







ST JAMES'S PALACE

From: Miss Claudia Spens M.V.O.  
The Office of TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and HRH Prince Henry of Wales

**Private and Confidential**

9th July, 2013

Dear **[REDACTED]**,

The Duke of Cambridge has asked me to thank you for your letter of 17th June in connection with your son's magazine, 'The Nervemeter'.

Your reasons for writing as you did are appreciated and His Royal Highness is grateful to you for taking the trouble to send him a copy of this thought provoking publication.

The Duke of Cambridge has asked me to send you his best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia Spens

**[REDACTED]**  
MRS. JEAN AMSON



If you are begging on the streets then you qualify to sell Nervemeter magazine. The minimum suggested donation is £3: all of that money stays with the vendor. If you would like to sell Nervemeter magazine, call or text this number - 07427686132 - and we will arrange a delivery to you.

Ако просия по улиците след това имате право да продава Nervemeter списание. Минималната предложи дарение е £3: всички тези пари остава с продавача. Ако искате да получите искал да продаде списанието Nervemeter, повикване или текстово този номер - 07427686132 - и ние ще организираме доставка за вас.

Dacă sunteți cerșit pe străzi, atunci te califici să-și vândă Revista Nervemeter. Donația minimă sugerată este de 3 RON: toți banii sta cu vânzătorul. Dacă ar fi dori să vândă revista Nervemeter, sunați sau text acest număr - 07427686132 - și vom aranja o livrare pentru tine.

Contributors: Aidee, Angus, Aslan, Gerald Baker, Big Stu, Michael Brady, John Dolan, Little Jay, Harry, Brendan Quick.

Art director: Kieron Livingstone

Editor: Ian Allison

With thanks to Iphgenia Baal and Tim Roman

The magazine is dependent on donations and fundraising events to pay for print runs.

For more information see [www.nervemeter.co.uk](http://www.nervemeter.co.uk) or [www.facebook.com/TheNervemeter](https://www.facebook.com/TheNervemeter).

[info@nervemeter.co.uk](mailto:info@nervemeter.co.uk)

West of Cityminster

Our Ref: DW\_RSUTHER

Penalty Charge Notice No: [REDACTED]

Date of Contravention: [REDACTED]

Location: [REDACTED]

Contravention Code: [REDACTED]

Wardour Street (G1)

In many respects this is the most important issue of Nervemeter so far. It is composed of writing, drawing and art by homeless people and hostel-dwellers, most of whom have sold the magazine. We have complemented this with quotations and interview material from our vendors, and a sample of opinions from members of the public about begging.

We were impressed by the prison diary given to us by a man who goes by the name of 'Little Jay', with whom we have a long-standing relationship, and who we first met when he was sleeping in a pile of old duvets behind the former Texaco garage on Shoreditch High Street.

The thing we found most striking about Jay's contribution from jail was the fact that he had scribbled it on the reverse side of letters from his mother. We asked Jay's permission to scan in both his diary pages and the front sides of the letters, and he agreed.

We were also dazzled by the brilliance of 'Big Foot News', an occasional publication featuring drawings and musings by a man who goes by the name of 'Big Stu'. We learnt that this man's talents have since been recognised by the Royal Academy, where he took part in an art class for homeless people.

In addition, we would like to thank Michael Brady for his beautifully handwritten account of living in a squat in Brixton. And extend that thanks to everyone who has shown support for the Nervemeter – residents and staff – at Joe Richards House in Peckham. We would also like to thank for their brilliant contributions, Aslan, Aidee, Angus, Harry of Mayfair and the now-celebrated artist, John Dolan.

Keeping with the letter writing theme of the issue, we have also included a reply we received from St James's Palace on behalf of HRH Prince William. Another letter accompanied by a £10 donation, came to us from the mother of one of our vendors, David Hutcheson, who sadly died in 2012.

We also thought it was appropriate to include a signed message of 'best wishes to the Nervemeter' from the most venerable Major of London, Boris Johnson.

Very Best Regards,

The Nervemeter

To the Nervemeter  
with best wishes  
Boris Johnson





# TRAVEL FROM LONDON



- **I ESCAPE THE KALEIDASCOPE OF HASSLE AND ABUSE OF OLD SMOKEY**
- **FIND NEW FRIENDS AND NEW ENGLAND. THE JOURNAL IS INSIDE THIS ISSUE.**
- **NEW POLICE**
- **NEW DRAWINGS**

Brighton

**Lot of tent and police come along; information again but no move of the beach. A lot smoke barbeque the hassle. Outreach then food shower at first base. Use computer and print Friday, 07 June 2013**

This is updating, several stops and asked to move; saying begging and know I have journal outside st James' church Piccadilly, then burglar in Cornwall, just off the bus full of racist attacks.

A lot of rain this week so difficult anything; gloom and dirt and cold 12/02/2013 09:37:56. plenty others getting wet and sitting or sleeping outside and new flute player in tunnel so no sleep yesterday, walked Victoria and police there; rest a while on bench and look for a ticket, anywhere to get out of cold, trudging with a load, or confrontation.

## Update

24/06/2013 11:32:39

Back in London after travel; log pictures copying; some stops and move on



# SHORT STORIES

People like reading, and anyone reading this may understand more than one language.

Writing is a physi-

Amazed at cal and her re- mental ef- sponse I fort, and I ask for the stop form; like to draw and paint , in the day centers. In Paris I was

there at the right time for an art group.

I returned to England, after loosing a ticket, three days without

later I can discuss incidents with other sandwich bin

collectors

Pavement Magazine, for Homeless people, publishes these figures. Twenty seven is Hospital age for

death of average admissions. After three winters outside and a new one approaching, the community and regions are still not housing as emergency homeless.

Hostels, such as a backpacker exist but money may be better spent on food, sleeping bags or clothing. Some say the are twelve years outside one hundred deaths are reported each year and the latest figure is

More stories  
and art on  
email  
bigstu42@y  
ahoo.co.uk

## 325 get the number

Gambling on law is a difficult procedure, people don't appear to follow laws-only the legal profession knows where and what you can do . Continual surveillance and another stop, sitting is not a crime and I make sure I am on a vacant property.

I hold up my News and no interest, they pass by and

then the smokers and sharp critiques.

People look and the charity collectors continue for donations, this time the death.

The big issue seller, the charity workers, passers by.

I am questioned and say I don't have to answer. She stops with my name the

conversation.

