

A Worm out of water

WORM from Page 6

But Warren the Worm didn't seem to notice. "Looks kinda quiet to-night," was all he said.

Then Warren the Worm said something about having to meet somebody over in Brentwood.

UCLA didn't look much like it always looks on those halftime spot-lights, but then, neither does UNL when you think about it. On the way, we went past LaBrea, Melrose and Laguna Avenues.

As we passed Anaheim Drive, Warren the Worm pointed out the window and told me about sitting in Gene Autry's skybox.

As we drove down Vegas Drive, he pointed straight ahead and told me about getting a ride all the way down I-15 in Sammy's limo.

"Let's go see my old office," he suggested.

What the hell, I thought. I've come this far, I may as well find out where we're going.

Warren the Worm excitedly gave the driver a long list of directions and started telling me about his old office. It was actually a bar in the middle of the Sunset Strip, he told me. It had a tattoo parlor next door and a package liquor store around the side. It was also just down the block from one of L.A.'s best bail bondsmen, said Warren the Worm.

After driving around for over an hour, we ended up in a neighborhood that looked suspiciously like one we'd just left. We turned onto Sunset (from Wilshire Boulevard, no less) and I was immediately struck by the remarkably houselike appearance of every structure on the street. The Bookie to the Stars excitedly pointed out the window at a two-story brownstone with carefully manicured hedges.

"That's the spot!" quoth the Worm.

I was left wondering which All-American model home was the Whiskey A Go-Go.

It was now after midnight. By my bleary estimate, we'd been driving around Lincoln (well, probably Lincoln) for over six hours.

The cabbie turned around, looked at me, then at Warren the Worm, then back at me.

"That'll be \$283.60," he said evenly, looking directly between my eyes.

I stole a quick glance at Warren the Worm.

"Uh, well," I smiled, forcing a laugh.

"Two-hundred and eighty-three dollars?" I asked, hoping I'd heard it wrong.

"And 60 cents," replied the cabbie, sternness creeping rapidly into his voice.

I started to sweat. I reached slowly for the door.

I jumped at the sound of the doors locking. The cab driver was kind of big. He had a tattoo, a scar and several teeth missing. I sensed danger.

"Don't sweat it kid," rasped Warren the Worm. Then he turned to the grim-looking cabbie, handing him three crisp hundred dollar bills.

"Keep the change, sport."

The doors unlocked and Warren the Worm stepped out of the cab. As he shut the door, he leaned in the window and pointed his thumb at the driver.

"I don't think he believed me before," winked Warren. "Ya know what I'm sayin'?"

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Edited by EUGENE T. MALESKA

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