

A family pauses outside Battery Park, as the father speaks with a ticket vendor.

The Short End of the Stick

DISPUTE AMONG BATTERY TICKET VENDORS LEADS TO STABBING

By Matthew Fenton

In the latest outbreak of intermittent violence that stretches back almost a decade, a ticket hawkker at the Battery, selling boat rides around (but not to) the Statue of Liberty, was stabbed twice on the morning of June 7, apparently by rival vendors who believed he was crossing into their territory.

Days before the incident, Mayor Eric Adams said at a press conference that he had visited the Battery in April, in response to a reporter's question about the ongoing lawlessness among aggressive street salespeople offering "tickets to the Statue of Liberty."

Such tickets are sometimes valid for admission to boats that tour the harbor, but these boats

are often docked in Midtown, and the tickets are sold under the false pretense that they stop at Liberty Island—and profited at inflated prices, far above their actual value. In other cases, the tickets turn out to be worthless counterfeits. A third scam involves selling bogus, expensive passes to board the Staten Island Ferry, which is free. But the salespeople who engage in these transactions (often clad in official-looking uniforms) form a screen at the entrances to Battery Park, intercepting visitors before they can reach the only legitimate Statue of Liberty ticket seller, Statue City Cruises, located at Castle Clinton, within the park.

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Slow Burn

FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN SPEED LIMITS PLANNED FOR LOWER MANHATTAN

By Matthew Fenton

The City's Department of Transportation, which cut speed limits in Lower Manhattan in 2024, has identified five streets close to public schools where it intends to lower the legally permitted speed further, from 20 to 15 miles per hour. The locations are Battery Place (at P.S. /I.S. 276), Warren Street (at P.S. 89 and I.S. 289), Beekman and Spruce Streets (at the Spruce Street School), and Beaver Street (near the Lower Manhattan Community Middle School at 26 Broadway). The DOT has not announced plans for similar speed reductions near the Peck Slip School, P.S. 234, or P.S. 150.

DOT selected Lower Manhattan as the site of its first "regional slow zone" last autumn, reducing the speed limit on all roads south of Canal Street to 20 miles per hour—except West Street and the FDR Drive, where speeds of 30 and 40 miles per hour are still permitted. Since rolling out this first slow zone, DOT has reduced speed limits at 70 zones throughout the five boroughs, a total that the agency plans to increase to as many as 250 by the end of this year.

The initiative springs from "Sammy's Law," a 2024 statute named for 12-year-old Sammy Cohen Eckstein, who was killed by a car when he chased a ball into a Brooklyn street in 2013.



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Lower Manhattan Gets Shafted

SUBTERRANEAN ARTERY-HARDENING SAVES TIME AND MONEY

By Matthew Fenton

An innovative engineering method that rehabilitates deteriorating subterranean walls without the need for expensive and disruptive excavation at street level recently made its New York debut in Lower Manhattan. The venue for this tryout was the South Street Interceptor, a half-century old, 1,000-foot-long tunnel (eight feet high by six feet wide) that stretches between Fulton and Dover Streets, 30 feet beneath the pilings that support the FDR Drive viaduct.

Interceptor lines are major sewer mains that accept water from a network of converging, smaller pipes and channel it toward a treatment facility. According to a spokesman for the City's Department of Design and Construction (DDC), the problem with the South Street Interceptor, which handles 40 million gallons of water each day, is that "its concrete walls are wearing down, making it vulnerable to infiltration from the East River and therefore more likely to overflow."

The traditional method for addressing this issue would have been to dig an open trench three stories deep, which would have meant closing South Street to traffic, possibly for several years. Such a project would also have en-



Visitors treasure the half-acre Elizabeth Street Garden, which is dotted with sculptures and old-growth trees. Although located on publicly owned land, it has been maintained and improved as a de facto park by local residents since 1991.

A New Elizabethan Age Begins

CHERISHED LOWER MANHATTAN GARDEN IS SAVED BY NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEAL

By Matthew Fenton

A decade-long battle over bulldozing the Elizabeth Street Garden—a verdant, picturesque, public lot dense with old trees, stone pathways, and sculptures of angels and animals—in order to build affordable housing came to a close on June 23, when City Council member Christopher Marte and Mayor Eric Adams announced a deal that will bring affordable housing to other Lower Manhattan sites in exchange for preserving the garden.