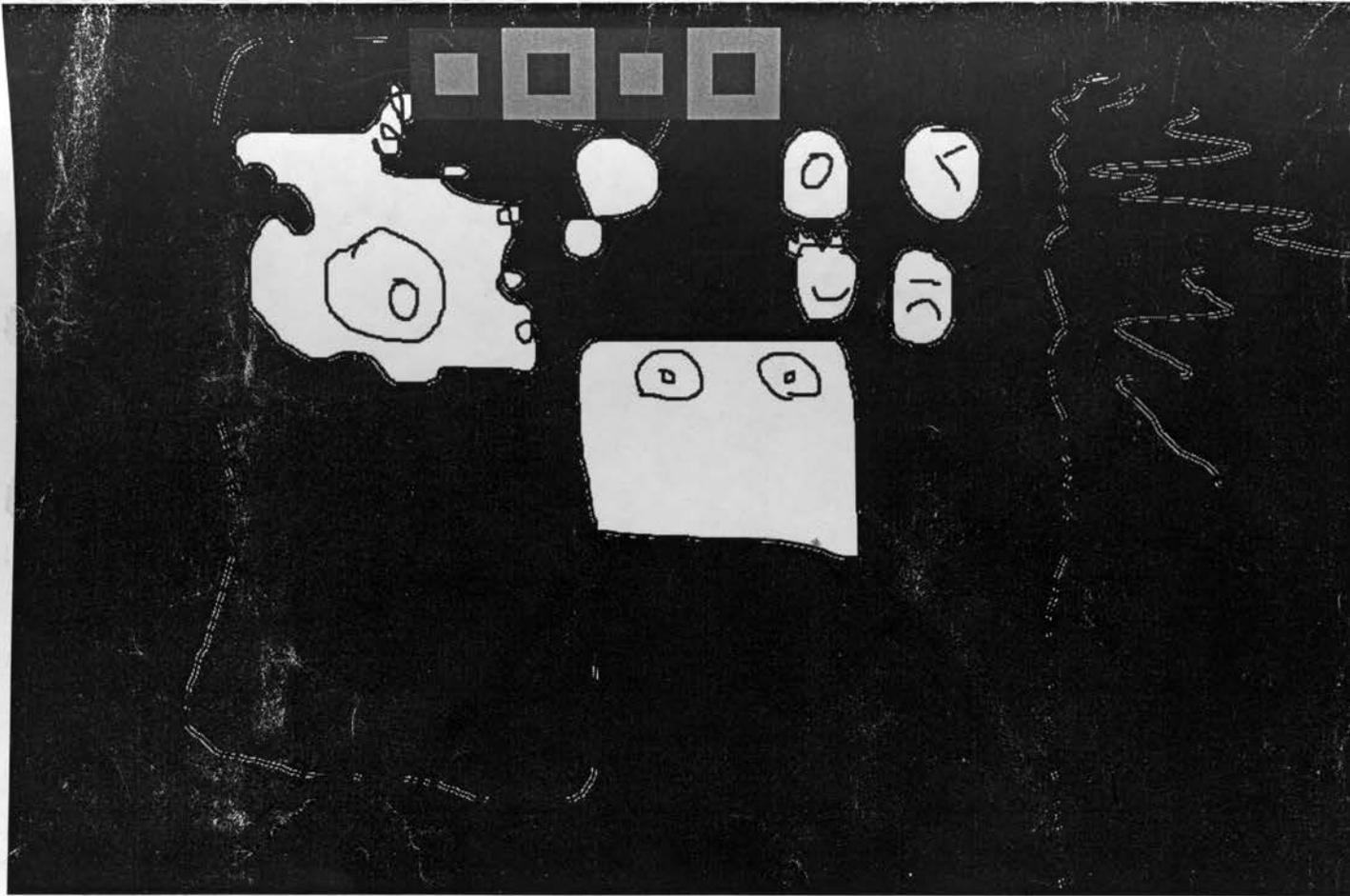
She says I am begging because of my sleeping bag; I tell her I'm not asking for money and you must have it she says move for my safety.

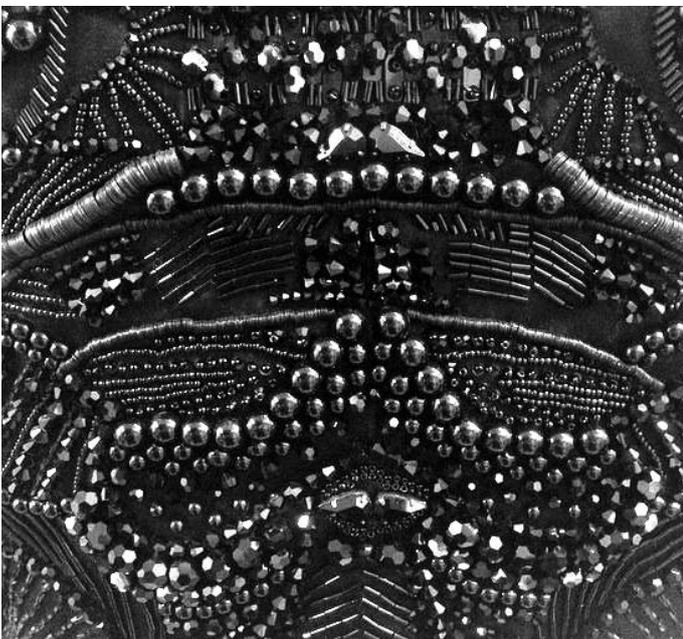
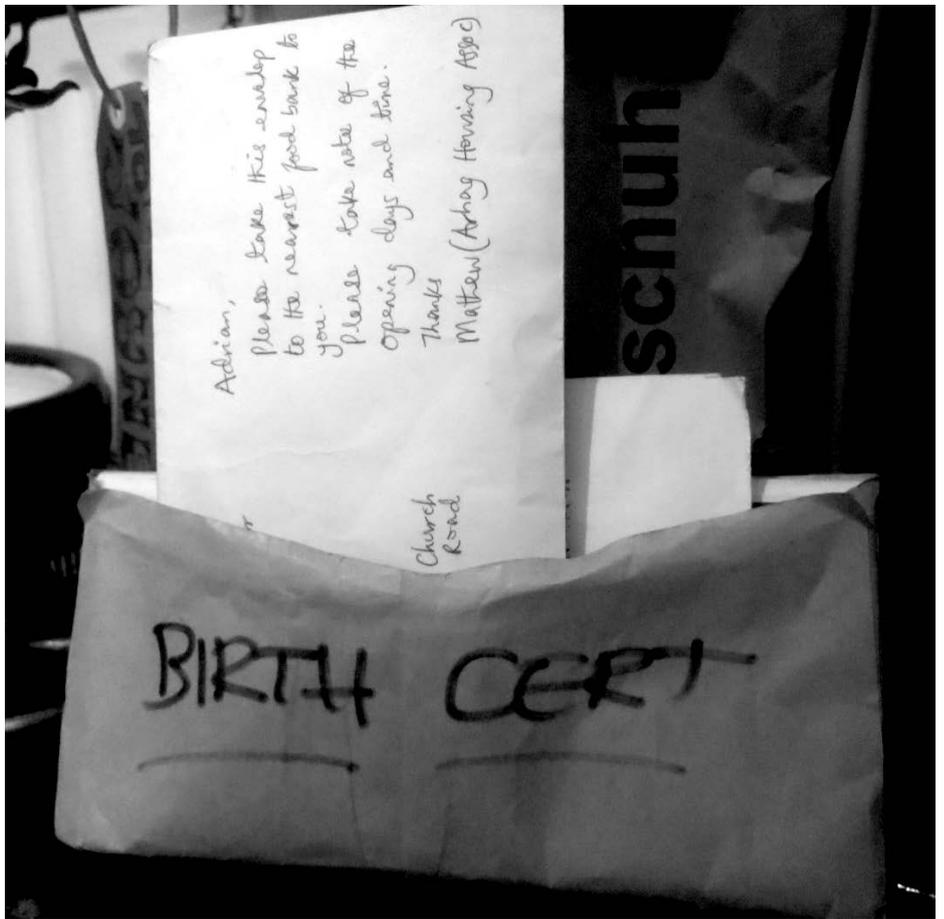
Next few days am moved on from sleeping; Police man asks

