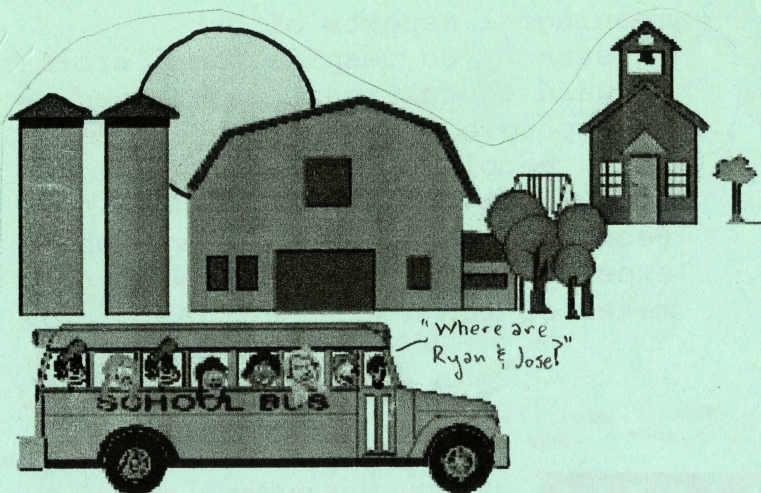


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# A Look at a Different Life

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Chris Kirkland  
University of Redlands



## Foreword

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I created this zine with a sort of *day in the life* theme, to borrow the phrase. The most interesting things in life are often overlooked or forgotten. People's day to day experiences are often quite rich in knowledge and understanding of this complex and often bewildering world.

Experiences of sometime no particular importance, in the immediate perspective, can end up being the most memorable and meaningful aspects of our existence. So despite these stories awkward foundations, understand that people everywhere are just that, people. Like any other individual you will ever meet. People, with experience, valuable experiences, for life is what one makes of it.

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Due to some non-traditional zine making this material may be inappropriate for young children. The following stories contain: bad language, drug content, and alcohol consumption. For those of you, who don't care, enjoy.

**PARENTAL  
ADVISORY  
EXPLICIT CONTENT**



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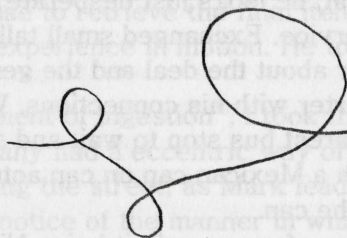
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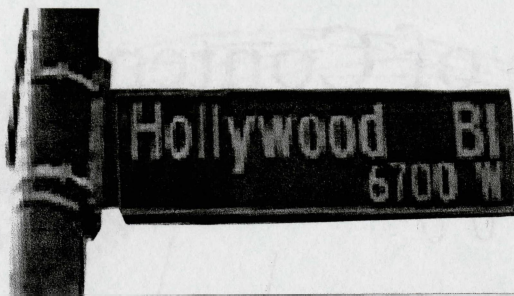
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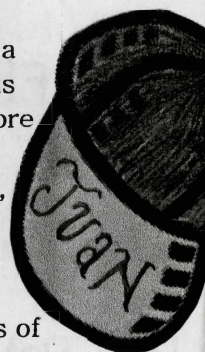
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It was a Sunday, as I recall, it was bright and quite warm too, the haze settling over the urban sprawl in the early afternoon. Us two comrades strolled along the main boulevard in the land of the stars, with a shrewd business mindset as to prepare ourselves for this risky endeavor. That day was a particular one, we had come an hour or so north, from our somewhere sheltered environment in Orange County, we walk the street searching for someone with a certain item they were looking to acquire was something we are not quite accustomed to. Finally, walking passed a rough and grungy looking character whom was wearing a black baseball cap with *Juan* stitched onto the front of it, we asked him the usual, "Tienes mota?", and "know where I can find some bud." Only this fellow was different, something that one could pick up on from right off the bat, he looks just desperate enough to be of some service. Exchanged small talk, and inquiry chatter about the deal and the gentleman went off to barter with his connections. We took a seat at the nearest bus stop to wait and see if this white guy with a Mexican cap on can actually score what he says he can.

The two of us, namely it being Nick and I, my names James, sat discussing the gravity and uncertainty of our present situation. Remarking primarily on the new business partner, and the mutual lack of trust shared by the both of us, this of course just one negative byproducts of these kinds of dealings. Ultimately we decided that until future events that could convince us otherwise, we would give the guy a chance. Shortly there after, he



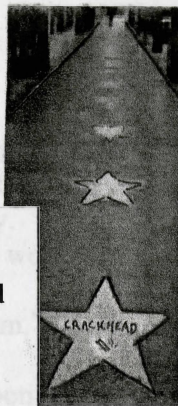


returned to inform us that he and his colleagues temporarily have no access to the product in question. No big problem just part of the game, and with open mouths about to say, "Thanks, but no thank, or so long," our associate instead made a different proposal. Proceeding to offer us another local product which he assured us was of great quality and popularity in this unfamiliar territory. "Some rocks, euphoric ones," he suggested them to us, "Never know, they may just tickle your fancy."

Both of us were intrigued at the mentioning of these potently powerful rocks, Nick being more easily persuaded than I was at the time. We had heard tales of such rocks but neither of us had ever experienced with such forbidden substances. Nevertheless, Nick quickly convinced me, Lord knowing curiousness is my weakness, so purchasing several small glossy looking rocks from our new connect, we next ventured off in search of a place to partake. So the three of us, friends set out to Mark's house to retrieve the final item that would throw the experience in motion. He told us he needed

an "implement of ingestion", I took this to mean a pipe, he really had a eccentric way of speaking.

Along the street, as Mark lead the way, Nick and I took notice of the manner in which their guide carried himself, so self assured, and without a care in his head, confidently. Winding up in a back alley off of the main boulevard he told us to wait while he went inside. We waited, deciding to have a smoke just as Mark disappeared behind a block wall out of our view, at the end of the alleyway. After having a cigarette with Nick, Mark quickly returned and produced from his pocket a small round tube, a pipe or a test tube but with both ends being open. Right



# CRACK!

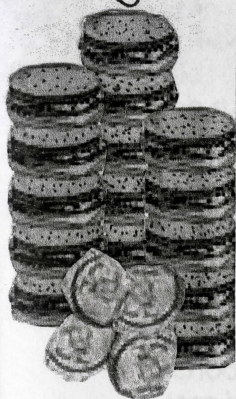
there in the alley, Mark demonstrated placing a small piece in the cylinder, and immediately grabbed a light and burned it. Strange the things that go through one's head while lowering themselves to a level they never imagined stooping to. Picture's from my life seemed to flow though my head like a river, when I experience it but still it didn't stop me, or Nick, I can even quite say why. Our seemingly innocent adventure to get bud and taken us down a much more difficult road to forget, so it is stuck in my memory.

The most unparalleled events began to take place after we had smoked, for instance. We passed a very young girl whom was crying, as he slipped by her, Mark who was quite drab in appearance, only said, "shuuuush, It's Okay," as he lightly patted her head, looking in her direction as he continuing on his way. The girl turned looking him straight in the eye with an expression of naive curiosity on her face, and abruptly stopped crying. Nick and I were almost stunned at this uniquely out of the ordinary display of reassurance, and at this crack heads gentle touch and despite his unsightly appearance.

