

# q book: WORDS BY MARCUS PROCTOR

It's 2005 and a rather cold winter's night has decided to make my chosen job a wee unpleasant (though given what happened, I'd choose the cold) so threw on my trusty red coat I got 6 years earlier in Cannes when I started backpacking. I was a rent boy on Santa Monica Boulevard and a guy picked me up and tried to haggle. He realized I wouldn't budge so he agreed on my price and we drove to his place in South L.A. We did the deed and as I was getting dressed, he put the price he argued for on the bed, looked at me 'menacingly' and went to the kitchen.

I said "Remember, what we agreed on mate" and put on my shoes. He came out, we started arguing and I said "Do you want my man to come around and get the money?? I know where you live". I didn't have one, just made sense at the time, lol. He opened a drawer, pulled out a gun and stuck it point blank in my face and said "Do you really think I give a fuck about your man??" Calmly I said "Mate, I don't think you're a pussy but this is a business transaction and I want my money".

I got the money. He drove me back to my spot and on the way went Downtown (not as cheery as the song), pulled up behind a closed shop and got a brown paper bag from this guy and they kept looking over so I undid my belt and had my finger on the door handle as the guy got back in and drove off. It ended up being a bottle of whiskey and he offered me some which I gladly took. After an emotional farewell I thought I would hang around for a little more money since I was leaving for London the next day.

A fellow rent boy walked up and we started talking. He offered to share a joint and since I was feeling a little frazzled I said 'Sure!'. We walked down a street and turned into a darker one in which I turned around. He stopped and told me to give him my money...doh!! He said he had a gun in his pocket to which I replied "No, you don't. It's obviously your finger, you idiot! That didn't go down well and he ran for me. I ran down the dark street, changed my mind, turned around and pushed him out of the way.

The irony that I had decided to leave my mace behind for the first (and last) time hadn't escaped me as I ran down the street and screamed at a car to stop. I slammed my hands on the bonnet and they guy came from the side and tackled me to the ground. The car kept driving and the guy tried to take my coat off me so I started punching him in the face. It went beyond just protecting my property. The feeling inside was so strong, I really loved this coat. I actually fought someone off me to make sure she stayed in my life...well, kind of off me. He ended up getting me in a choke hold and I started to pass out so I threw my money on the road and he let go.

There happened to be a few road workers who were watching the whole thing so the mugger put on a scene that I was the one mugging him and he stormed off. The workers went back to their jobs and I walked away feeling happy I had my coat and a little down that I now had to make that money back. Five minutes later I'm blowing someone for \$50 thinking how resilient I am when I started to quietly dry reach from shock, pushed it back down and kept going.

I made the money back so jumped on my bike and rode home. Living that life, you build a lot of barriers around you so nothing unnerves you but I lay on the bed and it hit me. I literally could have died, my body dumped and no-one would've had a clue what had happened. Shit got real that day, lol.

I'm now writing this in 2021 with my coat gently nestled beside me for inspiration and am amazed at how untouched she looks considering everything we've experienced together and just realized she's the longest relationship I've ever had...considering how much I've put her through, I'm not really surprised my human relationships don't get past 7 weeks.

Thanks for reading me.

*Marcus Proctor is an actor/writer who has written a book on his 6 years of backpacking around the world titled 'Happy Traveller' coming out this year. IMDB*