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# Chapter Thirty Three

## *Sundance in Thailand*

### **Koh Samui, Thailand Aug. 1, 2008**

*Sundance, the brother formerly known as James O'Connell Morgan, Jr. is an iconoclast. This is his account of some of the events surrounding a recent trip to Thailand. Hurricane Katrina hit his home town of New Orleans during a previous journey to this far off land.*

*(Hurricane Katrina of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season was the costliest hurricane, as well as one of the five deadliest, in the history of the United States. The most severe loss of life and property damage occurred in New Orleans, Louisiana, which flooded as the levee system catastrophically failed.)*

WAM, The last place I would go for sympathy or even empathy is you. Here goes nothing. I am in the 23rd day of my 63 day overseas Southeast Asian adventure. All well and good. The first 15 days were spent in Bangkok failing to meet up with past acquaintances and discovering that my Thai Princess that I had sent thousands of dollars to over the last three years had gotten married and moved to Belgium. Good for her. I even encouraged her to try to better her life which didn't mean I MEANT it !

Well, Bangkok is a bustling New York kind of "pay to get on the ride place" which is really more your cup of tea. So I decide to go to Koh Samui where I have a couple of pals and is my cheap Hawaii. I take a lovely train ride to the coastal city of Surat Thani and transfer to a bus which takes me to a ferry and each connection is costing 5 times more than my last visit. I could have flown cheaper !

After the ferry I load up onto a "song tai" which is a pick up truck converted to a bus taxi with low seats. Remember the low seats part. There are several tourists on the vehicle which is taking me the complete wrong direction on the island but no worry the island is small and round. When I am the last one on

the “song tai” I say “Spa Samui” louder like he will understand me better. “Oh”, he says and quotes me double the price that he quoted originally.” OK,” I say as it’s 10 hours of travelling and I am sore and tired. About three minutes before my final destination I feel my hip go out. This is my hip dislocation problem which happened a year ago but under far more extreme circumstances. I jump up and try to force it back into place, like I had a clue how. No luck. I am paralyzed thinking what to do. Like it’s a bad dream and will go away.

I have forced my leg against the opposite side hoping to force it back in place. I am now in front of my destination but I can’t move. A gorgeous blonde steps over me and gets into the cab and says, “Where are you going ?” I respond, “To the hospital.” She says “Oh.” Meanwhile the cabdriver is massaging my leg. In Thailand they think massage cures all problems. The blonde bombshell intervenes and says, “I know where you should go, it’s an excellent hospital and they have a super doctor there who saved my friend’s life.” She gives instructions to the driver who takes me to her recommended hospital and she gets the stretcher guys to wheel me in. Her last words were “The food is really good.”

I didn’t find the food all that great but she was, my Jennifer Anniston look-alike. Her name was Vicky Freed, (Australian I believe), and she called twice in the next 5 days to check on my condition.

I am finally released after contracting a nasty staph infection which could have killed me why they were curing me. I was lucky though because my doctor had some orthopaedic knowledge and did the surgical procedure called a “reduction” which puts the bone back in place.

So I am walking very slowly in the land of palaces and of pleasure functioning like a one hundred year old man with 40 days of fun and frolic to go.

Wes, If you could send this out to your email literary family list I would appreciate it.

Sundance Koh Samui, Thailand Aug. 1, 2008

## **Section II – In Closing**

Greatness is elusive and relative. Yet, you can't seek it out and try to earn it. In some cases it is thrust upon a person by situations and events. But, I think, in all cases the true greatness is in how a person responds to the outside world.

If I thought a person could learn greatness I would suggest studying what is and what passes for greatness. But observation alone does not build character. It does not tell you how to react to external stimuli. It does not provide a roadmap to that greatness. Nevertheless, it does inspire.

The great man does inspire me.