



The Cemetery Run

PHHH# 892.4

Date: July 31, 2002

Weather: Torrid

Hash Start: Rte 206 at mile marker 47

Time: 1 hour 7 minutes

Hashers: Juicy, Nonsensei, Ice Blue Balls, Tropical Depression, Ex Utero, Hand Solo, Dancing Fool, Weatherman

Seen en Route: Just Melissa from the Micronesia HHH

Latecomer: Hey Yo! Paully

Set By: Wacko

The engine begins to scream as the rpms breach the point where the air cooled 600 overcomes it's hindrances and hits the meat of the powerband. A quick clutchless upshift and she's back at 9000 and pulling strong. 20 feet ahead the tail of the yellow CBR flashes red, the rider leans the bike over and glides smoothly thru the right-hander. At the diamond I kick the Kat down a gear, stab the brakes for a millisecond and lean her over, following Weatherman through the turn. Just one of hundreds we saw today.

Juicy and Ice Blue Balls were already there as I pulled into the parking lot bright and early. The day had already began its relentless march toward triple digits. It was gonna be a hot one. The place was out of iced coffee, so I grabbed a glass of water, lit a smoke and settled into a metal chair on the veranda.

The sound of approaching bikes broke the tables discussion as fellow members rolled in. Wacko later said the number was 7. I recall seeing Ex Utero, Dancing Fool and Nonsensei trailing a red 748, a new generation Fly Yellow 900ss and an FZR600.

If I've forgotten anyone I apologize in advance. Hands were shaken, stories shared and with that completed we mounted up. The Ducatis gassed up, we headed enmass towards the trail. We were riding towards Wacko's new loop. It turned out to be the one I've previously ridden. The one with the pizza place with no pizza and the scene of Llodà's flat. Once clear of McKinney we picked up the pace as the FM asphalt passed under and the blue sky over. Curve after curve rolled by as the group separated only to regrouped at each intersection.

I took up my usual place as tailgunner. TailGUNNER, Hand Solo...GUNNER. NOT marker! The road has been well traveled by the PHHH and most run it on a sort of automatic pilot of which I'm also guilty of. The few challenging sections are known ahead of time. The bumps in the middle of the right-hander by the white metal fence, the high speed right-hand sweeper that ends downhill at a stopsign and the gravel strewn right-hander at which the road appear to continue straight. If you continue straight you'll end up on a white rock road. Nonsensei had warned a few about this corner before the ride and at this very corner we were greeted with a parked group of European sportbikes, a sheriff's car and an ambulance. Hey Yo! Paully who was a bit late and joined the group as we were heading out of Plano said he thought it was a 595/995. Juicy thought it was a Ducati. Either way we all hope the rider is ok. As our group of four rolled past the scene we slowed and tried not to be too obvious about looking. Once past the corner I dropped two gears and pegged the throttle, bringing the little 600 to redline. The corner monster may have gotten that rider, but not me. Not today.

Throttle, brake, downshift, lean, throttle, and repeat becomes the mantra for the day's ride. The sun begins baking the black ribbon with not a cloud in the sky. We zipped through small towns and past grass parking lots full of church goers. At our refueling point in Leonard I gas up Sally and recall the days events so far. We passed 2 cemeteries. I'm not sure why that connection was made. I've passed them a few times before and never gave them a second thought. They are the small town types with grave markers hundreds of years old. Weed infested lots surrounded by dilapidated metal fences. The locations where tight knit communities bury their own. I told no one of my observance. Seems kinda strange to talk of the dead while some of us are living so close to the edge.

The Ducatis became magnets as most hover around them, the 748 in particular. The bike looked to live up to everything the magazine industry has said. Small and light with laser sharp handling. Too bad it was red. Hey, you gotta complain about SOMETHING! Weatherman motioned for the group to saddle up and we headed out of Leonard and towards Bonham's backroads. At the turnoff from 78 I panicked and almost didn't make the turn. I'll blame it on being up for 17 hours, but most would just call it par for my course. Once I made the turn we were back to carving the country side.

At an intersection to a small town the group surrounded the 748. The oil light has begun to intermittently flash. IBB says it's a normal quirk of the 748 and we swing

the group around and head back the way we came. A few miles down the road and Tropical Depression pulls over to the shoulder. The rear MEZ is going flat. He borrows my gauge and confirms the slow leak. The four of us mount back up and slowly catch up to the group. It is decided to head towards Ector and get some air. At the gas station everyone takes a much needed break from the heat and chatted with the Ducati and FZR owners. I noticed the rear tire's tread on the 748 seemed awfully unused for such a bike. Of course I'm only speaking from the jealousy stand point! I decide to ask Dancing Fool about a handling quirk on my bike.

There are occasions where she doesn't like to hold the angle right after turn in. Dancing said "huh" and turned away. Guess some guys dont want to be bothered with that kind of stuff on a ride. Time constraints being what they are in regards to enjoying a ride. I noticed 3 more cemeteries on this stretch.

The next section of road is constructed of some really nice high speed sweepers and posted 20-50 curves. There are sections where the road flows just perfectly and you can set yourself up for a nice left, right, left rhythm. Pick a song, sing in your helmet as loud as you want and just ride. At the intersection where the loop begins to head back towards Leonard I find the two Ducatis stopped. After a few minutes discussion they and the FZR decide to head back towards D/FW. I bid them farewell, thank them for letting us know they were breaking off, tell them we enjoyed riding with them today and try and catch up to the group. I pass one more cemetery and that clinches the name of this route in my mind. Ex Utero alluded to my sighting as being a Suzuki thing, but I attribute it as more of sense of local history. I catch up to the group which signals the end of our now abbreviated clutch of bikes and we head towards Leonard and lunch. I set up behind a group and we glide through the fast sweepers always alert for the gravel Nonsensei warned us about.

At Leonard we pull into the Official PHHH restaurant (DQ) and park under in the shade of the awning. Everyone's feeling real good about today's ride. As I dismounted the bike I yelled over at Wacko telling him the "official" name of this route was The Cemetery Run. Paully and Juicy talked about the last stint as I looked at my rear tire. YES! only a half an inch of unused rubber now, showing I got farther over today than I did in Mena. While for some of you this is a tire going to waste, for me this is a personal victory and proof of my burgeoning riding skills. I got a high five from Paully for my proclamation and we all headed into the DQ for lunch and some cool conditioned air. While discussing the day's riding and maybe starting out a bit earlier from now on, someone commented on the 900ss continually crossing the center line, yikes!

After lunch we mounted and headed home with me heading down 78 to Bonham. On the way home I was feeling pretty pumped up about the days ride. I'd been up for 21 hours at that time and other than the silly mistake at the 78 intersection all had gone great. Then it happened. At a simple little stop sign I angled the bike to

the right to make the corner easier (the lazy way), put my right foot down and promptly hit air. As the bike leaned slowly to the right I caught the ground and slipped on the gravel. It took me a seconds to realize I was under my bike and as I slid out and picked her up (NOT easy as she was over further than 90 degrees) I noticed my right hand mirror didn't come up with Sally. DAMN! It lay there, black body in the white rock gravel mocking me. I cleared the excess fuel from the carbs and ran home cursing the empty mirror stalk all the way. From hero to zero in nothing flat. Oh well.

Where to next week?