

DAILY Mirror

55P
MONDAY
AUGUST 18, 2014



It's all kicked off!

THE PREM IS BACK...

20-page pullout inside

MIRRORMAN ON THE FRONT LINE

INSIDE EBOLA HELL

First dispatch from Africa on full horror at epidemic clinic



DESPAIR
Family with faces painted in mourning



Pictures:
ROWAN
GRIFFITHS

EXCLUSIVE

BY **TOM PARRY** in Monrovia, Liberia

BODIES are tipped into a truck yesterday - like earth from a wheelbarrow.

One is a nurse who treated Ebola sufferers and I listen to her devastated husband crying.

As the eight corpses leave Elwa isolation unit for cremation, a family begs for help, faces dyed white in mourning. They are turned away, despite their father dying of Ebola.

FULL STORY: PAGES 4,5,6&7



DANGER Tom is the first UK journalist to go inside Ebola zone

EXCLUSIVE: MIRRORMAN ON THE EBOLA FRONT LINE

Layson couldn't give her son a last hug in case a stray tear infected him... We watch aghast as her body is thrown in a truck with 7 others



GEARED UP Mirror's Tom in protective suit outside isolation unit

By TOM PARRY
Reporting from the Elwa Isolation Clinic in Monrovia, Liberia

SEVEN days ago Oliver Wilson drove his sick, shivering wife Layson to an isolation clinic for suspected cases of Ebola.

The 33-year-old nurse, knew from her symptoms that she had contracted the world's most feared virus.

She knew also that she was about to die from the incurable disease.

But she had stopped short of telling Oliver. And she deliberately didn't hug their one-year-old son Oliver Junior as she walked alone through the quarantine tape surrounding the tin-roofed hospital unit.

Her fear that she could infect the tot through a drop of sweat or a stray tear was based on sound knowledge.

Yesterday grief-stricken Oliver wept and banged his head against the steering wheel of the family car as he watched Layson's body chucked unceremoniously on to the back of a truck in a white plastic bag.

He had been denied the chance to say goodbye to his childhood sweetheart.

In a macabre scene, the corpses of seven other Ebola victims - including a six-year-old boy - were loaded on to the flatbed lorry.

I looked on aghast as grimly determined mortuary workers, clad head to toe in protective clothing, tipped Layson's corpse off a stretcher - like earth from a wheelbarrow.

HERE in the hellish Ebola zone of West Africa, the victims' remains have to be cremated quickly as even the dead are contagious.

This is the heart-breaking drudgery of life in disease-racked Liberia, where the worst outbreak of this violent disease in history claims fresh lives daily.

The World Health Organisation admitted that the official death toll of 1,145 in the region "vastly underestimates the magnitude of the outbreak".

For Oliver, a former UN aid worker, the swiftness of his beautiful wife's decline remains impossible to understand.

Speaking through bursts of stifled sobs, he details with amazing clarity how Layson went down with the incredibly contagious Ebola virus. I talk



TRAGIC Layson with husband Oliver and son

to Oliver from outside the cab of his 4x4 vehicle where he sits - through fear of getting too near to him.

My instinct would be to offer a sympathetic hand, but I have been told about the risks of getting too close to someone who might have embraced his Ebola-stricken wife 10 days before.

"I'm trying to be strong, but it's so hard," Oliver, 36, stammered. "She died on Saturday, yesterday evening.

"She caught Ebola at work, at the Catholic Hospital here in Monrovia. The hospital administrator had got ill.

"He tested positive for Ebola. "It was my wife's job to give him an ECG examination, to put the pads on his body.

She knew she had to put plastic gloves on, but for a few seconds she was touching him with her hands, to help him get off the bed and on to a chair. That is how she got it. A few days later, that man died.

"It was on August 3, when we came home from church, that she complained of shivering, of feeling chilly."

Oliver explained how Layson was determined not to be a burden, and so tried to get better with medicine she bought from a local chemist. The middle-class couple, who wed in 2007, had always been active, outgoing members of the community.

Four years ago, they used their savings for a dream holiday in the United States, and Layson hankered after another trip abroad.

He proudly showed me a photograph of Layson on his mobile phone.

