

**Subject:** Mexican Bandits and marines

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> Here is a more coherent description of the events of August 23,2010.

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> My family ( Mom and Dad and I) drove down to Puerto Vallarta,  
> Jalisco, in July from Alberta--in my Toyota Highlander--- for  
> our vacation. On the return trip on August 23 2010, we were set  
> up at a gas station outside of Mazatlan. (I believe the bandit  
> network is sourced from the gas stations.) About 5 K's  
> north of Matzatlan we crested a hill on the tollway and in the  
> dip 4 armed bandits (some masked) held us up at gunpoint (  
> uzzis or some such "long Guns" as they are referred to down there.)

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> Two bandits approached us with their guns trained on us.They  
> were wearing pretend policeman's uniforms. They wanted my  
> vehicle and screamed and yelled and smashed at the windows of  
> the car with the butts of their long guns while intermittently  
> pointing them at us, in our faces, through the glass. I refused  
> to open the doors or unlock the car. There are 9 bruises in the  
> window glass on the passenger side from the big bandit's gun  
> butt hitting it repeatedly. He was one very frightening masked  
> bandit who was about 6'3" and 230 pounds or so and very dark, a  
> Mexican who would be easy to spot anywhere. My dad opened his  
> door and he was dragged down the highway by one of the  
> masked bandits at gunpoint. My Mom then decided we should let  
> them have the car. She expected Dad to be executed at short range  
> at any moment. The big masked bandit ripped at her neck  
> where she was wearing a long gold chain. She gave it to him at  
> gunpoint. He leaned across her and tried to steal the car  
> keys--only got Matthew's rabbit--Mom and I were smashing on him  
> to keep him from getting the keys. He looked up at me with his  
> masked face--- eyes surprised! Matthew--our big guardian angel!

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> In the meantime a truckload of Mexican Marines drove by and did  
> nothing. Nor did the bandits appear to even react, the  
> first time. We were astounded that these so-called protectors  
> just simply drove past and didn't even change speed or react  
> either to a clear hold-up in progress.

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> Then another truckload of Mexican Marines came by on the other  
> side of the tollway, stopped their truck and started shooting.

> There was an exchange of gunfire for a few moments.  
>  
> 2 of the bandits jumped in the ditch, 2 more took off in their  
> getaway car. The bandits were not shooting at us--they were  
> gone. We jumped in the car to escape.  
>  
> The Marines had shot out my driver's window ( the shots came  
> from their side) while we were trying to get the papers and our  
> purses out of the car. When the bandits took off Dad shouted to  
> get back in the car and to "GO, GO, GO". I jumped back  
> into the driver's seat landing in a seat full of broken glass.  
> As I was trying to start the vehicle my mom yelled for me to  
> "GET DOWN" because the marines were shooting. I hunched down  
> just as a Marine bullet grazed my head ( bled all over my shirt)  
> and went through the top of the windshield quickly followed by  
> another bullet. They, the Marines, put 3 bullets through the  
> windshield and bullets into the back window and through the body  
> of my Toyota ripping up a lot of things in the luggage,  
> including putting large holes right through Mom's CDN dollar  
> travelers cheques ( which were uncashable in Puert Vallarta at  
> the Mexican banks). By my count a minimum of 9 bullets went into  
> or through the car. They were whizzing everywhere while I was  
> driving down the road. The bandits were nowhere to be seen--they  
> were long gone. I drove like a mad demon to the toll station  
> where we got behind a gated locked . My mother went into shock as  
> soon as I started driving with all the bullets flying past us  
> and shook like a leaf from top to bottom and her blood pressure  
> was off the map when the medics got to her at the toll station (  
> Marmol--25 K's from the entrance) . She is 86. Dad is 90 and  
> needs a walker or a cane to walk.  
>  
> There is an overpass on the tollway after this holdup spot where  
> it is possible to leave the tollway. I did not see the bandits'  
> car again but a big red truck going even faster than I was went  
> past us and was so close to us I thought he would take off the  
> side view mirror. My Mother thought he was trying to run  
> us off the road and into the ditch. He went through the toll  
> booth and continued down the tollway. The truck was a big Ford  
> or something and a very pretty cherry red.  
>  
> My mom has PTSD and I am not particularly well.

