

Sunday 9 August 1981

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Greetings-----73#

Trying to get over an unpleasant experience of yesterday mid-afternoon, which however has a positive aspect: A couple I would suppose in their thirties or so, looking like gypsies had a little girl about 2 th I think, and parked their truck across across the street and came here allegedly to see the instruments--pretended they had heard about me or something of the so sort, and when I turned on the Megalyra and started my demo, they ran into this house and headed for the bathroom and wanted a glass of water etc. and all this attempt at distracting me made me suspicious, because this is the way certain thieves get into homes and start robbing. The woman tried to make me come outside to play the instruments while the man and the girl were in the bathroom which in itself was kind of queer, and of course that made me all the more suspicious and alert and careful. then when they left the house she came in to the front room here and tried solicit me, so I said "You are acting very strangely!" and I got them to leave.

I was watching as much as I could so this ruse or rather these ruses didn't go very far. Nothing t like this has happened here in Glendale before, although some people like that robbed my mother of \$40 or such an amount one time about 25 years ago.

The positive aspect of this is that not only did I become suspicious, but I wasn't afraid they would hurt me, and that they left when I made them--I didn't give in--and ten or twenty years ago I would have been a helpless robbery victim if these same people had done exactly the same thing. That is, I was surprised at myself.

They asked me dozens of questions that got more and more personal and I just didn't answer or stood still. Funniest surprise was when they asked me where I was from and I said "New York": Just popped into my head. They wanted to know how much this guitar cost and how much that one cost and what I sold a Megalyra for and so on and I evaded all these questions and mumbled something about my agents.

I don't know whether to be relieved that the thing didn't go through or to be afraid they will come back and try again or somebody else will try harder the second time, or whether this is merely a phenomenon that has happened most of the times I have had to move--about a month or so before my moving away from a place, mildly unpleasant and depressing incidents occur, such as that fall from the step and Edward von Kneifel's return to Los Angeles and now this robbery or theft attempt.

Or maybe it was solicitation of prostitution? It all happened so fast--couldn't have been more than 15 minutes all told--seemed a real short, nipped-in-the-bud affair. The last thing they said was "till next time". They spoke some strange language that wasn't Spanish for sure--maybe Romany the Gypsy language or maybe something like Arabic or Turkish? It wasn't Russian or the like either.

Oh yes--there was another unpleasant incident Friday--the switch on the vacuum cleaner burnt out and filled my bedroom with acrid smoke of formaldehyde and phenol--the decomposition products of Bakelite plastic--and the switch arched over inside and that of course made metallic-smelling fumes.

After the people left in their truck (that's suspicious --they probably used it to carry loot away in--) I repaired the vacuum by taking it apart and soldering the wires together that went to the switch so as to bypass it and disconnect it.

I had to take half a cupful of roaches out of the vacuum chamber (i.e. the airspace after the disposable bag).

The truck was parked across the street so I didn't get to see it clearly--dark blue is all I know. Maybe they will try to break into this house and steal the guitars etc. On the other hand they may be afraid of me. There are lots of tricksters who prey on older people with the Tigeon Drop and the Bank Examiner and the We are Checking on your Social Security Number scams.

Other people who came from the neighborhood to see the instruments never went to the door and into the house while I was out in the yard. So of course that all alerted me to the danger of being robbed.

And nobody to talk to around here except the lady in the other half of the front duplex--Mrs. Wilson didn't seem to be around. And she couldn't have done anything either.

I think you will now understand why I make such a damn fuss about getting duplicate instruments placed elsewhere.

I could never convince a burglar that all guitars here are non-twelve and therefore non-pawnable and non-sellable and non-fenceable. Not sure whether a big sign in here Notice to Thieves would do any good!

And I feel very very uncomfortable about Abbie Breit, the would-be filmmaker ffe from Venice who is supposed to come here this afternoon at 4 to hear my tapes and wants 10 minutes of film background music. Wish I could stop it somehow and make her wait till I have business partners and a lawyer and maybe a toughie Agent. This on-again off-again procrastination has been going on ever since Gani article in March!

Cliffhanger Dept.: Will the postal strike in Canada be settled before the Postal Strike in the USA begins? So I can write to SiemontTerpstra and maybe to John Grayson and Douglas Walker?

I hope the Pepe Estevane concert last night went off well. At least, if the burglars return here, you will still have a set of instruments.

Yours