Freegans or freeloaders?

Text 1

With a gloved hand Talmadge sifted through the bags’ contents: donuts, Portuguese rolls, Kaiser rolls, bagels, cookies, cream horns, Swiss rolls, challah and muffins. The effluvia of the Key Food bakery department, most of it edible but none of it salable, discharged to the curb. He transferred two of the Portuguese rolls and two pistachio muffins into the burlap satchel he wore messenger-style on his shoulder, and then, remembering that Matty was coming to dinner, added another roll and muffin to the bag. Then, one more Portuguese roll, and on second thought another, because he remembered that Matty ate like a pulpwood hauler. [...] The challah was as hard as seasoned firewood, and should have, he noted critically, been thrown out the day before; Ditto the bagels, though he didn’t care about them much, since day-old bagels were his easiest prey. Unger’s over on Avenue B had the best ones anyway and Mr. Unger - testy, fat-jowled, an aproned old relic from the bygone Lower East Side - put out two or three full bags of them nightly. The only problem with those was Mr. Unger himself, who would sometimes charge out of the store to demand payment. Talmadge was always quick to skedaddle but Micah relished the fight. “They’re trash”, she’d say. "They’re my trash”, he’d reply. And so on and so forth until Mr. Unger would fling up his arms and shout, “Freeloaders! Freeloaders!”

The whole exchange was avoidable since there was a two-hour window between the time Mr. Unger locked the shop, at seven, and when the Department of Sanitation trucks rolled up at nine, during which time the bagels were free for the loading, but Micah operated on her own narrow terms - angry fat-jowled relics be damned.

After retying the bag and replacing it onto the heap, Talmadge went about frisking the other bags. He was after the pleasant dumpy squish that meant produce, which he found after several gropings.

He wrestled the bag off the pile - it was unusually heavy, suggesting melons, - and opened it on the sidewalk.

Jonathan Miles, Want Not, 2014
Matt Malone doesn’t mind being called a professional dumpster diver. He tells me this a little after 2 am on the morning of July 7 as we cruise the trash receptacles behind the stores of a shopping center just off the Capital of Texas Highway in Austin. [...] Malone stops his Chevy Avalanche next to the dumpster in back of an Office Depot. Within seconds, he’s out of the truck and sticking his magnetized flashlight to the inside of the dumpster’s wall. He heaves himself up onto the metal rim to lean inside and begins digging through a top layer of cardboard and packing materials. Half a minute later I hear what I will learn is Malone’s version of eureka: “Hell yes! Hell yes!” He comes out with a box containing a complete Uniden Wireless Video Surveillance System - two cameras and a wireless monitor- which normally retails for $419. A quick inspection reveals that it’s all in perfect condition, although someone has clearly opened and repacked it.”A return,” he says, then plunges back into the dumpster. Ten minutes later, when he’s again behind the wheel of the Avalanche, Malone continues to tell me about the material benefits of dumpster diving. If he were to dedicate himself to the activity as a full-time job, he says, finding various discarded treasures, refurbishing and selling them off, he’s confident he could pull in at least $250,000 a year - there is that much stuff simply tossed into dumpsters in the Austin area. He lists a few recent “recoveries”: vacuums, power tools, furniture, carpeting, industrial machines, assorted electronics. Much of it needs a little love, he says, but a lot of it, like the Uniden system, is in perfect condition. But, he quickly adds, his foraging isn’t just about dollars. It’s also about the knowledge he acquires and the people he shares it with. He prefers to be known as a “for-profit archaeologist.” After all, archaeologists have always studied garbage.

Randall SULLIVAN, wired.com, 2014
Document 1

a. Find information about the main character (name, activity, place)
b. Comment on the bag’s contents. What impressions does this list convey?
c. Describe and comment on the shopkeeper’s reaction;
d. How would you qualify the atmosphere in this passage? Why?

Document 2

e. Find information about the man portrayed in the article (name, job, activity)
f. Explain the man’s routine when he goes dumpster diving.
g. What are the two main advantages of this activity for the dumpster diver?

Documents 1 and 2

h. Compare and contrast the two men’s motivations.
i. Would you say that the expression in document 2 “a non-profit archaeologist” could be applied to the main character in document 1?

Recap:
What aspect of American Society is condemned by dumpster divers? Explain why people resort to such an activity.
To what extent is dumpster diving only about non-profit?