

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



SCOTT OLSON

A Hertz car rental facility in Chicago.

Hertz mistakenly adds car renter to their Do Not Rent list

By Christopher Elliott

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I rented a car from Hertz in Cabo San Lucas. After this, Hertz placed me on their Do Not Rent list and claimed that I tried to rent a car with a fraudulent ID. I do not understand this since my ID is entirely valid and definitely not fraudulent.

I asked for more information, but these were the only details that Hertz would provide me with. I asked the company to send me a copy of the ID they had on file, but they refused.

Hertz also says I was with two women when I rented the car, but I took the trip to Cabo alone! I have no idea what they're talking about, but now I can't rent from Hertz. Please help!

SHANE RICH, *San Diego*

A. Hertz shouldn't have put you on its Do Not Rent list. And if it did, it should have specifically told you what you did to deserve to be on the list.

What is the Do Not Rent list? Basically, it's a rental car company's blacklist. Usually, you get on the list for failing to pay for your car. But you can also get

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In reviewing the paper trail between you and Hertz, it appears the company accused you of renting a car in Cabo in August 2021. However, you were not in Mexico at the time, and you say you didn't rent a car from Hertz then. This really appears like a case of mistaken identity.

But how do you inform Hertz of these facts? Like other car rental companies, Hertz has a system that allows you to appeal a suspension. It looks as if you had an active dialogue with the car rental company, and it had asked you for a copy of your ID, which you provided.

Your case must have slipped between the cracks. All they had to do was compare the information on your ID to the one they got on the rental, and they would have seen that this was a case of mistaken identity. It's not clear why they didn't.

A brief, polite, written appeal to a manager at Hertz might have helped. I list the names, numbers, and email addresses of the Hertz executives on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I contacted Hertz. The company reviewed your file and checked your ID.

"We've determined that we made a mistake in this case and have restored the customer's rental privileges and apologized to him," a Hertz representative told me.

Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy (elliottadvocacy.org), a nonprofit organization that helps consumers solve their problems. Email him at chris@elliott.org or get help by contacting him at elliottadvocacy.org/help.

THE VIP LOUNGE

Davin Youngs finds beauty in bad travel experiences, too

After the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, "The RESET" might be just what the doctor ordered for those seeking a calming experience and sense of renewal in the new year. Singer and sound healing artist Davin Youngs will bring his show, billed as an "immersive take on a sound bath," to the Huntington Theatre for two shows, at noon and 4 p.m., on Jan. 25. "There are so many reasons right now to engage in a restorative healing experience, Youngs, 43, said in a recent phone interview. "With the nature of the world we live in with so much unrest ... I think any sort of opportunity for people to step into spaces that promote restoration and healing is more important now than ever." The Otsego, Mich., native, who has performed "The RESET" in a variety of spaces (from theaters to hotel rooftops to large corporate events) for a wide range of audiences, crafts each "experience" using improvisational singing, looping devices, sound healing instruments, and electronic beats to create, according to the Huntington's website, "a sonic container for restoration, discovery, and healing." Youngs, who hosts the "Free Your Voice, Free Your Life" podcast, said he likes to tell people that while the experience is similar to a sound bath, "it is not your grandma's sound bath. ... It's a more amplified experience." He said those who "go on this journey" with him "are almost guaranteed to find a deeper sense of self and a clarity with which they're able to pursue their life." We caught up with Youngs, who lives in Chicago with his partner, Scott Perin, who owns a specialty market, Tot-to's, in Chicago, and their 9-year-old rescue pitbull, Neko, to talk about all things travel.

If you could travel anywhere right now, where would you go?

I've been thinking a lot about Ecuador and given our current frigid winter temps, it seems like now would be a good time to go. I'd be on the lookout for a beachfront property with a few small, delicious restaurants nearby and plan to do not much: sun, swim, read, and eat ... [and] maybe a few hiking excursions.

Do you prefer booking trips through a travel agent or on your own?

I love to research and plan a trip myself. My main objective is to find hotels, restaurants, and activities that feel a bit off the beaten path — but that are not terribly inconvenient. ... I also patronize small businesses as much as possible.

Thoughts on an "unplugged" vacation?

Only 10 years ago an "unplugged" vacation just meant going to Mexico, where it cost too much to justify getting cell service. Now, this feels like such a novelty and, while I love the idea, I can't say I've done it in a long time.

What has been your worst vacation experience?

I don't think this is a cop out, but ... I don't have one. Sure, I've got stories of canceled flights, illness, and conflict with travel companions, but I just kind of love all of it. I learn so much about life when I travel and even the seemingly bad experiences have felt really beautiful to me.

What is your favorite childhood travel memory?

My family didn't travel often, but if we did it was a road trip. [When I was] somewhere around the age of 10, my dad had the idea for us to drive from



Davin Youngs on Scotland's Isle of Skye.

Michigan to the Smoky Mountains. In particular, I remember stopping by Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, as well as the horse barns. ... I can see myself so clearly in those caves and petting the horses.

Do you vacation to relax, to learn, or for the adventure of it all?

All of it. I absolutely love a beach vacation where the only objective is ... well, beach. But I also love an urban adventure, exploring Amsterdam, London, Paris, Copenhagen, Berlin ... and walking until your feet can't take anymore. Or, take me to the mountains. I'd prefer a comfy bed to sleep in at night, but I'm happy to hike all day and catch the many profound glimpses this world has to offer. You'd be hard-pressed to propose a trip I wasn't game for.

What book do you plan on bringing with you to read on your next vacation?

