

TIMES SQUARE LITERARY PUB CRAWL

INTRODUCTION

GUIDE 1

Greeting and thank you everyone for choosing to spend your afternoon with us today. We'd love to begin with a toast by possibly the original bohemian writer of New York City:

**Filled with mingled cream and amber
I shall drain that glass again
Such hilarious visions clamber
Through the chambers of my brain
Quaintest thoughts and queerest fancies
Come to life and fade away
What care I how life advances
I am drinking Ale today**

-Edgar Allan Poe

GUIDE 2

To quote Jack Keruoac:

“I settled down to [...] long walks around beloved old Manhattan a half hour subway ride away. I roamed the streets, the bridges, Times Square, cafeterias, the waterfront, I looked up all my poet beatnik friends and roamed with them, I had love affairs with girls in the Village, I did everything with that great mad joy you get when you return to New York City.”

GUIDE 1

Welcome to the [insert name of tour here]. My name is [insert your name here] but more importantly his/her name is [insert your partner's name here]. [Say something positive about your partner, how long they've been doing the tour, and then something silly or funny. You can work this out in advance]

GUIDE 2

[Politely laughs, but with conviction!] [or whatever] Thanks. And [Say something positive about your partner, how long they've been doing the tour, and then something silly or funny. You can work this out in advance]

We started doing tours back in 1998 in Greenwich Village. Originally this was a fundraiser for The New Ensemble theatre company. We would do readings of writers works at different literary bars as fundraising events, and then one of the members went on and was inspired by the Dublin Literary Pub Crawl and we adapted accordingly. We are now the longest running tour in the Village. Over the years we have expanded into tours in Brooklyn, Times Square, as well as numerous private tours and educational tours throughout the years.

GUIDE 1

Today we're going to take you back in time to that hey day of glamour, crime, culture and writing that shaped the mystique of NYC, even today. We'll hit 3 pubs with a strong connection to literature, art, theatre and culture, share the stories of the bars and writers, and perform some of their work.

GUIDE 2

We've found that everything runs the smoothest if you head straight for the bar as soon as we get there (assuming that you want a drink) and in the meantime, we'll find a relatively quiet spot to meet. When everyone is ready, we'll give you

some history of the establishment, tell you about the writers who drank there and give you a sample of their work as well.

GUIDE 1

One thing you may have learned over time is that the more times you tell a story, the bigger the “fish” gets, so to speak. As stories become legend, legend becomes embellished. Often in the midst of our research we’ll find various contradicting dates, or phrasings or what have you. Many of the stories come from the writers themselves, and drunken writers have a strong tendency to “embellish” their own histories

A classic example is writer/critic Mary McCarthy once said of Broadway playwright Lillian Hellman, “every word she writes is a lie, including ‘and’ and ‘the’.” We have done relatively extensive research and wherever possible have tried to clear up any myths. But we still will find many variations of these stories and will share the several different versions, or certainly the most interesting

GUIDE 2

We keep referring to this idea of the Mystique of New York. Often when people think of the city they think of that era of the 1920’s-1940’s. The Sinatra years, the glamorous gangster, “They say the neon lights are bright, on Broadway...” the Great White Way, the glamorous speakeasies, the journalistic elites of the New Yorker and the New York Times, and of course Times Square. Today we’ll be journeying through modern NYC, but we’ll be sharing all the writers and artists who helped create and shape that Mystique that cemented New York City as one of the most mythical and magical cities in the world.

That mystique we feel was cemented by 3 influential people who were active in the writing, performing, theatre, film and drink. Three people who it turns out were all regulars here and who all have had their caricatures adorning these walls: Danyon Runyon, Texas Guinan, and Dorothy Parker. All of them, like nearly every great luminary figure in Times Square, eventually came here to Sardi’s.



Sardis

GUIDE 1

-In my mind there are two words more than any other that evoke the spirit and mythos of the Times Square, New York theater scene and those 2 words are; Broadway and Sardi's.

Sardi's opened in 1926 by Melchiorre Pio Vincenzo "Vincent" Sardi, Sr. and his wife Eugenia "Jenny" Sardi. The pair both immigrated from Northern Italy and soon met after landing on Ellis Island and finding work at the Bartholdi Inn, an upscale boarding house in the theatre district. Jenny worked as a housekeeper and Vincent as a waiter.

Together, they opened "The Little Place" at 146 W 44th Street, just a few doors down in 1921. They offered two menus: one regular priced menu, and one lower priced "actor's menu." When the building was torn down in 1926 to build the St. James Theatre, the Shubert's moved them to this location, and opened Sardi's. Sardi's became a "clubhouse" for thespians and the unofficial "Broadway Hall of Fame."

The Sardi did not want to be associated with the Italian mafia, as many restaurants were. For this reason, they did not call Sardi's an Italian restaurant. Instead, Vincent is credited with coining the term "Continental" cuisine.

Sardi's became the go to place for pre and post show theatre. During the golden age of Broadway, stars such as Tennessee Williams, Helen Hayes, Maureen Stapleton and John Barrymore were guests.

In 1947 The Tony Award were conceived at Sardi's and named for recently deceased actor, producer, director and leader of the American Theatre Wing, Antoinette Perry. At the first awards ceremony, Vincent Sardi, Sr. received a special award - a gold money clip with the inscription: "To Vincent Sardi, for providing a transient home and comfort for theater folk at Sardi's for twenty years."

Jenny was such a huge part of Sardi's that, when she retired, her son said he had to hire three men to replace her. (The Women Who Made New York)

GUIDE 2

The Caricatures

When business was slow, Vincent decided to hire artist Alex Gard to do caricatures of the patrons like at Joe Zelli's nightclub. Gard was introduced to Sardi's by members of the Cheese Club. The Cheese Club was made up of members of the press and critics like Walter Winchell, Ward Morehouse, Irving Hoffmann and Heywood Broun (of Algonquin Roundtable fame).

The first caricature that Gard drew for Sardi's was of Ted Healy, creator of The Three Stooges. Vincent struck a deal with Gard to draw caricatures in exchange for one meal a day. Later, when business was better, Vincent tried to offer Gard monetary payment, but Gard refused. He was happy to continue with their initial arrangement. Gard drew 700 caricatures, replaced by Don Bevan and Richard Baratz. Currently over 1300 caricatures.

