

Rory J. Mayberry
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Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
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I would like to thank Chairman Waxman, Chairman Tierney, and other Members of the full committee for allowing me to come testify today. I believe I am one of only a few Americans to have recently worked on the site of the new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, and my impressions about how the construction is being managed have left me incredibly disturbed.

My name is Rory Mayberry. I am an Emergency Medical Technician by training. Based on my professional experience, and the fact that I have spent 4 years as a medical technician in Iraq, I was contacted by MSDS Consultant Services, LLC. MSDS had seen my resume and wanted to contract me out to First Kuwaiti , the company that is constructing the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Under the contract, I was to provide emergency medical services on the site of the U.S. embassy. I went into this contract with the same good faith as my other contracts—I wanted to use my medical skills to stop people from dying in a dangerous place.

According to my contract, I reported to First Kuwaiti managers in Kuwait City, where I signed my paperwork and received photo identification. Nothing led me to be concerned at this point. A few days later I was given my flight information to Baghdad. At this time, First Kuwaiti managers asked me to escort 51 Filipino nationals to the Kuwaiti Airport and make sure they got on the same flight I was taking to Baghdad. Many of these Filipinos did not speak any English. I wanted to help them make sure they got on their flight O.K., just as my managers had asked. We were all employees of the same company after all.

But when we got to the Kuwaiti Airport, I noticed that all of our tickets said we were going to Dubai. I asked why. A First Kuwaiti manager told me that because Filipino passports do not allow Filipinos to fly to Iraq, they must be marked as going to Dubai. The First Kuwaiti manager added that I should not tell any of the Filipino they were being taken to Baghdad.

As I found out later, these men thought they had signed up to work in Dubai hotels. One fellow I met told me in broken English that he was excited to start his new job as a telephone repair man. They had no idea they were being sent to do construction work on the U.S. Embassy.

Well, Mr. Chairman, when the airplane took off and the captain announced that we were headed for Baghdad, all you-know-what broke lose on that airplane. People started shouting. It wasn't until a security guy working for First Kuwaiti waved an MP-5 in the air that people settled down. They realized they had no other choice but to go to Baghdad.

Let me spell it out clearly. I believe these men were kidnapped by First Kuwaiti to work on the U.S. Embassy. They had no passports because they were confiscated at the Kuwait airport.

When the airplane touched down at Baghdad airport, they where loaded into buses and taken away. Later, I found that they were being smuggled into the Green Zone. They had no IDs, no passports, nothing. They were being smuggled in passed U.S. security forces. I had a trailer all to myself in the Green Zone. But they were packed 25 to 30 in a trailer, and every day they went out to work on the construction of the embassy without the proper safety equipment.

I went out to the construction site to watch. There were a lot of injuries out there because of the conditions these people were forced to work in. It was absurd—I had been hired based on my experience with OSHA guidelines and compliance, and I saw guys without shoes, without gloves, no safety harnesses, on scaffolding 30 feet off the ground, their toes wrapped around the rebar like a bunch of birds. One guy, he was up there intoxicated on pain killers, and I had to yell and scream for 10 minutes until they got him down.

I was afraid of blowing the whistle on this because I didn't want to end up outside the walls of the Green Zone and left to fend for myself. I stayed in Baghdad at the site of the U.S. Embassy for a total of 5 days before I was sent home. Once I got home, I contacted the military about what I witnessed. After much delay and e-mail traffic, the military told me that in fact, the State Department is in charge of the embassy construction.

I've read the State Department Inspector General report on the construction of the embassy, Mr. Chairman. It's not worth the paper it's printed on. This is a cover-up. I'm glad that I have this opportunity to set the record straight, and I look forward to your questions.