

“I DON’T KNOW SHIT”

(RELATIVELY SPEAKING THAT IS...)

So I’m guessing that when this finally goes to publication and they do all of the coding and decimalizing that they will categorize this as a self-help book. I’m not sure if that is going to be a proper designation. You see, I’m not writing a book that is designed to be the next big self help wave or a book that will have all the answers to how you can become wealthy and rich by the power of positive thinking. I can’t tell you how to become financially wealthy or financially successful because I’m not fiscally rich and wealthy. This is not a book that will promise you a magical formula to fix your life. I am a very broken human who has been stitched, patched, beaten and loved back together so thoroughly that I have come to a place that I am able to heal myself when life does what life does.

That is the purpose of this book, hopefully, to be read by the one person who is where I was when I decided to change my life, and maybe, if I’m lucky, the things that I have gone through and the lessons I have learned can be relatable and in some way helpful. So you see, this is not a self help book, this is a there must be something I can offer from the lessons I have gleaned from the horrors and joys of my life thus far and I have been such a horrible person to myself and those I have loved that I truly desire nothing than to try to help one person not have to hurt as so many did for me on my journey book.

So, having said that, this book will tell the tale of how I went from a bright, happy little boy to a tortured soul possessed by fear and feelings of inadequacies. Of how it would take me almost 34 years to lose hope enough and try to end it all only to be met by a team of benevolent spirits and my Guardians who assured me that my time was not yet over and the Journey thus far from that truly momentous experience. I am not a Guru nor do I hold some secret to everlasting happiness. I am just a man who has been beat down and knocked around so much by life that I decided to fight back. If there are individuals who are either offended that they are in this book or because they are not I would like to say that I am sorry for your hurt feelings but that would be a lie and I'm really trying not to do that anymore, so I guess my advice would be, hmmm, let's see?????

OH YEAH!!! Build a bridge and get over it...

I would also like to caveat with this; I have been through a lot of trauma and done a LOT of drugs. In saying this I would like to say that the following stories are drawn 100% from MY memory. If they don't jive with yours that can't be helped, I am only as accurate as my memories will allow me to be. That being said...

.1

I have been afraid my entire life. For real, no shit, but see, the thing is, I'm pretty sure everyone else is too. There's a reason that self help books and videos and seminars and retreats and workshops and 12 step & alternate recovery programs and life coaches and every other fucking thing we can come up with to try to alleviate some of the immensity of the fear we all feel is a multi billion dollar industry. There is a reason that The Bible and the A.A. Big Book are the 2 greatest selling single volumes in history. We are, fundamentally a species of highly evolved(ish) beings who in some parts of the world still live with the very realistic fear that lions and other dangerous animals, insects and reptiles can and will kill you & eat you. This was, until only a couple generations ago, a reality for 90% of the world. We are a fight or flight species. We are so adjusted and adapted to dealing with fear at a physical level, as a race, that it is hard wired in our make-up. We have healthy fears, like don't touch a hot stove or don't drive too close to the edge of a cliff and then there are, strictly in my opinion, unhealthy fears.

This is a tricky issue because if you were to say to me that you were afraid to go to hell, my immediate thought response would be that it's silly to fear a place that there is zero physical or anecdotal evidence that it even exists. So to my way of thinking, that is an unhealthy fear.

That doesn't mean it is. You see to someone who grew up in say, a strict Catholic household and who's faith is the foundational principles that they live by. To this person, perhaps their fear of going to hell has kept them from ever doing drugs or breaking the law or generally making any really bad or stupid decisions, and therefore have lived a very comfortable and seemingly safe life. And who knows? They may be right. Although that was never my experience and truthfully it sounds fucking dull.

