

**In Which Jodi Gets Kidnapped,
And The Beginning Of Her Wheeler's story.**

Part III

I was a peripheral person at Wheelers compared to most of you, but I have quite a story to tell. I hope you read and enjoy it! Responses of any type are 'Most' welcome. I kept detailed journals, mostly of my thoughts, while living on the streets and at the Ranch.

Up until recently they were too painful for me to look back upon, but I recently decided to send them on to Ramon to do with as he pleases. I was 17 and 18 years old, a runaway from West Virginia, when they were lived and recorded. I do not own a computer, nor do I know how to use them or type very well. When I get one of my own I will figure out how to set up a page so it will be more legible for you all to read! Anyway, sit back and enjoy the journey as Maggie and I travel on...

Maggie, my beloved, loyal and faithful dog... liberated from a West Virginia dog pound, she was probably the only West Virginia Birddog that walked across America! We hitchhiked back and forth across the US together numerous times, including once smack dab in the middle of a howling winter blizzard, crossing northern- most Interstate 80 of course!

I wore a threadbare Goodwill coat, no socks, and a pair of too large, boys converse tennies. In a bland small Midwest town, standing roadside, my heart sunk as a cop passed, stopped and circled round back my way. It was dusk and below freezing, Maggie was wrapped in a sweater, I was holding her in my arms for warmth. The cop thought she was a baby, and was not too pleased to find out otherwise. He ordered us to get into the cruiser, and proceeded to insult 'us immoral, filthy hippie types' and lecture me about safety, as well as grill me about my lifestyle so foreign from his own, he was truly curious and perplexed. His plan was to drive me across town and deposit me outside the city limits and his jurisdiction! I chose to be totally honest with him, explaining my side of the coin in a patient and kindly manner.

As darkness fell, he turned off the highway and pulled into the towns only motel. He left me in the car, and went in to talk to the proprietor. When he returned along with a key to a room, he handed me his lunch neatly packed by his wife in a brown paper bag, a tuna sandwich and packaged cupcakes for his night shift.

"You'll be hungry." I protested. He refused to take the lunch back.

"Just be out of town by daylight," he said as he pulled out of the gravelled lot. Maggie and I shared the sandwich, and enjoyed a warm bed for the night. We had another guardian angel.

"What type of dog is she??" folks would always ask me.

"Birddog," I'd proudly reply. They'd scratch their heads and look perplexed, no one ever got my little joke of naming a bird dog, "Magpie." My Maggie was loyal beyond belief, she helped soften the many harsh blows along the way.

She and I were very well known on the streets of Berkeley. We'd crawl out from whatever hole or crash pad we were sleeping in, and head up to upper Telegraph Avenue, near Sproul Plaza at the first light of day. This may seem hard to believe, but it is true, Maggie and I would discuss our plans for the day, kiss goodbye, and head our separate ways! Maggie off to do her doggie thing, and me off running down my little trip!

The Hare Krishnas were after me for years to become a devotee. They called me, Doggirl. "You're a dog running the streets and living just like her," they would admonish, pointing at Maggie. "You'll come back as a dog in your next life if you don't accept Lord Krishna into your life."

The Berkeley cops also found me to be a constant source for their harassment and sadistic pleasures. "Apache," they called me in a very racist and derogatory manner. Because of my jet-black hair and tan complexion they assumed I was Native American! I am not. AIM had taken over Alcatraz for the first time, and the police were hot under the collar. Free Huey P. had been going on, Vietnam rioting, and scores of runaways kept them occupied I now realize, but their cruelty to me was extreme and uncalled for. They provided absolutely no protection for me, in fact, thought it was their duty to protect the local citizens from the likes of me!

So, they would shout out as I walked by, "Hey, Apache, when are you gonna cook and eat that dog?"

They'd make war-whoop sounds and yuck it up. I'd say something sassy back as I walked by with my head held high, but it always hurt my feelings terribly that they cared so little, if at all, whether I lived or died. Anyway, I better not get too far off course here with my Maggie tale. Maybe I'll do a cop story

another time.

