

Summer 2004
\$3.95

(718)

The Greater Part of New York City

Life is

CHEAP



*Cheap food,
drink and
living in the
Outerboroughs*

MOST REGIONAL MAGAZINES READ LIKE THEY WERE WRITTEN BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. (718) AIMS TO CHANGE ALL THAT.

IN PARTICULAR, a lot of magazines that purport to cover the City outside Manhattan have been launched in the last couple of years. Most of them have tanked. Most of them deserved it. They all seem to have been written by people who lived in different “Brooklyns” or “Queens” than we do, odd parts of the City where everyone lives in huge, recently renovated brownstones, next to smiling, upwardly mobile black and/or other minority group members, where subways service doesn’t suck. Money in these parts of town apparently overflows like our toilets.

(718) has never been to these neighborhoods. We’d like to go there and meet these people. Then, maybe we could borrow money from them. Unfortunately, we can’t get there on the weekends, because the F train isn’t running this weekend and the G train is skipping stops. In the meantime, we plan to write about the messy, sloppy, haphazard, bizarre and absolutely damned wonderful Outerboroughs where we live.

For our premiere issue, we’ve decided to focus on an issue that is near and dear to our hearts, and hopefully yours: living cheap. A lot of people move into the outerboroughs from Manhattan in order to save a dime. Then, they spend all their free time and free cash on the Island. Not us. We believe that there

is more fun to be had in the outerboroughs for less money than practically any place on earth.

To that end, we’ve got stories concerning cheap buys, cheap eats and cheap drinks. Also, we cover a feud between the minority-owned businesses on Atlantic and Flatbush that should interest anyone who has ever scoured that area for bargains, or for any other reason. Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz talks about his job, and clues us in on his favorite cheap treats around Brooklyn. Finally, we have a piece of fiction concerning the Astoria pool which is, at the very least, full of cheap thrills.

We do have a sincere apology to make. Our premiere issue focusses pretty narrowly on Brooklyn and Queens. It just so happens those are the parts of town we know best. As time goes on, we’ll be getting to know The Bronx and Staten Island too. We know that there’s stuff there at least as cool as in Brooklyn. We’ll find it, we swear.

(718) wants to be the magazine you’ll read to know all about the city, not just ten square blocks in Midtown Manhattan and parts of downtown. We’ll give you the news, the food, the arts, and the dirt of the bulk of the Greatest City in the world. If you want to know this town like an insider, you’ll have to read it cover to cover. ■

Contributors

Thomas Seltzer – The superlunary was born in St. Louis, where his genius appeared at a very early age, as evidenced by his dearth of social skills and his complete lack of success with girls. Today, of course, he has left St. Louis.

Rod Milam - Killing a nest of Nazi frogmen single-handedly is a remarkable achievement for a man, especially for one born in 1970. Our admiration for his accomplishments is undying.

Abby Leabling-Martin –Prize-winning reporter, single mother, crime fighter. Beware evil-doers, this city belongs to her!

George Wright – Winning the battle of will with his former *maestro*, George Wright rose to become a gifted singer and composer but not, repeat not, America's last *castrati*.

Steve Wilson –Lanky, curly-haired and mysterious, questions about this Indiana-born artist abound. Is he in fact the lineal descendant of the bastard love child of T.E. Lawrence and a Zulu priestess? No, he is not. But there must be other questions.

Diana Karakitas –A convincing-sounding Greek name that we thought would be appropriate for a writer who was supposed to have grown up in Astoria. “Souvlaki Athena Mousakka” was rejected by our editorial board as too obvious.

Norman Conquest – The best we could get on short notice. ❏

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Cover by Thomas Seltzer for (718)

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Some shops way, way around the corner

FROM STATEN ISLAND TO THE BRONX, THE BEST BARGAINS IN NEW YORK CITY ARE NOWHERE NEAR MANHATTAN.

I'M TEMPING for extra money these days, doing secretarial work, desktop publishing - whatever they'll pay me for.

This month, I got a continuing assignment to work at the American branch of a Japanese securities firm in the World Financial Center.

This is, all things considered, a pretty good deal. I get paid a fortune, for one thing. (At least compared to cartooning.) It has its drawbacks, of course, the first of which is that I have to wear a suit to work, which I consider a definite inconvenience. The only ameliorating circumstance is that I happen to look unbelievably good in a suit. How good? You wouldn't believe it.

I have to tell you about working in the World Financial Center. The World Financial Center is not the same as the World Trade Center - they are across the street from each other. The two complexes are connected by an enclosed bridge, which makes sense, because the whole point of the World Trade/ Financial Center is that you should never leave the building. Each day, several hundred thousand people - more people than live in University City and Clayton combined - come into me World Trade Center to work. And once they get there, they never technically have to go home. The Center is filled not only with hundreds of firms, but , book stores, bars, fast food joints, sit-down foot joints, more bars, tens of clothing stores, four or five banks, box office outlets, sporting goods stores, a camping

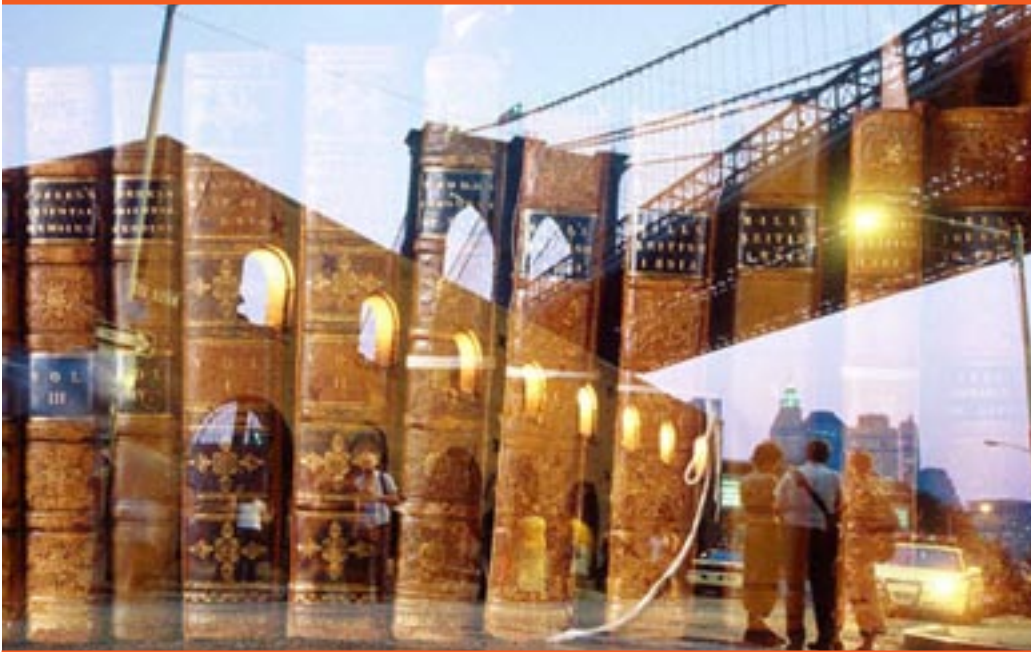
goods store and a branch of Barney's Department store. (Really.) A person could spend his entire waking life in this center, and because so many of them work ten or twelve hour days, many of them do. This is a problem, because there are only three bathrooms in the entire building, which is why financial workers look so tense all the time.

