

LIBERTY PARK INN®

A Syndicated Column

Name: Housekeeper Of The Year

By: David Henry © 2012

"Thanks for checking that," I said as I hung up the phone on my office desk.

As I looked up I saw my Head Housekeeper, Betty, waiting by my office door.

"Hi, Betty," I said. "Come in and have a seat."

Betty came in and we sat down together on the couch by the wall where I had a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence.

"I called you here because we're approaching the time for our annual awards banquet and I wanted to ask who you think should get the 'Housekeeper Of The Year award.'"

Betty responded without hesitation. "That's easy. Consuelo."

I wasn't surprised by her answer. Consuelo had been a faithful employee for many years. But I probed a little anyway. "Well, why do you think she should get the award this year?"

"Well, for one thing," Betty said, "she is the hardest working housekeeper we have."

"How do you know that," I queried?

Betty responded, "As you know, I personally inspect every room before I release it to be rented to the next guest."

"I am aware of that," I commented, "and I appreciate the thoroughness of your inspections. That is one of the reasons we consistently get favorable comments from our guests about our clean rooms."

Betty continued, "My policy has always been to send the housekeeper back to re-do the room if it doesn't pass my inspection. With Consuelo I rarely ever have to send her back. She does it right the first time. It would be hard to find a more reliable worker than Consuelo."

I agreed with Betty's assessment and added "It's been my observation over the years that Hispanics are generally hard workers. But when I was a young boy, before I actually met any Hispanics, I thought that Mexicans

were lazy. I was surprised when I grew up and started working with them and found out that I had been wrong all those years. I think I got that false idea from a comic strip about a lazy Mexican who always said, 'Tomorrow,' when it was time to do any work."

"I can see how you would get that false impression." Betty said. "But getting back to your question, Consuelo has been with us for six years. She is always on time. I can't remember her ever calling in sick. She gets along well with the other housekeepers. The guests also like her and frequently comment on her friendliness and helpfulness. She would be an excellent choice for 'Housekeeper Of The Year.'"

Just then, John, my Front Desk Manager, burst into the office and said, "I'm sorry to interrupt. But three police cars just drove up. I think you better come."

As the three of us entered the lobby, Officer Jones and five other officers walked in. I knew Officer Jones pretty well and I considered him a friend. But today he was all business.

"Hi," I said. "What can we do for you?"

"Do you have an employee here named Consuelo Martinez," he asked?

"Why yes," I replied. "As a matter of fact we were just talking about her."

"Can you take me to her?" he said somewhat curtly.

I was surprised by his uncharacteristic abruptness, but I said "Sure."

"I think she is cleaning room 132," Betty said. And we walked off together toward that room.

She was in the room cleaning, as expected.

One of the other officers, who I didn't recognize, went up to Consuelo and said, "Are you Consuelo Martinez?"

She was obviously taken by surprise, but answered, "Yes. I am."

With that, this officer abruptly took out his handcuffs and cuffed her, saying, "Consuelo Martinez, you are under arrest for identity theft."

He read her rights to her and took her out to the waiting police vehicle.

As she was escorted into the vehicle, I asked Officer Jones, "What is going on here?"

Officer Jones responded, "She is in this country illegally and has been using someone else's social security number for years to work and avoid detection."

I couldn't hide my astonishment and exclaimed, "Wow! We had no idea. She has always been such a good, reliable worker. We never suspected anything like this."

Another officer spoke up and said, "Well that's how these people operate. They sneak into this country illegally and take the jobs of real American citizens."

"What's going to happen to her," I asked?

"Probably three to five years in prison," He answered. "But if she's lucky she might just get deported and never be allowed to return to this country again."

I considered his words for a few moments, and then asked, "What is going to happen to her children? She has three underage children who were all born here in the United States."

"They will become wards of the state. Probably end up in three separate foster care homes until they're 18. After that they will be on their own."

As the police vehicles drove off I found myself thinking about what had just happened and I wondered silently "Could this really be justice?"

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This column is based on an actual event that occurred in a hotel where the author was working. The immigration problem needs to be fixed. But the author does not think the current solutions being discussed will actually work.

Liberty Park Inn® is a syndicated column about issues and current events featuring conversations in an imaginary hotel. You may contact the author through his website at www.libertyparkinn.com.