

Our Wedding Story

For those of you people that were not able to share this joyous day with us, we are writing this letter so that you can feel as if you were there to share the memories we shared in Jamaica from May 13th to May 20th. We were sad you were unable to attend, but you were there in our minds and hearts.



Waking up for a 7am flight is what you would imagine - a lot of sleepy-eyes and drowsy people sleepwalking to the gate and to our airplane seats. (There were 18 of us on the flight down to Jamaica on Sunday.)

The plane to Miami was a full flight, and with a few hours at the Miami airport, we all did what was expected, eat, drink, and some of us went on a Miami airport pub crawl.

Thanks to Felicia, her iPod boombox was a big hit, until the stewardess came over and ruined all the fun.



We finally landed in Montego Bay to cloudy skies and mainly rain all week. The rain definitely did not deter us from having a ton of fun at the pool bar, lobby, beach, and of course, the GD (Galaxy Disco). The first half of the week was mainly eventless with people arriving (51 total guests), going on excursions (Dunns River Falls)

and of course eating and drinking. The only unfortunate event was the bride and groom getting sick on the trip (and we hardly ever get sick!) so a cough and fever started to spread around.



Thursday May 17th was our rehearsal dinner. Natalie (my wedding planner) found Arnaz on the beach in the morning and said we probably would not be able to have the bonfire because the wood might get wet.

What Arnaz said next was a brilliant idea (maybe covering up the wood so it did not get wet?!) because the bonfire started up without any problems. Some of the ladies dressed up in sari's and everyone looked so elegant.

The rehearsal dinner was held outdoors and it seemed everyone had a great time.



After the night was over, Arnaz said goodbye to Mike and would see him next at the wedding arch on the beach. (Although we saw each other about 3 times during the day but not on purpose!). Friday May 18th (despite what the Minister who married us said!) was the day of our wedding. It started out a bit cloudy with all the girls having hair and nail appointments throughout the day. (Booking the appointments was crazy because there were 3 weddings that day.) All the bridesmaids and Rosy made it to the suite by 3PM. The girls got ready and opened and wore their gifts. Rosy did a mini-fashion show to decide what dress to wear, and everyone was a little anxious. The photographer was supposed to be in our suite by 3:45PM... however Arnaz got a phone call at 4PM from him stating he was downstairs, and was waiting for her! Arnaz told him to come on up and she finished getting ready while she posed for him and his wife and brother-in-law. He then left to take pictures

of Michael and the boys at the English Pub (and later unknown to Arnaz) the Galaxy Disco.



The ceremony concluded with a dove release. The request of the wedding planner was to do the release of the doves the next morning as the rain might confuse them on how to get home. This was answered by Mike with "We don't really need them to get home as we are only using them once". It was funnier to us than them, regardless the dove release was done right then. We have requested 2 doves to release but that had given us three so our mothers were asked to join us. You couldn't have seen 2 more distinct reactions. Rosy and Mike released the doves without any

issue, letting them go quite gracefully. Ellen and Arnaz, however, had quite a different reaction as you can see from the picture below.

At this point the rain was starting to come down so it was inside for the party. Everyone was set up in a conference room as the wedding reception could not be held outside due to rain. The wedding party was asked to wait outside the room until we were announced. Yet again, we were working on Jamaican time because we were waiting for at least 2 cocktails before someone finally came out and lined us up. As "Bring 'Em Out" played everyone came in and was instructed on where to go except Arnaz and Mike who had no clue where they were going. We stood there for what seemed like a minute looking for our table until we were told we were up front.

The party was excellent, food was good and everyone was having fun. Farida read an E.E. Cummings poem that was quite nice and Jay did a great job on the speech. The dances went well with our parents with the exception of them cutting short the song we picked for Jimmy and Arnaz. The only hitch in the wedding was we needed to rush everyone to the dance floor as the contract with the photographer was running out and we had no party pictures (thanks to starting the wedding 1 hour late). Overall it was a great party and everyone had fun. The night ended an hour early though because "The DJ was tired and wanted to wrap things up". Gotta love Jamaican work ethic.

Saturday was our first day without any stress whatsoever, or so we thought. It was supposed to be our day to relax before the long trip home but things didn't quite go as we would have hoped. Our first stop was downtown to go to Margaritaville and go shopping. It was a beautiful day and we were hoping to go down the waterslides and use the water trampolines everyone was talking so much about. We decided to eat first and then we would digest while shopping and end with the water activities.



We must have gotten half way through our meal when it started down pouring. It was raining sideways and completely ruined all chance at the waterslides. So we just sat in the restaurant and tried to win t-shirts. The first contest was for the girls and Arnaz, Lauren, Jill and Peggy were in a dance contest on top of the bar that Lauren won easily. The guys turn came up and it was a chug contest with Latitude beer. The first round was 2 random guys and then it was Mike against Vlad for a trip to the finals. It was a tie but they gave the win to Mike as he was just married.

