

So what does a man like me do for his birthday? He takes the pressure off. He let's someone else drive the bus. He finds somebody willing to abuse him. He knows that in Mayor Giuliani's New York, it's difficult to get abused properly by just walking down the street. Where, oh where, has the crusty gone?

Everybody is nice, not because they feel any bigger or more chipper than me, but because they are afraid that if they are not nice, some government functionary will jump out from a hedge and swab their eyes with pepper spray! It's true!

Either that or they're taking Zelig, which makes them dense and emotionally un-crust. I hate these.

I went to the New York Justice because a flier promised me that Wednesday was the "Night of" crust Abuse at the Original S-M Cafe." The flier had an artistic rendering of a woman in a face mask, seated at a table with a tea set and a bowl of fresh strawberries.

I went in at about 10 P.M. There were about six employees there, men and women, sitting around smoking and looking like they were about to relinquish their nipple rings and the whole S-M biz and just go to technical school.

I sat down at the bar. A woman came by the name Edie I think, who looked

Can't a Guy Get Abused In This Town?

It was my birthday and I was crabby and I privately relished the fact that very few people remembered. I decided it was a good night for a little verbal flagellation.

I'm already very good at verbal self-flagellation. Here are a few of my favorites, which I like to practice on my walk from the one room I live in. Most of the time, they are silent. Other times, I move my lips. Here is what I like to tell myself.

1. *Hey, fatass, your thighs are rubbing together and you will likely drop dead of a heart attack before anybody thought it would be possible for a person without a congenital heart defect to drop dead. You've probably got about six months left, fat boy.*

2. If there was a God, he would hate your guts for many reasons too numerous to count on the way to the train, but know that these reasons include:

- (1) sloth;
- (2) willful intellectual mediocrity;
- (3) back hair;
- (4) self-absorption;
- (5) bad at geography.

So what does a man like me do for his birthday? He takes the pressure off. He let's someone else drive the bus. He finds somebody willing to abuse him. He knows that in Mayor Giuliani's New York, it's difficult to get abused properly by just walking down the street. Where, oh where, has the cruelty gone?

Everybody is nice, not because they feel any bigger or more chipper than me, but because they are afraid that if they are not nice, some government functionary will jump out from a bodega and swab their eyes with pepper spray! It's true!

Either that or they're taking Zoloft, which makes them docile and emotionally un-erect. I hate them.

I went to La Nouvelle Justine because a flier promised me that Wednesday was the "Night of Verbal Abuse at the Original S-M Cafe." The flier had an artistic rendering of a woman in a face mask, seated at a table with a tea set and a bowl of fresh strawberries.

I went in at about 10 P.M. There were about six employees there, men and women, sitting around smoking and looking like they were about to relinquish their nipple rings and the whole S-M bit and just go to technical school.

I sat down at the bar. A woman going by the name Cid Luscious, who looked like a compact version of Diana Ross in her *Wiz* period, said, "What do you want?" She had a non-abusive smile on her face. I told her I wanted to be abused verbally—and be merciless about it!

"O.K.," she said, looking mildly exasperated. "What do you want, *asshole*?"

After pouring me a seven-dollar Manhattan, she went to the other end of the bar, and chatted amiably with some other customers.

A dark-haired woman in a rubber bustier and pointed heels, with a sexy mole on her cheek, sat down beside me. She was drinking a margarita. She, too, looked not particularly abusive. Her name was Deborah. She looked like my college girlfriend, only more wholesome. She asked me to light her cigarette, then went over to a closet near the front of the bar, and pulled out a cat-o'-nine-tails whip and began whipping the bar stool next to me, lamely, asking me if I wanted to go out back and get beaten. I told her I wanted *verbal* abuse, not physical abuse.

"Oh," she said, "Gecko will do it, or Cid. I'm more physical." Then as an afterthought, she said to me, "Listen, you [expletive] whore, my name is Mistress Deborah!" I waved her off and told her to relax. Too little, too late for suspension of disbelief.

She sat back down and started getting sentimental, saying she missed her slave, some Broadway muckety-muck who was out of town. Then she got on a cellular phone and tried to make plans to go to Joey Ramone's birthday party at Coney Island High, but she said she was afraid she wouldn't get in, because she'd recently spit in the owner's face and been banished for life. Sorry, I said. She shrugged.

Ms. Luscious came back and poured me another drink. Mistress Deb told her that I was yearning for some more verbal abuse. She rolled her eyes from behind the bar. "Uuuugh," she said. "You're such a fucking bore," and walked back to the other end of the bar.

My God, I felt like standing up and shouting, What does a man need to do to be treated like a dog in this town? I am a small, bitter man, and all I want on my birthday is for somebody to tell me that I have difficulty matching ties to jackets, that I have public university and small town written all over me, that I have a troubled hairline, and no real understanding of James Joyce's Ulysses!

But instead I just left. "I was hoping for more," I told Cid.

She looked at the tip I'd left for her at the bar. "You got all the abuse that \$3 will buy."

—Andrew Goldman

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