

# Chilean surfer -- Indonesia tsunami hit like runaway train, shaking 3-story building

**Kay Johnson, Associated Press, 10-29-10**

JAKARTA, INDONESIA — Within two minutes of the powerful earthquake that disrupted his evening of watching surf videos at his beach resort, Sebastian Carvallo heard a distant roar "like a train out of control." He knew immediately he had to run.

The Chilean surfer and videographer grabbed his computer and camera, rounded up his fellow surf fanatics and headed for the highest position they could find: the third floor of the resort's thatch-roofed restaurant with a view of a lagoon.

There, the group huddled, screamed and prayed and watched with horror as three huge waves — two of them at least 16 feet (five meters) high — crashed onto shore on North Pagai in western Indonesia's Mentawai island chain.

"It shook the building really hard, to the foundations, almost like it was going to collapse," Carvallo, 29, said of one wave.

He managed to film parts the tsunami as it slammed into the Mentawais on Monday, killing more than 400 people. His footage is one of the few videos to emerge of the tsunami as it hit.

"It was noise and chaos. You can hear the water coming, coming, coming," Carvallo said Friday. "And then before the second wave hit the building, everyone was screaming and when the wave hit the building you could only hear people praying."

Carvallo was showing some surfing videos he'd filmed that day to other guests — all surfers or surf instructors — on the ground floor of the resort's restaurant when the earthquake struck.

"Two minutes later we heard this huge noise, like a train out of control. We just ran to the top of the building," he said.

Incredibly, all 19 guests and eight Indonesian staff at Macoroni Surf Resort survived — even though five people were caught outside.

Two of them climbed palm trees to escape the wave, and three others wrapped their arms around tree trunks and clung for their lives.

"They survived. I don't know how," he said.

He said his childhood in earthquake-prone Chile taught him to seek higher ground after an earthquake near the coast. He was in his hometown of La Serena for the 8.8-magnitude quake that flung a tsunami onto Chile's coast earlier this year, but La Serena wasn't hit by the wave.

The tsunami hit on the last night of Carvallo's eight-week stay on North Pagai, where the resort owner had hired him to make promotional videos.