

ACROSS THE CONTINENT ON A HONDA FOUR BY FRANK CONNER

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For a whole mile down the road from American Honda I resisted the temptation, but then I couldn't stand it any longer. Leaving the bike in low gear (a 25 mph speed limit), I flicked my right wrist and watched the tach needle whip around to the 8500 rpm red line. I sat a bit taller in the saddle then, listening to those four exhaust-pipes, pipes that sing the most beautiful song that you can own for less than \$20,000. Because the 750cc Honda Four was such a rarity during those middle days of August, the rest of Los Angeles listened just as carefully as I did.

The Four was tall, and it was heavy. I had to tilt it over to one side before I could plant a foot flat on the pavement at red lights. But once its wheels were rolling, the thing turned into a racehorse. You could operate the controls with light, positive motions. Pulling the clutch required only two fingers. The gearshift had a short, positive throw. The brakes were the best I'd encountered on anything that didn't carry permanent number plates. With only a touch of throttle, the bike would sit up and get gone. It would go exactly where you pointed it, and pointing it required almost no effort at all. Riding the Four was like flying a fighter; each generates a feeling of elegance. I was glad that I was wearing leather gloves, and I wished for a long white scarf.

I entered the freeway on-ramp much too fast, but was able to relax halfway through the sharp turn even though the horizon was still tilted up on its side. The Four wasn't a bit bashful about hooking over way past the point where alarming things usually happen to a big bike. Still heeled over, the machine responded instantly to small steering corrections, and then we were upright again in a mad rush of speeding cars flitting from lane to lane to jockey for each others' draft. Reading my two handlebar mirrors as if my life depended upon them (it did), I grabbed a handful of throttle and joined the battle.

Since the Four's 67 horses are fed into a close-ratio five-speed box, there are no awkward riding speeds. If the engine began to lug or scream in a particular gear, all I had to do was go up or down one gear, and the engine was perfectly content. The bike and I fitted each other nicely, and wonder of wonders, there was no vibration.

Leaving the freeway network, I red-lined the tach needle in low gear again, and from the corner of my eye watched the pedestrians' heads snap around. I was in hog heaven; unless the Four melted itself somewhere en route, my ride on this bike from Los Angeles to New York was going to be the kind of ride that most people dream about.

Sunday morning, I strapped my pack on the back of the saddle and left for U.S. 395, and Yosemite. Off through innocuous hills and valleys to Palmdale; and then the broad sweeps of crazily tilted valleys, where stark mountain ranges grow straight out of the ground with no foothills or trees to soften them.

At Lancaster, there was a stretch of concrete four-lane that had been grooved while wet into wavy patterns. The bike danced around on it uncomfortably, but soon I noticed that the machine only moved a

few inches at a hop, so I relaxed. Always before on long trips, my butt would start aching about halfway through the first day, and it wouldn't become properly numbed until the second day. Now was the time for my tail to get sore, but it didn't. In fact, it never did. The saddle on the Four doesn't seem all that great if you just sit on it for a moment, but it's really Super Saddle in disguise.

Gradually, the road became clogged with traffic. It seemed as if there were millions of campers, either going to or returning from Yosemite. Cars and campers crawled along and got in each other's way; for them, this journey was a nightmare. For me, the traffic had overtones of fun. I'd overtake a long line of traffic, and as soon as the oncoming car had passed the car ahead of me, I'd punch the gearbox down into fourth, grab a big handful of throttle, and peel off to the left. I'd sail over into the left lane, get everything available in fourth, and then catch fifth. Still accelerating like a wild thing, I'd tear past the line of cars on my right and before anybody got unduly worried, I'd ease in between a couple of cars to let the next oncoming car whiz past me.

The desert country was magnificent. The road led me through great flows of lava, some of it smooth and some jagged. It was easy to understand why the Spaniards had called it "mal pais" (badland). Past Bishop, the Sierra Nevadas on my left suddenly became huge and craggy, with snowcapped peaks, but in the valley the August heat was ferocious. Then the road began to climb, and soon I found myself riding through pine forests. The air turned chilly, and ominous thunderheads loomed ahead. I left U.S. 395 and entered Yosemite from the west. At Tioga Pass (almost 10,000 feet) the Four seemed to have just as much power as it did at sea level. That amazed me.

In places, I was above the treeline, and it seemed strange to be riding along in the middle of summer with patches of permanent snow and ice only a few hundred yards away. The rain finally came, and I got drenched. My teeth were chattering, and I was shivering uncontrollably. I should have remembered that whenever you go riding in the real mountain country - even in August - you should take along plenty of warm clothes.

