

D. H. Kerby

In the Fall of 2006, after a military coup ousted the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand, I was subjected to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment which qualifies as torture under the U. S. criminal code inside the Taiwanese Embassy in Bangkok.

I am now on a quest to document that fact and to uncover the events behind it. I am a U.S. citizen, a journalist, and a poet who provided humanitarian help to political prisoners and their families in Cape Town, South Africa in 1990.

Many of these men and women had been members of the military wing of the African National Congress, an organization which until recently was designated by the U.S. State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, even though it had the support of the majority of South Africans and was fighting for the establishment of a one person one vote political system in that country.

This help was provided under the auspices of the Anglican Church, through an organization with which Desmond Tutu is affiliated.

Soon after my arrival in Bangkok, the theft of my ATM card rendered me an indigent street dwelling beggar.

Destitute, I went to the U.S. Embassy hoping that it would grant me an emergency loan. Initially, I was refused, though after eight days of homelessness, during which time the events described in this document took place, the Embassy lent me enough money to fly to Los Angeles where I was born.

During the conversation in which the United States consular officer refused me the emergency loan, I referred to the torture and other war crimes with which the Bush Administration has become associated in the press. The consular officer remarked to one of her colleagues, "He's accusing the Embassy of torture."

After several nights sleeping rough in Bangkok, I was approached in the street by men with American accents. One of them told me "David, we've found a party for you to go to."

Desperate to get out of the tropical elements and to have a roof over my head, I got into their vehicle. I was driven through the streets of Bangkok and to the Embassy of the Republic of Taiwan even though I was filthy from sleeping in the streets and hardly appropriately dressed for a dinner party at an Embassy.

I entered the Embassy with these men, turning left several meters from the entrance and walking into an area which abutted

an outdoor area and which was partly open to the sky where about fifteen people, mainly westerners, appeared to have just finished dinner.

I was offered a seat at the table.

It would seem that I was to be an after dinner entertainment. I was subjected to multiple counts of battery while standing and walking near the dinner table by the guests at the party, who had also gotten up from the table.

Someone had said very quietly in my ear while I was seated, "David, we've arranged some *help* for you" and it was just about at that moment that I saw a man dressed in medical scrubs holding a tray of medical implements near the spot where I had turned left, entering the area where the dinner party was being held.

I immediately remarked, "I think I may be about to receive treatment with some sort of 'special' medical skills and I would like the Consul General of the United States at Chiang Mai to be apprised of that fact immediately."

The man in medical scrubs backed off right away, like a misbehaving local police officer whose prisoner had just asked to phone his attorney.

Apparently someone at the party had a conscience and came to the conclusion that this inhuman treatment of me had simply gone too far and made a phone call on my behalf, because one of the guests informed me that the FBI was on its way to the party.

Despite this, I was never approached by anyone identifying him or herself as an FBI Special Agent. I suppose I don't really know what, exactly, the FBI did or didn't do there.

Before leaving the Embassy that night I had to pass through the security office, where an official questioned me very, very closely and aggressively, focusing on finding out where I was staying in Bangkok.

I repeatedly asserted that I was homeless, that I had nowhere to stay, that I stayed in the streets. He asked me over and over, "where do you stay in Bangkok?"

He said to me, "Execution will be immediate. Stand over there."

I refused to comply with this instruction and left the Embassy of Taiwan, walking out onto the streets of Bangkok, terrified, destitute, and dazed from trauma.