



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### An Interesting Encounter with NJ Narcs

by Amaru & Suzanne, August 12th 2006

Well, well, this time I really have an interesting story to tell you all!! But first, some background information.

So, Suz left to go home to Sydney about 2 weeks before all of this happened. I dropped her off at Newark Airport (at 4am) and there we noticed that her flight to San Francisco had been cancelled.....great, another star for United. Everything got sorted out though, they managed to put her on the LA flight that was leaving just 30min later than her original plane. There she barely had time to jump on her next flight to take her to San Francisco. Now that she had landed in SF she had a few hours to spare and went strolling into the city.

After a few hours of walking the hills (can't wait to get there myself) she went back to the airport, checked in and sat down waiting to board a 14 hour flight home to Sydney. Just before boarding she was called to the desk and was then given a new ticket.....in Business Class!!! The luck she had huh!! I bet you I'll end up sitting in the middle between two really obese people.



**Before the Game**  
Denis and I with our new t-shirts



**Giants Stadium**  
And Rene, Magnus and I in front of it

Anyway back to the story, an old friend of mine, Magnus, whom I used to work with when I was living in Dublin got a few days off from work and decided to come and visit over a long weekend. He had never been to New York, or the States for that matter so he was really looking forward to it....

What can I say about his arrival....well, he chose the worst day to fly in. The event in London had just taken place the very night before and everything was on high alert (red alert level here.....not going to say more about that). His plane landed and I thought that he'd be out in a sec without a problem.....was I ever wrong!

He landed on time (actually he landed about 15min early) but his plane was kept on the tarmac for 4 (!!!) hours. During this time I was in the arrivals hall waiting for him, and I had no idea when he was coming out. We, all the people waiting, didn't get any information on what was happening or when we could expect them to come out.

At some point some guy next to me waiting to pick up his wife got a call, the wife had managed to borrow a cell phone and told him that they were still stuck on the tarmac. Now, she wasn't on the same plane as my friend but at least I got a general idea on what was happening.

Since I now knew that he wasn't getting out anytime soon I started wandering the airport, had some junk food, read some magazines at the newsagency and just watched people. Eventually I got bored and sat down close to the entrance, I still had a fairly good view over the arrivals so even if he would appear I wouldn't miss him. Funnily enough though I managed to snooze off for a few (I think) minutes and of course when I woke up I thought that I might have missed him. I did a quick look and.....nope, he hadn't arrived yet!



After a while you start making conversations to people here and there and I actually found some Irish people there waiting. Unfortunately they were waiting for the Belfast flight while I was waiting for the Shannon flight. But it was still thanks to these guys that I found out where to go and pick up Magnus. Where I was in the terminal I didn't have any coverage for my cell. So my choices were very limited, I could either stand there and wait to see if I could spot him coming out or lose sight of the arrivals and walk outside to see if he had tried to call me.



Eventually I called home and told my dad that if Magnus called just keep trying to call me.

Not long after this one of the Irish guys came over and said that he had found out that the Shannon flight was now on Terminal B, no word from the officials though.....

I walked outside to make a quick call and my phone rang, it was my dad saying that Magnus had called, he was now waiting at Terminal B.....Finally!! After making my way over to the Airtrain I went over to the next terminal and picked him up. The drive home from the airport was quite interesting as well....the sky opened and it poured, I was on the highway and couldn't drive much faster than 50km/h since I couldn't see anything in front of me, what a day!

Friday morning we got up early and made our way down to the train station, before boarding the train we made sure we had some bagels with cream cheese and a Snapple each (a very American morning), we didn't get our coffee until we hit New York, as usual I got the coffee from Mud cafe.....

The rest of that day we walked and walked and walked some more around the city, showing it to Magnus. We decided to skip the Empire State Building and instead went up to the Rockefeller tower, that was one of the best decisions I've made for a while. Compared to the Empire State Building, this one is empty....barely any people at all, and the view is so much better. You get an awesome view of Central Park and of course here you can see the Empire State Building in front of downtown NY which is very nice as well.



After this we caught the subway to Brooklyn, had some ice cream at the Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory and here we also found a nice bar where we "sampled" the local brew Brooklyn Lager. After a few games of pool and a few other beers we walked over the Brooklyn Bridge back to Manhattan.



