

Bastard theatres and human dregs: cultures of illegitimacy on 42nd Street

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Abstract

This article uses newspaper and trade press archives to chart the evolution of the phrase ‘legitimate theatre’ in relation to theatres on New York’s 42nd Street that were built by 1920 and converted to moving pictures by the early 1940s. Various surrounding industrial and social tensions – the transition from live performance to movies, the derided status of exploitation and adult films, the perceived degradation of the area in the post-war era, and the drive for its wholesale redevelopment that gathered pace in the 1970s – are examined and interrogated. The shifting implications of the term ‘legitimate theatre’ in this context, from an established industry descriptor to a means of moral judgement on these venues’ output and audiences, are thereby shown to illuminate the broader cultural and economic histories of the 42nd Street area, revealing a process of differentiation and exclusion from perceptions of mainstream popular culture that would eventually become weaponised to justify the demolition of the area for the purposes of corporate capital.

Keywords

Legitimate theatre, grind houses, New York, cinematic spaces, urban redevelopment

In the annals of cinema history, New York's 42nd Street has long been associated with theatres that exhibited an eclectic mixture of exploitation and adult films from around the world. Recent scholarship has analysed how the term 'grind house' developed to describe such spaces and thereby to denote aberrant forms of venue, output and audience, differentiating classes of cinema through a process of cultural distinction. Such discourse finds a contrapuntal parallel in the notion of 'legitimacy' (and the rhetorical antithesis of the 'grind house': the 'legitimate theatre'), the analysis of which further illuminates how and why these theatres, their audiences and their cinematic output came to be cast as deviant and separate from perceptions of 'mainstream' cinemagoing.

As I shall demonstrate, the word 'legitimate' repeatedly adapted to the shifting cultural terrain of the twentieth century in a journey of consistent dissociation: firstly from vaudeville and burlesque, then from moving pictures, and then from a particular type of moving picture. This article examines the evolution of the word's usage in local newspapers and the trade press, with particular reference to the eleven theatres on New York's 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues that had been built by 1920, and had converted to moving pictures by the early 1940s. The findings reveal that, in this context, discourses of 'legitimacy' evolved from well-established industry meanings that denoted types of theatrical performance, into a framework of implicitly classist, homophobic or racist slurs against these theatres' audiences, frequently adopting a lexicon of pollution and impurity. The article thereby charts patterns that both map onto contemporaneous parallels in the cultural history of the 42nd Street area, and reveals much about broader processes by which various types of adult or exploitation films came to be cast as excessive or obscene. Their exhibition in spaces which had long been derided through terms of cultural distinction was a decisive factor, and the evolution of the word 'legitimate' in the 20th-century US theatre industry encapsulates this evolving phenomenon.

Legitimate theatre

The term ‘legitimate theatre’ originated with the official licencing of eighteenth-century Patent playhouses in the UK, and became the standard industry vernacular for full-length stage plays (as opposed to vaudeville or variety acts) in late nineteenth-century US theatre. A term designed to preserve the high-cultural capital of ‘classic’ dramatic performance, ‘legitimate’ referred to both a particular kind of respectable venue and a prestigious category of output, but was also replete with connotations of social class and ethnicity. As Mark Hodin explains, ‘what it proposed and promoted was that, in *relation* to other competing forms of commercial amusement, the particular value of conventionally staged drama was that it provided the best occasion and opportunity available for acquiring cultural prestige’ [emphasis in original].¹ Such perceived ‘commercialism versus culture’ dichotomies were foremost in the minds of 1890s US theatre critics, and Hodin goes on to explain that, though the word officially denoted a format of performance, it also registered specific anti-immigrant sentiments in the 1890s. He highlights the demonisation of New York’s Theatrical Syndicate, whose largely Jewish membership were cast as a vulgar, commercialised threat to the city’s culturally superior ‘legitimate’ theatre industry. The notion of legitimacy was thus co-opted to connect mass culture with Jewishness, thereby marking ‘the mass audience as immigrant and ethnic, and [conceptualising], through negation, the legitimate theatre position as “literary,” “American,” and “white.”’² The specific meanings of the word ‘legitimate’ therefore shifted according to their surroundings, ensuring that it remained a fluid term of cultural distinction which consistently demarcated the preferred formats, spaces and clientele of self-appointed arbiters of taste. As we shall see, it retained this core function throughout the twentieth century.

Surveying the theatrical trade press from the 1910s onwards reveals quite how fluid the term was, as it adapted to the USA's rapidly changing cultural terrain in the first half of that century. In 1910, 'legitimate' was being used to refer to 'higher-priced admission' as opposed to 'two-a-day vaudeville', perpetuating the word's nineteenth century usage to distinguish the prestige of long-form dramatic narratives from less respectable variety programmes.³ Adverts from the early 1920s confirm that this division was still in common use, by differentiating 'legitimate, burlesque, vaudeville, and moving picture theatres', but the adaptability of the word is evident in a 1917 *Variety* article, in which the Columbia Amusement Company's plans to provide soldiers with a guaranteed brand of high-quality entertainment is described as promising 'legitimate burlesque'.⁴ This demonstrates that, as had been the case in the 1890s, the flexibility of this label allowed it to denote either a particular type of output, or a desirable business model aimed at audiences deserving of respect, depending on the context. Moving pictures would simply be inserted into this pre-existing, and ever-evolving, discourse. So it was that, by 1930, when the onset of talkies was posing dilemmas to proprietors, one theatre owner 'believed that the public already had shown its aversion to synchronized [moving picture] vaudeville skits and soon would return its patronage to legitimate vaudeville.'⁵ Here we see the word shifting once again, to signify live performance *per se* as opposed to screen- and synchronized sound-based entertainment, and this would become a well-established usage from this point onwards. This is not, however, to say that discourses of legitimacy were merely settling into this newly-agreed meaning, since the word continued to adapt to the evolving entertainment marketplace, in an ongoing demarcation of respectable output and venue. Accordingly, once moving pictures had themselves established a firm and profitable foothold in the theatrical sector, the term was deployed to denote particular kinds of cinema, and to cast other kinds as aberrant.

