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METRO COLUMN | GET OUT OF THE SUBURBS: FILLMORE PHILADELPHIA

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Hi, my name is Michael and I [swivels around, sees if people are looking] live in the suburbs. (Hi, Michael.)

I am from the 'burbs, but that doesn't preclude also being 'from Philly', despite arguments to the contrary from those who reside within the city limits. But that distinction is also self-imposed by many in the suburbs, embracing the disconnect, the dichotomy that draws artificial lines along City Line; you take Philadelphia County, and we'll stay out here in the dozen or so counties that surround it after 5pm. Philly pholks and their economy-driving, commute-in-for-the-day suburban brethren have always had a tenuous symbiotic relationship.

Out of that grew a frustrating personality trait of Philly suburbanites of a certain post-hipster, pre-midlife age: The proclivity for eschewing going into the city for an evening or a day, because reasons. It's too far. I hate driving 95. The mall has everything I need. That middle school play is quality entertainment. Baseball is just so *much better* on TV.

Buck up, suburban denizens. There is zero reason to fear the city. I promise, the city occupants won't bite, won't scare you away, and won't judge you for living in the 'burbs. Well, of course they will, but they'll do it nicely. (You will, city residents, right? Nicely? Promise me you'll be nice. I swear you won't catch 'suburbs'.)

If you haven't noticed, suburban friends, Philly is going through quite a revolution. Publications from New York to Katmandu have taken notice. We're a World Heritage City. We're a new foodie mecca. The local music scene is 🍷, as the kids say. AND YOU'RE MISSING OUT.

Difficulty getting to the city is not an excuse I will accept from you. Yeah, navigating construction on 95 is a pain in the butt. The Schuylkill is worse. But driving *home* from the city after hours is easy, breezy, beautiful. Parking a pain? Find a good lot kinda-sorta near where you're going and grab an Uber. There are thirteen SEPTA Regional Rail lines and over 150 stations. You can't possibly live that far from one. Your excursion taking you out later than SEPTA RR runs (FYI: Geez SEPTA, people – even suburbanites – have lives *after* 11:30 at night!)? Drive to the ends of the BSL or MFL and ride all night! Fern Rock is not nearly as scary as you think.

So get up off your Barcalounger, put away the lawnmower, forsake a night at Panda Express, and pop into Philly for a few hours (because an evening in the city doesn't require you blowing 50,000 Marriott points to stay the night). There are places to be seen.

Philly's newest high-quality music venue, The Fillmore, is a perfect one of those places. Wait, did you not know that Philly had a new music venue? You've most definitely not left the suburbs in way too long.

The Fillmore, owned and managed by Live Nation (who also run the TLA, the Tower, and the new Punchline Comedy Club), sits comfortably in the 125-year-old Ajax Building in Fishtown across the street from Sugarhouse Casino. And – even just simply by its newness (it opened in October) and cleanliness – may be the best mid-sized music venue in town. With a variety of trendy artists spanning the music spectrum – from Tegan & Sara, A\$AP Ferg, and Gavin DeGraw at the 2,500 capacity main stage to up-and-coming acts like Half Moon Run and Zella Day upstairs at The Foundry lounge that holds about 500 – The Fillmore Philly is reigning back in bands to the city that previously considered playing The Borgata as a 'Philly date'.

The venue is nice. Real nice. Like you suburban'ers won't feel you were dumped into the middle of Electric Factory nice. The folks at the box office are helpful and accommodating. Ticket prices are reasonable. The bathrooms are clean, the bars are spacious, the stage is at a perfect height, and the acoustics are nearly perfect. There are even photo spaces designed to make your Instagram followers envious.

Getting to The Fillmore couldn't be easier. Being a new venue, there is ample parking (albeit expensive on some nights) right outside the door. Pro Tip – and you didn't hear it from me: Grab a spot for free across the street at Sugarhouse and walk over. If you feel guilty about that, come early, drop a few bucks in a slot machine, and you've paid your 'parking for customers only' dues. Grab a train into Center City (RR to Market East – I refuse to call it 'Jefferson' – or BSL to City Hall) and grab an Uber.

So there is Mission Number One, suburban friends. Go catch a show at Philly's best new music venue. And then we'll go from there. Baby steps.