All caricatures are portable because the lease states that the landlord (the Shubert Organization) owns all permanent fixtures in the restaurant. Today, three copies of the caricature are made: the original goes in a vault, a copy is given to the subject, and one goes on the wall. This practice started when James Cagney's was stolen on the day that he died. In fact, many portraits have disappeared from the walls. Actress Maureen Stapleton hated hers so much that she took it home to burn. Actress Anna Maria Alberghetti (Carnival) allegedly stole producer David Merrick's to hang over her toilet because she hated him so much. In the film *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, Kermit pretends to be a famous Broadway producer and has Rizzo and other rats engage in a "whisper campaign" to create buzz about his new show. Kermit replaces Liza Minelli's portrait with his own, but his plan is thwarted when Liza Minelli shows up at the restaurant. Today, both Liza and Kermit hang in Sardi's.

DAMON RUNYON

GUIDE 1

Sardi's was once described as a place "with drinks strong enough for Damon Runyon." If any author can take credit for cementing the Mystique of New York, it's Damon Runyon.

Has anyone here heard of Damon Runyon [don't say this, but probably not]? Can you name me some musicals that were done in your high school or college that you recall? [see if someone mentions it] Guys and Dolls is performed by every High School and College theater department every 7 years it seems. It's one of the most iconic and popular musicals, and it is very much a New York musical.

GUIDE 2:

Runyon once wrote:

"If I have all the tears that are shed on Broadway by guys in love, I will have enough salt water to start an opposition ocean to the Atlantic and Pacific, with enough left over to run the Great Salt Lake out of business."

Damon Runyon was born in Manhattan and died in Manhattan.

GUIDE 1:

Born Manhattan, Kansas that is, and died Manhattan, NY.

GUIDE 2:

He was a well respected News paper reporter, writing frequently about FDR, professional Boxing, and the New York Giants. But his hobknobbing with the sporting and political scene very quickly led him to the Times Square area and rubbing elbows with the gangsters that led him to begin writing a series of short stories, most famously Guys and Dolls. The stories, much different than the better known musical shot the mystique of NY to the national scene. He created an exciting and edgy vernacular, mixing the slang of the times with some of his

own unique catch phrases, and based most of his characters on real life gangsters he befriended in local establishments we'll be passing. He really opened the door for the idea of the endearing gangster, arguably the predecessor the likes of Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino. The stories are engaging, humorous with a dark edge, electric and very, very New York. He was a close friend and confidant of many gangsters, but never was involved in criminal activities. He described himself as "being known to one and all as a guy who is just around."

To get a sense of his popular slang and style he captured the nation's imagination, here's an excerpt from the beginning of his short story "The Bloodhounds of Broadway"

GUIDE 1

[60 second monologue]

....I am standing in front of Mindy's restaurant on Broadway with a guy by the name of Regret, [who has this name because it seems he wins a very large bet the year the Whitney filly, Regret, grabs the Kentucky Derby, and can never forget it, which is maybe because it is the only very large bet he ever wins in his life.]

What this guy's real name is I never hear, and anyway names make no difference to me, especially on Broadway, because the chances are that no matter what name a guy has, it is not his square name. So, as far as I am concerned, Regret is as good a name as any other for this guy I am talking about, who is a fat guy, and very gabby, though generally he is talking about nothing but horses, and how he gets beat three dirty noses the day before at Belmont, or wherever the horses are running.

In all the years I know Regret he must get beat ten thousand noses, and always they are dirty noses, to hear him tell it. In fact, I never once hear him say he is beat a clean nose, but of course this is only the way horse-racing guys talk. What Regret does for a living besides betting on horses I do not know, but he seems to do pretty well at it, because he is always around and about, and generally well dressed, and with a lot of big cigars sticking up out of his vest pocket.

GUIDE 2:

Regret is based on gangster Otto Berman, who was one of several gangsters shot down by Lucky Luciano's thugs in Newark, NJ.

Runyon had moved to NY on the prompting of a fellow reporter, Ellen Eagn, later to be his wife. Almost 15 years later the marriage was on the rocks,

GUIDE 1;

Literally on the rocks- he had ended up quitting drinking early in their marriage for health and relationship reasons (he was a philanderer) while Ellen's drinking was on the rise.

GUIDE 2:

They ended up splitting, he fell for a Mexican dancer 26 years younger than him and married her. In fact, mayor Jimmy Walker performed the ceremony.

GUIDE 1:

Sadly none of it ended well. She ended up leaving him for a younger man. Ellen ended up allowing drinking to consume her life and died as a result from it.

He had made the one wise decision to quit drinking. For health reasons. But kept smoking.

GUIDE 1:

Heavily.

GUIDE 2:

Heavily.

GUIDE 1:

Very heavily. After one operation he lost his voice entirely, and for the final two years he carried a note pad around with him to communicate. He died of throat cancer at the age of 66, just after the war. Allegedly his son spread his ashes over Broadway from an airplane overhead.

After his death famed fellow journalist Walter Winchell made a plea for donations to fight cancer, and the Damon Runyon Cancer Memorial Fund and is still operational. Milton Berle hosted the very first Telethon to raise money for the

cause a few years after his death. There is also the Damon Runyon Stakes horse race, and the Denver Press Club assigns the Damon Runyon Award to prominent journalists each year (Bob Costas was a recipient.) So his spirit lives on.

GUIDE 2:

On that note, bathrooms are here and let's start crawling!

Just outside Sardi's

GUIDE 1 or 2

We are going to start walking through an area that residents of New York make all effort to avoid at all costs. We may be accosted by Disney Princess and Marvel Superheroes. Not quite reflecting the great History and Mystique of New York we've been discussing. There's a lot we could cover, but we're going to hit the highlights and try to get off on some side streets with some great quirky and literary history.

But first we'll jaywalk and cut over to that Alley.

B. Shubert Alley

GUIDE 1

The Theatrical Syndicate 1896-1910

In 1896, six theatrical owners and managers (Charles Frohman, Al Hayman, A. L. Erlanger, Marc Klaw, Samuel F. Nirdlinger, and Frederick Zimmerman) with influence throughout the country met for lunch at the Holland House and decided that American theatre was in chaos. They agreed to work together to control all touring companies in major cities by managing their bookings into regional theaters, giving them a monopoly. They created a chain that controlled all professional theater.

