

Lady Luck rules in Vegas, but where is Elvis?

LAS VEGAS from Page 5

We pulled off the last exit, drove through the last remnants of what may have once been a city, and voila! — there it was. Shards of dizzying blindness shot off every building, through our wide-open eyes, and bored their way into our brains. Downtown Las Vegas, where every day is Christmas, and it's in Technicolor.

"Ace" jumped out of the car and ran into the nearest casino, shouting at us to meet him there in an

hour.

When we did, he was sitting at a blackjack table with a Jack 'n' Coke and a stack of chips in front of him. We watched him win some more chips; then he got up, gave us a crooked smile and held up the stack.

"Here's another 120 bucks," quoth "Ace," downing another free drink.

That night, we were all too excited to sleep. Visions of Sugarplum Blackjack dealers danced in our heads. We each took off a sock

and hung them on the dashboard of the Diplomat. Tomorrow was going to be the first day of our wonderful new lives.

That next day, we all played lots of blackjack. We started sometime that afternoon. By 6 or 7 that night, all was well. "Ace" had won enough money to fulfill his promise to buy us hotel rooms, so we wouldn't have to sleep in the car again. "Mel" promised to buy us all flowered Hawaiian tourist shirts, just like the one he was wearing. "Earl" had won enough to buy us

all tickets to the Cramps, on New Year's Eve in San Francisco. I had enough to pay everybody's way in to see Elvis. All we had to do was find him. I can't remember anymore what "Cliff" or "Turtle" were going to buy, but they could have.

We didn't find Elvis that night. We should've left town right then, but I wanted to stay until the next day so we could find Elvis. By midnight, "Ace" had \$100 left, after having \$600 four hours earlier. The rest of us thought he'd done well.

We quickly realized what had happened. Because of the excessive amount of neon in the atmosphere over the city, any money that touches air will somehow vanish. There was nowhere to sit down and think about this, because the only chairs in the entire city have slot machines or Keno cards in front of them. The vacuum never shuts off.

We almost had more money. An old lady at Caesar's Palace suggested a quick way for "Cliff" to make 500 fast ones the hard way, so to speak. We would've tried to talk

him into it, but we figured she wasn't responsible enough to keep the air from touching the money, and it would've disappeared anyway.

With all the gambling everywhere around you, it's hard to find something to do for free, but there are fun games to play.

1. Guess which guys have guns under their coats. There are three types, Middle Management, Upper Management, and Freelance Thugs. The Freelance Thugs are the stupidest and most dangerous, unless you bother a waitress. In that case, Middle Management are the most dangerous.

2. Guess which girls are hookers, which are call girls, and which are just trying to keep up with the decor. Hookers work for a living, and call girls specialize.

3. Guess who's really just disgustingly filthy rich, and who just spent two months' salary to buy ugly clothes and throw money on the card tables.

See LAS VEGAS on 9

"You're what?!"



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