

# They're rolling in rainbow dough - but at a cost to the neighborhood

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff

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It's mid-afternoon, but the line continues to spill out the front door of The Bagel Store and around the block, just as it has since morning. There are young couples, mothers with anxious children and teenage girls chatting in packs. And there are cameras - so many cameras.

"What are you all waiting for?" a woman who lives in the neighborhood asks. "I see this line every day. It isn't just for bagels, is it?"

"It's the line for rainbow bagels!" a little girl yells.

She takes out her phone and shows the woman photos of the striped, multi-colored bagel posted to the website Instagram.com. The photos are accompanied, of course, by the hashtag "#rainbowbagel."

The woman, unimpressed, turns and walks away, shaking her head the way people do when they want to make sure others notice.

## A "World Premier Bagel Artist?"

The rainbow bagel is the brainchild of self-proclaimed "world premier bagel artist" Scott Rossillo. The multi-colored swirls are made by adding food coloring to multiple batches of dough. Rossillo slices pieces from each batch and rolls them together to create his signature bagels.

After 20 years of existence, the brightly hued treat is now having a moment of fame that many people in the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn, New York, could do without.

For years, Williamsburg was the epicenter of cool for the artists, liberals and other countercultural types who gathered there. It was a capital of hipsterdom, defined, in part, by yoga studios, organic food markets, used clothing stores and coffee shops.

Time has transformed Williamsburg from a neighborhood adored by a select few into a popular tourist destination for anyone visiting New York City. That popularity has not always meshed well with local values.

## **There Goes The Neighborhood**

In many ways, the rainbow bagel captures the tension of a neighborhood confronting change perfectly. The dye-infused treat, which resembles Play-Doh more than actual dough, is the polar opposite of the organic food culture of so many Williamsburg residents.

It is also evidence of a new form of gentrification. Rather than raising housing prices by drawing wealthier people to an area, this new form of gentrification remakes a local economy for popular consumption. Neil Smith, an anthropology and geography professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center, told The New York Times this kind of economic gentrification aims to turn a local lifestyle into a tourist experience.

"Gentrification today has become all about attracting capital to the city," Smith told the Times. He said when business and local culture clash, "the interests of private capital rarely lose."

The Bagel Store used to simply be a neighborhood bagel joint. It offered some quirky concoctions, including the cragel, a cross between a croissant and bagel, but mostly it offered simpler fare: bagels with cream cheese, egg bagel sandwiches, coffee - the sort of things locals bought on their way to work. There was never a line out the door.

## **Instagram Swamped**

Then a wave of publicity hit. A video posted online earlier this year led to mentions on TV shows, articles on websites and more than 10,000 photos on Instagram.

Everything changed when the neighborhood spot became a tourist trap.

The Bagel Store has been so overloaded with tourists it had to retire its delivery service. The only way to get an egg bagel sandwich on weekends is to wait on a three-hour line. So no one gets an egg bagel sandwich.

"I used to go there on the weekends, but ever since this rainbow bagel thing started it's been impossible," said local resident Maia Schoenfelder. "I can't go anymore."

Schoenfelder isn't alone -- more than a dozen people who live in the area expressed a similar frustration.

## **Don't Forget The Locals**

The problem is not lost on The Bagel Store, which realizes that popularity has come at the expense of its core customers.

"We don't want people who live nearby to not be able to come here," said Francine LaBarbara of The Bagel Store. "We're trying to figure out how to accommodate them."

On a recent weekend morning, the easel outside Summers Brooklyn, a small Williamsburg cafe, looked different than usual. Instead of showcasing the custom sandwiches and fresh juices inside, it poked fun at the craziness down the street.

"Now serving rainbow egg sandwiches," the easel joked before adding, "just kidding!"

Summers is the kind of cafe that would never serve food made with the artificial dyes of the rainbow bagel. The cafe offers organic veggies, local cheeses and avocado toast. It is the sort of all-natural hangout where you see many yoga outfits and few cameras.

## **They Don't Get It**

But behind the joke is something else. The folks at Summers, like many who own and work at restaurants in the area, are just a bit perplexed by the whole rainbow bagel thing.

"It's something people in the industry here talk about a lot these days," said Alex Kleinberg, who opened Summers with Christopher Taha in 2013. "That place has been selling quirky bagels and cream cheeses for a long time, but no one was buying them. I just don't think it's the kind of thing people are interested in Williamsburg."

Virtually everyone in the area had similar feelings. They would not say so publicly, but their feeling is that the rainbow bagel simply does not belong in Williamsburg. If anything, they feel it is the sort of cheap gimmick that belongs in Times Square.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# What's the "gist"?

*Gist: (n) the substance or essence of a speech or text*

You just read the article "They're rolling in rainbow dough - but at a cost to the neighborhood". Now summarize it! Explain what the "gist" of it is. On the lines below, write your "gist" summary in 20 words.

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## Break it Down

1. How did the author organize this article?
2. Who was the intended audience? Could anyone read this?
3. What descriptive language is used?
4. What unfamiliar words did you come across? Write down and define at least two:
5. What interesting information did you come across? Did you learn anything? Would the intended audience have learned things by reading this article?
6. How does this article fall into the genre of "informational text"?