



Hot Prowl

June 12th, 2020



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Friday, a strange thing happened during work, I ended up at a scene just a few doors down from my childhood home. I grew up at the end point of KoreaTown, in an area that was mostly an El Salvadorian neighborhood near Olympic Blvd and Normandie Ave. The park that I played at, just 200 feet or so from my front door, is where the notorious MS-13 gang originated in the 1980's. Yes that gang you never heard of before Trump took office, is actually an LA gang that has now branched out internationally.

It's been a rough week covering the Black Lives Matter protests, and today more news of yet another young black man being killed by police. I'm sad and exhausted and done

with all the hatred being spewed in all directions. Here I was, standing on the sidewalk just a few yards away from a place that was admittedly a very very hard place to grow-up. Normandie Ave was also the through-point of the 1992 Rodney King Riots. I was 23 living in the Hollywood Hills when that day hit, and I drove south down Normandie to check on my family that still lived a block over from this very house. Luckily that block was spared from fires and mayham that day in 92.

When I was a kid, it was a place that seemed like there was always police helicopters overhead, continual gang activity, guns shots, screaming, guys jumping across roof tops to escape the police, and so on. It seemed like we were always calling the police, for car break-ins, burglaries, child abductions, muggings... you name it, it was on.

When I was done with my work, I asked a colleague to take my photo in front of the old house that is now part of a Korean Buddhist Temple..... although unrelated to the Japanese Buddhist Zen Center my parents were members of across the street.... another story for another time.

The moment reminded me of an incident when I was 12 years old living in that house. And I recited the story to my colleagues while they took my photo. The property was not gated back then. It was 1981, I was a latch-key kid so when I got home it was rare for anyone to be home. I unlocked the front door when my friend Fawn and I heard footsteps upstairs. We stopped in the doorway and I called out to see if it was Lorain who lived with us. Maybe she was home early. Fawn grabbed one of my white boot skates as a weapon, while I slowly crept down the hall toward the stairs that led to the upstairs bedrooms. As I peered up the stairwell a man came running down with a pillowcase full of loot over his shoulder yelling something at me in Spanish. I immediately started screaming and ran toward the backdoor. But I cut left through the dining room that was shielded by a dividing wall of the hallway. I quickly made my way back to the front of the house, but just as I would make my escape and come around the wall to the front door, I saw something, something I always kept near the door just in case. It was a broomstick, minus the broom, just a solid 3 foot wood dowel. I grabbed it and ran past Fawn, still in a defensive stance at the front doorway, went back down the hall after the intruder with the stick over head screaming at him to ***get the fuck out my house!*** He ran thru the kitchen and out the backdoor with me in chase. I came to an abrupt stop at the doorway, still screaming as he jumped the retaining wall into my neighbor friend Susan's apartment building driveway, and disappeared. Although, I would see him several times in the neighborhood after that, he would go one way and I

the other.

What happened next is where we come to why this reunion reminded me of that moment. I had been hysterical on the phone with the 911 operator. I was scared and upset when the 4 officer got there, 3 men and 1 female. I explained what happened and they looked at me like I was crazy. One said that next time I should just run away and not give chase. I looked at him like **he** was crazy. *What if he had a weapon or gun or something*, he said. I was taken aback, the idea never entered my 12 year old mind. I resigned myself to runaway next time I encountered a *Hot Prowler*.

One of the male officers sat me down at the dinning room table and tried to calm me down. Now I was fixated on where my cat had disappeared to. He asked me how I was doing with math in school. Then he showed me a trick multiplying by 9. On a piece of paper he wrote 0-9 on the left, and parallel on the right he wrote the opposite 9-0. The two rows revealed how to multiple by 9. I thought it was pretty neat and it calmed me down. Right around then, my mother made it home from work. It was already dark. It was not the first time she had gotten a call from the police regarding an incident involving me, and I can only imagine how upset she was, although I never noticed.

As an adult I have always wanted to thank this officer who had been so kind in that moment. I tried earlier this year, but was told the records were gone from that long ago. I realize that this is a moment when there is a call for major change in policing, and it is my hope that we can make changes that create and retain officers like the ones that helped this child so long ago.

Multiply by 9

Multiplying by 9: A Tip You Won't Forget !

First, write the numbers 0 - 9 in a downward direction.

Next, write the numbers 0 - 9 in an upward direction.

Fact Check:

$9 \times 1 = 09$
$9 \times 2 = 18$
$9 \times 3 = 27$
$9 \times 4 = 36$
$9 \times 5 = 45$
$9 \times 6 = 54$
$9 \times 7 = 63$
$9 \times 8 = 72$
$9 \times 9 = 81$
$9 \times 10 = 90$

Me (with crutches) and my friend Melinda in front of my house the year before.



