

## **The Great *Village Voice* Caper**

Once upon a time, the *Village Voice* newspaper, a New York institution, was notorious for its personal ads. One day, members of the Wolfe Pack Steering Committee dreamed up a personal ad for Mr. Wolfe. Classified ads, whether legitimate or somewhat sleazy, all used newspaper advertising abbreviations in the interest of squeezing in as much information as possible, since each and every bit of type cost money. Hence the title: SWM, 1/7 of a ton.... [SWM=Single White Male].

The placement of the ad in the *Village voice* was a given as was the goal of the ad: to attract savvy readers who would see through our clever ploy and let them know about the Wolfe Pack. We were not looking for hook-ups for Mr. Wolfe. Really, we weren't.

When we presented the ad to the clerk in the office of the *Village Voice*, we weren't sure they would take the ad we wrote. We underestimated the tolerance of the paper and the "been there, seen it all" attitude of the staff.

The ad read:

"SWM (single white male) weighing 1/7 of a ton seeks kindred spirits to share interest in orchids, fine food, reading. Self employed PI, stay at home type. Owns brownstone in W. 30s. Fond of yellow silk PJs."

The clerk at the desk looked it over, counted the words, charged us \$51.30, and that was it. The responses were directed to the Wolfe Pack's P.O. Box.

The responses that came in divided into two groups: those who got the joke, and (sadly) those who didn't. These facsimiles reveal not only the content but the period in which they were written, by hand, or by typewriter, complete with full address and telephone numbers. This kind of pre-Internet age response is now as distant as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

# THE VILLAGE VOICE Classified Ad Order

842 BROADWAY, NYC, NY 10003

(ADVERTISER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE VILLAGE VOICE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PRINTING ERRORS BEYOND THE FIRST ISSUE AND CANNOT GUARANTEE PLACEMENT OF THE ADVERTISEMENT IN ANY DESIGNATED PAGE OR ISSUE. THE VILLAGE VOICE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT OR REJECT ANY ADVERTISEMENT.)

Classified:  
(212) 475-5555

Claims & Adjustments:  
(212) 460-1486

PHONE 201 9633696 AD NUMBER 200203700 TC NS SALES 02 BY 02:02/24,17:3  
BILL TO Blauer, Ettasale CLIENT  
ADDRESS 905 Hudson St APT-SUITE-ETC.  
CITY Hoboken STATE NJ ZIP 07030 CALLER s MORE  
CLASS 258 SCHED 03/07/89,1x FMT ADS  
PAID 51.30 TYPE ck ACCT# 1207 EXP - AUTH  
NOTES SUBSCR ADJUST  
TEARSHEET QTY AFFIDAVITS PO# LINERATE + 9.5  
CREDIT 20- DELAY - QUOTE + 57.0  
AD TYPE TRC AD RATE D AGENCY CN RATE NET + 51.5  
BOX # HNJ Y000.43/0006 BE 03/07/89 EN 03/07/89 TI 1 AMT DUE + .0  
DISC 10 SORT LAST SORT SPS TO

SWM weighing 1/7 of a ton seeks kin[-]  
dred spirits to share interest in orchids,  
fine food, readings, self employed PI,  
stay-at-home type. Owns brownstone in  
W 30's. Fond of yellow silk PJ's. Re[-]  
spond to PO 822 Ansonia Sta NY 10023

(END)



# NALS

ecure & sensual M 37, 5'11, very fit, handsome, playful, professional seeks a tender F 25-35 with brains & beauty ready for the perfect romance. Note/photo. Write Box VMV9842

SEEKING SOULMATE-SWF, 29, 5' 7, sensitive, sincere, down-to-earth, rexed-an avid runner, loves nature and outdoors, enjoys reading, introspective musing, music-especially folk, Lindham Hill, Gitaro, classical. Values simple pleasures and spiritual side of life-morning runs on the beach, afternoon strolls through Central Park in a downpour, frolicking in an evening howl, wherever that may be, free to roam. Seeking man 27-35, who has a passion for nature, a spirit for adventure, a general curiosity about life, and a touch of ruggedness. Thoughtful note. Write Box VMV9823.