and then orders;

Can't you move around there?

ROCKERBILL  
Y SNOOZE





# Diary of my time in H.M.P. Thameside FOR "THE NERVE METER"

Being an ex con aint easy you know! Life aint exactly easy being normal <sup>as it is!</sup> Joe Public? ~~tot~~ ~~at~~ so when you are a prolific violent offender, you can imagine the bountiful opportunities on offer from life in general. I've had a five year break since me to London and I thought, my Prison days were over, so you can imagine my surprise when on 10th July I was sentenced to 14 weeks imprisonment at the Metagull Bow Magistrates. This court is infamous throughout the Criminal element of Society for its relentless hard stance on sending offenders back to the Slammer without any mercy what so ever. Here is a diary of my time in a serco security prison H.M.P. Thameside.

## Week 1 (Arrival)

To be landed out am now sitting in the swee loose awaiting my Process through reception yet again for the hundredth time. ALL sorts of thoughts are running through my head. whats this risk like, am I gonna get the chip knocked off my shoulder yet again as soon as I meet my welcoming committee at the front desk. what are the kanga's (screws, prison officers) like, are they gonna be cunts to me and oh my god we got to be - loose! which aint no easy ~~ride~~ ride at all. You see withdrawing from Hard Drugs is a price you pay for living life in a smoke

37 TORMORE PARK  
DEAL  
KENT  
CT14 9UR

Dear Jason

Glad you are OK at the moment, not a good place to be; at least I know where you are and that's in the last four or five years, we now know where you are.

We had a BBQ on Sunday all that was missing was you, David Heidi and baby Jack were here, Lucy and Warren, and Gareth. You have missed so much by not keeping in touch with us - you missed our wedding which I would have loved you to be there.

Jason you must remember that your brothers and sister feel that you could have got in touch, we all love you and just need to know that you are OK.

When we had the fire at the house it could have been a lot more than losing half the house, just think if anything had happened we can't get hold of you.

Baby Jack was born so early was not sure of what was going to happen to him, Lucy has Molly and she is now 12 so you never really got to see her, she is a darling of a girl, so lovely to everyone. Steve you only met the once we have been married for 8 years, and you so could have been part of our lives.

screened doors. I've got to admit life is bliss  
 without a care in the world. Constantly wrapped  
 up in lovely soft warm cotton wool and  
 buzzing to go with it! Well do I have to say  
 any more, I'm sure many of you have experen  
 that warm glow that blissfully radiates  
 from you when your high from Nature's best  
 There is one hard lesson you have to learn  
 though from life in the euphoric fast lane  
 what goes up must come down and come  
 down hard you do believe me. Your Recept  
 are very unforgiving for being suppressed and  
 when they come back online boy god do you  
 know it. Here they come the doors being unlocked  
 and I aint being handcuffed and am allowed  
 to walk on my own steam to my awaiting  
 "Hello" at reception. Not being frogmarched  
 and handcuffed is a new one for me to  
 experience. Arriving at the reception desk  
 I am greeted by a "Hello Jason" instead  
 of stand behind the line and be quiet.  
 "What the Fuck" maybe this is a false sense  
 of security but so far so good. The officers  
 are polite and respectful all the way thro  
 my processing ordeal. I am stripped, searched  
 and treated respectfully and aint receive  
 a good hiding which believe me does knock  
 your streetwise attitude out of you.  
 Finally I am instructed to sit on a chair.  
 This is the chair I have heard about for  
 so long. It scans your body for conceal  
 objects such as mobile phones and parcels  
 of drugs. Nothing is detected as I aint got

Steve is such a good man everyone loves him, because he is so good to me.

Molly calls him Steveboy, but now he is a proper Grandad to Baby Jack

We have just finished the garden and looks great now. we don't have to go out anymore as everything we need is at home.

As you said you may come for a visit let me know when as will try and get everyone together, for a BBQ

I think its been about 6 years since I saw you last. and this year you are now 42

Time you sorted your life now, as your Mum I will always worry about you, hope this prison time is only for what you said. and nothing worse

~~well~~ take care and sending you a few pounds of 15, only have this at the moment. hope this will be ok for the things you need.

Keep in touch with your family  
love you Son  
take care.

