

I get stereotyped a lot. It's part of who I am, some are true and some aren't. I skateboard around all day, hood down, sometimes up. It doesn't matter. I wear a hat backwards sometimes. It doesn't matter about what I actually do. I bet if I walked with a striped button up, middle parted hair, and khakis no one would judge me like that.

So far I've been a clean skater, I don't do drugs, I don't smoke, I don't wreck people's property with my skating.

I wake up on a Saturday morning and I already know it's going to be a great day, because there's no school. I get up and half way pull up my pants when my phone rings. I waddle over and pick it up.

"Hello?"

"Oh man, you sound like crap, you on drugs?"

"No, its 9 in the morning, I just woke up man," I say as I rub my eyes and ruffle my hair to the general position

"Oh yeah"

"So what do you want?"

"Oh yeah plans for the day! It's going to be hype, we're skating all day then filming with Jack and then we're gonna paint the abandoned storage house."

"Sounds good. Lemme get dressed."

I finish pulling up my black jeans, I pick up some random shirt and look at it. It reads Live Skate Die Revive, my favorite shirt. I smell it, not the best but I'm just with the guys today so it doesn't matter. I get my skate checklist as I eat a piece of toast - I do most of my stuff alone so my mom gave me a mini fridge and toaster and a little cupboard. So most of my time I'm home I'm in my room - I look at number one on the list, Skateboard. I look at it on the floor, check. Left earring, check, I slept with it in last night, it hurts now. Camera, well it barely counts - I've got an iphone 5c with an olloclip, it's an attachment you put on your iphone camera and it works for micro photos and fisheye filming. Shoes, haha you'd be surprised, once I left in my slippers. I go over and pick up my Janowski's. Check. Last but not least, a streaker, it's called an industrial marker by some, it's a stick of hardened paint in a tube, it writes on any surface, great for tagging.

I step out the front door, and breathe in the air, it's gonna be a good day. I skate

through the neighborhoods warming up. Sometimes a little kid will point at me awe struck. I arrive at Nur's house, he's skating his rail in his driveway. "C'mon!" I yell at him. He falls off the rail and looks at me with a glare, picks up his hat off the ground, grabs his backpack and skates over to me, I hear paint cans shaking in the bag, "what colors?"

"I got black, white, red, and yellow montana paint," he says.

"Montana? When did you get that?"

Montana paint is probably the cleanest best working spray paint on the market but it's expensive as crap. He doesn't reply. But hey if someone offers to paint with me and they're supplying paint I don't complain.

We skate over to Big 6, the Big 6 is a 6 stair with a really good rail. It's one of the best places to skate in our town. We meet up with Jack and Mills at Big 6 and Jack gets out his camera. We're ready to skate. Nur's been practicing a trick for a while at home but his small driveway rail doesn't suffice.

He falls first time, but then thats always the way it is for anyone. He gets right up, like any skater would and goes back to the top. He gets back into position and skates towards the steps again, he kickflips (board does a barrel roll) up in the air and tries to land on the rail in a feeble grind (one truck on the rail, one off to the side) but his back truck hits going too hard and he falls, again. Like always he gets up and back to the top of the stairs to get ready. This time he doesn't even get the kickflip rotation down and misses the rail. There are many more missed attempts, it's always like this - filming a good 10 second clip can take hours depending on what it is. The one that looks like it hurt the most was when he landed on the rail with too much weight back and the board slipped out from under him and he fell on the rail, ouch! But he finally lands it and it looks amazing. We go over to Jack to see the film.

"Sorry man, the camera wasn't rolling," he says in a joking way to Nur

"Shut up and let me see it."

The results were good, very good, I was quite jealous in fact.

But now it was my turn to skate for a clip and I wanted it to be good, I was gonna go for a tre flip to backside boardslide (board does a 360 and a kickflip and landing on the rail backwards with the rail in the middle of the board and sliding). I didn't

tell them that's what I was gonna try so it came as a surprise when I tre flipped OVER the rail, it's not what I was going for but it was an amazing feeling. Tre flips are my favorite trick because the board rotates so quickly it looks and feels amazing to land.

"Whaaaat," I hear behind me.

"Dude that was dope!" they yell at me.

It was, first try too. But I also really wanted to land it in a backslide so I went back up and got ready. I skated towards the steps and set my feet in their position and when I got to the ledge I flipped the board, everything feels like slow motion but my board under rotates and I eat it once I hit the rail. I lay on the ground for a couple of seconds before getting up.