By this time the three became quite hungry, as it was now late afternoon, the hill could be seen a golden brown if you look up the streets jutting off Hollywood and the sky stained the surrounding structures with orange and purple hues. Mark looked back to the two entranced friends and suggested, "What better place to eat on a Sunday!" At that, James and Nick became quite puzzled, although having no time to think of it as Mark accelerated through the crowd. Finally stopping outside McDonalds the two friends enquired, "Sunday, what are you talking about Mark," he enthusiastically replied, "It's 39 cent cheeseburger day, man! Come on we'll eat like kings."



Yum!!  
Burgers!



"Ahhh.??.. could I get a bunch of burgers, please," Mark asked the worker who stood there in a daze, not even paying attention completely.

"What ya want man," the adolescent worker behind the counter asked back.

"A bunch of burgers dude, a lot of 'em," Make told the kid again.

"How many you want man?!" he responded, shrugging and putting both hand down grabbing the edge of the counter in an irritated manner.

"Ahh? Like twenty...ahh cheeseburgers" he replied calmly.

"Okay dude that's gonna be \$8.43 man," the worker said not even bothering to look Mark in the eye while telling him.

"That's so much dude, I'll give you seven," he told him.

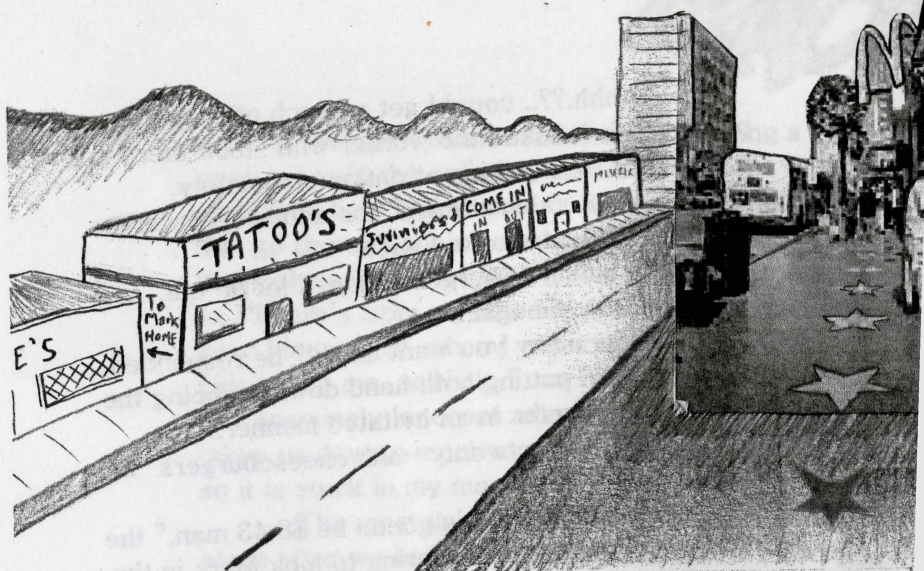
"Senor, you canna du that," said the confused worker.

"I got some money, Mark," I finally said intervening.

"Sweet, man, thanks!" Mark replied back to me, as the employee walked back to the burger warmer to get our food.

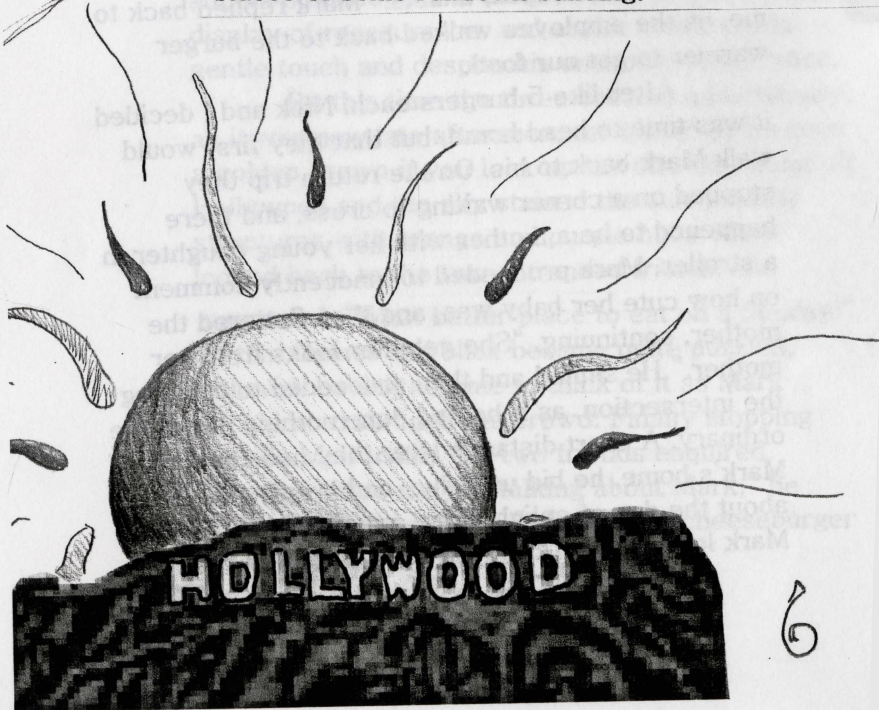
After like 5 burgers each, Nick and I decided it was time to head home, but that they first would walk Mark back to his. On the return trip they stopped on a corner waiting to cross, and there happened to be a mother with her young daughter in a stroller. Mark proceeded to innocently comment on how cute her baby was, and then flattered the mother, continuing, "She gets her looks from her mother." He smiled and then proceeded to crossing the intersection, as if he had done nothing out of the ordinary. A short distance later they had come to Mark's home, he bid us a due, and briefly talked about the day of enlightening experiences. Finally Mark looked at us seriously and explained, "As





corny as it sounds, appreciate your parents, because nothing matters if you don't have a roof over your head and a place to call home."

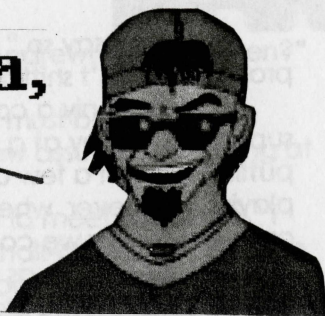
At that we said good-bye to our new friend Mark, we turned walking away as he knelt down and crawled into his small cardboard house wedged between a cinderblock wall and the crumbling stucco of some rundown building.





# The Shredmiester

**Hakuna Matata,  
dude!**



Well I guess things must have picked up the first time I met him. It was late May as I remember, but being quite sloshed at the time surely did not aid my memory. Jose and I drove to his house as the sun was setting which always threw purple hews all though the sky, typical of most summer evenings. I knew Jose from school, he was this pudgy temperamental Mexican guy, and I think he was illegal too. Anyway, I met 'cause we played drums together in the school band. Jose knew this other guy from high school but I gather he had graduated a year or so before I transferred to the school my junior year. So here it was late May and Jose is just about out of there too. I really didn't know too much about who this character was even, apart from knowing how well he could play guitar, and hopefully he could jam with us.

"Are you sure he's the guy we need?" I questioned Jose, who had known him already for quite some time.

"Ya, man he's pretty good, you'll be surprised. He has played with a bunch of bands before, no one big but he's got some experience," Jose responded.

"But can he get the songs down in just a few....," I continued, and before I could finish Jose added.

"Trust me dude, I've seen him learn songs just before he goes on stage, and the time I saw him do that, he even busted an improv-solo at the end of the song," he assured me.

