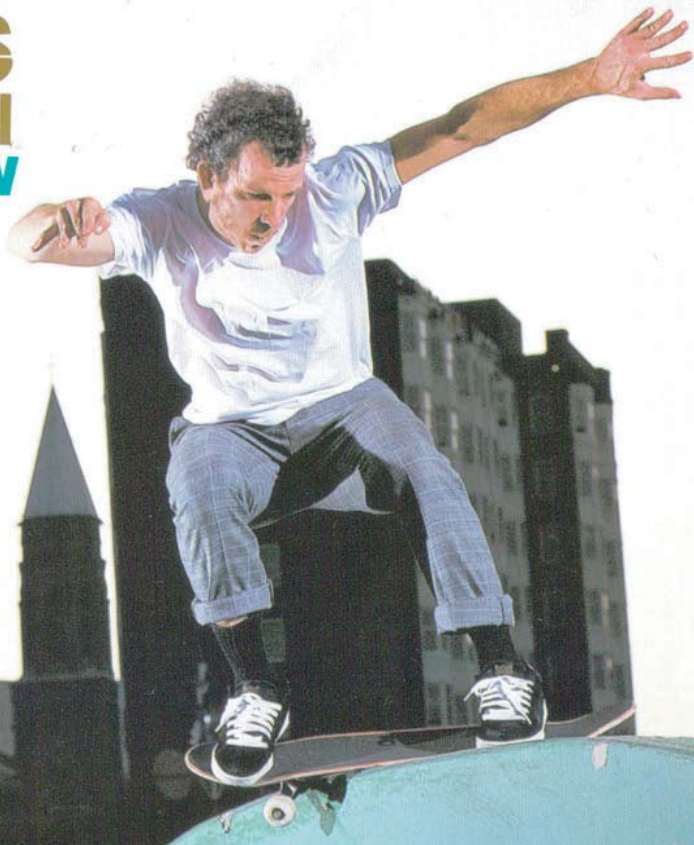
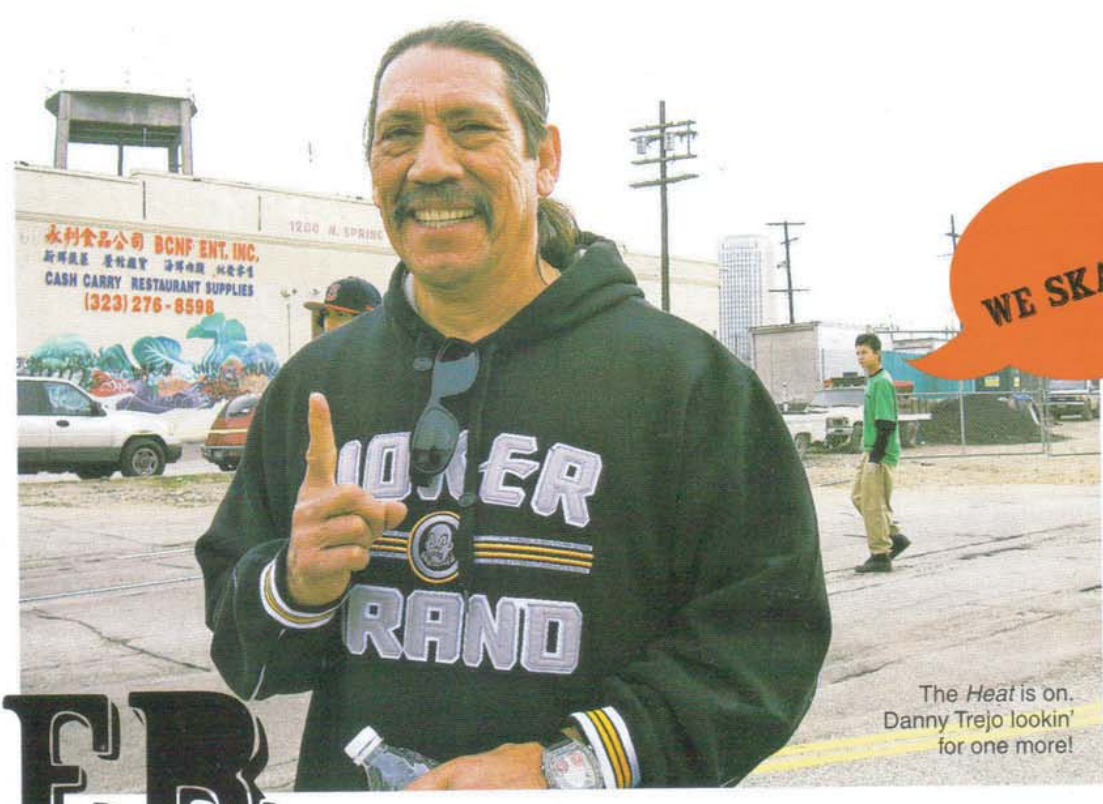


