

# Life from the Milk Crate

*A Journal by Robert “Homeless Bob” Wright  
Edited by Christina Nordstrom*



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*“Bob Wright; homeless for years, inspired many”* (August 16, 2009) is reprinted with permission from and grateful thanks to Christine Legere, Columnist, Boston Globe.

Photograph of Christina Nordstrom, Bob Wright and Suzanne Straley by Chris Hall

Among Bob Wright’s journals, he left photographs taken by a young man named Tiago Genoveze from Brazil, a former Boston University student. We wish to thank him for the use of his photo story of Bob Wright and to acknowledge his award-winning work!

Cover: Sculpture/Photograph of *“Rich Man, Poor Man”* by Dan Zampino used by permission with grateful thanks!



## Editor's Notes

I am one of three friends who collaborated to help find permanent housing for Bob Wright – formerly known as “Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire.” In the fall of 2007, after surviving on and off the streets of Boston for 13 years, Bob moved into a studio apartment at the Ruggles Assisted Living Center for formerly homeless seniors located in Roxbury, Massachusetts. He lived at Ruggles for 18 months until his death on August 10th, 2009.

The center is one of several independent living facilities for seniors operated by *Hearth, Inc.*, which is the former *Boston Committee to End Elder Homelessness*. Please see [www.hearth-home.org](http://www.hearth-home.org) to learn about their innovative programs and strategies that surely will help achieve their mission of ending elder homelessness.

Bob kept journals of his experiences living on the street and had asked before he died that they be shared so that people might have a first-hand glimpse at what that life experience is like—from his perspective. It didn't matter whether or not you dropped some change into his cigar box that sat on the sidewalk in front of him outside Park Street Church. He just wanted to be acknowledged as a person—not ignored and invisible. Although many of his journals had been lost over the years—stolen along with “his kingdom” in his backpack—we had started working together a couple of months before his passing to document his story using the journals that remained.

Several weeks after the memorial service I received Bob's notebooks—20 of his remaining handwritten journals. Most were dog-eared and life-worn, and in some cases the ink had smudged from exposure to the elements. It was hard to read the entries, as the pages seemed to emanate the feelings and very history recorded on them. This is not something one should do in one sitting, so it's taken several months to compile them. Many entries were rewrites of “Bob's Top 10 Birthday Wish List”—and always in the number one spot were the words: “Hope, Not Dispare” (as he spelled it).

In the last sentence of his final journal entry, Bob wrote that he couldn't survive “...without help from the people that *cross my feet every day*.” Is it coincidence that my friend Dan Zampino's picture of his sculpture, “Rich Man, Poor Man,” on the cover depicts a “rich man” walking over a “poor man's” feet? Thank you, Dan!

Among Bob's journals were four pictures of him with a yellow sticky message from a BU student from Brazil named Tiago saying that he'd return in January and would show him the photo story when he got back. I wanted to include the photographs in the manuscript and credit this photographer, but locating him seemed impossible, or improbable at the least. The only clues I had were a first name, the fact that he was from Brazil and that he went to BU (which Bob had told me). I considered the odds and *Googled* “Tiago” and “Boston University.” And, who knew?! (This is how the world works now!) His website popped up first on the list! I took a shot and wrote to him for permission to use them. Finding him volunteering in Solentiname, Nicaragua, Tiago responded later that evening that, indeed, he was the “Tiago” I was looking for and gave me a whole-hearted “Yes!” that I could use the photographs. He also said that there were more photos of Bob on his website ([www.tiagogenoveze.com](http://www.tiagogenoveze.com) under “Stories” and “Bob Wright”). He won first place in the photo story category of the Boston Press Photographer's Association 2008 student contest; most of them are included within this manuscript. Thank you, Tiago!

Jonathan Margolis worked with staff at *Hearth, Inc.* to set up the “Bob Wright Memorial Fund,” contributions to which will support *Hearth’s* programs of outreach and service to other homeless seniors. Any proceeds from the sale of Bob’s journal will go to *Hearth*.

There are many who will remember his legacy of caring for those who, like himself, were homeless. And in remembering Bob, how could we possibly forget to “SMILE [because] it’s the LAW!”

~*Christina Nordstrom*

Robert “Bob” Wright was one who, if you gave him an article of clothing that didn’t fit him, said, “No matter...I’ll find someone who can use it.” One morning, when a fleet of Starbucks’ marketing reps was handing out free coupons for coffee to “the homeless” near Boston Common, Bob crossed over from his corner and asked if he could help distribute them; he knew where to find others who weren’t as visible as he. Once he was given \$60 worth of *Stop & Shop* supermarket gift cards, one with a value of \$10 and one for \$50. Later, when he was shopping in the supermarket, he saw a woman he knew who was shop *lifting*. He knew she had no means to purchase food, and gave her the \$10 gift card to use so that she wouldn’t face the indignity of an arrest. Another time, he sat with a homeless friend’s child on a bench on the platform in the subway so that she could go out to find food.

With a frugal spirit, he would pick up potatoes that were left for clean-up crews at Quincy Market, and planted their “eyes” all around Boston (... and “some of them are still there under the Big Dig to this day!”). Then he’d harvest them and cook them over an open fire in a bucket of water from the Charles River. He shared them with others who, like himself, found shelter under Longfellow Bridge. (Enterprising soul that he was, he said that he had once found shelter *inside* one of the bridge’s salt-and-pepper-shaker central towers.) Before his death, he laughingly related another time when he went “dumpster diving” for food on Thanksgiving and found two discarded frozen turkeys. One he cooked in the pot under the bridge and shared it with his adopted family. The other one he tethered to a rope and placed it in the river to stay “refrigerated.” A day or so later when he went to retrieve the bird, he drew up nothing but a picked-clean carcass!

On another occasion during the winter, a friend gave him several packages of instant hand-warmers, which he, in turn, passed out to others he knew on the street to put in their shoes. He said he was proud that he still had his toes, what with being out for 12 winters [at the time] and having diabetes and poor circulation. “Most homeless,” he related, “don’t have their toes because of frostbite.” I was reminded of this again this past summer as I walked around Quincy Market during a lunch break. Passing a barefooted man who was fundraising on the sidewalk, I saw that he had no toes—evidence enough.

What I will most remember about Bob is that he loved seeing the children. He wanted better for them; he hoped that they would grow up in families that cared for and loved them so that they wouldn’t have to learn about life the hard way—as he and his brother did. With a “thumbs up” and a big smile, he would shout, “School’s cool!” as parents escorted their little ones past his corner and down the street to the daycare center.

There are untold stories of so many of life’s unsung heroes whose lives and individual gifts have a special place in the circle of life—on the never-ending continuum. But no matter the point where upon they fall, they all matter; they can all offer inspiration. And, while I’m the first one to admit that I don’t always succeed “in the neighborhood” as well as I’d like to, I wanted to remember Bob here among so many others who have inspired me to “go and do likewise”—to *try to* love neighbor as self.

