



WHY A HARLEY DAVIDSON ISN'T A REAL AMERICAN MOTORCYCLE

Harley Davidson owners are preoccupied with image and sound, so much so that they've forgotten the basic principle that backs up those two aspects; performance. Image and sound are nothing, they are meaningless, without performance, but you can't convince people of that today. Performance. You can't have image and sound without performance to back it up. You just can't. If you try, you've got a facade, a hollow shell and you're just a wannabe hiding within it.

As Americans, we live in the greatest country, the greatest country in the entire world. We, as Americans, are driven to be the first in everything. It's our nature. We're not slackers. We take second best to no one. It's a national point of pride. No one can beat our military, our pride, our technology, our determinedness, or our ingenuity. There is nothing in the world, no problem, no tragedy, no foe too great that America cannot triumph over them.

So, then, I'm afraid to inform you that, in one very important regard, we *ARE* willing to settle for second best or even worse, last place. America has become complacent in the world, we are content to sit on our fat butts and watch others whiz past at breakneck speed and yet we do nothing. We're getting left behind because we can't keep up. Why? Because we are stuck in a misunderstood and ill-conceived mental rut. I'm talking about motorcycles, American made and built motorcycles; Harley Davidsons to be exact. You see them everywhere, and you know the kind of rider that is usually aboard one. Leather chaps, leather jacket, combat boots, the very epitome of a bad ass biker.

But, that's just a wishful image. All that stuff came out of a corporate catalog... One Harley rider looks like another, pretty much, yet they all claim that they are 'individuals'. Seeing a group of Harleys go past is like watching a cut scene from the movie "The Stepford Wives". They're all identical, they look alike, and they all ride the same thing; junk.

Very few Harleys are truly fast or powerful. Most are just loud rattletraps, over priced dealer wannabes

or pieced together hope it works tomorrow wonders. They are paper tigers, all show and no go. You can get a hundred pounds of chrome on one of those motorcycles straight from the factory. Matching leather everything as well, even down to the little official HD logo which is oh so important to this flock behavior mindset. Studded, braided, polished, painted, chromed, but ... it's all flash. It's all custom parts and paint, all jury rigged and low tech. In anything else but a Harley, the extremes that most Harley owners go to would be considered tacky and tasteless, and probably laughable.

The roar of a Harley is really just the growling of a sheep in wolf's clothing, and the bleating of the image driven lemmings that ride them.

Sure, Harleys can be made to perform, but you have to rebuild them from the ground up and by the time that you get any decent performance out of a Harley, you could have bought two or three Japanese bikes for cash. Harley's fastest motorcycle, the Sportster, isn't anywhere near deserving of its name. There is no "sport" to the Sportster, and with a 883cc engine pushing out a meager forty seven horsepower, you have all the makings for a Black Angus set in motion by a mouse fart. As a comparative example, take the 1995 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R's 599cc in-line four which makes ninety-seven horsepower. How American is it to be big *and* slow? How American is it to be outdated and obsolete? More than twice as much power with two hundred cee-ces *less* displacement! That's sad *and* embarrassing. If the Harley Sportster made anywhere near what it's displacement could be, it would be a much better motorcycle. As it is, there are some imported single cylinders and some 250cc Japanese sport bikes that put out more horsepower than Harley's 883cc rolling excuse for an entry-level purchase into the whole flock mindset.

And what about price and cost of upkeep? A top of the line Harley costs many thousands more than a comparable import motorcycle, is less dependable, doesn't enjoy the quality or workmanship, and won't even perform as well. It isn't even close. So, why do so many people flock to HD dealerships and wait in line for months for a Harley? Because they are sheep. Why does a Harley hold its resale value so well when all the cards are stacked against it?

Because of one thing; image.

A underlying factor is also stupidity.

Harley Davidson's stupidity, you ask? Hell no. Harley Davidson is about one of the *smartest* motorcycle manufacturers in the world. The stupidity can be traced right back to YOU, the unwitting public who buys what Milwaukee is selling and Milwaukee is selling only one thing; image. Image with no substance, image at a price. Anyone can ride a Harley, it just takes lots of money and very little brains. How else can you explain paying so much and receiving so little in return?

Image.