He snapped her posing in a snowbound

street, a treasured memento. Layson desperately didn't want to be ill. She entered nursing in 2005, and had been promoted several times to obtain a senior position.

AFTER Oliver lost his job at the UN, she became the family's breadwinner. Now he has no idea how he will support their son.

"On the Monday evening she said she was too hot," Oliver continued. "She wanted cold water on a towel to put on her forehead. By Wednesday she had lost her appetite. On Thursday the weakness had got worse and she told me she felt nauseous.

"It was last Saturday that she became really ill. It was our son's first birthday.

"She slept in the living room because I think she knew what was happening to her.



DEADLY CARGO Aid worker in protective suit puts body on truck yesterday



GRIM TASK Aid worker tips body into truck outside isolation clinic



PERILOUSLY CLOSE Unprotected guards talk as the work goes on



WAITING FOR NEWS Relatives check their phones outside the unit

SEE THE VIDEO
mirror.co.uk/mustsee

PICTURES by Rowan Griffiths

She said, 'Oliver, don't touch me.' She couldn't touch Oliver Junior either, and she had to stop breastfeeding him instantly because it is contagious through all body fluids.

"She was so weak she couldn't even sing Happy Birthday to our son."

The symptoms Oliver described chart the classic, rapid downfall in healthy people caused by debilitating Ebola.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said Ebola started with fever, muscle

aches, weakness, headaches and sore throat. The next stage is often characterised by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash and malfunction of the liver and kidneys.

Worst of all, some patients have severe internal and external bleeding and multiple organ failure.

Survival rates are less than 40%, and

there is no vaccine or treatment, although a trial is underway in Liberia.

That is why the capital Monrovia is currently gripped by paranoia and suspicion over the spread of the disease.

"I brought her here later that day, eight days ago," Oliver said, as we wait outside the clinic for his wife's final journey.

"Within a week she was dead. I never got a chance to say goodbye.

I could only speak on the phone. The last time we spoke, she told me her heart had stopped beating too fast.

"She said, 'Don't worry, I'll be fine.' Now I am here to watch her be carried out in a bag." The unemotional profes-

sionalism of the Red Cross workers hired to dispose of Ebola bodies is a shocking sight. For Oliver, it must be unimaginably painful. Security guards in front of the desperately overcrowded unit continue to chat while the bodies are loaded.

ONE woman laughed loudly, seemingly oblivious to the grim loading up process taking place behind her.

Throughout Monrovia there are huge advertising hoardings warning people of the dangers. Yet in the filthy slums, many seem to be going about their Sunday afternoon business as normal.

Torrential rain fell all day, turning the shanty town tracks into a putrid quagmire. It must be the ideal breeding

ground for a virus so contagious a quick touch on the arm from a sufferer is apparently enough to spread it.

By the time you know you should have been more careful, it might already be too late. Wracked by the loss of his beloved wife, Oliver also feared that he too might have Ebola.

Incubation can take up to 21 days. "I might have it," Oliver admitted. "I feel fine now, but it is very likely. Until she got Ebola, I didn't understand how scary it is. Now I'm terrified for our son too."

As the back panel on the truck carrying Layson's body was slammed shut, Oliver shuddered.

A disease he had not heard of six months ago has ruined his life in less than a fortnight.

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SICKNESS THAT IS INVISIBLE AND INCURABLE: PAGES 6&7

EXCLUSIVE: MIRRORMAN ON THE EBOLA FRONT LINE



TENSION Police had to fire shots to protect burial team



MOBBED Family surrounded as they leave isolation centre

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EXCLUSIVE

BY TOM PARRY in Monrovia, Liberia



THEIR faces daubed in white paint as a symbol of mourning, a mother and her two children shuffle to the gate of an Ebola treatment centre.

Days after losing her husband to the highly contagious illness, the woman looks extremely unwell herself.

Her daughter carries a large bottle of water while she carries a black bin liner containing their only possessions.

Her son dawdles behind. But when the listless family reach the gate of the special unit at Elwa Hospital on the outskirts of Monrovia the security guard turns them away.

There are no free beds here, and there is little chance of any extra space being made available in the next few days.

