

Twin City Confidential

By Kenn Hartmann

Great. Preacher pulls out of Minnesota just as I submit my TC Confidential story. So indulge me, dear reader. This never really happened. It's fiction, believe me. I'd hate to end up in a million pieces on Oprah. I knew this dude named Rawballs who got busted by park rangers and went on Oprah's show to complain about police brutality. He kept calling her 'Ofra' and finally she told him to shut up. I think if he kept on she would have glocked him with her microphone. An 'ofratality.' Meanwhile, here's my story.

I rumbled down this alley in South Minneapolis 'seeking shelter' so to speak. Pulled into the carriage house with other sickles. An old railroad line shack garage hauled up from the river. Barely kept out the wind. In the club house, after introductions, joined the party already in progress. A wheelchair bound biker took exception to my presence. Dude, I'll just go upstairs. Seems I can't blend in anywhere. He said, 'I don't trust nobody that don't drink.' Hangovers affect folks differently, I guessed. Mine is numb oblivion. And my bones hurt. But I was standing. The Sanka tasted like melted Styrofoam. I told him I just froze my ass on the ride from Lacrosse. 'F-this weather,' he said. 'F-the world.' Finally we could relate.

Quite the shindig, an organized free-for-all. Only cost ten bucks. Except I didn't pay - I came in the back door. The owner had a title, like plant manager or president - an ex-boxing or karate champ. Like all parties. Nobody has names. They have titles. And I knew the sergeant-at-arms. Hence the backdoor. Yeah, I knew the guy and so did half the Hennepin County detox patients who poured in anxious to get toxified. And watch the pole dancer. I went out to have a smoke and check my bike. The thugs in the shed loitered around a wood-burning stove. Back in the house, down in the basement, an electric blues combo jammed, solid, naked blues under a red bulb hanging from the joists. Some fat dudes suckled at a beer keg lodged into a dusty coal bin, the behemoths fought for each savory gulp directly from the tapper. F-that, I thought and fired a spliff. The place already smelled of Mexican mildew. Or wet newspapers. The crowd looked more like beatniks than bikers. Perhaps I experienced a flashback. Or mild hallucination. Like my head's on fire. Oh man, leaning up against a bulb sucks.

Then the cops showed. 'So?' said the plant manager president karate champ. 'So the f-what?' That covered a lot of territory. The cops didn't even step on the front porch. They told him to tone it down. 'What's that mean?' the champ asked. Well, either burnouts or the blues upset somebody. Nothing changed and the party went all night. Before dawn, I stumbled around and spied the pole dancer in all her naked glory. She looked at me with dark, mysterious eyes like a sad criminal lost in passionate reverie as she humped the



crippled biker in his wheelchair. Impressively limber, I observed.

I walked to a Lake Street cafe, the gourmet of greasy spoons. Watched the sunrise. Found a chopper shop around the corner where a couple old-time yikes worked. Long-haired hippy dudes. Killer bikes. Left the shop, my head filled with chopper dreams just as a squad pulled up and cops stopped me. They seemed delighted to discover an outstanding warrant with my name on it. 'Look at the bright side,' said Officer Jovial, 'you could have been out partying; best to get this over now.' I was out partying, I muttered, already handcuffed in the squad. 'You must have pissed off the arresting officer because nobody gets busted for what you got busted for.' At Hennepin County, the guards tossed me in with the black inmates. There was a commotion in the white cell. Some punk made a valiant stand until the screws swarmed him. It sounded like pummeling. I glanced through the bars, sure enough, extreme pummeling. Muffled whimpers. Whatever. The black dudes talked about hooking up with Moon Dog at Stillwater. Moon Dog must be the man at the state pen. But I got transferred across the river. The outside world appeared sublime from the back of a paddy wagon. At Ramsey got photographed, finger printed and one phone call to an ex-girlfriend in St. Paul. Her evil laugh cackled out of the receiver. She offered to testify to extend my incarceration. The jailer asked if I wanted to try another call. But I took my best shot and didn't dare press my luck. The tiny cell had comforts not found sleeping in ditches. Toilet paper too. The soothing cavernous lockup sounds lulled me to sleep.

Being handcuffed to other human beings is a trip. On one hand desperate doom and on the other the possibility of escape and whichever way it goes, we're all in it together. Un-cuffed before the judge, he lectured me. 'You obviously angered the arresting officer,' he said. 'Nobody gets ticketed for hitchhiking.' I shrugged under the weight of this burden, living in fear for a year, running from the law. Truth is, I forgot about it within minutes of getting the ticket. It was a year earlier, my bike broke down in the midnight rain; I thought the cop stopped to pick me up. When he scoffed, we argued. Why did you stop? I asked. He said, 'have the courtesy to not

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Illustration of a biker in a leather jacket and sunglasses.

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