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Cell: 224-239-9877
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Title: ***Experiencing something that should not exist! Poverty-Homelessness***

Not everybody has the same experiences in life, this just happens to be part of mine.

You find angels if you're lucky enough-before you even hit the pavement to call yourself the homeless. Admission is not easy. Pride kicks in or nothing at all. You already know the score. The farther down on the income ladder the more likely it's not as easy to get out or above or beyond the circumstances that surround an individual. A bull's head of stubbornness, more of determination at a constant is what I am going at to succeed. To get beyond the circumstances, patience-at-will that at times is more beneficial in the long run. *It's a learning curve or a curve that needs not to be learned but, just heard-meaning you do not need to experience homelessness at first hand to understand.* Many times, pointed in other alternative directions more beneficial to me and others. A state in which a person is *experiencing something that should not exist!*

I've come to find out that if I had the funds to change a condition or atmosphere, I would have done it. But, with a limited resource(s) gives me no alternative than to ignore and just take note in my head that someday – it may change – my situation and others-that I may be able to change some of it myself.

Otherwise, it just becomes as a mental note at this moment. Not a bounce off fact that hits you smack between the eyes- the idea or constructive criticism that never sinks in that just stuns you enough that something hit you. Then falls off and disappears. So, you just wait like others for it to smack you between the eyes again until it really sinks in and sticks/stays. Then it's a mental note taken.

I've walked, hitch-hiked across Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania and got bus passes from two strangers that got me to New York, New York. I've met some angels and a monopoly of people to get here.

The Angels:

- The two truck drivers – one was from Poland and the other Spanish-Mexican origin. Both liked to talk. The Spanish-Mexican gave me money for a bus pass to get to Pittsburgh, Pa.
- I got a ride from a woman that worked at a pharmaceutical company. The drug being promoted was for Alzheimer's disease.
- A young couple in their early twenties on their way back from a wedding going to Columbus, OH gave me a ride.

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- A man that came off as being laid back easy going gave me a ride because he felt like going for a ride.
- Then there was the man that was about my fathers age slightly younger in his 70's that smelled good. He had a car dealership wished me luck and gave me money for a second bus trip ticket to New York, NY.
- There was also the woman that drove around picking up homeless people in Ohio and took them home. Her husband was a little bit strange to me but he gave me a ride to the Pennsylvania boarder.

The Police The police were interesting to me on my journey I encounter-usually at night and during the night:

In Illinois, I got boomeranged off the highway. I found out you can not walk the highway but you can the back roads. So, the truck stop that I was at the night before was quickly occupied by me once again after they explained this to me. I also, found out that the back roads eventually, become the highway. That's where I kind of got in trouble in the future but just a little bit.

In state of PA (not dad either), I got a spanking. I was not arrested – told I was not being arrested. But, I was to take it as a warning. I got to try on the silver cuffs and put in the back of the patrol car. “Just a warning,” he said. “So, I got a spanking?” I said. He said, “No, just a shake of the finger.” He bought me lunch when he got me to the truck stop. Also, told me what back road I could use to get the next town. I'm lucky. I did not get a ticket – only the numb wrists from the ride and little hurt when it came to pride.

There was the cop that saw me in Geneva, IL outside that knew I was passing through. I was waiting out the down pour of the rain under a store front canopy at about 3:30-4:00 am in the morning. He stopped to listen to me talk about walking to NYC. Told him I would be moving along once the rain stopped. He asked me if I needed anything. “Coffee,” I said. I didn't think anything of it. But, twenty minutes later, he drove up with a large cup with cream and sugar and gave it me. Told me he'd check on me. The rain was cold and it did not seem to cold after that. Heck, after that I almost wanted to stay in Geneva, IL.

At night outside of Pittsburgh, PA into the next small town, a cop took me to the nearest shopping mall and dropped me off. That's as far as he could go for his jurisdiction.

The night would not have been that bad except there were black bear warnings in the area. A predator in the state of PA that roams freely throughout the state and was noted

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that it was bear season for mating that time of year. Also, noted that with black bears people are not to roam around with food without containers because bears are looking for food constantly.