# Santa Ana High School

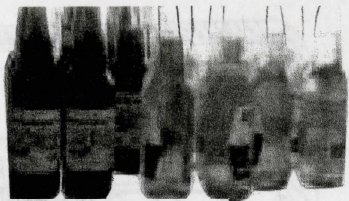
"If you say so," I replied, assuming he probably wasn't shitting me.

It was only a couple days before we were supposed to play at a show our high school was putting on with a few other bands. We were just kids playin' what ever, where ever we could, and out of or on what ever we could afford, using our garages, of course, as practice space. The year prior Jose and I had played the same show, it went off without a hitch. Jose was on drums and I stuck with bass, but pick up guitar occasionally too. It was actually a really awesome show, probably the biggest crowd we've ever played for. This years' show was supposed to be even better, seeing as how there were several more bands than the previous year, and plus we had friends in most of the other bands playing, bound to be a party, especially with all the different kids playing. Punks, metal guys, the emo group, ska kids, beatniks, and then all the random folks that just like to fuckin' play.

We pulled up to his house which was in the middle of the, lets say economically challenged, or somewhat run down section of Santa Ana. The homes in the area had lots of bared up windows, tall spiked fences, and you could usually hear the sound of dogs barking or police sirens wailing in the background. Walking up to his house, I immediately to note of all the revelry, and people, (not to mention the drinking) that was taking place in an open garage, still several houses away as we jaunted down the sidewalk. Jose waltzed right in, and so I assumed he was close enough with what's-his-face, his friend's family to just go ahead and do so. Most Hispanic families treat friends like this, and as we walked in someone took notice turning to yell, "Jose, how are you doin' man? I was wondering when the hell you were going to show your ugly Mexican face!"



"You guys  
wanna beer?"



"Shut your mouth, Andrew! How ya been?"  
Jose answered.

"Not bad! Ohh, this must be the kid you were talking about." Andrew assumed gesturing at me.

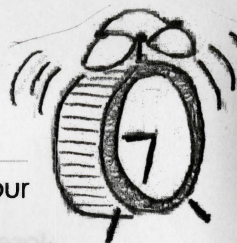
"Ya, I'm Ryan. Nice to meet you dude," I replied, not wanting some half-baked introduction from Jose. "I have heard you rip at guitar, man," I continued.

"Ya, if that's what you want to say, I can play, sure," he replied. "But anyway enough about music right now. You guys wanna beer? Let me introduce you to everyone Ryan," he enthusiastically told me.

We all grabbed a beer and then I proceeded to meet his entire family; brothers, sisters, parents and even an uncle or two all of them being really friendly.

After mingling about and talking with everyone for a while and a few beers later, we were all warmed up and ready to teach Andrew all the tunes. As we started to run through all the songs, and I realized Jose wasn't joking, Andrew *could* really play guitar. He learned all his parts in a matter of minutes, and even got the arrangements down too, he was like a prodigy or something. Overall he seemed to be a nice guy, kinda weird and we hit things right off, in addition to instantly clicking musically. He kept on repeating, "*Hakuna Matata*" being completely tanked by this time; funny just like the rest of us. And he kept on saying, "I'm the Shredmiester, dude, Ahhgg.. I am

Shredmiester!!" And I'm like, "Ya, man.. you're the shredmiester.. uh..huh, right..You corny fucker. " Yes, not 'til later, as in two days later when we were to play the biggest show of our lives, up until that point, did I understand what the hell he was talking about.



It was that Friday, two days following our initial practice with Andrew.

"Shit," I cursed. I woke up late, glancing at my clock which read 9:34. "Ohhh...well, I didn't feel like going to school today anyway," I grumbled to myself while rolling out of bed.

I guess I can make an exception today; we are playing the Battle of the Bands today, pretty sorry excuse, but an excuse nonetheless. Three o'clock that's when the show started so there was a bit of time to round everyone up, and run through the set of songs one more time, just so Andrew can get all the changes right. He was so drunk last time hopefully he'll even remember them. I threw on some clothes, I think it might have been the same thing I had worn the day before, but I was like whatever, no matter. Grabbing some Pop-Tarts from a cupboard and then picking up the phone off the kitchen counter, I gave Jose a ring.

"Bueno!?" he answered in Spanish.

"Hey, what's up dude," I muttered.

"Ryan, hey you ready for this afternoon," he asked in an excited manner.

"Ya, for sure, but we should probably get together and run through all the songs one more time. Sound good?" I asked.

"Good idea, that way Andrew can hear and go through all the songs so he'll definitely know them," he agreed.

"Can we jam at your house?" I asked

"Ya, my parents are gone, so we can make as much noise as we want," Jose responded. "I'll call Andrew and tell him to head over."

"Okay, I'll be over in just a few minutes, I just have to finish my breakfast and throw all my gear in my car." I replied with half a mouthful of what was now clearly stale Pop-Tart. In this hung-over disposition, I hadn't noticed the box's well over due expiration date, but it didn't taste all that bad, just kinda crusty.





"Oversized hunk-of-shit,



"Alright man.... see ya," he said as he hung up.

"Laattee," I mumbled. Munching down the last few bites of breakfast, I grabbed my bass, and then my oversized amp and took them out to my car. It really was an oversized hunk of shit, I could hardly even lift it by myself, and it wasn't even all that loud. With that I was off to jam at Jose's.

I pulled up to his house a few minutes later, which was actually only a few blocks from the school, thinking about how ironic that I'm here and not there. His house was a sort of small place with another residence joined on next to it, with a chain link fence all around the front yard. As I hopped out of my car, Jose immediately ran out the front door to open the gate for me, and said, somewhat panicked, "I can't get a hold of Andrew! His family said he never came home last night." He continued.

"Shit, man, what are we going to do without a guitar player?!" I questioned. "I though you said we could count on him!" I continued.

"We can, don't worry," he assured me.

"Well, do you know where we can find him?" I asked.

"That fucker could be anywhere for all we know, but I know a few places he might be. Let's go!" he stated, while walking towards his car. "He might have stayed over at his girlfriend Chelsea's house, or maybe some other friend's... Hell he could be passed out in some random person's backyard who had a party last night for all we know!"

We jumped in his car, a beat-up old blue Buick station wagon, and he fired it up and then blasting some Misfits for the ride over to Chelsea's, or Andrew's girlfriend as I knew her.

"Let's check  
Guitar Center!"



to Chelsea. Actually it was the first time I met her. She was a cute innocent looking young lady who looked about twenty I'd guess, and she told us she hadn't talked to Andrew since the day before. It seemed kind of funny that Andrew had a girlfriend like that. He wasn't really the innocent type, more of a drunk-ass in my opinion, not the kind of person she seemed to be, but opposites do attract. We really couldn't find him anywhere, at his house, his work, his girlfriend, and we even went to check at his favorite places, or so Jose said, Guitar Center and he wasn't there either. It was about 1:30 by this time so we had no where left to go except back to Jose's house, so we went.

"Hey, why the hell aren't you at school anyway?" Jose questioned with a grin on his face.

"Well, I didn't really feel good so I couldn't go," I replied with a big smirk on my face.

"Right....," he said slowly.

"What's your excuse gonna be?" I asked, "Something along the line of, Immigration almost caught you so you couldn't come to school today." I messed with him.

"Hey shut the fuck up, cracker! You've always gotta bring that shit up, don't you! He yelled at me, with a bitter look on his face.

"Just kidding dude, sorry," I mildly apologized. "Shit, I hope they'll let us play still. Since both of aren't there I mean."

"They better man, and if we can't find the stupid fuckin' 'shredmiester' soon, were screwed anyway!" He answered.

