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## Did Mickey, Goofy take guest's SUV for joy ride?

**The Travel Troubleshooter CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT Syndicated Columnist**

**Q:** I recently stayed at the Grand Floridian Resort & Spa at Walt Disney World, and something happened to my SUV that I parked through the hotel's valet service.

Two days after I checked in, I called the valet number to get my vehicle. But they couldn't find my keys, and after half an hour of searching, a manager offered to pay for a cab to Disney's Animal Kingdom, where we were supposed to meet our party.

I was told that I would be called as soon as they found our keys. We visited Animal Kingdom and waited several hours but never received a call. When we returned to the Grand Floridian, I asked why no one had phoned. They said they lost our number.

When I asked how they found our keys, I was told that someone had filled out the envelope incorrectly — using my first name instead of my last. When I pressed further, an attendant admitted that my keys weren't in the original envelope and that no one knew why my keys were ever removed from it.

At this point, I became suspicious. When they pulled the vehicle around, I noticed that my son's car seat had been unlatched. I was sure someone else had used my SUV. We also discovered that the movie my son had been watching on the way to Disney World had been moved.

I'm beyond disappointed. When I spend almost \$1,000 to stay somewhere for two days I expect that my vehicle will be kept safe. Do I have any recourse? — Lynn Seehafer, Winter Park, Fla.

**A:** When you hand your keys to a hotel valet, you should expect your car to be parked somewhere safe.

Coincidentally, I valet parked my car at a Disney World resort yesterday, and right on the stub handed you when you surrender your keys, it says the company is liable for ... well, nothing.

"Please remove any valuables from your vehicles," it reads. The company, it adds, "does not assume any responsibility for the loss of any valuables." Neither Disney nor the company it contracts to handle valet parking services at its resorts is responsible for loss or property damages, according to the disclaimer.

I think a court may see your hotel's liability a little differently. Just because it says it isn't responsible doesn't mean that it isn't, although I have to tell you, I don't think you're going to be the test case.

You did the right thing by appealing to a manager while you were still at the hotel. But you probably could have pushed your case more forcefully. If you believe Mickey had taken your SUV for a joy ride and watched your son's movie, simply expressing your disappointment may not have been enough. You have to tell someone what it will take to make things right.

After you checked out, a brief, polite letter to the hotel might have helped, but resolving this case after the fact would have been problematic. There was no documentation that someone messed with your car (no photos or mileage logs) and no one had taken anything from the car. Where's the damage?

I contacted Disney on your behalf. A representative called you and apologized for your experience. She insisted that your car didn't leave the parking lot and that an associate had just turned off your son's movie when he parked the car. To make up for your trouble, Disney sent you four park tickets and a \$50 gift card.

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