

EXHIBIT W

Doblin: An eruv connects Mahwah to Clybourne Park

Alfred P. Doblin, Editorial Editor, @AlfredPDoblin Published 11:30 a.m. ET Aug. 11, 2017 | Updated 9:31 a.m. ET Aug. 14, 2017



(Photo: Tariq Zehawi/NorthJersey.com)

It's plastic PVC piping. Innocuous on a utility pole. Drive by and it looks like a conduit. It is. Not for electrical power, but for fear. What should denote a boundary where people of faith can walk with strollers has become a line in the sand between THEM and US. Welcome to Mahwah, N.J.

For several weeks, this Bergen County community near the New York State border has been ripped apart over an eruv, a perimeter created by Orthodox Jews that, in most simplistic terms, expands the boundaries of their homes. It allows Orthodox Jews to perform certain tasks on the Sabbath outside the walls of their homes, like pushing a baby stroller. Sometimes an eruv consists of strung wire or small pieces of plastic tacked to the tops of utility poles. As Andrea Jaffe, communications coordinator for the Bergen Rockland Eruv Association, the group seeking to extend an eruv into a small portion of Bergen County from New York State, explained to me,

an eruv also can be marked by streams, rivers, trees or mountains. It depends on geography.

EDITORIAL: [Mahwah goes wrong way on eruv \(/story/opinion/editorials/2017/07/24/editorial-mahwah-goes-wrong-way-eruv/506218001/\)](/story/opinion/editorials/2017/07/24/editorial-mahwah-goes-wrong-way-eruv/506218001/)

GARDEN STATE OF MIND: [In Mahwah, a Jewish symbol sparks fears of a takeover \(/story/news/columnists/christopher-maag/2017/08/04/garden-state-mind-mahwah-jewish-symbol-sparks-fears-takeover/537983001/\)](/story/news/columnists/christopher-maag/2017/08/04/garden-state-mind-mahwah-jewish-symbol-sparks-fears-takeover/537983001/)

In neighboring Rockland County, where a large community of Orthodox Jews live, the street grid near the New York-New Jersey border prevents the marking of an eruv — that is why the eruv association is expanding into Bergen County. It needs contiguous streets. That's it. According to Jaffe, and according to Mahwah Mayor William Laforet, Orthodox Jews from Rockland County are not planning what some in Mahwah think is a takeover of the town. And rumors of real estate agents knocking on doors offering residents buckets of cash to sell their homes, presumably to Orthodox Jews, are not supported by facts.

Mahwah Police Chief James Batelli told me Wednesday that his department went back as far as Jan. 1 of this year and there was not a single complaint lodged of an individual knocking on doors with such a purpose in Mahwah. He added the caveat that there is no crime committed by doing just that. But given the hysteria spreading across Mahwah over the eruv in just a few weeks' time, it seems unlikely that real estate agents could be roaming the streets of Mahwah unnoticed. And there is hysteria.

Laforet said, "You throw rocks in the pond, there'll be ripples." Rocks are being thrown. Metaphorical ones, yes. But, rocks. The mayor recently penned an opinion piece for The Record and [northjersey.com \(http://northjersey.com\)](http://northjersey.com) stating "hate has no home in Mahwah" and that vile, hateful comments spewed across some social media sites are not representative of his town.

Column continues after video

I accept that the majority of people living in Mahwah are good people. But bad things happen, and the people who do these bad things are often good people.

In 1959, the fictional character Karl Lindner says: "Now, I don't say we are perfect, and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way. And at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background."

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That's from Lorraine Hansberry's play "A Raisin in the Sun." The Younger family, which is black, is planning to move into a modest home in all-white Clybourne Park, and Lindner, a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, has come to the Younger apartment to convince them to back out of the sale. Hansberry does not write Lindner as an Archie Bunker bigot. Lindner is a quiet, thoughtful guy, probably a church-going, insurance-selling middle-aged man who wouldn't hurt a fly. He's the embodiment of "good" people.

As I spoke with Jaffe and Laforet, I was struck by how both wanted to defuse a tense situation, but also how they wanted me to understand that Orthodox families from New York are not planning to move to Mahwah. Yet I was left repeating the same question: So what if they were?

Because this is America, a nation founded by people seeking religious freedom. Neighborhoods change. For the better. For the worse. But they change.

Jaffe stressed that the communities in New York State that appear to be striking fear into the hearts of some Mahwah residents failed to follow zoning laws designed to protect the integrity of neighborhoods. Fair point. Important point.

But zoning cannot be used to discriminate because of faith, culture, race, gender or sexual orientation. When that happens, a crime is committed — a civil and a moral crime. There's no nice way of saying this. The people who say they don't want THOSE people are bigots, and in this case, also anti-Semites. If you don't want Jews living in your neighborhood, you're an anti-Semite. It is what it is by definition.



Slim plastic pipes affixed to a utility pole in Mahwah are part of an eruv, a symbolic boundary that allows Orthodox Jews to perform tasks outside their homes that usually are prohibited on the Sabbath. (Photo: Kevin R. Wexler/NorthJersey.com file photo)

Staff Writer Jessica Presinzano reported on the convergence of disparate groups in Mahwah's Winter's Park last Sunday. There were children playing, some wearing yarmulkes. There were people from a group called Stand Up Against Hate, plus members of Mahwah Strong, which is opposing the eruv.

Recently, the Township Council adopted an ordinance barring non-New Jersey residents from using the park. Residents have complained of busloads of Orthodox children being brought there. The Bergen County Prosecutor's Office made it clear that such a ban is unconstitutional.

The disparate groups managed to coexist in the park without incident. But the eruv hysteria is not over. It ebbs and crests.

A decade after "A Raisin in the Sun" was first produced, a middle-class black family was attempting to move into Bergen County. "[The real estate agent] kept insisting that we didn't want to move there, that we wouldn't like it, that we should want to be with our people, that we didn't want to be responsible for destroying a community."

It was Cory Booker's family. It was Harrington Park. And as the now-junior U.S. senator from New Jersey wrote in his book, "United," it took the efforts of fair-housing volunteers to make his family's move into Harrington Park possible.

There were good people then. There are good people now.

An eruv is a doorway, not a wall. It allows people of faith to move about freely. It does not shut them out. It does not shut anyone out.

Mahwah residents should not fear outsiders putting up an eruv, a boundary that welcomes. They should fear their own construction of a wall, a barrier that excludes.

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