I am from South New Jersey (Represent!!!), Glassboro to be exact. I was never, not once, in my life growing up ever concerned with being attacked or eaten by a wild animal, well, not a four legged one. The only dangerous animals where I'm from are vicious dogs. So the dangers of the wild were not the same that I faced, no, the adversaries I dealt with were very skilled evolutionary predators. They are a very powerful, invasive and quickly growing population of bipedal parasites. They have evolved into all forms, shapes and sizes. They have infested and infected every walk of life, in almost every demographic, all though sadly the males of the species seem to be the more sexually violent.

What are these parasites?

Well, I will tell you, they come in three types- sexual predators, violent predators and the worst of the three are the sexually violent predators. There are a lot of distinctions between the 3, and I have seen my share of almost every variety. I

have had direct and indirect experiences with all. For the sake of this chapter I will only talk about the ones that created the most fear and therefore have taken the most work to manage.

You want some advice? Well of course you do, that's why you're reading this book, LMAO!!!! Oh boy, I am literally giggling while writing these sentences... I crack myself up...

Seriously though, here it is, get to know your fears, spend time in the shadows. If you cannot accept that you are equal parts light and dark, then you might as well take this book back now before you crack the spine and can't get a refund, cuz that is the reality of my life. I spent the better part of 4 decades being ruled by my demons. My demons are more familiar to me than my angels, although I know now that my angels are much more powerful.

So for the majority of my life I was a liar, I still am to a small degree, I still fudge the truth or tell a fish story for the approval of those I'm reminiscing with or glory dazing it... we all like to make our stories as fun and enjoyable, but alas, that is not the kind of little white lies and embellishments that I am talking about. No, I was a world-class liar. I learned from the best, my Dad.

See I was so afraid that if people knew the real me, if they could see who I really was, that then they would know who I was and what had been done to me, cuz

you see, like all victims of abuse, I thought it was my fault. I thought if I had been better behaved or not allowed myself to be alone with those men or whatever it was that I had been through, it always came down to the same set of thoughts, feelings and self talk...

“If you weren’t so stupid...”

“If I wasn’t so fat...”

“If only I wasn’t so ugly...”

or my favorite, “If only I had never been born...”

these are horrible and tragic thoughts for anyone, ever to have and if you are human you think them to some degree or other too. We may not share the exact content of the statements but the sentiment we do... We all have our if’s, *our mistakes or regrets of things we either have done and wish we hadn’t or the things we really wish we would have when we had the chance*, and I would like to share a truth with you, it is a truth that I have slayed dragons to learn, and it is this.

IF you were meant to be anything other than what you are right now, you would be it.

I do not care what you believe or do not believe, I challenge anyone to prove me wrong. I have devoted years of my life to wishing and praying that I could do “IT” again, or pondering the ineffable question “What If?...” and I have nothing to show for it but a lot of wasted time thinking about things I can’t change. I have spent a lot of time playing the “What if?” game and frankly, I think it is a monumentally stupid enterprise played in the manner of past tense.

The “what if” game can be a joyful venture if used in the capacity of, for instance...

“What if we were to add a greenhouse on the south facing wall of our home?”

So you, either alone or with whomever you wish to share your ideas with and you spend time, perhaps visualizing the design & construction and then the tiny sprouts breaking soil or perhaps you are the type who fantasizes about the finished work and the quiet afternoons spent reading in the sunlight while basking in the glory of botanical bliss. However you choose to play the positive “What if?” game just remember, fantasizing about the future can be just as harmful as dwelling in the past if you never *act on it and just continue to dream about what could be while missing what is.*

I have literally been fighting for myself since I was born, alone, surrounded by strangers for the first month of my life. Then moved away to another state in another

part of the country with my 16yr old Mother and 17yr old drunk, abusive Father. At a few months old I was given away to my maternal grand parents, which is funny to me. You see, my Mother hated her step-mom, so much so that she moved to SC with her husband to get as far away from her as possible. But as I said, ole dad was an abusive drunk and liked to hit Ma and me, so old Sheriff John Brown told my dear mother that she could either call someone or they was shipping me off to the county orphanage. So what does Mommy Dearest do? She calls the one person she hates the most.