Around 7pm or so we met up with Evan at his place, had a shower and made our way down to Chinatown where we met up with lots of other people and had a huge dinner together. After dinner we walked to the lower east side and did some club hopping and had some beers here and there, the most annoying thing about drinking out in the states is the tipping, for every beer you buy you have to leave a dollar, and if you don't.....well, you might then just find yourselves standing at the bar without anyone taking your order.

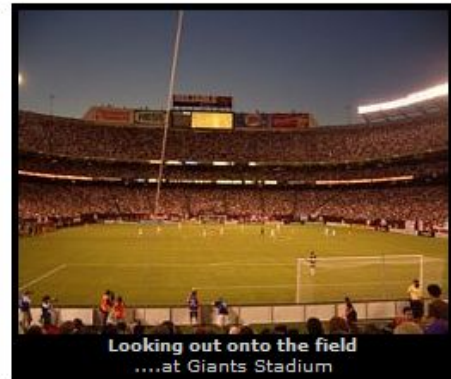
Around 2am we lost most of the group (people going home to sleep and so) so the last 4 of us made it over to alphabet city (the area with the A, B and C avenues) and jumped in between a few more bars until they all closed at 4am. Now it was time to start heading home, before taking the path back to NJ we stopped at Gray's Papaya and had 3-4 dogs each (well, what can you expect when you are drunk and the dogs cost less than a dollar each).

After stuffing all of those dogs down we made it over to the New Jersey side and since we still had an hour before the train we got to sit by the pier in Hoboken and watch the sun rise over New York City.....quite impressive.

Saturday, this is when it all got very exciting at night....

We slept in that day (duh....what else would you expect when you get to bed at 7.30am) and later on made our way over to Giants Stadium where we were going to watch a football (soccer) game between the local team New York Red Bulls and FC Barcelona who were touring the US at this time. It all starts in the parking lot, it's quite funny to see people arriving to the game 4 or more hours before the game and then set up the BBQ's right there on the parking lot. We didn't get there that early but we did stay on the lot for a while having some beers before we entered the arena (beers are expensive and really crappy inside, Bud and the like).

The game was good, Barcelona won (so unexpected huh) in front of a crowd of 79002 so it was quite full. When leaving we had to wait forever before we were out on the highway again and even there it was packed.



Looking out onto the field  
...at Giants Stadium



The four men of my family  
...all together, not often that happens

Once we found the road we were looking for we, Rene, Magnus and I, made it over to the Satin Dolls, the stripclub where Soprano's BadaBing is filmed. And it looks just like it, outside and inside. We took a few photos of the place, only from the outside of course, I don't think they would be too happy if we started taking photos of the girls inside (even if by New Jersey law if there's alcohol served there's no nudity, and of course they had alcohol....)

From here we made it over to Paterson, Magnus was commenting that it was just like in the movies, you enter the ghetto and see people hanging around the corners, all guys dressed in clothes that are waaaaaaaay too large for them....I mean, a t-shirt that hangs down to your knees...what's up with that?!? (and I'm not even going to comment the fact that the UNDERwear is on the outside..... funny,

UNDER usually means under the clothes).

We eventually ended up at a drive through where we ordered some burgers, when we pulled up to the window to pay and collect the food we saw that the window in front of the workers was at least 7cm thick....bulletproof then, what a nice neighborhood.

The time was around 2am and we were now driving home, we were litterally around 10 blocks before we entered our town when all of a sudden an SUV behind us starts flashing its cop lights. We pulled over and the second the car stopped there were narcs, dressed in undercover clothes and with their badges hanging from their necks, all around the car with the guns drawn against us and yelling for us to keep our hands up. They then opened my door, took a half eaten burger from my hand (which they just tossed away) leaned in, undid the safety belt and had me get out against the car to be padded down. Once that was done I was told to stand at the back of the car so they could get Magnus out as well and padd him down.



New Jersey State Cops  
does the outfit look like something else!?



