

DEAR CAPTAIN MARTIN ...  
IN OUR EYES, YOUR DEPUTIES ARE ALL ANGELS...

Hey, let's go to Malibu! Home of the laid-back California lifestyle. Surf and sand, kids hanging ten, movie stars at Trancas Market. Or, go inland from the coast, where you'll find big chunks of God's country in the Santa Monica Mountains--rolling hills with California white oaks, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox's old back lot, and Topanga's quirky over-the-hill hippies.

Or farther inland from there--the 101 corridor of business parks, planned suburbs, horse property and upscale-to-ritzy homes.

Is police work supposed to be hard in a place like this? Is there more to it than the oft-joked-of tickets and drunks?

You bet there is. Ask Deputy Jim Mulay. His gutsy struggle back from the brink of death, induced by a heinous assault on the PCH, reminds us all that this job is just plain dangerous everywhere in Los Angeles County.

Or you could ask Deputies Fray Lupian and Roberto Garcia. More living proof that police work at "slower" stations is still flat out a "heads-up" game. The fact is, their recent arrest of a pair of guys with a sawed-off shotgun began with a handicapped parking violation obs, and resulted in a foiled robbery. But not without risk.

By the way, if you were walking around town with a sawed-off shotgun jammed in your pants, would you pull into a handicapped parking space without a placard? Or might you figure it wouldn't be a good time to call police attention to yourself? Just wondering.

That consideration didn't occur to Marcel, 18-years-old, and Zixie, 19. They had their driver, "Skinhead" Rios, pull into the parking slot with the blue curb at a Mobil Station in Calabasas. Fray and Roberto, 224 PM's, were passing by enroute to graze for bad guys at the nearby no-tell motel and noticed the bald guy sitting in the driver's seat, not looking particularly handicapped. On to the motel parking lot, through and out, then back to the Mobil Station to see if "skinhead" was still there. He was.

Roberto and Fray pulled up and saw two, able-bodied guys walking toward the car from the mini mart. The deputies saw that the two guys noticed them, and then made an about face back into the gas station. Their quickened pace backwards, complete with averted eyes, interested the deputies, who pulled into the gas station.

Fray walked up on "Skinhead", greeted him and the right front passenger, and saw the inevitable open containers of booze on the console. Meanwhile, Roberto went into the mini-mart and escorted one of the two guys back out. It was Marcel, who had the shotgun tucked away.

Roberto did the pat down and found the loaded sawed-off, which he handed to Fray. Fray quickly got on the air and got back-up rolling while Roberto searched on and found six shotgun rounds on Marcel.

Deputies Scott Rule and Bill Kitchin were 10-97 first. Roberto arrested Marcel and handed him off for storage to Scott, who stuck him into a radio car. Fray and Bill were detaining Skinhead and his partner. Surprisingly, Zixie wandered/stumbled out of the mini mart just as all this was going on. Zixie was HBD ("had been drinking") and feeling no pain, but his attitude about being detained left a lot to be desired.

Roberto detained Zixie and did the weapons search, this time through a whole performance of squirming and screaming by Zixie. Roberto found one blunt, barrel shaped object worth checking -- turned out to be a black marker.

By now, the deputies had multiple considerations. It was obvious they had interrupted the suspects' robbery plans. Zixie was acting a fool. The gas station hadn't been completely cleared of possible additional suspects. There was more than one suspect per deputy. Now, out of the blue, a young "lady" in the driver's seat of a different car, by the pumps, engine running, was yelling at the deputies, "Hey, what are you doin' to my brother?!?!?"

Roberto quickly stashed Zixie in the back seat of one of the radio cars while Deputy Marc Lashley was pulling into the parking lot. Fray asked Marc to check out the girl while he, Scott and Bill finished securing Skinhead and the fourth guy; meanwhile, Roberto went to double check the mini-mart.

Suddenly, Zixie developed a bad case of the "stupids" and started kicking the windows of the radio car while screaming about killing "you \_ \_ \_ \_ ing pigs." Fray gave him a couple of friendly warnings before it was time for action. He told Zixie to turn around and put his hands behind his back. "What for? I'm cool here."

Needless to say, Zixie was ultimately handcuffed, but he chose the hard way, which gave Fray and Bill some exercise. Roberto came out from the store just in time to sit on Zixie's ankles while Fray finished making with the handcuffs. Lucky for Zixie, he came out of it with only his meager pride injured.

Meanwhile, Marc cautiously approached the girl in the other car. "Whhhhaaaat's (imagine the word accompanied by a withering blast of liquor smell) up, Deputy?"

I hate you pigs. Leave my bro alone!” Marc carried on anyway and got a nice, neat deuce (drunk driving) arrest for his efforts.

While Fray sorted out who was good for what, Roberto searched the car, but found no more evidence of the suspects’ evil intent. Just a pair of pants with a notebook containing a bunch of gang “artwork”. Therefore, the only real suspect of the four was Marcel, packing the shotgun.

All done, right? NO!!! Roberto did the thing that new deputies sometimes overlook -- he went back to where the suspects had come from to check for contraband. Checking inside the Mobil’s restroom, Roberto had the satisfaction of ferreting out Zixie’s contribution to the attack on the gas station—he found gang graffiti in black felt pen all over the walls. It looked *just like* what was in the notebook he found in the car! Thus did Zixie, too, get an all-expense-paid trip to the Sheriff’s Station in the oak-studded hills!

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You would really enjoy the surveillance video, as long as you were watching it secure in the knowledge that Marcel and Zixie were already in custody. It doesn’t leave much room for doubt about these guys’ intentions, what with the repeated trips back and forth into and out of the mini-mart, the glancing and gazing around, etc. For the duration of the video, around a dozen people are seen purposefully walking in, paying for gas, or buying a slurpee, etc, and then leaving. Only Marcel and Zixie are recurrent characters in the unfolding drama.

As you may have guessed, the title of this story comes from a commendation. This one was written by the owner of the gas station. She writes that Roberto and Fray “went above and beyond the call of duty, to apprehend several gang members who would have no doubt shot to death our young cashier working that day.”

Above and beyond? Well, no, not exactly. What the owner didn’t remember is that this sort of thing *is* our duty, and alert deputies are doing these things all over the place, all the time.

Still, the commendation was mighty nice, and let’s face it—the whole thing was based on some fine examples of our line of work’s favorite piece of headwork—the “good obs!”\*

\* Short-hand for a shrewd, attentive observation on the part of a cop