

the Miami Poem

yasser musa

September 29, 2002

Just 3 hours before the Paslow building went up in
smoke

I headed north to Cancún, tip of the Yucatan Peninsula
Limestone McDonalds and Henequen burger kings
Via
Cane fields and a free zone

September 30, 2002

Unto the Cancún airport for a Mexicana flight to
Santo Domingo

Flight cancelled due to Hurricane Lili-
On the CNN screen Cuba being battered,
Just days earlier
Jesse Ventura and Fidel sipped mojito together
Under an Archer Midland Daniels tent,
In steaming Havana
Jinetas and juntas, manifesto writers and world
champion wrestlers

So

On the re-route through Miami to the Dominican
Republic
This saga begins...

And the prelude

A choice-
A Belizean passport or a British passport
A Palestinian name
Coming via land from Belize, through Mexico
Unto
nervous American soil

Immigration Officer #1

"Sir, please step aside and wait over there."

Immigration Officer #2

"Sir, please come this way."

And into the room

Tinted glass, LCD monitors, scanners, a Bin
Laden poster,
CIA and FBI logos –
The smell of impatience and misunderstanding
There must have been 100 people waiting
Haitians, Ukrainians, Costa Ricans, Syrians,
Ghanians, Jamaicans
And a Belizean with 2 passports and a Palestinian
name

Side Show #1

Eric the Immigration Officer,
White, crew cut, wearing a big gold badge-

"Yu people shut up,
now, just sit and be quit,
shut up, nothing else..."

Side Show #2

Eric again,
Walking to the front of the anxious group
Standing in a confident broad-way pose-

"Ladies and Gentlemen,
welcome to Club Med
you just got an all expense paid pass
to a once in a lifetime vacation,
so just sit back and relax,"

Side Show #3

34 minutes into the wait,
a Jamaican woman,
a beautiful blue dress approaches computer terminals
asks Eric, "Mista, I gat wa flight, and a noh wa
miss it."

Eric like an ostrich out of sand leans from behind
monitor,

"Mam, you are so beautiful. BUT SIT DOWN. NOW."

She struts back to her seat blurts to the crowd,
"Dehn noh haffi go an like dat."

Side Show #4

46 minutes in,
Eric shouts
"Yasser Musa,
what a name to have!!"

Side Show #5

I got up and Eric
Pointed
To another room,
"Go in there,"

in where
in that space
that cave, Bora Bora,
boys from Alabama on Kabul soil
girls from Mississippi on the planes of Masar Shariff
I just tried
To remember the songs that used to make us
rock away
Where is Berris Hammond?
Not here,
Here is all about
Documents dancing on photocopying machines,
Does that computer have a scussi device?
And the white walls, is it the same in the Bush
house...
In where
In that space;

Another Immigration Officer, Greg,
"Have a seat,
why are you coming to Miami?
why are you using a British passport?
why are you coming via Cancún?
coming from Belize?
why do you have a US visa in your passport?"

where was the visa issued?

And the questions kept coming
soft hip-hop phrases
Me
Paralyzed – threading in the pond of humiliation
Numb by the swift typing sound of a Dell-Dimension

And it got better-

Another Immigration Officer, name unknown, enters
Puts on some cotton gloves
A museum curator getting ready to hold a Picasso
"Put all your possessions on the table."
"Take off your shoes, your socks"
"Take off your pants..."

In my brief and a red t-shirt
I tried to answer the roller-dex of questions coming,
My pants stretched on the table,
Next to
4 children's toothbrushes
2 credit cards
a receipt from the Cancún duty free
50 Mexican pesos
120 US dollars
10 Belizean dollars
A business card from a restaurant in Manchester
A Belizean social security card...

The last sentences...

"You can put back on your clothes"

"Mr. Yasser Musa, you're free to go"

The smell of carpet, computers, air conditioning
inside the terminal of the Miami International.

ZERO
new belizean art

November 2002 - January 2003



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