I decide to sit off on the side for a bit before trying again. Right now Mills is warming up just ollieing the stairs and 180's and stuff like that, Mills is probably the best skater here. He skates on flow from 4 different brands, Spitfire wheels, Chocolate Skateboards, Orion Trucks, and he occasionally gets shirts from Diamond. He doesn't have to buy boards unless he breaks one before they send him a new one, which isn't that often. He's a talented skater and is always skating, once he got suspended from school for skating to and from classes.

I sit back sipping in the cool air and listening to my music while Mills skates. I realize how good it is to be alive right now. My family has had hard blows before. My dad left my mom when I was little, and my mom's bank was part of a banking scandal and lost a bunch of money. But lately things have been getting better. My mom got a full time job and quit smoking. Things are looking good for the future.

We got kicked out of skate spot after Mills landed his trick he wanted. We had expected to get kicked out sooner so it wasn't that bad. The owner of the business that owns Big 6 has man periods I swear, one day he'll be out there cheering us on while we skate, the next he'll yell at us to leave. We don't really care because his good days are the best. We've decided to paint the storage place sooner.

We skate out of downtown towards the edges of the city where the buildings and houses fade into warehouses and fields.

We get to the abandoned storage unit. It floats in a field of tall grass that shines with the sunlight glinting off the diminished shiny parts of the building. Trees behind the

building stand up straight like eager students, the whole thing is straight from The Louvre. We hop over the weak wire fence that hangs low inviting us in, like a bowing butler at our service. The abandoned place feels like a mansion as we walk in, filing through the death trap broken window.

I pull my sketch out of my pocket and and imagine it on the wall in front of me, Nur hands me some paint, and takes some for himself. Jack and Mills have their own but look over at the Montana

“Yo! Sweet paint man can I catch a tag with that?”

Nur tosses him a can and he writes his tag on the wall, we officially started. I use white with a gray dot skinny cap for the outline of my piece. I check out everyone else’s when I finish the outline and see Mills is on his second throwie, Jack and Nur are doing two pieces attached by a character of an alligator holding a spray can. I start my fill with a can of black and a NY fat cap. The fills go much quicker with fat caps. Once I fill it in I outline in white. I like the looks so far, I messed up a bit on the second letter but I’ll fix that once it dries. I get the red can and I put on an astro fat cap, they make beautiful highlights the size of basketballs if you are practiced with cans.

I walk back and look around the whole thing. Mills did three throwies and he’s out of paint sitting in the corner smoking a cigarette, disgusting. I check out Nur and Jack’s piece, it’s great but they aren’t quite done. They are probably the best graffiti artists in the crew, ASC (always spraying cans). I just sit back and watch them paint, their hands flow unrealistically with the cans. Mills walks over to talk to me “Don’t come near me with that nastiness man,” I toss the words at him.

He drops the cigarette and it sizzles like bacon as his toe crushes the end, “better,” I say. Jack and Nur pack up and and shoot photos of everything. Nur takes out his good camera and we all leave him behind to take photos. He likes to be alone for his photos, he’s amazing at them. We wander our way into the woods and sit up in a tree.

I gaze at Nur, he’s on the roof of the abandoned building crouching like a panther on the very edge with his camera up to his eyes. His hand is adjusting the lens, I see him wobble on the edge of the building looking as he might fall off. “Shit,” I hop out of the tree, when he’s taking pictures he doesn’t even notice the position he ends up in. I start running to the building, Jack and Mills know what’s going on and they start

sprinting behind me.

We get to the building and Nur is still in his picture trance, but he doesn't even have his camera up, he's just soaking in the landscape.

"Nur!" Jack yells, Nur looks around looking like he just woke up then he shakes his head.

"Oh shit," he says and backs away from the edge of the building, I see a look of fright flash his eyes for a second, he backpedals for a second then runs down the rickety steps inside the building. He bursts out the hole in the wall and jogs over to us, he doesn't really say anything just kinda stands there eyes wide, mouth tight. He gets scared by himself, the fact that he can just be overcome like that makes him worried.

We all walk the dirt road back to the city and wander around with our boards, we buy sandwiches at Jimmy Johns and skate our way back to Nur's house, we all come in and his little sister attacks us, she's a cute little girl but right now none of us are in the mood. We go to his room and just chill out talking and such. Nur pulls out his camera and plugs it into his laptop. iPhoto pops up in the dock and starts to bounce until it fully opens and loads. He pulls up one of the photos that he took from atop the building and I get why he does it. The grass shimmers and looks to be swayed all to the right with a big brotherly gust of wind, the sun creates shine in the tops of the trees, golden syrup dripping down. An old rusted barb wire fence leans in the back against a tree with the comfort of an old man relaxing on the porch. The whole picture creates an image of wilderness happiness and I get why he is always entranced.

