

An Afternoon With The FBI

It seemed like something out of a movie, our visit to the local FBI office yesterday. Except that it wasn't a movie, and the office wasn't exactly local...

Let me back up. It's December, and don't you know, that seems to signal a yearly torrent of bad luck thrown our way. Shortly after turning the page on our calendar this month, we found out (among other things) that my husband's website (and our family's livelihood) had been attacked. And I don't mean a little harmless virus or an annoying spam attack – it's a DDoS – simply put, someone targeted this website, and essentially used thousands of computers around the world to overload this website and crash the server. It's enough of an incident to capture both the interest of the local media and the FBI, both of whom politely requested interviews yesterday. So we drove out to the city, found the government building that houses the FBI offices, walked inside and checked with the doorman who wanted to know who we were there to see.

"I have an appointment with Mr. X at the FBI (*name changed for privacy*)." said my husband, and once it was confirmed that he was on the list, the doorman stated that he "would get us up." He led us to the elevator and punched in a special code – can't just push the floor number for the FBI these days it seems. We got off the elevator and waited around for a few minutes, entertained by the FBI's 10 Most Wanted posters. One in particular caught my husband's eye. "Doesn't that look like our neighbor?" He asked me, and I had to agree. I began to read the description and was surprised to see that it did seem to describe our neighbor – he's into sports like golf and dirt-biking, and it's strange because my husband and I would often notice the neighbor packing up his car for weekend trips and coming back, unloading things like helmets, golf clubs, and lots of other sporting equipment. Such is life when you

don't have kids, we thought, and I guess you should know that the reason we pay so much attention to this neighbor's activities is because he happens to have a nasty cat that terrorizes our neighborhood. So while keeping tabs on [that darn cat](#), we've observed some of our ~~most-wanted~~ neighbor's behavior. The kicker of this whole coincidence is that the Wanted-by-the-FBI guy was listed as possibly having bi-sexual tendencies, and that fits in with what we've seen about our neighbor as well. Don't get me wrong, I don't think it's him, but it was an entertaining wait, to say the least.

So then an agent comes out of a door and asks if we've been helped. We said not yet and repeated the name of the agent we were there to see. We were led to a door, and there was a sophisticated series of security measures that the man went through to enter (not going to repeat them here on the internet out of respect for the security of the FBI – not that I even knew what he was doing anyway). In this small waiting area, there was a metal detector, which began to go crazy every time this guy went near it – I forgot to mention that he's carrying 2 or 3 very large bags. He disappears behind a door, and the man we were supposed to meet with appears and introduces his assistant – a lady carrying a notepad, a pen, and oh yeah, I shouldn't forget to mention the large gun she was packing tucked into the back of her skirt. What kind of assistant is that?!?



Two of the most famous fictional FBI agents in pop culture history: Agents Mulder and Scully from the X-Files. Ok, so our agents were not Mulder and Scully, but I

couldn't resist making the comparison.

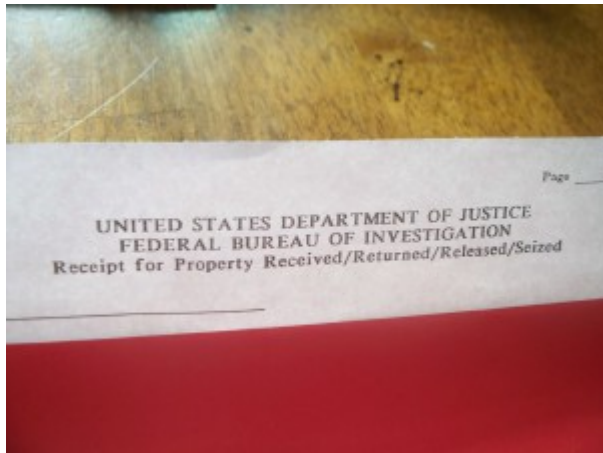
So we go into a conference room of sorts, and the interview begins. The agent and his assistant are not unfriendly, and they want to know the facts of the case. They are both taking notes, but probably most surprising to us is the absence of laptop computers – these FBI guys (from the cyber crimes division) are taking notes with pens on Steno pads, and that's not even a joke. But it is hilarious.