~Christina Nordstrom

*Editor's Notes: Bob Wright's journal notes have been transcribed as he had written them, without corrections, except in a rare case to clarify. His spelling was kept as originally written, e.g., he writes "women" when he means "woman" and "payed" when he means "paid," "subjected" when he intended "subjected"; punctuation is transcribed here as he wrote it, underlining, use of capital letters, etc. Most entries are signed with his name, "Robert Wright" and under this he wrote "Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"; these are not repeated in the journal entries here. "Undated Entries" are included chronologically according to where they were found in Bob's notes, but this is sometimes just a best guess. He usually also made a note of the time, temperature and weather conditions in his dated entries. Many of his journal notebooks were stolen, which will account for the gaps in the continuity of his story but there is enough content to get a sense of this very special soul. His notes begin in July of 1994, six months after the fire that left him homeless.*

As the nights grow old so slowly  
As the twilight grows so gently  
It's the time to reach out for each other.

All I want for Christmas is every thing I don't have.

Robert Wright  
"Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"

## July 24, 1994

[Editor's Note: The following was written on the back of a folded house of correction canteen order form dated July 20, 1994. At the top was written "109.71 New Man," McGrath House, Inmate #83578. Checked off on the form were: 10 "Private Stock Regular" cigarettes, 10 peanut butter crackers, 10 cheese and crackers and 1 hair brush.]

"Ramblings" July 24, 1994

...This is Sunday, so the priest came up and spent over an hour talking about the body of Christ and bad mouthing Jews and Muslims to anyone who would listen or couldn't get out of bed. Now that I think about it, they were one and the same.

So far the hacks (guards) I have met seem tough, but fair. They all look like power lifters.

This morning I snuck out to the yard again and wouldn't you know I met another man that worked for my father and then myself.

## **An Undated Entry, probably during 1994**

In your wildest dreams, who could ever beat a homeless person?

I have found the Boston Police have competition (at least most of them).

The people who are given the responsibility of taking care of the homeless, **THEY ARE THE ABUSERS**. The people that are being payed to help the homeless, are the biggest abusers of the homeless. They insult, degrade, rip every ounce of dignity you have left from your heart and treat you like dirt. **WHY**.

If you are foolish enough to ask why you are labeled a trouble maker, then the two famous words to the homeless, **“YOUR BARRED.”** **“Get out.”**

In my 45 years of life, I have never heard these words more often then now.

**“Your Barred,”** Means your out. The weather does not matter. Rain, ice, snow, cold, cold, it does not matter. For example: I was barred from Long Island Shelters by a van driver who was **PAYED** to pick up homeless on bad nights and transport them to warm shelters. When I asked what shelter he wanted to take me to, he said Long Island Shelters. (Long Island Shelters are the **BIGGEST** abusers of the homeless in the city.) I told him **“no, take me to another shelter or none at all.”** This is when he barred me. When I asked why (and this is a direct quote) **“For refusing my services.”** Who are these people?

They get our good tax money to put my body in their shelter for one night, then kick me out at 6:30 a.m. the next morning only to start again the following evening. **WHAT KIND OF SYSTEM IS THIS? WHO ARE THESE** people?

I checked on that van driver, his qualifications are: he was once homeless, and he is very, very big. He obviously knows very little about people, **EXCEPT** himself. (That's wrong)!



**January 2, 1995 22°**

I'm thinking as I sit here motionless that at this instant my Earth is traveling at about 860 miles per hour west to east (1,040 MPH at the equator) at the same time my Earth is orbiting the Sun at 66,661 MPH, and my Sun is carrying itself and its planets toward the star Vega at 31,000 MPH (soon to be our next Sun in 50 million years). Hold on, now, we start going fast. Our Sun and Vega move around the galaxy at the blinding speed of 100,000 MPH and our galaxy itself rotates at 559,350 MPH. Did I mention our galaxy rushes through the Universe at over 1,000,000 MPH? So where are we going in such a hurry? (That is all real time as I sit.)

So, as I sit, I am moving at over 2.5 million MPH in six wildly different directions (all in real time) and to think, after 1 million years the best we can walk is about 2.3 MPH.

**January 16, 1995 60°**

(Bob's Top 10 Wish List)

1. Hope, not Dispare
2. A clean warm bed for the winter
3. Smiles and Hellos as you walk by – most days this is all that keeps me going
4. Solid winter work boots – I do plan on being normal again
5. To be treated with RESPECT – most homeless ARE real people, just blindsided
6. A tiny recorder with tapes – this experience should be documented
7. Ruby slippers – click, click, there's no place like home.
8. Dentist – my pain is greater than my fear of dentists
9. More people willing to try and help – most just don't know how. ASK.
10. James Michener's new book, my #1 addiction. I would give anything to love and be loved again.

**January 19, 1995 4:30 p.m.**

Salvation Army, Cambridge – A man standing behind me asks “What's for supper?” The answer from a worker: “TOILET paper.” HELP. Is this the answer to homelessness?

4:42 signed in.

**January 21, 1995 and counting**

List #3 – Bob's Newest Top Ten Wish List

10. James Michener's newest book – my #1 addiction – I gave up on the \$15,000 pay raise...
9. People willing to TRY and help – most just don't know how – ASK
8. Dentist – the pain has become greater than the fear
7. Still #7 for the third list, Ruby Slippers – click, click, “There's no place like home.”
6. A tiny recorder, with tapes – this experience should be documented
5. To be treated with Respect – most homeless are *real* people, just blindsided



4. Strong, WARM winter work boots, size 11 – I do plan to be normal again.
3. Smiles and Hellos as you walk by – some days this is all that keeps me going
2. Clean, warm bed and a shower for the winter – I do slate and copper, my work is dead for the winter
1. Still #1 Hope, not Dispare.

[Additional notes:]

We need more good breakfasts like the Paulist Center serves.

“Oh, I would do anything for love.” (Bread)

### **January 21, 1995 and counting**

List #3 – Bob’s Newest Top Ten Wish List [2<sup>nd</sup> list #3]

10. James Michener’s newest book – my #1 addiction – I gave up on the \$15,000 pay raise...
9. People willing to TRY and help – most just don’t know how – ASK
8. Dentist – the pain has become greater than the fear
7. Still #7 for the third list, Ruby Slippers – click, click, “There’s no place like home.”
6. A tiny recorder, with tapes – this experience should be documented
5. To be treated with Respect – most homeless are real people, just blindsided
4. Strong, WARM winter work boots, size 11 – I do plan to be normal again.
3. Smiles and Hellos as you walk by – some days this is all that keeps me going
2. Clean, warm bed for the winter – I do slate and copper, my work is dead for the winter
1. AND STILL #ONE – Hope, not Dispare.

[Additional notes:]

Small personal care items I can hand out to the homeless in the Common (80% male, 20% female, 10% children?).

“People Who Need People”

“I would do ANYTHING for Love” (Bread)

**January 24, 1995**

Tonight I subjected myself to be beat, to meet one women. She works at the Pilgrim House. She seems to be the one of very few who really cares.

This women told me of a subway tunnel where I wouldn't get hurt. Who is this women? Every time I entered Pilgrim House she has treated me with RESPECT. Who is this person?

Why is it the staff who are paid to HELP the homeless have no concept of respect? This makes me ask again, WHO IS THIS WOMEN?

**January 26, 1995 3:04 p.m.**

A women just handed me a 5.5 oz. ham and said, "I work for the homeless." I said, "Let's work together." She said, "I've heard about you, that's why we came here today."

LET US ALL HOPE SOMETHING GOOD COMES FROM THIS.

