

## *Restaurant for the Ugly*

Amidst a sprawling incursion of crumbling waste contours of cement formed into sprouting aisles of sidewalk, and beetling chrysanthemum groves lay a new project undertaken by a city ordinance declaring that each year a spry entrepreneur gets a chance to open a small business. After six months of secretive brick and mortar operations, alongside visits from international debutants, representatives and the architecture college down the block, the edifice unveiled one of its secrets: it was to be a restaurant. Two weeks later a dozen phone calls lit up everyone's phone decreeing that if they were given the chance to wake up tomorrow in a new pair of jeans at the cost of a human life, would they be so obliged—press “one” for yes, press “nine, nine, nine” to repeat the question, or hang up for “no”—? After some investigation there came to be no leads as to where the phantom request came from, but a scrawl of phone numbers appeared on the desk of the local police department. In the margins accompanying each phone number printed one of these three phrases, “ONE”, “NINE NINE NINE” or “DISCONNECTED”.

The next month the restaurant city finance project sprouted its soft opening. The “Restaurant for the Ugly” opened its doors at ten o'clock in the morning, served breakfast until three in the afternoon and then closed for the night at midnight. It was met with a mixed reaction from the city, exposing the pockets of the community who either (1) had no problem with its rhetoric, or (2) didn't have a problem admitting they were ugly. Spurring waitstaffs clad in freshly pressed denim lined aisles of butterscotch yellow linoleum and ruby red plaster cushion booths. Reports from Shakey Mimpes, the town beauty queen winning twelve consecutive years in a row, quotes, “It's just such a great opportunity we have here. I always thought it was cruel how ugly people would have to wait in a long line for a reservation anywhere else. I thought they were just as qualified to eat as anyone else. Now not only do I get to share a restaurant with some of my most respected friends, but there are no longer smelly ugly children gnawing at my tablecloth for a cup of parmesan or a spoonful of raisins.”

Mimpes doesn't stand alone in the beautiful crowd, strong community leaders like Ono Schettters have been regulars at Restaurant for the Ugly, now hosting their book club meetings there every third Wednesday. Other features of the town, such as Bolero Esharrock, the long time champion of used car sales, has chimed in their reports. Across the board there is a belying coat of acceptance, trying to scrub the didactic nature of this institute, and lay the groundwork for a formal and enriched dialogue.

Yet there exists some dissent. Trilling, undulated serpent tongues like the feathers shooting plucked out of a bird's back, the gasps and excreting pains of groups of contrarians plumes from the circumference of Restaurant for the Ugly. A cluster of agitated community members stands at a legal protesting distance away from the maw of the restaurant. A protester, who refused to give out a name, declared that the restaurant represents a long time stain on American thought, archaic divisions that go far beyond contemporary feelings towards empathy and compassion. Upon further investigation, one inquisitor pried about this dissident's stance on the other protest happening within the adjacent permit zone, marked by a bundle of traffic cones. The other protest also swayed resent towards the establishment, on the grounds that ugly people do not deserve a restaurant of their own, and that no ugly patrons should be welcomed into a place of dining. The protestor, at this point seeing the ambiguity in the report revealed their name to be Nixode Tritones, who remarked, “No I don't have a problem with that. That's honesty, the world is full of hateful poison. Places like this restaurant aim to try to spin that as integration, that we should be inclusive while creating boundaries. If anything, I agree with those sickening assholes than I do with this restaurant,” Tritones concluded their thoughts, and marched back into the parameters of the sixty meter protest quadrant that the city allotted them, and a police officer kindly escorted them back in with the crowd.

Yet casting aside the opinion colloquium, the real question on the mind of most was who is the *provocateur* of this establishment? Under a pile of newsprint and coffee grounds disclosed a jade textured paper folder. Blocky script printed from a laminate coated label maker scrawled out “Management” on the folder in question, to which the contains disseminated issues of grid organized information, corroborating arrivals of carts of hamburger meat and the recipient of the delivery, “OLD TURF SINIR”. Later this was found to be an anagram, upon some careful

code-cracking, it was deciphered as “Lint F.I. Turson”, the only member of the phone book that fit the bill. Turson was asked to make a public appearance in which he showed up to the house of the journalist in question, three hours later, wearing plastic bags for shoes, a paper bag over his head and a shirt that said, “**MY MOM BOUGHT ME THIS SHIRT**”, his jeans seemed fresh and barely worn in. Turson refused to answer any questions about why the thematic material of the restaurant was based around appearance. He was quoted only with declarations that he’s “an iconoclast”, and the qualities of sacred triangular architecture that exude from the walls of the restaurant, inheibreated the patrons in a genial sense of serotonin emissions. The only seemingly related topic that Turson appeared interested in, as far as questions from the journalist, was the menu. Which has the mien of a misdirect, but the menu is another very substantial topic on everyone’s mind.

The menu is divided into two large categories, “UGLY PEOPLE FOOD” and “PRETTY PEOPLE FOOD”. While the presentation is a bit forward, it’s another area where the ultimate taste lands in ambiguity. Rutger Wippes, a town “ugly” as he is known, had quite the fondness, “You know you go to these restaurants and they present you with this big laminated piece of cardstock full of *hors d’oeuvres* and fonts that have the feet on them, what is that called serif or something like that? I think food for beautiful people is marvelous, very well crafted, but it just doesn’t sit in my stomach right...and honestly it’s just wasted on someone like me. I like things to be pretty clear cut and straight forward,” Wippes was quoted as becoming giddy with mirth, “no one makes ugly people food like Turson’s boys.”