GUIDE 2

Yes, much like Pablor Escobar did for the cocaine trade in Colombia, they created a Cartel to work together to set prices and control their product.

Although actors, playwright and theater owners complained about their strong arm tactics, it wasn't until the Shubert Brothers came along that they were able to break free and the brothers formed National Theatre Owners Association.

Shubert Alley connects the Shubert Theatre (1913) and the Booth Theatre (Named for Edwin Booth, brother of John Wilkes Booth). They share a Venetian Renaissance facade. The Sam Shubert Theater was named for brother Sam who died in a train accident in 1905.

According to legend, actor's used to gather in this alley to see if they'd been cast in shows.

***Optional

THE SHUBERT BROTHERS – Took down the Syndicate and helped build Broadway

Lee Shubert, Sam S. Shubert (d 1905) and Jacob (J.J.) Shubert began operating theaters in Syracuse before NYC in 1900 and went on to become the biggest theatre moguls in America. As kids, the brothers had to forgo formal education to work to keep the family afloat due to father's alcoholism. Lee sold newspapers, Sam shined shoes and Jacob

Sam got the idea to go into theater after working as a treasurer for a Syracuse theater. With a loan, they set out to produce theater in Syracuse and the surrounding area. Initially, they were unable to use theaters under the control of the Syndicate and sometimes used circus tents, but made the money to start putting up shows in theaters. By 1900, they leased their 1st NYC theater in Herald Square and quickly began building their empire.

Eventually, the Shuberts amassed enough theatres to be independent of the Syndicate and competed directly with them. They worked with actors and companies who had been hurt by the Syndicate, and developed a good reputation. The Theater Syndicate became focused on profit, but the Shuberts were producing similar productions with better production values and happier staff. Soon, the syndicate crumbled to the competition.

No one remembers the Syndicate, but to this day, there are still theatres in Chicago, Boston and other major cities and, of course, Broadway, that bear the Shubert name.

Times Square

GUIDE 1

“Suddenly I found myself on Times Square. I had traveled eight thousand miles around the American continent and I was back on Times Square; and right in the middle of a rush hour, too, seeing with my innocent road-eyes the absolute madness and fantastic hoorair of New York with its millions and millions hustling forever for a buck among themselves, the mad dream—grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying, just so they could be buried in those awful cemetery cities beyond Long Island City.: Jack Kerouac, On the Road

GUIDE 2

Times Square is the one neighborhood that all New Yorkers avoid like the plague. Originally called LongAcre Square, named for a district in London by the mainly Dutch settlers. It was an area determined by rivers that flowed nearby. A small dutch hamlet was located NW of hear, and this was a place for carriage making.

The Tenderloin was the center of the Red Light District for a long time, through the early 1900's. It was around what is now the Chelsea area. It was much more populated and seedy, but as industrialization and commerce in southern Manhattan pushed prostitution and theatre upwards, this area became known as Thieves Lair.

In 1960's through the 1980's Times Square became unofficially the Red Light District for it high concentration of Prostitution, Adult clubs and video booths, and selling of drugs.

GUIDE 1

1 Times Square, to the south is where each year millions of out of towners stand here and freeze for hours with no place to pee to watch the ball drop. It was built in 1904 originally for the offices of the New York Times. It's completion coincided

with the opening of the first subway line. Adolph Ochs, the paper's owner at the time decided as a brilliant publicity stunt offered to host the New Year's Eve celebration here on December 31st, 1904 instead of at Trinity Church. The church was relieved and the 200,000 people who came established the tradition that lives to this day.

The building is almost entirely empty, despite being one of the most photographed building in the world.

This is also the Home of world's first "moving sign" the wrap around sign started in 1928. It's unofficially known as the zipper. First message announced the victory of president Herbert Hoover.

On the Corner of 43rd and Broadway in what is now a starbucks is the site of the building where Eugene O'Neill was born.

GUIDE 2

One bizarre Times Square Luminary, described as a well dressed and pale cadaver, was Herbert Huncke. He was part of the beat movement, despite not being a fairly prolific writer himself. Some say he coined the term "Beat" that Kerouac grasped onto and made famous. Huncke turned Burroughs onto heroin, giving him his first fix and becoming fast friends. He was a prominent character in Burroughs "Junky" and Kerouacs "Town and City," "Visions of Cody" and "Books of Dreams." He was studied by Alfred Kinsey due to his colorful sex life, and brought a lot of the beat members to Kinsey's office as well. Kinsey hired him to recruit other subjects.

He had a distinct code of honor. He'd steal from his friends, but never rat on them. He said "I always followed the road of least resistance. I just continued to do what I wanted. I didn't weigh or balance things. I started out this way and I never really changed."

Broadway

- Oldest thoroughfare in NYC.
- 18 miles N of NYC through Tarrytown, ending in Sleepy Hollow
- Broadway is a literal English translation of Breed weg, Dutch
- Originally a Native American trail called Wickquasgeck Trail
- First mentioned by Dutch David d Vries in a 1642 journal
- 1776 labelled on a map as Broadway Street

GUIDE 1

Longacre Theater: 220 W. 48th Street

Longacre Theatre, named after the original square of course, is a fun stop that is a bit literary and bit baseball!

Designed by architect Henry Beaumont Herts in 1912, the theatre was named for Longacre Square, the original name for Times Square. The French neo-classical building was constructed by impresario Harry Frazee, better remembered as the owner of the Boston Red Sox who, needing money for his theatrical ventures, sold Babe Ruth's contract to the New York Yankees in 1919 after their 1918 World Series win.

The legend is of course that he sold Babe Ruth to fund a theatrical venture here for his wife. Thus began the Curse of the Bambino begins. This isn't entirely fair though. He had been producing theatrical ventures before and after owning the Red Sox. Babe Ruth was a difficult player to manage and caused a lot of issues for the team. The reality is the team was doing well, he the team needed to liquidate assets and Ruth was obnoxious. Needless to say Frazee left the Red Sox in bankruptcy but continued to produce theater.

