

Waking in Oak Creek

A documentary presented by Not In Our Town
and the U.S. Department of Justice COPS Office

Waking In Oak Creek Script

[00:00:13.20] 911 dispatcher: Oak Creek 911, where's your emergency?

[00:00:15.00] Female caller: Yeah, I was just going to Sikh temple, and I was in the parking lot, and I think someone was shooting some guy with a turban.

[00:00:24.00] 911 dispatcher: He's in the church with a gun?

[00:00:26.10] Male caller: Yeah, yeah, cause I can hear it in there, he's in there shooting people.

[00:00:33.00] Harpreet Singh: A white supremacist, fueled by hatred, walked into our local Gurdwara with a loaded gun. He shot and killed 5 of our men. He killed my mother while she prayed.

[00:00:49.00] Eric Adar: I think this is an assault on all of us. It's an assault on anybody who's a Milwaukeean, a Wisconsinite, an American, a human being...

[00:01:05.18] "Not in Our Town presents Waking in Oak Creek"

[00:01:25.08] Gurpreet Dulai: Tonight we are celebrating the lives of six victims who tragically lost their lives on Sunday August 5th 2012

[00:01:36.25] Woman at Vigil [Kristin Fuhr] I don't know anybody personally that goes to the Sikh temple here, but it still hits close to home. He very well could have walked into my church and done the same thing.

[00:01:49.07] Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka: The whole point of a candlelight vigil is that that light embodies the hope that we have amongst this darkness, so many people showed up blocks away from where this happened, without any fear and with so much love. It was tremendous."

[00:02:09.35] Albert Smith (community member at vigil): You never think that it would happen in your own backyard, here in the Milwaukee area, but then again, on Sunday it did. And it goes to a point where it calls us to action

[00:02:21.17] Police Chief Edwards: In 28 years of law enforcement I have seen a lot of hate, I've seen a lot of revenge, a lot of anger. What I saw, particularly from the Sikh community this week, was compassion, concern, and support.

[00:02:40.09] Amardeep Kaleka: My dad...he was the first one to help protect the temple. It was his, it was ours, he lost his life.

[00:03:00.28] NEW SCENE

[00:03:08.06] Mrs. Kaleka: We do come early to prepare the food every Sunday. Usually talking family stuff you know, this that.

[00:03:18.05] Abhay Singh: Me and my sister, we went outside and then all of a sudden a white man came out and he just started shooting randomly and we just ran as fast as we could inside and warned everybody theres a man outside with a gun.

[00:03:34.25] Mrs. Kaleka: My husband was sitting having tea then he said close the door then he was on the phone 911 then he ran to keeping everybody away.

[00:03:50.02] 911 phone worker: Oak Creek 911, where's your emergency?

[00:03:51.23] Man on phone: Um we were having a problem here at Sikh temple of Wisconsin, (screaming in background) we need 911 quick!

[00:03:59.00] Kaleka: "And then we went into this pantry.

[00:04:00.29] Other Woman: "15"

[00:04:01.29] Woman: "15, 15, 15 people! We tried to quiet inside cut

[00:04:05.09] Man on phone: 7512 howell avenue, they're shooting.

[00:04:11.00] 911 worker: Ok did anyone get hit? hello?

[00:04:17.08] Pardeep Kaleka: Somebody called and said you know your dad's been shot. So I called his phone and talked to somebody inside and they said get here hurry up.

[00:04:24.28] Lt. Brian Murphy: As soon as that call came in I knew I was going to be the first one to arrive

[00:04:29.25] Dispatcher: Squad, last I heard a balding male with glasses may have gone inside with a gun and there were shots fired"

[00:04:37.03] *frantic phone call here

[00:04:42.08] Mrs. Kaleka: We were hearing the pop pop, you know the bullet shots. You know, we start praying

[00:04:49.03] Woman on phone: We need help someone is shooting outside"

[00:04:51.04] 911 worker: Yes, we've got help on the way, ok?

[00:04:54.00] Woman on phone: "We are just hiding now"

[00:04:56.13] 911 worker: "Ok stay on with me. Ok? Ma'a m?"

