

Mark Muoio

Panda Story

We had been rejected again, the third time in three days. While the other lawyers were meeting with their clients five of us, our interpreter, three habeas lawyers and our military escort, a young airwoman, were sitting in the shade of a large shed in between Camp Echo and Camp VI. The conversations varied, and in an off moment I retold a story I had only half heard the day before while buying postcards at the Naval Commissary and Exchange (NEX).

The story as I remembered it recounted by the armed forces radio was about a Giant Panda on Xanex mauling an innocent person. I recounted as much of what I could remember to the group. Everyone was disturbed and disgusted. Our escort was particularly disturbed by the story, she said "Ya know , it's no wonder the poor panda attacked a person, it's away from its home, it's been put it in a cage and drugged up. It has no one to be with, and it's probably pretty sexually frustrated. It's really no wonder the animal would hurt someone. Look how they treat it." Nervous laughter and yelps of victory erupted from the habeas lawyers. Our escort, realizing the implications of her statement rolled her eyes and put her head into her hands with an unsavory smile.

Note: The real story concerned a domesticated chimpanzee attacking a person; however, the details of that story are not all that important.