

St. SomeTimes

December 2023

V279



59th Anniversary

David & Pat

FLIGHTS FROM HELL

Flight Number EK213

Dubai to Miami

Aircraft Type B777-300ER

Aircraft ID A6-ECT

Speed 502 mph

Altitude 28,284 ft

Outside Temp -34° C

Distance Travelled 8174 mi

Time to Destination 0h 41m

Distance to Destination 274 mi

Time at Destination 10:21

Estimated Time of Arrival 11:02



THE PLANE TOOK OFF FROM THE ISLAND 2 HOURS LATE!

I had planned the usual 1.5 hour layover in Dubai because flying only Emirates means a 30 minute security check, drink a beer, gate change. Little did I know...

Hell. Absolute hell. The flight to Dubai was full. Instead of an extra seat by the aisle, reserved for handicap, Emirates filled it. I was hemmed in between two smelly guys for almost 3 hours.

When we landed in Dubai, it was chaos. I've never seen Dubai airport in a mess. But this was hell. Lines everywhere. Everyone was skipping lines. Shouting. Everyone claimed to be a VIP. But all the flights were delayed. Worse yet, we were assigned terminal

A instead of the usual Terminal B. B is the easy arrival, security check, next gate over for connection. A means more time and a train ride to B. ughh.

I snapped. Walking fast I asked for help from an airport concierge. "No problem. B27." no help. I flagged a taxi golf cart. It rushed me to the far end of B and the plane was actually there. It was 3:15am. The flight was due to leave at 3am. Wow. Full flight again. All seats! Sandwich. No sleep. Headwind. 15.5 hours. Shit.

I refuse to run through an airport! I always plan long layovers as opposed to "just in time" layovers, precisely because I don't ever want to be late or miss a flight due to the usual delays.

I was at my airport four hours before I was due to leave. We boarded on time.

Then, the captain announced we were delayed due to weather in Dubai.

The entire airport was delayed. Oh crap. We sat 2 hours at the gate.



GREG PERCENTAGE

Only one person in the world can insert himself into a vacation designed to spend maximum time with mom and dad...Joe.

Joey upgraded this time and brought Danica along. The minute I landed, I drove my rental across the Everglades and met up with Joe and Danica at our usual spot: a restaurant near his sister's condo called Pelican Larry's. Later, Kathy joined us for Pizza and Beer.

FUN COUNTRY = DRUM KARAOKE ORGANIC GROCERY

Danica will always, from now on, be known to me as "the upgrade". Last summer, when Joey crashed my parent only vacation, he was on his own. We had fun staying at his sister's condo and spending a little "greg percentage" on that USA trip. But this time was an upgrade..."the upgrade". Danica and Joe flew down to Naples for just three days. Just enough time to see me and meet up with his sisters for a quick hello.

Every trip we have together, Joe likes to plan a surprise. Each trip is an attempt to have more fun than the previous trip. This time the surprise was immense. I wouldn't have been more surprised if I had woken with my face sewn to the carpet. We spent the first full day together, but they just would NOT tell me until the very last minute.

I wanted them to meet up with mom and dad. We all agreed to meet for lunch at the Ale House. That's the home of my current favorite wheat beer - Mango Wheat! Later, mom and dad hosted us at their house for the afternoon. Joe, dad, and I tried out my first (of many) Amazon orders - a small hovercraft. We sank it in the pool within five minutes. Amazing it worked later at all, but it does to this day! Farewell until later.

The surprise was about to start. Joe and Danica took me to Walmart because GoodWill was closed for the evening. I was instructed to buy the worst possible Xmas sweater. I chose one that had blinking lights. And then... we went to Seed to Table, an organic grocery store! Why? A bar inside. Live music. What????

We didn't stay long. Instead of great live music, it was two high schoolers banging on drums to Karaoke. So we headed back to Pelican Larry's. Whom your with!!!!



Two Weeks of Retirement



Doggies Out?

Every time mom has a major surgery, dad gets her a new puppy (well, if they only have one dog at the time).

How many times in a day do a really old dog and a new puppy have to “go out”?

Answer: one more

Sleep. Eat. Sleep.

I won't kid you. I love retirement. Mom and dad are retired in Naples. So was I, for two weeks.

Naples, Florida is magical. Relaxing. Beautiful. Slow. Old. Perfect for retirement. I really didn't want to do anything anyway.

Hanging Out!

Some days, we did nothing. We just “hung out” together.

Dad still wakes up early. Hell, he doesn't have a choice when there is a five month old puppy in the house.

I'm pretty sure he was sweeping the main garage every morning.



What? What, Pat?

What? What, Dave?

Hearing is quite a valuable communication tool. But not in this house. No one can hear anything. Mom and dad both have hearing aids attached to their phones. When they use them, it still seems like they can't hear anything. Weird huh? Oh well. Such is life.

After 59 years of living together, mom and dad pretty much know what the other is thinking anyway. Nothing much has changed over the years. My dad has his way of doing things. Mom has her way of doing things differently. How do they make it work? Love and understanding.

