

**KATE AND NACIE'S WEDDING**  
**TOUR OF SAN FRANCISCO FOR OUT OF TOWN GUESTS**  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2010**

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, everyone. Welcome to sunny San Francisco. I'll be your guide this afternoon. Don't worry about taking notes. You're not likely to learn anything. Except, perhaps, how great I look in a suit. Everything else, I probably made up.

You may be wondering how I'm qualified to lead this tour. That's a good question; keep wondering. I do have a mostly successful babysitting track record and haven't lost a child I liked yet. I hope to apply the skills I learned in that endeavor today so in about an hour we'll have a snack of apple wedges and peanut butter followed by a nap during which time I will sneak out to smoke pot in the bathroom.

Note that before you will be allowed to attend the reception, there will be a test to ensure that my questionably-sourced knowledge has been accurately absorbed.

Feel free to raise your hand if you have any questions. I probably won't know the answer, but it's good for the circulation anyway. I'm sure everyone remembered to stretch before boarding so we'll get right down to it.

How many of you have been to San Francisco before? Ok, this is good. Then you guys probably know even less than I do.

**HISTORY**

The first settlers arrived here before I was born. They were the inhabitants of the icy steppes of Siberia. Tiring of that harsh land, these simple folk looked east across the sea, where they could see Alaska from their houses. Packing their crude, handmade possessions, they left their ancestral home to migrate across a land bridge that connected Alaska to what is now Russia during the last ice age. They followed the coast until they came to the Bay Area where they settled.

Modern San Francisco was settled by German farmers seeking fortune on the frontier. They arrived here and mixed with the Siberian migrants, learning from their primitive hosts how to coexist with the seals and dolphins and liberals and to survive in this foreign land. Without their help, the city never would have flourished as it has. In remembrance of their benefactors, we continue to refer to this city as 'San Francisco', a German translation of the original Siberian name, which was (If any of you speak ancient Siberian, please forgive my mangled pronunciation): "Los Angeles."

Despite the odd nomenclature, the German settlers found these lands to be ideally suited for dirt farming and so San Francisco became one of the thriving dust industry's most successful boomtowns. Our success in this field led directly to the chalk explosion of the 1870's.

Today, most of the dust you see in movies, theme park haunted houses and museums, is produced in eastern Europe, where labor is cheaper and a long tradition of dusticulture allowed for the production of some of the world's finest crop. However, you can still see one of the original German storage silos atop Telegraph Hill.

### **CABLE CARS**

San Francisco's cable cars are the only moving National Historic Landmark. Each car runs on a single 'cable' strung under the street for the entire length of its route. These cable loops are drawn by a 500-horsepower motor at the Cable Car Barn Museum.

Even though we refer to these slow-moving traffic jams as "cable cars", their mode of locomotion isn't actually a cable. Originally, the line was painstakingly hand-woven from strands of human hair.

While blond hair is preferred for its higher tensile strength, the influx of Irish immigrants in the 1820's, and subsequent exodus of their Germanic predecessors, resulted in entire stretches of red haired 'cable' which is more brittle and resulted in The Great Downhill Cable Car Runaway disaster later in that century. To this day, citizens of our fair city mourn that tragedy. *[Shed tear here.]*

After the tragedy, the original 'cables' were replaced with cheaper and stronger synthetic weaves much like those you see Beyoncé wearing today.

So, the cable isn't actually a cable. They also aren't actually cars, as you can see. But no one wants to come all the way to San Francisco to ride the "hair train", so we call them 'cable cars'.

## **UNION SQUARE**

Union Square is among the top four shopping areas in the nation, according to the Internet. But it wasn't always so. In the 80's and 90's this was the center of the city's flourishing ill-repute industry.

The Internet also says that at that time, the streets around what is now Union Square were so fraught with peril that the police force was more than a little hesitant to enter.

The criminal gangs in the area effectively had free run and their battles for dominance and territory likely resulted in the great fire that nearly burned the city down more than a century ago.

Many historians allege that the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 was started in the same manner.