For example, in 1939, *The Film Daily* reported that ‘an objectionable movie show promoted to a California crowd and competing with legitimate movie houses’ had been shut down. In the same year, *International Projectionist* lamented the rise of ‘16mm. transient exhibitors, as contrasted with [...] legitimate movie houses’.⁶ In *Showmen’s Trade Review*, a series of editorials between 1939 and 1944 similarly highlights the perceived scourge of ‘16mm sound projectors finding their way into civilian hands’.⁷ The author’s objection to such ‘non-theatrical free show and wildcat’ screenings is that they are ‘costing the legitimate movie theatres untold losses’.⁸ The following passage encapsulates how theatrical ‘legitimacy’ was continuing to evolve:

Not so many years ago in a mid-west town a filthy sex-and-dope picture was run in a hired hall following a spectacular exploitation campaign and did turn-away business for the one night of its stand [...] The black eye that one performance gave the legitimate movie house in town almost put the local exhibitor out of business. Meanwhile, the fly-by-nighter pocketed a wad of folding money and was on his way.⁹

While ‘legitimate’ would continue to be used to denote live performances, we can see here that by 1944 it was also a signifier for the respectability of established movie houses, in contrast to tawdry roadshow formats and related exploitation film output. The term therefore underwent various shifts in meaning, while retaining a consistent function of dissociation: in the first instance from vaudeville and burlesque performances, then from moving pictures, and then from certain kinds of moving picture. These meanings did not replace one another; rather, they accumulated, to entrench the word as a dependable marker of culturally acceptable output and venue, which constantly morphed to exclude the latest form of disreputable entertainment.

The illegitimacy of ‘grind’

It really seems Times Square and 42d St. may be born-again instead of terminally porn-again: long a straight porn-film theater, the Rialto at Times Square at 42d. St., owned by the Brandt organization, has been recommended to decency, once a fate worse than debt. It will be closed, refurbished and open for legitimate stage productions next fall [...] The Brandts are adding one more turnabout theater to its plans: the Lyric, also long a typical 42d St. grind and grime house is being refurbished toward legitimacy next season.¹⁰

The above quotation illustrates how, in 1979, one particular form of disreputable entertainment being excluded by the notion of legitimacy was to be found in the grind house. This correspondent (Jack O’Brian) conducted a notably vociferous campaign against such venues over a number of years, but his words are indicative of wider patterns. The term ‘grind’ is here (and elsewhere) deployed to denote a seedy underbelly of New York’s entertainment industry, whose immorality and unhygienic ‘grime’ are by the turn of the 1980s soon to be swept away by the area’s long-overdue gentrification and attendant return to legitimacy. In recent years, valuable film history scholarship on this exhibition context has focused on this antithesis of ‘legitimate theatre’, and shown us that familiar patterns emerge throughout such ‘grind’-related discourse.

David Church and Phyll Smith both demonstrate how the evolution of the ‘grind’ label reveals two notable and related patterns. Firstly, the industry term ‘grind house’ was constructed as a means to contain the threat to prestige studio practices posed by cut-price, continuous film exhibition. The term acted as a tool for differentiating classes of filmgoing, thus casting certain

types as aberrant in order to mark other forms as culturally acceptable. Secondly, the term's meaning was fluid, shifting between a description of venue, a marker of cinematic content, and a value judgement of a certain type of undesirable audience. 'Grind' can therefore be seen as a contrapuntal mirror-image of 'legitimate' in the ways in which both were deployed in the trade and local press. Each was a constituent part of a wider strategy of cultural distinction.

As Smith illustrates, the term 'grind house' at first connoted the mechanized, repetitive labour of exhibiting 'serial' products, the 'long grind' of an extended performance being akin to all-day pitches at fairgrounds.¹¹ By the 1920s, such practices had evolved into a 'grind policy' of continuous exhibition with low admission prices which ascended throughout the day and evening. Church explains that these policies were not exclusive to movie houses, instead simultaneously becoming common practice in vaudeville and burlesque theatres.¹² As exhibitors of multi-reel feature films sought to align themselves with the cultural cachet of 'legitimate' (in this case, long-form) live performance, it is therefore easy to see how 'grind house' (associated with mixed-bill variety and vaudeville) soon became a pejorative term, with a particular cultural function:

to offset negative criticism of more prestigious cinema products, a rhetoric marking a middle-class first-run ideal as 'normal' and grind and serial practices (and audience behaviour) as exceptional, economically marginal, and industrially insignificant [...] creating a notion of an audience that respectable audiences and critics could define themselves against.¹³

Smith's focus on audience here underlines that fact that, while the term 'grind' performed various functions to describe different aspects of the film industry – 'grind' exhibition policy,

‘grind house’ venues, and even the notion of a generically ‘grindhouse’ type of cheap cinematic product – underlying all of them was anxiety around the kind of person one might find in such places.¹⁴ Church points to ‘the economically undifferentiated seating in grind houses, allowing a greater intermingling of classes’ as a key factor in these venues’ eventual disrepute.¹⁵

It is indeed hard to miss the implicit lament at how times have changed in the following passage from *The New York Age* in 1949, which fondly recalls Florenz Ziegfeld's 1915 ‘Midnight Frolics Revue’ show on the roof of the New Amsterdam Theatre at 214 West 42nd Street:

All the important members of the Socialite Who's Who of New York's famous ‘Four Hundred’ were buzzing with excitement as wealthy dowagers adjusted their lorgnettes and as budding debutantes clasped the hands of dashing ‘Romeos.’¹⁶

The supposed upper class of clientele in 42nd Street theatres’ previous manifestations was a source of nostalgia in and of itself, and this points to the important role played by the social, economic and cultural conditions of the Times Square area in this evolving discourse. The intersection of 42nd Street and Broadway became a transportation hub and theatre district at the end of the nineteenth century, attracting up-market hotels and restaurants but also providing a space for mass public gathering as the opening of the subway system in 1904 offered increased accessibility to and from the whole New York metropolitan area. As a result, ‘legitimate’ theatres were soon rubbing shoulders with vaudeville shows and dime museums, in what Nathaniel Brennan describes as ‘a new culture of permissive social contact between classes, genders, and sexualities.’¹⁷ By 1915, when Ziegfeld’s revue was playing on the roof of the New Amsterdam, the continued expansion of mass transit had continued apace, and the area was already starting to take on its enduring dual role as both a heterogeneous meeting-place for

diverse communities, and a locus for middle-class anxieties around social and moral degradation.