The Curse was finally broken in 2004 by an amazing come back victory by the Red Sox, behind 0-3 to the Yanks, and for the first time in history turning that round to a victory and subsequently a World Series.

Ladies of the Corridor by Dorothy Parker ran for a month here

GUIDE 2

49th Street Theater: Gone

Site of this theater where No Siree! Was performed and made Benchley a star. Members of the Algonquin Round Table, a writers group we'll touch more on at our last stop, were all contributing material for this sketch revue. Legend has it They kept pressuring Benchley who kept procrastinating. A week out he scribble a few notes out on a paper and then performed as an assistant treasure bumbling around disjointedly trying to give a state of affairs of the theater company. Thus

the Treasurer's Report was born. Irving Berlin loved it so much he hired him to present it at his Music Box Revue and then later became a short film, one that was the first entirely all talking movie.

Now the Pearl Theater

The Actor's Chapel is right next door.

224 W 49th Time Hotel-Damon Runyon

Formerly the Forrest Hotel. Bet Lahr, Jack Benny, George Burns, Gracie Allen all lived here. Damon Runyon lived here for 2 years from 1928-1930 on 17th floor and began to write the stories that would become Guys and Dolls.

GUIDE 1

1619 Broadway- Brill Building

Built 1930 – (The Bust) developer Abraham Lefcourt leased the land from the Brill Brothers to build the Alan E. Lefcourt Building, named for his son who died of anemia. His bust is still on the front. He defaulted on the lease and the brothers named it for themselves and were forced to rent space to music publishers due to the Depression leading to hundreds of hit songs.

Famous Composers: Billy Rose, Carole King, Burt Bacharach, Neil Diamond

Famous Musicians: Elvis Presley, Bobby Darrin, Liza Minelli, Dionne Warwick

Songs: "Save the Last Dance for Me", "River Deep Mountain High," "The Locomotion"

"The Brill Building in the early '60s was a classic model of vertical integration. There you could write a song or make the rounds of publishers until someone bought it. Then you could go to another floor and get a quick arrangement and lead sheet for \$10' get some copies made at the duplication office; book an hour at a demo studio; hire some of the musicians and singers that hung around; and finally cut a demo of the song. Then you could take it around the building to the record companies, publishers, artist's managers or even the artists themselves. If you made a deal there were radio promoters available to sell the record" - TheHistoryofRockandRoll.com

GUIDE 2

Carolines on Broadway

Site of the original "Lindy's" opened by Leo Lindermann and is the the basis for "Mindy's" in Damon Runyon Stories of Guys and Dolls, the famous "Mindy's Cheese Cake" they keep talking about in the musical. Runyon was a regular here at this all night diner, and this was also a known hangout for many of the local gumbas. Much of his inspiration was from people he met and conversations her heard here. While never actually committing crimes, he quickly became knon as "safe" by the regulars, which allowed him friendships and access to information he might not have otherwise. He wrote:

"A person who asks questions can get a reputation such as a person who wishes to find things out."

Regular Arnold Rothstein was the inspiration for Runyon's character "The Brain" as well as Nathan Detroit. Arnold Rothstein was also the inspiration for Meyer Wolfsheim of Great Gatsby, and was accused of coordinating the Black Sox Scandal, although this has never been proven.

GUIDE 1

1650 Broadway- Aldon Music where song "On Broadway" was writtern Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil were based here, and wrote the song in 1963. The early version was recorded by the band the Cookies, and also the Crystals. However they were told that the Drifters were booked in the recording studio. Mann/Weil sent the song to Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller and put more of a rock beat to it, and created the hit.

Optional:

51ST AND BROADWAY

Journalist Victor Riesel was a journalist and outspoken critic of corruption. He had left Lindy's restaurant and at this intersection (West of Broadway north side) he was attacked by a small time hood who threw acid in his face. Abraham Telvi was the hood and was killed 2 weeks later. Riesel went blind but continued his crusade.

ROSIE O GRADY'S

Formerly the Playground Speakeasy

GUIDE 2

In 1919 Congress passed the 18th Amendment, known as the Volstead Act, establishing what was known as Prohibition in the United States. It went into effect on October 28th, 1919. By October 29th, 1919 the alcohol trade was booming!

To get a sense of how successful the law was, they estimate that in by 1918 in NYC, before the law was passed there were about 16,000 places that sold alcohol. By the time Prohibition was repealed there were between 50 and 100,000 places that sold alcohol in NYC. While speakeasies rose throughout the nation, NYC was the city that most openly thumbed their nose at the law.

You could argue that there were two extreme versions of the Speakeasy during prohibition. There were the glamorous well-lit clubs, celebrity hostesses, dancers and singers, well dressed clientele- and there were basements. Surprisingly a large majority of speakeasies were literally just the basement, but here in Time Square through the mid 50's were the glamorous ones.

These are where the gangsters came, this is where all the Guys and Dolls clubs were set. Arnold Rothstein/Nathan Detroit, Damon Runyon, the mayors, sports stars, gamblers, film stars...they were all up here.

This used to be a speakeasy called the Playground, run by Tommy Guinan. Tommy Guinan was a bit of a figure in the Speakeasy scene, but he was overshadowed by his sister who helped finance The Playground: the infamous Texas Guinan, aka "The Queen of the Night"

GUIDE 1

Born Mary Louise Cecilia Guinan, later called Texas was the premier hostess for clubs, concert saloons and cabarets during prohibition. It is believed that she may have been the first person to coin the term "night club."

She was very savvy with her speakeasies- she wouldn't sell tickets to her shows, instead selling "membership cards" at the door for entrance, and telling cops it was a private club.

They say she was arrested so many times that she wore a necklace made of tiny padlocks.

Once she was arrested for being a hostess of a speakeasy. She beat the rap claiming she was the host of a party that sold only ginger ale.

GUIDE 2

Texas Guinan was close friends with the infamous and illustrious Mae West. Guinan actually funded many of Mae West's theatrical endeavors. West was a very savvy business woman. When her vaudeville career was waning, she started writing and producing her "star vehicle" plays, which tended to be very bawdy and pushing the accepted limits of civility and morals of the day. Most famously was the production of her play on Broadway, appropriately entitled "SEX." It was so provocative that she was arrested for obscenity charges. The grand jury wrote: **her "obscene, indecent, immoral, and impure drama" would aid and abet "the corruption of the morals of youth."**

She was given the opportunity to avoid jail time if she closed the show, but as we mentioned West was a very savvy business woman. She knew this would be "marketing gold." The "corruption of the morals of the youth" would be better than any rave review she could get. She even began writing from prison that she was dining with the warden, and letting it slip to the tabloids that under her prison uniform she was wearing pink silk panties. Needless to say it worked.

