



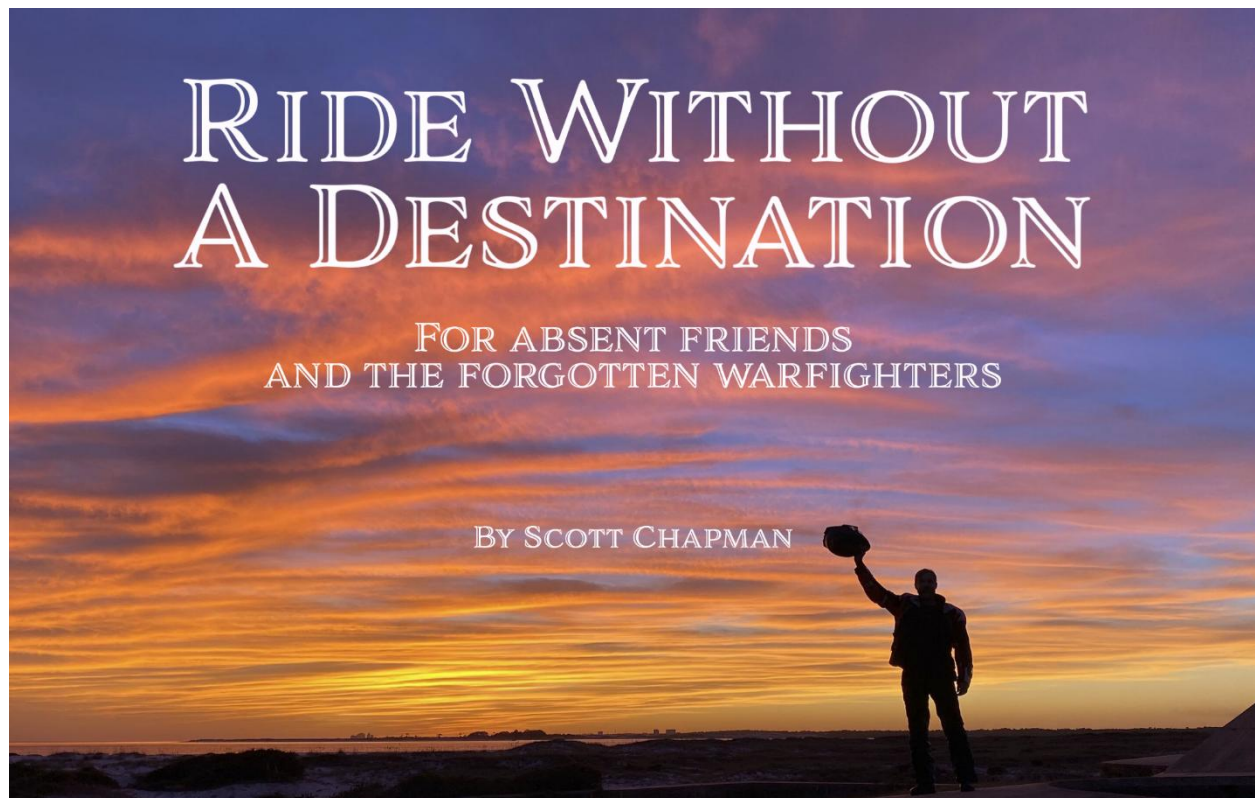
“Ride Without A Destination”

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CHAPTER 9 of ∞





For the *Mean Old Woman*

I view words & individual characters as music notes. Quanta packets of frequency. I rearrange these music notes to find the 'in-tune symphony.' Walking 3D edits through wavy waters during a dynamic writing project. Life is a living document. Together, let's find the frequency of a blue-sky sonnet on this paradise planet.



16 Oct 2019

After I visit *Janice* in Central Florida, I'll pause my motorcycle escape down further south in Broward County. I need to meet with several lawyers to discuss ludicrous legal matters, buy a new moto riding suit, then hear an audacious business proposal from a friend who's clawing at my cage for help. Intermingled in the un-fun list of chores above, I'll have a final moment with my dear sick sister, then take a hard look in the mirror.

These are a sliver of the high-stress decision-tree challenges I set up weeks ago. I take tiny actions, done with deliberate design, to create the conditions of a reality I concoct in my mind. I have a penchant for patterns and predictive action. It's a clever backwards problem-solving tactic that some may see as magic.

