

## "Creative Survival in THE CITY WITH NO PITY"

Live or Die, laugh or cry. It's not that big of a decision. Making it happen is a whole 'nother story. I don't do "broke" very well and I have enough hustle to not have to do "broke".

I walked thru the Builders Emporium parking lot picking up discarded receipts until I found one worth my while. It was for a dozen drawer handles at \$4.59 a pop which adds up to \$55.08 or \$59.07 w/ TAX. I entered through the side door and worked my way to the hardware aisle. I found almost a full aisle of handles, hasps and hooks so I ended up spending way too long locating the exact handles I had a receipt for, matching the ID numbers. It took so long that an employee finally approached me and asked me if I needed help. Of course I said no but now, since I've been spotted I'd have to make this happen in two trips instead of one like I hoped. They had a stack of paperbags there in the aisle "for your shoplifting convenience" or some such crap, so I bagged the 12 handles up and walked to the back and stashed them behind some bags of peat moss. I'd return the next day to "return" the unneeded hardware for a quick \$60. bucks without them ever leaving the store. That will be fine for tomorrow, but what about today? Maybe I'll try the Glendale Galleria. There's always some way to make a few bucks wherever shits sold. Even at the most desperate of times there's some kind of scam to pull.

Then I remembered a petty scam I learned at my stint at the California Youth Homes in Inglewood. It was the lowest Rated Group Home in California and the only one that would take me in. Obviously they'd take anyone. I returned to the Building Emporium and boosted a short phillips head screwdriver and started walking down Sunset. I stopped at every phonebooth & payphone and locating the box along the conduit under each phone I opened it up and cut the red wire, then replaced the cover and moved on to the next phone. I covered 10 or 12 blocks and hit almost 25 phones, then taking the bus back to where I started I finished...

my "job." Here's the deal: Back then, when they had payphones, the coins you put in them would not drop into the money box until you hung up and broke the connection. But when you cut the red wire, which was the wire that controlled the money dropping into the box, the money wouldn't drop. It would just sit in the mechanism until you re-connected the red wire, at which time the money would drop into the coin slot. I don't know why it didn't drop into the box and I don't know who the hell figured this out but sometimes when you're really down and out a couple hours of devious behavior would put a few bucks in your pocket. Usually you'd only get 25¢, 50¢ or maybe a dollar from each phone but sometimes you'd catch a phone where someone's been calling long distance and, as long as they weren't using a calling card number, you'd get anywhere from 3 to 5 dollars. And that's right on time when you're broke and hungry! Now with 10 or 12 bucks in my pocket I caught the bus up to the BLVD, I first stopped at Yucca Liquors and bought a quart of Olde English, this is before they even sold 40 ozers, and walked the last block to Stephanos Pizza on Hollywood & Las Palmas, where I got a slice of pizza for a buck, so I ate and got a headchange for \$2.06. I even had money to get some more Aqua-NET Extra Super Hold. Got to get my hawk up after "returning" those drawer handles!

I swerve out of Stephanos and walk the block and a half to Don the Beachcombers. I climb the tree and go in thru a 2nd story window, and make my way to my "room". A couple of months earlier I found a room in the middle of the back building that had power! It also had no windows and a locking door. Perfect. I stole a hasp and padlock the next day so I could lock it up when I was gone and I lived there for several months. I only had a duffle bag full of clothes a leather jacket and a skateboard to my name, but it was nice to have a place to keep your shit. And having a widden, locking squat was really nice. I took noone there, because I knew...

that my Homeboys, Bobby, Shooter, midget, <sup>etc</sup> would fuck it off. whenever I was with anyone else and we landed at Don the Beachcombers I'd stay away from that room, but once while me & Bobby prowled around, he spotted that room w/ the padlock and he tried to kick it in! Luckily he was too drunk to work his feet so I managed to steer him away from there!

The next day I go "get paid" and I get a room at the Hollywood Hills Motel. Squats are fine, but I need a shower! Washing up at Burger King just isn't the same. I pay for 2 nights, spend the first night alone but the next day I go tell everyone I have a room and before long there's 10 or 15 punks all piled in there, drinking and fighting over crap. Luckily Dottie, the fat Black Manager chick, was punker friendly and would let us get away w/ murder as long as we didn't harass the other guests and stayed out of sight. She knew we were all homeless and hopeless. And we very rarely broke anything. At least on purpose.

The Hollywood Hills Motel was where I first started making fake acid. I used a ruler (actually just a book edge at first) and my little swiss army knife to fake perforations. I'd measure a 2 1/2" square of thick paper and mark out 10 hits x 10 hits, - 1/4" wide - and end up with a perfectly fake sheet of blotter acid. I made so much of that shit that I ran into other kids on the Boulevard trying to sell it to me! City Baby acid? That was mine. Fake as Hell! Here's how I started making that batch: Me & Sick Boy were skatin' the BLVD. and ran into some gay okie at Tommy Burger on Hollywood and Wilcox. He wanted a couple of sheets of Acid and since it was almost midnight I got his number and told him I'd call him the next day. Me & Sick Boy landed at a squat below Sunset somewhere and ran into Sniffles who had a match in a ziplock that he said some guy dipped in Liquid LSD earlier. Perfect!

I told him we had a sucker on the line and I'd give him \$20. for that match. After we hustled that Okie of course. He gave it to me and while looking around the squat I found a flyer for some metal band and their logo was some crazy-looking baby in combat boots holding an UZI. The next day we took that flyer to a copy store on Sunset and had them shrink that picture of the "City Baby" til it would fit on a 2 1/2" square. I then had it printed 12 times per page on 4 different colors of thick paper. I had 4 or 5 pages of each color printed. I then borrowed some scissors, a pencil and a ruler and I marked and "perforated" two sheets of this fake-ass shit and put them in a ziplock baggie along with the acid-dipped match. I then called that stupid Okie and had him meet us at the Holiday Inn on Highland. We led him out the back door, into some apartments across the street and then into the laundry room. I pulled out the bag and showed him, telling him that my "connection" doesn't sell hits, only full sheets so he can't tear a hit off to try it, but "He dipped a match right in front of me for you to sample it." He sucked on the match and in about 45 minutes he started feeling it so he broke us off \$200..! That was a quick \$100. for me \$80. for Sick Boy and \$20. for Sniffles and the birth of City Baby Acid! I made alot of money on that stuff and so did alot of other people! That's why you only buy acid from people you know!

This all may sound like some real petty criminal crap but when you're a teenage punker in the early '80s Nothing was too petty as long as you could survive. Only the fags (and the girls) could go get picked up by a creep and turn a trick to make money. That wasn't an option for me so I had to figure out a different way to survive. Petty crime? No; creative survival. Punk gotta have Beer! (4.15. Another B Day in Prison! Yippee! :-)