

# Nigel Brennan

## **Former Somali Hostage, Author & Keynote Speaker**

Nigel Brennan is freelance photojournalist best known for surviving a fifteen-month hostage ordeal in Somalia between 2008-2009.

At that time, he had travelled to Mogadishu to report on the human price of 20 years of complex conflict, food insecurity and drought in a country the international community had all but abandoned. On his way to record conditions in a camp for 50,000 internally displaced people outside the capital, Nigel and four others were kidnapped by a criminal gang.

He and Canadian journalist Amanda Lindhout were held hostage for 462 days in Somalia. Nigel was held in isolation, generally in a room 3×5 meters, and often in the dark. After an escape attempt in January 2009, in which they were both recaptured, Nigel and Amanda were chained around the ankles until their eventual release, ten months later.

During his time as a hostage, Nigel suffered both mental and physical torture at the hands of his captors. He and Lindhout were finally released on the 26 November 2009, after their families paid a ransom amounting to over \$600 000 (USD). Nigel had lost over 15 kilograms, and was suffering from a number of medical conditions.

Since returning to Australia, Nigel has rebuilt his life and today is a consultant who specialises in extortion response, international risk management and emergency management.

He has developed a strong media profile and has authored the best selling book *The Price of Life* – a true story of kidnap for ransom.

In demand as a keynote speaker, Nigel's story is immensely captivating and emotional. His account of being captured, held hostage, a near escape and eventual release, provide a fascinating insight into the strength and willpower of mankind, and the virtue of forgiveness.

### **More about Nigel Brennan:**

Nigel Brennan grew up on a 5,500 acre property near Moree in North West NSW. He studied hospitality management at Macleay College in Sydney, and then worked in the hospitality industry



for four years, before heading overseas. During his travels through Europe and Asia, Nigel discovered a passion for photography. Upon returning to Australia, he enrolled at Griffith University to study Photojournalism at the Queensland College of Art. In 2005, Nigel was selected as a finalist in the Lieca Documentary Awards for the photographic series "Crossroads". In 2007, he was selected as a finalist for the National Photographic Portrait Prize for a picture of Dr Catherine Hamlin, the Australian founder of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia. He currently has a number of photographs held in galleries and private collections around Australia.

In 2007, Nigel took a job working for APN newspapers in Bundaberg. At the start of 2008, he moved back overseas and began working as a freelance photojournalist. In August 2008, he traveled to Mogadishu, Somalia with Amanda Lindhout, to cover the humanitarian and food crises, as well as the ongoing conflict and drought that has ravaged Somalia for nearly 20 years.

Four days after arriving in the Somalian capital, Nigel and Amanda were ambushed just outside the city, on the way to photograph internally displaced camps. They were held hostage for the next 462 days, making Nigel the longest held living captive in Australian history, outside a prisoner of war situation.

Nigel has established himself over the last 10 years as a consultant, specialising in extortion response, international risk management and emergency management. He also works to mitigate and negotiate risks for individuals, international corporations and government agencies.

He has worked with the ABC, Channel Nine and SBS as a social commentator. He has also worked with international news organisations, including Reuters and BBC, preparing, training and mitigating risk of foreign correspondents that operate in remote and hostile environments.

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