

I have two or three illegal things in my apartment.

Can you guess what?

Dr*gs?

Nope.

An exotic pet?

Good try but no.

A gun?

Never. Guns scare me.

Then what?

Well, two books and a CD.

Why are they illegal?

In case you are thinking this, no, Ecuador doesn't have a list of forbidden books that people aren't supposed to read.

The country has a lot of problems, but at least we can read anything we want.

So, why are those two books illegal?

Because they are "piratas".

They are illegal copies.

Someone decided to print cheap copies of those books and sell them.

And this is the interesting thing:

When I bought them, years ago, I didn't know they were illegal.

You can find pirated products everywhere.

Books, DVDs, clothes... You name it.

Are there laws against piracy?

Yes.

Are there people or institutions enforcing those rules?

I don't think so.

You can find book stores filled with illegal copies of famous books, or huge rooms with hundreds of illegal copies of the most recent movies, or stores with cheap copies of expensive brand clothes.

Seeing illegal copies of everything is normal for Ecuadorians. We are used to that.

But you know who was shocked about it?

My girlfriend.

She was shocked at the huge amount of fake products you can find here.

She told me that would never happen in the US. That the law is very clear and strict in this matter.

And I trust her, so I must remember not to carry any knock off products in my backpack when I go to visit her in the US.

Although... Besides those books I don't really have anything that can be considered illegal. So I think I'll be fine.

(And I don't get rid of them because they are still books, and it's not their fault that they were born as illegal copies)

Did you know that about Ecuador?

If not, you just learned something interesting today.

If yes, how did you learn that? Did you buy anything that you shouldn't?

Don't worry, I won't accuse you to anyone.

And remember, if you are planning to come to Ecuador and want to learn more interesting and important information about the country, and also want to learn or improve your Spanish:

[Online Spanish lessons with an Ecuadorian teacher.](#)

P.S. I didn't tell you what's the illegal CD I have at home. It's the *Under My Skin* album by Avril Lavigne. I got it when I was a teenager. I didn't know it wasn't legal, I promise.

Andrés Trujillo

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