

Day 6 – No Good Can Come From This

Leg 2 began 6AM Friday morning with a riders meeting. John Harrison strongly cautioned riders to pay more attention when taking bonus photos and to read the instructions. Mike Kneebone then translated John's distinctive Alabama dialect so Yankee riders could feel shamed as well. After Mike announced the Top Ten riders at the end of Leg 1, the bonus point values for Leg 2 were distributed and the field dispersed. Long distance riding legend Rick Morrison had a simple theory on checkpoints: "Get out of the gate quickly," he'd say, "Pick a big bonus that made sense and head that way." He'd let the rest of the route fill in from there. The man could route with a Malboro cigarette, flipping it across the map. 200 miles. 400 miles, etc. Rick also loved foul weather, especially when he was leading the pack. "It keeps the riff raff out." He's probably uttered some nuggets worth listening to. The guy's only finished five IBRs with a win (1997) and 2nd (1999). Eric Jewell agrees. He was on the road by 6:41 AM. "You got to be riding in daylight hours. You GOT to be riding in daylight hours," he told Austin. Most went back to their rooms to route and enter data. Mark Starrett went back to sleep. Then he went home. He'd finished in 2013, although not without challenges. Four days this year were enough.

Leg 2 wasn't two hours old before rookie Jeff Wilson's day turned to crap. Jeff reported a catastrophic rear tire blowout in Clines Corner, New Mexico, just 59 miles from the checkpoint. He was able to keep his R1200RT upright, but unable to remove the wheel. Lisa reached into her little black book and connected Wilson with Bob Hall living nearby. Jeff arranged a tow to Bob's house where Bob was able to break the wheel free, mount a new tire and get Wilson back on the road by 2 PM. Hopefully, Jeff learned a thing or two watching Hall wrench on his RT. Maybe he even got some advice from the 2001 IBR winner on how to reroute to make up for the lost time.

Wilson's call came to the Rally van, the Chrysler Town and Country minivan Mike Kneebone so generously rented to transport Rallymaster Lisa Landry and her entourage (John Harrison, Steve Hobart, Dave McQueeney and yours truly) to the checkpoint in Kingsport, Tennessee. Lisa circulated the Rally van rules before the start. No farting and only minimal scratching will be allowed. No Sportster bladders. No stopping. We have assigned seats. (Seriously, I tried sitting in McQueeney's seat once and he went all Sheldon Cooper on my ass.) Hobart and Harrison are the designated drivers. One thinks he's still a cop and the other a NASCAR bootlegger. Someone asked if we had a spot tracker. If we had, we'd be disqualified. I was going to upload a picture of Lisa sleeping but she took my phone. I think we should be allowed to pee.

Sydney and Sam Liles' 2-up IBR effort was over after just one leg and 2,576 miles, their 2015 BMW K1600GTLE is dead from a software glitch. It's heartbreaking to see Sam and Sydney end their IBR ride this way. They even tried to rent an H-D Ultra Classic from Eagle Rider as a substitute, but no such luck on a July 4th weekend. There was a time (not that long ago) when you could take your Beemer cross country, down into a canyon, to the track, around the world, or just back and forth to work every day, without a worry. Even if something did break, it could usually be fixed with tools provided in the stock tool kit, which you knew how to use. The stock tool kit today is comprised of a Felo E-Pro All-in-One Screwdriver (made in Germany), a toll-free number and a credit card swiper from Square. Are the days of the Roundel's dominance in long distance riding over? Unfortunately, the Liles will be plagued with this question for the next two years.

By the Friday afternoon three general routes had surfaced. A number of riders led by Brant Moteelall took the northeasterly route to Kansas City. Again, more riders see something that

route master Tom Austin just doesn't get. Jewell, Mountain, Lipps, Bray, Owen, Orr, Beaulac, Bertram and Talken-Spaulling were all pointed towards the deep Texas route that Owen and Phil Weston just swept in Leg 1, with Schween, Moon, Barclay and Peart in tow. Essentially the rest of the field took a more direct approach east through the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma and Arkansas. The orange mass on Spotwalla for this group was so tight and in such formation at 6 PM, we considered starting a clock to see if they were operating as a team. By this morning, a lot of that orange had spread like a rash, although 20 or so were still clustered along I-40, training like the row of severe storms firing just to their south. Mark Crane is not one of them. At 6:47 AM, Crane was north of Des Moines, Iowa, arcing to the east. Crane goes to great lengths to avoid Mississippi like a man who owes alimony.