The constant conflict between warring factions in this quarter resulted in enormous collateral damage, leaving the streets littered with the corpses of the innocent and revitalizing the city's faltering orphanage industry. The success of the high-end stores you see here today are a direct result of the cheap labor that those children provided.

## **JACKSON SQUARE**

In 1850, gold seekers and pirates abandoned over 600 ships in the bay. Some became landfill and are now buried beneath the Jackson Square Historic District.

This area was less devastated by the fire and is home to the city's few remaining nineteenth century commercial buildings, which include Ghirardelli's first chocolate factory. The Jackson Street whiskey warehouse is also among the few

structures that survived the quake and fire, confounding local clergymen who proclaimed the disasters were divine retribution for the city's sins.

### **FISHERMAN'S WHARF**

I have absolutely no idea where we are right now.

But, if I can direct your attention to the left [*extravagant gesture*]. Oh, man, you guys are all sheep. I told you, I'm lost.

### **TELEGRAPH HILL**

One of the Seven Hills that make up our city's pointedly bumpy landscape, here you will see the abandoned dust silo mentioned earlier.

This majestic vestige of our city's glory days has been colonized by the famously feral Parrots of Telegraph Hill.

These wild birds have dominated the neighborhood for decades, gaining national landmark status and terrorizing residents with their penchant for airborne bowel evacuation.

### **CHINATOWN**

We are now passing Chinatown, which is home to 45% of the city's population and 100% of its dollar stores. This is the site where the Great Dumpling vs Gyoza conflict of '93 played out. The pointless tomato vs tamato-type disagreement captivated an apparently easily-entertained world and remains unresolved to this day.

Here you will also find the city's best East Asian cuisine. Notice that these streets are remarkably feline free.

### **ALCATRAZ**

Just offshore, in the choppy waters of the Bay is Alcatraz Island. Alcatraz means Pelican in Spanish. I stopped reading the article after learning that, but I guess it was probably a military fort before being repurposed as a prison.

While a prison, Alcatraz was purported to be escape-proof, in much the same way that the Titanic was ice-proof. Fortunately, our stuff-proofing technology has improved markedly over the intervening decades.

The prison was shut in the 60's after lifers Bobby "Babycheeks" Blossum and Peoria Jack Thibeau, with the help of notorious frontier gunman Clint Eastwood, escaped without notice by fashioning full-scale decoys of themselves from scavenged wax, clothing, newspaper and hair. This historic escape was later dramatized in reverse by Ed Harris, Nicholas Cage and Sean Connery in the popular movie 'The Rock'.

### **ANGEL ISLAND**

Beyond Alcatraz is Angel Island, the Ellis Island of the west, through which hundreds of thousands of immigrants from China and Japan passed before settling down in the frontier towns and budding burbs of the bay.

Note the lack of liberty-representing statue or structure of any sort. The complex immigrant processing system on the island is actually entirely subterranean to accommodate a widespread Asian fear of daylight.

The catacombs remain intact to this day and, while closed to the public, tales of rogue immigrants wandering the lightless labyrinths are now told to children to keep them in check and amuse parents with the sweet smell of their gullible offspring's nighttime terror.

### **PALACE OF FINE ARTS**

There you will see the Palace of Fine Arts. This structure was built by the ancient Greeks in the days of yore and has since become the most sought after second-wedding site in California.

Also, here is the Wave Organ, the largest manmade instrument in the world. The organ utilizes the power of the changing tides to create haunting, rhythmless melodies.

This reminds me of a great story.

## **THE PRESIDIO**

We are now passing through the Presidio. San Francisco outlawed burials in 1901, following a widely supported media campaign that clearly shows the bigoted anti-zombie sentiment of the people of that day.

The two remaining cemeteries in San Francisco are in the Mission and here in the Presidio. All the rest of our dead we ship to Colma, which is the world's only incorporated city in which the dead outnumber the living and the source of the majority of extras for the film *Sean of the Dead*.

## **GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE**

The Golden Gate Bridge, with 23 miles of ladders and 300,000 rivets in each of its three towers, was the world's longest span when it opened in 1937. Seventeen ironworkers and 38 painters constantly fight rust and renew the paint on its 1.7-mile span.

