



The day was similar to any other for twenty six (26) year old Juliette Mauricette, as she made her way to work on the morning of Friday June 12, 2009. Little did she know that in a moment her life as she knew it for over twenty years would be changed in an instant.

Juliette, a mother of three was in a jovial mood and looked forward to the days activities at her working place - a restaurant located in Rodney Bay, St Lucia. She also had a new outlook on life, having recently separated from what was reported to be abusive relationship with her boyfriend and father of her children, Matha Joseph.

On this day, Juliette got off the bus and walked by KFC in the Rodney Bay Mall , she was caught off-guard as Joseph jumped out of nowhere with a cutlass which he used to chop her all over her body with severe blows to her eyes, nose, ears and hands.

In ICU

Following the attack, Juliette was taken to Victoria Hospital by ambulance where she was treated and admitted to the Intensive Care Unit for one month.

The news of the gruesome attack sent shock waves across the island.

In December 2010, we visited Juliette at her home in the village of Canaries located on St Lucia's West Coast. Along with Anthony Avril, from the St Lucia Blind Welfare Association, (SLBWA) Juliette invited us in and shared her story.

"It happened when my ex-boyfriend attacked me with a cutlass, and from the day he attacked me the cutlass took my eyes.... I didn't see anything again. I remember when I went to ICU and they put the eye pads on my eyes and when they took them off I could not see. I remember when the Doctor didn't break the news to me, he only said he was going to transfer me to the Blind Welfare Association. I said me? It was a lot. I can remember when someone from the Blind Welfare Association came to visit me in the Hospital that afternoon, I didn't want to have anything to do with her"

Released from Hospital

But shortly after being released from the Hospital, Juliette visited the St Lucia Blind Welfare Association.

"When I got to the Blind Welfare I did feel different, I got encouragement from the staff, they told me that it's okay, its not to the end of the world, I still have my life. I live with it everyday , it is still frustrating but I don't make it a big issue. It's not as frustrating as when it just happened"

With encouragement from members of the Association, she then began to take baby steps towards adjusting to blindness. However there was a setback as Juliette found out that she was pregnant once again. "I am not working right now, I was taking training at the Blind Welfare, but I am now pregnant , it makes me tired, frustrated, I always want to lie down, but after the baby I will start taking my Computer Classes seriously"

Seated on her bed and in an advanced state of pregnancy, she opened up about her injuries by removing her glasses and showing the damage done to her hands.

"I have very little use of my right hand. I lost my thumb. My left hand - is of no use, I cannot open or close it. It is very painful, if somebody tries to touch it, I feel a shock pain. There are many things I can't do on my own , that's when I start to remember when I had my sight. (Then) I didn't have to depend on anyone, I could come and go as I wanted to" she lamented.

Juliette then removed her sunglasses for a closer to reveal her eyes.

"The cutlass took out my eye completely, it was hanging, so I have nothing in my left eye. In my right eye, the eyeball remains but I can see nothing from it"

The Road to Recovery

According to Anthony Avril, the road towards recovery will not be a smooth one for Juliette.

"Even to use a computer, she relies on her hands, when you are blind, your fingers become your eyes, we call them the seeing fingers. It's a challenge for her but she is strong" he said.

Concerning her ex-boyfriend and father of her children, Matha Joseph, he was sentenced to seven years in prison. Juliette admits that she is terrified just thinking of the day he will be released

While confessing to bouts of depression and even contemplating suicide, Juliette who is now twenty eight (28) remains hopeful and refuses to be daunted. She looks forward to the future and the birth of her child.

"Before this happened, I had a good life. There are a few things that I desire right now, such as a comfortable home or even a room for a person who is blind. Probably I would also like to have a job one day. Something that could suit my situation. To be independent in my home and to be independent financially, once again but until everything falls in place, I will continue to be strong, I have to be strong" she said.