[00:05:01.03] Woman: Thank you

[00:05:03.22] Lt. Brian Murphy: I saw two men laying on the ground, one on top of the other.

[00:05:07.24] Uh, I need an ambulance, I do not see a shooter anywhere...

[00:05:12.16] Lt. Brian Murphy: And just as I had started moving I saw him. White T-shirt, lots of ink on his arms, black tactical pants and a holster on his hip. We both shot... probably at the same time. My shot missed and he hit me directly in the chin, which traveled down my throat and ripped apart my larynx. I stood up, pointed my gun... and thats when he shot the tip of my thumb off. The gun came out of my hand. I kept crawling and thats when he shot me in the back of my head. I know i've been shot a ton at this point and then a funny thing happens, it just gets quiet and I knew I had to fight

[00:06:00.55] Officer Sam Lenda:

I drove up, I saw him and I saw that something just wasn't right. Thats why I backed up to acess my rifle, and then I pulled back up. The glass sprayed me in the face. With the front sight I followed him and shot until he went down"

[00:06:16.22] Pardeep Kalaka: As the minutes went on it just became more and more urgent and I just wanted to know what happened to dad, is he alright?

[00:06:26.18] Kamal Singh: I think I must have asked him about 25 times, did you find my mother? Did you find her?

[00:06:33.13] Gurpreet Dulia: I mean, receiving those text messages, you're standing on the sidewalk... you don't know who is alive and who's not, and all you can think about is, you know, am I going to see my parents.

[00:06:44.29] Sam Lenda: I didn't know if I had hit him, or if he had just dove to get cover.

[00:06:49.11] [police radio] Where's Murphy? We don't know where Murphy is!

[00:06:53.10] Woman: Any further description if there is an additional shooter?

[00:06:59.29] Sam Lenda: He's still shooting, I figured, I'm going to take the fight to him, and if I run out of bullets, I'm going to run him over, and I saw that he had a head injury, but I didn't know if I had hit him in the head or not, the round that we had heard was not fired at us, he

actually had put the gun to his head, didn't want to be taken alive.

[00:07:22.28] Police Chief John Edwards:

We had a lot of information pretty early on who he was and what he was all about. What he was wearing is indicative of a white supremacist to show I'm going to spill blood for the cause.

Our role now is not only to protect, it's to make them feel safe, and not just in the Sikh community, but everywhere in my city

[00:07:44.16] Amardeep Kaleka: The day after August 5th, my brother came into my room, and I said "Can we take all of the money that Dad had and go hire a lot of friends who were ex-gang members? Can we go after the neo-nazis guys // so that they don't ever think about doing something like this again? And my brother stopped me and he goes, look, you don't realize, we could either become weaker or stronger. If you retaliate, you're no better than them.

[00:08:06.14] Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka: I used to cut my hair, trim my beard, depending on what I felt like each day. I always thought about taking the sarup, as we call it, of the Sikh faith, where you don't cut your hair, you keep your [?].

[00:08:18.18] Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka: I thought about it and I was thinking, you know, maybe someday, I'm not spiritually ready...and when the shooting happened, I felt like, if there's a day, it's today. And I wanted to show the world that even if we look different, we're still Americans, and we're still human beings. I'm not a terrorist.

[00:08:36.20] Sam Lenda: I look at it as I confronted evil in the parking lot. You know, he was looking for division, it didn't work that way. And I think it grew people closer.

[00:08:56.17] MOS We're trying to remember what happened last Sunday, we're trying to come together as a community to reassure the families and heal together

[00:09:09.25] Mayor Stephen Scaffidi:

I'm affected by any kind of tragedy but there have been several times where I just struggle to like hold it together. It almost like shakes you by the shoulders and says you gotta wake up, you can't allow these things to happen, you can't allow hate to dominate a conversation.

[00:09:26.21] Mayor Stephen Scaffidi:

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the victims, for our wounded officer...there is no doubt in my mind that the heroic actions of our police officers prevented an even greater tragedy.

