**IEEE SoutheastCon 2017 – The Road Trip XP**

A 10-hour trip they said. It would only be 10 hours, but who knew that that just that trip alone would be extended over to an actual 13 hours. If it weren’t for the gasoline stops, and the one IHOP stop, then maybe, possible it would have been a 10-hour trip. I started the drive at 6:20 AM, and mind you picking up the last person needed in my car at around 7:00 AM. By 7:25 AM, we left Jupiter and started making our journey towards SoutheastCon in Charlotte, North Carolina. Along the way, we did stop in at a couple of rest areas to stretch the legs and empty the bladders.

On a side note, know that once you enter South Caroline, DO NOT stop at the first pit stop. I don’t know if it is because of the construction they are doing to renovate that rest stop, but it smells like the city dump. The bathrooms were a joke, they were beyond outdated and even though the restoration loomed over the now depleted rest stop, it looked like the rest stop would be far from being finished. Walking away to the car was still terrible, because the stench followed you. It was as if once you entered the rest stop parking lot, there was a cloud of stench that loomed over and enveloped you until you left. After that, we kept driving west into South Carolina, deeper into the foot hills of the wooded Carolina.

The woods, now that was something enjoyed seeing. As a person who loves to go camping and hiking, just the idea of stopping and venturing into the thicket of the woods would have been a great adventure. My passengers, Washington, Victor, and Nafisa, didn’t like the idea. But as the hills rolled on and the scenery changed, I believe the idea sunk in one way or another. Sadly, the scenery change dramatically when it started to rain. Nothing not too uncommon, especially after living in Florida for such a long time. The worst part of this rain though, was that once entering North Carolina, it was completely dark. If I could complain to the governor of North Carolina, it would to be check your infrastructure because the sensors in the lights were not working. Imagine driving into a new place, on a highway one has no experience with and then amp it be ten because A) it was still raining, and B) the lights on the highway were not on. I do not know how I could make it to the hotel safely, because it was dangerous with a capital ‘D’.

Once we made it to the hotel, we made sure to help Nafisa get to her hotel which is literally across from where we are staying. A two-minute walk that was timed by Victor to be exact. After checking in the group at the front desk, and getting our keys, we grabbed our luggage. After pulling all luggage in, we went to our room located on the fourth floor and settled in. I can say, that the Marriott Residence is probably one of the nicest hotels I’ve stayed at so far, and the staff have been extremely helpful and friendly. The rooms are adequate for the price and we have both a small kitchen and living room area. The beds are beds, but I’m enjoying the stay so far. Now, I’m hoping we can have a great stay at the IEEE SoutheastCon for this year of 2017.