Anyway, every day about dusk Maggie and I would reunite with each other on the steps of Sproul Plaza. How she knew to do this, I'll never fathom, but she was always loyally there waiting for me to return at approximately 5:00 every evening. Amidst throngs of people we would locate each other to go about our nightly business of rounding up dinner and a crash pad.

Every night at this time there'd be the little ol' Jewish man waiting in front of the tree planter for us, with a can of dog food for Maggie, and 2 dollars for me. He wore a button on his lapel that read "Jewish Power." He had a thick Yiddish or German accent and was actually quite handsome with very nut brown skin and silver curly hair. He always said the same thing to me, "Call your mother," he'd say, "call your mother." My benevolent street grandpa and another guardian angel, may he rest in peace. I would feed Maggie 1/2 the can of dog food, and proceed down the street with the rest.

In front of Cody's Books, Frankie and Jeremy would be waiting. Frankie was a young and strung-out girl in far worse shape than myself. She was dazed and covered in filth and practically mute with terror. Jeremy was a magnificently beautiful striped dog many of us called "Marble Cake." I would give him the other half of the dog food, and to Frankie I'd give whatever change (I was a pro at panhandling) I could spare and food if I had any. Maggie and I would then walk back up Telegraph to the open-air grocery where the blind man waited with his tin cup and white cane. He would take my elbow, and we would stroll off of Telegraph, past People's Park and head to the church soup kitchen. A long line of assorted runaways, flower children, drug addicts and dealers, escaped cons, AWOLS and various schizophrenics, all of my friends in fact, already stretched down the block in a long line.

I'd lead the old blind man to the front of the line, always to the protest of one loud and obnoxious individual, "Get the bitch out of there, she's just using the blind guy so she can cut in front of the line!" I would make sure the man was deposited safely, then walk way back to the end of the line to take my place, passing my heckler who would usually be embarrassed and humbled into submission by now, knowing that my distant place in line meant less food, if any.

After our meal, Maggie and I would head back to Telegraph and wait until 11 PM or so when the restaurants closed. We each had our favorites, so we would split up to go to them. The owners, managers and workers knew us well, and bagged leftover food was always waiting for our nightly arrival.

We would then either go to a crashpad if they seemed relatively safe -- I almost always had to provide sex for a place to sleep in these arrangements -- or we'd get together with other street kids and sleep in abandoned buildings, on rooftops, or in somebody's backyard.

More often than not we would all go down to the International House Of Pancakes, the only place open 24 hours. We were welcome there, the waitresses were incredibly kind, and we had endless pots of coffee to stay awake all night, all the pancakes we could eat, and Maggie tied up outside in the bushes, enjoyed lots of leftover sausage.

One day while walking the long walk back to Berkeley from a crash pad in North Oakland, Maggie walked out in front of a speeding car. I watched helplessly in horror as it hit her and she flew up into the air. As the car sped away, I ran to her screaming. Her leg was totally mangled and thrown back over her shoulder, but she was still breathing. A red Volkswagon circled back and stopped.

"I saw everything," a woman said. "Get in and I'll take you to my vet."

She had short brown hair and a very masculine appearance. I wasn't accustomed to women who looked like that and was a bit mistrustful, but for Maggie's sake I got in. I was inconsolable and very, very frightened. Maggie clung to life as she stared very deeply into my eyes with her large brown, soulful doggie eyes.

"Don't worry girl, you're gonna make it, I won't let you die! You can't die and leave me here all alone." I spoke to her softly as we sped to the vet.

Once there, they anesthetized Maggie for the night and handed me a card with their office's phone number. I was told to call them the following afternoon. I thanked the woman who brought me and sadly went away to wait out the long night. I called the clinic the next day. Maggie was fine, pins had been put in her leg, she would have to wear a cast for some time, but she would eventually be good as new. I was so happy, but had no idea how to pay such an exorbitant bill.

"Don't worry about that," they said, "The woman who brought you in paid for everything!"

I never even knew her name or saw her again -- another guardian angel.