

## Easy Rider version 2007

1969	2007
Harley Davidson	Kawasaki Concours 1000
Peter Fonda - Dennis Hopper	Rick Hall – Patrick de Maqueville
3.500km	10.500km
T-shirt	Bike gears
5 states	23 US states + ONT

This first episode of my trip will explain shortly what I've seen in this magic country ; it's generally just a story day by day of what I visited. Because of so much to say, it will be continued by 2 or more episodes. The last one will have a special content with a conclusion explaining what was my feelings during this extraordinary adventure, especially with a point of view about the wonderful human relations I met. Guys, I will never thank you enough for all that you gave to me !!!

2007/07/21 – local time GMT+2 – Saint Loubes (FR)

1:30am : End of activities in the small house, all have been checked : bike gears, paper maps, waypoints on the GPS unit, passport and driving license, etc. I got less than 2 hours left for to take a snap before the start of the best trip I'll ever do.

3:30am : I've been unable to sleep because of too much excited. Not a problem : I intent to sleep in the plane.

4:30 Arrival at the airport... where all is still closed... I spend time to show the maps again, waiting for the inboarding...

5:30am : arrival of the personal of the airport. I run to the inboarding gate... But have still to wait a quarter...

6:40am : the plane land off head Munich (DE). Only 2 hours for this fly. Lucky in Munich, I find a way to get a cigarette... The next fly will be 11 hours ! And of course that's no smoking...

9:20am : nothing can now stop me on the way to USA. I'm in the right plane and it's landing off... Nothing except to want to smoke and then to jump out over the ocean ! I would like to sleep, to avoid jet lag, but the thinks to what I will discover there are incompatible with sleeping.

On the way, I watch sometimes trough the window... Water, water, water... Flying over CA, I see many lakes and snow... In a few days, I'll be back around those on a bike...

So many pictures invade my head : on TV I've seen so many times big cars, skyscrapers, cop's pursuits, Canyons, Cowboys, etc... I will discover all those.

Local time GMT -7 – Denver CO

12:05am : from the plane, I've seen some strange shapes on the ground ; big colored shapes with dark lines around. I'll know later that those are fields and the straight lines are the streets : I could not imagine this at this moment because on my continent, straight line on a road can not be so long ! The trip above trough Kansas will impress me very much.

Customs at the Airport :

-do you have any cheese ?

-no Sir !

-do you have any meet ?

-no Sir !

-do you have any food ?

-no Sir !

-go on !

Well, I'm glad that he did not ask me about wine... I just answer to the questions of the officier and don't want to give him informations which could get me some problems with the custom...

Going out of the controlled zone, I look for my friend Rick : he told me that he will hook up me with his truck...

Yes : he's here with a large smile on his face ! With him are 2 other guys that I never met before : Harry, who will make my trip possible by loaning me his bike, and Mike, another Concours Biker. I'm so happy to be here !!!

Following the guys to the parkplace, I'm glad to see « my 1<sup>st</sup> american cop », with this so famous hat... I'm really in USA !!!

Walking trough the parkplace, I watch at the cars... Well, there really very big ! Many are taller than myself !

Stop ! The 3 guys are looking at me... What's happening ? I look at them, then look around... 3 concours are waiting ! Errrrr... I don't undestand immediatly : where is Rick's truck ? No no no : there is no truck at all and I have to retrieve my bike gears in my luggage for to drive on the way to Rick's home. It's time to panic : I sleep less than 2 hours during the last 2 days, I know neither the traffic rules, neither the road signs, neither the traffic used and this Concours is maybe different than mine... I hope secretly that I will just be passager on a backseat, but they confirm to me that I will drive by myself... Ok, I go !!!

The loan bike is very new and it's an american model. Where is the light button... There's none ! All other things seems to be in place.