December 26th is their anniversary. For the past 59 years, they have been there for one another through thick and thin. My favorite quote from this year's vacation with mom and dad was shared with me from mom. It was Jeff that said:

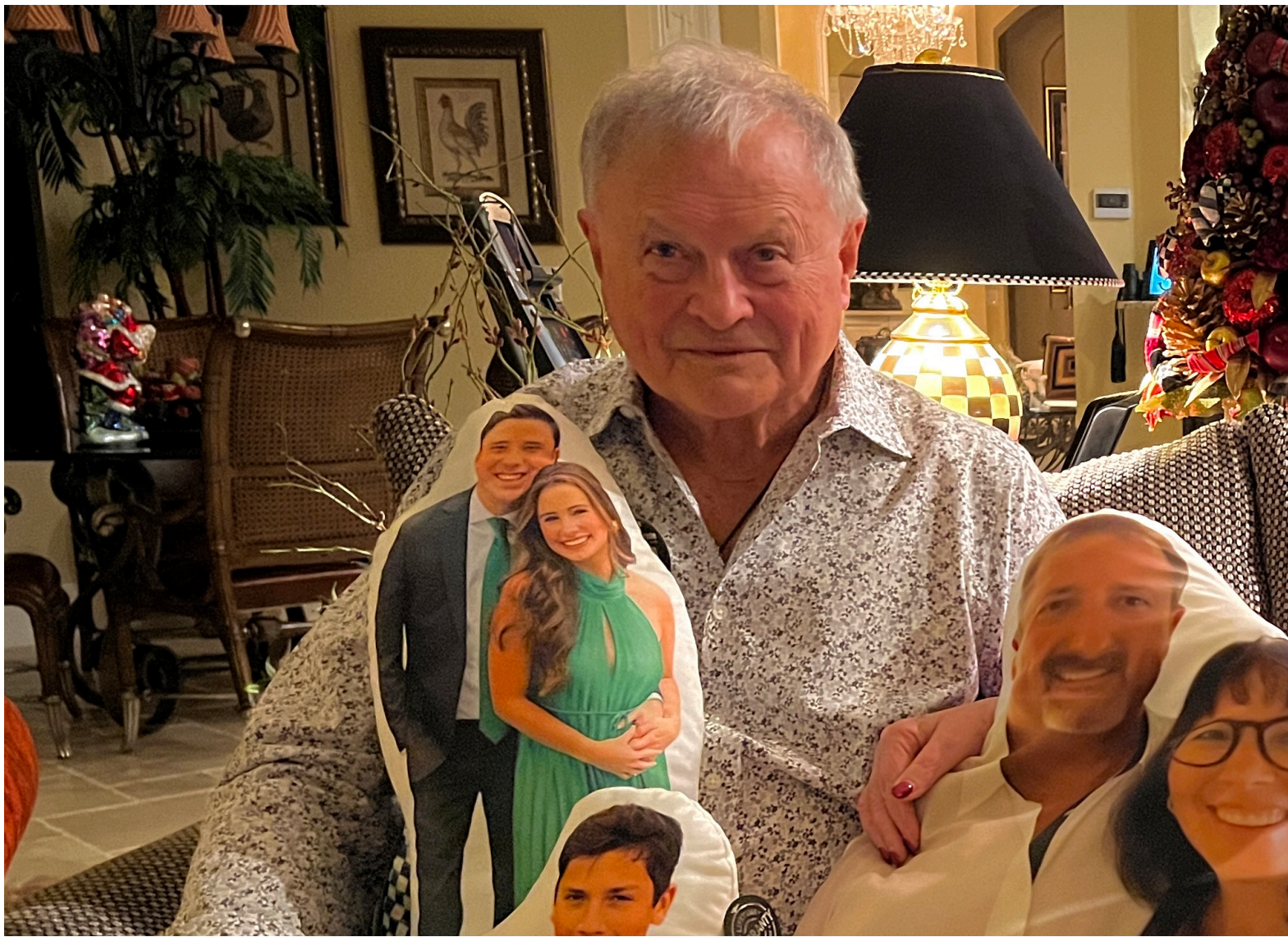
"It better be more than 56 years, because I'm 56!"

I didn't hear Jeff say it. Mom just shared it with me. Still funny.

Not surprisingly, technology is more of a nuisance and patience buster than help in the Lemoine household. Just trying to watch a movie, drop a storm shutter, or see the Packers play against the Buccaneers were all challenges. It's like a tech black hole once you enter mom and dad's house. Don't ask why. It just is. Things don't work.

If you happen to get a new technology gadget, don't try it out by the pool or on an extremely windy day in the street. Bad mojo. We dumped the new hovercraft thingy in the pool. Then dad and I tested out his new paper airplane remote app on a windy day. That was funny.

No matter what, mom and dad put the other first and foremost. "Dad, what are we doing today?" "Whatever your mom wants to, Greg."



Family is certainly important, but it sure felt great to be selfish this year and get mom and dad all to myself. But my sister Erin has a way of outshining my presents. Take a look at these great pillows!

