



Hi Again, DJC... X-Games are in Ventura!

Well hello, Darrell. I posted here about you, about us, once before ("Hi DJC, Remember This?"; April 3rd, 2018). It was a petite histoire of our wild trip down to Raggy Waters on a Greyhound bus, pretty long and probably quite boring to anyone who isn't us. Unsurprisingly, that post was never commented on or transcribed... hell, it was probably never even read! 😊 Now here's another one in that same vein.

So hey, it's been a long time, man. I just wanted to tell you, the X-Games were held in Ventura this year. Yep, second year in a row... incredible, right? Right there at the Fairgrounds, at the end of the Promenade. You and I walked and biked and skated that area dozens of times together, maybe hundreds without each other, so it's a place we knew well and one I'm sure you still have clear and fond memories of... and the frickin' X-GAMES was there! I mean, that's about the biggest event of our youth being held almost literally right in our own backyard. Can you imagine how it would've been if this had happened when we still lived there? Really, it would've been our teen wet dream come true, wouldn't it?

As I watched on TV, I couldn't help seeing you and me standing there next to the most massive obstacles imaginable (honestly, bigger than anything you and I could've imagined back in the 90's... if you took all the dirt from every jump we ever built in Ventura, it still wouldn't be enough to build just the landing for the first set on this 2024 course; bike jumps have gotten that huge!) That reminds me, do you remember how otherworldly enormous all the jumps in Palmdale looked to us when you came out to spend that last summer with me? I never did hit the biggest set of doubles there, but when I finally summoned up the balls to jump the second largest, I think we were both equally shocked. Remember how as soon as I landed, I dropped my bike and we slammed into each other for a giant celebratory hug? Anyway, so I was looking at that X-Games crowd on TV. today and I just saw US there, you know? You and me. It was 100% our type of thing, man. It just happened a few decades too late. 😊

Seeing such a big crowd down in that area brought me back to the day you and I went out for the grand re-opening of the pier after they rebuilt it — do you remember that? They had that sculpture that shot water up every time a wave passed underneath. And you saw that girl you'd been dating, Brianna (or was it Cara?), plus a few others you knew. It was so crowded, and I realized you were popular, lol! 😊

Anyway, our city still looks largely the same, bud. Maybe you've been there since I last saw you? But yeah, it's grown and morphed, gotten denser and more congested, yet it's still immediately recognizable as Ventura; certainly everything from the pier to the fairgrounds looks about the same, and things like the weather, the June Gloom making the morning overcast and chilly even as the rest of the country is stifled by a heat wave... some things just never change. It was sunny and clear by early afternoon, just how it always brightened up around mid-day when you and I would skate from your house on Joanne or ride the SCAT bus from my house on Ralston to hang at the beach all day.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, seeing our old stomping grounds on T.V. like that, seeing home, made me long for a lot of lost things in my ruined life: the beach area, downtown, the Cross (they shot some amazing drone footage up there), plus just the whole vibe and environment of the X-Games and BMX life, which became even more my world after I came home and you were no longer part of it. But more than anything else, seeing all that made me miss You. You were my best friend, Darrell; I'd say you were like my brother, but that's not even strong enough, as we both have brothers and you know as well as I do that the fraternal relationship isn't necessarily always such a close one. But you and I were as tight as any two people can ever be, and the truth is, you transformed that time when we were so close into the very best years of my life.

Yeah, Darrell, I'm sure we both know that for sure we'd have gone to the Ventura X-Games - it's impossible to imagine any way we could've missed it! And we'd have been right up front for sure, leaning over the barriers to high-five our heroes who'd some emerged from our magazines and videos and managed to materialize in our hometown for a couple of days. We'd be yelling and throwing up the horns until our voices were shot and our arms ached; maybe we'd have even gotten to ride with some of them at our local spots before or after the contest. Can you imagine seeing an actual pro on our jumps up at the Hill? Honestly, it just feels so wrong that others are now experiencing this thing, enjoying what we loved the most in a place we loved, with our hills and palm trees in the background, yet we never got to. But maybe there are two friends there today who are kind of like us, having their dreams come true, and that thought makes it at least a little less gut-wrenching for me. Still, I can't help thinking that no one could possibly appreciate this event in this location more than we would have, together... all of which makes me wonder whether anyone ever ended up appreciating you as much as I did, or as much as I should have, anyway.

Maybe in another lifetime, right? I hope you're well, my friend. Take care.