

My Son, My Son!

During Justin's second year at Auburn, Margene and I drove down one Saturday to check out the fraternity he'd joined. When we saw the living conditions inside the Chi Phi house, Margene put the fingers of one hand over her mouth and despondently whispered to herself, *My son, my son!* Justin's "room" at the 5-star Chi Phi Pig Sty was on the top floor. He and his roommate had built a crude excuse for a bar, which consumed most of the floor space. Because of the bar, there wasn't enough room for two beds, just the one the roommate slept on. For Justin to get to his "bed", he had to crawl through a jagged hole in the wall that led to a cramped, unfinished area of the attic. Since there wasn't enough space to put a bed frame, Justin slept on a mattress that had been squeezed through the hole in the wall, which looked like it had been gnawed by a giant rat. Justin's room, and indeed every square inch of the rest of the Chi Phi house, looked like a bomb had gone off. Not only that, but the place was a fire trap. Several wall outlets had way too many may plugs in them, and there was no fire escape from the top floor, where Justin slept. When I got back home, I wrote a letter to the Auburn Fire Department, and sent a copy to the president of the university. Notwithstanding the shock of seeing the Third World conditions in which our oldest son was living, we enjoyed our visit and were really proud of how well Justin was doing in his classes. As always, Margene looked absolutely gorgeous that day, so much so that Justin's frat bros told him after we left that he had the kind of mother they'd like to date.

Justin and me sitting on the steps of one of the world's truly elegant lodging establishments.
From the looks of the clean front porch, it would be easy to assume that civilized people lived inside.

