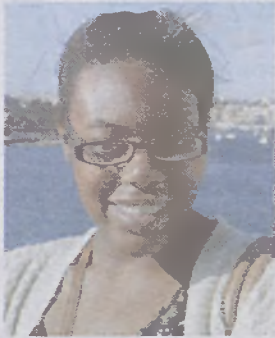


## Series: Daddy Danger

# ICYMI: Chivalry is dead and camera phones are annoying

Randal Walton

[rwalton@unca.edu](mailto:rwalton@unca.edu) - Sports Editor



In the South, the term “Southern gentleman” carries with it a weighty set of expectations that most, if not all, men should adhere to. However, sometimes my father forgets that he’s Southern and shuns chivalry altogether.

For some reason, my dad hates when people come to our house for a celebration. I don’t know why, because we only have celebrations

about once every two years and they’re always cookouts. This particular celebration was for my sister’s high school graduation, something that only happens once. The entire day my dad remained moody. He snapped at just about everyone and didn’t really help out much in terms of setting up the cookout.

After a couple of hours, people started to arrive, quickly filling up our small, suburban home. I found it a bit comical because most of the guests were women and their children. My dad show a bit of discomfort on his face. I guess seeing so many children around the house constantly reminded him that he lived with two heterosexual daughters. Oh well.

I didn’t have time to dwell on, or laugh at, my father’s discomfort. As hostesses, my mom and I constantly bustled around the house getting the food ready, setting up tables, making sure our grill master (my neighbor’s brother) had everything he needed, keeping flies out of the house and keeping the children from breaking our very cheap, but very nice, possessions. My mother ordered me around so often throughout the day that I started calling her “Massa.”

“Randal, I need you to set out the condiments on the table outside,” my mom said.

“Yes, Massa,” I said, ducking my head and grabbing the bottles with a smirk.

The kitchen roared with laughter.

At one point during the party, we ran out of tin cartons to put the grilled hotdogs and hamburgers in. So, my mom requested that I go to Wal-Mart and pick some up. But, I brought Kayla with for extra protection, since we all know that every Wal-Mart in America is sketchy. Even if you live in the richest part of the country, I guarantee you’re scared of going to your local Wal-Mart alone. After all, it’s where fool congregate.

The weather seemed to need some form of bipolar medication. Five minutes down the road, the sun hung brightly in the sky and the dry, scorching Carolina heat threatened to force me to pass out. However, as Kayla and I drove back up the winding road to my house, rain plummeted from the skies and enveloped my windshield. And, of course, I forgot my umbrella because I didn’t expect the rain. (As I have previously explained, African-American women are like cats – we don’t like water.)

We pulled up to my house to a scene of absolute chaos. Hordes of African-American and Hispanic women with umbrellas and plastic bags covering their heads flitted from the backyard, carrying tables, chairs and tablecloths into the garage. Kayla and I looked at each other with widened eyes.

“Let’s make a run for it,” she said.

Dashing out of the car, we heard yelps and screams of people trying not to slip in the mud, but trying to get dry as quickly as possible. As we went into the house, we tried to dodge some people lugging a long fold-up table through the house. I dropped the pans on the counter, grabbed my umbrella and immediately went outside to help.

Now, where does my father figure this? Well, firstly, mostly women helped with taking things out of the rain.

Most of the men sat under the gazebo drinking beer and enjoying the show. Even my sister sprinted back and forth out of the house – and it was her party!

Secondly, and most importantly, the day after the party gave me even more reason to get angry at my father.

I sat on the couch in the living room watching television and trying to read a book to prepare myself for the upcoming semester. Suddenly, a cell phone with a video playing obstructed my view of the television. I looked up to see my dad with his trademark ‘satisfied smile’ plastered on his face. I had the feeling that I was about to get upset.

“Look at it,” he urged. “It’s funny.”

So, I grabbed the phone and pressed play. I watched as the guests from the party and myself scurried around the yard in the rain with plastic tables and chairs. I heard the deep, booming laughter of the men under the gazebo who didn’t have the nerve to help out a bunch of women. I handed my father his phone in disgust, not even finishing the entire video.

“You know, you could have helped,” I said.

“Why would I? Just watching y’all run around in the rain was funny,” he said.

I glanced at my mom in the kitchen and saw that her face mirrored mine.

“So, you just decided to film it for what purpose?” I asked.

My father shrugged.

“Because it was funny,” he said.

I didn’t find that a legitimate answer, nor an acceptable excuse. I understand that my father doesn’t like having too many people over at his house, but it’s not like we do it every weekend. Also, we wanted to celebrate a once in a lifetime occasion. My sister would only graduate from high school once. The fact that he not only watched us struggle, but filmed it as well, made all of his actions completely unacceptable.

See, I love my dad, I really do. But that just ain’t right.

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Karpen Hall 019 (828) 251-6586 [www.thebluebanner.net](http://www.thebluebanner.net)

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Send to [hkrick@unca.edu](mailto:hkrick@unca.edu)

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