The Elizabeth Street Garden—a 20,000-square-foot publicly owned lot between Spring and Prince Streets—has been the focus of controversy since a 2014 announcement by the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development that it planned to create affordable housing for low-income seniors there.

In lieu of this plan, City Hall and Council member Marte have agreed to retain the gar-

den in its current form, while building a minimum of 620 affordable homes at three other Downtown locations: 123 units at 166 Bowery (the same number of homes that would have been created at the Elizabeth Street Garden site), 200 units at 22 Suffolk Street, and at least 300 units of affordable housing in the recently announced development plan for 100 Gold Street (alongside the Brooklyn Bridge).

"This incredible win-win for our community shows exactly why we should never give up," said Council member Marte. "Since the beginning of this fight, we've been saying that we can save community gardens and build new affordable housing. And with this historic agreement with Mayor Adams, this will be the largest influx of new, permanently affordable housing in Lower Manhattan in decades. Our rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods have been

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NEWS & COMMENT

Even in the bluest noonday of July,
There could not run the smallest
breath of wind
But all the quarter sounded like a wood;
And in the chequered silence and above
The hum of city cabs that sought the
Bois,
Suburban ashes shivered into song.
— Robert Louis Stevenson

A PAC of Fun

The Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC) at the World Trade Center will host its first annual Family Day on Saturday, July 12, from 10am through 4pm. This free, open-house event will bring together local families and artists for a day of indoor and outdoor workshops, performances, interactive creation stations, live music, dance battles, food, face painting, balloons, and more. Many artists are planning interactive parades throughout the day, encouraging family participation. Admission and participation are free, but the PAC asks that guests RSVP in advance, to ensure that there is space for all. For details, go to pacnyc.org/whats-on/family-day/

No Kayak Deniers Here...

The world's largest free kayaking program, which is headquartered in Lower Manhattan, has opened for the season. Now, through October 5, the Downtown Boathouse (at Pier 26 in the Hudson River Park, in Tribeca) is offering complimentary boating in the Hudson. The all-volunteer, nonprofit organization provides not only the kayaks, but also brief instruction and life vests (use of which is mandatory), along with changing rooms, lockers and locks, sun block, and first aid equipment. There is even an outdoor shower. The fleet consists of unsinkable, self-bailing, sit-on-top kayaks. No reservations are needed. Users must know how to swim and are required to sign a waiver before going out on the water. Hours are Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays (from 10am to 4:30pm), with weekend evenings from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Closing hours denote when the last boats go out, but in practice, it may be necessary to arrive an hour or more earlier in order to ensure that you can be accommodated.

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Image credit: Leeor Wild

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North Oculus Plaza

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North Oculus Plaza

Norman Edwards Jr. and SpikKik
World Trade Center
North Oculus Plaza

Ginita y La Orquesta Esa
140 Broadway

Alphonso Horne and His Gotham Kings
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Wayne Tucker and The Bad Mothas
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Short End of the Stick

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At a June 3 press conference, the Mayor said, “when we went down there... we didn’t see it. And so we need to identify the hours. And so we’re going to try to go back down there.”

“It’s unfortunately not surprising that the daily lawlessness in Battery Park has yet again resulted in nearby violence,” commented Mike Burke, the chief operating officer of Statue City Cruises. “We urge the City to do what it has done in other parts of town and once and for all eradicate this blight on the

aggressive the ticket sellers in the Battery have become. They are illegally inside the park, and they routinely harass, intimidate and scam tourists and locals. We appreciate the additional enforcement that the NYPD has been doing and look forward to working with the City Council and the administration to take future action to rid Lower Manhattan of these ticket sellers.”

Nearly a decade of local history underscores the chronic nature of these concerns. In



Clad in official-looking vests, ticket sellers near Wagner Park at the foot of the West Street walkway, and along the perimeter of the Battery, purport to offer visits to the Statue of Liberty, but in fact sell passes for excursion boats that do not stop there.

