An aerial photograph of a city street at dusk, likely San Francisco. The street is illuminated by streetlights, and the surrounding buildings are lit up. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

He drove a horse-drawn, flat bed wagon up and down Market Street with a band playing, proclaiming 'Painless Extractions for \$1.' Using a solution of cocaine, he would inject his patients and extract teeth in a dental chair mounted in the wagon. These people were the 'outlaws' of the dental society ... they were

'The Advertisers'

"So how many times have you taken the California Dental Exam," says the man sitting to the left of me. "This is the first time," I respond. "Oh, this is my fourth," he answers back. The gentleman to my right chimes, "This is my third." I smiled. I needed to focus. I figured if I could pass the Florida Dental Exam, both written and practical, with an acute case of conjunctivitis (pink eye), I could pass the California. The auditorium is filled with 200 dentists trying to get licensed to practice.

I arrived in San Francisco from Florida with Andrea, my girlfriend, after driving cross country in my 1969 Volkswagen camper, a gift from my father and mother for graduating Medical College of Virginia Dental School in Richmond, Virginia. That was very nice even though my dad and I had a tumultuous relationship for years.

Andrea and I were living in a communal house in Noe Valley with friends I had met and partied with from Virginia Beach. Janis Joplin lived across the street. The 'City' was the 'happening' place in America and I was going to be part of it. This was my adopted residence. My new life. I had Andrea, an artist, design a psychedelic banner to stream from my camper proclaiming 'Free Dentistry'. Parking along the curb at the Panhandle, part of Golden Gate Park in the Haight-Ashbury district of the city, I interviewed prospective patients to perform the required dental procedures, in order to pass the practical part of the test. I found *Wednesday* (that's the name she went by) a young 'hippie.' She had the required tooth problems and agreed to become my patient. Six weeks later, I received the positive news that I had passed. It was time to find a job.

Truckin' up Market Street, 'The Slot,' I noticed large signs proclaiming 'Credit Dentistry' with different dentists' names on each. One grabbed my attention. It read, **Dr. H. H. Brady, Dentist**. Taking the elevator to the second floor of 942 Market Street, I entered the dental office and asked to see the dentist for prospective employment. Several minutes later I was escorted to his office. It was an old-looking place with wooden partitions between cramped rooms. The back room was dark and there sat this middle-aged gentleman with a white coat. He asked me my name and if I had a license. I told him I was looking for part-time work, three consecutive days as I was new to the state and wanted to explore it. He said he would let me know and told me the starting salary per diem. That was the interview. I left my phone number at the desk. That evening Dr. Brady called and told me to come in on Monday at 8:30 and start working. I had a job. It was December, 1969.

**Brady Herbert H Dentist
942 Market Room 202
Tel EXbrook 2-6112**



The equipment was from another time. The patients were definitely in need. The staff was a story untold. Brady was a whirlwind of energy. I was lost. I was confused. I was fascinated. Two months later, we moved three blocks up the road to a more modern, ground floor, twelve operatory, location with equipment I could understand and use efficiently. The office was designed with a long hallway and six operatories on each side. It was always crowded. No appointments. First come, first served. Four to five dentists working the floor with their assistants, three receptionists at the front desk, a floor supervisor, credit manager, and a five man lab churning out removable appliances and gold crowns and bridges. Anything else was farmed out to specialty laboratories. It was a busy, money-making enterprise. It was like the TV series, 'Mash.' Crowds of people would descend into the waiting room to be diagnosed and have their teeth 'fixed.' Each doctor would diagnose and contract the patients. Generally it was one third to one half for a down payment and twelve months to pay the balance in equal installments, no interest or carrying charges.

Dr. Brady would run from room to room seeing patients. I would literally need to block him at the doorway of an operatory and tell him, "I've got it," before he would back away. He was a rough, gruff, Runyonesque character with a warm heart and a vulnerability that he hid. He commanded loyalty. Many of his staff had been with him for years. He was tough and had a soft side. Once, a guy said something to him that was unpleasant. Brady took him by the collar of his coat and the seat of his pants and threw him across the room. Another time, one of his patient's could not afford the bill and brought him a fish as a down payment which Brady accepted. Dr. Brady also had an antique furniture business with a large warehouse in Redwood City. He would have the furniture shipped in from Europe in containers. Six weeks in the summer, he would travel to Europe to vacation and purchase the furniture to have shipped. A very dynamic man.

Dr. Brumback, his past partner and much older, just took impressions for dentures and extracted teeth. He managed the second office in Oakland, which I eventually would run for ten years. He and Brady were connected to the



power elites that ran California. Both were wealthy and contributed to the political power that would best serve them. There were many backroom deals that took place. Joe DiMaggio was a client as well as Artie Samush, the horse racing commissioner. Dr. Brumback was 'busted' for 'hot' diamonds and spent eight years behind bars. The day after he was released, Pat Brown, the governor, restored his dental license. Bea, the floor supervisor was his assistant and mistress for years. She always stood by him through thick and thin. Dr. Brumback and his wife lived on separate floors in their beautiful home in San Francisco, never divorcing but had an understanding.



