

Crouching ☿ Longboarder ☿ Hidden Grease Slick

☿ *Granted, Benn's house was on a large, rolling hill;* he just wished the roads weren't so cracked and pot-holed. It would make sense, we all thought, that the local board shop owner would have at least a good test hill near his place.

Benn's house is one lot away from a dead end, a dead end that used to border a forest. Early in 2007 that forest was cleared and the ground flattened for the construction of a suburb. Now, your average Joe would probably get upset about a couple years worth of road and house building noise in their backyard, but as Benn says, 'we know a spot when we see it, and we appreciate it more than your standard Joe public.'

Myself and HJ showed up at Benn's shop the very day they laid and flattened the black asphalt in a snake pattern along the rolling dirt hills of the construction site.

"Go check it out, it might be ready," Benn told us – and we did; and we flipped; and as soon as the good people who built us that virgin run finished work I picked up HJ and drove straight there. And Benn – Benn simply walked out his front door.

The hill ended at a T, wide enough to bank a turn either way and ride out your speed on a long, straight road. Any day a stop sign would go up and traffic let through, but for now a back-hoe parked at the runs end on one side of the street with its arm forming an arch to the other side (too low for cars but high enough for a crouching longboarder to squeeze

through) securing the road for riders.

HJ and Benn took the first runs in full tuck, just barely making it around the final turn. On his third run, HJ discovered a hidden hazard of newly paved roads: the manhole covers were filled with oil; a hidden grease slick that sent him flying into a tuck and roll.

"When you hit an oil slick at high speed it can only get better from there," he said, walking up for his next run – we setup markers on all the man-holes.

Andy showed up half way through the night, just as everyone was bombing through the back-hoe in their best crouching longboarder stances. We showed him the hill from top to bottom. A gradual start into a dog-leg turn; picks up a little speed into a huge, flat left-turn; drops into a high-speed snake road that ends in a T. The road is black asphalt, perfectly smooth, wide, and a little sticky, so you can do gentle carves the whole way down or just tuck and push into the natural curves of the road.

As the sun sank beneath the mountains on the runs horizon, four silhouettes carved and crouched, falling to their hands and sliding into the last seconds of dusk.

"We bombed it, we carved it, we slid it, we rode it into the night," Benn reflected at the session's end, "we came and we conquered." In complete content, HJ, Andy, and myself walked back to our cars. Benn, of course, simply walked back inside his front door. ☿