

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Russian Hill Upholstery & Décor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill.

XXXXXXXXXX

If you read it in the Herald, you probably know it already:

New restaurant at 700 Post (at Jones) called Beyond Burma. It's where Borobudur Indonesian Restaurant was... Want to help with the ongoing upgrade and renovation of Huntington Park? Go to NobHillAssociation.org... According to that site, Walk Score just named Nob Hill the sixth most walkable neighborhood in San Francisco.

XXXXXXXXXX

In 1991 I heard a power pop song on Live 105 (now Alt 105) that I really dug. It was called "I Got Happy" by a duo from Richmond, Virginia called House of Freaks. Bryan Harvey was the guitarist and singer. Johnny Hott was the percussionist. Harvey wrote "I Got Happy" about meeting his wife, Kathryn.

I found the album it was on, *Cakewalk*, in the used cassette section of a record store and bought it. I loved it, and so did everyone I played it for. They all bought their own copies of it. Unfortunately, not many other people did, so House of Freaks eventually split up. However, Harvey and Hott remained friends.

On New Year's Day 2006 Johnny Hott and his daughter arrived at the house of Bryan Harvey's family to find it on fire. Police responded and found the bodies of Bryan and Kathryn Harvey and their two daughters, Stella, 9, and Ruby, 4, bound and gagged with their throats cut hours before the family was set to host a New Year's Day party for friends at their two-story brick home. Harvey had just played a New Year's Eve show with his band NrG Krysys the night before. The murders became national news.

According to stories I read Bryan was a nice, humble guy and the family was very popular in the community. One anonymous detective working the case told the Richmond Times-Dispatch the



San Francisco Herald

February 2020

SanFranciscoHerald.Net

"Serving Nob Hill and Beyond"

XXXXXXXXXX

condition of the bodies "left some of our people crying" and said the crime scene was as "horrible" as it gets.

The Harvey family were among the victims of the 2006 Richmond spree murders, carried out by Ricky Javon Gray and Ray Joseph Dandridge. Dandridge's girlfriend had assisted them in their murders and robberies until she became one of their victims. Earlier they had killed Gray's wife. Dandridge got a life sentence and Gray was executed.

Right after the murders I kept Live 105 on the car radio dial constantly, hoping to hear "I Got Happy" or another House of Freaks song in tribute, or at least a mention of what happened from a DJ, but never did.



Johnny Hott (left) and Bryan Harvey.

Surprisingly, the most heartfelt tribute I read about Bryan Harvey wasn't in the music press, but in National Review, the renowned conservative publication. It's by John J. Miller and titled "Remember Him Well" - after the last song on *Cakewalk*, "Remember Me Well."

Some of Harvey's song lyrics reflect the feelings of a white Virginian, guilt-ridden over the South's racist past. So it's cruel irony that the two murderers of him and his family were black.

Shortly after the deaths, the Bryan and Kathryn Harvey Family Memorial Foundation was established. It provides scholarships in the arts to the Richmond community.

XXXXXXXXXX

Lee Mendelson, the animator of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* passed away on Christmas. I remember seeing his animation studio in Burlingame. On a similar note, here's a little blurb I wrote in 2006:

I stumbled upon the Charles Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa a few months ago. "Sparky" is what Charles Schulz's friends called him, and he really had quite a life for himself there. He played hockey every week at the ice rink he built next to his studio, ate lunch every day at the restaurant he built next to his studio, built a baseball field for the kids in town to play on next to his studio -- a nice life, rated G. (Someday when there's an R. Crumb Museum I'll bet it will be a little different.) If you walk around downtown Santa Rosa there are statues of Snoopy, Lucy Van Pelt, and other characters Schulz created for *Peanuts*. It was well known how much Sparky lived for drawing his comic strip. In late 1999 he announced that due to declining health he would be retiring, and that the final *Peanuts* strip would appear on February 13, 2000. It did, and Schulz died in his sleep on February 12, the night before it was published.

Another *Peanuts* Bay Area connection: Musician Vince Guaraldi scored those cool jazz soundtracks to the *Peanuts* specials. He once lived in Mill Valley and died between playing sets at Butterfield's nightclub in Menlo Park.###

The San Francisco Herald is copyright 2020 by Gene Mahoney (except work not done by Mr. Mahoney). The events and situations in Good Clean Fun comics are fictitious; none of the events happened. Herald logo by James Dylan. Ads do not appear in online edition of the Herald. Contact: Gene Mahoney, P.O. Box 843, Redwood City, CA 94064

Depression

By Ace Backwords

I had three friends who suffered from chronic depression. They were almost always depressed. I've had trouble with depression myself. But these guys were really depressed.