Another interesting thing about this job is that I get to work with top secret, confidential stock and bond type information. Well, the fact of the matter is that I work with it, but I don't really get a chance to read it. My job involves laying it out on the page so it's presentable, so I don't necessarily even examine the text of the documents I'm working on. Most of the really good stuff is in Japanese anyway, which is as meaningful to me as Our Bodies Ourselves is to the average priest. Nevertheless, I have, in all seriousness, been warned that the information I am dealing with is highly confidential. My boss, Dave, said to me, "You are not permitted to share this information with outsiders. It's illegal and could get you in trouble with the SEC. Thus, for your own protection, do what I do: simply forget everything at the end of the day." ❌

TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT:

*Malamud's Cloth Shop, 1415 Flatbush.
Malamud's selection blah blah de blah.
Blah blah? Blah, I say. Malamud's Cloth Shop, 1415 Flatbush. Malamud's selection blah blah de blah. Blah blah? Blah, I say.
Malamud's Cloth Shop, 1415 Flatbush.
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(CHEAP Buys)



by George Wright (718) writer

My Date with Andrew Jackson

CAN ONE \$20 BILL TAKE OUR
WILLIAMSBURG-BASED AUTHOR
FROM ZERO TO INERT?

SO I BROKE DOWN and joined a health club this week. I'm not proud of it, but I did it anyway.

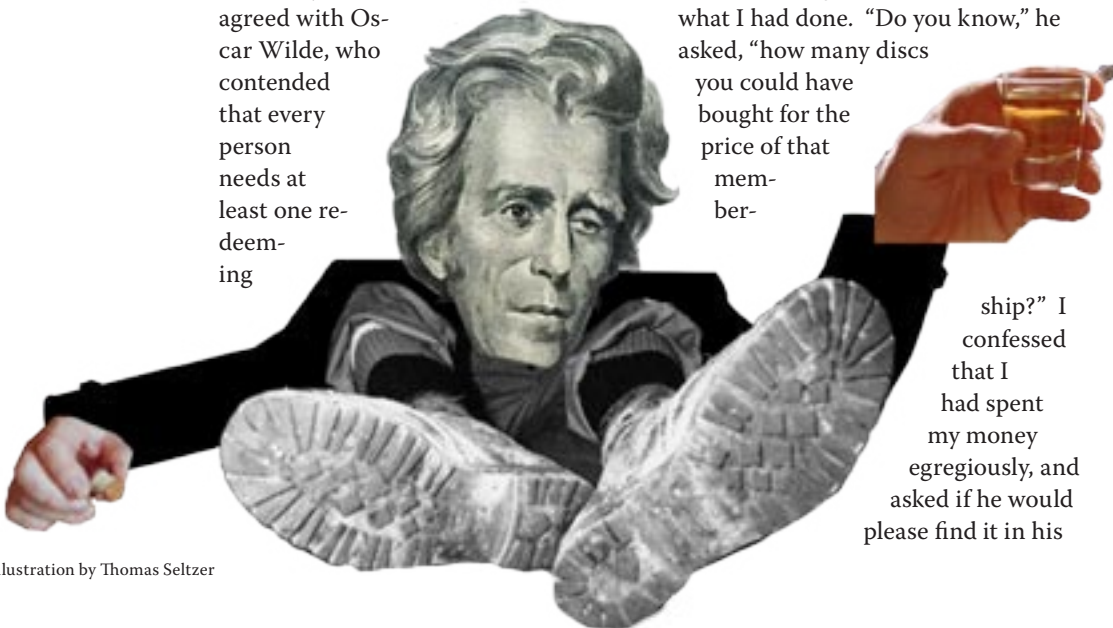
For the average person in the health-conscious nineties, this type of thing would come as no surprise. After all, in 1995, we equate health with morality. Our heroes in movies and on TV lift weights, go jogging at dawn, eat plenty of roughage and fight off red meat with their bare hands. Villains, on the other hand, smoke cigarettes, drink hard liquor, and eat rich cream sauces and possibly human flesh ("The other white meat"). Lean, trim heroes' only rewards are sex scenes with other lean people, in which they produce the ultimate offspring of celluloid heroes: a blockbuster opening weekend. Villains die of high cholesterol and bullet wounds.

But I am not health conscious. Me, I've always more or less agreed with Oscar Wilde, who contended that every person needs at least one redeeming

vice. Sex doesn't count. Sex has been scientifically proven to be both a potent aerobic exercise and a necessary stress reliever, so no it's no fun at all. Eating veal on the other hand, makes me shiver with glee. To me, the perfect meal is equal parts red meat and desert, followed by whiskey and coffee (so you can stay awake to be drunk longer.) Then I like to smoke a cigar and fall asleep without brushing my teeth. I like things that are bad for you. It's a matter of principle.

So why in God's name did I join a health club? Have I abandoned self-indulgence for self-denial? Have I, in short, lost my goddam marbles? Committing myself to this club has cost me the respect of those I value most. My own mother started crying. "Why couldn't you have just turned out to be gay like all the other boys?" she wept. The host of this program expressed disgust when I told him what I had done. "Do you know," he asked, "how many discs you could have bought for the price of that member-

ship?" I confessed that I had spent my money egregiously, and asked if he would please find it in his



heart to forgive me. "No," he replied.

So, what then, was my motivation? You will all be comforted to know it was vanity. I didn't want to live longer and healthier. I just wanted to be better looking, dammit.

Normally, I wouldn't have resorted to such drastic measures. After all, one of my greatest abilities is that of self-delusion: I pretty much think I look good all the time. But I had my bubble burst recently by my girlfriend. Not, mind you, that she was anything but complementary about my appearance. She has always considered me to be extremely handsome, as I have always known her to be beautiful and probably near-sighted.

