

Preacher, an ex-Phantom rider who says he's an ordained minister, conducts the marriage ceremony. Standing before him are the bride (Evil) and bridegroom (Loser).

Motorcycle Wedding

By Hank Burchard

Preacher jumped up on the well cover and cried, "All right! We're going to have the ---- wedding."

And they did. It took about four minutes for Loser to take Evil to be his wife and co-rider with the Phantoms Motorcycle Club.

The affair took place over the weekend (all of it) in Prince George's County, near Indian Head Highway, in somebody's yard. Loser, 19, is to start work with a glass company this morning. Evil, 23, who has an 8-year-old son, said they will make their home with her parents for a while.

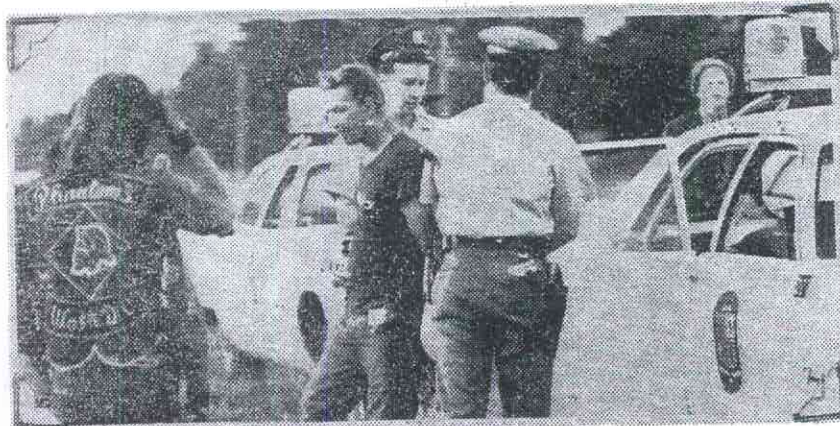
The wedding party was made up of members of the Phantoms and delegations from the Pagans, Satan's Few, Knight Riders, Los Vagabondos and the something-Gypsies, along with a few independent bikers who ride under no club's colors. Total attendance was about 100.

The festivities were delayed for some time because Spider, who was driving the goods wagon, was busted by the county police on an old warrant for non-support of part of one of his families.

The goods wagon contained the cases of beer and Boone's Farm Apply Wine,



"You may now kiss the bride, and you both have my deepest sympathy," intoned Preacher. Instead of rice, the couple was doused with beer (above). The ceremony had been delayed because Spider, at right, who was driving the food and drink wagon, was busted by the county police on an old warrant for non-support.





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Photos by Ken Fell—The Washington Post

de rigeur refreshments whenever the clubs foregather.

Spider and his station wagon were impounded at the Oxon Hill police station, and things had begun to drag while everybody was waiting for Money Momma, their bondswoman, to spring Spider and the goodies.

But if things went slowly at first, there was something passed around in a bowl called "speed" that seemed to enliven the tempo of things.

The ceremony itself we have verbatim, in notes by Preacher's own hand. Preacher, who was wearing a black frock coat over a blue shirt with large white polkadots in each of which were hand-drawn swastikas, said he is an ordained minister, \$15 class, of the Universal Life Church.

He said he was the son of a Baptist and had undergone ordination in some branch of that church also. He said the wedding, as performed by him, was legal. Asked where the license was obtained, he said he was "working off a learner's permit." Preacher talks like that all the time.

This was the ceremony he conducted:

"We are partying here tonight to join this dude and this chick in eternal torment. I don't know why they want to do this, but they do so let's get it over with.

"Do you have the ring? Place it on her finger.

"Do you Loser take this chick for you lawful old lady, to—and protect from this party on?"

"You bet your—I do," said Loser.

Do you Evil take this biker for you lawful old man, to satisfy, work for and

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if necessary steal for from this party on?"

"I do," said Evil.

"Now I have to ask this question. If there is any biker or chick here who has any—against these two stupid fools as to why they shouldn't be married, speak now or forever hold your peace."