After my reluctant mucked-up legal meetings with the undead esquire team, I have a handful of time-sensitive tasks to finish in S. Florida before I escape all on my own again. All I want to do is pull the curtain tight and escape in the night; yet my embedded moral fiber forces me to sacrifice and always do what's right. The magnetic drive that calls birds to fly south for the winter is the same magnetic drive to force me to follow a higher moral fiber. The friction I feel underneath my skin is a symptom of a world consumed by sin. I long to feel the steady hum from my motorcycle to silence the twisted timelines that consume my mind.

Most important above all the boring stress and distress to sort out down south, I must visit my dear sick sister, before my forgotten motorcycle departure. My sister, Heather, lives in South Florida with the Light of her life, my dear new brother Bryl. I fear this may be the last time I see my sister; walking warm and mortal.



In the quiet hours, while alone in the dark, I wondered if my motorcycle departure will outlive my dear sick sister. I dared not to speak those words aloud in fear of a mindless manifestation mishap. I trapped those dark thoughts deep underneath the locked-up trunk and down below my ice-cold gut. The pain of that wonder weighs heavy over my soon departure. I lifetime of a life in survival allows my mind to switch off emotion and release when ready.

One important bit of self-love luxury took place before I departed on my trip across space. After I wrapped up all my square-framed meetings with those square-framed legal leeches, I decided to swap out my protective riding suit for a heftier piece of rider-safety kit. I'm an astronaut in the World and need a proper piece of protective equipment while I drift from place to place. I shopped and bought a tippy top of the line riding suit from the BMW motorcycle shop in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

I won't say the new suit is "better" because these itchy scratchy words are not a written product endorsement. I never tried my 'Sand 3' safety suit on before I bought it. Last week I didn't have 3 hours to invest in a round-trip fit test. Since my life is a constant course-correct concoction, I adjust on the fly while I work to untangle and say goodbye.

I decided to purchase the bougie smooth BMW Rallye Suit. The material, protection, and technology are an order of magnitude better than the 'Sand 3' suit I started with. The increased protection came with a high cost I cared little about.

With excitement and trepidation, Yin and Yang, I drove my moto over to BMW Motorcycles of Fort Lauderdale for two reasons. The impulsive nature of this important purchase is met with apprehension over the coming reflection. The primary intent is to purchase an expensive new riding suit from the showroom shop.



The second reason for my exploration is wrought with anxiety because I must continue this journey of self-discovery. The mirror appears when the blocked-up energy is cleared, then a new perspective presents itself to the Self.

What's the beef? Why the aforementioned anxiety? Six years before these written words, I returned to the States after an intense deployment to Afghanistan and walked into unnecessary friction with the owner of that moto shop marketplace. Today, I stopped in that shop to see the owner, make amends, and to talk about motorcycles. I sought to find a once-familiar refuge of calm and chase the feeling that I do belong.

In the spirit of this bare-naked journal, I feel compelled to do something I'm reluctant to do. When one steps outside the self-established personality patterns, new perspectives may be gleaned to initiate a cycle to soothe the nervous system.

The last time I visited that shop took place 6 years ago, in 2013. At that time in my life, I worked as an Independent Security Contractor (IC) for Blackwater Worldwide (a.k.a. Xe Services, Academi, Constellis Group). Some of you might use the term P.M.C. "*Private Military Contractor*." I provided high-threat protection services for U.S. Government Intelligence Community employees in Afghanistan during the "*War on Terror*."

Context makes a story to life. Let's stroll back in time to describe a sliver of my surreal life that led to this deliberate anxiety encounter in Fort Lauderdale.

That period of my life can be understood as an era of extremes. In the most discrete and dissociative manner possible, I prepared to die a painful Christian martyr death before every one of my 22 overseas rotations. I've found once one accepts they're already dead, moving forward



within a waking nightmare becomes a curious circus of calamity. A delightful notion from a brain bent on disassociation.

Capture, in Taliban controlled Afghanistan, meant torture through rape, the dishonor of dismemberment, or a possible public beheading on Social Media; maybe all three if the right TB fighters captured me. The horrors that'd happen, if captured at my place of work, helped to further fracture my mind and highlight my sacrificial life.

To navigate through these surreal scenarios, with cool and calm intense extremes, I continued a dark-trend from my childhood. I turned off emotion. I became a shell to shield the child who still hides in the pitch-black bathroom mirror. For six years, I packed my travel pack with fresh clean socks; while I wait for my head to roll 'cross an Afghan butcher's block. I put extra pants in my travel pack; while I prepared never to come back. I packed my favorite brown leather holster; then said goodbye to my mother.

