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He does it his way — by walking

Danny Garcia is walking down Route 30 into Atlantic City, explaining why he wants to walk around the world, when a car almost sends him to the next world.

"I'm giving the most precious gift I can give — I'm giving my life," says Garcia, at almost the same instant this big, white car comes a couple feet away from making that sentence his last one.

The driver, who's trying to turn into a casino-employee parking lot



MARTIN DeANGELIS

without slowing down much, swerves to miss Garcia — barely.

But the walker hardly seems to notice his latest close call — he just keeps his stride and his story both going full speed ahead.

The story, as Garcia tells it, already includes a

walk across the United States, and more walks up and down its coasts. They're all separate from Garcia's latest walk, which started in Hoboken — more on that later — and ended the other day on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City.

He's planning to hit the road again this morning for Philadelphia, and he expects to leave from there for the walk he says will take him around the world.

He pulls out a beat-up map to show off his planned route, which



GARCIA

starts in Scotland, runs through Europe to the Middle East, then on to Asia, down to Australia, over to South America and finally up to California, his home, before he started doing all this walking two years ago.

He admits he doesn't know how long all that will

take, or how he'll make it across the oceans. But Danny Garcia, a 53-year-old U.S. Marine Corps vet, says he wants to live this dream for two reasons — to help children and help the cause of peace around the world.

He believes walking can spread peace because he's seen it happen — to him. He says he started walking after his wife told him she was having an affair with his friend, and wanted a divorce.

"I felt like I had died," he says, passing one billboard after another as he heads for the Atlantic City skyline. "I said, 'If there's a God out there, please help me. 'Cause I can't handle this.'"

Garcia says God led him to walking — or maybe walking led him to God. Either way, he says he started walking from San Francisco to Tijuana, Mexico, to raise money for Toys For Tots, a popular charity for Marines. Within two weeks, he says he was at peace with his world and himself.

"I had to do something for somebody else. That was the key," Garcia says. "I'd just been thinking too much about myself, and that's what leads to depression."

He says he got a lot of media attention on that trip, which got other people asking him to walk for their causes. So he did, and he was in London, planning his around-the-world walk, when he heard about Frank Sinatra dying.

"I said, 'I'll do a walk for him.' He gave a lot. ... And I liked the way he sang," Garcia explains.

He knew Sinatra was from Hoboken, so he called police there. Through them, he got to Ed Shirak Jr., the author of a Sinatra book who's also planning a Sinatra museum in Hoboken.

Garcia started his New Jersey walk at the house where Sinatra was born, and ended it in Atlantic City at the Sands — where Sinatra played his last U.S. club date.

The Sands gave Garcia a room — he has no income, so he depends on donations and sponsors to support his walk. (Call 732-974-3555 if you'd like to help.)

Garcia's walking as he tells this whole story, making it from Absecon to Atlantic City in about 90 minutes. He's walking again today, and if he has one rule in this world he plans to walk, it is this:

"Don't quit. It's so easy to quit, but you can't. I say, 'I know I can do this. All I have to do is keep walking,'" he says.

Right about then, the car almost whacks him, which leads to Garcia's Rule No. 2: Watch out.

"You know," he says, "I see a whole lot of people out here who