

special report by Danny Boyle

A depressing glimpse of TB



▶ Danny Boyle sees the pain of tuberculosis.

▶ Essays from the 14 writers and actors who travelled with Tom Craig will soon be published in the book *Writing on the Edge: Great Contemporary Writers on the Front Line of Crisis*.

▶ Director Danny Boyle, one of 14 writers and actors who traveled with photographer Tom Craig to document isolated areas with Doctors Without Borders ▶ Boyle reflects on his search of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis

We're on our way to Karakalpakstan, which you won't have heard of. It's an autonomous republic in the north of Uzbekistan. And the town that we're driving to, Muynak, was once a thriving town with a large fishing fleet, nestled on the shores of the world's fourth largest inland sea. But those shores are now 100 miles away, and the sea itself has shrunk to 20 percent of its original size.

Around the world someone catches TB every second. One-third of the world's population is currently infected with tuberculosis bacteria, and although it kills almost two million people each year, most of us can park the bug

"440,000 people had MDR-TB in 2008. A third of them died."

BOYLE

under the watchful eye of our immune system.

Having lost their income, water supply, main food source and doctors, the people of Muynak were sitting ducks. It wasn't long before Muynak had one of the highest incidences of tuberculosis in the world.

A local nurse takes us to visit one of her tuberculosis patients, Gulshat, at home. Gulshat looks 75 but is in fact 25 years younger. Gulshat is a barely living testimony to the devastation that poverty, and tuberculosis, can cause. First

her husband died of the disease. Then her two daughters died in quick succession, one just months after the other. Now she is sick with it for the third time.

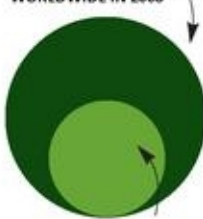
We take a brief tour of the house, involuntarily holding our breath, but curiosity gets the better of me and I'm drawn deep inside. And what I find is haunting: two empty rooms with threadbare carpets, a single photo of each dead daughter adorning the walls.

Her fate, while tragic, is hardly exceptional. The latest news from the World Health Organization estimates that 440,000 people had MDR-TB worldwide in 2008 and that a third of them died.

Deadly disease

World Health Organization estimated multidrug-resistant TB cases and deaths worldwide:

440,000
PEOPLE HAD MDR-TB
WORLDWIDE IN 2008



146,667
OF THOSE WITH
MDR-TB DIED

1:sec
Globally,
one person
catches
TB every
second.