

# Firefighter credits surgeon's persistence with saving his arm and his way of life

*Experts stress importance of seeking the appropriate level of care for injuries*

Orlando Regional Medical Center

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## NEWS PACKAGE


<p><b>SUGGESTED TEASE</b></p>	<p>AFTER ESCAPING THE JAWS OF AN ALLIGATOR, A FLORIDA FIRST RESPONDER'S LIFE WOULD BE DRASTICALLY DIFFERENT TODAY WITHOUT THE PERSISTENCE OF HIS DOCTOR.</p> <p>COMING UP, HOW SEEKING THE RIGHT CARE AT THE RIGHT HOSPITAL MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.</p>
<p><b>ANCHOR LEAD</b></p>	<p>A FLORIDA FIRST RESPONDER FINDS HIMSELF ON THE OTHER SIDE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL. HE ESCAPED THE JAWS OF AN ALLIGATOR WITH HIS LIFE, BUT EXPECTED TO LOSE HIS ARM. BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS ON WHY HE CREDITS THE PASSION AND EXPERTISE OF HIS SURGEON WITH WHERE HE IS TODAY, AND WHY SEEKING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CARE WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES IS SO IMPORTANT.</p>
<p><b>(PACKAGE START) -----</b>  <b>CG: Courtesy: ORLANDO HEALTH</b>  <b>:00 - :03</b>          Shots of Dr. Desai examining patient</p>	<p>(Nats - Sound) :02</p> <p>IT WAS DOCTOR KARAN DESAI'S (ker-AHN duh-SIGH) FIRST DAY OF ROUNDS AT ORLANDO HEALTH ORLANDO REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER. :05</p> <p><i>"One of the residents came to me and said, 'Hey, Dr. Desai, we have a patient who an alligator basically bit off his arm.' And I thought it was a joke at first."</i> :09</p>
<p><b>CG: Karan Desai, MD</b>  <b>Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute</b></p> <p>Shots of Carsten walking by lake</p>	<p>HE ARRIVED AT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TO SEE CARSTEN KIEFFER, A FIREFIGHTER WHO WAS AT SERIOUS RISK OF LOSING HIS ARM AFTER AN ATTACK ON A HUNTING TRIP. :07</p> <p><i>"My life as I knew it was probably going to be over. I wouldn't be able to go back to work, doing what I love to do."</i> :06</p>
<p><b>CG: Carsten Kieffer</b>  <b>Alligator attack survivor</b></p>	<p><i>"A lot of the muscles were destroyed and essentially avulsed out of the arm due to the bite of the alligator. It was also questionable whether the arm had blood flow."</i></p>
<p><b>Dr. Desai (CG'd earlier)</b></p>	

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<p>Shots of surgery</p> <p>Shots of Carsten's x-rays and photo of arm</p> <p><b>Dr. Desai (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p><b>Carsten Kieffer (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Dr. Desai in exam with patient</p> <p>Shots of ORMC</p> <p><b>Dr. Desai (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Carsten lifting daughter up</p> <p><b>Carsten Kieffer (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Casten playing with his kids <b>(PACKAGE END)</b> -----</p> <p><b>ANCHOR TAG</b></p>	<p>:10</p> <p>DOCTOR DESAI STARTED WITH A SIX-HOUR SURGERY TO ASSESS THE ARM AND SET THE BONES, INSERTING TWO PLATES AND SEVENTEEN SCREWS. BUT THERE WAS STILL A LONG ROAD AHEAD. :09</p> <p><i>"I went in two days after the first surgery and took bone from his hip and put it into the fracture site to ensure that he would be able to heal that bone." :09</i></p> <p><i>"The most recent surgery was transferring muscles from the under part of my arm to the up side of my arm to give me control of the wrist." :08</i></p> <p>CARSTEN WAS LUCKY THAT A FELLOW FIRST RESPONDER WITH HIM DURING THE ATTACK KNEW THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING HIM TO A LEVEL ONE TRAUMA CENTER LIKE O-R-M-C, WHICH MADE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMPUTATION AND RECOVERY. :11</p> <p><i>"If you come to a center like this, where we have a lot of different specialists in different fields, and people who are trained to take care of these kinds of injuries, we can try to save these extremities and do as much as we can, and totally salvage the limb" :13</i></p> <p>CARSTEN HAS PUT HIS ALLIGATOR HUNTING DAYS BEHIND HIM, AND IS GRATEFUL HE HAD A SURGEON WHO NEVER GAVE UP ON HIM. :07</p> <p><i>"He just kept going to find the best possible option for me. I don't know how you thank a guy for that. It's just beyond amazing to me what he has done." :12</i></p> <p>AT ORLANDO REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :03</p> <hr/> <p>WHILE ALLIGATOR ATTACKS ARE RARE, EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CARE, WHICH CAN OFFER THE BEST TREATMENT AND OUTCOMES.</p>
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### SOCIAL MEDIA