Several hours later, we had looked all over the city for him and still to no avail. We had talked

Where is oo,  
that guy?

12







Arriving at his house, I asked, "What should we do man?" Jose didn't immediately respond, and I could easily tell he was more pissed off than anything else by this time.

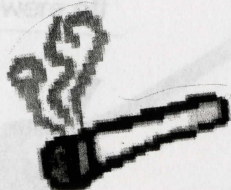
"That fuckin' flake, what the hell!?! He knew the show was today, where is he?!" he yelled as he slammed the car door and then leaned up against it, crossing his arms. "I don't know what to do," he finally responded.

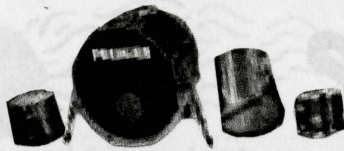
"Well we should do the only thing we can do, smoke this doobie and then get all our shit together. Head to the show and hope that we find him before we have to go on," I suggested.

"Ya...I guess so," Jose hesitantly agreed. "Light that thing up, man. I'm tired of worrying about where the hell Andrew is. We should just kick his ass when we see him. All the trouble he's causing, holy shit dude."

My head was just now starting to throb from the previous evening. Too much 100 proof Vodka always seemed to leave me in shambles the next day. This splif will fix me up. Funny, though, I never seemed to feel sick after drinking until much later on the days following my nights of bingeing. Come to think of it, I couldn't even remember much of what happened yesterday. Oh well, I must have had fun partying.

I sparked it, and we smoked right there in front of his house, one of the only advantages of living in a neighborhood like Jose's, the only risk was having some *cholo* or gang-banger come up and wanna puff which isn't even really a problem. He actually put on some Marley, and blasted it on his car system for the smoke, something rare for a punk kid like Jose. At that we both walked up his driveway and into his house to load all his drums, and then head to the show.





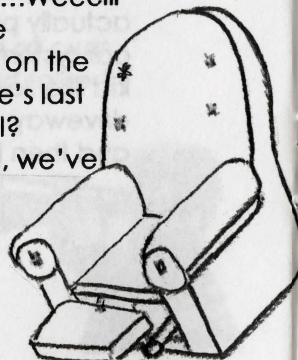
So we started to tear down and pack-up all of Jose's drum equipment, and continued to make trips back and forth from the house to his car, in a dazed stagger after the joint we had just blazed up. Finally filling his back seat with as many drums, stands, and cymbals as possible, we decided to kick back for a little while in his living room before venturing off to the show, minus a guitar player of course. Both of us had become really concerned, and worried about Andrew by this point, and now that we were only slightly incapacitated it gave us a whole new perspective on the situation.

"Where do you think he would be dude?" I asked Jose for probably the hundredth time, quite relaxed about the issue, now leaning back in a Lazy-Boy.

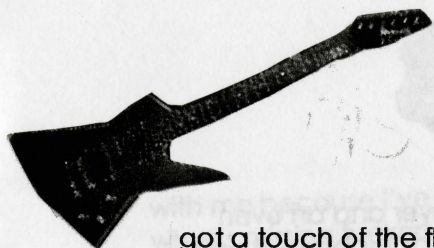
"It's getting to be the eleventh hour, and well we still can't find his negligent ass!" Jose grumbled. Typical, you would never see Jose get very anxious or worried about much if anything, even missing people. He would just get all pissed off and moody if shit went wrong.

I didn't even answer back. I didn't know whether I was too stoned, hung-over, or just too plain lazy to even give a shit now. "Jose, we're fucked... How the hell can we play if we can't find Andrew and if we go ahead and play without him? It will sound like shit." I started to go off just as Jose's phone rang.

"Hello," he calmly answered. "Ohh, hey, what's up... Okay fourth... around 3... sounds good we'll try to be there... What do I mean try... Weee!!! see our guitar player is kinda, missing." he explained, as I suddenly heard the voice on the other end get noticeably louder with Jose's last remark. "Why aren't Ryan and I at school? uh... we both don't.. uh.. feel good, ya, we've







got a touch of the flu..? But anyway, "Ya, Ya were doing what we can to find Andrew," he continued. "Yes, I checked his house, asshole."

From the conversation, I already knew who was on the phone. It was Mr. Hill and given the fact the two knew each other, they always talked however they felt to one another, or talked shit, you might say. See Mr. Hill was still a young guy only late 20's maybe, and he was in charge of organizing the Battle of the Bands, as he was a teacher in the Music Department. Exactly what he was telling Jose, I couldn't quite make out.

"Alright, we'll be there anyways in an hour or so. Okay...See ya Mr.Hill!" he finished. "He said were fourth up, and we'll be on at like 3 o'clock. He was also saying how that was usual of that 'lackadaisical' bastard, Andrew," he informed me.

"Wait. Mr. Hill knows, Andrew." I asked him, somewhat astonished.

"Ya, for one thing he went to that school before you did man, and second why do you think Hill is letting us play for a fuckin' *high school* battle of the bands? Andrew has been out of that school for like a year or two now," he remarked.

"Oh true I never thought about it," I replied. "I just thought like anyone could play as long as one guy in the band was in school."

"We should probably get out of here and down to the show, it's a little past two," he suggested.

"Ya, I guess that is all we can do, since we can't find Andrew," I agreed.

Walking out of Jose's room and then through the front door, I started to feel even more hung over than I had before. *I'm just getting dehydrated*, I thought. We both hopped in our cars and were off



to the show with no guitar player and an even lesser idea of where he might actually be. It only took a couple of minutes to get to school from Jose's house; it was a short little jaunt.

Arriving at school, and pulling our cars up to the main auditorium so we could unload all the gear, and at the same time I saw a most surprising sight. It was Andrew standing outside the back entrance to the building, with his guitar case leaning up against the wall, in the same manner that he was. Both Jose and I saw him and jumped out of our cars and ran over to him within a second's time.

"Where the hell have you been all day," I demanded.

"Me! What the fuck dude, I was at your house," he yelled back in my face. With that, a flood of old but unrecalled memories came to me from the previous night. Images and blurs of a party at a friend's house, vague recollections of being driven and then stumbling into my house nearly blacking out before I could crash on my bed. It all seemed like so long ago, even though I had just realized it was only a number of hours previous.

"Wait, what, at my house!" I questioned, now not completely doubting what he was forcing me to remember.

"I drove you home in your own fuckin' car, Ryan, I'm not surprised you can't remember with how fucked up you were, you drunk ass," Andrew told me. "I wasn't nearly as drunk as you were, so I took it upon myself to get your sorry ass home. Then you fuckin' take off this morning without even waking me up, you even told me I could just sleep out in the den in your garage. Now you're all upset







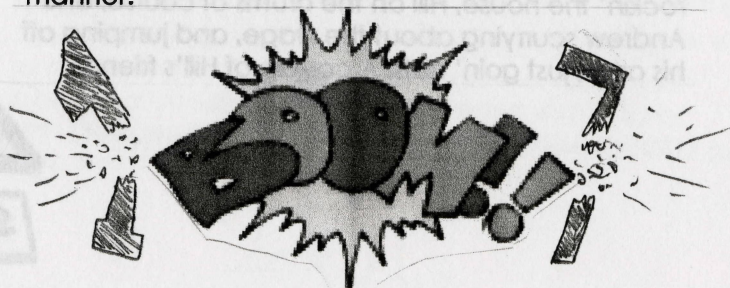
with me because I've been missing! It's your brain what's missing fucker! I had to walk all the way to my house just to get my guitar, so I could be here!" He yelled at me with a stern or pissed off, rather, expression on his face, as he proceeded to shove me back nearly knocking me over, my head still partially spinning from last night's memory loss.