One reviewer wrote **"(Sex) is a crude, inept play, cheaply produced and poorly acted."** An ad for the show warned that **those "who cannot stand excitement" should "see your doctor before visiting Mae West."** The play outlasted all the competition. Variety magazine labelled the main character the **"Babe Ruth of stage prosties."**

GUIDE 1:

Mae West met one of her contemporaries and idols here at the Playground. Tommy and Texas Guinan were hosting a party here for actor by the name. Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina D'Antonguolla. While he was worse known for his full name, he was better known for his stage name Rudolph Valentino.

GUIDE 2

We've put together this quick scene on how we like to think the Hollywood introduction went, with my partner playing the actor and I will play Hollywood.

GUIDE 1:

“Hello. My name is Rodolfo Alfonso Rafaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina D’Antonguolla.”

GUIDE 2:

“I did not understand a word you said. You are a beautiful man. You are now Rudolph Valentino.:

GUIDE 1:

Okay.

GUIDE 2:

It didn’t actually go like that. He’d been a struggling young immigrant and “tango pirate” in New York for awhile (an early version of an escort) and got into an affair with a married woman. There were lots of trials, divorcing unpleasantness and it ended with the wife shooting the husband to death and Valentino fleeing to the West Coast and shedding his full name.

Valentino always struggled with his image, that while he was beloved by women for his soft, sensual and beautiful features he was mocked by men for his soft, sensual, beautiful and features. His masculinity was always in question. He was known to get into fights over his masculinity, and sadly often lose.

He was a star of the silent film scene that could never find success in the talkies. On this particular night Tommy Guinan had hired an Egyptian Fakir, aka a magician named Rahman Bey to perform for them.

Bey’s first trick was to stick a huge hair pin into the arm of Texas Guinan, who through it all didn’t even wince. Then one of the men in the audience shouted out “what about having that he-man, Valentino, follow suit” to which the audience laughed and Valentino was on the spot. Bey offered to push the pin through Valentino’s face, which he was going to reluctantly agree to when a woman concerned with his precious face intervened and insisted on his arm.

Valentino removed his jacket, only to reveal he was wearing Red Suspenders which at the time were far from masculine attire, to which everyone laughed. Then he shouted “ouch” when the pin was pushed in, also illiciting more laughter at his expense. He was surprised at the lack of blood when it was pulled out and then everyone went back to the party.

Valentino would tour to promote his movie a handful of more weeks until August

August 15th, when he collapsed at the Hotel Ambassador in Manhattan, and died 8 days later, at the age of 31.

He was far from healthy. A member of the physical department of the NY Board of Education asked him how well he took care of himself. It went like this;

GUIDE 2:

“Do you smoke?”

GUIDE 1:

“Yes, about 40-50 cigarettes a day.”

GUIDE 2:

“Do you drink?”

GUIDE 1:

“Yes, frequently.”

GUIDE 2:

“What about your diet, your eating habits?”

GUIDE 1:

“I eat everything I please?”

GUIDE 2:

“What is the secret to your health?”

GUIDE 1:

“I do what I want to do, when I want to do it.”

GUIDE 2

Did we mention he died at 31? Mae West was convinced that it was suspicious, and to prove it, she held a séance in Manhattan to raise his spirit, joined by Tommy Guinan and other gangsters. Must have been some proof for she conducted séances frequently for the rest of her life.

To keep Valentino’s spirit alive, we’d like to perform a short monologue of his from Son of the Sheik” [shake a flashlight and do several wide eye movements and cigarette lighting.”

WRAP UP AND EXIT

GUDIE 1

21 Club

Jack and Charlies last establishment. They began with the Redhead in Greenwich Village (Millay), and later moved to 42 West 49th Street, and finally here.

In the 1930's Dottie was married to Alan Campbell butg was having a drink with Benchley. She and Benchley were discussing their relationship when Dottie finally asked "Why don't we get married right now?" Benchley asked "What would we do with Alan?" and Dottie replied "Send him to military school."

This was where an informal wake was held for Benchley after his death in 1945. Dottie organized a similar one on the West Coast. Apparently the idea was to raise a glass at 6pm so Marc Connelly called Dottie at 6 and said let's raise a glass to which Dottie replied "Raise our glasses? Why Marc you stuped bastard it's only 3 o'clock here, and we're all at work. I meant West Coast time you silly son of a bitch."

Plaque for Benchley is here that says "Robert Benchley, - His Corner"

GUIDE 2:

Toys on the ceiling – British Airways investors met here and donated a model plane. Howard Hughes was jealous: "If you're hanging that plane, you're hanging my plane." stated the ego toy contest.

Lawn Jockeys-donated by famous stables throughout the country beginning in 1930

Mayor Jimmy Walker and the secret wine cellar

Every president since FDR except GWB. JFK ate here the night before his innaguration.

Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall's 1st date

Truman Capote writes about The 21 in Breakfast at Tiffany's:

"Once, a visiting relative took me to '21,'" the narrator says, "and there, at a superior table, surrounded by four men . . . was Miss Golightly, idly, publicly,

combing her hair; and her expression, an unrealized yawn, put, by example, a dampener on the excitement I felt over dining at so swanky a place.”

GUIDE 1

Ernest Hemingway had sex there

When visiting 21, Hemingway would famously declare, “Since I’m not drinking, I’ll just have a tequila.” One night, when he was there for a dinner party, he met an attractive woman with whom he spent the remainder of the night talking and eating and drinking. When it was time for the restaurant to close for the night, Hemingway asked Jack (the owner), if they could stay for a while. Jack was known for saying yes to everything, and he agreed to let them linger while the restaurant cleaned up. “They got to know each other very, very well, intimately even, on our kitchen steps... they’re pretty darn steep!” Fletcher claims. Apparently, the next day Hemingway came back to the restaurant and said “Jack, I have a problem: what’s her name?” And as it turned out, he had romanced Legs Diamond’s girlfriend.

