

Majid Akbani is Why I Will Never Stay at a Howard Johnson Express Inn Again

29 December 2009

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To the Management of Howard Johnson International, Inc. and Orbitz Worldwide, Inc.:

After riding my motorcycle through several hundred miles of winter rain, I arrived at the Howard Johnson Express Inn - San Antonio (13279 West IH-10, San Antonio TX 78249) just before 5:00am CT on 24 December 2009. I was exhausted, soaked, shivering cold, and badly in need of warmth and rest. I held a printout of my Orbitz reservation against the glass door of the front office to convince the young Indian night clerk to let me in. He informed me that although my three-night stay was prepaid, I would not be allowed to check in before 11:00am. Desperate for shelter from the wet and cold, I readily agreed to pay the full rate for an extra night in order to check in immediately. The clerk then noted that my reservation was for a ground floor room with a king bed, and that all he had available was a second floor room with two queens. I quickly said I'd take it. So he took my cash, handed me a key card, and assured me twice in the process I would have the option of either staying in that room, or moving to one like I had reserved later in the day.

I parked my Harley behind the motel, and then lugged my gear up to room 227. Once inside, I opened my "waterproof" touring bag to discover that almost everything I'd packed was soaking wet. So I turned the heater up to high, and began hanging and spreading my clothes to dry as best I could throughout the room. By the time I was done it was nearly 6:00am, so I returned to the hotel lobby for some hot coffee and nourishment. I was seated in the tiny breakfast nook eating tasteless powdered eggs and what I guessed to be airline surplus "turkey bacon" when the droning of the TV news channel was overcome by what sounded like an argument in a foreign language. I looked over my left shoulder to see the night clerk receiving what I suspect was a chewing-out from another Indian who was apparently his superior. That man then looked and pointed over at me, curtly demanding to know if I was "the guy in 227". I said I was, and he ordered--not asked, ordered--me to come to the front desk and re-register later in the day. I asked why, and he snapped back with "Because that is what you have to do!" Not being one to respond well to orders, threats or ultimatums, I made it clear to the irritating little tyrant that I would stop by the front desk when I was finished eating, and he could do whatever he needed to do then. He fumed back with "Fine!"

A few minutes later, I walked over to re-register with the ill-tempered (mis)manager I now know to be Majid Akbani. As he banged away on his keyboard, he arrogantly asserted "Let's see if I will let you stay in the same room." Well, having spent all that time spreading out my wet clothes in a room I'd been told twice was mine to keep, I assured him that I expected that commitment to be honored. He sharply blurted back that my room assignment was *his* to make, and threatened me with "I can kick you out right now if I want to!" Shocked but not intimidated, I warned him that any such action on his part would assure more

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negative online reviews for him and his motel, and severely damage the Howard Johnson brand reputation for hospitality. He scoffed at that, claiming he "could care less" about his terrible reviews because the motel stayed booked up every night anyway. He then glared at me, and perhaps I glared back at him. And after a pregnant pause, his voice went up an octave as he shouted "You think I am afraid of you? I am not afraid of you! I am going to let you stay in 227, but not because I am afraid of you!"

My only response was to take my new key card and return to the room. From there, at a little after 7:00am, I called Howard Johnson Customer Service at 1-800-544-9881 and filed complaint #2469548. In so doing, I realized I had not taken note of the rude manager's name, so I put on my jacket and went back to the office to get it. On the wall to the left of the front counter was a Howard Johnson's franchise plaque that read "MAJID AKBANI, General Manager". As he was standing close by, I asked if that was his name. He said yes, and I started to write it down in my notebook. Observing that, he spit out "Here! Take my business card!" and literally threw a card at me which reads as follows:

Majid Akbani
General Manager
HOWARD JOHNSON
13279 W. Interstate 10 . San Antonio, TX 78249-2207
Phone: 210-558-7152 . Fax: 210-558-7228
E-mail: majidakbani@hotmail.com

Operated under franchise agreement with Howard Johnson International, Inc.

He then said something I didn't quite catch, but it ended up with "I am calling the police to throw you out of here!"

I discounted this threat as a temper tantrum, and turned around to walk into the "Business/Fitness Center" and check my email on an antiquated PC. I then returned to my room, thinking the worst of the drama was behind me, and hoping I could finally get some sleep. Not long after I dozed off, though, my slumber was interrupted by the ringing of the room phone. It was, of course, Majid Akbani, claiming he had called both Howard Johnson corporate and Orbitz to say he was refunding my money and demanding that I leave immediately. I reassured him I had no intention of leaving before my three paid days were up, and hung up the phone with him still babbling on unintelligibly. Too tired to be infuriated at that point, I soon fell back to sleep.

An hour or so later, my much-needed rest was disrupted once more, this time by someone knocking on the door. I assumed it was Majid Akbani continuing his insane tirade, and ignored the banging. Minutes later, the room phone rang again. This time, it was Majid Akbani informing me that the police were on site and waiting to speak to me. I suggested he send them up. Moments later, I answered a renewed pounding on my door by yelling for whoever to hold on while I put on a shirt. I then opened the door, and invited in the two representatives of San Antonio's finest who'd been bruising their knuckles.

Once inside my room, the two policemen were very relaxed and polite, and almost seemed to be holding back snickers as they dutifully informed me that Majid Akbani was "allowing me to stay, so long as I agreed not to do anything to him". I then related my side of the story, with which they clearly sympathized. They then both smiled as I assured them that, although Majid Akbani was the rudest hotel manager/clerk I had ever known, I was not about to slit his throat on Christmas Eve.

The rest of my stay at the Howard Johnson Express Inn of San Antonio was uneventful, with Majid Akbani either looking the other way or walking the other way whenever our paths almost crossed. But the damage was done, and I hereby urge you to take whatever action is necessary to assure that Majid Akbani is never again allowed to rudely abuse another innocent and unsuspecting hotel guest. At a

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minimum, I insist that (a) Majid Akbani's affiliations with Howard Johnson International, Inc. and the Wyndham Hotel Group be permanently severed, and (b) the Howard Johnson Express Inn of San Antonio be removed from the Orbitz hotel/motel reservations database until these and all other appropriate corrective actions have been taken.

In closing, please note that the numerous negative online reviews you will find in the Google search results I link hereinbelow provide ample evidence that the intolerably rude manner in which I was treated by Majid Akbani was not an isolated incident, but rather part of a consistent and inexcusable pattern of hotel guest abuse which neither Howard Johnson International nor Orbitz Worldwide can afford to ignore:

<http://tinyurl.com/majid-akbani>

And finally, know that inaction on your part will assure further action on mine.

Sincerely,

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