Such specificities of place are of utmost importance, if this article is adequately to appraise the shifting discourses that surrounded the theatres on 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. For example, the show that provided the above nostalgic reminiscence about a higher class of patron – Ziegfeld’s *Midnight Frolic* – was not in fact a ‘legitimate’ performance according to that phrase’s prevailing meaning at the time (a full-length stage play), but was instead a risqué, late-night variety act featuring, among other things, chorus girls parading on a glass walkway above the audience. Neat class divisions between categories of entertainment therefore did not apply, and this “respectable” clientele would have walked out onto a highly diverse and commercialised 42nd Street, a full year before the first purpose-built movie theatre on the stretch (the Rialto) entered this pre-existing milieu in 1916. We have seen that both ‘legitimate theatre’ and ‘grind house’ were malleable critical constructs, ready to be deployed according to the specific requirements of a given market to demarcate classes of theatre- and cinema-going. It follows that no two such venues were the same. Given the fact that, between the First World War and the onset of the Cold War, there were up to seven hundred cinemas in the greater New York region alone, Brennan quite rightly insists on ‘the need for localized studies of film exhibition in big cities [since] this vast metropolitan region was [...] fragmented and diverse.’¹⁸

This methodological clarion call is echoed by David Church and Eric Schaefer, who argue for the importance of micro-historical research into the exhibition contexts of adult films, so as to construct ‘a history written with fewer a priori generalizations’ about this highly influential sector of the film industry, which has nevertheless ‘historically been cordoned off from the rest

of popular entertainment through censorship, alternative production and distribution channels, and separate physical spaces.’¹⁹ Many of the theatres under consideration in this article provided these very spaces during the 1960s and 1970s, and it is therefore my hope that my findings will enrich this historiographical challenge.

To this end, I have collated a sample of 101 local newspaper articles published between 1912 and 1999 that mention at least one of the eleven theatres that occupied the strip on New York’s 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues for most of the twentieth century: the Rialto, the Anco, the Empire, the Victory, the Liberty, the Harris, the Lyric, the Times Square, the Selwyn, the Apollo, and the New Amsterdam.²⁰ I do not claim to be charting a comprehensive overview of the area’s exhibition contexts here, since other theatres have existed on this strip beyond these eleven. Rather, my focus is specifically on venues that had been built by 1920, and had converted to moving pictures by the early 1940s. The long-term evolution of the discourses that surrounded them is my specific focus. For this reason, I omit coverage of such ‘shoebox’ movie theatres as the Harem at 249 West 42nd Street, which emerged in former retail space in the late 1960s and 1970s.

This exercise has been made possible by the increasing efficiency of online newspaper archives in recent years, which facilitates a wide-ranging search for keywords and terms that would otherwise be obscure. This has made the search for each theatre’s various name changes across several decades a time-consuming but achievable task. For example, between 1912 and 1940, the Anco theatre was called the Harris, the Frazee, and the Wallack. A search for each name was therefore undertaken with both ‘theatre’ and ‘theater’ spellings attached (since each was in common usage in the early period of my sample). Other than a geographical restriction to newspapers in the New York City area, I added no other qualifiers to these searches, since my

aim was to identify patterns in the discourse without allowing preconceived notions to influence the findings. Of course, there are limitations to this methodology, since not all newspapers have been fully digitised, and my findings are reliant on accurate scanning and text conversion for those that have (which means that folds or defects in scanned pages might have led to omissions). This should therefore be taken as a sample rather than an all-encompassing survey.

[Figure 1 here]

Figure 1: The archetypal view of 42nd Street from the 1960s until the 1980s, here showing the entrances of the Victory, Lyric, Times Square, Apollo and Selwyn theatres (still from *42nd Street Memories: The Rise and Fall of America's Most Notorious Street*, dir. Calum Waddell, 2015).

The illegitimacy of 42nd Street

As we have seen, the word ‘legitimate’ was a standard and well-established industry term, whose meaning evolved as various kinds of exhibition and performance waxed and waned, but which nevertheless retained a consistent function of delineating particular forms of cultural consumption. It is therefore no surprise to find it (or its abbreviation ‘legit’) being used in several local newspaper articles (a total of 22) in my sample, but a closer look at how this word is deployed over time reveals notable patterns. At first it appears as a merely descriptive term for a type of performance, artistic output, venue or audience, continuing to carry its well-established connotations specific to the theatre industry. After 1934, by which time the venues in question were almost entirely dedicated to burlesque performance and grind house exhibition

practices, the word begins to be deployed as a part of moral judgements of such low forms of entertainment. From 1969 onwards, uses of ‘legitimate’ pertain to the word’s broader etymological meaning, beyond the entertainment industry, being accompanied by overt, hyperbolic, and implicitly classist, homophobic or racist slurs against these theatres’ audiences.

One notable pattern in the early stages of this discourse is that, when ‘legitimate’ accompanies discussions of audiences, these tend not to differentiate non-legitimate patrons in a derogatory manner. If anything, the reverse is true, with articles describing ‘the sodden, hopelessly tired business men who patronize the legitimate’ and observing ‘a nit-wit audience simply shriek with laughter’ at one live performance.²¹ This latter article is also at pains to point out how tawdry and antiquated the legitimate theatre experience has become, in stark contrast to the luxurious treatment afforded the patrons of the moving picture:

Each time you buy 75 cents worth of admission to a movie emporium, they do everything but send you to lunch with the President. But each time you attempt to buy \$8 worth of tickets entitling you to sit in somebody's sweltering theater and listen to a lot of pre-war jokes, you have a day's work cut out for you [...] the movie emporiums [...] have discovered that the ultimate in courtesy, refrigerated air, and a swell show bring business, packed to the galleries, as against the half empty houses of some mere dozen legit theaters.²²

This tone would not last. Table 1 shows that, by 1934, all but one of my eleven case-study theatres were permanently focusing their efforts on either burlesque or moving pictures, and this concentration coincided with a shift in the use of the word ‘legitimate’. The news that the

Apollo was to convert to burlesque and the Times Square to ‘a low-price motion picture theatre’ was seen to be part of a long-term trend in one *Daily News* article in 1934:

42d Street – once one of the most important streets in the legitimate theatre – will have only the New Amsterdam and possibly the Selwyn available for legitimate offerings. Burlesque at the Apollo would give the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues three hot - strip - tease emporiums.²³