But a few weeks ago, she was gently rubbing my belly and told me she found it to be "cute."

Now you get it. Now every man out there understands. There is nothing so damaging to male vanity as to be called "cute." "Cute" hurts. Every man sincerely believes that his significant other views him exactly as he would like to be seen. We can be short, fat and bald, but we honestly believe that when our girl looks at us, she is thinking, "Wow. Just like Paul Newman, but his legs aren't as skinny." We are sure that she will notice the infinitesimal dimple in our chin, but be completely blind to the ones in our butt. And above all, every man thinks that the phrase he will hear when a woman touches his belly is, "Oh, my poor hand - it's like rubbing my palm over a slab of chiseled granite."

When I failed to hear this, I knew, with the typical logic of the male ego, that I had no choice but to go out and spend extravagant amounts of time, money, and effort to purge myself of a trait which my beloved considered endearing. So I joined a goddam health club. But rest assured, I plan to continue to eat garbage and drink a lot of beer, thus insuring that joining a health club won't do any good.

After all, I haven't abandoned my convictions. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

So I broke down and joined a health club this week. I'm not proud of it, but I did it anyway.

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health-conscious nineties, this type of thing would come as no surprise. After all, in 1995, we equate health with morality. Our heroes in movies and on TV lift weights, go jogging at dawn, eat plenty of roughage and fight off red meat with their bare hands. Villains, on the other hand, smoke cigarettes, drink hard liquor, and eat rich cream sauces and possibly human flesh ("The other white meat"). Lean, trim heroes' only rewards are sex scenes with other lean people, in which they produce the ultimate offspring of celluloid heroes: a blockbuster opening weekend. Villains die of high cholesterol and bullet wounds.

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"HOW CAN A PERSON TELL WHETHER HE HAS GENITAL HERPES OR GENITAL WARTS?" I ASKED. THE STOOL BESIDE ME CLEARED.

Face Down on Old Hickory
Three Williamsburg Joints That Give Bang for Your Buck



1. **ROXY BAR** – Blah blah dum de blah. Nice joint. Cheap booze. Bartenders have generous buyback policy.
2. **Last Exit** – Blah blah Cheap booze. Bartenders have generous buyback policy.
3. **Bar None** – Blah blah dum de blah. Nice joint. Cheap booze. Bartenders have generous buyback policy.

Source: (718)

Continued on page 23

By Thomas Seltzer (718) writer

“We Sell to White People Too!”

A BROKEN WINDOW SPURS YUSSAF HASSAN AND MERIAN PERIWINKLE’S INTO ANOTHER ROUND IN THEIR ONGOING “ETHNO-PLUNDER” WARS.

I GOT A TICKET driving in New York City. In retrospect, I deserved it. Because, after all, I hadn’t done my duty as a New York driver. I didn’t honk my horn for no reason, or drive over a curb or drive on the wrong side of the street. I think the exact charge I paid \$75 for was “failure to maim.” But I don’t complain. If it wasn’t for citizens like me paying these tickets, who would pay for the New York City workers to create new and even more misleading road signs (my personal favorite: “Atlantic Exit closed: Take alternate exit at Atlantic”), or finance the Pothole Creation Squad, a crack team of experts who know that the only hour to tear up a road is Rush Hour.

You might think I am exaggerating. I am used to that. And yet, as always, I speak the truth, and then some. (I’ll just drop that one here.) In this case, let me give you the unvarnished facts:

My girlfriend Ines and I rented a car to drive down to visit my sister and brother-in-law in Maryland. My girlfriend lives in Queens. I live in Brooklyn. All that I had to do was pick her up, a simple trip that consists of driving up the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, and exiting a few blocks from her house.

I drove up on the so-called “Expressway” at a speed of forty miles

and hour, all the while reading the swath of entertaining reading material posted by the Sign Squad (“Right Lane: Exit Only”; “Middle Lane Ends - Merge Right.”) I had the exact same feeling driving in the city as I use to have on the playground at McKnight school, when Jesse Akers would play his game entitled “Let’s stand behind Tom and swat the back of his head.”



Photo by Steve Wilson

ABOVE: “If she wants to help the downtrodden, she can move away from my corner,” says Mr. Hassan. Six days a week, he still gets up at 4 AM to check the day’s fresh merchandise before opening.

He would grab me and hold his open palm out and I would scrunch up my shoulders and push my neck forward, and I knew that I couldn’t turn around or he’d smack my nose, so I’d just have to stand and wait until I got swatted. He was really big and fast for a third-

Photo by Steve Wilson



RIGHT: "I'm not going anywhere," says Ms. Periwinkle. After only six months, her shop is earning enough to another full-time salesworker.

grader. I think he was seventeen. I sincerely hope he's impotent now.

Anyway, I drove almost three-and-a-half miles without incident. Then I made the mistake of stopping my car when all the traffic in front of me stopped. I used my brakes, which was obviously incorrect. Apparently in the city, the proper procedure is to slow down some, and then finish the braking job by gently colliding with the bumper of the forward car at eighteen to forty-seven miles an hour. The person behind me braked properly, and I was able to verify this by first, hearing the crunching sound, and then looking in the rear-view mirror and watching him perform the ritual New Yorker At-Fault Dance in which he shrugged his shoulders and rolled his neck as his way of asking the existential question, "Hey, what can you do?" I had some suggestions, but I lacked the proper choreography for conveying them. I drove forward, feeling Jesse breathing on my neck.

"Damn it, my stock is not 'ethno-plunder'!"

I arrived at the exit and pulled off onto Hoyt. Here the situation became critical. I was in the right-hand lane and had to get to the left-hand lane to make the turn. I committed a sin which even Aquinas then wouldn't confess: I turned on my blinker. In Missouri, as you know, turning on a blinker is a way of saying, "I would like very much to enter in to your lane, please." In New York, I have found out, it means, "I have decided to end my earthly existence. Please help me out." The driver to my left obliged me by trying

to wedge his front end between my left-rear tire and wheel base. I continued to drive forward, as the car behind me had also decided to help me shed my mortal coil by driving six inches from my rear bumper, and I realized that they were forcing me directly into the steel girder supporting the

underpass. I think at this point, the drivers paused to celebrate having assisted a fellow traveler to Valhalla. I took advantage of this distraction to swerve wildly and speed away from them.

That's when I saw the flashing blue lights.

