

## Q&amp;A

## Kindness is his road map

*On the road, Leon Logothetis really relies on the kindness of strangers. In 2006 and 2009, the British adventurer traveled from London to Scotland, from Paris to Moscow and from Manhattan to Los Angeles on the minging budget of \$5 a day. For supplementary funds, he approached random folks, who often agreed to "pay" his way using the currency of a couch, a hot dog or a car ride. Cable channel Outside Television is airing a 13-part series documenting his journey, and a book covering the American leg comes out next fall. Staff writer Andrea Sachs spoke with Logothetis from his home base in Los Angeles, where he runs an adventure travel production company and is saving up his fivers for a trip to Australia next year. Excerpts:*

**How did you come up with the idea of crossing great distances on \$5 a day?**

I used to work in London as a broker and wasn't very fulfilled with life. I watched "The Motorcycle Diaries," and [the movie]

shifted something inside me to travel more. I came up with the idea of traveling around the world relying on the kindness of strangers.

**What was your strategy for asking for food, a ride or lodging?**

I would be very respectful. I was the opposite of threatening. For whatever reason, I have this knack for connecting with people. If you don't connect with the person, they're not going to do this for you.

**Did you find that people from certain countries or regions were more giving than others?**

Americans were far, far more generous and kind than Europeans. In the Midwest and the South, people were astonishingly friendly. In Galesburg, Ill., I ran into this guy who put me up for the night. The next morning, he took me around the entire town and raised \$100 for me to get to Denver on the train. I can't accept money, that's one of the things about this trip, but the whole town got me to Denver.

**How did you fare in New York?**

In New York, certainly in Times Square, it was challenging. It took me maybe seven or eight hours to find my way out.

**How did you eventually escape?**

I was sitting in Times Square, moping around, and this guy and girl came up to me and started chatting. They took me to New Jersey. It was actually funny because, after all that time of trying to find my way out, you can take a PATH train from New York to Newark, and it only costs \$1.50.

**Any disturbing moments?**

One of the worst places I stayed at was a hotel in Gallup, N.M. The hotel room cost \$20,

and this really nice guy gave it to me for free. I went [to the room], and there was blood all over the door. I barricaded myself behind the door; people were screaming in the room next door.

**How did you gauge whether a situation was safe or potentially dangerous?**

Ultimately, you gain a sixth sense. If I didn't feel right, I didn't do it. For example, I was in Flagstaff, Ariz., and some guy wanted to take me out to the desert and let me stay with him. I didn't do it.

**Any individuals who really impressed you with their generosity or were memorable in other ways?**

I met a lady in Indianapolis who lived in Chicago. She said, "Leon, if you can make your way to Chicago" — mind you, I just met her, literally seconds before — "here are the keys to my house, and you can stay there for free." So I stayed at this lady's house. I slept on her couch. Then I left the keys in the flower pot. I nicknamed her Generous Julie. One of the funniest [experiences] was in Munich. I ended up staying the night with a bisexual nudist swinger. In the morning, Frank said, "Do you want to go for a picnic?" It was at a nudist colony in the center of Munich. Frank took all his clothes off, went for a swim, came out and we had a picnic. He was naked; I wasn't.

**So, in the end, did humanity disappoint or amaze you?**

I was in no way let down. Out of 10 people, I'd say nine would say no. But that one person would say yes, and that connection I had would make it worthwhile.

For more information on Leon Logothetis and his adventures: [www.leonlogothetis.com](http://www.leonlogothetis.com).

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Per person.  
Restrictions  
apply.