So a dayish later Ed and Cass (My Maternal grandfather and his wife) arrive and they agree to take me and even offer Mommy Dearest her home back. Here's the part that gets me... Sharon, my biological mother, hated growing up in their house so much, she has told me since I was a teenager how horrible it was for her, so much so that she agreed to abandon her first born child and send me alone to the very home she despised so completely...

Well fuck, thanks Ma!!! There is sarcasm and genuine gratitude in that statement. Cuz you see, one of the greatest lessons I have learned is that those who hurt you the deepest, teach you the most... but I digress, we'll get to that in later chapters. It has been, as of the day of writing this, 2,319 days since I decided that I was no longer going to do heroin. This was a decision to end a 3 plus decades of extreme drug/alcohol and an overall life of self-destruction.

See, I started smoking pot when I was 6 years old with a classmate in Pittman, NJ. It was a way for me to escape the reality of the physical, sexual and psychological abuse that was my home life... See Ed, whom I grew up calling Dad, had left Cass, whom I grew up calling Mom and had shackled up with a new woman and her kids and brought me along. I was not a part of Arlene's plan, except perhaps as a means to her sadistic ends. Truth be told, I no longer care, I only even tell these things to give context to the later grief, trauma and recovery. I should say now that there are parts of my story that I won't share with you. This is not because I wish to keep anything back, it's just that some parts of my story are closely related to others in my life and I do not wish to cause anyone direct pain, not anymore.

I had a step mom who abused me in every fashion that you can, physically, spiritually and above all, psychologically & emotionally. I say this because of the lasting effects that the latter has had on my overall life. You see, I can take a beating because of her, both physically and spiritually. Thanks to her, I am able to look at any situation and see the beauty, after years of denying any faith or the existence of any God or higher power, I am now able to see that "God" is everything, especially in those dark, secret places of torment that live inside the very core of who we are as survivors of trauma.

We'll talk more about my spiritual journey later in chapters. For now we are going to stick to the topic, fear. Psychological and emotional abuse, for myself, have

had more negative and lasting effects. You see when I was a little kid, I was happy. I knew who I was, who my family was and who the people were that were supposed to protect me. And then in a very short time, literally from Christmas Eve 1979 to February 80, my entire life changed.

On Christmas Eve there was such a violent fight in my living room between my Mom & Dad that the cops were called. This was all new, I remember feeling that this was all wrong, that its X-Mass Eve, we should be opening our new PJ's and putting out milk and cookies for Santa and carrots for the reindeer. I remember sitting on the stairs by the living room and listening to everything and I remember the cops leaving and my Dad coming up the stairs and me asking my Dad if Santa was still coming, hoping that whatever tragedy had befallen our household was not so great as to keep Santa from his appointed rounds. I remember needing him to tell me that it was going to be ok, that my world was ok. He did not. I will never, not as long as I live forget what he said to me.

He said... "Fuck no, I shot his fat ass. He's dead in the backyard"

Something inside of me was stretched beyond a healthy or safe point that night.

The next incident to fuck my mind during this short period was a few weeks later on my 6th birthday. I don't remember all of the details, but I do remember

sitting in a courtroom with my dad all day, except when we went to the diner for lunch. I remember at the end of the day, the judge called my Dad (Ed) up to the podium and says something along the lines of...

“Well Mr. Walter, it looks like Mr. Tull is not gonna show. So I am awarding you permanent custody until the ward is 18.”

So as you can imagine, I was very confused. So I asked my dad what the judge meant? Well he proceeded to explain to me that he was not, in fact, my Dad. He was actually my Grandfather and that my “Real” Father had just been released from prison and was ordered to come take custody of me, but apparently he didn’t want me so now he, Ed, was stuck with me.

(FYI: I didn’t process that conversation until I was 32, just saying.)

