

30s, fit and full of himself, nonchalantly waved off the appeal and sauntered around the corner just as I leaned out the window and got off a "Hey!"

4 Maybe if I'd just kept my mouth shut I wouldn't have taken it personally. After all, just two minutes before, I had been sprawled out in my bedroom, windows wide open, enjoying a balmy Sunday morning leafing through the newspaper while monitoring the two football games in progress on TV. Absolute bliss.

5 My first bad move was slipping into a pair of flip-flops and trundling down to the landing to right this slight to my dignity. I wasn't going to yell, just walk up to him in the deli and murmur something along the lines of: "You were asked politely to move; would you please?"

6 When I turned the corner at the end of the driveway, Mr. Park Where I Want was striding away from the deli and toward me. Smugly self-assured and dressed in one of those velour warm-up suits, he was bouncing along as if he'd just won the lottery.

7 He smirked when we passed each other. I turned and retraced my steps as he approached his car. I pointed to the signs posted near the entrance. "In the future, no parking, OK?"

8 Our eyes met as he smirked again. "Caaalm down."

9 Calm down? "I'm calm, just don't park here."

10 At this point I should have kept on walking back to the funny papers and football.

11 "Caaalm down," he said again in a pat-on-the-head tone.

12 You know how annoying that is?

13 I gave him my best withering look. "It's real simple, no parking, parks! nyetski, right?"

14 He grinned as he slid into his car. He offered up an unoriginal obscenity, followed by "low-life."

15 I felt my anger surge into a raging boil.

16 I proffered my middle finger, cocked and ready to see what Mr. Big Shot in His Big Mercedes wanted to do about it.

17 More grinning as he slowly backed out of the driveway, returning the salute.

18 That's when I lost it, spewing every unprintable phrase that welled up in my febrile brain. I questioned his courage, his sexual proclivities, his family, his—you know the drill.

19 And that's when he braked in the middle of the street, grin gone and in its place an icy stare.

20 At that movement, a car barreling around the corner blared its horn and we lost eye contact. He maneuvered out of the way and drove off.