One of them once told me: "I kept a journal for a while. It basically went: 'Monday: I'm depressed. Tuesday: I'm depressed. Wednesday: I'm depressed.' And it went on like that for several years."

My other friend once said to me: "I vividly remember EVERY bad thing that ever happened to me going all the way back to kindergarten." It's like his mind had this weird editing function that edited out all the good things while emphasizing all the bad things.

And my third friend once said to me while we were having a casual phone conversation: "I just want to let you know I'm sitting here with a loaded gun on my lap and I'm thinking about killing myself."

The weird thing was: All three of them were good-looking men, in good physical health, with sharp minds, quite intelligent with quick wits. And all sorts of artistic talents. And they all came from fairly stable and financially prosperous families. And yet they were miserable virtually all the time. And when they weren't depressed, depression was never far away. It was like depression stalked them relentlessly. It was hard to figure. I knew many many other people who weren't nearly as gifted as them, but were perfectly satisfied with their lot in life. It was if the three of them were simply born depressed. They were just wired that way.

All three ended up committing suicide. One jumped in front of a train. One hung himself. And the third, I believe, shot himself.

This life often doesn't make a lot of sense. You just have to figure it out on the fly.###

Almost Famous

By Kimberlye Gold

(Edited for length from original.)



So there it was in the Pink section of the Sunday Chronicle: an ad for open call auditions for "replacements and understudies" for "Beach Blanket Babylon", SF's musical theater equivalent of the Energizer Bunny with giant hats for 30 years. You know a show has legs when the city changes the name of the street that the club is located on (Green) to "Beach Blanket Babylon Boulevard". The gig even offered health insurance.

Hey, health insurance!

My life flashes before my eyes. Over twenty years ago, I auditioned for "BBB". My whole life is repeating, like "Groundhog Day". I had to do this. Even if I hadn't done actual musical theater in two decades. I didn't even have a recent headshot. A Xerox of an old gig flyer would have to do. A star is re-born.

I am warming up, screaming my best Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart" with Velcro rollers in my hair, while driving down Lombard Street, frightening other drivers. People are lined up around the block already, as I pay \$10 to park. I get in line, already feeling an acute rush of déjà vu. There are people of all shapes, types, sizes, ethnic persuasions, and yes, ages! I am not the old(est) kid on the block!

The girl next to me says, "Cool pants!" I am cool now.

Directly across the street is Green's Mortuary. As our line starts to move, a military marching band begins to play,

leading a funeral procession in the opposite direction. Ominous.

The theater looks exactly the same as it did 20 years ago. My heart pounds. I take my seat and drink tea to keep my pipes warm. Janis would have been drinking Southern Comfort.

Director Kenny Mazlow speaks to us, heir to the throne of creator Steve Silver (who died in 1995). "Now everybody stand up and let's sing to warm up!" Mazlow instructs us. The piano player begins a rousing version of "There's No Business Like Show Business", which everyone seems to know but me. I fake it with gusto. The first few singers are musical theater types. Mazlow stops one blond ingénue and asks her to sing a verse of her song, "Crazy" like "Snow White" in a tiny soprano voice. Then like Cher. We are laughing, clapping, cheering everyone on. It's like a giant musical theater summer camp, we are all high off the excitement. This is fun! A large, African-American woman in a jean jacket sings "New York State of Mind", and Mazlow yells, "Sing it like Tina Turner!" The woman's face instantly melts into a Tina Turner face and she begins to strut around the stage like Tina, "Some folks like to... gettt awaaaay...".

A young black kid in his early 20s with dreds sings an India.Arie song acapella and Mazlow asks him to sing some vintage Michael Jackson. Astonishingly, the kid knows no Jackson 5 songs. We are screaming the words at him from the sidelines, where we are waiting. He fakes through "I'll Be There".

