

Cosmic Chronicles

Part 3

1983–1989

The Cosmic Cabdriver

Curiously Yellow

Yellow cabs are not simply yellow. There is a little green and a little red pigment in the paint; it's a deeper, darker yellow. Even without the lettering and top-sign, it is recognizable as Yellow-Cab yellow.

Michael had worked inside Yellow Cab of Kansas City, learning a lot about the business, but actually driving one is a different experience entirely. Unlike in Kansas City, where about half the drivers were on commission, and the rest leased the cab, all the Phoenix drivers leased, considered independent contractors. The lease was for 12 or 24 hours. The driver made what was left over after paying lease and buying gas. It was possible to do well, break even, or lose money on a shift.

Taxicabs had been deregulated a few years before. Republican legislators like to do that. There was no limit on the number of cabs that could operate, so competition was at a maximum. Yellow, which also owned Checker, was the largest company, but smaller cheaper-rate companies like Ace, and independent owner-operators were in the mix.

Michael's knowledge of the metropolitan area was limited, but he soon found that the best way to learn it was to drive a cab, carrying a map and a street-guide, a booklet that lists the hundred-block number for every street.

When not actually picking up and dropping off, a driver often has to park and wait for the next call. It's a good opportunity to read a book. Michael also started drawing on his trip sheet, the blank paper used to write addresses, drop points, and keep track of fares collected. He had never been an artist, but with practice he learned to draw cartoons at the top of each sheet. Sometimes they were humorous, usually risqué. Sometimes they just announced the date and cab number.

To begin with, Michael would go to Yellow Cab and lease one from the company, often a different car each shift, some better than others. There were also Yellow owner-operators, some of whom had several cars to lease to drivers. They were usually nicer and better maintained. Ed Weske was one of the owner operators, with an office in Glendale, on the west side of Phoenix. Soon after Michael started driving for him, he learned that Ed was a "graduate" of Brown Schools, where Michael had worked in Austin. Ed was easy to get along with, and the cars were nicer to drive. By November of 1983 he was driving 526, a full-sized Chrysler.

Before cellphones became common, cab drivers used voice or digital pagers for contact with personal customers. Here's the message the customers heard:

Like knights of old, the drivers of 267 charge through the valley in their shining yellow armor, rescuing weary travelers from the pain of their feet, and delighting the delicate derrieres of damsels with our soft sheepskin seats. Speak a message at the tone,

Thanks for beeping our beeper-- for you, our rates are cheaper.

(BEEP)

A Cab Story

A cab driver (not 'cabbie', please) is often told things that a priest, analyst, or friend would never hear. Most of the time the information is isolated; connected to nothing else the driver might know...but not always.

A plump girl of exactly 29 (it was her birthday) got in my cab at the Motel 6.

"Nineteenth and Dunlap, please."

I headed that way. *"Do you know where Frankie's is?"* she asked.

Of all the bars in Phoenix, I know where Frankie's is best; it's the bar I go to. But I'd never seen her there. She asked me if I'd ever been there; I said "yes."

She asked if I knew Lee, the owner, and I said I did. It was he who she was going there to see. She knew him years before, but he kicked her out, she said. Now he'd taken her to bed again, so they were *back together*. She said, *"He asked me to put his penis in my mouth, but I wouldn't."*

So I learned more than I ever wanted to know about the sex life of the owner of my favorite bar and a fat girl celebrating her birthday.

I dropped her in front of Frankie's and drove on, ready for my next trip.

--Michael, 1984

A few years later, Frankie's closed, and the building it was in disappeared. Where it once stood became a parking lot for the Taco Bell next door.

Wednesday, May 23, 1984

'I now lived within a fire of unsatisfied longing...I saw the beloved apparition of my dream...I called it my mother....I called it my beloved, and had a premonition of its ripe all-fulfilling kiss...'

-Herman Hesse, Abraxas

Re-reading Hesse, it occurred to Michael that he sought the same ideal, personified by Jill-- a spiritual and sensual union with a woman who seemed more than just a woman. "Both angel and devil; pure light and searing fire; both mature and childlike, wise and foolish."

She was not a goddess, but it was easy to believe she was the next best thing.

May 31, 1984

A relationship with such a complicated woman can be difficult. The intensity of love can make determined effort to maintain it seem the only option. The difficulty itself only underscores the notion that it must be worthwhile.

Michael and Jill took a trip back to Los Angeles, a visit to scenes of a happier time. Living there hadn't been easy, but it had been a challenge faced by the two of them together. Phoenix seemed to be full of distractions, including Jill's parents.

The trip to L. A. was certainly a mixed bag, or a mixed blessing. A lot of good things and feelings came from it. Sleeping in Venice, walking on the beach together, seeing old friends...then, as could perhaps be expected, she pulled away.

A friend of Jill's, Jackie, invited them both over one evening. Jackie, like Jill, was an attractive bisexual woman, and it promised to be an enjoyable experience for all three. But, for some reason Jill declined. Was she jealous, either of Michael or her friend, or both? She never said. To Michael, it seemed like a great opportunity, not just an exciting one for him, but a fulfillment of Jill's bisexual desires, the best of both worlds at once. But it was not to be.

On November 15, 1984, Jill enlisted in the Army. This was devastating. It seemed a betrayal of everything both of them had believed in. She was trying to prove something to herself. It turned out badly. Jill had asthma, which in normal activity seldom gave her a problem, but the army's basic training was far beyond normal. She was medically discharged.

**Fate's fickle finger writes, and, having written, moves past.
Only then do you know if it has goosed you in passing.**

**Every string which has one end also has another end.
--Finagle**

Disappointed with herself at that predictable outcome in the Army, Jill returned to Phoenix, but she was restless, unsure what she wanted to do with her life. She was a talented graphic artist, and it occurred to her she could use her skills by becoming a tattoo artist. She was right, but the beginning wasn't easy.

A local shop called Peter Tattoo, part of an operation with headquarters in Denver, agreed to make her an apprentice. Many artists are good and interesting people, but this one exploited their apprentices by demanding many hours of menial and unpaid work for the privilege of watching and learning.

He management of Peter Tattoo treated its artists as if it were a mafia-style organization. Though artists are not employees, they are subject to arbitrary rules. No tattooing homosexuals or blacks, even for practice. They tell them how to dress, who to associate with, Even after fully proficient, an artist can't work in any other shop. They threaten to confiscate the artist's equipment or even break their fingers.

Though Jill was not happy with the attitude and her treatment, she did learn fast and well. She was on her way to learning the career that would bring her joy and satisfaction throughout her life.

Meanwhile Michael was often angry at the way they exploited her, and confronted them on more than one occasion. His relationship with Jill had become uncertain, though.

They stayed in contact, and he did what he could to protect her from the exploitation by the tattoo shop, but they were apart most of the time.

He bought a used Plymouth Biscayne, a full-sized sedan missing the front passenger seat, providing a long empty space suitable for a bed. It was pointless to pay rent to live alone, so he used the car, parked in Ed Weske's cab lot, as living quarters. For shower and bathroom facilities, he bought a membership in a nearby fitness gym.

This worked quite well. He was driving a cab at least 12 hours a day, and he missed Jill much more than he missed an apartment. For an occasional night off, there was a bar about a mile south of the cab lot. Unfortunately, the cab lot proved to be an insecure place to part the Minstrel Cycle, and one evening he returned to find it missing. What happened to it remains unknown.

A Motorcycle Trip **July, 1985**

Michael wrote:

"This entire chronicle was written in a tiny notebook that fit in the pocket of my leather jacket, while I was traveling. As I re-read it and transcribe it 19 years later, I am keenly aware of how much I needed that trip then. I like to think the universe needed me to take it, too."

Beginning odometer: 32444

Michael had to stop in Mesa to replace a manifold clamp: \$1 from Unauthorized Harley, plus 3 pennies to make it fit right. So far, so good. He thought, *"I can tell my ass will be the tiredest part of me, or else it'll get tough and I won't feel it."*

The bola-bags worked fine for water, except they didn't keep it cool. Perhaps wetting the outside would help.

Superior, AZ

Crossing the first mountains past the Highway 60-89 junction, ahead, sunlit from the west, was a rocky mountain that, from a distance, looked like a fantasy, set off beautifully among the surrounding hills. The highway ran almost to the mountain, then around it to the east, descending into a valley. Michael saw the rain ahead, smelled it, felt the humid gusts. He kept riding, down and into the valley of the rain, and the air grew darker, more restless. At the bottom of the valley, entering Superior, the rain hit. He looked for the nearest bar, and found it. It even had an overhanging roof to shelter the bike. A Mexican bar. People were friendly to the stranger stopping to get out of the rain.

Silly Mountain, which he passed a while back, made him smile. There must be a story behind it.

When the rain stopped, he rode on, but ran into sprinkles that made him cold enough to dig out his leather jacket. The droplets still smashed into his face at 50 mph, stinging. Soon the rain let up a little as he hit Miami and Globe, a pair of twin cities. Both owe their existence to copper mining. Half the businesses in them have 'Copper' in their names. The mountain scenery was pleasant.

He stopped at McDonald's in Globe for a burger and coffee as it began to sprinkle. The sprinkling continued, so he resolved to find a bar and drink to dry weather. A teenager outside McDonald's asked Michael to get him a 6-pack, so they met at circle-K where he procured some Michelob Dark for the boy and his 2 friends.

Then he went to a bar called Bronco's, tended by the friendly owner, but frequented by almost nobody. Michael asked when the people came in; after all, it was Saturday night. He said it would be packed by 9:00. It wasn't. An old trucker named Cowboy bought Michael a beer and said "Don't be a trucker. There's no future in it.." Would he do it again if he had it to do over again? He said, "Definitely. I love it. There's good money in it, but no future."