That night I found a motel about 20 miles back down U.S. 395, and there I met Steve - a big, husky, cornfed Iowan who was working for the summer at a forest-ranger camp nearby. Steve was absolutely enchanted with the Four. He liked it so much that I offered him a ride into Bishop, 50 miles away. We took off at sundown. Paying no attention to the speedo, I was using about the same amount of throttle that it took to go 80 mph solo, figuring that we'd be doing about 60 mph riding two-up. Steve shouted that the Highway Patrol was following us. I glanced at the speedo. 80 mph. What a motorcycle! I eased off to 65, and the fuzz sailed on by. That was a cold ride, but the sky was full of stars, and the silhouettes of the mountains, still dimly visible, made it all worthwhile.

The next day, I backtracked down U.S. 395, and the Sierra Nevadas looked completely different in the early morning sunlight. At Lone Pine, I took off for Death Valley. There was no traffic on the road except for a few lizards. As I bombed along, I wondered if Death Valley had anything worth seeing. Then the road climbed up to a pass, where superb ranges of mountains and valleys stretch away from horizon to horizon. As the road fought its way down from the pass, waves of hot air rolled against my face, and the distant desert shimmered in the heat.

The narrow, twisting road was poorly surfaced, and drifting dirt had piled up in a few of the blind corners. The edge of the road hung over sheer drops; there were no guard rails, no shoulders, no nothing-just space

when the pavement ended. The bike drifted a bit on a patch of sand in one of those blind corners, got real close to the edge, and scared me badly. I gritted my teeth and crawled the rest of the way down the mountain side, hating myself for having taken fright so easily. At Panamint Springs I stopped for gas, a beer, and a sandwich. all served up by a twelve-year-old boy, and afterwards felt much better.

In Death Valley itself, I was surrounded by the most spectacular geological formations that I have ever seen. In the distance, off to my right, was a lake. "Aha," said I, "a mirage." After a while I caught up with my mirage, which didn't go away as all good mirages are supposed to do, because it was an alkali salt-flat of immaculate and eye-searing whiteness.

Enjoying myself thoroughly, I smiled at the fears of many people about riding the deserts in August. The heat wasn't even affecting me slightly. Then, at Furnace Creek, I turned off into the museum parking lot and found myself about to ride right into a big pile of rocks at one side. Doing all of 10 mph, I could have stopped the bike easily, but my mind was sluggish and refused to function. I just stared stupidly at the rocks ahead. At the last moment, I gave a mighty heave and the bike wobbled and brushed past the largest rock. I parked, looking around guiltily to see if anybody had noticed my awful error. Nobody had.

Leaving Death Valley, I emerged into the flat, empty roads of western Nevada. This seemed to be a good time to find out if the Four would hold together at speed, so I rolled on some throttle and ran it up to 100 mph. I held it there for half an hour, as tar patches in the pavement rushed toward me and the wind played with me, and the bike felt good. My arms began to tire from holding on, but the bike seemed perfectly happy to run at that speed. Many, many motorcycles would have melted their engines at that speed in the August heat on the desert.

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Then an incredible character came into the shop. You could tell right away that he was a character because he wore Levis several sizes too large, a well-worn Italian knit shirt, and an unassailable cool. He turned out to be the legendary Paul Pratt, who recently completed his longest journey: two and a half years of riding through Mexico, Central America, and South America on a detuned 650cc Triumph twin. We talked about the real long distance riding, and Paul said that you can only digest so much scenery; after that the pleasure (or dissatisfaction) of the journey comes from the people you meet along the way. All of the long distance travelers he had met had developed considerable sensitivity in sorting out the

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Overnight in Kingman, Arizona, and on the road again at seven in the morning, I was going east on Route 66. The Santa Fe tracks ran alongside the highway, and a passenger train caught up with me. I wondered how fast it was going, so I turned on the Four and matched speeds with the train. 98mph; that train wasn't fooling around.

For the first time during the trip, I got involved with a number of semitrailers. As I approached one of the big trucks, its turbulence would shift the helmet around on my head, and wobble me around on the bike, but the Four would keep going straight. As I pulled up even with the rear of the trailer, the draft would suck me forward and give me another eight to 10 mph. Alongside the tractor, another blast of turbulence would hit me, and then I'd be past.

