

AUTOBIOGRAPHY NOTES 2015-'16

By Jennifer Gann

CHAPTER 3-THUG LIFE

"I tried to submit as my father said I should, but I was unable. I was like my mother. There was too much anger in me."

-Phoolan Devi (1963-2001) ¹

The word "thug" in English derives from the Hindi term for bandit or outlaw, a term which has been reappropriated by Black culture and hip-hop music as a term of empowerment. "Thug Life" is the life of the infiltrator, the life of the revolutionary, the life of resistance---a concept which was popularized by legendary gangsta rapper Tupac Shakur (R.I.P.)¹

Around the age of 10, i stole a pack of cigarettes from the Albertson's grocery store in my neighborhood. This was my first "crime", more a youthful indiscretion than a crime, probably motivated by observing my step-dad's habit of smoking Marlboro reds. Monkey see, monkey do! =·)

I was caught by the store employees, who called the police, and took a short ride in the back of a police car to my family's residence. i was scolded, spanked, and put on restriction--a grave injustice in my young innocent mind. This was my first step on the path of a thug life.

I would go on to commit more serious crimes throughout my teenage years. When i was 13, i ran away from the Awahnee Hills boy's ranch with another kid. We broke into and burglarized a couple of homes, a schoolhouse, and a convenience store as a means of survival, taking mostly food, liquor, and cigarettes. We were young and dumb and full of cum! =·)

We eventually got busted in Mariposa, California, and spent the next few months in Madera County juvenile detention. i would go on to spend alot of time in and out of Orange County Juvenile Hall for various mischief, such as public drunkenness and vandalism (graffiti), resisting arrest, etc.

When i was about 17 years old, i was charged with my first felony offense, after i smoked some PCP and apparently threw some girl's cat against a wall. i was sentenced to one year in juvenile detention. When i turned 18, i was discharged from juvenile custody and probation.

I was finally free! Or so i thought. i had become institutionalized and simply didn't know how to function as an adult. i never had a driver's license, owned a car, or held a steady job. Also, i had become a drug addict.

Three months after i gained my "freedom", i was arrested and charged for attempted robbery and assault with a deadly weapon. In March 1988, i was convicted and spent a year in Orange County Jail.

I was with two young comrades in my West O.C. neighborhood drinking beer and eating some burgers in front of a local Jack

in the Box restaraunt when we saw two Mexican dudes pull out a wad of cash."Let's rob those fools!",one of my homies said.Shit,i was down!

I found myself homeless and living on the streets a few times during my youth,running from the pigs.So i did what i had to do to hustle money and survive.i got away with alot of crimes.Once an older homie and i were threatened by a couple of older dudes who intended to rob my friend's mom,who was a dope-dealer. So my homeboy grabbed a 2x4 and began beating one of them in the face,throwing him down a flight of stairs,while i grabbed a steakknife and chased the other dude down the street yelling,"come on mother-fucker!" He jumped into a car and started to drive away,so i jumpedthrough the car window and stabbed him in the face a couple times.i don't know if he lived or died.

Of the estimated 1.6 million homeless and runaway Amerikan youth,as many as 40% are LGBTQ(Lesbian,Gay,Bisexual, Transgender,Queer),according to a 2006 report by the LGBTQ Task Force and the National Coalition for the Homeless.A similar study by the Williams Institute cited family rejection as the leading cause of the disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth.²

In 1989,i was running around the streets of Santa Barbara where i did some commercial burglaries,robbed a drugdealer,and stole a Mazda RX7 stick-shift.i didn't know how to drive and crashed into a parked car landing in someone's front yard where i abandoned the vehicle.i was just doing what the thugs do.

One day i was walking down State street when out of the blue i was solicited for sex by an older Black dude in a Cadillac,i was caught off guard and tempted by the prospect of making some quick money.in spite of my semi-thugness,i was already bi-curious and jumped at the opportunity to explore my feminine sexuality.Thus, i was introduced to the life of sex-workers and began my path toward womanhood.

I was on the run from the pigs in Orange County when i finally got busted in San Luis Obispo for contributing alcohol to a minor.Thus,my probation was revoked and i was sent to Chino State Prison.Now i was in the penitentiary,the "Big House",with some REAL thugs!Killers and dopedealers!It was "mandatory" program in this maximum-security University of Gangsters.Kill or be killed was the rule of thumb.

I was never an actual gangmember,but i grew up in a predominantly white racist neighborhood of West O.C.,around Skinheads and Surenos.i ran around with a few different cliques in my area,such as the Gestapo,Peni Death Squad,H.B. Hardcore, and H.B.Skins among others.There was also a couple of Mexican gangs in my area who i went to school with,West 13 and Southside Huntington Beach.

While i was in jail in 1988,i was approached for recruitment by the White Aryan Resistance(WAR),and in prison i eventually fell in with the Aryan Brotherhood(AB) at Folsom State Prison.This was mainly by force of circumstance and for my own survival as a young effeminate whiteboy.i just tried to get in where i fit in,and did alot of dirt for the "Brothers".

NOTES

1. http://mayamackrandilal.com/@femme_couteau.
2. Janet Mock, *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More*, (New York: Atria Paperback, 2014).