

My friend, I was in a terrible situation, my situation was bad by all measures, I didn't have a douche nor a toilet down there and I had to stay up all night with him and his friends, every night. They were smoking weed, I didn't smoke at that time, how terrible is that? The guy lived in a Villa, but he had to come down to the basement every time he was smoking with his friends, which was all the time. Because his wife wouldn't let him smoke upstairs and he wouldn't let me upstairs because he doesn't really trust me. After all we had just met. But I would go up and use the bathroom under his supervision. I had to spend most of my day away from that mess so I often used to go watch movies. I had no schedule nor anything binding except the credits at the end of every film. I used to walk into the cinema without asking too many questions. As long as the film is up and I am sitting down then everything was going according to plan. That is Boston city, and this is me, but I have nothing to do with its attractions and it has nothing to do with me. Matter of fact I am here to leave... in 12 days... that's about it. But one Monday, things changed.

I went into the cinema and watched a film that I don't quite remember completely but the protagonist got killed and things got boring after that. I remember I admired him; a family guy with some gangster roots but a good cause. Despite robbing banks, he didn't deserve to get shot, not by a policeman at least, not at his home with his family. I remember they moved on with the story after he was killed and I didn't like that. Who cares about the policeman's story now anyway. The policeman was in a gush of remorse and I was in my chair in blinding boredom. I checked my phone to see that I missed a message from the guy I stayed at: "Where are you? come home NOW!"

I thought to myself Ok, something wrong has happened. I went out of the cinema...ok...something WRONG had happened! Smoke was all around me and people were shouting, running,

screaming. Should I be screaming too? What happened?! Policemen were everywhere. I got myself on a bus home and when I arrived it was all on TV; The Boston marathon bombing. I was waiting for the guy to ask me if I had anything to do with this. I mean I was a perfect suspect. "A 27 years old Syrian was caught on his way to Russia after landing in Boston to target the innocent people gathered at the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon." Oh my god, this sounds so real!

How can I convince anyone that I am here only for tourism. Why am I heading to Russia afterwards? How can I explain that it's not my real destination? Well of course I don't explain that, I have to stick to the plan. It's all tourism. I am a tourist until I reach my destination. I tried to calm myself down but I couldn't stop laughing at the thought of me in orange suit, limbs cuffed, and dogs barking at me. It was funny cause I never anticipated such a thing. Or because I couldn't believe that I will be thrown into this scenario. But my real fear was that I wouldn't make it on that plane to Russia. Then all this effort would be blown away and I would only blame the bombers for that. Till then, I am keeping myself safe in the basement breathing the smoke of joints.

Few days later, at JFK airport, I walked up to the counter with uncertainty. I carried my steps up to the Check-In desk. I am trained to be in these situations, I shouldn't really smile, just an original traveler's face. Everything went surprisingly smooth, no one even opened my passport yet, up until I reached the airplane. There were two FBI agents standing by the door of the airplane. My calmness was almost gone when they stopped me and asked me for my passport. One of them looked at it, looked up at me and said:

- Where were you on the 15th of April?
- Boston.
- What were you doing there?

Well I knew how to answer that. I explained why I was here in the US and that I was visiting my friend. I told them I understand your procedures since I have worked closely with US officials at my job as a security guard for the American embassy in Syria. I explained that I am going to Russia to visit another friend and I will be back in Syria to proceed in my position. I showed them my badge. I have never been so proud of this badge. This badge must mean something to them. I confidently pulled out the cinema ticket I had saved and I remember telling myself: "this must be the worst alibi that ever existed."

They looked at me, paused for a while, and after they made sure the badge was real and my papers are in order, they said: "You are either lying or you're a very unlucky person, here's your passport."

Yes, I did make it! I walked shamelessly among the passengers that were staring at me. I called my family, once before the plane took off and once when I landed to transit in Sweden. "I made it, I am in Sweden!" I told my family after I tore my passport apart. I went to the officers at the airport and asked for asylum, while they looked at me in hidden shock as if they were thinking to themselves "how the heck did that Syrian manage to get here??" I hardly managed, my friend.

