

## You Can Still Do That, But Not Here!

\*I had a dream last night. It was more like thoughts racing through a half-awake brain in the hour before dawn. I want to make it clear that it was JUST a dream - but, the way things are going in this world, the dream is becoming a reality. I am not on the same stuff I was on in the hospital! I have not been talking to Kenn Hartmann. It was JUST a dream!\*

I found myself riding an exhilarating road through an often unrecognizable countryside. I had not noticed the mirage until it approached me and I entered the mist beyond reality. I was about to enter a strange unknown city, and decided, at the last possible second, to pull into the wayside just outside the city limits. The sign read, "Mystic City Rest Area, No Loitering." Being an old biker, I just needed a rest stop and had no intentions of loitering. This is where I met Coyote Bob, as he called himself, whom I saw pushing his motorsickle, as he called it, from the city towards the wayside. Being the helpful citizen that I am, I walked down the highway toward him to help him with his disabled sickle. When we got back to the rest stop, Coyote Bob sat down and told me his story.

Said Coyote Bob:

Ah wuz ridin' ol' Blue through this here country fer the first time in mah life. As Ah come in tuh town, Ah spied a likely 'stablishment where a ol' cowboy could get refreshed, so Ah set Blue on her 'stand an' walked through them batwing doors in tuh the Mystic City Bar and Grill. It taken me a minite tuh get mah bearings an' git mah eyes 'justed tuh the dark inside. Ah taken a step tuhward the bar when the bouncer gits in mah face 'bout mah at-tire. "No colors allowed in the bar."

"Sorry, bro. Ah'm ridin'with them RagTag Riders. We don't wear no 'colors,' we wear a one-piece, no-territory, 'backpatch."

"Makes no diffrence tuh me. It's got colors on it and it's agin' the law. Yuh can still wear it, but not here."

Ah don' aim tuh off-end nobody, club or commun-ty, so Ah'll stow mah backpatch on occasion. Ah done jest that, made mah way past a ol' juke box, and sidled up tuh the bar. The bartender had a ol' fashioned handle-bar mustache that made me check if Ah had rid up on a Harley or a horse. Ah said to him, "Let me have an Lone Star longneck," as Ah pulled out the fixin's and begin tuh roll a smoke. When Ah scratched an lucifer along the seam of mah chaps, the bartender sez tuh me, "You can still smoke it, but not in here."

"Scuse me?"

"We got a local law here sez yuh cain't smoke in a public 'stablishment. Yuh gotta go outside."

Well, Ah grumbled, but grabbed mah longneck, and headed fer the door. Of all the idiot stuff goin' on, Ah'd never figured we'd come tuh this. As Ah kicked open the batwings, the bouncer placed his big, hairy paw in the middle of mah chest, and said, "Where duh yuh think yore goin'?"

"Ah'm goin' outside tuh take a few draws on mah smoke."

"Sorry, cain't let yuh take yer longneck out of the building. Yuh can still drink it, but not out here. It's gotta stay inside."

"Yuh gotta be kiddin'. Ah cain't have a smoke inside and Ah cain't have a drink outside. What other laws am Ah breakin'?"

Finding mahself stuck in a virtual prison, stogie in one hand and longneck in the other, Ah didn't seem to have any other choice but to vacate the premises. Ah done went an' found mah Harley in the parking lot. Ah flipped the petcock to open, and reached fer the ignition, but an patrolman's voice from behind me said, "Stand away from the bike!" "Look, Ah just come out of the Mystic City Bar and Grill. Ah had no drink or smoke, and Ah cain't leave yore city fast enough. What's the problem now?"

"If yuh think the law is a problem, Ah guess yore in a real mess. We have a noise ordinance in our town, which yuh will violate when yuh start yore machine. Yuh can still ride it, but not here."

Pushin' mah 800 pound beast through the streets of Mystic City was no fun, bro. Ah've been in the hospital, an' mah strength ain't what it used ta' be. Ah come tuh a down hill stretch where Ah thought Ah would git on and coast awhile, but as Ah got set to swing mah carcass onto mah scoot, the patrolman came whippin' up and said, "Hold on, bud, yuh cain't do that."

"Ah was jest gonna git on an' coast down this here hill a little."

"Ah don't see yore helmet, bud. Yuh can still ride without one, but not here. Git off an' walk."

As Ah was creepin' nearer tuh them open spaces - and freedom agin, Ah kept thinkin' Ah must be goin' insane, or somebody else was. How could any peoples freely give up their freedoms so easy? Where in the heck is ABATE when yuh need 'em? Ah was so tired of pushin' ol' Blue, an' Ah stopped at a side street tuh rest. Bein' somewhat of a religious man, Ah decided tuh say an prayer fer God's help in gettin' out a town. As Ah bowed mah head and begin tuh pray, Ah felt an han' touch mah shoulder. Ah knew that it must be a angel sent by God tuh help mah motorsickle tuh the edge of town. It was a ol' woman, dressed in a crossin'-guard uniform, who said, "Sorry sir, but yore in a school zone, and yuh gotta go."

"Ah'll leave as soon as Ah can, but Ah just had tuh stop and rest fer a minite."

"Restin' is OK, but yuh cain't do what yuh was doin'. This here is school property, with children and such around, and it's agin' the law fer yuh tuh bow yore head on this here ground. Yuh can still pray, but not 'round here."

Ah come down the road out of town, an' that's when Ah met you comin' the other way. Ah 'preciate that yuh volunteered tuh help this old man push his bike to the edge of town, an' savin' mah life in doin' it.

Once across the city line and into the rest area, we parked Coyote Bob's motorsickle, as he called it, and caught our breath. While catching up on our breathing, Coyote Bob began to tell me of some of his misbegotten deeds, as he called them, and how his life had unfolded from his misspent youth, as he called it. I told him of the need we all have for trusting Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and Eternal Life in heaven with Him. As I spoke of the perfect life Jesus lived, the sacrificial death He died on the cross for our sins, and the indisputable fact of His resurrection on the third day, a small group of interested listeners gathered. They had questions which I attempted to answer from my limited store of knowledge.

We had not progressed far into the discussion when we heard sirens approaching, and were scattered by the frantic arrival of the local SWAT team. "We heard you speak the name, Jesus Christ, numerous times and deduced that you were not just cursing, but were having a religious discussion, which violates the Hate Crime and Tolerance Laws."

"How can this be? We live in a society that believes in free speech, and freedom of religion."

"But Jesus Christ said He is the Only Way to God. Therefore, He is hateful and intolerant of all other religions, and so are you if you follow Him. You can still speak of Him, but not here."

I was immediately cuffed, blindfolded, gagged, and thrown in the back of their van. As we drove away, one of the guards mentioned that they had emptied a lot of terrorist's cells at Gitmo . . .

The van drove me back through the mirage, and I was alone, on my bed, in my trailer when Preacher called to say, "Hello." It was JUST A DREAM . . . Ah think!

Pastor Sam Downey

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