Image is a powerful thing. We, as Americans, want to project a strong image to the rest of the world, but in doing so, we have become lazy. We are now willing to pay large amounts of money to buy an image, rather than go out and earn one for ourselves. We are lazy. It is easier to walk into a motorcycle dealer, buy a new Harley Davidson, and then tell ourselves, "I own a Harley, therefore I am a bad ass because a Harley is a bad ass bike. That movie I watched last night proved that!." than it is to go out and actually prove that we are bad ass. It doesn't matter that you're overweight, ugly, live in a trailer park, on your third marriage, and just lost your job at the cigarette packing plant. Hey, you're bad because you own a Harley. It doesn't matter if your bike is made up of parts from six or ten other Harleys, you are one tough bad ass. All because you own a certain type of motorcycle?

And you're wrong.



A Harley isn't a motorcycle. Not a real motorcycle. It is nothing more than a rolling image, a self-propelled personal public relations machine that you rent for your ego, a facade that you strap your legs over when you want to show off to the rest of the world that you are something that you really aren't.

"Hey! I ride a Harley! I'm bad! Don't mess with me or you'll be sorry!"

Whoopee. You and every other Peter Fonda Easy Rider wannabe.

How can you be bad when you don't have any performance? How can you be bad when everything else in the world will whip your ass and hand it to you on a silver platter? How bad are you when a 250cc rice rocket will eat your 883cc Sportster for lunch? I just don't understand the logic behind the image without any performance to back it up ... It's an empty threat. Since when did being *bad* mean that you got stomped by everything else in the world? I thought that being bad meant that you could take on anything and come back for more. Obviously, Milwaukee uses a different definition for the term "*bad*."

A scooter will get you from point A to B, and that's what I consider a Harley to be. A big, overpriced ego boosting *scooter*, geared for people too timid to make a statement to the world any other way than through noise and flash and by paying lots of money. Only posers and wannabes buy Harleys. Oh, and buy the required wallet on a chain, the leather jack boots, the German war helmet, and be sure that your HD comes with all the go-fast goodies like studded leather saddlebags, tassels, and a three square foot windshield. They're essential to the "bad" image.

I love my country but I hate the motorcycles that my country manufactures and I don't think that they come anywhere near being able to be compared to what America is all about or what makes America great. Harley Davidson is a wart on the ass of America. That's the bottom line, no pun intended. I hate Harleys and if you have to know, I don't even consider a Harley to be an American motorcycle. It is a sad, pale product that captures very little of the American experience and doesn't come anywhere near what a real American motorcycle *should* be. America stands for technology, ingenuity, performance and innovation. Harley stands for none of that. Milwaukee churns out the same tired old designs every year, a piece of this model, a piece of that model, change the tank, paint it black, add forty pounds of chrome and three grand to the price and give it a name like American Historical Limited Edition Super Extra Easy Wide Glide FGXLHR or something equally incoherent and viola!

You have a *brand new* Harley for this model year.

At least you, the public, think that you do, and the boys in Milwaukee would really want you to believe that, but in reality, this year's 'new' model has the gas tank from three years ago, the forks from fifty years ago, wheels from five years ago, etc., etc., etc. The only thing on that bike you just bought that probably is brand new is the price tag and the rubber it rolls on. Everything else came out of parts bins somewhere in Milwaukee. I don't think that we've seen any innovation from Milwaukee for sixty years now. If Japan, Italy, and Germany did product development the same way that Harley Davidson does, there wouldn't be Honda, Ducati, or BMW bikes. There wouldn't be VCRs, mini-TVs, or Sony Walkmans. We'd all still be listening to wind up phonographs and watching black and white TV through vacuum tubes. And we'd be paying thousands of dollars for it and each one would be

named "American Heritage Edition FGXR TV" or something equally lame.

But they would be *nostalgic*.

The only reason that I would even consider that a Harley was an American motorcycle is that it is made in Milwaukee, which is a city in the United States (and apparently the population is composed of nothing but sheep). But then Honda makes its motorcycles and some of its cars in the United States, at American built assembly plants, staffed by American workers. Is Honda also an American motorcycle? Honda assembles its cycles and cars over here, on American soil. If you take it down to the barest essentials, a Harley is no more American than a Honda Shadow or a Honda Civic.

