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VIRTUALLY REAL THE TR3K



Alan Rosenheck

It's 6:45 AM, the beginning of another sultry day familiar to the New Jersey summer. Alan Rosenheck is jogging down an otherwise empty Asbury Park boardwalk. He's a middle age man, lean, not quite 6 foot, practical looking. His neon orange shirt is bunched up where it's tucked into the hydration belt fastened around his waist. An earbud scotch taped in each ear. It's his 58th birthday and the first day of THE TR3K — his 3 thousand mile virtual coast to coast run across America.

"The route is virtual but the running is real," he explains.

Rosenheck will be running the streets of Monmouth County in a challenge called THE TR3K. Each day he'll come home to a warm bed and his personal outdoor shower, but in the mind and hearts of all of those following his journey — oh the places he'll go. The virtual route is synced to his Garmin GPS watch, and displays his progress across the 50 states in real time. It begins at his residence in Ocean Township, NJ — then heads south to visit his mother in Vineland,

NJ. Next, a pass through Philadelphia where Rosenheck met his wife Jacqueline. He will virtually wave as he passes their first apartment. "That will be the final memory of home for a while," says Rosenheck. The streets of Cleveland, Chicago, Denver and stretches of lonely pavement in between will be the only home Rosenheck knows for the next several years. When asked how he would simulate the elevation of traversing the Rocky Mountains Alan responded, "screw elevation I'm doing this sucker flat." His route takes him down Las Vegas Boulevard before the final southwest stretch to Los Angeles, the home city of his two children.

Alan has been training for the last 3 years. Running 1,000 miles each year. However, there is no amount of local training that can prepare Alan for what he is about to attempt virtually.

Back in Asbury Park on the first morning of his journey Rosenheck passes through The Casino, a skeleton of a building straddling the boardwalk which once housed an arcade, an ice skating rink, and an antique carousel. A large mural of a half octopus lady wearing a flapper headdress is left behind as he jogs by. Shadows of the building's lattice facade cross Rosenheck's face. "I doubt that much of the nation is as interesting as here. You might think running the same trail could get boring, but the repetition also helps you feel a connection with the route and the area. You can't see change if you're just passing through."

— Josh and Aaron Rosenheck

