

November 2013

On the Road: Dragging the Customer Net

Don Jaeger
Alfred Jaeger, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Recommended Citation

Jaeger, Don (1995) "On the Road: Dragging the Customer Net," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 7: Iss. 5, Article 23.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1627>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

On the Road

Dragging the Customer Net

Column Editor: **Don Jaeger** (Alfred Jaeger, Inc.) <jaeger@ajaeger.com>



I am pleased to include another travel story. The names are being withheld to protect the innocent and also the authors have requested anonymity for obvious reasons. The episode is entitled "Dragging the Customer Net" and took place in New Orleans at an unspecified date.

The story you are about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty. My name's Friday. I'm a vendor.

Saturday: 8 PM. I had just come off working the day watch in the ALA exhibits onto the steamy streets of New Orleans. My assignment: take best client to supper.

Dom-da-domm-domm.

I consulted **Zagat's** guide and located a Cajun restaurant. It made sense. It was New Orleans. I hailed a cab which took us for a ride down Canal Street — a \$20 ride. The hack overshot the restaurant by several blocks. There are no U-turns on Canal Street.

Dom-da-domm-domm.

To double back, he'd have to go eighteen blocks and charge me another twenty. I told him to pull over. We got out, paid the cabby off and started walking back. The cab made a squealing U-turn at the first light. "Hey," I said, as he disappeared down the other side of the six-lane highway. He didn't hear me. We kept walking and reached Zydeco's Cajun Crawfish House. The lights were off. It was **CLOSED**.

Dom-da-domm-domm.

University Park Media

- Quick turnarounds
- Exceptional fill-rates
- Personal customer service
- Competitive discounts

For more information about
University Park Media services:

Voice: (800) 752-8498

Fax: (800) 264-3987

E-mail: service@uparkmedia.com

Website: www.uparkmedia.com



P.O. Box 177 • State College, PA 16804

I opened **Zagat's** guide to ask it some routine questions. It shouldn't mind answering them if it had nothing to hide. Facts were all I wanted. The final line of the entry for the restaurant was: "call ahead of time because hours are irregular."

Dom-da-domm-domm.

9:30 p.m.: We were hungry. We were tired. And we were now in the middle of nowhere with no cars in sight and a long way from home. Then I spied a telephone. It was two blocks down from the restaurant, an open booth, on the side of the road. We got there. We used 25, then 50, then 75 cents. The machine ate all our change. I concluded the phone was out of order. By this time, we had attracted the attention of street people. They, too, were lost, but it didn't bother them. One wanted five dollars for wine. He said he'd share it.

I spied a bus. It was idling all the way across the six lanes of street and the broad median that make Canal one of the broadest streets in the world. Pointing it out to my client, I began to jog across the street, hoping to catch it before it took off. The driver put it in gear. We began to sprint. Luck was with us. Gasping and winded, we ascended the bus. Now our assignment was easy ...

... find out where we were.

The only place in the city the bus driver and I knew in common was the French Quarter. The driver wasn't helpful. He told me: "If you go out at night ...

... know your way around."

Dom-da-domm-domm.

A woman on the bus said she could recognize the French Quarter. All the tourists seemed to like it there. It was my big moment. I said, "Just the facts, ma'am." That set her straight. She said she'd tell us ...

... where to get off.

Dom-da-dom-dom.

Checking **Zagat's**, I said we'd go to **Gallatois** for supper. It was expensive, but perhaps I could retrieve the evening. There was a line outside, but not overly long. A sign said: "no blue jeans allowed." I ignored it. Everybody wore blue jeans these days.

Dom-da-dom-dom.

10:45 p.m.: lines move slowly when you're on stake-out. Finally, we reached the prime position. The *maitre d'* didn't share America's opinion of blue jeans. He pointed to the sign.

Dom-da-domm-domm.

I checked the facts again in **Zagat's**. The final bit of the entry was: "Dress code."

Dom-da-dom-dom.

My evening was not going well.

11:15 p.m.: another cab ride later, we settled into a bar with beer and fried oysters on a hero roll. The bar was both open and it overlooked blue jeans. A neon sign blinked a lurid red in our faces. The message was clear.

*I am sure there are other humorous stories out there concerning the travels of both librarians and vendors. I heard some of them this summer at the ALA and MLA meetings, and invite those people to share those stories with us. Kindly submit it to my fax or e-mail address and I'll be pleased to include it in the next issue of **Against the Grain**.*

Of course, any company names or individual names would remain anonymous at the request of the authors. We look forward to receiving more creative stories for future issues. See you in Charleston!