

"Just call me Penis"

In the summer of 1989, I led a hiking and climbing group of about 10 Americans from around the US to then communist Czechoslovakia. It was in conjunction with the Lokomotiv Klub (a climbing club) in Brno, Czechoslovakia. We spent a month in Czechoslovakia and traveled all over the country. At one point, we spent a week in Adrspach which is one of the most famous sandstone 'cities'. This is an area chock full of 100 foot sandstone pillars formed into amazing shapes. This area has a long climbing history, although the climbing requires great courage since no metal protection is allowed and the rings are set very far apart. 2-3 rings per 50m is not uncommon, even on very difficult climbs.

Our group was mainly hikers and had a few pretty young women, especially a young blonde who seemed to have an intoxicating effect on all the Czech boys and they followed her around like puppies with their tongues hanging out. On our first day in Adrspach, we gathered around our guide for introductions at the start of our hike. Now as usual for any Czech man that got within 10 feet of our group, he was swaggering a bit like a 'hot-climber dude' to impress blondie. We all gathered around him in a little amphitheater and he stood up on a high spot to talk:

[The following dialogue was in Czech and English. When a word is written in English, that word was in fact said in English during the conversation.]

"Ahoj, Welcome to Adrspach! My name is Petr. But you can call me Cock."

Stunned silence. I mean what do you say to man who announces something like that!? Well, his English was not great, so I figured we must have misheard him. So while the Americans in my group stood there intently examining the spots on their shirt sleeves. I tried to clarify in my own broken Czech.

"Promente? Co rikete?" {Excuse me? What are you saying?}

"Everyone calls me Cock not Petr. Just call me Cock."

Ok, so I'm hearing him correctly. He begins to go into the history of Adrspach, but I couldn't quite get over that this man expected us to call him "Penis".

"Petr"

"Please, call me Cock"

"[cough] Um, no jo, tohle myslim nejmenujte. Prosim, rikejte vase jmeno cesky." {translation: Um, well, this way I don't think you are called. Please say your name in Czech.}

"Muj jmeno je Petr, ale jmenuje se Cock. To je muj nickname." {translation: My name is Petr, but I'm called Cock. It's my nickname.}

"Jo, ale co je vase nickname CESKY?" {translation: Yeah, but what is your nickname in CZECH.}

"Kohout."

At this point, I couldn't help starting to laugh. "Ah...Petr, in American English, 'kohout' is translated ROOSTER".

"Rooster? A co sznamena 'Cock'?" {translation: Rooster? And what does 'cock' mean?}

I paused for a moment, and debated how honest I should be, but then shrugged....

"Curak." (translation: Cock.)

And this time, it was his turn to be tongue-tied. It was a moment or two before he

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was able to continue with the history of Adrspach. Well, I suppose he got a lot of mileage out of the story later of how he stood up on a rock in front of a bunch of American tourists and insisted that they call him by a crude name for the male anatomy.