Carol. Her first name is Carol. Who ever gets possession of these notes must pay tribute to this women. She is nothing but a worker (I've seen her do everything). But when she talks to you, she looks you in the eye, then she shakes your hand, she has a firm grip. But the BEST is: If you need something, *this* women does not make you BEG for it.

**Undated Entry**

This biggest abuser of the homeless are the people payed to HELP the homeless. Pilgrim House: "You take it, this isn't KFC, shut up, and sit down."

Charlie asks WHY would I watch the news if Pilgrim House was mentioned? WHO IS CHARLIE? WHAT IS HIS TRAINED HIM...you must ...

Night Center, Anchor Inn – 4 Points

**January 28, 1995 8:05 p.m., 15°**

Harvard Square

Once upon a time, a young man some called a "white prince" lived in the land of the dragons. Now this land was not all bad, there were many good people living here to try to keep the dragons at bay. But it was a battle every second of every day.

Now the "white prince" needed very little food, but he did need medicine to keep his heart working strong and sure.

Many good people in this kingdom helped the "white prince." They made sure he had the strongest coat of ARMOR and the best helmet to catch pieces of silver the good people

would send his way, for they wanted him to slay the dragons and give this land back to the good people.

Early one morning the “white prince” was sitting in the center of the kingdom, when out of the sky came a swoosh of light followed by a “white witch.” Now in this kingdom there are many good witches to help the “white prince” slay the dragons, but none are more cherished than the “white witches,” for they have an inner power to draw upon to give the “white prince” more energy to fight the dragons.

Now this one “white witch,” we will call her “Annie,” came down on a ... silver broom she called VW...

So “Annie” says “YO Prince, hop on, we go for a ride.” Now the Prince, being nobody’s fool, hopped on the silver broom behind “Annie the white witch” and off they zoomed in to the clear cold sky. But the “White prince” was not cold at all as a matter of fact, he was quite warm, for there seemed to be an invisible bubble around them. Which was good for the temp was below 0°.

As he rode through the sky, he was in a world he knew he had been to before, but he couldn’t put his finger on [it]. What was it?

Then BAM! He knew, it was the soft words of the white witch, it was the soft womanly smell of Witch Annie, it was the way the wind swept her hair. She was, *OH MY*, she is a woman!

Now the “white prince” was taught to always be nice to woman, so he just sat back and enjoyed this thrill he once knew.

As they flew through the wonder full sky, Annie told the white Prince of how her good friends helped all the poor people of her kingdom. So they flew to the area of Magazine and Putnam (a special area indeed). When they parked the silver broom (the one called “V.W.”) they entered a small castle that was as busy as a honey bee hive.

Good Princes, and Good Witches were handing out good clothes and tasty food to all the good people who entered this enchanted castle. It gave the white prince great joy to see the good children running around and pretending to catch the bad dragons. He knew they would soon be “white princes,” and help send the bad dragons far, far away. But for now, the white prince had work to do. So “Annie” snapped her fingers and her silver broom zoomed up (now I know you remember “V.W.”) and off they flew towards the white princes kingdom.

When they got there, “Annie” saw that the white prince needed new boots of armor, so she pulled out her plastic wand, and with a flash of light the prince was wearing shiny new armor boots.

Now, because this white witch had the “inner power,” these boots were special, for when the white prince set out to catch a bad dragon, jets of fire would come out the back of the boots to give him extra speed and power. A sure winner for the good people.

Now the white witch had to do good work for more people, so with sadness in his heart, the white prince waved good bye to “Annie” as she flew into the warm sun, sitting aboard her trustie broom. (What was its name?)

This story is written to pay tribute to a lovely women, Anne Moore, and to her friends at the Cambridge Baptist church (corner of Magazine and Putnam St.).

### **Undated Entry**

You think that you grow up,  
But one day you find  
It is fun to be young.  
Just about that time, you  
Realize you are to OLD  
To play the role of a  
Young person.

### **Undated Entry**

6. “T” Pass – I was hit by a car, now I don’t walk as well as I should.

1. Hope, not Dispare

4. Smiles and Hellos as you walk by – this helps give me energy to fight the cold.

7. Still #7 for the fourth list RUBY Slippers, click, click, “There’s no place like home.”

5. To be treated with Respect – most homeless are real people, just blind sided.

8. Dentist – the pain is becoming greater than the fear.

3. 10 minutes with Gov. Weld or his Rep – maybe he doesn’t know there is a problem with the shelters

2. Warm sleeping quarters – the subway is fine, but no place for a real homeless person so sleep. I can do house repairs to pay.

10. More people like Anne Moore – she gave me my warm winter work boots (#4 on the last list)

9. Strong back pack – I must carry my kingdom on my back.

Ask me who Carol is.

## January 31, 1995

Kingston House

Weekdays:

7:00 a.m. Wake up

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

11:30 Bed Assignments

8:30 overnight check-in till 9:00

## February 1, 1995 25°

Last night my friend Carol at the Pilgrim House had me talk to “Her” friend Maryann. This woman was, is, very nice, but (and I hate that word) she tried to build up my spirits, and I am tired of the let down with people like this. Carol said she is good to go [to], so I must wait till Thursday to find out.

I slept well at Pilgrim House last night, and the dinner they served was very good. To get here, you subject yourself to Hell, but most of these people TRY.

I must restate, “Carol” trys, and if I ever get #3 on my new wish list (#4) then I will TRY to talk her into walking beside me into the Gov’s office.

[Second entry this date:]

Pine Street Inn

I thought Long Island Shelters were bad, but they must work a little to top these people.

Why is it the “REAL” Pine Street Inn does not show up in the ads on TV?

I went to Pine Street on January 31 about 9:00 p.m. This time they let me in (last time, about a week ago they laughed in my face saying, “The INN IS FULL. It was snowing that night.”). So back to now.

They allowed me to bed down beside a Coke machine on the floor in a room with about 50 drunk men (in my dreams, this is a drunk tank in Tiajuana). These times men (drunks) fell on me while I slept. (Bet you didn’t see that in the ads.)

5:00 a.m. time to wake UP and get out. I go into the bathroom to pee and wash. Bad move. I came out my jacket is gone. If I had taken 5 seconds longer, I would have lost it.

I saw a man stuffing MY jacket into a plastic garbage bag. (5 seconds.)

I have my jacket back. He has very sore kidneys.

But the bad part is when I told the staff of Pine Street Inn (this is a quote), “That’s to bad, but that’s the way it goes.” WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?? They did not care who the thief was. The place is a shopping MALL for thieves.

Why ARE WE GIVING THEM SO MUCH MONEY?

## February 2, 1995 and counting

Bobs New Newest Top Ten Wish List (List #4)

10. More good people like “Annie”; she gave me my warm winter work boots (#4 on last list).
9. Strong, waterproof backpack; I must carry my kingdom on my back.
8. Dentist; I can trade work. The pain is becoming greater than the fear.
7. And still #7 for the fourth list, RUBY Slippers; click, click, “There’s No Place Like HOME.”
6. “T” Pass; I was hit by a car, now I don’t walk as well as I should.
5. To be treated with RESPECT; most homeless are Real people, just blindsided.
4. Smiles and Hellos as you walk by; a warm smile can make a pauper feel like a King.
3. 10 minutes with Gov. Weld or his Rep.; maybe he doesn’t know there is a problem with the shelters. (He won’t accept my calls; you try.)
2. Warm sleeping quarters; the subway is fine, but not good for sleeping in. I can do house repairs for payment.
1. And STILL #1 – Hope not Dispare

[Additional notes:]

Small personal care items I can hand out in the Common (80%male, 20% female, 10% children).

