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LINDA – Fieldnotes – Wednesday and Monday, October 24 and 29, 2007

Subject: walking on 125th street

Location: 125th st between Douglass and Powell

Time: 5:50-6:15

October 24

When I went to see Veronica Holly last week I was early, so I browsed a few stores on 125th st near the Theresa Hotel. I went to Uptown Jeans, a clothing store with multiple monitors playing rap music, some commercial, some an extended commercial for the store. I think the store targeted younger consumers with inexpensive clothing. At the front of the store, a burly black man kept watch over the clothing. Downstairs the young man monitoring the shoes was thin and appeared to be Latino. The shoes were very cheap, starting from \$5. He wore a baseball cap and a black hoodie.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0DE6D7153CF933A2575BC0A961958260>

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9500E5D7103BF937A35751C1A96E958260>

<http://www.villagevoice.com/news/9852.noel,3098,1.html>

A web search shows some drama over this store: 8 people killed when it was called Freddy's, and continued protests with its current incarnation as Uptown Jeans, billed as a racial dispute between the Jewish owner and black activists.

Next I visited Lazarus department store, which mostly seemed to be inexpensive children's clothing. Lots of moms with small kids in this store. Again, the cashiers and workers were a mix of people who looked Latin and African American.

Next I went to Pay Half. The stock was arranged like a low-end department store, with the quality of a discount department store, much like Filene's Basement but less crowded, both in terms of shoppers and the amount of clothing crammed onto each rack. All single women shopping here, some professionally dressed. Yet again, the cashiers and workers were a mix of people who looked Latin and African American.

October 25

On my way to the Ed Gordon campus I noticed that quite a few street vendors set up their wares between Douglass and Powell. [by the way I never hear people use this, they say 7th and 8th] These included tables set up with incense, jeans, books and DVDs, etc. I

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noted one stall selling educational materials, mostly workbooks, reference books, and charts.

Since the event at the Ed Gordon campus was cancelled I had some extra time. On my way home I stopped in at PayLess again—on the last visit I had found a pair of pants I liked, but in the wrong size. I didn't have time to search for the correct size, so I went back today. Apparently they all sold since the last time I was there. Today I noticed that several women who approached me from the back surreptitiously turned around to look at me.

I also stopped at the educational materials table. A woman with milk chocolate skin was browsing. The vendor, a thin male, was talking with a woman in a language I didn't recognize. The other shopper asked the vendor the price on a small book. Three dollars, he responded. She put it back down. I picked it up, a blue address book about 2.5 inches across. Other materials included Christian stories, children's dictionaries, thesauruses, test prep for 2nd grade up to high school, and workbooks. I picked up a "community math" workbook, in which the community was a generic one with a post office and grocery store where you could do math. The other shopper left. With the man still talking to the woman I left.

[The street was packed. I realized that it is not only 125th st that comes to life at dusk—every time I've been out at this time a lot of people come out, especially young men.]