



FREEDOM

...just another word for nothin' left to lose

Me & Bobby McGhee

Kris Kristofferson

March 17th, 1989—St. Patty's Day. And less significantly, my 18th birthday. I awoke to the rattle of single pane windows and the shudder of sheet metal walls. Uncle Bill pulled up along side the single-wide on what appeared to be a figment of long lost imagination. It had been about a decade since I had last seen it and wasn't quite sure I was seeing it now.

“Get your skinny ass outta bed, J.T.” was followed by a big-fisted rap at the door.

Bill was the only one who called me that and it pissed me off to no end. He knew it and needled me every time he got the chance. My dad somehow had the ancestral loving sense to pass on his middle name. A name I pretty much kept to myself. I threw on a pair of jeans and scrambled to the front door. “What the hell, Bill.”

“Your old man rode this over ten years ago and told me to hang on to it until you was a man. Shit, kid. I'm not really sure I know exactly when that is myself. But I figure eighteen's as good as any. Happy birthday, Johnny. Don't bust your head up too much.”

He fired her up and gave her a handful of throttle. She purred like a kitty on steroids who had smoked one too many packs of Reds. And I grinned wider than Alice's pussy.

"You fucker. You had this the whole time and didn't say dick."

"Promised your Dad," he said kind of sorry-like.

Bill had pretty much been a father to me over the last ten years. I think deep down he was pretty pissed at my old man for taking off, but he knew you don't get involved in family problems like that.

"That Bastard. At least somebody keeps promises around here."

Harold Sachs, or 'Hairy Ball Sac' as I called him, my mom's current suitor, ambled out with a mug of coffee followed closely by mom carrying a carton of Marlboro cigarettes.

"What's all the hubbub?" crooned the forty-something car salesman with cheesy mustache and heavily receding slicked back hair.

Hubbub? Who the fuck says hubbub anymore? And how many more times am I gonna have to see this slick dick in the morning with a cup of joe in one hand and my mom's ass in the other?

"Happy birthday, honey," says the mouth attached to the ass in the hand of the Hairy Ball as a carton of Reds flies thru the air from the hand attached to the mouth attached to the...

I should've been happy. I should've been excited. I should've been jazzed as hell. I mean—FREEDOM. I now had wheels. My *own* wheels. Granted, only two of em—but they were all mine. Anywhere I wanted to go, I could. Anytime I wanted to go, I would. The freedom and mobility to go do what, when and where I wanted. No longer stuck in a one-bung town sweeping up metal shavings at the tool & die shop. No longer trapped in a tin can trailer park with an alcoholic whore for a mother and her last hairy ball sac through the revolving door. Dodge—see ya.

Hey Lady, I know why the caged bird sings. Cause she's too damn stupid to get wheels and fly that coop.

But knowing that bike was from my old man who left me and my mom ten years ago just made me wanna scream. The Bastard went out for ice cream on my eighth birthday and never came back. Hell, I thought you had to walk to Alaska and back to get the good stuff until I was ten. And now that rat-fuck thinks he can wipe the slate clean with a fuckin motorcycle. My ass. And I don't give a lick even if it was a Harley. (The natives just got restless. I know it sounds blasphemous, but I'm just relating my emotions at that particular moment in time.)

Well, the old man's got another thing comin. Mainly, me. I'm gonna take this guilt-laden sorry excuse for atonement, track his dead-beat ass to the ends of abandonment and run this Harley up his sorry said hole. He may not have named me Sue, but neither did he stick around to see how I turned out. Reckon it's about time I showed him.