City’s tourism industry.”

City Council member Christopher Marte (who recently introduced legislation to toughen enforcement against bogus ticket sellers), said, “this stabbing is horrifying – but unfortunately, it’s not an isolated incident. For years, there have been repeated reports of harassment, intimidation, and even violence tied to illegal ticket vending operations in Lower Manhattan. These aren’t just one-off scams – they’re part of organized networks that prey on tourists, undercut legitimate businesses, and create real public safety concerns. That’s why we’ve introduced legislation to hold the companies behind these operations accountable. By targeting the source of the problem – the businesses that profit while others take the fall – we can protect everyone: consumers, neighborhood residents, pedestrians, and even the ticket sellers themselves.”

Tammy Meltzer, chair of Community Board 1, said, “this now-third stabbing among ticket sellers at the Battery is just the latest reminder that the ‘wild west’ of this industry continues, despite attempts to regulate it by increased enforcement. For years we have documented escalating numbers of assaults, fraud, and aggressive harassment tied to tour-ticket vending, but the problem continues to get worse. That is why Community Board 1 worked with Council member Marte and the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection to draft and unanimously pass a resolution in November 2024 calling on the City to require ticket sellers to be employees of the tour boat operators and to revoke their license and ability to operate when their agents break the law. Council member Marte’s bill was introduced last week and we hope it will bring that accountability. We urge the Council to bring the bill to a swift hearing and passage so we can end the rampant violence, fraud and harassment on our streets.”

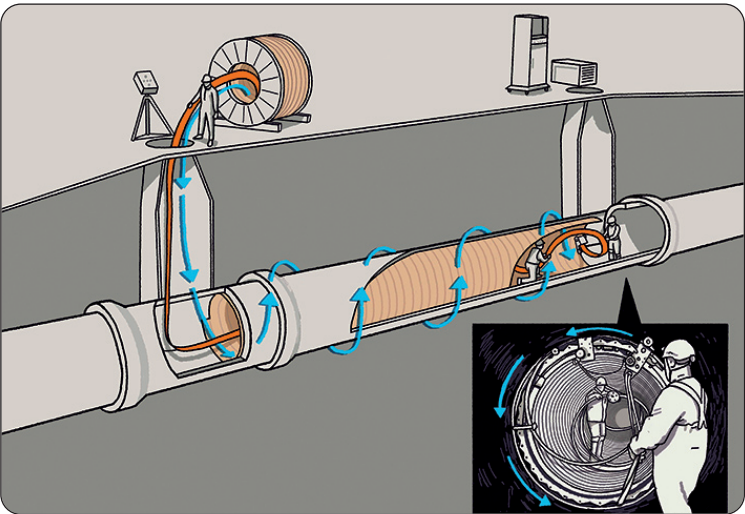
Jessica Lappin, president of the Downtown Alliance, said, “this incident reflects just how

February 2016, a man and woman believed to be romantically linked, but who worked for competing companies, became involved in a violent altercation, which ended when the woman attacked her boyfriend with a stun gun. Later that month, another couple selling tickets attacked a tourist who refused to buy from them, fracturing his skull. That fall, a pair of vendors were accused of assaulting a tourist who refused to buy the tickets they were offering.

In the spring of 2017, police officers arrested more than a dozen sellers for offering fake tickets to unsuspecting tourists. In April of that year, gunfire erupted near the corner of Battery Place and Washington Street, arising from an altercation between two men who sold tour tickets. The shots were fired steps away from three childcare facilities, and struck one innocent bystander, a woman in her 30s who was wounded when a stray bullet hit her in the ankle. A second victim, who sustained a gunshot wound to the abdomen, was a party to the dispute.

By 2018, ticket hawkers had refined their scheme by coopting the Connection shuttle bus, operated by the Downtown Alliance, as a prop. In this version of the ruse, ticket sellers would herd their victims (who had paid inflated prices for worthless passes to board the bus, which is free) onto the shuttle, under the pretense that it take them to a pier for embarkation. In fact, the Connection shuttle merely drove in a circle around Lower Manhattan. For several years, the Downtown Alliance was forced to eliminate multiple stops from the shuttle’s route, in an attempt to foil the scam.