American made my ass. Who are they fooling? Apparently, enough people to stay in business, which is sad to think that it takes the average mentality of a pack of stale Twinkies(tm) to buy any Harley Davidson product, let alone one of their motorcycles. But people are sheep, and sheep like to be part of flocks, and flocks need a way to identify sheep that belong to them. It is simple brand association at work, much like cattle in the old west were once subjected to and still are today.

Hence the Harley Davidson merchandise and officially licensed products that often have the Harley shield and bar on them, but really don't have much to do with the actual motorcycle experience itself.

Harley's even use Japanese carburetors on their bikes!?! Why is *that!*? Because Japan does it better and has for a long time. The automobile industry has had to play catch up with Japan since the mid-70's and only lately has the market gained against the wave of invasions from the Far East. Milwaukee just hasn't seen the big picture yet. Either that, or they just aren't smart enough to do anything about it. Or maybe Milwaukee has done all it can do, and where it can't compete in technology and production, it chooses to supplement its income by marketing its tired old image as something 'bad', as 'the American dream', and ramming it down the throat of ignorant sheep with more money than brains.

Japan has caught America napping (again) and Milwaukee, sadly, is the only game in town if you want a 'home grown' motorcycle, but what Milwaukee is offering is not worthy of being called 'American' by any stretch of the definition. It's survival of the fittest. Harley was going the same way as the vacuum tube and the Edsel, soon to be extinct, bypassed by technology, until they came up with an angle... get the government to bail you out, take all the handouts that you can, and then sell 'officially licensed' crap at top price while fooling people into thinking that they were buying gold instead of crap.

Performance?

Technology?

Who needs it when you have the power of marketing. Marketers can sell anything to anyone, all they need to do is find their target market. Harley found their target market; fools with too much money and not enough common sense. And Milwaukee is milking it dry for all they can grab.

Performance and technology; two words synonymous with America. What does America have to show the rest of the world with regard to performance and technology? America is at the top of the world for everything that is powerful, compact, and fast, from military vehicles to hand held computers to fighter jets. We put a man on the moon, we have the space shuttle, and we invented nuclear weapons and nuclear power. Everything that is performance oriented, everything that is leading edge, America has a stake in it. Everything in America is fast and powerful and has the brass to back it up anytime a challenge is made. Everything we build commands respect with the rest of the world.

Everything except American motorcycles. When you add Harley Davidson to that lineup above, it just kind of seems anti-climatic doesn't it. It's misplaced. So, where is America's most powerful motorcycle? Where are the muscle machines that we, as Americans, crave and love so dearly? America doesn't have one. America doesn't build a single high performance motorcycle. Not one.

Oh, you can point to Eric Buel, and his series of bikes, but I still say uh-uh. Not one single high performance motorcycle do we build. Why? Because we have become complacent to project our

bad ass image through intimidation and the media, but it is a hollow image, a sheep in wolf's clothing, a overblown caricature of our real selves fueled by money and a strong desire to belong to a collective group that takes pride in calling its members 'individuals'. We feel that if our motorcycle is loud enough, shiny enough, heavy enough, big enough, wide enough, and if the most powerful people in the world are portrayed in Hollywood and the media as owning an American motorcycle just like the one you can buy, then you must be riding the *best* that there is.

Wrong.

You're still the pathetic little balding, overweight, middle aged accountant married to the fat, over demanding nag that you were one second before you signed the papers on your new Harley and the ink dried. You always will be. Owning a bike isn't going to change that but this is a moral that so few people today are smart enough to comprehend! Once you crank the engine, you aren't going to change one bit, except that you will have become a slave to the media, you will have allowed yourself to willingly accept a brand association, and you will have admitted that you're a gullible fool who doesn't know the first thing about what a *REAL* motorcycle is.

Simply put, a Harley is God's way of saying that you have too much money and not enough brains.

I'm as patriotic as the next guy, but I believe in a different kind of motorcycle for America. I believe in a true, high performance motorcycle that is American designed, built, and ridden. I believe in more than Harley Davidson, I believe in something that Harley is missing out on. I believe in American dominance over every other type and brand of motorcycle in the world. That is what America is all about, showing the rest of the world how it's done and then letting them play catch up. That's dominance gained by performance, power, and design. Not image, loudness, and the flash of chrome off of oiled leather. Dominance gained through legitimate means instead of smoke and mirrors, dominance gained through sheer power, skill and determination. Dominance gained through technological advantage and design.

