

ROSALIE DACE REFUSED ENTRY TO USA?



Note: This is NOT a political blog. Rosalie loves the USA, wants to return here to work, and to follow all the rules correctly. This is a problem for all International teachers going to many countries. We hope to help her and get the correct information to others to reduce problems in the future. **Please no political comments, solutions only.**

Rosalie tells her story...

"I appreciate the concern and support of so many people over my unfortunate experience in Seattle on Saturday July 6.

I understand that it is the duty and responsibility of officers at any entry point airport to determine who comes into a country. I also believe they have the authority to make judicious decisions on individual cases.

This event has clearly affected many more people than just me. Quilt conference organizers, colleagues, students, friends and anyone thinking of teaching in the future in the US could be impacted. To make things clear, here is my account of what happened.

On presenting myself and my documentation for admittance to the US, I was stopped, questioned, and sent for further screening. This involved two more interviews and, while it was definitely uncomfortable, the officers were clear, concise and abrupt, but no one was deliberately rude. They were probing in their questions, and asked several of the questions repeatedly. After travelling for many years with this visa, as anyone would, I felt surprised and anxious being cross-examined.

The issue of the wrong visa (B1/B2) was raised several times and this was the cause of my inadmissibility to the US, and subsequent deportation. It seems that this is an area of confusion even for American citizens, as well as visiting teachers. It is unclear what the correct visa is that allows one to visit AND teach. Technically, that is what I have done...visited with friends, sometimes for several weeks, travelled with them and taught in between. It is very costly to come back and forth for each individual teaching event. I have certainly never over-stayed my visit.

As a boringly law-abiding citizen I honestly thought I was totally legal. (I have never even had a speeding ticket, although I once got a parking ticket!). I thought a visa for Business and Pleasure meant I could be involved in the business of teaching. Evidently the definition does not mean 'business' as I know it. I tried to explain that I was well regarded in my field, and that this was clearly a misunderstanding or misinterpretation, but they were not willing to use their discretion to accommodate my case, and revoked my visa.

So technically, even though my visa was issued by the American Consulate, I needed another type of visa.

Of course the whole performance of being raced through the airport by two officers running through the crowd was unnerving to say the least. Having to be escorted onto and off each sector of my flights home with only my escort being given my documentation and Passport by the Purser was humiliating. I had to sign the transcript of my interview without having read it, and only actually saw it and my Passport once I got home. While I understand that that was the Protocol for deportation, I question whether it was really necessary to treat a 72 year old woman wearing compression stockings and alternately walking with a cane or in an airport wheelchair that way, especially when I made my case so clearly. Fortunately, being a good traveller, I was able to cope with a flying time of 44 hrs in 3 ½ days.

My main focus now, other than not forcing so many people to change plans, is to get a Waiver on my revoked visa, so that I can apply for the new correct one, whatever that is deemed to be. Until that happens, I was told that I cannot even apply for a visa for 5 years.

My first action on coming back to South Africa was of course to contact the US Consulate here in Durban. For the last 2 ½ weeks, I have sent repeated emails and phone calls to them, accompanied by some of the letters of support I have received. My request has been to schedule an appointment to resolve the issue of the Waiver, and to then apply for the correct visa. I just want somebody to speak to!

They do reply immediately, but it is an automated response directing me to various websites and sub-sets of websites. I have now got as far as being told by email that as soon as they find the relevant person to deal with my case-specific request, they will send me the information.

I have a flight reservation back to Seattle on August 17, and am hoping to have the issue resolved by then so I can get there.

I really appreciate all the support and concern people have shown. Maybe this concern will reach the US Embassy in Pretoria or Consulate here in Durban and get them to understand how many people are affected by this, certainly not just one person teaching quilting!

Daily Blog

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I'm sure there is a way that quilters can keep going and be legal."

Rosalie loves the US and wants to do everything by the book. Can you help? (We are pursuing several leads so far but could use more. Thank you.)

If you know anyone at the State Department who may assist in expediting the visa process for Rosalie, please reach out to us at CustomerService@thequiltshow.com