

The Chili Dog Adventure



by J.L. McGoldrick

Dedication

To My Father - John Lloyd McGoldrick Jr.

Thank you for the love you gave,
the lessons you never knew you taught,
and the strength I carry because of you.

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It was a very strange afternoon in Missouri. My little brother Robert and I were sitting on the porch swing trying to think of something fun to do that wouldn't get us both spanked. So as we mulled over the idea of finding something to shoot with our BB guns, we heard the front screen door creek open.

We looked up and saw our Gramps slowly step out the door. It did the usual slap shut behind him and we watched him as he made his way over to his mint green 1972 Chevrolet El Camino "The Puddle Jumper". When he reached the door he looked over at us and smiled saying "Well come on guys we don't have all day." We jumped up and bolted over to the car as if our pants were on fire. Robert and I got into the passenger side and were just getting the seat belt strapped around us as Gramps fired her up and we were on our way.

Gramps started to tell us Granny said we need to go into town to gas up the car and get some more things from the store. Of course the ride into town felt like it took 8 hours, but I am sure it only took thirty minutes or so. Robert and I sat in the seat watching the farms rush by and listening to the country music Gramps had playing on the radio. The wait to get into town was almost agony.

As we entered town and turned to go north on Porter Wagner Blvd Gramps looked over at us and said with a very serious look on his face Ooh no, I am having a junk food attack! Looking back it was rather convenient that he always had these attacks right in front of his favorite junk food haven.

We made a quick right hand turn into Sonic burger, Home of the Footlong Chili Cheese Dog. Gramps couldn't get around very fast, but he would have walked all the way from the house into town just to get his weekly fix of a Footlong Cooney and a Coke.

Now Sonic was and still is a fast food joint in the way that fast food hang-outs were originally designed. You pulled your car into a parking space facing in toward a strip where people could get out and eat at tables or you could order

from a menu next to you car and then they would bring your food to you. Then you could either eat in your car or take it home.

Once we found a parking spot Gramps started telling us what he was going to order. I think I am going to have a footlong chili cheese dog, french fries and a large coke. What about you guys? As far as we were concerned Gramps was the coolest person on the planet and if he was eating it so were we.

He pushed the order button on the little speaker below the menu. In a flash our order had been taken and now the wait was on. It never took more then a couple of minutes, but it still felt like eternity.

The best part about the wait, wasn't the mouth watering picture's of food on the menu or the catchy dancing wiener in the window. It was the greatest media tool of all time... beautiful girls on roller skates.

They were practically runway models for all we knew. It still gets warm blooded males all over the world to stand in line for processed food heaven! I don't think that any of us really minded the wait, if you know what I mean.

Besides we were going to get the ultimate reward for our patients and we knew it. Soon the moment had arrived, we watched as one of these roller beauties carrying a tray covered in goodies pulled up to our window.

Gramps adjusted the driver window so she could attach the tray to the side of the car like a feeder box next to a livestock pen. Gramps passed out the food, making sure we all got a huge supply of napkins. All the better to make sure we kept our secret. A big chili stain would surely give us away.

Once everything was passed out, it was time to dig in. An Heaven help us, even the rollerskating girls sped up for safety as they got close to our car for fear of losing a limb from the shark-like action in that car!

Now here is the amazing part. You have to realize that Gramps wasn't a very big man. He stood about 5'4" and weighed in at a whooping 95 lbs with lead fishing weights in his pockets.

As a scrawny red neck kid their was no way I could eat all the food that Gramps ordered. Heck, I am 30 something now, 5'10" 190 lbs and I can't eat

that much food. But Gramps managed too, I am not stretching the truth here when I say he could finish that meal every time.

By the time we were done we all looked like we would explode at any moment. Now it was time to hurry and cover our tracks.

We pulled out of Sonic and raced down to the store. Then made a pit stop at the gas station that would have made Dale Earnhardt proud. Once we had finished the tasks that would cover our get-away it was time to get home.

Traveling down K highway home we all moaned and held our stomachs praying for the occasional burp for relief. It had taken all day.

Turning right onto the old stone drive way, we were home. We were still stuffed and Gramps looked over at us and with a wink he said Remember, we only had time to go to the store and get gas.

As were headed up the front steps Grannie yelled from in the kitchen Hurry up you three, dinner is on the table and everyone is waiting. Ooh Lord!