When back in the States, I lived my life from the perspective of a man who eluded extermination right before his last vacation. The insignificant nonsense drama of Monday's Mundane stood in my way to celebrate sight of the morning sun again. For 17 rotations over 6 years, I sustained a rhythmic cycle of certain death followed by a renewed zest of life. Rise and fall. Push, pull, and squeeze my brain to such quiet and controlled extremes; while I smile and pack away horrific scenes.

During my nomadic life as a security contractor, I lived out of a backpack and traveled across conflict zones with a tattered, black plastic, Pelican war-trunk. Filled with plate carriers, personal armor, and a range of tactical trinkets, I toured almost every corner of the beautiful war-torn land of Afghanistan; with my tax-payer trunk in tow.



When I stumble back to the States, I travel from place to place as a disconnected observer apart from the scenes I see with my eyes. I try to jam 3 months of long-gone into 1 week of adventure filled fun.

I'm self-aware enough to see I sometimes come off as cold and distant. As a former Division 1 distance runner, body dysmorphia makes me forget my beefy, gym-fueled sizeable stature. I'm accustomed to disregard pleasantries in lieu of efficient communication because my available time is often squeezed to slim extremes. Small talk elicits anxiety because I see the seconds of my life waste away while I grow closer to my next deployment day. I cannot die with an unpublished book still trapped within!

Time is my most valuable asset because once it's gone, it's gone forever. I cherish every waking second because I know my time is limited on this paradise planet. I press to put my life together before the clock strikes 12. I'm direct, to the point, and appreciate accurate answers to simple, direct, questions. For example, "Is it raining?" "Yes." Direct. To the point. No fluff.

Or maybe let's try this one, "*How much longer until my bike is ready?*" My lifestyle dictates my personality because I stand outside myself to survive. Rotate enunciation emphasis on any one word, in that innocent question, to see a story of wild accusations and assumptions.

The 2013 fall-out with the owner of the BMW Motorcycle shop started with the *Mean Old Woman* who worked behind the counter. I asked a relevant question and received an irrelevant answer. I heard her words but couldn't comprehend an answer in her illusive string of sentences. Perplexed, I spoke the same honest intention question then received an answer wrought with rude undertones and accusatory assumptions. I wonder if I will ever feel safe anywhere.



The owner of the establishment is the *Mean Old Woman's* son. He must've caught a one-sided snapshot of this ridiculous rude event. He rushed from far off in the shadows to defend his mother, then said he didn't like the tone of my voice. Yet, he heard the tone of a man with no emotion project a simple direct-action question. I deflected the fight and moved outside to calm my mind.

I sat on a scratchy bench in the sun and used written words to release the pent-up frustration over my BMW moto shop showroom showdown with the *Mean old Woman*. I said what I said and spilled my side of the story while I sat on the seashell coated concrete seat.

Moments after I pressed 'send' on my online review, I see the front door swing full open and smash into the wall. The owner stormed outside to vent another volley of rage in my direction. Surprised, I stood stoic in the Sun with my hands ready to defend while his wife restrained his aggressive forward footsteps. Red faced, he pointed, purged, and pushed out an ironic version of a twisted vile sermon. He loud judgement over me while wearing a log in his own eye. Amazed, I stood outside in the sun, astounded over his audacity because it looks as if he wants to fight me.

I'm familiar with the body language precursors that lead to physical confrontation and domination. Posturing is a big part of this scripted cycle. I stood quiet and still while I watched an angry little man project all the signs and signals that show soon violence. I became bewildered while I watched a grown man transform into a toddler, then feed his own irrational temper tantrum.



A lifetime in the protection industry taught me to see when someone succumbs to anger, their thought process shrinks to that of a small dog. It's impossible to reason when the other party is past the part where they only hear demons.

I'm on a quest to rediscover myself through my bare-naked motorcycle journal. On my way to the shop, I thought, "Maybe I was a dick to that *Sad Old Woman* back in 2013 and didn't see it?" I pushed harder to see a different perspective. Then continued, "I'd also be quick to take aggressive actions towards anyone who spoke rude musings to my mom." My heart swelled when I considered the context of the *Hurt Old Woman* and how she became so hollow. I invested energy and emotion into another probable timeline for the *Lonely Old Woman*, then felt a wave of humility wash over me. The final destination of this ego-unwind led me to wonder, "What if I'm the bad guy in this sideways story?"

