

Smoke

By Bess Bateman

MOTEL COMPLAINT BRINGS DRUG ARREST

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A complaint from a motel manager in Fruit Heights led to a drug arrest Monday afternoon.

The manager of the Mountain Creek Inn on U.S. 89 in Fruit Heights called the Davis County Sheriff's Office Monday, tipping off deputies that one of his tenants might be dealing drugs, according to Lt. Kevin MacLeod. Deputies Brent Peters and Arnold Butcher went to the man's room, knocked on the door and asked to talk to him, MacLeod said. He invited them in, where they saw what appeared to be drug paraphernalia on a table.

They obtained a search warrant and found five ounces of cocaine.

The 40-year-old suspect, who was on probation for a previous drug conviction, was arrested and booked into the county jail, MacLeod said.

February 14th, 2005

FRUIT HEIGHTS, Utah (AP) – Davis Metro Narcotics Strike Force officials say they will reconsider some of their tactics following complaints about recent “knock and talk” searches at motels.

Morley R. Sprague, owner of Mountain Creek Inn, said plainclothes officers arrived at his business at 10:00 PM, Jan. 21, and knocked on every door. Once inside the rooms, officers searched them.

Officials said not every room was visited, and future searches may not be conducted so late. Manager Julie Duren said she felt intimidated by the number of officers who crowded into her office, wanting to see the guest register and asking questions.

Some of the motel's guests are families who are between homes, construction workers who are living in the area for a short time, and a single man who prefers someone else to do his cleaning, Sprague said.

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It was strange, coming back to this place after ten years. Today it was just an exhausted flaxen field, empty, run down and forgotten. Something was lacking, like the tension in the air had completely dissolved- if anything, it was resigned. Out-of-order. Broken.

I hate this place. I was glad it had been torn down. Memories I had here weren't happy ones.

I was four in 2006. We were forced to find alternative living quarters for the time being, as construction workers were far past the due date of finishing up or house.

The motel was anything but ideal. It was tucked away in the fenced-off, backyard of a failing waterpark. It was obvious by the residents that this place was for those who had nowhere else to go. There were several unemployed men who sat back in the sun all day, smoking and drinking and carefully scrutinizing anyone who walked by. Tiny, undisciplined children ran free in the dust and gravel, like chickens, scraping themselves and wailing to a mother who was too busy daydreaming of a better future to stress over it.

The smell of smoke. An acrid odor that permeated the two-and-a-half acres. My parents tried everything to get the awful stench out of our room, with dozens of Febreze cans and scented candles, and air conditioning vents that were supposed to keep it all out. Regrettably, nothing worked.

But from the beginning we didn't belong there. Not in that sort of place. We were a family of four; my parents, my older brother Alex, and myself. We weren't meth addicts, or criminals, or running

away from anything. We were just a family of four waiting for a house to be built. A perfect Mormon family. Square. Naïve.

Nobody belonged in that sort of place.

Still, it drew in certain people, and it was obvious that we were different. When we pulled into the motel, other occupants kept staring at us; trying to find out what drove us there.

The conditions of the motel were bad enough for anyone, desperate or not. Discolored walls. Cracked tiles. The air, if tangible, would've been yellow and gray. The blanket of smoke that covered the building made it hard to breathe. At night sleeping was near impossible based on nearby screaming, flickering lights, and bugs crawling across the floor. Every so often mosquitoes and other flying insects would land and sting and bite.

My father's coworkers would ask him if he started smoking. It wasn't a bad assumption, going by how we had all reeked of ashes.

It was less than ideal.

Gunshots and the police constantly searching for more drugs, like we're hiding something. Screams coming from the next door. My mother swaddling me and my brother as we ran to the car, clutching to us like we might be taken from her. (It's a possibility.)

Finding stains on the mattresses and ceiling and trying not to think too much about what caused them. Sobbing late at night because there are literally dozens of spiders crawling over my sleeping body.

Now that the motel had been cleared away (probably from the numerous amount of illegal crimes and meth labs) it was almost as if the entire situation had never happened, like it was blown away and buried in the dust. All that remained was dried bracken and some sort of brick rubble in the field- the only evidence that anyone had ever built something there.

The land that had once been that awful motel was less than half a mile away from my new home, just past the concrete walls. It was slightly reassuring to have the knowledge that whatever had haunted my past beyond that was now nothing but a memory.

Now it's a field, barren and dull and dry, and there is no trace of the short, redheaded lady, or the vacant mothers, or the drugs, and there is only a faint hint of smoke that lingered, although it might've just been my imagination bringing the past to life.

The past. Even if it had happened, it was over, and it wouldn't happen again.

It felt rather freeing.

"You ready to go?" I hear Brooklyn call from behind me. "You've been standing there for a long time, and this place is super creepy!" She shifts her weight uncomfortably, half-turned to the exit. I smile tightly and nod, starting to walk back.

She doesn't know the half of it.