The language used here gives an indication that such exhibition practices were removed from notions of legitimacy due to their overtly commercial nature, since they have transitioned from being ‘theatres’ (connoting cultural value) to becoming ‘emporiums’ (connoting mere acquisitiveness). This was indicative of a broader sense that, by the mid 1930s, the area had become disreputable and well past its prime. Brennan records that, in 1934, the Rialto, along with the other theatres on West 42nd Street, ‘reflected many of the concerns about the once-vital area’s visible decline. The former first-run picture palace had sunk to a quasigrind policy and resembled the theaters west of it more than it did the picture palaces of Broadway.’²⁴

[Table 1 here]

Table 1: Years of opening, and of permanent conversion to burlesque / movies²⁵

The above patterns show that the word ‘legitimate’ continued to be deployed as a marker of cultural distinction while morphing around particular industrial conditions: specifically in 1934, the impact of the Great Depression on the entertainment industry, as many movie houses

were compelled to reduce ticket prices and adopt double-feature exhibition practices in a precarious market.²⁶ The kind of non-legitimate entertainment on offer is here seen to be a sign of wider socio-economic degradation. If we leap forward in time to 1969, however, we see that the word's usage has shifted markedly. Now, the forms of entertainment on offer are seen to be a cause of the degradation, rather than merely a sign of it. The word 'legitimate', meanwhile, is being used to distinguish, not only from disreputable kinds of cultural output and venue, but from the dirt and grime of West 42nd Street itself. A lexicon of pollution signals the area's descent from non-legitimate formats of entertainment to illegitimate impurity (see Appendix).

In March 1969, it was explained that the reason such 'great old legit houses as The New Amsterdam in 42nd Street' did not return to stage musicals was because of the profit margins of 'the movie grind-shows on that grubby block'.²⁷ Such language would intensify almost a decade later, as the area's redevelopment began to take shape. In November 1978, for example, a report that the Harris, New Amsterdam, Victory, Apollo and Selwyn theaters were to be converted back to 'legitimate and cultural use' framed the story as the 'garbage can' of 42nd Street being 'cleansed of its human dregs'.²⁸ Two months later, in January 1979, the news that 'two bastard theatres' – the Apollo and Lyric – are being restored to their former glory 'with a renewed legitimacy' is symbolised by the (clearly metaphorical as well as literal) observation that the Lyric 'is especially beautiful now that decades of dirt and decay have been scrubbed away'.²⁹ By March 1979, the Apollo's return to legitimacy was being contrasted with 42nd Street's erstwhile status as 'the true rotten core of the Big Apple'.³⁰ The Apollo has been, we are informed in May of the same year, converted 'from a smut-style porn-palace to a fine legitimate theatre [...] pure dirt abounded these too-many years'.³¹ The trend of describing these theatres through metaphors of waste, decay and degradation continues to feature heavily in discussions of their relationship to 'legitimacy' through the 1980s. We must, for example,

look beyond ‘the dregs who [now] inhabit the sin strip’ to remember that ‘in an earlier time, 42d St. was the center of New York’s legitimate theatre’.³² In October 1985, the same writer looks back fondly at the days before ‘the great theaters became 24-hour movie houses that in time played only violent and porno flicks. 42d St itself went from dance halls, burlesque and penny arcades to an open cesspool.’ The only remedy to such decay, we are told, is ‘to restore legitimate theater’.³³

Where West 42nd Street theatres were concerned, then, the concept of ‘legitimacy’ was by this time being applied well beyond its established usage in the entertainment industry, instead connoting the word’s broader etymology of purity and legality, and being measured by its contrast to bastardisation, grubby dregs, smut, dirt, garbage, decay, rottenness and cesspools. Moreover, the absence of legitimate theatres was now overtly being seen as a cause of this degradation, and their return a catalyst for a cure. Such discourses were not exclusively emanating from the popular press, since they were also to be found in academic outlets at this time. Stanley A. Waren wrote in the *Performing Arts Journal* in 1979:

The gradual decay of New York City’s 42nd Street and its environs offers a striking example of how intimately entwined is the fate of legitimate [live performance] theatre to blight in an urban community. Yet the increasing restoration of live theatre and other performing arts in the area can serve as a model of the integrating power of arts institutions in a community urban redevelopment plan.³⁴

Just as the local press extrapolated this apparent link between live performance and urban renewal into a condemnation of ‘human dregs’, so Waren laments the ‘more violent street breed’ that has taken the area over in recent years.³⁵ Waren also adopts the very same lexicon

of pollution and decay, describing the area's 'urban rot with the potential of infecting not only adjacent legitimate theatres and communities, but the economic life of the city as a whole.'³⁶ Such attitudes were therefore widespread among cultural commentators at the time. As we shall see, while these were partly grounded in the concrete realities of socio-economic change, they were also entwined with racially coded and class-based discourses of gentrification.

A 'triple-X cesspool'

We must of course recognise that such patterns as are analysed above arise in part from material changes to an urban landscape over time. 42nd Street's reputation as a centre of commercialised salaciousness was already in evidence by 1932, when the city authorities temporarily closed down the Victory and Empire theatres (at that time called the Republic and the Eltinge) due to complaints about their indecent burlesque performances.³⁷ In 1934, the 42nd Street Association paraded in protest at the degradation of the street, whose Depression-era identity had become cemented as 'a jungle of flea circuses, movie grind houses, hot dog stands and cheap burlesque.'³⁸ New Deal recovery programmes heralded a temporary rehabilitation, as the local economy recovered and consumer confidence returned, but suburbanisation and 'white flight' in the post-war era saw a steady decline in the strip's reputation, as peep-show arcades and adult bookstores increased in number and the theatres turned their attentions to the projection of adult material through the 1950s and 1960s.³⁹

