

**ARIAS, BOGOTA, CHRIS, DAVID  
DAVID WATSON (2019)**

In 2008 Ricardo Arias invited Chris and me to perform in Bogota. We were in a radio station to be interviewed and were scheduled to do a little performance. In his interview, Chris delivered his tried-and-true tropes:  
*“I was away from school that day, the day they explained the difference between speech and music etc etc”.*  
The young woman announcer followed his idea and his English with great difficulty and then she got down to business.  
“Okay! And now we will have a performance from Chris Mann! The singer from New York!”  
I sank into my shoes. I looked down at the table. Exactly which layer of embarrassing misunderstanding had we fallen into?  
Chris performed for about twenty minutes and he came to a close. She smiled beatifically and said simply “Thank you, Chris.”  
“And that was Chris Mann. The singer, from New York.”  
What was that? Some awkward nomenclature? Or a leap in understanding in twenty minutes?”

PASSPORT

We were downtown in Bogota, when someone pointed out that it would be much better to get our checks now, before we leave the country. Great, we said. Of course, you’ll need your passport. Chris pulled out his passport.  
AH! I said. Mine is locked in the hotel. Chris, why have you got yours?  
*“I never go anywhere without my passport.”*

In our four-day stay in the hotel, Chris was on a mission to not be addressed as Señor. He wanted to be called Chris. By the time we left he was Mr. Chris. He seemed satisfied with that.

We did a quick recording session with Ricardo in Bogota. The outside of the studio looked unlikely. Completely suburban. Down a long corridor, and then into the studio which immediately had a surprisingly good feeling to it. The engineer asked Chris, “What kind of mic do you want?”  
*“Nah. I’ve got my own”. “Unless you’ve got a pair of matched Neumanns!”*  
with a faint touch of hiss in his reply. “You can have a look in the cupboard, if you want.”  
The mic cupboard opened, revealing racks of matched Neumanns.  
Chris silent. Momentarily outplayed.

Last year we played a reunion show, with Chris and Jim Denley at Experimental Intermedia. Afterwards, relaxing with Jim and my friend Satya, who was expounding on Chris-is-a-solo-artist. Having just done an hour with him onstage I made some protests about Chris-is-a-solo-artist. Jim didn’t get involved and simply said later, “Chris is one of the greatest singers in world”.

For some reason that moment came back to me when I was talking to Chris, just about a week before he died.  
I relayed the story and he blew a kiss in Jim’s direction. Across America, across the Pacific Ocean. And went on talking.