



Source: 'Vatican legate boycotts Holocaust remembrance', New York Times in *Sydney Morning Herald* online, 16/04/07.

Tags: [streets](#), [crime](#), [discomfort](#)

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The latch clicks gently into place, and I make for the lift at the end of the hall. I can still hear them all discussing the game, how bad it was, and now they're going to watch it all over again on the TV. I wait, following the green light as it skips between the numbers on its way towards level seven. My head is heavy with booze and cigarettes. Sirens and crowd noise linger about.

The lift stops its easy descent in front of a glass security door. There is an elderly couple outside, blocking my exit, but I'm hidden to them by the street reflection. I have to nudge my way out and then cross quickly to the other side where I fill my lungs with the thick city air.

The night's breeze is gentle, but has enough bite to quicken my pace a fraction. Exhaust fumes are busily working their way through the tall buildings and into the atmosphere. The weekend buzz is full of energy.

Swarms of people are spilling out of laneways. Girls squeal amongst themselves. Guys point and prod and poke fun at each other as they move one step forward in a line to the bar. I snake between them, keeping my head dipped to avoid making eye contact, all the while aware of my peripherals. There's a loud cheer as two women kiss passionately, part of a dare I expect.

My habit is to give way to oncoming foot traffic. I sometimes think about just holding my line and firming the shoulder to see what would happen. But not tonight. Tonight I'm tired, and have to work in just a few hours and so I give way.

As I near the end of the street, I turn to cut through a narrow alley. There's a fracas at a small, unassuming entrance. There is a dim light from the towering car park above, but no signage to mark the location. I don't recall having seen a venue here for some years. The silhouettes scuffle but it's obvious that one has the weight advantage. The unmistakable dull thud of fist on face reverberates in the door well, and a body falls under its own weight. I catch the number 103 on the big guy's lanyard as he moves away. His shoulders are round and wide. He does not look back.

My mouth is open, but nothing comes out.

As I approach, a battered head pushes forward into the light. It speaks before I do, spitting violent abuse and blood at me before slumping back into the dark. He doesn't want help, so I don't offer it.

I break through the city centre hubbub into the quiet of the business district where the homeless lurk. The kitchen smoke has now dissipated, and the refuse bins and urine have taken stock. I quicken my step, letting the cracks in the pavement flicker past like an old super 8 film until I reach the Cathedral. The yellow up-lights scare Gothic shadows into the sky.

I run my hand along the spiky surface of a hedged fence and my heart rate drops down. I take a right past the Aegean restaurant. The light from a new gallery spills onto the footpath. There's chalk underneath my feet, *The Rokeby Venus* is all but erased now. The ticket desk for the Club is empty and the door-staff look dejected. Their security numbers, 168 and 211, are familiar to me somehow.

Around the corner Latin music blares from Copacabana where there is still a line of short skirts and greased-back hair waiting for entry. My knees are starting to ache but I'm not far from home now. I can see the street sign coming into focus. Easey Street. Oh yes, I hear it all the time. Just this morning the two tradesmen who came to fix the door; first thing the shorter one said, 'So you're always living on easy street huh?'

The street is long and at this hour, dark. I'm not scared exactly, but I don't feel at ease either. Cars pass by at the end of the street, their noise dulled into a distant drone. Closer, I hear a baby crying. Her mother is trying to hush her back to sleep. And I wonder, not for the first time, if that was the house where it happened all those years ago. The house where that baby was left there, alone for five days, until the bodies were discovered. Those murders have never been solved.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Dave Hagger.*