

Plinko Fuckin' Plinko

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Ocean Beach, San Diego, USA

- Thomas Francine

Pretty much spent the day chilling on my own, needed some time on my own, just chatted with a few people here and there. Picked up my \$64 check from my temp job at the gay activist place since Keith's was around there. Stopped at the co-op on the way for good food, and went to a cool library. Went swimming.

Walked around looking for a place to sleep, found an okay spot hidden just slightly in some dunes, but there were a lot of spiky plant seeds under me and someone was creeping around the area a bit. Went a little away and slept okay. Woke up early because someone down the path nearby was blowing his nose or coughing or something odd really loud like 5am, maybe as a warning to sleepers because the cops came round right after. And I adjusted myself as they went so I would stay more hidden behind this tiny plant.

Got up quick with my mind working and saw two big boxes of bread on a table. Saw some garbage lady about to throw them away so I went to tell her I'd give them out instead, and she *really* didn't want me to, supposedly cause there was too much and later she would just have to pick it up off the ground. I only took three loaves and easily gave them out.

Met Daniel, he was sleeping on the beach and the cops had woke him up. He offered me coffee he was brewing over a tiny fire, in exchange for the bread. Such a nice and smart guy. Said he has abandonment issues from when he was a kid and that's why he can't form relationships with people and is always on the move. Said his theory about geniuses like Einstein and Hawkins is that God gives them these amazing gifts but then also has to take something significant so they don't become assholes and think of themselves as gods. This made me feel better about my own (petty though sometimes stressful) problems because I am super smart in one respect but also dumb in other categories.

But anyway Dan is a badass. He said he's neurotic and is usually working a lot, but now that he's a beach bum he has no worries... "If I eat I eat, if I don't I don't." When the cops woke him up, he said, they asked him if he was drunk or on drugs, and also if he was a veteran. To that last one, Dan replied that it shouldn't matter, but that yes, he was in the Marines for 21 years.

After a while, Daniel told me he had been praying to God this morning for food to come his way since he's not one to beg, and then there I was with two loaves of good bread for him.

That was a funny little chain of events that led me to do that... getting woken up in an odd way... then walking and feeling so fresh that I actually ran to the garbage lady when I saw what she was about to do... and then seeing Daniel... plinko.

I keep thinking along this whole trip how each little detail changes my whole adventure so so obviously. Everything's like that in life, you just don't usually notice and you also don't typically have anywhere as much say in it. You let things happen rather than make things happen. Switching where I stand thumbing every so often; changing what sign I use; turning down one ride cause it's too short, but then accepting one an hour later that ends up going to the same place; deciding to stay in town one more night; having

a fresh loaf of bread to give when passing by Daniel. Simple shit. And each simple move completely changes the entire course of the rest of my trip and the rest of my life. Everything's like that, you just don't usually notice and you also don't typically have anywhere as much say in it.

After chatting with Daniel, I got to read a decent amount of *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and it got into a really good part (chapter six) of the story. It was saying how people generally live parodies of what real life should be and they even often know it on some level; people's minds are molded by what's around them and only a unique few have the power to mold their own minds in large ways; freedom is due first to your own freedom in your own mind, second to your physical surroundings; nature is balanced between order and chaos, and humans have a unique balance themselves between freedom and keeping in line. Freedom vs. security is in our very DNA. I've thought about this all before but *the Chink* sees it much more clearly.

"To live fully, one must be free, but to be free one must give up security. Therefore, to live one must be ready to die."

[Thomas Francine is a social worker, hitchhiker, and filmmaker from New Jersey, USA. His documentary "The Greater Good: A Hitchhike Perspective (2013)" was an award-winner/official selection at eight film festivals and is now available free, along with many other projects, on his website www.GoGreaterGood.com]