This mixture of tangible socio-economic trends and increasing anxiety over a perception of urban degradation is discernible in the news stories surrounding 42nd Street in my sample of local newspaper articles (see Appendix). Mentions of crime do not feature in a single one of the thirty-one articles dated from June 1912 to August 1934. In September 1934, a riot is reported as having taken place in the lobby of the Liberty Theatre.⁴⁰ From that point onwards,

thirty-three (47%) out of seventy articles dated between 1934 and 1999 focus on crime and criminality in the 42nd Street area. The reported crimes are varied, but consistently violent: for example, time bombs being discovered in the lounge of the Times Square Theatre in 1935 and again at the Times Square and the Liberty in 1936 as part of a union dispute; a woman being apprehended after ‘she bopped two men on the head with a hammer [...] at the Selwyn Theatre’ in 1948; armed robberies of the Times Square in 1950, the Liberty and the Victory in 1952, the Anco, the New Amsterdam and the Harris in 1953, the Anco in 1955, 1960 and 1963, the Victory in 1958 and 1964, and the New Amsterdam in 1976; and the murder of a teenager at the Times Square in 1977.⁴¹ Such stories certainly attest to the presence of violent crime in 42nd Street (since these events did happen), but their marked increase from 1934 does not necessarily point to a correspondingly exponential growth in actual crime rates. The available data suggests that violent crime in New York City actually peaked in the late 1920s, before dropping steadily throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and then climbing in the 1960s.⁴² Even allowing for the socio-economic factors outlined above (which may have caused a localised increase in criminality on 42nd Street), the sudden arrival of crime in press discourse surrounding these theatres cannot be explained by concrete realities alone (it is here worth reiterating that my methodology for finding these articles was not to search for crimes, but simply for the names of the theatres).

Another explanation is surely related to the trends I have already outlined around the operation of these venues. We have seen in Table 1 that 1934 was the year by which all but one of my eleven case-study theatres were permanently focusing their efforts on either burlesque or moving pictures. We have also seen that disreputable types of theatrical output were often seen to be linked to processes of socio-economic degradation. This associated stigma is clear from an August 1934 *Daily News* article, which reports that one 42nd Street theatre proprietor was

considering physically turning their venues around so that the entrances would be on 43rd Street, to dissociate themselves from all the other 42nd Street theatres that were ‘devoted either to burlesque or films’.⁴³ While a direct cause-and-effect link between theatrical ‘illegitimacy’ and crime would not emerge in the discourse until 1969, pithy comments making the connection implicit were common in the preceding decades. The 1955 armed robbery at the Anco occurred, one journalist wryly observes, ‘while the movie “The Violent Men” held an audience spellbound [...] the crowd was still watching the movie, unaware of the show they’d missed below.’⁴⁴ A similarly sardonic tone is to be found in the reporting of the 1960 hold-up at the same theatre: ‘the action began at the Anco Theater as [...] “A Stranger with a Gun” was playing on the screen.’⁴⁵ The 1964 robbery at the Victory follows the same pattern: ‘While about 100 swordsmen whacked at each other on screen [...] a thug pulled his own cold steel - a penknife.’⁴⁶ These humorous asides demonstrate the evolving discourse linking 42nd Street’s real-life crime (‘the show’, ‘the action’) to the cheap, violent movies playing in its theatres (and, implicitly, the kind of uncritically ‘spellbound’ crowd one might find there).

Yet a focus on the venues and their output alone cannot fully explain the stigma of crime, filth and ‘illegitimacy’ that came to be associated with 42nd Street theatres. The ubiquity of such discourse by the 1970s must also be placed in the broader context of the Times Square area’s status as a hub for social interaction and a focus for diverse identities. By the 1930s, Times Square was already one of the most important centres of gay life in New York, and George Chauncey Jr. explains that elements of this subculture were held up as ‘part of the “undesirable” element regularly implicated in the “decline” of the theater district by more respectable New Yorkers, who mobilized a variety of policing agencies and strategies to eradicate their presence from the Square’.⁴⁷ Adam Herron collates numerous sources to demonstrate how movie theatres became an integral part of this process, as attempts by officialdom to ‘clean up’ Times

Square forced gay rendezvous spots to move to such indoor spaces as restrooms and theatre balconies, while Jancovich and Snelson emphasise how social upheavals during the Second World War led to ‘a period in which sexual codes were disrupted’.⁴⁸ This was particularly manifest on 42nd Street, which provided a locus for military personnel and war workers to explore their sexuality in an unprecedented ‘quest for pleasure’.⁴⁹ By the 1950s, Times Square was, in the words of Martha Shearer, ‘a vital public space for the Beats, New York’s working-class African American and Latinx youth, and queer cultures and practices.’⁵⁰ One city official stated that, by the late 1960s, ‘a lot of Black and Puerto Rican people [...] felt [...] that [42nd Street] was one of the few blocks outside of Harlem they could more or less call their own.’⁵¹

It is only once we appreciate this long-standing status as a hub for lifestyles and identities that were seen to be alternative or lying outside the white, heteronormative mainstream that we can adequately contextualise the lexicon of ‘impurity’ that we have already seen surrounding ‘legitimacy’, since such language was in widespread usage when discussing 42nd Street cinemas throughout the 1970s. Articles about the renovation of ‘Slime Square’ would often frame the area as an ‘open sewer’, ‘the gutter of the world’, or ‘a triple-X cesspool’.⁵² Furthermore, several articles in my sample go further than such hyperbolic, figurative disgust, to define ‘legitimacy’ in direct contrast to the type of person one might find frequenting these venues. 42nd Street ‘used to glitter [with] fine restaurants, legitimate theaters, top stars, well-heeled play-goers’, but is now full of ‘doorway dudes lurking about, trying to sell pot, muttering “Smoke? Smmmmoke?”’.⁵³ The Apollo’s return to legitimacy comes ‘after several generations of misfit audiences’: a constituency elsewhere summarised as ‘guys in raincoats’.⁵⁴

The language of pollution and contamination that we see here cannot be separated from the Times Square area’s reputation for both sexual licentiousness and racial diversity. As I have

previously argued, this discourse extends beyond the popular press and into parts of academia. The heterogeneity of social intercourse to be found in the area and its theatres in the 1970s is remembered fondly by Samuel Delaney as a world in which people of various sexual identities ‘sat by one another [...] drank shoulder to shoulder [...] walked down the same streets, and lingered in the same shop windows’.⁵⁵ Yet such diversity is invoked in a rather different tone by Jack Stevenson, who illustrates how ‘depraved’ one 42nd Street theatre was by listing its customers as ‘black transvestites, pre-op transsexuals, subway toilet queens, and confused Japanese tourists’.⁵⁶ Stevenson describes the theatres themselves as ‘rat’s nests of filth, while up in the restrooms, a witches’ brew of slime bubbled away in plugged-up toilets.’⁵⁷ This is indicative of a tendency among some historians to amplify the mythos of the grindhouse by both buying uncritically into the hyperbolic language of impurity and filth propagated by the local press, and pointing to the diversity of 42nd Street as a sign of such depravity. Most notably, Bill Landis’s loving paean to the subversive outrageousness of the ‘grindhouse’ experience co-opted the language of sordid corruption in its title *Sleazoid Express*. Here, Landis fondly recalls the 42nd Street area being populated by ‘flocks of black and Latin hustlers [...] transsexuals [...] and closety guys with a fetishistic homo- or heterosexual itch to scratch’.⁵⁸ While such recollections bespeak delectation (rather than condemnation) of alternative lifestyles and identities (what David Church calls a ‘thoroughly romantic mythology of excess, hedonism and transgression’), their affiliation with the lexicon of corruption and impurity attests to the entrenched nature of such language when discussing 42nd Street and its theatres.⁵⁹

