



# The Best Laid Plans Of Brides And Grooms

by Chad Lowry

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Dear James,

My apologies, but I won't be able to submit a column for August. I meant to write one in July, but I got all caught up in planning my wedding, which was yesterday.

Everything seemed to be under control until I realized I had no idea how much work is involved in one of these shindigs. Who knew? For example, you have to order flowers. I always thought they just showed up. Same deal with the cake. But no, you have to call people and ask for them. It's the damndest thing.

I suppose it would have been easier had we hired a wedding planner, but what I really needed was a Designated Throttlr. This would have been a friend or close relative whose job was merely to take a beating from me each time something went awry. That would have relieved a lot of stress.

For instance, most of my family was due to fly in from various cities on Wednesday for the rehearsal. Two of my brothers made it in early without incident. My older brother was arriving in the early afternoon, and planned to pick up my younger sister and Dad when they arrived shortly thereafter. My younger sister and Dad somehow decided that, even though they were leaving from the same city and the same airport, they should be on different flights and different airlines.

The three of them needed to leave the airport by 5 p.m. in order to make the 6 p.m. rehearsal. (Since the location for our wedding hosts multiple ceremonies per weekend, each couple has only one hour to rehearse, so running late was not an option.) Unfortunately, some thunderstorms moved through the area, causing them to not only be delayed, but also to arrive from different connecting cities than expected. My brother and sister were able to find one another because they each had a cell phone. My Dad, however, does not.

At 4:40 p.m., my brother called me to say he couldn't find Dad. "I looked through my terminal, in my baggage claim, in his terminal, and his baggage claim," he said. "I have no idea where is or how to find him."

"Pete," I said, "did you try having him paged?"

Silence, then, "I didn't think of that."

At ten to five, my brother called to say that he found my Dad. "Good," I told him, "if you hustle you can still make it on time."

They were going to leave right away, he told me, but first they needed directions on how to get to the site. Now, I sent an invitation to the wedding to each of them, and a separate invitation for the rehearsal, and each of those had a map in it. Between the three of them, they had managed to leave behind all of the six maps. "Take 294 South to 88 West," I sighed, and I heard him repeat it to Dad, who was standing next to him.

At 5:40 p.m., one of my younger brothers (who had arrived earlier in the day) called me to say that Dad and my brother and sister were still at the airport, since my sister couldn't find her bag. My head exploded. Because I was driving to the rehearsal myself at the time, I asked my younger brother to call my older brother and tell them to leave immediately, bag or no bag. I may have used some words from the French vocabulary to express myself.

Five minutes later, my phone rang again. It was my younger sister, asking frantically, "Which way do we go on 294?!?" Eventually, they showed up.

The next day, the night before the wedding, I was out to dinner with one of my groomsmen. Ours was a morning ceremony, so I didn't want to be out too late. Arriving home around 10:15 p.m., I walked in and heard someone talking on the answering machine. I quickly picked up the phone and realized it was our DJ. "Hey," he said, "hope I'm not calling too late, but I just want to go over a couple of things with you." Sure, I thought, we've got plenty of time.

I answered his questions, then went straight to sleep. Sometime later, the phone rang. I woke up in a stupor, looked at the clock and saw that it was 1:15 a.m. The answering machine picked up. It was the DJ again. "Hey, it's Russ the DJ. I need to talk with you about something. Give me a call at the office." I decided not to call him back. The next day, I found out that he had called to say he couldn't find the song for our first dance. But later he found it, so everything was OK.

The day of the ceremony, the DJ provided more highlights, including:

- Enlisting my groomsmen to help him move his equipment before the ceremony since his assistant had called in sick
- Forgetting to play a song during the ceremony
- Mispronouncing most of the names during the introductions

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- Playing the wrong song for the cake cutting, and
- Playing numerous songs which we had expressly told him not to play.

During the meal, he came up to my bride and I to ask how everything was going. "Great," we lied. "Good," he said. "I'm a perfectionist and I hate when things don't go just right." We lightened his tip considerably.

Anyway, that's why I won't be able to come up with anything this month, but I'll be sure to get back to you by September.

Relievedly yours,

Chad Lowry