Route 66 in Arizona could never make up its mind what kind of highway it wanted to be. First would come good pavement; then a mediocre stretch; and finally some awful road, with lots of potholes and frost heaves. The Four took all but the worst of the stuff in its stride, but it would dive off into the potholes. I guess that anything on two wheels would have done the same. Somehow, though, the Four never did deliver that spine-jarring crash of bottoming suspension that takes the starch out of you so quickly.

At Holbrook I left 66 and wandered up into the Four Corners country and the Navajo reservation. The road is un-fenced, which means that when you top any hill you can expect to see the road dead ahead covered with congregations of cattle, sheep, horses, or goats. I had several interesting experiences with the assorted livestock, proving once and for all that in a panic stop, the Four's brakes work like champions.

The horses and cows seemed to know about motorcycles, and as I'd come thundering at them, brakes working frantically, they'd amble off to the side. But the calves and sheep didn't seem to get the message. They'd see me coming and look up, mildly interested, but they wouldn't move until I was only about 20 feet away. Then, in utter panic, they would scatter in all directions. After awhile, I could begin to guess where the next collection of animals would be hidden, so I'd slow down a bit.

Later, on one of the overlooks at the Canyon de Chelly, I was admiring the secret pocket-canyons carved

out of the sandstone by the river over the centuries. Cliff dwellers had lived in these canyons, growing their crops in them and building their houses in natural caverns high in the sheer walls of the cliffs, so as to make it very difficult for their enemies to get to them. A busload of Navajos from nearby Chinle, and a couple of other tourists were standing beside me, also enjoying the view. One of the tourists struck up a conversation about bike's. He told me about his adventures in riding a BMW on the Alcan Highway. The other tourist (who was a stranger to us both) listened for awhile and then joined in with some of his experiences on motorcycles on the Alcan. Both tourists became deeply interested in comparing notes about a particularly nasty (when muddy) stretch of the road near Yellowknife. I left them there engrossed in conversation.

In Shiprock, New Mexico, I made a friend. A nine-year-old boy, a Navajo, smiled a huge smile at me, calculated to warm the hardest heart, and asked if I would give him a ride on my bike. I started to give him the brushoff, changed my mind, and told him to go ask his folks if it was okay with them. Whether or not he asked their permission I don't know, but after a convincing length of time he returned and said it was okay with them. We went for a 15-minute ride, and he held on tight all the way, shouting his pleasure and waving at his friends.

The next morning I worked my way north to Durango, Colorado, where I picked up U.S. 160. The road twisted and turned its way through the gorgeous San Juan mountains, and there was a lot of traffic. The Four and I played Pass the Cars again, while I enjoyed those wonderful curves. Some of the enjoyment went out of it temporarily when a car going the other way slung a rock the size of a walnut, which got me, THOCK, right on the kneecap. For the next five miles I rode crouched over, massaging my left knee.

At Alamosa, I left U.S. 160 and went north to look at the Sand Dunes National Monument. There, in the lush part of Colorado is a vast basin that gets almost no rain and is therefore a desert, complete with sand dunes 700 feet high.

North up a flat and fast road to Salida, and then I joined a number of tourists heading east on U.S. 50. Sections of the road were wide, with paved shoulders, which turned out to be a Good Thing, because I came around a blind corner, and there I was face to face with one car passing another. I took to the shoulder. Five minutes later, the same thing happened again. Ten minutes after that, it happened a third time. If the drivers who did their passing in those blind corners were lipreaders, they may have noticed that I called them some hard names.

Just this side of Canon City, I stopped at the Royal Gorge. Not even the three-ring tourist traps set up on the rim could dim the wild beauty of that sheer canyon, with the Arkansas River rampaging angrily so far below.

The next day I visited the Four Seasons in Denver to get the 2000-mile inspection on the Four. While there, I called the editor to see how things were going, and he said, "Come home, come home, wherever you are. This month's deadline is here." Then I made a big mistake. Looking at a roadmap, I saw that I-80 runs from Denver to New York, and I decided to ride it. I had forgotten the basic rule: superhighways are no place to ride motorcycles, because on superhighways motorists and riders alike get lulled into carelessness.

Interstate 80 aimed me right for the middle of a big thunderhead, but the highway veered just in time.

Now I was headed toward another thunderhead; surely it was going to get me. But again the highway angled around and missed it. All morning long, the highway dodged patches of rain, and never once did I get wet. The highway engineers had been thoughtful, laying out the road between the thunderheads.