The only thing that went through my mind was, "Now what?" I couldn't believe that the cops would bust me for using my blinker, but by the same token, I remember the time when one of New York's Finest decided to help get my girlfriend out of a locked apartment by locking two other people in there with her, himself included. This cop informed me that I had driven through a red light. I started to explain in a quavery voice how I hadn't even seen the light, as

I had been too concerned with not getting rammed into the girder by maniacs, as anyone who was watching could surely see, when I realized it was hopeless. He was too dumb to understand. This winner wanted to arrest me for driving without license or registration. I had to explain to him - twice - that I was driving a rental car, so I didn't have any registration, and the reason I didn't have my license was that he was already holding it. He finally accepted the rental agreement, but he still wanted to bust me. I sincerely hope he's impotent, too.

In any case, my days of driving in New York are done,

**"COMPETITION?
YOU ARE NO
COMPETITION!"
MR. HASSAN
SCOFFS.
"OF COURSE,
IF MY RENTS
GO UP, I'LL
BE PISSED."**

“IF YOU’RE
NOT
FROM
BROOKLYN,
I FEEL
SORRY
FOR YOU.”

Brooklyn Borough President **MARTY MARKOWITZ** talks about cheap food, cheap drink, cheap fun, the Atlantic Stadium meshugoss and does not go out of his way to antagonize other, lesser boroughs. Story by Abby Leabling-Martin.

“**O**f course I love my home town. Anybody who doesn’t love their home town is some kind of weirdo. If I’m a little more enthusiastic than most people, that’s only natural: I’m bigger than most people. Although I’m working on it.” Marty Markowitz rubs his tummy just a little self-consciously as he says this, and, although it’s a smaller tummy than it was this time last year, it’s still a tummy that’s hard to overlook. “All I’ve ever wanted to be was Brooklyn Borough Preseident. Even when I didn’t know that there was such a thing, I wanted to be it.”



SINCE

I don't know if St. Louis is even remotely concerned about the Molten report, but everyone in the Big Apple is all abuzz. You're not going to believe this, but, according to this report, there is widespread corruption with the NYPD. Even more shocking, it seems that the earth revolves around the sun!

I'll pause briefly for you to recover your breath. So the cops have been getting a lot of bad press lately, and I feel it is my duty as a responsible commentator to contribute to the problem. Which brings us to this week's story.

When summer comes to New York, the upwardly mobile mobilize. They take off for parts unknown, for exotic ports of call, for about two weeks including weekends, if they can spare the time. While they're gone, they desperately need to have someone look after their apartments. (Not, of course, to imply that there's a serious problem with theft in NYC. That would be misleading. There's no problem at all - everyone has had a theft. But I digress.)

Here's where our story begins. A mutual friend of my girlfriend and mine, whom I'll call "Tony," because he's not listening to this broadcast anyway, asked my girlfriend Inés to apartment sit for him in Chelsea while he went bopping around Mexico for a couple of weeks. This sounded like a great deal to her because his apartment is five blocks from her office and it's air conditioned. So he showed her how to use the answering machine, and the washer and drier, and how to open all the locks (remember this) then he took off to the halls of Montezuma.

(Now, from here on out, I was not personally involved, so you must understand that this is a retelling of a retelling of a story. So if anything strikes you as unlikely or possibly exaggerated, you should accept this as gospel, literal, one-hundred-proof truth.)

Monday morning around 8:45 Inés is taking off for work. She turns off all

the lights, checks that the A/C is off, and heads downstairs. But when she tries to open the door to the street, she finds that she is trapped inside. She pushes, she pulls and she prods, until she confirms that the door is not merely stuck; the lock is broken.

Inés is no fool. She knocks on the upstairs neighbor's door, then the downstairs. No response. She looks up their phone numbers and calls them. No answer. She would call the super, except Tony had told her that the super did not have a phone. (Not a good sign, if you think about it.) So Inés did the only thing she could think of: she called 911.

She gets to the operator, who immediately asks, "What is your emergency? And Inés is forced to respond, "Well, I'm not really sure it's an emergency." "Well, what's the problem?" Inés pauses. "The lock on my apartment door is broken." "Well," responds the operator, "Whyncha just call up a neighbor and have them let you in." "No," Inés protests, "you don't understand- I'm trapped inside." (If I were her, I probably would have juiced it up a little at this point, like saying, "I'm trapped inside with sixty-four donuts (cream-filled).") But I wasn't there, and anyway, I'll proceed to juicing up the whole story in a minute.) In any case, the operator sends out a patrol car.

Fifteen minutes later, a cop pulls up. (Inés later remarked that she was impressed with the response time, but I wasn't. If I were a cop, I'd rush off the the let-the-woman-out-of-apartment calls a lot faster than I'd head for the crazed-psycopath-with-machete calls. If she had told 911 she had a kitten caught in a tree, she probably could have gotten a whole SWAT team there in under a minute. But here I am digressing again.)

Cop pulls up, complete with all cop accoutrements, and waddles to the door. There, somehow, he meets up with the Super, who magically appeared once he was sure he didn't have to do any work. Inés passes them the key under the door and they unlock it, and step in.

"Looks like your lock was broken,



little lady," cops says. Inés is little, and she is a lady, but I wouldn't advise pointing this out to her in this manner.

"Lock's busted," said the super, demonstrating his Einsteinian grasp of the situation to the law enforcement official.

Tourists and tsuris at the Atlantic Stadium

"Betcha I can fix it," says the cop.

"It can be fixed," says the super, with Apollo-like insight.

"I'll fix it right here," cop says.

"Don't ..." starts Inés, but the super cuts her off.

"We'll fix it right here," the Super maintains, in case Inés has forgotten in the last three tenths of a second where it is the lock is to be fixed.

The cop then demonstrates his voodoo powers of locksmithery by a) jiggling the handle and b) looking concerned. "Fixed it," he proclaims.

"It's fixed," says the Super.

"Watch this," says the cop, hand on flab roll, as he grabs the doorknob.

"Shouldn't at least one of us be ..."

Slam!

"...outside?" asks Inés, meaningfully.

"Hey," says the cop, trying the handle, "The door's stuck."

"It sure is," echoes the super. "Hey."

So these two hemmed and hawed, and asked Inés if she had checked with

FROM LEFT: Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah. Blah blah. Marty blah de blah blah blha. Blah blah.



Photos by Steve Wilson

the neighbors, and pushed on the door again and finally broke down and, you guessed it, called the cops. Whereupon another twenty minutes later, another cop pulls up, opens the door and is greeted by the first cop with the words that made lawman Wyatt Earp legend: "Please don't tell the guys at the precinct about this."

