

Bikers Protest Helmet Law

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

The word went out through the grapevine. In the parts shops and on the street the word went from mouth to mouth, "There's gonna be a protest!"

There was no other publicity, but on Sunday, September 7, better than 150 bikers gathered to protest a clearly unconstitutional law recently passed in Michigan requiring motorcyclists to cover their hair with a regulation motorcycle helmet while on a bike. The U.S. Supreme Court has declared a similar case unconstitutional on the basis that it violates the individual's right to die any way he damn well pleases.

The bikers came together in the parking lot of Grandland Shopping Center, on Grand River just north of Fenkell. The rally was addressed by an ACLU lawyer and a Michigan state senator both advocating a return to bikers' natural freedom.

The crowd then participated in a chaotic "uncovering ritual" where they threw their helmets down and stomped, jumped, and otherwise demolished them. Then the whole huge pack hopped on their bikes and roared down Grand River towards downtown Detroit. In a complete celebration of their strength and freedom they rode without helmets and completely ignored the pig traffic signals.

Detroit pigs met the unleashed threat with a roadblock at Schoolcraft. But the leaders saw the attempt and turned the whole horde back up Grand River towards Southfield and the open country.

The hot-tempered pigs immediately gave up their stalking game and tried a more direct approach, forcibly dispersing the crowd with their patrol cars and running isolated bikes off the road. The mounted Huns simply split off into side streets and led the pigs around the neighborhood in isolated chases for an hour before they were broken up.

Only six were arrested in the whole event. Three for "operating motorcycles without a helmet." One member of the Violators was busted when he shouted obscenities into a pig's face after the law refused to listen to complaints about the police maneuvers. The Violator was forcibly arrested and charged with "assaulting an officer" when he resisted the arrest.

Previously, another independent who was not even mounted, was leapt on and dragged to a car by uniformed pigs. This too was ostensibly for assault, but the kid's only motion was an attempt to move out of the area on a police command.

Presumably the three riders who were busted for riding without helmets will be the basis of an ACLU appeal of the repressive anti-hair statute. Long may it wave!



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