

“เปิดใจมือปืนป๊อปคอร์นฉบับเต็ม”, Popcorn gunman fully opens his heart, TNA Special, March 27, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etrKxiwkO1o> , Interview with Vivat “Top” Yodprasit, transcript and translation Nick Nostitz

Q: Normally you are... [*unintelligible*] What are you working?

A: I am a laborer

Q: What kind of a laborer?

A: Harvesting rice, and whatever else someone hires me for

Q: What profession do you and your father have?

A: We are farmers

Q: In which area do are you work?

A: In the village

Q: You had a drug case, where and how did that happen?

A: I was caught when I went home. I worked in Nan, my elder brother in law was contracted for construction work in Nan, had no people working for him, and took me along.

Q: That drug case was it your only criminal charge?

A: Yes

Q: [*unintelligible*]

A: Yes

Q: How do you live at your home?

A: We are 4 or 5 people

Q: With whom are you living?

A: I have elder and younger siblings, and dad

Q: You are mostly working in construction?

A; Yes

Q: What changed that you went to Bangkok, what did you do in Bangkok?

A: I thought to try to find work, and to visit my relatives/people at Sanam Luang

Q: [*unintelligible*]

A: Protesting at Sanam Luang

Q: When did you relatives/people, when did you join the protests?

A: I can't remember

Q: Which group did you join?

A: A group called Dao Daeng group - White Masks.

Q: You went to follow relatives

A: I went to visit my relatives, and at the same time looked for work. There I could make money too, and I stayed there. But I did not get anything. They said I get 300 per day, but they did not pay

Q: Did you get anything?

A: I got 2000, I got it from the unit, because I wanted to go home. They paid for the fare only 2000 Baht

Q: How many days for 2000?

A: About 1 ½ months

Q: Your relatives said you got money when you stay there...

A: Yes

Q: ... but in reality you only got 2000?

A: Yes

Q: After this you came and went form the protest?

A: Yes, regularly I went away, slept outside, and slept at times inside

Q: For the big protests mid-November you joined as well?

A: Yes

Q: Were you a normal protester or volunteered as...

A: I volunteered as a guard.

Q: Why [*unintelligible*] as a guard?

A: I saw people joining, when they came they were attacked and injured, I felt sorry for them, that is why I stayed there as volunteer

Q: Did anyone ask you to

A: No

Q: Which stage were you?

A: At Suthep's stage, at Rajadamnern Rd.

Q: Mostly at Rajadamnern? As guard?

A: Yes

Q: Did they check a lot

A: Not, they did not really check. I was with the protests all along. The ones who were guards have known me to some part.

Q: Staying there all the time they knew your face. If they don't know someone they do a lot of checks?

A: Yes

Q: When you were guard at Rajadamnern, at Democracy monument, did you have and/or use a gun?

A: No, I didn't

Q: You ever used a gun?

A: Never

Q: At the time were a guard at the outer perimeter?

A: Yes, on the perimeter, I watched the entry

Q: When did you start seeing guns?

A: When I was at Chaeng Wattana

Q: How?

A: I have seen guns in the mob. M79 came down behind the stage, 3 grenades, and people shot into the protest area. We had no guns to fight back, and I saw guns being brought in, but I don't know who brought them in

Q: That is when you began seeing guns, but did not use yet?

A: Yes

Q: I spoke with your father at home, he said that you can't even shoot with a 'Boen Gep' [*Small caliber frontloaded rifle used upcountry to hunt small animals*]?

A: Yes, indeed

Q: How did you train?

A: I did not train. That day I went... I don't know how that happened... they said I trained, but in reality in never trained

Q: You never trained? When you were in the mob did you never touch a gun?

A: I touched them, just played around

Q: Did anyone give you tips how to use a gun?

A: Somebody I know

Q: What guns were mostly there?

A: Small guns - 11 mm, normal 9mm

Q: What gun did you use there, in the corn bag?

A: An 'M' gun [*unintelligible*]

Q: Did someone teach you?

A: Yes. He just told me to get it ready, and to put it on safety, but did not teach how to shoot

Q: [*unintelligible*]

A: People together in the guard team

Q: Head of the guards?

A: Several people told me, not just one

Q: Many rifles?

A: No

Q: That day at the incident at Laksi how did you prepare?

A: I did not prepare, I slept the whole day

Q: Where did you sleep?

A: I slept in front of the barricade

Q: [*unintelligible*] How did you get there? Who called you up?

A: Somebody called me up, our people from Lad Prao could not cross the road, were shot at from the opponents, had ping pong bombs thrown at. The people had to take cover

Q: They assembled you

A: They assembled the guards. First I thought I won't come out. I looked left and right, nobody, and the piece was with me already, so I decided to come out

Q: 'Piece' means gun?

