

Jeff Around Town – August 23rd, 2024

Otis: Let's go. Around Town with Jeff, Jeff Koterba. Jeff, how are you?

Jeff: Good morning, Otis. Well, it's Jeff Around Town, Time Machine Edition, you might say.

Otis: Ooh, okay. Do we need to do one of those spiral things?

Jeff: Can you see the two of us spiraling in the twilight zone? When you think of prominent intersections in the United States where you might see a celebrity, what if, you know, maybe Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco, or maybe Broadway and Fifth in New York?

Otis: Yeah, Twelfth and Vine in Kansas City.

Jeff: Oh, yes, of course, well, when you think about that in Omaha, for celebrity sightings you might think of, well, would you think of 50th and Underwood?

Otis: I would. I saw Paul McCartney there.

Jeff: Well, yes, you did, and tomorrow is Dundee Day, and that intersection has been in the news the last few days because the city is experimenting whether they will permanently remove the stoplights in favor of stop signs, but that's not what this is about. If you're new to town or if you're, you know, not of a certain age, you might not know that 50th and Underwood has gained celebrity status many times over the years. For example, Omaha filmmaker Alexander Payne has shot quite a few scenes in his films near that corner.

Otis: Mhm.

Jeff: In *Citizen Ruth*, starring Burt Reynolds and Laura Dern, there's a scene with Laura Dern filmed there. And in the film *Election*, starring Matthew Broderick, and Reese Witherspoon is one of her first big breakout roles. Well, Matthew Broderick has a scene there. Also, Jack Nicholson in *About Schmidt*. I think there's a scene where his character was throwing away his wife's clothing in a dumpster on that corner. And even more recently, Otis, several scenes in the movie *The Headliner* were shot there. Now, *The Headliner* was produced and directed by Tony Bonacci and written, well, by Christine Burright. Full disclosure, she's my significant other.

Otis: Right.

Jeff: And it's currently in film festivals and hopefully will be streaming soon. But 50th and Underwood is the same corner where, as you mentioned, Warren Buffett and Sir Paul McCartney...

Otis: ...had ice cream.

Jeff: ...had ice cream. And you know about that little bench.

Otis: Yes, I do.

Jeff: There's a little plaque.

Otis: Yes.

Jeff: If you don't believe it, it's right there by the CHI. Have you ever sat on the bench?

Otis: There's a bus bench in Hollywood with my name on it, but it's a whole different kind of story.

Jeff: Did you eat ice cream there?

Otis: No. That's the sad thing.

Jeff: Well, there's one time when I was living in the neighborhood, I ran into Lady Gaga.

Otis: Oh, wow. Oh, yeah.

Jeff: And she was dating her Nebraska guy and even wrote a song about it.

Otis: Right.

Jeff: So, my favorite celebrity sighting, Otis, I think it was like the winter of 2009. I'm sitting at the Dundee Dell. It's a little after 10 o'clock. It's a weekday.

Otis: Alright.

Jeff: The place is empty, fairly empty. It's cold. It's blowing. It's a typical Nebraska, you know, the snow's blowing, the wind's blowing. It's freezing cold. No one's there. And in comes this small group of people, including some guy after 10 o'clock wearing sunglasses. And I'm thinking, who wears sunglasses in Nebraska on a winter's day? I'm sure you know who I'm talking about.

Otis: I really don't.

Jeff: It was Bono.

Otis: Oh, really?

Jeff: Because Bono, he was in town. He's done some work with Suzy Buffett.

Otis: Right. Yeah.

Jeff: Who has been involved with many of his humanitarian efforts. So, this small group of people come in. And this is early in the days of Twitter. Oh, my gosh. Within, I'm not kidding, 15, 20 minutes, the place was packed.

Otis: The sighting had been announced.

Jeff: It was incredible. People came through the snow. So, I'm not normally starstruck, Otis, but as Bono was leaving, I was ready to leave, but I stuck it out. And as he was leaving, he

went outside, and he was kind enough to take some photos with people. So, I thought, I'm going to get a selfie.

Otis: Did you get one?

Jeff: I got a selfie. And I'm going to have Addison post that. It's blurry. You see my one and only photo.

Otis: Your one chance.

Jeff: It's blurry.

Otis: Blurry.

Jeff: Yeah. One last thing. Where E-Creamery is, that used to be Baum Drug, as you know.

Otis: Right, right.

Jeff: Do you know this rumor that Al Frank Baum, who wrote *The Wizard of Oz*, that he was related...

Otis: Oh? To the Baums?

Jeff: And the rumor, the story is that he finished writing *The Wizard of Oz* in the basement of that building.

Otis: Uh... I don't know.

Jeff: Now, I don't know if it's true or not, but I like the story. So, Underwood Avenue may not be the Yellow Brick Road, but there's something special going on at 50th Underwood. So, the next time you're sitting in traffic at that intersection...

Otis: Right.

Jeff: ...maybe just take a breath, take a moment, soak up the magic of that corner, and maybe even do that tomorrow on Dundee Day. And that's another Jeff Around Town.

Otis: Dundee Day tomorrow.

Jeff: Tomorrow.

Otis: I think I saw Larry Storch there once.

Jeff: Yeah.

Otis: From *F Troop*. I think so. Around Town with Jeff Koterba. See you next Friday.

Jeff: Thanks, Otis.

Otis: All right, buddy.