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Well hello there reader.
In this issue of Lumpen we explore Jagoffs.
Introduction

Welcome to the Lumpen Field Guide to Chicago Jagoffs.

This experiment in urban lexicography and crowd-sourced freelance socio-linguistics had its origins in the Llano Del Rio Collective’s An Antagonist’s Guide to the Assholes of Los Angeles, which “annotates over 80 places, banks, businesses, politicians and polluters, war contractors, institutions, a troll, a yeller, and a cruel mis-dial,” culled from an “open public call.”

But “assholes” is such an . . . LA term. In Chicago, we have jagoffs. So we set out to produce this Guide.

What the word actually meant was our starting point. We thought, like most people who bother to think about such things did, that “jagoff” was a Chicago variant pronunciation of a term for male masturbation. “Jerk off” or “Jack off” becomes “jagoff,” the same way “fuck” becomes “fugg.” Yet the word was used in Chicago as a noun, not just a verb—a noun for a particular sort of really annoying person.

We thought that the term was unique to Chicago, since we had never encountered it elsewhere, either in person or in writing. There was no sign off it in the Oxford English Dictionary, or various lexicons of American slang.

We were soon informed, though—thanks to the Internet—that it was a common Pittsburgh term: common, and rude, enough that a newspaper editor there wanted to ban it from the paper’s pages. And popular/ populist enough that the Mayor of Pittsburgh campaigned to have it included in dictionaries.

This Pittsburgh claim, we rashly theorized, might suggest an Eastern European linguistic origin. “Jag” sounding like a Slavic verb of some kind, “jagov” perhaps meaning a person who . . . annoyed you. Pittsburgh and Chicago both having been settled in no small part by Slavic immigrants.

That turned out not to be the case: as Carnegie Mellon professor Barbara Johnstone points out, the term originates in northern England, where “the verb ‘to jag’ means to prick or poke.” “Jagoff,” it turns out, comes from the same root as “jagged,” a term for something that pokes or annoys.

The Dictionary of American Regional English identifies several usages associated with the Pittsburgh region:

> A reckless person, one who takes foolish chances; A very awkward, clumsy person; A dull and stupid person.

Or Uncomplimentary words with no definite meaning—just used when you want to show that you don’t think much of a person: “Don’t invite him. He’s a ________.”

It’s this last definition that most seems to jibe with how the term is used in Chicago.

Casey Cora, of DNAinfo Chicago, wrote a story about the planned Guide, including our incorrect—yet highly plausible!—speculation about Slavic origins for the term. This initial publicity led to further media attention.

An appearance on WBEZ, Chicago’s local public radio station, caused a bit of a stir, as some folks with delicate sensibilities were deeply offended that we would say “jagoff” on the radio, even as we explained that it did not mean anything sexual. It seems that you cannot talk about what words really mean, as opposed to what people think they mean, without Western Civilization crashing down.

It’s as though you cannot wake up when the cock crosses anymore, since that word also has a rude sexual meaning. As any aficionado of the New York Times crossword can tell you, “small wrens” are also called “jtts,” but we cannot mention such things! Well, when people are offended by serious attempts to explore the truth of what words actually mean, that’s their problem, not ours.

Back to Chicago v. Pittsburgh: we could get into a throw-down with Pittsburghers over ownership of “jagoff,” but it’s probably better to acknowledge that many Rust Belt towns have parallel linguistic heritages, and we all should team up against Houston, Phoenix, and Tampa-St. Petersburg.

In Chicagoese, we argue that the term “jagoff” has a relatively precise meaning. It’s not a person who is just annoyng in a particular situation, or who does one annoying thing. The jagoff stands distinct from other Chicago sorts of urban loser, though the Venn Diagram of Loserhood has many overlapping categories. The Mope, the Jackmoke, the Douchebag, the Bust-out, the Bro: any person in each of these might ever into jagoffery at their worst moments. But let’s give them credit: Hopes and Jamokes and Douchebags and Bust-outs and Bros sometimes deal with their fellow citizens in clean and honest (if Loserish) ways. Not the Jagoff. The Jagoff always acts as though no one else exists, or if they do exist, they don’t matter except for how they may gratify the Jagoff.

The pure Jagoff is gonna be who he (or she) is, regardless of anyone or anything else around them, regardless of common decency or common sense. Jagoff is an essential subject position, immutable, and a Jagoff’s jagoffery will continue regardless of what anyone around them says or does. Jagoffs are like Louis XIV of France, the Sun King, around whom everyone revolved. One common theme in the entries below will show that Jagoffs transform public space into private space, as they act like no one else exists or matters.

So we set out to call out the jagoffs of Chicago, the people who annoy everyone around them, even as they advance to high political office, attain local or national celebrity.

Lots of names popped to mind, and lots of sorts of jagoffs, when we began to think about this. Most, our readers will note, are sort of canonical: White Men, and lots of Dead White Men. Well, sorry if we’re not diverse enough: but this is satire as much as scholarship, and satire should always punch up.

But we didn’t want this to be all about us. What kind of jagoff presumes to speak for the whole city?

So we opened this Guide up to anyone who was listening on the radio or lurking on the Internet. A twitter account @ChicagoJagoffGuides and a yahoo email (lumpencjp@yahoo.com) solicited submissions, and many Chicagoans contributed their ideas for who, or what, was a jagoff. Some didn’t make the cut—frankly, people who don’t clean up after their dogs, or people who go slow in the left lane of highways aren’t just Chicago, and aren’t necessarily jagoffs. The writing styles and approaches vary greatly, as we’re not like those Chicago Manual of Style jagoffs who try to make everything uniform.

So what follows includes six things: individual jagoffs; types of jagoffs; self-identified jagoffs; Chicagoland jagoffs; jagoff habitats; and some parting jags. It’s not a comprehen- sive list, just what we have as of the time just before the epochal 2015 Mayoral election. We would hope that any Jagoffs we’ve neglected to include will inspire discussion, action, and perhaps a general reduction of jagoffery all over town. But we’re not holding our breaths.

Here is your Field Guide to Chicago Jagoffs.

Enjoy.

By Bill Savage & Paul Durica
John Kinzie

The founding jagoff, the one who started it all and set a Chicago standard for self-serving behavior and indifference to others, John Kinzie may have played a part in ensuring that the violence following the forced evacuation of Fort Dearborn in August 1812 was as extensive as it was. Kinzie made certain that he and his family eluded the hundreds of Potawatomi warriors who killed most of the garrison, local militia, and the women and children near the intersection of today’s Michigan Avenue and Roosevelt Road. While protecting one’s own in a time of crisis is understandable jagoffery (to be fair, he helped the fort’s commanding officer and his wife escape and negotiated for the freedom for some of the other survivors), Kinzie’s actions in June 1812 are difficult to defend. He committed the first documented murder in the area that would become Chicago, killing fellow fur trader Jean La Lime after a heated argument. Kinzie claimed that he stabbed La Lime during a fight at a tavern while being pursued by La Lime supporters (who werevengeful and thought they saw La Lime as the one who helped the British in the War of 1812). Kinzie was literally trying to run away from the war, which had just ended, and he fled O.J.-style first to Milwaukee and then into Indian Territory. Away from Chicago, he shifted his allegiance between the British and the Americans to his advantage, only returning after it became clear he wouldn’t be held responsible for La Lime’s death. And what had been the cause of the argument between Kinzie and La Lime? Corruption within the government–sponsored fur trade: the soon-to-be-dead La Lime connected to Kinzie and threatened to expose. And how did La Lime die? Jean Baptiste Point du Sable is now recognized as the first long-term, non-native settler in the Chicago area and thus has taken the title of “father of the city” from Kinzie. Commercially corrupt, politically shifty, it’s hard to come up with a literary figure less liked in Chicago than Saul Bellow: he can’t even get an honorary street named after him despite having received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1976. A brilliant prose stylist with a broad if somewhat biased knowledge of the Western canon, Bellow continually undermined his artistic genius through his public stupidity. His infamous and insensitive comments concerning the “Tolstoy of the Zulus” and the “Proust of the Papuans” made in a 1988 New York Times Magazine interview broadcast nationally attitudes that were well-known locally in his lifetime Hyde Park neighborhood. While Bellow’s defenders rightly suggest that one can love the art without loving the artist, they should take a good, long read of The Dean’s December (1983). Somewhat regretfully, Studs Terkel had to admit that Bellow had a real fear of people of color and viewed them as culpable in a believed decline in the city. His attitudes toward women weren’t much more evolved: reputedly, he “interviewed” prospective students for his seminars at the University of Chicago simply so that he could personally select the sexiest women to allow into the class. In The Dean’s December, the titular character regards his deceased brother-in-law as the “true, buzzing, bullying, braying, La Salle Street brass”—in other words, as a textbook Chicago jagoff. But an outright “bullying” and “braying” jagoff is certainly easier to respect than a jagoff who conceals those qualities within clever phrases and an artistic demeanor.

Margaret Anderson

In 1930, Margaret Anderson published her autobiography My Thirty Years’ War. She was in her mid-forties at the time, which gives you some insight into her character. The battles she fought were mostly literary. As an editor, Anderson played an important role in the period some literary scholars regard as the Chicago Renaissance, roughly 1912-1932, when Ben Hecht, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, and others called Chicago home. Anderson’s The Little Review, which she began publishing in 1914, provided an outlet for these writers and other modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The journal serialized James Joyce’s Ulysses, which is basically on-air jagoffery, in the 1970s, long before Howard Stern, to whom he’s often compared. Dahl makes it in the Guide, however, for his role in the July 1979 Disco Demolition Night at Comiskey Park. While the stunt, which basically encouraged Dahl’s listeners to bring disco records to the ballpark to be ceremoniously destroyed in the break between the two games of a doubleheader, was merely juvenile, it resulted in a very public expression of latent racist and homophobic attitudes among the city’s citizens, the wrecking of the playing field, and the White Sox forfeiting the second game to the Detroit Tigers (which one of these three results you consider the worst reflects your own level of jagoffery). Dahl is a jagoff because he planned the event so poorly, blowing up portions of the field and allowing a riot to occur, and then ran away from the chaos he’d caused, getting defensive when criticized for it and letting Bill Veeck, Jr., and others assume all the blame. Given the success of Disco Demolition Night, it’s surprising that Rahm Emanuel didn’t pair Dahl with Redmoon when planning the Chicago Fire Festival—at the very least, the fake buildings would be guaranteed to catch fire.