A: Yes

Q: Who gave it to you?

A: Somebody in the guard team

Q: Gave it to you?

A: Not to me, left it at the barricade. But he left me to watch it when he went to the toilet

Q: You walked from the stage or went by car

A: I walked

Q: With the person who was the spotter?

A: That I don't know

Q: Did you come together?

A: No, we did not come together. I don't know where he came from. I walked, I don't know where he came running from. He came running and grabbed my back

Q: What did you think, that you came out, did you watch the incident, or did you shoot straight away?

A: I watched the incident. One – when the opponents did not start, I don't do. I don't know who did what, and who didn't, who has a gun, and hasn't. When they shoot first, I shoot to scare them. I did not shoot at people, just to scare them

Q: How did you know that you shoot just to scare?

A: There were no people. The people who were hit... understand, it was not me alone... many people, many outfits. But the famous one is popcorn. I do not know... The say only popcorn did alone

Q: [unintelligible]

A: Many people came and went, so I used the bag, nobody knows. When I carried it [*the gun*], people don't know, as if we carry normal bag

Q: Carry since the barricade?

A: Yes

Q: You never shot a gun...

A: Never

Q: You were not scared

A: I was not scared.

Q: [unintelligible]

A: I only thought our people have to be safe. Get our people in safety. Get our people to be able to get to Luang Bu [*Buddha Issara*]. If it gets dark our opponents will harm us definitely

Q: Did you shoot a lot?

A: about 20 Bullets

Q: Did you see where you shot these 20 bullets at?

A: I did not see. I do not know who I hit, but what I know is nobody died. The news said nobody who was shot died, the news said there were injured, but nobody knows who shot them. But famous is popcorn. Journalists say popcorn did it, only. At the Pan Fa incident, the news said popcorn. I slept at Chaeng Wattana, did not go anywhere. The heavy incidents it's popcorn – I did not go. One incident, finished. I did not go anywhere. The news said everywhere popcorn. It spread around, I was once famous, always famous

Q: At Pan Fa you never interfered?

A: I never interfered at Pan Fa, I never went there. I always stayed at Chaeng Wattana

Q You always stayed at Chaeng Wattana after [*the protests*] spreading from Rajadamnern?

A: Yes

Q: The others who fired guns there did you know them?

A: I do not know them, different outfits

Q: Who looks after your outfit?

A: P'Men

Q: The house were you fled to [*unintelligible*]?

A: I did not flee. I did not know if the arrest the group, or if I had arrest warrant. We went to travel. My girlfriend wanted to travel there, wanted to rest her mind, she was very stressed. I felt sorry for her, did

not want her to stay too long in the mob, so I brought her to travel to the south. Elder sister invited to travel to the house as well, took the opportunity to travel to her house, with my girlfriend

Q: When did you go?

A: At the 18<sup>th</sup>

Q: How many days?

A: We slept one night there

Q: Then you were arrested?

A: Yes

Q: At home, you dad said that it is very easy to order you?

A: Yes

Q: Meaning, that ordering you to do something is very easy?

A: Yes

Q: You dad was asking who was conning Top, to have him shoot a gun, let top carry the blame? Is that true? You must have suspicions?

A: No, no, no [*insecure*]

Q: You volunteered yourself?

A: Yes, myself ... our people were hurt. If you would have been there, and your people/relatives would have been hurt, would you come to help? Our people were shot dead, what do you think?

Q: Nobody came and conned you?

A: No

Q: Your dad thought you can't shoot a gun, how were you able to shoot, 1, and 2, who conned his son? When all is over the leaders will be alright, but the criminal case is against you. We spoke when the arrest warrant was not issued yet, but not many days later the arrest warrant was issued, and you were arrested. Your dad and people in your village suspected you may have been conned to shoot. Normally you are not a person who knows how to look for trouble. When you shot did you think you do something wrong?

A: After I finished I was thinking. At the time I just needed our people/relatives/people to be able to cross, before darkness. The soldiers went on the mobile stage and announced that the people have to cross, the soldiers receive them themselves, and let the fighting stop, let both sides stop fighting. Both sides stopped. The soldiers received the people. That's it.

Q: You did not think that you will be blamed?

A: I never thought that

Q: Politics fight but you are the unlucky one? Have you thought about that?

A: Yes, I thought about it in the morning. I slept in the tent, and thought

Q: Imagine tomorrow the protests stop, the mob goes home, the leaders will go their way, and in the future they will be ministers, prime minister, or whatever. But Top, I am not sure, you will be punished for shooting a gun, attempted murder, maybe get a life sentence. Looking back, how do you feel? Others will go home, but you will go to prison?

A: I should not have done it, I should not have come out

Q: Later, did you think hard?

A: Yes, very hard. I thought why did I do that? Why did I go out?