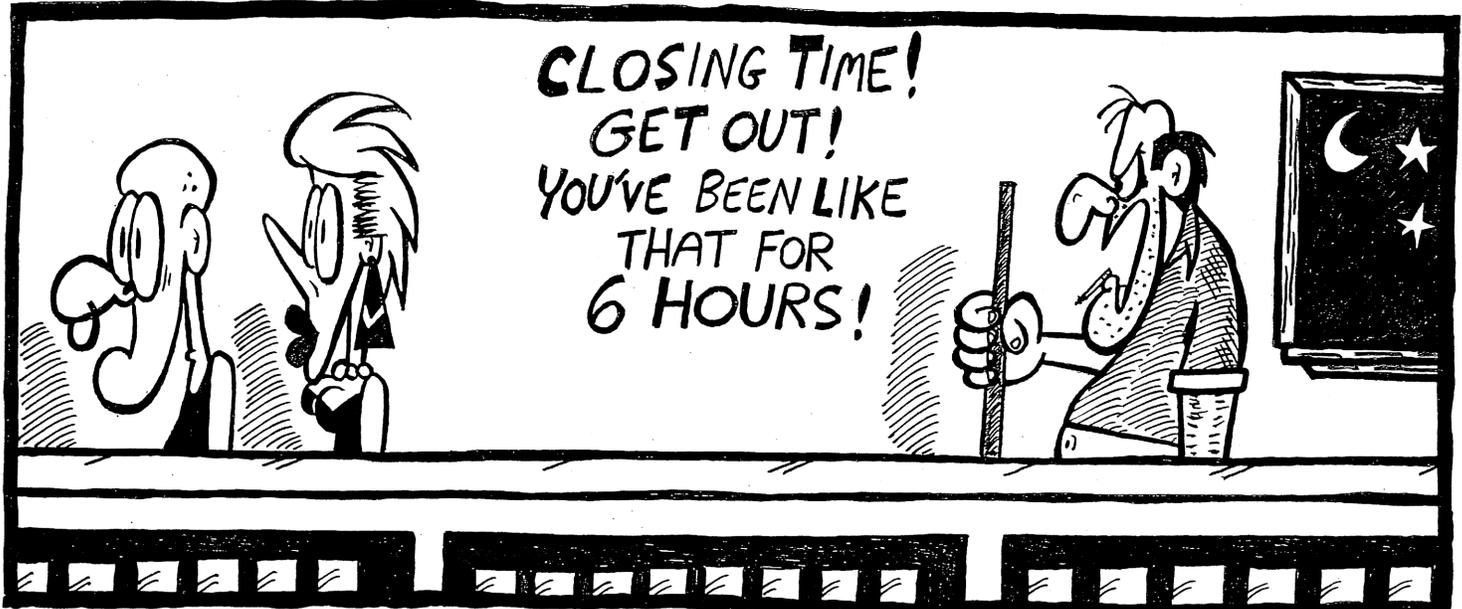
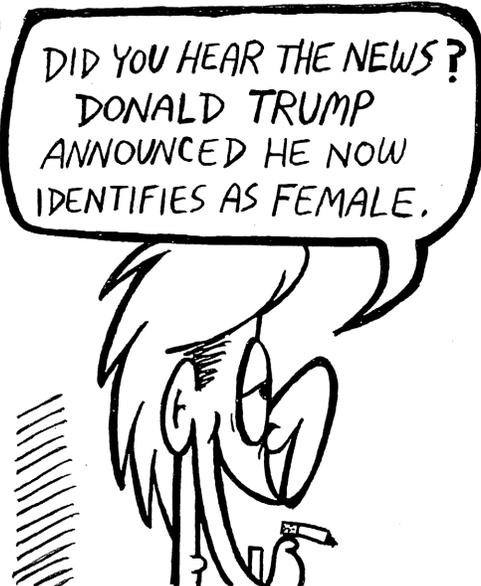
My group is next! I am last and will show them I can rock! Then they will be blown away by my amazing Janis Joplin-ness. Our entire group is cut. Not one of us gets through. We are the loser group!

As I leave the club, I see my favorite African-American diva with the giant, braided hair and rhinestone shoes. "Hey, Emily!" I call out. "They need to cast you, girl! Can I get your full name for this article I'm writing?" "Yeah!!" she exclaims. "Can I give you my picture?" It's a head-shot with the name "Emily Baloney" printed under it. My baloney has a first name, it's E-M-I-L-Y...