Saul Bellow

He was a Quebecker, Canadian-born—Quebec, that treasonous province—and went at things as he taught himself, self-regarding, and made his record in his own way: elitist, racist, and chauvinistic. It’s hard to come up with a literary figure less liked in Chicago than Saul Bellow: he can’t even get an honorary street named after him despite having received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1976. A brilliant prose stylist with a broad if somewhat biased knowledge of the Western canon, Bellow continually undermined his artistic genius through his public stupidity. His infamous and insensitive comments concerning the “Tolstoy of the Zulus” and the “Proust of the Papuans” made in a 1988 New York Times Magazine interview broadcast nationally attitudes that were well-known locally in his lifetime Hyde Park neighborhood. While Bellow’s defenders rightly suggest that one can love the art without loving the artist, they should take a good, long read of The Dean’s December (1983). Somewhat regretfully, Studs Terkel had to admit that Bellow had a real fear of people of color and viewed them as culpable in a believed decline in the city. His attitudes toward women weren’t much more evolved: reputedly, he “interviewed” prospective students for his seminars at the University of Chicago simply so that he could personally select the sexiest women to allow into the class. In The Dean’s December, the titular character regards his deceased brother-in-law as the “true, buzzing, bullying, braying, La Salle Street brass”—in other words, as a textbook Chicago jagoff. But an outright “bullying” and “braying” jagoff is certainly easier to respect than a jagoff who conceals those qualities within clever phrases and an artistic demeanor.

Steve Dahl

Radio talk show host Steve Dahl pioneered the “shock jock” attitude, which is basically on-air jagoffery, in the 1970s, long before Howard Stern, to whom he’s often compared. Dahl makes it in the Guide, however, for his role in the July 1979 Disco Demolition Night at Comiskey Park. While the stunt, which basically encouraged Dahl’s listeners to bring disco records to the ballpark to be ceremoniously destroyed in the break between the two games of a doubleheader, was merely juvenile, it resulted in a very public expression of latent racist and homophobic attitudes among the city’s citizens, the wrecking of the playing field, and the White Sox forfeiting the second game to the Detroit Tigers (which one of these three results you consider the worst reflects your own level of jagoffery). Dahl is a jagoff because he planned the event so poorly, blowing up portions of the field and allowing a riot to occur, and then ran away from the chaos he’d caused, getting defensive when criticized for it and letting Bill Veeck, Jr., and others assume all the blame. Given the success of Disco Demolition Night, it’s surprising that Rahm Emanuel didn’t pair Dahl with Redmoon when planning the Chicago Fire Festival—at the very least, the fake buildings would be guaranteed to catch fire.

Individual Jagoffs
Ronnie “Woo-Woo” Wickers

BILL SAVAGE

Ronnie Woo epitomizes the relentless self-promotion that characterizes a certain breed of Chicago jagoff: it’s all about him. A self-styled Chicago Cubs mascot, Wickers got his nickname by showing up in the bleachers and chanting “WOO!” after the names of various Cubs players. Dressed in full Cubs home uniform, he evolved from a minor annoyance (his piercing cry could be heard from every seat in the park) to a perpetual motion annoyance machine, from the Cubs Convention to Spring Training to Opening Day to the bitter end of the season. Casual fans, especially drunk young women and the jagoff bro’s who love them, eat up his schtick, and eagerly pose for pictures. Wickers tickets from morons who should know better, and then works his celebrity magic for beer in the bleachers and beyond.

What truly elevates him to pure jagoff status is when he takes his act beyond Wrigley, where at least he has a self-selected crowd of baseball masochists to pester.

In November of 2014, he went to the funeral of Mayor Jane Byrne at St. Vincent’s Church. Wore through the receiving line in full uniform. Twice.

In January 2015, he attached himself to the civic mourning over the death of Ernie Banks, posing with tourists and fans who should know better in front of the Banks statue when it was relocated to Daley Plaza.

Ronnie "Woo-Woo" Wickers is to Ernie Banks what an overweight 16-inch softball beer-league bench-rider is to an MLB Hall of Famer. But if there were a Jagoff Hall of Fame, Wickers would be a first-ballot unanimous selection.

The Old Navy Street Preacher

MARC FISHER

The tagline for George Romero's 1978 zombie film Dawn of the Dead famously read, “When there’s no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth.” For those who believe that hell is real, one of the reasons it might be filled to capacity is because Samuel Chambers—who many know only as The Old Navy Street Preacher—has been damning people to hell for decades. It doesn’t take much to be deemed hell-worthy by this State Street fixture. Gays, prostitutes, smokers, and fornicators are obviously fucked, but this preacher’s general tactic seems to be to assume that everyone is a gay, smoking, prostitute fornicator, until otherwise proven heterosexual straightedge and deemed safe for entry into heaven.

Samuel Chambers is so strongly associated with Old Navy, having continued to preach in front of the store even after they moved across the street (lest he become known as The Target Street Preacher) that he appears in some of the store’s Yelp reviews. He has also been given his own Facebook page, and you can find numerous videos of his rants on YouTube. Being told you are going to hell by Chambers is about as much a part of visiting Chicago as a photo in front of The Bean, a walk down The Magnificent Mile, eating a hot dog smothered with a bunch of shit, or stuffing your face with a deep dish pizza. A 2004 article by Emily Nunn in the Chicago Tribune reported that Chambers has been standing at State and Madison for 35 years. The article also states that he has eight children, and a wife (who works, because standing on a corner telling people they are going to hell doesn’t pay the bills, shockingly).

Not everyone likes hearing the preacher’s judgments, and he has been physically assaulted on multiple occasions. Usually my own response, which is like a reflex after years of walking past him, is to simply reply, “You are such a hateful piece of shit” and keep right on going. One day, as I braced myself for his usual slurs or assumptions about my conduct, he caught me off guard with, “If you’re bald, you’re going to hell.” I had nothing, and he knew it; I couldn’t help but smile. You can’t teach an old dog new tricks, but apparently even a homophobic jagoff like the Old Navy Street Preacher can sometimes learn new ways of antagonizing passersby.

Larry Harmon

PAUL DURICA

Bob Bell portrayed Bozo the Clown from 1960-1984. While in the midst of being treated for a brain aneurysm in the late 1960s, Bell called in to the show in character so that Chicago’s children would know that their favorite clown was still thinking of them. In short, Bell was loved and fully deserving of his induction into the International Clown Hall of Fame in 1996. Bell expected to attend the induction ceremony in Wisconsin in character as was the custom but was prevented from doing so by an LA-based producer named Larry Harmon. Harmon had worked for Columbia Records, which developed the Bozo character in the 1940s, and, sensing the potential of the character within the emerging medium of television, had snapped up the copyright when it became available. He then franchised out Bozo shows across the country, with Chicago’s becoming the longest running and arguably best loved. When one of the franchises came up with a character or concept Harmon liked, he simply expanded his copyright to include it; as a result, Chicago creations like Cooky, Wizzo, and the Grand Prize Game, developed by Bell, Roy Brown, Marshall Brodien, and others at WGN became Harmon’s property. And he made certain to squeeze every last dollar out of that property. Harmon was a jagoff to Bell but got his comeuppance. He has the distinction of having been de-inducted from the International Clown Hall of Fame. For decades he had claimed to be Bozo’s creator when, in truth, he simply was a businessman who owned a copyright and was reaping wealth from the work of others—and the clown community gave him a well-deserved pie in the face.
Jerry Reinsdorf
BILL SAVAGE

While some might think 6 NBA Championships and the 2005 World Series victory for the White Sox makes Jerry Reinsdorf like unto a God in this town, he still qualifies for jagoff status. Just ask anyone who ever drank at McCuddy’s. After threatening to move the White Sox to St. Petersburg, Florida unless he got a new stadium, Richard M. Daley and Illinois Governor James R. Thompson caved like undernourished street urchins that hadn’t been fed in weeks. Reinsdorf and his Welfare King minions instead sat the park down in a sea of sterile parking lots, an area designed to make sure that everyone coming to a Sox game has to spend all of their money inside the park (and all that cash goes to the Cubs’ owners. The Sox promised to re-open McCuddy’s, the historic 35th Street family-owned bar, but not to thank him.

The park itself was designed to maximize the number of skyboxes, which makes its upper deck a vertiginous ski slope with terrible views of the game. Instead of the retro Camden Yards, Reinsdorf delivered the last of the truly ugly ball-malls to his fans, who stay away in droves to thank him.

Bushman
PAUL DURICA

This now-unfortunately-named famous ape has the distinction of being the second-hairiest being to appear in a literary work by Nelson Algren, specifically The Man with the Golden Arm (1949). Algren knew who was truly important in Chicago, and it’s difficult to imagine a figure who brought more people from different walks of life together than this gorilla. Thousands upon thousands visited Bushman at Lincoln Park Zoo when it was feared that he was close to death in the mid-1950s. He had come to Chicago while just a little gorilla in the early 1930s, and at the height of the Depression, he charmed countless visitors to the zoo. Bushman didn’t actually return the love: he made tossing poop through bars into an art form. But the guy had good reason to be gruff, confined for most of his long life to a cage and treated less than kindly by one of his trainers—he was made into a jagoff by the jagoffs he found himself captive among. After his death, he was publicly dissected at the Field Museum, and his body was stuffed and mounted. Now he stares down visitors to the museum from his glass case in the basement, but he does so, as the result of a taxidermy misstep, with human eyes.

John Kass
PAUL DAILING

Everyone I know at the Chicago Tribune says columnist John Kass is one hell of a guy — genial, incisive, and on the money about every backdoor deal in town. Too bad that guy’s never shown up in Kass’ bomb-throwing, right-of-Koch writing. He called Ferguson a “lynching.” A “legal lynching” of the white police officer who shot and killed an unarmed black teen. If Western Springs resident Kass has a skill, it’s passing off nicknames as political commentary. “Rahenfather” for the mayor (who loves it so much Kass gave him a framed portrait), “Little Bike People” for cyclists (a frequent target of his in a city with bigger problems). “Sensible Shoes” for Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle (because of… shoes?). So here are some nicknames for the shitsfrom of Page 11: Rich Little, because he’s made a career of a cut-rate Royko impression; Pom Squad, because that’s the last place catty nicknames earned anyone that much status; Navy Pier, because he slathers himself in a faux Chicagoana to match what the tourists expect. John Kass has position, power, and prestige to make change in the world and he punts it with a “Chik-kahgo guy” impression. Give this jag a moutza, and give someone else his job.