Mum

X  
X

Nothing on me. Unfortunately as I don't  
 have the opportunity to get a parcel  
 sorted for my unscheduled break from  
 society; my withdrawal from living it  
 large outside are now beginning to kick  
 in and I tell you what I feel like shit.  
 I am in fucking bits and am well and truly  
 Rattling hard like a bitch. I don't really  
 feel like writing this diary at all but  
 The Nerve Market has more than helped  
 me out I tell ya so maybe I owe it to  
 give something back for once as it's  
 been one way traffic for a long time  
 and all I've done is ~~take~~, take, take and  
 take in hard times. I have had this  
 feeling of wanting to contribute for  
 a long time and now is my chance to  
 have some input into the magazine and  
 at the same time let ya know what it's  
 like doing bird in these majestys finest  
 establishments. Anyway back to my arrival  
 and I'm now waiting in a large room eating  
 my dinner which is somewhat unappealing  
 as when your Rattling trust me eating  
 is the last thing you want to do when  
 your stomach feels like it's full of  
 lactic acid and someone is twisting  
 a knife around and around it, so my  
 dinner stays on the table in front of  
 me unopened of course and no doubt  
 going cold by now. Next a bag of kit  
 is brought in to me with prison issue clothing  
 and bedding in it the officer asks me to  
 follow him as we are going to the wing,  
 my new home for 7 weeks as we only get to  
 serve half my sentence. A shit and a slave

GYM INSTRUCTOR.

GYM WORKOUTS  
DIETS -

37 TORMORE Park  
Deal  
Kent

SACRIFICE.

CT14 9UR

JOHN POLAND.

Dear Jason

It was a bit of a shock to hear you are in prison. I do hope that it is not too serious this time and hope that you will sort your life out once and for all. We all worry about you and think about you often.

You should keep in touch with us as we need to let you know what is going on at home. Like the job we had, and David's baby being born two months early. We have no way of getting in touch if anything else happens.

You have a lovely family here we miss you not getting in touch.

I am a bit worried about you being in prison, as a mum I still worry about you even though you are a grown man. It is time you sorted things out, and stayed out of prison. All this lost time you only have one life and please don't waste it.

You can ring me or write to me as I would like to know you are OK.

love you lots take care

Mum

XX

X

£50  
To get a few  
bits  
x

Diary of my time in H.M.P.Thameside for "THE NERVEMETER"

Being an ex con ain't eazy you know! Life ain't exactly easy being normal Joe Public as it is! So, when you are a prolific violent offender, you can imagine the bountiful opportunities on offer from life in general. I've had a five year break since moving to London and I thought my prison days were over. So you can imagine my surprise when on 10th July I was sentenced to 14 weeks imprisonment at the merciful Bow Magistrates. This court is infamous throughout the criminal element of society for its relentless hard stance on sending offenders back to the slammer without any mercy whatsoever. Here is a diary of my time in a Serco Security prison, H.M.P.Thameside

Week 1 (Arrival)

I've landed and am now sitting in the sweat box awaiting my process through reception. Yet again, for the hundredth time. All sorts of thoughts are running through my head. Whats this nick like, am I gonna get the chip knocked off my shoulder yet again as soon as I meet my welcoming comitee at the front desk, what are the kanga's (screws, prison officers) like, are they gonna be cunts to me and oh my god, we got to detox! which ain't no easy ride at all. You see withdrawing from Hard Drugs is a price you pay for living life in a smoke screened daze. I've got to admit life is bliss without a care in the world. Constantly wrapped up in a lovely, soft, warm cotton wool and buzzing to go with it! Well, do I have to say anymore? I'm sure many of you have experienced that warm glow that blissfully radiates from you when you're high from nature's best. There is one hard lesson yo have to learn though from life in the euphoric fast lane. what goes up must come down and come down hard. You do believe me. Your receptors are very unforgiving for being suppressed and when they come back online, boy, god, do you know it. Here they come, the doors are being unlocked and I ain't being handcuffed and am allowed to walk on my own to my awaiting "Hello" at reception. Not being frog-marched and handcuffed is a new one for me to experience. Arriving at the reception desk, I'm greeted by a "Hello Jason" instead of standing being the line and being quiet. "What the Fuck." Maybe this is a false sense of security but so far so good. The officers are polite and respectful all the way through my processing ordeal. I am stripped, searched and treated respectfully and ain't received a good hiding, which believe me, does knock your streetwise attitude out of you. Finally I am instructed to sit on a chair. This is the chair I have heard about for so long. It scans your body for concealed objects, such as mobile phones and parcels of drugs. Nothing is detected as I ain't got nothing on me. Unfortunately, as I didn't have the oppotunity to get a parcel sorted for my unscheduled break from society; my withdrawals from living it large outside are now beginning to kick in and I tell you what I, I feel like shit. I am in fucking bits and am well and truly rattling hard like bitch. I don't really feel like writing this diary at all but The Nervemeter has more than helped me out I tell you, so, maybe I owe it to give something back for once, as it's been one way traffic for a long time, and all I've done is take, take and take in hard times. I have had this feeling of wanting to contribute for a long time and now is my chance to have some input into the magazine and at the same time let you know what its like doing bird in Her Majesty's finest establishments.

Anyway, back to my arrival and I'm now waiting in a large room eating my dinner, which is somewhat unappealing as when you're rattling, trust me, eating is the last thing you want to do, when your stomach feels like its full of lactic acid and someone is twisting a knife around and around it. So, my dinner stays on the table in front of me, unopened of course, and no doubt going cold by now. Next, a bag of kit is brought in to me, with prison issue clothing and bedding in it. The officer asks me to follow him as we are going to the wing. My new home for 7 weeks, as I've only got to serve half my sentence. A shit and a shave.

1st LETTER

GYM INSTRUCTOR  
GYM WORKOUTS  
DIETS -  
SACRIFICE  
JOHN DOLAND

Dear Jason,

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I do hope that its not too serious this time and hope that you will sort your life out once and for all. We all worry about you and think about you often.

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You can ring me or write to me, as I would like to know you are OK

Love you lots, take care

Mum x x x

£50 to get a few bits x

2ND LETTER

Dear Jason,

Glad you are OK at the moment, no a good place to be; at least I know where you are and that's in the last four or five years, we now know where you are.

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When we had the fire at the house, it could have been a lot more than losing half the house, just thinking if anything had happened, we can't get hold of you.

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Steve is such a good man. Everyone loves him, because he is so good to me. Molly calls him Stevieboy, but now he is a proper Grandad to Baby Jack.

We have just finished the garden and looks great now we don't have to do out anymore, cos everything we need is at home.

As you said, you may come for a visit. Let me know when, as will try and get everyone together for a BBQ.