As I rode, I learned that you can hear yourself sing inside a Bell Magnum; in fact, the helmet lends a pleasing echo-chamber effect to rusty voices like mine. So I rode and sang songs like "John Henry", "Frankie and Johnny", "The Wreck of the Ol' 97", "Hobo Bill", and "If You're Goin' to San Francisco", and sang them all in the same key. I stopped for the night at a friendly motel way out in the middle of nowhere, and sang some more in the shower. Mr. Bell's helmet gives you a better tone.

The sun was out early on Sunday morning, and so was I. Since the mist didn't burn off until midmorning, I rode for awhile with my headlight burning. At my cigarette breaks in rest areas and filling stations, I met a dozen or so of my fellow travelers. These people had watched me pass them six or eight times, and they were curious about the bike, so they talked with me. All were impressed by the Four. One driver, a music teacher en route to New York from Denver, said, "You seem to be having a ball; it must be a very good motorcycle." He was right on both counts.

Morning passed pleasantly, and then I got to the Valley of the Shadow: the variously-numbered superhighways that serve as I-80 from Chicago to the Ohio border. In the suburbs of Chicago, I was riding in the right lane. Beside me in the center lane was a Buick, driven by a middle-aged man with a supercilious smirk pasted to his face. He decided to join me. I had been watching his right front tire, and as soon as it began to turn I grabbed my brakes. The Buick's rear bumper just missed my front tire. I was infuriated, more by the man's smirk than by his action, and I ressed the horn button to blow a mighty blast of displeasure. The horn would yield no more than a pitiful croak. This enraged me even more. I whipped into the center lane, positioned the bike a couple of inches from the Buick's front fender, turned my head to stare at the driver through his front windshield, and bellowed at the top of my lungs. When aroused, I can make lots of noise. The driver never lost his smirk, but he did turn white.

As I rode on, I brooded about motorcycle horns. Motor vehicles are fitted with horns for use when the other traffic fails to see them. Industry concensus is that most riders who get hurt on street bikes do so because other traffic failed to see them. Logically, then, the street bike should be equipped with a horn at least as loud as the one on an automobile. What kind of horn does the motorcycle actually get? Hah!

Monday morning on the Ohio Turnpike was delightful. There was little traffic, and I was passing through rich farm country, and the air was cool, not cold. One truckdriver whom I was passing stuck his head out of the window and shouted so loudly that I could hear him through the helmet, "THAT'S A GREAT MOTORCYCLE!"

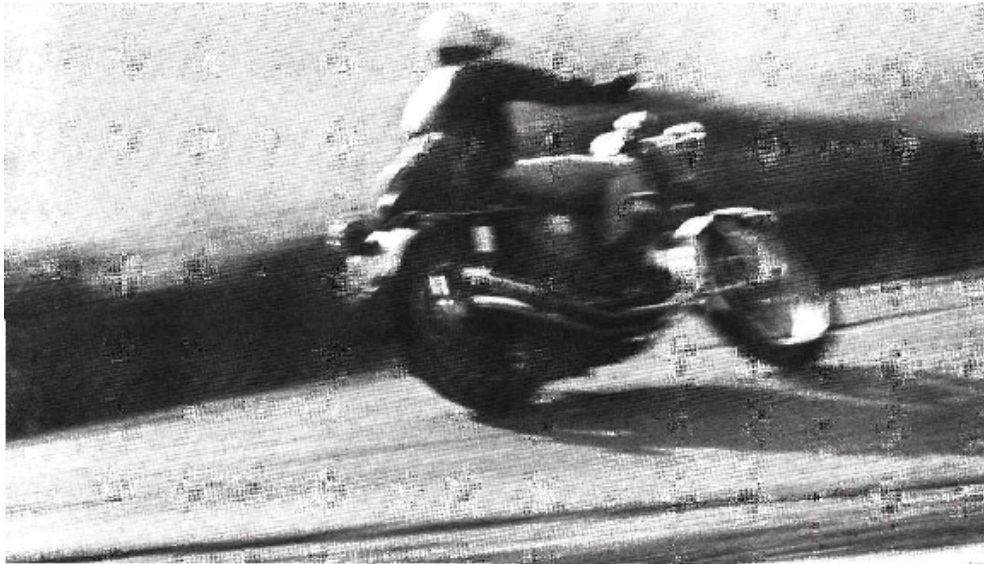
Pennsylvania's turnpike was something else. At the bottom of a long hill, both lanes of traffic came to a stop, and I was at the end of the line. I looked in my mirror and saw a car and a truck sailing down the hill, side by side. They hadn't perceived that the traffic was stopped. The skin on my back crawled as I frantically punched the Four into gear and headed for the space between the two cars ahead of me. For the next few moments there was much squalling of tires and squealing of brakes, as I cowered on the bike, and then everything became quiet. Both the car and the truck had gotten stopped, but the truck now occupied the space where I had been.