Brady had been married three times. The first daughter, I never met. His son practiced dentistry in Oregon. The second marriage produced two daughters and he adopted another daughter from the third marriage. They were lovely women. I am still friends with one of his daughters after all these years.

My assistant was a 'hot thing' from El Salvador whose husband did not know how to handle her. And she liked to be handled. The lab had its cast of characters. Carlos, a short-tempered, rotund, Nicaraguan always carried a 'piece' in his pocket. George, the happy German who fought in WW II for the German infantry, always said the best thing that ever happened to him was when he was captured by the Americans. And then there was Johnny, a wild haired, young guy with hands of gold. I told him he should become a dentist and he did. We are friends to this day.

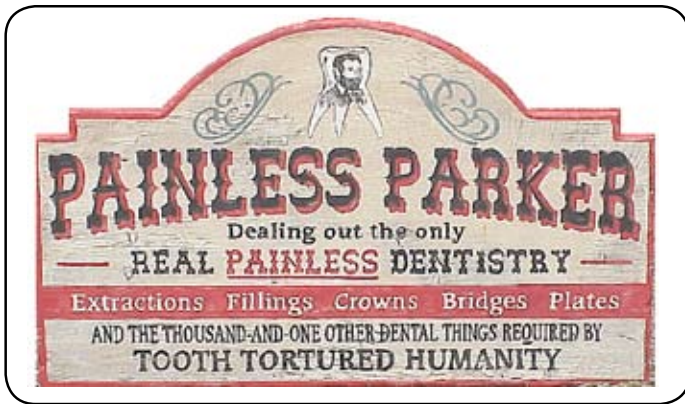
The 'docs' were a group of their own. Dr. Gold was born six months before the Great San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. Dr. 'Schein,' was an enigmatic man who would float in and out, working for a few months and some say, he'd return to Mexico. Never said much. Just smiled. I always wondered if he was related to the Schein Dental Supply company. There were many dentists that worked for a few months or a year that Brady would hire. Maybe they were going through a divorce or their business failed. They all needed to make a few 'bucks' to re-establish themselves. Everyone had a story. Few chose to communicate them. It was a private matter and we all respected that.

One of my patient's, an older Irishman, always placed his nickel-plated, snub-nose .38 on the tray table as I worked on him. I was always extra careful. Another, a young transvestite, always wore beautiful dresses. One day he came in with trousers and a shirt. I asked him what happened. He said, "I thought I would try it 'straight' for a day." I took an impression for a removable partial appliance. As I usually do when taking an upper impression because it may activate the gag reflex, I'd say, "This is going to be a mouthful, breathe through the nose." He responded, 'Don't worry, I'm used to mouthfuls.' We both laughed.

Zaneta, the credit manager, was an elderly, scrunched up, wisp of a woman, but on the telephone, she was 'tough as nails.' She would cajole, threaten or intimidate patients who were delinquent with their payments and she got them to pay. We were friends and she would tell me stories of her loves and the early days of her youth in San Francisco. She worked for Painless Parker Jr.

The turn of the Twentieth Century brought a host of people from the East to 'strike it rich' in the Golden State of California. Los Angeles was booming with orange groves, oil, and movies made in Hollywood. San Francisco, as always, was the shining star





of the state. To this city came Edgar Parker DDS, a P.T. Barnum character with charisma and a flair for the dramatic. He drove a horse-drawn, flat bed wagon with a band playing, up and down Market Street proclaiming 'Painless Extractions for \$1.00.' Using a solution of cocaine, he would inject his patients and extract the teeth on a dental chair mounted on the wagon. He eventually built an empire of 33 offices throughout California and became very wealthy. He was the first to advertise 'Credit Dentistry' and went by the name **Painless Parker**. The established dental community was outraged and sued

him for using the false name 'Painless.' So Edgar officially changed his name, and continued to practice. His son, Painless Parker, Jr. continued in his father's footsteps but ran the empire from Oregon as he could not pass the California Dental Exam. Some say politics kept him from succeeding in passing.

Dr. Beauchamp had Southern California with 30 offices. His son took over that empire. I met the son in his latter years and spent a hour reminiscing about the old advertisers. Beauchamp's empire grew to over 100 offices under the changed name of Western Dental. I managed, in my days of dentistry, two of the offices at different times in my career. Dr. Campbell, another advertising dentist, had 50 offices throughout the state and his son took over. They had a magnificent mansion in the Marina district of the 'City.' I met them both, older and younger Campbell, a few times.

These people were the 'outlaws' of the dental society. because they advertised, They were not allowed to join the American Dental Society. It wasn't that advertising was against the law, but it was inappropriate and blasphemous. These guys just smiled as they raked in the money. They did 'volume' dentistry at cheaper prices and catered to a certain class of people, the blue-collar workers. Also they took DentiCal, the State-run, multi-million dollar public assistance program for indigent people who could not afford dental care.

The 'credit' dentists were hard working men, dynamic, and all had the American entrepreneurial spirit. As I sit back in my elder years, I remember being the 'young buck' starting out. I smile. I am proud to have met and work with 'The Advertisers.' -- **Drake Regent**