I get home around 7 and I see my mom sitting at the table crying onto a piece of paper. I drop my stuff and rush over to her. I clench my fists when I see the paper is a picture of her and my dad, I have developed a hate for my dad just because of how he has abandoned mom and me. He still causes her so much anguish it hurts me to see. I take the picture away.

"Mom, stop thinking about him! He left us you can't still love him!"

"You don't know how love works," she whispers it so quietly I almost don't catch it.

I storm off to my room. Maybe I don't know how it works, but I do know if you love someone so much you marry them, you don't later run away. I always said to

myself if I met my dad the first thing I'd do would be punch him. He has never been around. I never got to play catch in the yard with him, he never watched me and cheered me on while I skated. I didn't have a dad around for my childhood. Sometimes I wonder how life is treating him. I think about what job he has, where he lives, all that. I usually imagine him as a hobo helpless without his wife.

My alarm goes off at 2am, time to bomb. I roll to the side and swing my legs off the side of my bed and sit up. I quietly step to my closet and grab some jeans, a dark hoodie and plain t-shirt. Always try to stay under the radar and dress casually. I open my desk drawer and grab my crappy shoes. I pull out the drawer that's right under that for my marker collection. I shine my phone light on them and look over them. I have my sleek missile like Krink markers, I grab my silver one, and a huge black Montana paint marker. I creep out of my room with a slight creak from my aging floor, I shush it with my finger to my mouth. I slink my way through my dark house. I have the turns and steps memorized from years of sneaking out. I reach my front door and unlock it slowly with a short *click* and the end. I wait and listen. My mom is still asleep. I get out of the house without fault, now I start my walk to the meetup spot where I'll meet my homies from my crew, ASC. After a long walk, I come to the park where I'm supposed to meet them. I don't see or hear anyone, I start a lap around the park to try and find them. I see movement on the other side of the park and I walk over. Its the crew. I quietly get their attention and do some hand shaking with the guys. Without talking we start our walk around town, first electrical box we see we walk over to and tag up.

After a long night and a lot of tagging we are almost finished up, we slink around in the shadows only coming out to tag something or cross street. We disburse off to our houses and the fun is over.

I walk in the door and see my mom sitting in the chair of our living room staring at me. "Where were you?"

I ignore her and walk to my room, she follows me asking the same question again, I get to my room and slam the door behind me. There are gonna be a lot of questions in the morning, but for some reason I don't care.

"Want to tell me what you were doing at 2 in the morning?"

"No."

The day passes with many questions and not being able to leave the house, I really don't care any more. When time comes I go to bed and my mom locks my door. I try to fall asleep. I really do. But I can't. I think about my dad and how he left us. What would make someone do that. I want to destroy something. I creep along the floor to my closet and pile some paint into a backpack. I slip towards the window and try to open it. It works. The window hasn't been open in years so the first inch makes some noise, I cringe. I hear no discontinuities in the soft quietness of the house. Once the window opens enough I get a burst of crisp night air. I step out one leg at a time. I get out fine. I walk through the neighborhood streets hiding behind bushes or trees whenever a car drives by, I know it's way past my curfew. I head towards the downtown area, I want the name big.

As the first line of the red cut that will cover the wall is painted I hear a noise. I crouch down, I look around. I see nothing, it must be my imagination. I stand back up and finish my tag. It's very clean and big. I walk out of the alley and as soon as I turn on to the street I see lights flash and a siren starts. More than one siren, I run. I sprint as fast as I can and slip my backpack off into a trashcan I see. My heart is pumping so hard I can feel the beat throbbing in my chest. I turn into an alley and start running to the other side. I hear shouts and yells behind me but I don't stop. The adrenaline seems to make me run faster, I jump right over the trash can that is in my way, I push myself around the looming dumpster that is next in line to get in my way. But I fall, and I fall hard. Behind the dumpster is a little box that I fell on. And I can't get up, I try, but I can't. The loud patter of footsteps catches up to me.

"We got him!" The gruff voice yells from above me.

The ride to the station is a blur. I land in a room, a man on the other side of the table shoots questions at me. I don't answer. I don't hear what he says. I don't hear anything.

I end up in a holding cell, I'll have to stay there until my bail is paid, then I can wait for my hearing from the comfort of my home. My mom can't pay that. She doesn't have money for that. I screwed up. And I have been screwing up for the past year.

After two days of terrible food and lame activities a guard comes and releases me.

"Who paid my bail?" I ask.

He look down at the paper in his hand and reads out the name “Robert Cleveland,”
I don’t know who that is.

“Who?”

“I don’t know, that’s not my job.”

I am walked out where I see a man in a hat and sunglasses, the guard lets go of me
and I walk towards him. He takes off the hat and sunglasses. I recognize the face, but
from where I don’t know. But then I do. It’s my dad.