I think it's been about 6 years since I saw you last, and this year you are now 42. Time you sorted your life now, as your Mum, I will always worry about you. Hope this prison time is only for what you said, and nothing worse.

Well, take care and sending you a few pounds £15, only have this at the moment. Hope this well be OK for the things you need.

Keep in touch with your family, love you son, take care

Mum x x

# Always Looking For A Place To Live

Another day in the life:

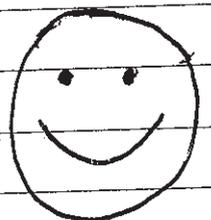
Another day with no life

By nature i'm not a negative person but waking up as sick as i am right now doesn't put me in a joke telling mood. I'm in the shit-dig time and i've still got to walk 2½ miles to the spot where i go and peg up my money. At least my Dog has been properly yed, that's one thing i make sure i never have to worry about, what i do to myself is my choice but my Dog really does come number one before anything. I first got her when i was homeless but this was at a time when Squatting was much easier to do, before the Government changed the laws on squatting civil-properties so now you can only squat commercial-~~buildings~~ buildings which is harder because there usually much "pigger" so you need a lot more people to hold down and keep secure and trying to organise it so that there was always someone on the premises 24 hours a day was difficult because most of the people that did squat with us were not exactly 9to5ers with a healthy respect for authority so people more often then <sup>not</sup> just did as they pleased, in the end it became impossible. I'm in a hostell now with my own front door key and my own bed to lie down on, i miss my squatting days but every knock at the door, in the end just became something more to worry about. The last place i squatted in for me was the jinal straw. It was a house, although not completely empty it wasn't in a good state, un-fit to live in and it looked like it hadn't been lived in for a long time so we decided to occupy the place

We just got the place together and were sitting down having a drink and a puff when all of a sudden the front door flies open about 15 masked men with bats and all kinds of tools came bowling into the front room and proceeded to batter everybody. As it happens around this time i had just been moved into temporary accomodation by the council so i wasn't actually living in the house but because i found it i decided to help out a bit just to help make it liveable. Anyway i managed to get away and call The Police which i did not like doing but we had just been well and truly overpowered so it was the only thing i could do. Squating has always been an unpredictable and precarious affair but a definite answer to a real housing problem. Having had a serious habit for a good few years now it tends to make even the most straight-forward of situations very difficult and waking up outside in the cold sick as a pig really is not nice so i am glad my housing has become a bit more settled even though life in a hostell aint exactly normal.

Written by No-Where Man, The Nervemeter,  
Peckham, S.E.15

October 2014



# “I’ve ate a hedgehog before, in Wales.”

“There are several methods to keep warm when sleeping outside during the cold winter months. A good idea is to get two cheap sleeping bags and put one inside the other. This provides a lot more warmth. Also sleeping inside a cardboard tunnel keeps the warmth in and the wind out. To this you need to get hold of three quite large cardboard boxes and make them up back into boxes. Open the flaps of the boxes and slide them together to make one long box you can lie down inside. Close the end flaps at each end to keep out the drafts. Once inside the cardboard tunnel it will trap a lot of heat. If you can find a big sheet of plastic you can also drape that over the top to make the boxes waterproof as well. That is essential if you do not have a well sheltered alcove to sleep in. By the way sleeping in a cardboard tunnel will also help to keep your belongings secure as well. It is also a good idea to put a few layers of cardboard underneath you to provide insulation from the cold ground. Also as a lot of heat is lost from your head wear a thick woolly hat while sleeping. Also wear several pairs of socks. Three or four pairs of thin socks will keep your feet really warm throughout the night.”

“Being strangled to try and get the stuff out of my mouth after scoring. It’s what they do. I’m a master at swallowing it and getting it back up.”

“Everyone who goes through the clearing process now, they only get their flat for two years. You might get an extension. They were pretty firm when they moved me in here, saying don’t forget, it’s only for two years. The idea is that you sort your life out and get a job so you can pay rent.”

“I had a good sleep. I woke up in the end. It got too warm. Fuckin hell.”

“I stayed on the streets. I stayed on the streets for ages... I use to ride a unicycle and juggle, and I’d make a bit of money on the South Bank and sleep there. Where the Tate Modern is. I used to camp there. When it was just a factory. They actually co-erced people with places to live. They didn’t last long though. They were out back on the streets within six months or so. Somewhere else. You still get people near the church, round, what was it called? Cardboard City? The Bullring, that was it. You always had a fire there. That was the good thing. Every night there was a fire, but you got some proper dodgy characters.”

“This magazine has got to keep going. It’s working really, really well. Would you like a cup of tea? Have a cup of tea, man.”

“Busking. Penny whistle. Played the baron as well - the ice drum. My ex, she taught me. In Shrewsbury, she’d play the whistle and I’d play the baron. Playing the big slope in the city centre. Masonic rich motherfuckers mate. They are mate.”

“And Christmas is shite. Trust me. It really is.”

“I’ve ate a hedgehog before, in Wales”

“She picks me up. She takes me to Epping, physically abuses me all weekend, and then brings me back. What a lovely woman she is.”

“Excuse me. Doing Mayfair and the Ritz hotel. Don’t dumb me down. Walthamstow? How dare you? How double dare you? I only go up to posh birds. But you know why, they don’t tell their parents when I do. You know why? Cos they’d be ashamed of a homeless man, but they love me. Because, I’m not just a nice guy, I’ve got a large member. I’ve got the biggest membership in England. Trust me. They call me donk.”

“Yeah what they used to do is put the sandwiches by the bins. They were all ... mental health problems, really severe. I don’t know if people still stay round there or not. Lincolns Inn Fields they used to stay, didn’t they.”

“I like Iceland for their skips. I get stuff all the time. You’ve got to be careful. As long as you don’t leave a mess. It’s hard to do at night now, cos it’s shut and they lock the gates. But if you go in the day and there’s no delivery of anything, no one hanging around, then you can have a good poke about. You get loads of fruit and veg and you still get a couple of roasts and things. And you get loads of ice lollies and cake and biscuits. All that stuff... Mr Kipling, big bags full of them. I got a box of apple pies the other day. That was pretty good ... They have got a bit funny recently. They’ve started taking stuff out of the packet before they put them in [the bins]. Marks and Sparks used to put blue dye all over it.”

