

With Ann Coulter on the Jewish Conversion Tour

by Con Chapman

NEW YORK. It's 6:30 p.m. and I'm sitting at Greenblatt's Deli on West 38th Street, eyeing the door nervously. It is here that I've agreed to meet right-wing columnist Ann Coulter, who recently shocked a live audience and viewers of CNBC's "The Big Idea" by saying that she wanted "Jews to be perfected." I shot off an email to her in a nanosecond, hoping to pick up a six-figure proselytization gig. I want to get her to sign on the dotted line—actually, those lines aren't dotted anymore—before my competition in the religious-ethnic perfection biz can.



*WASP*y guy, eyeing the kreplach.

She crosses the threshold, and to our mutual surprise nobody bats an eyelash. My guess is her Nielsen ratings in this neighborhood couldn't be detected with an electron microscope.



"Who's the shikse?"

"Yoo hoo, Ann—over here!" I shout, and after scanning the crowd her eyes settle on me with a skeptical bemusement. She walks over

to the table, her hair swinging in the breeze from the ceiling fan, and gives me the once-over.

“Funny—you don't look Jewish,” she says.

“I'm not, but I've got a ghetto pass.”



Coolidge Corner, Brookline, Mass.

“You mean like John Mayer?”

“No—'ghetto' originally referred to the parts of European cities where Jews were confined.”

“Oh. So—how'd you get your pass?”

“It was bestowed on me by the *tante* of my Jewish girlfriend back in the 80's. We were having Rosh Hashanna dinner at her place in Brookline, and I was the only one who was talking to her. She found out I knew more Yiddish than her niece.”

The tough-talking pundit takes this all in. “Okay,” she says, “I guess you'll do.”

The waiter comes by to take our order. “I'll have the usual,” I say.

“A Reuben and a can of celery soda?” the waiter asks.



"Celery soda—yuck!" Coulter exclaims. "That's gross!"

"It's not bad—and it's kosher," I say.

"What's the difference?" Coulter asks

It's a golden opportunity for me to recite the first poem I ever wrote: "Lines Written Upon Waking After Spending the Night at a Kosher Vegetarian Commune."

"I can explain it with a little ditty," I say, then begin:

*This is kosher, this is trafe;
one unclean, the other safe.
All day long we work and slafe,
keeping kosher from the trafe.*

"Cute," Coulter says sarcastically. "What do you recommend?" she asks.

I look up at the waiter. "How's the *petsele* today?"

"Good, fresh," he says. "We cut it over the weekend."

"Great," I say. "Why don't you make a nice *petsele* sandwich on an onion roll for the lady. Plenty of mustard."

"Pickle?" he asks.

"Absolutely—let's show this *shikse* what real New York deli food is like!"

"And a Diet Coke," Coulter adds. "Is that 'kosher'?"

"It's gonna have sugar in it, not corn syrup," the waiter says. "Some people say it tastes better."

"I don't see how that could be, but I'll give it a shot—in the interest of promoting better 'understanding'," Coulter says as she makes ironic little finger quotes in the air.

"Okay," he says and shuffles off.

"Now," I say, shifting into professional mode. "If you're going to win the hearts and minds of the Chosen People, you're going to have to come at it a little differently."

"Why should I care?" she says haughtily, drawing herself up in defiance. A little bony for my tastes—I wonder if she's on the Lady Di diet. I wouldn't kick her out of bed for eating crackers, but it would be like sleeping with Eva Braun.



Eva Braun, SS Playmate of the Month

"You said you wanted to 'perfect' them," I say. "You're just going to turn them off with your proselytizing . . ."

"What'llytizing?"

"Trying to convert them. Just leave them alone."

"I can't do that," she says, turning serious. "When the Big Guy put me here on earth, he said 'Go forth and piss people off.'"



“Please—you’re all being way too sensitive!”

I can see this is going to be harder than I thought. “Okay,” I say. “Let’s think of some Jewish contributions to American life that we simply couldn’t do without.”

“Like what?” she says with a snort.

“The Great American Songbook,” I exclaim. “George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, Frank Loesser . . .”

“Never heard of him.”

“Guys and Dolls? I’d Like to Get You on a Slow Boat to China?”



“I had a suspicion you were a Communist.”

“That’s a *song* you dubohead. The very architecture on which the Swing Era was built—most of the composers were Jewish.”



Frank Loesser

"Big deal."

"It *is* a big deal. If it weren't for Cole Porter and Hoagy Carmichael, the *goyim* would go home without a medal, like the Cuban Winter Olympics team."

"What else?"

"Well, humor."

"Oh, puh-lease," she says. "A bunch of Jewish mother jokes? I read Freud in college."

"That's barely the tip of the iceberg. There's Lenny Bruce, the Marx Brothers. Really disruptive humor, unlike the Bob Hope VHS boxed set you probably get your laughs from."

"Tell me one Jewish joke that's really funny that you can tell without everybody getting up in arms," she snapped. People were starting to look at us, so I lowered my voice and began.

"There's this guy who's been a *mohe!* for thirty years . . ."

"What's a 'moyel'?"

"He's the man who performs the ritual circumcision, the *bris*."

"Gross. Continue."

"His whole career he's been throwing the foreskins in a closet, and finally his wife tells him she needs it for storage. 'What am I going to do with three decades worth of foreskins?' he says. 'That's your problem,' his wife says. 'Figure something out.'"

So the *mohel* goes to a leather shop and says "Can you make something out of these for me?" and he drops three big bags of foreskins on the counter.

"Sure," the guy says. "Come back in a week."

So the *mohel* comes back in a week and the guy at the leather shop says "I made you a wallet," and he hands it to him. The *mohel* is disappointed, and says "Thirty years worth of foreskins, and all you can make is a wallet?"

"Stroke it," the guy says. "It turns into a suitcase."



"Tck."

She is silent. "That's a stupid joke," she says finally, dabbing at the corners of her mouth with her napkin. "At least the food was pretty good," she concedes as she washes her sandwich down with a last swig of Diet Coke. "What exactly is this 'petsele' stuff?"

“Oh, that? It's foreskin. The guy who works the meat slicer here is a *mohel* on weekends.”

