

Deprivation Road Leads to Depravity

DA CHANNEL—Angela Bartucci is a woman on a mission.

“I’m mad as hell, and I ain’t gonna take it no more!” she declares as she sits at her formica dinette in her modest Lower Irish Channel shotgun. A Lucky Strike is gripped firmly between two flaming red lips, and a bottle of Dixie Beer stands at the ready by her side. “Me an’ mines been here for years and years, but now it looks like we might be betta off following all the rest dat have moved out into da Parish!”

A native New Orleanian, Angela is dismayed by the recent and ongoing rash of sellouts, buyouts, defections, mergers, and just plain disappearances of longtime New Orleans institutions.

“Aw, I’m tellin’ ya, it’s horrible out there and getting worsen every day,” she laments. “Like just the other day, I was downtown, going ta buy my grandchild, little Angelo, a Christmas present. I always get him a Barbie fur coat from Koslows to add to his collection—he don’t want his father ta know about it, so I always hide the little coat in a box a chocolate or something. Anyway, I get down there, and Koslow’s ain’t there! Gone! Some juke joint t-shirt shop is in its place. So I decide ta try Woolsworth’s ta see if dey might have somethin’ similar, and Woolsworth’s ain’t there neither! Same goes for McCrory’s and Kress. All gone!”

“Another thing is my Mardi Gras party dis year. I hadda call it off. Wit no more McKenzie’s, where I’m gonna get purple, green and gold petitfours for my guests at? Won’t no one come to a Mardi Gras party if you’re not servin’ dem petitfours. Krispy Kum doughnuts with purple, green and gold sprinkles just ain’t da same.”

It’s not just Angela feeling the pinch of deprivation and loss. Her friends and relatives are also finding it hard to function in the Depraved New World that is New Orleans.

“Take my daughter Tiffany for example. She’s an interpretive dancer at da Club Charmin’ down on Boibon Street. Ya know, her act is real high class artistic stuff. Now, she used ta get her paraphernalia for da show at Krauss. Now she don’t have nowhere to go to get her accoutrements. She’s been reduced ta dancin’ around in an apron an’ garden gloves from Home Depot while croonin’ “I Got Faeries in the Bottom of My Garden”—kinda a homage to Martha Stewart. She’s her idol, don’t ya know.

“My friends Rhoda Ruin and Helena Handbasket got it bad too. Poor Rhoda used ta go to da beauty shop in Holmeses to get her hair fixed up. She used ta have a beautiful big red beehive, da biggest in da city! Now dats gone she tried goin’ ta Suppa Cuts, but she always comes out lookin’ like a reject from da Audubon Zoo. Last time I told her she looked like a drowned nutria, and she hid in da laundry room off her car porch for a week!

“And Helena is specially tragic. Wit K&B gone she can’t find her favorite brand of licker, you know dat purple label stuff. Now she drinks Mad Dog 22 and Watermelon schnapps down at da Mansion Lounge all da long. She’s a pitiful sight!”

Luckily for Angela and her friends, the Mystic Krewe of Inane has come to the rescue! Inane has developed a twelve-step program to aid those who are suffering from the DTs as a result of being deprived of their beloved New Orleans staples. The program is as follows:

Step 1: Admit that you are powerless over the forces that are depriving us of the bastions of Inanity that make our city special.

Step 2: Come to believe that a Depravity greater than ourselves can restore us to Inanity.

Step 3: Make a decision to turn yourself over to a life of drunken lewdness and lascivity.

Step 4: Make a thorough inventory of those things you want to do that are thoroughly depraved, and go out and do them all!

Step 5: Submit to a life of hedonism, and through your actions exact pleasure for all the deprivations that plague our city.

Step 6: Allow alcohol and sex to erase all memory of our lost treasures.

Step 7: Make a list of all the people you would like to depraved things with, and promptly go out and do it with them.

Step 8: Make direct amends to all those people who wanted to do depraved things to you, but you turned down.

Step 9: Humbly crawl home when your depraved acts are done. Get some rest. Continue on your merry, depraved way the next night.

Step 10: Commit to living life on the cutting edge of depravity.

Step 11: Pray for insights into new ways of expressing your newfound depravity.

Step 12: Carry this message to all New Orleanians suffering the pangs of deprivation.

To present “Depraved New Orleans: Inane’s Twelve-Step Program” to the city, the Mystic Krewe of Inane plans to parade through the streets of the Quarter, where depravity reigns supreme. Sporting outfits that leave little to the imagination, and tanked with liquor and other chemical substances, Inane’s members are the perfect disciples of depravity to bring this unique antidote to deprivation to the people of New Orleans.