see who came to school--and they would say Hutus and Tutsis. They would call your name and later on they would ask who’s a Hutu and who’s a Tutsi, so you would have to raise your hands. So the first time, my friend who was mixed- raised as a Hutu-*

LESSON

Working Transcripts (cont'd)

1. Kizito Kalima: Ethnic differences in school (cont'd)

and I raised with him and he [the teacher] said, “No.” The teacher knew my family and was like, “No,” you are Tutsi and I found out myself there were like two of us in a class of 45 people. And that kind of action made me feel like I’m different, and people look at me, other kids would look at me like I am different because Tutsis, you know, they’re called, they used to call us “inyenzi,” “inzoka” which is cockroach and snake, and that’s not something you call people. Once you start labeling people, you know pretty much it’s degrading them. So it was somehow uncomfortable.

Guiding Questions:

- How does Kizito describe his father’s beliefs about ethnicity? How does that differ from Kizito’s teacher’s apparent beliefs?
- What was the purpose of the teacher’s identification of Hutus and Tutsis? How did this contribute to the mistreatment of the Tutsi children in the classroom?
- Discuss the power words might have in the early stages of genocide.

2. Kizito Kalima: Attacked by a mob (4:38) — Acts of Violence

Background: The Interhamwe (“Those who attack together”) were the larger of two militia groups affiliated with Rwanda’s president Habyarimana that trained and carried out the genocide against the Tutsi population. For more information, visit <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,USCIS,,RWA,456d621e2,3decf4b24,o.html>

Kizito: *So they [the Interhamwe] just left one exit, one area which was the bridge and the bridge was where the killing-- they would kill people and throw them in the river, or you know, put the women there and just rape them. So we [Kizito’s cousins] came to this bridge and when we were about to get there, people saw us, saw me, and they realize we are Kalima’s kids. They just freaked out because some of them, my dad had done more than what their family had done for them, so they’re like “No, you can’t go there, they would kill you, they would chop you into pieces.” So, but I was confused, I didn’t know exactly what was going on, so they kind of snuck us behind the road. The bridge, we just went through, there was a small river you can walk through it.*

Interviewer: *Does it have a name? The river?*

Kizito: *It was, there was a big forest we called the Kinene; it was*

LESSON

Working Transcripts (cont'd)

2. Kizito Kalima: Attacked by a mob (cont'd)

in the valley between the Kinene and the Kigoma hills. It was like, it was in the middle there; I don't remember the name of the river.

Interviewer: *All this is still in Butare right?*

Kizito: *This was still in Southern Province. So when we crossed, when we would get by this roadblock, that's when people would tell "soma"-- "You know they are going to kill you, they know you, they're going to kill you." So they kind of snuck up behind it and they let us go, but when we came out the bushes, people saw us. The people on the top of the hill started shouting, that was like six o'clock in the morning. It was in the morning; they started shouting, and they said, "We found inyenzi, we found cockroaches," so they came running. This bunch of people came running to help find. So we didn't know where to go because we were surrounded. So we just, they came and they just grabbed us. They just, they grabbed me by my shirt and just put me on the ground. They roughed everybody, and they dragged us to like, I would say 50 feet and like on higher ground and when we got there, that's where we find mass killings, dead bodies everywhere, people still dying, people still, just blood; it was terrifying. So when I was there, this guy Munyaneza, who was a Hutu and was trying to help and has been protecting us, he just say, "No, you cannot; you're not going to kill this, Kalima's kids, you're not going to kill Kizito." So when the guy hit him with like I would call a "kibando," it's like a baseball bat. Munyaneza, this guy my dad had raised, had covered me and he was hit and his arm just dropped; they broke his arm. So he fell down and I fell down, so they pushed him away. They told him to go back or he was going to get killed. So they dragged us on top by the hill, and when I was there, one of the guys just grabbed me by the shirt and tried to chop me off with a machete, the "panga." So I saw the machete coming and I kind of freaked out, and I got so scared and he hit me with the machete here [gestures to his scalp]. So what I think happened was he wanted to chop my head off, but the machete kind of went awkward and the edge of the machete was like a very sharp edge went into my head, deep, deep inside. I still got a little dent here [gestures to scalp]; you can't see, I have hair. So when he got there and he hit me, and I start bleeding and the shape of the machete was here all during the genocide. I still got a dark spot here. And I fell down; I fell unconscious and they jumped on me, they just were beating me. By that time I was almost dead, and it was nine dead bodies. I was with my cousins; they were there without being hit and they were just crying; it was just crazy. It was crazy.*