Philip Danforth Armour
PAUL DURICA

Philip Danforth Armour made his money out of meat and men. He modernized the packing industry and maximized its profits, finding a use for every part of the pig, he reputedly boasted, “but the squeal.” Cruelty to animals isn’t enough to get him on this list—jagoffs that we are, we like our hams and hot dogs—but Armour regarded his largely immigrant workforce as being as disposable as the pigs they processed. Working conditions in his plant were so bad and injuries, illness, and maiming common enough that Upton Sinclair was able to get a whole novel’s worth of material out of them. Like Marshall Field, Armour seemed to have believed that the United States military existed for the sole purpose of protecting his wealth. In the aftermath of the 1877 railroad strikes, Armour was quite vocal in expressing his belief that a Gatling gun was the best way to deal with disgruntled workers and helped to establish Fort Sheridan so that the army would always be standing by. But here is what makes Armour such a jagoff: to the same army he expected to aid him, he sold tainted meat by the barrel. An official inquiry into the matter severely tarnished his image. Screwing over the people who make your money is one thing, but screwing over the people who protect that money as well, that’s just plain jagoffery.
George Pullman

When George Pullman arrived in Chicago towards the middle of the nineteenth century, he helped lift the city out of the muck—literally. He ran a business that specialized in raising buildings at a moment when Chicago’s street grade was elevated in order to mitigate problems associated with its swampy foundations. With the money made on that venture, he went into the luxury train car line, achieving national prominence when, through typical Chicago-style machinations, a Pullman Palace Car was selected to carry the body of the assassinated Abraham Lincoln from Washington to Springfield. Success in this market led him to create a model town adjoining the train car factory. While it offered the latest in urban amenities, it also prohibited its residents from buying their own houses, running their own newspapers, drinking, assembling in public, and attending Sunday services in their own house of worship (Pullman rented out the Greensstone Church by the hour). Cash conscious Pullman even had the residents’ waste materials pumped out to the fields surrounding the town to be used as fertilizer in growing the crops that were then sold back to said residents: in other words, Pullman’s people ate their own shit. When an economic crisis hit the country in 1893, Pullman cut the wages of his workers but did not lower the rent in his town, believing the two matters were completely unrelated and caring only about making a profit. Workers at the Pullman factory wanted to negotiate it be known that he would never support clemency and all the rest with him, but he refused all entreaties to settle the dispute in arbitra- tion, even when they came from a secular saint like Jane Addams. In 1894 the Pullman workers went on strike and were joined in sympathy by railroad employees from across the country. Federal troops put down the strike and restored order, but Pullman ultimately lost ownership of his town, which became part of Chicago. His friends and family must have known he was something of a jagoff. When he died, they buried him in Graceland Cemetery in the early morning hours and covered over the coffin with several feet of concrete to prevent the body from being desecrated by disgruntled employees.

Marshall Field

As will come as a surprise to no one, Marshall Field was the offspring of Puritan, Massachusetts jagoffs. He moved to Chicago, like many East Coast jagoffs, to make money. Which he did, hand over fist, in retail and dry goods. So much so that, because he was a miserly miserable jagoff, he was able to buy out his partners, the equally despicable Potter Palmer and Levi Leiter, and name the business solely after himself.

Field’s big contribution to Chicago retail was giving rich, fancy ladies who lunch a safe place to be demanding cunts and have every whim catered to. This was the Gilded Age, after all.

Field, of course, like many of our modern jagoff retailers, prevented his employees from unionizing, but took it even further. Field employ- ees were encouraged to rat out fellow employees who gambled or drank after work hours, but the cardinal sin was always fraternizing with union members. Field funded anti-union militias to patrol the Chicago Board of Trade. After the railroad shittshow of the Haymar- ket Riots and subsequent arrests and convictions of innocent men, even real pieces of work like Lyman Gage thought things had gone too far. The convicted men’s wives started a clemency campaign, which even jagoffs like Potter Palmer were inclined to support, but Field let it be known that he would never support clemency and all the rest of the jagoffs were too scared to cross him, so four innocent men were hanged.

As a final show of generosity to Chicago, this jagoff helped fund the University of Chicago, where fun goes to die.

Marshall Field, Part II

Marshall Field is the king of the merchant princes of Chicago. And like any sovereign, he could be petty and cruel. After the civil unrest of the 1877 railroad strikes, Field didn’t respond by perhaps considering why workers across the country might be unhappy with low wages, long hours, and absolutely no safety laws. Instead, he bought the city of Chicago a Gatling gun to be used in case those uppity Irish, Germans, and Poles ever again dared to agitate for some level of economic fairness. As a leading member of the Commercial Club, he worked to purchase land north of the city that could be given to the federal government for the purpose of building a fort there—part of the problem in 1877 is that federal troops, who had been chasing the Sioux out in the Dakota territories, had to be shipped in to Chicago to fire upon immigrant laborers. Said fort and the road connecting it to the city were named for Field stooge General Philip Sheridan, who enjoyed killing Indians and immigrants alike. In the aftermath of the Haymarket bombing in 1886, Field openly expressed the view that various labor leaders and anarchists should be executed without trial. Time and again, he valued property over human life. Now you might be saying, didn’t he do some good, civic-minded things like give the land upon which the University of Chicago stands and fund the Field Museum of Natural History? While he did give some land to the University, it was not the land the school needed or wanted, which he did sell to them eventually at a sizable profit. As for the museum, he had to be talked into it by his friend, Edward Ayer, businessman and book collector, who deserves the real credit for this Chicago treasure. On the other hand, Marshall Field & Co. did give Chicagoans the Walnut Room.
Individual Jagoffs

Charles Tyson Yerkes
Paul Durica

Charles Tyson Yerkes in the words of the Rolling Stones was a “man of wealth and taste.” He amassed over his lifetime an impressive collection of fine art and had the reputation as a food and wine connoisseur. He was a devil, however, who didn’t merit much sympathy. At a time when the rules regulating business were few, Yerkes still found a way to break the existing ones: his financial dealings in Philadelphia landed him in prison. Upon his release, he moved to Chicago and set out to take over the city’s transit system, freely dispensing bribes to get his way. Yerkes bought up several elevated train lines but kept them purposefully separate so that riders would have to transfer to get pretty much anywhere yet pay a full fare each time. Eventually, his machinations became so egregious that notoriously corrupt aldermen John “Bathhouse” Coughlin and Mike “Hinky Dink” Kenna had to oppose him. Chicagoans of all walks of life so hated Yerkes that when it was discovered that he’d helped finance the move of the original Ferris Wheel from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition north to a beer garden near today’s Wrigley Field, they protested and made certain the venture failed. Yerkes left a despised man for London, where he’d play a role in the building of the Tube. About as civic-minded as fellow jagoff Marshall Field, he had to be convinced to fund the University of Chicago observatory that bears his name.

Cubic Transportation Systems
Robert O’Connor

These are the jagoffs responsible for Ventra – that space-age farecard system for the CTA that 1) doesn’t work, 2) helps the CTA lose money contracting out what it used to do itself and 3) have I mentioned that it doesn’t work?

The machines are so bad I have to take my Ventra card out of my wallet to swipe it, lest my credit card or debit card get charged by mistake. What really pushes Cubic into the higher realms of jagoff is that they make these fair card systems for other cities around the world, like the London Oyster card, and guess what? THAT CARD WORKS! I’ve used it; it works perfectly! You don’t have to take it out of your wallet or anything.

If London can have a working fare card, why can’t we? What’s London got that we ain’t got?

Oh, and they’ve got no offices here, they’re all out in California. So they have no idea what it’s like having to use these things. And we can’t walk into their office and complain; we have to call. Pfft!

Ventra
Yana Kunicoff

Getting around the city of Chicago is hard enough – clogged six-lane arteries branch through the entire city, and whipping winds buffet El platforms at all hours of the day – and most irritable commuters would have been hard-pressed to find a way to make travel more mishap-prone. Enter Ventra. The open-fare card system introduced by Rahm Emanuel in the spring of 2013 merits inclusion in the list of Chicago jagoffs because in one $454 million, twelve-year contract it created a set of unforeseen difficulties for public transit consumers all across the city. From the woman who received 274 Ventra cards in the mail to investigations revealing that a litany of unseen fees came with the prepaid debit card available to Ventra customers, the months following the launch went almost as badly as they could. The ties that Ventra’s parent company, Cubic, has with military and surveillance projects didn’t help the already brewing controversy.

It isn’t all bad, though. This jagoff puts Mr. Potter, the Grinch and the Monopoly man to shame. The only hope of this proudful community is for the Eagle overlooking the Square to exact his revenge.

M. Fishman
W.R. Logan Sq.

One by one, he has bought up the historically significant apartment stock, maximizing on low, low white flight sale prices, all while lining the silk pockets of the aldermanic laissez-faire coats for speculative zoning changes.

Day by day, he sucks the bucks of the working class while turning down their heat, letting the build code violations stack up to evict the masses. Inspectors turn blind eyes and the young professionals rent his manufactured urban lifestyle by paying him double, even triple.

Month by month, he calculatingly passes ‘go’ to collect from the TIF pot and property tax appeals. Counting his loot safely behind his closed-captioned cameras and shyster lawyers, crouched on his pile of cash in his suburban Deerfield vault, laughing while shitting on the lives of people he despises.

Year by year, he manifests his whitewashed empire for the false gentry of the gentrified. A stolen arts festival, a remodeled theatre and appropriated culinary partnerships for the discerning tastes of the neoliberal take over.

This jagoff puts Mr. Potter, the Grinch and the Monopoly man to shame. The only hope of this proudful community is for the Eagle overlooking the Square to exact his revenge.
Individual Jagoffs

20

Dan Ryan  
Hugh Iglarsh

Here’s a curse to the Chicago Expressway System, that web of scars that cut through, killed and cauterized the living urban tissue; transformed neighborhoods into walled ghettos; and traumatized a great city, creating an army of internal refugees who settled in the suburban wasteland made possible by an out-of-control road-building program, inspired by Hitler’s autobahnen. As one city historian has noted, Chicago’s expressway development between 1948 and 1966 was the single greatest cause for family relocation in the city.

So here’s a middle-finger salute to Dan Ryan, Jr. (1894-1961), the insurance man and local pol who sat on the Cook County board for much of five decades, salivating at the prospect of Chicago superhighways and the construction jobs and kickbacks accruing therefrom. It was he who in 1955 engineered the issuing of bonds to jump-start construction, as the interstate program was gearing up, with its billions in federal dollars.

And here’s an affecionate toast to Ireland, where Dan Ryan Senior hailed from. In 1959, the Irish National Roads Authority was told that a proposed bypass in western Ireland would destroy a certain hawthorn bush that had played an important role in – I’m not making this up – “fairy military history.” Believing that cutting down the shrub would lead to auto accidents and general bad karma, the authorities rerouted the roadway and built a protective fence around the enchanted shrub. After all, who would want to offend the genius loci, the spirit of the place, by interfering with a well-worn fairy path?

How many fairies paths, how many enclaves and subcultures and deli cate networks of connection and relationship were wrecked by Dan Ryan, Jr.? How many lives were disrupted by these broad and brutal straight lines, bordered by polluted and degraded real estate?

If there is one reason why life in Chicago is so alienated and unviable, it is the domination of the automobile over the pedestrian. And there is one simple solution to the problem of livability here: take down the expressways, restore the urban fabric that was taken away from us, build a city for people, not cars. Undo the work of Dan Ryan, Jr. and Richard J. Daley – men who, in philosopher Marshall Berman’s phrase, saw themselves as “demurges of a state-funded modernity,” wielding a mea su re over neighborhoods that were seen not as places in themselves, but rather as obstacles to progress, to movement, to the going-nowhere-quickly dynamic of postwar American life.

19

Unelected Chicago Board of Education  
Mary Zerkel

For twenty years this rotating cast of bankers, PR shills, charter school investors, and the super-wealthy have presided over the privatiza tion of our public school system and the destruction of neighborhood schools.

Having secured the power to SOLELY appoint the Chicago Board of Education, having secured the power to SOLELY appoint the Chicago Board of Education, and paved the way for more charters. Ryan, Jr.? How many lives were disrupted by these broad and brutal straight lines, bordered by polluted and degraded real estate?