Michael tried the Drift Inn, which was supposed to be the biker bar of Globe. No bikers were there. There was a blonde. When Michael asked her how she was, she replied, 'Fucked up.' She probably was. There was a cute curly brunette, but she left. By this time, though the rain had stopped, it was dark. Michael thought he might allow himself to be seduced by some local lovely lass, who, he hoped, would have her own place. He tried the Shamrock, where, it was said, everyone was. Again he met the curly one, talked a bit, and just when things seemed promising, she said "Be right back", and she wasn't. So at closing time, he headed on up the road. Alas and alack, the lack of a lass...and a bed. But there was a sleeping spot, behind a tree just off the road.

6:00 am

Show Low, Arizona. Odometer 32,660. 3.4 gallons. 63 mpg.

Almost as soon as he started out, it started raining again. Cold and wet, he made it to Show Low, and put on dry jeans and moccasins at the first coffee shop. He was still shivering half an hour later after several cups of coffee. The sun came out, and his boots, jacket, and bandanas were drying in the sun. Soon he got back on the road.

It was a clear run from Show Low to Springersville, though a few drops hit at the Springersville city limits. He stopped at a coffee shop for coffee and food, where the waitress had beautiful eyes. He wanted to tell her so, but somehow couldn't work it in. Sometimes we think about much more than we say or do, and regret it later. She wore a wedding ring, but he could have told her anyway. She had asked, "Is there only one of you?" That was an interesting question.

Michael bought some new vinyl gloves to replace his leaky wet ones, and stopped at a laundromat to dry his wet clothes. The rain wasn't too serious, so he rode on, past majestic rocky peaks and breathtaking canyon views. He would have enjoyed Salt River Canyon a lot more without the rain.

An Apache ranger said the landscape changes colors as the sun moves. The rangers were looking for a family believed lost while hiking on the White Mountain Apache reservation.

The Landscape Turns Female

East of Springerville are some green rolling hills and smooth grassy mountains. They are the Earth at its most female. Their curves are feminine, sensuous; almost erotic. Riding amid such landscape is almost like letting one's fingers search the lush curves of a woman's body. He crossed into New Mexico and the Continental Divide; there were a few brief splashes of rain, but not enough to get him soaked.

Pie Town, New Mexico

There's a cafe there that specializes in home made pies. It's owned and run by an oriental lady, very cheerful and chirpy. He ordered coffee and peach cream pie. He asked her if the pies were the ones that Pie Town was named after. She said, 'No, those pies were eaten 80 years ago-- these pies are fresh!'

It was delicious, and there was a great view of the sunset and western landscape out the window. The lady gave him two apples and a couple of plastic garbage bags in case he had to sleep in the rain. It was getting dark and cold, so he hoped the next town, Datil (pronounced as in 'Dat'll be 98 cents plus tax'), would have a motel. Sleeping in the possible rain didn't appeal.

He entered Datil about 9:00 pm and almost missed the town--everything was dark. There was one dark building that said 'motel', but it was closed, and it was the only place in town. On to Magdalena.

June 29

Michael stopped under a tree on US 54 east of Vaughn New Mexico to see if it's going to rain or not. These trees afford some protection, and he could camp there if it didn't stop sprinkling. He stood back and looked at his bike parked between the trees, and thought *"I'm just as picturesque as the rest of my travel environment. I look at the quaint little villages I pass through, and the quaint villagers look at me passing."*

He imagined himself sitting still on the Ratster, while the Earth turned beneath him, bringing the land ahead closer as the road passed beneath his wheels. He knew the real Earth didn't turn that direction, but the imaginary one did.

Magdalena should be ahead, and it was time to move on. He stopped to adjust the chain just outside Mesa, New Mexico, and discovered he wasn't on US 54 at all, but US 285, heading toward Roswell. He'd taken the wrong turn in Vaughn, and there had been no highway signs the whole way. He took state highway 20 north. He was running low on gas, but made it to Ft. Sumner on reserve.

Ft. Sumner. Odometer 33,126 miles. \$5.00 gas at \$1.20. 4.2 gallons 66 mpg.

June 30

Taking US 60 east, Michael arrived in Clovis, New Mexico that evening, and decided to try a local bar. He stopped outside the Copper Penny, a C&W dance joint. A police car pulled up next to him. The cop said, "Just thought we'd warn ya-- you're fixin' to go in a redneck place." Michael asked him if this was a violent town. He said, "No, but...stereotypes, you know." He wasn't sure what stereotype he appeared to be, but he decided to take the hint. The cop suggested a place called Boot Hill, It was also a country dance place, frequented by old couples, mainly. He had a beer and left.

The cop had also asked, "How many times you been run?" Michael looked at him questioningly.

"You know-- NCIC." (National Criminal Information Center).

"None in New Mexico."

"You're not going to Missouri, are you?"

'Why?'

He said he'd heard there was a big 'meet' there. The stereotype was revealed. There was no point trying to explain that not all Harley riders with long hair and a leather jacket belonged to outlaw motorcycle clubs, nor that this particular one was a hippy who liked bikes. He just said, "No, I'm going to Kansas."

Michael camped at a rest stop just west of Bovina, Texas. It wasn't bad, except for the damp canvas sleeping bag. He woke up to a warm sunny morning. He had breakfast at Billy-Bob's Drive-in in Bovina, They serve great french fries--leave the skins on, too. Delicious.

Alarming noises

Strange grinding, clattering noises. He pulled over. It was the generator trying to fall out. One of the bolts was too short. The other one, and some wire to support the weight, seemed to hold it, once it was re-tightened. He made a note to stop at the Harley dealer in Amarillo, to replace the bolt, and get some Harley oil. Good oil is hard to find. Some AMA group ought to look into ways of distributing Kendall 70-weight at 7-11's.

Lunch at the Grand Burger, which consisted of some crumbly hamburger on top of a layer of salad on a bun. Not grand at all. Now to find I-35 north out of Amarillo and see a lake.

Amarillo, Texas. Odometer 33,311.4 miles. 2.4 gallons

Heading north toward Kansas, there was supposed to be a big lake, but it wasn't visible from the road..

Liberal, Kansas

Ask most young people in a small town how they like it, and they'll say 'boring'. There ought to be a way to make life more interesting anywhere.

On the Oklahoma side, just before Liberal, there's an establishment called the B and D Social Club. Kinda makes you wonder.

A girl in Liberal said Liberal isn't very liberal. It's conservative. You'd think the name would do something. Maybe it makes them react the opposite. A sign says this is the 'Land of Aahs', with a picture of Dorothy and her dog tripping down the yellow brick road. In Liberal you can visit the Wizard of Oz museum and tour Dorothy's house. Probably not during a tornado warning, though.

Plains, Kansas. Odometer 33,519 miles. 2.9 gallons.

No More Rain

After getting soaked in Arizona, he missed major rain with uncanny accuracy. People would say you just missed a downpour or a storm. He woke up just east of Greensburg, Kansas, in a nice little rest stop. A sign pointed to Roxbury.

Breakfast in Haviland. Seems that some small-town cafes are becoming conscious of their own country image. Mason jars for water glasses-- now, a real country attitude would be to buy glasses, which are cheaper, and use the Mason jars for their intended purpose. Breakfast was good in form, but lacked substance. The biscuits were big and fluffy-looking, but were too light and crumbly. They needed more shortening or something. At least the waitress, a cute, well-fed country girl, believed in keeping coffee cups full.

Found Kendall 70 weight for the first time in Pratt, Kansas

Hutchinson, Kansas. Odometer 33696 miles 2.5 gallons 1252 miles so far

Hutchinson was the home of Gypsy Claar. Michael was stopping for a few days to spend some time with her.

August 6, 1985

On the road again. Council Groves, Kansas. Odometer: 34,136. Rainy weather, but not heavy. Cheese and bananas at the IGA, paid for with food stamps from Gypsy. Food on the road had been on a budget, and perhaps not too nutritious.

As he rode eastward, he thought about the visit, and about Gypsy. At his next stop, he wrote, "*I should have waited till morning to leave, but somehow I felt it was the time not to stretch the goodbye out any farther...I don't know how long this goodbye will be for...I have a lot to think about concerning you and other parts of my life. I feel somewhat at loose ends. Neither person nor place ties me tightly. I am aware of being tempted to make an alliance with you. We would, after all, be of great help to one another. We have similar approaches to lifestyle. We're very compatible in lots of ways. Yet I am not sure that is enough. Perhaps because I am more guarded in my feelings than I used to be, perhaps because I am not yet sure who I am to be, I am not sure if I could return your love as freely as it is given. It will take time for me to figure that out. I know at least that you're a remarkable woman, and that I will always count you as a very good friend.*"

It might have been more practical to be traveling in a pickup truck instead of a motorcycle. When it rained, he got wet, and he couldn't carry anything extra. There were things in Hannibal and Austin that he'd like to collect. But that would have to be another time. This was an adventure; an experience; an impractical journey; a way to get in touch with people, not things; a way to learn about himself and others, not pick up scattered possessions. Perhaps he was testing himself. Was he as resourceful and independent as he thought? All things considered, he was glad he'd done it this way.

Just before Burlingame, Kansas, the wind started to blow so severely that he needed to seek shelter. Fortunately there was a tavern in the town, called the Swamp, frequented by pleasant, friendly types. If the town had any bikers, they might go there.

The storm was replete with sound and fury, so he sipped 3.2% beer until it abated. The road was wet and the air cool, but it was tolerable, and he made good time to Olathe, and a Denny's, there to plan his next move. Olathe is 20 miles from Kansas City, Kansas, and it was 1:45 am. Should he look for a motel, or keep drinking coffee at Denny's till early in the morning? He chose the coffee, so as to catch Kay before work in the morning.

Lee's Summit, Missouri

August 7, 1985. Odometer 34136

He was there to visit his son, Geoff. They played computer games, catch, and later went out to eat and see a movie. Geoff seemed very aware and understanding of the situation. It felt good to get to know him.

Independence, Missouri. Odometer 34323 miles. 1 gallon, August 8, 1985

Michael and his son rode the 200 miles from Lee's Summit to Hannibal. Geoff didn't complain, though His rear and legs were getting tired and sore, he didn't mention it until he was asked. They stopped every 50 miles or so, once to eat in Moberly. Geoff reminded Michael of himself at his age.