A couple days later my Dad would call me into his workshop in the front of the house, my ABSOLUTE favorite place in the world to be, and asked me, what I believe now, would be the most important question of my life, which in the moment, not even knowing what a hypothetical question was, thought that it was one. Because at no point in all of my 6 long years could I have ever believed that it was a serious question. What’s worse is that not only was this the most important question I would ever be asked, but the decision would not only decide the outcome

of the better part of the next 4 decades, but also have ripples throughout the rest of my life.

He asked, "If you had to pick who you wanted to live with, who would it be? Me or your Mom?"

So now lets add context... I'm a six year old little boy who thinks his dad is a real live G.I. Joe who also takes me fishing, plays Chinese checkers with me, almost anytime I want, and he always makes Billy, my older brother, let me watch Gilligan's Island. Mom worked all day, was hardly ever home and when she was she made me eat my Brussels sprouts, clean my room and do my chores.

It was a no brainer; my Dad was my fucking hero and my protector & defender. He might not be my Father, but he's my Dad for sure.

So I said... "You Dad."

Well it wasn't hypothetical, a couple weeks later we left and moved across town and in with the woman who, for the next 6 years, would use me as her own personal torture subject. Busted bones, stitches in the head, concussions, bruises and many other various injuries. But again, it was about the mental and emotional abuse.

You see Arlene was a master at instilling fear in me. I remember the first major beating I got, and on the way to the hospital she stopped the car, looked me dead in the eye and told me that if I ever told anyone about what went on between her and I, that she would kill my Dad. That I would go through life knowing my Dad was dead cuz I couldn't keep my mouth shut.

So I never told. I suffered and dealt with it, and very quickly learned to not beg and plead, because it only fuels the predators' need and hunger. They're not trying to eat your flesh, oh no, they are feeding off of the fear and helplessness that they instill in you. There is immense power in walking into a room and your mere presence is enough to immediately put someone instantly into fight or flight mode, and especially when that fear is coming from a child.

I was so afraid of her that I didn't even want to wake up. Sleep was my only solace. So much so that I became a bed wetter around 4th grade to like 6th grade. I went to Emergency Room's and had Dr.'s look at my wounds and ask Arlene to leave the room and ask me if I wanted to tell them what really happened, and when I would sit there and cry and tell them no, that's what really happened, they would let it go. I'm not blaming them, that's kinda just how it was where I'm from, ya know? People didn't get involved.

Again, though, I don't mention this for the beatings, I'm just providing context, you see it is so much easier to break someone's spirit if you break their

body first. That is precisely what she did... the real abuse began with comments like...

“You’re fat...”

“You’re lazy...”

“You’re ugly, stupid, worthless, ad infinitum...”

The wording would change but there were only 4 general themes... that I was fat, stupid, ugly and worthless. I don't care who it is, if you tell any child, repeatedly for years that they are anything, especially anything negative, they WILL believe it. I, unfortunately, am no different. My Dad was an unwitting accomplice. He was so blinded by Arlene's big tits and an even littler boy who was still completely enamored with him. See I was beginning to see through Ed's bullshit. I learned very quickly that I had no protector, no defender. I had no safe place, and the adults that I should've been able to trust the most had betrayed me the hardest. We moved around a lot and I went to a lot of different schools, so it was easy for me to be different people and have different back-stories.

I know this will be hard to believe, but I didn't much like my real story, fuck I didn't even really know my backstory. No one ever wanted to talk about my real parents, it was all so fucking hush, hush, like some big cold war secret. All they

would ever say about my real father was that whenever I would fuck up, or you know, be an ornery, neglected latch key kid, my Dad would say...

“You’re gonna end up just like your father.”

So I would reply... “What do you mean?”

The answer would sound something like this...

“A worthless dropout strung out on drugs, in & out of prison your whole life or end up a ditch digger somewhere.”

See to my Dad who was a career Army man, being a criminal or a ditch digger was just about the 2 worse things a man could be.

