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Grisly **Suicide** Bombing in Jerusalem**BYLINE:** LAURA KING; AP Special Correspondent**SECTION:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS**LENGTH:** 825 words**DATELINE:** JERUSALEM

The young man making his way along the Street of the Prophets was dressed in a skullcap, white shirt and dark trousers - the sober garb of an Orthodox Jew, apparel that would scarcely draw a glance in the center of Jerusalem.

But to sharp-eyed passers-by, the man's demeanor was all wrong. His movements were jerky, nervous; he was almost running. As two Israeli paramilitary policemen confronted him, he smiled, turned away - and detonated explosives in a sack strapped to his back.

Even in bomb-hardened Jerusalem - where the previous 36 hours had produced no fewer than four blasts, none causing serious injury - the gruesome aftermath of this attack had the power to shock.

The force of the explosion catapulted the **bomber's** severed head over a high wall and into the schoolyard of a French school as children were arriving for class. Scraps of mangled flesh were embedded in the cracks of the former convent's high stone wall.

Bystanders, including at least one arriving schoolgirl, were pelted with bloody bits of the **bomber's** body. Others suffered shrapnel wounds from nails and screws packed into the bomb.

Twenty people were injured, including the two paramilitary border policemen. One was in critical condition following surgery for internal injuries and severe burns, and his young partner was inconsolable.

"He was just ahead of me - he took the force of it," said 24-year-old Guy Mughrabi, red-eyed and dressed in a wrinkled hospital smock, speaking to reporters from his bed in a hospital just up the street from the blast site.

With an iodine-soaked bandage showing under the open neck of his hospital gown where he was hit by shrapnel, Mughrabi recounted how the pair spotted the man moments after being alerted that someone **suspicious** was in the area.

"We started running - we came within three or four meters (yards) of him. We yelled 'Stop!' Mughrabi said. "He had this smile on his face that I will never forget. We raised our rifles. We knew this was a point of no return, that we had a **suicide bomber** in front of us."

The explosion scorched the high outer walls of the Lycee Francais, a French-language international school. Pierre Weill, a Radio France correspondent, had

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just pulled up outside the school to drop off his 12-year-old daughter Ines when the thunderous blast shook the street.

"My car was splattered with pieces of flesh and blood. My daughter was also covered with bits of flesh and blood," he said. "We saw the head of the **suicide bomber** rolling into the courtyard."

Police quickly covered the head with an upended trash can, but not before some of the children saw it. Classes went ahead despite the bombing, and the Jerusalem municipality offered psychologists to talk to the children. Cleaners used powerful jets of steam and water to clean the yellowed stone walls and courtyard.

At the Anglican International School, about 500 yards up the street, principal Chris Wright said teachers were encouraging students to talk about any fears and anxieties. The school is mainly attended by children of diplomats, journalists and international aid agency employees; about 70 of the pupils are Americans.

The school brought in extra guards and kept its gates closed during the day, as it has in the past when explosions have occurred nearby. But school officials deliberately tried to keep the security from being too heavy-handed.

"We don't see ourselves as a target," Wright said. "It's a delicate balance - we want our students to be safe here, but we can't make this some kind of impenetrable fortress. We want the environment to be, though I hesitate to use the word, something approaching normal."

In Jerusalem these days, an incident like this one tends to give rise to a peculiar sense of relief, of greater catastrophe having been averted. Only three weeks earlier and a block away, a Palestinian **bomber** blew himself up in a pizzeria packed with families, killing himself and 15 others.

"There is no doubt that the border police ... prevented a much larger disaster," Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy told Israel's Channel Two. "It could have been much worse had the assailant reached the hospital, or another crowded place in the city."

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, but Israeli authorities were investigating the possibility that the **bomber** came from the West Bank village of Aboud, a stronghold of the militant Islamic group Hamas. Villagers said they were being questioned by Israeli security forces about a man in his 20s who was missing from his home.

In Jerusalem, few on the Street of the Prophets were predicting that things would get better any time soon.

"It's become routine," said 57-year-old Itzak Avramson, whose dress shop just down the street from the blast site was filled with customers as soon as police reopened the street. "They have their queue of martyrs waiting - today this one, tomorrow another."

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