Ok, be quiet Patrick and come on : they let me take the middle place of the bike group, so I just have to do exactly so like the leader.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> kilometers, I find a so huge road : so many lanes ! I'm worrying about the drivers reactions, turn signals, and I watch so much in the mirrors than in front of me. After a quarter, I'm quiet again : driving in USA seems not to be dangerous, drivers are cool, they observes rules. No, I can watch around me. Definitively, USA is the country of the big things : roads, cars, buildings, fields.... All is so like expected, I'm really in USA !

Around 2:00pm : we arrived, safe, at Rick's home. There is also Cotty, the wife of Harry. The band will try to keep me aware to avoid the jetlag. Rick's home is a typical wood house in a wild country. Actually he has a problem : no more water at home, because of defection of the pump, and work hard to repair it with his neighbour while Cotty, Harry and me are tasting the American beer in the shadow of the trees...

Later, in the evening, we go with Rick's truck to a famous and fancy restaurant where Harry will offer the diner to us. An american usage will surprise me before to get used with later during my trip : the bill comes close so fast than the food, so like that meaning « order then pay, I don't care if you really want to eat... ».

2007/07/22 :



This day will be the rest before the begin of the bike trip. I discover many things around Rick's location the Rocky Mountains (the small town in the nearby, the forest, the water natural spring). I meet some Rick's friends (Mike and family, Phil and family) in the afternoon and I will taste with 1<sup>st</sup> American BBQ with ribs : the BBQ itself is closed and the meat is slowly smoked inside. That's really delicious ! Rick jokes about me because I'm not used to eat with my fingers. But it will quickly be able to do it !

I discover too the US guns law... Everybody can get guns in this state, and I will try some very impressionant models...

2007/07/23 – 2:12pm - Day 1 of the trip CO-KS

Harry and Cotty left in the morning : I promised to care of their bike. They loan me a tent too : it will be usefull at least 2 times during the trip. We leave Rick's cottage head the discovery of USA. The I-36 impress trough Colorado and Kansas me very much : we can ride more than 50km without any curve, and we I watch on my GPS, it say that the next turn will be in...258km !!! Straight, straight, straight !!! So far I can see, there are only fields. Fantastic ! The road is large with an excellent asphalt. Sometimes we see a mailbox, but we I look for the house and when I can see it, it's just a small dark point very far away at the end of the lane on the side. Only very vew traffic here : main of is very long trucks, and when they hold a sign « Oversize », they are really monsters... And they drive so fast or faster than we : the 1<sup>st</sup> time I was passed by one of those trains, I got really a big fear ! The filling on this road is so special that I've got shivers ! And I sing in my helmet !



7:13pm we arrive in San Francis – CO. There is a place where we will be able to put the camp for the night. But it's time to get diner : in this country, restaurants are closed very soon. So we go head Bird City to retrieve some vitamins. To know what to eat is a big problem for me because I don't understand what's written on the menu. Rick advice me... Rocky Mountains Oysters ! But before to order, laughing, he explain to me what are really those oysters... Well, I'm here for to know American life, so I will test those balls... Sincerly, that's very good !!!



2007/07/24 – 8:42am - Day 2 of the trip KS-NE

Head Nebraska ! But before we have to tank. At the gas station is a police car and I ask to the officer for to take a picture. Very friendly, one of the both cops offer me a police patch ! This will be the 1<sup>st</sup> of a small personal collection.



Leaving the I-36, the landscape and the road change : small hills, but still a road very straight. Other differences : the road is now with an usual size for me, and asphalt is...errrr... With bumps and holes ! I will hurt my foot with a bump on this way, and my knie will remember of it more than 3 days. I will be crying on the bike more than 10min without to be able to use my left leg. Lucky, there is no reason to brake on the way : it never happen anything, neither stop, neither traffic, neither animal... Neither animal ? Not really : there are some big black birds and it seems that they don't like the bikers. 2 times we had to avoid those birds, flying without to care of us...

We arrive by Chris and Pat Baum at 6:17pm. We spend an happ time with the whole family then, for diner, Chris lead us by Lazlo's, a famous restaurant, where I'll get a swig sampler : 8 different beers ! Enough to spend a very

good night in the offered palace... We will leave late in the next morning !