SO...

I grew up believing that I was a fat ugly loser who would never be anything but a junkie convict my whole life, just like my real father...

So what did I do? Well, I did what any fucked up, rage filled emotionally unstable 80’s kid would’ve done. I devoted my life to proving everyone right. I started acting out. First just little things that quickly escalated into robbery, full blown drug

addiction and being, I'm pretty sure, the only legitimate homeless person at the time in Glassboro.

Not a distinction I was looking for. None the less it was one I had, and I was by no means a cool, trendy street kid like you see in any fucking town in America now, no I was a terrified, lying, thieving, scheming leech. I wanted everyone to like me, but I constantly did everything to make sure they didn't. I honestly have no idea why any of the friends I did have, kept me around. I guess we have a certain sense of loyalty in Jersey. There was one over riding fear that developed during my teenage years. It was the greatest fear of my life. That I would be stuck in NJ for the rest of my life. I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do with my life, but I knew for sure it had nothing to do with NJ except as the place I was from. Turns out, this would be my greatest motivator.

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So shortly after my 18th birthday, I had to go. I had just recovered from a serious trauma and I realized that I needed a change. Well, by the serendipity of the universe, I ended up, both kicking & screaming, at a Grateful Dead concert. I imagine that a lot of you out there are thinking why is that so bad, and I would tend to agree with you now, that yes, that really doesn't sound too bad. Well, 18yr old me did not agree. I hated the Grateful Dead. I thought they were a bunch of burn out hippies who made shitty country music.

Well upon arriving at the Spectrum, I almost immediately ran into a group of Mohawked punk kids who had a pretty cool van and had a little campsite set up right in the parking lot, which I would learn is actually called "Shake Down" but there are enough books written about that band, so anyway, they called us over and asked if it was my first show, cuz in hindsight it must have been glaringly obvious it was.

I confirmed that it was and we proceeded to talk about how even though they were not your typical hippie dead heads, they were very adamant that unless you saw the music live, on some good psychedelics, you could not properly judge the experience. They offered me a ticket, which I already had one, so they gave me some mushrooms to eat during the show. So, I ate them and walked into the show... they assured me that we would all go in together and "sit" together. *I remember going to the bathroom to eat the boomers and then just kind of walking around the Spectrum*

checking out all the strange and colorful people. I had never seen so much color in clothing, ever. After a time I started getting the yawns, which if you have ever eaten magic mushrooms you will know that is a precursor to fun, so we made our way to "Phil Zone" and as we found some seats the band came out and I couldn't believe it but the first song they played was the only one I knew cuz they had made a video for MTV for it, "Touch Of Grey" I remember that all I wanted to do was dance.

I had never in my life "just wanted to dance". But dance is what I did until the show was over than we went and danced on the lot and then danced our way to the after party show and danced til dawn...

Sprocket stole my face.

There are some of you who just read that line and are thinking...

"What the hell does that mean?"

Or

"Did he steal his identity?"

Or some other form of confusion as to the meaning of "stole my face".

Not all are confused, some of you read that line and immediately knew what I meant. I probably even got a smile from most of you, and in the sense that Sprocket tore down my conceptions of what live music and especially the diversity of what one group of musicians can do to one individual who is having a mind blowing mental meltdown to said music can do, then yes, this was monumental.

But and also...

If you want to talk about ripping apart the very fabric of someone's soul and revealing to them that their life is a disingenuous construct of lies and falsehoods built upon imaginary loyalties and misconstrued purpose on a foundation of self-hate and loathing and an insincere desire to just die, then yes, that is what **I** mean.