We both then simultaneously called one another "fucker!", and jumped at each other. He hit me a few times in the face, and then I tackled him, rolling around being punched and also beating him in the head in return. I could hear Jose yelling at us to stop before things got out of hand, but it had gone too far already. We kept on fighting. Jose couldn't pull us apart, despite his desperate attempts. I saw Jose turn his head to look at something and after that take off running towards the auditorium.

The school security guard saw us fighting and immediately rushed over to put a swift end to our brawl. His name was Albert or something like that, but everyone just called him Fat Al, even though he was more stocky than fat.

"What's wrong with you two?" he questioned, and then grabbed us both by the arm. "You crazy kids, always fighting over stupid shit," he continued, looking at both of us somewhat blooded up, quite disheveled, and not saying a word. "Ahh. Andrew. I didn't think I'd ever see your face around here ever again, especially after our last run-in," Fat Al said grimacing at Andrew.

"Uhhh. I was just... here to play guitar... tonight," Andrew explained, in a stuttered broken manner.



"Well not anymore, son! You're not even in this school anymore, so get your ass out of here!" he replied, letting go Andrew and slightly shoving him towards the front gate. Andrew stumbled then slowly walked away, and looked back only to reveal a smile and a quick laugh as he went away, but he wasn't that easily persuaded not to play in a show.

"And for you little-man lets go talk to the Student Relations Office and sort this out.

"Ah, shit, please Fatty, we have to play a show," I pleaded, glancing back and seeing

Andrew come running back through the gates and into the backdoor of the auditorium.

"Too bad Ryan, you gotta learn not to be a dumbass sometime. And don't call me fatty," he told me as he dragged me by the arm from outside the main hall, where I could now hear the first band starting in a faint rumble, to the Office.

After a long chat with the principle, it was agreed that the issue would be thought over and decided upon on Monday, since by this time it was late Friday afternoon. So I was free to go, well at least kinda, except they had already decided that not playing in the show would be the first part of my punishment. With that, I left the office, taking off into a sprint as soon as the door shut behind me, and running back toward the auditorium which conveniently was just down the hall from where I was. As I ran through the front door of the auditorium, I stopped and immediately saw non other than Andrew up on stage with Mr. Hill's band, "Holy Guacamole". The four of them were really rockin' the house, Hill on the drums of course, and Andrew scurrying about the stage, and jumping off his amp, just goin' nuts. A couple of Hill's friends





played rhythm guitar, and another guy on bass. A small crowd had built up in front of the stage by this time, as I started to slowly walk down to the front, casually looking to see if Jose was around. I spotted him up in the crowd, just as I saw some chick throw her bra up onto the stage right where Andrew was knelt down doing playing the main solo on there last song. Finally reaching Jose in the crowd, I stood there, as we glanced at each other with expressions of disbelief evident upon our faces.

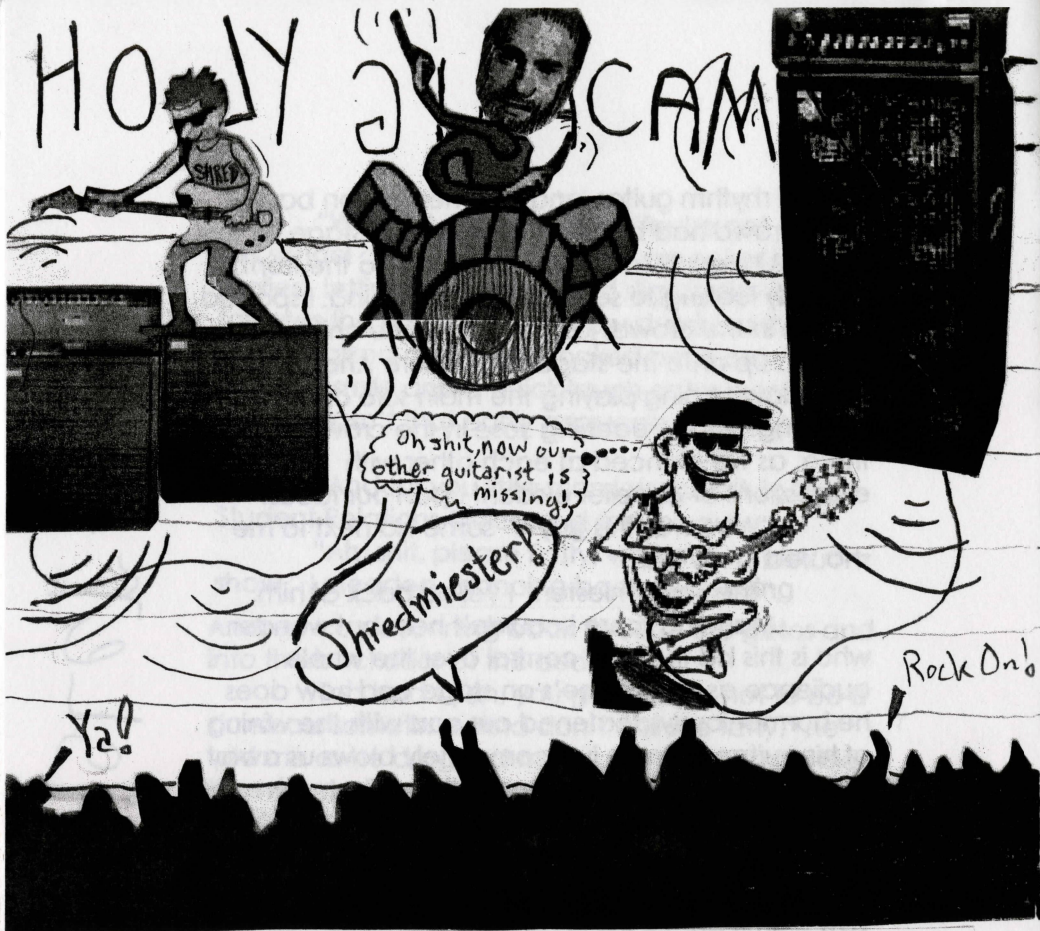
"Who was this guy?!" some kid next to me shouted in my ear.

"The Shredmiester!" I yelled back at him.

Standing there I couldn't help but wonder who is this kid that has control over the whole audience as soon as he's on stage and how does he harmoniously deafened our ears with the wining of his guitar. Then he just completely blows us away with the way he makes the girls throw themselves at him. Holy shit it's just one of those shows you'll always remember, even though we never got to play.

Well I nearly got expelled for the little "fighting and ditching school" incident. The three of us, still play parties. He shreds it up doing his crazy solos that make girls go more nuts than even him, and we just get wasted, doin' the scene. Even though we didn't get to play that day, all of us look back at it with a positive attitude for some reason; especially our fight. I wasn't like a normal brawl, cause as soon as it was over neither of us were even upset, even though I almost got fucked for it, it didn't really phase me to much, I always like blame it on that damn Pop-Tart, but whatever.