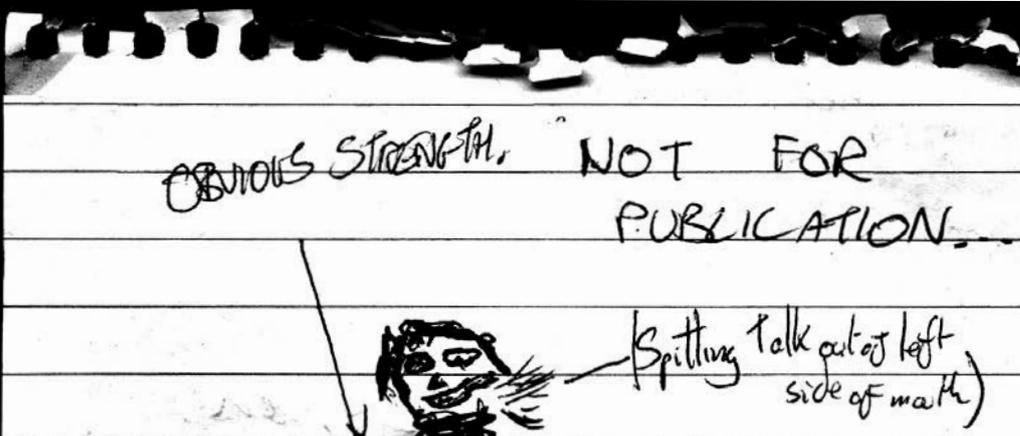
“I’m a bag of nerves, I’m paranoid, I’m schizophrenic, I’m Scooby Doo. I have gone through sanity, or that bit of sanity. I’m not trying to hang on to my sanity. I’m trying to hang on to other people’s sanity.”

“Well, he went for his medical, didn’t he? And they said to him ‘are you fit for work?’ and of course he’s fit for work, but he’s got a mental problem. Issues. They give him £35 a week rise and told him never to come back again. If he ever wants mental help, call this number, don’t come here.”

“I actually used to take mushrooms and bang up amphetamines, no, listen, I became part of the bike. I became part of the machine, and all the time I had it, only slipped off it once. Only one time, that’s all.”

“Christmas in the psyche unit was not so bad. Better than being on the street. They did this version of ‘The Ward’s Got Talent’. This big fat lesbian was hogging the floor and not letting anyone else sing, and eventually it all kicked off. It was like, this would be funny if it wasn’t happening to me.”

“I’ve got everything fucking designer now.”



## The Witch

Before I embark on this tale, I feel I must explain a little about where I was in life. I was very free. No responsibilities, no people's idea of who I was (I'd left my home town because people there couldn't accept that I was no longer the same person they'd known (some of them for years)). I probably hurt friends, I refused to answer to my old name, I'd always known I had another name that belonged purely to me. I found it - Aslan, yes, like the lion. Anyway, some people literally got vindictive about it and refused to accept this. So I left. I travelled round England a lot, never staying in one place too long. I was in Cambridge at the time, a great place for me (approx. 93-94). I was in a field near to the town centre with a crowd of travellers and locals of all ages. Alcohol and spliffs were about. Summertime. A good vibe. So he appears, like something out of the 16th century, or any century come to that. Timeless. At first glance, just an old raggedy guy pushing a wooden handcart. But look closer, and its undeniable. A face that's constantly changing. Very blue eyes with a sparkle of a distant star.

Now, can I just make this clear, we're not talking about some hag with tarot cards and crystals. Nor someone dressed up in a cloak and pointy hat. Or ceremonial gear, sword, wand etc. Or even someone who leans towards paganism. Nor someone who reads New Age literature, or seeks out rare occult books. None of these cliches... On with the tale.

He's obviously a bit tired. He sits down near a few of us and proceeds to talk out of the side of his mouth, spitting every other word. He seems to speak old English, but its the voice that stands out. Every sentence is an obvious effort. He beckons me over, and I'm immediately interested. His forearms are huge and twisted like tree limbs. He gesticulates a lot. He has one normal-ish palm, and another as black as coal. Not dirty, it just is black, not like a black man's hand: jet black.

I ask his name, and he replies in his strange voice (its almost like a lisp),

"I'm a witch, beat me up if you want to!"

I have no interest in beating him up and tell him so. I ask him what he believes in. (I have my own knowledge in this area. Really!) He replies,

"I believe in one man and one man only."

I ask who, already suspecting the answer.

"The devil himself!"

"Why?" I ask.

"Because I've met him," he says all this with a wry smile.

There are other people around now, and they take it all in good humour, but no more.

"OK," says one, "tell me a spell."

I shall try to imitate his reply.

"Get a bottle of Guinness. Have a drink, spit in it, blood it, piss in it, run it behind a tree, leave it, run back out, if it goes BANG! you'll be a good man for the day. Sounds like on sense at first, doesn't it? But consider the objective result. BANG! YOU'LL BE A GOOD MAN FOR THE DAY."

Remember he was asked for a spell, now you look in any book on this subject. It'll all be things like making someone love you, luck with money, healing people, being beautiful, or hurting people. NOTHING SO BEAUTIFUL AS BEING A GOOD MAN FOR THE DAY.

I was already pretty convinced he was for real, now I was convinced. I loved him. He asked me to shake his hand though, the black hand, and something in me wouldn't let me do that.

He laughed at this, genuinely, and I got the idea he was pleased. There was an older guy (than me) around, one of the "brew crew". Now pay attention, here is the truth. This guy saw what was going on and said,

"What's wrong? I'll shake any man's hand."

The witch held out his black hand and the guy shook it. Now, I saw with my own eyes, this man change immediately. The expression on his face changed, and his eyes changed forever. he turned on his heel and walked away a different man. I'll never forget it.

The witch grinned at me. We talked a little bit more, with others as well. And I "SAW" the effort the witch hand with speaking, and understood the spitting. He was a holy man and hand to clean his tongue especially when people lied or talked shit.

I have since experienced this sort of thing myself. For truth is freedom and people try (almost unwittingly) to trap or imprison you with their talk. He would not have that. People would say "uncouth, disgusting, insulting, etc." wouldn't they? He would not have that. And he was a very peculiar creature. More real than you or I. I remember two other things he told me.

1. He didn't like women.
2. Heroin was bad, or, a grip!

Now that's pretty extreme to not like women, but I understand why. That though is for another day. And if you are offended, remember his first statement!

I am convinced we were meant to meet each other. There is even a part of me which thinks maybe he was me. This man belonged to any age. He could have been 500 years old. I loved him. If one were to choose to beat him up, I'm sure they'd be dead, or wish they were with 7 years. Do you think you may have met him? If so, contact me, I'll tell you more... if you believe?

