

The Worst Day Since Yesterday

Standing in the doorway to my bedroom. There's definitely something wrong with my ceiling. I have my roommate check to make sure I'm not seeing things. That is definitely a major bubble in my ceiling, right above my bed.

Great.

That means water damage most likely. Which means at any moment water could come pouring through my ceiling and soak my bed and possessions. Laptop, iPod, textbooks, and paperwork all potentially ruined. Right about now I'm wishing I had gotten rental insurance for my laptop. We move everything to one side of my room and call maintenance. A guy in a hoodie and workboots shows up in an hour. Says it looks bad, he'll put the work order in when he gets back to the office.

Two weeks later.

The bubble's still there. No one's come by to fix it. I call to complain and to find out what's happening, why my ceiling hasn't been fixed yet, when will someone be out to take care of it. They tell me someone will be by tomorrow to look at it.

Tomorrow comes. So does another guy in a hoodie and workboots. Again he says it looks bad. We need to fix it soon.

No kidding.

I tell him I don't care how much of a mess it'll make; I just want it done already.

A week later the semester ends and I've gone home for winter break. I left my apartment a mess though, so I go back after a few days to clean up and check on my room.

Still not fixed.

Not only is the bubble still there, it's becoming bigger. And so is my frustration. I call again to complain. The maintenance man on the other end of the phone assures me it'll be taken care of. Another guy tells my mother the same thing when she calls the next day. Done by the end of break. Absolutely.

Or not.

The problem continues to grow. So I start making it more difficult for them to ignore my ever expanding issue. I start calling every few days, then every other day, then every day. I can hear the somehow comforting sounds of dread and

annoyance in their voices when I tell them who is calling. It's the only satisfaction I really expect to receive from these calls. Always asking the same thing:

"Hi. I'm just wondering... when exactly is my ceiling going to be fixed?"

I start dragging more and more people into this. I speak to the supervisor at the maintenance company and he tells me someone will be out in a day or two. I meet with a "higher-up" at the apartment company and bring him out to my apartment to see the damage for himself. He acts surprised and appalled at the state my ceiling is in. They all assure me the problem will be taken care of soon.

It's already been eight weeks.

Apparently that's still not long enough to wait. We start talking to others. The town inspector nearly has a heart attack when he sees my ceiling. The school's lawyer is happy to give advice; he hates my apartment company even more than I do. He tells us to document everything. I compile all the photographs I've taken over the last two months; it's like a flip-book tracking the growth of this bubble in my ceiling.

My roommate jumps at the opportunity to call the maintenance company time. He's armed with the confidence of talking with the school's lawyer and the experience of dealing with people who don't do their jobs. It's better this way. I'm

getting too tired for this crap. I'd probably just start to curse someone out. My dad and the lawyer both tell me that wouldn't be very productive.

40 minutes.

He spent 40 minutes on the phone. They *apologized*. Apparently clerical errors have resulted in nearly three months of unsafe living conditions and living in half of my bedroom because I've been afraid of a block of ice falling through my ceiling at any moment. Boy do I love dealing with bureaucracy.

One hour.

The day they finally came by to fix my ceiling, it took one hour. I spent almost three months trying to get someone to do their job and all it took was one hour of their time. Some days I just want to punch a wall, but that probably wouldn't be fixed until next spring.

Three days later.

The rain is coming down hard outside. It's late and quiet in my apartment and I lay down on my bed to sleep, satisfied with the repairs to my ceiling. No

longer am I afraid of water pouring into my room or a block of ice falling on me in my sleep.

Within five minutes.

I can hear the water dripping through my roof and onto the fresh patch of drywall above me.

Son of a b-