He wasn't sure how to entertain an estranged son, but decided he didn't need entertaining, or impressing, or teaching. He should just be himself.

Michael hadn't seen his old neighbors, Donnie and Mervin Sharkey for years. Mervin hadn't changed a bit--same mannerisms, same posed, superior-intellectual look, which, compared to his brother seemed almost effeminate, but which was offset by his robust farmer side. He had become a counselor at Hannibal Junior High. Donnie had grown a beard and grey hair, but he looked good, healthy and happy.

They told him Sandra Bush and Deborah Reigel had both been divorced 3 or so times each. Michael thought "Too bad they missed out on me." He thought of Carolyn, a pretty blonde with a dazzling smile he had dated for quite some time. And Phyllis, Yolanda, and Christine- he wondered what had happened to them.

The Step Mother

Michael's stepmother, Sue, did not seem happy about his visit, though he tried to make it a pleasant one. He sensed some hostility, perhaps from not being able to control him. She ordered Geoff around, too, not grandmotherly at all.

Maybe she has a general feeling that life has given her a rotten deal. She'd always been a bit of a martyr, taking care of her mother till she was nearly 40; then, when she finally married my father, he died about a year later, leaving her with Michael and a pregnancy. That was bad luck indeed, but one can't use the status of a tragic heroine indefinitely. That does not buy happiness nor does it buy control of others.

You can't pin your own happiness on your ability to control other people. She hadn't realized that. It isn't easy to learn that the behavior of those close to you might not follow your plan, and that should not be taken as a personal affront. We must learn that, and sometimes relearn it, or live in constant frustration and resentment. The Hannibal sojourn had gone on long enough.

August 14, 1985

Sue's behavior was unexpected. Michael felt unappreciated. He traveled hundreds of extra miles to spend a week visiting her. She accused him of not caring about her.

She was judging by appearance, it seemed. His hair is long, and he rides a motorcycle. That was enough.

She told at length the little story about how his sister Pat was so hurt because Brian, who had been like a grandfather to her, had promised her his ring, and just before he died he changed his mind and gave it to his niece. Not the monetary value, but the broken promise was the hurtful thing.

After 30 years of promising, "I've divided everything equally between you two kids, because I love you both the same," she had changed her mind about that. Michael didn't begrudge Pat anything. After all, she was her natural child, and he was the adopted orphan that came as a package deal with his father. But she was the only mother he had known. He had respected her for her better qualities. Now, he thought, he would have to respect the memory of them instead.

No child asks for his situation. He or she must just do as well as possible with the reality of it. Michael had to accept a lot that he didn't like for 18 years, and tried, usually successfully, to believe the intent was loving and kind.

He thought, *"When I live my own life, and build my own values, to find love and spirituality in my own way, then I am not accepted by my own parental figure. Well, who says life is fair?"*

He had planned, after returning to Phoenix, to save about \$100 and send it to her so she could have something extra she wanted, and to have a nice 8 x 10 picture done of himself, framed to hang on her wall. But after this, she'd probably misinterpret the money, and she probably wouldn't hang the picture.

On to Austin

It was obviously time to leave Hannibal. He felt restless; anxious to get on to the next part: Austin. . What could happen there? Can something be put back together there that couldn't elsewhere? He was thinking of Jill.

When you've painted yourself into a corner, the only thing holding you there is your unwillingness to get footprints on the floor and paint on your shoes.

Jill had asked for his help, and he was willing to try, knowing not to have any expectations. In the past, he had expected too much, making one woman all women. Making her a goddess. When love becomes too serious, fun suffers.

August 15, 1985

Monroe City, Missouri. Odometer 34551. 3.8 gallons

August 16

Lewisburg, Kansas. Odometer 34795. 3.8 gallons

Miami, Oklahoma. Odometer 34942. 2.0 gallons

He stopped to sleep at Rocky Point, north of Muskogee, Oklahoma. It cost \$6.00 to get in the park, but the light show, the sky full of stars, was free.

The day was going slowly; he didn't get started till 1:00 pm, and didn't feel too well in the heat, perhaps from not eating enough. The bike seemed tired, too, but it kept going.

August 17, 1985

McAllister, Oklahoma. Odometer 35125. 2.7 gallons

The bike stopped with a series of backfires in the middle of Nowhere, Oklahoma. The battery was dead, too. He thought he had found the charging problem, but still couldn't get it push-started. Night fell, so he slept just off the side of the road in a little clearing. He woke, cleaned the plugs, and started holding up a sign that said 'Need Jump'.

A couple of people stopped who didn't have cables. Finally a cowboy in a pickup truck stopped and tried to jump it. It turned over, but wouldn't run. With considerable work, they got it in the back of his truck and took it to Atoka, about 15 miles down the road, to a truck stop. He ate there, and investigated further on the bike, opening the ignition module cover and found the electronic distributor had been trying to grind itself up. Broken bolt, shear pin, and springs. No Harley shop in Atoka. No auto parts store open on Sunday. Pizza Inn sold no beer on Sunday. He started walking. It was hot and humid. At a store along the way, he was told the bars weren't open either on Sunday. He was, considering a motel; the clerk, with a worried look, said \$18.00. Money was tight. He walked on..

Then he was rescued by a woman who drove by. She said he could crash at her place. She liked Harleys, and didn't like to see anyone stranded in Atoka. Just a nice person, and more trusting than is probably good for her. Fixed him steak for dinner. Sometimes, it IS a friendly universe, When he leaned over the bike in the sun, his crystal pendant projected the rainbow on the tank. There are good people in all places, usually when you least expect them. Thank you, Vivian Layton.

August 19, 1985

On the Road Again? Off the road again.

Just outside Atoka his carefully improvised repair took a dump. He was sorting out the pieces, and an old pickup with a Harley sticker pulled up. Terry, a Harley rider from Durant, had the parts he needed. However, he had to wait while Terry fixed a couple of refrigerators, his line of work. Actually, he does anything that will make a buck, He charged \$25 for the part, which was a fair price. By flashing the generator, they even got that to charge

It only made it 50 miles and quit again, this time for unknown reasons. No more charge, either. He got a jump from a guy who'd also jumped him in Atoka on the way out. He followed into Dennison, the bike running on one cylinder. At American Cycles in Sherman, they found it was only an oil-fouled plug that refused to start firing. Replaced by a new one, it ran fine. The generator stopped charging again. A new regulator is too expensive, so he got full charge and pressed on. The proprietor of American Cycles, like most Harley people, had been helpful and fair.

Across the street there was a shop called Blind Alley. It sold blinds.

Sherman, Texas. Odometer 35230. 2.5 gallons.

Waco, Texas. Odometer 35378. 1.6 gallons.

August 20, 1985

Finally, Austin. And Jill was waiting at Glenda's like she did 6 years ago when she had come to Austin for the same reason. This time it's more serious, though, and more vital that she come here to stay for a while.

Bob Wayman was still a friend, and a helpful one. He had left some things, most importantly old notebooks he had written in. He thought he'd like to get a truck, gather his belongings, and end up in Austin.

Things seemed to have improved for Bob, too. Julie, was far better for him than Robin, and the complication of his custody struggle over his daughter was resolved. He seemed more relaxed, more cheerful; more free. It was a pleasurable visit, seeing old friends--Bruce, David, Kelly, and Sue... Time to head for Phoenix. Back to work.

August 27, 1985

Austin, Texas. Odometer 35673. 3.7 gallons.

Sonora, Texas. Odometer 35878. 2.9 gallons.

Was this trip worth it? For all its troubles there were some real good times, some learning, and experiences not to forget.

Someone in a bar in Sonora offered to let him crash in a trailer later, if he wanted to stick around and have a few beers. It was too early, though. He continued to a rest stop just east of Fort Stockton, Texas, where he slept.

Ft. Stockton, Texas. Odometer 36035. 2.7 gallons.

He was questioned by a cashier on the food stamps, asking for an ID, and refused to accept his \$10 stamp. He said "Well, I guess I can't afford to eat, then." The cashier GAVE him the food.

El Paso, Texas. Odometer 36283. 3.7 gallons. 66 mpg

August 28, 1985

Evening at the Texas-New Mexico border. Odometer 36312 miles. Nice view from this rest stop, up the side of a hill. You can probably see Mexico from there, as well as Texas and New Mexico. El Paso was like Phoenix, except more Mexican. Outside a Safeway two young girls were taking a picture of the bike. They asked Michael if it was his; they wanted to take his picture beside the bike.

He asked them how El Paso was. They said 'Slow'. Too bad they were too young. He got the battery charged at a small Mexican garage. No charge for the charge-- that was nice.

August 29, 1985

Wilcox, Arizona. Odometer 36548. 3.6 gallons.

The last day's travel was about 460 miles. It's 1094 miles from Austin to Phoenix. From Phoenix to Hutchinson, Kansas is 1253 miles. In 15 days actually on the road, he had averaged 288.2 miles per day, a total of 4323 miles altogether. He arrived home about 8:00 pm on August 29.

Riding a motorcycle is like living, only more so.

It doesn't matter whether it rains, whether you have breakdowns, where you go, or why you're going there. It's what you do with the experience that counts. And that comes from inside you."

Flash forward: October 30, 2005:

Twenty years later, Vivian of Atoka OK saw this story and emailed. Coincidences happen, it would seem.

MAN AND MOUNT

The rapport we have with our machines is often such that, when our vehicle's engine is straining under a heavy load, we feel that strain, project our strength into it and feel weary from the effort.

A good smooth power in our motors makes us feel personally strong, athletic; muscular. That a man and his mount might seem to read one another's mind might be easily imagined. Riders of machines seem to share emotions with them; to trade egos.

Cosmic Chronicles

Part 3B

TALES FROM THE COSMIC CAB

The following are stories recorded by Michael from his experiences in driving his taxi.