Later I discovered that the traffic was stopped because the turnpike narrows down to one lane to go through a tunnel. During peak loads, the traffic gets jammed for five or ten miles back down the road, but the Turnpike Authority has not seen fit to place signs back where they would do some good, to warn people about sudden stops. Lots of carnage.

Tuesday was the last day of my journey. What a difference on the turnpike. There was almost no traffic. The Pennsylvania Turnpike crosses mountains and valleys, and it is the only superhighway with real character to it. I was enjoying the view from the saddle. There were many innocent-looking cars parked by the side of the highway, with State Troopers sitting inside watching the goings-on, and maybe watching radar units too, so I held the Four to a careful, legal 65 mph. After awhile the pike came to an end. I handed the booth attendant a crumpled-up punch card. He gave me a dirty look and tried to straighten out the card. His displeasure was surprising; the card had been neither punched, stapled, spindled nor mutilated.

The New Jersey Turnpike was as busy as ever, but I didn't care: they had let me on it, which meant that the cross-winds weren't too bad that day. From Elizabeth to Newark (Newark looking like Manhattan after The Bomb) I breathed those industrial fumes so generously donated by local industry. Up ahead, a thunderstorm was busy dumping rain on Manhattan and it looked as if I were going to get soaked at the last minute. But I fooled it; I took the Lincoln Tunnel and stayed dry. Crosstown traffic wasn't too bad for once, and soon I had the Four safely garaged.

Back at the office again, I didn't need my daily trip notes to write this story, because the memory of that ride echoes sharp and clear in my mind. It is one of two unforgettable rides. The other one took place in 1964 on back-country roads in Georgia, when I broke most of the motor-vehicle laws as I put break-in miles on my first-ever production roadracer and discovered what it was like to ride a bike that would really handle. Maybe someday I'll luck into a third unforgettable ride. The 4200 miles that I put on the Honda Four was my first experience aboard a street bike that is everything a street bike should be—what I'd call easy riding.



Easy Riding ACROSS THE CONTINENT ON A HONDA FOUR

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Everywhere I stopped, people materialized out of nowhere to examine and exclaim over Honda's new bike. Most of them said they would own one someday.



Alcan. Both tourists became deeply interested in comparing notes about a particularly nasty (when muddy) stretch of the road near Yellowknife. I left them there engrossed in conversation.

In Shiprock, New Mexico, I made a friend. A nine-year-old boy, a Navajo, smiled a huge smile at me, calculated to warm the hardest heart, and asked if I would give him a ride on my bike. I started to give him the brushoff, changed my mind, and told him to go ask his folks if it was okay with them. Whether or not he asked their permission I don't know, but after a convincing length of time he returned and said it was okay with them.

We went for a 15-minute ride, and he held on tight all the way, shouting his pleasure and waving at his friends.

The next morning I worked my way north to Durango, Colorado, where I picked up U.S. 160. The road twisted and turned its way through the gorgeous San Juan mountains, and there was a lot of traffic. The Four and I played Pass the Cars again, while I enjoyed those wonderful curves. Some of the enjoyment went out of it temporarily when a car going the other way slung a rock the size of a walnut, which got me, THICK, right on the kneecap. For the next five miles I rode crouched over, massaging my left knee.

At Alamosa, I left U.S. 160 and went north to look at the Sand Dunes National Monument. There, in the lush part of Colorado is a vast basin that gets almost no rain and is therefore a desert, complete with sand dunes 700 feet high.

North up a flat and fast road to Salida, and then I joined a number of tourists heading east on U.S. 50. Sections of the road were wide, with paved shoulders, which turned out to be a Good Thing, because I came around a blind corner, and there I was face to face with one car passing another. I took to the shoulder. Five minutes later, the same thing happened again. Ten minutes after that, it happened a third time. If the drivers who did their passing in those blind corners were lipreaders, they may have noticed that I called them some hard names.

Just this side of Canon City, I stopped at the Royal Gorge. Not even the three-ring tourist traps set up on the rim could dim the wild beauty of that sheer canyon, with the Arkansas River rampaging angrily so far below.

