

## In The News: The Tourists Dumb & Dumber

### Description

If Bangkok has a soul, you'll find it at Wat Arun, the Temple of Dawn on the banks of the Chao Phraya River.

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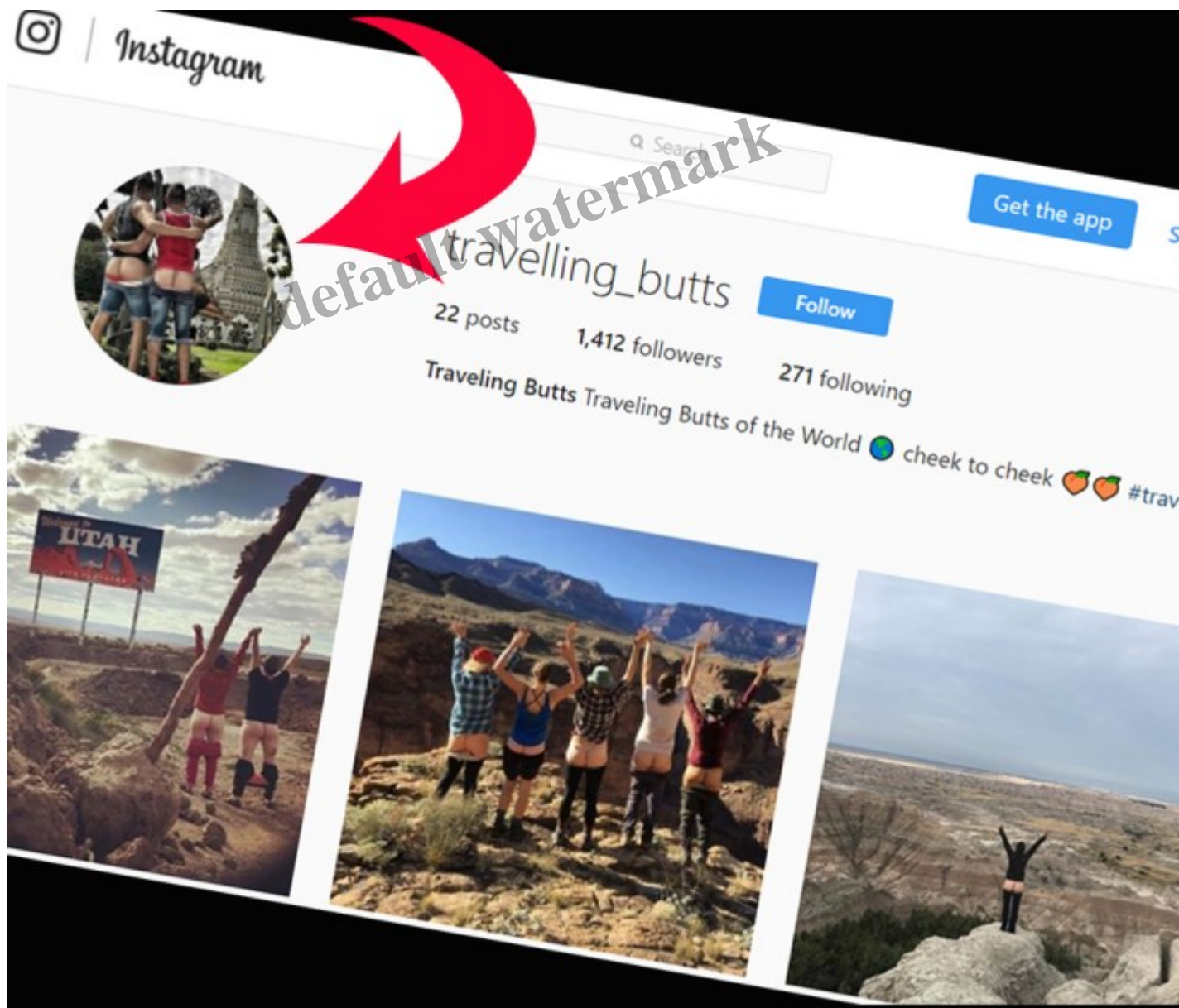


Wat Arun. Temple of Dawn

A trip to Thailand is something to get excited about. A far off, exotic country. A world class cuisine. Thai smiles everywhere. Beaches galore. But recently, for two American tourists, their Thailand trip was an opportunity to insult Siamese culture at one of the most revered Buddhist temples in The Kingdom-Wat Arun, The Temple of Dawn.

## They Did What??? Say Again???

Travis (36) and Joseph (38) Dasilva from San Diego, California loved to travel the world visiting important religious, cultural and historic sites. And their passion at these world heritage sites was to bare their butts and take selfies of themselves. In fact they have an Instagram account named “travelling\_butts” which showcased both their bare asses in front of whatever cultural/geographic site they deemed worthy.



