

From: Sandi Byers <[e-mail address omitted]>

Date: Tue, Apr 14, 2009 at 6:53 PM

Subject: Letter

To: Teri Gunn <rtgunn4him@msn.com>

Dear Teri,

I hope this e-mail finds you well - since you seem unwilling to talk to Sandi or me about the issue of our wedding pictures I am asking you to take the time to read this e-mail completely and understand it.

I want to first make some observations (I'll get to the meat of the issue in a moment), or criticisms if you will in regards to our experience with you as a photographer. I do not point these things out to be malicious but hope that you will find them constructive and useful. I am myself not a professional photographer, nor would I consider myself an armature photographer. But I do like to be behind the lens and I feel that based on my experience (most notably with videography), and the amount I have read and studied the subject I can speak with some authority. Please take the following for what it is meant as - constructive criticism:

* Complaining (constantly, non-stop, blathering on about it) about the weather, too rainy, too cloudy, too sunny, etc. is not something I would recommend doing in front of your future clients. I understand the frustration when the environment is not ideal for taking pictures or video; I dealt with it all the time with my video work. Why someone would tell me they want video of a youth worship service and then proceed to turn all the lights in the sanctuary *off* is beyond me - but it's happened to me and I had to work through it; I adapt, get creative, and make it work. When my uncle was videotaping a wedding during the reception - all the lights went off to the point that it was too dark to get good, usable footage. Never once did the bride and groom hear a peep out of him regarding this issue. He mentioned it to a third party and it was handled. My point is - through understanding of your equipment, your skill level, and your creativeness you can adapt to the situation you're in and get the shots you need. Furthermore, in a situation like a wedding the bride and groom should not be subject to constant blathering about how poor the situation is for photos; even if that's the case. If Sandi were a weaker person she would have likely been brought to tears because of your constant complaining about how bad things were. I have no doubt in my mind that the environment we were in was ripe for fantastic photos - I got some myself, my uncle did, [name omitted] did and so did several other guests. Complaining about the rain, the lighting, etc. is unprofessional, and unbecoming to you as a photographer I encourage you to improve upon this, understand your equipment and how to use it in a variety of environments; you will be surprised at what comes out. Rarely is the situation ideal (unless you work at Sears photo studio) for photographs or video - it's up to you as a photographer to make the best of it and get great shots.

* Complaining about you equipment malfunctioning - the above points apply to this too. Roll with the punches, clients don't need to know. Whining about it is again unprofessional, and unbecoming to you as a photographer.

* Coming to a shoot unprepared - I've done video enough to know what I need going into most situations. It is something that took time to prefect, but I got a pretty good handle on it now. Which is why I brought so much stuff for the video to the wedding - sound mixer, microphones, cables, I didn't need any of it and I knew my Uncle would come just as prepared, but I knew better than to just leave it all behind - just in case. However, there are things that no matter what your experience level, common sense should tell you to bring. Whenever I did video work I always, always, always brought extra tapes - for without tapes there is no video. Coming to a photo shoot with one (rather small) memory card is in my opinion is grossly unprepared. You should consider the considerably small investment and get more memory cards for your camera - or bring a notebook to transfer them to as your one card gets full. Getting to the point where you have to delete client photos - as you did in our case - should never, ever

happen. I don't care if you think at that time the photo is not good. You should take it home and give it a closer look. But you wouldn't have had to do that if you would have come prepared.

* Deleting client photos to take family portraits of other people - non-wedding pictures - is again unprofessional, and unbecoming to you as a photographer. The bride and groom don't care about their guests getting their family portrait taken; they care about pictures of their wedding. That's what you are getting paid for. In your case that's what you volunteered for.

* Consider B-roll - that's what it's called in video world but it's that extra footage or pictures of candles, people taking, and stuff that seems kinda silly but comes in handy for you and clients. Again, standing still is for Sears photo studio - move around get extra shots, candid photos. Of course you need the extra storage for these photos.

Ok, now to the meat of the issue -

Here are the facts:

* You came to Sandi and offered to do our wedding photos - you did not mention any cost associated with your services. In fact Sandi pushed you about paying you and you insisted that she was your friend, stood by you through a hard time, she was the reason that you and Robb are together, she was a friend to you when no one else was, and you wanted to do this for her as a gift. Plus you said you'd get the experience and pictures for your portfolio.

* I made it clear to Sandi that I wanted a photographer who would give us the raw pictures, I was adamant and should you not have agreed to giving us the raw pictures you most certainly would *not* have been the primary photographer. So for you to claim that you never agreed to give us the raw pictures is irrelevant because you would have never been our photographer had you not.

* I was in the same room listening to the conversation you and Sandi were having about the pictures prior to the wedding. Sandi repeatedly asked you about us getting the raw pictures and though I could not hear your side of the conversation, Sandi's side indicated that you agreed. And Sandi told me as such.

