

LOSIN' IT

"I returned to New York as I had left it - penniless." How many times have I echoed Henry Miller upon arrival at Kennedy, LaGuardia or Forty-Deuce! And yet, I've never experienced his disgust or disorientation. Oh, I've been apprehensive on occasion, but when all is said and done, I love this city to distraction. I adore the very stones in the streets, its constantly shifting population of scum bags and its manic energy.

Unlike Henry, I never leave without a fistful of money or some functioning plastic. I just wouldn't risk getting stranded in London, Des Moines or Dingle. And although I have rarely been solvent in New York, it seldom fazes me. I automatically switch into overdrive and prowl this jungle, keen as a tiger.

Nor have I ever had a creative block here. If I need music, I stand on Broadway - the scream of traffic and the motion of the mob electrify me. If I need poetry, the multilingual babel of Canal Street is invariably inspiring.

And yet, like many New Yorkers, I am mere seconds away from hysteria. I explode into expletives at the smallest of provocations, both real and imagined. Along with 10 million other nut cases, I teeter precariously on the brink of psychosis.

Like Chuckie R. Law, I am a walkin' time bomb when it comes to significant others. Dump me and I'm liable to be found dancing naked in the rain outside CBGB's, crashing a wedding in Bensonhurst or passing out in Manhattan and waking up in Haiti.

I suppose that's why I live here. Taxis and mailboxes may want to sleep with me; you may have left me for a cab driver who looks like a cross between Jesus and Yul Brynner; and the ladies at Victoria's Secret may tremble when I appear in their doorway brandishing a blowtorch. Still and all, tomorrow I'll wake up, pop a couple of Tylenol and go about my business. No one will even raise an eyebrow. They all know I was just losin' it.