

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



SCOTT MCINTYRE/NYT

A rental car employee works in a car lot at the Orlando International Airport in Orlando on May 21, 2021.

I have proof I didn't damage my rental, so why do I have to pay?

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I need your help resolving a car rental damage claim. I recently rented a car from Enterprise in Phoenix. The rental car had a small dent in one of the doors. I took a photo of it to document the damage.

When I returned the car, an agent did a walk-around with me and said the vehicle was good to go. Eight weeks later, I received a damage claim from Enterprise. The date of loss was three days after I returned the car.

I sent Enterprise the photos of the existing damage, but the company is insisting that I am still responsible. Can you help me get Enterprise to drop this \$1,391 claim, please?

STACEY WALL, *Crestview, Fla.*

A. Technically, Enterprise is right. You are responsible for a car while it's in your possession, including any dings or dents. But if you have evidence that your car was damaged before you rented it, this should be enough for Enterprise to drop its damage claim. Clearly, this didn't happen on your watch.

You did the right thing by taking "before" photos of your rental, but it looks like you missed a few things. You want to take both "before" and "after" images of the car to show there's no damage.

If there is damage, you need to request a different car. If no other car is available, you should note the damage to the vehicle in writing and get a supervisor to sign the form. It appears you only had the "before" images, which showed the preexisting damage. They were timestamped, but this apparently didn't matter to Enterprise. Its records must have shown that the car was undented before your rental.

This is a common problem with rental cars. Many drivers assume that if they weren't directly responsible for damage to the car, someone else — maybe the car rental company's insurance — will take care of it. But unfortunately, this is not true. The renter is responsible for anything that happens to the car from start to finish.

It can take weeks, sometimes months, before a car rental company processes a damage claim. So, the dates you mention — the claim being dated three days after your rental, for example — are not out of the ordinary.

Here's what is a little unusual: You had photographic evidence that the damage already existed, which the car rental company seemed to be ignoring. If the car was already dented when you picked it up, why isn't Enterprise taking that into consideration?

You were in contact with Enterprise's damage recovery unit, the part of the company that handles claims. But you also tried escalating this to an executive at Enterprise. I list the names, numbers, and email addresses of the Enterprise executives on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org. But the managers didn't respond to you.

I contacted Enterprise on your behalf. It reviewed your photos and agreed to drop the claim against you.

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

Photographer Barry Schneier

on Boston's music scene, JetBlue's app, and how to pack the right way

Newton native Barry Schneier has been chronicling Boston's music scene with his photographs since the mid-1970s. His work has been featured in national and international publications, and is in the permanent collections of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music (Schneier photographed Springsteen's May 1974 concert at the now-closed Harvard Square Theatre in Cambridge and his photos of the Boss have appeared on several of Springsteen's album covers). The Boston-based Folk Americana Roots Hall of Fame is showcasing Schneier's photographs from his new book, "The Song Is Still Being Written," at the Boch Center Wang Theatre through late December. "The space where the exhibit is being shown is visually beautiful. Not only does it showcase the photos, but the rich history and vitality of the folk music scene in Boston and Cambridge," said Schneier, 74, in a recent phone call. "There's a stereotype of folk music just being performed by older white people playing guitar. Folk music today is not that at all. It's [written and performed by] a diverse group of people of all races, backgrounds, sexual orientations ... it runs the gamut." Folk music is, he added, "music by the people, for the people." Once the exhibit closes at the Wang, it will be staged at other venues and spaces throughout New England. We caught up with the father of three and grandfather of two, who lives in Plymouth with his wife, Marty, a retired social worker, and their rescue dog, Finn, to talk about all things travel.

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

Chipiona, Spain. We have family who have a home there. It's a small beach town with everything you need in walking distance.

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

On my own.

Thoughts on an "unplugged" vacation?

Would love to be able to, but often when I'm traveling, I'm in the middle of other things and need to keep at least aware of what's happening.

What has been your worst vacation experience?

It was last year. We arrived early at Logan for a Saturday morning flight to California with plenty of time — only to discover the baggage handling system had broken down. Bags were stacked everywhere, so we had to navigate around and literally over them and barely made it to the gate on time — at which time I discovered that I had left my phone behind at the checkout counter.

What is your favorite childhood travel memory?

Traveling down Route 3 with my parents to the Cape. As soon as I saw the four antennas for what was then WPLM in Plymouth, I knew we were close.

Do you vacation to relax, to learn, or for the ad-



Barry Schneier and his wife, Marty, in front of a home where they used to live in Venice Beach.

venture of it all?

I love traveling for adventure and discovering new things.

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

"Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow" by Gabrielle Zevin. I actually just started it on my last trip.

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

Barack Obama — just for the conversations.