Prayers may help.

Printed by “Sir Speedy”

## February 3, 1995 25° Windy -2°

I spent the night at Pilgrim House to talk to Maryann about better housing and she gave me the same old BULLSHIT, “Well, Bob, you must stay here for a while so we can find JUST THE RIGHT PROGRAM for you.”

What a bunch of bull! I’ve been homeless for over a year, JUST GIVE ME A CLEAN BED.

It’s like, “Keep them begging, that way we get the Gov. money.”

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE??

**Kingston House, 10:35 a.m., February 3, 1995 25°, Wind -2°** [a second entry on this date]

I walk to Kingston House by advice from a friend.

I enter one glass door, and am in an entry way, in front of me is a glass door (LOCKED) and to the side is a large glass window beside the front desk.

They won't let me in, they are busy. The BIG man behind the counter (no more than 5 ft. from me) would rather talk to 3 personal than ask what I wanted. He had me stand in this entry way for 10 minutes, then buzzed me in to stand in front of him across the counter.

/ME/ "I'm homeless, how may I apply for a bed?"

/Him/ (Never even looking at me) "Be here at 8:30 a.m. Mon.-Fri." (This is Fri.) No other info, no offer of help, no "Can we feed you?" No "May I try to find you a bed?" NO "Would you like to warm up?"

NO. MAKE ME STAND AND BEG. (If you don't beg, you don't get buzzed in.) WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? HOW MUCH government money do they get? The front counter man should be better trained, or at least use common sense.

The homeless must always BEG for what these people are payed by the government to provide. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE??

**February 3, 1995 25° 4:00 p.m.** [a third entry on this date]

Let's not Forget Family

The distant/or close cousins, their answer to every time is GET A JOB: I never heard that one before. How do you get a job when you have a bad leg (hit by a car), broken wrist, stink (lack of shower), cloths stink from sleeping in subways, and you are just plain worn down from fighting the cold and thieves.

They live in a bedroom town (Natick), if I ask them to follow me through the homeless world they say, "Not on your life." But they can sure tell me to get a job, then leave.

What family? What is family? Where can I get one?

So who are these people we call family. They grew up working, every one of them. To this day they still work. They have no concept of what it is like to be homeless. This CANNOT be held against them, for they live in a bedroom town, not Boston. Heck, they don't even know what Black is. (Ask any one of them what "Stemming" is.)? They say, "Robert, I'll give you work."

Now what good am I to this person if I'm dirty, and haven't slept? They just don't see this. EVERYTHING is NOT SOLVED BY Getting A JOB!! Why don't they say, "Bob, sleep in my basement until you can get your self together."

It's 6:30, I must try and find a "bed."

**February 3, 1995 10:00, Pilgrim House** [a fourth entry on this date]

I'm back in Pilgrim House (10:15 p.m.). God what you must go through to sleep on a stiff army cot. Now that's the good part. I ask for a coat hanger. No. (I washed a pair of sox and underwear in Mcdees but now I must dry. BUT NOT HERE! WHY?? All I want is a coat hanger to dry a pair of jockey shorts and a pair of sox.

Sayes, "No nothing gets hung up here." This man acts like we are to get new clothes some place and throw the old cloths away. DON'T wash out Dirty Cloths!! Who is this Man?

### **Undated Entry**

I would like to say "this is a classic," but I can't, this is more normal then we know. I enter Huntington Deli and Spirits. I walk up to the deli counter, in front of me is a fair deli counter, with prices on the wall. I ask the man behind the counter, "What will it cost for a plate with some roast beef, pastrami, salad, baked beans [baked beans was crossed out and in its place was written] chili?"

HE SAID "WE SERVE SALAD AND SANDWICHES."

"Who ARE these people?"

I may be old fashion, but if I worked here, I would give this person a price. What ever happened to "the consumer may know what they want?" Do they TRAIN these people to deal with the public?

**February 5, 1995 20° 6:12 p.m. with wind chill -40° Plus**

5:15 and I see the MBTA outreach van on the Common. It's 20° with 20-40 MPH winds, that computes to MORE then – Minus 40°. I ask for transport to Pilgrim House. Two Good men, Sampson and Gene say, "NO problem, this is our job." Why have I never met these two before? As many times I've been kicked out of the subway by the MBTA POLICE, and they NEVER TOLD me about this Outreach VAN. (Carol, of the Pilgrim House, told me "if it gets really bad, call this outreach van" (no number [given]).

We arrive at Pilgrim House about 5:30 p.m. WE go in and Joyce tells us to leave. "Nobody allowed in until six p.m. Thank God Sampson and Gene were more interested in my health and wellbeing (she must know what the temp is out there). So we sit in the heated van and wait. Sampson gave me a number to call for a case worker. This tells me he cares.

At 5:49, the Pilgrim House van drives up, loaded with homeless men and they walk in. NOW WHY MUST WE WAIT TILL 6:00 p.m.? This is the same women who picked up my hat off the floor and gave it away. (Two cold days later, I got it back.)

It would seem the homeless just done suffer enough on the streets, we need the people PAID TO HELP US to add a new dimension to suffering.



## Undated Entry

I entered St. Francis House at about 11:55. Sincerity allowed me in but St. Francis House personl said no mail until after their lunch (1:00). GO BACK OUTSIDE. 23° with wind = -30°.

Re-enter 12:50 (through Sincerity). Stand at counter while “Brother” ignores you and reads his papers. (How cold must you get)? 5 minutes of 1:00, ONE Black Sincerity women said, “You must leave, you can’t stand here.” She DOES NOT CARE HOW LONG I HAVE BEEN WAITING IN -30°. (5 minutes to access the desk.)

(I NEED A SMALL VIDEO CAMERA.)

### February 9, 1995 27°

Most nights it just doesn’t seem worth the fight. Each night I lose a little more. Sleep seems to be the elusive Butter Fly. The MTA police throw me out of the subway, so I run to another tunnel, maybe I get an hour sleep with the rats till the MTA police find me again and out I go again to run to another tunnel. Each time I exit, the sweat freezes. The shivers never seem to go away. The other night I walked from Park Street to Arlington *on the tunnel tracks* all the time thinking “so what if a train hits me, the darkness must be better than this.”

I know I should sell crack coke or “junk” – make a couple hundred a day and get off the streets, but even the darkness is more appealing.

Then 5:00 a.m. comes and I go to Tremont and Park Street and sit with my cigar box. From my seat, I suck energy from the good people who smile at me, or say, “Good morning,” or put pieces of silver in my cigar box. *They* give me the power to keep trying to get off the streets. They are the answer, not the roach-infested sewer called Pine Street Inn, who must run TV ads to say how good they are, but if you ask the people who know, the streets are safer – or the Long Island Shelter system, where the staff will beat you as quickly as one of their inmates.

For me the answer is in my people. These are good people.

*Robert Wright*  
*“Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire”*

### February 10, 1995 28°

I just met the infamous Jim Greene. People have been telling me to meet him at down town crossing, but he was never there when I was looking. This man is payed to help the homeless, he works with the Pine Street Inn. The day before the “Blizzard of 95” the police told me had “had the day off.” The homeless would like a day off.