The lone man out on Friday's group routing was Phil Weston. After spending his entire first leg in the bowels of Texas, Phil finished Leg One with only 6 states and now needs to play catch up. As much as he'd like to follow the leaders over familiar territory, he needs to clip states, not points, if he wants to finish. He headed north into Colorado before turning east into Nebraska.

Speaking of teams, rookie Chris Rooney called Rallymaster Friday afternoon to let her know that he and fellow rookie Chris Comly intended to ride together for the next couple of bonuses. Rooney assured Lisa this coincidental directional anomaly was not intended to form a team or union of any kind (not that there's anything wrong with that). But it makes us wonder if anyone actually reads the rules which state that any riders reaching the same bonus locations at approximately the same time during a 24 hours period will be presumed to be team members unless the Rallymaster (or Kneebone) determines otherwise. It takes commitment to ride with someone else for a tankful or two, let alone 24 hours. But, two or more riders running to the next bonus or two is NOT considered a team and, in fact rally vets have a great time reminiscing about such times.

Late in the day Friday Chris Sakala phoned Lisa to say he was withdrawing. His GPS issues had returned and he was still in a funk from his rookie scoring errors on Leg One. He will be back in a future event, The IBR taunts him.

Allen Hatcher called at 7:03 PM. He was fried. His 2003 K1200LT was fried. Both were sitting on the side of the road west of Cheyenne, Oklahoma. It wasn't immediately clear which was in worse shape. The exact issue with the LT wasn't clear, but it was mechanical, metallic and, well, shouldn't sound like *that*. "Crunchy" rarely equals "easy" to fix, especially on a holiday weekend. Like so many earlier requests, smoke signals were released and, 113 minutes later, Steve Bracken, family in tow, rolled from his home near Owasso, Oklahoma, to deliver his FJR to guy he'd never met. I won't let my neighbor use my lawnmower. We are watching for Hatcher's next move, although it ought to include signing the Brackens up for the Jelly of the Month Club.

Replacement motorcycles in the Iron Butt Rally have become less unusual (although always dramatic). Prior to 1997, however, it had never happened. After an accident left Manny Sameiro stranded in Houlton, Maine, in the first leg of the 1997 IBR, Manny found himself with an even bigger dilemma than how to tell folks back home in New Jersey that he had filled his bike with Diesel. First, he had to get home to New Jersey. There's no commercial airport in Houlton. There's no Hertz location in Houlton. When someone said it would be cheaper to buy a car than rent one, Manny realized it would be even cheaper to buy a *motorcycle* than a car. And, with a *motorcycle*, he could get back in the game. Manny found a 1983 Honda VT50 Shadow at a local

sports equipment store that catered to snowmobilers, and \$1100 later, he was back on the road. He finished – dead last – but finished. This was before the world of LD rider lists, online forums and Craigslist made it easier to “pull a Manny” in the IBR. It’s a great read. Check it out in the 1995 daily reports.

10:00 PM

Ian: “Lisa, it’s Ian McPhee.”

Lisa: (*yawning*) “Ian, what’s wrong? Are you okay?”

Ian: “Yeah, I’m fine. Why?”

Lisa: “Because it’s a 10 o’clock at night, Ian, and I got 2.5 hours of sleep last night. What do you need?”

Ian: “Where is the group photo bonus?”

Lisa: “What? Have you checked your book?”

Ian: “No.”

Lisa: “Honest to God, Ian. If you make me get out of bed to answer this question, I will tell Cimino to write about it.”

Jeremy Loveall apparently lost his GPS last night along I-40 some 50 miles outside Ft. Smith. Well, he found it, at least what was left of it after it fell off and tumbled at speed. But, he lucked out when rally scoring volunteer Lynn Carey, also en route to Kingsport, was likewise looking for her phone which somehow was escaped the car. Jeremy was able to cannibalize Lynn’s GPS to repair his, leaving Lynn to call John Harrison every 15 minutes for directions.

Overheard in the Rally van:

“Is the reason you don’t remember that I just said that because I’m ‘just a girl’?”

“It’s four of you against me and I do not feel outmatched.”

“McQueeney, you have to warn us when you are going to tell a joke.”

Harrison (upon switching in for Steve Hobart to drive): “Wait, I can’t reach the pedals.”

“Note to self: bring bungee cords to strap all of Lisa’s shit.”

“Elephants don’t take 45 minutes to poop.”

“Is this a private group?”

Moron II should land in Kingsport sometime this evening. We will continue to watch the orange dots and field calls and update everyone again Sunday.

Chris Cimino

Iron Butt Scribe

Iron Butt Rally©