

Michael Plasmeier

Cobb

World Cultures

4 Dec 2006

## A Peaceful Vacation

As I stepped off the plane in the Abu Dubai airport (AUH) I was amazed. The place was brand new and clean. I hardly even realized that I was in the Middle East, the most troubled spot in the world. Why, then, had the State Department warned me not to come here! I don't see any trouble, where's the conflict? Iraq, I guess, but I planning to steer clear of Iraq! I know I read about it every day in the newspapers, but I don't see any problems here. I'm really only planning to stay in Israel. The pictures I saw of Israel seemed pretty nice. It looked calm there. But then again, I also wanted to see other parts of the Middle East, so I chose to fly to Abu Dubai and drive to Israel. This will give me a flavor of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the occupied Palestinian territories. Any trouble, I expect, happens on this part of the trip.

I left the airport and started my drive through the Middle East. Abu Dubai was a busy, modern city. It seemed very western to me with all of the luxury hotels and skyscrapers. The place seemed like New York except much cleaner and newer. How could they possibly tolerate terrorism here? Commerce and oil are king in this town; it seemed very stable.

I soon moved along into Saudi Arabia. However, I had a little problem at the border. They confiscated my bottle of liquor I was planning to bring home as a gift! They claimed that the entire country was dry! I remember hearing about the prohibition in the US and the problems that it caused. I wonder how Saudi Arabia could cope. I would soon find out, as I rolled across the border.

A desert covers most of this country. It seems to go on forever like the ocean back home. What would happen if you got lost in it? No thank you! Big expanses of sand dunes stretch for as far as the eye can see in either direction. It feels scary!

Sharia law runs Saudi Arabia. <sup>It is</sup> It's this strict religious code enforced by the government, a monarchy. <sup>you are</sup> If you're caught stealing, they will cut your hand off. No thank you! No wonder they warned me about stay away from trouble with the police. Overall, however, I like Saudi Arabia. They use oil to finance their future, like the UAE.

Lastly on my tour, I crossed through the the occupied Palestinian territories. This place seems like a empty wasteland, except people live <sup>ok</sup> here. In addition, Israeli tanks roll down the street and Israeli planes thunder overhead. Every <sup>third</sup> 3rd building has some kind of hole in it, most caused by bombs and guns. How could these people put up with living in this environment?

By this time, I wanted to stop somewhere for lunch. I didn't see a single decent place to stop. There wasn't a McDonald's or <sup>?</sup> western restaurant for miles around. The only half-decent looking place seemed boarded up and closed. All of the other places seemed too dirty. I would not even go near them, let alone eat there. Think of all of the diseases those places must harbor!

My stomach growled as I entered Israel. But I momentarily lost my hunger as I noticed a <sup>difference</sup> big difference in the landscape between here and Palestine. The streets crawled with people. The farms overflowed full of food and colors. Water existed everywhere. I heard that once a desert existed here, but I don't see any evidence of one. I even counted a few McDonald's in the city. This country seemed like Dubai or America. In fact, I'm starting to like this place. They even have malls with my favorite designer stores like Gucci in the capital, Tel Aviv. I could definitely live here! "Why can't Palestine look like this place," I thought as I entered McDonald's.

? mark there?

UAE? Explain what it stands for.  
 United Arab Emirates ← don't really need to, already said it.  
 see

**Boom!** All of a sudden, a suicide bomber detonated right in front of me! Thoughts flashed through my mind! I had never <sup>known</sup> know this sort of horror! Against my better judgment, I ran to the scene of the explosion. Blood and glass flew everywhere! A small crater stood in the road with a twisted pile of metal of where once a car had existed. Smoke smoldered up from the wreckage. The police arrived quickly. They ordered everyone back, afraid another suicide bomber would take advantage of the crowd. I quickly decided to leave in fear of my life. The next day, most of the people in the city acted as if nothing much had happened. In America after 9/11, the response differed greatly! How could this not affect the spirit of the Israeli's??? The mood in Tel Aviv seemed so normal! How could these people not let this tragedy affect them? What's more, how could these people live with the constant fear of death day after day?

I guess I would so on find out! I decided to do what the Israelis did, and not let the bombing scare me. So I decided to continue my vacation. The next day I went parasailing! It felt great feeling the wind in my hair. I totally forgot about what had happened yesterday! I guess that the Israelis feel like this after every suicide attack!

The day after that, I <sup>went down</sup> want to the Khamat Gader water park. The next day I stopped at several of the 133 museums in Israel. <sup>kind of confusing</sup> 11 They looked just like the ones at home. <sup>oops forgot to remove</sup> Jerusalem, a mixture of old and new, I went to next. <sup>used</sup> The Temple Mound, I learned, has lots of volatility. The Muslim Dome of the Rock now stands where the old Jerusalem Temple use to stand. The Jews believe that that the third temple needs to exist here for the Messiah to come. The Muslims seem quite happy with their place of worship currently. In fact, some historians put the destruction of the Dome of the Rock as the most likely cause of World War <sup>three</sup> 3. I hope I'm not around when that happens!

Sadly, my vacation ended too soon. It went so fast, the way all vacation<sup>s</sup> do. In fact, I had a quite normal trip, except for that incident. But now, it's time to leave. Overall, I'm leaving happy; I had lots of fun in Israel. I also had fun on the drive through Dubai, Saudi Arabia and the occupied Palestinian territories; it opened my eyes to the problems of the Middle East. But I think about what it would feel like to live with such volatility day in and day out! How would it feel to know that suicide bombers might explode in front of you without notice! These poor people live with this fear for their entire lives. I would not want to live with this instability in Philadelphia! I would die everyday from the fear of death! No thank you!

14 to be verbs

This paper captures exactly what an American traveler would think  
 - Good - Place

- I purposely used to-be verbs, contractions, and 3e #s to further characterize this American narrator.