

The background image shows a modern architectural structure with a complex, angular glass facade. The building's lines are sharp and geometric, creating a sense of depth and complexity. In the foreground, a walkway or balcony is visible, where several people are silhouetted against a bright, overcast sky. The overall tone is dark and moody, with the white text providing a stark contrast.

Customs & Criminology

By Chris Thomas

Malaga Bar

Having taken time to deliberate and relax my brief period of sanity, which many would interpret as a holiday, on making my way to England, with confidence that all had been completed and finished, I joined the crowd of willing travelers.

Custom officers, in their dutiful manner, were politely asking all persons to remove any metallic objects on their person and to pass any hand luggage through the x-ray machine via the conveyor belt. "Excuse me" one young mother asked, "do's the pram go through here or on that?" Without expression, the guard waved his finger north, south, east and west, politely the mother placed the unfolded pram on the improbably suggested conveyer belt and waltzed through the detector door, inevitably, the sirens rang.

Under the instructions of the officer she removed her well-buckled belt and proceeded with no further disturbance.

Following through the procedural gates of customs I presented my passport to the official, on acceptance I passed into the no-mans land of duty free.

Within twenty feet I would be halted by the command of an official, on questioning why, I was told to wait. Three minutes later two customs police personnel escorted me back to my departure point. When I say escorted, they beckoned me to merely follow them.

At this point I believed it was only a procedural matter and not of an incriminating nature.

Then it began to become apparent.

In the airport there is a police station complete with holding cells for those unfortunates to be caught or found to be with disagreeable offenses of the occupant state, in short, “you have done something wrong”.

With both wrists firmly attached behind my back, shoes belt and personal effects removed, accounted and signed for on relevant documentation, I was escorted my place of residence until ordered to leave.

Bang, click, jangle, I’m now behind bars. Not the only bars I was going to be behind, as I discovered.

The whole event over the previous 30 minutes had included a hesitant call to my immediate family in a desperate attempt to explain the reason I may be late on arrival, all mothers can understand the comment.

“Hi Mum I’ve been arrested but don’t worry it’s not a problem, I’ll sort it, see you soon”.

Six Spanish, two Moroccans and an English man, all with stale bread and yoghurt.

Having established our designated area of the cell in which to sleep and placing the comfort of vinyl covered foam, as generally experienced on a sun bed whilst basking in the Mediterranean sun, I didn't expect to be leaving immediately.

At 10:00 am, having been given breakfast, a fellow in-mate and myself were wrist banded together and duly escorted to a police personnel carrier, a van with bars and big locks.

Cell number three, Malaga court.

In the airport there is a police station complete with holding cells for those unfortunates to be caught or found to be with disagreeable offenses of the occupant state, in short, "you have done something wrong".

At this point I felt that I was not going to get past GO!

Having given my statement and following correct procedures, current address, purpose of travel and so on, I was given a draft letter, which was explained, by the interpreter of course, to me.

"So what do I do now?"

The reply was the same as I had already heard and would continue to hear for some time.

The interpreter turned to me and casually expressed his understanding of English and summarised the judicial statements made within the court over the previous 15 minutes as "no problem you can go, take this letter".

The letter informed me that I should attend a hearing at the Malaga courts at 11:30 on 14th January 2008.

At this point I had been jailed three times, told “it’s not a problem” seven times by police, interpreters and legal representatives. My only question was, “How do I get to Malaga airport from here?”

The only helpful suggestion I had heard over the previous 24 hours came, “I’ll share a taxi with you”, beckoned a well belted and buckled English lady pushing a pram.

To be continued ...

Welcome to my Book World

For several years I have had the desire to write a book and kept delaying getting started, I realised that the reasons I was giving were excuses.

This book is based on fact, yes I did get arrested at Malaga airport, I was going to my brothers wedding in the UK at the time I was living and working in Spain, indeed this period in my life is the basis for another book I am working on. It is in the 'Finding Home' series the first of which is subtitled 'The Philippines' where I am currently living.

Learn more and visit my 'Finding Home' blog, where you can follow my life experiences as they happen as well as a page dedicated to the process of developing my first book in a series to be written & published in the coming months.

[Learn more](#)