Inside the house. A slumber party the same year with my friends. Clockwise starting upper left. Me, Fawn, Susan (my neighbor), Terri, and Noelle. Everyone except Susan

were friends from elementary school, all of us bused to an experimental alternative school in the Mid-City area.



Cookie. My cat that showed up the next morning after a night of hiding outside.



If you would like to read more about the history of MS-13 go to this link:

<https://www.laweekly.com/actually-trump-ms-13-was-born-in-koreatown/>

Hot prowl burglary defined:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_prowl_burglary

COVID-19 Pandemic ...and a moment in the Black-Lives-Matter movement... June 12th, 2020

Photo © Jennifer Emery


#Pandemic, #COVID19, #BLM, #policing, #hotprowl


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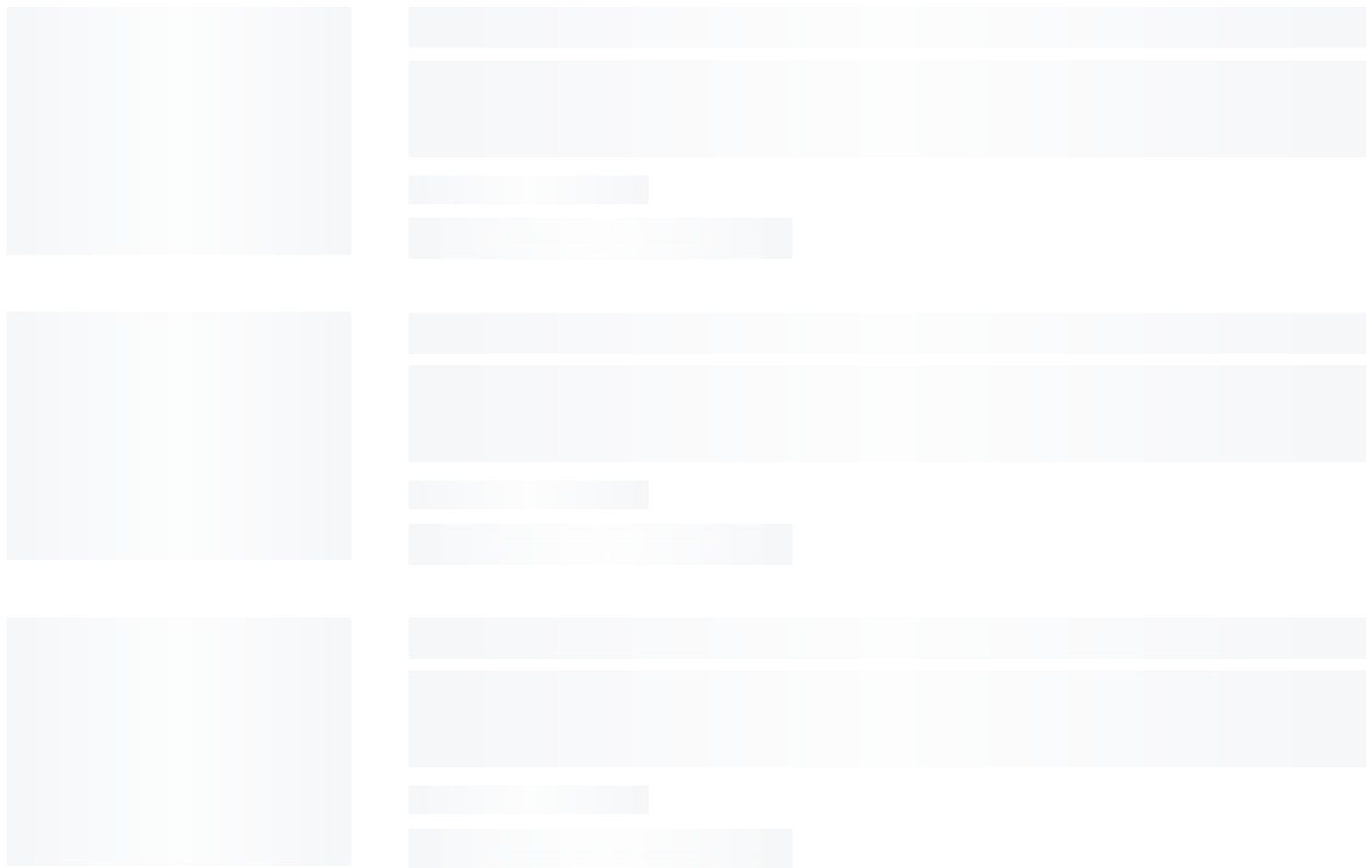


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Aw Melinda. Thank you for sharing the wonderful memory Jen.
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