21

Mathias “Paddy” Bauler  
Anonymous

Alderman Mathias “Paddy” Bauler believed Chicago wasn’t ready for reform and lived his life accordingly, serving on the City Council from 1933-1967. From his saloon on North Avenue, in the 43rd ward, he ruled like a feudal prince, dispensing favors and punishments and doing very little work—he often regarded city council meetings as naptime. Bauler is one of the last in a line of saloonkeeper aldermen, such as John Powers, nemesis to Jane Addams, and Michael “Hinky Dink” Kenna, subject along with his First Ward counterpart John “Bathhouse” Coughlin of Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan’s Lords of the Levee (1943), who were capable of turning a bar and its patrons into a loyal and unsassable base of power. Like Powers, Kenna, and Coughlin, Bauler engaged in very run-of-the-mill grafts and election fixing. His designa tion, as the jagoffs call it, is due largely to his boorish personality, regarded as colorful by some, and his brazeness. For example, Kenna never took a drunken shot at a Chicago police officer and got away with it, but Bauler did. Powers never boasted of his corruption, while, Bauler, in the aftermath of a difficult 1939 reelection, made his infamous “Chi cago ain’t ready for reform” remark, which now appears in pretty much anything written that’s critical of politics in the city. Worst of all, however, is that this rotund, boozed-soaked, and jolly “Irish”-man had parents of German ethnicity. Only a jagoff pretends to be Chicago Irish, as the city is reminded of every March.

22

Urban Planners on 1900 Farwell Block Club, plus Alderman Joe Moore (49th)  
Anonymous neighbor

Some jagoffs reshape the whole city to suit themselves.

The residential street Farwell Avenue was primarily one way eastbound from Western Avenue to the lake. In December 1957, Ald. Joe Moore (49th) OK’d changing ONE BLOCK of the short two-way stretch of Farwell between Clark Street and Ridge Avenue to one way. Going west. In attempting to address the traffic concerns of one NIMBY block, new problems were created, including diversion of traffic to a neighbor ing street with a playlot and many near-accidents on Ridge as con fused drivers discovered that they could no longer turn either east or west onto Farwell. This change was foisted on the community fortuitely. The original request came from the members of the 1900 Farwell Ave block club, who complained of the amount and speed of traffic coming off of Ridge. Neighbors on surrounding blocks objected—most people thought it was selfish to calm traffic on your own street by diverting it to other blocks. Residents of the other blocks were told by Ald. Joe Moore that a city traffic study would be done and shared with resi dents before any decision was finalized, but suddenly in December, the 1900 block of Farwell was made one way. Moore chose not to share the results of the study and to ignore its results, which stated that an area-wide solution should be considered “rather than focusing on a single street such as Farwell.”

The Jagoffs:

1. Neighbors who make their own block nicer by shifting problems to other blocks are jagoffs.
2. Ald. Joe Moore, prevaricator and just another hack who paints himself as a progressive but actually operates as the king of his own fiefdom, is another jagoff.
3. The City Traffic Department, which should have a spine and not allow aldermen to make these types of decisions on a whim, is a bureaucracy of jagoffs.

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William Hale Thompson

As the name suggests, William Hale Thompson came from a long-established and well-respected family, but he is better remembered by his nickname, “Big Bill.” He holds the distinction of being the last self-identified Republican to serve as Mayor of Chicago, having left office in the early 1930s and effectively destroying the brand. His cozy relationship with criminal figures during the era of prohibition is not enough to earn the designation of jagoff. No, what makes “Big Bill” a jagoff is the loud-mouthed and boorish behavior that characterized his administration. Cognizant of the city’s large German population, he remained less than neutral during the early years of the First World War, openly threatening to punch the nose of George V of England. Once he claimed he was going to engage an opponent in a public debate and then showed up with a rat in a cage (a stand-in for the opponent), which he then harangued. All of this could be written off as mere political theater, except that “Big Bill” used these antics to distract from the flagrant breaking of laws he was elected to enforce. Let’s just say that a safe full of undocumented money was discovered upon his death. But his jagoffery did have its upside: his ego ensured that countless bridges and other structures got built, and he recognized the importance of the black community to the Republican Party and supported some progressive measures to secure their vote.

The Jacksons: Jesse, Jr. & Sandi

Once Chicago’s African American royalty, the Jacksons have become exemplary jagoffs.

It’s not just that the U.S. Representative from Illinois’s Second District and his Seventh Ward Alderman wife were corrupt, embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars from their campaign funds to bankroll their everyday living. Mere corruption does not a jagoff make. Their jagoffery comes from the spectacularly stupid and inane form their corruption took. They didn’t spend their money getting allies elected, buying off judges, influencing politics. They spent it on spectacularly ugly and stupid home décor. A fedora that once belonged to the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. Bruce Lee memorabilia. Two stuffed elk heads. Cigars, dry cleaning, appliances for their kitchen.

Elk heads? Bear heads, ok, but elk? Neither of them ever represented Elk Grove Village, what’s the connection? Jagoffery is the connection. Unlike the scions of white political dynasties—Daley, Madigan, Burke, Melt come to mind—the Jacksons never learned from Jesse, Sr. how electoral politics should be played, since Jesse, Sr. himself was never elected to anything.

Great corrupt Chicago politicians die after serving some time in jail, with shoeboxes full of cash to cushion their twilight years. The Jacksons’ impossibly venal corruption got them some jail time, endless embarrassment, and should remind Chicago’s political class of the one rule that successful political jagoffs never forget: Don’t Get Caught.

Rahm Emanuel

A child of White Flight, the vertically-challenged Rahm Emanuel spent his formative years in Wilmette, suckling on the elitism and racism of the North Shore. After a brief flirtation with the arts (hence, “Tiny Dancer”), Rahm chose power. A master of money politics, he specialized in selling the soul of the Democratic Party to Wall Street. After a stint as White House Chief of Staff, his principal responsibility being to convince President Obama to betray every campaign promise he ever made, he coveted Obama’s job. But with no executive experience, and the public image of a Walking Personality Disorder, he had to remake himself. So he parachuted into Chicago and purchased the Office of Mayor.

He planned to piss us off, abusing the base being the path to success for Democratic politicians. Rahm is White Flight’s Revenge, withdrawing resources from African Americans to promote ethnic cleansing, busting unions, selling public assets to Wall Street cronies, all the while keeping a public lid on his explosive temper. It’s not enough for Rahm to be the Biggest Jagoff in Chicago. He wants to be the Biggest Jagoff on the planet. He wants to be President, and he’ll destroy Chicago to do it.
Types of Jagoffs

Bernard Epton

Despite thirteen years in the Illinois General Assembly and a failed bid to buy the White Sox (with comedian Danny Thomas), Bernard “Bernie” Epton was little known in Chicago when he won the Republican nomination in the 1983 mayoral election. Expected to face well-funded incumbent Jane Byrne in the general, Epton’s fortunes changed when Harold Washington upset Byrne to secure the Democratic nomination. Though Epton said he wouldn’t run on race, his campaign slogan “Before it’s too late” was deemed a dog whistle by everyone, it seemed, but the candidate himself. Eight white Democratic committeemen endorsed Epton. Six endorsed Washington.

In the end Washington was elected mayor, receiving less than 20 percent of the white vote. The Epton landslide among white voters masked a division by zip code: it was as possible to be white and live in Lakeview and not know anyone who voted for Epton as it was to live in Bridgeport and know no one who didn’t. Whether Epton was a racist or merely a useful idiot swept along by a cabal of Republicans, ethnic whites, and political opportunists remains an open question—as does the question, Which is worse?

The Clout Jagoff

This guy is one of the more omnipresent and omni-annoying of Chicago’s jagoff fauna. The Clout jagoff is a city worker, often a cop or fireman and usually white, male, overweight, and mustachioed. This species of Chicago jagoff suffers from the lingering after-effects of intense inbreeding, as his relatives populate city, county, and state payrolls for generations, and tend to mate with females of their own kind. His natural habitat is the neighborhood corner bar, but he can be found in every drinking establishment from Gibson’s to nameless Old Style sign joints on obscure side streets. Despite avidly rooting for Chicago sports teams, including their African-American players, he vocally despises minorities and affirmative action. His limited intellect cannot grasp the fact that because he got his city job through the clout of blood relatives, he too is the beneficiary of the primary Chicago form of affirmative action. That’s not special treatment on his behalf, that’s just the way things work in this town, according to this breed of Chicago jagoff. The descendant of once-discriminated-against immigrants, he also will openly despise contemporary immigrants, except for hot Slavic or Irish women who work in bars along South Archer or North Milwaukee Avenues.

Bruce Rauner

New Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner is passionate about protecting people’s right to work and “empowering” them by liberating them from the power of those pesky labor unions. All while wearing his beloved Carhartt jacket and $18 watch. Never mind that this man of the people profited handsomely from his investments in nursing homes that cut staff while patients were neglected and sickened. A good buddy of Rahm Emanuel, he wants to send all kids to privately-run for-profit charter schools—while apparently clouting his daughter into an elite admissions public school, while laying off their parents and slashing their pensions. It looks like Bruce Rauner loves a fight as much as he loves a bottle from a wine club where membership alone runs $100,000 a year. A proud member of the 0.01 percent, he’s already declared his intentions to crush the unions that represent greedy teachers and lazy government workers. What a jagoff.
JAGOFF CITY

TEENAGE BOYS WITH YOUR HANDS DOWN THE FRONT OF YOUR BRAND NEW 
$500 JEANS—THROUGH TO YOUR 
EXPERIMENTAL EXHIBITIONISM. I TIRE OF THESE 
LASCIVIOUS MUTUAL MALEBILIZATION SESSIONS— 
PERHAPS THERE IS A BATH 
HOUSE OR PUBLIC PARK YOU 
CAN FIND TO FONDLE 
YOUR GRUBBY LITTLE 
RODS TOGETHER— 
JAGOFFS!!

SPORTS GUYS OUTSIDE BOOS WITH BIG-SCREEN 
TELEVISION WALLS, DISCUSSING "THEIR" BIG WIN— 
GLEEFULLY RECITING PLAY-BY-PLAYS, RELIVING 
STATS AND REVISITING COACH STRATEGIES, ALL WHILE 
HUFFING CO SMOKE AND STROKING THE SLEAZY 
COCKS OF THEIR JERSEY-CLAD RELIES.

BY EDDY RIVERA

BY GEORGE PORTEUS
So I UH bought these flowers yesterday and they are ALREADY DEAD!

Oooo what’s fresh today? I want something REAL FRESH!

I REALLY messed up!!! Can you help me???
I need some flowers for my Girl Friend.

OH! I can’t decide!
I want them ALL!

Give ME a Refund NOW!!
My plant is DEAD!

So life, what flowers last the longest???
The… Forever??
Pub crawlers

Paul Dailing

A brunette with long, flowing hair and a body no one has past twenty-five showed her moves. She whipped and whirled, flipped her hair like women in '80s rock videos did to imply orgasm.

She leaped on her man at one point, wrapping thin legs around him as he continued his dance. She stumbled back through broken glass and suds. An older man from Kansas had to stop her from plowing headlong into a load-bearing column.

But the blues club didn’t kick the Gong Show pub-crawler jagoffs out until the dustbin incident.