GUIDE 1

5TH AVENUE SILENT PROTEST

A silent march was done July 1917 marching 5th avenue from 59th St to 23rd street to protest the East St. Louis Lynch riots. The riots were obviously racially motivate, and partially because some workers went on strike and the company hired Toni Morrison writes about it in Jazz. It’s a great passage/chapter and it’s good to get the details of the actual march.

GUIDE 2

Toni Morrison: Jazz

During the march it seemed to Alice as though the day passed, the night too, and still she stood there, the hand of the little girl in her own, staring into each cold face that passed. The drums and the freezing faces hurt her, but hurt was better than fear and Alice had been frightened for a long time—first she was frightened of Illinois, then of Springfield, Massachusetts, then Eleventh Avenue, Third Avenue, Park Avenue. Recently she had begun to feel safe nowhere south of 110th Street, and Fifth Avnue was for her the most fearful of all. That was where white men leaned out of motor cars with folded dollar bills peeping from their palms. It was where salesmen touched her and only her as though she were part of the goods they had

condescended to sell her; it was the tissue required if the management was generous enough to let you try on a blouse (but no hat) in a store. It was where she, a woman of fifty and independent means, had no surname. Where women who spoke English said "Don't sit there honey, you never know what they have." And women who knew no English at all and would never own a pair of silk stockings moved away from her if she sat next to them on the trolley.

OPTIONAL:

ROCK. SKATING RINK

Catcher in the Rye scene is here. If you are killing it on time, and there's not a lot of tourists near there, and if there's a big Salinger fan on the tour.

SUGGESTED QUOTE: (CATCHER IN THE RYE-SKATING)

The funny part was, though, we were the worst skaters on the whole goddam rink. I mean the worst. And there were some lulus, too. Old Sally's ankles kept bending in till they were practically on the ice. They not only looked stupid as hell, but they probably hurt like hell, too. I know mine did. Mine were killing me. We must've looked gorgeous. And what made it worse, there were at least a couple of hundred rubbernecks that didn't have anything better to do than stand around and watch everybody falling all over themselves.

FULL QUOTE IF YOU WANT IT: (CATCHER IN THE RYE SKATING)

I was all set to take her home and all--I really was-- but she said, "I have a marvelous idea!" She was always having a marvelous idea. "Listen," she said. "What time do you have to be home for dinner? I mean are you in a terrible hurry or anything? Do you have to be home any special time?" "Me? No. No special time," I said. Truer word was never spoken, boy. "Why?" "Let's go ice-skating at Radio City!" That's the kind of ideas she always had. "Ice-skating at Radio City? You mean right now?" "Just for an hour or so. Don't you want to? If you don't want to--" "I didn't say I didn't want to," I said. "Sure. If you want to." "Do you mean it? Don't just say it if you don't mean it. I mean I don't give a darn, one way or the other." Not much she didn't. "You can rent those darling little skating skirts," old Sally said. "Jeannette Cultz did it last week." That's why she was so hot to go. She wanted to see herself in one of those little skirts that just come down over their butt and all. So we went, and after they gave us our skates, they

gave Sally this little blue butt witcher of a dress to wear. She really did look damn good in it, though. I save to admit it. And don't think she didn't know it. The kept walking ahead of me, so that I'd see how cute her little ass looked. It did look pretty cute, too. I have to admit it. The funny part was, though, we were the worst skaters on the whole goddam rink. I mean the worst. And there were some lulus, too. Old Sally's ankles kept bending in till they were practically on the ice. They not only looked stupid as hell, but they probably hurt like hell, too. I know mine did. Mine were killing me. We must've looked gorgeous. And what made it worse, there were at least a couple of hundred rubbernecks that didn't have anything better to do than stand around and watch everybody falling all over themselves.

**LOCATION: 48TH AND 6TH AVENUE
(POINT OUT ROUGHLY 117 W. 48TH)**

GUIDE 2

This was one of the Speakeasy Night Clubs that Texas Guinan ran.

- • Beautiful Florence Mills was an African-American cabaret singer, dancer, and comedienne known for her delicate voice, effervescent stage presence, and wide-eyed loveliness.
- • She welcomed guests to her chic midtown speakeasy, Chez Florence, 117 West 48th Street, New York, NY. When Mills returned to France to headline a European nightspot, Tommy Guinan took over her club in 1928, continuing her custom of hiring black performers.

Another source claims this was called the Texas Guinan Club, was padlocked by the city which forced them to open the El Fey Club in midtown.

LOCATION 47TH AND 6TH AVENUE

Someone should like point out the Diamond District and talk about diamonds.

LOCATION 45TH AND 6TH AVENUE

POINT OUT 2 SPOTS: 107 WEST 45TH AND 25 WEST 45TH

GUIDE YOU CHOOSE

107 was the El Fay Club, one of the more famous clubs that Texas Guinan opened up. The 25 W. 45th was the original offices of the New Yorker.

OUTSIDE THE ALGONQUIN:

You can mention that the Hippodrome (now gone) was on 6th Avenue between 43rd and 44th and was the largest performance venue in the world at the time. Closed in 1939

Harry Houdini performed here.

Often circus acts would perform here.

GUIDE 2

Old Vanity Fair offices

19 West 44th Street

Helped kick off the careers of Dorothy Parker, Gertrude Stein, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Theodore Dreiser, DH Lawrence and many others.

Eventually Robert Benchly (managing editor), Robert Sherwood (drama editor) and Dorothy Parker (literary critic) would all work there.

Dorothy Parker was fired from there for writing a bad theatrical review, Benchley and Sherwood quit in solidarity.

ALGONQUIN

Can do some outside if busy in there, and cut to the actual members of the round table inside, or do the whole thing inside

GUIDE 2: (you can also let them order, and then start doing fun facts until they have drinks, then do the toast)

We'd love to share a quick toast by the most famous name from the Round Table, miss Dorothy Parker who once quipped:

"I love to have a martini.

Two at the very most.

Three and I'm under the table.

Four and I'm under the host."

