

STOP! A Look At Los Angeles

Written by Crackpot



Despite the weather, L.A. is often a chilly, brisk town. It's strictly divided between the haves and the have nots and it's hard to keep to pace with everything that is changing about you. God forbid should you talk to your neighbors. For the most part, people stick to their neighborhoods and cower behind locked doors.

Friday was my first day off in a while.. It was an errands-palooza kinda day. I drove over to the west side for a Doctor's appointment and brought some early lunch to a friend recovering from a gimpy leg. He asked me if I wanted to catch a flick, but, no, it was my first day off in a while and I had stuff to do. Wanted to get some writing done.. needed a car wash.. I've been real busy and wanted to tackle those loads upon loads of laundry (ah-hah! That's where that smell has been coming from!) that had been piling up. This reminded me I was a week late in picking up my dry-cleaning and needed to get that before Subir hocked it. I needed some dishes out of the sink.

Today, I'm NOT gonna be irresponsible. Got shit to do. Today I am laundry doin, dry cleaning picking up, crazy bitch with a dish cloth, mad ass duster, closet organizing, Armor Alling freak. By the end of the day, everything that had slid since the first of the year was going to be done.

So I skip out around noon or so, proud of myself that I was sticking to my day off schedule. Traffic was moving great up the Sepulveda Pass, and I screech on the breaks.

And stopped.

With a thunderclap the world stopped somewhere between Mullholland and Ventura Blvd. as I

STOP! A Look At Los Angeles

Written by Crackpot

drove smack into traffic. The teeth gnash cursing Sherman Oaks traffic I curse the 405 Interchange. I curse the Kappa Kappa Gamma from UCSB in the Jag edging into my lane, a bare right foot on the dash.. I curse realtors, clients and KFWB "Traffic on the Ones" for not warning me earlier.. For good measure, I curse politicians, squash (both the game and the fruit), my checkbook (for if it was bigger, I could commute via chopper) and, again, the city of Sherman Oaks.

But then, I saw it; The real "Fuck You" of LA traffic.

People were getting out of their cars. This isn't traffic, this is a closure. On a Friday, sometime between noon and one, everyone's world stopped. The busiest freeway intersection in the United States had been closed.

It's been said that things that are out of our control don't make us angry. If you trip, you don't blame gravity. It's the things you can do something about that makes you angry.

So there we were, old, young, black, white, poor, rich, pretty and not so much.

A contractor who wasn't getting paid today got out of his car sat on the hood of his pickup and opened the sports section. An ultra healthy fifty something gets out and strains for a view of "What the Hell is going on?." Some pretty young thang bums a menthol off of the tattooed bad boys in one of those half truck half SUV things.

Word of the "crane a quarter mile up that smashed down on the big rig that smashed into Honda that smashed into the Chevy" was making it's way down the stalled tenants of the 405. The radio said we would be there about four and half hours.

Then the weirdest thing of all happened. We, complete strangers, started talking to each other. People without anything in common.

There are some damn fine folks in Los Angeles. We talked for 2-3 hours.

STOP! A Look At Los Angeles

Written by Crackpot

About the Super Bowl,
about Magic Mountain,
about cigarettes (who knew so many still smoked?)
about the housing market,
about ex-girlfriends,
about the Kappa Kappa Gamma,
about the cool things we had bought on E-Bay.
about what a beautiful day it was,
about the strange weather,
about In-N-Out
about how we just don't feel the same about the Lakers since Shaq left

At this point, the LAFD chopper flew over our heads. From listening to the radio we knew it was the crane operator with his two broken legs going to UCLA medical center. Everyone's radio had been blasting the play by play.

In spontaneous, selfless, unanimous harmony we raised our fists in a salute. And we cheered the crane operator. He was just a guy going to work that day. Then high fived. We were really proud that this guy had been saved. For the first time since the Northridge Quake, I felt connected to the City of Los Angeles.

Then a Winnebago moved. There was a scramble back to the cars and we all changed lanes, shuffled our dance cards, traffic lanes and ended up with a new group of folks for the next hour. Mine didn't speak English. We did make funny faces at each other. I sat on my hood and read the Sports section the contractor had given me.

Despite the weather, L.A. is often a chilly, brisk town. It's strictly divided between the haves and the have nots and it's hard to keep to pace with everything that is changing about you. God forbid should you talk to your neighbors. For the most part, people stick to their neighborhoods and cower behind locked doors.

Friday was my first day off in a while.