Period.

Harley Davidson seems to have forgotten what motorcycling is all about. There was a time when Harley Davidson was a good bike. They built the best and the the fastest motorcycles in the world, but they became stagnant. The rest of the world started building better mousetraps than Milwaukee could. Milwaukee refused to change with the times. The rest of the world left Milwaukee behind, it happened sometime in the late '60s when Harley Davidson started losing races to British and Japanese motorcycles. What did Harley do? Did they jump into research and catch up to the foreign invaders? Did they pick up the down trodden American flag and raise it high into the air again, waving it proudly in victory? When the chips were down, did they muster all that they had, pick up the pieces, and come from behind to capture the winner's cup in grand American tradition.

No.

Harley did what *no* American would ever consider doing... They quit.

Harley gave up. They quit racing. When their bubble was burst, and new and faster motorcycles were entering the market, Harley simply walked away and never went racing again. Harley left the real world and gave the go ahead to European and Japanese manufacturers that America was out of the performance circle and that America was out of the game. Soon what the British and Japanese engineers were learning at the race tracks, they were applying to their brands of motorcycles, making them faster, better handlers, lighter, more durable, more reliable. Their technology was advancing by the year, with each victory, with each innovation, each design breakthrough.

Harley walked back to it's little corner of the world (Milwaukee, USA), with it's tail between its legs and sulked. It just wasn't fair that all those mean old import bikes would beat up on something American. It just wasn't (sniff, sniff), fair, darn it. So, Milwaukee took their toys and left. As the world passed Harley Davidson by, Harley just kept on beating out the same old tired,

uninventive, unimaginative designs year after year like their pappy had done before them, and their grandpappy had done before that.

Oh, Harley could have been a dominant force in the world market, far more than they are today, but they quit. Yes, they just quit. And now they are so far behind, that America may never catch up in performance motorcycles, especially not if we have to rely on *quitters* like Milwaukee to heed our call for capable machines in the great international motorcycle wars.

I really get tired of people coming up to me and saying "You need to get a real bike. You need to ride a Harley, not some damn rice burner!"

Most of the people who tell me that don't even own a motorcycle, let alone a Harley! They're just good old boys or girls who have this ignorant notion that no motorcycle in the world is better than a Harley and since I am an American, I should be ashamed to ride anything that isn't American. Here's a shock, Sparky. Did you know that America has several really fast motorcycle racers to be proud of? Kevin Schwantz immediately stands out. Did he make his name riding domestic speed horses? No. We, as Americans, couldn't offer him a bike to ride on that would be competitive with European and Japanese models. That's a shame, a home grown racer having to sign up with European and Japanese corporations for a chance to gain glory for America. I blame Milwaukee for that, I blame the three tooth hill scoggins that work at Harley Davidson banging out the same old tired designs and who are content to sell more merchandise than actual bikes for that kind of embarrassment. Kevin gained an impressive amount of glory for America riding Suzukis. Suzukis! Not Harleys! An American out there showing the world what America was made of and he was doing it on a Japanese bike! Now folks, that is downright embarrassing from a patriotic point of view.

Milwaukee, you should hang your head in shame for letting down the American people the way that you have. How could you do it? Or better yet, explain to me how you could fool the whole country into believing that it was okay to quit and that you are still the number one motorcycle maker in the world. As Motorhead's song goes; "Don't talk to me, I don't believe a word".

Well, here's some more news, Milwaukee. I don't buy bikes built by quitters. Not now, not ever. And I don't support quitters. I don't support three tooth hill scoggins who beat out tired old 60 year old designs and call it 'innovation'. America doesn't build motorcycles, not real ones, at least. If America built a real motorcycle, I would own one. Until America builds a *real* American motorcycle, I'll buy my *real* motorcycles from other countries and manufacturers. Harley and Milwaukee are stuck in a time warp. They are building motorcycles like it was 1940 all over again. If NASA were in the same technology rut that Harley Davidson is in, Neil Armstrong would have gone to the moon launched from the world's biggest slingshot...