the skateboard MAG

CHRIS HASLAMI INTERVIEW



BAKER CHRISTMAS DEMO



The Heat is on. Danny Trejo lookin' for one more!

WE SKATE

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Have you ever read *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein? It's about two friends—one is a young boy and the other, a tree. The young boy, throughout his life, comes to the tree for various things. The tree, having such unconditional love for the young boy, joyfully gives him everything she can—from a place to climb and play as a young child, her apples to sell when he needs money, a place to make out with chicks as a teenage boy, branches to build a home for his family, her trunk to build a boat so he can sail away, and finally, years later, when nothing is left of the tree but a stump, the boy returns as an old man and asks the tree for just a place to sit and rest. The tree, overjoyed to see her friend and be of service, gladly offers herself one last time, and she and the old man are happy together once again as the tale ends.

A dear friend gave me *The Giving Tree* for Christmas this year. I hadn't read it for at least ten or so years and flipping through the pages reminded me of the Baker Christmas demo I had attended a few days prior in Los Angeles ...

Skateboarding, as a whole, it seems, is becoming more and more generous these days. There are charity events happening all over the place every year—as there should be with all the cash floating around the industry lately. It's a pretty cool thing considering for the most part skateboarders get the shit end of the stick and could easily adopt a nihilistic "fuck the world" policy toward society. But we know there are people out there who have it worse than us, and hosting and supporting charity events like this is the least that we, as an industry, subculture—or what have you—can do.

On December 18, donated canned goods resulted in food for the needy and each donor got a raffle ticket for quite a large product toss and giveaway. Baker, Emerica, KR3W, Active, RVCA, Spitfire, and Deluxe gave away over forty thousand dollars in presents. For anyone who doesn't know what forty grand worth of skate gear is—it's a freakin' lot.

Andrew Reynolds, Kevin "Spanky" Long, Leo Romero, Rammy Issa, Braydon Szafranski, Antwan Dixon, Jeff Lenoce, Jim Greco, Erik Ellington, and Bryan Herman were all on hand skating and signing for the fans. For two hours straight, following the demo, Dave Duncan shouted out numbers and kids got seriously hooked up. Once the darkness set in, the organized giveaway was abandoned, and for an hour straight, product was heaved out of the Active trailer to the crazed crowd below.

In addition to all the product and the skaters and companies donating their time and talent, there was free food all day with Vans' Steve Van Doren manning the grill. The City of Los Angeles donated two blocks in Chinatown. People in Progress, an LA inner city intervention non-profit group, provided added security. For over eight years, Heidi of SPAUSA has devoted herself to these inner city youths, who've come out in droves for this amazing day. Robin Fleming, Baker's brand manager (let's just call her Superwoman), went above and beyond the call of duty with Ari Evan Gold, executive director of The DooGood Conservatory, to make this event possible and make loads of people smile this holiday season. Thanks to all who came, donated, skated, volunteered, worked hard, and on and on and on. It felt good, didn't it?

... And the tree was happy.

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LEO ROMERO

Leo Romero, much like the Giving Tree, just keeps on giving. In this case, his gift to us was a 360 flip.

Here's what they call a "collage." Basically, it means that so much totally rad stuff went on that we couldn't possibly fit it all into full- or half-page photos. So we cram 'em all on one page like this and everyone's happy. If you think I'm going to caption every single one of these, you're nuts. I'm on deadline here.



BAKER CHRISTMAS DEMO



BRAYDON SZAFRANSKI

Lately it seems a lot of kids are doing tricks where you go up in the air and grab your nose and your tail hits the coping. I suck at those. In fact, I'm sooo "street" that I didn't even go over to the mini ramp to know that Braydon Szafranski, or anyone for that matter, was sessioning it.



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