Maybe I'll audition again when I'm 60. If I still don't have health insurance.###

GOOD CLEAN FUN
WRITTEN, DRAWN &
©2020 BY
GENE MAHONEY
~~~~~  
"NO TWO SNOWFLAKES  
ARE ALIKE"  
OR  
"DON'T PULL MY  
TRIGGER WARNING"





## **Roommates of My Life: The Old Man of Noe Valley**

**By James Dylan**

*(The names have been changed to protect the idiots.)*

My new place in Noe Valley was a nice 2 bedroom on 24th Street, but right away I could tell there were going to be problems.

Frank.

That was the name of the nut case who held the lease to the place. He was an older guy, probably in his 60's, a health food nut. He usually only ate beans and rice, no spices.

He was a real piece of work, let me tell you. He had lived in the apartment since 1969. He wrote articles about Mexican Art for various magazines, I guess. During the day he worked as an office clerk for a temp agency. As I was moving in he stood in the kitchen preparing his meal. As me and the guys helping me move were walking in and out, he just stood there in the kitchen with a look of great pain on his face, not moving. He was holding 2 Tupperware containers in his hands, and in the 30 minutes it took for me to move in, it seemed he never moved; he just stood there.

After the guys had gone and I was in my room starting to organize everything, he knocked on the door and came in, seemingly in shock. It was if he wanted to speak, but couldn't. His mouth was open, but he couldn't take his eyes off my stuff piled up in the room. Finally he managed to utter something; it was reminiscent of the scene in *Apocalypse Now* where Col. Kurtz is assassinated, and as he dies, you hear him

utter...."so much stuff,....so much stuff...".

Finally he gathered himself together to say he didn't know I had so much stuff, and if he had he wouldn't have let me move in. I asked what that had to do with anything, as it was all going to be in my room anyway, but he couldn't accept it. It turns out he is a total anti-materialist, and he couldn't even live with someone who had "so much stuff". In my defense, I didn't have all that much, and it fit in my room nicely. I had a queen-sized mattress, a desk for my computer, my clothes, and several boxes of personal effects. Finally I guess he accepted it.

He had a few quirks, which became apparent right away. He wanted to "show" me how to open, close and lock the doors. I said I knew how to open, close and lock a wide variety of doors, but he seemed to think the doors in his place were "special, one-of-a-kind doors" or something. He insisted he show me.

So I went downstairs to the main door and he showed me how to open it, and close it, and lock it too.

Then he asked me to do it, as if this was a test or something. So I did it. Then he wanted me to do it again to make sure I had it down pat. Then he showed me how to do the upstairs bathroom door, too, in case there was some part of the doorknob that might have thrown me off. Satisfied that I knew how to operate the various doorknobs and door handles in the apartment, he relaxed.

Frank had one room where he kept a small, cheap, wooden desk. He had a really old early 80's computer on it on which he typed his articles. It had a 5-inch floppy drive. Besides that he had 2 old splintered planks on cinderblocks for a shelf on

which he kept several old books, and an old foam mattress in the corner on which he napped. The floor in this room was linoleum tile that was so old and unbaked that he kept the pieces in place with UHU glue. They would shatter under your feet. The floor was in this condition because of his curtains. Or shall I say what was left of his curtains. His curtains were so old and sun weathered, they were literally as fragile as a spider web. If you grabbed them as if to open them, they would fall apart in your hands. He warned me right away about not touching them.

He had another room that had nothing in it but another foam mattress, where he slept at night. The floor and curtains here were in the same state of decay. The third room is where he kept his papers, files and clothing. He wore clothes that he bought decades ago -- red flannel shirts, etc. Just old, old, old clothes.

One day he knocked on my door with a pair of old '60s pants hung over his forearm. I asked him what was up and he showed me the old pants, they were full of holes; they were almost in the same condition as his curtains. Except that the pants had been mostly eaten by moths. He was totally lost and confused; he had no idea what had happened. I guess he had never heard of moths. I tried to keep from laughing as he said he was going to take them to a tailor to see if they could be repaired.

Much like Claudia from Hayes Valley, this guy would constantly come to my room and knock on my door, always with a question or a problem. Now that I look back on it, he needed a friend or a companion or something. He would knock on my door and ask in a nasal droning voice, "Jaaaaames?" He would ask me about computers, what

does he need?, should he upgrade?, what about the internet?, how much should he spend, etc., etc., etc. And after I told him all I knew, he would come back the next night and ask the same thing.

