

When Hospitality Matters Most

In a Moment of Crisis, a Comfort Inn Responds

True hospitality is about much more than just friendly check-ins, clean rooms, and comfy beds — it's about showing up for guests when it matters most.

What began as a routine night at the Comfort Inn in Shelby, North Carolina, quickly turned into something no hotel team ever expects.

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"All of a sudden, the building shook. I'm looking around, I notice debris coming from the walls," recounts Night Auditor Robin Morton. "My immediate response was to set off alarms — I'm not sure what's happening, but I have to get everybody out in case anything else happens."

And amid the chaos and concern of the moment, that's exactly what Robin did. After evacuating the guests, she was stunned to discover that a tractor-trailer hauling lumber had crashed directly into the property, breaking through the side of the hotel.

The crash sent shockwaves — both literal and emotional — through the Comfort Inn Shelby that night.

"I receive a phone call from Robin," recalls General Manager Rosemarie Nixon. "She said, 'Ms. Rose, we just had an 18-wheeler run into the hotel. I said, 'You got to be joking.' ... I was out of my mind. I said, 'This cannot be.'"

"When I got a call about the incident, I was in a deep sleep," adds Abhijit Shende, owner and operator of the property. "I was shocked, and I rushed to the hotel."

Months after the terrifying episode, Abhijit is still in awe of his night auditor's composure under pressure.

"Anybody could've run out of the building, but you [were] brave, and you make sure that every guest is out of the building and safe," Abhijit tells Robin. "We love you and [we're] proud of you."

Fortunately, no one at the hotel was hurt that fateful night. And today, the fully renovated [Comfort Inn Shelby](#) is open and thriving — with some much-deserved help from Choice Hotels.

"This is a hotel that we value, so it behooves us as a company to not just treat this hotel like a number, but treat them as part of [a] family, too," explains Choice Hotels Area Director Christy Williams. "This was a crazy incident."

"I could not thank [them] enough for the Choice support," says Abhijit. "From the day the incident happened, everybody from the Choice management team was making sure we got what we needed."

More than just a great place to stay, the Comfort Inn Shelby now stands as a powerful reminder that hospitality doesn't stop when things go wrong. That's when it matters most.

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