As a worker tried to talk the couple out of dancing in broken glass, a jagoff in a Northwestern football jersey snuck up and took the broom and dustbin.

He started sweeping. He did it with a grin as his friends laughed and cheered.

He was sweeping in a bar! Him! He of the expensive college and football body! He was doing a black man’s job! What a hoot!

The bartenders and bouncers kicked them out. All of those jagoffs.

Somewhere, Gong Show wobbled into the night, to the next bar, to shenanigans and mugging about doing servants’ work. There will be hangovers, high fives, and bright-futured children only cleaning up after themselves if they think it’s funny.

12.5-er

Jamie Trecker & Shanna Van Volt

From the vantage point of your neighborhood barkeep, there is perhaps no bigger Chicago jagoff than the “12.5-er.” This is a special kind of asshole, forged in the student hells of DePaul or, say, Loyola, that chokes bars from Wrigleyville to Avondale and points north. Sporting upturned polo shirt collars, perhaps even a rakish backwards Cubs hat, these motherfuckers flaunt a very special understanding of the phrase “customer service.”

You’ve seen them. These are the guys who order Miller Lites for all their bros, while sharing their “insights” into the craft beer scene with you. They summon you by first name from across the bar on first meeting, as if they actually know you. And when time comes to pay the tab, this trustifarian will inevitably tip half the amount he should.

Other signs of this genus of Chicagous jagofficus: he speaks at a volume more appropriate to an in-use general aviation runway. You kicked him out in the middle of the day for fighting with a Cardinals fan. Or, hey, you found him hurling in your john at the end of your shift because your barback mistook him for a regular and slid him a drink after you’d cut his ass off. And, blissfully unaware of how the service economy works, he left you $5 on a $50 tab.

That’s a real Chicago jagoff, right there.

The “My Chicago” Jagoff

Bill Savage

This individual can be of any race, ethnicity, class, or gender, and is defined by the perpetual insistence that his or her neighborhood is the authentic Chicago. “My Chicago,” this jagoff will ALWAYS say “is the real Chicago.” If this jagoff is from the North Side, the South Side is just a wasteland of crime and corrupt politicians with a ballpark and a few museums. If this jagoff is from the South Side, the North Side is just yuppies and bike messengers and the Gay Pride Parade. If this jagoff is a Cubs fan, Sox fans are just thugs. If this jagoff is a Sox fan, Cubs fans are not real Chicagoans because they’re not working-class South Siders (This, by the by, is the only way in which Studs Terkel was ever a jagoff). The “My Chicago” jagoff insists that his or her favorite bar, or hot dog stand, or pizza joint is the best in Chicago, despite never having, you know, tried any others beyond the boundaries of their neighborhood or parish. If the “My Chicago” jagoff has moved to the suburbs, he or she will still insist that the area its family fled is more “real” than anywhere else, including the white flight suburb they now infest. This particular breed of Chicago jagoff is endemic to all parts of town but is most annoying when a way with words leads to work in the media, where they perpetuate bullshit about sports loyalties, pizza, ketchup on hot dogs, and other foundational myths of Chicago Authenticity.

The “New York Sucks” Jagoff

Sam Weiner

New York City exists. This fact drives certain Chicagoans absolutely fucking nuts. There’s really not any competition between the cities—indeed, part because New Yorkers don’t see a need to compete with Chicago. This fact also drives certain Chicagoans absolutely nuts.

The “New York Sucks” jagoff takes every opportunity to badmouth New York. To him, every mention of New York City calls for a red-faced, dissertation-like defense of Chicago’s relative cleanliness and affordability. His pride forces him to scream belligerently whenever a New York sports game is on TV. His Big Apple vs. Big Shoulders arguments are so precise and effective, they barely need to be made: “New York City? Just look at that place!”

Nobody in the world loves New York as much as certain Chicago Jagoffs hate it.
Bike Ninja Jagoffs

BILL SAVAGE

This individual, who can be of any gender, is the bicyclist who makes other two-wheelers look bad. He or she provides fodder for anti-biking jagoffs in the media (cough, John Kass, cough, and endless Local Crank Letter Writer Mopes) by riding recklessly, blowing through not just stop signs at vacant intersections, but red lights with active cross-traffic. The BNJ thinks his or her superiorly honed biking skills allow them to do whatever the hell they want, as though other bikers, pedestrians, and drivers don’t exist. They dress in dark colors, ride bikes without lights (sometimes without brakes) and often become hood ornaments for drivers who never saw them coming. The BNJ will ride right up the taillight of the responsible cyclist who is stopping appropriately and giving the right of way to those who have it, blow past, and create nerve-jangling chaos, for which the responsible cyclist will be blamed. This particular brand of Jagoff often congregates in massive groups known as Critical Mass, the Bicycle-Rights equivalent of Anti-Choice protesters who wave placards of bloody fetuses outside abortion clinics.

A City Cyclist Responds

ANDRÉS CARRASQUILLO

I am a cyclist in the city. You, a driver in a car, see me wherever you go. I blow through stop signs and yield at stoplights. I participate in bicycle parades on avenues like Milwaukee and on streets like Clark. When we share a lane on the way to a hipster haven like Logan Square and I get a little too close for your comfort, or when I weave in front of you in the line of traffic stopped up at Davis Street in Evanston, or when you simply take issue with my very existence among motor vehicles, you might call me by a different name: I am a jagoff. I assert my place on the street, and once you get the chance, you assert yourself past me, which honestly makes the acceleration of your car sound kind of pissy. What explains your displeasure for me? Why do you like to steer into me to clip my wheel? Why do you slow down to shout invectives out your open window? Occasionally, yes, I ride like a jagoff, but sometimes you drive like a real asshole. Maybe you actually fear for my life, and this is the twisted way you express it, since the danger I put myself in might cause you to imagine the same fear I do: a body mashed between your wheel and axle. Why not suffer my jagoffery and drive a little more carefully, because after all, from the inside of your car, I am just one of those little bike people? As you drive away you might yell some stupid name at me. But you know what? Considering the alternative, I’ll take it.
Types of Jagoffs

Parking Lane Drivers
MATT LAURITZEN
People drive in the parking lane of a one-lane-each-way street because they must think they are special and allowed to skip everyone else. There is no way they actually think it is a lane for driving. This happens on southbound Milwaukee Ave. every morning. Increased levels of jagoffery occur when they encounter a parked car and then must cut back into traffic, usually in a manner that makes you hit the brakes or crash into them. They cannot wait. They are more important than anyone else, and your parking lane is their express lane. Jagoffs.

Chicago Drivers
CAROL LACHAPELLE
They race through parking lots, pause at stop signs, and blow through alleys, sometimes while honking, most often not. They are Chicago drivers. They are jagoffs. They accelerate when approaching red lights then come to a screeching stop in the middle of the crosswalk. They don’t back up. They are Chicago drivers. They are jagoffs. They make right turns on red while looking left; they drive too close to bike lanes; they drive in bike lanes. They are Chicago drivers. They are jagoffs. They do all this while on their cell phones or while texting.

I’m neither a Chicago driver nor a jagoff. I’m an urban walker and cyclist. In 2013 I was hit on my bike while crossing legally at a three-way stop on Pratt and Bell. That Chicago driver not only struck my rear tire but did so in a big white Mercedes, then fled the scene.

He was immediately pursued by a witness, a Chicago driver who is not a jagoff. She pulled him over blocks away, then made him come back and apologize to me.

I was a month shy of my 70th birthday.

Jaywalking Jagoff
V. FRANCON
This is the person who takes the whole “Cars need to yield to me” thing a bit too far and ignores DON’T WALK signs and yellow lights or just walks across a street when they feel like it despite the presence of traffic.

In short, these jagoffs walk when they should not walk, adding to the already dangerous roads. They are jagoffs because they don’t feel the need to wait thirty goddamn seconds for a light to change, or they think that they can walk at a pace sufficient to cross a street when the yellow light and their own lazy shuffle confirm otherwise. I used to give these people the benefit of the doubt—they must be too stupid to understand the basic rules of society. Now I know they are simply selfish jagoffs.

Secretary of State Jagoff
AMY BETH DANZER
Standing before the Secretary of State jagoff, with a bulletproof glass between the two of you, you feel like Josef K. from The Trial; the universe has declared you guilty of something, and the Secretary of State jagoffs are there to – not facilitate, but – deal with you. They are not interested in helping you one iota. They assume you are either a swindler or a disorganized, dimwitted troll and treat you as though you just rang the doorbell of their home during a family dinner. They are put out by your very presence. If your paperwork is not in order, they send you to another line without telling you what the other line is for, or they send you home with a vague idea that you were missing something without any clue as to what that something was. If your paperwork is in order, they stamp off on it with the apathy of a disenfranchised cog, avoiding eye contact all the while.

The LiPaWoP
ED HERMANN
At first it may seem that the Lincoln Park Woman of Privilege is a creature deserving our pity - stressed trying to remember the name or location of that cute new organic hand-crafted cosmetics shop; worried about the slow lines at Whole Foods; whether she’ll be late for yoga; maintaining her chirpy optimism despite spilling her coffee; chatting about the color, grain, and gloss of the rare tropical hardwoods in her new custom cabinets; unable to find Brazil on a map but knowing it’s a cool place cuz Zumba’s from there; loving the new doublewide stroller (“the nanny feels like she’s so in control”) – but as she chats, car door open blocking the street, oblivious to the three cars waiting, it is in fact she, ("sorry, I’m in a rush here") with a flip of her perfect blond mane stepping into the cab we’ve hailed, who pity us.
First Wave Gentrifiers Who Protest Second Wave Gentrifiers

BILL SAVAGE

These are the poor huddled masses of recent college graduates or dropouts who move into that hip new neighborhood. Wicker Park in the ’90s, Pilsen in the ’00s, Bridgeport in the Teens. They like the neighborhood’s character, especially the cheap rent and proximity to public transportation and their Loop sell-out McJobs. An urban infrastructure that includes former industrial or warehouse spaces that can be made into lofts helps. After a critical mass of First Wave Gentrifiers (FWGs) accumulates, someone opens a coffee shop. Then a tattoo parlor. Then a bar that serves more than just Old Style or Zywiec or Tecate. Then an art gallery or a “performance space.”

People who lived there in the first place—immigrants or their children, from some Latin American or Eastern European region that the FWG might have studied in college—have to move out due to rising rents. This opens more space for even more FWGs. But then, their mortal enemies, The Second Wave Gentrifiers, arrive.

The FWGs don’t just rent, they buy, driving up rents. Soon someone opens a bistro. Then not just a café, but a coffee roaster! Strollers appear, some of them doublewide, and trendy dog breeds, instead of shelter mutts and rescued pit bulls, crap up the sidewalks.

FWGs protesting the presence in their sacred neighborhoods of SWGs are jagoffs of the first order. How dare the SWGs do to the FWGs what the FWGs did to the neighborhood in the first place? They are like the southern “right to work” state textile mill workers, who bitch about losing their jobs to even cheaper workers in Mexico or China, when they themselves stole unionized jobs from New England mills a generation earlier. No one likes the taste of their own medicine, least of all Gentrifier jagoffs.