A 2016 police investigation found that several of the companies that deploy ticket sellers to Battery Park made it a practice to hire people who recently had been released from prison, and were in many cases on parole or probation. Several of these companies, in fact, were run by convicts, and in one case, the enterprise was being managed by an owner while he was imprisoned at Rikers Island.



The South Street Interceptor runs for more than 1,000 feet, three stories beneath South Street. The tunnel, which is eight feet high and six feet wide, handles more than 40 million gallons of water per day. As shown in the illustration above, “spiral wound lining” is a new technology that makes the expensive and time-consuming process of excavating trenches at the surface unnecessary. Images courtesy of the NYC Department of Design and Construction

Getting Shafted

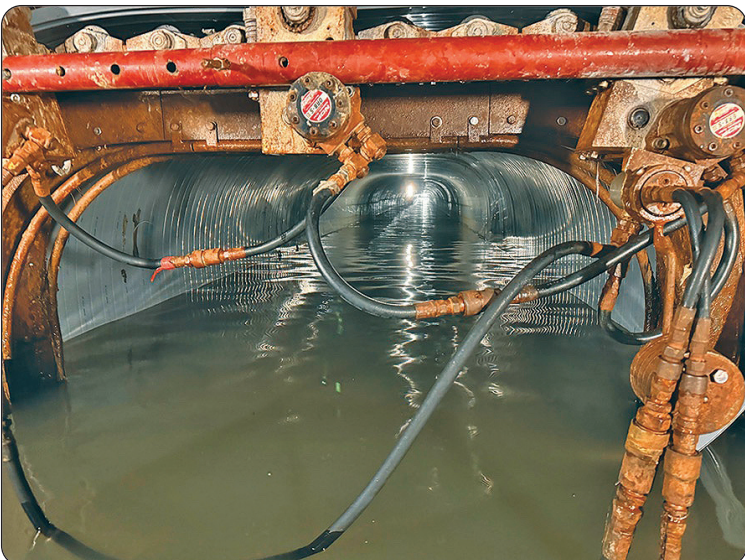
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croached on dozens of other underground utility vaults.

So DDC decided to give a new technology called “spiral wound lining” its first New York tryout. This approach relies on a miles-long spool of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a thermoplastic polymer that combines flexibility with strength and resistance to water. The spool is brought to an existing access point (such

as a manhole) and slowly unwound.

Before that process could start however, DDC sent scuba divers into the South Street Interceptor, armed with a submersible pump, to empty the tunnel of most of its water. After the space was cleared, works crews lowered into the shaft the spiral lining installer, a piece of machinery that expands or contracts to the size



The spiral lining installer, which expands or contracts to the size of the tunnel, molds strips fed from above into a customized, interlocking shape, forming a watertight seal, and affixing it to tunnel walls.

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of the tunnel. As the spool of PVC (positioned above, at street level) unrolled the liner down into the tunnel, the installer below molded it into a precision-customized, interlocking shape, forming a watertight seal, and affixing it to the tunnel walls.

“Workers feed the winding machine with PVC material and guide it as it rotates throughout the interceptor sewer,” the DDC spokesman explained. “The machine constructs the liner through a continuous winding process, as the profile edges form successive wraps of PVC. Space between the PVC liner and concrete wall of the sewer are then sealed with grout to help improve the structural integrity of the sewer.” With the new lining (which was installed at the rate of a few linear feet for each eight-hour shift), the tunnel is now four inches narrower on each side, but much stronger.

As the South Street Interceptor rehabilitation (which has been in progress since last autumn) nears completion, DDC estimates that it saved roughly \$12 million by not having to excavate an open trench along South Street. The \$29-million budget also translated into finishing the project in a fraction of the time that would have otherwise been required.

