

# **YOU ARE HERE**

by Chris Van Strander

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## CHARACTERS

AUDIOGUIDE        An electronic tour guide, via mp3 player. Female voice.

TOUR GUIDE        (*optional—see note*)

## SETTING

The Liffy II Bar. Inwood, Manhattan, NY. Now.

## NOTE

In the original production, a silent, slightly disgruntled TOUR GUIDE unobtrusively pointed out, via flashlight, various aspects of the bar in tandem with the voiceover. This worked nicely.

*The audience enter the Liffy II, a working-class Irish bar in Inwood, Manhattan. They order drinks, then congregate in the bar's large "lounge" room. Once everyone's settled, the AUDIOGUIDE pipes up from the bar's internal speakers.*

#### AUDIOGUIDE

Chiggie check. Microphone check one. Chiggie check. Microphone check two. Chiggie check. Microphone check three.

Quiet please! May I have everyone's attention? Our tour is about to begin. Thank you.

Welcome to the Liffy II, the greatest bar in New York's greatest neighborhood! Let's hear it for Inwood! Woot woot! Holler! Oh, and if you'd like to check in on FourSquare or Facebook, go ahead.

Are you making your maiden visit here today? Or have you stumbled home from this joint more times than you care to admit? Either way, I bet you don't know the story behind this historic watering hole.

Today's tour will last ten minutes, and cover some fun facts about Liffy II. You can make the most of this tour by actively observing the bar's features as I point them out. Examining them as I narrate will greatly increase your enjoyment. Don't feel you have to sit here just staring at my voice. Oh, and if computerized voices weird you out, or you're feeling buzzed and need to sit your cup down and chill?, go ahead. Sound good? Awesome possum! Let's get started!

Liffy II was opened on Christmas, 1938, by Leo Mannix, a recent immigrant from the village of Despair, Ireland. His wife Siobhan, who had a wooden leg, worked behind the bar, as did his one-eyed son Patrick. Since they'd just sunk their life savings into Liffy II, the family had no presents to exchange, so they gave each other pathetic gifts of thimbles and sawdust, then spent most of the holiday behind the bar. Liffy II is run by descendents of the Mannix family to this day.

Liffy II is named for Ireland's Liffey River, referenced often in song and literature. Were you aware that the Liffey is the only river mentioned by name in the Bible? Radiohead also reference it in their tune "How to Disappear Completely."

Oh by the way, does anyone know how we got the number II in our name? There used to be a bar on Broadway called The Liffy. Hence, we're the Liffy II.

Let's turn our attention first to the bar itself. Look at the bar. The bottom panels are original, tulip wood, from an historic tree in Inwood Hill Park. It marked the site where Peter Minuit swindled—I mean purchased—Manhattan from the Lenape Indians. Coincidentally, this tree "just happened to fall down" right when Leo Mannix was looking for lumber, and he fashioned it into this handsome bar.

Now feast your eyes on those six stained-glass lamps with fruit motifs hanging above the bar. These are genuine Tiffany lamps. So are the table lamp behind the bar, as well as the three in this room. How did we get so many? They come from the collection of comedian Sinbad. Apart from being an hysterical comic, Sinbad is one of the world's foremost experts on Tiffany lamps. Unfortunately, Sinbad has fallen on hard times, and we snagged these super cheap at his estate sale.

Notice all those German beer steins above the bar? Why would an Irish bar have German steins? It's a love story! Patrick Mannix, the owner's son, fought in Germany in World War II. There, he married a girl named Gretchen. With anti-German sentiment across the U.S., Patrick was nervous his bride wouldn't be welcome here. When Patrick brought Gretchen into Liffy II, what did he find? His family had hung up all these steins, to show her she was welcome. (After this, Gretchen could never bring herself to tell everyone she was actually French.)

**To read the rest of this play, please contact me at:  
[chrisvanstrander@gmail.com](mailto:chrisvanstrander@gmail.com).**