

Living in a Dream

By Kenn Hartmann

I realized long before the snow flurries that I dressed inappropriately for the ride. My naked calves bore the frostbitten brunt but for a few breakfast shots of single-barrel whiskey out of a flask, I'd a-been the original ice-sickle. At the party, I got into one of those hard-core motorcycle club conversations about raising daughters; you know powder-puff football, the joys of Ren & Stimpy. A guy named Digger materialized out of the periphery and said he recognized my jacket from the paper. He said 'I relate to your stories, some unbelievable experiences, I've been there.' Digger had the canny knack of letting himself be seen as a way of diffusing any potential misunderstanding. So let's relate. Sometimes nobody sees you coming. Or maybe they think you're someone else.

My dad called me Sneaky Pete. But it's an illusion. Sometimes it's difficult to see what's off limits when everything looks a little off kilter anyway. It's imperative to be steeped in the social amenities of the culture. So I blunder into the middle of right where I'm supposed to be only to find nobody's there yet or they've already gone. A classical predicament easily avoided by understanding the convention of time. Would a cheap wristwatch suffice? Or do I need to walk the streets worried about the government? Perhaps the authorities need to put up way more signs because there's probably not enough. Signs like, 'Where the Hell?' 'What the Hell?' & 'Who me?' Ya'll know what I mean. You can relate.

I came out of the forest on the northern edge of the Great Plains. On the North Dakota side of Minnesota, close to Canada. In a thicket about shoulder high, the only light being the stars, the aurora borealis and a distant campfire. I saw them but they never saw me. I crossed the bunch grass meadow & could see a tipi faintly shimmering in the flickering shadows amongst the scrub pines. I approached the fire, sat on a log & stared into the flames. Three men sat there, one talked, spilling his heart in earnest & when he finished, silence. Having been trained in the white culture's social etiquette, I politely said, 'yeah, I know what you mean.' The three figures turned to me & focused their eyes, then recoiled, sprawled ass-backwards while drawing weapons. 'Who the F are you?' demanded the storyteller. It wasn't the first time I had been asked to justify my existence. I prepared to answer with a detailed account of the entire night's events, however their impatience demanded a short version, so I said, 'I'm with the band' & pointed to the darkness beyond. 'Hey man,' said the storyteller, 'you came the long



way.' It never dawned upon me I had reached the outskirts of civilization.

I jump around in my stories because I jump around in life. It's like a 'grease opera.' Last weekend, Tommy & Danny had to push start my Thumper – dead battery outside Trickster. A couple weeks before that, Officer Irving escorted me home in the rain, because my bike got stuck in first gear when this girl plowed into me at a stoplight & broke the shifter shaft. I can go on & on. Pablo's Ride – my carbs flooded in a torrential rain outside the Wildlife Refuge. The Rudderville Run – my left pipe fell off out in a cornfield. Life happens. So pretend you're back at the start of this story, in the crowded heart of civilization. Everybody's there. Even our fearless editor, Preacher. Plenty of cops too. Apparently a lot of inappropriately dressed bikers are having a good time.

Cooch from the Freedom Run pulls me aside. 'Kenn, you need to write about the Freedom Run this year, Easy Rider just did a story.' Cooch, the last time I went on the Freedom Run I didn't write for FRP for 3 months. It's an emotional thing. Just thinking about it made me miss the May issue. 'You did the whole run? Actually went to the memorial?' Cooch, an eagle flew above the bluffs. When they read the names, I involuntarily snapped-to attention. But I understand his surprise. Half my crew baled at the first bar. Listen, I'm not Skypilot or Pastor Sam. I'm the guy who does things you're not supposed to do. I'm broke-down, beat. Living in a dream. My next ride is going to the Ramshackle Day Parade. After the last Freedom Run, my step-daughter Christina said one of her college friends stuck in traffic on Interstate 88 called to say she saw 'your dad all biker'd out in an endless line of motorcycles.' I know my brother Chuck is going. That makes two of us. The Freedom Run is June 21 & starts in Joliet at the Route 66 racetrack.

-Kenn Hartmann
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reward
Grubby Fest

Lost Brothers Memorial Ride

When:	Sign up 10 Leave At Noon	Cost:	Free
Where:	Johann's Bar and Grill N1257 Cty. Rd. B Richford, WI	Why:	This is to remember all our lost brothers. May they all rest in peace.
Miles:	100		
Rikker:	5150 Hardrock Mini Chopper Raffle, \$10/ticket		
	110 cc, 4 speed 4 stroke, jockey and foot shift, forward controls, kick or electric start, 15" rear/ 18" front tire, front disk brake, springer suspension, 150 lbs, 45-55 mph, 24" seat height.		

Grubbyfest			
When:	4 p.m. - close	Phone:	(715) 228-2500
Where:	Johann's Bar and Grill N1257 Cty. Rd. B Richford, WI	Cost:	\$10.00 per person (at door)
		Cost covers:	chicken dinner, band, and good times.
Info			
Festival Date:	Saturday July 12, 2008	For more info:	Gypsy- (920) 647-0161
Extras			
Bikini Bike Wash (weather permitting). T-shirts will be available for purchase.			

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11th Annual "Can't Afford Sturgis Party"

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