

## Iberostar Paraiso – Sexual Assault – October 19, 2010

I post my story as an obligation to women. This has never been my generalized feel for Playa del Carmen, Mexico, but this incident occurred to ME personally just 3 months ago. Since nothing has been done by the resort to apprehend the individual, I feel it is my duty to warn other women traveling to this specific property.

I am a single mom with 2 girls and travel solo yearly to the Playa area for a few days of much needed R & R. I have NEVER feared for my safety and always felt equally safe in Playa as I do my own home town of Plano, Texas.....until recently.

I arrived at the Iberostar Paraiso Maya on October 16, 2010 for 4 nights. On my 3<sup>rd</sup> night at the resort, I decided to go OUT to dinner rather than order room service. I met up with some people I had met that day by the pool, and we went to the disco on the property. Upon arriving safely back to my building by the property trolley, I went up to my room and my key was deactivated and not working (for the 2nd time since at the resort).

By the time I got back down, the trolley was long gone, and I therefore had no choice but to walk back to the lobby for a new key. It was very late, but since there is so much security at this property, I felt perfectly safe. The Iberostar is a HUGE resort of 5 different properties known in its entirety as Iberostar Paraiso in Paraiso Beach.

While walking back I saw a security guard and asked him to point me in the right direction of the Maya lobby. He pointed me down the path which I was headed and continued to follow me. I kept asking him if I was getting close, and he just kept pointing and nodding me forward. He started saying 'Sexa! Sexa!', which I naturally assumed was sex. I kept saying 'No!' He continued to repeat "Si, Si!" "Sexa!" and grabbed my arm and pulled me to him. I attempted to push him away, but he then grabbed my other arm. He forced me into the bushes in the 'jungle' and raped me.

As soon as he took his hold off of me, I RAN as fast as I could and ended up in the lobby of the Iberostar Grand screaming and crying about the incident that I had 'been raped by a security guard'. I asked the guards to please call the Police. They told me they would not do that. When they saw I had a bloody toe, they asked if I wanted to see a doctor they would call me a cab to take me to Hospiten in the town of Playa Del Carmen, about 20-30 minutes away. This was nowhere near feasible for me; all I wanted was to be in safety. I begged them again to call the police and they simply ignored me. They did NOTHING but talk on their walkie talkies for 10-15 minutes while I sobbed, and I was then escorted back to my room by 3 security guards. They told me a report was written up and I would be contacted by management first thing in the morning.

The next morning, I called and requested a female member of management please come to my room. Veronica Bianciotta arrived. She asked me what I needed, like she was completely CLUELESS to the situation. I told her I had been assaulted and I was very afraid for my health and asked her what I could do. She started advising me 'not to be out late at night by myself and to not take long walks on the beach'!!! When I told her I had been assaulted, she did not understand. She was absolutely FLOORED when I told her it was a rape, she told me the report had been written up as 'sexual harassment'!

Veronica became very concerned and contacted the US Consulate, Samantha, who soon called me to discuss my options under 'Mexico Law as a US Citizen'. And they were, in a nutshell, as follows:

- I needed to personally appear in the next 2 hours to the authorities in Cancun to make an Official Report. This would take several hours.
- I would need to see a doctor at the local hospital, Hospiten, as well as undergo a separate exam by a medical examiner for whom I would need to make an 'appointment' for the rape kit.

- I would need to extend my trip for 7-10 days to identify the perpetrator and give him his legal right to face me and personally plead his case in front of a judge.
- Several trips back to Mexico would be required over the next year or two to pursue the legal process.
- All of this needed to be initiated within the next 2 hours.

At the time, as a single woman alone in Mexico, ALL I wanted was to go home! Veronica tried to make me an appt with a recommended female Gynecologist, but she was not in that day. Only a male was on duty; I was told he could run tests, but they would all come back negative since it takes 2 weeks to get accurate results with testing done in Mexico. I decided to wait and see my own OB/GYN when I returned home the next day.

Samantha asked me if I could pick the guy out of a line up. At the time, I did not think I emotionally had it in me to do that. It was much too frightening and something I knew I could not face at the time alone. I just wanted to return home to safety and attempt to FORGET the entire incident. I truly envisioned that once I left Mexico, I could LEAVE it in Mexico and forget it FOREVER; my conscience had something else in mind!