We can therefore see that the use of such vocabulary when discussing theatrical ‘legitimacy’ belongs in a wider context of discourse surrounding the evolving socio-economic identity of 42nd Street. This does not, however, explain why this language specifically proliferated in 1970s discussions of the area since, as Jancovich and Snelson explain, attempts to ‘clean up’

Times Square had been ever-present since the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Moreover, the language of pollution had long been a staple of cultural critics seeking to discredit lower-class forms of entertainment, as *Variety*'s 1921 description of outdoor carnivals as 'unclean and corrupting [...] the poison gas from the sewer of show business' attests.⁶¹ The proliferation of such discourse in the specific context of 1970s 42nd Street can only be understood once we consider the underlying subject matter of the articles in question: the ideological project of urban redevelopment.

The redevelopment of Times Square

In the late 1970s, urban developers commissioned a survey from the City University of New York (CUNY), which found that per capita levels of crime on Times Square and 42nd Street were low when compared to other parts of New York City. In fact, the report stated, the clientele of adult entertainment in the area were especially well-behaved, since they did not want to draw attention to themselves. The survey also found that the street's population constituted an even ethnic balance between white, black and Latinx people, who would mix freely, rather than segregating themselves.⁶² Considering how innocuous these findings were, the conclusion drawn by the study is striking:

Thus, a large [...] group of like people were on the street. Most of these came for legitimate purposes; however, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate users of the street is not easily made and, in the ebb and flow of the 42nd Street crowds, those standing around or congregating in front of a movie often appear as the pushers, solicitors, and others 'doing business' on the street.⁶³

We have already seen how the notion of ‘legitimacy’ surrounding the physical spaces of 42nd Street theatres was no longer just a descriptive industry term for types of entertainment by this time. This premise is here laid bare by the implication that racially diverse groups of people gathering in the vicinity of these venues were in and of themselves a cause for alarm due to their propensity for ‘illegitimate’ behaviour.

This report was a precursor to the official application by the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) for eminent domain (the right to seize private property without consent) in 1984. Here, the UDC listed reasons why the redevelopment of 42nd Street was required:

The Project Area is marked by street crime, substandard and insanitary conditions, uses that inhibit the general public’s use and enjoyment of the Project Area, and physical, economic and social blight which contribute to the growth of crime and delinquency [...] The redevelopment of the Project Area is in the best interest of the City in that it will remove blight and physical, economic and social decay.⁶⁴

As Kristine Miller argues, this report makes an implicit distinction between the undesirable people who currently use Times Square, and an idealised ‘general public’, whose ‘use and enjoyment’ (which surely translates to ‘spending power’) would be more in keeping with the ambitions of the UDC. The use of the word ‘blight’ here is of course in keeping with the lexicon of decay, disease and pollution we have already seen, but it also performed a specific legal function as a justification for the condemnation of real estate.⁶⁵ This language, which had become embedded in discourse surrounding 42nd Street over the past decade, was now an official means through which the area’s wholesale redevelopment would be sanctioned.

What is also striking, for the purposes of this article, is that, as the redevelopment became a physical reality in the 1990s, romanticised elements of Times Square's history were selected as nostalgia-tinged justifications for the project. Benjamin Chesluk highlights the efforts made by the Disney Store that opened in 1995 in the space previously occupied by the New Amsterdam Theatre, to replicate the 'crowded' look of Times Square billboards from the early 1900s.⁶⁶ The same discourse that had surrounded 42nd Street theatres since at least the 1940s (when Ziegfeld's *Midnight Frolic* was wistfully recalled as the upper-class heyday of that very same theatre) was therefore being used to justify those venues' eventual redevelopment. Lynne B. Sagalyn has shown how the press enthusiastically framed this renovated space as a 'Cinderella Transformation of 42nd Street' created by 'Disney's Magic Wand', co-opting this enduring nostalgia for the area's imagined (white, affluent) past into a literal process of 'Disneyfication'.⁶⁷ Martha Shearer further demonstrates how the area was thus reclaimed as a 'safe', sanitised space, suitable as a setting for romantic comedy, with its investment in narratives of gentrification and property development.⁶⁸

What becomes clear is that the tropes mobilised by redevelopers to argue for their project's necessity – the ruination of a once-elegant strip by pervasive crime and sleaze, the casting of 42nd Street's aberrant filth as infectious – were already well established in the local press, ready to be co-opted for the purposes of corporate capital. A Times Square cleansed of its illegitimate 'human dregs' and returned to an imagined past of wholesome white consumption was enabled in part by this legitimating framework. All of this context considered, it is no surprise to find that the lexicon of impurity surrounding 42nd Street theatres in local newspapers intensified to its most extreme language in the late 1970s, in stories directly addressing the redevelopment

project. Here, the impending return of ‘legitimate’ theatre is directly linked to the cleansing of such filth.

