I had a problem that led to me having to flee paradise today. I called my friend the minister to tell him we were building a new design fishing boat with better fish storage and he was invited to see it launch. I expected him to be friendly as he usually is. Instead he asked where I was. I said I am at the factory. He asked “In Negambo?” I said no in… before I could finish he told me I had to answer to charges of being a spy. I asked what he meant. I told him I was not a spy and I thought we were friends. He replied telling me that the years I had spent there were as a spy and I used my friendship with him to be close to the government so I could spy for the enemy. Again a said I was not a spy. Again he told me I was a spy and that I should be locked up. Next he told me that I was to report to his office first thing in the morning to answer charges of espionage. I asked if I could make it the day after tomorrow because I was busy launching the new vessel. He told me if I did not report in the morning he would send the police to get me.

OH \*#&@^#\*# what was I going to do? I will tell you what I did. I booked the first flight out of there which was at 4:00 am the next day and hoped they did not have me on an airport watch list. I then left everything I had in the apartment and hopped on a trishaw to the Galle Face hotel. Before I arrived I stopped at the American embassy to tell them a minister accused me of spying. They would not let me in the gates instead over an intercom a US representative told me they warned me I should not have lived among the people and should have stayed in the American compound. You see they knew who I was and knew I ignored their warnings not to mingle with the locals. He then said don’t worry they already heard about it. It was due to the escalating war where everyone was being accused of being a spy. Come to think of it a lot of people were disappearing.

Since the embassy was no help I hid at the hotel. I called Ann to tell her I was leaving in a few hours and probably was not going to return. I reminded here that this in no way would stand in the way of bringing her to the US to marry me. I tried to bring her to the US on my last vacation but they would not grant her visa. Turns out no Sri Lankan can get a visa out of Sri Lanka. I remember contractors that worked for me telling me they had work visas for the US but could not get there because no airport stop along the way would allow them to pass through.

Ann found a way to visit me at the hotel before dark. She was in disguise and I do not blame here. It would devastate her reputation if anyone recognized here going into a hotel to visit an American. We talked for a while had diner and she left. I swore to here that as soon as I got to the US I would file a petition to bring her to the US to marry me. I do not think she believed me but acted as if she did.

While in the hotel after Ann left I called my usual driver to ask if he heard anything about why I was thought to be a spy. He came to meet me and he explained a lot that opened my eyes to how it came to be. It started with some videos I took when I came at the time of the Tsunami. When I first arrived my friend the minister told me to take pictures and videos of everything and get Americans to become interested in Sri Lanka and invest in building fishing fleets for Tuna. That is what I did. I took photos and video every time the minister and I would get together which was often as he and I inspected the devastation. We even posed together for the camera on occasions. Sometimes I would film as he was talking to other businessmen. I did not think he cared as he told me to get the attention of the Americans to invest in Sri Lanka, so I videotaped everything we did together.

Turns out the videos I took back then are now being viewed as me spying on the comings and goings of the minister in order to set him up for the enemy. I thought %@^#&#\* these ^^@%@#\* Ass&@##$^!\*s. I am not ever coming here again. My driver told me that was not the main reason the think I am a spy. I asked him to explain.

He asked me if I remember reading about the Phantom in the newspaper and how the Navy finally caught and sunk the boat that was launching attacks at night the disappearing out to sea. Yes, I remembered something about that. I remember articles in the paper and the news where there was a speed boat that would come to the harbors at night and attach floating bombs near the container ships. Whenever they would be spotted they would speed off into the sea and could not be caught.

I remember on night hearing a bomb go off in the harbor about five miles away and seeing reports it was a floating bomb left in the harbor by the Phantom. My driver then showed me a photo from the newspaper from last week where they finally caught up with the Phantom and had a battle at sea where they took a photo of the Phantom as it burned. Uh OH, is that what I think it is? It was a boat I made for some Indian Businessmen from the mainland of South India which was also the enemy base headquarters. They had told me they were from Bangalore and where making this boat for sport fishing in Chennai.

Well they were not business men they were terrorists who used the boat to attack the Navy and I was the guy who made it for them. Still it was an honest mistake, right? Then I remembered about a week ago several navy officers came to the factory and went to Chairman’s office they left then returned several times over a few days. I thought they were customers since the factory makes many boats for the Navy. But I sensed these visits were different, but could not out my finger on it so I ignored the signs.

My driver is also the driver for several Blue Star members and over heard what was being said. Turns out the Navy had found out the Phantom was made at Blue Star and that I was the one who made it. When meeting with the Navy officers the chairman and every executive at BSM distanced themselves from me saying they had no idea who I made the boat for that they had no control over what I did and I was out of control as far as they see it. Baloney ! They knew everything that was going on there. I could not get a nail or a piece of rope from stores unless they had a record of who was paying for it and who the customer was. They met with the buyers anyway. So when they put it all on me I knew I was their scape goat.

It all became clear that I had better get on that plane or I would disappear. At 2:00 am I hired a taxi to take me to the airport all the while looking over my shoulder. When I entered the airport I checked in without any luggage which immediately drew attention because who travels one way internationally without luggage? In this day and age they figure you’re a terrorist. They questioned me and I told them this was a family emergency. I sat is a locked room without windows for a few minutes while they checked me out. I thought I am going to miss my flight if I stay here any longer and if I had not left for the airport hours earlier when I did I would have missed my flight. Apparently either no one had put out a lookout for me yet or the minister let me go I do not know (Today I think the minister let me go). They let me out a 5 minutes before the flight left as I ran on board the plane and said farewell to paradise.