

AGGRESSIVE COSTUMED CHARACTERS ARE A NUISANCE*

*The Yiddish words meaning “nuisance” are “nudnik” and “tsutsheppenish.”
Here are some additional Yiddish words used in the following article:

“to arrest”	“arestirn”
“to punch”	“zets”
“to curse”	“shiltn”
“costume”	“kostyum”
“to squirt”	“shpritsn”

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe

1990: Squeegee-ing

2014: Spider-Man, Elmo, Super Mario

American “aktrise” (actress), singer, and model, Kirsten Dunst, remembers when she was younger (“yinger”), driving around N. Y. with her mom and going to auditions. “I’d be like, Mom, drive us by the hookies! Hookers. I called them hookies. There was one street in the Meatpacking District where they all lined up. So I was definitely a part of the dangerous New York when I was younger. But now I feel like New York is safe (“besholem”). I can walk down the street by myself (“zikh”). When I was younger, my mom was like, Hold my hand! It was always a little sketchy. But now Times Square is Disneyland.”

A Times Square Spider-Man was arrested after cursing at a police officer (“politsyant”) and punching him in the face. An officer witnesses a man and woman taking a picture (“bild”) with the superhero. The woman attempted to donate (“shenken”) A “dolar” (\$1.00) to Spider-Man, who refused it. Spider-Man then told the woman that he only accepted fives, tens, and twenties.

In 2011, Rudy Giuliani told Squeegee men, “Don’t stand on a corner squeegeeing. Go to a restaurant. Get a job at a restaurant.” In that same year, Michael Bloomberg called for Squeegee men to “get lost.”

Yes at one time a driver had 1.5 seconds to make it clear that you didn’t want them to clean your windshield before they squirt something on it. One NYC driver said that he would roll down his window and yell out, “Look at what I’m driving. (He was driving a rusty 20-year-old “beater.”) Does it look like I have any extra money?” (Works like a charm.)

Other drivers would turn on their wipers when they saw a Squeegee man coming their way.

During the 1960s and 1970s, live nude shows, sex shops, erotic bookstores, and

x-rated movie theaters dominated the area. By 1993, Mayor Giuliani vowed to improve the area by increasing security, closing pornographic theaters and pressuring drug dealers and “Squeegee men” to relocate.

F-a-s-t f-o-r-w-a-r-d to 2014. Times Square. Yes, people come to Times Square to see crazy stuff. Times Square boasts one of the world’s most concentrated theater districts. It hosts several notable venues for concerts and comedy. One can take in a rock show, listen to jazz, or see New York’s top comics at Carolines on Broadway, and visit Madame Tussauds, Ripley’s Believe it or Not, and ABC’s Times Square Studios (where Good Morning America is filmed). And each year millions of people have gathered for the well-known ball drop ceremony.

NOW, Times Square has become “The Disneyfication of Times Square.” Gothamist.com asks if “the creepy Times Square costumed characters should be regulated”? Sophie Kleeman says that Times Square is “starting to become seedy again, thanks to the mob of street hustlers dressed as cartoon characters demanding tips from tourists.”

In July [2014] there were approximately 52 costumed characters working in Times Square. “Super Mario” groped a woman, and “Elmo” was ranting anti-Semitic slurs. JewishNewsOne reported that Elmo said, “Don’t use Michael Milken’s International Jew brand Leap Fog!”

Councilman, Peter Vallone,” said, “A dangerous character could be hiding in a cuddly character.” Vallone’s proposed legislation will require performers to undergo background checks, pay taxes on earnings, and complete some statement that they are not infringing on any copyright or trademark issues.

In the meantime, if you have your child or “eyniki” (grandchild) photographed with Captain Hook, Batman, or any of the other characters in Times Square, be prepared to give a hefty tip (“trinkgelt”)... or be harassed.

Marjorie Wolfe’s two favorite New York City quotes:

“Anytime four New Yorkers get into a cab (“taksi”) together without arguing, a bank robbery has just taken place.” Johnny Carson

“In terms of theater, there’s not a more supportive theater community than in New York. It’s really kind of a real thrill to go there. I mean, don’t forget, I’m a boy from the suburbs of Sydney, so getting to New York is a huge, huge thrill.” Hugh Jackman