Surveying the local press from 1978 to 1985 once more, we repeatedly find the very same tropes as would appear in the CUNY report and the UDC’s case for redevelopment. We discover that the theatres will be converted to ‘legitimate and cultural use’, because ‘the “garbage can” that is 42d St., must be upgraded [to be] less obnoxious to the general public’.⁶⁹ This will lay the basis ‘for an elegant, modern and sophisticated entertainment area to replace the existing tawdry bazaar’.⁷⁰ The theatres will thus return to ‘the glory days [of] legitimate theater’ once ‘decades of dirt and decay have been scrubbed away’.⁷¹ The New Apollo is to be ‘laudably reclaimed from the Big Apple’s rotten core of porn-obscenities and returned to the very legitimate stage’.⁷² The Rialto’s switch to live performance is welcomed because it ‘has been more of an illegitimate theater in the past few years. Pictures of ladies in panties with an occasional whip for emphasis firmly tagged the place as a porno enclave’.⁷³ One writer wonders whether something might be lost in the process of redeveloping the area, writing ‘beyond the dregs who inhabit the sin strip, Times Square generates a bright-lights excitement that is unique to New York.’⁷⁴ The same writer later laments that the once-great theatres became ‘an open cesspool that all but the most adventurous citizens came to shun’.⁷⁵ A desirably homogeneous ‘general public’ are thus distinguished from the ‘dregs’, whose natural habitat is a seedy ‘enclave’ (suggesting marked difference from the areas around it), which is racially-coded as a ‘bazaar’ (with Orientalist connotations of foreignness, backwardness and danger) and inhabited only by the ‘most adventurous’ (in other words, the marginalised).

‘Legitimate’ – long a descriptive industry term, which nevertheless had always carried associations of racial and class-based distinction – is front and centre of this discourse. On the

face of it, this word is still being used as a descriptor of a mode of performance in the above press stories, but it was by this time also providing a framework to separate a desirable citizenry from the perceived impurities of 42nd Street. It was therefore co-opted as part of a broader ideological drive to demonise the area and advocate for the necessity of its wholesale transformation along neoliberal lines. We have seen how this term was always fluid, adapting to an ever-changing cultural landscape to demarcate respectable forms of entertainment and thereby to exclude others. The cultural, racial, sexual and class-based ‘impurities’ of 42nd Street eventually led the word to morph once more: this time in the service of gentrification.

¹ Mark Hodin, ‘The Disavowal of Ethnicity: Legitimate Theatre and the Social Construction of Literary Value in Turn-of-the-Century America,’ *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 2 (2000), 212.

² *Ibid.*, 216.

³ Anon, ‘Another Recruit,’ *The Billboard*, 3 December 1910, 12.

⁴ Anon, ‘Julius Cahn - Gus Hill Theatrical Guide and Moving Picture Directory,’ *The Film Daily*, 20 May 1921, 18; Anon, ‘Cantonment Stock Burlesque Under Columbia Circuit Plan,’ *Variety*, 12 October 1917, 3.

⁵ H.T.L., ‘Chain Theaters, Incorporated,’ *Harvard Business Reports*, 1930, 553.

⁶ Anon, ‘Seattle Squibs,’ *The Film Daily*, 27 February 1939, 12; Anon, ‘Protest Itinerant Shows,’ *International Projectionist*, July, 1939, 30.

⁷ Chick Lewis, ‘The Editorial Page,’ *Showmen’s Trade Review*, 9 September 1944, 7.

⁸ Chick Lewis, ‘The Editorial Page,’ *Showmen’s Trade Review*, 14 October 1939, 3.

⁹ Lewis, ‘The Editorial Page,’ 1944.

¹⁰ Jack O’Brian, ‘Wiping the Slime off Reborn Times Square,’ *Daily News*, 15 May 1979, 9.

¹¹ Phyll Smith, “‘This Is Where We Came In’”: The Economics of Unruly Audiences, Their Cinemas and Tastes, from Serial Houses to Grind Houses,’ in *Grindhouse: Cultural Exchange on 42nd Street, and Beyond*, ed. Austin Fisher and Johnny Walker (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 34.

¹² David Church, ‘From Exhibition to Genre: The Case of Grind-House Films,’ *Cinema Journal* 50, no. 4 (2011): 4.

¹³ Smith, ‘This Is Where We Came In,’ 32.

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- ¹⁴ David Church, *Grindhouse Nostalgia: Memory, Home Video and Exploitation Film Fandom* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 73.
- ¹⁵ Church, 'From Exhibition to Genre,' 5.
- ¹⁶ Noble Sissle, 'The Fabulous Ford Dabney,' *The New York Age*, 26 March 1949, 7.
- ¹⁷ Nathaniel Brennan, 'The Great White Way and the Way of all Flesh: Metropolitan Film Culture and the Business of Film Exhibition in Times Square, 1929-1941,' *Film History* 27, no. 2 (2015): 4.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.
- ¹⁹ David Church and Eric Schaefer, 'Why Adult Film History Matters: Introduction,' *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58, no. 1 (2018): 143.
- ²⁰ Most of these venues underwent name changes as they were taken over by various owners through the decades. For purposes of brevity, I shall refer to them by the names in this list unless a specific iteration is relevant to a given argument.
- ²¹ Anon, "'Lady Bug' Good Movie, but Lacks Tone as a Play,' *New York Herald*, 18 April 1922, 8; Rian James, 'Reverting to Type,' *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 15 July 1930, 19.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Anon, 'Apollo and Times Square Theatres May Become Burlesque, Film Houses,' *Daily News*, 13 April 1934, 55.
- ²⁴ Brennan, 'The Great White Way,' 15.
- ²⁵ The Rialto was the first purpose-built movie house on 42nd Street, but the building was torn down and replaced with the New Rialto in 1935.
- ²⁶ Brennan, 'The Great White Way,' 8.
- ²⁷ Jack O'Brian, 'Miller Theater Quits the Stage,' *The Journal News*, 5 March 1969, 51.
- ²⁸ Anon, 'Changing cityscape: \$170M smile planned for face of W. 42d St.,' *Daily News*, 19 November 1978, 75.
- ²⁹ William Carlton, 'A New Legit Look for Times Square,' *Daily News*, 1 January 1979, 13.
- ³⁰ Jack O'Brian, '\$10M price on Oakland A's ballclub,' *Daily News*, 6 March 1979, 20.
- ³¹ O'Brian, 'Wiping the Slime,' 9.
- ³² Owen Moritz, 'Square Deal for 42d St?,' *Daily News*, 19 February 1984, 23.
- ³³ Owen Moritz, 'Times Square: Cleaning Up its Act,' *Daily News*, 9 October 1985, 25.
- ³⁴ Stanley A. Warren, 'The City and the Theatre,' *Performing Arts Journal* 4, nos. 1 & 2 (1979): 120.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 120-121.

³⁷ Anon, 'Girl Shows Closed, Minskys Do Kicking,' *Daily News*, 21 September 1932, 13.

