

Addict's Almanac



Tye Doudy lives and works in Portland. Addict's Almanac is a reprise of his popular series from 2008. He can be reached at wurmstar@gmail.com

When Darby and I met CJ, he was sitting on the sidewalk in front of the convenience store by the Max tracks on 10th and Morrison in downtown Portland. It was 10 a.m. on a Tuesday in July. The kid looked horrible and smelled worse. He was rocking and talking to himself, with long strings of greenish snot hanging from his nose and upper lip. He had two black eyes, his teeth were full of blood, and there was a large bloody gash on the back of his head. I didn't even want to look at him, but Darby, being the sweetheart that she is, immediately went right over to him to see if he was okay.

It turns out that the night before he had met some skinheads from the suburbs and had drunk whiskey with them until he blacked out. He woke up the next morning in a ditch by the railroad tracks rolled up like a burrito in an old cat-piss-smelling carpet. Apparently the fuckers had beaten him severely and left him for dead. All of that was shitty, but the issue that was troubling him the most was that he was strung out, and now he was too dopesick and in too bad of shape to make any money for his fix. Darby wanted him to go to the hospital, but he wouldn't have any of it. He just kept saying that he needed a hit of dope, and he would be fine.

The night before, Darby and I had made a good score by stealing a couple of bicycles off the front porch of a house in Southeast Portland. The guy at the pawnshop had given us 50 bucks each for them and we had just spent 80 of it on heroin, so relatively speaking, we were loaded. Darby told CJ that if he wanted to come with us to the Jackson Street squat that we would get him well. I could have killed her! There we are hustling our asses off, and she goes and offers to give this fucked up kid some of our drugs!

The look on his face was like he had won the lottery, sitting there grinning at us with all that blood in his teeth. But goddamn it, I wasn't happy about having to share with some strange kid. I didn't want to be the big heartless asshole, though, so I just kept my mouth shut and went along.

We helped him up the street, with me supporting him on my shoulder and Darby carrying his pack. We had to stop repeatedly along the way for him to throw up blood and

stomach acid, and for him to rest. I was seriously wondering if he was going to make it or die right there on the sidewalk. When he would puke he would grimace in pain, clutch at his ribs, and groan loudly.

The people on the street were stopping to stare at this bloody spectacle and I knew it was just a matter of time until someone called a cop. I hated making a scene or drawing attention to myself in any way. I had lots of dope on me and I knew I had warrants, so I was getting very nervous. The last thing I needed was to end up locked up over trying to help some kid I didn't even know. I was a little mad at Darby for putting us at risk, but more just for

know how big of a habit he had but I didn't want to risk it.

The dope we were getting was pretty good, so I pinched off half a balloon, cooked it up for him and drew it up in a clean rig from the needle exchange. If he wanted, I would give him the other half later. I handed him the loaded syringe and without tying off he found a vein in the back of his hand, drew back on the plunger until he saw blood then slowly pushed the plunger down sending the heroin flooding through his bloodstream. He pulled the rig out of his hand, handed it back to me, lied down with a great sigh, and closed his eyes. He slept for 16 hours, woke up long enough to do the

Darby and I looked at each other for a second before we both leaned over and hugged him. He smelled terrible, but I could tell from the hug he gave us that he had a lot of heart and it was worth it. After a long moment he released us, asked our names, told us his name was CJ and then asked us if we had anymore dope.

offering to share our drugs with a fucking stranger.

We reached the hole in the fence above the freeway and held it open for CJ to crawl through, then followed him in with his pack. Darby found a dry place and kicked the trash out of the way so she could spread out some cardboard and lay out the sleeping bag strapped to his pack.

When the bag was unrolled and ready for him he kind of fell to his knees and collapsed onto his side on the bedroll clutching his ribs with a moan. He closed his eyes and took a few deep breaths, then asked us if we were really going to get him well. I was already breaking out my works to cook up a hit, so by way of answering him I just asked him if he wanted me to cook it up for him or if he wanted to do it himself. He told me to "go ahead and do it" and "just throw the whole balloon in."

Darby and I looked at each other and she very subtly shook her head. She didn't have to. I was thinking the same thing. We didn't want the kid to OD in our squat and have to deal with the police and all that. I didn't

other half of the balloon of dope, and then slept for 12 hours.

Darby kept checking him with a flashlight to make sure he was still breathing by holding a little make-up mirror under his nose. During the time he was sleeping, we kept a nervous watch. If we had to go get food or smokes then the other would stay and keep an eye on him. When he finally woke up late that night, the first thing he asked was "where the fuck am I?" followed quickly by "who the fuck are you?" We told him of where we had found him and what had taken place over the last 32 hours or so. His eyes filled with tears of gratitude and wordlessly he opened his arms for us to give him a hug. Again Darby and I looked at each other for a second before we both leaned over and hugged him. He smelled terrible, but I could tell from the hug he gave us that he had a lot of heart and it was worth it. After a long moment he released us, asked our names, told us his name was CJ and then asked us if we had any more dope. The three of us were inseparable ever since.

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