

# hours in a skate park

THE PEOPLE OF THE DENVER SKATE PARK

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**W**e arrived at the Denver Skate Park at 8:30 am, precisely. We stepped out of our cars and started making our way around the mostly vacant park.

Two men in their early twenties skated, equipped with workout gear and gym bags, around their basecamp at the Gazebo in the center of the park against the backdrop of the Denver skyline touching infinity.

After walking around for a bit, they paid no attention to us, and it felt as though we were encroaching on their space.

Just a few minutes later, a man who

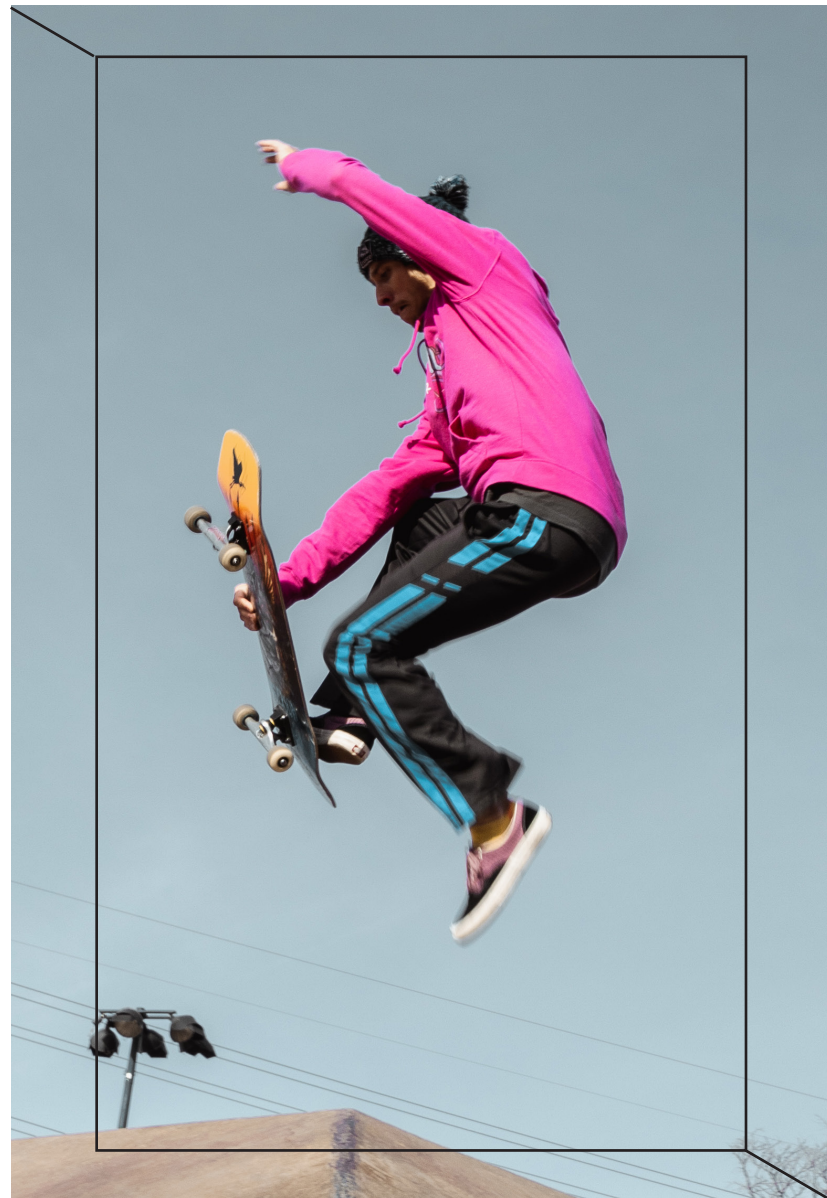
appeared to be homeless approached us. We noticed him sitting on a ledge in the far corner of the park, but like the others, he hadn't acknowledged our presence when we first arrived.

"Can I borrow a lighter?" he said, his last cigarette dangling from his fingers.

After reluctantly giving him a lighter from the pocket of my jacket, he returned back to his corner of the park without saying another word.

Iced Caramel Macchiatos in hand and slightly dazed from our first interaction, we immediately felt out of place.





After about an hour had passed, the park finally started to see some new faces, including Zack, a tall guy in his early-to-mid twenties, and a woman who might've been his mother.

The woman was filming Zack doing different tricks around the park, and when we asked if we could take photos of them, Zack was kind enough to repeat the same trick ad nauseum until we

had the perfect shot.

It turned out he wasn't from around the city or anywhere near at all. From the looks of it, he was moving states, because he was just making a stop in Denver while driving a U-Haul from Nebraska to Arizona.

I've seen [The Denver Skatepark] on Instagram, but I never knew the names of the individual skate parks around here. When I saw it, I knew I had to stop by," he said.



## THE GAZEBO

The challenge we faced was one of intimidation, as most people seemed busy or unapproachable. After nearly two hours at the Denver Skatepark we had only talked to a few people, and we never talked for more than a few minutes.

At the top of the list was a group of guys who had gathered under a Gazebo, right in the center of the park. Their dogs were playing together, and they seemed to be enjoying themselves as they laughed and smoked.

After sitting on a nearby ledge and struggling to make a connection with anyone at the park for almost half an hour, they yelled in our general direction, asking us to come over.

We introduced ourselves to Lee—the OG of Denver skatepark—and his dog, Fever. Explaining that we were talking photos for Monarch's media, Lee told us that he was a photographer too.

We met his crew and slowly became part of their group. Including us in their conversations made us feel integrated and accepted into the skatepark.



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## LARRY

As the temperature warmed up, so did we. The skatepark was now filled with people, and with our confidence sparked, we branched out to another skater, Larry. His whole life had been about skating and music, so he often found himself at the skatepark. Denver specifically, because of its location in the heart of downtown Denver, and for the vibes.

“When you come down to DPark, it’s peace, love, and positivity,” Larry said.

Denver skatepark was a place where everyone knows everyone, and he was able to point out eight different people that he was friends with.

He embraced Wyatt, who had met Larry at the skatepark, along with many other good friends.

Wyatt emphasized that DPark was a community, where everyone felt comfortable with each other.

“When people first start skating, they are always scared to skate in front of everybody because a lot of good people come here, but honestly, everyone here is nice,” he said.

It became clear that the Denver skatepark was about much more than skateboarding, it was about the bonds and friendships that were made there.



“YOU GOTTA WATCH OUT

FOR THE CRACKHEADS

HERE AND THERE,

BUT OTHERWISE YOU’RE FINE.

EVERYBODY ELSE IS NICE AND KIND,

THAT’S JUST THE CULTURE, DAWG.

WE’RE DOWN TO HELP

ANYBODY ELSE.”

-ANDREW

