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# Why I Brought My Mother On My Honeymoon

Mar. 3, 2014

By [Michael J. Solender](#) 



Michael J. Solender has written hundreds of feature articles for regional and national publications. He is a regular ...

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Looking northwest across 6th Ave from West 53rd Street at the Hilton on a sunny midday. /

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My wife and I lived together for twelve years before deciding to officially tie the knot and get married. While the extended courtship was never a source of any particular consternation for either of us, the absence of nuptials caused excessive angst for my mother. A consummate score keeper, mother was always reminding us there were countless shower gifts and wedding presents owed us from her friends awaiting if and when we ever decided to walk down the aisle.

We often joked with her that it was this very fact that served as a contributing factor preventing us from getting married. We were in our 30s, owned property together, and had an entire house full of stuff and did not need any fancy glass blobs from her friends. We agreed when the time was right, we'd have a small civil ceremony with no hoopla or parties. No showers, no gifts, no big event.

In the twelfth year of our engagement the equation changed for us. My father passed away after a protracted illness. Three months after his death, we decided it was time to do the deed. A bit of good fortune and luck played into the decision and made it an easy one to make.

I won a raffle that awarded me two round trip airline tickets anywhere in the U.S. and 5 free nights at any Hilton Hotel in the country. We lived in Los Angeles at the time and decided we wanted to use the raffle winnings to visit New York City. We would take a connecting flight through Las Vegas, make a quick 5 hour stop to get married and have dinner, then take the red-eye to NYC.

We convinced my mother to meet us there where we would host her for a week in the Big Apple, her first trip after my father's death.

My parents had been married for forty years when he died and losing her life's partner was of course devastating for my mother. A Midwestern girl who had always lived in Minneapolis, my mother loved to travel, especially to New York City. My father took her there every year. It was their town and they always did it up right.

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Mom agreed to meet us and I made all the travel arrangements.

We kept the wedding part a secret planning to tell her on the evening we met up in New York.

Redeeming the voucher for the airline tickets went off without a hitch. It was a different story for the hotel. The New York City Hilton Towers was less than accommodating when I tried to use my voucher for the free stay claiming no availability. When I went online and immediately booked rooms with no trouble at all I was upset to the point of firing off a terse, but professional, letter to the president of Hilton Hotels. It was only two weeks prior to our travel and I didn't expect a response. I was not disappointed. I planned one last valiant try in person upon arrival in New York.

Our plan went flawlessly. Our wedding at the Little Graceland Chapel (Bon Jovi was married there, Joan Collins, several times) was kitschy, laugh filled and complete with the finest Elvis impersonator and a freshly rounded up Doctor of Divinity to perform the 5 minute ceremony. We arrived in NYC early the next morning and met my mother at the hotel later that afternoon.

At the hotel check-in, I asked to speak with the manager, pleaded my case and explained the unaccommodating phone transaction of two weeks earlier. He promised to look into it and get back with us.

We met up with my mom later and took in a few sights and an early dinner. At dinner we told mom the news. Naturally the tears ensued and her initial response of shock and surprise quickly moved into disappointment that she wouldn't be able to host a large ceremony. This notion quickly dissipated and her wheels began to turn as she plotted an acceptable course of action. She would be damned if she was going to let us get out of her throwing a score-settling party where her friends could pay her back with gifts for her kids!

We weren't going to argue with her. She'd had a tough go with my dad's passing and here she was in New York, enjoying herself. We were going to have a great time over the next week; we could worry about parties later.

Returning to the hotel, I found my key would not open the door to our room. I made a quick trip downstairs where the front desk clerk presented me with a note from the hotel's General Manager. It was a very sincere and lengthy apology taking full responsibility for a misunderstanding about the voucher. He had learned (apparently from my earlier letter to Hilton's president) that this was my honeymoon and as a goodwill gesture they were upgrading my room to the top floor, 2500 square foot, 3 bedroom, penthouse suite overlooking Central Park for the duration of my stay.

The desk clerk told me that he had the bellman already move our things from our room to the penthouse suite and he would have me and my wife escorted upstairs to our room where some special honeymoon champagne awaited us, courtesy of the hotel.

"What about my mother?" I asked.

"Excuse me?" The look on the desk clerk's face was bemused.

"My mother, she's staying here as well."

"I don't understand sir, isn't this your honeymoon?" His face now was contorting and I was playing it to the hilt.

"Yes, you said the suite is 2500 square feet and has 3 bedrooms, correct?"

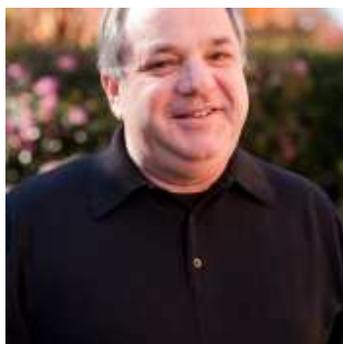
"You'd like your mother..in your honeymoon suite..is that correct???" He must have thought I was completely nuts.

"Yep." It was all I could do to keep from completely breaking up.

"Very well sir!"

For the next 17 years, my mother got more mileage out of that story insisting upon my telling of the time we took her on our honeymoon every chance she got. I never turned her down and to this day is my most lasting memory of our time together. 

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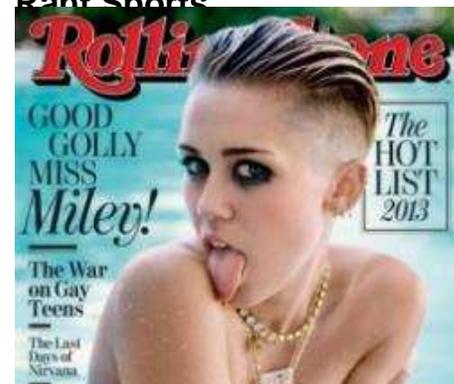


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