LESSON

Working Transcripts (cont'd)

2. Kizito Kalima: Attacked by a mob (cont'd)

Guiding Questions:

- How do members of the militia describe Kizito? How does Munyaneza describe him? What is the significant difference?
- As we struggle to comprehend the horror that Kizito went through at this point, reflect on the power and the courage of his would-be rescuer to stand up to literally shield Kizito with his own body. How would you explain why he took this action? What in the clip helps give you evidence as to why he took such a risk?
- Describe Kizito's narrative style (how he recounts his story) in this testimony excerpt.

3. Kizito Kalima: Importance of learning this lesson (2:44) — Legacy

Background: Kizito was asked if he had any message or life lesson about surviving the genocide he might pass on to students.

Kizito: *I want to just tell them that the genocide happened, the Tutsi genocide happened. What I was saying was that Hutus died during the genocide, but they were not the target. There was genocide against Tutsis. They were the main target. The Hutu that got caught in the genocide were mainly because they never wanted to kill the Tutsis. So to those who died, their families, my heart goes out to their family, but what I want to tell the whole world is that you know, even though we went through the genocide, we, I personally, I don't like to be called a victim. I don't want to feel like I'm a victim of. I just feel like OK, whatever happened to me should be a motivation to make sure that genocide never happens again to anybody, a Hutu, a Tutsi or anybody over the world. And to make sure that we work to help or to rebuild the lives of those who have been affected and to make sure that people are educated enough they know exactly causes and the consequences of genocide. That's what I want everybody to know and to learn, because the way the whole world acted during the genocide it kind of bothers me until now because people could have stopped it, easily, simple and easily. But, it seems like nobody cared. I may be wrong about that; it's how I feel, that's my personal opinion. I want to make sure that this thing, if it ever happens to anybody anywhere, we should act. And when I say, I know myself, I will act in any means necessary as long as it brings peace to help people. Even if it means to lose my life, I'm willing to do so. Because I can't sit and see people dying and I'm not acting, especially my people. That's the last thing I want to see in this world. So I would like ev-*

LESSON

Working Transcripts (cont'd)

3. Kizito Kalima: Importance of learning this lesson (cont'd)

erybody to get involved and help as much as you can and make sure that we live in a safe, safe place, a safe world.

Guiding Questions:

- What distinction does Kizito make in regards to Tutsis and Hutus as victims?
- Why does Kizito feel it's important for him to not be called a victim?
- What is his advice to those who know his story? How might that be accomplished?

4. Freddy Mutanguha: Saying good-bye to his mother (8:29) — Acts of Violence

Background: While being hidden by his friend, Jean Pierre, Freddy is visited by his mother for the last time.

Freddy: *Night of 13th, actually my mom came to see me and she say that "probably is my last day." And the food store was finished because she had to feed the militia, she has to give money out each and every day. And she brought me beans and vegetables, so I didn't like them. She knew that I didn't like, I don't like, only those kinds of food: beans and vegetables. They're very bad cooked because she didn't have time with the emotion and the fear and everything; she could not cook very well. But at least she say, "I need to take something to eat for my son." She brought me the fruits, the passion fruits, two of them and say, "I know you like fruits. You like passion fruits so if you don't, you're not able to eat the beans, please try the fruits." She was different. Her face was very different. She was so quiet. She didn't talk too much. That's how I felt that probably as she said, this was the last day, and it was the last day. She told me how they were harassed by the militias. She told me that she doesn't have any money left at home; they were saved by money. She said that there was no food, no money, nowhere to go, so she say that we don't have hope tomorrow, probably. It was not, she say that it was not possible to live again because we don't have anything to give to the militias. She went back; I was hopeless. I didn't have anything to tell Jean-Pierre because many times I was trying to engage in conversation with him and tell them stories and everything. But in that night I was just so quiet because how I saw my mom, it was so different. I never see her in that condition, in that mood since I born, it was my first time. She told me many, many things and ask her and say, "What will happen if you die and I don't die? Because of you hiding*

