

Many Motels Nail Down Furniture To Outwit Thieves

By SUSAN K. POLLOCK
United Press International
CHICAGO (UPI) — Plenty of motels nail down their furniture, but they still can't stop thefts ranging from ash trays to whole rooms full of furnishings.

The thieving guest is a long-time pest to the hotel industry and he's growing more common with the mushrooming of motels along the nation's highways.

Motel operators are used to missing ash trays, soap and towels. They even expect it. They're also not surprised when a chair, a television set or even a mattress leaves with the departing guest.

The Holiday Inn chain reports they've had a complete room stolen.

"It was a day by day job when we were furnishing one of our Houston motels. By the end of 10 days every item that comprises a room was missing — coordinated perfectly color-wise," Clyde Dixon, president of the Inn Keeper's Supply Co., a Holiday Inn subsidiary, said.

Stalwart Everythings
D. G. Pavis, general manager of O'Hare Inn just outside Chicago, said he once checked a room which was minus the door hinges, water faucets, towel bars, door stop, curtain rods, curtains and the toilet seat.

"He must have spent hours at it so I guess he earned what he took," Pavis said.

Motel managers are quick to make a distinction between the "professional" thief — such as Pavis' room-stripper — and the "impulse" thief.

Dixon said the "professional" checks in at a motel with the sole purpose of stocking up. Desk clerks are usually alerted to keep an eye on travelers who insist upon a room in the back.

"Certain items are in the rooms for guests to take," Dixon said. "When they disappear, we consider it a combination theft-public relations job."

Items that Holiday Inn sets out as thief-bait souvenirs include fly swatters, water glasses, shoe shine cloths and plastic bags. All these bear the name or crest of the chain.

Dixon said his outfit expects at least one ash tray to disappear from each room every day although the firm doesn't consider ash trays a small cost item.

Location Counts
Marcel Lutwak, executive director of the Aristocrat Inns of America, said the type of item taken and the frequency with which things disappear depends chiefly upon the location of the motel.

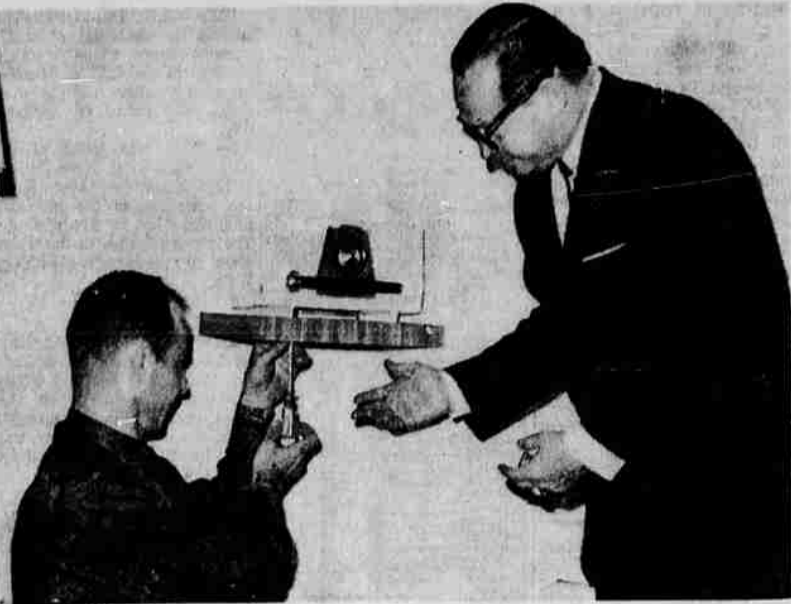
More thefts occur in motels located on a highway, where travelers stop for a night on a cross-country trip, than in those located in the heart of town, Lutwak said.

That is a problem that has been stumping the motel industry for years — but no one seems to have found a foolproof system of catching or punishing the culprit.

Many motels install furniture that is too bulky to place in the trunk of a car and some nail portable objects like television sets or lamps to heavier furniture.

All motels carry theft insurance and most have some type of inter-plant checking system.

Lutwak discovered one way of making a hotel thief pay: "Once a maid reported that someone was helping himself to towels and other such items. We simply placed a new category on his bill and called it 'souvenirs.' The man was too embarrassed to question it."



ENGINEER DEFIES THIEF — Hostellers in Chicago expect guests to take missing ash trays, soap, or towels, but they're also not surprised when a TV set or a mattress departs with the guest. In this photo John Dudic, Lake Tower Motel engineer, uses screwdriver to fasten radio to prevent theft. Les Brown, assistant to the president of the motel, watches. (UPI)

Medford Firm Gets Winema Road Job

KLAMATH FALLS—Award of a contract for construction of the Meadow Creek road was announced recently by Winema National Forest officials.

Cal-Ore Construction Company of Medford was the successful bidder at \$33,595. Bids ranged in price from the low submitted by Cal-Ore Construction Company to a high of \$99,742. Fifteen bids were received.

Award of the contract was made on Nov. 19. Men and equipment were moved onto the project immediately and construction work is under way.

The Meadow Creek road is a project on the Winema Forest being financed by Accelerated Public Works funds. The road is an extension of the improved timber access route in the Skelton Draw area, and will provide needed transportation route in a block of virgin timber on the Chiloquin Ranger District.

The Accelerated Public Works funds which finance the project are made available through a cooperative program with the Area Redevelopment Administration of the Department of Commerce.

Life Cycle of Fir Beetle Under Study

CORVALLIS—Basic research into the life cycle of the timber-damaging Douglas fir beetle is now under way at Oregon State University with a three-year \$35,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

Two forest entomologists, Dr. William P. Nagel and Dr. Julius A. Rudinsky, are developing a method of sampling the population of Douglas fir beetle and its natural enemies.

Nagel and Rudinsky plan to record the life and death of successive generations of beetles

and to learn the efficiency of the beetle's enemies as a factor in their life cycle.

The Douglas fir beetle usually breeds only in natural wind-thrown timber in the coastal zone, Nagel said. In the interior regions, the beetle attacks both downed timber and standing trees. Sampling work by the OSU scientists will be done in timber on the Mary's Peak watershed, 12 miles west of Corvallis.

When forest scientists learn what happens to complete gen-

erations of beetles and understand the many factors which influence their life cycle, it may be possible to successfully predict the beetle density from year to year. This would allow better control of the Douglas fir beetle and could reduce the damage to timber by these insects, Nagel said.

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