

Episode 5:

Welcome to Gilded Garbage Can, a podcast dedicated to defogging the image that is San Francisco.

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Apologies to my loyal listeners, all 12 of you, for going silent for several weeks, but I was on vacation. It was a great trip that took me to a bunch of places in Europe and, as you might imagine, has given me a lot of material, some might even call it fodder, for this podcast. One thing for sure, the trip did inspire me. It was great to experience **real** world-class cities and confirm San Francisco's amateur status in that regard.

So, over the next several weeks, I plan to share observations about the places I visited and draw comparisons to the city by the bay. These comparisons will cover a bevy of topics from public transportation to urinating in public; from cleanliness to old and modern co-existing in harmony, and so much more, so get ready for that.

I didn't want to kick this series off with anything too heavy – the memories of vacation are still fresh, and I don't want to ruin that just yet. So, for my first comparison we are going to talk about LTE in Geiranger, Norway.

Geiranger is a small town of about 250 people – yes, 250 – situated on the Geiranger fjord, considered to be the most beautiful in all of Norway. The town boasts a cruise port, a school, a super windy road that leads 1,500 meters up to the peak of Mt Dalsnibba, a few souvenir shops and cafes, a fabulous chocolate shop, a bakery, a gorgeous waterfall, an art gallery, a hotel and a serene vibe. Geiranger is a little village with an economy tied to tourism and given its size and location, you'd never expect its mobile network to even come close to what we have here in San Francisco.

Speaking of mobile network in San Francisco, I wonder if anyone has ever counted the number of dead spots in the city. I can't even go more than a mile or so down Geary without dropping calls. "Hey mom, how's it..." DROP! Call back. "Sorry mom, I hit a dead..." DROP! I think the people who set up our mobile infrastructure here are the same people who time the traffic lights and program the little signs that tell you when the next MUNI bus is coming. It's all pretty basic technology, but as with so many things, SF just can't get it right.

Meanwhile, back in Geiranger, Norway – population 250 – the LTE is amazing! I did a speed test while driving up that windy road I mentioned, and it came in 2 or 3 times faster than what I get in the Financial District on a normal weekday. And best of all, the LTE signal was reliable the entire time I was there. I was updating my phone's OS, downloading movies, updating apps – it was glorious. Meanwhile, people in San Francisco were dropping calls, restarting their phones



and, worst of all, accepting the fact that this is simply the way it is here. We live in the city that should have the **best** mobile infrastructure in the world. It should be the model that all cities strive to achieve. I mean, didn't we invent this stuff here? Doesn't the city want the world to think it's the tech capitol of the world? I used to work with a guy who said you can't be great if you don't nail the basics. Congratulations, Geiranger, Norway – you nail the basics; San Francisco, you still have a ways to go.

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