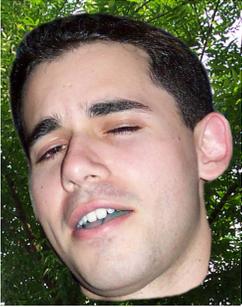


Girl Continually Hit On By Local Tree



By Jackass McGee

Coming as a surprise to her friends, Harvard Graduate student Estelle Rochelle Hotel announced recently that ever since the beginning of April, she had been constantly sexually harassed, not by area construction workers, colleagues in her department, or dudes at the Porter or Harvard square T stops, but by a local tree. According to Hotel, the tree, located permanently on Massachusetts Avenue, halfway between Porter and Harvard square, had evidently been whispering reasonably clever pick up lines to her and often "getting a little too touchy feely", from its square of soil, nestled in between sidewalk concrete sections, "like every time" she passed by in the past few months.

"And it's not like it's only happened a couple of times." Explained Hotel. "I live in Porter Square, and I walk down to campus for class at the Education department, so I walk by that perverted punk ass tree like almost every day. Who the fuck does he think he is?"

Tree had this to say. "Who do I think I am? I am the arboreal master of love. They say it's a jungle out there, but oh no, girl, it's a jungle in here, if you know what I mean. You know I ain't goin' nowhere, girl. I'll be waiting here for you and for your sweet love."

"You see", said Hotel, "It's like that every time. And sometimes the lines aren't even that bad. But it's a fucking tree for God's sake! What the hell does it think I'm going to do, take it out dancing to the club?"

Tree responded to said stimuli. "Don't say that baby. You hurt me so...with that tongue throwin' out cuttin' words like a chainsaw. What are you supposed to be? A lumberjack? Sheeeeeit. But anyway, you know they say that plants are incapable of locomotion, aside from a little swaying in the wind and a little turning toward the sun for some photosynthesis action. But with you girl, when you're around, I'll do a little tiltin' with or without the sun, if you know what I mean. I don't need no silly ass breeze to sway my leaves when I've got you, girlfriend. Sheeeeeit. The club's right here girl. We don't even need to go down to the Hong Kong. Although those Scorpion Bowls are mighty tasty."



The CO₂ Breathing Offender



Move Over Inspector Gadget

Estelle claims also to be bothered not just by the verbal harassment, but specifically by the fact that the low hanging branches of the tree somehow always manage to brush through her hair every time she passes under the tree, walking toward campus on Massachusetts Ave., past the Coldwell Banker real estate office and the Boca Grande Taco Shop.

Hotel explained, "It's a bit spooky and unnerving when you get a face full of foliage no matter what you do. If I duck, the branches hang lower and are somehow there to meet me. If I hug the side of the building, the leaves still find a way to lightly caress both me and the panes of the shop windows that I cling to in a futile gesture for protection. One time, I even ran half way out into the middle of the street, dangerously with my back to traffic, and somehow, I still feel that springtime stalker exhaling Oxygen on the back of my neck. It's like Go Go Gadget branches or something."

Ms. Hotel noted that she is seriously considering permanently diverting her course to the other side of the street. "I'd feel sort of stupid changing the way I walk to class just because of some goddamned tree, but I'll tell you, the thought has crossed my mind quite a bit recently. I mean, how would you feel if you constantly find twigs in your purse, bark and leaves in your hair, and sap all over the back of your ass, and have to explain it to friends. I've had just about enough."

UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Tree kindly offered a rebuttal. "Don't go baby. Spring is the time for love. Flowers are in bloom. I've got my leaves. And baby, you so fine, in the Spring time/Summer time...basically from April to August, depending on the year. Anyway, you know you want some of this. I've got things that no other man can offer. You can climb in my branches and view the fine asphalt vista of Massachusetts avenue. You can patiently look at all the shops and stores which are in visual range of my location. And when you get tired, you can walk only like 50 steps and either get a burrito or rent a fine film at the corner video store."

"He does have a point, Estelle", remarked a local squirrel and summer resident of the Tree.

"You think?" asked Ms. Hotel, seemingly considering the idea for a moment.

"But if I were you," said the squirrel, "I'd just wait around till the Fall/Winter. Then you won't have to worry about this bastard anymore. Charging me an arm and a whisker. Won't even let me sublet. What does he think I am, made of acorns!"

"Shut up little squirrel. I'm offering you a good deal. You ain't getting that kind of rent from no goddamned trees in the square. And even the trees in Somerville ain't exactly what you'd call decent landlords. Pay your rent, nut muncher, and shut your furry ass up."

"You know, squirrel", asked Hotel. "You got me thinking. So what are you up to for dinner tonight anyway?"

"Oh, you know, nuts and berries." Explained the squirrel. "But I suppose we could also do that over some Chateau Lafitte Rothschild '66 at the top of the Hyatt, overlooking the Charles. Then we can go to your place afterwards," added the unexpectedly suave mammal. "Normally, I would have said come back to my place, but given the situation with my landlord and all, I think that would be impertinent."



"Don't do this to me girlfriend." Interjected the tree. "Why you gotta playa hate and shit. You just trying to make me jealous. What you gonna do with that squirrel anyway?"

"Fuck off." said Estelle Rochelle Hotel, as she and squirrel sauntered arm in arm, calmly and deliberately, to the other side of the street.

Thirty five seconds later, Harvard sophomore Rachel Taylor swore she heard an odd, somehow Oxygenated, Barry White sounding love poem emanating from an unspecified location, as she struggled to free herself from a jagged branch that had accidentally caught on her sweater.