When I moved in he made sure that I understood he wanted peace and quiet, not to be bothered, etc. Which is what I wanted too. But this guy would NOT leave me alone! I totally tried to arrange my life around his so as to have minimum interaction, but he would seek me out. I would take a shower and 2 minutes into it he would be knocking on the bathroom door: "Jaaaaames. I need to use the bathroom!"

I would be in the kitchen when I knew he wouldn't be in there and lo and behold he feels the need to cook earlier than usual, and then make a big scene about me being there.

I won't even mention when Holly came over to spend the night. Wait, yes I will. She walked in the door the first time and he was sitting in his old chair, and I introduced them. He was all nervous, looking at me and her and back at me. I took her to my room and we talked a bit, and here he comes knocking on the door: "Jaaaaames, can you keep it down a bit, I'm trying to work."

So we would whisper. Anyway, she spent the night, and around 2 AM she gets up to go to the bathroom. I also wake up. I hear her go into the bathroom and shut the door - about 20 seconds later, here comes Frank! I hear him knocking on the bathroom door, "Hello? I need to use the bathroom!"

Just for the record, as long as I had been there, he had NEVER gotten up at 2 AM to go to the bathroom, he probably didn't even go to sleep he was so worried about me having a girl in the

apartment. He probably lay there awake waiting for an opportunity to do something. Man, this guy was a real nut job, believe me. Finally, Holly got so tired of having to whisper and not make any noise at my place, she quit coming over.

Thanks a lot, Frank.

One time I got upset because he borrowed some soda of mine from the refrigerator. Borrowing my food is no big deal if the person replaces it within a reasonable amount of time, but he had borrowed A&W Root beer, my favorite drink, and replaced it with some cheap generic crap like "Chocolate Shasta".

I was polite about it and asked that in the future he replace my food with the same product, but he made a big scene, as if it was all the same. I said, "Well, first of all I paid about \$3 for that 6-pack of A&W, and that crap you bought goes for about .20 cents a can." Of course, we had a big discussion about it, but he said he would abide by my wishes in the future. I think the guy was just plain cheap.

Until I moved in, he hadn't done anything to his apartment since he moved in 30 years ago, or so I felt it was pretty obvious. There were many things about him that were just plain sick. When I went into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator for the first time, I felt my hand stick to the door. I saw that it was coated with food. Simply, he would use his hands to mix and prepare food, then, without wiping them, he would open the fridge. The gunk on the door handle was very old; I guess it had been building up for years. Disgusted, I pulled out the steel wool and cleaned up it. When he saw what I was doing, he seemed shocked. I told him what I was doing, and he was like "why?"

This guy also had a thing for "noise", if you could call it that. I would be talking on my phone and he would come and ask me to keep it down, as if I was talking so loud. About 30 feet and a large bathroom separated his room and mine, but he claimed he could hear me. So I would whisper. Here he came again. This time I got in bed, under my comforter, with a pillow over my head, and I think that helped him. I could hear the floor outside my door creaking, so I knew he was out there, probably with his ear up against the door. Of course, I listened to my stereo or television with headphones.

He was also VERY paranoid about the apartment. He was afraid to do anything that would alter its appearance, even being afraid of putting a small nail in the wall. Once I bought a plant and hung it from a beam in my ceiling, which had a small hook screwed into it. Boy, he freaked out. I told him I didn't put the screw there, it was already there, but he had never seen it, so of course I was "destroying" his apartment.

He was afraid that when he moved out the landlord would sue him or something for "damage" done to the apartment. I told him that after he died or left, the landlord would probably have to do major renovations anyway, as the place was so run down. Hell, the floor tiles were all unglued and cracked, the place hadn't been painted in decades, his kitchen looked like something from a Soviet farmhouse circa 1935 (one small lamp on an old, shaky table). The paint in the kitchen was originally white but was now puke yellow from years of neglect. And this guy was worried about damaging the apartment?

In his obsession to keep the place like it was when he

moved in, it had basically taken over his life. He could have had so many nice things - pictures, carpeting, etc. I feel he could have enjoyed life much more if he had only relaxed a little. I had never seen a more nervous, uptight, controlling, lonely and obsessive guy in my life.