The shopping mall's lights went out in the middle of the night. I called the local police to get a ride to the nearest station that was open. This time a different Policeman arrived. He was playing classical music and he was patient enough with me to get me to the next town's all night open truck stop. I told him my story and he bought me a middle of the night dinner/breakfast (I would not quite call it dinner or breakfast). Also, he drove by later to check on me.

During my travels throughout the states, the incidents with police compared to the number of states- the incidents were few. The policemen that I encountered were helpful and supportive.

Sleep deprivation is Not Avoidable. Your priorities for being homeless becomes a little more fine tuned in survival. You look for food but better yet you look for a place to sleep! Thought driven-*if I can only get to the next place to shut my eyes- just for a few moments*. Your thought process becomes of a sleep origin quest- a journey looking forward to just getting enough sleep to carry yourself forward for a few more moments/minutes to a few hours. You just want to feel better- feel refreshed. Thought ramble with "*How long has it been since I've slept?*"

Where did I sleep? There were all night 24 hour, café's at truck stops and in local towns. Some places, very few, let you sleep a little before they come by and tap the heck out of the table to wake you up. Then tell you to move along. I would *literally* walk all night long looking for a place to get a few moments of rest.

In the middle of a pitch black night, there was only one truck stop/rest area place along an interstate that had one bathroom that was unisex/family origin with separate men and women's bathrooms to the right and left. For a couple of hours, maybe, three, I locked myself in that bathroom. Because it was 3:00 am in the morning with no way of walking out in that pitch black of the night out in the middle of nowhere. Actually, I was hoping the police would have shown up that night to get me to a safer place. I was dropped off by a trucker to stay on my route going east. I didn't even know what state I was in only I was on a certain route going east and on the right interstate going the right direction.

When I reached NYC, I was living on the streets. People or police move you along. When it's not raining, I was okay on the church steps and a few places that are not commercial. I slept in front of the church one evening. A van with the sign noted for the

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homeless stopped, woke me up and gave me a hot plate of food. It was greatly appreciated. I had not eaten that day. Blessings that came from a van of angels.

What about food?

There are people I consider angels, humanitarians, that collect on the streets whatever people will give to feed the poor. They are not collecting daily on the same street in the same place, but some days they are on the same street-some days a few days in a row in the same place. A couple of times I had to go to them directly to get a few dollars for food or get a McDonald gift card for a meal.

Bartering was an option for me, but it does not always apply or work. It is not a reliable source for food, not everybody will trade or can trade. I traded a couple of vitamin C packets on a couple of rainy days for a bagel and a muffin. When I ran out of money to do my laundry, I traded my leather wallet to do a wash.

The last resort, I waited at a breakfast vendor for a working person to stand in line and asked if they would buy me a bagel or muffin because I was out of money. There were two people that were very hospitable and bought me breakfast.

The Job Hunt?

You need a local physical address for an application to get a job.

When you are on the streets (homeless) filling out applications, putting a cell number in and not filling in the street address but put the city of New York, NY in hopes that I would get a call. In hopes, that an owner would help me out in pointing out a direction to get local housing of some type. It was hope, not a promise from God or any individual person-but a hope. I did get an interview with a bakery, unfortunately, not the job before going to a shelter.

Propositions-

A big misunderstanding! Don't know how the word "Platonic" meant anything else but friendship without sex. But, this happened some people thought it meant friendship with sex- that is the wrong answer. Let it be understood there are options that sex should not be traded for food – it's not a bartering product or service. This is when you find yourself knocking at the local church in search of **shelter**- DEFINITELY A BETTER ALTERNATIVE AND A GOOD ANSWER – A BETTER ANSWER!

Harry-(This is not about a sexual encounter!)

I believe there is an angel or a person of importance that touches the heart(s) that need it at the low or lowest points of their life. People can not exist without compassion for others – a human being that can take an individual to understand a situation that is

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beyond one person's control. The way each individual reacts to a situation(s) is always (most always) different than another. An observation of a situation from one point of view to another whether an action is taken in physical sense or a mental note can make an impact upon both individuals involved-long or short. Those that show compassion (and I don't mean sex) to understand an individual human being in need. They are the helpers, the angels that cheer on the individual(s) to achieve to strive forward. My angel is Harry.