Perhaps if Jesus had been a cab driver, he would have learned better how to get along with people, and they wouldn't have nailed him.

October 24, 1986

WINSOME, LOSE SOME

She was pretty, but what I noticed most was her smile as she got in my cab at the bingo parlor. It was not that her smile was dazzling, almost luminous, although it was, but that it seemed permanent and real, not just a smile flashed at will for its effect on others.

She gave me her address, and we crept forward through the post-bingo traffic. She smiled on.

'Did you win tonight?' I asked. 'Oh, I won a little.' 'I figured you didn't lose, the way you're smiling.' We pulled into her driveway, and, still smiling broadly, she handed me a ten for a \$3.00 fare. 'Keep this', she said. 'I won \$600 tonight.'

My next fare was at a bar, a father and son, both happily drunk. Pops, as he called himself, was a rugged-looking feisty old fellow with long white hair and a beard.

We stopped at a store for a 6-pack. When the son went in for the beer, Pops opened his shirt and showed me a scar on his belly.

'They cut me open', he said. 'They say I've got cancer, and I'm gonna die before Christmas. Do you know how it feels to know when you're gonna die?'

I shook my head.

'Everybody knows they're gonna die...but to know it's coming that soon-- that's like being sentenced to the electric chair. I love livin'. I WANT TO KEEP LIVIN'...but they tell me I can't.'

There was no sob nor whine in the old man's voice. There was strength and courage along with sorrow.

His son came back with the beer. As he got in, he asked, 'Did he tell you he was dyin'? My old man ain't never gonna die! Not as long as he keeps partyin' with me!'

SWING SHOW

I drove Misty to and from work frequently for several years. She was one of the least maladjusted topless dancers I ever met. She was still amused and delighted that men would spend money to watch her take off her clothes. She lacked the jaded disdain for her patrons that some dancers develop.

Misty once recalled noticing that the boys in the playground would stand in front of the swings, hoping for a peek at prepubescent panties when her skirt blew in the breeze. A reasonable girl even then, she would oblige them.

Strip tease shows, in their various forms, are only adult versions of that eternal childhood pastime.

IT'S THE SMALL TALES

We in public service, cabdrivers, waitpersons, dancers, and escorts among others, all occasionally get unique moments of insight into the mind and society. It is often these, not stories of extreme drama, that we remember and sometimes retell.

This one was told to me by an out-call escort as I drove her home from an assignment.

'Shhh...we don't want to wake Mother.' The speaker might have been a grandfather himself, if he'd ever impregnated a woman. He wore thick glasses that made his eyes inhumanly large. Random wisps of wild hair sprouted from his otherwise bald head.

As he led her silently to his study, she could hear 'mother' snoring loudly behind a closed bedroom door.

He handed the pretty call-girl a hundred dollars. She counted the crisp twenties and put them away. 'You're not promiscuous, are you?' he asked earnestly.

RHYME AND REASON

Some words are easier to rhyme than others. My second ex-wife Jill once challenged me to rhyme the word 'diaphragm'. The result follows:

The singing coach said, 'Higher, Fran;
You need to sing from your diaphragm!'
So Fran took this advice to heart,
And released a melodious pussy fart.

A NEW LISA ON LIFE

'My name's Lisa Anne', announced the pretty blonde with the low-cut halter-top and the fur jacket.

'Sleazeanne?' That's what I thought she said. She blushed and giggled. 'Great,' I thought, 'A call-girl with a sense of humor.' I liked her immediately. I started my cab. 'Where to?'

She told me. She also told me she was an escort, but I'd already guessed that. She's from Hollywood, and she has a Hollywood concept of how a call-girl looks. She has a mischievous, sexy grin that shows she enjoys the theater of it all. She'll flash her tits at convenience store clerks.

We stopped at a hotel to try to change a hundred. 'Drive past these guards', she said. 'I want to flash them some tit.'

'No, you'll get me in trouble.' She pulled down the halter-top as I drove.

'Now, would that get anyone in trouble?'

I was looking at truly beautiful breasts. She had tweaked her nipples, and they were magnificently erect. Indeed, they could get someone in trouble very easily under some circumstances-- the sort of trouble Helen of Troy or Cleopatra might cause. I would have risked that for some time to caress them, and explore the rest of her.

But Lisa Anne is not all glitter and tease. She's a vulnerable woman who loves and needs and gets sad when she loses at love. As much as it may delight her to be worth \$110 an hour, she does not mistake this for true respect and affection.

Perhaps those who are quick to stereotype would not see this, and would admit no feeling beyond lust. As usual, such people miss a lot.

Wisdom consists of avoiding stupidity most of the time.

-----unknown

Crickett

A rare warm wind
From Colorado blew in;
Took my tower like a storm
Weather she comes and
Whither she goes
She's sure done me no harm
Mounting peaks
For weeks and weeks
Make a sensuous climate
And I would continue
Along this venue
If I could only rhyme it.
-- June 1987

The first thing he noticed about Crickett was her legs: long, lush, smooth and brown below short cutoffs. She was sitting quietly at the corner of the bar, and he didn't talk to her that time. The next time, when he did, it was an easy conversation, the kind you fall into when no one is trying to impress anyone.

She had silky long black hair, brown eyes, and an incredibly creamy tan complexion. It didn't occur to him at first that she was a Native American, but her features were classically that, with a slightly oriental flavor to her eyes. She was tall, with a strong healthy body. She told stories of Colorado, of Breckenridge and Telluride, of growing up adopted, of a mate, a child, money and bad habits she'd had and lost, and the stories and their telling showed her to be sensitive and caring, strong and resilient in spirit as she was in her body. There was something about her that made him want to be her friend as well as her lover. She had a good soul.

She had said she was headed on to California soon, so it was no surprise when she announced she was flying away June 25th. Michael would have liked her to stay longer, but she needed to go and find out what waited there. He hoped she'd be back.

And every day at 4:05
My wristwatch comes alive.
Peep-peep; peep-peep until
I stifle its electronic bell.
Time to pick up Crickett again
Though she's been gone the last of June.

Monday, July 20, 1987

Amazing Grace

Alone again, he thought of Grace, who he hadn't seen while Crickett was there. Then there had been a visit from Gypsy Claar from Kansas. He called Grace, they went out to eat, then back to her place.

Grace had a lot of class. She had every reason to be depressed, angry at the world, or simply to whine and complain...and she didn't. Her health problems caused pain much of the time, and of that she had an old man who beats her up. Any man who hits a woman is a detestable coward; a poor excuse for a human being, but to beat on a woman like Grace is beyond the depths of depravity.

Yet she could smile, laugh, have a good time; be a sensuous lover. She has accepted her health problems. She does no drugs except pot, and hardly drinks at all. Michael felt privileged to know her; to have spent a wonderful night with her.

Tuesday, July 21, 1987

Michael met Jill and her new husband John at the Crazy Horse for some beers. He still loved Jill, but accepted that the romance was over. He wanted her to be happy. John seemed a decent guy, protective, and perhaps good for her.

Later Michael went to Frankie's, and got seduced by Renee', who used to dance at Grand Central Station with Jill. He was just filling in for her old man, who is in jail. He did his best. He never could resist a damsel in distress.

He almost didn't want to leave Phoenix...but only almost. A road trip was overdue.

Essence of Love

Soft mountainous breasts
Dark pink proud nipples
Begging to be sucked
Creamy inner thighs
Yearn for tender kiss
Tongue tease behind knees
Fingers grasp her round
Behind; squeeze, massage.
Pause to nibble at
The shallow hollow
Where thigh meets pelvis
Then nose explores soft
Fragrant down. Tongue seeks
The sweet secret source
Tasting gods' nectar.
Thighs part; reveal pink
Petals, lovely; moist.
Sip from the fountain
Of youth; give squirming
Timeless ecstasy.
At last, we kiss; tastes
Herself as hardness
And softness unite.

-1984

A ROAD TRIP

It was time to travel again, this time not on the Ratster, but on 4 wheels in a Mazda GLC, which had been a gift from Jill.

The Journey Begins. July 22, 1987 14:47: odometer 74509

He filled up at the Exxon at I-17 and Dunlap and headed south on I-17 to I-10, east toward Tucson.

The freeway could get monotonous. It was the most logical route, but rather dull. However, it's unfair to compare a trip like this to the motorcycle trip of 2 years ago. It was a good deal more comfortable, if somewhat lacking in style and the sheer pleasure of riding. So far the Mazda was performing well. On to El Paso.

Sign: DEFACING ROCKS UNLAWFUL

July 22, 20:30 Lordsburg, New Mexico mile 74793 8 gallons, \$8.20, 35.3 mpg

He called Bob Wayman in Austin. Julie answered, and assured him they would be there.

By 20:50 he was in Las Cruces, NM: odometer 74912, having coffee and cookies at a Shell gas convenience store, the items passed through a teller bin from behind thick glass. They were taking no chances.

Las Cruces is beautiful when approached from the west at night. One descends on it, and its lights look like interlaced strands of silver and gold.

There was a rest stop at the Texas-New Mexico border ahead where he had stopped to sleep once before.

July 23, 07:00

The eastbound stop is on the Texas side; the westbound was in New Mexico. It was more modest, but adequate, and there's still a nice long view to the southwest, clouded by a morning fog. He couldn't sit on the ground; the little ants were active.

sign: TEJAS MEANS 'FRIENDS'

The French conquest under Maximillian would be interesting to read up on.

Billboard for radio station KFOX in El Paso: I FOX AROUND!

Van Horn, Texas, 10:23. mile 75079. 7.5 gallons; \$8. 38.1 mpg

Those who think Texas is flat have probably experienced only the north part where US 66 goes through. From the west it is full of small mountains and valleys, then hills that look sculptured with a smooth regularity that makes one think of the ancient pyramids.

The interstate highway slices through the hills with a Texas-style refusal to let nature inconvenience people too much. The road does rise and fall with the land, but the steeper hills, though they could have been merely crossed, are sliced cleanly and neatly, leaving straight sides of naked earth on either side of the road.

