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Half-Cab Backside Flip to a Fakey Five-O Revert 270 Out. Sound familiar? Probably not.

For Bradley Johnston, this is a second language. For seven years, skateboarding has been a second lifestyle. Skating on piles of concrete in his backyard, he has allowed it to change his entire outlook on life. From the most subtle details (landscaping turned skate surface) that he imagines into reality, to the jargon that he and his “boarder” friends have adopted over the years, many things have changed. “Oh hell yeah we have a different language. We’re a different breed. Who else bounces their body or breaks an ankle, duct tapes it and keeps trying?”

Duct taping a broken ankle is only one of the many obstacles Bradley has skated through on his journey to the X games.

He already has the look of a skateboarder, standing at 6-foot-2, 185 pounds, “rockin’” his favorite pair of black, girl jeans, black T-Shirt, a lip ring, and black gauges in each ear. But when it comes to support, he just doesn’t have it. Bradley’s mom, Kathy Fowler, does not condone his skating lifestyle. “It took over baseball,” he explained. With a full ride to two junior colleges in Alabama, Bradley chose his first love—skating. With all of the practicing necessary to succeed in college baseball, he just didn’t want to commit. Skating won the battle, defeating both his mom and his baseball career.

Getting arrested twice for public trespassing and destruction of public property didn’t help either. Bradley and his friends ran into trouble with the law while skating at his favorite location—the Sylacauga Post Office. This was one of the last “sweet spots” he was able to skate

until the city “skate proofed” all public property. He could have gotten sponsored by big-name companies and skated on the next level, but after getting arrested, he had to stay at home.

“People think we’re nothin’ but hellians and hoodlums—which is true,” he chuckled, “but also that we’re losers—good for nothin’.” This is hardly the case. Bradley is considering playing baseball again at Southern Union “The Onion” Community College while he pursues a career in business and maintaining his position at Golden Rule Barbeque as a cook. He also has two nephews who he says he spends most of his time trying to be a good role model for.

Through all of the negative experiences he has had, Bradley can’t seem to quit skating. “It’s a battle,” he agrees, “but here I am seven years later and I’m still learning.” Even after getting knocked unconscious, tasting blood for a week, breaking the same ankle twice, and “focusing” more than \$5,000 worth of skateboards (snapping them in half), he still gets back on his board. “It’s love. Hell, I’d love to skate 24 hours a day.”

His dedication to the sport has allowed him to travel and compete in competitions. In Birmingham, Ala., he competed against locals in a best-trick competition and won 1st place and \$100. He has also competed in the Atlanta, Ga., area. Bradley would most like to travel to Huntington Beach, Calif., or Barcelona, Spain, where they don’t care about public skating. Describing his style, Bradley would say he resembled his biggest role model, Andrew Reynolds, because of his “gnar” skate style—crazy monster tricks on 100-step rails. “How you feel is how you skate. One day you feel handrail, another day mani.” He carries around his iPod to cultivate the mood changes. “If I’m doing something big, I’ll rock crazy metal shit.”

Another big role model in his life is Jamie Thomas of Alabama: “One of the greats. There is something about his style that I like. I want others to look up to me and respect my craft like they do for Thomas.”

In the world of skateboarding, it is all about those who came before, who hit the latest trick, image, skating style and respect and love for the sport. Wanting to be a good role model for others, Bradley advises to up-coming skateboarders to “skate fast, push harder, always progress. Don’t give up. Don’t let anyone influence you. Don’t let the man keep you down.”

Rules I’m aware of:

-after the first reference, should use last name only.

-need a conjunction in last sentence before always progress--makes sentence parallel