

Old Faithful

By Dan Wiedenfeld

Above the red Craftsman double-stacked tool box, with one of the drawers open to the standard box-end wrenches, hung an old poster of the Easy Rider Movie with the now famous Stars and Stripes Chopper. The poster was starting to show its age, curling up at the corners, and anywhere that the colors should have been white, were now a dulling yellow. He had been one of the first people to see the movie in the theater.

Beside the rolling red tool box with a bumper sticker stuck to the side of it that read 'Kick Some Asphalt!' was a cardboard box of used motorcycles parts, some clean, some broken, some still covered in their original grease and dirt from old rides gone by. Propped up against the wall behind this box of treasures, was a Smith & Wesson pump shotgun, filled with 5 rounds of #8 Bird Shot. The barrel of this 12 gauge shotgun had been sawed off to just above the forward stock by 'no one can really remember who' making it a short, lethal, illegal piece of personal protection. The wood finish had been worn off at every place the human hand could reach out to hold it. It too was showing its age, but it still felt good in your hand, like an old friend's handshake. Its old look, the look of a battle weary warrior, and its feel, made it even more valued.

Standing next to these was a refrigerator, a really old refrigerator, heavy and solid, made out of solid steel. With a large chrome handle that you pulled down like a beer tap to open, the kind with the suicide door that could not be opened from the inside. The refrigerator stood next to the wall vibrating as its large electric motor ran, sucking huge amounts of kilowatt hours. As it circulated and recirculated the Freon that still ran through its old copper tube veins. It had been painted and repainted over the years and now stood wearing a coat of Hunter Green.

In spots where someone had nicked and chipped the paint, you could see that at one time it had been painted Gold and another time painted White, and here by this large scratch you could tell it had once been painted a dark Red. Inside the refrigerator (nicknamed Old Faithful) you could always find a large variety of Beer; Budweiser, Miller, Red White & Blue, Papst, Old Style, Michelob, Old Milwaukee and Coors. Whenever someone would come over they would bring the 'Beer of Choice' and toss it into the frig. Consequently, this left a hodge-podge of left-over Beers in cans and in bottles. In the inside of the door were a bottle of Jack Daniels Old #7 over half gone, a bottle of cheap Tequila with the paper seal still intact, a large bottle of Tabasco Sauce and 3 shriveling green limes.

Sitting in front of the frig were two ageing recliner chairs, one heavy and solid, covered in dark brown worn leather. The other a Lazy Boy with faded blue corduroy ripped on one arm. Both chairs still served the garage well making it a small home away from home, holding many a tired partier through the night as they slept off the effects of 'one too many' trips to the old Hunter Green Refrigerator. Piles of Easy Rider & American Iron Magazines and Free Riders Press Newspapers lay stacked or strewn about the chairs.

In front of the chairs lay a thick rug with the image of a motorcycle and rider on it. The garage was clean for the most part; even the floor had been painted white. By the edge of the rug sat an old RCA Black & White TV with the dial-knob you had to turn to change the channels and a set of those old Rabbit Ear Antenna sitting on top of it. Behind the TV on the cold concrete floor, sat his pride and joy, the true resident of this garage, his Harley-Davidson.

Striking the tip of a wooden farmers match down the side of the garage door's wooden door jam its sulfur hissed to life. Flaring and throwing off colors of yellow, orange and red flame. In one smooth motion he brought the wooden match up to the tip of the Marlboro Red cigarette lighting it. Before the sulfur could even finish flaring to life he flicked it out the garage door through the rain, sending it tumbling end over end into the air. You could hear the flame of the burning wooden match hissing and spitting as it came into contact with the rain drops. As it flew threw the air coming to land in the wet grass on the other side of the blacktop driveway its flame snuffed out.



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He would mulch it into the grass later with the lawn mower. He took a deep drag off the specially made cigarette, made in Europe.

If he were going to kill himself with cigarettes, he wanted to do it with some of the best cigarettes money could buy and he had bought himself some wicked killers. With 0.8 mg of nicotine, these babies were as close to getting high as you could get without buying illegal drugs. Blowing a smoke-ring into the rain, he watched it do battle with the falling rain drops. He watched the rain drops pound the smoke into oblivion. As the rain grabbed onto the smoke and dragged it down to the ground smashing the smoke particles onto the blacktop driveway. The rain drops themselves would exploded as they hit the ground while the smoke-ring still tried to drift up into the gray falling sky as a breeze continued to pull it apart.

Turning he looked back at his bike and sighed deeply, knowing he wasn't going to be able to ride today, unless he wanted to get soaked clear down to his underwear in the unrelenting rain. He looked back out at the skies; it definitely looked like all day rain. Leaning against the garage door's door jam he crossed his arms and felt the rush of nicotine wash over his body. Relaxing he took another deep drag on his smoke, he gazed dreamily out into the rain remembering the ride he had taken through the Dakotas last year and how wonderfully dry it had been for their trip.

As he slipped deeper and deeper into his daydream he was once again on his favorite ride, his powerful Harley beneath him as he cruised through the curves and rocky hills of South Dakota. He looked down at the speedometer, they were going 90 mph. Now nothing lay ahead of them but wide open space and a straight highway that stretched out into infinity. Looking into his rear view mirrors he could see 4, no 5 bikes following along behind him as they raced across the prairie. He could feel the sun on his back and the warm wind in his face, and he never felt more alive or free. Just then a rain drop blew and hit him on the cheek, what the...?!

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