Seeking that special slim, attractive intelligent woman to be my friend+lover. I am a MWM, own business, 56 w/similar attributes. Enjoy conversation dining dancing & love. No pros. Note/photo? Box 581 Coram, NY 11727

Separate bedrooms-a 40's movie? for me it's an 80's reality unhappily. MWM early 40's looking for love w/o walls. I'm slightly Bohemian, not bad looking, seek attractive sensitive artistic F 30-early 40's. Please write Bx VMV9838

SINGLE BI MALE- Handsome-looking for single F slightly in BiKnowings (half feminine) w/straight upbringing like myself-to enjoy life with, good times, music. I'm a more towards peaceful guy. If you know enough about strong things, but are basically soft natured, lean & kind, call this #. ext 5512

Sir Lancelot seeks Guinevere to live out romantic fantasy. Sir Lancelot is SWM, 5'11, 178, athletic, professional. Guinevere should be 20-32 and want some adventure in her life. Write to Box VMV985.

SWM 28, goodlooking extremely well-built, financially secure would like to establish a serious relationship with an attractive BF 18-25. Note/Photo/Phone Guarantee answer. Call ext 9844 or Write Box VMV9844

SWM 28, slim, very good looking likes art, opera, dining out, seeks irreverent, cerebral SWF 20-28. No smoke. Photo, if possible, note. Write Box VMV9903

SWM 30, looking for an attractive F for friendship, romance and caring. I enjoy movies, art, museums and being with someone I care about. Box VMV9822

SWM 33, unique, very affectionate, sensual, witty, sincere, good looking & great sense of humor seeking SF (20-40) who's looking for a serious relationship & possible commitment. Info: all music, arts, dining, enjoying life, not just living it. Note photo & positive thoughts appreciated. Write Bx VMV9836

SWM 35, handsome, slim & fit, educated, discreet, friendly commercial artist seeks to expand social & sensual horizons with an attractive SWF or MWF, 22-40. Photo/phone. Reply P.O. Box 205, 1202 Lexington Ave., NYC 10028

SWM 35, Wasp 5'6, 155lbs, seeks SWF or SWBIF 18-30 for commitments. Interest in tennis, sailing, the Village, SoHo & walks by the ocean. Nonsmokers and SLC women welcome. Write Box VMV9892 842 B'way, NYC 10003

SWM 38, physician, clean, good-looking, disease-free, recuperating from minor auto accident. During my recovery period I am bored & lonely. Seeking F, age/race unimportant for discreet, sensual times. Will provide transportation. Reply to Box VMV9861

SWM, college grad professional, successful, 5'10", 180, 40, seeks college age Female for a live-in relationship. PO Box 330 Riverdale Sta. Bx NY 10471.

SWM weighing 177 of a ton seeks kindred spirits to share interest in orchids, fine food, reading, self employed PI, stay-at-home type. Owns brownstone in W 30's. Fond of yellow silk PJ's. Respond to PO 822 Ansonia Sta NY 10023

The Final Frontier-SWM, 30s, devoted to movies, Star Trek, pop culture, looking for one lively lady friend with similar interests, who's cute (not glamorous), 25-35, and has lots of time to build a great one-to-one friendship or more with an offbeat, unusual but fascinating, attractive guy. Photo please. Write Box VMV9898 842 B'way, NYC 10003

This is my very first time. I've never tried a personal ad before because I've always had my doubts as to the quality of what I'd get. Please prove me wrong! I'm a WM 37 seeking a female, never been married, good looking, intelligent, 215lbs & financially independent. I love games & gadgets of all kinds as well as movies & travelling. Please enclose photo. Write Box VMV9890

Transsexual/Transvestite any age/race with feminine charm & intelligence sought by handsome Italian M 28, 5'9", 155. POB 100328, Bklyn, NY 11210

Very pretty BIWF 21, 5'6, 121 & clean sks some (18-28) for friendship & lots of fun. More details over drinks. Photo/telex/note a must. Write Box VPV9895

Warming up to the ice age. SWM, 35, smart, handsome, off-beat, funny, creative, irreverent, down-to-earth, left of center, professional, inciteful, music junkie. Seeks smart, pretty, hip woman who laughs with abandon and appreciates irony. VMV9827.