I took the humble trek to my old favorite shop with high hopes to hug or high-five the owner who sought to fight me. My goals glow with genuine intentions. I sought to shake his hand, apologize for any misunderstanding, then talk shop about my upcoming off-road excursion. I yearned for an island of peace during this turbulent time in my life.

The plan is calm, cool, and casual while I work through this situation. The few footsteps it took to reach the threshold entrance brought back unwelcomed familiar feelings of a life stuck in Fight or Flight. These rare tools for human survival are needed not as daily casual.

I grasped the handle then walked tall through the same front door I once saw swing wild open and smash the wall. When cortisol and adrenaline rushed through my being, I felt an awakening of a familiar feeling. Pressure from the pulse in my neck became a noose to block my breath. My footsteps bounced with the beat of my heart while I tried to project myself as an



approachable person. I strolled to the spot to buy my new protective riding suit while my vigilant eye became the guide. These are symptoms of a man who's stuck in a fight for his life.

A friendly new face greeted me with small talk when I walked past the front counter. My efforts to present myself as a normal person must've paid off. With a healthy strut, she led me to the back rack that held my new riding suit. Through the course of our delightful banter, I found out the owner isn't in the office today.

Part of my attention peered over the shoulder attached to the friendly new face before me. The *Mean Old Woman*, who caused the energetic attack, still sat far in the way back. From my perched position, I saw the same *Mean Old Woman* wear the same shade of her ugly personality. She sat in the same exact same spot and wore the same ugly outlook.

How can this be? I thought this is a journal of self-discovery. While I enjoyed genuine kindness with the new friendly face, my detached attention heard the *Mean Old Woman* snap sharp words to someone over the phone. I watched her slam the corded phone receiver into the receiver in disgust. She then began to belittle the person out loud and to empty air. With a twisted face and turnt-up tonsils, she vented out an entitled puff of hot air then proceeded back to her computer. She uttered unproductive ugliness about the man she just hung up on. I watched with sadness while the *Mean Old Lady* fed her dark reality.

At the register, my gaze drifted back to the warm new face before me. Faced with a new course-correct direction, I no longer desired to shake hands with the shop owner or mingle with the trusted wrench technicians. The wisdom of this lesson sunk in when I saw the *Mean Old Lady* let loose her untamed trauma to the innocent room. I left before she recognized me because



I dared not to cause another ugly scene. I pondered then pitied the untamed trauma this *Mean Old Woman* refused to see.

After my updated showroom showdown, I now see a new perspective of the angry little shop owner man. Instead of ferocity and force, I see a crumbled kid who cried for help while I sat stoic in the Sun. I see a man who allowed the demons of his mother to infect his actions and others.

While I walked out the store, I saw my smile in the reflection of the front door and felt a swift sigh of relief. With calculated care, I opened the front door with just enough force.

Today, I struggled to face myself through the perspective of a perceived righteous adversary. No matter who you are, everyone struggles with something. Some people, however, are better at hiding their struggles than others. Some sit stoic in the Sun, while some wish the world to burn. I walked away knowing I'm not the monster to blame over the untamed tantrum from 2013.

While I visit my family's home that evening, I don my usual façade of quiet confidence laced with Teflon no-nonsense. No one knew of the negative energy encounter I sought to decipher that afternoon. I play it cool, like I always do, and pretend I'm not falling apart in the front yard. Nobody asked a question or cared to know more of the mean old monster I exhumed that afternoon. I kept the conversational focus of my trip upcoming centered on logistics and superficial language. I preferred to focus on my sister and her overt battle.

I spent the evening at my mom's house. I hugged my final goodbyes, while the distant horizon drew my mind's eye. I feel driven to leave as fast as I can, before flood waters smash these gates open again. My dear sick sister, Heather, and my new brother, Bryl, attend my



impromptu sendoff celebration. I had to hold my shock over how thin I she'd become. I haven't seen my sister since the hospital released her. My new moto jacket swallowed her frail frame while she sat on the sofa. It's a quick reminder how thin she's become. I'm terrified tonight is the last time I'll ever see her alive. I crave to quiet my mind so I can enjoy my sister's company for the first, and maybe the last time. That's it for tonight.

Selected Replies:

ADV Rider Metalcarver: *"This is the same feeling you have after lighting a fuse."*