Thrifters

HONNA EICHLER GEORGE

While having the means to buy new garments, Thrifters spend their time and energy roaming through low-income resale shops (Salvation Army, Village Discount, or Unique Thrift Store) to discover the perfect find. Their zeal for a deal is often at the expense of store employees, as Thrifters conduct their methodical search and displace half of what they touch in the process. This is all necessary, of course, because a Thrifter’s outfit must be as unique as their personality, which will aid in separating them from any established social order. The main social disorder Thrifters cause, however, is the discarded, forgotten clothing left throughout the store in their pursuit of, say, a worn leather clutch or “authentic” plaid shirt. These piles are then restocked by low-income workers and stumbled over by those who could truly benefit from the discounted prices. While Thrifting is justified for pro-environmental reasons, Thrifters are defined by their lack of care for the environment and people they encounter in resale shops.

The Ol’ Timer Who’s Only 20 Jagoff

SAM WEINER

“Damn, damn, damn. This old neighborhood sure has changed.” It makes total sense to hear this from a retiree visiting his hometown, but only in Chicago will you hear it from someone too young to legally drink who just moved one neighborhood west six months earlier. Get a tour of the North Side from one of these young greasers and be treated to history lessons like:

“See this bar? Used to be a different bar.”

“This used to be the biggest roller rink in the state. Then yuppies demolished it.”

“A frozen yogurt shop? This used to be a . . . well, I don’t remember what it was but it wasn’t yogurt.”

These lifelong experts are equally able to hold forth on subjects like local fence-height ordinances, real estate advice (“Get a two-flat.”), and why the South Side is the “real” Chicago despite the fact that they’ve never been there. Unlike most Chicago jagoffs, however, these old souls mean no harm—they just love the Chicago they grew up with, and that’s not so bad, even if the old neighborhood has been taken over by yuppies.

Hipster Musician

CHRISTOPHER PETERSON

Here’s to you, O Aspiring Hipster Musician. Here’s to the smug smirk buried beneath your ironic Rutherford B. Hayes beard as you judge me in the acoustic room at Chicago Music Exchange while I strum a Radiohead tune instead of a B-side from the up-and-coming indie-folk-pop duo that only you and your axle biker gang bandmates are cool enough to have seen before Pitchfork mentioned them. Here’s to your just-load-enough-for-everyone-to-hear profundities about how Arcade Fire sold out long before Reflektor as you seek out that vintage paisley guitar strap for your new tenor banjos, which is only new to you because you wouldn’t be caught dead buying anything new off the showroom floor. Here’s to your first show at Empty Bottle, sipping your PBR during the horn intro while your high-waisted fiancée with the Victorian-styled sleeve tattoos and her layered-local friends talk about your latest excursion to the microbrewery that just opened up outside of Milwaukee. Here’s to your Rusty Nails before dinner and your judgmental Millennial entitlement and your Bizarro-world Yuppie groupthink. Play on, O Aspiring Hipster Musician, but rest assured that your upcoming vinyl release will never be swapped at the handmade markets.

“Get Oprah!” Jagoffs

GREG SALUSTRO

Hundreds of thousands of us in Chicago work at fantastic nonprofits; we love our work and how we’re making the city better. But a week doesn’t go by when we don’t hear from the “Get Oprahs.” Fundraiser coming up? Just get Oprah! Work with kids, women, poverty, education, arts, media? “You should get Oprah!” Asking someone for money? “Well, I can’t help you but you know who would? Oprah!” These jagoffs, who can afford to help, just want Oprah to take over.
Yes, the Jagoff reputation comes as far north as you can imagine.

Incredible: 50¢ big chocolate bar would cost $1.99.

Boring: Buy it anyway, cause it’s organic.

Should I ever get the chance to say no to them... Their power becomes useless.

I am also a Jagoff.

I am the Jagoff who stands behind the counter and isn’t bound to serve you with a smile.

In the Jagoff that has been thinking on his shoulders to control the patrons at this great restaurant, who can he be.

The Jagoff who doesn’t wear deodorant because he has heavy metals in it.

The Jagoff who yells from 6 WGE, Fane 6-C1, and hates the bus.

The Jagoff who thinks he knows everything.

* J.O. noise. *

They let their children run wild in the store.

They ask for a price check.

They throw debit cards on the wooden counter.
Youths Riding the #66:

KATHERINE UHRICH

Yours is a special type of jagoffery: you accost the weak. You inflict your teen stupidity and egomania on sleepy, pre-caffeinated commuters. I don’t care that you jump the line of us queuing chumps. I mind that, once on board and shielded from rain, you can’t find your Ventra card. It’s not your loud music I detest. It’s your pathetic attempts at singing aloud with it. I’m not frustrated that your backpack gets its own seat. I’m pissed that you ignore me when I ask, “Can I sit here?” It’s not your poor posture that makes me wince. It’s your legs’ invasive, obtuse angle allowing me only a half-seat. Look, you little slack-jawed imbecile—I’m a grown-ass woman and have no interest in your half-formed genitalia! I don’t cringe at your slang-ridden dialogue about who you will next beat the shit out of... actually, yes. That is worrisome, and I do cringe.

Jagoff Youths, I know you face teenage strife and pain, but until you display one ounce of citizenship, may you forever turn the corner as the last of four accordion buses lumbers off. Twenty-eight minutes ‘til the next bus, jagoff!

Slow-Walking Cell Phone on Metro Platform

MAX NORTON

Taking the Metra into the city ain’t half bad, but it doesn’t matter whether your train is pulling into Ogilvie, Union Station, or LaSalle Street, you will always find this little jag blocking you whenever you’re in a hurry. More times than not, this is a five-foot tall girl in her early twenties wearing a silk scarf regardless of the season. For this little jagoff, it doesn’t matter that hundreds of tired, hard-working people are trying to get to work on time, or trying to get home after a long day. Because none of those people matter, or even exist, for this little jagoff. There is only her. This is her world and she is the queen. And her millions of followers cannot go another moment waiting for her to post a selfie on insta, or tweet about her fascinating day: #trainlyfe #newscarf. If you get stuck behind her, you’re fucked. She moves like a snail on heroin. You can see an obvious obstruction of flow ahead, but cannot determine the cause. She is too short to see in the crowd. You’re stuck behind her until she comes to a dead stop, dead center in front of the exit. She needs to pin the most important thing on Pinterest before she ventures out into the either way too hot or way too cold for her beautiful scarf weather.

The El Door Blocker Jagoff

BILL SAVAGE

This jagoff’s natural habitat is the CTA train car, though related subspecies can be found on CTA and Pace buses and the Metro. This particular strain of Chicago jagoff can be of any race, gender, age, or class. These people board El trains and immediately stop and stand in the doorway, blocking the movement of people behind them, even when the empty car has many seats available. Their primary identifying characteristic, besides rude selfishness, is stupidity. They think that by standing in the doorway, they will arrive at their eventual destination faster, since they will be able to get off the train first. But their obstruction of the door means that it takes longer at each stop for other passengers to get on or off the train, and this time adds up. So while they will indeed be the first jagoff to disembark at their eventual stop, the train will be later than it might have been because of their clueless and rude obstruction of our common public transitional space.
Types of Jagoffs

The Old Left

August Spies

Don’t trust anyone over thirty. Purity is an illusion; it’s hard to grow up without selling out. The mantra is particularly apropos when it comes to the institutions that emerged from the rancid afterbirth of Chicago’s 1960s glory days as a hub of leftwing politics. Today, the specter of the Old Left—white, Marxist, “color blind,” with a penchant for hawkin’ papers—has made a business of driving a wedge between would-be activists and the city’s radical history. Mother knows best, and she wants you at that desk, not out in the streets.

One socialist-rag-turned-progressive-glossy has spearheaded the movement to separate radical words from radical deeds in the name of the dollar: In These Times. Though ITT, a nonprofit labor magazine, counts a number of today’s most impressive young journalists among its contributors, the magazine still pushes a hardline Old Left. ITT was called out in a recent VICE report on the abuse of unpaid intern labor in the publishing industry (though they reportedly receive a modest travel stipend, probably so they can get back to their SROs?), and according to one source, recently stiffed a comrade delivery kid on a tip, the ultimate faux pas, no matter your politics.

As an observer quipped: “Sorry, can’t tip you today, but if you try to form a union, we might have an intern blog about it. Sound fair?”

Trapped In Amber Liberal Jagoff

Luann Paladino

The trapped-in-amber liberals busy throwing contemporary progressives under the bus to look good to their imagined minority audience. I know someone teaching a class on media and race, and in the process she holds her students hostage to her once-radical past. To demonstrate pervasive racism, she shows them commercials that have only white people in them and ignores real media progress like the recent Cheerios commercial with the mixed race family, or any of the Target commercials with gay couples, or that extended god-awfully-sentimental Tylenol commercial depicting the “new Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving family.” Hey, jagoffs: come into the twenty-first century, enjoy some of our victories over racism.

The Space-Grabber

Vincent Truman

I take you to that great breeding ground of jagoffery: the CTA. One day in early 2014, long before the corporate jagoffery of Ventra, when #chiberia was trending on Instagram, I had found a rare seat on my commute home. A bearded Mr. Jagoff sat beside me and immediately the problems began. While we were both layered in our gay winter apparel, Mr. Jagoff decided he had too much clothing and began to jerk his elbow aggressively against mine. In front, then behind, then in front again, like an angry infant unable to attain comfort in his crib. A moment would transpire, and he’d do it again, as if he hoped, by mere friction, to wear down my arm and gain his anointed 75% of the two-seater. Withered sighs and double takes to other passengers followed. Finally, he ejected himself from the seat and stood with his back to the door, repeating his pained moans when anyone entered or alit the train and entered his sacred personal space. Eventually, he departed into the night, disappearing like a jagoff troll.

The Totebags

Kathy O’Neill

The Totebags show up at lectures. They ask too many questions, take too long with the set up, and eat too many purple grapes at the reception. The Totebag respects the speaker’s opinion, though he disagrees. He whispers through the whole lecture, raises his hand, the WHOLE TIME during Q and A, and walks in front of the projector. TWICE.

The Totebag DOES NOT BUY YOUR BOOK. He borrows it from a friend and it comes back with notes in the margins and covered in hummus. At the podium for Q and A, the Totebag’s Q is not really a Q at all. It is a manifesto, a rant, a thesis. But he tacks a question mark on at the end.

The Totebag went to summer camp with Fran Leibowitz. There are women Totebags, oh, yes there are. Madame Totebag is gentler in her approach. “I liked your book, but.....” And then recites a review of your book, co-written by her calico cat named Walter Cronkite. Ms. Totebag brings her own snacks in said tote, a pungent and noisy arrangement of homemade trail mix, granola, and Count Chocula.