A police officer told me to find him at 59 Temple Place, Suite #1014. After a short wait Mr. Greene allowed me to enter his office, after I explained part of my problems Mr. Greene made it CLEAR. He was not ALLOWED to have homeless visit in HIS OFFICE. WHO PAYS FOR THIS? (Must we meet in the subway with the rats – my office? Why must the homeless beg for help from people like this who are paid to provide it? (Truth be known, if I had his office I may not allow dirty, smelly, homeless people in). I put my kingdom on my back and left, nothing gained, respect lost. Pine STREET proves they hire the best with YOUR money.

**February 10, 1995 29°** [a second entry on this date]

So do I dare ask, who is in charge here? Let me take a count.

Carol: #1. Pilgrim House: I have received nothing, yet, but her honesty is tops.

Keith: He PAYED to put me up at the “Y”, these are the real people. He does not get PAYED to help.

The MTA cop that see’s me but does not hurt me. HE IS A GOOD MAN.

Annie (the White Witch) thanks for the boots

Sampson and Gene: MBTA van drivers, they try

I met some good people in Pine Street Inn. BUT THE PLACE IS A SEWER. (Give them MORE MONEY)! – stupid

The MAN who gave me my winter jacket almost stolen at the Pine Street Inn, God is watching – thank you!!

Please help, how do I count the many people who drop pieces of silver into my box. THEY GIVE ME ENERGY TO KEEP GOING!

Sometimes I just wish this trip was through: WHERE ARE THE POWERS THAT BE?? WHO ARE THE POWERS THAT BE?? Does anybody know??

So I freeze tonight.

**February 13, 1995 25°**

When you think it’s bad, don’t lose hope, it will get worse. While walking through Harvard area, I stopped a man (Black man) selling a paper to benifet the homeless. I ASKed how this benifects the homeless? “NONE of your business, beet it.” I didn’t, the police where called (NO body touched anybody). The Police (Cambridge police, Unit #218, Plate #436, 1:00 p.m. Monday) told me, a homeless person, who was stupid enough to question these people, to get lost OR ELSE. 338 Sgt.

These people are selling a newspaper for \$1.00 but will not tell a homeless man how this helps him. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

I have been homeless for over a year. Every time I ask one of these newspaper pushers (newspaper for the homeless) how this helps the homeless, they can NEVER ANSWER.

How is it when THEY say, "This man is bothering me," this officer (never getting out of his car, never asking the homeless man any questions), can tell the homeless to "get lost, or else."

### **February 22, 1995 1:15 p.m. 35° (snow/rain)**

I'm sitting in St. Francis House for a 1:15 appointment for an I.D.

Next table a man is telling a young man he will never be accepted into the kingdom of "Christ" unless he gives "All to the Lord." (Did I mention this was a homeless shelter? The people who enter HAVE NOTHING.)

So what more can the homeless give? We must BEG just to sit in this warm room, we have no money, our kingdom is on our backs. Must we also sign a ... [end of entry]

### **February 27, 1995 29°**

A homeless person tells me to "go to Chelsea" to a burnt out building. I went and found a mall of empty buildings. Both burnt out. Or just empty.

Pick your area. This area is a true "real estate" market for the homeless.

### **March 13, 1995 37°**

As I walked by a store front on Bromfield I saw myself in a mirror, and I thought who is that man? What I saw scared me. "This is not the Robert Wright I am."

The man I saw was old, gray beard, graying dirty hair, baggy dress, walking with a worn wooden cane.

What have I become? What did I do wrong?

How can a working, almost middle class person go from what we think as "normal," to what you see in front of you?

This is what I call fear. From what I was.

**April 18, 1995 51°**

I sit on “the hill” in Boston Common. Not a cloud in the sky, hundreds of people walk the paths in the warmth. A very well dressed, middle aged woman walks by with her breasts bouncing joysley with her brisk step. I think I shall bounce joysley when I am no longer homeless.

DELTA Dawn is BACK 4-18-95. YEC!!

When I am no longer homeless, I may still see people as I see them now.

Knee (MTA)

Pain?

Headaches (EARS)

Zoloft

Zantac?

Sleep (or lack of)

“Dine”

Heart, (Varap)

Dentist, how

Depression (is it phy.)?

Lasting effects carbon poison

Blood pressure

**May 24, 1995, 8:15 a.m. 65°**

This morning as I sit in front of the Park Street Church, I read a column in this mornings Herald by Beverly Beckham about how people are, for the most part, caring about others. Case in point could be made from the pieces of copper and silver in the cigar box at my feet.

Earlier this morning a man handed me a ten dollar bill. Was I excited? Now, I know I’ve seen this man before, where?

Then it hit me, this man, in his pickup truck, stopped traffic while I walked a very old woman across the street. This man waved and gave me a thumbs up of approval. Now that was two weeks ago. And who said people don’t care?

*Robert Wright*

*“Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire”*

**May 28, 1995**

When you find yourself in a position in need of charity it suddenly becomes a privilege to live. They now can make you beg for basics, food, toilet, four walls. It is no longer a right as a fellow human to eat, use a clean potty, sleep out of the weather, people like the people running the multi million dollar Pine Street Inn have made IT all a privilege that THEY CAN DENY YOU, as they choose. I must beg for an answer, who ARE these people?! And more important, who gives them this power?!

If you are homeless and or disabled, you are invisible. It can happen instantly, one day you are middle class (whatever that means), the next (as in my case by fire) you are homeless. Now a multi million dollar industry suddenly comes to light, the homeless shelter. They make millions on the misery of the homeless.

...If you are homeless and or disabled, you are invisible. It can happen instantly, one day you are middle class (whatever that means), the next (as in my case by fire) you are homeless.

*Robert Wright*  
*"Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"*

### **Undated Entry**

Tonight I eat well. After setting out my collection, I find I have  
2 partially eaten hot dogs (both with mustard)  
1 half eaten taco  
2 sandwiches (one egg salad, one tuna)  
1 styro foam container of gook rice

To think I once bought my own food. Why must I be reduced to shopping in trash barrels or begging at food lines?

### **Undated Entry**

From my position each day is like a women, they always end up leaving me.

**May 29, 1995**

“The Termont St. Homeless Gang”

This group of mixed homeless people was formed to educate people as to what homelessness really is. The only requirements to join the gang are they must be homeless, and they must be able to put words together to form a sentence, and sentences together to form a rational thought, and be able to express this thought to others.

I would like to see this “gang” (no more than ten) of homeless go before the Jaycees, Rotary, churches, schools and relate to the people how they became homeless, what it is like to live homeless (lose all sense of dignity) and most important, what can be done to move them back into main stream.

**June 5, 1995 72°**

I just commented to a woman, that she looked sharp, “dressed for success,” I said. Now I sit and wonder how a homeless person could “dress for success.”

What is success?

**Undated Entry**

Bob's Birth Day Wish List [Bob's was born on August 31, 1949]

1. Sit down dress up meal at Legal Sea Foods
2. Flowers (I love flowers and plants)
3. Ruby slippers; click, click, there's no place like home
4. Respect: we are real people
5. Hope not Dispare
6. Smiles and Hello's, most days this is all that keeps me going
7. “I” tokens; I don't walk as fast as I once did
8. Food as you walk by; don't worry, if I get too much, more homeless will be happy
9. A home
10. OK it was a shot in the dark
11. Strong water proof back pack (ASK)

**Undated Entry**

Homeless Bobs News

What is news to Bob?

WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO.

The money you give to the homeless must support their lifestyle for good, or bad.

Stemming is Big Bus.

**August 29, 1995 78°**

From my seat and with the thought pattern of a homeless man, I see more than most.

1. Women have the most foot problems. "Have you ever seen what they wear in the name of fashion?"

**September 28, 1995 66°**

From the Milk Crate of Robert Wright:

Ms. Goggin,

When I first read your letter of rejection, I thought this is my penalty for sleeping in your tunnels last winter. But I figure you wouldn't know about that. (See paper dated 2-9-95 27°.)

Now because I wear a brace for my knee only a small part of the time, when Dr. McCormick wanted to include "KNEE BRACE." I said no. In hind sight one could say that was a bad call, but if I expect to regain some sense of normality (whatever that is), honesty is an issue I must deal with daily. I thought homelessness would also be considered a handicap. This along with the knee injury. (See paper dated 11-18-94.) I can't read it, but what it should say is, on said date Mr. Wright was hit by one car then bounced onto an on coming car (two for one). "He complains of lower back pain, knee and thigh pain (impact point of first car), abrasions on both hands and right side of face and ear (it was a rainy night as I slid along the pavement with little damage). Mr. Wright also has high BP)." No I did not sue.

They handed me a wood cane (which I still need today), and sent me back out in the cold rain. NO X-rays, no complete physical, no money, no respect. Today the back pain is gone, only the knee still hurts and the BP is still high (9-27-95 at Mass. General it was 176/120). Meds are very expensive for a nonworking homeless person, and Dr. McCormick wants me to take five different kinds.

But this is getting long, so back to the present. Every morning (for the past 11 months) I sit at the corner of Park St. and Termont St. (please stop by some time 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.). I collect used clothes, male and female, food, change and Respect! among other things.

I then start walking/hobbling, around my good city hunting out the homeless men, women and children, to hand out my collected items to. I also hand out respect freely, because that is what I demand from them. In this way I earn their trust, so, if they want [to] enter a detox or drug clinic, they ask me for help. Last winter and spring, I averaged 5 a week. Some still walk by my corner in the A.M. dressed for work, and say "thank you."

Last November I walked out of the homeless shelters in order to avoid becoming a drunk or drug addict. Yes the system is so Bad, a sober person often develops a need to be NUMB in order to deal with it, or should I say NOT deal with it. But, once again I ramble.

I request you reconsider my request for a pass, not only because of my physical walking ability or inability, but also please consider I sometimes must walk vast areas of the city to help the

people I wish to help. In helping them help themselves, everyone wins including the MBTA, your platforms will be less cluttered with drunks “sleeping one OFF,” or urinating in corners, etc., etc. I do not claim to be an answer to these and other problems, but let me try please.

## References

Susan Robinson: Mass. Gen. Hosp., she is a social worker working with the homeless, and also my friend, Terry Wilson: Cardinal Medeiros Transitional Housing Program for the Homeless. If you need more please advice, not a problem.

## Undated Entry (presumed to be in the fall of 1995)

[Page 1 is missing, this entry starts in the middle of a sentence.]

...as if in a coma, I finally found out. He was sexually abused by a Cathloic priest!

“I” set fire to the church (9 years old and I know what pay back is). I only cared about getting my brother back. (It worked.)

I could go on about what childhood really was, but I will spare you (and me). Most of the bad times are stuffed in a “Black Box” I have created.

As an older person,  
I have been shot  
Knived twice  
Mugged about seven times  
Jumped out of a plane with a dirty chute  
Crashed 2 miles short of the runway in a glider  
Etc., etc.  
(Not to mention poisonous snake bites) Ask scars  
Also Brother Richard is dead due to suicide.  
The point of all of this is to say none of the above could prepare me for the abuse about to happen to me.

New Day, New Page.

Please try to understand the emotional pain. As an adult, we are talking “evac.” “Get the hell out.” But NO!! I am a begger, I am homeless, I have No Drag!! I am a dental student’s “TOOTH TOY.”

Time was an illusion. They never stopped. At one point I just blacked out. When I came to, Ms. Collins had a stainless steel grip on one of my teeth. She was saying, “Hang in there, Mr. Wright, almost there, hold on Mr. Wright!”

PLEASE, PLEASE, WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE??

Black Out, Black Out.

When I knew they had finished the only thing on my mind was to get OUT.



They handed me a piece of paper with about ten DO's and DON'Ts. Ms. Collins walked me from the chair from hell to the reception desk. This women "from hell" said if I had a problem, "just call." No follow up, no nothing. Talk about the Dentist from Hell!

So, I walk a country mile from the reception desk, to the exit door. I know there is a God, "GET ME OUT." I look normal, with a mouth full of gauze and blood. But understand, this is my "Tunnel of Light."

I went through the EXIT door "FAST." Right across the hall is a sign, "MEN." I'm in, and the lights went out.

When I came too, I was cowering under the sinks [this last phrase is underlined in red], a man standing, crouching down over me saying, "are you all right?" I said, "Yes, I'm fine." I cleaned up all the blood and got the hell out of that building. My recall is perfect, even in my nightmares. My first logical thought was: Could this really be healthcare for the poor, homeless?? Thanks NEWT!

In your wildest dreams, who would ever hurt the homeless? Can you spell M.G.H.?

### **October 23, 1995**

As I walk in the financial district, I am attracted by an odor. As I walk I see an affluent, well dressed women in front of me is also attracted. (Her nose is in the air, higher than normal.) As we reach the business (her in front of me), we both read the grease board. "BEST ITALLIAN SUB in Boston." I try to figure a way to come up with \$3.95 (I have \$3.00 in food stamps). This goes through my head at the same instant that this nice women starts walking away. Now being an iteligent man with nothing to lose, I said, "You look at the menu, and count calouries, I look at the menu and count pennies." She gave me a knowing smile and moved to the other side of the street.

### **October 23, 1995 58°** [a second entry on this date]

I feel a sadness (if you can believe this), the moonshiner on the Common has been busted. All the normal drunks have flowery breath and bad health. C.V.S. Termont Street run NONSTOP sales on MOUTH WASH. ASK WHY. They drink it. It is called, "Market Demographics." "Sell to the consumers demand." And the drunks will drink it.

### **November 13, 1995 5:15 a.m. 36°**

Most of the time who we speak of the homeless, be it newsprint, TV or just what we see on the streets, it is almost always depressing, which of course, is quite accurate. But if your in the "T" tunnel at 3:00 a.m. with the rats "talking" to you, life is hardly a bargain.

Now, at least in my case there is a silver lining, not all my life is pain! My silver lining is the people (My people) that walk by me, and try to help. This help may come in the form of a

simple smile and “good morning” or a few coins in my cigar box, to the food some place in my hands.

Annie: (The white witch – future story) My feet would have frozen as well as my faith in people if not for this woman and her friends, the Cambridge Baptist Church.

Ken: If not for this man, many days I would not have eaten outside of the [the rest of these notes on this page have been blurred by water and wear].

Robbie and Martha: I have never met two people who care more about the homeless, they both must carry their hearts in 5 gallon buckets. As I write this, she is FAT and DOO, as you read this, she has calved out another savior for the homeless.