The Hill Country itself is a tree-filled countryside, no longer rocky but lush and green rolling hills. Small towns tend to look picturesque without working too hard at it. Of course, one never knows to what extent a small town is self-conscious about its small-town look. If it didn't know it was supposed to look like that, would it look like that anyway?

Suddenly he was confronted with a village whose name a sign proclaimed to be HYE. He waved at the sign and said 'Hi' back. A second later, at 55 mph, it was time to say 'BYE'.

July 23, 19:14 MST odometer 75540. Austin, Texas

It took 28 hours, including sleep, to cover the 1031 miles from Phoenix. He switched to central daylight time, which cost 2 hours. At 23:00 he was waiting outside for Bob and Julie to get home from work. Finally, they did. The next day he slept until 14:00, then watched movies on TV while Bob and Julie were at work.

Saturday, July 25

Michael and Bob went to see the Austin Lounge Lizards at the Waterloo Icehouse. They're a very musically adept bluegrass band with well-written humorous songs. One is called "Saguaro", about a man who has a gunfight with a cactus, and loses.

Sunday, July 26

They visited the Back Door off Riverside Drive, a big place with a game room side and a rock-band side. Michael had been there before with Jan Horne, the cute redhead that used to work at Brown School, with whom he had an affair after Jill left for L. A. Jan had later had an accident that disabled her for some time. She may have gone back to Arkansas, where she was from.

The place had gotten bigger since then. Then they checked out 6th Street, which seems to be the happening area. Maggie May's had folk-type music-- a Joni Mitchell soundalike. Draft Guinness for \$3 a pint. Joe's Generic Bar had blues and beer for \$2 a bottle.

Monday, July 27

Michael went to see where Bob was working, a Brown-School type facility. It was a nice setup, way out in the country. The residents seemed feisty enough to be interesting, but manageable.

Tuesday, July 28

Michael checked out the Black Cat Saloon while Bob was working. Quite a scene, when you can buy a beer and stand on the sidewalk or sit on your bike and watch the women go by. The bar itself, like several of the 6th Street bars, is long and narrow, a divided section of the old buildings already there. Many of the Austin bars, like the Doll House (a topless bar), the Outhouse, and others have dress-code attitudes about Harley T-shirts, etc. The Hole in the Wall doesn't, nor do the 6th Street bars. Phoenix has some of the same situation, yet one expects it less here. Austin should have a more enlightened attitude.

August 4, 1987 09:00 Austin. odometer: 75621. 7 gallons, \$6.50. 31.43 mpg

Heading for Lee's Summit. It was 200 miles to Dallas, and he arrived around noon. There was midday stop-and-go traffic. He missed 69 because he was supposed to look for 75, which leads to 69, but 380 would take him from Denton east to the right road.

Pet store: FISH N' CHIRPS

The 380 route was a nice drive through some green wooded countryside north of Dallas and Denton.

Sherman, Texas 15:45, mile 75945 8.9 gallons \$8.50. 36.4 mpg

He stopped in Sherman to find American V-twin, the shop that was so helpful last time through on the bike. It had moved, and was a bit hard to find. It took about an hour, but he wanted to tell the owner he appreciated his being there when needed.

The owner had his hassles with the Establishment in the interim. He actually got arrested IN his shop for wearing a FUCK JAP MOTORCYCLES T-shirt. When they want to hassle you, they'll do anything. Too bad he didn't have any of those T-shirts. Michael wanted to buy one.

In Oklahoma one crosses the Clear Boggy River, then the Muddy Boggy, and finally the North Boggy, which is presumably neither clear nor muddy, but still boggy. Then there's a town called Tushka. A good place to sit for a spell?

19:30, Muskogee Oklahoma odometer 76116.

Everywhere is halfway to somewhere.

Muscogee was that place Merle Haggard sang about, but Michael had discovered last time through that they DID smoke marijuana there.

22:25 Joplin, Missouri. odometer: 76253. 7.6 gallons; \$7.00 40.53 mpg

Michael arrived in Lee's Summit at 01:15 August 5. It took a few minutes to pinpoint the house in the dark. Few addresses are visibly displayed. Since everyone was evidently asleep, he parked and went to sleep too. He awoke about 06:00 with feeling like he had a ringside seat at the Indy 500. It seems Douglas is quite a thoroughfare for those in a hurry to work.

He and his son Geoff went to Hannibal for 3 days, which was plenty long enough there. The next stop was Hutchinson, Kansas to see Gypsy. They only stayed one night, mainly because he wanted Geoff to enjoy himself, and there was little for him to do there. Michael had spent time with Gypsy before the trip when she visited in Phoenix, so the short stop wasn't so bad; time enough for a one-night stand.

Loaded up as it was, the car was a bit uncomfortable to sleep in. They stopped once at a rest stop in Colorado.

GRAND CANYON

Signs on the canyon trail warned about the strenuous climb and the heat, suggesting plenty of water be carried. As it was, water fell from the sky; as the sunny day turned to downpour from sudden rumbling clouds echoing thunder off the sheer rock walls.

Although the rain dampened the hike, Michael did have a chance to meet and talk to Prina under a sheltering rock overhang. She had an open, friendly smile and her dark brown curls, almost Rastafarian in their tight zig-zag pattern, sun-lightened on top. She had shapely, firmly muscled short legs, and hiked as if she walked a lot.

Hers was a strong healthy body, neither fat nor thin, and her face, most especially when she smiled, had the kind of clean beauty that required no makeup, nor could I imagine her wearing any. She bore the attitude of an environment where fear and fakery are not social requirements.

She seemed to like Michael, staying nearby after the rain let up, to continue the conversation. Perhaps hoping that that he and Geoff were hiking all the way to the bottom, as she was, where she had a room reserved. She was not so much flirtatious as she was openly friendly.

She said that she was an Israeli Jew, though she was not religious. She had noticed the Star of David he wore. He told her he viewed Judaism in a similar way, as a culture, an identity; a way of relating to the universe, rather than a theology. Her English was accented but excellent. She remarked on the bigness of America, and the bigness of Grand Canyon. Israel, too, has its beautiful scenery, she said, but its beauty was on a smaller scale. You can travel through all of Israel in one day.

Less than an hour was not nearly enough time to get to know Prina, but Michael found her enchanting and attractive. He gave her his address, telling her if she ever made it to Phoenix he would like to see her. She said she likes to ride on motorcycles.

He and Geoff turned back about halfway to the bottom. The hike back up, of course, was harder work than descending.

Geoffrey reminded Michael of himself at times. Quiet, understating his reactions. One gets the impression he is reflecting on things to himself rather than conveying them to the outside world. He may venture an opinion much later, when he has thought about it.

Back in Phoenix,

after 3876 miles, \$104.95 in gasoline, averaging 36.45 mpg. Not bad.

Sunday, September 6, 1987

RESCUE OPERATION

Crickett called, saying that she was being abused in Newbury Park, a Ventura County suburb of Los Angeles, Michael promised to come pick her up in about 24 hours. He ended his shift around 16:30 and headed west by 20:00. He tried to stop to see Terry in Santa Monica, but he was not home at 02:00, so he went to Newbury Park and parked to sleep on Ventura Park Road near Pepper. He woke up around 07:45 and found the house. The abuser wasn't there, so no confrontation was needed.

September 16, 1987

Suddenly he found himself living with a woman after having gone without even a one-nighter for weeks...and a GOOD woman at that. Crickett has a pleasing, easygoing personality, and was very sexually compatible. He felt like the proverbial kid in the candy store with a credit card.

He didn't want to come on too strong and scare her away. He couldn't be sure she would stay, but he hoped she would. . She was fun, intelligent, sensual, and willing to contribute her share to the household. She had wonderfully soft, smooth skin of a beautiful golden tone, a firm, strong feminine body, long black hair, and the prettiest pubes he had ever seen, with the overall effect of serene natural beauty, not unlike a clear mountain stream shaded by green trees, where one yearns to lie down on its grassy bank and drink deeply while breathing the fragrant air.

ON TIME TRAVEL

One logical problem plagues the concept of time travel into the past: that being, if it can be done, given enough time for research and technical advance, why haven't future time travelers come back to our present?

Surely, if it can be done, mankind will do it and use it, unless we are destroyed first. We don't know if such destruction (or loss of our techno-civilization) would be a man-made or natural disaster.

Perhaps interactive past time travel is somehow impossible. Maybe one could go into the past and view it, but not interact, being separated by a time-fold.

This problem might not apply to future time-travel. It would be more interesting, anyway, since nothing is known about the future, while the past has already been done. (Actually, we probably think we know more about the past than we actually do.) But if we can travel to the future (faster than we already naturally do) and not to the past, it would be a one-way trip, since we could not return to the present.

Travel into the past would be most interesting to discover whether and how the paradoxes actually work. Could one actually meet oneself? If you seduce your mother before she meets your father, could you become your own father, or would you cease to exist? Would this happen instantly, or when you return to the present? Preplanned messages from the past would be easy enough, so time travelers could usually communicate what went wrong even if they were unable to return to their present.

Could UFO's actually be time machines, and the reason they are so elusive could be the need to avoid interaction. Time travel, of course, also requires space travel, since nothing stays in the same place for long. .If you could not compute where you need to be at the time you want to be, and if you cannot accurately travel to the right place, then you would have to be extremely lucky to survive. You could end up in space far from Earth, or embedded in solid matter, either of which could be quite uncomfortable.

To A Sleeping Beauty

10/12/1987

Yes, I love to watch you move,
and to feel you move next to me;
beneath me as we express our passion,
your smooth skin under my caressing fingertips.
But, as for a moment I watched you sleep tonight,
your silver necklace gleaming in the soft red light,
and you lay still, unaware of my gaze,
I enjoyed the natural quiet beauty of you.

