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Good Smell Perplexes New Yorkers

By [KAREEM FAHIM](#)

An unseen, sweet-smelling cloud drifted through parts of Manhattan last night. Arturo Padilla walked through it and declared that it was awesome.

"It's like maple syrup. With Eggos. Or pancakes," he said. "It's pleasant."

The odor had followed Mr. Padilla and his friend along their walk in Lower Manhattan, from a dormitory on Fulton Street, to Pace University on Spruce Street, and back down again, to where they stood now, near a Dunkin' Donuts. Maybe it was from there, he said. But it wasn't.

Mr. Padilla was not alone. Reports of the syrupy cloud poured in from across Manhattan after 9 p.m. Some feared that it was something sinister.

There were so many calls that the city's Office of Emergency Management coordinated efforts with the Police and Fire Departments, the Coast Guard and the City Department of Environmental Protection to look into it.

By 11 p. m., the search had turned up nothing harmful, according to tests of the air. Reports continued to come in from as far north as 112th Street shortly before midnight. In Lower Manhattan, where the smell had begun to fade, it was back, stronger than before, by 1 a.m.

"We are continuing to sample the air throughout the affected area to make sure there's nothing hazardous," said Jarrod Bernstein, an emergency management spokesman. "What the actual cause of the smell is, we really don't know."

There were conflicting accounts as to its nature. A police officer who had thrown out her French vanilla coffee earlier compared it to that. Two diplomats from the [Netherlands](#) disagreed, politely. Rieneke Buisman said it smelled like roasted peanuts. Her friend Joris Geeven said it reminded him of a Dutch cake called peperkoek, though he could not describe that smell.