The country is buckling under the strain and the moment I walk off the plane at the city's Roberts Airport, I am confronted by fear of the disease.

Stepping into the shabby arrivals hangar, a female security guard takes my temperature with a thermometer.

Getting a high reading would indicate sickness – possible Ebola – and I would be taken for a further examination.

A sign on the door warns of what precautions need to be taken to avoid the malevolent disease.

EBOLA EMERGENCY it says, putting passengers immediately on their guard.

At the hotel I am directed to a barrel of chlorinated water with a tap, in which everyone has to rinse their hands before entering. There is another disinfectant spray on the reception desk.

No one shakes hands. Any bodily contact is now forbidden, no matter how impolite it might seem.

AND that's when the unease creeps in. What if the porter putting his hand on my bag has a relative with Ebola?

Can his brief touch on my luggage carry the lethal condition? I'm assured one cannot be infected like this.

But normal actions, opening a car door, paying a cashier, become something to consider carefully.

For the people in the Ebola zone, day-to-day life has become a battle against an invisible and incurable sickness.

Liberia, like neighbours Guinea – where the outbreak started in February – and Sierra Leone, cannot handle the strain.

It does not have enough hospital beds for all the people who may have the disease. In Monrovia's outskirts, the isolation unit has grown from six beds to 120 in two months – nothing like enough.

As suspected Ebola cases have to be quarantined, people with other illnesses like malaria are turned away too.

Patients who could normally be treated are dying needlessly because medics are so overstretched.

Joanne Liu, from the medical charity MSF last week warned it would take six months to control the outbreak.

She said it was like "wartime" and added: "If we don't stabilise Liberia, we'll never stabilise the region."

Dr Moses Massaquoi, the man leading Liberia's fight against Ebola, admitted the death count was "definitely more than the official figure".

So many people who almost certainly died from Ebola are registered as deaths from unknown causes due to a lack of funds for tests. Dr Massaquoi told me: "It is definitely

still escalating. I am being called all the time for live patients or for dead bodies. "We are struggling to find enough places for all the people who are ill now. There is no point in me denying it.

"I would be lying if I said it was getting better. I simply do not know if the hygiene message is being practised."

Many Liberians are deeply suspicious of the spread of Ebola and refuse to follow the authorities' precautions.

Over the weekend, riots broke out in Monrovia slum West Point, started by protesters who claimed Ebola was a hoax.

They attacked and looted a quarantine centre and at least 20 patients who were being monitored for signs of the illness escaped. Officials said blood-stained bedding looted from the centre posed a serious infection risk.

A police officer said: "This is one of the stupidest things I have ever seen."

HAVE reported from Africa many times, but for me this is a special case as it is not something that can be dealt with through peace-keeping troops or food parcels.

But the West can intervene if it sends its skilled doctors and nurses and superior medical technology.

In Britain, it is difficult to imagine the scale of this modern-day plague, but Liberia is only a seven-hour plane journey away. Yesterday a Nigerian man was being tested in the Spanish city of Alicante after going to hospital with tell-tale signs of the disease.

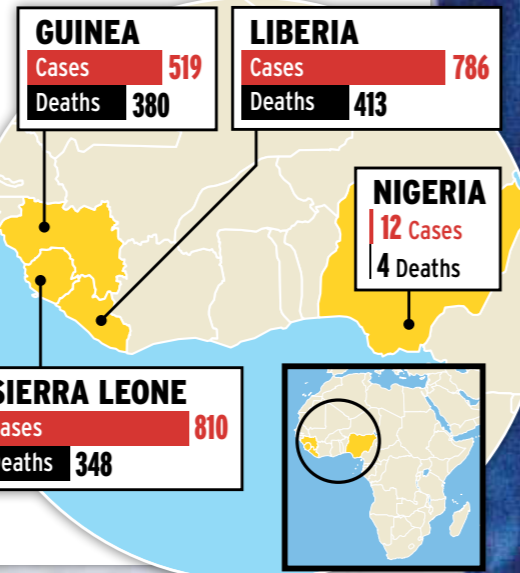
There have already been several scares in Britain and as the virus continues its march across West Africa, there will be more.

But patients in the UK get constant medical attention. Here they return to die in their homes in agony.