And what about Eric Buel?

God bless Eric Buel, for daring to quit Harley Davidson and attempt to design a true American sports bike. He saw what America needed to be competitive again and he didn't find it in Milwaukee. He had the right idea, HD is stagnant. Their latest designs still look like they were created at the end of WW II. No innovation, and why should there be. If lazy Americans will buy cobbled together rattle traps at super premium prices, why should you change the design. If fools out there will buy quartz at diamond prices, then there will always be someone out there to make a killing off of selling quartz. If America is willing to buy an image, then Milwaukee is selling. They've got a gravy train just waiting for the next sucker with more money than common sense to buy one of their products. Harley makes more money on T-shirts and HD embossed leather wallets on a chain than from selling motorcycles. Big hint here, folks. It's all about image.

It sure isn't about performance, America, or glory. It's all about a canned and commercially available image. You subscribe to it with each T-shirt or accessory that you buy. That's sad, but it is another example of image and the power of the media. How many people out there have a HD emblem sticker in their truck window but don't own a HD? How many people have a HD T-shirt, but don't own the motorcycle? I get so tired of those "AMERICAN THUNDER" T-shirts.

American Thunder?

What a joke! You should be scared of thunder. The only thing I'm scared of when a Harley is near is that either a piece is going to fall off and cause me to wreck, or I'll slide in a patch of oil that the Harley leaked onto the road ahead of me. American Thunder my ass! Thunder is powerful and loud. Harleys are just loud. I think the truth in advertising should apply to Milwaukee as well, if so, it would be called "American Noise".

People tell me that when I bought my Ninja that I was supporting Japan's economy when I should have been supporting America's economy. I didn't see it that way. I saw it as a way of sending a message to Milwaukee. That message is that I can buy a much better built, faster, better handling bike cheaper than anything you produce any day of the week. Am I supporting Japan's economy by owning a Ninja. Probably. But I'm also making a statement. Wake up Milwaukee! This Ninja is the bike that I and countless other red blooded American youths want to own, and you don't make it!

You don't even come close.

You don't stand for youth, you stand for old age and mediocrity. You stand for slow and weak when we want fast and powerful! Where do we turn to? Those who can make and sell what we want! Hear this, Milwaukee? If you made a decent sport bike like the Japanese and Italians, those of us who live in America and ride CBRs and Ninjas would probably buy it, if it was just as fast, reliable, and affordable as those that Japan offers. Am I supporting Japan's economy. Again, probably, but I'm doing my best to correct a sixty year old mistake.

So you bought a Harley? Congratulations. That was about the most unpatriotic thing that you could have done. Why? Because you're helping to support a facade. You aren't doing America any good because you're sending Milwaukee a message that what they are building is just fine. You've been sending that message for a long time now and Milwaukee is reading it loud and clear. It's time we weed out the dead wood and start over. It's time that we sent Milwaukee a new message. We want real motorcycles, not the crap you are (barely) cranking out. Catch up or get out of the market because America won't tolerate quitters any more. We want real bikes like the rest of the world produces. We want to be number one again and we won't take second place as an option.

Eric Buel has the right idea, but he's going about it the wrong way. So, what is wrong with Eric Buel? Buel may be performance oriented, but he doesn't have a clue as to what is needed to build a true American sport bike. He's raced bikes professionally and now he wants to build an American sport bike. Great! Finally, a voice that shouts above all the others! Lend Eric Buel all the support you can! However, there is just one thing wrong with his American superbike design. He's using the wrong component in his bike and the sad thing is that component is the core of the motorcycle! His error in design is in using the Harley Davidson V-Twin engine. A tired old piece of hardware that can't keep up with today's high tech world. The HD twin is fifty or more years old! Building a American superbike using a Harley V-twin is like trying to make a really great chocolate shake when all you have to work with is premium milk and old dog shit. It just won't work, no matter how hard you blend it.