[00:09:41.01] Sikh man reading names of departed: "Sita Singh, 41 years old, Ranjit Singh, 49 years old,. Satwant Singh Kaleka, 62 years old. Prakash Singh, 39 years old. Paramjit Kaur, 41 years old, Suveg Singh Katara, 84 years old,

[00:10:23.00] Harpreet Singh “These were people who were walking alive just a week back. They are no more with us. We come together in love and peace and understanding, rather than hatred.

[00:10:34.15] Pastor Giles (Christian Fellowship Community Center Church): “It could happen to anybody, anyplace, anywhere. Hatred don’t care where it goes. What hurts them also hurts us too. We are christians, we all are brothers and sisters together, that’s why we are here. We came to share their grief too.”

[00:10:53.00] Police Chief John Edwards: Sometimes people think that when you go into a situation like this, its over its done you go home you do your job you go back... it doesn't work that way. There were some pretty graphic things that went on there. They're trained to see that, but now when one of their own goes down--we need to heal behind closed doors in a group and come together and talk and cry. I would like to see them get some time to decompress and catch their breath too.”

Natsot: She was a hard working woman

[00:11:18.16] Kamal/Harpreet: She sacrificed what she wanted for her self to give us what we needed. just working for 12-14 hours a day just to put food on the table.

[00:11:33.00] Pardeep Kaleka:

My dad was a strong strong person, a strong personality, he was going to fight till the end, and you know sometimes it rubbed people the wrong way, but he was also a very honest person, almost brutally honest. A lot of integrity. You don't know that you have these characteristics built into you until you need them

[00:11:54.28] Pardeep Kaleka: How can we look into the eye of a horrific tragedy... I seek solace in the fact that, even in death, my father has done more to promote awareness of the Sikh faith than he did when he was alive.

[00:12:34.06] Police Officer John Edwards: How are you? Good to see you.

[00:12:36.50] Police Officer John Edwards: There is intelligence that is shared among the law enforcement community on what we can do now, who we're looking at, but when you're looking at raw data, pull the data out of the FBI files, this will not show up. This is the hate crime incident report, and you can see what the hate was for. Because it's erased their gender, their sexual orientation, and then religion, we have Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, other religion, so the Sikh community, there's not...there's really nowhere for me to put on here who they are. They're others.

[00:13:08.06] Kamal: Where are our Sikhs, where do we count our mother? What are they going to say, 7000 other died? That was a wake up call I believe to all of us, where we needed to do something.

Text card:

One month after the attack, Kamal and Harpreet joined the Sikh Coalition to testify at a Senate hearing on hate crimes.

Harpreet: I know what happened at Oak Creek was not an isolated incident. I fear it may happen again, if we don't stand up and do something. Senators, I came here today to ask the government to give my mother the dignity of being a statistic. The FBI does not track hate crimes against Sikhs. My mother and those shot that day will not even count on a federal form.

I want to tell the gunman who took her from me: You may have been full of hate, but my mother was full of love. She was an American. // Despite everything, I still believe in America, in the American dream.

[00:13:45.09] Kamal: He became the first, first Sikh ever to testify before congress in US history. And how many people can say that in the world? So it was definitely dear, close to our heart.

[00:14:01.23] Harpreet: It was just for my mom

Six months after the attack

[00:14:17.08] Lt. Brian Murphy: You know, there are days that you are sitting there and its miserable. For me to get out of bed and walk to the bathroom is a major event. You know I remember being in the hospital and members of the temple brought up letters and cards and...that makes you get up and move. The outpouring of gratitude and every aspect of support, they've been there. [00:14:46.10] My wife and I have never really went on a honeymoon and we had tickets to go the Florida Keys in two weeks. There was actually one point where I'm laying on my back and he shot me through the bicep and I can just remember in slow motion... the blood sprayed out of my arm and I can just remember thinking as I'm crawling backwards.... we're not going to the Keys. And I thought... she's going to be mad, you know? [00:15:21.23] I had been shot 15 times, I really can't feel anything in the forearm, I have half a thumb, some memory loss from the shot in the back of the head... But, things could be so much worse. I'm very fortunate. granted I'm not thumb wrestling anybody or singing karaoke but I can still do my day to day functions.