October 20, 1987

Do you see the beauty in life?
If you look for it, you will.
Look at yourself
Not just the outside,
which happens to be beautiful to others,
but inside, where every vein,
every bone, every organ plays
in the orchestra of you, plays
the symphony of life

She Dreams of Nuclear Wars

She dreams of nuclear wars, and she's a survivor. The bombs made the world go away; now she's on her own, strong and ready because she planned for this-- she knew it was coming, always traveled light, learned to be alone; loved the quiet land. Now it's all quiet land. The echos of the bombs have faded away. The echos of other voices have faded too; the millions of other faces have gone with the nuclear wind, and she faces her future with no one else.

Dreams may be our fears or our fantasies. Our fears may be our fantasies. Turn over the dragon-headed coin and you've got dragon tails. Use it to buy a ticket to fly and you've got dragon wings.

We may all face the nuclear winter. I want to survive. Some don't. But I'm betting on a level of sanity of those in control just high enough to stop short of bringing it on. If I really expected it I'd find a way to live in the wilderness out of the target zones.

Yet there is an appeal to the fantasy of being a survivor when civilization is gone-- no longer doing city jobs for paper pay to buy market food and shelter made by others, but to grab and hold the real: building by hand, killing my own food, living from day to day, ready for anything; feeling satisfied with only the basic needs. We are not so far from our age of stone that, however much we dream of luxury and ease, we don't dream of this also: the simpler times.

But the world won't go away; it will change some but not much all at once, and we need to deal with it, as it deals with us. This is a kind of survival too, a bit more complex and subtle, but as necessary to our age as hunting skills were once.

That dream had been Crickett's. It may have been because she is a Native American, and though she doesn't express it, she has an unconscious natural desire to see civilization pay for the destruction of her people, a people who may still be better equipped to survive a nuclear war than anyone else; who may once again flourish, given the space and freedom to do so.

Though she spoke little about it, perhaps she suffers for her people, none the less so because she was partly robbed of her heritage by adoption, which was only another symbol of the oppression.

She responds with scorn to the white songwriter's attempt to sing of injustice to Indians. She thinks they don't care-- perhaps that they only do it for the money. Many do care, but she has a point, and it is this:

America, self-righteous democratic nation that it is, committed genocide on the Native Americans. It was done on a larger scale, over a longer period of time than the German genocide on the Jews and other minorities.

The Germans, by circumstances of war, were defeated and punished, and they are still being punished-- not just the Nazis who actually committed the crimes, but all Germans, by association. Germany is a nation living in guilt for the sins of its fathers. Germans who were not even alive then are still apologizing, or at least doing much to show the world that they are no longer a nation of murderers.

America has never been punished for its crime. Indeed, as a whole, it has never even apologized. Attempts at reparations have been pathetic and completely inadequate; the effect has been a continuation of genocide under the guise of benevolent paternalism.

America even misnamed its natives and never bothered to correct it. We have known for over 400 years that they were not Indians. Even Native Americans is wrong; there was no America until the land was stolen by the European invaders.

At least the Jews and the Gypsies were still called by their names when they were being starved and shot and gassed to death. And at least the Jews, partly through their own effort and with the help of other nations, finally achieved a homeland, though they have had to fight long and hard to keep it.

Where is the Native Americans' homeland? The reservations: tiny scraps of a vast continent--land that no one else wanted, scattered and surrounded, almost like concentration camps, an insult to the once-proud tribes who roamed all the land, using it rightly?

The tribes are said to be sovereign nations, which sounds good on paper, but they have little if any more power than any landowner. If any positive change is to come from the revelations of BIA corruption, it should be that of a long-overdue restoration of land and real sovereignty to the tribes on a scale that will insure economic self-sufficiency. Land must be added to present reservation land of a type that can be used agriculturally or otherwise productively, not the water-poor wasteland that is often the case. Native land should no longer be called reservations, but should be considered in every way the national land of the tribes occupying it. Thereafter the tribes must be dealt with as foreign powers, as we would deal with Canada or Mexico

We can never undo the great wrongs done by our ancestors to their ancestors, but we could try much harder to set things right in the present. And we must stop whitewashing our history to ignore past crimes. It is easier to avoid mistakes in the future if we fully recognize the mistakes of our past.

It's too late to make spaghetti. If we did, it would be pasta time.

8807.09

A Cosmic Cab beeper greeting: *The friendly drivers of luxurious Yellow Cab 267 remind you that it is too hot to walk, but it's cool to roll. If you need a ride, and we think you do, say your name, location, and phone at the tone. Tell us when you need the ride-- call ahead if you can, in case we have to finish another trip first. Michael or Pat will call or come as soon as we can. We deeply appreciate your patronage.*

8807.20

Barb

Onene night at Frankie's Michael saw her at the end of the bar. She looked directly back at him and smiled as if she meant it. Clearly, they needed to meet. Not long into the conversation, she said, "You turn me on." That was not something he was used to hearing, at least not until much later. She was slim and pretty. He wanted her. She was officially Trader Steve's ol' lady, she freely admitted, but he thought she might be worth the risk. For awhile this never went beyond surreptitious smiles and winks across the bar and an occasional few words when proximity permitted. Then, one evening she announced she was moving to Utah. Life with a dealer was getting too hectic for her and her son.

He asked her to call before she left, but he didn't hear from her or see her again for awhile. He thought she'd gone. A few weeks later she showed up at Frankie's without Trader. He was out of town, she was leaving him anyway, and she gave Michael her number. She said "Call me", so next day he did. They stopped at Chester's Bar, then rode to his place. There were no coy games about it-- they wanted one another. Even dressed she was a natural beauty, but when she was unclothed he was still amazed by her flawless body, small and slim but perfectly shaped. The passion was electric. There was sweat; their movements removed the fitted sheet from the mattress and denuded a pillow of its case. Heedless, they sought only one another's pleasure, stopping for nothing, every nibble, caress, and thrust sending them to new heights.

8807.30

Their chance had come when Trader the dealer was out of town, reportedly aiding a club snitch to escape from Phoenix. Trader returned, and though it was her intention to leave him, he didn't know if she actually would.

8808.20

Happy endings are for fairy tales. Michael saw Barb just before she was to be married to Trader. She did not seem to be overjoyed at the prospect, and said it was for practical reasons-- concern for her son. Was fear a factor too? There was something between Michael and Barb besides intense lust. Lust and love are not separate, but only semantically divided parts of the same emotion. Conventional thinking, influenced by the dark ages, tries to divide the whole.

A String Theory: On the computer you cannot put quotation marks inside a string, because the string itself must be in quotes, and the second quote it comes to, fools it into thinking the string has ended. Perhaps this will be resolved by the creation of a more complex string theory in time.

Is a sarcastic telegram a barbed wire?

8809

Peekers was a video arcade that featured live nude dancers, who performed in a glass cage for tips. Gypsy Jill danced there for some time, then ended up marrying the owner, John. Michael occasionally visited her there. Once Jill used the place to work on his tattoos.

Nancy Alvarez, originally from Douglas, Arizona, was a dancer at Peekers. Her stage name was Kitty. Michael met her at Frankie's one night and danced with her twice, and saw her later at a party, briefly. As Jill was tattooing him, Nancy appeared. Jill endeavored to play matchmaker; Nancy was agreeable, though reserved at first. Eventually, there was a spontaneous experience in her car in his parking lot. She was pretty, lushly exotic, intelligent, and appealing. He hoped for an extended relationship, but she was also going to college and didn't have a lot of free time.

He didn't see her again until December, when she showed up at Frankie's along with a woman named Shawn, who Michael also had known intimately in the past, but had moved to Wisconsin. He took Nancy home and made love to her, but afterward she told him of her plans to go to Ohio and continue her college courses there.

Jody

On a quiet Tuesday night at Frankie's, Jody walked in, announced she was waiting for someone, and asked for a glass of water. She was freckled, cute, nicely shaped, and, it turned out, lots of fun in bed. She talked about traveling a bit-- originally from New York, she had spent time in Southern California, Houston, and Phoenix. She had a 6-year-old kid, but was staying with her mother and was supposed to be home by 2:00; this night she didn't get there until around 3:00.

In time he learned the rest of the story. Her real name was Cindy; Jody was her dancing stage name. Michael went to the Velvet Touch to watch her dance and take her home afterward. They stopped at TJ's and she revealed that she had an old man, due to get out of jail soon. So much for extended romance.

* * *

A letter to Gypsy of Kansas, 8812.01

Glad to see you're getting along with computers so well. I've grown rather fond of them myself. This is done on the Atariwriter program with a dot-matrix printer. It's not as crisp-looking as yours, but it's useful. It's unfortunate that all computers and peripherals aren't compatible. For that matter, it's too bad all people aren't compatible.

At least "yuppies" serve one purpose-- they're a perfect negative example of what to avoid in our own lives, just in case we need reminding. Sometimes people say "I used to have hair as long as yours." That seems sadder to me than the younger people who have never done anything but conform. I want to ask, "Didn't it mean something to you then? If so, what happened to your values?" But I usually don't ask. Perhaps that's not as bad as those who pretend to be into freedom and brotherhood, but are as selfish and greedy as the yuppies.

I have a Hannibal High School reunion in June. The Mazda quit on me a couple of months ago. A little module in the electronic ignition distributor seems to be the problem. This tiny part goes for \$164. I'm trying to find a way to convert it to regular points, but no one has been very helpful. I'll try to sell it, and buy a good old pickup truck.

A synchronistic fact

Hadrons are subatomic particles that exist in an excited state.

Inverting one pair of letters results in "hardons" which also exist in an excited state.

Snow Wandering

It was 3:00 AM in Phoenix on Xmas night, 1988. Michael was driving his cab. The man he picked up was giving his wife a divorce for Christmas, and wanted to go to Flagstaff to catch a train.

It was dark at night, as it often is, and the foothills were socked in a dense white mist. They drove onward through the fog. About 30 miles from Flagstaff a strange white crystalline substance began to cover the ground and highway. Michael had seen it before, in the cold and distant past. The view ahead wasn't clear, like a TV screen with snow. Snow! He remembered he used to play in it as a child, but then, children will play in anything.