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Working Transcripts (cont'd)

4. Freddy Mutanguha: Saying good-bye to his mother (cont'd)

me here, you were exposed. Everybody knows you awhile.” She say, “If you survive, be a man.” This is the last word I heard from her. She didn’t even say goodbye. She just disappeared. She couldn’t say goodbye because, is what I am thinking, she knew it was last time. The passion fruit became my memory to my mom. And the last word, I would never forget it. The following day about 11, I heard, I was listening to a very big group of people who come into my house. They took everybody from the house and they killed them. I could listen. I could hear the screaming of people being beaten and killed and then at a certain, it took about 15 minutes. Then I realized that everybody had died. It is so hard to listen to that. You feel you want to listen to it, you feel you want to go and see. It was so hard, each and every time and some time have nightmares and I listen exactly, exactly the same noises come to me. It’s so hard to live with, and I could wish to not listen to it. Sometime I feel happy that I have listened to my parents dying, but the other time I say I don’t have peace because of that.

Guiding Questions:

- Think about the emotional pauses Freddy has in telling this story. How do they contribute to the meaning of the story he tells? How can watching testimony differ from reading stories?
- What do you imagine “be[ing] a man” means to Freddy’s mother? What senses does Freddy speak of in his testimony excerpt as he remembers his last meeting with his mother?
- Are there tastes or smells that have become part of your memory landscape?
- Compare Freddy’s narrative style (how he tells his story) to one of his other testimony excerpts. How is this excerpt different?
- Explain what Freddy means by his last sentence: “Sometimes I feel happy that I have listened to my parents dying, but the other time I say I don’t have peace because of that.”

5. Freddy Mutanguha: Rescued by a friend (2:10) — Responses

Background: Freddy was taken into hiding by Jean Pierre, his best friend (and a Hutu). While in hiding, he heard the massacre of friends and family outside of his hiding place.

Freddy: *I went that night, I went and knocked on the door of Jean Pierre and I say, he heard my voice and he say, “Oh, come to my house.” But the same day on the 7th, Jean Pierre came to my house to see if he could find me there and go and hide me in his house. So he say, “Yeah, I was looking*

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Working Transcripts (cont'd)

5. Freddy Mutanguha: Rescued by a friend (cont'd)

for you. Everybody would be killed, but I don't want you to be killed. Actually at least it's what I can do. So stay in my house. If they come and they kill you, I am very sure they will kill, I will die with you. But you're a very good friend of me, then I need to make sure that you're protected." They kept killing my neighbors, I mean all the Tutsis around. They killed many, many people. They killed; they raped actually the women. You can listen to screaming around. I was in the house, but I didn't see anyone, but you can listen to those screaming, people being killed with machete, people being discovered in the bush. And then you could listen to a big group of people passing around the houses with very bad word and say, "We will kill them all." They were all singing in the day and the night. So it was so horrible to listen to that and many times they say which family remain when they pass. They say, "We need to go kill Vincent [cousin in hiding]. Vincent is still alive there."

Guiding Questions:

- Based on the testimony clip as Freddy relates it, why was Jean Pierre willing to die for Freddy?
- How do you suppose the militia's singing and talking about their potential victims compounded the horror for Freddy?
- When you think about the term "genocide," what in this testimony excerpt would illustrate it?

6. Freddy Mutanguha: Burying his parents (6:07) — Legacy

Background: Freddy recalls revisiting Rwanda in 2001 in order to properly bury his family.

Freddy: *Yes I went, but she [his sister] knew, actually she changed mind exactly the day we decided to go. So I say, "I don't want to change mind because I need to know what happened and where they are so that I can bury them or something, like I need to know." So she say that "I cannot go there, so you go there and tell me when you'll be back." So we went there, but they were thrown in the toilet, in their toilet. Because in Rwanda when they say toilet, it's not toilet like this one you have in the house. So the toilet is a pit outside the house. So it was easy to throw in people, rather than going and dig actually a grave for them. So in 2001 we went back there, we exhumed their bodies, then we buried them in a place where it's dignified.*

Interviewer: *Did you go back to Mushabati?*

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Working Transcripts (cont'd)

6. Freddy Mutanguha: Burying his parents (cont'd)

Freddy: Yes.

