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## Jerry

My name is Jerome Butler Simon. Jerry.

I was born on May 9, 1951 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My mom was a homemaker and my dad was a jack-of-all-trades, driving a truck, a limo, a taxi, whatever he needed to do to provide for us. He took pretty good care of us.

We had a couple of poodles growing up but I can't even remember what their names were. We had a few tropical fish, too.

My parents were married in 1949. If they're still alive, they would've been married for 61 years. I haven't spoken to them since I left Pittsburg in 2005. After me they had two more boys and a girl. I'm not in contact with my siblings, either.

I grew up Jewish. My grandparents on my mom's side were really strict Jews. They always ate kosher. But I'm not really into religion.

My best friend as a kid was a guy named Michael Morrison. He was a good guy. I don't know where he is any more.

My best childhood memory was afternoon bowling leagues when I was a kid. I got pretty good with a 179 average. I also have a great memory of my parents taking me to [Kennywood Amusement Park](#) in Pittsburgh when I was five. That was really special.

I've never been married. I don't have any kids. I know that for sure.

I got my high school diploma and joined the Navy. I was in for 14 months and then got out. It just didn't work out. I've had a lot of jobs over the years driving this or that.

I've lived in Oceanside now for five years. I came to California to get away from my family, my parents, and especially my sister. They were always making me out to be the bad guy. So I came back to San Diego since I'd seen it and liked it when I was in the Navy.

When I got to Oceanside, I leased my own taxi and drove cab for a while. But business dried up and I couldn't make the payments so I lost the car. I was homeless for a while but got another job and then lost it to. So now I'm homeless again. I'm staying at [Bread of Life Rescue Mission](#) in Oceanside. They are good people there. I'm staying in the winter shelter but I'll have to leave in a month or so. That's pretty much my biggest worry—where am I going to stay after that? I really need a job and jobs are hard to get.

The best people in my life right now is the Wiggelsworth Family. They live in Oceanside but they are going leave to go to Colorado. They have a kid and he calls me Uncle.

The best thing going in my life right now is that I'm alive. That's pretty much it. I hate it when people get on my case, tell me what to do, tell me where to go or not go. I wish they'd just leave me alone.

I'm just a person trying his best to get out of a rut.



*Jerry was interviewed on March 13, 2010. Jerry's story and photograph are used by his written permission.*

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