[00:15:53.01] Lt. Brian Murphy: The Sikh Temple is on Howell Avenue, one of the busiest thoroughfares in Oak Creek, but how many people ever truly understood what they stood for, what they worshiped, what their lifestyle was like?"

[00:16:11.11] Kanwar: In our faith, God is everywhere. Sikhism was founded a little over 500 years ago in an area of india known as Punjab, who we now call Guru Naneth. We primarily believe in one god, and that all people from all different faiths prayed to the same god. Regardless of your cast, regardless of your gender or where you are in life, you can find god just as easily as anyone else. You simply work hard and work honestly. You keep god in your mind, and you share what you have with others. And our God is defined essentially as the energy of the universe.

[00:17:06.02] Kanwar: As a scientist we are really only trying to understand God, in the same way that as any spiritual person tries to understand god. Just using different tools. Albert Einstein was supposedly quoted as saying all of his work in exploring science was to understand god's work and I think the concept for me at least spiritually now is trying to merge the two.

[00:17:30.19] So our lab in general looks at learning and memory and I do that looking at how cells communicate amongst each other. And these connections are the basis of how we are able to think, learn, and remember. The way we do things, why we do things, so many different important questions have yet to be somewhat uncovered. There's a whole concept of sungruth [?] or community in our faith, is that you as an individual cannot find truth. We must learn together to find that truth. So we're always encouraged to pray in groups, to meditate together, to interact with each other, to eat together, to serve each other in that hope.

[00:18:27.29] Pardeep Kaleka: You never get used to coming into a scene where your dad took his last breath. I remember vigo vigo, you know, please come save me. My mom used to be really involved in the Gurdwara and helping out all the time."

[00:18:48.09] Pardeep's Mother: "Still its hard for me, starts shaking my heart and everything"

[00:18:53.22] Pardeep Kalaka: "It's a hard obstacle to try and get over."

[00:19:12.03] Santelle: One of the things that was most important, I believe, for the Sikh community to hear, was the clear articulation that this was in fact a hate crime, not because it lessened the pain, but just because it gave them the ability to say we are a part of America. They are our doctors, they are our nurses, they are our teachers, they are our masons, they are our cab drivers, they are us. There is no one to prosecute here, there is no defendant for us to indict, but that suggests that we have a larger mission, and that is, in part, education. What do you take from an experience like this?

[00:19:46.23] Lieutenant Brian Murphy: This guy was inked up to the max with neo-nazi white supremacist tattoos. Hate festers like a sore. It doesn't happen overnight. I wonder how many people ran into this guy and didn't know what he was about. As a law enforcement officer, you should know your community inside and out. You get to the places that you don't normally get to. It's hard to say to someone else 'don't be ignorant' when you're ignorant yourself.

[00:20:25.23] Mayor Steve Scaffidi: You can't go through this and not be affected. There is still emotion, its just not the raw emotion of the incident, all of us i think sense that there is a change here. From its a bad thing that happened, lets move on to maybe we need to talk about how we can reduce the likelihood that it will happen. I promised the Sikh community that we would continue to have events based on what happened here. Can we do something as a community to kinda change the discussion.

[00:20:54.11] MOS: I think most folks in Oak Creek would say before this happened, I mean we knew the temple existed, but in terms of interacting with the community and knowing what they're about and how they live their lives, was kind of a mystery.

[00:21:06.00] Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka: Before this whole incident occurred I really had a negative outlook on police officers... but we don't have those conversations, to see that they're humans.

[00:21:13.09] Officer Sam Lenda: "We have a ride along program. Come ride with me for a day.

[00:21:16.18] Kanwardeep Singh Kaleka: I would love to do that Sam.

[00:21:22.25] Pardeep Kaleka: Everytime I turn to speak to a crowd a take a deep breath, and I gather myself and I hope that once we leave today that we will both be messengers together. To get out there and basically preach the message of love.

[00:21:36.10] Police Chief John Edwards: I've seen a lot in 28 years of how people hate each other and how they treat each other, but unfortunately thats where we are at. Somebody who's always telling me their brother, their uncle, their sister... they're worried that they may be one of those people, and I look at them and say well then why didn't you say something!?