So I myself have a plan to control police corruption. We merely call all the corrupt cops one by one over to Tony's apartment and ask them to open the door for Inés. We'll let them out as soon as one of them fixes the lock. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

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"You never really get out of your neighborhood"

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"There's nothing wrong with Queens"

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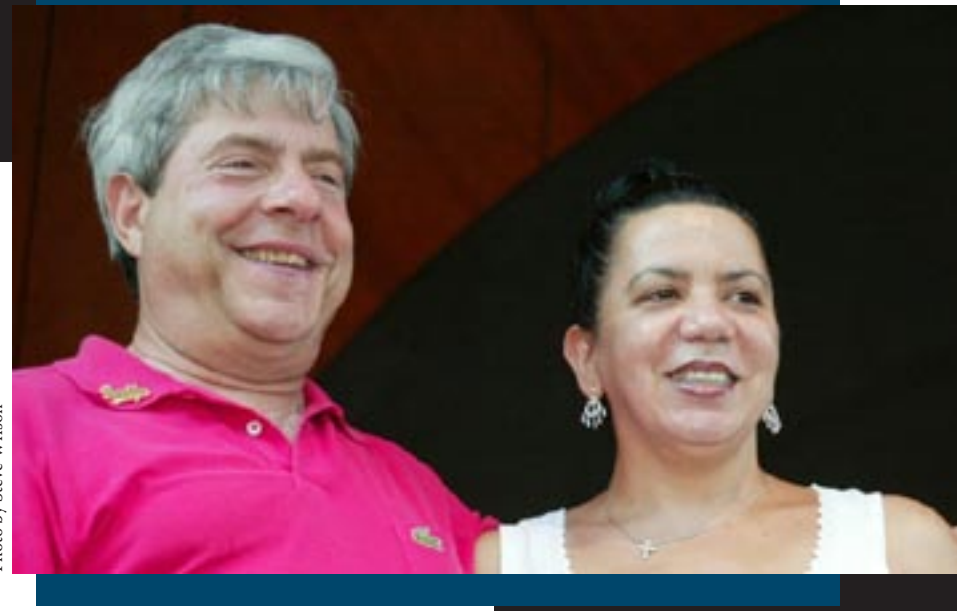


Photo by Steve Wilson

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King's Bounty

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“APPARENTLY, IT WAS EASIER TO REBUILD JAPAN AFTER WWII THAN TO REBUILD THE ATLANTIC STREET STATION.”

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Photo by Steve Wilson

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“Don’t get me started on the MTA”

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Continued on page 25

Fit for a King’s County

Marty’s six absolute best cheap things about Brooklyn

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Source: (718)



Illustration by Thomas Seltzer

What to eat at 3 AM in Astoria When You're Dead

A spear of slabby grease-speckled chunks of carbon-caked, soot-dusted, char-coated flesh lays in front of me, wrapped in a transparent napkin perfectly exhaust-fume smoked. It is unquestionably the best thing I have eaten tonight. I have had duck, duck feet, possibly duck bill. I have had noodles with broth, noodles without broth, broth without noodles. I have had Colombian baked goods, Argentine beef, and one bagel that tasted like it was shipped in from Tierra del Fuego. I have no steady job, no steady girlfriend and a dire need for Maalox. But this is one hell of a kebob.

**Late-night reportage
by Rod Milam**

It's been pointed out to me again that I am not funky. I've always hoped that in time I'd grow into it. But I've got to face it. I lack funk. I don't know how to talk to hip people. I am so unfunky that I don't even know how to fake it. Watching me try is a painful, ugly thing, like watching Bob Dole pretend he can smile.

You might think that I could get funky if I gave it a shot, if I just reprogrammed myself to do it. You would be completely wrong. My occasional lapse into the Kingdom of Wonks is not a software problem. I have a motherboard with an internal Dork microprocessor. It doesn't happen often, but I know that there are predictable intervals when I am simply hardwired to act with the collective panache of all the attendees of the Midwest's third largest Doctor Who convention. It's like my personality is rigged to a Pentium chip.

The latest example: a few weeks ago, the host of this radio show told me that I didn't have to produce a segment for that week's program.

"It's an all funk show," he said, "so I'm not going to use your New York Minute."

"Wait a minute," I countered, "Am I to infer that you don't think that I'm funky enough?"

He didn't even bother to pause to consider it. "Yes," he said.

And do you know what I shot back? I am not proud of this one. Remember, I'm trying to convince Rod that I could be the backup booty-meister for Parliament here. I'm trying to prove that I am ten pounds of funk in a five pound bag. But you must also keep in mind, that I have Intel inside. I had no choice but to say what I said.

"I beg to differ," was the phrase that slipped out of my mouth. Thus proving to Rod, myself and the world that I am approximately s funky as sandals worn with black socks.

Later, I told this to my girlfriend.

"Rod says I'm not funky," I told her, "Can you believe it?"

"How is Rod?" she said. "Tell him I said hi."

"How is Rod? Are you listening? Rod is misguided. He said that I lack funk."

"Is George really going to write new theme music for his show?"

"You are dodging the issue," I warned her. "I am, in point of fact, as funky as I want to be."

This pronouncement caused her to giggle until she actually changed color. I felt as funky as William Shatner. I hadn't been this depressed since she told me that she liked my tummy because it was cute and soft.

Still, lacking hip isn't like being given a prognosis of terminal illness. More like a prognosis of chronic hemorrhoids. Every so often, you know you going to reveal how uncool you really are. It's like knowing no matter where you are, what you're doing, you have a dentist appointment coming up sometime when you least expect it.

But this is not without cause. There's a reason that I am incapable of funkdom. No one out there is genuinely funky except James Brown, George Clinton and maybe Sly Stone. Everyone else is faking it. I know it, and so I can't bring myself to put on the act.

What do I mean by an act? Look at all middle age white guys you see playing basketball, slapping each other on the ass and calling themselves "Homeboy." Right. The fact is you are not permitted to call yourself "Homeboy" if you own your own home. And look at all the kids in Greenwich Village acting like punk rockers. They've had to struggle so against the Imperial British class system, you see. **This was a classic Queens pizzeria, one that would give you either a fork and knife or napkins, but never, never both.**

Flecks Maybe you're like me. You're a reasonably together guy, one who doesn't dress funny or clam up in front of girls. Most of the time, you're on top of things with a quick retort or a fast one-liner. But there are just certain things you cannot do, because you can see yourself too clearly to fake them. You cannot dance right. In your heart of hearts, you know that while you may be dancing to James Brown, your butt is moving to John Philip Souza. You can't bring yourself to get a haircut you know will embarrass you in five years. And to you "Fly," "Phat," and "Def" will always mean an insect, a lipid and the hearing impaired, respectively.