There were some ribald expletives, but they were not taken to be objections. Preacher swallowed a jolt of wine, found his place once more in the Triumph motorcycle repair manual that served him as The Book, and went on.

"I have to be the one to do this to you but with the power vested in me I now pronounce you man and

wife. What I have joined let no man put asunder."

"Listen to the man," somebody said appreciatively, "'asunder'. Wow! Go it, Preacher." Preacher accepted this compliment with a modest bob of his shaggy head.

"You may now kiss the bride, and you both have my deepest sympathy," he said. The happy couple then were doused in beer and the beat went on.

If the reader finds sexist overtones in the ceremony, this is not an error. The women who ride with the clubs always ride behind. On their backs are to be found patches describing them as the property of a given male member, as: "Widow, Property of Katipo."

Widow is called widow because she is one. Katipo took his name because a katipo is a small and very venomous East Indian spider, although he is a large and seemingly very jovial fellow.

Thus his name is counterpart to hers, if you take "Widow" as in "black widow" (although she is in fact white). This is the way it was explained to your correspondent, but it doesn't seem all that clear any more. However, Katipo was best man and Widow was matron of honor.

Women's liberation has not penetrated to the chopper motorcycle set. The

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At the motorcycle wedding, when the ceremony ended the merrymaking began. Dudes kissed chicks, dudes kissed dudes, and Phantoms embraced Pagans, Satan's Few, Knight Riders, and Los Vagabondos.

women don't even get to pick their own names, sometimes.

Lips, for instance, is called Lips because Sgt. Pepper, her late old man, chose to call her Lips. (He got killed under vaguely described circumstances, in Pennsylvania, some time ago. This is not uncommon in biking circles.)

Lips explains: "Sgt. Pepper called me Lips because he had his reasons. You'd have to ask him, and he's dead."

When she's not doing biking with Satan's Few, Lips does customer relations for a large Washington firm, which shall remain nameless for their mutual benefit.

Lips did not want to get involved in any psychoanalytical discussion about how she got into and why she stays into the Satan's cycling scene. Besides, she said, her current old man was watching and he might misunderstand.

Loser didn't mind talking about what biking means to him, but he had trouble getting his point across to an interviewer.

He has been biking for about 18 months, with several months out to recuperate from an accident, which messed up his right leg and wrinkled his Triumph 650 cc.

In order to remain in good standing with one's club it is

necessary to have, in operation condition, a motorcycle of 500 cc's or more displacement. This rule is inflexible, and if a bike is off the street for as much as a week, somebody will go pick up the member's colors.

"Colors" refers to the sleeveless blue denim jacket with club patch, iron crosses, death's heads and so forth that the members must wear when on motorcycles and must not wear anywhere else, such as in a car. If a member is caught wearing his colors in a car or on, say, a bicycle, "It is open season on him," said Loser. "You can stomp him freely until he gets his colors off." The reason for such

punishment, Loser said, is "We are not, like, a car club, you know, Man, and that's why."

The swastika is a recurring motif in the dress of the biker, but has no political significance, Loser said. "It's just to blow the citizens' minds," he said.

Substantiating the nonfascistic claims of the clubs is the fact that all the organizations mentioned are integrated. There are some all-black bike clubs in the Washington area, but no all-white ones of any size.

Bali Hi, the black vice president of the Phantoms, said it's all very simple. "They liked my song, Man, so here I am. There ain't no

big thing about it."

"If a man is righteous enough to be in a club's colors, his color don't matter," said Loser.

By righteous is meant, it appears, that a man is regarded as a suitable companion for parties and runs, which are the mass outings of bikes running the highways in supercool formations that scare your Aunt Minnie so bad, which is mostly why they are done.

That about uses up the notes, except that in Clancy's Bar on Good Hope Road SE, where everybody gathered before the wedding, and where there were six different topless go-go dancers.



Members of various local clubs clown around while awaiting the arrival of other bikers.