

Q: I rented a car in Manhattan, and when I drove to my hotel's garage, a parking attendant took it. Several days later, after I had checked out and returned the car to the agency, the clerk there said I owed \$400 for a parking ticket. I asked how and where it could have happened, and the clerk read me a street address from the citation. It was two blocks from my hotel, indicating the garage attendant had left it illegally parked long enough to get the ticket.

The agency said it could do nothing, and the payment of the ticket was my responsibility. When I complained to the hotel, the manager said the garage was a concession, and the hotel was not responsible. The parking garage management weaseled out by claiming their attendants never left cars on the street. This was a round-robin of excuses, leaving me holding the \$400 bag. What can I do?



A: Make a lot of noise until you get satisfaction. As in too many cases, if you deal with low-level employees on problems like this, they tend to clam up to protect their butts. Get the name of the top executive of the hotel and/or of the hotel chain, and send a registered letter explaining what happened.

That executive knows damned well you left your car at the hotel garage in good faith, and the parking ticket is the hotel's responsibility, whether the garage was owned by another company or not. You should get your \$400 returned quickly, accompanied by an apology and, if you're lucky, a certificate for a free stay on your next visit.