

## **The overrun marmot**

by Maycon Dimas

And then a marmot got overrun by a car on the countryside of Brazil. Only a minor accident; no humans harmed. But surprisingly enough it was the first time in history that something like this happened. Never before a marmot had faced death in this manner. They were usually eaten by bigger animals or defeated by old age, but never ever hit by an automobile. There were shock and commotion everywhere as the news swept the planet.

TV crews from around the world popped in Rio de Janeiro to report that a harmless marmot had been shattered by a “dodgy” Ram, even though the incident involved a much less majestic VW Fox and happened several thousand miles inland. Some newspapers contemplated sending their reporters *in loco*, as the event presented itself very succulent for a good writer, but in the end they decided to just reproduce what had been said on Twitter under the trending hashtag “marmot”. The role of putting what happened into words was taken by professional bloggers, who dressed it with so many search-engine-optimized terms that in the end it was impossible to understand if the marmot had flashed a nipple in Hollywood or was to be wrapped as a Valentine’s gift.

Some very basic questions were raised by YouTube commentators after the accident went viral: why on earth only just now, after millions and millions of years in constant evolution and other hundreds with wheeled means of transportation among us (considering chariots, rickshaws and whatnot), a marmot got overrun? Was it possible that this animal had been so careful and clever that they never before crossed a road without looking both sides? Or perhaps they were so underground that they

never stuck their heads up where humans would be driving their killing machines? Maybe their covering was so thick that a car couldn't break? When would someone make a hip-hop version of the accident? Nobody could respond to any of these wonders. Even Paulo Coelho, the worldly famous writer, known to the Y Generation for his mystic quotes and rascal comments about almost every daily affair in the country, merely posted a picture of his cat. It said underneath: "I'm so relieved it wasn't you, Lion, my friend, my family and my spirit of light."

A few days of general bewilderment went by before the government finally decided to put their hands on the matter. An official inquiry was established on the National Congress. By popular demand Thursdays became again a work day in the parliament. The pressure arisen from the street about the case was so strong that the President suspended his official visit to the Bahamas to intervene: he demanded that all the other polls in the House should be suspended until the "Dramatic Marmot Process," as the press named it, came to an end. All the Senators, even the ones from the opposition, agreed to contribute. They said the issue should be resolved before the general election, set to be taken in a few months.

Their first action was to demand the driver's incarceration. He was sentenced to spend 120 preventive days in prison thus the police could investigate his life thoroughly. Due to the seriousness of the case he was taken to a Federal Jail first intended to hold only white collar criminals. There he could have a whole ward all to himself. His Facebook account was suspended and the car, with not a single scratch in it, had to be disassembled for further verification. No sign of it was ever seen afterwards.

The dead Marmot itself was taken to the Forensic Medical Institute in Brasília. It would be examined by Roberto Miguel Rey Júnior, M.D., aka Dr. Rey, and broadcast live on E!. Pictures of the

exact place where the animal was ran over started popping on the internet as a meme; it carried motivational phrases like “Keep Calm - Car-y On.” Even an internationally respected singer-songwriter, famous for his reclusiveness in the cold mountains of Canada, left his cave to express his opinion on a new single which eventually topped the Billboard list.

The popular imaginary became divided: whilst some people considered the driver guilty for being irresponsible, unprepared and ugly (some really did say that), others blamed the marmot for its lack of attention when crossing a road. Both sides were ferociously taken in parades and manifestations. Online petitions emerged from all over the country. The social media went mad. Everyone, everywhere wanted quick and concrete answers. That story could not stand as it was.

After a month or so, however, the World Cup began and the “Dramatic Marmot Process” was un-solemnly buried never to see the light again.