

WHY AFI PIRI CAME TO AUSTRALIA

Beware this story contains torture details

Why and How I left Iran

My name is Afi Piri (my birth name is Mohammed but I prefer to be called Afi as my story will explain). I lived in Tehran, Iran. I lived with my family Dolat my father, Roya my Mother, Ali Reza and Mojtaba my brothers. I worked as a barber in a shopping complex that my Father owned with four other barbers. I managed the shop and was very happy about my life. I was supporting my family through my income and felt appreciated in the family. I love my profession of being a barber as well as my skills at tattooing. I love helping people improve their appearance and wellbeing.

My Brother Ali Reza was jealous of me because he thought my Father liked me better than himself. He told my Father that I was gay very bad and I had a boyfriend.

Six months later Afi's family went on holidays for 2 weeks. They returned home early & caught Afi' in bed with his male partner.

Afi's father confronted him & enquired if he was gay. Afi confirmed he was. Afi's father called his grandfather- both these men are very powerful in their community. They in turn advised Police Afi was gay. Afi was told he was no longer has a father, grandfather, mother etc. or a home.

My Father was very angry. He asked me "is this true". I said you know me yes it is true. Then he said to me
"My son is dead, get out"!

He said

"You have no mother, no father, no brothers, and no home"

My Father who is a Mullah and my grandfather who is an Aotollah reported this to the Police; As well my Brother reported to the Police that I was tattooing women. The Police came to my home. My Mother rang me and told me it was too dangerous to go home because the police were searching for me there. When the Police caught me I was taken to Police Station 157 Masudie, I was booked for tattooing a woman. I was strung up & consistently bashed. He had his fingers bent backwards & broken as well as bashed consistently with batons. Had the tendon in his leg cut when 3 Police "stomped" on him with boots. Suffered severe damage & was also finger printed. Kicked out of Police station & barely conscious phoned a friend to take him to hospital, Afi remained there for a month & couldn't walk.

Afi & his partner then fled & lived in a car for 4 months- after they ran away. They then shared a small flat for 9 months. 30 Tir. Home Number 40. Reza paid the rent he was still working.

Afi set up a home tattooing & piercing for friends at home.

Why I Left Iran and How I came to Australia

After 9 months Afi's brother & father gave Police Afi's & Reza's address- they were set up to be arrested & executed. Afi's Father & Grandfather signed papers to arrest Afi, luckily Afi's neighbour tipped him off & advised the Police were searching for them. There was a man outside Afi/Reza's flat waiting for them. Afi's neighbour let Afi & Reza escape through his place. The neighbour also purchased all the furniture & Renzo's car to give them enough money to purchase a plane ticket to Malaysia then to Indonesia. They then proceeded to Jakarta by boat. This took 4 days. They were in Jakarta for 4 weeks then paid 'people smugglers' \$5300 each. After 4 days on a boat they arrived in Christmas Islands 11/7/2013 just after the Rudd Government introduced the 'no benefit clause' that effectively holds asylum seekers in a 'never world' for up to ten years – no work, no recognition, constant surveillance in or out of detention.

What has happened in Australia?

In Christmas Islands they were held in detention for three weeks then sent to Perth. Afi was granted a Temporary Safe Haven visa (subclass 449) and Bridging E visa they were then moved to Melbourne & after 2 months to Tasmania being released into the Community on bridging visas. Afi was in a hotel in Hobart for about 6 weeks prior to meeting Julian and Brian. Afi and Renzo had broken their relationship since coming to Australia. Rainbow Communities Tasmania Inc. was contracted by Red Cross and asked to provide mentor support for &Afi. He met Julian & Brian 30/8/2013 and commenced living with them and their two dogs Millie & Ella 4/9/2013 as part of their family.

Julian is working with Afi to help him gain a permanent protection visa based on the International Torture and Refugee Conventions. The bridging visa (the safe haven visa has been replaced by the Bridging visa and offers little protection to Afi in not allowing him to work and having to live on an allowance well below the poverty line.

Rainbow Communities Tasmania Inc.

RCT has supported many LGBTI refugees, asylum seekers and overseas students through a mentor system of support and advocacy work around gaining stable permanent visas. This was established through a LGBTI CALD Forum held by the Greater Hobart COPP Community Liaison Committee and the Hobart City Council. The Forum expressed concerns about the lack of appropriate support for LGBTI Asylum seekers and refugees as well as the failure of CALD workers to be trained in LGBTI cultural awareness competencies in Tasmania. RCT has developed a relationship with the Oxford Refugee Studies Centre and their specialist research and practice in relation to the protection of forced LGBTI migration given fundamentalist discrimination against minority groups leading to imprisonment and execution. The RCT work in this area has not been endorsed or supported by other LGBTI organisations or mainstream organisations working in the CALD area!