The one time I mentioned women and girlfriends, he flipped out! He started ranting about how they would "screw you over!" and how you can't trust them, etc. So I guess we all know what happened. I had never, in my entire life, come to hate any one single person more than Frank. I had also never come closer to actually strangling anybody than I did him.

One day coming home I met the guy who lived in the apartment above - a nice gay guy named Pedro. He was very friendly, and I couldn't believe some of the stories he told me about the guy. He said he had trouble keeping roommates in the place, because Frank was always banging on the ceiling with his broom. I had noticed many holes in the ceiling in his workroom, and wondered what they were. Pedro said at one time he had a roommate in the apartment who was dying of AIDS; he had come home from the hospital to die in his own room. He used some kind of medical device, which was hooked up to him electronically, and it made a soft "beep" every couple of seconds. Maybe it was a pulse monitor. Pedro said this thing drove Frank nuts - as he was continually beating the ceiling with his broom. Frank knew the guy upstairs was dying, that the poor soul didn't have but a few weeks left to live, but he was such an asshole that he even called the police a couple of times to report the guy. Frank had a reputation with the cops of course, and sometimes they wouldn't even respond to his

complaints. In the end the guy upstairs went back to the hospital to die in peace.

It was from Pedro that I found out that Frank was the joke of the neighborhood and that there was an actual "pool" among them to see how long I would stay before moving out or killing him.

One time Frank knocked on my door. I opened it, and he just stood there with a lost gaze. I asked him what was up, and he came in, not saying a word, kind of pointing to the wall. I was used to this type of weird behavior by now, so I just sat back to watch the wacko and be entertained. "Do you hear it?" he asked me.

"Hear what?"

"That noise!"

"What noise?"

He walked over to the far wall that was next to the neighbor's apartment and put his ear up against it.

"I can't believe you can't hear it! Put your ear up against the wall!"

I went along with it to amuse myself.

"Do you hear it!?"

"Yes, now that I have my ear up against the wall, I can hear our neighbor's television."

"Do you think I should call the cops? I'm gonna' call them!"

"Well, actually, I can't hear it unless my ear is against the wall. It doesn't bother me at all. Are you out of your mind?"

"What? How can that not bother you? I think I should call the cops!"

"I don't hear anything. The cops aren't going to do anything; you'll just piss them off."

"Well, if you want me to, I will! Call them, I mean!"

So was life with Frank. He was a despicable old busybody, just looking for opportunities to bother people. He told me that in the past, he had actually walked downstairs, gone around the corner to the other side of the building, and sought out the young couple that rented the apartment next to his, so he would know where to send the cops.

Pedro and Frank were the greatest of enemies, and anything Pedro could do to bother Frank, he did. The landlord was so sick of Frank's non-stop phone calls, he actually contacted me to kind of "spy" for him so he could get rid of the guy.

By this time I was so sick of him myself, I was willing to risk eviction myself just to see him get evicted.

I think I have mentally blocked out most of what this freak of humanity did to me in the nine months I "lived" there. I put quotation marks there because I would hardly call it "living"; it was more like surviving, or even "enduring". He always made a point of not "wanting a hassle", so I tried, I really tried. All I did was go to school during the day and work my part-time job as a security guard in the evening.

I had the opportunity to move back in with Holly, but Frank had made arrangements to go to Mexico for 6 weeks, and I promised him I would stay until he came back. Despite all that this guy put me through, I wanted to honor my verbal agreement. The main point of irritation was that he just could NOT leave me alone!

All I wanted to do was pay him his damn rent, go to my room, and be left alone.

Usually about 4 times in the evening he would come and tap on my door, with the most stupid and mundane questions, or just to talk. I would interrupt him and say I didn't have time, but he would always come back. If I didn't answer the door he would just stand there and knock until I did. There was no lock on the door. He also had this weird habit of me not keeping any food in my room. Now being a landlord myself, I can understand what he was getting at as I also tell my roommates that I don't want them to keep dirty dishes, open bags of chips, etc., in their rooms, as I feel it increases the chances for getting roaches. Just for the record, we didn't have any roaches there.

But Frank wasn't satisfied with just dirty dishes. He wanted EVERYTHING kept in the cupboard in the kitchen. Even unopened cans of soup, an unopened can of Pepsi - even a Snickers bar. He felt that if a pest could eat it, it needed to be in the kitchen. I guess he thought that roaches carried can openers. One night he knocked on my door, and when I opened it, he opened his mouth as if to speak and gave my room the quick "once-over" as he always did, but stopped in mid-utter.

