

notice, they hadn't been able to travel to Bangalore for the funeral.

"Sheila, you and George must stay with us for as long as you want. Sam and I are alone now. The children are both far away. Sophie lives in Maryland with her husband Roger, who is in the Army, and Solomon is studying for an MBA in Chicago," Molly said.

Their house was certainly very large. It even had a swimming pool in the backyard. George was given the room that his cousin Solomon sometimes stayed in when he visited. His aunt put his mother in the large guest room.

"George, treat this as your own house," said his Uncle Sam. "Your father was very kind to us when we first came here. He took me to the Social Security office, taught me to drive, went with me for the road test and helped carry our first mattress. He even gave your Molly Aunty money for the advance for her first apartment."

He wiped the tears from his eyes as he reminisced about Mohan Chandy and their early days in the U.S.

"Now we are well settled, please allow us to be there for you," he said.

George was relieved that his mother had a place to stay temporarily while he made something of himself in the U.S. He did not plan to be with his uncle and aunt for more than a few weeks. He would find a job and move out. Then, once he was established, he would bring his mother to live with him.



George started looking for work right away. He applied to jobs at advertising agencies in New York City as a graphic artist. However, after a few weeks of sending out resumes in reply to job postings in *The New York Times* he realized that without a Bachelor's degree in Art, he would not be considered if he applied through the mail. The letters of rejection started coming in everyday. He was disappointed but still optimistic. Maybe if they saw his portfolio they would consider him.

He decided to go to Manhattan and look in person. It was a very exciting place but also very daunting and unfriendly when one didn't know anyone there. He usually spent the morning applying to jobs from home. After lunch, he would catch the Route 13 bus from Elmsford to White Plains train station and then take

the Harlem Line of the Metro North Railroad to Grand Central Station in New York City. The journey took about an hour.

He photocopied a list of all the advertising agencies in the City at the Greenburgh Town Library. With his portfolio in hand, he went around from building to building, up and down Madison Avenue and its environs. He didn't have much luck with this unsolicited approach. The buildings that had doormen in them wouldn't even let him in without an appointment. If he managed to get past the doorman and make it to the correct floor, he had no way of meeting an art director or someone else of importance. The receptionist at the office there would usually turn him away at the door. Sometimes one of them would take pity on him and ask him to leave his portfolio behind but he did not feel comfortable doing that. He only had one set of comps and layouts that he had brought with him from India showcasing his work at Dimensions and *Bangalore Baloney*.

After spending a few hours wandering the streets in his quest for a job, George would take respite at the New York Public Library on 42nd Street. He liked sitting outside on the steps near the Patience and Fortitude lion statues, smoking and watching the people there: attractive and fashionable women in business clothes, apparently oblivious of everyone else around them, hurrying past; homeless men and women sleeping on park benches with pitiful plastic bundles at their feet; executives striding quickly and purposefully with cold determination on their faces; tourists of all ages walking around looking up at the big buildings in wonder and taking photographs; cops with benign but tough expressions keeping a watchful eye on everyone; Greek and Arab roadside vendors selling gyros, shish kebabs, hotdogs and hamburgers from their carts; old men playing chess on little granite checkered tables on the sidewalk; street hustlers slyly engaging tourists in games of three-card monte and pocketing their money with apologetic smiles; drug addicts, pushers, hookers all making brief appearances and disappearing before the cops noticed their presence...

As the sun went down, he occasionally walked west to the blocks near Port Authority Bus Terminal at the corner of 42nd Street and 8th Avenue, where the seedier side of life was on full display: movie theaters that played pornographic films with vulgar-sounding names that were similar to that of popular Hollywood

movies; live peep show halls with several circular stages, where 50 cents would buy two minutes watching nude girls walking around, two dollars a quick feel of breast, buttocks or genitals, and a fast hand-job for ten; adult video booths where three minutes cost 25 cents and where cleaning staff roamed around mopping semen off the floors with disinfectant every few minutes; live sex theaters that featured threesomes, foursomes, midgets and other strange acts that seemed more pathetic than titillating; specialty houses, where transsexuals in curtained glass cages allowed people to see them naked for five dollars, touch them for ten and performed BJs for twenty; emaciated, tired-looking prostitutes with bad teeth, beckoning passersby from entrances of decrepit tenement buildings; little stores selling pornographic magazines, videos and sex aids staffed by Indian and Bangladeshi immigrants reading incongruous Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu books with bored expressions on their faces as they rang up the hard-core porn purchases of furtive customers...

As an artist and songwriter, George reveled in the experience of watching all these disparate specimens of humanity that were on display so readily in a city that was unlike any other he had known before. Sometimes he tried to imagine what the lives of some of these people he saw were.

He went home and wrote long letters to Swami narrating his observations and experiences but he then put them away in a folder and sent shorter, edited versions instead – or nothing at all. He realized that his friend was probably too busy with his twins and managing the newspaper to have time to read or reply to long, drawn-out letters. He called him a few times but spoke briefly because he didn't want to run up the long distance charges on his hosts' telephone bill.



Often George felt defeated and disillusioned after wandering around all day trying unsuccessfully to get a job. Coming from a life where he knew a lot of people everywhere he went, it was very lonely being in a place that was so crowded but yet where everyone was a stranger to him. One day, while he was sitting in Bryant Park late in the evening on his own, he wrote a song that expressed how he felt. He called it *My Crazy World*: