

Police Stop & Search

Anonymous



I thought I would share a rather unpleasant incident which happened to me in Sukhumvit yesterday. I have posted a similar post about it in the "Bangkok" section of Thaivisa.com, but please feel free to publish it yourself if you want to:

As the tourist season has now arrived, the incidences of police stop and search supposedly increase around this time of year, especially in the Sukhumvit Soi 22 area. I want to tell you about a bad experience that happened to me at 8pm on Friday night.

First of all, I would describe myself as a respectable clean-looking 45 year-old man who has been living here for the past 10 years.

I was just going out for the evening and I was walking down Sukhumvit Soi 20 when two policemen on a bike approached me and asked where I was going and if could they see my passport. I always carry a copy, so I showed them it. They then asked if they could search me. I asked whether they had warrants to which they replied no. I said they can, but not there, but I would be happy to go to Thonglor police station and do it there.

They said I was a good man because I knew the law and suggested we go to that police booth on the corner of Asoke junction. This was my big mistake because I should have insisted on going to the police station.

After we arrived at the police booth, they gave me a thorough search. They literally had their hands inside my pants feeling my bare ass. When all that was over they showed great interest in some ATM receipts in my wallet. They wanted to know how I had so much money in the bank (don't get me wrong, I don't have that much) and they said they wanted to go and search my room. I obviously refused and said they can't without a warrant and I wanted to go to the station. They radioed two more of their colleagues, who arrived and closely examined my ATM receipts. They too wanted to go and search my room. I refused and kept saying I wanted to go to the station.

The newly arrived police officers then wanted to search me again and at this point I thought they were going to try and plant something or set me up in some way so as to extort some money. Again I refused, saying I had already been thoroughly searched and I kept insisting I wanted to go the station. A few times I was threatened with being handcuffed, but throughout the whole procedure I kept polite, but was obviously very anxious and nervous.

It became a stalemate with them wanting to search me again, go to my apartment, and me wanting to go to the station and to now speak to the captain. They told me the captain was coming down to see me, which I didn't believe.

Luckily in talking to the head honcho, I was able to get out of the door and we were standing by the road and I was insisting we get a taxi to the station. He told me gently he just wanted to search me. Then I refused to go back into the booth, so one of the other officers put me in an arm lock whilst making threats, such as the police will kill me.

At this point I thought the only thing to do would be to draw attention to myself from passers-by, so I faked a collapse and lay unconscious on the floor. At this point the police panicked a bit and were shouting something which I couldn't understand, but it was about the embassy and how I had attacked the police first.

After a while I picked myself up off the ground and an English guy came over and asked me if I needed any help. I said please help me, probably in a rather garbled way, and he said he had a Thai friend who was a lawyer. He called her and she spoke to the police and we agreed to let the head honcho search me again with the English guy watching closely. The English guy kindly protested when they searched my groin and the officer backed off. After it was over, I was allowed to go and I was so grateful to the guy who came to my assistance. I would hate to think what would have happened otherwise.

Incidentally, a friend returned to the booth about 30 minutes later to try to find out their names. He knew it would be fruitless but he hoped to maybe get them thinking this was being taken further. By the time he arrived, he found they had just gone. He spoke to the lone traffic policeman in there, who wasn't involved in

anyway. The policeman actually said he felt quite sorry for me and if I want to make a complaint, I should go to the station. From what I've read, this can be a futile effort and will probably create more problems than it's worth. Also I don't have their names or numbers.

Anyway, I just thought I'd share a rather nasty experience I had and would like to thank the guy for coming to my assistance if ever he should read this.



Stickman's thoughts:

This is a very nasty situation and it sounds like you were a combination of clever and lucky to get away as you did.

As I have written in my weekly column in the past, a lot of foreigners have been stopped in the area from the Asoke intersection heading east, to sois 20 and 22. It doesn't seem to matter whether you're young or old, look respectable or disheveled, there's a chance the cops might try it on.

The big question is how you deal with it...

*For me, I *think* I would refuse, but it would depend on a number of circumstances from the way I read the situation to whether I had been drinking to various other factors. I never have anything illegal on me - have never done drugs in my life and don't use any prescription drugs so there's no issue there. But I'm a civil liberties kind of guy and don't like the idea of anyone searching me without valid reason or authority. I think what I would do is try to talk my way out of it and if that didn't work I'd call a friend who is a cop - not high-ranking but he is someone with whom I am good friends and I would simply pass the phone to the cops who had stopped me with him on the other end. I am sure that would be enough to end it there and then. If it didn't, hmmm, it might get interesting! It really is a situation I don't wish to experience... If I do, you'll read about it in my column!*

The one thing I will say is that I don't ever remember anyone ever having anything planted on them by Thai police - so that is one concern I think we can largely eliminate.

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