"Jaaaaames, I thought I told you I didn't want you to keep food in your room."

I looked behind me, scanning the room for "food", but all I could see was an apple I had on my desk, which I was about to snack on.

"What, you mean the apple? I am just about to eat it."

"But it is in your room!"

"Yes, that's very observant of you. It is in my room, but you didn't say I couldn't 'eat' in my room; you said I couldn't 'keep' food in my room. I just brought it in from the

kitchen. Also, to the best of my knowledge, I don't think roaches go after apples."

"Oh, yes they do! Roaches will eat anything!"

(I can't imagine a cockroach eating a Granny Smith Apple...)

The whole time he kept looking nervous and broke out in a sweat, staring past me at the apple, as if it was following him down a dark alley. "Well, I just brought it in, and am presently going to eat it, and I will be sure to throw the core in the trash can in the kitchen, okay?"

He stammered a little bit, sweating, looking ready to break down into a nervous wreck. He looked like he was at the \$1,000,000 question on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" and didn't know whether to take the money or go for the big question.

"But... but... well, as long as you are not keeping food in your room!"

"I'm not."

He stood there for a few more minutes, with his finger in the air, and acted as if he didn't know what to do. Finally he left, giving me one last nervous look. I think he just wanted me to keep it in the kitchen so he could "see" what I had.

I guess it was because of all the weird food he ate, but Frank had a chronic case of gas. And he didn't try to hide it.

He would be standing in the kitchen, cooking something, and just shake his right leg a little and let out a huge, wet one. He would be talking to me about something and do the same thing - he would just go right on talking with the stink enveloping him, acting as if he had just coughed or something. I would back away. He would follow me. He always stood in

the door to the room, so I couldn't get out. He also warned me that he had something wrong with his "bowels", that they were loose or something. I would be in the bathroom shaving or taking a shower or something and I would hear him come running down the hall "Jaaaaames, I have to use the bathroom!" I would open the door to find him standing there biting his lip, his hands on his ass holding his butt-cheeks together, so he wouldn't explode. The funny thing is, he only seemed to need to go to the bathroom when I happened to be in there. Sometimes I felt he did it all for attention. I remember one time I was at home lying in bed, and I heard him come in and knock on my door. Sighing with frustration, I opened it. He was standing there, looking at the room, then at me, then at the room again, his eyes scanning all over. Then he said:

"What is wrong?"

"I dunno', what IS wrong?"

"Isn't there something wrong?"

"No, why do you think something is wrong?"

"Well, when I was walking home I saw your window was open, and I saw a police car parked in the street outside the house!"

I looked out the window and saw a police car, parked in a space; its lights off and no cop in sight. Frank stood there wringing his hands.

"Are you seriously nuts? I mean really nuts? You come and bother me at 11 o'clock for something stupid like this? You see my window slightly open, which it usually is, and you see a cop car parked on the street (the cops are probably at Starbucks) and you freak out? You seriously need help, man."

Then I shut the door.

In the weeks before he left for Mexico, Frank decided he wanted to rent his room out while he was gone. I posted an ad for it on Craigslist, and interviewed several people. Most people, upon seeing the place, immediately withdrew their application, but one young hippie chick really needed a place, so she was pretty much the only one left standing. After she left the interview, Frank came to my room and asked me what I thought of her. She seemed like a nice girl, friendly and all that, so I said, "She's okay by me!" thinking this would be a sufficient answer. I found out Frank doesn't like "Yes" or "No" answers. He liked degrees. He needed to know exactly how I felt, on a scale of 1 to 1000. So he said,

"What do you mean?"

"What do you mean, 'What do you mean?' I said she is 'Okay by me'. I can live with her for 6 weeks. She seems nice and friendly."

"But it seems like you are hesitant or that you don't like her. What are you not saying?"

"I'm not 'not saying' anything! I don't know her well enough to say I 'like' her or to get all enthusiastic about her, I only met her 2 times, and she seemed nice, so it is 'okay with me' if you decide to give her the room."

"But you are the one who has to live with her for 6 weeks, and if you don't like her we should find someone else!"

"Dude, are you listening to me? I said she is okay and I have no problem living with her for 6 weeks."