A lecture, a panel discussion, a symposium, a day of puppetry. They’re there, waiting, with frayed and laminated articles from magazines long since gone out of business. The Totebag is everywhere, but always looking at his watch, can’t really talk, got to run, but will catch up with you at the Newberry next Saturday, or the Harold the week after that, or the Humanities Festival...
The “I Never Complain About The Weather, But…” Weather-Complaining Jagoff

SAM WEINER

Chicagoans can deal with winter. They persevere through cold snap after cold snap and unlike those whiners in LA or New York who can’t handle a couple days of below-freezing temps, most Chicagoans never complain. Which is why the few Chicagoans who do complain feel the need to always preface their complaints by saying, “Now, I never complain about the weather... [but let me complain about it right now].”

This particular type of jagoff would have us believe that he’d never stoop so low as to grumble about the cold—yet he simply must do so at this extraordinary moment. He is a model of perseverance, a hero of immense fortitude, but even he, who NEVER complains, finds that he must complain about being cold, if only to warn others!

He knows he should be ashamed of his inability to bear the weather. So he hopes that by adding that he, “Never complain, but...” his audience will forgive his childish sensitivity to the cold and that he doesn’t seem to understand that they are all dealing with the EXACT SAME WEATHER.

Here’s a tip for these jagoffs: Shut up. Everyone knows it’s cold. The weather you’re currently complaining about is not especially bad, or historically bad, or even the most bad you’ve personally experienced. It’s just normal bad. Because in Chicago, the worst possible bad weather is still normal. And if you’re going to complain about bad weather, spare us the “I never complain, but” lead-in and cut to your jagoff point.

Random Extras

HONNA EICHLER GEORGE

Random Extra jagoffs are the ones who have been an extra in a show or movie filmed in Chicago and have at least ten conversational segues to bring up this fact. They believe they get more conversation time because it is important for you to understand how close they were standing to a well-known actor, what they were wearing, and what would be communicated to this actor off the set, if such an opportunity were to arise. The Random Extras are not professional actors but might convince you otherwise; they did, after all, sign a release form and help themselves to the snack table. Everyone who lives in Chicago has been on camera, but the Random Extras believe the camera that captured them in a scene that was not used is better than the one that filmed you getting cash at the ATM.

People Who Grew Up On Wine Coolers Jagoffs

PETER HAND

The microbrew jagoff hails beverages that are “tasty.” “Tasty.”

A Starbucks Frappuccino is tasty. A pumpkin spice latte is tasty. Beer is not tasty.

Beer tastes like beer, the beverage that didn’t go down as easy as a tasty, say, Kool-Aid... when you were nine and had stolen your first beer. God made it that way so nine-year-olds don’t drink so much beer as to get drunk (if nine-year-olds are gonna get drunk it should be on schnapps or Bacardi Breezers or something... tasty).

The fruity microbrew jagoff grew up on Zima, or Bartles & Jaymes... then had to stomach cheap beer to get through life on the land-grant quad... then when he can finally afford it, he finds a pumpkin spice ale.

Oatmeal. Nut brown. These are the flavors your Aunt Fannie enjoys... of General Foods International Coffees and store-brand cookies.

Good beer is to cheap beer what steak is to hamburger... you don’t graduate from hamburger to Pop Tarts. Jever or Radeberger or Lezajsk or Pilsner Urquell don’t taste like Bud.

The Coffee Shop Complicated Drink Right NOW Jagoff

CHARLIE DAVIS

Coffee is technically considered a stimulant drug and when people don’t get their fix when they want it, the jagoff grows in an incredible Hulkish fashion.

During the early morning shift, like any coffee shop at 6:30 or 7:00 am, business folks needing their daily pick me up before their commute downtown slam the café.

During this short period of time, several jagoffs inevitably order a complicated hand-crafted beverage, i.e. a dry cappuccino or a large mocha with extra froth and whip and two ice cubes or extra hot hot chocolate, and then explain to us that they need the beverage in less than thirty seconds or they are going to miss their bus and it will be our fault that they are late to work. Unless it’s a drip coffee or water for tea, drinks take at least two minutes to make perfectly. Finally, if for some reason a miracle happens and I or another barista can get the complicated beverage to them before their bus arrives, the drink tastes like shit. We know it’s going to taste like shit. If a latte or cappuccino is rushed, it is going to taste terrible.

Then the drama of “remake this!” or “I want to talk to the manager” ensues, and then sometimes they get the drink remade, a refund, and stroll out the door like they were never in a rush to begin with.

And on top of that, these jagoffs never tip.
Locals Who Hate Newcomers

CHRIS BROHTERON

When I first moved to Chicago from Atlanta, I scoped out the neighborhood, trying to find the right bar for me. I went into a bar near Loyola. I had just started graduate school and figured it would be a good place to meet other students. After a few visits, I was acquainted with everyone, and I heard the term “jagoff” come up in conversation. I had never heard of it before and asked what it meant. I was informed that I was a jagoff because I was an out-of-towner ruining the established order of the bar. So I promptly left and I have never set foot in the place since. But it quickly became clear to me—as I found other places for a beer—that a jagoff is the bartender who drives off good business by telling patrons they’re not welcome because they don’t fit in. And a good thing, too: some jagoff places you probably don’t want to fit into.

The One-Man Neighborhood Watch

JOHN SHUSTER

“The neighborhood didn’t used to be like this.” You gird yourself for what’s about to come, you’ve heard it a million times before, its exact wording changing over the years, to adapt to new codes, but there it is, just as vile and racist as it would be in 1955, 1995, whenever. “Until they started to show up…” You’ve stopped listening. You realize you’ve come face to face with one of THOSE guys, who comments on every article about a shooting on the Trib, the Reader, DNAinfo, anywhere, who fancies himself the only one who tells it like it is: the One-Man Neighborhood Watch. Locked behind an extra lock he had to ASK the landlord to put in, he turns on the police scanner, every chirp and routine call validating him. Refreshing the news page to see if they posted about the shots on the 4000 block of wherever. “When I was a kid, you could walk in the park…” Your friends arrive, you nod, tell him to have a good night, try to be polite. He looks over: “Hipsters. Good sign...”

Lakeview Watchdogs

HONNA EICHLER GEORGE

Despite living in Chicago and in an area attracting youth, sports fans, and tourists alike, Lakeview Watchdogs seem surprised when beer cans appear in their yards, the occasional drunken brawl erupts, or people are smoking in parking lots. The disproportionate outrage experienced by Lakeview Watchdogs distinguishes them from the average city dweller or homeowner, who might find these occurrences annoying. Lakeview Watchdogs might say they are “protecting their neighborhood for those who pay taxes” and are often concerned when they notice someone not like them “lurking” about. To address these issues, Lakeview Watchdogs are in regular contact with the Chicago Police Department, their alderman’s office, and the City of Chicago to regulate the social service agencies that “are responsible” for attracting disruptive youth. Yes, Lakeview Watchdogs are the people who blame crime on local agencies providing services, including healthcare and shelter, to at-risk youth. Many Lakeview Watchdogs may not realize that in this past year alone there were 22,000 homeless youth registered as students in Chicago Public Schools (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 2014) and Lakeview is one of the safest neighborhoods to receive comprehensive support.

The I Think The Public Alley Is My Private Oasis Jagoff

AMY FRIEDMAN

Alleys in the city do not serve the same function as suburban driveways, though some seem to think they do. Alleys are for access, not for parking, though try telling that to the jagoff who parks his second and third cars there or insists that his kids’ nanny park in the alley to avoid taking a street spot. Garbage collection schedules don’t exist for this public space larcenist as old sofas and stoves from his most recent renovations litter the alley, even though they won’t be collected. Playsets for the children of this jagoff spill out from his garage into the alley as if it’s some kind of paved backyard. Floodlights the size of satellite dishes affixed to the top of the jagoff’s house, meant to cast light onto the alley, instead blind neighbors in every living room and bedroom within a block. The sound of the alley hijacker’s car horn is heard every time he pulls his car into or out of the alley. In the winter, he piles his snow up against your garage door.
BY KRYS TAL DIFRONZO

WRITE N BY MIKEY CARRETTA & DRAW N BY NATE MCDONOUGH
Dibs Jagoff

AMY BETH DANZER

The archaic system of claiming dibs in Chicago is already a borderline jagoff practice, where an individual shovels out a spot on a public street for their vehicle and secures said spot with lawn furniture, toy rocking horses, old keyboards, Virgin Marys, boxes of cereal, etc. until they next return home. While they are away at work, running errands, visiting friends, or even gone for the weekend, they expect no one else to use the – under less inclement circumstances – public space. A bona fide Dibs Jagoff is one who continues this practice even after the snow is gone. They continue to reserve public space for private use. Dibs Jagoffs should not be surprised to find said place holders thrown unto their lawns, smashed into little pieces, or sold on Craig’s List. Likewise, individuals who take on Dibs Jagoffs, beware of retaliation in the form of keyed cars, slashed tires, or broken windows. It’s a jungle out there!

And it can be even worse. As this Guide was going to press after the 5th-worst blizzard in Chicago history—now dubbed the Super Bowl Blizzard— we received this email from Ms. Danzer:

So... yesterday, I spent close to an hour shoveling around my car -- and this morning, I got up early and spent another half hour, shoveling the more recently fallen snow. Because I do not subscribe to “dibs” (I feel if everyone shovels their spot, we should all be cool and why shouldn’t others use my spot while I’m away?!) I did not leave anything to save the spot. When I arrived home from work tonight (worked through lunch so I could leave early to get a leg up on the parking sitch), I found two lamp shades marking my spot. A new dimension to dibs jagoffery! Of course, swiftly tossed the lamp shades into a nearby snow bank and proceeded to park my Toyota. But, can you believe that? Low.

We pray her car wasn’t covered in ice by morning. Dibs: the ultimate arena for jagoffery.

Dibs Jagoff, Part II

RANDY BUSHWA

The Dibs Abuser - a separate entity from the dibs/no dibs debate; this is a jagoff we can all agree on. This jagoff will do the minimal amount of work to actually clear his/her own spot, yet he/she will ride out the dibs privilege until past the bitter end. Johnny Dibs was seen pulling his car out of his spot after the big snow. He didn’t do any shoveling, just threw some milk crates in the space formerly protected by his rusted Taurus’s chassis. It’s now May and there’re only a couple sad nuggets of black ice sludge on the street, but Johnny is still fighting the good fight and leaving angry notes on any cars that creep on his undeserved dibs. Hey, Johnny, clean out that rat’s nest of junk in your garage and park in there, you bum.

The Rescue Dog Owner At The Bucktown/Lincoln Park Dog Park

AMY FRIEDMAN

Making small talk at the Churchill Field Dog Park, or anywhere else where those with money and canines congregate in the city, is impossible without hearing “my dog’s a rescue (fill in the breed).” Thanks, self-appointed philanthropist, but a rescue is not a breed. Terrier is a breed. Boxer is a breed. Rescue means you got a free fucking dog. Fine, you paid for its shots, or sprung to get its balls cut off, but other than that, you’re not Mia Farrow. You hardly opened your home and your heart to a dozen kids in need. You wanted a dog and you simply paid less than I did and less than you could afford to stand in the park recently re-designed for the upwardly mobile to tell me how magnanimous you are. Of course it’s great to rescue a dog. But do people with adopted children tell you that when you ask them how many kids they have? Right. This is the Chicago jagoff’s new way of giving back without actually giving back.

