

TOUGH GUYS

Big, brawny bar bouncers do more than keep the peace

BY CAROLINE GRECH
Staff Writer

By day, 33-year-old Jason Foroglou is a senior financial analyst for Allstate Insurance in Markham.

But every Friday and Saturday night, you will find the six-foot, six-inch, 270-pound Toronto resident staffing the doors of one of Toronto's biggest clubs.

A 13-year veteran of the profession, Mr. Foroglou is one of the hundreds of bouncers at downtown clubs, providing security so party-goers can enjoy a night out in a safe environment.

Bouncers are entrusted with a host of nightly tasks, including everything from keeping the peace to checking ID at the door.

Staring ominously at the entrances of any given bar or club, the mere mention of the word bouncer conjures up images of muscle-bound tough guys ready to pounce at the first sight of unruly behaviour.

While Mr. Foroglou fills the size part of the stereotype, he doesn't fit the bill on the aggressive side of things.

Soft-spoken, he has only felt he was in danger once, when an incident broke out and people started running out of the club with steep stairs.

"It doesn't matter how big you are, when there are that many people coming toward you, you worry," he said.

In Mr. Foroglou's 13 years, he has managed to avoid most serious skirmishes, instead offering patrons facing ejection the option of leaving the easy way or the hard way.

The only other time he can recall being afraid was when a patron came at him and, not knowing if the patron was armed, Mr. Foroglou pushed him into a wall.

When the patron didn't move, Mr. Foroglou feared he had really hurt him.

Luckily, the patron was, for the most part, uninjured.

This hasn't stopped Mr. Foroglou from donning extra protection on occasion.

"I have worn a bullet-proof vest three or four times," he said, pointing out it was at special events where trouble was possible.

Enjoying the best of both worlds is what has kept Mr. Foroglou at the job.

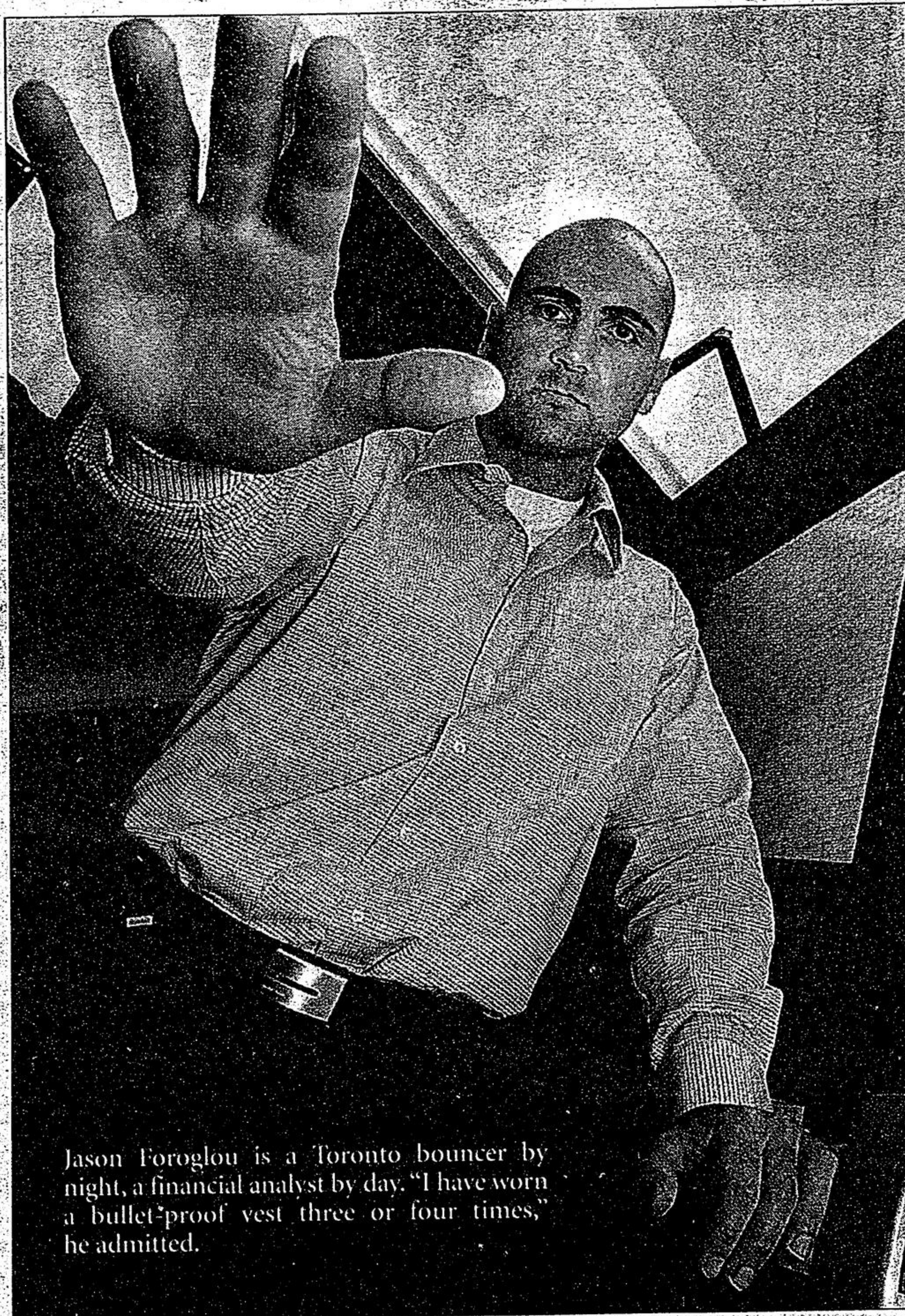
"You're in the scene, but you're getting paid for it," he explained.