The radio was announcing zero degrees, and they didn't mean college diplomas. Zero is only a number, but when he got out of the cab to refuel, he was aghast at the chill. His mind had mercifully suppressed memories of Missouri winter misery, but there it was again.

The passenger bought breakfast at Denny's while they waited for the railroad station to open. It was getting light out; a good time to light out for Phoenix, with the traffic still light and the scenery lit. The snowy slopes looked pretty in the rising sun, seen from within the cozy cab.

It was snowman's land. Michael drove south, taxiing down the peaks, peeking out of the taxi. On the edge of night, there would soon be a brighter day as the world turned. Washing the cab afterward would be a real soap operation. In the rearview mirror, he could see by the dawn's early light that Flagstaff was there.

February 1989

Michael had known **Janet**, though only casually, since the early days in Phoenix at the Oregon Pines trailer park. Then she was married to Peacock, the park's manager. Michael and Jill had an issue with him over the furniture provided in their cabin apartment at the trailer park. His attitude had been annoying, and they had moved to another apartment at 24th Street and Monroe over that issue.

Janet was a much nicer person, and was no longer Peacock's wife. She was tall and slim, with perfect sized perky tits, and nice all over. She loved to fuck, and showed it with Michael, literally all night. This was quite enough for a start, but he also learned that Janet was a very together woman, worthy of respect as well as lust. She rode and worked on her own Harley, had built VW trikes, worked construction as well as dancing, and was a licensed and experienced truck driver. She had a 9-year old daughter. Not a helpless female, and robustly feminine and sensuous.

In a twist of synchronicity, Janet and Michael were at the same concert featuring Foghat in 1977 in Kansas City. She was in the 8th grade then. She nicknamed herself "Tigger" (with a short I, from a cartoon character). A remarkable woman of 25, She was evidently quite a female "outlaw" from an early age.

To Janet

*Just in case I don't see you for a while
(Perhaps you'll think of me and smile)
Or just in case you'd like to know
(If, by chance, it doesn't show)
I think you're special, and not just slightly.
(Which is not a thing that I say lightly)
I've come to like you for your mind
(Not just your breasts or your behind)*

*But perhaps I shouldn't fail to mention
That your body does get my attention.
To give you pleasure rings my bell
You give it back so very well.
I've learned I shouldn't care too much
Too soon, for love can be a crutch
And then I fall; it spoils my day
When the crutch is yanked away*

*But it's right and good a friend to be
(Another thing I've learned, you see)
'Cause friends can last a long long while
Being happy just to see you smile
No matter with whom else we stick
Let's be friends through thin and thick
And whenever it's the thing to do
I'll gladly be your lover too
--Michael*

“Don’t play with your words”, the mother said. “Just eat them.”

“But, words are pun to flay with.”

“I say you can’t, so don’t.”

“You’re going into contractions again. They’re close together, too.”

“There you go again. You’re becoming a punster. Your palms will grow hair.”

He looked out the window at the palm tree he had planted. It did look a little hairy.

June 23,1989

Poppy was a charming little bloom, all 98 pounds of her, with a style all her own. She was in her early 20’s, yet had been married twice, both of which husbands died in car accidents. Evidently she had a lot of money-- insurance or inheritance-- plus a talent for business management. She seemed intelligent and well-read, perhaps also well-educated.

Michael gave her a back rub, which led to some very nice lovemaking. She likes to be bitten and have her hair pulled at times, and likes to be held down. She said she likes to be tied, but we didn't try that. She was quite sensual. Alas, she lived elsewhere, and was just visiting.

June 24

From a flower to a spice: Ginger was a pleasing blonde with tattoos met while playing pool at the Crazy Horse.

To Grace

*Both of us have loved before,
And lost, or tied, or got rained out.
Perhaps we've learned a thing or four;
We're experienced without a doubt.*

*Whether we're the worse for wear,
Or better, like fine wine or cheese,
Well, that is neither here nor there.
(But I'll pick the latter, if you please)*

*I like you better when you're near,
On that there's no confusion
What that portends or means my dear
I'll not leap to conclusion,*

*For we have time, and it is true
That we find each other tasty.
We'll explore the world of me and you;
There's no need to be hasty.*

--cosmic rat

Anthropic Principle

*If it wasn't like this, it wouldn't be like this.
(Or, it's like this because it had to be like this to result in us,
so if it wasn't, we wouldn't be here to see how it was)*

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 1989

Motorcycle Trip II: The Reunion

Written in Michael's own words, from his notes on the trip.

It had been 4 years since my last cross-country trip on the Ratster, and I was ready for another one. The occasion was my 25-year high school reunion, though I also wanted to visit Gypsy Claar in Kansas again, spend time with my son in Lee's Summit, Missouri, and see my stepmother and my boyhood home.

On the Road

I finally left Phoenix around noon. The odometer read 46,420 miles at the start. I stopped at the Sunset Point rest stop. The white Ford that seemed to be following me went on by. All seems well so far. Riding is a lot more comfortable this time with a softer seat. It's a nice sunny day.

Flagstaff

The drain plug in the transmission fell out. I improvised a rubber plug from a piece of oil hose stopped with a bicycle tube air valve, screwed in and wired to the frame. It should stay.

Gasoline: \$3.50 at \$1.11 a gallon. 46,568 miles; 47 mpg.

Holbrook, Arizona, 6:45 pm

The temperature has been cooler since before Flagstaff. It's warm and sunny, but you can wear leather comfortably on the highway. I'll gas up here just in case: 46,673 miles, \$2.00 for 1.7 gallons.

Gallup, New Mexico, 9:30 pm

When it got dark approaching Gallup, it got rather chilly. I added a wool shirt under the leather and was still cold riding. The rest stop outside of Gallup was closed, so I rode into town, got food and coffee, and considered a motel. I stopped at one advertising \$13, but of course there were no rooms of that price left. It would be \$18, which wasn't bad, but I didn't like that tactic and preferred not to spend the money anyway. Gallup is quite old-fashioned looking. I was looking for a convenience store, and it was a while before I found the generic equivalent of one to get a cup of coffee, some vitamins, and information.

The clerk directed me to a small park just outside of town. Camping conditions were not ideal, but I found a spot where I could sleep slightly secluded next to the bike. There were some interesting signs in the park: one said No Alcohol or Drugs, featuring the circle/slash symbol over a marijuana leaf. Another said No Unloading Livestock, with a sign below it reading Use Trash Bins

One can picture a semi load of cattle being let off the truck so they could graze and shit in the park. How the trash bins provide an alternative, I'm not sure.

Sleeping was a bit chilly; it would have been good to have a sleeping bag, but I managed it, waking several times at nearby noises. No one actually bothered me, though.

June 27, 7:00 am

It's still cool with the sun up. I went to a nearby restaurant for coffee and breakfast.

Gasoline: \$2.00 for 1.7 gallons at 46,778 miles

Grant's, New Mexico; 9:30 am;

The odometer has stopped odometering, at 46,833 miles, so there'll be no more mileage figures.

In Albuquerque I filled up with \$3.50 at \$1.04 a gallon. I discovered I left behind my adjustable wrench for the rear axle nut, so I had to buy a pair of slip-joint pliers for \$8 at K-Mart. The girl I asked for directions to the K-Mart was a real fox.

I found that I needed to use sunscreen. The sun is intense, despite the cooler air.

Moriarty, New Mexico, 2:00 pm

Their sign promises a McDonald's that wasn't built yet, but the Burger Queen had a chili dog with real good chili. I got gas in Milato, New Mexico: \$2.35. In Tucumcari I gassed up again: \$2.50, and briefly met the most beautiful girl I'd seen yet near the convenience store at First St and Business I-40. If I had lots of time and money...

June 28, 1989, 4:42 am: the Quack of Dawn

I awake by a lake in a secluded weeded clearing just outside Dalhart, Texas, to a chorus of quackers. It was a much better campsite than the last, despite the Texas mosquitoes and the nonresemblance of the ground to a mattress. It's a small placid lake. I heard fish playing last night; this morning it's a duck dawn.

I was going to stop at a bar last night for a beer, but they close at midnight in this Texas county, and it was about that time. As I was unlocking the bike to leave, one of the departing Texans with a pickup truck offered me a cold beer. It was a Coors Light, but that didn't matter-- friendly is friendly. Probably a lot of Texans deal with their patchwork liquor laws with big coolers built into the back of their pickups, so there's always a cold beer.

It was warm enough sleeping last night, and the view of the stars was great. I counted 18 billion and some, but toward the end I got confused by a UFO that kept moving. It might have been a firefly.

It was a bit chilly at dawn, but the sun was beginning to illuminate the earth and warm it. If I'd brought my sawed-off 12-gauge, I probably could have gotten 4 or 5 ducks in one shot, but I didn't have time for a big breakfast. Better just to duck into a cafe on the way. I found a use for the helmet: it keeps the kickstand from sinking into the soft dirt.

Dalhart, Texas, 8:00 am

Gas: \$2.85 at \$1.14.

About 320 miles to Hutchinson, Kansas. The atlas says it's 1040 miles from Phoenix to Wichita, 1238 to Kansas City.

I rode through Hooker, Oklahoma, where, the signs say, the Hooker Lions welcome you, and you're invited to the Hooker Pig Sale. To raise funds, the Lions Club could sell their own brand of lead weights for fishermen. They could call it the Hooker Lions' Sinker

Liberal, Kansas, 10:00 am

I added \$2.25 in gas at \$1.13, and the first 1/2 quart of oil. No time to tour Dorothy's house. Maybe next time.

11:30 am: Meade, Kansas

Home of the Dalton Gang Hideout....That makes me wonder: do Americans still love outlaws like they used to? At one time, outlaws (bank and train robbers, fast guns, etc.) were the symbol of freedom for the common man. They were what one might be if only one dared, and they usually struck blows against the established greed-heads who were becoming rich by making the people poorer. Most people knew how the system worked, so they secretly or openly applauded the outlaw who took some of it back. Perhaps there were few Robin Hoods; the outlaws usually kept the money, but in the eyes of the people they did it for those who didn't dare to do it themselves.