<p> <b>Share it! Suggested tweet:</b></p>	<p>A Florida firefighter credits the passion and expertise of surgeons at <a href="#">@OrlandoHealth</a> <a href="#">@JewettOrtho</a> with saving his arm and his way of life after an alligator attack. Why seeking this level of care for traumatic injuries is so critical: <a href="https://bit.ly/3wbsNFI">https://bit.ly/3wbsNFI</a></p>
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**Suggested post:**

Dr. Karan Desai got an interesting call on his first day of rounds at [Orlando Regional Medical Center](#). A first responder's hand and arm was left mangled after it was bitten by an alligator. Dr. Desai's persistence and expertise not only saved his arm, but also his entire way of life, as he's now back to work as a firefighter on full duty. <https://bit.ly/3wbsNFI>

**EXTRA BITES**

**CG: Karan Desai, MD**  
Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute

Desai says Carsten worked hard in rehab to maximize the effects of surgery:  
*"A lot of the work that we did on him, the tendon transfers, the skin grafts, the repairs, it requires a lot of rehabilitation. He really took that to heart and worked very hard, which is why he has the result that he has today."*  
:15

Desai says he worked to restore functionality to Carsten's wrist and hand:  
*"He could not cock up his wrist, he couldn't extend his fingers, he couldn't extend his thumb. He couldn't move anything, and his hand was essentially dangling inflection making it very hard to do daily activities. So my goal was to restore all those functions that the muscles in the back of the arm do."* :19

Desai says these are the types of cases he has trained for:  
*"You train for this your whole life. I trained for nine years after medical school for these kinds of patients specifically. To be handle everything from the bone, all the way to the skin, all the way to the tendons and the muscle. So, I was ready for the challenge."* :15

Desai explains the expertise offered by level 1 trauma centers:  
*"We have the expertise in microsurgery to be able to reconstruct different types of tissue in the upper extremity. We have nerve specialists, such as myself, who can repair complex nerve injuries and reconstruct nerves, and therefore it's really important to be at a center where there's that sort of comprehensive care."* :17

**CG: Carsten Kieffer**  
Alligator attack survivor

Carsten explains how the alligator attack happened:  
*"He was able to launch off the bottom of the creek and into the boat where he got ahold of my arm. And luckily when he landed, his teeth got caught on the railing of the boat, so he couldn't pull himself out in the water. But he held onto me, and that's when it kind of went downhill fast."* :20

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**CG: Carsten Kieffer**  
**Alligator attack survivor**

Carsten says waking up from surgery with his arm intact gave him hope:

“The fact that I woke up with my arm was just mind-boggling to me after seeing the injury. And I think that kind of gave me hope.” :09

Carsten says the accident made him see what’s really important in life:

*“I used to work a lot of overtime and I’ve kind of gotten away from that now. I’d rather spend time with my family than be at work. Money is not everything; we can make by with what we’ve got. My one friend says ‘I work to live, I don’t live to work,’ and that kind of stuck with me. So now, going on family trips and taking the boat out with the kids, it means more to me now than it did before.” :25*

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