



Being blue-eyed in a brown-eyed country, is always an odd one out situation

Author: Tue Nielsen, ICT Emergency Officer- HQ, Rome

March 2008

I was on my way "by foot" from the hotel to the office when approached by a 'well dressed' person saying "Hola como esta" -

I answered with my standard and the second sentence I had learned by heart (yeah I am sure you can all guess what the first one is) "Mi habla no Espaniol amigo" and I continued walking. The 'well dressed' switched to a poor English, but anyways better than my Spanish "From Bolivia, first day in Colombia, going to Costa Rica - Avianca", at this point in time we were joined by a '2nd well dressed', who hablad a lot in Spanish about turismos mucho in Colombia, then introduced himself with a police ID and asking for IDs.

Well, well, well what a coincidence to get 2 "tourists" in one go! I was on my toes and alert asap, especially after losing my back-pack to a con in Brussels 2005 (still hurting my pride)! Anyhow, as there is a certain uncertainty I showed my passport and my LP - stating that I am no tourist but works for PMA.

The '2nd well dressed' said, "you must still register with the police station, please follow me it is just down the road". Hm..... I looked to my watch 7:50 a.m. and said "I have a meeting @ 8 and as you can see my visa in my passport, I am sure that PMA has already registered me" - the '2nd well dressed' insisted and started walking down the road with my passport (the 'well dressed' had also shown his ID and followed without talk), I said "escusa senior my passaporta pour favour" - he stopped and handed me the passport back (it was on the 7th avenue and crowded with folks on their way to work), he said "registration only 2 minutes, meeting no problem".

I replied "OK, but let me first call the office and let them know that I might be late" (of course having in mind to check whether this was normal police procedure in Colombia or not) - I reached to my pocket, pulled out the mobile and started calling; the '2nd well dressed' said "ok no problem" gave a hand shake and disappeared with the 'well dressed' following him.

I continued to the office and later on the incident report.

Could have become a number in the statistics - real person behind or not, but in this case at least a happy ending (- :

Tue.