In simpler times people understood these things. Freedom was still the most important concept when there was still a frontier. When absolute freedom was just over the horizon, fewer people were willing to be oppressed, either legally or economically.

Media now voice the concern of the established greed-heads and portray would-be outlaw heroes as Public Enemies. We live perceiving the world through glass eyes and paper ears, and many of us believe their distortions. Now we accept curtailments of our own freedom in the name of safety. Will we ever see through our own eyes again?

Greensburg, Kansas, 1:24 pm

Gas: \$2.50 at \$1.11.

It's about 100 miles to Hutchinson. I'll be stopping to see Gypsy there, but just staying one night because I need to be at the high school reunion when it occurs. I'll stop longer on the way back.

I arrived in Hutchinson around 4:00 pm. I changed my watch to CDT, making it 6:00. I had a little trouble finding Gypsy's house because I thought it was B Street, not B Avenue (to B, or to B?) Gypsy said I should avoid South Hutchinson next time. I didn't know the town was big enough to have two sides. The water tower marks the corner. It has cost about \$23.00 in gas to get this far.

July 29, 6:30 pm

I left Hutchinson, heading to Lee's Summit, Missouri, after buying \$2.50 gas at \$0.99. I got on the wrong highway at Newton; I-135 instead of US-50, due to a poorly marked intersection, which took me 8 miles out of the way. After stopping for gas in Emporia (\$2.50), I arrived in Lee's Summit around midnight.

June 30, 12:30 pm

Headed for Hannibal, Missouri, boyhood home of Mark Twain and I, via US-24, the most direct route. I've always preferred non-freeway highways anyway, especially on the bike. I arrived around 5:00 pm.

Hannibal High School, Class of 1964, 25-year Reunion

Although I knew very few of them then, it seems that as a whole the class of '64 are not a bad bunch, and some of them are actually interesting.

Carole Coats was one of the girls who looks better now than she did then, and from a brief conversation I was impressed with her searching mind and original thinking, as well as her vital, healthy body and radiant smile.

There was Brad Brice and his French wife. They gave me a Bible. That was nice, I suppose, but pushing religion is not what I consider friendly. One of the things I respect most about Judaism is that it doesn't seek converts. Lou Jaworsky still has a great attitude and sense of humor. I recall many years ago he introduced me to the first Mothers of Invention album.

Carolyn Lugering wasn't there, but someone told me she still looks good, as I would have imagined she would.

Carol Mann was, overall, the best-looking woman attending. She lives in San Antonio now. Nancy Williams was another pretty one. Frank Maddox was the only other Harley rider there. He rides with the Vietnam Vets MC. My old friend Charles Janosz was supposed to be there, but he wasn't.

Reunions aren't so much about nostalgia as about satisfying curiosity. And interacting with people for any reason can be good. I tried to get together with Carole Coats, but our schedules didn't mesh before I had to head back West. She tried to call me in Hannibal just after I had left. Too bad; who knows what might have been?

Westward Ho

I headed back to Lee's Summit, then back to Hutchinson, Kansas, now that I have time to spend several days to spend with Gypsy. Visiting Gypsy is always relaxing and peaceful and pleasureable. We think and feel the same in lots of ways. But we have separate lives in separate places. I'm not sure either of us could join the other's. Still, I enjoy being with her when I can. She suggested my route back to Phoenix, through Taos, New Mexico.

July 12, 1989, 2:30 pm

Leaving Hutchinson, I rode into Dodge city around 5:00 and stopped for gas. About 30 miles west of Dodge, the sky began to look dark ahead. A damp chill tinged the wind. I knew I was about to meet the bane of motorcyclists. I was headed for rain. I pulled over at my next opportunity and unpacked my leather jacket. Then, deciding to be really prepared, I dug out my waterproof pants and pulled them on I wanted to be ready for the rain. I restarted the Ratster and rode on toward the dark horizon. The wind picked up and got colder. Lightening flashed. Then it hit. A shotgun blast of hail struck my head and face. Eighty mph winds lashed horizontal rain into my right ear. There was no getting ready for this except being indoors. I stopped on a side road and parked the bike high side toward the wind. It sheltered me somewhat from the blast. I peeked periodically at the sky for funnel clouds. The wind went on and on with the horizontal rain. When it finally slowed, I began to get wetter, so I got out my tarp and made a tent with myself as the center pole. I'm not Polish, but it worked anyway. Finally, with difficulty, I could roll a cigarette. The lighter failed in the wetness, but the waterproof matches worked. Another eternity later the rain slowed to a trickle. I packed up and rode into the face-peppering sprinkle, 30 miles to Ulysses, my Oddysey nearly over for the day, to the Wagonbed Motel. The pretty desk clerk charged me \$23 for a room with a tiny frog on the floor and Electroglide in Blue on TV.

Thursday, July 13

It shows promise of a Brighter Day, though there are still Dark Shadows of clouds. We'll see how the story unfolds As the World Turns. Perhaps I'll have dry weather when I reach the Edge of Night.

What else but soap operas while at the laundromat? Actually, the dryers are performing a Soap Ballet, drying what got rained on yesterday. Nothing much dried hanging in the motel room overnight. I had to replace the 20-year-old rope that held my mailbag closed.

Once dry I followed US-160 to Trinidad, Colorado, then I-25 south to Raton, and US-64 west to Taos, New Mexico. Though clouds periodically behaved in a threatening manner, I avoided rain on the road to Trinidad. Eastern Colorado looked a lot like Western Kansas: flat plains. There's even a National Grasslands, since they couldn't call it a forest without trees. Well, they could, but everyone would laugh.

After a while hills began rising in the landscape and it looked more interesting. By the time I got to Trinidad the scenery was definitely improved; medium and small mountains, partly covered with trees except for their rocky tops.

Trinidad is a picturesque town, having retained its original buildings and character. I decided to stop for food at La Fiesta, a small family-operated Mexican cafe. It proved quite tasty. Next door to La Fiesta was a bar called the Other Place. I went in for a beer. I noticed the bartender immediately. She was a slim brunette in a black skirt and tube top, a pretty smile and dancing eyes. She had a nicely done tattoo braceletting her left wrist. She also looked strangely familiar. As we talked between her errands to fetch drinks, she said I looked familiar to her, too. We established that we had been in Phoenix more or less the same time, but it wasn't till I asked if she'd ever danced there that we saw the connection. She said she'd danced at the Blue...something. Blue Moon! I said. I asked if she knew Gypsy Jill. Then she

remembered it all: she was Patty; had been with Steve who rode the dresser, lived at Oregon Pines, along with Pan Billy, Pegleg, Peacock, Janet, and Jill and I. It had been back in 1983. This unlikely coincidental encounter got me a place to stay the night in her trailer just outside of town, which was extremely fortunate because shortly after we got there it rained prodigiously. We spent a pleasant evening watching videos and talking about old times. She hadn't had a ride for awhile, so I took her for one in the morning before I left. She lived amid some beautiful scenery, Fisher's Peak just outside her door, and other nice hills, valleys, streams, and lakes around.

July 14, 1989

Leaving Trinidad, I rode down I-25, which winds up and down Raton Pass to Raton; pretty countryside all the way. It's 7800 feet at the top of the pass. Cool weather under blue skies and white clouds. In Cimarron I stopped at an outdoor tool and misc. sale, and noticed it was threatening to rain. I almost decided to try the 56 miles to Taos, but then I stopped at the edge of town and decided the small cafe looked better.

The rain stopped, and the sky turned blue again, so, on to Taos.

The road from Raton to Taos is indescribably beautiful. It descends into a forested canyon, with towering spired cliffs and a creek running beside the curvy road. Then, Eagles Nest: suddenly a lake appears, surrounded by mountains in a valley plain. It started sprinkling there, so I stopped at the Laguna Vista saloon, a very nice place in the little town there-- and had a beer while waiting for the rain to stop. The bartender was a very attractive lady who moved there two years before from Newport Beach. She likes it. I liked her. But, the rain quit, so I rode on. There was forest all the way to Taos.

Taos

It is indeed a cool place, but like many cool places it has become highly commercialized, so it's not quite as cool anymore. Still, it was interesting, and I spent some time checking it out to see if anything might happen. It didn't. I talked to one Harley rider from Georgia who got there 2 weeks ago and is now managing the Harley shop, which is owned by a local parole officer. Hmmm. He said there are some fun women in town, but I didn't find any.

After finally finding my way out of town on US-64 west, I rode a few miles into the setting sun and found what looks like a good campsite: a rest stop by the Rio Grande Gorge, with covered picnic tables.

July 15, 1989

I awake at the Crack of Dawn. I heard it: it sounds like a nice gentle pussy-fart. I don't often wake early enough to see the sun rise, but this morning it was like waking with my head between the spread thighs of a horny woman. There is no prettier color of reddish pink. It made me want to reach out and lick the crotch of the horizon. Pun intended.

Actually, that sound I heard was coming from a couple of hot-air balloons getting ready for flight nearby.

I got gas in Tres Piedres, and breakfast in Chama. Semi-desert plains alternate with forestland. I stopped in Farmington for gas and talked to a girl in a jeep heading for the Telluride Jazz Festival, then had a beer at Zia's west of town. On to Gallup, Holbrook, and US-666, The Beast Highway. I don't know if the number affects the driving, but twice on the two-lane road on a long straight portion, oncoming cars passing forced me to the shoulder rather than getting back in their own lane. Not nice.

I took the Beeline to Phoenix: home at 1:30 am on July 16.

Unified Field Theory Paradox

A true unified field theory would determine all our actions, including our search for the theory itself, and its outcome. --Hawkings

A black hole has no hair.

--Hawkings

CONTINUED ON PART 3B