

My first summer job was at a Richfield gas station at the corner of College Avenue and University Blvd. in San Diego. The pay was \$1.00 per hour. The year, 1961. At age 18, working in a gas station was all I knew how to do other than wash dishes.

In San Diego at the time, you were lucky to get hired anywhere, especially if you were a punk kid just out of high school who didn't know much, only that he needed money to move out of his home town to pursue a dream of living in the Big City (San Francisco) where he had been accepted at SF State.

The owner of the Richfield business, a thin, be-speckled man in his 30's, projected an air of worldly wisdom beyond his bland image. Out of the blue one day after a short time on the job he pulled me aside.

"I have a story to tell you, Danny."

I waited, enthralled. He was my boss, after all.

"A man walked up to me one day carrying a brown paper bag and said, 'You the manager? I brought my lunch. Where do you want me to start?'"

The owner studied my reaction with an expression that was somewhere between a knowing grin and a sneering allusion to...?

What? I didn't know. I was already on the job. Did he think I was too meek? I was trying — maybe not hard enough for him — to learn the ropes. Why the story about this guy who just walked up and practically without a word slipped on a pair of Richfield overalls worn by the mechanics and stuck his head under the hood of a car to give it a tune-up?

The bell rang. A customer's tires had run over the hoses lying across the slick driveway. The boss watched his fresh attendant jog a little quicker over to the

## The guy with the brown paper bag

driver's side window.

"Fill 'er up, sir?"

Maybe the boss wanted the new employee to know that he was damn lucky to have a job at all in this economy, with so many people moving into San Diego and not enough places for them to live or work.

It was definitely a time of scarcity—my step-father talked about it all the time—but big words like scarcity that didn't mean much to me. All I knew was that jobs were hard as hell to find. At another Richfield station where I had applied, the owner called and offered me the night-shift position. I took that job too.

With two jobs, I was able to save a couple hundred dollars, even at minimum wage, to bankroll my move out of San Diego.

In San Francisco my buddy and I walked the streets for days before we finally saw a "for rent" sign in a window on the corner of 20th Street and Guerrero. We found the owner, a Chinese guy, and he accepted us.

My buddy got a job in a fancy restaurant. I got a job in a Richfield gas station. We used public transportation to get around the city. With our savings added to what we earned with our part-time jobs, we made it through our first year away from home debt free (tuition at SF State was \$50 per semester.)

That same process happened at every place I moved to over the next several years in different parts of the country. Taking on a new place was never easy. I have been the new kid in town, or the

new man in town, many times. You go to a place because there's something about it that seems to be calling you and you want to see if it's the right place for you. You know you have to get a job, a place to live, make new friends. Maybe you'll get lucky, and things will begin to go your way quickly. But that's never guaranteed.

When I came to Arcata in 1971 to attend Humboldt State, there were no places to live, or if there were any we couldn't find them. We — my girlfriend and dog and I — lived in our van.

Then we got a tiny motor court unit in Trinidad rented by the week. We knew nobody. I tried to hunt down jobs. I went into Real Estate offices and offered my services to do repairs, remodeling, anything.

I felt like that guy in San Diego who showed up with his brown paper bag.

A realtor on F Street offered me the job of dismantling the one-car garage located on the corner of the property built almost right up to the sidewalk. He wanted a parking space there. No money was offered, but he said I could have all the materials.

So I took the old redwood structure apart board by board. I hauled the old-growth 2 by 4's and 6s up to the motor court and stacked them alongside our mini-cottage.

People passing by on F Street saw me working and one thing led to another. I started getting small jobs and making a little money. But there were no apartments or houses or anything to rent in town. The freeway was going in at that

time and Caltrans was busy removing houses in their way, worsening the bad housing situation.

That winter, 1972, Elk River flooded and a house that had been built on the banks of the river was inundated and came up for sale cheap. Lisa got a \$1,000 loan from her family and after first spending some days cleaning it up, our little family moved into the water-damaged two-bedroom house.

It took several trips to Trinidad to transport the garage lumber to the site. It turned out to be a bountiful stash of materials that stood me through several remodeling projects on the house.

We now had a home of our own five miles out Elk River Road and from there we commuted to Humboldt State College every day. We felt like we were in. I started meeting people, getting more jobs. Whatever skills I was offering found customers and so it seemed there was a match.