Wippes was accompanied by a long time childhood ugly friend Hector Mut—no reports have made it clear what Mut was eating, but the colloquial knowledge has it that it was a signature ugly person dish—. Mut represents one of the hundreds of ugly citizens that are apart of the sprawling community of engineers and finance workers that are crowding the charming avenues of residential neighborhoods. “Where I live is like Senior Generational Ugly, those that pretty much stay in their shells, only going out to the grocery store, bring their kids to school or to sit on the bus. But people like me who are from metropolitan trade schools bring a new fresh perspective on how we can enhance the ugly community. I’m thinking about putting a magnetic shirt on everyone ugly person, to prevent the rampant repelling in our community,” Mut is one of the dozens of graduates from the Business Enterprise trade school started by his father, Alachi Mut, “I know I see the world for what it is, and this right here is the world. In this establishment the beautiful serve the ugly and the ugly serve the beautiful.”

Fascinating stuff, Mut and their father plan on creating big developments across what is currently residential housing, soon to be one of the largest buildings in the county. Mut is also in the works with community tastemaker Ono Schettters on developing an urban style gastropub with ugly inspired cuisine. As Schettters has stated in many interviews, “Pardon can you please repeat that? I have trouble hearing, but if I’m being asked what I think I am, I know the answer. My grandma was ugly, we called her grandmop. And every holiday we would be treated to one of her delicacies that only the ugly side of the family knew. The rich flavors and the permeating humility awoken my senses and my mind to the sprouting vibrations of what this life has to offer. Hector and I found three of the least feces-ridden shipping containers from the junkyard, and then had them adhered to monster trucks, where they fought in a Roman-esque pantheon. My grandmop loved monster trucks. The winner is going to be our new home for ugly cuisine.”

The eatery has already a full calendar of reservations, and on ribbon-cutting day Turson was seen—this time without his signature paper bag, but rather a wide-brimmed baseball hat that read, “**MY MOM BOUGHT ME THIS HAT**”—enjoying a plate of their speciality: which is to be revealed on their formal opening. One of the finest cooks is known colloquially as the owner of the only dry cleaning shop in a one hundred mile radius, “Currently I don’t do much dry cleaning. I haven’t seen any galas going on lately, and everyone just has a really fresh pair of jeans sitting in their closet next to machine wash safe garments,” they continued their work of flipping over batches of raviolis in a curdled ball of cardamom, “but I like happy faces. And I get to serve those every day,” quite thrilling stuff.

Some have turned to their elders on the matter of the ugly and the beautiful, some have turned to the scientists. Sociologist and barista Yrabal Möest has given up to twelve talks at local community centers and public swimming pools about how the cultural developments of appearance lay within cohesive material of the present,

“It’s an absolutely dilenatable phenomenon. These are turbulent times, and things can get quite antediluvian when the whole structure of how we normally navigate the daytime is being barraged by new intricacies. I don’t think anyone now is able to think about the fact that most of the coming developments aren’t necessarily tangible, and most discourse is either pre-planned or deemed as ‘inconclusive’. This is not really a suggestion to revert back to what was going on before, I just think it’s all a bit hilarious that the ideas about community building are coming from the people who wear a new pair of jeans everyday and live in their mother’s various three million dollar mansions,” Möest paused his diatribe to clarify something he deemed of worth, “actually do you know how much each of Mrs. Turson’s houses cost? \$333,333,333.33 each, and she has three different houses, one in each part of town that is equally nine miles apart. It kinda gives me the heebeegeebees, but I suppose that when you have a lot of money, you have a lot of time too.”

As ugly culture gets a makeover, the town is beginning to see daffodils turn sweet and radiant on the thorns against the clustering bed of begonias that brim the trellises along Dreineunrzy Avenue, the new up and coming neighborhood for commuters and media curators, a place where everyone wears fresh jeans. The Restaurant for the Ugly is expected to have its doors closed for the next handful of weeks as they deal with a media emergency. Penske Ururun, the only old woman in the city, entered the restaurant, got her order taken, and promptly died sitting in her booth. The waitstaff that escorted her body to the curb (all available ambulance staff were eating a few booths away, and felt that a liability charge lingered too closely to their heads), whereby she ultimately became public property and the EMTs vacated once their meal was complete. A service will be held for Mrs. Ururun on the third Wednesday of this month, following the meeting of Ono Schetters’ book club, and after the last reservation at Schetters and Mut’s diner (they have decided to name it “Old Motorboat”—one of the many loving pseudonyms given to Schetters’ late grandma—) has been seated. Lint F.I. Turson and his mother will both be speaking at the service, alongside the town’s mayor who will dawn the final pair of fresh jeans onto Mrs. Ururun’s corpse. The grand re-opening is scheduled once the housing committee locates a new old woman to serve as a replacement. Everyone smiled as they awaited the bulldozer to knock down whatever was left of Mrs. Ururun’s house, because they knew that this was the beginning of a time where the beautiful and the ugly both wore bright blue jeans, drank strong black coffee, and smiled at each other amidst crosswalks and clusters of discotheques and brutalist loft apartment complexes.