Shredmiester

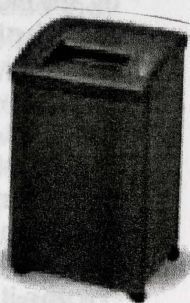


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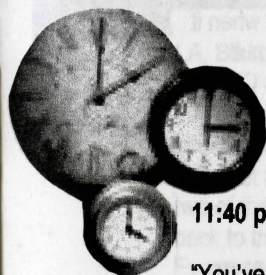
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# Time Flies

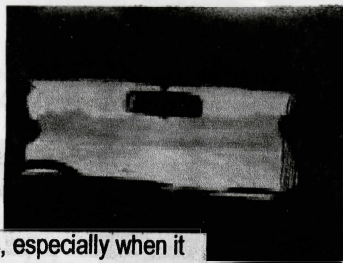


11:40 pm

"Okay Chuck, just chill out for a second," Blake pleaded, "You've had a lot to drink tonight, don't do anything fuckin' stupid!"

"I've had enough of all of you tonight, so don't make me do anything stupid, fool," Chuck threatened, as he waved a knife that only moments earlier he had pulled from a kitchen drawer. Everyone in the cabin was not only in shock but were paralyzed with uncertainty and fear at the sight of Chuck, this drunk, brandishing the large knife. All who were present knew him fairly well, having talked or hung out with him at least once or twice around campus, despite his non-student status at the school. From a first impression, one would think him to be most stable and level-headed guy around, but now with everyone in this state of shock, it was obvious to see otherwise. All around the living room it was dead quiet, with the stench of flat-warm beer soaking the air and most of the floor as well.

Blake stood only several feet from Chuck. Blake's mind raced laps through his head as he thought about what would transpire in the next few minutes, and he couldn't seem to take his immediate attention off the knife that was shaking in Chuck's hand. At the same time, he couldn't help but think how the party had taken such a drastic turn from just a few hours earlier. The night wasn't supposed to have been this way; it wasn't turning out fun at all. The dozen or so friends present only wanted to have a sort of a low key kick back shindig before a big day of skiing, but it now appeared their intentions had no part in the current dilemma. Blake was sure that the keg in the corner was a decisive factor that had spun the evening into a near disaster. Not to mention that rat bastard Paul, who had set the whole thing in motion by ripping off Chuck for something like \$1500 bucks, it was like a 1/4lb of ganja he jacked him for. I could happen to anyone, it's just a deal gone wrong, and someone always comes away screwed and the other one is simply the winner. It was his own fault anyway, that's just bound to happen when you involved in business of that nature, and plus Chuck never took anything lightly when it pertained to his money. One time I say him get totally pissed cause some guy shorted him like five bucks on a few eights of



shrooms. Chuck always seemed to take chances, especially when it came to trusting himself and other people. That bastard had put everyone there in jeopardy when he decided to double cross Chuck but he was long gone by now, that was at least an a few hours ago.

"I'm gonna start cuttin', Blake. you better give me the fuckin' keys!" Chuck began threatening.

11:50pm

It was quite a dark cool, and seemingly calm night as my girlfriend and I, as well as another couple in the back, headed up the steep mountain road to the small ski haven of Big Bear, to the party which was sure to be in full swing. All four of us have been anticipating this party all week; it will hopefully be "the" party of the semester, or at least the month. We had a full load of people that night, I was the one driving and my girlfriend Christine was there, my bud Jeff and his girl Carlita are in the back.

"James? Was it like bring your own drinks or is there going to be some there." Geoff inquired.

"Chuck and Maryanne said they were probably going to get a keg and just have everyone pitch in a little." I explained.



"Ring," "Oh, my cell, Heello," I answered.

"James?! Hey, listen, you guys better get up here quick things just went fuckin ape shit and Chuck flipped out and then took off." Blake was yelling on the other line in an obvious panicked manner.

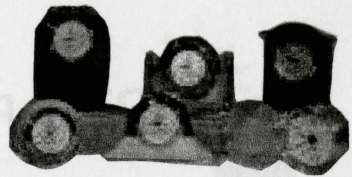
"Wait, what happened?" I questioned.

"Ya, man he pulled a knife out on everyone and was waving it at me and Maryanne mainly, but we're all just really freaked out," Blake continued. "Everyone's okay, but

Then in a split second, I heard Christine scream, "James watch out!" I dropped the phone just in time to swerve out of the way of an oncoming car that had veered into my lane. Fortunately for us, there was a shoulder on this part of the road. We flew on to the side of the road and violently screeched to a halt. All this just in time to turn and see a white camero lose control and slam straight through the guard rail and almost instantly disappear over the cliff-side.





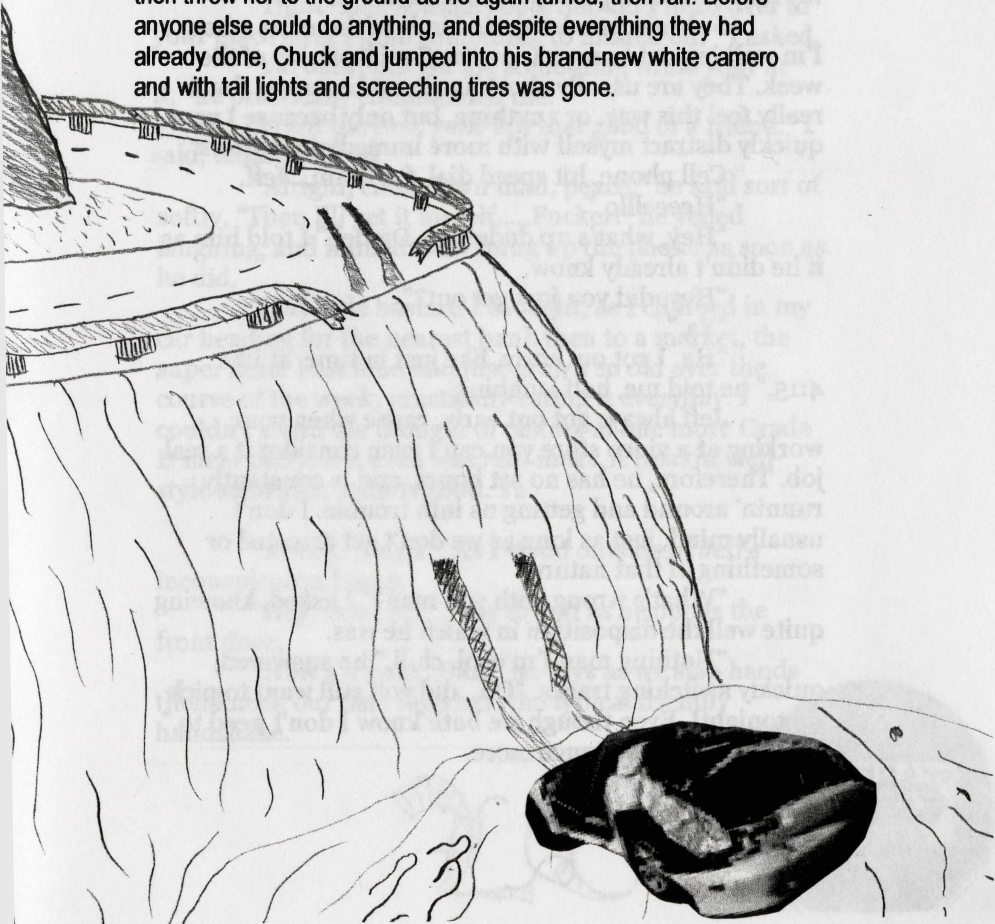


11:45pm

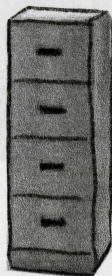
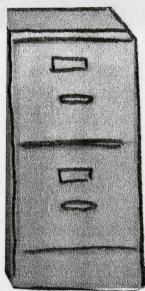
"For the last time give me the key, I just want to go back to LA, Blake come on, give 'em to me damn it!" Chuck yelled in a rage.