End of the Game  
79000 people altogether at the game

Once this was done a HUGE guy approached and asked; "Have you searched them", to which one of the other cops replied; "Not as good as you do it". Now as you can probably see all of us were imagining the gloves coming out and then some poking in not so nice areas.....but the only thing that happened was that everything we had in our pockets was taken out and inspected.

Once my pockets were emptied the guy continued over to Magnus. While he was searching him, Magnus turned around looked at him and asked; "Man, how tall are you?" to which the cop replied in a not so nice tone; "Does that f\*\*\*\*\*g matter??" Magnus quickly faced the car again and said no.

After we had been searched they started going through the car with a flashlight, looking all over the place, even leaning the backseat forward and reaching into the trunk and grabbing some beers we had there. I was under the impression that cops weren't allowed to search the trunk but I wasn't going to start telling them that right then. When he got the beers out he started asking us; "Did you stash the beers back there when you saw us coming?" Yeah right....because we had that sort of time before we got harrassed.

We were searched and the car was searched.....what now, we still had no clue of what was going on, they didn't tell us why they had stopped us or what they were suspecting us for. And they now starting asking us about gang tattoos....gimme a break, we showed them all of our tats, nothing to hide and no gang tats either.

Then the huge cop starts asking me; "So you were at a game tonight?", we had told them that already, I even had a Barcelona shirt on and we all still had the ticket stubbs in our pockets (well, the stubbs were now together with the rest of our stuff on top of the car). He then grabbed my camera and asked; "Mind if I check though you photos", and then without waiting for an answer started looking at the latest taken photos. Of course I mind, those are personal and you can't look through them.....is what I wanted to say, but I said; "Sure, go ahead".

I even tried to show him how to do it and he just told me to stay against the car.



The first photos that came through were the ones taken outside the stripclub, since so much of the Sopranos takes place on the outside and the back we had taken photos of that.....I told him that he had to continue to get to the game and he then asked; "you don't want me to look at these photos is that it???".....whatever!

So he checked out the photos and there was a shot of my two brothers and Magnus and them making some sort of gesture with their hands.....yup you got it, now the cop starting asking us what that meant, if it was some sort of gang related gesture etc. etc.

We eventually were allowed to leave but still with no explanation, we were just asked what we were doing in that part of town at that time of night....

So, we were harrassed something silly!!! We had done nothing wrong and we weren't even legally too drunk to drive since in NJ the level is 0.08. Only in the US of A!! Once we got home we were all pissed off over what had happened, but what can we do about it, if you live in a police state that's what you're going get.

Sunday we got up early again and left for the city again, this time we went all the way up to the Upper West side, had a stroll through Columbia Uni and then checked out the diner from Seinfeld. We ended up sitting at a different place for lunch and the service was so bad and so slow that we ended up leaving the place without leaving any tip whatsoever.

I hate the tipping policy in this country....15-20% is what you have to give. No way....we both looked at each other, talked about the service and didn't leave as much as a penny too much for them.

The rest of the day we spent walking Central Park, Little Italy and Chinatown and finally ended up at Evans place where we rented a few movies and just chilled in front of the TV.



Monday was his last day and we didn't do much, relaxed most of the day and then took him to the airport. I later recieved an email from him telling me that he was very popular with the story about the cops.

Imagine that....

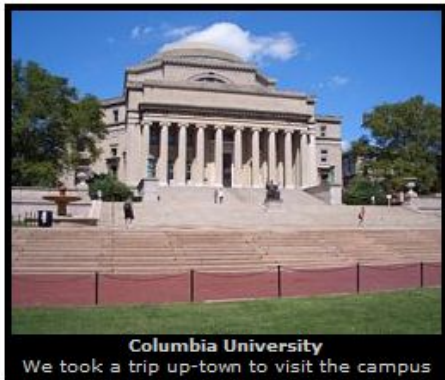


**Mud Coffee**  
Still the best coffee in town!



**Rockefeller Tower**  
Now re-open after some 20 years...







**Back at Strawberry fields**  
Another day...



**Mulberry Street**  
Right in the middle of Little Italy



**Little Italy**  
Very touristic and tacky



**They really are serious about the parking**  
We found this sign in Chinatown!



**Small Cop Cars**  
I don't think I've seen smaller than this...

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