In the finals Mike lost to a 45 year old guy who quite obviously had done this many times before so no t-shirts were won by the married couple. After bargaining down a t-shirt and photo album at a souvenir store we headed back to get ready for Luminous Lagoon.



Luminous Lagoon is one of four places in the world where there is a micro-organism that when excited it glows like a firefly. Since Jamaica is one of those four places we decided to take the bus ride to head out there and see what it was all about. The bus ride was supposed to be $\frac{1}{2}$ hour but the bus driver we had was being awfully cautious, or so we thought, and it took a little over an hour to get there.

Once there we got on a boat and went out to the lagoon with Captain Jerry. We were able to go swimming in the lagoon and watch the blue glow around us as we moved. Even when exiting the lagoon your body would glow due to the water still on your body. This was a great time.

But the real excitement started on the ride home. The first thing our driver, Austin (a name that will always be thought of when talking about this week, he referred to himself as Austin, Texas), decided to do was inform us that the clutch was having an issue. When he could barely climb the hill out of the parking lot we realized this was going to be a long ride home. The bus ride home we averaged about 10 miles an hour, barely making it up each incline. It got to the point where we would erupt in applause when the bus made it up the hill. Arnaz and Mike asked Austin, TX if he could call his boss and maybe get us another bus as this ride would take 6 hours at the speed we were going. That is when the excuses kept flying. He told us everything from he had no service, to his phone couldn't dial out but his boss could dial in, to the fact that he didn't know the number. As he spoke we kept going slower. The pace got to a point where Mike's grandmother, cane and all, could have walked home faster. Luckily for us the locals behind us kept beeping in encouragement and telling us we were number 1 as they drove by. Nice people those islanders are.

Finally Austin, TX pulls over in a gas station. Apparently he thinks the random gas station attendant will know his bosses' number. Unfortunately they did not and things looked bleak. That is until we noticed a van in front of us where a guy has seemingly nothing to do. Mike called him over and negotiated a ride home from him and his friend behind us for \$5 a person. Poor Mr. Austin was going to be flying solo the rest of the way as we began entering the van. At the entrance to one of the vans there were 3 guys standing there so Mike paid them \$20 for 4 of us and hopped in the van. As we were about to pull away Mike informed the van driver we owed him for 8 more as we had paid for four. The driver, shocked, asked who we paid to which we pointed to a Rastafarian standing outside the door. The driver gets out and rips the money out of his hand calling him a coke head in the process. The rasta giggled and walked away after his failed attempt to take our money and with that we finally had our ride home.

Sunday came and it was time to say our goodbyes after an eventful trip. The flight home to Boston was for 21 of us so we loaded the shuttle bus at 10:30 AM and were off to Montego Bay airport. Once we got there we passed through customs and went to find something to eat. It is here we were informed our flight is delayed by 30 minutes. This was no big deal as we had a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hour layover in Miami anyway so we would just grab lunch and wait.

After lunch the delay had been extended for another 40 minutes due to weather and now it was getting close to being a little worrisome but still they would wait for us to get there as there were 22 of us. The interesting thing was at this point people we had said goodbye to at the resort had caught up with us and we were all back together in Montego Bay airport. It became apparent after the 40 minutes came and went that we had an issue. The visibility was so bad that the planes were circling above the airport but none were able to land. They let us know we would not be taking off before 4 PM (5 PM Miami time) and this meant no connecting flight for this group. Also in the same boat was Brandon (his flight had circled for so long it had to go to Kingston to refuel, never a good sign). After speaking with the worthless woman

at the American airlines counter and our travel agent, we were ready for a night in Miami as it didn't appear we were getting home.

After finally taking off 3 ½ hours late we arrived in Miami and it was a mad house. Everyone was trying to get home. We were told there was only one flight going to Boston and there were only 2 seats left so it was time to get creative. Jimmy and Linda Byrnes were able to get the 2 seats so they were all set and that left 20 of us to figure out where to go. We were told that because the weather caused the delay instead of the mechanics of the airplane we were not entitled to anything from the airlines. That put everyone in "get us as close as you can mode". 11 of us booked flights to Hartford, CT that were set to land at 11:55 PM. 7 people ended up going to JFK on the 9:05 PM flight and 2 people (Lori and Lauren) happily stayed in Miami for the night and left the following evening. The final time for returning was 2:30 AM for the people from Hartford and 5 AM for the people from JFK. Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, Brandon was stuck in Dallas over night and Sarah and Dave (thanks to a baggage carousel malfunction) missed their plane by 20 minutes and were stuck in Atlanta.

It was the perfect end to the week that couldn't have had more things go wrong. All in all though, it makes for some really funny stories. Wish you all could have been there, although after reading this I bet you don't feel the same ☺ .

Love,
Mike and Arnaz