WF, 38, attractive, youthful. You're mature but have a youthful zest for life; have overcome some of life's difficulties -without bitterness or resentment; have had some unusual life experiences; have a strong work ethic and a good sense of humor, look distinguished and are affectionate and sensual, can enjoy amblance w/soft music & 1 or 2 cocktails. send note (& photo if possible). VMV9826, 842 B'way NYC 10003

WHAT PLACE IS THIS SPAWNED BY 8 YEARS OF RONALD REAGAN?

SWF 36, looking for the underground, seeks male soulmate for romance and mutual inspiration. Me-new writer, sometime painter, lots of ideas, politically Left, PhD student (history), still dream of sailing around the world. You-knows a thing or two about life, passionate, creative, honest, kind, real smart, Left. Likes talking world politics, Frida Kahlo, Mayan temples, quarks & flight patterns of wandering seabirds. Send note/photo. Write Box VMV9859.

White Male mid fifties professional would like to hear from white female toward a thirty day tour of Western US beg. mid July mid Aug. Prefer moderately overweight professional to share expenses & enjoy a casual non rushy vacation. Will exchange open file discovery. Photo & phone: Box VMV9868

Will you be my paramour? MWM 46, very successful attorney wants to fall in love, long-term with a special lady. I have it all! Let's share. No flakes, phonies, frauds. Be my confidante. Monogamy, discretion assured. Box VMV9870

Younger Man/Older Woman sensual gldking WM 30 blind hair/blue eyes athletic trim & discreet seeks an older fine athletic woman. PO Box 95 White Plains, NY 10602

Dear Mr. 1/7<sup>th</sup>,

Hi, you've caught my interest but I have a few questions I'd like to know about you. If you don't mind. Now that I know your weight, how tall are you? Not that it makes a difference -- well I'm lying -- if you're 4 feet tall there could be a slight problem/discrimination feeling. Unconsciously mind you, but nevertheless, present. And how old are you? This is also not a crucial matter but since you opted for no information on those two accounts, I think you want to not tell us (Personals Readers) this information. Other than that your ad was captivating.

As for me, I don't know a thing about orchids but my mom belongs to an orchid club so I know of them and have been around many beautiful ones. I, however, seem to be a plant killer, none of my plants survive if I'm the grower. Next in your ad was fire food. I know a bit more of this

because (are you ready) I'm overweight. And it's not because I don't eat a thing like most overweight people claim, I eat and I'm telling the world this message. Although, like most overweight people, I do want to lose weight. So if I haven't scored you off yet, please read on.

Reading was next in the ad, well here again there might be a problem. I don't do much leisure reading because I hang out and still am a student and have had to read so much that it's not a fun thing for me to sit and read. Sorry.

Self employed PI, sounds interesting, adventurous and even sort of risky. Hmm, I don't know what else to say about that, you're the first person in that line of work I've tried to communicate with. But I'm sure, you can tell some great stories. And I am a good listener.

Stay at home type sounds cozy. I like to watch TV (too much) and going to the movies (whenever I can) along with comedy clubs are my main time absorbing activities.

I don't own a browser or anything else for that matter, I live with my family on the west side about 110 blocks away from you.

[I've written too much and we need to go to the next page now--please follow me]

(2)

Here I am -- hi again.

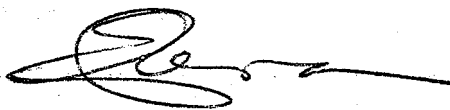
As I was writing, I'm living here now because of my studies but I'm from Florida. To be precise, (here is where my mom lives, you remember her the orchid club member) and travel back and forth frequently. I'm almost finished with school, however, and will probably try and become an employed person here in N.Y.

OK. enough about that, rest up in your ad -- yellow silk P'S'S -- Hmmm. I've never had or even seen anybody with a pain but like I ~~said~~ wrote earlier -- your ad is captivating.