Maybe we're not uncool. Maybe we're just too cool too be hypocrites. Maybe it's people like us who are the real elite of the world, the radical individuals, the true mold-breakers. Maybe we are, in fact, the real funksters of Planet Earth.

1. **Eppes.** 1440 Steinway. Blah blah blah. Blah blah? Blah blah!
2. **Bupkes.** 1250 Steinway. Blah blah blah. Blah blah? Blah blah!
3. **Burpies.** 1330 Steinway. Blah blah blah. Blah blah? Blah blah!
4. **Blechies.** 1240 Steinway. Blah blah. Blah blah? Blah blah!
5. **Beppes.** 1190 Steinway. Blah blah blah. Blah blah? Blah blah!

Five you should try

Or maybe we should just swallow our pride, break down and go play Dungeons and Dragons. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

Drips

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Now, I like fried plantains. And I like Mediterranean food. But frying plantains in olive oil will not hold.

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Continued on page 27


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Source: (718)



...But
It's
Only
Four
Feet
DEEP!



*Three warm bottles of
Budweiser, a broken locker
and (probably)
how I got mono.*

*Thinly veiled “fiction”
concerning the pre-
renovation Astoria Pool by
Diana Karakitas.*

My hair doesn't frizz. It may not be good hair, not blonde, thick, wavy hair that doesn't even get messy when I pull off my hat in the middle of winter, like Michelle's hair, but it doesn't frizz even on the really bad summer days and that's as much as I can say about it. I don't wear glasses any more either, at least I don't have to every day, because my dad finally paid for my contacts, even though he kept saying that it wasn't covered by insurance, which is stupid, but there you go. I have to wear glasses when I go in the pool, though, because I have hard lenses, not soft lenses, and you're not supposed to wear those in the water, because they'll fall out, and insurance won't pay for a new pair. Which is stupid, but there you go.

But I'm not going to wear my glasses at the pool, because you look really dumb in a swimsuit and a pair of glasses, like you would look with a swimsuit and a pair of socks, but not that bad. Michelle is going to try to guide me without making me look like it's a Stevie Wonder sort of thing. Which is great, because Michelle is cool and nice (there goes a stereotype), but bad, too, because I don't think any

boy will look at me when I'm standing next to her in her French-cut bikini.

Summer officially rolled its flabby bottom on top of New York City this week. Until last Monday, the metro area had experienced a prolonged and beautiful spring. Temperatures stayed around the seventies. The sun was out all the time. People from all over the five boroughs came outdoors, breathed deep the fresh air, took your wallet, and went home. It was as close as the Big Apple gets to beatific.

As a St. Louisan, I was not sure how to cope with all this. The longest spring I remembered from growing up in the midwest was eighteen and one-half minutes, in 1982, although it's possible that my watch stopped and I overestimated its length. Seasonal shifts in the midwest are much like heating up ice water to boiling: there is a brief, pleasant transition, but a wise man wouldn't linger in it. Spring in St. Louis has all the staying power of a college freshman with seven beers in him and a Tri-Delt named Lola.

A merely objective description of St. Louis in the summer would prompt Dante himself to make lip-farts. Limestone melts. Humidity stays at a level one hundred and ten percent. The average temperature (and the national weather service will back me up on this) is three hundred and forty-seven degrees (Kelvin). Walk outside in the summer and it's like swimming in sweat. Someone else's sweat.

But New York summers are, believe it or not, worse than St. Louis summers. No, it doesn't get hotter than in St. Louis, and it isn't possible to get more humid without changing states of matter, but New York summers are worse. The reason is, of course, that St. Louisans are smarter. St. Louisans realized right off that they had summers that made the surface of the sun look like a Lipton iced tea commercial, and they decided, "Why don't we all make houses with

central air conditioning or at least decent ventilation and make sure that we all



The removal of his moles left his shoulders pitted like the surface of the moon

drive cars with the A/C cranked or the windows down? Also, let's dress in cool summer clothes like baggy shorts and ugly T-shirts with outdated slogans of second-rate products

on them!" And so thanks to this earthy reasoning, St. Louis is livable. Tacky, but livable.

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And, of course, New Yorkers don't drive cars, with or without A/C. We all take the subways. I should say this:



We stood at least twenty feet away from the kiddies and glared at them

the cars on all the lines are air-conditioned, and they do a pretty good job of upkeep. The stations are, however, not air conditioned. (Another brilliant example of NYC municipal planning. "Let's build cramped, decrepit subway stops! And let's put them physically close to Hell!!") Imagine waiting for a train for a half hour, underground, no breeze, with two hundred and seventy people of differing ethnic groups and odors of perspiration all somehow touching you at the same time. Then imagine you and your two hundred and seventy pals all stepping into the train, where the sweat evaporates. Then you can see two hundred and seventy people, of varying national origins, of all different ages and genders, try to pull their shorts out without being noticed. Yes, it's the type of scene that Dickens would write about, except he'd be too overcome by nausea.

Now, my apartment is on the top floor of a three-story brownstone. You may have heard that heat rises, but I have found this is only true to a certain point. The certain point is the third floor of my brownstone, where heat stops rising and lolls on my couch in the middle of the living room. Things could be worse. My uncle gave my roommate Pasco and myself a small, window air conditioning unit which we have placed in the living room window. We had to put it in the living room. We split the utilities bill evenly, so it's unfair to stick it where it won't do good for us both. Unfortunately, while this unit would be perfect for cooling down either one of our bedrooms, it's nowhere near powerful enough to cool off the entire living room. So we're paying an extra twenty dollars a month to cool off eighteen square feet surrounding our dining room table.

Of course, in order to keep our precious dining room table scientifically cooled, we have to shut the living room window. The pleasant end result of this is that, while we our apartment temperature is still Toast and Top

Brown, we can rest assured that at least we have averted any possibility of our domicile burning down, as there is nowhere near enough oxygen in the apartment to start a fire.

But I'm not complaining. Nor sir, not me. On June 28th, I'm going back home to St. Louis for a week, where I'll finally have a chance to cool down. Ho Ho Ho. This has been Tom Seltzer with A New York Minute.