The only people in the world who build a decent sporting V-twin are the Japanese and the Italians. Consequently, the Japanese and the Italians are, in my opinion, the only people in the world who know how to build a decent motorcycle in the first place. The Germans build decent motorcycles but I think the Japanese and Italians are ahead in the game there. Maybe Porsche could build a decent motorcycle, but they haven't even tried. A motorcycle made by Porsche would be interesting. The French? When was the last time that the Frogs built *anything* worth owning? Remember Le Car and Renault? Enough said. Americans? Ha! That's what we're talking about right now! Ducati and Japan are building fast sport twins that will clip the wings of Buel's best bike on their worst of days. Eric Buel has a lot to learn, but he's doing the best that he can and you have to give him credit for not only trying in the first place, but for sticking it out this long. He's doing the best that he can with what he has to work with, which isn't much when you consider it all. Hell, his company almost went under and Harley had to buy him back out!

The American V-twin. What a overweight, underpowered waste of good material and metal. Freedom. Power. Blah. Blah. Blah. All canned pure marketing bullshit from Milwaukee's own spin doctors. The American V-Twin. The American embarrassment is more like it. This thing is a clunker, a boat anchor. It takes 1203ccs of American V-Twin to even come close to what 600ccs of Japanese in-line four can pump out for performance, and even then the 600cc 'rice rocket' will always blow the chrome off of the Harley. We don't build anything else, just twins. No straight fours, no V-fours, no singles, nothing. Just old, outdated twins that have been around since before World War II.

No innovation.

No high technology.

No change whatsoever. Just proven sixty year old designs that make a lot of noise and clunk along at legal posted speed limits (barely).

No thank you. And now, Harley is rumored to be working with the Germans, Porsche in fact, on redesigning the V-Twin engine for more power. What do the Germans know about performance? Americans teaming up with Germans for a technology boost? Well, I guess since Germany is a country about the size of the state of Georgia, and that the Germans were the first to invent rockets, jet engines, guided missiles, etc., and since most Harley riders wear German war helmets and have Iron Cross mirrors or Nazi symbols, Germany was about the only likely choice to turn to for innovation, since they were the obviously the major source for inspiration.

I just don't understand this ...

Instead of trying to come up with something on their own, Harley had to turn to the Germans!? There goes American ingenuity for you, guess you can say that Milwaukee has no new thinking, they have to get it from out of country. Talk about patriotic? You look down on me for riding a 'rice burner'? You tell me, who started World War II first, the Germans or the Japanese? Is there any difference between riding a BMW or a Honda? What about a Porsche powered Harley? Is the term Kraut burner going to come into fashion now? People tell me that they don't own a 'rice burner' because the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor and killed some of 'our boys'. Well, what the HELL do you think happened at Omaha Beach and Normandy? Do you think THAT was the Japanese that killed so many of 'our boys' that it made Pearl Harbor look like a small town shooting in comparison. Yet Harley riders often pay homage to German designs, tattoos, and other paraphernalia. I find that laughable, talk about patriotic... Harley rider's logic is about as reliable as the machines they choose to ride on and that isn't saying much.

I can see the new Harleys now. It will say Harley on the side, with a little badge that either says 'Suspension by Porsche' or 'Powered by Porsche'. How many red blooded Harley riders are going to want to ride a German Porsche powered Harley? Harley riders are some of the most die hard fanatical riders toward their brand and bikes, and diluting an American legend like Harley with a German infusion of technology is going to cause some mighty big waves not only in Milwaukee but in the rest of the U.S. Milwaukee? If you needed help with your bikes, why not turn to other Americans? Eric Buel, and many, many others who would like to see Harley Davidson become a dominant force in the world again.

If I had been Harley, I would have gotten together with Chevrolet in order to design an ultra compact, multi-valve liquid cooled four cylinder. Think of it, Harley and Chevrolet building American sport bikes, standards, and cruisers. You want foreign technology, Milwaukee? Chevrolet bought out Lotus, that's how they got thirty-two valves in their 350cid Corvette ZR-1! Even if Chevrolet doesn't have Lotus anymore, they probably still have a good understanding of multi-valve engines. Why Porsche instead of Chevrolet? Why did an American company like Harley, whose riders blatantly display hatred of all motorcycles foreign or Japanese, turn to a foreign company for help? Why didn't Harley turn inwards to within America's own technological base for help?

Who knows what really goes on in Milwaukee ... except that when it comes to technology more advanced than the sixty year old V-twin, they are at a total loss as to what to do.