After working years in gas stations, I now had a trade that fit my temperament (and paid better). There have been good times in the construction business and hard times.

Whenever I ran out of work, I remembered the guy with the brown paper bag. I would go into real estate offices and introduce myself to the agents. I almost always found something by doing it that way.

At Caldwell Banker one downturn season, the agent on duty at the time connected me with one of his clients who needed help on a rental in Westhaven. After that job, I worked for the same owner over the next dozen years building or remodeling one of his projects, mostly in Arcata.

It was a match made in Heaven. I got regular work and he got

some houses fixed up and made handsome.

Some things are meant to be, I like to think, and some aren't.

One day as I drove up F Street, I noticed a single car garage being built on the corner of the lot where Action Real Estate was located (or whatever its name was back when I was a college kid and new in town.)

The original house sitting back from the street is still there, though a different business occupies it now. I stopped and chatted with the crew, a couple of young fellows just getting their construction business going. They weren't using old growth redwood studs and rafters but they were building a solid little garage right up close to the street.

It stands on exactly the spot the garage I dismantled 30 years before stood. It's as if that particular spot in town was meant to have a garage on it. The space called out for it, as if it would not be denied again its downtown presence.

One wonders how many places like that there are around town, awaiting the newcomers to discover their future, as if calling from a past of which they are hardly aware, whether these newcomers be climate refugees, college students, retirees, professionals, or just youngsters looking for a match for their dreams.

I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see all the new things they will bring to our community, as each one of them looks for a place to work and for their next apartment or house or room or something, anything, and refuses to give up even if finding a place to live in Arcata is hard as hell. But not impossible.

You see, there was this guy who came up with a brown paper bag.

Contact Daniel Duncan at dduncan362@gmail.com.

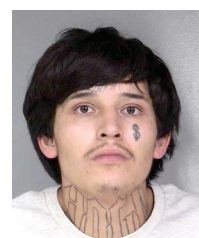


❖ THE FEATURES OF ARCATA  
Daniel Duncan

Only a little PC 29800(a)(1), PC 245(a)(1), some (PC 246), VC 2800.2, a smattering of VC 23103(a), VC 22450(a), PC 594(b)(1) and *why, dude, why?* – PC 273.5(a) & PC 273a(b)

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HOOPA/ORLEANS/ARCATA – On Sept. 22 at about 8:28 a.m., Humboldt County Sheriff's Office deputies received information regarding the location of 20-year-old Luke Anthony Reece.



Luke Anthony Reece

Reece was wanted on numerous felony charges resulting from multiple incidents in the Hoopa and Orleans areas this month, including shooting at an inhabited dwelling on Sept. 16, evading a sheriff's deputy on Sept. 9 and a domestic violence investigation.

Reece was taken into custody without incident in the Arcata area. Meanwhile, deputies served a search warrant at Reece's residence in Orleans. During a search of the residence, deputies located a firearm and ammunition.

Reece was booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility on charges of felon in possession of a firearm, assault with a deadly weapon, shooting at an inhabited dwelling, evading a peace officer, reckless driving, failure to stop at a stop sign, vandalism, inflicting corporal injury on a spouse and child endangerment.

This case is still under investigation.

Anyone with information about this case or related criminal activity is encouraged to call the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office at (707) 445-7251 or the Sheriff's Office Crime Tip line at (707) 268-2539.

The futile fleeing and failing and unsafe lane changing ended in the shrubbery with K9 Officer Link

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SOHUM – On Sept. 25 at about 9:57 p.m., a Humboldt County Sheriff's deputy on patrol in the area of U.S. Highway 101 near Garberville observed two motorcycles, one without a rear license plate, traveling in excess of 90 miles per hour.

The deputy attempted a traffic stop on the motorcycle without a plate, and the driver failed to yield.

Deputies pursued the motorcycle for approximately 28 miles, after which officers with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) – Garberville Division assumed control of the pursuit.

At approximately 10:30 p.m., deputies were notified that the motorcycle had been involved in a collision near the 5400 block of Brice-land-Thorne Road, and the driver, later identified as

26-year-old Dylan Edward-knee Sally, had fled into nearby vegetation.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife K9 Link was deployed, successfully locating and apprehending Sally. During a search of Sally and his belongings incident to arrest, deputies located drug paraphernalia.

