Network Anchor

A year ago, Cincinnati native and Fox News Channel anchor BILL HEMMER spent 10 days reporting from Haiti in the aftermath of the January 12 earthquake. Though not new to crisis coverage—he’s reported on the Ft. Hood shooting; military conflicts from Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq; the September 11 attacks; and Hurricane Katrina—he counts the Haitian story as one of the most dramatic and difficult.

WHAT WAS REMARKABLE ABOUT THE HAITIAN EXPERIENCE was that we were traveling to the moon. We had to bring everything with us. This is an island nation, surrounded by water, with no electricity, in absolute devastation. We were able to fly into Haiti with three small suitcases that contained a computer and a satellite uplink...and tell our story to the world.

VERY FEW PEOPLE EVER WITNESS A TRAGEDY ON that scale. It was street after street, block after block. You could drive for an hour or for eight hours and the images seldom changed. Concrete. Pancaked buildings. We see a lot of things in our business, but no one was prepared for the amount of destruction that hit Port-au-Prince.

I TRIED TO TAKE VIEWERS THROUGH MY DAY: WE WOKE up. We found this soccer field. In this soccer field, there were 3,000 people tucked beneath colored tents. There was one doctor to provide service to 3,000 people. We’ve seen a baby born. We’ve seen the amputation of a leg.

THAT COUNTRY’S BEEN RIPPED OFF BY ITS GOVERNMENT for decades. All the aid and all the help that’s gone into Haiti has gone down a black hole. Will the government meet its promises? Will other countries, including the United States, continue with aid? I believe the U.S. will because it led the entire way in this effort.

ALL TRAGEDIES ARE UNIQUE. KATRINA IS DIFFERENT from a bridge collapse in Minneapolis. A bridge collapse is different from a war in the Middle East. The difference in Haiti is that the world shook for 30 seconds and the lives of an entire generation of people were altered forever.

—PATRICIA GALLAGHER NEWBERRY