



One Long Day

Living out of town had triggered an early morning on November 9th as I made my way to the Calgary airport. Today's destination was the 2008 SEG conference. After a brief stop in Denver I was to head directly to Las Vegas. The brief stop took 2 1/2 hours and a gate change. It also begged the question why did I even have to go to Denver? Oh well!, at least I was on my way again. After a short shuttle bus ride I arrived at the MGM Grand. With suitcase in hand I joined what looked like 1,000 other guests waiting to be checked in. It seems that the computer system had crashed and the hotel was about to manually check us all in. After 3 hours in line it was obvious that the process wasn't working all that well. I cast my eyes to the ceiling and wondered why Bugsy Siegel had ever made this desert town famous.

Las Vegas was established as a city in 1905. I was told, by a hospitality guide, that its existence was largely tied to the railway needing a stopover between Salt Lake City and San Bernadino in California. Regardless, the legalization of gambling in 1931 had a lasting impact on the city. Fifteen years later and the aforementioned Mr. Siegel opened up the Flamingo Hotel. Along with some of his friends the Strip was soon developed and as one might say, the rest is history. Today, Las Vegas is home to some of the largest hotels in the world and claims 2 million residents in the greater metropolitan area. Certainly an appropriate setting for a band of hard working geophysicists to congregate.

Continuing to stand in line my mind went back to previous SEG conventions. When I started my career back in 1976 I was too young to really appreciate the SEG Convention that was held in Calgary the following year. It didn't, however, take too long to realize that every year the senior members of our profession would head off to some location south of the border. In a sense it became the technology Super Bowl for many of us. If you worked hard, had a financially successful year, and your manager liked you then you might get to go. Aside from the technical aspect of the show it was with great anticipation I went to Las Vegas in 1983 followed by Atlanta and Washington in ensuing years. As for Las Vegas, not being a gambler it was to be my only visit until I returned in 2008.

Well it has now been 3 1/2 hours of standing in line and I wish I had never heard of an SEG convention. Furthermore, what would ever have induced a movie studio to think that they could manage a hotel. Of more immediate concern I noticed some in line behind were becoming very restless. I also noticed that the hotel had brought in additional security in

the event the remaining 985 of us didn't get a room fairly soon. It occurred to me they could be put to more productive use in checking us in. Not to worry I'm sure they know what they are doing. After all any hotel named after a studio responsible for the critically acclaimed *Basic Instinct 2* must have some management expertise!

After 4 hours I finally arrive at the front of the line. After providing my reservation information to the young lady at the counter the defining moment of the day occurred. After hearing my voice the couple behind me enquired if I was a Canadian.

"Yes, I am", I replied.

The lady's husband stared at me and asked, "Is it true that Canadians don't like Americans?"

I took a good look at him. He looked to be in his mid-40's. I estimated him to be about 5'10" and 230 pounds and he certainly had an affinity for tattoos. (N.B. I've used Imperial measurements, because that is what my mother taught me) I put a smile on my face and responded.

"Absolutely no, that is not true, but I've heard that there may be some discontent in Europe!"

Fortunately the young lady returned and after 4 1/2 hours I was in my room. All was forgiven and I was off to the Icebreaker. After 30 years in our industry it is still amazing to see the sheer breadth of our business. For the next couple of hours the intent will be to rekindle as many distant friendships as possible. We all share some commonality regarding the state of the business. Inevitably we complain but we do it with a laugh. It is very satisfying to see the number of Canadians who have distinguished themselves in our profession throughout the world. Coupled with what seems to be a large contingent from Canada, it makes you feel right at home.

After numerous reunions the Icebreaker is beginning to break-up. Attendees are heading in many directions until morning when they will return. It is then that I become all too aware that I have been up for over 19 hours. All the waiting I endured has receded into the background. Anticipating a long day tomorrow I calculate that the best course of action for me might be returning to my room. I could grab something to eat and see if there is a James Bond movie on one of those numerous channels. MGM sure knows how to make good movies. *R*

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