BANG! AND YOU'LL BE A GOOD MAN FOR THE DAY. Remember this is 20-25 years ago. But the only objective of the "spell" he was asked for was being a good man for the day. I'm pretty sure his life was not each. But it was an enormous push to let me know, there are those who fully dedicated.

years old. I loved him.  
If one were to choose to beat  
him up. I'm sure they'd be dead.

# “I do drink, yes. In bars though.”

Begging? No. I think it breeds unhealthy attitudes. Well, towards working, obviously. And it's what the money is funding – cigarettes, drugs, alcohol – you see where it goes 100 yards down the line.

**[Man, 40s, pinstripe suit, Whitehall]**

It's more opportunists rather than need. It's more of a job, more of a choice. I don't, I have this thing in my head where my gran never got her purse out in public, and a lot of these people are pretty sketchy and you never know. I give to charity, or the Big Issue, or stuff like that.

**[Woman, late 20s, leggings and a leather jacket, Soho]**

No one should be homeless in this country. This country has enough for everyone. You had me down for a suit? No, I don't work in the city.

**[Trini man, suit + tie, late 30s, South Bank]**

People make mistakes, bad choices, generally speaking I think it's the choices people make that turn bad and ruin their lives. Going to prison, coming out with no family... there's always a story. The ones with a story are generally the ones I don't trust. The guys who just says 'I'm hungry' I've got a bit more sympathy for. Depends on the mood I'm in to be honest. Maybe it goes on drink and drugs. Some people say yeah I just want to go get a drink, you take people at face value, so I assume it goes on drink and drugs, but if that's your gig, that's your gig; it's a quid to me, it's an opportunity to you, you do what you want with it.

**[Man, late 20s, suit and tie with cotton jumper, City of London]**

I usually don't give people money but sometimes I do. Usually if they have a dog. I feel sorry for the dog.

**[Man, teens, Danish, South Bank]**



I do try to, when I have money on me. You don't know what they're gonna use the money for, but then we don't really know do we, you have to give them the benefit of the doubt. You may as well give them the money, they can do whatever they want with it.

**[Woman, early 20s, handbag and a headscarf, Brixton]**

No. I just don't give money to people on the streets. Quite a large number of them are frauds.

I know that a number of them are making a fairly large amount

of money out of it. I've been all over the place, including countries where poverty is a real problem, and yes I do, not here. No no no, not buskers either.

**[Man, 60s, tweed suit with a leather satchel, Brixton]**

I wish there was more grassroots stuff that could help people earlier on in life. I've worked in a homeless shelter, but I don't give to beggars because I don't want to encourage alcoholism and drugs.

**[Woman, early 20s, pink hair, South Bank]**





It is my opinion that they are lazy. In this country there is a lot of opportunity, if you are young you can get the work, or the benefit, you should just find a job. Where I'm from people need money, they have real problems, here you can get a job or a benefit.

**[Man, 40s, business suit with I.D. tag, City of London]**

A lot of the time you find they are ex-military, so really heartbreaking but begging? I don't give money to beggars - you give to one and then you've gotta give to all the others. I can't. I can't do that. You get a lot of drug addicts as well, so you don't know which are genuine.

**[Security woman, 40s, high-vis jacket, South Bank]**

Get a job. Was that recorded?  
**[Man, 30s, Italian, South Bank]**

The thing is I don't believe a lot of them. I really don't. - I just... You see in the papers people come up to London especially to do that and they go to their big house in... wherever. They make a lot of money out of it. No. I used to but I don't now. Because of things I read in the press mostly. The Metro - it's all over them all though. And I know for a fact that the Big Issue seller in Tunbridge comes on the train from miles away, every day, and, I don't see why he has to come in from so far away.

**[Woman, 40s, dress and large handbag, City of London]**

It is a really sorry state of affairs if someone has to beg. No, I don't give them money.

**[Man, 30s, blue puffa jacket, South Bank]**

Drug abuse, alcohol, things like that. No, there's enough support in this country to get people off the streets, there's enough charity to help them. I don't see why I should give money when my taxes go to charities, and to, I don't know, other charities, so it's better that way than to give them money. They're not willing to take the opportunities. The money goes on alcohol. I do drink, yes. In bars though.

**[Man, 30s, suit and open-neck shirt, City of London]**

I had a girl come up to me the other day and she's like 'my car ran out of gas, will you give me a couple of bucks to get some gas?' and I said, I won't give her the money, but I'll give her the gas. It's a matter of trust. I don't believe what anybody tells me if they're asking me for money. Too many times I've been burned. I asked her to take me to her car.. When they say they need gas and their story keeps changing.

**[Man, mid 30s Mormon, South Bank]**



Yeah sometimes, if I have the money. I don't want to give you money to go destroy yourself, but some people I see them and I know they need the food. Some people don't want to work, but in this country if you don't want to work you can suffer, the benefits are not enough, they give you benefits and it's finished in two weeks and you have to go to the streets to beg.

**[Man, late 20s, tracksuit and a gold tooth, Brixton]**

There is less begging than two years ago, but more homelessness since the Olympics. And now it is people who are really in need, not like two years ago, when it was professional beggars. Some of them work as well. They sleep and then use some toilet to brush up and go someplace sometime to work. I seen one or two guys. They really need, you know, some place for peace.

**[Security man, 30s, high vis jacket, South Bank]**

July 24<sup>th</sup> 2013

1, Drumjoan Terr  
Ochiltree

bumrock

Ayrshire

KA182RS

Dear Jean,

many thanks for  
the lovely card you sent me  
also the magazines I got  
from your son Ian, I'm  
enclosing £10 for your kindness  
it's not much. I did appreciate  
the books my daughter &  
son got 1 each. David is  
greatly missed by his family  
also he had many friends  
up here in Scotland. He  
loved London but always  
came home at least twice  
a year. After ~~some~~  
unannounced. He had a  
gran-daughter Laci & also

PTo

had another one on the way who was born 3 months ago. She is called Olivica Rose. He more or less reared his 2 children in London owing to a very volatile relationship with their mother, & I got custody of them both when they were 10 and 8 yrs old. They were his pride & joy

Please excuse my writing as I've got arthritis in my fingers & have bother holding a pen.