I walked out of that show and went and partied and raged around Philly for the next couple nights, but as always happens, the circus pulls up stakes and the train loads up and it's off to the next town. Sprocket and entourage assured me there was room for me in the van and that the life I have always dreamt of was out there, all I had to do was get on the bus. I did not. Sprocket saw through my meat suit and into the very core of who I am. He saw the torment, he knew that I had yet to find my home, that I had a seekers heart and that I could never in a billion years find any peace or joy in this incarnation if I did not listen to my truth and get on the bus. He knew without doubt that I would torture myself and regret the rest of my days any decision other than to get on the bus, but he did not press. No, that wasn't his style.

Instead he handed me a business card with some Dead artwork on it and a phone number, 1-900-RUN DEAD, with some options for once you connect. He told me when I was ready, that's where the bus would be and they drove away.

I remember seeing something in Sprocket's eyes when we last spoke before he drove away. It was a bit of sadness clouded by an almost mischievousness, like he had just gotten away with something, or pulled a fast one... little did I know that he had, see he had planted a seed, incepted a thought. He had pulled back the *veil* on my life in NJ and showed me a world of *color and* possibilities.

I was a daydreamer. I grew up reading comics at my mom's house and playing by myself with my actions figures. I played with my G.I. Joes and Star Wars Action figures *so much* that I really kinda considered them my friends. I would talk to them and truly miss them when I had to go back to Ed and Arlene's during the week. I say my Mom's house and Ed & Arlene's house because they weren't my homes. I didn't have a home when I was a kid, I've stayed at other peoples houses, since I was 6 years old. It would be almost 40 years before I found my forever home, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

I made it about 2 days or so then I called... I said my tearful goodbyes, lol, then got on a bus for Auburn Hills, MI. When I got to the lot, I almost immediately

found the bus. They weren't even all out of the van when I come bouncing up, like I couldn't believe that they were actually there. All Sprocket said was...

"Hmph, I didn't expect you till tomorrow."

Sprocket didn't give a fuck about shit. I mean really, he couldn't see the purpose or even the need for the desire to waste valuable life energy on caring about things. I could write an entire volume on the valuable lesson's I learned from my time with him, but this book is about me.

After Auburn Hills we meandered and pattered around the Midwest until we eventually made our way to the Mecca for all things punk & hippie. Toss in a large population of homosexuals, junkies, crack heads and the scum who feed off them and you will have The Shitty a.k.a. San Francisco, the City by the Bay and MOST importantly, where all the "Real" lot hustlers went to wait for summer tour to start out West. The "Real" hustler was Sprocket's terminology. He hated trustafarians, trust fund or rich kids who come on tour and pretend to be ballers using there Mommy & Daddy's loot to do it...

So yeah, S.F. sucks... it's only good for 2 things, for me anyway, getting high and going to jail. Which I didn't really do too much of that when we got there, I just had this weird, nagging urge to finish something I had started. Remember back a few pages I told you that old sheriff John Brown came and next thing I know I'm on a trip

back to NJ? Well, I didn't see Sharon (The Bio Mom) again until I was 13 when she swept into Glassboro for a couple days and didn't see her again for a few years, which was weird, to say the least and would not see her again until I was 25. The sperm donor though, I never talked to him, met him or anything. I knew my grand parents on his side, ish, but I had never even spoken to him on the phone.

That was about to change. I chilled with Sprocket until February of '93. We did summer and fall tour in '92 and were chilling, squatting in S.F. with some other punk lot kids. I had just spoken with my paternal grand mom and she gave me my bio-father's phone number and I called him. He invited me to come stay with him in Las Vegas. I had a real N.C. DL under a dead babies name that said I was 3 years older than I was and as quiet as it had been kept, I had longed to meet my real father since I first learned about him when I was 6 years old. I talked it over with Sprocket and we split ways, him home to Denver & me, off to meet my senior.

