

Diary of a Mad Home Builder!

Written by A. William Carson and published as a public service by the Indiana Builders Association, the following "Diary of a Mad Home Builder" is a dramatized example of how Murphy's Law can and too often does come into play in do-it-yourself home building.

April 1 (Fool's Day) My banker was very friendly. Said he wished I would get a builder because I didn't know what I was doing. Best rate I could get was four points above prime because I was too marginal! Also said I'd get the money in stages after I showed proof of payment to subs. What Nerve! I didn't realize there would be this much paperwork. Missed three hours of work. He gave me a calendar though.

April 26 Took 25 days to finally agree on house plans. Never dreamed there were so many details. Discovered that my wife is a very nasty person. Think I'm getting a nervous condition.

May 4 Finally swung the deal on the lot. The developer said "Take it or leave it". Said the builders buy several lots at a time and that's why they get discounts and that I didn't qualify. I know I paid too much but I'll easily save enough to offset it later.

May 6 Somebody's going to pay for this on election day. You need a PHD just to fill out all the forms for permits and licenses and to go to all the various governmental offices. There was less tape when I joined the Navy.

May 7 Staked out my lot as best I could. I didn't have one of those tapes so I just stepped it off. Wonder how builders square the house on the lot?

May 8 Met excavator early in the a.m. He said only a fool would build a basement on that lot. Too low! I let him know that it was my money and to dig. He was grinning when I left for work.

May 11 The foundation guy told me it would be at least three weeks before they could get to my job. They had to take care of the builders first. I hate delays.

May 12 Lumber man said that I could qualify for discounts as soon as I bought at least \$250,000 worth of materials. Told him that was discrimination. He agreed. He also said he would not guarantee prices because lumber prices were fluctuating daily. Told him I wouldn't stand for that kind of treatment and would shop around. Missed two days of work getting bids. Returned to original lumber man and signed up.

Diary of a Mad Home Builder!

May 15 When the framing carpenter told me his price I told him to go to hell! Told him there were doctors making his kind of money and that there were plenty of others where he came from.

May 24 Hired original framer.

July 2 Foundation man finally showed four weeks late. Foreman called me an idiot. Said that no blocks on the site no work. I thought they brought their own. I told him if he set foot off my property it would be his last step. He beat me half to death. Missed two days of work. Had to reschedule everything. Those subs are mean.

July 11 Lumber finally came. Called framing carpenter and he said he had to frame a house for one of his builders first. It would be about three weeks. I kicked my dog for the first time.

July 12 Most of the lumber was stolen. Insurance company very cooperative. Lumber man said it would take about four weeks to replace items. Decided not to tell the carpenter for fear he would take another job. I'm sick.

August 13 Lumber delivered. Called carpenter and said the timing was not so good. He would start in four days. An extra delay because his daughter was getting married.

August 18 Carpenter finally showed. I almost went berserk when he pointed out that I needed a sawbox from the power company or he couldn't run his power equipment. He said I'd have to pay him for as long as it took to get one or he'd have to go to another project. I mumbled yes I'd pay. How was I supposed to know about sawboxes. Missed more work. Decided it's not fun to build a house.

October 3 Structure looks beautiful. At least it will be closed up for the oncoming winter. Neighbor told me the house looked off center on the lot. I told him to mind his own business and get off my property.

October 6 Roofer fell off the house today and was injured. More delays. My wife just keeps nagging. Told her to leave me alone and that I never loved her anyway.

October 12 Moved family to a motel. New owners just moved into our house. Thought it would be long done before now. I have wasted a lot of money.

Diary of a Mad Home Builder!

October 14 Noticed red tag on my house. The Building Commissioner explained that the framer had not built according to the code and some small details would have to be corrected. I told him that I was “big” in the party and wouldn’t stand for this. He urged me to continue my political involvement and to make the corrections or no more construction.

October 14 Had some terse words for the carpenter, but didn’t know what to tell him to correct. Told him to work it out with the inspector. Felt like a fool.

October 23 Scheduled plumbing, cabinets, wiring, fireplace man and heat man—all of them at the same time. I just don’t care anymore.

November 16 They all showed up on the same day and it was total chaos. I didn’t care! Missed work again.

November 17 OSHA inspector closed down project. Cited 21 safety hazards. Told him someone was going to pay “big” for this because I’ve got strong political connections. My doctor told me I have high blood pressure.

November 22 All safety requirements met. Work is in progress. Scheduled dry wall company. I’m drinking to much now. Missed three more day of work.

December 4 Dry wall men asked me why I didn’t insulate the house. To save face I told him he showed up on the wrong date. He was very disgusted. The insulation company said it would be at least four weeks due to backlog of orders.

December 5 Received certified letter that foundation man was suing me and received two irate calls from subs. I hadn’t had time to pay. Told the boss to “get off my case” that same day.

December 6 Discovered that vandals had broken all the windows in the house. The insurance people said the policy did not cover broken glass. I went berserk.

December 10 Painter splashed paint all over the woodwork and carpet. I smiled at him and told him that I’d see to it that he’d never get another job. I keep a flask in my glove compartment now to ward off the cold chills of winter.

December 25 Told the family the reason there was no gift exchange this year was because I had a sizeable overrun on the house. I promised next year would be better. My wife mumbled

Diary of a Mad Home Builder!

something about ignoring her advice in getting a builder in the first place. I retorted that if she was so smart why did she even stay married to me?

December 26 My wife sue me for divorce today. Said she couldn't live any longer with a man of my temperament and drinking habits. Said she was going to sue for the "House" and that she wanted it furnished. I headed for the glove compartment.

December 28 Showed up at work with an awful headache. Boss told me that I should begin the new year by utilizing my talents elsewhere. Said he'd give me a good recommendation as a builder smart aleck.

AND THEY TOLD ME I COULDN'T BUILD MY OWN HOUSE!