Well, now that I've addressed all of your points and if you're at all interested at this point, I'll tell you that I am Latin, Cuban actually. And that's about all you need to know for now. Of course if you desire any other information or want to answer the questions I posed for you. Please feel free to give me a call. If I'm not home leave a message on my machine and I promise I'll return you

Call. My number is (612) 862-4541.  
(Good timing paper - wise -- this way  
you don't have to re-read my letter  
to get the #) (if this made no sense  
to you -- I tried -- whatever that  
means.) Oh yes by the way lost but  
not least my name is Elaine.  
Pronounced ELAINE with an  
A at the end. I think I wrote  
too much but it's done so I'll  
leave you now and hope you  
find what you're looking for.

Bye.



I'm the type of woman who doesn't understand why so many of the men in New York want a "dominant" woman. I'm the type that is easy to get along with, and takes the time and energy to be as comforting as possible. But understand, I won't be talked into anything I don't want.

If I've arosed your interest, and if you're not the type to play mind-games; then please feel free to call me at 718-384-7959 (don't let the machine fool you). My name is Verna Rudy, but my friends simply refer to me as Rudy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "V. Rudy". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yellow? Yes, I'm very fond of the color.

P.J.'s? Yes, I'm a creature comfort type of woman.

Silk? Oh yes, I'm very fond of silk.

I've never grown orchids, but I do have a trace knowledge on them. Fine-food...say no more! My reading habits lean toward biographies/autobiographies, eccentricities, and humor.

I am, by nature, an explorer and a person who enjoys being out and about the city. However, I've never found a museum, show, or bar that's anywhere near as comforting and enjoyable as an evening spent in the comforts of "home".

My vital stat's are: Single, white, 28 year-old female, healthy (in both body and mind), 5'8", weighing in a little under 1/10 of a ton, degreed, Texas native (recently relocated to New York from New Mexico), and honest.

3/4/89

HI,

MY FIRST PREFERENCE IS TO  
OLDER PARTNERS. I'M 41. SECONDLY, I  
LIKE HEAVYWEIGHTS, BUT THEY ARE RARE TO  
ME. I'M  $1\frac{1}{4}$  OF A TON. I'M ALSO A STAY  
AT HOME AND PLAY PERSON, BUT AT THE  
OTHER PERSON'S HOME. I CAN TRAVEL TO  
NY ON SOME WEEKDAY AFTERNOONS  
OR EVENINGS OR MOST WEEKENDS.

WHAT ELSE CAN I SAY? FEEL  
FREE TO ASK ME QUESTIONS.

ART



PO BOX 822

ANSONIA STATION

NY NY 10023

Dear Archie:

ad letter March 1, 1989  
plv  
9/23

The bank balance must be at an all-time low for you to try so desperate a ploy. Given your employer's ill-disguised discomfort in the presence of women, the invitation you extend (disguised as his) is a risk I hope you have calculated carefully.

Since I do not care for beer, only the possibility of sampling Fritz's cooking has lured me into answering. Still, since I love reading, enjoy fine food, and never use "imply" when I mean "infer," Montenigran courtesy will not be taxed and we should be able to manage a pleasant hour or two.

I have no experience of orchids (or yellow silk pajamas, for that matter) and would love a tour of the greenhouse, if Theodore is willing.

Your employer's well-known reluctance to leave home means that even though I, too, weigh 1/4 of a ton and am therefore not your type, you will owe me for helping, and I expect you to take me dancing when my part in your plot is finished.

Sincerely,

Donna Jordan

(201) 333-5742

3 / 5 / 1989.

Good afternoon advertiser;

My name is Nadia, I'm writing responding to your ad in The Village voice.

Well, I'm an attractive single young woman of 29 years old, 5'3. I weigh 116 pounds, I've got dark brown eyes, brown ~~eyes~~ hair. I'm creative, caring and very affectionate, I enjoy good food, beaches, music.

So, if you want to know more about me give me a call at this number 718 267 0760.

Good Bye

Here's to ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> Nero Wolfe —

the antithesis of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Hollywood's  
celluloid buffoon —

the quintessential NY bachelor,  
gentleman-farmer of the brownstone  
with his undercurrent of  
Balkan intrigue —

sanitely intelligent, erudite &  
unapproachable,

expending his sexuality  
on devotion to orchids, books,  
food & fine tailoring —

I love you anyway ...