³⁸ John Chapman, 'Forty 2nd Street,' *Daily News*, 29 April 1934, 66; Danton Walker, 'Broadway,' *Daily News*, 1 November 1943, 46.

³⁹ Brennan, 'The Great White Way,' 26; Church, 'From Exhibition to Genre,' 14.

⁴⁰ Theodore Prager, '50 Film Pickets Stage Broadway Riot; 33 Jailed,' *Sunday News*, 2 September 1934, 43.

⁴¹ Anon, 'Guard Theatres in New Bombing,' *Brooklyn Times Union*, 14 August 1935, 6; Anon, 'Movie Bombings Stir Police Anew,' *Brooklyn Times Union*, 3 November 1936, 5; Anon, 'Bellevue Gets "Hammer Girl",' *Daily News*, 10 September 1948, 13C; Anon, 'Theatre Robbed in Times Square,' *Binghampton Press*, 12 June 1950, 1; Anon, 'Blackface Bandit Gets \$2000,' *Daily News*, 29 January 1952, 18; Anon, 'Brooklyn Man Shot in Holdup Chase,' *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 28 April 1952, 9; Anon, '2 Midtown Stickups Yield \$6,500 Loot,' *Daily News*, 6 May 1953, 18; Anon, 'Theatre Robbed,' *Binghampton Press*, 31 October 1955, 8; Anon, 'Promote Cops Who Grabbed Movie Bandit,' *Daily News*, 17 February 1960, 10; Anon, 'Pair Stage \$500 Theatre Robbery,' *Daily News*, 16 September 1963, 26; Anon, 'Times Sq. Matinee: Cop 'n' Robber,' *Daily News*, 25 September 1958, 5; Anon, 'Forks Over \$95 to Knife,' *Daily News*, 13 February 1964, 70; Edward Kirkman, 'A Rerun for Boss,' *Daily News*, 13 April 1976, C3; Martin King, 'Teen, Slain Aiding Beaten Boy, Called "Beautiful Kid",' *Daily News*, 28 December 1977, XQ4.

⁴² Fred P. Graham, 'A Contemporary History of American Crime,' in *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Vol II, ed. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr (A Staff Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969), 374-375.

⁴³ Anon, 'Lyric, Selwyn to Move Front Doors to 43d St,' *Daily News*, 5 August 1934, 70.

⁴⁴ Anon, 'Theatre Holdup Nets \$183,' *Daily News*, 31 October 1955, 6.

⁴⁵ Edward Kirkman and Henry Lee, '42d St. Bad Men's Holdup Flops; 2 Shot in Dual Gun Movie Bill,' *Daily News*, 16 February 1960, 2C.

⁴⁶ Anon, 'Forks Over \$95 to Knife,' *Daily News*, 13 February 1964, 70.

⁴⁷ George Chauncey Jr., 'The Policed: Gay Men's Strategies of Everyday Resistance,' in *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*, ed. William R. Taylor (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 316.

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- ⁴⁸ Adam Herron, “‘A Contemptible Movie now Showing in Times Square’”: Cultural Distinctions, Space and Taste in the Exhibition of Snuff at the National Theatre’. *Horror Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020), 175.
- ⁴⁹ Mark Jancovich and Tim Snelson, ‘Horror at the Crossroads: Class, Gender, and Taste at the Rialto’, in *From the Arthouse to the Grindhouse: Highbrow and Lowbrow Transgression in Cinema's First Century*, ed. John Cline and Robert G. Weiner (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 114.
- ⁵⁰ Shearer, Martha, ‘The Comedy of Redevelopment: Romantic Comedy, Real Estate, and the “New” Times Square’. *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 60, no. 2 (2021), 106.
- ⁵¹ Benjamin Chesluk, *Money Jungle: Imagining the New Times Square* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 38.
- ⁵² Donald Flynn, ‘No Crime in Slime, Magdalen: Anything Goes,’ *Daily News*, 14 August 1971, 12C; Harry Stathos and Harrison Rainie, “‘Porn-Free” is Theme as B’Way Launches 3-Day Drive on Smut,’ *Daily News*, 12 April 1977, 5; Anon., ‘The 42d St. dream,’ *Daily News*, 4 December 1978, C13; Anon., ‘Apple has jobs appeal,’ *Daily News*, 20 January 1996, 12.
- ⁵³ Jay Sharbutt, ‘42nd Street to Live Again,’ *The Journal News*, 25 February 1979, 17M.
- ⁵⁴ O’Brian, ‘Wiping the Slime,’ 9; James Rutenberg, ‘Curtain Up!,’ *Daily News*, 30 July 1995, 36–37.
- ⁵⁵ Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999), 146.
- ⁵⁶ Jack Stevenson, ‘Grindhouse and Beyond,’ in *From the Arthouse to the Grindhouse: Highbrow and Lowbrow Transgression in Cinema's First Century*, ed. John Cline and Robert G. Weiner (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 141.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.
- ⁵⁸ Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford, *Sleazoid Express: A Mind Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square!* (New York: Fireside, 2002), 3.
- ⁵⁹ Church, *Grindhouse Nostalgia*, 14.
- ⁶⁰ Jancovich and Snelson, ‘Horror at the Crossroads,’ 116.
- ⁶¹ Anon, ‘Carnivals and Sewer Gas,’ *Variety*, 1 August 1921, 9.
- ⁶² Chesluk, *Money Jungle*, 40-41.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ⁶⁴ Kristine Miller, ‘Condemning the Public: Design and New York’s New 42nd Street’. *GeoJournal* 58 (2002), 140.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Chesluk, *Money Jungle*, 42.

⁶⁷ Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Times Square Roulette: Remaking the City Icon* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 343.

⁶⁸ Shearer, 'The Comedy of Redevelopment,' 108.

⁶⁹ Anon, 'Changing cityscape,' 75.

⁷⁰ Anon, 'The 42d St. dream,' C13.

⁷¹ Carlton, 'A New Legit Look for Times Square,' 13.

⁷² Jack O'Brian, '\$10M price on Oakland A's ballclub', *Daily News*, 6 March 1979, 20.

⁷³ Don Nelson, 'Rialto Goes Legit', *Daily News*, 9 May 1979, 57.

⁷⁴ Moritz, 'Square Deal for 42d St?,' 23.

⁷⁵ Moritz, 'Times Square: Cleaning Up its Act', 25.