Jason and Erin were up in Green Bay with their family for the holidays, but it sure seemed like they were right there in the living room. Hah hah.

Of course, we played phone tag once in a while. Dad had to call Jason several times about how to get the Televised Packer Games on the PLEX. (I have no idea how the Plex sharing works. I have a "Stanley Box" and can get any movies or TV I want. Plex just hasn't been very successful for me. Any time stable internet is involved - as in streaming or live file sharing - count me out.)

It would have been very cool to see Jason again. If Jason had been around, I probably would have spent

an impossible amount of time in the pool or whirlpool. That's Jason's thing. However, without him, I skipped the pool thing.

Next summer will be my time to spend some quality time with Jason's family. It will be over two years since I have seen him by that time. TJ is married off. The girls are out of the house. Colin is a superstar on Off-Broadway. And Teddy. Don't get me started. I think he's taller than I am now.

Not only did Jason and Erin out-gift me this year, so did Jeff. He sent mom and dad these cool photo books and several mugs. One of the mug handles was destroyed in the shipping. Jeff, I did my best to remedy that. I wrote a very strong argument to the company on dad's behalf. Alas, what's a mug to them. I guess they missed out on the Customer Service stories featured in Forbes and Time magazines! Cool mugs though! And those books are fantastic.



Dad even took the Maldives book to pass around at the New Year's dinner party. So yeah, I've been out done by my bros this year. Oh well. I simply leached off mom and dad for two weeks of room and board. Hah.

My present was simply being there with mom and dad. I had them all to myself. We spent time talking, laughing, solving the damn puzzle, and saying "What?" quite often.

Several mornings, I'd wake up early and go for a big breakfast at Perkins. It's one of my favorite things to do. It took about three visits before the waitresses got my bacon order correct. I mean, what is so difficult about two extra orders of bacon? in addition to the four pieces of bacon I order included with the meal - no sausage. Too bad they wouldn't serve me a beer with it.

On days I stayed home for breakfast, I'd have my anti-desert, FU beer for breakfast and see what dad

would put in the eggs. He puts everything in the morning egg scramble. Whatever we have for dinner, usually take-out, and don't eat, ends up in the eggs. The only exception is pepperonis. He has a stockpile of those to get the pan started. Yummy. But you never know. Chinese food, pizza, steak, italian pasta. Doesn't matter. It all goes into the eggs. So fun. So delicious.

The rest of the day? Not much. We had a routine which consisted of just about nothing. Dad can fall asleep anywhere, immediately. Mom is mending nicely after her recent brain surgery. She was semi-bed ridden for most days, but that was expected.

Most evenings, dad would go get take-out food while I got some trays and drinks ready. Pile the food onto the trays, let the doggies out again, eat dinner in the master bedroom while we watched episodes of Bosch or Reacher. I'd be in bed by 10 most nights. Whew. Retirement is addicting.



Lucy

5 month old Havanese puppy.
Aka - demon dog or Cujo



THE HOST WITH THE MOST (WINE)

Back in the old days, mom and dad never reached out to make “friends” in Florida. Those days, Florida trips were always about relaxation and getting away from the social life in Wisconsin. Now that mom and dad live in Florida most of the time, they have spread out their social butterfly wings. However, they are very picky about whom they spend quality time with.

I couldn't be happier for them. In particular, I was introduced to Peter and Shirley. Peter is a life force. When he walks into a room, bam! First of all, he towers over most people, physically. But his energy and outgoing personality are even taller. I mean, who else would wear a bright orange sport coat? Me. Colin. Yep. Peter's personality is just as outgoing as his jacket!

Shirley holds her own though. She is as quiet as Peter is outgoing. But don't be fooled by her demeanor. Shirley is ultra sharp. Listening. A perfect fit to balance Peter's energy. I can see why these two have latched onto mom and dad (and vice versa). They are genuine, caring, and know how to have fun!

Besides Shirley, one of Peter's great loves is wine. He insisted and picked me up one morning to introduce me to one of his favorite wine stores - Total Wines. I got the 411 on Naples as we drove to his Shangrila. (He's a great tour guide.) Once inside, he walked me through the entire store and divulged a few of his wine buying secrets - including where mom's absolute favorite bottle is located. What an experience. Imagine, I haven't even seen alcohol in almost six months. Suddenly, I am walking through one of the grandest liquor stores in the USA with a professional wine connoisseur as my guide. Thank you, Peter.

MEET THE PARTY!

Starting with Peter in orange, clockwise.

- ✓ Peter
- ✓ Leone
- ✓ David (Dad)
- ✓ Yours Truly
- ✓ Evan
- ✓ Donna
- ✓ Pat (Mom)
- ✓ Lisa
- ✓ Shirley



Orchids

Dad's recent hobby. This particular one is called a "hairy pig". It's dad's favorite.

Sasha

At her age, it's not easy having a little sister around to "play".



You won't find a prettier home than casa de Lemoine, anywhere.