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- > We spent several days giving police reports in Mazatlan after
- > having been escorted back there by the army---- ready in full
- > attack mode. The Marines refused to talk about why they were
- > shooting us, I understand, but I was a nano-second ( and
- > one quick dip) away from being killed. Now just get
- > headaches. The local Mexicans were up in arms at tourists being
- > shot by their own Marines for no reason, I was told. It's clear
- > that the Mexicans themselves have no real protection with
- > Marines like that.
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- > The minister of Tourism or his representative has agreed to
- > reimburse me for all related expenses. I do not have that
- > agreement in writing but do have the name and email of the
- > representative to contact, which I will do when I know what they are.
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- > Since the windows of my Toyota (3) were shot out and there was
- > only one toyota window ( driver's window) in Toyota glass in
- > Mexico, the glass shop in Mazatlan had to find the windshield
- > and the rear window in California and have them shipped down.
- > The windows were held up at mexicali in customs-hence the
- > delay. Then the Canadian consulate helped me find a driver to
- > bring my Highlander back----hopefully soon. I need to be
- > available to pay him and to get him back on a plane back home.
- > The vehicle apparently was driven across the US border at 4 PM
- > on Saturday, but I have not heard a word since the one report I
- > received from Josee at DEFAIT ( confirmed by the consular agent
- > in Mazatlan). I expect the driver to have the car here to-day or
- > else there is another problem to deal with.
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- > The Mexican Federales Chief of Police personally had the bullet
- > holes ( on the outside) repaired so that the US customs would
- > permit my vehicle into the country.
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- > So it was pretty much a disasterous end to a beautiful trip.
- > Mexican tollways are not safe, as touted, the gang wars
- > around Mazatlan are fierce and the only way to go to Mexico , in
- > my opionion, is to fly in and fly out, or take a ship. I
- > have had numerous call on this from all over north america.
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- > A similar incident happened to a Canadian couple from Victoria

> in April in the exact same place and exact same way, again in  
> the middle of the day, but they lost their new truck, all  
> contents and their 3 dogs--and they were left by the side of the  
> road. When they returned home they told me they were called  
> liars and no one would publish their story. Apparently they  
> reported their experience to their MP in Victoria but nothing  
> was done. They called me the night the Global News reported the  
> incident and said they have not gotten over being robbed at  
> gunpoint on the Maxipista since it happened in April of 2010.  
> They too own property in Mexico.

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> The Mexican Governments at all levels--city, state and  
> federal are well aware ( or should be) that the spot where we  
> were stopped by the bandits at gunpoint on the Maxipista (   
> privately owned by-the-way) north of Mazatlan for these hold-ups  
> is a "sweet" spot. They should also know that tourists are being  
> cased and set up out of the gas stations by attendants or window  
> washers. They have done nothing to warn or protect  
> innocent travelers there. On the contrary, representations are  
> made on the internet that the tollroads are the safe way to  
> drive. What a very bad joke. But then the private owner is  
> collecting his tolls. He doesn't seem to care who gets hurt or  
> killed, nor did with the Marines who shot us.

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> There appears to be a very serious problem with the  
> Mexican Marines. There was NO reason for them to shoot at us--  
> the bandits were gone! We are as gringo looking as you can  
> imagine: 2 blondes and a 90 year old man who can't walk well and  
> who has white hair. There was no way we could be mistaken as  
> drug dealers, a fact which the army interpreter confirmed to me  
> in front of his superior officer, as did the Prosecutor's office  
> and others.

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> Both my mother and I are getting help with the aftermath. I am  
> waiting to get my car back, waiting to be reimbursed for all the  
> expenses, waiting for an explanation why nothing has been done  
> about warning Canadian travelers enough about the dangers of  
> highway travel in Mexico ( the US travel site is far more  
> explicit in its warnings) and particularly about that "sweet"  
> spot for hold-ups, why that huge bandit has not been  
> apprehended, but most importantly, why the Mexican Marines shot

- > us and an apology from the Mexican Government.
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- > I was told by many Mexicans, including the prosecutor's office
- > in Sinaloa, that this is the first time the marines have shot at
- > tourists. There is no rational excuse for this--none.
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- > Signed: (Name withheld lest she be accused of lying)