Yours sincerely

Doreen Hutchison

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**Home is ...**

I've got a cardboard box on a semi-detached doorstep. Park benches, Benson + Hedges, tents, what me? Have you got a spare room? I'll move in with you. Gawd bless yer.

**Where do you live?**  
Shoreditch

**Who's the most famous person you've met?**

Boris Johnson. He gave me a fiver to fuck off ... a fiver. He was on his bike.

**What was the last play you went to see?**  
Les Miserables.

**Earliest London memory?**

On the way to Gatwick. On the way to Spain. On London Bridge. We broke down. That's about the earliest. I was only four or five. A kid. Going to Ibiza. That was before it was hype. It was the 70s then.

**Best place for a first date?**

Trocadero, London. Piccadilly. Sega World. Definitely. Oh yeah. Definitely. Everything you need's in that place - cinema, video games, restaurants, cafes. Oh yes.

**What building would you most like to be locked in overnight?**

Trocadero again - yes - luv it - fantastic place. I used to hang around there, mid 20s to mid 30s, coming up from Dover, every weekend. Squat parties in the night, then in the daytime, Trocadero, then back for the night. But it's fucking dear - an expensive place. You've gotta have a few hundred quid to go in there for the day. '98, '99, 2000, all them years, when squat parties were regular. Only once every couple of months you get a squat party now. They've really hammered them. They just don't get them up no more, cos of the Old Bill taking the systems. It's not good. No parties anymore, anywhere. I've been waiting to hear for one now for 3 months.

**What building would you most like to buy?**

The Pinnacle, definitely. The big tall thing. No, I mean the one that's finished. The Shard. By the bridge.

**What would you do as Mayor for the day?**

Fine people £100 for putting chewing gum on the floor. Have you seen all these white dots all over the floor? Have you seen it everywhere? It's as bad as spitting. It's spitting, but staying there. Once it sets rock hard, you know they have to use special equipment to get it off? It's so difficult to clear off. Chewing gum, ban it or bin it. That's one thing. The other main thing I'd do is cycle routes - I'd put barriers either side of them. I've seen people in traffic jams - I've walked from Limehouse to Poplar, I've got here and the guys not even there in his car - he's miles behind. And they're overtaking each other and cutting each other up. Get a fucking push bike mate - free waterproofs for pushbikes. It's London - what's wrong with people? Scared of a bit of exercise. I don't get it, I don't get it, I really don't get it. It's ignorance and selfishness, that's what it is. There going, in a city, two miles up the road there, they're queuing up to go in there. People queue up at bus stops as well, to get on a bus, to go three stops. Obviously people walk faster than buses. God - what is wrong with people? That's why people are obese, fat. I don't get ya. Yeurgh. Fat as fuck, I don't get it. Lazy fat fuckers. I tell you, come the day of the steep hill, they're not gonna get up it. They're not gonna do it, they ain't gonna get there. Next question.

**Best meal?**

Liver, it was this liver, not Romanian, not Bulgarian, Albanian liver. An Albanian restaurant, it was, on Essex Road, by the Angel, by the Post

Office. I was homeless then, I was begging, and I went wow, when I went by the shop, and the guy goes 'wait there, wait there', so I waited outside, and he put on to the side, and he brought me this Albanian liver dinner with mashed potatoes and bits. It was absolutely gorgeous. The caramelised onions ... that was the best meal I ever had. I was homeless at the time. The guy just seen me inside, and I tell you what - oh man, really, really nice, that's my best meal.

**What are your favourite shops?**

Sweet shops - sweeties. Oh definitely. This one in Margate, Candy World. It's three floors of sweeties, yeah mate - buckets of sweets in that one. A big blooming shovel, you shovel into your bag. three floors of Pick 'n' Mix. Unbelievable.

**What was the last gig u went to**

That was a while ago. It's probably Hawkwind. A good few years ago. They still do it every Xmas. I think even The Damned still do Xmas.

**What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?**

Think in terms of Ying. Don't listen to people who overtly talk Yang all the time. It's just over masculine like rukhrukhrukh. That. Stay away from that.

**Who do you call when you want to have fun?**

I guess my dealer.

**Best thing a cabbie has said to you?**

Here's yer christmas bonus. 50 quid, last year. Good cabbie. Outside the Texaco garage. Just before it shut.

**What's the last album you bought?**

That was Eat Static, Planet Dog Records. I seen em at Glastonbury. It was Eat

Static, Ozric Tentacles, then it was Prodigy, then Chemical Brothers, straight after each other. That was good.

**What's your favourite pub?**

That'll be Sports Bar. Dollar. That's my favourite pub. Riches. That is one 24-7 place. Even when it's shut - the staff live there, and there's always someone about. It's constant money, the Sports Bar. Amazing for money that place. The barmen and the strippers and the residents and the bouncers - they all give you money. Eastern European most of them, but they're nice. There's no attitude, no sneakiness. They're nice people - very. And they're all loaded. Trust me. They earn a lot of money. The bouncers are on £100 a night there. 5 days a week. £500 a week in their pocket. It's only - what - 6 hours a night? They've all got jobs in the daytime as well. They are loaded. It's 9 o'clock they start, til 2,

maybe 3 on Saturday nights, so it ain't long. Opposite the garage - a hotbed of crime that was. Everybody used to wait around the garage to score, so it was constant area of beggars and dippers and thieves and dealers. Now the Sports Bart's getting all the flack. Mostly girl beggars. There's a few girl beggars that are causing a lot of trouble there. Dipping the clients. They always go for the suits.

**What's the first thing you do when you arrive home?**

Er... from where? I unlock the door. I unlock the fucking door man.

**Who's your hero?**

Auguste Comte. Oh Yes. Definitely. As far as I know, he is the only philosopher who tried to commit suicide. Threw himself into the Seine. Had a broken heart. And this was the father of Positivism. The height of rationalism. Makes you think. Ha ha ha.

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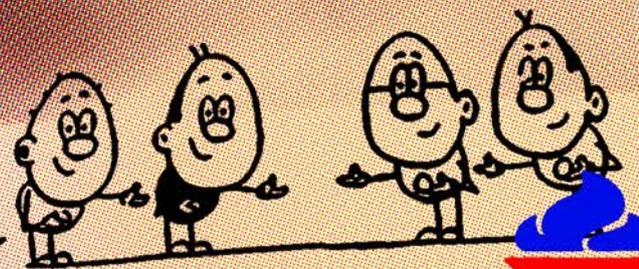
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