

Series: Daddy Danger

We should have stayed at the hotel, motel, Holiday Inn

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Most people say that it doesn't matter where you lay your head, just as long as you lay it somewhere. Obviously, these people have never met my father and experienced his lodging choices. Otherwise, they would cherish the pillow they already have.

I admit that my uncles played a larger role in some of the hotel or motel choices

than my father. However, my father still held the responsibility to make sure his family stayed in a safe, clean and satisfying place.

During one of my Uncle Mike's various weddings we stayed at the Hampton Inn. From what I remember, the hotel was actually pretty nice. The rooms stayed clean and they had really good grits for breakfast. But it wasn't the service that worried me.

The day my family checked out of the Hampton Inn was hectic; everyone ran around throwing their belongings in their suitcases before we got thrown out by the management. I don't think we even ate breakfast. Thankfully, we made it out in time.

After an almost three hour drive home, my family and I unpacked the moment we stepped into our house. At the time, my sister and I shared a room and we started throwing our clothes all over the place because we just wanted to play with our Barbie dolls. But my mom came into our room with a puzzled look on her face.

"Have you seen my phone charger?" she asked.

"No," we said.

"Are you sure?" she said as she started to rummage through our joint suitcase.

We sat there watching my mom frantically scatter half-folded clothes on the bottom bunk of our bunk bed. She heaved a heavy sigh and stomped out of our room calling for our father.

"Did you check in the car?" He asked.

She nodded. "Those maids stole my phone charger."

We have never stayed at the Hampton Inn since.

The next motel on "Don't trust the daddy" list is La Quinta Inns and Suites. My Uncle Alton secured

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this motel for our family after my grandmother passed away seven years ago. He got a discount off the normal rates because he knew the manager of the motel. My father didn't check out the motel first to see whether or not it suited our family, not that I blame him, his mother just died. But, I think even he showed signs of surprise when we entered the room.

The room reeked of stale beer, unwashed sheets and really cheap box wine. We guessed the sheets used to be a nice pristine white, but now they were tinged the color of Ramen noodles. The biggest kick we got out of the room was a card lying in the middle of the bed, propped up by the pillows. It read, "We're trying to do our part in reducing the global footprint by saving energy and water. If you would like your sheets washed, please leave this card on the pillow. If you don't leave this card on the pillow, we will only wash your sheets every two days. Thank you."

"Every two days?" my mom shouted. "Of course I want my sheets washed! I'm gonna kill your Uncle Alton."

The room only had one sink, which presents a huge problem when you have three women. None of us wanted to use the bathtub/shower due to the caramel tinted ring that circled the entire tub. Needless to say, my sister slept on top of the sheets, covering herself with her coat.

Now every time we go on vacation, my sister brings her own pillows and sheets. It doesn't matter how many stars the hotel has, she still doesn't trust them. I'm convinced that La Quinta started this - thanks for that.

In the same hotel in Myrtle Beach that my dad stunk up with his beloved alligator, something else happened. On the same night my father almost wiped out his entire family for some overpriced steak, the hotel we stayed at again proved itself unworthy of any positive reviews. My family decided to have a quiet night in, watching a random show on television. I felt

quite relaxed piled in the living room with my family. We just sat there enjoying each other's company. Just as we settled in and brushed off our near death experience, we were cloaked in darkness.

"Did the electricity just go out?" my sister said.

Her voice held a tone of comic disbelief. I felt exactly the same way. Although I couldn't believe that this was actually happening to us, given everything else that stood in our way on this trip, at the same time, it wasn't hard to believe it because nothing ever seems to go right on our family vacations.

My dad stood up. "I'll go talk to the front desk and see what's going on," he said.

When he left, I walked over to the window, pulling aside the snow white gauze curtains to get a view of the compound. Imagine my surprise when I saw that all of the other buildings lit up like candles on a Menorah.

"Are we seriously the only building whose lights went out?" I said.

"What?" my mom said. She stood next to me and took a quick glance around. "Damn," she said, chuckling. "I think it's time for us to get back to Charlotte."

The moral of this story? Yet again, do not let my father choose any lodgings of any sort. When I buy or rent my first home, I will look to my father for advice. I will take what he has to say in consideration. However, I will rely on my own common sense and avid watching of HGTV in order to make my final decisions. At least I know what not to do when I go looking for places to stay. I think I have more than enough bad examples to last the rest of my life.

See, I love my dad, I really do. But this just ain't right.

The Blue Banner gladly accepts letters to the editor.

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