

In a New York minute

Written by Lincoln L. Hayes

If you were around in the winter of 2002 and majority of 2003, you may recall I worked at the old D&J Hardware as my after school job.

In college, the knowledge I gleaned working there paid off in my technical theater classes—being able to tell a claw hammer from a ball peen put me well ahead of some of my classmates. (They went to performing arts high schools. Go public education!)

I never really thought my time at D&J would really pay off more than that, but then last Wednesday happened.

I currently work at a restaurant called City Winery in SoHo (“South of Hudson,” a neighborhood in Manhattan), and last Wednesday, my general manager asked for my help hanging a lighted sign in our window. I told him he would want to use some hardware so he didn’t have to lock the chain in place (like a carabiner or something).

He asked me to run across the street to the hardware store and get whatever I thought would work. He also gave me the company AMEX Gold Card. A bit overkill for what turned out to be \$11-worth of hardware, but whatever works, I guess.

I went over, and as I’m waiting for help, I see someone I recognize: Peter Green, an actor known for his roles of Zed in Pulp Fiction, Redfoot in Usual Suspects and most recently Jimmy McMannus in too-shortly-lived ABC series Life on Mars. I thought, “Cool! The dude who played Zed is here!” and that was about it.

Then I’m up at the counter being helped, and he says, “Excuse me, can you help me with this?” I looked at the guy behind the counter, and he helped Mr. Green and that was that. He then goes to a display of what I’d describe as light-industrial space heaters. You know, like the ones farmers have in the shops by their work benches. My dad’ll know what I’m talking about...

Anyway, again he turns to me and says, “Can you help me with this?” I said, “I don’t actually work here. I work across the street.” He apologized, saying he mistook my black shirt and apron for the black shirt the employees of the store were wearing (though why they’d be wearing aprons with City Winery printed on them is beyond me).

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I said, “No problem,” and after I minute I added, “Loved your work on Life on Mars. Great show, though way too short-lived. And you had a great story arc.” He thanked me and agreed, then we went about our business again.

Another minute later, he said, “Would you happen to know anything about these?” I said, “Well, I did used to work in a hardware store...”

I then proceeded to talk him out of buying the \$70 space heater he was thinking of buying for his mother to heat her drafty bedroom (awwww), and that he could probably get something cheaper and more effective at Staples or Office Depot because all he needed was one of those “under the desk” jobbers.

He thanked me, shook my hand and introduced himself. I told him my name, said “You’re welcome,” and he left.

So thank you, D&J Hardware, for giving me the appearance of knowing what I’m doing in a hardware store. I got to meet a movie star because of it.