[00:21:50.20] Arno Michaelis: I was a founding member of the same organization that Wade Page belonged to. So in many ways I set the stage and I created the environment that he came from. The most frequently asked question was how did you change!? I was very fortunate that kindness was given to me by complete strangers, who I was outright hostile to.. And while these acts of kindness didn't change me on the spot, they planted seeds that grew in my heart that left less and less room for that hate and violence.

[00:22:26.17] Pardeep Kaleka: I think that the country has gotten too used to stories like this. We don't feel each others pain. Being awake means that you feel it... you feel Newtown, you feel it so much that you want to get in your car, drive to Connecticut and be with the victims. As you leave today, be awake.

[00:22:48.23] Catherine Roeske, Oak Creek City Clerk
I have a 6 year old daughter and I think about it everyday. But, I think we're making a difference,

and for me, everyday is do the right thing, try to teach my children to do the right thing.

[00:23:00.50] MOS: I'm sick of being passive, I guess, and today really helped in seeing I'm not the only one in the community who actually wants to help out.

[00:23:13.07] Mayor Steve Scaffidi: I often say I have more faith in the kids than I do in adults sometimes...it's probably a naive statement in some extent--kids are really going to drive this discussion.

[00:23:24.02] MOS student: Since that incident, people have started to believe that we like actually had a problem, where people didn't understand fully about other people's cultures or they didn't respect it.

[00:23:36.24] MOS student: Yesterday, at the Sikh temple, we were talking about bullying, because it goes on a lot at the high school too.

[00:23:43.15] MOS student: I was bullied...like racial remarks, like all the time...one day I just went to my grandpa and just asked him questions about like about India and about my culture and stuff. Now I stand up for myself, like if someone makes a racial remark like I correct them and they actually listen.

[00:24:02.14] MOS student: The fact that you guys can wake up and get past that and move on is really amazing.

Text card : Student planted a diversity garden to honor the sikh temple etc

MOS Student #1:

Everybody got down, and got dirty.

MOS Student #4

This is a small thing, but it can set like a ripple effect.

MOS Student #3

It kind of symbolizes our unity as a community.

MOS Student #1

It made everybody feel like they were even a tiny part of something amazing.

American Legion scene

[00:24:32.20] Commander Dan Daily: I'm the commander of port 34 squadron and i'm a retired police officer from the city of Oak Creek. We, obviously are a veterans organization. The day all these people joined the service they decided to serve their country and their community, that will not stop until the day we put them in the ground with the flag on their coffin.

[00:24:57.05] Commander Dan Daily: As soon as this happened, members of the post all got together and said, what can we do?

[00:25:03.04] MOS: Usually a legion post takes care of its own members and everything but we wanted to make this a community wide effort.

[00:25:09.23] Commander Dan Daily: We feel that heroes from all walks of life should be honored not just military heroes. The way today's society is, we don't get to know enough about each other. What those six peoples deaths did was help us better understand the Sikhs. They understand us better, and the two communities are now much closer together. We're not born heroes, we become heroes because of something that happens in our life.

[00:25:41.06] Text card: One Year after the attack

[00:25:48.28] Rabbi Ronald Shapiro: Around the community this weekend, there are congregations who are remembering those who perished--

[00:25:59.00] Rabbi Ronald Shapiro: We've known what it is like to be attacked, to feel the sting of other people's hatred, that should cause us to do everything within our power to bring about a sense of the good.

[00:26:13.03] Pastor Sue D'Alessio: When we are doing things in our world to make a difference, each community of faith can only do so much, and that's why God gave us another community of faith and another faith tradition. We each have ways in which we touch people's lives.

Text card: One Year Memorial Service

[00:27:16.15] Police Chief John Edwards: How does a community come together, so quickly after something so horrific? And you have to understand, you're the reason, that that happened. The compassion and forgiveness that you have. We want to remember the victims, never ever forget them. But what we want to be remembered for, is the response, and how we dealt with it, and how we came together.

Lt. Murphy [00:27:46.03] Lt. Brian Murphy: Last year, I was blessed by God to be given an opportunity to serve the Gurdwara, and for that, I will always be thankful. Like the other six victims who lost their voice permanently, and mine, who has been diminished, that voice has been replaced by everyone here--the voice of Chardi Kala, the voice of going forward, and moving ahead.