“Once the South Street project is complete,” the DDC spokesman says, “1,000 feet of deteriorated sewer will be reinforced with four inches of PVC material. With the interceptor now impermeable to water, it will be less prone to potential overflow, which reduces the risk of flooding for the surrounding community. The finished project will also extend the overall lifespan of the interceptor sewer and prevent further damage from root intrusion.”



Elizabethan Age

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desperate for homes that working people can actually afford—and now we will have hundreds of new neighbors, and old neighbors with new homes, right here, all while saving a beloved community garden that is a home away from home for Lower Manhattan families.”

First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro said, “we will now be creating more than five times the affordable housing in this district than would otherwise have been possible from taking this garden site alone and, at the same time, preserving this community garden in an area largely bereft of parkland.”

Many in government and in housing advocacy were critical of the plan to build affordable housing elsewhere, however, saying that these plans were already in the works. City Council Speaker and mayoral candidate Adrienne Adams said in a statement, “Amidst a severe housing and affordability crisis, Mayor Adams, First Deputy Mayor Mastro, and their administration have betrayed New Yorkers who are in desperate need of affordable homes. The Mayor is not only overturning a housing approval by the Council from six years ago, but also denying homes to older adults, as he fails to address our housing crisis with this decision.”

Multiple sources said that Mr. Mastro, who joined the Adams

administration in March, played a crucial role in brokering a compromise between the Mayor and Mr. Marte, who had been at an impasse over the Elizabeth Street Garden (and multiple other issues) almost from the day that Eric Adams took office in 2022.

In exchange for 620 units of new affordable housing in Lower Manhattan, Mr. Marte agreed not to oppose rezoning the first two sites to accommodate the extra development, and also not to oppose City Hall’s plans for 100 Gold Street. These concessions by the Council member were likely viewed as crucial by City Hall.

In particular, Mr. Marte’s opposition could have blocked the Adams administration’s plans for 100 Gold Street, which the Mayor views as an urgent priority. Mr. Marte’s acquiescence to the 100 Gold Street plans represents a significant concession, as he had originally called for all of the 1,000-plus new apartments at the site to be affordable units, rather than the 30 percent he is now agreeing to.

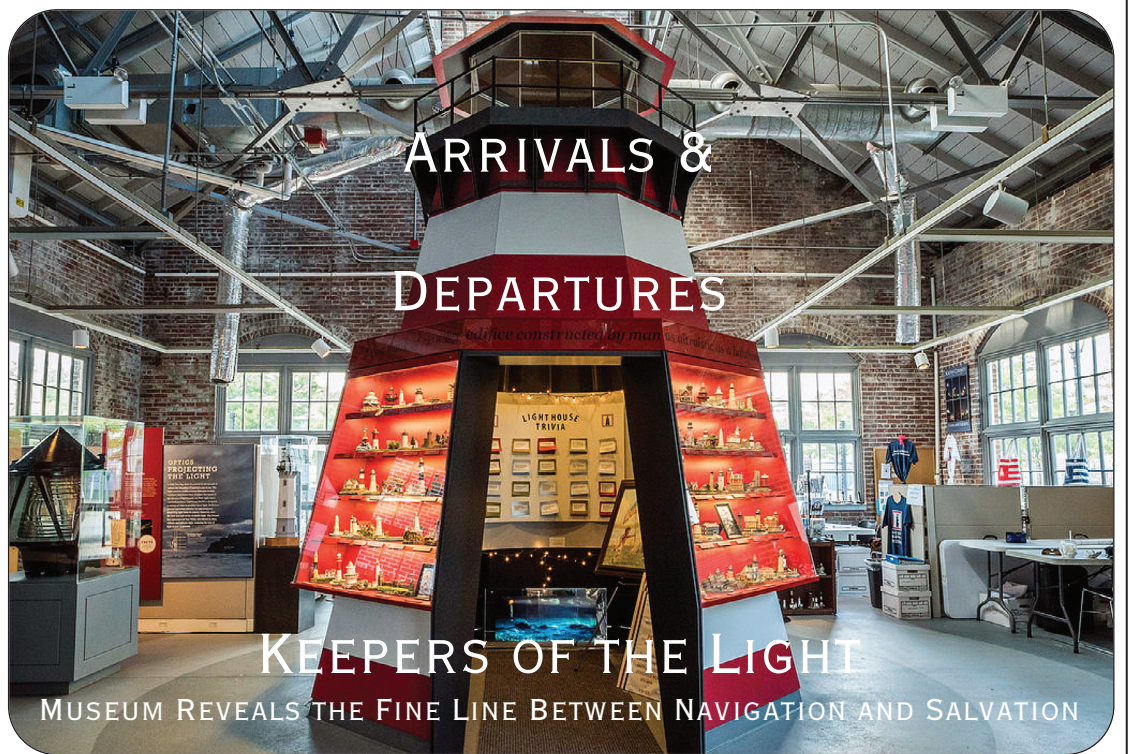
The Elizabeth Street Garden dates from 1991, when art dealer and gallery owner Allan Reiver turned an abandoned

