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Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson Is Distressed by 'For Rent' Signs and Asteroids

• 6/24/09 at 4:10 PM

Name: Neil deGrasse Tyson

Age: Born the same week that NASA was founded. Figure it out.

Neighborhood: The Real Downtown

Occupation: Astrophysicist, director of the Hayden Planetarium, co-host, "[StarTalk](#)," a radio show dedicated to space, but with a pop-culture twist.

Who's your favorite New Yorker, living or dead, real or fictional?

Clark Kent.

What's the best meal you've eaten in New York?

[Picholine](#).

In one sentence, what do you actually do all day in your job?

Bring the universe down to Earth in the service of the public's appetite for the cosmos.

Would you still live here on a \$35,000 salary?

Of course. I would just eat at cheaper restaurants

What's the last thing you saw on Broadway?

Play: *Ruined* (last night!)

Central Park: *Twelfth Night* (last week)

Musical: *Phantom* (a month ago)

Do you give money to panhandlers?

No. But I will always give them my "doggie bag" of food that I could not finish at a restaurant.

What's your drink?

Non-alcoholic: Strawberry double-malted

Grape: Grand Cru Burgundy

Liquor: Warmed Grand Marnier in a snifter

How often do you prepare your own meals?

Half the time I am home to do so.

What's your favorite medication?

None.

What's hanging above your sofa?

Ceiling. Live in a loft. Sofa is not against the wall.

How much is too much to spend on a haircut?

I cut my own hair. But I recognize that for others a good haircut is priceless.

When's bedtime?

Midnight. But often ranges from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Which do you prefer, the old Times Square or the new Times Square?

New Times Square. You no longer feel that you must bathe immediately after having walked through it.

What do you think of Donald Trump?

I love all who are more a caricature of themselves than others can be of them. The list is not long, but would include: Joan Rivers, Donald Trump, William Shatner, and Gilbert Gottfried.

What do you hate most about living in New York?

Waiting for a train late at night. You see slow-moving lights approach down the tunnel. Turns out to be one of those yellow train barges rather than the train you are waiting for.

Who is your mortal enemy?

The asteroid with Earth's name on it. The mortal enemy of us all.

When's the last time you drove a car?

Two weeks ago.

How has the Wall Street crash affected you?

Distressed to see so many "for rent" signs on storefronts. Reminds me of the seventies — the collapse of neighborhoods — which was NOT a good time for New Yorkers. Otherwise, not directly affected.

Times, Post, or Daily News?

Times op-eds. *Post* headlines. *Daily News* photos.

Where do you go to be alone?

A crowded bar.


What makes someone a New Yorker?

Being energized rather than enervated by its pace of life.

By: [Vanita Salisbury](#)

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