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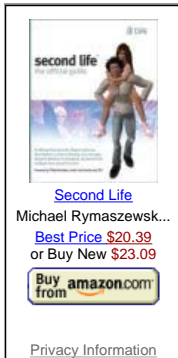
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Tuesday, December 05, 2006

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HOMELESS FOR THE HOLIDAYS (Updated)



It had been built to promote the television network owned by General Electric, but last night when I went to take a screenshot of their New York City ice rink and their lit-up Christmas tree, he was already there, silently using [NBC's site in Second Life](#) for a purpose of his own. I said hello several times, but the thin frail kid said nothing-- though if you clicked on his cardboard box, an automated message told you he was collecting Linden Dollar donations for a Spanish NGO to help the real world's poor. (And if you're going to do that in an online world, why not do so in a virtual recreation of the world's richest city?)

Since I hadn't heard of the non-profit and he didn't respond at the time, I couldn't confirm right then that he was a genuine emissary of the group. (But in retrospect, that [appears](#) to be [the case](#).) And eventually, my attention wandered over to a man with a pompadour and limited English skills at the edge of the skating rink, who had needs of his own.

I said hello and asked AcereroBen Rothlisberger what was up.

"Nothing," he declared. "I cant' speak english." I knew enough Spanish to get that he was from Mexico, but confusion set in after a few lines of chat. So I brought out [Yossarian Seattle's translator device](#), and gave it to him. After a few false starts, he was able to get the device working, and something halfway comprehensible started coming across my screen:

AcereroBen Rothlisberger: ok ya me entiendes?
Translator v1.6: ok already you understand to me?

"Yes!" I wrote back. "Now I read it in English!"

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AcereroBen Rothlisberger: Muy bien muchas gracias
Translator v1.6: Very well thank you very much

"I hope it helps you in Second Life."

AcereroBen Rothlisberger: me ayudaste muchisimo
Translator v1.6: you helped me very many

So from there, we were able to talk about many things, such as Oaxaca and the state's current civil unrest, and whether I should visit.

AcereroBen Rothlisberger: si, no te preocupes eso se solucionara
Translator v1.6: if, you do not worry that it solved

I told him I hoped so, and offered him friendship as I got ready to go.



AcereroBen Rothlisberger: muchas gracias por todo. cuidate y recibe un abrazo de Mexico
Translator v1.6: thank you very much by everything. cuidate and receives a hug of Mexico

I offered him a hug from the USA, and that's right about when I took leave of my new acquaintance from Mexico, standing there next to the avatar of an unspeaking homeless child from a Spanish charity on the digital Manhattan sidewalk paid for by the National Broadcasting Corporation.

Update, 12/5, 12:05pm: Rik Riel and a gentleman purporting to represent the

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[The Second Life of Mark Warner \(a presidential hopeful makes an online world whistle stop\)](#)

Spanish advertising agency that introduced the homeless child into Second Life sends along a link to this YouTube video:

Mensajeros de la Paz Second Life



Update, 12/5, 1:20PM: I just contacted representatives with NBCi, sponsors of the Second Life site, asking them about the homeless avatar begging on their virtual property. Will post any response they send here.

Tuesday, December 05, 2006 in [Real world in SL](#) | [Permalink](#)

TrackBack

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<http://www.typepad.com/t/trackback/7043478>

Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [HOMELESS FOR THE HOLIDAYS \(Updated\)](#):

» [My friend Mensajero, the virtual panhandler](#) from The Click Heard Round the World

After reading about a homeless avatar begging in Second Life (Thanks, Hamlet Au , SL Insider, and my friend Tony) I decided to pop into SL to check it out. I tracked down the resident named MensajeroDeLaPaz Jubilee and got [\[Read More\]](#)

Tracked on Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 11:28 AM

» [Homeless for the Holidays in Second Life](#) from The Daily Glyph
Virtual worlds are colliding. I have met a number of Mexican, French and Brazilian new residents in the last couple of days. And there's another collision taking place in a virtual version of my last network job location. The ghost... [\[Read More\]](#)

Tracked on Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 03:48 PM

Comments

Sounds a lot like the real NYC.

Posted by: [reuben steiger](#) | [Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 06:02 AM](#)

No, if it was the real NYC, Ham would have ignored the homeless guy (who would have been arrested for sitting there in the first place) and cursed out the clueless tourist for blocking his way.

Posted by: [rikomatic](#) | [Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 06:32 AM](#)

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[Protagonist of the Island Nakama \(Creating a commercial microcosm of anime\)](#)

[-- And He Rezzed a Crooked](#)

I didn't realize there were so many Pittsburgh Steeler fans in Latin America!

Posted by: [Terry Cloth](#) | [Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 06:57 AM](#)

Oh and here's a video the Mensajeros produced about this:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOz2x9cYUhQ>

Posted by: [rikomatic](#) | [Tuesday, December 05, 2006 at 10:34 AM](#)

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