

# US woman disfigured in lye attack reveals new face

May 1 2013, by Rodrique Ngowi

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Carmen Blandin Tarleton, of Thetford, Vt., embraces her surgeon Dr. Bohdan Pomahac during a news conference at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Mass., Wednesday, May 1, 2013. The 44-year-old mother of two underwent the transplant in February after a 2007 attack in which her estranged husband doused her with industrial strength lye, burning more than 80 percent of her body.(AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

(AP)—A U.S. woman revealed her new face after a transplant

Wednesday, six years after her ex-husband disfigured her by dousing her with industrial-strength lye, and said she went through "what some may call hell" but has found a way to be happy.

Carmen Blandin Tarleton had [face transplant](#) surgery in February and spoke publicly for the first time at a news conference.

"I'm now in a better place, mentally and emotionally, than I ever could have imagined six years ago," Tarleton said. "I want to share my experience with others, so they may find that strength inside themselves to escape their own pain."

In 2007, the 44-year-old mother of two was attacked by Herbert Rodgers, who believed she was seeing another man. Police say he struck her with a bat and poured lye from a squeeze bottle onto her face.



Carmen Blandin Tarleton of Thetford, Vermont, right, is embraced by Marinda Righter, daughter of face donor Cheryl Denelli-Righter, at Brigham and

Women's Hospital in Boston, Mass., Wednesday, May 1, 2013. The 44-year-old mother of two underwent the transplant in February after a 2007 attack in which her estranged husband doused her with industrial strength lye, burning more than 80 percent of her body. At left is her surgeon, Dr. Bohdan Pomahac. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

When police arrived, Tarleton was trying to crawl into a shower to wash away the chemical, which had already distorted her face.

In 2009, Rodgers pleaded guilty to maiming Tarleton in exchange for a [prison sentence](#) of at least 30 years.



Carmen Blandin Tarleton, of Thetford, Vermont, speaks with reporters at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Wednesday, May 1, 2013. The 44-year-old mother of two underwent the transplant in February after a 2007 attack in which her estranged husband doused her with industrial strength lye, burning more than 80 percent of her body. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

A [Boston hospital](#) said more than 30 surgeons, [anesthesiologists](#) and nurses worked for more than 15 hours to replace skin, muscles, tendons and nerves in the face transplant.

The face donor was Cheryl Denelli Righter, who died of a sudden stroke, a hospital spokeswoman said.



A file photograph of Carmen Blandin Tarleton, of Thetford, Vermont, is displayed during a news conference at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Wednesday, May 1, 2013. The 44-year-old mother of two underwent the transplant in February after a 2007 attack in which her estranged husband doused her with industrial strength lye, burning more than 80 percent of her body. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

Righter's daughter, Marinda, told Tarleton on Wednesday that she looked beautiful, adding she was certain her mother had somehow picked Tarleton. "They are both mothers, they are both survivors, they

are both beacons of light," she said.

Tarleton, who is legally blind, thanked Righter's family for what she called "a tremendous gift" that's greatly alleviated the pain she'd felt daily.

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