

Tonight's Scenes from the Local

Tonight, I've me no responsibilities and decided to spend this care free night at my local favorite. What you read is what I thought or witnessed first hand. It is not proofed in any shape or form and is before you as is. If this troubles you, then yer an uptight turd and should go away.

Before heading out, I make myself one stiff drink and Dixie cup it into an empty Pepsi can for expert camouflage. I've never used this method and find it rather surprising how quickly a 12 ounce can of Pepsi is filled by a few Dixie cups.

I step outside and feel the refreshingly warm February New England air against my face. Snow surrounds me, but I can hear it rapidly melting. I ditch my keys in their typical hiding spot (I hate carrying keys on my person) and start off on foot to the local (the pub).

As I walk through the high school parking lot, I check out (sorry, break time, the Ramones "Pinhead" just came on the radio and I must get into it rather than type because this is one song I want to learn how to play on the guitar)...ok, now I forget what I was going to type, but I do know that I recalled visiting the area Whole Foods (I quickly discovered my friend Kate was not working. Major boo for me because she has one of those faces that can brighten up any thing that needs brightening) earlier today and saw something that brought back memories I had not recalled in years. While searching for a certain seomthing, I saw another something that ripped me back to my childhood. I'm talking when I was around 7 or 8. My family comes from Dorchester, MA and after we moved to the 'burbs, would often return to good ol' St. Margaret's St. to visit my grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. Having grown up Catholic, my family would attend services at St. Margaret's church and I knew several of the priests. Father Coyne was a younger priest who presided over the "children's' Mass" on Saturday afternoons. Father Coyne would wear a gown (?) made out of Snoopy/Woodstock sheets. Years later, Father Coyne saw his parish closed and sent off to nowhere because he spoke out against the Cardinal and the sexual abuse cases. He was/is a great guy who fought the Archdiocese. I digress. Father Coyne has nothing to do with my dive into the memories. Another priest at St. Margaret's was a Chinese immigrant named Father Peter. He spoke broken English and would laugh at anything. While outside of the church, if he ran into kids from the parish, he would pull a small container out of his pocket, open it, twirl his thumb in it, then rub the ointment on the kid's forehead in the shape of a cross. The ointment was hot and really felt like the cross was searing into the forehead. I haven't seen that ointment in almost since childhood. Until this morning at WFM: Tiger Balm.

Ok...as I walk up the street leading from the high school lot, I step on a sewer cap that reads "SEWER" and I fell a bit concerned because I've walked this street 8 zillion times and never recall seeing this sewer cap. You see, I am a tad bit compulsive and try my best to walk the same steps (or park in the same spots) wherever I go and find myself unsure if I simply over looked this sewer cap or if it's new. Christ. Anyway, I walk uphill and see the river of water streaming from the melting snow

Maybe 20 steps beyond the sewer cap, I pass a woman

and man as they walk out of a church. The woman walks in front of me leaving a trail of her perfume which reminds me of elementary school.

I reach the main drag and have a tough time crossing the street as the traffic is unusually heavy. I walk down one side of the street on snow and slushy ice covered concrete until I get an opening. Hurriedly, I sprint across street, but halfway through, my right shoe slips from my foot. I never tie my shoes and for the most part, it's not an issue. Damn. Right after my shoe left my foot, I stepped down on the street and luckily felt no wetness. Not a puddle for my socked foot to be found, but the joy is short as I surely looked like a goon in front of the oncoming cars.

I walk up the steps of my local and peer through the center door that leads to the staircase of the upstairs rooms (the left door hits the deli, the right hits the pub, the center points to the rooms). The landing is plugged with old looking furniture and reinforces my idea to ask the owners for permission to photograph the one of the rooms for the cover of my next book).

