

Remembrances

Dave Bucher looks back at some little gems of experience from his 45 years of riding and writing.

Hollyweird

In 1985, while my wife and I were visiting California, we stopped by the *Rider Magazine* offices in Aguora Hills, just north of LA. I'd been doing a lot of writing for *Rider* and they insisted we try out their latest creation. Not knowing that the Ninja-based Concours was just a year away from introduction, they'd taken an '84 Kawasaki GPZ900 and cobbled some hard bags, a seat and an extended fender on it and claimed, as they do to this day, that they'd "invented" the sport touring genre.

Anyway, they gave us some gear and some directions and Mary Lou and I hopped on for a taste of fabled California riding. We ended up on Malibu Canyon Road, which took us on an exciting, twisty ride to the Pacific Coast Highway, and a beautiful view of the Ocean, just north of Malibu. Across from a traffic light, at what was essentially a "T" intersection, there was a short stub of road on the ocean side. So we crossed over, parked and enjoyed the view.

When it came time to leave, we faced a traffic light that simply wouldn't turn green. We waited and waited. Surprisingly, nothing came from the opposite direction to trip the light. We waited more. And then, just as I'd decided to go, I glanced again to my left. It was like one of those cinematic telephoto shots, with the shimmering tarmac and the all-too-familiar-looking set of light bars rising swiftly from behind a dip in the road. I knew right away I was toast.

That Highway Patrol car came around the corner on two wheels, with lights blazing, ready for the chase. But I'd already pulled over. I'd seen too many episodes of CHiPs and Adam 12, and heard too much about the ruthless efficiency of the CHP when it came to catching bikers. It then occurred to me that I had no documentation for this bike. So when the movie-star cop, with carefully coiffed hair and big aviator shades, strode over to us, I was reduced to a stammering mound of jelly. While I nerv-



ously poked around the taped-on plastic panels, fruitlessly looking for a registration card, I tried to communicate how two people from Pennsylvania were on a borrowed bike with California plates, with no proof of ownership, had waited eternally for a light that wouldn't change, and had then gone through it on red. Even as I mouthed it, it sounded goofy to me. I was certain I was about to go from being the star in a Hollywood Police Drama to being the fall guy in an LA Courtroom Drama.

After what seemed like an endless wait...remember, this was before cell phones or computers...he walked

back from using the radio in his car and stood looking down at me from his 6' 4" perch. I was ready for the cuffs. But, peeling off those sunglasses, he said simply, "You're lucky I have a luncheon appointment." Then he handed me my license, turned back to his car and was off.

Maybe it was because I didn't run or pretend not to know what I'd done. Maybe my wife was making eyes at him from behind me. Maybe the situation was just too crazy for him to deal with on an empty stomach. It sure was crazy for me...my one and only motorcycling experience in the Golden State, and one I can never forget.