

## 5 Things to Know

# 5 things to know: 31 October 2017

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From the desks of the Hotel News Now editorial staff:

John Marriott III sues father, alleges ‘financial ruin’  
Best Western unveils soft brand BW Signature Collection  
Freitag: One-offs skew September data  
Indictment of Paul Manafort reveals Airbnb sublets  
Cuba announces new travel regulations



By the HNN editorial staff

1

John Marriott III sues father, alleges ‘financial ruin’: [John Marriott III is suing his father, Bill Marriott](#), and his uncle, Richard Marriott, for allegedly disowning him, cutting him off from his trust fund, forcing him out of the family hotel business and “attempting to drive him to financial ruin,” the Washingtonian reports. The suit claims this all happened because John Marriott III divorced his wife, and the Marriotts are a devout Mormon family.

Bill Marriott is executive chairman of Marriott’s board of directors. Richard Marriott, who serves as chairman of the Host Hotels & Resorts Board of Directors, controls the trust set up by his and Bill Marriott’s parents. John Marriott III left the company in 2006 but remained on the board of directors and focused on JWM Family Enterprises, a private company that develops hotels.

A spokesperson for Bill and Richard Marriott told the Washingtonian, “We have not yet read the complaint. The allegations of which we are aware at this time are untrue.”

## 2

Best Western unveils soft brand BW Signature Collection: Best Western Hotels & Resorts has launched its third soft-brand collection, [the BW Signature Collection by Best Western](#), which will fit in the upper midscale chain scale segment, according to a news release. The collection already has two members: the Killington Mountain Lodge in Killington, Vermont, and the Brooklyn Way Hotel in Brooklyn, New York.

“An increasing number of hotels in North America and overseas are going independent because they want flexibility and freedom from brand requirements, but they are also looking for an alternate source of business, a loyalty program and a robust reservation system,” Best Western President and CEO David Kong said in the release. “No one is offering a soft brand in the upper midscale segment right now, so by diversifying our offerings in the space, it is clearly an opportunity for us to capture market share and achieve scale.”

The company projects to have 100 hotels in the BW Signature Collection by Best Western pipeline by 2020.

## 3

Freitag: One-offs skew September data: Calendar shifts and severe weather events [make it hard to compare this recent September with other years](#), writes Jan Freitag, SVP of lodging insights for HNN’s parent company [STR](#).

In Freitag’s latest data analysis piece, he points out the U.S. has now enjoyed revenue per available room increases for 91 consecutive months as RevPAR jumped 2.4% for the month, helped by increases in occupancy (+1.4%) and average daily rate (+1%).

“But let’s unpack this data just a little bit,” he writes. “As I said, the hurricane impact easily skews results up. So, total U.S. RevPAR for September was up 0.7% excluding Florida—where RevPAR grew 10%—and Texas (+18.3% RevPAR).”

## 4

Indictment of Paul Manafort reveals Airbnb sublets: The unsealing of the indictment of Paul Manafort, former campaign chairman for President Donald Trump, during the investigation of connections between the Trump campaign and Russia revealed Manafort’s family set up a company to sublet several apartments in [“the kind of black-market operation Airbnb has come under criticism for enabling,”](#) Bloomberg reports. Manafort’s property rental business is alleged to have been used as part of a money laundering operation.

Manafort’s daughter, Jessica, and her husband reportedly earned \$30,000 a month from subletting four Manhattan apartments, according to the article, basing this on a lawsuit by the couple’s landlord. Some of that income came from listing their units on Airbnb and other short-term property rental sites. It is illegal in New York City to rent an apartment for fewer than 30 days unless the primary resident is there.

## 5

Cuba announces new travel regulations: Cuba recently announced [new travel regulations](#) that seem to be made to maintain the flow of Cuban-American visitors, the Miami Herald reports, but they “also seem to be a response to a chill in the U.S.-Cuba relationship” and a stricter travel policy enacted by Trump’s administration.

The regulations include welcoming back those who left Cuba through “irregular means,” such as by raft, the newspaper reports. The regulations also remove some of the bureaucracy associated with such trips made by Cuban-Americans. The new regulations go into effect 1 January 2018, but there is uncertainty in how they will be implemented.

*Compiled by Bryan Wroten and Sean McCracken.*