2007/07/25 – 10:12am - Day 3 of the trip NE-IA

In Lincoln is the Kawasaki Plant, so we make a tour there but no way to see the new C1400. So, we go further on the way.

We cross the Missouri River !!! A so famous name !!! I can imagine the smoking boats in the old time... I'm really in America !

The landscape change one more time : roads are now frequently curvy. On the road, we suddenly cross a police car wich appear at the top of a small hill ; we pass this hill top too and Rick pulls down on the side of the road. Doing same, I was wondering why when I see again the police car, lightening and coming to us.

Cop : « you were speeding ! »

Rick « no Sir ! »

Cop : « someone called me because you were speeding ! »

Rick « no Sir, we did not speed ! »

The cop order us to stay in place near of our respective bikes and in the field of the camera of his car. While looking for the papers of the bike and my international driving licence, it seems that I said something in French because the cop became suddently white. Then, trying to understand what could be written on my strange papers, he had a wonderfull idea : « the best thing I can do is to le them go !!! ». I take though a picture of this officer at the door of his car before to execute. Thank you Officer of Shelby County Sheriff ! No patch for this time, because he answer that I had none available...



In the evening, we arrive by Jerry and Pat Roland. They did offer us lodging on the net and, so like many other later, neither Rick neither me did know them before. Rick like the good wine... And let us to taste some very good : so like, I can compare a Priure Lychine 2000, wine that I know very well, with another so famous wine of California on side of another big American BBQ. Well, the evening was very funny ! I also did taste Tequila from Mexico and an authentic home made American Martini. The sleep has been very strong after...

2007/07/26 – 9:45am - Day 4 of the trip IA-IL

Jerry wants to lead us for a part of the day : knowing the best roads of his area, we cross many wonderfull green landscape (Stone City is my prefered) on twisty roads up to the National Motorcylce Museum (Anamosa-IA) where I can see an original Harley Davidson from the movie « easy rider ». Well, I prefer to ride on a Concours !!! At this point, I get my 1<sup>st</sup> police ticket : bad place for park... But no signs to inform about !!!

Then we go head Lansing. It's very hot , my foot is still completly blue because of the hurt and I forget to put my hear plugs. Roads are straight again. This part is the 1<sup>st</sup> time when I suffer of riding. Lucky, we make stops every 2 hours. Generally, they're at gas stations where we can smoke one and have a cold drink. I will never more forget to put the hear plugs, or I'll stop immediatly for to do it !



We cross another very famous river : Missouri ! This time, I don't want to miss the picture and we make a stop ; it's so large !!! The river is also the State limit beetwen Iowa and Illinois.

We arrive by Hoogie around 5:20pm. The tall sympatic man offer to us to go and see right now Chicago from a skyscraper : no more tired when I hear a such proposition ! Chicago means for mean « the city of Al Capone, with all stories of the prohibition time » ! So, we take place in Hoogie's car, one more big one... And where he ask to me if I have room enough on the back seat ! Well John : take place in an European car, so like a Smart, and you will see the difference... « Chicago, Chicken go », the best way to pronounce this name correctly. Hoogie knows very well the big city and comments every quarter : it's very interesting !

On the way, I note that the car of Chicago's workers is a second office : to eat, to read the newspaper or to call on phone is very usual...

From very far away I can see the towers, especially the Sears Tower... 442m high, 108 floors !!! But before to visit it, we go in a restaurant where all cops of Chicago are eating more than 50. More than the feeling of safety, I'm impressed by their uniform !

Then we go and park the car nearby the Sears TowerI feel so small at its base... Hoogie leads us at the 103<sup>th</sup> floor !

Oh my God : the view is much more wonderfull that I could imagine ! It's by night now and I can see all the lights of the city, of the cars in the streets. They seems to be so small at my feet !!! I guess that we spend something like 1 hour there, but I could stay here all the night, completely hypnotised by the view !

Map of my trip



End of episode 1, to be continued.....