GUIDE 1

ALGONQUIN HOTEL FUN FACTS:

- Is named after the original Native American tribe that originally resided here.
- Landmarked in 1987, and as a National Literary Landmark in 1996
- First hotel to offer rooms to actors, and to single women travelers (look up)
- The Oak Room was a Premier night club (remember, Texas Guinan coined that phrase), closed and renovated in 2012.
- Hotel has a tradition of keeping a cat that has the run of the place. Originally there was the owner's cat "Billy." The owner adopted a second cat named Rusty but the legend is actor John Barrymore said the cat needed a more dignified name and chose "Hamlet." Always a cat here now, if male is named Hamlet and if female named Matilda.
 - Matilda actually gets e-mails and will responde (or at least an assistant will).
- Barryore stayed here at the hotel regularly, when performing at the Hippodrome. He suggested that after prohibition that the bar get a blue light because it was more flattering. Hence the Blue Bar.
- Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford honeymooned here. As a publicity stunt for Robin Hood he shot arrows off the roof for the press.

- Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe composed much of my Fair Lady here. They wrote “I could have danced all night” here in a 24 hour stretch, and the owners threatened to remove the piano if they didn’t quiet down.
- William Faulkner stayed here regularly, sometime as often as every few months. He wrote his Nobel Peace Prize reception speech here in his suite.
- Maya Angelou would stay here when making appearance in NYC. She began the screenplay adaptation of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings here and some of the initial few pages were on Algonquin stationary.
- J.D. Salinger frequently stayed here hine visiting. He was friends with editors at the New Yorker
- Peter O’Toole, Graham Greene, Noel Coward, Talulah Bankhead and Laurence Olivier, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklias are other residents at one time here.

HL Mencken would often check in here while working on the Smart Set Magazine, written at office on 45th Street, with compatriot George Jean Nathan.

They worked on it in 1914

In early years of Smart Set the magazine helped found the career of O. Henry.

Smart Set published several Eugen O’Neill plays, and bought enough of Fitzgeralds early work that he could quit his advertising job and finish writing This Side of Paradise.

Smart Set offices moved around a lot throughout midtown

GUIDE 2

“The Round Table” began here around 1919, and is one of the most famous literary circles to have come out of New York City. That being said, have you ever heard of it?

It was a group of writers, reviewers, newspaper reporters that would have regular lunches. Their wit and sarcasm got so famous it was written about regularly in the papers and became a nationwide obsession. Membership to the round table quickly grew.

It was begun by Robert Benchley, Dorothy Parker, Alexander Woollcott, Heywood Brown, press agent John Peter Toohey, pretty much during the entire first half of Prohibition. (1919-1929 roughly the years.)

Legend has it that little people – circus performers- at the Hippodrome weirded Sherwood out a bit, especially since he was so tall. He refused to go out to lunch in that area alone. Thus the lunches began, starting in the Pergola Room (became Oak Room), then the Rose Room where eventually a round table was the setting.

George Kaufman, Marc Connelly, Edna Ferber and others joined. Kaufman and Ferber wrote numerous successful plays together. She's often listed but forgotten as a co-author.

Let's go inside for a drink: **[if you aren't inside already]**

GUIDE 1: [IF YOU DID SOME OF THE INFO OUTSIDE]

We'd love to share a quick toast by the most famous name from the Round Table, miss Dorothy Parker who once quipped:

"I love to have a martini.

Two at the very most.

Three and I'm under the table.

Four and I'm under the host."

GUIDE 2:

The Algoquin Round Table became a setting for challenging wit, using words in sentences. Became very scathing. And in any ways was "self important."

Dorothy Parker was once challenged to use a word in a sentence, given the word horticulture and quickly replied

"You can bring a whore to culture, but you can't make her think."

Some say the New Yorker was partially founded at the Round Table, or as a byproduct. Harold Ross was an associate and occasional attendee of the Round Table. Ross allegedly won a large amount of money gambling with the Vicious Circle Members and finally decided to make his dream of a weekly comical periodically a reality (with a lot of strong encouragement and contributions from his wife).

One of the most scathing wits of that of Dorothy Parker. Her notorious wit, fiery poems and brutal reviews in Vanity Fair made her famous and infamous, and her

comments are often what were the highlights in the tabloids. There were sections in newspapers and magazines dedicated to “What was said at the Round Table.”

Dorothy Parker said **“people often romanticize the round Table. There were no giants. Think of who was writing in those days, Lardner, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Hemmingway. Those were real giants. The Round Table was just a lot of people telling jokes and telling each other how good they were.”**

Parker definitely struggled throughout her life, romantically, financially, often dealing with bouts of depression which would affect her work, though always managed to keep her scathing humor. Here’s a great example:

GUIDE 1

Symptom Recital:

**I do not like my state of mind;
I'm bitter, querulous, unkind.
I hate my legs, I hate my hands,
I do not yearn for lovelier lands.
I dread the dawn's recurrent light;
I hate to go to bed at night.
I snoot at simple, earnest folk.
I cannot take the simplest joke.
I find no peace in paint or type.
My world is but a lot of tripe.
I'm disillusioned, empty-breasted.
For what I think, I'd be arrested.
I am not sick. I am not well.
My quondam dreams are shot to hell.
My soul is crushed, my spirit sore:
I do not like me any more.
I cavil, quarrel, grumble, grouse.
I ponder on the narrow house.
I shudder at the thought of men.
I'm due to fall in love again.**

GUIDE 2

She was once very late with a submission for a piece to her publisher, that she wrote the following telegram:

THIS IS INSTEAD OF TELEPHONING BECAUSE I CAN'T LOOK YOU IN THE VOICE.

I SIMPLY CANNOT GET THAT THING DONE.

YET NEVER HAVE DONE SUCH HARD DAY AND NIGHT WORK

NEVER HAVE SO WANTED ANYTHING TO BE GOOD

AND ALL I HAVE IS A PILE OF PAPER COVERED WITH WRONG WORDS.

CAN ONLY KEEP AT IT AND HOPE TO HEAVEN TO GET IT DONE.

DON'T KNOW WHY IT IS SO TERRIBLY DIFFICULT OR I SO TERRIBLY INCOMPOTENT.

