

## *The Day I Nearly Died*

*Some people are terrified of spiders. For me it is public speaking.*

*Fortunately, my life of writing allows me to maintain my anonymity - at least for the most part. I challenge myself, of course - I try stretching my boundaries.*

*Yet, just as everyone reminds the arachnophobe that huntsman spiders are perfectly harmless, his reaction to waking and finding one on his face is always the same.*

*The equivalent moment for me came on the afternoon of 17 June 2007. I know the date because it was a fairly big event - in fact the biggest ever gathering to meet under one roof to hear a speaker in New Zealand.*

*At the time, I had been working on a book for teenagers, telling the story of the life of the Dalai Lama. I had been searching for a publisher for over five years and boxes of my book were appearing from the printers in Wellington the same week His Holiness was due in the country.*

*An e-mail arrived: 'Here is the idea... When His Holiness finishes the Public Talk, I will ask you to say few words about your book... then you present a copy of your book to His Holiness. What do you think?'*

*There would be 10,000 people there.*

*What do I think?!!!...*

*Check out the photos on the following page to see if you can guess; he was so kind to me that you can hardly tell!*

*Andrew*



Photo above: © John Chapman

Other photos: © Jacqui Walker



Author Andrew Crowe presenting His Holiness, the Dalai Lama with a signed copy of his book, *The Dalai Lama Story* at the Vector Arena, Auckland, 17 June 2007