While many assume most bouncers are former football players or wrestlers, Mr. Foroglou isn't the only one who bucks the stereotype.

"I've worked with stockbrokers and doctors who are retired," he said.

That doesn't stop people, who don't get their way, from hurling verbal abuse at the bouncer responsible for escorting them out of the establishment.

See **THEY'RE**, page 17.



Jason Foroglou is a Toronto bouncer by night, a financial analyst by day. "I have worn a bullet-proof vest three or four times," he admitted.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

GOOD MANNERS, QUICK THINKING HELP

It's not just size that counts when bar and club owners look for bouncers to handle security.

Among the most important skills and qualities:

- Calm under pressure and non-violent. When a tense situation breaks out, owners want someone who can prevent the situation from escalating;

- Likes to have a good time. Standing around looking mean doesn't provide a welcoming atmosphere potential repeat patrons. Also, people who want to throw their weight around to prove a point may serve to instigate a tense situation. Bouncers and security people

are meant to prevent a situation, not make it worse;

- Quick thinking. When trouble happens, it's often without warning, forcing security officers to quickly respond and dissipate a situation;

- Good observation skills. Keeping an eye on everything and removing rule breakers before a situation becomes a problem is essential; and

- Customer service skills. While bouncers and security people may have the image of being rough around the edges, one characteristic bar owners look for is good manners.



Anne Brodie

On Movies

Comedy lets movie thief shine

THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN

Starring Steve Carell, Catherine Keener and Paul Rudd

Directed by Judd Apatow

Steve Carell is a career movie thief — he robbed Will Ferrell in *Anchorman* and *Bewitched* and stole *Bruce Almighty* from Jim Carrey.

As a former reporter for *The Daily Show*, you've probably seen him playing a Ted Knight-inspired newsman.

His wicked, piercing comic style is unique and frankly welcome. He also stars as the horrible boss in the American version of the TV series *The Office*.

Mr. Carell's life of crime is over — he finally has a feature to call his own.

Gone is his hysterical, ironic posing, replaced by wide-eyed innocence. After all, he is meant to be a 40-year-old virgin.

He says, "I love and respect women so much that I stay away from them," not seeing the irony at all.

Mr. Carell co-wrote the script with director Judd Apatow and they haven't left a stone unturned in this battle of the sexes.

It's no wonder Andy (Mr. Carell's character) prefers to be in his own apartment, playing with his action figure collection or riding his bike, helmeted and self-contained.

The women in this film are genuinely awful people, drunks, manipulators, shrews and predators. The writers have really socked it to the entire female gender.

Even Andy's eventual love interest, played by Catherine Keener, is histrionic, foul-mouthed and on a maturity level with her teenaged daughter.

But it is a sure-fire laugh-riot. It's the strangest thing to watch a 40-year-old innocent, not a line on his face, untarnished by love and loss, navigate

See **MOVIE**, page 17.

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