

The Sleep Cheap Motel

The Sleep Cheap Motel has a great-looking pool--except for the pool light floating by its cord in the water. This doesn't look safe to me, but no one in the water seems worried--or dead. Yet.

We check in anyway, excited to start our vacation early the next day. It takes eight tries with the key card to get into our room. I call the front desk and the clerk tells me that yes, there have been some problems with that lock. We haul all of our belongings to another room on another floor on the other side of the motel. The key works! The air conditioning doesn't.

Also, the light bulb in the lamp above our bed is burned out, so I go to the front desk to get a new one and report the air conditioning problem. There are four people in line in front of me with key cards in their hands and mean looks on their faces. I decide not to bother with the bulb. There are other lights in the room and some of them work.

Later, I call the front desk, hoping they've handled the key emergencies and will now have time to take a complaint about the air conditioning. The clerk tells me that he can't promise anything, but if I try turning the heat up all the way, the air conditioning might kick in. I had not thought of trying that. I probably won't think of trying it again either. But it works!

It isn't until we crawl into bed that we realize the air conditioner is spraying water; it is RAINING on our bed! (Does that explain the mildew smell?)

I turn off the air conditioner AND the heat and call the front desk again. The clerk says he'll do what he can. Moments later, he's at our door with a ten-inch fan.

Despite the heat, I doze eventually. But I'm awakened at 1:30 by two men talking loudly outside of our room. I listen to their conversation for as long as it's interesting. Then I ask them nicely if they could please go keep someone else awake. They seem genuinely surprised that anyone would be trying to sleep at 1:30 a.m. But they're extremely apologetic, maybe because they're drunk.

I'm awakened again at 5 a.m. by the slamming of a door. Like many affordable motels, ours is designed with doors that can only be closed with a BANG. This makes it sound like all the guests are mad. Of course, some of them are.

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