I open the door and hear the jukie blasting George Thorogoods "One Bourbon, Once Scotch, and One Beer" (not the original, but you know...). I drop a copy of my book, that was burned by my toaster oven (inscribed with the same), on top of the cigarette machine and walk to the end of the bar to take a seat. I stand in front of my bar stool and place the nearly drained Pepsi can in the bar. I ask the chap next to me if the seat is taken, to which he replies, "No, but if that's only Pepsi...then yes, it is taken. If you have rum in there, the no, it's not taken.

To this, I reply, "How 'bout Jameson?"

"Have a seat..." He said.

I've placed my butt right smack in front of the beer cooler and quickly discover this seat offers several boobie peeks at the female barkeeps who repeatedly bend over before me to retrieve bottles of beer for those who choose to drink what they can drink at home, opposed to what they can not enjoy without a tap. God. Why would you drink Bud bottles when Guinness and Smithwick's is right there?

Half way through my first pint, I notice down the bar a fella' who I've seen many times before, but instead of his usual picture of beer, he has a bottle of Coors Light, and a smokin' chick next to him drink some sort of surely over priced martini. This guy has hair like Elvis, not Elvis Elvis, but Elvis as portrayed by Kurt Russell in that movie starring four or five actors playing Elvis who hope to rob a bank. Oddly enough, this guy's air reminds me of my Uncle Bobby, who had the same thick/black hair from childhood until hi died. Hell, aside from th stray here and there nipple hair Bobby's hair remained unchanged for nearly 40 years. At a high school reunion, a classmate said she knew who Bobby was due to his unchanged hair after years and years.

What the heck? There are two containers of strawberries on the bar. While contemplating the strawberries, I feel my phone vibrate and run outside to answer it, but not before seeing a copy of a local music rag that I wish to read upon my return. The call is from my daughter and we talk for a bit. After saying our goodbyes, I walk back into th bar and glance at the basket that once held the mag, but it is gone! What the hell? It was there two minutes ago. Ah, the drummer of the band is reading it. Ya, like he knows how to read.

I sit down at the bar to find a chump..ah, chap, awaiting his drinks. He has a beer and a shot and the barkeep says, "12.50,

please.”

12.50? Damn, for a bar in Boston that is typical. But for a bar in downtown Rockland...wait, the barkeep brings to the guy a pint of Guinness...ok, a bottle of beer, shot, and pint-o-Guinness...12.50 isn't so bad.

I notice the dude next to me has his arm in a sling and I ask about it. Turns out years of beating on his arm and shoulder has resulted in several minor but nagging injuries. Since he is currently laid off from the union, he decided to use this down time to fix himself up and recover. He orders a sirloin steak, rare to medium rare. I almost tell him how the cooks here always overcook the meat, but decide against it.

Crap! A band has arrived and is setting up their gear. I loathe the bands that play this joint.

Whoa, “Blister in the Sun” by the Violent Femmes plays and throws me way back.

From behind and between me and the hurt arm guy, a man calls out a beer order, which is quickly retrieved by the barkeep. She places the beer on the bar and he slides a saw buck across the bar. While getting the guy change, he reaches between the hurt arm guy and me, but struggles to reach his beer because he has the shortest arms in the world even though he is not a short person. I find this slightly amusing.

NCIS is on the TV. I see Mark Harmon and feel happy that he's still kicking around. You never hear or read anything about about this guy. He's not a dick, as far as I know. And Lauren Holly...yowza! She was so damn hot in Dumb and Dumber and Beautiful Girls...come to me, Lauren...come to me...

The hurt arm man gets his food and immediately inspects the steaks doneness, and looks rather disappointed with it being a bit too well done for his taste. However, he doesn't complain and eats it. God, the broccoli stinks! An old woman sitting on his other side is staring at him while he eats. Making this stare session even funnier are her thick glasses that make her eyes look all goofy. Man, she is really staring! Then again, I suppose I'm staring too; at her staring.

A female barkeep, who is fairly new to the job, talks about a date she went on last night and sums it up rather quickly with, “I should've just stayed home.”

