

At a Glanz... Waking Up in Vegas



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As I woke up Monday morning, after winning my poker tournament, I knew it was time to get a job. I had just a little more than my original \$400, so that wasn't going to last me a very long time. So I thought.

I suited up, brought my resume and headed to every TV station in town looking for work. Receptionists saw a very well dressed man, but that well dressed man never could get past her. Despite working more than 10 years in the media industry, I couldn't even get an interview.

With the money dwindling, I had but one play. Poker.

While I thought I was a pretty good poker player, I was jumping into unfamiliar territory. I was strictly a tournament poker player. Tournaments are great. You can win a lot of money, but the odds of even the best players winning an individual tournament is small. I couldn't put all my money in play on two tournaments; I had to go play the cash table.

I played in the smallest stakes tables, the \$1, \$2 tables. My plan??? Just win baby. Really, I had no other choice. I brought \$100 with me and sat down at the table. I wish I could tell you what happened, but honestly, I don't remember. All I remember is being extremely nervous always having so much of my bankroll in play.

But a funny thing started happening. I started winning, and kept winning. I'd normally win anywhere from \$50 to \$200. I could never accrue money because of living expenses, but I also didn't have to get a job. I was living the life. Going to sleep when I wanted to, waking up when my eyes decided...things couldn't be better. And the best part?? You're all expecting a "but," but don't look here, because you won't one.

While at the time I wish I had more money, looking back, I am proud of what I accomplished. I was playing in 30 consecutive Game 6's. Yeah, I could probably afford one loss, but not two in a row. I remember after my 18th session, I was 15-3. One of those losses was for \$100 (when my Kings lost to Queens), another loss was for \$3, and another loss I just sucked. But I was and still am so proud of myself for kicking butt.

I remember calling my friends and family back home, and almost all of them congratulating me and then quickly saying, "Now stop playing." My response was always the same, "I can't afford to stop."

And I'm glad I didn't. I have many great stories from Vegas, but one of my favorite was on my birthday.

Since I was winning, I doubled my starting stack and would bring \$200 to start. I had pocket aces and lost to pocket kings. I was pissed. Happy birthday Richie I thought. And then something amazing happened. This 21-year-old kid named Chris, wearing a ski cap saw that I was sad. So he said, "Hey seat 3, do you wanna do a Jaeger Bomb with me??"

My roommate Anthony started shaking his head no. He knows the only alcohol I drink is beer. I had a bad experience when I was

17, and swore off hard liquor. So as Anthony is shaking his head no, I stare at Chris and say, "Yeah!" Then I turned to the guy who busted my aces and say, "I'm down \$140 right now. By 8 a.m. I'll be even." The time was 1:35 a.m. By 1:40 I was only down \$5. I drank and drank and drank. Beer, Jaeger Bomb, beer. I kept winning pot after pot after pot with my drunken glazed look. I honestly don't know if I ever played better. I had no concept of money, I just put in my chips when I thought I was ahead, and laid down my cards when I was behind. I remember having a lonely pair of fives on a board filled with over cards and this guy bet \$60. Sober Rich probably would have folded even though he knew he the guy was bluffing. \$60 is just too much to call when my hand was so weak. But Drunk Rich knew I was ahead, so I made the call. The guy smiled and mucked his cards. He knew he was beat. When I flipped over my hand, he couldn't believe I called with such a weak, yet winning hand. As I raked in the chips I puffed out my chest and put my brag on. I said, "I suck at poker." He said, "No you don't."

He was right. And yes, I was fishing, but it was my birthday and deserved a compliment darnitt!! As I sobered up, this very aggressive Asian player came in. I beat him in two \$400 pots. Finally as 8 a.m. neared he beat me in a \$400 pot. I had pocket Queens, he had Ace/King. I said to him after he beat me, "I had you. (since I started with the better hand but he got lucky and beat me)" He said, "That's because you play like a little girl." Normally I would have gotten mad. But I was too happy to be mad. I was living the dream. And it was my birthday.

I walked to the cashier, told her it was my birthday, gave her my winning story, and gave her a nice tip. They always got a tip

when they were forced to listen to my story. I finished up about \$600. But the memory of that night is worth much more than that. And I have to say, waking up in Vegas is pretty cool.