If you look closely, you can see the joint in the middle of the bridge which allows it to be drawn up as a defensive barrier were the city ever to be attacked by the roguish residents of Sausalito, the wild and mostly barren wasteland across the bay.

This defense has been used only twice since the bridge's completion.

## **SEA CLIFF**

This posh neighborhood is home to the ruins of the Sutro Baths, which burned down due to a fire, the leading cause of things burning down.

Before their destruction, the baths were filled at each high tide by the rising of the sea. There, holiday-goers donned those silly, full-body bathing suits you see in old timey movies and soaked in the salty water.

Also here is San Francisco's world-renowned and over-priced Cliff House Restaurant, which hangs precariously over the naturally eroded precipice and is held in place by an elaborate system of two by fours and bailing wire.

The restaurant has ironically burned to the ground on multiple occasions and been rebuilt each time. Traditionally, the clergy protests the permit process, preaching that the repeated, fiery destruction is divine message.

Personally, I would think that the Lord Almighty would have just dropped the whole bloody mess into the sea if he really wanted it gone.

### **LINCOLN PARK**

Lincoln Park, named for Abe “Not A Crook” Lincoln, is home of the Legion of Honor museum.

The museum houses one of the world’s most significant Rodin collections as well as the country’s most extensive display of curios, knick-knacks, collector’s edition decorative themed plates and other As Seen on TV junk that your grandmother thinks will one day be worth something.

It really is a waste of time. Don’t go there.

### **OCEAN BEACH**

Here we cross the threshold between bay and sea. This is our ocean. I think they call this one the ‘Pacific’ after the anti-war hippies who reside in the area. Notice that the water here is miraculously oil free.

This is the imaginatively named Ocean Beach, the only sandy expanse in the world where beachgoers built sandcastles while wearing parkas. They will occasionally dip bare toes into the frigid water and then giggle gleefully while scampering off to the climate-controlled safety of their SUV’s.

### **GOLDEN GATE PARK**

The entire park was once an expanse of dunes and sand people. It was converted into the lush homeless-haven you see today in the ‘30’s by a fellow with nothing better to do with his money whose name I forgot and didn’t bother to make up.

Golden Gate Park is home to the last herd of buffalo in the nation. These elusive creatures spend their days chewing cud and lazing about. Their spirits have

been broken and dreams shat upon by a life in captivity with no hope of ever realizing their full potential.

Let us share a moment of silence for these majestic beasts.

### **THE DE YOUNG/ACADEMY OF SCIENCES/TEA GARDEN**

We are now passing the De Young art museum, on your left and the Academy of Sciences, on your other left. The latter is among the largest natural history museums in the nation and hosts educational excursions for snotty school children who are forced to learn about the creation of the universe and the dynamics of our continued existence on this planet, if you buy into all that crap.

At the eastern end of the park is the Tea Garden, birthplace of the “Chinese” fortune cookie. The prophetic treat was invented by the Japanese Hagiwara family, which now produces hundreds of millions of vaguely worded and not very helpful fortunes to shove inside the sugary, nutritionless cookies in Chinatown’s Rube-Goldberg-like Ross Alley fortune cookie factory.

I probably should have mentioned that while we were driving by it in Chinatown. I bet you all would have loved a picture.

### **PANHANDLE**

This narrow expanse of nature is prime for spectators of the Bay to Breakers charity foot race, which crisscrosses the entire peninsula, on which San Francisco resides, and attracts hundreds of thousands of athletes from all over the world.

Runners often don extravagant costumes representing their homelands, native cultures and propensity for drinking in public whenever they can get away with it.

I have run this seven-mile race each year I’ve lived in the city. I hope one day to beat my best time of eight point two hours.

### **ALAMO SQUARE**

Alamo Square is home to most of the city’s 14,000 Victorian houses. You’ll recognize several locations from television and films like Mrs. Doubtfire, Party of



Five, Full House and Beverly Hills, 90210.

**CONCLUSION**

This concludes our tour of San Francisco. I want to thank everyone for joining me today. Please fill out a comment card on your way out. The conditions of my parole depend on your responses.