lot into an open-air annex to his Elizabeth Street Gallery. Over the years, he and his son, sculptor Joseph Reiver, filled the half-acre parcel with sculptures and cultivated an idyllic garden.

Monday’s development offered a denouement to years of legal battles in New York and federal courts, and political organizing and activism to preserve the garden. This drama seemed to wind down in March, when the City received final permission from a judge to padlock the park and physically evict people or works of art. Such a move would have cleared the last hurdle to new development. Unexpectedly, the City did not push ahead with this process, a development that may have been related to Mr. Marte joining the Adams administration that same week.



HARBORWATCH



“I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse,” reflected George Bernard Shaw. “They were built only to serve.” The National Lighthouse Museum (located on Staten Island, next door to the St. George ferry terminal) was built to serve—and preserve—the legacy of both the structures and the saviors who manned them. Situated in the historic Foundry Building on the grounds of the former U.S. Light House Service General Depot (in operation from 1864 to 1939), the museum was formally opened in 2015. Current exhibits include “Black History,” which recounts the story of Willis Augustus Hodges (the first African American lighthouse keeper), and “Life at The Light,” featuring personal stories of keepers such as Kate Walker, the first woman to receive a presidential appointment as a lighthouse keeper (from Benjamin Harrison, in 1890), who presided over the Robbins Reef Lighthouse in New York Harbor for more than 30 years, during which tenure she personally saved the lives more than 50 shipwrecked sailors. For more information about visiting this unique museum that is a free Staten Island Ferry ride from Lower Manhattan, go to www.lighthousemuseum.org



More than 180 lighthouse models are on display at the museum’s Wall of Lights.

CRUISE SHIPS NAVIGATE THROUGH NEW YORK HARBOR ON THEIR WAY TO AND FROM THE MIDTOWN PASSENGER SHIP TERMINAL, CAPE LIBERTY CRUISE PORT IN BAYONNE, NJ, AND THE DOCKS IN RED HOOK, BROOKLYN. THE ESTIMATED TIMES BELOW ARE BASED ON SIGHTING HISTORIES, PUBLISHED SCHEDULES, AND INTUITION. THEY ARE ALSO SUBJECT TO TIDES, FOG, WINDS, FREAK WAVES, HURRICANES, AND THE WHIMS OF UPPER MANAGEMENT.

DATE	SHIP	ARRIVING	DEPARTING	DOCK	DESTINATION
June 26	<i>Liberty of the Seas</i>	6:30am	4:30pm	Bayonne	Eastern Caribbean
June 26	<i>Carnival Venezia</i>	7:15am	4:45pm	Manhattan	Bermuda
June 27	<i>Symphony of the Seas</i>	5:30am	3:30pm	Bayonne	Bahamas
June 27	<i>Viking Neptune</i>	N/A	N/A	Manhattan	Norway
June 29	<i>Celebrity Silhouette</i>	6:30am	4:30pm	Bayonne	Bermuda
June 29	<i>MSC Meraviglia</i>	6:30am	4:30pm	Brooklyn	Bahamas
June 29	<i>Norwegian Getaway</i>	6:15am	4:45pm	Manhattan	Bermuda
June 29	<i>Pacific World</i>	N/A		Manhattan	In port overnight

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