Interviewer: Also in 1990 [Incorrect year].

Freddy: Right after getting my sister, I went back. I buried my mom because she was, well, after killing her they actually dig small, small grave for them, for three. Because she was killed with another lady who's my neighbor and then my father, my stepfather, and herself. And then they actually dig small, they didn't have time, they put them and they went. So the water, the erosion, they were coming and taking some of their bones. So when I went back, I took the bodies because they were only bones. We washed the bones and then put them in the coffin, and then we buried them.

Interviewer: Did you do that by yourself or did you do that with others?

Freddy: With others, I had some friends in Kigali. So they came with me, and it was a time where we started to know as survivors each other. So I get some survivors in Kigali to, and I told them what I'm planning to do and they came with me; we were about five. Then we went to my region, we buried them. Again my sister didn't want to come.

Interviewer: So that was also 1995?

Freddy: Not in 199--in 1994 at the end of it, it was about December. She had too much nightmares about the life and everything, so she said, "I cannot cope with it, so if you can go that will be fine." So she started to go back to Mushabati and see the graves in 2001. Now she can go there alone but for myself I went there, I wanted actually them to be buried, not to be eaten by dogs or the bones be taken by erosion and taken in the rivers and everywhere. So at least I can feel that I buried them.

Interviewer: What about your sisters, your four sisters?

Freddy: Yes. Even at the same time I went to the toilet they pulled them, we took them out. You know it's so hard to go to sleep and your parents and your sisters, they are in the toilet. You cannot, first of all it's humiliation for you. The second thing if you don't act quickly, I don't think you'll feel there is any difference of those people who put them in and you who keep them in. So that is why I decided very quickly to go ahead and take them out. And the toilets, they were so deep with all mess and everything so to have someone else to go and take them out. It's so difficult because you have to go, to go there yourself because you feel your people and you love them and whatever and whenever they are, you can touch them you

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Transcripts (cont'd)

6. Freddy Mutanguha: Burying his parents (cont'd)

can do anything to them. To go and be in a toilet and pull people up, and it was so hard but we had to do it.

Guiding Questions:

- How important was burying his family's remains to Freddy?
- How might retrieving and burying the families' remains and/or memorializing the victims be an important step in recovery from genocide?
- What does Freddy mean when he says: "If you don't act quickly, I don't think you'll feel there is any difference of those people who put them in and you who keep them in"? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

7. Carl Wilkens: Pre-genocidal violence (3:16) — Warning Signs

Background: The plane crash Carl is referencing was on April 6, 1994. The presidents of Rwanda and Burundi (Juvénal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira) were killed after their plane was shot down by rocket fire in Kigali. It was only hours after the plane was shot down that Hutu extremists took power and the genocide began. For more information, visit http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/6/newsid_2472000/2472195.stm

Carl: When there was another time of violence, rioting in the city, and they [the Rwandan government] shut it down for curfew. And a young lady who worked for us, our cashier at ADRA [Adventist Development and Relief Agency], called me at my home with a frantic call.

"Please, they're killing people in our neighborhood! Can you come and get me?" And during these three months before the genocide--my father in this project that the Canadian Government was funding of rebuilding the health clinics. My father had come. I'd invited him over with his financial background to handle the finances of this. This was \$300,000 over three months. It was a lot of money, short period of time, things could go, they [the finances] needed to be kept tight. And so he had come to help in this project. So I remember he and I getting in the car and driving out trying to get to her neighborhood. You know, coming down one side of the hill near our house and on another side is a truckload full of guys with masks and weapons and clubs and stuff and I'm thinking, "Okay, do we turn around or do we go ahead and face them and try and pass them?" As it worked out because of roadblocks and difficulty in the city, when we finally got to her house, it was quite a while. There was nobody there. Fortunately, somebody had come earlier and taken her and her family. She had family members who worked with Peace Corps, and they had come and gotten her. So we had those experiences.