The Losing Their (dog) Shit Jagoff

JOHN DUDAS

It is possible for a person, sensitive to the offenses of jagoffs, to evolve into that which they are so quick to despise.

One afternoon I stepped out onto a sunny, Heart of Chicago sidewalk to find an angry, handwritten sign planted in a narrow strip of grass. It read, “Please pick up your dog’s shit! We play in this area, so please pick up your dog’s shit?!!! This goes for the whole block!”

This neighbor had finally crossed that narrow threshold, the fine line that separates jagoffs from decent citizens. In his emotional fit, he extended his expletive rage to the whole block (including the children who play there and are learning to read). The people who don’t pick up their dog’s shit are jagoffs, but no one has to be a jagoff in return. At least not in writing.
“Hey, great party. I’m Sam. I’m new to Chicago.”

“Bro, have you read Devil in The White City?”

“No.”


“Everyone says it’s good.”

“You can’t understand Chicago until you’ve read Devil in The White City. It’s mandatory, bro.”

“I’ll have to check it out.”

“Bro, what I’m saying is: If you haven’t read Devil in The White City, you made a big fucking mistake coming to my town.”

“I…plan on reading it.”

“Everyone, listen up! This new guy hasn’t read Devil in The White City. Around this time, it is said, perhaps apocryphally, that either a Juvenile Court Judge or a local cop referred to the TJOs as “Those jagoffs.” The name stuck and they started referring to themselves thusly, apparently becoming fond of the moniker. A colleague of mine, evincing the common mistake as to the meaning of the term, said, “It’s like calling yourself the nose pickers.”

I suggested that he missed the point: these guys were perfect examples of the Chicago jagoff. Loud, obnoxious, and rude thieves, enamored of senseless violence. Sometime later a black kid, who fancied himself a Gangster Disciple, told me that he was “really tired of those jagoffs.”

All too soon, the whole neighborhood would become fatigued with the result was a disturbing, racially-oriented conflict, especially at Senn High School. Around this time, it is said, perhaps apocryphally, that either a Juvenile Court Judge or a local cop referred to the TJOs as “Those jagoffs.” The name stuck and they started referring to themselves thusly, apparently becoming fond of the moniker. A colleague of mine, evincing the common mistake as to the meaning of the term, said, “It’s like calling yourself the nose pickers.”

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All too soon, the whole neighborhood would become fatigued with the
The Suburban White Kid on the Green Line

JARRETT NEAL

I live in Naperville and you should know it. You should know it because I drove my dad’s Lexus SUV to a friend’s house in Oak Park—the real part of Oak Park, between Ridgeland and Harlem Avenue—and boarded the Green Line at the Oak Park station. Yeah, I’m white but, like, whatever. I might go to Lollapalooza and roll in mud. I might kick it up to Wrigleyville, fake ID my way into a bar, puke my guts on the Red Line coming back. I might transfer to the Brown Line and mack on pouty Trinkies desperate to get over the dude who dumped them. It’s all good.

So when the Green Line arrives at the Oak Park stop I hop on with my peeps: we look like an American Apparel ad or some shit. But usually I’m in Sperry canvas shoes, a Run DMC T-shirt, and cargo shorts. Like, if you’re really lucky, you may hear a drunk Chicagoan interrupt an English Premiere League discussion by saying, “Whatever...the Chicago Bears would beat the shit out of Manchester United!”

That jagoff has no idea about the difference between Bears Tailgaters and Man United travelling supporters. With luck, he will soon learn a hard lesson.

The Chicago LAND Jagoff

JULIE WELSH

We’ve all been there. Maybe you’re on a plane returning to Chicago. Or maybe you’re in a pub in Dublin. You spot a guy in a Toews shirt or hear someone complaining bitterly about the goddamn potholes on Ashland. In a burst of civic pride or boredom, you wade in and ask, “So, you from Chicago?” The guy (it’s almost always a guy) immediately answers in the affirmative and you begin to banter: how badly the Bears suck, whether D. Rose is ever gonna be 100%, and you segue into local schools or the next mayoral election and the dude slams the brakes on the conversation by stating, “Oh, I’m from Schaumburg,” or Glen Ellyn or Wheeling or whatever jagoff suburb he’s from.

No, intrepid Inverness/Winnetka/Tinley Park resident, you do not get to say you’re from Chicago and if you do you’re a jagoff. Unless you have to navigate the byzantine CPS selective enrollment system; deal with the entire North Side of the city becoming a parking lot when the Cubs play; have to pay the goddamn meter on a Sunday; wait for the #49 bus in -12 degrees; keep a running tally of the likelihood of your alderman being indicted and/or a machine tool, while still keeping on your good side because you want the goddamn sinkhole in front of your house fixed; and are still reveling that recycling finally expanded to your suburban he’s from.

Michigan Avenue is my honorary Chicago Jagoff...

RACHEL

There is nothing magnificent about the Magnificent Mile. Beautiful and striking are not the words I would choose to describe the outdoor mall otherwise known as North Michigan Avenue, where tourists slowly move in packs taking smart phone pics of some of the city’s worst architecture, mostly nondescript high-rises and facaded Art Decos, and carrying American Girl and Garrett Popcorn shopping bags. Every city has its touristy areas, but this congested, homogenized street conveys nothing of Chicago’s rich culture. It is deplorable to think the majority of tourists, who usually come from car-dependent Nowheresville U.S.A., only see this fabricated version of a “real” city, rarely going beyond the environs of Streeterville. Instead of experiencing the city’s many culinary offerings, tourists swarm chain eateries like the Cheesecake Factory. Believe it or not, Michigan Avenue used to be charming in character—the Diana Court restaurant is just one of the forgotten gems. But like most American cities, the unique shops and restaurants that once lined glamorous Michigan Avenue were replaced by high-priced national stores and massive high-rises by greedy real estate developers, who destroyed Chicago’s pride and created a poor imitation.
The state’s number one tourist attraction is My Chicago Jagoff

RACHEL

London has Covent Garden. Boston has Faneuil Hall. New York City has Times Square. Every city has its own tourist trap, but Chicago’s Navy Pier is certainly the worst because once you’re there, the only remote resemblance to culture—-with the exception-proves-the-rule of back whence you came or to jump in the water. Bereft of anything remotely resembling culture—-with the exception-proves-the-rule of back whence you came or to jump in the water. Bereft of anything remotely resembling culture—-with the exception—-time—-of culture—-there is rarely awakened even in the most saintly mystic or contemplative person the lake setting and skyline views, but those pluses quickly turn into minuses during the humid summer months when suburbanites are on their once-a-year excursion to the city. Sweaty and overweight families, usually wearing ill-fitting clothes covered in logos, and masses of teenagers cluster around the third-rate mall line the south side of the pier. Unless you plan to do every Chicagoan a favor by burning it down, avoid Navy Pier at all costs!

A Child’s Tale

JOE BRYL

One upon time in the Land of Jagoff lived a sweet little girl named Eloise. Eloise who was not yet five years old, an age that suited her just fine thank you, lived with her mother and father in a towering castle of glass and metal. A winding, shimmering, silvery river wrapped its banks along the castle’s main portico and sweet little Eloise sometimes thought that she could see her reflection mirrored on the water’s silent waves which never once moved due to either a witch’s spell or its natural indolent disposition.

One day, while having a tea party with her stuffed animals who always complained to her that the tea was too hot and the biscuits too hard (an all-too common criticism in the Land of Jagoff) sweet little Eloise overheard her parents bickering between themselves, calling each other the most scandalous names not yet fit for the still wholesome and pure ears of their precious Eloise. Unable to find refuge from the verbal skirmish that became more heated with each new accusation, beloved Eloise thought to herself “How can they both be so unhappy? Don’t they have a charming and kind little girl like myself who they can hug warmly and shower with soft kisses all day long and who always sings pretty songs and dances like a Russian ballerina?”

But then, quite unexpectedly for such a young and innocent child, normally guileless Eloise who always made sure that she said thank you and please came to the alarming realization, an awareness that was also a Jagoff. Sweet little Eloise then placed the remnants of her favorite white pony into the empty wastebasket and took no further part in the verbal skirmish that became more heated with each new accusation, beloved Eloise thought to herself “How can they both be so unhappy? Don’t they have a charming and kind little girl like myself who they can hug warmly and shower with soft kisses all day long and who always sings pretty songs and dances like a Russian ballerina?”

Her previous uncorrupted consciousness momentarily shattered, sweet little Eloise unmindfully pushed aside her stuffed animals with a never before seen mixture of anger and regret. They bounced and careened in a peli-melt fashion across her tiny tearoom floor which caused her favorite, the pure white pony with a long luxurious mane of bright pink hair to lose one of its back legs. With a gentle hand like she once saw her elderly Auntie hold a delicate crystal Christmas globe, sweet little Eloise caressed the now limbless pony, gently petting its soft white fur while shedding oh so many tears.

It was at this moment of sadness and contrition that sweet little Eloise came upon the profound awareness that she, like her parents, was also a Jagoff. Sweet little Eloise then placed the remnants of her favorite white pony into the empty wastebasket and took no further delight in afternoon teas.

Parting Jags

That jagoff who stands on the left side of any CTA escalator and stops while the entire right row is congested and there is a line of people trying to walk behind him. That guy/gal!—Rebecca Sorsch

Looking around when taking a wizz in Wrigley’s troughs. Stare straight ahead, pal.—Carter O’Brien

Bridgeport drivers who double park to talk or pick up their family and buddies and block the street while there is a parking spot open within reasonable distance.—Lou Sandoval

The runner that jogs in the bike lane on the street instead of the sidewalk that bikers are forbidden to ride on is a jagoff!—Sarah Tuohy

The jagoff who asks the bartender’s name, because then he or she can shout the bartender’s name when it’s busy, instead of patiently waiting their goddamned turn. My parents named me ”Bartender.”—Bartender, my name is none of your business, jagoff.

The jagoff who remains standing after the hitter steps into the batter’s box. The jagoff who jumps up at every routine downfield pass, fast-break, or 4-on-2 breakaway. Down in front, jagoff—Season Ticket Holder, I paid for seats, not stands, so sit the fuck down.

The jagoff who remains standing after the hitter steps into the batter’s box. The jagoff who jumps up at every routine downfield pass, fast-break, or 4-on-2 breakaway. Down in front, jagoff—Season Ticket Holder, I paid for seats, not stands, so sit the fuck down.
A Note on Our Contributors

Many people sent contributions in that could not be included, due to redundancy (everyone wanted to write about dibs), non-Chicago-ness, space constraints, or, frankly, kind of sucking as writers. Many of our contributors don’t seem to be very detail-oriented, and did not include biographies. Their loss! Some used noms de plume, of course. Any writer with no bio listed didn’t submit a bio.

All contributors retain their copyrights. We thank them sincerely!
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The Community of the Future is a not so tongue-in-cheek reference to the burgeoning cultural scene in Bridgeport. Stop by Maria’s Packaged Goods & Community Bar at 960 W 31st Street to get your bearings. While there enjoy one of the largest selections of craft and imported beers and ales in the city of Chicago.