So you bought a Harley? Congratulations on helping to keep the American dream dormant and to support an image without substance. But, wait, you say, I didn't buy my Harley to race (that's fairly obvious). I bought it to ride. I bought it for the freedom of the open road and to travel. I bought it to enjoy the adventure that is motorcycling, "Where the Road Begins And Never Ends..."(tm).

Oh, brother. What a bunch of stupid commercial driven trend humping NASCAR following redneck lemmings... You just paid a butt-load of money for the world's worst accelerating, worst handling, worst braking, heaviest, loudest, and ugliest motorcycle. How smart does that make you feel right now? If you say that it was a wise investment, then there really is *no* hope for you. You are terminally deluded by the media and your own lack of any self worth. Where did you learn to manage your money or was image just something that you decided that you could buy instead of earn? Does your new Harley look good in your four car garage with your two Series 9 BMWs, your Hummer, and your Volvo turbo station wagon? Does it fit well in the private parking garage of your law office. Did your rich wife buy it for you as a gift?

Wake up, you bunch of image driven lemmings! When you turn that key in your new or used Harley, you don't turn into the Incredible Hulk, you stay the same old boring accountant who works from eight to five in a cubicle. So you ride a Harley. Big deal. The truth? Can you handle it? You bought into an image. An image fabricated by countless TV shows and Hollywood movies depicting a life on the back of a bike that you simply weren't cut out for. You WISH you could be like Lorenzo Llamas in that lame TV series, RENEGADE. You wish you were riding a customized Harley and being a bad ass.

But you aren't.

You WISH you could be like Peter Fonda as "Captain America" and Dennis Hopper as "Billy" in EASY RIDER, cruising America doing whatever you want, being bad and breaking the law.

But you can't.

It's all make believe and you just bought a make believe motorcycle.

If someone out there is reading this, and you have more money than you know what to do with (multi-millionaires or billionaires only, I'm afraid, because this is going to take a lot of money), and you are wanting to do something that other people around the world will remember your name for ages to come, here's a simple solution.

BUY Eric Buel. That's right, walk straight up to Eric Buel, hand him a LARGE sum of cash, and say, "You work for me now. We're going to build *real* American bikes!" Watch, he'll follow you around where ever you go and the first place that you need to take him to is the site where you're going to break ground for the new Buel American Motorcycle Corporation (BAMC) building and assembly plant. This will be built by you, or you and a group of investors, to churn out the highest tech motorcycles that the world has ever seen. Motorcycles that the Japanese will work day and night to overcome. Motorcycles that are American designed and built. Powered by the highest technology engines that Americans can produce. Motorcycles that look nothing like what Milwaukee produces. You'll get the best designers that money can buy, smart kids, who aren't afraid to try radical designs and building techniques, who know how to compete with the rest of the world. Fresh ideas, not rehashed stale old technology thrown together in yet another uninspired combination for this years model. You'll have design teams, not cousins and uncles and brothers all with the same last name and one good set of teeth between them. You won't build 'motorcycles like pappy used to build 'em.'

Think of it!

Bikes that look like they came right out of Akira, or Blade Runner, instead of machines that look like they were picked up at a Allies post war auction. American super bikes and super cruisers that would dominate the world. Engines from 250cc up to 1500ccs. Fours, sixes, twins! Fuel injection! Twin engines! Turbo charged and intercooled! Carburetors by Rochester! Supercharged! Not American Iron anymore, but American alloy, aluminum, titanium, and other exotics, mass produced

and affordable to those who are dying to ride what America so desperately needs; a true home built performance bike.

American Lightning would forever replace American Thunder, which would die not with a bang, but with a whimper.

America could build V-4s and conquer the world motorcycle market. Why stop there? We could build V6s and V8s, we're really good at building V8s! How about a fuel injected V8 powered American built, American designed, super sport bike? I'm not talking about taking a Harley and plugging a small block Chevy in either! I'm talking about a 600cc V8 with ram air and fuel injection. How about a American Standard powered by the same engine, much like Yamaha's VMAX?

Ram air?