[00:28:34.01] Text card: One Year Anniversary Vigil

[00:29:14.29] Amardeep Kaleka: It's very difficult obviously to be up here and MC when today was the day that I found out my father was murdered. I was full of so much anger. If I do something constructive, if I try to help build a community, I don't think about the negative side.

[00:29:33.00] MOS: As for, Wade Michael Page, there is no question that my father, and I'm pretty sure that the other victim's families--they've forgiven him. And pray for his soul.

Text card: Raghvinder's father, Baba Punjab Singh remains in the hospital

[00:29:49.08] Gurvinder Singh: After they took my dad's coffin, I started crying. And I couldn't stop.

[00:29:59.22] Kamal: Light your candles for him. Look out...

[00:30:05.20] Gurvinder Singh: Thank you, thanks for your love.

[00:30:15.12] Pardeep Kaleka: It seems like, everytime I get tired, somebody steps up and uplifts me, us, all of us.

[00:30:24.22] Pardeep Kaleka: As much as you are angry, as much as you are going through these feelings of grief, so was the rest of this community, and the rest of the community literally took their arms, raised them around you, and took that burden of pain away.

[00:30:40.00] Mrs. Kaleka: Yes, it makes a difference.

[00:30:44.01] Pardeep Kaleka: We can laugh, we can sing together, we can beat the drum together, we can be with each other, and that creates this healing.

[00:30:51.22] "We need a little help" song/dance

[00:30:56.26] Mayor Steve Scaffidi: Small towns, small cities in America, we can accomplish things that set examples. We can make a change that's real.

[00:31:29.40] Mayor Steve Scaffidi: We had all kinds of people come together today and walk and run, 6k, 1k for each victim.

[00:31:10.23] Amardeep Kaleka: "Chardi Kala" means relentless optimism. You need to have hope that the moral arch of the universe bends to the good.

[00:31:18.30] Pardeep Kaleka: We felt like a run was something we could do, and it represents a challenge. People get to a point where they think they can't make it, they search inside and dig in, and basically keep going.

Closing cards:

Mrs. Kaleka became Vice President of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin.

Lt. Brian Murphy was honored in the 2013 State of the Union address.

Pardeep and Arno founded Serve 2 Unite with Amardeep.

Together, they are training young people in peacebuilding.

Kamal and Harpreet are studying to become law enforcement officers.

Attacks against Sikhs are now included in the federal Hate Crime Incident Report.

Amardeep is involved in a nationwide effort to stop gun violence, and decided to run for office.

Kanwardeep received his PhD in Neuroscience, is studying for his MD, and teaches Sunday school at the temple.

The city of Oak Creek is part of the Not In Our Town campaign to build safe, inclusive communities.

This film is dedicated to those who lost their lives on August 5, 2012, the injured, the families, and the community members who surrounded them with support.

Credits:**Produced and Directed by**

Patrice O'Neill and Charene Zalis

Editor

Debra Schaffner

Camera

Dinesh Sabu, Gary Mercer, Brian Dentz

Sound: Nicole Docta

Additional Camera: Colin Sytsma

Title Design: Darryl Vance

Assistant Editor: Jeremy Jue

Productions Assistants: Diana Wendel

Post Production: Zeotrope Aubry Productions

Sound Mix: Joel Raabe

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Deepak Puri and Shareen Punian

The Sikh Coalition

Brad Lichtenstein

Kim Aubry

Valarie Kaur

Music: APM MUSIC

Musical Performance at vigil by: Skai Performing Arts Academy

Not in Our Town Staff/Board of Directors

Cassandra Belson, Becki Cohn-Vargas, Michelle Gahee Kloss, Ryan Hunt, Libby McInerney,
Elizabeth Meyer, Gamaliel Perez, Mimi Shum, Alicia Upano, Intern: Jack Higgins

Margo A. Feinberg, ESQ, Barbara Glickstein, Ken Ikeda, Millie Jefferson, Frank Joyce, Nicco
Mele, Rhian Miller, Eran Thompson

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Patrice O'Neill

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