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VOICE OF THE MIRROR: PAGE 8



HANDS ON Worker cleans ambulance



HOW TO HELP

AID agencies working in the Ebola-affected region desperately need assistance.

UNICEF is providing supplies to people in affected communities across West Africa. Y Care, the international wing of the YMCA, has trained 100 young people across Liberia to teach their communities about how to stop Ebola spreading.

To make a donation to UNICEF go to <http://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/donate-now/> or to Y Care visit <http://www.ycareinternational.org/>

LIBERIA'S GHOSTS

A family outside the isolation unit. The painted white faces signify mourning for the woman's husband, who has died of Ebola

No one will shake hands, all contact is forbidden. Life is a battle with a sickness that is invisible... and incurable



Pictures: ROWAN GRIFFITHS



GRIM TASK A burial team removes body of a victim from home



SPRAY Corpse is disinfected in a makeshift isolation room

MIRRORMAN MEETS POOR AT DISEASE GROUND ZERO

IN THE EBOLA SLUMS



IN NEED Child in Ebola hell

EXCLUSIVE BY TOM PARRY in Monrovia, Liberia

OUTSIDE a tumbledown shack yards from where the first case of Ebola emerged in Monrovia, Jacob Fofana shakes a bucket that should contain disinfectant.

The father-of-four heeded the hygiene message broadcast in Liberia, where at least 570 have already died of the disease.

But now the bucket is empty, Jacob has little idea when he will next be able to get clean water and the disinfectant chlorine solution needed to kill the highly contagious virus.

Jacob rubs the palms of his hands over his face in exasperation, a natural reaction in his situation. It could also be a fatal gesture given his close contact with so many potential carriers.

Against this background, aid agency workers face an almost impossible challenge to halt the seemingly unstoppable march of Ebola through this city of more

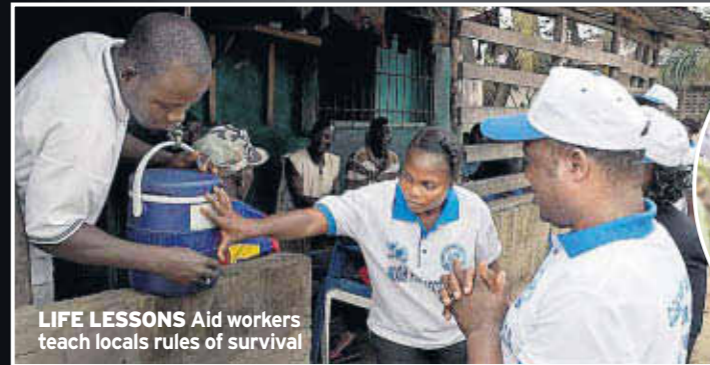


SAFE HOUSE Health teams leave mark

than a million people. Nowhere is the plight of Liberia more apparent than in the densely populated rabbit warren slum of New Kru Town.

Visiting with a team of volunteers from local charity Community Development Services, and backed by international aid agency UNICEF, the health workers' unenviable task is to educate the tens of thousands of people here about how to avoid Ebola infection.

"I'm glad these people are here to help," says Jacob, 35. "But we've had many deaths in these streets from Ebola and it's probably too late to stop it now.



LIFE LESSONS Aid workers teach locals rules of survival



HELP Wife gets visit from team

Families don't even have basic disinfectant

HOW am I supposed to keep my family clean when we don't even have access to running water? I cannot stop my children running around.

"We all know we need to protect ourselves, we know we cannot touch anybody, but this horrible virus can get inside you so easily."

Jacob's family disinfectant bucket is perched on the breeze block wall surrounding his stone home and attached to the tin roof by an electrical cable.

Everything here is makeshift. He sits around a wooden table with neighbours outside his single-room concrete block home to listen to a brief lecture on cleanli-

ness. The audience - all men - wear sandals, T-shirts and shorts, making me especially conscious of my protective latex gloves and face mask.

Halfway through the talk a woman looking after a little child throws a bucket of dirty water over the wall.

In New Kru Town there are no working toilets, sinks or bathrooms.

Opposite, unfinished foundations for another home are used to dry out washed clothes.