Roddy: This kid comes out of the Park Street tunnel on Termont Street with one of his parents (they alternate). Regardless of the traffic volume, I can hear this three and a half year old yell “Bob” and suddenly my life takes a new meaning. This little munchkin strains against his parents grasp to run and HUG me. Hello, wake-up call. This 3.5 year old treats me with so much respect I am drawn to tears.

Jeannette: She won me with her ... and her smile, and her homemade sandwiches. She invited me into her office in the STATE HOUSE to meet her boss (when I met [the rest of this entry is blurred by water and wear and is not readable].

## **November 27, 1995**

### **Bob's NEWEST Top Ten Wish List**

10. Clothes for me: 34-36 waist, 16.5-33 shirt, 7.45 hat, 40 coat.
9. People willing to try to help the homeless, most are willing, they just don't know how.
8. Dentist: I am tired of my food coming through a straw.
7. Still #7 Ruby Slippers: click, click, “There's no place like home.”
6. A tiny recorder with tapes: This experience must be documented. (A cheap unit will not last out here.)
5. To be treated with RESPECT: most homeless are real people, just blindsided.
4. FOOD: This is more important than money. If I get too much, I can feed others.
3. Smiles and hello's as you walk by. Some days this is all that keeps me going.
2. Clean, warm, home.
1. Still #1 HOPE, not Dispare

[Additional note:]

Small personal care items I can hand out to homeless: 80% male, 20% female, 10% of children.

**December 14, 1995 Snowing**

When you feel like complaining, take a minute and think about the homeless person you saw this morning. Try and think what kind of night they had.

*Robert Wright*  
*"Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"*



**February 1996 11:05 25°**

ALL ABOARD, I'm suddenly sitting aboard an Amtrack train, heading towards my biggest pobia, Framingham. OBJECTIVE secure fire report for 142 Union Avenue, 25 months ago.

[Excerpt from *The Boston Globe*, January 9, 1994 by Robert Grunwald (permission to reprint is being requested)]:

*A two-alarm fire was burning in a Framingham apartment building early this morning, forcing the evacuation of at least 30 residents and causing at least two injuries.*

*Firefighter Joseph Hicks said the fire began just before 12:30 a.m. in the basement of 142 Union Ave. He said that firefighters had the blaze under control at 1 a.m.*

*Hicks said two ambulances were summoned to the scene, ...*

**An Undated Entry**

It is with deep regreate that at this time I cannot receive the key to your great city.

As my memory serves me, and I promise it may be amiss, the last key allotted to me is still MIA.

I also understand you have no brothels, adult areas of knowledge. I also understand your city council is not HONEST.

Screw this, I'm heading for Scranton ...

Truth be known, I hate Chelsea, MA. It seems so easy to kill myself, but for that I must find a logical reason.



**July 8, 1997 80°**

If only she knew what she was doing. You would think by looking at her she would know. She looked sharp in her park ranger suit, shiney badge, and pretty smile, but no, she did not know, or even seem to care. Just when you think homelessness may (but for some hard work soon be an ugly vision of the past) along comes a shiney badge to put you back in your place.

“All vendors have been given a spot, you will interfere with other vendors.”

“But there are NO VENDORS between 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. when I arrive and leave.” No matter, rules are rules so she told me I may set up my newspapers in a place (spot) out of the flow of foot traffic.

I must ask, WHY?

If she is as smart as I think she is, she should also note, I do not tolerate drug pushers or boot leggers on my area. I also treat my people with RESPECT, and they treat me with RESPECT.

Why take this asset and hide it? “WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?”

**August 25, 1997**

Bob's Top Ten Birthday Wish List

10. Med. Size weather proof back pack. I must carry my kingdom on my back.
9. Food: leftovers are good. What I don't eat, I feed to others.
8. Smiles and hello's as you walk by. Some days, this is all that keep some homeless trying.
7. And still #7 for the 5<sup>th</sup> list, Ruby Slippers. Click, Click, there's NO place like home.
6. Warm clothes, male and female, used is good. Winter will soon be with us, again.
5. A home were the buffalo roam. I will clean up their mess.
4. RESPECT: People must understand, the homeless are not all drunks or drug addicts. Some of us, once, lived next door.
3. More people buying my newspapers. Then I could rent a room full time.
2. Gift cert. to any resturant. Once in a while a sit down meal just feels good.
1. And still #1 Hope not Dispare.

Every thing is OK as long as you know somebody cares.

*Robert Wright*  
*‘Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire’*

### Undated Entry (1997)

You do not have to be satisfied with America as you find it. You can change IT.



### March 10, 1998

News and Views, From the Milk Crate

It is with great pleasure I have a chance to write this note of t hanks. How rare it is for anyone to extend a hand, without a string connected. They may only be boots to most, but you have a sence of what they mean to the commoner.

I always ask, are we “our brothers keepers”, or is this just scribbles from some desert towel head?

It does not really matter, most have long sence forgotten the words.

It is with great respect I can say, You have not forgotten.

Thank you, and may you forever pass it on.

... if people keep telling you, you stink, and your dumb, you believe it...

*Robert Wright*  
*“Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire”*

### **An Undated Entry**

If two men (dist. For the Boston Herald – Tony and the Boston Globe – Roy Bender) can destroy the lives of the homeless, well all must ask who gives this power?

I, Homeless Bob, have personally seen this happen. If it were not for fear, they instill upon these, you would have known about long ago.

I, Homeless Bob, have seen paper sales persons develop a great start, only to have the Dist. Kick them out to a garbage stand, so a FRIEND can take over.

The homeless are the lowest beings on earth, why would you let a capitalist big swine beat one who was once your friend. Did someone once say, All men are equile?

We must get OLDER,  
We need not get OLD.

### **An Undated Entry**

[Editor's Note: Bob once related that an acquaintance asked if he could help get some tools for him so that he could perhaps do his metal craft work (making copper lanterns) to earn a little money. Apparently this is the list, but Bob said he never received the tools or supplies.]

Airplane shears (Wiss)  
Reds, greens and yellow  
3"shears (Alum., 33"4" is size of jaws)  
5/6 point crimpers (red handle)  
Vise gripps, 3/4", 1", 1 1/4", 1 1/2", 2", 3", 4"  
Files, metal, course, med, fine  
Prick punch (awl)  
2-3-4 pocket leather apron (just big)  
Soldering Irons (actually copper)  
1/2 lb., 1 lb., 2 lb.  
Solder 50/50 (50% tin, 50% lead)  
Acid – Flux – copper, Mantlos  
Copper sheet 16 oz. cold rolled, soft 16 oz.  
1/8" bar stock

### **April 30, 1998 62°**

If you had the choice, how many of you would switch jobs with me in the morning?

Now you should know, as of this moment, my newspaper stand does not exist. As most know, the dist. For the Globe and Herald unfairly replaced me over 2 weeks ago. As most have seen I have been waging a one man boycott, with the help of many friends.

Now given the options, would you take on this conflict or would you just say "screw it, it's not worth the battle."

The whole reason for this Quiz is every morning a young man stands before me, he is one of those computer nuts. He thinks he would love to change jobs.  
Would you, and why?

