

the Prince of New York was never exactly a New Yorker. He'd lived in Tampa since 1994, shortly after the Yankees drafted him. "As soon as the season was over, I'd be back in Tampa," he says. In his long NY career, he set foot in Central Park all of three times, the same number of times he rode the subway: twice for photo shoots and once, improbably, for a trip from the Upper East Side to Lower Manhattan for the ticker tape parade celebrating his first World Series championship, in 1996. If he truly lived anywhere, it might as well have been in a sixth borough named Black Car. Back and forth he went—apartment tower to stadium—on his season-long circuit.

Still, he will forever be associated with the last days of what now feels like an almost premodern Gotham Golden Age: before tech bros, before 9/11; a time of newspaper wars and *Sex and the City*, but not yet everybody who moved to the city because of *Sex and the City*; Brooklyn, but not *Brooklyn*; hideous men like Giuliani and Trump, but still only *locally* hideous; maybe the last time that New York truly felt like the only place in the world where it really mattered to be prince.

"New York was the center of the universe," Jeter says. "The Knicks had good teams. The Rangers had won. Then hip-hop took it to another level: Puff, Jay-Z. Now here come the Yankees, and we dominated for a period of time. It just seemed like all eyes were on New York and all eyes were on us." It was heady for a 29-year-old sudden star. "You'd go to clubs or lounges and everyone was there. People you grew up watching: Denzel, Jack Nicholson. And they come over to *you*. They know you on a first-name basis! It's a surreal experience when you're that young and you're having success. I don't know if I can articulate how weird it is."

Jeter has frequently said that his career would have been ruined had cellphone cameras been around. It's a good line, but of course he spent half his career in the camera-phone era. It's taken real discipline to maintain his privacy all these years. He remains exquisitely attuned to the potential of a headline, and quick to head it off. When I ask if he remembers running into Donald Trump in his Manhattan days (Jeter lived in a Trump building), the notion that he would even engage such a question is so absurd that he just laughs. (continued on page 86)

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