Marci Kalinsky

✓  
3/10/89

Dear Mr. Wolfe,

Yours is the only truly irresistible personal ad I've ever seen - here's the evidence. Do you really weigh  $\frac{1}{7}$  of a ton? If not, maybe we can meet for a drink or a cup of coffee and discuss cases. Knowing how you feel about women, I must warn you that I am one. If that's not a problem, you can phone me at 718-499-1650.

Sincerely,  
Criso Cunningham

166 7th Ave  
Brooklyn NY 11215



N. Wolfe  
P.O. Box 822  
Ansonia Station, NY  
10023



**THE WOLFE PACK™**  
**P. O. BOX 822**  
**ANSONIA STATION**  
**NEW YORK, NY 10023**

**THE WOLFE PACK ASSEMBLY**

**October 23, 1993**

**Hart's Restaurant, 122 E. 27th Street**  
**New York City**

**Moderator: Ettagale Blauer**

\* \* \* \* \*

**PUTTING DOWN ROOTS**

Dear SWM, 285 lbs (I love the teddy bear look.), many diverse interests, self employed (It must be nice to be the boss.), stay in West 30s brownstone, you sound super, man with intriguing VV ad for a woman who looks good in yellow silk PJs, (Me, I hope?):

I am: "A blonde, cute, curvy, slim, clean, petite, Vassar female WASP, 36, 36C, 21, 32, 105-110, 5', wants healthy, kind, caring, honest, financially successful man. Discreet sensual fun assured. Kathleen Anderson, Suite 60, 2901 Broadway, New York, New York 10025." I am single and live on Manhattan's Upper West Side - 6 rent stabilized rooms, river view. The best view of the Hudson River and New Jersey is from my bedroom which is like a forest or garden - fresh cut flowers, me, music, candles, green carpet, curtains, walls (I laid, made and painted them) and light oak furniture. I finished the virgin wood myself - great hands. I'm mobile with my great car whose like me - All American, top of the line stripped.

Until I changed jobs from banking back to my 1st career - teacher, I did not have time for ads. It was worth the pay cut, because teaching frees up time for my MBA - Columbia, my Mom, decorating my apartment and hopefully you. You sound like the most fun of the four. My stepfather died in 1985, and I have been spending some weekends in Buffalo to be with my Mom. I am a good daughter and thank heaven for USAir. I hope they stay cheap and safe.

Please send me a day (since I am free to call you days and teach some evenings) phone number and best time to call. Do not worry if it is a work # - I just want to give pleasure, never embarrassment. If a brief conversation cliques, I'll give you my number and we can make a date at once. I do not mean to sound paranoid, but I never mail my number to strangers. That would be even worse than the bar scene which I always avoid.

