

## Rudy Brueggemann, Feb. 2004

**Scene:** David Ben-Gurion International Airport, near Tel-Aviv, Israel.

**Date:** Monday, Feb. 10, 2004, approximately 1:45 a.m.

**Location:** The unloading area, immediately after passing through the heavily armed entrance for taxis and shervut (van taxis).

**Situation:** A white shervut unloads. The passengers include: three native Spanish-speaking Jewish men, each around 17 years old or 18 (they are Hasidic, with long locks); a Hasidic Jewish family, whose nationality remains unclear, as they speak only Hebrew in the car; an American Jewish man in his late 50s wearing a black beret; and a man in his early 60s, likely an Israeli Jew. I am the other passenger. We all unload our luggage. I am the first to get my one bag and make it to the perimeter area of the entrance area. A man in a windbreaker jacket motions for me to stop. All the other passengers in my bus pass by.

Q: Where are you going?

A: I'm catching the 5:40 flight to Amsterdam.

Q: May I see your passport?

(Passport handed over, with entry card and visa stamped on passport).

Q: You have a ticket?

(Copy of E-ticket is given to the man)

Q: This is all you have?

A: Yes, that is all they give you with an E-ticket?

The man reviews the documents and looks back at me. He leafs through the passport and sees nearly all the pages are stamped. He looks at the picture, and then looks at me again in the eyes, and back again at the photo.

Q: Wait over here please (pointing to a spot a few feet away).

I wait. In the meantime he briefly asks for the destination and documents of a woman from Argentina. She is traveling alone. He looks at her visa and lets her through. He waves to a second man who comes over. The two talk quickly in Hebrew. The second man looks at me. Now, the second man arrives. He is smaller, about 5'8". He doesn't smile.

Q: What is your name?

A: Martin Rudolf Brueggemann.

Q: Where are you coming from?

A: I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean? Do you mean my country? My hotel?

Q: Yes, your country?

A: I'm American.

Q: May I see your passport and tickets?

He is handed my passport and my entry card and E-ticket confirmation. He rifles through all the pages. He stops to stare at the Rwanda and Vietnamese visas. They are the largest in the passport.

Q: Where did you come from tonight?

A: Jerusalem.

Q: You were staying with friend?

A: No, in a hotel.

Q: What was the name of this hotel?

A: The Lutheran Hospice?

Q: How long were you staying there?

A: Since I came to Israel?

Q: Yes, since you came to Israel?

A: Four nights.

Q: How did you come to the airport?

A: I took a shared taxi from Jerusalem.

Q: Did anyone give you a gift, any package, anything before packing your bags?

A: No.

Q: You are sure, nothing?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you pack your luggage?

A: Yes.

Q: Was your luggage with you at all times?

A: Yes, it was?

Q: Was it with you in the taxi?

A: Yes, it was with me the whole time.

Q: Where?

A: In the back of the taxi, with the luggage from all the other passengers.

Q: Do you have a weapon?

A: No.

Q: No weapon, not even a pocket knife?

A: No, but I do have this (I say, and lean to the side, showing my tripod that is tucked to the side of my backpack).

Q: Where have you been in Israel.

A: Jerusalem, The Negev, Mamshit, Advat, Mitspe Ramon.

Q: How long have you been in Israel?

A: Nine days.

Q: These are the only places you have visited? You have not visited anywhere else?

A: As you can see by the passport, I visited Jordan.

Q: Why did you got to Jordan?

A: To see the beautiful ruins of Petra and take a trip in the Wadi Rum.

Q: Do you have any friends in Jordan?

A: No?

Q: Did anyone give you any package there, any letter to deliver to anyone in Israel?

A: No.

Q: So, you know no one there?

A: No.

Q: Did you go to Bethlehem?

A: No.

Q: Do you know anyone in Israel?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Do you speak Hebrew?

A: No, I don't.

Q: And you are traveling alone?

A: Yes?

Q: Why did you come here?

A: Tourism.

Q: You are not afraid of terrorism?

A: No. But, I am afraid of Israeli drivers.

Q: Why did you come to Israel now?

A: Because this was the only time I could get my frequent flier tickets booked.

Q: Are you a journalist?

A: No, I am not?

Q: You travel a lot?

A: I guess.

Q: So, you are sure you are not a journalist?

A: No.

Q: But I see you have camera equipment?

A: Yes, I like to take pictures, and this is the Holy Land.

Q: And you know no one here?

A: No, I don't.

Q: What is your job?

A: I am the media, cultural, public, and public affairs officer for the Canadian Consulate General of Seattle.

Q: You are Canadian?

A: No, I work for the Consulate, but I am an American citizen. Do you want to see my card?

The answer is "yes." The security officer, who has never identified himself or who he worked for or what he was doing, takes my card. There, on the card, it reads I am who I claimed to be. "OK," he says, giving me back my card and looking the other way.