Summer officially rolled its flabby bottom on top of New York City this week. Until last Monday, the metro area had experienced a prolonged and beautiful spring. Temperatures stayed around the seventies. The sun was out all the time. People from all over the five boroughs came outdoors, breathed deep the fresh air, took your wallet, and went home. It was as close as the Big Apple gets to beatific.

As a St. Louisan, I was not sure how to cope with all this. The longest spring I remembered from growing up in the midwest was eighteen and one-half minutes, in 1982, although it's possible that my watch stopped and I overestimated its length. Seasonal shifts in the midwest are much like heating up ice water to boiling: there is a brief, pleasant transition, but a wise man wouldn't linger in it. Spring in St. Louis has all the staying power of a college freshmen with seven beers in him and a Tri-Delt named Lola.

A merely objective description



Jason and Alex had tried all last summer to convincingly fake drowning

of St. Louis in the summer would prompt Dante himself to make lip-farts. Limestone melts. Humidity stays at a level one hundred and ten percent. The average temperature (and the national weather service will back me up on this) is three hundred and forty-seven degrees (Kelvin). Walk outside in the summer and it's like swimming in sweat. Someone else's sweat.

But New York summers are, believe it or not, worse than St. Louis summers. No, it doesn't get hotter than in St. Louis, and it isn't possible to get more humid without changing states of matter, but New York summers are worse. The reason is, of course, that St. Louisans are smarter. St. Louisans realized right off that they had summers that made the surface of the sun look like a Lipton iced tea commercial, and they decided, "Why don't we all make houses with central air conditioning or at least decent ventilation and make sure that we all drive cars

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Marty

(cont. from page 14)

a retelling of a story. So if anything strikes you as unlikely or possibly exaggerated, you should accept this as gospel, literal, one-hundred-proof truth.)

Monday morning around 8:45 Inés is taking off for work. She turns off all the lights, checks that the A/C is off, and heads downstairs. But when she tries to open the door to the street, she finds that she is trapped inside. She pushes, she pulls and she prods, until she confirms that the door is not merely stuck; the lock is broken.

Inés is no fool. She knocks on the upstairs neighbor's door. downstairs.

No response. She looks up their phone numbers and calls them. No answer. She would call the super, except Tony had told her that the super did not have a phone. (Not a good sign, if you think about it.) So Inés did the only thing she could think of: she called 911.

She gets to the operator, who immediately asks, "What is your emergency? And Inés is forced to respond, "Well, I'm not really sure it's an emergency." "Well, what's the problem?" Inés pauses. "The lock on my apartment door is broken." "Well," responds the operator, "Whyncha just call up a neighbor and have them let you in." "No," Inés protests, "you don't understand- I'm trapped inside." (If I were her, I probably would have juiced it up a little at this point, like saying, "I'm trapped inside with sixty-four donuts (cream-filled)." But I wasn't there, and anyway, I'll proceed to juicing up the whole story in a minute.) In any case, the operator sends out a patrol car.

Fifteen minutes later, a cop pulls up. (Inés later remarked that she was impressed with the response time, but I wasn't. If I were a cop, I'd rush off the the let-the-woman-out-of-apartment calls a lot faster than I'd head for the crazed-psycopath-with-machete calls. If she had told 911 she had a kitten caught in a tree, she probably

We Sell to White People

(cont. from page 16)

so I shall let all this go. So there's no need, for instance, to call the NYPD a bunch of corrupt, gun-crazy pinheads, as everybody in the world knows that anyway. And while I am being so forgiving, Jesse Akers, if you're out there listening to this, feel free to drop by if you ever drive to New York. Remember to use your blinkers. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

I got a ticket driving in New York City. In retrospect, I deserved it. Because, after all, I hadn't done my duty as a New York driver. I didn't honk my horn for no reason, or drive over a curb or drive on the wrong side of the street. I think the exact charge I paid \$75 for was "failure to maim." But I don't complain. If it wasn't for citizens like me paying these tickets, who would pay for the New York City workers to create new and even more misleading road signs (my personal favorite: "Atlantic Exit closed: Take alternate exit at Atlantic"), or finance the Pothole Creation Squad, a crack team of experts who know that the only hour to tear up a road is Rush Hour.

You might think I am exaggerating. I am used to that. And yet, as always, I speak the truth, and then some. (I'll just drop that one here.) In this case, let me give you the unvarnished facts:

My girlfriend Ines and I rented a car to drive down to visit my sister and brother-in-law in Maryland. My girlfriend lives in Queens. I live in Brooklyn. All that I had to do was pick her up, a simple trip that consists of driving up the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, and exiting a few blocks from her house.

I drove up on the so-called "Expressway" at a speed of forty miles and hour, all the while reading the swath of entertaining reading material posted by the Sign Squad ("Right Lane: Exit Only"; "Middle Lane Ends - Merge Right.") I had the exact same feeling driving in the city as I use to have on the playground at McKnight school, when Jesse Akers would play

his game entitled "Let's stand behind Tom and swat the back of his head." He would grab me and hold his open palm out and I would scrunch up my shoulders and push my neck forward, and I knew that I couldn't turn around or he'd smack my nose, so I'd just have to stand and wait until I got swatted. He was really big and fast for a third-grader. I think he was seventeen. I sincerely hope he's impotent now.

Anyway, I drove almost three-and-a-half miles without incident. Then I made the mistake of stopping my car when all the traffic in front of me stopped. I used my brakes, which was obviously incorrect. Apparently in the city, the proper procedure is to slow down some, and then finish the braking job by gently colliding with the bumper of the forward car at eighteen to forty-seven miles an hour. The person behind me braked properly, and I was able to verify this by first, hearing the crunching sound, and then looking in the rear-view mirror and watching him perform the ritual New Yorker At-Fault Dance in which he shrugged his shoulders and rolled his neck as his way of asking the existential question, "Hey, what can you do?" I had some suggestions, but I lacked the proper choreography for conveying them. I drove forward, feeling Jesse breathing on my neck.

That's when I saw the flashing blue lights.

He was too dumb to understand. This winner wanted to arrest me for driving without license or registration. I had to explain to him - twice - that I was driving a rental car, so I didn't have any registration, and the reason I didn't have my license was that he was already holding it. He finally accepted the rental agreement, but he still wanted to bust me. I sincerely hope he's impotent, too.

As everybody in the world knows that anyway. And while I am being so forgiving, Jesse Akers, if you're out there listening to this, feel free to drop by if you ever drive to New York. Remember to use your blinkers. ❏

It's only four feet deep
(cont. from page 25)

with the A/C cranked or the windows down? Also, let's dress in cool summer clothes like baggy shorts and ugly T-shirts with outdated slogans of second-rate products on them!" And so thanks to this earthy reasoning, St. Louis is livable. Tacky, but livable.