Travis and Joseph Dasilva’s Instagram account called “travelling\_butts. They brought their act to Wa

most sacred sites in The Kingdom.

On November 27th, 2017, while on a honeymoon visit to Bangkok, Travis and Joseph decided to moon Wat Arun in full public view. That's right-they pulled down their shorts on temple grounds in the middle of the day and took a selfie of their bare asses with Wat Arun in the background. They then posted the photo to their Travelling\_Butts Instagram account. The reaction among their followers was mixed at best.

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**traveling\_butts**  
Bangkok, Thailand >



The Dasilvas took a couple of butt baring photos on the temple grounds and with great pride posted them on-line.

By the following day, the photograph had come to the attention of the Thai police, although no one is

exactly sure how. The police quickly realized that the two “mooners” were probably still in Thailand and ordered immigration officials to detain them when they attempted to leave the country. Sure enough, the next day Travis and Joseph attempted to exit the country at Don Muang Airport and were placed under arrest.

The initial charge was a low level violation of public indecency, which only carries a fine of about 5,000 baht (\$150 U.S.). But soon the news media got hold of the story and it went worldwide within hours. Thai police then began viewing the mooning of Wat Arun as a serious crime and cultural insult.



Busted in Bangkok. Although Thai authorities masked their faces, it seems Travis and Joseph are still in their predicament.

The police now began to put together a criminal case of “Religious Insult” (that’s a crime in Thailand) and Computer Pornography (posting lewd photos on the internet). The religious insult charge carries a 7 year maximum sentence and the Computer Porno charge carries a 5 year maximum. No, you don’t get a jury trial in Thailand or the presumption of innocence.

It’s been a week since the Dasilva’s were arrested and there’s been no word of their fate. The police have not announced whether they will proceed with the two serious charges or even where exactly are the two being held. Publicly, the last we’ve heard from them was that they were asking friends in San Diego if they knew a good lawyer.

## Wat Arun

Many who visit Bangkok will tell you that Wat Arun may be the most iconic Buddhist temple in the city. It is certainly one of the most important Buddhist monuments in The Kingdom.



The Wat Arun we know today was finished in 1847. But for centuries before, probably dating back to the 1600s, a Buddhist temple has existed on this site. The Emerald Buddha, the most revered Buddhist icon in Thailand, was once kept here before its current home, Wat Prae Kaew, was built. The bones of Rama II are encased in the central spire (called a prang) of the wat complex. The central and surrounding prangs are decorated with over 300,000 individual pieces of cut glass and ceramics.

The Thais had just completed a long and costly renovation of Wat Arun-just in time for Travis's and Joseph's bare asses. If these guys were looking for a place where their exposed bare butts would cause maximum insult, they choose a very good place!

## A Just Punishment?



Joseph and Travis DaSilva. Thai police have not announced yet whether they will seek charges that land the couple in prison for years.

So just what should the Thai police do with these two cultural vandals? A reverent Buddhist nation is understandably angry and feels disrespected. If stupidity were a crime we would all agree the maximum punishment would be in order. But should these two asses serve 5-7 years in a Thai prison for a butt selfie?

There are many who think that Thai officials are way out of line by prosecuting these two for anything more than just public indecency with its small fine. (And it's possible that's all that will come of this.) But

let me remind you of what the reaction to their religious/cultural insult would be if the Dasilvas had brought their traveling butts show to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, or a whole host of other countries. They would be lucky to escape with their lives. So maybe Thai authorities are more lenient than we Westerners give them credit for.

First and foremost, blame goes to Travis and Joseph-Dumb and Dumber. Their Instagram account “traveling\_butts” is testament to the spoiled child syndrome of “it’s all about me!” I’m sure never once did they think about what their disrespect of Buddhism would mean to Thai People.

But I also blame the demeaning attitude of many tourists that Thailand is a country where anything goes. It’s not and never was. What happens in a few sleazy red light districts (Soi Cowboy, Nana Plaza, Patong Beach, Pattaya, etc.) has nothing to do with the moral compass of 100 million Thais. In fact most Thais would be happy if these two farang asses spent a few years in a wonderful Thai prison for insulting their religion.

## Epilogue

I check the Bangkok Post and other Thai newspapers everyday to see if there’s news of the Dasilvas. Nothing yet. No resolution of the case as of this writing that I’m aware of. If I learn something, I’ll add an addendum to this post. If anyone knows the outcome of this case, please reply by email to this post.

### Category

1. Thai Culture Wars

### Tags

1. #Buddhism

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