When I travel, I love to read self-help books because there is something about the expansive nature of traveling that seems to cause the words to have greater impact. I just finished Martha Beck's "The Way of Integrity: Finding the Path to Your True Self" and I would take that along to read again, because it is quite profound.

If you could travel with one famous person/celebrity, who would it be?

OK, I need someone who can act a fool, but also go to bed early. I'm going to ask Elizabeth Gilbert of "Eat, Pray, Love" fame, because I know she would understand the assignment.

What is the best gift to give a traveler?

A portable phone charger. This is so basic, but it is easy to forget and ... it's important to be able to avoid the anxiety of your phone running out of power or having to find somewhere to plug it in.

What's your go-to snack for a flight or road trip?

Honestly, dark chocolate. You could say I am addicted to it, but I prefer to think I'm committed to eating it ... after every meal.

What is the coolest souvenir you've picked up on a vacation?

I purchased two of the most beautiful Bedouin rugs in Palestine. It was insane to try and fit them in my suitcase, but I somehow managed and still admire them daily.

What is your favorite app/website for travel?

On a recent trip to Scotland with my partner, Scott, I used ChatGPT quite a bit and found it to be incredibly helpful.

What has travel taught you?

Travel is one of my best and favorite teachers. I actually believe riding on a train or a plane is a spiritual experience in that you are neither here nor there and, for me, that allows for more expansive thoughts. Once I've arrived at my destination — especially if it is somewhere I've not been before — just being there gives me a glimpse into new possibilities for myself. I'm so grateful that I live a life that allows me this experience somewhat routinely.

JULIET PENNINGTON



HERE

SIP AND SAVOR AT BOSTON WINE & FOOD FEST

Join other wine lovers this winter at the Boston Harbor Hotel for the 36th annual Boston Wine & Food Festival (Jan. 31-March 27). Led by executive chef David Daniels and festival director Nick Daddona, the schedule features a series of wine dinners paired with curated courses, tastings, galas, and master classes, presided over by world-renowned winemakers and culinary artists. An opening night walk-around reception in the Wharf Room offers stunning harbor views and tastings of more than 100 global wines, as well as culinary treats prepared by Chef Daniels. Thematic events are returning, such as the Battle of the Cabs Dinner with blind tastings of Napa's top Cabernets, and the Judgement of Paris Dinner, a showdown between French and California wines. Two romance events encourage lovers to toast each other in February: Valen-

tines on the French Riviera, an intimate evening focusing on the South of France; and the Romeo and Juliet Amaron Dinner, a journey through Verona, the backdrop of the ill-fated lovers' tale. New this year, Hollywood & Vine, a four-course dinner with wine pairings that draw inspiration from cinematic masterpieces. Check the website for more events and featured wineries. Tickets from \$95. Attendees are encouraged to take advantage of an exclusive Boston Harbor Hotel room rate starting at \$305, based upon availability. 617-748-1878, www.boswineandfoodfestival.com

THERE

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Fall asleep to the soothing sound of waves lapping the shore when you stay at the Monterey Beach Hotel (above), a Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel nestled along the Monterey Peninsula. The only beachfront hotel in Monterey, originally built in 1967, the

newly transformed property boasts 600 feet of exclusive shoreline, and is steps away from cliffside hikes and the Monterey Recreation Trail, 18 miles of a paved path around the bay. The 188 guest rooms and four suites, with ocean or garden views, are all designed in a sleek modern style that feature plush mattresses, luxury bedding, towels and bath amenities, refillable aluminum water bottles, Lavazza coffee and tea brewer, and more. Ocean view rooms offer NOCS Provisions binoculars, perfect for scouting shorebirds and sea life. Additional amenities include outdoor pool, fitness center open 24/7, e-bike rentals, and three distinct culinary and cocktail venues with chef-driven interpretations of fresh coastal and central California flavors. Rates from \$350. 831-394-3321, www.montereybeach.com

CALIFORNIA DREAMING, TAKE 2

Soak up the California sun at the Hotel Joaquin, a 22-room, adults-only seaside sanctuary tucked above Shaw's Cove, a residential beach secluded from Laguna's mega beach resorts. Formerly The Motor Inn at Laguna Beach, the property's extensive renovations reimagine the glory days of 1940s California Riviera with playful, chic décor in bright, airy rooms with ocean and garden views. Amenities include complimentary arrival cocktail; morning coffee delivered to your room; daily complimentary breakfast; heated outdoor pool; beach umbrella and chair set-up; and the Adventure Collection of bicycles, bodyboards, and beach games. Watch the sunset with handcrafted cocktails, beers, and wines at Saline Bar. Season-

al experiences may include weekly morning yoga, outdoor movie nights with popcorn and (if needed) blankets, and meditative sound baths to balance the mental, physical, and spiritual mind. Winter rates from \$280. 949-494-5294, <https://hoteljoaquin.com>

EVERYWHERE

TRAVEL GEAR FOR PETS

Take your four-legged family members along on your next camping trip with durable adventure-ready gear by P.L.A.Y. Featured Scout & About products include an outdoor dog tent with simple pop-up assembly, fully-enclosed floor, mesh sides for ventilation, and water-resistant roof; multifunctional pouch to hold treats, poop bags, and zip pocket for your keys and cash; collapsible travel bowls; water-resistant chill pad; outdoor bed made of high performance 600-Denier PE fabrics; and toys. The new fleece-lined Trailblazing Coat is designed with a split tail hem for increased mobility, adjustable leg straps for a secure fit, and harness slot for easy attachment. All products are available in a stylish array of colors that are sure to make your fellow campers jealous. Tents: \$125; coats: \$59. www.petplay.com/collections/outdoor-gear

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