The other female barkeep stands in front of me and I can not help notice that the booze bottles in the speed rack are the perfect crotch height. The phallic bottle pourer things are hitting “it” as if it's intentional.

And older gentleman brushes up against the right of me and tells the barkeep that more toilet paper is needed in the men's room. Gross.

The hurt arm man has finished his meal and left. The 'keep cleans the bar area, but inexcusably leaves several pieces of corn on the cob shrapnel. A man sits down in the empty seat and a sudden wave of maple syrup smell fills the air. This guy smells like maple syrup, strongly! Give me a break. You expect to smell maple syrup on people who are in the third grade. Not when they're 40-50!

The band playing is a blues band called Soul Shine. It is made up one black guy and two whities. I guess the black guy is the soul and the whities the shine because they are pasty arse mofos. Heckers, I am so white even white people call me honky, but these two dudes are super white.

I hit the bathroom and upon my return I see my pint

and my sweatshirt I had hanging on the stool have been moved down one seat and a woman has taken my original seat. Looks like Mr. Maple Syrup has a chick. I take my new seat and the woman smiles as she asks if I mind the move. I say no. She turns her back to me and talks to her man. She is wearing sweat pants and her butt is facing me. With her right hand, she reaches behind her back and pulls her sweat pants down a little exposing the thong. She motions with her index finger as if calling me over to her. I gently rub her exposed lower back and slowly feel my way down and inside her pants. I feel her butt crack and follow the road to glory...nah. I made that up. Her back is to me, but she's not wearing sweats and certainly didn't let me touch her butt. But, that would've been cool.

The band is taking a pretty long break and the juke has turned things into the John Denver and Paul Simon hour.

I've been here for a few hours and all this time a woman has been playing the video poker/slot machine game. Damn, kind of a long time to play a gambling machine that doesn't pay out cash prizes. Or so I think, anyway.

The owner of the bar appears with a bottle of Windex and has started cleaning the bar, which is pretty sticky looking. As he approaches my end of the bar, he stops and asks the barkeep (the new one) to clean the rest. She rolls her eyes and says, “I will, but...” and motions with her hands at all of the drinks on the bartop. The owner grabs the Windex and rag off the bar and says, “I'll do it! No, I'll do it!” He sprays the bartop instead of spraying the rag. The blue fluid flies everywhere. Have to give it to this new barkeep as she has the balls to back talk her boss. However, maybe she knows she won't get canned because one of the other bartenders (who had a slight attitude problem and once refused to serve my then girlfriend Meaghan; wouldn't even take her order) was recently fired and now they are short on staff. Short on staff...I know the feeling. I know the feeling. I glance up and see a small paper sign reading, “Pizza Slice: Cheese \$1.50/Pepperoni \$1.75.” I wonder if someone aching for a slice of roni pizza would balk at the 25 cent extra charge. This reminds me of when I worked in a video store during my high school years and got shat from a guy when I told him the cost of his renting a video would be \$2.10...”But the rental fee is two dollars,” he said. “What's the ten cents?”

“The tax,” I replied.

This guy also refused a small plastic bag once because he said it made the trash he “had to lug out every week” too heavy.

I feel my phone vibrate indicating a text message. I read the text. It's from an unfamiliar number and reads, “I'm at a bar and a lesbo is starting with me. She wants to fight.” I have no idea who sent this to me, but it is an obvious mistake.

Time to walk home. As I make my journey, I recall a story my mother recently told me concerning the bar I just exited. When I was maybe one, my family lived in this town and the bar back then was a rough and tumble type of place. A real bad reputation and a far cry from what it is today. One fine Saturday, my father and his neighbor friend disappeared for hours on end. Mad as hell, my mother threw me in the car, drove down the main drag, and saw my dad's car parked in front of the bar. She parked and walked in with me. She spotted my father and his friend boozin' it up and shooting pool. She planted my diapered butt in the middle of the pool table and left without saying a word.

No wonder I'm drawn to this place.