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# Tunnel Films Go Dark

By **ANDREW GROSSMAN**

The plan was to have 160 people climb down a manhole and into a large, abandoned subway tunnel 10 feet below Atlantic Avenue Saturday and Sunday. There, they would watch short films about people trapped in tunnels and in strange relationships.



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Bryan Derballa for The Wall Street Journal

Bob Diamond, left, gave tours of the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel in July. A film screening to be held in the tunnel was canceled by the Fire Department.

It was to be the subterranean debut for Rooftop Films, an organization more accustomed to working on top of buildings. It hosts film screenings throughout the city during warmer months.

But then the New York City Fire Department called, organizers said, and scuttled the plan. The sold-out screenings were canceled and purchasers will get their money back.

Dan Nuxoll, the program director for Rooftop Films, was dismayed. He has been wanting to show movies in the tunnel since he toured it two

years ago with Robert Diamond, president of the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association.

A fire department spokesman declined to comment on the shutdown of the event, saying only that it was the kind of decision that would be made by individual firehouses.

The goal of Rooftop Films, Mr. Nuxoll said, is to "bring attention to sort of unknown or neglected architectural spaces around the city." The tunnel fits that bill. Originally built for the Long Island Rail Road in 1845, it sat empty and forgotten for decades before Mr. Diamond rediscovered it 30 years ago. He has been leading tours and holding events, including film screenings, there since October 1982.

Mr. Nuxoll thought that meant the city wouldn't mind if his group held an event there— though he admits that perhaps "Trapped in the Tunnel" wasn't the best title. "We certainly didn't mean for it to be taken literally," he said.

Mr. Diamond doesn't think there's a problem with taking people into the tunnel. He took a National Geographic video crew into it Sunday. "I'm going to keep doing it unless somebody comes over to me with handcuffs," he said.

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