* Again - had you not have agreed to give us the raw pictures you would not have been the primary photographer. Had we had the money to hire a professional - I would have made sure it was agreed that we got the raw pictures.

* While not standard practice there are professional photographers who give clients raw, or full resolution pictures and it's a practice that is gaining more followers every day.

* By asking for the raw pictures we are not trying to rob you of your creativeness - I want them for the video, and to be able to apply my own creative touch on them. You are more than welcome to edit the pictures how you see fit and we were fully prepared to get prints from you.

* We had two other options for photographers - my uncle and hiring (very low cost) a student from [name omitted] but you offered to do it and in fact were admit about doing it.

* You came to us as a *student* photographer - any normal student photographer would be thankful just to get a chance to do a wedding since the client is taking a risk on them. They would likely not even get paid, as you said you'd get the pictures for your portfolio and the experience.

* We were warned, repeatedly about having you do our photos, that we would regret it. I don't point this out to be malicious but to let you know Sandi and I both dismissed your naysayers and placed our full unadulterated trust in you. Trust is not something Sandi or I dole out willy nilly, it's not something either of us dole out very often at all.

* Two weeks before the wedding you talked to Sandi and asked to be paid for your time - despite the fact that you had not asked initially and even refused Sandi's offer to pay you - Sandi agreed to pay you \$125 for you time. Nothing else changed.

* Two weeks after our wedding we have not seen one picture that you took of the event - except 3 of the cake that you have posted on FaceBook.

* Without us having seen any photos - on Monday you tell Sandi that it will be \$800 for the raw pictures and \$2.50 for prints, you claim \$2.50 is your cost for prints - which I find hard to believe. We're all trying to make a buck Teri you don't have to lie about it. If you pad the cost of prints a bit that's fine. Sandi and I were both prepared to buy prints form you despite of the fact that we could get them cheaper elsewhere.

* Sandi and I are both wondering if any pictures exist - we have not seen any. Just the 3 cake ones.

* Sandi and I both called you out while chatting with you on FaceBook - you got upset and left the conversation. You proceeded to call not Sandi or myself but a third party who has nothing to do with the situation and lie about the conversation we had on FaceBook.

* You literally brought Sandi to tears - this is not something I appreciate.

* I'm sorry Teri but I did not cuss you out while chatting with you on FaceBook, nor have I ever cussed you out- though at this point I can accommodate you if you like; my cell is [phone number omitted]. Just ask me to and I'll be happy to cuss you out; otherwise expect any conversation we do have to be civil.

* What you're doing right now is proving your naysayers right, I would think that would affect you in some way to do the right thing and follow through on your word.

* You are holding our wedding photos hostage - asking for ransom. It's unprofessional, and unbecoming to you as a photographer and completely and utterly despicable.

* Sandi and I are considering contacting the school you attend and notifying your professors - what would they think of a student going around holding peoples wedding photos for ransom?

* It's fair and accurate to point out that if were you a *hired* photographer, with a buisness license, etc. you'd likely find yourself on the wrong end of a lawsuit at this point. I point this out as a warning; that pulling the antics you are with us will likely get you in serious trouble with future clients. I would not suggest doing the wedding of any lawyers.

Sandi and I are both unwilling to give you whatever satisfaction you hope to gain by holding our photos hostage. We ask that you provide us with the raw full resolution pictures, as you agreed to. If you cannot do this then we revoke any rights to use any imagines depicting Sandi, our kids, or myself in any fashion. We have also contacted our families and they stand behind us in you not using *any* photographs of them either. That includes but is not limited to [name omitted], the [name omitted] family, the [name omitted] family, the [name omitted] family, the [name omitted] Family, and the [name omitted] family. If you wish to use photos depicting any other guests of our wedding I suggest you seek model releases from them. Should you decide to do what you agreed to and give us the raw full resolution photos you may use the pictures how you wish. No money will exchange hands - that was not part of the *original* agreement. However, if it suits you better to give us your SD card containing our pictures we will reimburse you \$25.00 for the cost of the SD car - \$25.00 is enough (including shipping) to get you 3 2GB SD cards from NewEgg.com (here is a link to the site - <http://tinyurl.com/clpjsc>).

This is really a sad situation - I hope that you do not continue to be the person that it seems

you have decided to be. I hope that you decide to act like the professional you claim to be, and the person you claim to be, and do what you agreed to.

Please let us know what you decide as soon as possible.

Adam and Sandi Byers

PS. Thanks Rob for the comment on FB about how you know what James was going through. You have no clue what I went through with him abusing me and my boys and to say you side with him is a great picture of your character. You and Teri should know what it feels like to be abused and how horrible was that for your parent not to stick up for you and believe you. To choose your abuser over you, their own child. How sad for you...

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Sandi Byers

www.adayinmylifewith3boys.com