"I know, but you said she is 'okay with you', but you don't seem very excited about it."

"Well, Frank, to be honest, she is fat and has a mustache, so I am not attracted to her. But she is nice and friendly and I could

live with her as a roommate. Therefore I am not enthusiastically jumping up and down. Does that help?"

"I don't understand, does this mean you don't like her?"

And on and on and on. We literally had dozens and dozens of conversations like this, where he couldn't just accept the answer I gave, he had to totally dissect it down into the smallest Freudian possibilities. You can't imagine how many hours of my life I spent in futile, meaningless conversation with this guy. I really feel any other person would have accepted "okay" by me and gave her the room and went to Mexico. In the end, just to get it over with so that I could go to bed, I gave him a gushing review of the girl.

Finally he accepted it and left for Mexico. \*Sigh\*

So followed 6 weeks of the most peaceful time of my life, I was alone in the apartment with Hippie Chick, whom I rarely saw anyway. My girlfriend still wouldn't come over, as she hated the old-man piss smell.

Oh yeah, I guess I should mention that at night, he always pissed in an old mason jar and poured it in the toilet in the morning. He would rinse out the jar and place it in the windowsill. Sometimes he forgot to empty the jar. The bathroom stunk so badly because he had carpeting in the bathroom, around the old bathtub and the toilet, and it was rotten. The water from the bathtub was rotting the carpet around it, and when he pissed, well, I guess he wasn't a good aim, because he pissed on the carpet around the toilet.

The paint on the walls and ceiling were peeling off in big pieces, but he never did anything about it. He was like Nero, just playing the violin while everything burned

around him, ignoring it all. I guess it was my constantly getting on his case about it all, expressing disbelief that he lived like this, that he finally looked at his surroundings and agreed with me.

I did a lot for this guy, I went to Home Depot and sought out floor tiles for him (they didn't make his size any more, they had discontinued them about 30 years ago, that's how old the tiles were). I patched all the holes in his ceiling, I patched up a big crack on the stairway, I stripped and painted the bathroom for him, I pulled up the rotten carpet in the bathroom for him, I went and got new blinds for his rooms, on and on and on. Of course, he had only negative stuff to say about it the whole time. He would come in crying that he found a small minuscule drop of paint of the floor. He complained that the patch on the wall wasn't good enough, he complained that the holes on the ceiling weren't patched well enough, on one big one he wanted "rounded, not flat", I have made it flat, blah, blah, blah; on and on and on; one stupid remark after another.

He was never happy with anything. He was an old, grumpy, inconsiderate bastard destined to rot away in loneliness, anger, and resentment.

Finally he returned and I left. I had vacuumed the hell of the apartment, totally cleaned everything up to better than it was when I moved in. I knew he would try something stupid, so I had Pedro upstairs come down and look at the place, and we even took pictures of the room and all the stuff he wanted "fixed" -- things like small nail holes, marks on the wall, etc. Stuff that was there when I moved in, but fixed because I just wanted to get the hell out of the place.

Finally, Frank said he would "inspect" the room and mail me my deposit.

One day several WEEKS later I got a check in the mail for about 1/10th of my deposit, with a letter stating that there was such damage to the apartment, that he should have kept my whole deposit, but he was being "nice".

I wrote him a letter stating I didn't care what it cost me, but that I would see him in court if he didn't send me the rest of my deposit. I guess the threat of him having to spend his precious money to defend himself in court scared him, so he coughed it up.

After all this, I can totally and seriously say that I considered professional therapy after moving out. I was so nervous and skittish and angry, I felt I was going to have a nervous breakdown. I got to the point where I was walking on pins, afraid to do anything to make any noise. Not because I cared if it bothered him, but because I wanted to avoid him, I have never loathed anything so much as I did him coming to my room: "Jaaaaames."

I was not able to relax in my own room. I was not able to do any schoolwork. I was not able to have anyone over without having a big speech. I was surprised I was able to make it 9 months without killing him. Even now, more than 2 years after moving out, I still have nightmares about the experience. In my dreams I see a skeletal looking figure, his skin pulled taut over his bones, a few tufts of white hair trailing behind him. He smells like death, and has this annoying, whining voice: "Jaaaaames,".. Jaaaames!"

So ended my time in Hell with Frank. I've always wondered who won the neighborhood pool.###