



## Brewhaha #5: Gritty's, Portland ME

Daylight was waning fast when C-Note found the downtown Portland parking garage. Maine's largest city (63,000+) would be the final stop for the night, so Rules 1 & 2 got shut in the trunk, Hops went peripatetic, and the Release The Hounds decree was officially, well, decreed.

As if by destiny, Gritty's – Maine's oldest brew pub -- was right across the street, and I wasted no time getting there. It had been a nearly two hours since F-Jack's – thanks to those two wild goose chases – and the great god Thirst was demanding his offering. And I can be very religious when it suits my purposes.

The dinner hour had not quite arrived, so there was ample room at the bar. It was smaller than I expected; maybe only 10 seats on this side and another 10 or so on the dining room side. The bar was that cool dented copper surface, and the room was woody and on the dark side. I felt right in my element.

The 21 IPA tickled my fancy, and my friendly barkeep cheerfully poured me one.

The iPhone had done some work today, providing maps and routes and Facebookings, but, to my chagrin, the inverter that I had brought with me was too wide to fit in C-Note's lighter socket, so I couldn't keep a charge on the phone. I spied an empty electric outlet behind the four-top next to the front door, and was just lifting off my stool to bring the phone and charger to it, when a party of four came in and made that table their home.

I hesitated, but went for it anyway, just walking them as they settled in, plugging it in, and leaving it aglow on the windowsill. I gave them a smile that said *hey y'all, howyadoin, don't touch my fucking phone or I'll cut your toes off*, and returned to my IPA and the Sox game on telly.

Either the game, or the beer, or my Notbook distracted me for a while, and when I looked up, the four-toppers had skedaddled and the waitress was wiping down the table. Then she saw the phone, grabbed it, and started to chase the departed quartet with it. Good thing I looked when I looked or she would have been down the street with it. I intercepted her before she could get out the door, though, splained it all to her, and plugged it back in for some more zizzin'.

Man, that flurry of worry got me thirsty! "A Vacationland Summer Ale, Mr. Barkeep!" It also occurred to me that I hadn't eaten all day. I didn't feel hungry, but it did seem that eating would be a smart idea. "And a small Mac-N-Cheese, if ya pleez."

Ah, the simple pleasure of mac-chee. As it would turn out, that modest dish was a staple of just about every eatery that I would encounter in northern NE.

Gritty's had filled up by the time my Vacationland was done. There were some good sounding beers left unsampled here, but Portland is teeming with brew pubs, and I could hear them calling.

