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about planting your seed, making a miracle happen and attracting positive energy to realize your dreams. I know that human beings are simply spiritual beings having a temporary human experience; so bathe yourself in your imagination - its where all the magic happens!"), has been overwhelmingly negative. Reviews written by former visitors described an intolerable environment where drunk employees got into fist fights, money was routinely stolen, and "cocoons" consisted of nothing more than foam mattresses on the ground. But was it really as bad as it seemed? I prayed it was. I'm funny that way.

I arrived at 7 pm on a Monday, the hour I said I would when I made my reservation. The front door was locked. I rang the doorbell. Nothing. Knocked on the door. Nothing. I looked through the window--an obese European man, sitting smack dab in the middle of a love seat, scowled at me briefly before turning his attention back to a laptop. I rang the doorbell again. Nothing. I knocked. Nothing. I turned to my gentleman friend, who was kind enough to (begrudgingly) tag along. "It begins," I said.

After calling the place, a skittish looking kid with plugs in his ears eventually let us in. He explained, however, that he couldn't check us in because the manager wasn't there. We were told we could "hang out" and wait for him in the living area, though. He gestured towards the living area. The obese European looked up and scowled. We decided to wait in the kitchen.

In the kitchen, young men cooked and yammered on in a language my limited education discerned as "not English." A radio played nondescript pop music at a slightly unreasonable volume. Two enormous vending machines, filled with nutritionally-deficient snacks, dominated the room. The "art" on the wall was, uh, not. I went to the restroom; the toilet paper was one-ply, there were no towels, and a half-empty bottle of Axe body wash sat in the shower. Now, granted, I had never been in a hostel up until that point, but this seemed painfully average. No one was screaming. No one was stealing. The sun, however, had yet to go down. We had yet to see our room.

Thirty minutes later, the manager still hadn't arrived. We were shown around by another employee, a low-energy fellow who asked if we were artists. I responded that we were not. He told us the building had recently been painted orange because the color is supposed to "inspire creativity." He showed us the communal laptop, an ancient IBM ThinkPad currently in the possession of the obese European. He led us around the hostel's "themed" rooms -- the "Moroccan Room," which had sheer IKEA drapes tacked to the wall, contained two partially-deflated air mattresses and nothing else. The "Princess Diana Room" had a picture of Princess Diana outside of it. The "Skype" room was a small cubby, with a tie-dyed sheet used as a makeshift door and a cushion on the ground. The cushion reminded me of a dog bed. A human-sized dog bed.

At 7:45, the manager rolled up in a hatchback filled with young men wearing backwards baseball caps. I could tell by his name that he was the fellow who wrote the hostel's kooky manifesto, yet he seemed perfectly sane. He studied our IDs. "You're from Florida?" he asked my boyfriend. He pointed out the window at the red-capped bro in the passenger seat of the car. "He's from Florida," he said. As if on cue,

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the driver, who was wearing a white cap, honked. The manager's interest was immediately diverted to them.

After a unsurprisingly long check-in process, during which we were initially put in separate rooms, we were finally shown our home for the next twelve hours--the "Mother Teresa Room." We were given a top bunk, the mattress of which was two-inches-thick and made of foam, and an air mattress on the ground. A threadbare fitted sheet and a Christmas-themed fleece blanket were artlessly thrown on the air mattress. It wasn't glamorous, but it was \$19 a night. You get what you pay for.

The night progressed without incident, save my altercation with Scott. There were no fights. No drugs. No theft. Most visitors were silent, scrolling away on their iPhones. Everyone, Scott included, was in bed by midnight. The degeneracy I had prepared myself for was nonexistent. The decor was laughable, but price-wise on point. The staff was bumbling, but well-meaning. The mattress was uncomfortable, but not as uncomfortable as sleeping on the street. As I took my leave the next morning, I wondered what everyone on the internet was so damn worked up about. It's \$19 a night, for Christ's sake. I would have paid \$20.

When I drove into that neighborhood We just felt the most unpleasant atmosphere of L.A. When we saw the house that supposed to be the hostel we just prayed to not be there. Broken fences, big amounts of rubbish and very creepy people everywhere.

Trust me, I don't really care about comfort and get along with different people when I am backpacking, but I got scared when I saw that place and people inside laying down on a sofa watching TV on a dim light who seemed quite wasted on heavy drugs and I am not talking