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My date with Alexander Hamilton
(cont. from page 6)

you, that she was anything but complementary about my appearance. She has always considered me to be extremely handsome, as I have always known her to be beautiful and probably near-sighted.

But a few weeks ago, she was gently rubbing my belly and told me she found it to be "cute."

Now you get it. Now every man out there understands. There is nothing so damaging to male vanity as to be called "cute." "Cute" hurts. Every man sincerely believes that his significant other views him exactly as he would like to be seen. We can be short, fat and bald, but we honestly believe that when our girl looks at us, she is thinking, "Wow. Just like Paul Newman, but his legs aren't as skinny." We are sure that she will notice the infinitesimal dimple in our chin, but be completely blind to the ones in our butt. And above all, every man thinks. ❏

3 AM in Astoria
(cont. from page 13)

breakers. Maybe we are, in fact, the real funksters of Planet Earth.

Or maybe we should just swallow our pride, break down and go play Dungeons and Dragons. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

It's been pointed out to me again that I am not funky. I've always hoped that in time I'd grow into it. But I've got to face it. I lack funk. I don't know how to talk to hip people. I am so unfunky that I don't even know how to fake it. Watching me try is a painful, ugly thing, like watching Bob Dole pretend he can smile.

You might think that I could get funky if I gave it a shot, if I just reprogrammed myself to do it. You would be completely wrong. My occasional lapse into the Kingdom of Wonks is not a software problem. I have a motherboard with an internal Dork microprocessor. It doesn't happen often, but I know that there are predictable intervals when I am simply hardwired to act with the collective panache of all the attendees of the Midwest's third largest Doctor Who convention. It's like my personality is rigged to a Pentium chip.

The latest example: a few weeks ago, the host of this radio show told me that I didn't have to produce a segment for that week's program.

"It's an all funk show," he said, "so I'm not going to use your New York Minute."

"Wait a minute," I countered, "Am I to infer that you don't think that I'm funky enough?"

He didn't even bother to pause to consider it. "Yes," he said.

And do you know what I shot back? I am not proud of this one. Remember, I'm trying to convince Rod that I

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Marty
(cont. from page 26)

could have gotten a whole SWAT team there in under a minute. But here I am digressing again.)

Cop pulls up, complete with all cop accoutrements, and waddles to the door. There, somehow, he meets up with the Super, who magically appeared once he was sure he didn't have to do any work. Inés passes them the key under the door and they unlock it, and step in.

"Looks like your lock was broken, little lady," cops says. Inés is little, and she is a lady, but I wouldn't advise pointing this out to her in this manner.

"Lock's busted," said the super, demonstrating his Einsteinian grasp of the situation to the law enforcement official.

"Betcha I can fix it," says the cop.

"It can be fixed," says the super, with Apollo-like insight.

"I'll fix it right here," cop says.

"Don't ..." starts Inés, but the super cuts her off.

"We'll fix it right here," the Super maintains, in case Inés has forgotten in the last three tenths of a second where it is the lock is to be fixed.

The cop then demonstrates his voodoo powers of locksmithery by a) jiggling the handle and b) looking concerned. "Fixed it," he proclaims.

"It's fixed," says the Super.

"Watch this," says the cop, hand on flab roll, as he grabs the doorknob.

"Shouldn't at least one of us be ..."

Slam!

"...outside?" asks Inés, meaningfully.

"Hey," says the cop, trying the handle, "The door's stuck."

"It sure is," echoes the super.

"Hey."

So these two hemmed and hawed, and asked Inés if she had checked with the neighbors, and pushed on the door again and finally broke down and, you guessed it, called the cops. Whereupon another twenty minutes later, another cop pulls up, opens the door and is greeted by the first cop with the words. ❧

3 AM in Astoria
(cont. from page 27)

could be the backup booty-meister for Parliament here. I'm trying to prove that I am ten pounds of funk in a five pound bag. But you must also keep in mind, that I have Intel inside. I had no choice but to say what I said.

"I beg to differ," was the phrase that slipped out of my mouth. Thus proving to Rod, myself and the world that I am approximately s funky as sandals worn with black socks.

Later, I told this to my girlfriend.

"Rod says I'm not funky," I told her, "Can you believe it?"

"How is Rod?" she said. "Tell him I said hi."

"How is Rod? Are you listening? Rod is misguided. He said that I lack funk."

"Is George really going to write new theme music for his show?"

"You are dodging the issue," I warned her. "I am, in point of fact, as funky as I want to be."

This pronouncement caused her to giggle until she actually changed color. I felt as funky as William Shatner. I hadn't been this depressed since she told me that she liked my tummy because it was cute and soft.

Still, lacking hip isn't like being given a prognosis of terminal illness. More like a prognosis of chronic hemorrhoids. Every so often, you know you going to reveal how uncool you really are. It's like knowing no matter where you are, what you're doing, you have a dentist appointment coming up sometime when you least expect it.

But this is not without cause.

There's a reason that I am incapable of funkdom. No one out there is genuinely funky except James Brown, George Clinton and maybe Sly Stone. Everyone else is faking it. I know it, and so I can't bring myself to put on the act.

What do I mean by an act? Look at all middle age white guys you see playing basketball, slapping each other on the ass and calling themselves "Homeboy." Right. The fact is you are not permitted to call yourself "Homeboy" if you own your own home. And look at all the kids in Greenwich Village

acting like punk rockers. They've had to struggle so against the Imperial British class system, you see.

Maybe you're like me. You're a reasonably together guy, one who doesn't dress funny or clam up in front of girls. Most of the time, you're on top of things with a quick retort or a fast one-liner. But there are just certain things you cannot do, because you can see yourself too clearly to fake them. You cannot dance right. In your heart of hearts, you know that while you may be dancing to James Brown, your butt is moving to John Philip Souza. You can't bring yourself to get a haircut you know will embarrass you in five years. And to you "Fly," "Phat," and "Def" will always mean an insect, a lipid and the hearing impaired, respectively.

Maybe we're not uncool. Maybe we're just too cool too be hypocrites. Maybe it's people like us who are the real elite of the world, the radical individuals, the true mold-breakers. Maybe we are, in fact, the real funksters of Planet Earth.

Or maybe we should just swallow our pride, break down and go play Dungeons and Dragons. This has been Tom Seltzer with a New York Minute.

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