

A Step Up From What?

The middle of Mountain View Motel was a trailer court – really just a wide expanse of concrete with electrical and water hookups for the trailers and mobile homes. Many different kinds of people lived in many different kinds of mobile shelters there.

I remember seeing an older couple, the two of them practically crammed together inside a tiny stainless steel Airstream trailer which wasn't much longer than a large van. Kim and I were curious, noticing that they had their little steel door open in the warm evening, so we peeked in. They saw us and invited us to chat with them.

They had a tiny little table, and a tiny little 12 inch black and white TV, and not much room for anything else. They were packed inside their tiny trailer, but they also seemed happy there – quite cozy.



My Dad's Mum, Margaret, me, Dad, and Kim, in Unit 17 (around 1975).

We moved from our damp Unit 22 into a smaller Unit numbered 17. I guess Unit 22 was too damp and drafty. In 22, after a

big rain, Kim and I would see slugs crawling up the inside the front door. I think there was no weather stripping. At least in that way, Unit 17 was a big step upwards, because it was drier and had no slugs.

With only two bedrooms, sleeping arrangements were cozy for us. I shared a double bed in one bedroom with my Dad, and Kim shared a double bed in the other bedroom with our Mum.

Mum and Dad were invited over to party at this younger guy's place, just up the lane from us in the Motel. Normally, two local teenaged girls would babysit me and Kim whenever Mum and Dad went out, but I guess this time they couldn't get a baby sitter for us, so we went along with them this time.

Our host was some young single guy with brown hair and a brown moustache, and he lived in a second-floor unit in the Motel, right above Lucien's place. I thought he was kind of scuzzy.

Kim and I didn't really have anything to do except hang out and get bored while Mum and Dad talked, laughed and drank with our host and his buddies. I didn't like it there – it was stuffy and stunk of alcohol and B.O. It felt creepy, being around strange, creepy adults whom I didn't know.

After a few minutes of looking around, I became aware of the graphic nature of the posters and calendars on the walls. There were photos of naked women and men in various explicit sexual positions. I didn't know anything about sex, but I could tell what was going on in the pictures. I noticed how the man in one of the photos was grinning, and the woman sitting on top of him had no expression at all. I wondered if she was not happy, or perhaps not able to show her feelings in the picture. It made me feel like I was spying on things I shouldn't be seeing. I began to feel pretty uncomfortable. It was a creepy and embarrassing scene.

Things between one of the guys and my Dad started to get loud and out of hand. Voices became raised, and all of a sudden, Dad said firmly “Angela, take the kids home.” So we knew the situation wasn’t safe, and the three of us left Dad there.

By the time we’d gotten about 100 feet down the lane, near our place, Dad came walking down towards us. The story he told was that one of the guys had grabbed an empty whiskey bottle and threatened him, holding the bottle up over his head as if he was going to hit him with it. Dad said he just cocked his fist and stepped towards the guy, at which point the bottle-holder stepped back behind his buddy for protection. It didn’t sound like Dad had to even touch anyone – just intimidate them. I was real proud when he told us this story. I felt like “Yeah – this is my tough Dad!”