Barefoot children play in the open sewers that run between the homes, and overflow most days because of the tropical wet season rain, currently at its height.

Tamba Bundor, who leads the team, explains how his toughest challenge is convincing the residents of New Kru Town that Ebola is

real. Even though there have been so many deaths in this area alone, they remain a hard core who refuse to accept anything can be done to prevent it.

Some blame the volunteers themselves, accusing them of being government stooges sent into the slums to spread disease. Others say the illness, which leaves victims with a 50% to 90% chance of dying, is a curse.

"When Ebola first arrived here in

Liberia, they all thought it was the government that had killed their family," Mr Bundor says.

"Now, after several months of our education programme, I would say one in three people here still denies there is such a thing as Ebola.

"They used to think that just praying would be enough to ward it off. It is taking a long time to get through. Finally, however, others are recognising the

illness is real and they are taking precautions. We are telling people to wash their hands with soap and water.

"We do have a major problem though in that there is no proper sanitation. What makes Ebola so prevalent here is that people who might be infected are going to the toilet in the open."

Ebola arrived in New Kru Town in June, after first emerging in Liberia's northern Lofa County in March. It is



HELP Nathalie

Quarantined Brit doctor wants to go back to help

A BRITISH doctor who was quarantined for three weeks after treating Ebola patients in Africa has returned to work.

Dr Nathalie MacDermott, 32, arrived in Liberia in July for two weeks just as the outbreak was spiralling out of

control. At a treatment centre in the capital Monrovia, 90 out of the 100 patients she helped care for died from the virus.

The specialist registrar, who has volunteered across the world, said: "Ebola is probably the most devastating disease

I've seen. There can be nothing worse than to die alone, in pain and frightened. I went to help prevent some of the suffering."

But she spoke of her delight when an ill 12-year-old boy called William did survive. Dr MacDermott said: "We were

DANGER ZONE Children roam the streets

Pictures: ROWAN GRIFFITHS



BATTLE Hygiene is a fight



FILTHY Slums have no services



WARNED Meeting of locals



AT RISK Girl in New Kru Town



CARING Will Pooley volunteered in Sierra Leone

EXPERIMENT DRUGS FOR HERO NURSE

BY ANDY LINES Chief Reporter WILL Pooley, the heroic British nurse struck down by deadly Ebola, is being treated with the experimental drug Zmapp.

The drug is credited with saving the lives of two desperately ill American sufferers. Last night doctors described Will, 29, as a "resilient and remarkable young man".

He was flown by the RAF from Sierra Leone, where he contracted the disease while working as an unpaid volunteer, and is in an isolation unit at the Royal Free Hospital in London.

Michael Jacobs, consultant and clinical lead in infectious diseases, said: "We have had the opportunity to give him the ZMapp treatment. It is an experimental medicine, we made that absolutely clear in our discussions with him.

"What has become apparent is that he is clearly a resilient and remarkable young man." Staff said he was given a first dose of ZMapp on Monday with further doses expected "in due course".

Dr Jacobs added: "We are giving him the very best care possible. However, the next few days will be crucial. The disease has a variable course and we will know much more in a week. Will is in a stable position and we are very pleased, we couldn't hope for more.

"He is sitting up and talking to the nurses and doctors who are looking after him".

PRECAUTIONS

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Will was being treated by "world class" doctors.

He said: "The risk level from transporting Mr Pooley to London remains very low. I'm really proud of what the NHS has been able to offer a very, very brave man."

He went on: "I think the public can be reassured, not just by the precautions that we're taking but by the superb care that he's received."

Up to 90% of people who catch Ebola die from the virus which has no known cure. The World Health Organisation says 1,500 people have died in the West Africa outbreak.

ZMapp, not yet been tested for safety or effectiveness, has been rushed into service and stocks have already run low. Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc, which started developing it early this year, said it is working with US agencies to increase production.

It was given to the aid workers Kent Brantly and Nancy Writebol after they were flown to a hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, from Liberia.

Both have since been discharged from hospital after recovering. But a Liberian doctor and a Spanish priest who received the plant-derived drug in Africa both died.

Will Pooley is clearly a resilient and remarkable young man

MICHAEL JACOBS INFECTION CONSULTANT

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