.3

Las Vegas is like nowhere else I have ever been. It is the worst place I have ever lived. It is also the hardest school I have ever attended. At the writing of this I am 46 years old. I never planned on hitting 18, 21, 25, 30 and especially 40. I have spent the majority of my adult life either living on the streets, by choice, or incarcerated. I have periodic bouts of adulting, by which I mean that I have had a couple apartments and roommates, but until recent years I enjoyed the freedom of not being bound by leases or utility bills or a bunch of possessions and material excess, right? No, the reality is, up until a few years ago, I was ridiculously addicted to drugs and for better or worse, street people are invisible & ignored, until those rare incidents where I stepped to far out of societies lines and they would lock me up and I'd get healthy and then get out and get right back at it.

You're prolly wandering what the fuck this has to do with Vegas, well I'll tell you. In all the jails I've done time in and all the cities and towns I've been a street kid and squatter in, I have never been so on high alert and perpetually scared as I was for the 11 months I was in Las Vegas. The day I got there I had to wait at the greyhound station for a couple hours waiting for Tom to show up and when he finally gets there we have to walk a couple miles to his Motel room that he lived in and within the first 15 minutes I'm there my life would take another dramatic turn.

I don't know how many of the readers are from the East coast, but growing up in the Philly, S. Jersey area there was no methamphetamines. Maybe some White Crosses or some pills like ridilin, but no crystal meth.

Well, I was about to be introduced to meth. Tom pulled out an 8 ball and me, him and one of his buddies did the entire thing. I have never been so fucking high in my entire life. I had no frame of reference as to how high I would be or for how long. My only experience with any type of upper was cocaine, which as we all know is a 30-minute high at best. Not only was I high for days, but the piece of shit was setting me up. We moved to a shittier part of town behind Vegas World off the strip called the Naked City. It was a real live ghetto with a bunch of ghetto hookers, crack heads and dealers. He kept me high for almost 6 days, and when I finally crashed, I woke up like 14 hours later and he was gone, along with the several thousand dollars I had saved from tour and planned to live off of.

Cue the FEAR. I panicked, what was I gonna do? I had no money, nowhere to live in the heart of winter in the middle of the desert, all the money I had was about \$200 so I did what any respectable addict would do. I went to the dope man, bought a fat sack of meth and went looking for Tom.

I found him at a locals bar he liked to throw darts at. I asked him where my money was, he told me that a small portion went to booze, drugs and a couple hookers, but most he gambled away. I was speechless. I remember thinking that

there was nothing I could do. I sure wasn't gonna call the cops, who does that? I could make too big of a scene cuz I was under age in a bar with a fake ID. So I just turned and walked away and left. I left walking away like the bigger man, knowing that I had done the right thing. After 19 years of not having a father, then after 13 years of wondering what he would be like when I did meet him I get this. He basically gets me high for days til I crash then robs me. I wish I could say that I let it go and just kept going.

I did not.

I went back to the bar, posted up and waited for him to come out and then I beat the shit out of him right there in the parking lot. I beat him til some friends pulled me off of him. I didn't say a word, I just spit on him and walked away. I only saw him one other time after that, across the street, walking the other way.

I went off the deep end. I have never been that low at any other point in my life. I ended up pan handling for money just so I could buy \$10 hits of meth. I'd had a perfect Mohawk for a while and it had grown out. The only clothes I had was a 3xl bright red sweat shirt & pants and a pair of Nike high tops that were at least 3 full sizes to big. I lived in a cardboard box behind a dumpster at a by the hour motel off the strip and I weighed about 140lbs.

My daily diet from the end of February until the end of May 1993 consisted of however much meth I could get and a small soufflé cup full of relish and a handful of 2 pack, saltine packs I could grab from the Hot Dog bar at Slots Of Fun on the strip. I maybe consumed a pint of water a day. I was dying, both spiritually and physically. I saw no way to get out of the hole I was in. I truly thought my life had reached a point that I couldn't find a way out of. But I never gave up hope.

One especially shitty, rainy day I'm sitting holding my sign and like a voice from beyond I hear...

"Geez, you look like absolute shit. What the fuck have you been up too?"