Samantha told me if I got on that plane, that would be my decision and it would be a closed issue by Mexican law. At the time, I thought it would be a closed issue within myself as well. As my shock wore off, many details presented themselves that afternoon and evening. I became angry and felt very courageous and prepared to do the line up.

Upon my departure the next morning, I informed Veronica that I indeed COULD pick the man out of a LINEUP. And I NEEDED to do that to protect other girls and women at the resort. This was not something I could run from, as I realized how I was enabling the attacker to strike again, and that 'next time' could just be one of MY daughters. I gave her a very specific physical description. She told me she would speak with the General Manager, Jesus, about emailing me pictures to do the line up electronically. She gave me EVERY indication this would be handled accordingly and taken care of. And I had every confidence it would; after all, Iberostar DID get Hotel Chain of the Year 2009.

Upon my return to Texas, I IMMEDIATELY emailed Samantha, Veronica, and the General Manager of the property, Jesus Bosque, restating my position that I had no interest in taking this down a legal avenue; I ONLY wanted him removed from the resort so he could not strike again. I felt taking this measure I could gain closure that I did the best I could at the time.

Unfortunately, the buck stopped there. Iberostar would no longer communicate with me. I requested a copy of the report I made with the property and suddenly management was 'not able to find any report filed by you the night of the incident'. Instead I was referred me to their Insurance company and a Mr. Carlos Amezcua:

*'As this is a very delicate situation, we have turned it to our Insurance Company. Any further claims you should direct them to Mr. Carlos Amezcua [carlos.amezcua@willis.com](mailto:carlos.amezcua@willis.com).'*

A portion of his email is as follows:

*Given that your accusations are quite severe over one of the hotel's employees, we are giving formal notice of your demands to Paraiso Lindo' Mexican insurance company and their legal department in order to have their capabilities ready and set up when you decide to step forward on this and provide the basic support for further investigations.*

*Not having initiated the customary denounce procedure before the local police is preventing investigations to happen, and as you might be aware only until a Mexican judge has not convicted any suspected criminal, he or she cannot be considered as such. In this regard, you also have to be aware that using public or private web sites or other media tools to affirm allegations that have not been proved, that are partially true or untrue at all trying to deter potential consuming public from using someone's services could be construed as a crime itself and can be also prosecuted by instance of the affected entity as victim of defamation or blackmailing, also seeking to exhaust all available means to clarify responsibilities and can be entitled to fully recover any loss of income derived from such actions.*

This was when I KNEW I had no choice but to return to the area asap to make my formal declaration. Unfortunately, with a few Mexican holidays, as well as a personal matter the consulate had to tend to for 2 weeks in the States, I was unable to return for about 3 weeks. I did return on November 15, 2010 and made my declaration with the proper authorities.

Upon immediately supplying the formal declaration to both the resort and the Insurance company, as requested, I have yet to hear word nor receive a single acknowledgement to my claim.

I posted my story on Trip Advisor to warn other women against traveling to this property, only to have it removed and shut down within a few hours. I did this for several days in a row.....until my account and IP address were blocked from the site.

The last update from the Consulate in late December was the Iberostar Paraiso was refusing to work with local authorities in apprehending this monster who poses on property in the form of safety as a Security Guard.

Iberostar Paraiso 's 2010 marketing campaign in partnership with Antonio Banderas :

**'On vacation, we're all Stars' is the central theme of the campaign. It's key objective is to demonstrate the importance that Iberostar places on guest satisfaction and the vacation experience.**

According to Luis Herault, Chief Marketing Officer at IBEROSTAR Hotels & Resorts: "The star in IBEROSTAR's logo is much more than a brand; it reflects our philosophy and conviction that our clients are the real stars." Regarding the agreement with Antonio Banderas, Herault has stated, "Antonio Banderas and IBEROSTAR have many things in common: professionalism commitment to quality and passion for what we do in our respective fields, for this reason we could not have found someone who better represents the values of our company."

Quite ironic, in my opinion.....

35 year old Mom  
Plano, Texas