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Transcripts (cont'd)

7. Carl Wilkens: Pre-genocidal violence (cont'd)

There was another time when our truck was stopped and taken away from our driver in the months before the genocide. So you could see, you had not only the reports from the workers and colleagues about what was going on, but you had the actual incidences before the genocide that were showing you how the tension was mounting. And I sent a, and we had the regular meetings by that time with the embassy, and I sent a fax to our world headquarters letting them know I was the warden, the responsible American Adventist missionary for the Adventist community in the country. Because there was Adventists at the university and different places around the country, missionaries, with the embassy, so I would go to these regular meetings at the embassy and they would brief us, and they set up evacuation procedure, identified as assembly evacuation points—assembly points for evacuation. And I sent a fax the end of March, last half of March, to the world headquarters of the Adventist church saying, “Listen—it’s like we are sitting on a keg of dynamite here. We have plans in place if things blow, so if you wake up in the morning and CNN is saying things have blown in Rwanda, it hasn’t caught us by surprise. We have evacuation plans and stuff in place but we’re all hanging on. We’re all hoping against hope that this new government will be installed and when this government is installed, we believe it will diffuse all of this tension.” And so it was that kind of razor edge that we were living on in the days preceding the plane crash.

Guiding Questions:

- Carl talks about venturing out during the Hutu militia’s preparation of the genocide to bring to safety one of the ADRA office workers. What were the dangers he faced? How did he respond?
- What qualities of Carl’s character might set him apart from others’ responses during the genocide? How is his role different than Kizito’s and Freddy’s?
- Do you think Carl would refer to himself as a hero? Why or why not?

8. Carl Wilkens: Neighbors speak up (2:17) — Responses

Background: During the early stages of the genocide, road blocks were established first throughout Kigali and eventually throughout Rwanda. Militia there stopped traffic and checked ID cards, looking for Tutsis. These were primary spots for killing by the Interhamwe militia. For more information, visit <http://www.rwandanstories.org/genocide/roadblocks.html>

LESSON

Working Transcripts (cont'd)

8. Carl Wilkens: Neighbors speak up (cont'd)

Carl: Thursday night after the killers were killing in our neighborhood and we saw them, we watched them carry the furniture, I told you about that down the street and everything. They came to our gate Thursday night with their clubs and their guns--and I guess guns-- definitely their clubs and machetes. And our neighbors, ladies, I don't know how many, if it was five or eight ladies, and I don't know if there were any men among it, I only heard about ladies who did this. When they heard that they were amassing at our gate to attack our house, they came out and stood between them and our gate. It's incredible and I wish you could see the pictures of these simple, ordinary but extraordinary ladies who stood there and said, "No," to the guys, "You can't go in this house." And when I asked them after, because we learned about it Friday morning from a neighbor through a fence, she said to Tabith, the young lady living in our home, and she says, "You know they came to your gate last night, they were going to bust in there" and what? And so she told them the details and when I talked to the neighbors I said, "How did you stop them?" You know they didn't come out there with guns or weapons or anything. But I found out their main tool was stories; they started telling them stories. "These people have lived here for four years. If we need to go to the hospital in the middle of the night, they take us to the hospital. Their kids play with our kids--" and that's just, that's incredible when I stop and think about. These guys with adrenaline racing through them, probably blood on the blades of their machetes and the clubs with the spikes and maybe their pants barely pulled up from the violating and the stuff they were doing in our neighborhood and now they're at our gate and these ladies, some of them older ladies, are there telling them, "No," and "Their kids play with our kids." I mean that could have been, it's not being overly dramatic to say that could have been it for us that night. At minimum they would have robbed our house, terrorized us in ways and our kids and that would have been huge changes in our lives if we had survived it. But our neighbors stood up for us.

Guiding Questions:

- Talk about the power of the individual in the face of genocide as inferred in the clip.
- How and why were these women able to change the perpetrators' minds?
- What do you think are the lessons of the Wilkens' relationship with their neighbors and what their neighbors ultimately did?