The entire day had a Men in Black-like feel... If you've seen the movie, then you remember the part where Will Smith is recruited to be a man in black – he goes to this bland looking government building that turns out to be very sci-fi on the inside with all the security measures and things like that. Such was the case here – lots of doors, signs about authorization, keypads, things like that, very sci-fi, and my husband told the agent so at the end of the interview. Mr. X seemed to chuckle (we wondered on the way home, are FBI agents trained to drain themselves of personality?), and he told us that we could just take the elevator back downstairs, no special code needed – thanks for the advice.

All in all, a very interesting trip. Made me want to do things like see Salt (a movie about the FBI) or read [Special Agent: My Life on the Front Lines as a Woman in the FBI](#) again. Did the FBI interview do any good for my husband's business? We don't know yet. It depends if they catch the people who are doing it. The FBI disclaimed several times that it doesn't seem as if the damages the business has incurred will be recovered, and we of course are praying otherwise. Whatever happens, this is part of learning to trust God's plan for us, isn't it? Easier said than done. I'm really hoping that the stress on my husband dissipates soon...

And oh yeah, a little souvenir from the FBI (the property we gave them was received and not seized, in case you are

wondering):



I hate bureaucracy

Yes, hate- a strong word for someone such as myself. Here's the new thing in IL- mess up and forget to register your plates on time and you have to jump through bureaucratic hoops. I noticed yesterday my plates were expired. Oops- they sent me notice two months ago but it got buried and forgotten. No problem, I'll just go to the currency exchange to reregister as I always do. Nothing doing apparently- now they require an emissions test first. What? Of course, with expired plates it's illegal to drive there. So what do they do? Make available temporary registration that I'm told will only allow me to legally drive to the test facility, nowhere else. Are they convenient to obtain? This is government we're talking about, so what do you think? I drove to the local DMV which I *thought* was full service. Nope. They gave me the addresses of the three closest places- all over 20 miles away (in Chicago traffic remember!). So I'm left with a choice- knowingly drive illegally to the test station and hope they don't check the registration, or jump through this latest hoop and hope I can still get registered before the price-

increase deadline. Nanny states- why many people love them I will never know. Conservativism clearly rules the day here.

to DTV or not to DTV

Another political post in two days? Wow! What is up with that? Just this, for at least the few months local television stations have been pushing the switch to DTV in Feb 2009. I purchased my digital converter before any local stations were using any sort of signal strength on the digital side. On Feb 18 2009, the signals on all the digital channels should have been boosted to a higher level when the old analog signals were shut off. Our congress, in the infinite wisdom (sarcasm!!!), decided it would be a good idea to delay the switch. ARRGH!!!!!! The president will probably sign this bill. ARRRRGH!!!!!!!!!!

So instead of getting better signal strength on the 18th of February, I'll be stuck with what I currently get. I live out in the middle of nowhere (I like that, so I'm not moving) and I can't get cable. I live in the middle of the woods so satalite TV is out, unless I want to cut down some very large and living trees (I don't). So I'm stuck with the signal I can get over the air.

I did my part. I got my new antenna (the old one would have never gotten a good digital signal). I got my converter box.

I'm just waiting to get all the local channels. 1 station still hasn't upped their signal to something I can get. 3 others are hit and miss right now. I can only get 1 station most of the time. I was hoping to get all of them in the middle of February. Can I say ARRRGHH!!! again?

I'm really not sure why anyone who watches TV enough to miss

it, could miss the fact that digital TV is coming. It has been forced down our throats over and over again, commercial after commercial (I was hoping they would stop soon). Now those will probably continue until some time in June. All because of a supposed 6.5 million people who aren't ready for the switch. My question is: "Where the heck were they for the past 6 months". Get your government coupon early we were told. Get ready for the switch was said. DTV is coming on Feb 18. Now we will get those same messages for the next 5 months.... GRRRR...

The Federal Government forced this switch on us years ago.

Saying we had to keep up with the technology. That started over 10 years ago. I'm sure that the way technology goes, there could be something better for transmission by now if somebody wanted to develop it. 10 years is a long time for tech stuff. Don't ge me wrong, I'm all for the digital TV, but this switch really should have been done a long time ago.

I'm just worried that this will go the way of the metric system. We've all seen how far that went. So in 50 years will we still have analog TV and Digital TV side by side? I wouldn't bet against it.