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Hicks alleges sex for spying offer

Reuters
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CANBERRA, Australia -- Australian terror suspect David Hicks was offered the services of a prostitute by the U.S. military if he agreed to spy on other detainees held at the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba, according to court documents.

In an affidavit unsealed by a U.S. District Court and seen by Reuters on Friday, Hicks, a 29-year-old convert to Islam, said he was also beaten while blindfolded and handcuffed, threatened with weapons and had his head rammed into asphalt.

Hicks was arrested in Afghanistan in late 2001 and was among the first small group of Guantanamo Bay detainees to be charged.

He has pleaded not guilty to aiding the enemy, attempted murder and conspiracy to commit war crimes.

"Interrogators once offered me the services of a prostitute for 15 minutes if I would spy on other detainees. I refused," Hicks said in the affidavit, which is dated August 5 and witnessed by his U.S. military lawyer Major Michael Mori.

Hicks said he was deprived of showers, sufficient food, access to regular reading material and other social contact, including mail, because he failed to cooperate.

"I have been beaten while blindfolded and handcuffed ... At one point, a group of detainees, including myself, were subjected to being randomly hit over an eight-hour session while handcuffed and blindfolded," Hicks said.

"I have had my head rammed into asphalt several times (while blindfolded) ... I have been forced to run in leg shackles that regularly ripped the skin off my ankles," he said.

The United States has denied allegations of prisoner abuse at the base and the State Department has said it believes detainees were treated humanely.

Hicks is one of more than 550 prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, most of whom were captured during the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban government in Afghanistan in late 2001 and early 2002.

Mori told Reuters in an interview earlier this month that, through his own investigations, he had been able to corroborate claims by Hicks that he had been physically abused.

Australia's government has previously raised with the United States the issue of how Hicks and a second Australian, Mamdouh Habib, were being treated and said that an initial inquiry found they had not been abused.

Egyptian-born Habib, a father of four, was arrested crossing from Pakistan into Afghanistan three weeks after the September 11, 2001, airliner attacks on the United States.

He has been named as part of a second group of detainees who will be charged.

Hicks is scheduled to be tried by a military commission in March.

The military commissions were authorized by U.S. President George W. Bush to try foreign militants after the attacks on New York and Washington, and are the first war crimes tribunals held by the United States since World War II. (Hicks lawyers challenge Gitmo trial)

Hicks faces a maximum penalty of life in prison if found guilty.