Dylan Sally was booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility on charges of evading a peace officer, fleeing a peace officer, resisting a peace officer, possession of a controlled substance paraphernalia, driving without a license, failure to provide evidence of insurance, failure to display a license plate and unsafe lane change.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the California Highway Patrol-Garberville Division and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for their assistance with this investigation.



Dylan Edward-knee Sally

Pointlessness, thy name is road rage antics on the streets of Samoa

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SAMOA – On Sept. 29 at about noon, Humboldt County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the area of Fenwick Avenue in Samoa for the report of a road rage incident.

A 22-year-old male victim was transported to a local hospital with injuries as a result of the incident.

During their investigation, deputies learned that the victim was driving in the Samoa area when he was confronted by another driver at a four-way intersection.

According to the victim, the driver, 45-year-old Kevin Dewayne Willoughby, followed the victim to his workplace and began arguing with him about a perceived traffic violation.

At some point during this incident, Willoughby reportedly physically assaulted the victim and then fled the area.

Deputies located Willoughby at a residence on Sunset Street in Samoa. Willoughby was taken into custody after a brief struggle and was booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility on charges of battery with serious bodily injury and resisting a peace officer.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call HCSO at (707) 445-7251 or the Sheriff's Office Crime Tip line at (707) 268-2539.



Kevin Dewayne Willoughby

## Children's unverified dewdrop reconfiguration sets off bellicose brouhaha

• **Tuesday, September 20 11:30 a.m.** A confused masked man with reddish hair carrying a U.S. flag drew swastikas on buildings downtown.

• **Wednesday, September 21 8:36 a.m.** A man called, saying he could see children at a nearby school bus stop drawing on his car, but he couldn't see any sort of utensils in their hands and refused to go look at the car to verify any damage. As best the APD dispatcher could ascertain, the kids had been using their finger



to write in the dew on the car. At this point, multiple priority 911 call came in and the caller was placed on hold. On picking the call back up, the caller had gotten the kids' school on the line. While no damage to his car was ever verified, that didn't stop the caller from launching into a bellicose tirade in which no one else could get a word in

edgewise, so the dispatcher said an officer would contact him over the dewy drawing crisis, and hung up.

• **4:52 p.m.** A blonde woman in a pink shirt dropped a 10-year-old child off at a historic Plaza storehouse, then left the area. For the next hour, the kid ran around unsupervised, in and out of a ground-floor bank.

• **Thursday, September 22 6:10 a.m.** A woman at a Valley West motel wasn't a guest there, but that didn't stop her from covering the lobby bathroom's counters with wet paper towels and refusing staff requests to leave. She, found drunk, was arrested.

• **6:30 a.m.** A series of odd occurrences beset a Courtyard Circle resident. It started with chalk scrawlings, unsolicited yelling by a neighbor, a gate that had been tampered with and a box of dog poop with a

note on it – apparently authored by the Dog Doo Fairy – that read, "We will be back."

• **8 p.m.** A man on a bike crashed into a Gintoli Lane storage yard's gate, bloodying it from an apparent injury. He then vandalized the gate in retaliation for... bleeding on it?... and wheeled away to his next conquest-broglio.

• **Friday, September 23 12:08 a.m.** After several days of a man sleeping out front of their Alliance Road home, tenants grew both wary and weary of the camper speaking nonsensically and running around in the street with a machete.

• **9:49 a.m.** A bear or bears is or are mining trash cans on Grotzman Road, the ursines never having quite internalized the notion that Sunny Brae not exclusively bear habitat any more.

• **1:44 a.m.** A woman reported having been raped and battered while parked in Ericson Court on Aug. 6.

• **12:52 p.m.** The word "choke" was somehow heard over the din of someone banging on walls and someone else yelling coming from a Samoa Boulevard apartment. "You bit my hand!" said an unknown man. Police went there and made a domestic violence arrest.

• **1:43 pm.** A young woman in an older gray sedan drove erratically around the Plaza, tossing beer cans at passing vehicles.

• **10:02 a.m.** St. Mary's Church on Janes Road was vandalized with hatey spray paint scrawlings.

• **11:22 a.m.** Arcata First Baptist Church on Union Street was vandalized.

• **11:15 p.m.** A yellow Ford Escort piloted by a man whose glasses might need a new prescription left an H Street night spot, drove the wrong way up one-way H Street nearly colliding with cars headed downtown, then took a left and headed westbound on 11th Street.