We INVENTED the technique in the 1960's and 1970's on our muscle cars! We would start to build what Americans build best; hotrods and fast bikes. You'd see them on the global tracks, you'd have racers running from other corporations for a chance to ride on your team, and they would be riding REAL bikes, not some leather saddle tassel covered sofa on wheels. No! We're talking about American made engines, liquid cooled, with double overhead cams, four and five and six valves per cylinder, aluminum engine blocks and heads, (painted) carbon fiber body parts and fuel tanks, aluminum wheels and twin spar reinforced frames. Exotic materials mass produced at quantities that would make them competitive with Japanese imports. We would come up from behind Japan and Europe, hop on their shoulders, and grab first place, never looking back.

Real American motorcycles that would look American! No more retro 1940's retard look, but modern, CAD designed stream lined dreams that would prowl the streets of the world, proclaiming that once again, America was the power to be reckoned with. They would be light, powerful, and since they would be mass produced, they would be affordable, as affordable as the Japanese imports. Let those wannabes who want tassels and a leather fetish go to Milwaukee. Those of us who crave a real American bike could walk into a Buell or Chevy dealership and take our choice of new American standards, cruisers, tourers, sport-tourers, and sport bikes. We could even have factory designed accessories! Racing leathers, helmets, decals, etc.

Money out the wazoo from patriotic young Americans who would have a motorcycle to be proud of! Do you realize how much money is involved in aftermarket paraphernalia? Well, I guess if you are Harley Davidson, you really do understand.

What image comes to mind when you think Harley?

Power? Nope. Handling? Nope. Well educated owner? Nope. Member of society riding it? Nope. See one parked outside the Country Club? Nope. See a Harley on the race track? Nope. These are the images that come to mind when I think of a Harley: Redneck, trailer park, cheap beer, truck stops, bad country music, pickup trucks, tattoos up one arm and down the other, leather wallet on a chain, Rottweilers as pets, German W.W.II helmet with the spike on top, murals on the tank, trailer parks, Grim Reaper, uncut beard, Hell's Angels, Nazis, smoke filled bars, knife hidden in the boot, American flag bandanna, huge belt buckle, leather saddlebags, tassels, wannabe rider. Everything that motorcycles are not supposed to stand for.

Does anything positive come to mind when I think of a Harley? Uh.... Hold on, I'm thinking. I'm really trying to be fair...

No.

The target buyer for Harley Davidson, if I read their ads correctly, are male overweight, middle aged, sexually repressed ex-cons with an abundance of tattoos, body and facial hair, and odious personal habits. They also tend to have a severe leather fetish with a passion for chains, tassels, and metal studs.

So, what does that make Harley Davidson? A Harley is the world's best selling motorized wheelchair for hippies and wannabes, and for those who would rather buy an reputation than earn one.

These are just my opinions, but it explains why I don't like Harleys. I don't think that a Harley is an American bike. America stands for power, and that power is always bundled in fast, sleek, and innovative cutting edge packages. Harley stands for none of that, and it hasn't for about thirty years now.

So, where does that leave Harley Davidson. You can paint as many American flags as you want on the gas tanks or the helmets, but it still doesn't change what Milwaukee can't do. Milwaukee can't lead America in competition with the rest of the world. Until America builds real bikes, Americans will buy their real bikes from Japan and Italy and Germany.

I think I've finally figured out just *WHY* Harley Davidson motorcycles are so popular... Harley Davidson isn't a motorcycle company, it is a cult religion. You don't ride a Harley Davidson so much as you worship it. You and every other little acolyte. A Harley Davidson is a rolling altar to mediocrity, you bend your knees and you pray to a pagan idol of chrome and leather for the pitiful life that you glean from it. That is the only way that I can see why so many people are so clueless when it comes to motorcycles. They can't stand on their own, they aren't tough enough to be individuals, so they have to reinforce their own self image with artificial constructs. Joseph Campbell would have a field day with the average Harley owner, I think that Harley Davidson is another of the 'masks of God' that Campbell once talked about so richly, or one of the supposed nine thousand names for God.

Harley Davidson. It's not a motorcycle company. It is a pagan cult religion for brain dead trend humping fashion lemmings.

Written by Christopher T. Shields, October 18, 1993. Updated with new items of relevant interest in the many years since. Bikes owned since original article was written include 1993 Honda VFR750F, 1995 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R and a 2004 Honda CBR600RR (currently owned and ridden).

[BACK](#)