That was a loaded question. He obviously knew I had been fucking up. You see, I had confided in Sprocket like I had never confided in anyone. He was the first person that I told about the abuse from Arlene and the rape when I was a teenager. He was the first person to ever tell me that I was safe now, if nowhere else, but the bus was safe. No one had ever told me that and I didn't believe him of course.

Here's the thing... I may sound like I was enamored with some of these people, Sprocket especially, but I was not. I felt like I had a real friend for the first time since I was a kid, but I fully expected him and every other person that I knew to try and fuck me over in one manner or another. Most did, and because I have this rigid sense of loyalty, I will repeatedly forgive someone I love for the most heinous of

crimes or slights. Not because I am some super altruistic saint, no, it's actually the contrary. You see in the words of the late, great Charlie Murphy, I am a habitual line stepper and I have burned more bridges than Kosciuszko. How the hell am I gonna judge anyone? I've broken just about every major law there is, and seeing how I'm not real sure about statute of limitations, I will not go into detail about them. But my criminal record is public record. I was a drug dealing/smoking/snorting/shooting thief for the majority of my adult life.

So basically what I'm saying is that I forgive my friends in hopes that if and when I fuck up, they will forgive me. Cuz really, isn't that kinda what love is? So as I tell my tale, remember that I am just a lowly Bard, spinning my tale for my dinner and ale. That this, like ALL other stories, is subject to the teller's addled memory.

I interject this brief nugget about myself so that you understand that Sprocket was just as, if not more fucked up then I was. The thing is, that now looking back he seems larger than life. The complete Zen like nihilism, the complete and utter ability, at least on a surface level to me, to completely not give a fuck about anything or the consequences that could possibly come from whatever it was he wanted to do.

There is one over riding thing about myself that Sprocket taught me in our short time together. It is probably the single greatest self-realization that I don't think I would have ever come to on my own.

Oh I'm sorry, you thought I was gonna give that nugget up so easily?
HAHAHAHA, silly bitches, now where was I?...

Ah yes, weeping in front of slots of fun... See Sprocket knew I would be on the strip hustling, he just didn't think it would be in that capacity. So he helped me up, gave me a really awkward hug and we took off. We talked and chatted and he began to tell me about how he had been looking for me since the day before and that he spent the first day looking down around Fremont Street, but figured he'd head toward Circus Circus cuz it was his fav place to hustle outside of and so he came up the strip.

I just remember having this overwhelming thought the whole time he was talking like we had been chilling the whole time, so finally I just blurted out...

"Bro, where the fuck are we going?"

He just shrugged and said...

"The lot dumbass, the Dead are in town..."

He turned around and kept walking and talking and all I could do was giggle and smile. While inside I was doing back flips, this was it, this was my way out of the

cardboard box, I could make some real money in Vegas, last year I pulled in like \$4k working for Fast Ed, R.I.P., and I knew he'd be there, I was set.

That's not how it went down at all. What happened was they fed me a bunch of psychedelics and all I remember is Sting sucked and there was a LOT of lightning, and the sun shined through the rain and clouds onto the stage and it was epic and beautiful and in that moment I knew what my purpose was. I would follow this band anywhere, if they would only continue to play for me.

Well that was short lived. I woke up the morning after the last show and was 3 days without any meth and I was in a bad way mentally. I pulled Sprocket and his road dawg, Omega, aside and explained that cuz we partied the whole time, which was great, but now they were leaving and although I had a back pack full of gear and clothes and shoes that fit, I would essentially be going back to the cardboard box, could they help a hobbled Kidd out?

Omega and some other friends hooked me up with a bunch of Nugs and doses to sling and a few grand to get me off the street. They asked if I was sure I didn't wanna get on the bus? I passed, this time knowing for sure that we'd meet again.

We said our goodbyes and I immediately jumped in a cab and headed to my dope man, but this time I bought an Oz. and he gave me a bunch of baggies and sent me on my way. Over the next 6 months I would reach new lows and highs in the