Where did I bathe? At the start of my travel in Illinois to NYC, I was given a free shower ticket at a truck stop. The truck stop was fully equipped with paid bathroom shower stalls dead bolt locked from the inside. It was \$8.00 to purchase the electronic combination to get into the shower bathroom stall that was fully equipped with fresh towels and toiletries. A very kind Mexican man that owned his own an 18 wheeler-semi-truck, gave me a ticket, talked to me about his lovely wife and three boys. He showed me beautiful pictures of them and himself on his cell phone.

Sponge bath's or so called wash cloth baths from a sink in a bathroom. Other truck stops that had no showers were frequent occurrence not only for me but other travelers. There were quite a few truck stops that had travelers that were not homeless that stopped washed their hair in the sink like myself just to freshen up- a normal occurrence out back roads and truck stop locations moving throughout states.

When it came to college towns and cities, local recreation center where there is a pool- was a helping hand for a shower. If not a sponge bath or so-called wash cloths baths from a sink in a bathroom.

Laundry When I left Illinois, I left with two bags – one contained clothes the other contained documents. This is what I had for clothes (this included the clothes I was wearing): 4 pairs of underwear, 3 sport bras, 4 pairs of socks, 2 hand towels, 2 wash cloths, 1 all-weather light blue rain coat and 4- pairs of sports ware capris, 1 natural colored oversized crocheted sweater, 2 tank tops, 3 t-shirts.

I had free samples of toiletries that I ordered from the internet.

I was lucky that when I had money from what angels or encountered on my travels had given me. Laundry was a priority. Due to it raining almost everyday, I learned early to purchase a large plastic bag to line the inside of my bag totted my laundry in to keep my fresh laundry dry. Also, kept a smaller bag on the outside the clean clear laundry bag (a zip-lock bag) to carry the small two boxed laundry detergent that I would replace from the laundry mat vending machines every time I did laundry. Wet clean laundry would not have been fun to put on. When the money ran out, I bartered with the laundry mat

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owner- gave him my leather wallet in exchange of a load of clean laundry. Believe it! It was worth the barter.

A Helping Hand- A Shelter -A turning point with hope for a future. Shelters brought hope for a lot of people- including myself. They provide a place to sleep, bathe and get a meal. They also help you get public assistance so you can survive and programs to help you regain employment. Unfortunately, due to the number of homeless, shelters do not always have beds available.

Finally, I stopped at the 5th Presbyterian Church after a job interview while being homeless. I met a remarkable compassionate Reverend Helen Jackson. I was in search of some basic needs-one was a sanitary pad and the other shelter. *You know you have reached the limits when you (if you are female) can not afford a sanitary pad.* After numerous calls to shelters by the Reverend Helen Jackson, she was able to get me into a shelter. A relief to sleep more than a few minutes to a few hours was and is very much appreciated. She is definitely one of God's angels at work.

Laundry & Shelters Not all shelters provide a washer and dryer to available. As a possible solution to be considered, refillable laundry cards- as a comparative to refillable print cards for a printer at a copy place or library.

Clothes God provided people with a unique understanding for the need to provide those in need with clothes. The churches do a wonderful job in getting those in need what they need. There are some things that need to be replaced as a necessity like under wear. It is not sanitary by any means to use or use used other peoples under wear. That means panties, bras for women and boxers, briefs or tidy whites if you want to call them that. Bacteria and yeast is prone to grow in women's and believe me it or not men's too. This can cause health problems and disease problems for both men and women. Socks should be viewed as the same way, especially if there is foot fungus involved.

Shelters and Soup kitchens are only hoping they succeed in getting the homeless and those in need what they need for a meal. In addition to the shelter, 5th Presbyterian Church offered me a list of Soup Kitchens that was very helpful.

On the weekends and when I can, I spread the news about support and help offered to the homeless.

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