Without giving things another consideration, Blake rushed Chuck and grabbed the knife from his hand, and consequently knocked the both of them to the ground. Blake kept his grip on the knife but the car keys went flying and landed a few feet in back of the two of them. Chuck jumped up and grabbed the keys nearly tumbling back to the ground in his drunken stupor, and barreled out the door. Everyone in the cabin was again in hysterics, yelling at Chuck to stop before he hurts someone or himself, and running after him, trying to intervene.

At this point Maryanne jumped over Blake and out the door catching up to and grabbing Chuck by the collar, trying to pull him to the ground. Instead he swung around and taking a good hold of her then threw her to the ground as he again turned, then ran. Before anyone else could do anything, and despite everything they had already done, Chuck and jumped into his brand-new white camero and with tail lights and screeching tires was gone.



# Pigs, Pot, and Problems



Ahh... Finally, my favorite time, well, pretty much ever, Friday afternoon, five o'clock. I've got an entire weekend ahead, with nothing to do but party and kickback in preparation for another week of the grind. Sometimes I just can't believe I don't just quit, with all the bullshit that goes on here, and the endless piles of documents that are constantly building up. Copying, stapling, filing, oh. whoopes. Paper cut. Over and over 'til my hand are all taped up to cover 'em all.

I always ponder these kinds of thoughts when I'm walking out to my car on the final workday of the week. They are usually short lived, not because I don't really feel this way, or anything, but only because I very quickly distract myself with more immediate matters.

Cell phone, hit speed dial, for umm...Jeff.

"Heeeelloo."

"Hey, what's up dude? It's Daniel," I told him as if he didn't already know.

"Hey, did you just get out?"

"Ya."

"Ha, I got out early, like just in time, at like 4:15," he told me, half laughing.

Jeff always got out early, cause when your working at a video store you can't even consider it a real job. Therefore, he has no set hours, and is constantly runnin' around and getting us into trouble. I don't usually mind, just as long as we don't get arrested or something of that nature.

"What's wrong with you man?" I asked, knowing quite well the disposition in which he was.

"Nothing man I'm cool, chill," he answered, quickly switching tracks. "Oh.. did you still want to pick up tonight!, Even though we both know I don't need to." he started to laugh once more.



"Of course man, it's Friday isn't it? You didn't smoke yourself that stupid, did you?" I said, poking fun at him half seriously.

"Uhh, no."

"Good, was your buddy at work today." I questioned.

"Yep,"

"Did your get directions to his place?" I continued.

"Ya, he said we could come over at like 6. He's gotta to go pick it all up first and he told me he was getting off at like 4:45," he explained. "There might be a lot of people over there. Last time I bought off him, like 20+ people were over blazin', chillin', it's just a cool group of friends."

"Tight man, sounds good. Should I head over to your place after I grab something to munch on?" I asked.

"Ya, okay, but get me something while your at it," he practically commanded me.

"What the hell, your not that good of a friend." I said, telling him off.

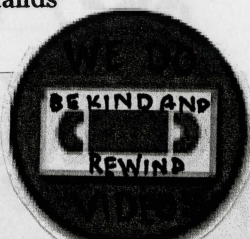
"Alright, calm down man, peace," he said sort of softly, "Then I'll get it myself.....Fucker!" he yelled laughing, and immediately hung up the phone as soon as he did.

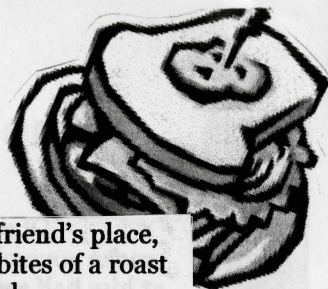
That little bastard I thought, as I climbed in my car heading for the nearest bank then to a market, the super kind. Fast food had just grown so old over the course of the week, practically eating it everyday. I couldn't stand the thought of tasting of one more Grade D meat patty, if it even was *real* meat. A freakin' deli-style sandwich sounds good. Ya.

"Knock, Knock." As I stood outside of Jeff's inconspicuous home.

"Hey, what up," I say to Jeff as he opens the front door.

"How's it goin', Dan," he says as we slap hands then knock our fists together, the typical friendly handshake.





"You ready to cruise over to your friend's place, dude? Ahum..." I ask stuffing the last few bites of a roast beef sandwich in my mouth. Good sandwich.

"Ya I'm ready! Ohh... wait hold on let me grab all my shit," he replied, as I waited outside being in somewhat of a hurry to get to the connection's house.

"Let's skedaddle fool," Jeff said in his usual fashion, as I followed suit.

"You wanna drive?"

"Sure, since I've been there once before I think I can make it without directions, but in this impaired and cloudy state, I just might need some navigation," he explained, excusing himself in case he got us lost on the way.

"Where exactly is his place?" I asked, as we climbed into his clunker of a 80's coupe, Buick to be precise.

"It's in a complex across from the mall."

"Which one?"

"South Coast, it's right next to it," he continued to explain.

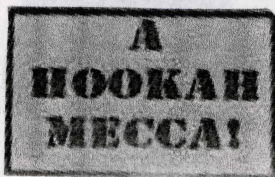
Seemingly moments later we were walking down winding cement paths in search for the correct apartment. Tall pine trees and bushes lined our way through the development. I could already smell a stank yet pleasantly familiar stench in the air. We must be going the right way.

"What unit are they in?" I asked Jeff.

"Uhh...159, It should be in that building over there." He pointed at building straight in front of us. "His place is downstairs."

"ah.. Here we are, must be the place," I said now hearing the faint rumble of music and voices inside, and that same well-known smell was now more distinct.

The door opened a bit more with each rapping of Jeff's fist, the door already being somewhat ajar. As I did



twenty-six



a billow of smoke came pouring out the doorway, as someone appeared through the smoke.

"Come in my friends, you have arrived with good timing," the character told us both, extending a hand in greeting.

"Alex, what's happenin' man," Jeff greeted the red-squinty eyed welcomer, as we all walked into the apartment, finding many more people already there than was first apparent.

"The name's Daniel, man," I informed Alex, while slapping hands together and then knocking fists, the accustomed Cali handshake.

"How ya doin' dude, Jeff was tellin' me a bit about ya. So you like music and ganja aayyy," he asked.

"Ya, I told him you were into jamming, and guitar and stuff," Jeff stated.

"Yes, sir. I enjoy one as much as the other, and often at the same time," I responded.

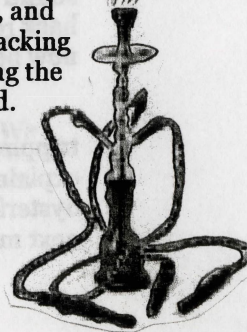
"Good man, good man...So how much you lookin' to pick up?" he continued on to the business at hand.

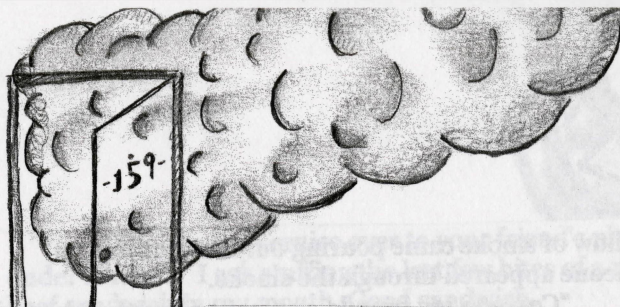
"Could I get an Eighter?"