DOROTHY

GUIDE 1

When we say she was scathing, she didn't pull her punches, even when it came to herself: Here's a quote from Wall flower's Lement

“It has lately been drawn to your correspondent’s attention that, at social gatherings, she is not the human magnet she would be. Indeed, it turns out that as a source of entertainment, conviviality, and good fun, she ranks somewhere between a spring of parsley and a single ice skate.”

GUIDE 2

To get a true sense of just how scathing her review were, here are some of her theatrical reviews written for Vanity Fair.

GUIDE 1

“Most of the numbers are entrusted to Lillian Lorraine, who is easier than ever to look at and harder than ever to listen to. Something really ought to be done about those high notes which she insists upon taking at the end of every song. After spending almost an entire evening in listening to her sing, I can't understand why she doesn't go into the movies.”

GUIDE 2

“Norman Trevor, as Sir Robert Chiltern, seems to have adopted a new technique; the idea is to see how quickly he can get through his speeches. He broke all previously existing world’s records in the second-act tirade about women’s love.”

GUIDE 1

“Miss MacKaye’s best moments were those when she was off stage.”

GUIDE 2

“This play holds the season’s record [for shortest play], thus far, with a run of four evening performances and one matinee. By an odd coincidence, it ran just five performances too many.”

GUIDE 1

Her reviews became so notorious that one afternoon the editor of *Vanity Fair* took her out to lunch at the Park Avenue Hotel by the park. He praised her style and work, but then promptly fired her. She didn’t see it coming.

In a show of solidarity, both Robert Benchley and Robert Sherwood quit *Vanity Fair* as well.

We can go on, and honestly if this is something you are interested in, much of the research on her comes from Kevin C. Fitzpatrick’s book, “A Journey into Dorothy Parker’s New York.” It’s an amazing read about her and this area during her time. He is the president of the Dorothy Parker Society, and he periodically leads tours in the area about her.

GUIDE 2

When she died she had been out of the limelight a bit and remained unmarried at the end. She had become a strong supporter for Equal Rights and had willed her entire estate to Dr. Marthi Luther King, Jr. Even though she’d never met him. He was assassinated 10 months later so her estate went to the NAACP.

Her ashes remained unclaimed and had remained in a filing cabinet at the law offices of a Paul O’Dwyer for 20 years until 1988. A Dorothy Parker biographer had learned about the ashes and together they held a press conference here at the Algonquin and delivered the ashes to Benjamin Hooks, the executive director of the NAACP and her ashes were interred Ironically in Baltimore at the NAACP headquarters, rather than buried in the city she loved.

GUIDE 1

On that note we thank you for attending our tour today. This is our newest edition and we've enjoyed working and researching and helping revive this great era of NYC culture and literature. Chek out our other tours...Yelp. Viator. Twitter. Facebook. That stuff.

THE END. FOR NOW.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION....

Alexander Woollcott-Algonquin Round Table

A friend said after his passing: If there is a hell for important people who are causelessly cruel to the helpless and unimportant, I hope he is there."

Another wrote: I want no part of Woolcott, dead or alive.

Is the inspiration for Sheridan Whiteside in The Man Who Came to Dinner.

Harold Ross said: He looks like a dishonest Abe Lihncoln.

Before he died he said of himself "I never had anything to say."

FILLER

Others major Broadway organizations: The Nederlanders (1912 Detroit, Michigan); Roundabout Theater Company(1965); Jujamcyn Theater (1970s)

EDWIN BOOTH (November 13, 1833 – June 7, 1893)- Greatest American Actor of his time

Edwin Booth was a 19th-century American actor who toured throughout America and the major capitals of Europe, performing Shakespearean plays

He and his brother John Wilkes were always at odds. Not only did their father Junius Booth, a very famous actor, made them compete as actors, but Edwin was a unionist and John was a confederate. Brother Junius, Jr. was overshadowed by them both. The only time the three brothers appeared together onstage was in Julius Ceasar in 1864 in a benefit performance to build the Central Park Shakespeare statue. It is believed that this is the very production where John met Sam Chester, who played a role in John's 1865 assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

The original Booth's Theatre opened on February 3, 1869 on 23rd Street and Sixth Avenue.

FILLER

Historic Theaters [Find out oldest still remaining theater]

The phrase Great White Way has been attributed to Shep Friedman, columnist for the New York Morning Telegraph in 1901, who lifted the term from the title of a book about the Arctic by Albert Paine.^[40] The headline "Found on the Great White Way" appeared in the February 3, 1902, edition of the New York Evening Telegram.^[40]

Broadway between 42nd Street and 53rd Streets

Empire Theater 1430 Broadway (40th and 41st)

First theater built in the "Theater District" in 1893

First theater to have electricity

First theater to be fire proof

1514 Broadway (Toys R Us Building) at 44th Street

2nd Theatre built was Olympia by Oscar Hammerstein I in 1895

Now is the Toys R. Us building

By late 1890's the area was thoroughly instituted as a theater district.

Talk about Disney revival, New Amsterdam theater etc

FILLER: DOROTHY PARKER BROADWAY

OPTIONAL

1 Astor Place: Former Astor Hotel

he former site of the hotel, the block bounded by Broadway, Astor Plaza, West 44th Street, and West 45th Street,

In late 1945 FBI attended a dinner here to investigate Dottie, who was lending her name to the American Council on Soviet Relations, and the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. She spoke about her concerns that the next war would be between the US and the USSR and said. "We hold out our hands to our friends, our allies, our sisters and brothers, the people of the Soviet Union. There is no better way to reach the people of the Soviet Union than by Books."

FBI investigated here there for other meetings, and ended up with a 300 page file on her. She was eventually blacklisted in the 1950's and barred from working in Hollywood due to alleged communist ties.

FEEL FREE TO SKIP UNLESS A BIG PARKER CROWD

Gaiety Theater/Former: 1547 Broadway (Now Marriott Marquis)

She Co-Wrote Close Harmony with Elmer Rice. It ran for 24 performances, and was basically a failure. It hit Dottie hard but she kept a strong face, as can be seen with the quote "CLOSE HARMONY DID A COOL NINETY DOLLARE AT THE MATINEE STOP ASK THE BOYS IN THE BACK ROOM WHAT THEY WILL HAVE". She also apparently partnered with Elmer Rice in bed as well, later referring to it as "the work fuck of my life."