### **An Undated Entry**

No More Turning Away

No more turning away  
From the weak and the wery  
From poor and down trodden  
From the hungry and dirty  
From the sick and the helpless  
No more turning away  
From the pain and the sorry  
We all must shed our blinders

**(An entry believed to be from April 1998)**

Considering Mr. Benders record, this may be a can of worms left unopened –

Sir,

Witchever roamer mill you listen to, I know you haven't asked about my side of the mill. You are my second to last straw. (Last straw will be TV, Mar Armstrong (Ch. 7) has ugly footage of myself the night of the fire that put me here. What a human interest story, "Homeless man tries to fight back, only to be destroyed by the Globe and Herald empires.)

Mr. Roy Bender threatened me with violence. I have sat here for over two weeks, and not one of your people has [asked] "Bob, what's the problem. What can we do to help?"

You have me eating out of dumpsters again. You have me sleeping in the Common again.  
WHO ARE You?

Please respond NOW.  
(Monday 6:15 a.m.– 9:00 a.m.)  
Or answer to a different public media.

### **An Undated Entry**

This is written for the people NOT for the big bean counters, CEO's or all the exec's of the Globe or Herald. Do you think they have a grip on what their subordinates are doing (outside of the plus/minus columns)?

Do you think they know/care that one of their reps. Roy Bender threatened me physically if I did not "go away"? Mr. Bender told me to my face (spit and all) "Your fucking with the wrong man."

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?? “You” the people that buy your papers from me have given me so much.

**May 18, 1998 72°**

The city of Boston has one of the best attractions of any city in the USA. As locals we call it hell, but as tourists, it is called “awesome.” This is the BIG Dig.

People have been making ... selling video tapes of heavy machines and here they are all around us, and getting the job done.

As the walls of our Boston Garden come tumbling down, I see room for exploitation (not that our Mayor is not willing to exploit our city any way he can). The print media keeps us informed as to the progress and cost over runs of the Big Dig.

You and I know our tourists rarely read the press on their short visits. So let us take the red trail (Freedom Trail) to a new level. Like ANY younging gives a hoot about graveyards, old church’s or over priced eaterys.

ANY good observer can see, what a child wants, said child GETS.

One of my favorite Teamsters Union, Local 56 pile drivers, use some awesome tools kids would love to have their picture taken with.

As of today, June 9, 1998 12:30 p.m., I, Homeless Bob...blend in to the fabric of the city never to be heard from again ...

*Robert Wright*  
*“Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire”*



**January 10, 2000 12:22 p.m. 21°-01°**

Living in the homeless world could be compared to rebuilding a large wooden ship in the middle of high seas, plank by plank.

**March 1, 200\_ 21° Snow**

SPECS

WHO: Mr. Wright

WHAT: Homeless by Fire

WHEN: January 9-10th, 1994



HOW: FIRE!

WHY: Drug dealers wanted in

COST: 3-1 Dead – many lives/dreams lost

WINNERS: Landlord City; energy packet

The old man and my father

Questions/Readings:

Questions:

When a Homeless person screams for “Help!” how can anyone tell?

### **An Undated Entry**

After 30 odd years, Red can tell you “word for word” almost any “A-A” meeting. Do they help? “NO!”

Now take “Joe” after 30 odd years he now has a job in a local bar as a bar keep. Does he still drink? YES.

### **An Undated Entry**

Most of you all know I was planning to leave Boston on August 1st. (Date of Robbery July 31st.)

As an explanation, I had planned a trip to the upper Mississippi River in order to write two books. In the prosses of planning I had gathered what I needed to make the trip. (All gone, now I must beg).

What most of you all don’t know, homeless is an endless circle. In order to break out you either have someone who will pull you out, and give you some real R & R, or you are on your own. On your own means, you have a great idea.

I thought I had THE great idea.

### **August 6, 2000**

So why should I write a book? People asked me to. People demanded I wright it. I really want too write it.

### **August 27, 2000 72°**

The time has come to rebuild the brick yard. But how?

We have all seen the endless repairs/improvements through the last 5 years, and we are all tired of the brick yard jokes.

## Undated Entry

The nurse came to my room, "What do you want with the nursing supervisor." I told her my meds are 3 hours late (it is now 10:30). She said that was the doctors fault, not hers.

My stomach aches, my nerves are on edge, I am sweating, my heart is fluttering, I am very ready to jump out this ... I'm back, I just passed out. I am on the sixth floor. The nurse came back and said her supper of some were and very busy. Help.

10:40 Dr. has arrived

11:10 B.P. 123/73 – Whow!

11:50 B.P. 141/89



## January 18, 2001 3:15

Chelsea Fire Department; Request info; January 9/10<sup>th</sup> log:

January 18<sup>th</sup> went to Chelsea Fire Dept. to read the logs of the night of the fire at the Stanley. There were none!

Having been trained as a wildfire fighter, as a teenager, and having somehow walked away from two deadly fires, I have a bit of knowledge on fire survival.

Knowbody will say it but I saved one Hell of a lot of people that night. First floor to the third floor, full of smoke and building. The only other source of help was the night manager. HE STARTED THE FIRE! Somebody had to take control.

Control is a very loose word. A person can take control of a problem, without others knowing. CASE IN POINT.

As soon as I heard the fire alarm, I could have evacked 15' to my left and down the escape. I had no thought of it. It was never about saving lives, IT WAS about training (get in, execute, get out). To execute required getting to the fire and terminating it. Thank you, job well done!

6:11

As a Homeless person, thank you's never quite seem to come around. Something about the squieky wheel gets the grease (credit).

I am walking north on N. Washington Street. "God it's cold!" It may be only 31° but the wind chill is 10° below. I fight my way through the next red light system and up towards the Northern Ave Bridge.

DAM, I do not want to be here, I'm hungary. And did I mention the cold, I meen very cold!

Ahead, there is a body across the sidewalk. As I approach this person, I am not surprised. I have seen many homeless under this bridge, some shooting up Herion, it's very common (but that's another story).

I kneel and touch the person. He is warm, approx. 58 years old, 5' 11" tall, white male! The smell, well, to be nice, is different. Help!

I can't find a pulse, I check for air, there is none. By the book he is dead on the sidewalk. BUT not in my book! As long as the body is warm, IT IS MYNE.

I started CPR, a well dressed women walked by, I told her to call 911, NOW. She did. I kept up my preasure, often yelling at this person to breath. At the same time, cars, trucks and busses drive by. Should I expect some help with this CPR?

I am getting very tired, when I hear the siren. I check again, I'm getting a pulse, faint, but a pulse.

The rescue team pulled up and I just backed away. "Not my job anymore." If a "T.V." crew happened by, I would have been an instant "Hero." No more sleeping under bridges. No more Dumpster Diving for food. HELP.



**August 7, 2002 Sunny 78°**

As most of you have heard, I (Homeless Bob) was robbed July 31, 2002. They stoled everything.

I thought the fire was Hell, (as a matter of fact, that is exactly what I said to Gary Armstrong, Channel 7, when I came to). That was 8.5 years ago.

After all these years of starting to rebuild, I awake to discover I no longer exist.

When you steal my backpack, you steal my kingdom, my life, my reason for –  
EVERYTHING.

At times like this, the DARKness is more appealing. (Not my style), my brother (my best friend on Earth) was homeless. He killed himself. I am striving to avoid this ending. This can not be done without help from the people that cross my feet every day.