"Just an 1/8, that's all, you da' boss maaann, this stuff's bomb, good shit, good shit, I'll go get that for ya," he assured me, turning and walking toward one of the back rooms. "You good, Jeff?" Alex yelled from the back room almost not being able to hear him over all the music and other people chattering.

"Ya man I'm all set, I've got plenty," Jeff replied.

At this point, we now took into consideration the many more people in the living room sitting around a large four-hose hookah which was atop a coffee table in the middle of them all. These folks were all friends one could easily tell, all whole of them laughing, joking, and passing the hookah hose, one of them constantly packing more buddah into the bowl, and then lighting, filling the blue acrylic chamber full with a grayish-white cloud. Ahh, the culprit of all that smoke that we had been





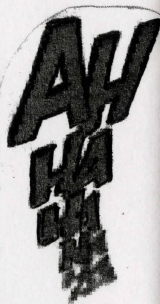
breathing since we came in the door. They all took a quick minute to acknowledge our presence with a mix of hi's, what's up, heys, and handshakes all around, as we quickly exchanged names with the lot of them. Next taking the only open seats, around the center piece, which was on the floor, and immediately a tube was handed off to us. Jeff and I looked at each other, then at the other two characters holding the other hoses, shrugged and proceeded to take a fat rip off of the Hookah. Just as the four of us were blowing out our own personal little cloud, Alex appeared from the back room holding a baggy, with lots little green nuggets all across the bottom. Tossing it to me, he quoted the cost and situation.

"That 'ill be fifty Mr. Dan. You got here just in time that's my last 1/8 of the few Oz.'s I got."

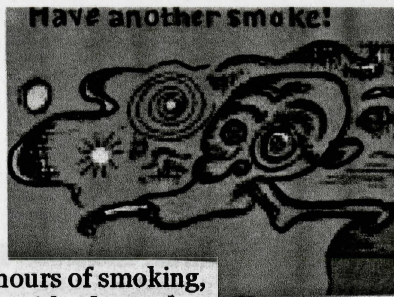
"Looks good," I responded, examining the contents for quantity and smelling to establish quality. "Thanks, man," I continued, passing the money and the hose to him, and stood to pack a fresh bowl of the dark greenish-purple herb covered with sporadic orange hairs, and setting my new sac down on the table. Next lighting it for the four, all being a gesture of friendly business, not to mention it's just good stoner ethics to do so.

The entire time I hadn't taken notice to all the details of my new environment, and now that my eye were becoming heavy and things were becoming more blurry and blissful, I started to look around. Paintings on the walls, a illuminated fish tank in the corner, and the sound of a guitar being played coming from the other back room, and a voice singing some soft melody, all this now being almost to strangely familiar.

"Wow, this shit's really kickin' my ass. I'm trippin' out to all the minute details around us," I stonily explained to Jeff who hardly took notice as he broke into hysterics at a joke from one in the bunch, realizing the next moment I hardly heard myself either.







After what seemed like several hours of smoking, endless conversation, and playing guitar with Alex and some other kid named Ian, who was the guy from the back room, and also Alex's roommate, it was time for me and Jeff to head out. We said our Laattees' and we were off like stony-baloney practically staggering out to the car, laughing the entire way.

"Sounds like a plan."

As we were driving away consciousness momentarily came back to me.

"Oh, shit dude," I panicked.

"What's wrong man?" Jeff said still laughing despite my state of alarm.

"I left my stash... On the table... Back at the apartment," I told him, having to actually think about each part of the sentence, which as soon as I got out sent both of us back into a laughing fit. We turned around a couple of blocks from the apartment to go back and retrieve what had been left behind, and passed a cop as we did so, not thinking to much about it, at least at the time. Parking again and walking up the same now recognizable path we had before I got a strange vibe, but dismissed it as nothing more than all the bud. Arriving at the apartment once again, the door was cracked and we just walked in. Everyone was still sitting round having the time of there lives.

"Hey guys, I just forgot to grab my baggy," I informed them.

"Cool dude, stay and hit another bowl if ya want," Ian suggested.

"Jeff," I said looking back at him seeing if he was opposed to the idea, as he shrugged.

"Sounds like a plan," I stated, opening my sac one last time, as we all heard someone at the door.

"Bang, Bang, Bang, Open up, police! Someone called complaining of the noise," a stern voice on the other side of the door yelled. But since the door had never closed it swung open with the hard knocking. We

"Stop you  
fuckin' stoners!"



all sat and stood dumbfounded for just a moment watching as the smoke billowed out of the front door and into the officer's face. A second later the apartment was in a complete frenzy, everyone grabbing their own baggy of greens and rushing the front door where the popo was standing with a look of shock upon his expression. The twenty plus people cramming and running out the entryway knocked the pig clean on his ass, the group of us rushing passed him, dispersing and looking for the quickest possible way to get the hell out of there.

In seconds, Jeff and I were back to the car, parked in the carport under an overhang. We jumped in, pulled out, and raced through the parking lot towards the main street.

"Holy shit, Dude, did you see how we fuckin' knock that cop over," I yelled not knowing whether to laugh or just sit there in disbelief.

"That was nuts, man. Everyone went ape shit, it happened so quick. I hope Al doesn't get arrested," Jeff responded, driving as fast as he could toward the exit of the complex, and breathing a sigh of relief when we got to the main street.

"At least I got my sac back," I said as we drove headed for the safe-haven that was Jeff's place.

"I guess we won't be chillin' over there anymore, huh," Jeff added.

The next day I gave Jeff a call to see what had happened to Alex.

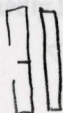
"Jeff, hey what's up, it's Daniel,"

"Waz' up," he said sounding like he had just woken up.

"So what happened to Alex last night? Did they arrest him or what?" I inquired, wanting to hear some closer to our little adventure.

"No, man, nothing too severe happened to him really," he replied.

"Ha, ha! I broke  
their pot smoking  
device!"





"What? How the? I mean?" I stuttered.

"I talked to Ian and he told me that because Al had sold all his stash and because we all took off so fast, that the only thing they had on him was a noise violation, and possession of paraphernalia. The worst part is that they took the hookah and gave him some tickets," he explained to me. "That cop was really pissed about being knocked the fuck over though, Ian told me, but since we were all gone by the time he could do anything, there's nothing the popo can do about it."

"That's fuckin' nuts dude. Lucky bastard. The hookah, though. That sucks." I responded.

"Ya, Ian said they took it outside and broke it to pieces right in front of them, and threw it in a dumpster," he continued.

"Damn, dude, I can't wait to get back to work Monday so something normal will happen. Until then, I just sit, play music and puff on the cheeba," I told him.

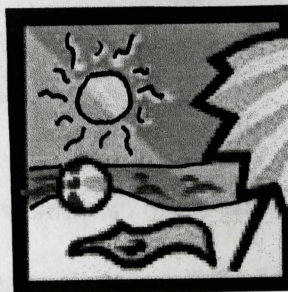
"Seriously, that was almost too much excitement for one weekend. I've got to take a bong rip. I'll call you back in a minute and maybe we can kick-it at the beach later. Sound cool?" he asked.

"Ya man, wanna meet down at Victoria beach at like, uhh.. 4:00," I questioned further.

"Sure dude, see ya then. Laattee!"

"Laaatttee."

"Those bastards  
broke the  
HOOKAH!"



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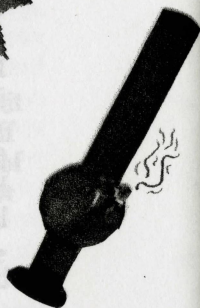
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