

In 1970, in the midst of the Vietnam War, David Haase '73 arrived in Vietnam for his Antioch Education Abroad.

As he says, he was "probably the only draft-age American man trying to get in to Vietnam." On landing in Vietnam, Haase's six-month visa was invalidated and he had to leave the country. He went to Thailand, where he and Antioch administrators tried to get a new visa issued.

Eventually, Haase gave up on getting into Vietnam and left Thailand for Laos, which is where he stayed for the next two years—years he considers his AEA experience, although he was technically on AEA for a year. This year, Haase released his memoir, *Hotel Constellation: Notes From America's Secret War In Laos*, about his time abroad and the war going on around him.

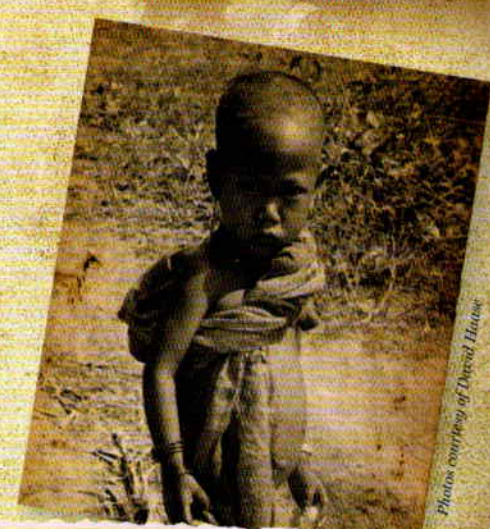
In Laos, Haase became friends with a group of journalists. They spent time talking in noodle houses and Haase eventually worked as a journalist. His stipend worked out to about 60 dollars a month, so he spent most of his time reading and writing and walking everywhere. Although he was a student and needed to take notes for papers he had to write, he also "wrote just to write. I didn't

have a vision of a book 45 years later or anything else." In his journals, he tackled "everything from a daily journal, to what life was like to studies...on the Laos economy, genealogies of the elite families, cultural anthropology of the hill tribes involved in the war there. I just wrote about everything, because I was hanging out with guys who wrote and read."

When Haase finally returned home, he brought all his journals with him, and has kept them with him ever since. Although he started working on his book in the 90s, it wasn't until his wife was diagnosed with cancer that Haase sat down with his eight boxes of journals and finished *Hotel Constellation* at her urging.

Ultimately, *Hotel Constellation* is about so much more than Haase's story. In it, he interweaves three main threads: his personal experience, the history of Laos, and the secret war that America was waging there. With *Hotel Constellation*, Haase also peels away the layers of secrecy around the war.

Haase says in the book, "I experienced things that almost no one of my generation could match, but I left so many opportunities on the table to learn more, see more, travel more, do more, understand more..." Regardless, he challenges anyone to "come up with a better AEA experience" than he had.



Photos courtesy of David Haase

Antioch Alum Publishes Memoir of his AEA Experience



Photo: Don Ronk

^ David Haase interviewed Jane Fonda on the tarmac of the Wattay Airport as she returned from her 1972 trip to North Vietnam.

by Michelle Marie Wallace