What is the best gift to give a traveler?

Noise-canceling headphones. A must!

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

Dried fruit and a protein bar.

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

Handmade earthen bowls from roadside vendors in Morocco.

What is your favorite app/website for travel?

I like the airline apps to keep track of flight times and delays. Many are quite good, but we've been flying JetBlue a lot lately and I like how the app tells you when your bags are loaded and when they've arrived. It's nice to get on the plane and get a text letting you know that your bags are on the plane, too. Also, there are texts when your flight's been delayed, your flight is on time ... I don't recall [an airline] that gives you as much information as JetBlue does. It's very handy.

What has travel taught you?

The world is an incredibly wide and diverse place. You need to sometimes insert yourself somewhere you have little familiarity with and just let the experiences unfold.

What is your best travel tip?

Pack only what you think you need, then let your spouse or significant other repack it for you.

JULIET PENNINGTON



HERE

VICTORIAN MANOR REVIVES IN ROCKPORT

Those heading north for leaf-peeping season have a new place to stay in the heart of Cape Ann. The former Pleasant Street Inn has been meticulously renovated by its new owners to its historic Victorian-era grandeur as The Rockport House, featuring three unique buildings set on a lushly landscaped and spacious property. Originally built in the 1890s, the restored inn blends a vintage vibe with modern luxuries. The Main Inn features 10 individually designed deluxe or superior rooms, two suites with full kitchens, and common area. A more casual setting can be found at the Carriage House, with three two-bed studios, single bedroom, and apartment with a full kitchen. For families or small groups looking for longer stays, check out The Cottage, a private three-bedroom home with a patio and fire pit. Located a short walk from Rockport's photogenic waterfront, the inn offers easy access to the town's beaches, eclectic dining scene, and art galleries. October midweek rates from \$250/night; weekends from \$350/night. 978-293-820, <https://therockport-house.com>



THERE

BOUTIQUE DIGS DEBUT IN DOWNTOWN DENVER

Once an ornate Gilded Age 1880s home, the historic George Schleier Mansion, Urban Cowboy Denver sparkles in restored glory smack dab in the middle of the Mile High City's Capitol Hill neighborhood. The 16-room hotel, bar, and restaurant's preservation includes much of the original structure's detail and architecture, including the Queen Anne style façade, original staircase with carvings of gargoyles, Bavarian swans, bulbous tower cupola, hand-carved coffered ceilings, and art tile fireplaces. Open now, in an old carriage house where the original owners kept their horse and buggy, the



Public House bar and restaurant mixes house cocktails at its hand-carved wooden saloon bar, and serves a menu of wood-fired pies and small plates by Brooklyn-based Roberta's. Opening mid-October, accommodations fuse luxury and creature comforts with Western frontier design, including custom-designed wallpaper — inspired by a 1700s block print pattern — and hand-hammered copper soaking tubs in each room. Rates from \$295 per night. www.urbancowboy.com/denver

DENVER DIGS DEBUT TIMES TWO

For another choice of a new hotel in Denver, check out Populous, said to be the first carbon positive hotel in the United States. Inspired by nature, the biophilic architectural design was informed by studying the characteristic patterns found on tree trunks of Colorado's native aspen tree, Populus Tremuloides. Featuring 265 modern accommodations, with rooms offering minimalist yet charming retreats as well as more spacious suites, guests can enjoy two distinct restaurants: Pasque, an all-day ground-floor dining destination, and Stellar Jay, a lively rooftop hot spot with shared plates and live-fired cuisine that overlooks Denver's downtown skyline, parks, and iconic Rocky Mountains. Additional amenities include a 24-hour fitness facility, flexible event spaces, re-

fillable water stations, and curated snacks in a private in-room bar. Rooms from \$299 per night; suites from \$499 per night. 300-800-4240, populusdenver.com.

EVERYWHERE

MAGNETIC PHONE MOUNT FOR CAR

Navigating your upcoming road trips just got a whole lot easier with the new Snap Grip Luxe and Snap Car Mount by ohsnap, maker of grips, stands, and chargers designed to make life with your phone less of a hassle. Its "Car Kit" combines a magnetic, easy-to-use car mount with a super strong and thin magnet that attaches to your phone or its case. If your car has a wireless charging platform or a portable wireless charger, you don't have to worry about removing the grip, as it enables pass-thru charging. A ball grip mount combines full angle control with consistent friction, allowing for a smooth rotation and perfect viewing angle.

When not in the car, the multi-functional Snap Grip Luxe snaps open to be used as a kickstand for propping up your phone on a flat surface, and offers a variety of gripping positions for holding securely. Compatible with most phones made in the last 15 years. Available in multiple colors. \$59.99. ohsnap.com/products/car-kit-4

NECEE REGIS