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Depressed Goats

By John Curraco

Stepping out of the van coming from the Super Eight Hotel, the cold sea breeze hits you in the face the followed shotley by the smell of the Pacific Ocean. Cali's own personal welcome.

My

teammates head off in two different directions. One small group goes with the coach to try to figure out where to pay for parking spot. The rest stand at the van stretching. We overshoot Venice Beach by about a half mile, anywhere else this would have been a easy walk but not in LA. LA seems to go on forever, city after city interconnected, the walk over to Venice Beach was no different.

Looking to your right when on the beach, you can see the city and behind the city you can see mountains. Yes mountains on the beach. I took a picture of this and sent it to my mom. The left side is not as cool because you could only see the city going on forever.

We strolled down the beach, we arrived at Venice Beach. The first thing you notice is that Venice Beach is straight out of a acid trip from the 60s and 70s, Locals just never left that time period and happy as hell that they stayed. On both sides of the walk you see shops/stands of random trinkets what people are selling. Henna tattoo shops to real tattoo shops; from sand paintings to acrylic paintings. People trying to start their rap careers by selling self-produced CDs the the public. There is also a plethora of restaurants. Some are sit down and others are pick up. It was almost noon and we want some food and drinks. Sidewalk Cafe & Bar is right on the walk and as advertised it has a bar. After just a few seconds of debate we decide to have lunch. We were seated quickly and i ran off into the into the restroom to change into my new swimsuit. I come back to the table and order a margarita with some fish and chips.

While we wait, for our food my teammates and I talk about the first few days of our break in Missoula. After talking

for a while I started to people watch and there were some interesting people on the beach.

One of the things Venice beach is known for is the local characters who show to the beach to entertain the tourists. Most of them look like they come from all the way out in left field but they all look like they are having a good time, so who am I to judge. When we were sitting down for lunch we casually heard a piano being played. At first I thought it was just the music from the restaurant. It could have been because I was a few margaritas in but I didn't think much of it. I didn't realize that it was coming from outside until one of the freshmen said, "That guy playing the piano really good." I turned around and look outside of the restaurant. Outside was an older man his mid 60s to mid 70s, tan as leather playing very difficult classical music. The thing that was most amazing was that he would go from song to song without stopping. Not for a drink of water in the hot sun, not to say thank you when someone tipped him.

Another character on the beach was an older man who rode a skateboard and would act like he was falling, but at the last second he would save himself and move along. The funniest thing about this gentleman was that he wore every type of safety equipment on you could think of, he had a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads, and gloves. He would swing around an area messing with everyone he could. I watched him from a distance tried this one of my teammates.

When we were full of good food and a few adult beverages, we headed out to the beach for some classic fun in the sun. One of our teammate brought his University of Arizona football and about four or five of us started to play catch on the beach while sipping on drinks. Now I was determined to swim in the ocean. The thing they don't tell you in school about the Pacific Ocean is that is not as warm.

Actually, "not warm" would be a grand understatement it was freezing. When I finally decided to go for a dip I got up to knee level before I started shivering. Again it could have been the drink or me just not thinking thoroughly but I dove head first in the freezing water. As fast as I dove in i just out and ran towards our designated area only to that I forgot to bring a

towel. I should have listened to Towelie.

Everyone who goes to LA wants to meet someone famous. It doesn't matter who, as long as you get a picture a hug or a handshake to make your day. One of my "goals" before embarking on this trip was to meet someone famous, didn't care who it was (I was hoping I would run into George Clooney) I just wanted a pic, and/or hug or a handshake. After taking a dip in the water I needed to warm up. So I started to play catch again. When I was going deep for a catch I noticed doing a photoshoot. I took this a my opportunity to meet someone famous. I topped off my "coke" and one of my teammates and I head over in the direction of the photoshoot, not knowing who was over there.

I hung out for a little trying to catch her name. Finally I look at her Q-cards and saw that he name was Abby Wilson. I walked back over to my bag and wiped out the e old smart-phone and googled her name. The first hit was "Abby Wilson girls gone wild." Upon reading that, I was determined to meet her and get a picture with her. Nothing would stop me on my newfound quest.

My teammate and I went back over the photoshoot and waited for a break in the action. I know what you're thinking. Two guys standing watching a girl working on a photoshoot: creepy right? Not really; she works for girls gone wild, so I don't care. In the end I got my picture, hug, and handshake with Abby Wilson. Then it was to Malibu.