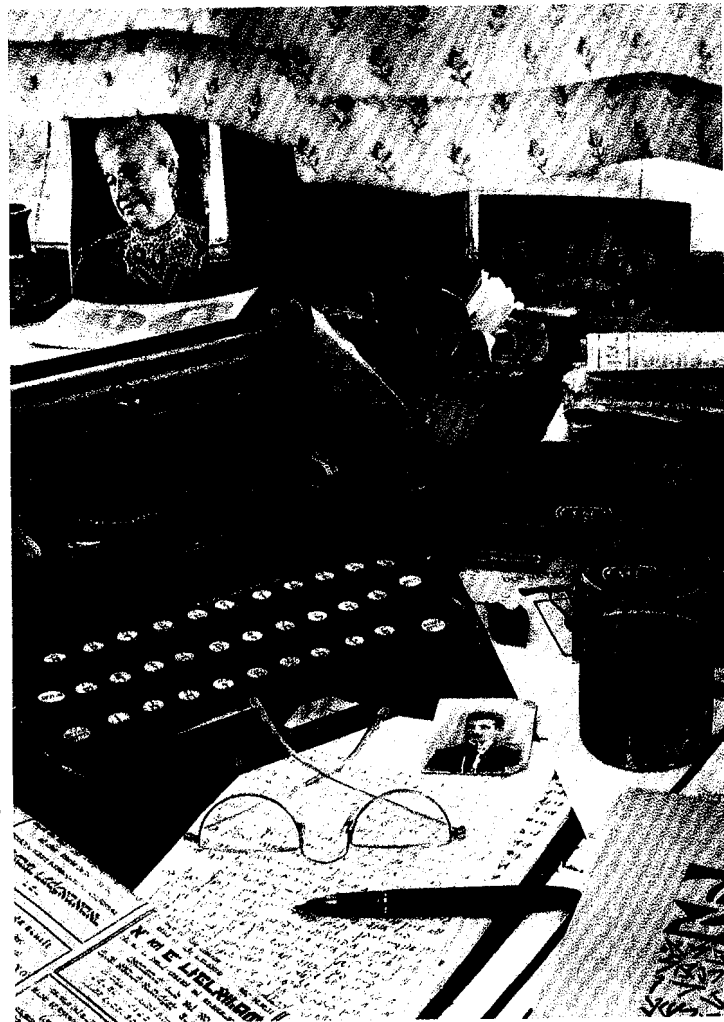
Love & lust, Kathy Anderson



THE NATIONAL YIDDISH BOOK CENTER  
IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION  
AND REVITALIZATION OF YIDDISH CULTURE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL ZIDE

NATIONAL YIDDISH BOOK CENTER  
P.O. BOX 969 • AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS 01004 • 413/253-9201



3/23/89

My dear Nero Wolfe -

I was quite surprised to see your ad in the Village Voice. I rather thought you were a much more private person - the PI business must be slow these days. My father would be horrified at the thought of my getting involved in yet another mystery, but trust Nancy Drew to get in over her head once again. Be that as it may,

I'd be delighted to tour your beloved rooftop greenhouse and see your prizewinning orchids. Perhaps your chef could be persuaded to whip up something special in honor of the occasion -

Hoping to hear from you  
(or even a message via Archie)

Nancy Drew

AKA Marci

861-2204

Kazinsky  
(member)

**Renée Kaplan**

56 PROSPECT AVENUE • NORTHPORT, NEW YORK 11768

Monday  
March 6  
ack letter  
9/23

My dear Kew -

What a joy to learn  
that rumors of your demise were  
unfounded.

You know, ~~although~~ although I'm  
a newspaper woman, even I lost track  
of you.

Call me at Newsday &  
we'll make plans. I hope you  
venture out from your delightful  
home - there's lots to see & do  
in the Big Apple of the '80s.

Your fond admirer -  
Alice Lytle

Office (212) 935-0880  
home (516) 754-1848

Dear Neo Wolfe,

<sup>ad letter</sup>  
I have been a fan of yours and would love to finally meet you. As an avid reader of the 9/23 thriller/detective genre, I have read most of Rex Stout's chronicles of your most famous cases.

At 5'8", 130 lbs, I am an attractive, slim, vivacious 32 yr old woman with brains and great legs.

I am a manager for a record company. I examine various marketing and operational issues to improve my firm's profitability.

I enjoy most forms of the arts, especially music and film. My tastes in music range from Jazz (Mainstream, Big Band, especially Miles Davis), Rock (Springsteen, Peter Gabriel - most non Heavy Metal), Classical (Back to John Adams), and some Country (Loretta Lovett).

In terms of films, I like vintage American comedies (Capra, Hawks, Sturges). I also enjoy "junk" like "Die Hard" and "Top Gun".

As much as I enjoy the city, I like to get away from it. I particularly enjoy the beach. I also enjoy going to New England of late much of my time has been taken up with buying a coop on the Upper Westside. With a little luck, I should be able to move within a month.

Though I have no great cases for you to solve, I would like to meet you (I do appreciate fine food and orchids.) I may be reached at 201.420.1774. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,  
Heidi

We'll have to give Archie a token and  
a credit card in order to get some  
privacy. Call. 212-222-7816  
or my office private  
line - 201-833-1190

"Tell"

ad letter 9/23  
pvr  
LINDA, For  
Lea

Dear Nero,

Does the window come down automatically  
at 6 a.m. so the room can warm up.

And, have you overcome your  
Antipathy for women and emotional  
outbursts — or for attachments of any  
kind other than your memories of  
a Roman childhood.

If so, we could share some of the  
stay at home time, preferably and after  
a while, without yellow silk pajamas.