The next day I visited the Four Seasons in Denver to get the 2000-mile inspection on the Four. While there, I called the editor to see how things were

going, and he said, "Come home, come home, wherever you are. This month's deadline is here." Then I made a big mistake. Looking at a roadmap, I saw that I-80 runs from Denver to New York, and I decided to ride it. I had forgotten the basic rule: superhighways are no place to ride motorcycles, because on superhighways motorists and riders alike get lulled into carelessness.

Interstate 80 aimed me right for the middle of a big thunderhead, but the highway veered just in time. Now I was headed toward another thunderhead; surely it was going to get me. But again the highway angled around and missed it. All morning long, the highway dodged patches of rain, and never once did I get wet. The highway engineers had been thoughtful, laying out the road between the thunderheads.

As I rode, I learned that you can hear yourself sing inside a Bell Magnum; in fact, the helmet lends a pleasing echo-chamber effect to rusty voices like mine. So I rode and sang songs like "John Henry", "Frankie and Johnny", "The Wreck of the Ol' 97", "Hobo Bill", and "If You're Goin' to San Francisco", and sang them all in the same key. I stopped for the night at a friendly motel way out in the middle of nowhere, and sang some more in the shower. Mr. Bell's helmet gives you a better tone.

The sun was out early on Sunday morning, and so was I. Since the mist didn't burn off until midmorning, I rode for awhile with my headlight burning. At my cigarette breaks in rest areas and filling stations, I met a dozen or so of my fellow travelers. These people had watched me pass them six or eight times, and they were curious about the bike, so they talked with me. All were impressed by the Four. One driver, a music teacher en route to New York from Denver, said, "You seem to be having a ball; it must be a very good motorcycle." He was right on both counts.

Morning passed pleasantly, and then I got to the Valley of the Shadow: the variously-numbered superhighways that serve as I-80 from Chicago to the Ohio border.

In the suburbs of Chicago, I was riding in the right lane. Beside me in the center lane was a Buick, driven by a middle-aged man with a supercilious smirk pasted to his face. He decided to join me. I had been watching his right front tire, and as soon as it began to turn I grabbed my brakes. The Buick's rear bumper just missed my front tire. I



was infuriated, more by the man's smirk than by his action, and I pressed the horn button to blow a mighty blast of displeasure. The horn would yield no more than a pitiful croak. This enraged me even more. I whipped into the center lane, positioned the bike a couple of inches from the Buick's front fender, turned my head to stare at the driver through his front windshield, and belted at the top of my lungs. When aroused, I can make lots of noise. The driver never lost his smirk, but he did turn white.

As I rode on, I brooded about motorcycle horns. Motor vehicles are fitted with horns for use when the other traffic fails to see them. Industry consensus is that most riders who get hurt on street bikes do so because other traffic failed to see them. Logically, then, the street bike should be equipped with a horn at least as loud as the one on an automobile. What kind of horn does the motorcycle actually get? Hah!

Monday morning on the Ohio Turnpike was delightful. There was little traffic, and I was passing through rich farm country, and the air was cool, not cold. One truck driver whom I was passing stuck his head out of the window and shouted so loudly that I could hear him through the helmet. "THAT'S A GREAT MOTORCYCLE!"

Pennsylvania's turnpike was something else. At the bottom of a long hill, both lanes of traffic came to a stop, and I was at the end of the line. I looked in my mirror and saw a car and a truck sailing down the hill, side by side. They hadn't perceived that the traffic was stopped. The skin on my back crawled as I frantically punched the Four into gear and headed for the space between the two cars ahead of me. For the next few moments there was much squalling of tires and squealing of brakes, as I cowered on the bike, and then everything became quiet. Both the car and the truck had gotten stopped, but the truck now occupied the space where I had been. (Continued on page 94)

Later I discovered that the traffic was stopped because the turnpike narrows down to one lane to go through a tunnel. During peak loads, the traffic gets jammed for five or ten miles back down the road, but the Turnpike Authority has not seen fit to place signs back where they would do some good, to warn people about sudden stops. Lots of carnage.

Tuesday was the last day of my journey. What a difference on the turnpike. There was almost no traffic. The Pennsylvania Turnpike crosses mountains and valleys, and it is the only super-highway with real character to it. I was enjoying the view from the saddle.

There were many innocent-looking cars parked by the side of the highway, with State Troopers sitting inside watching the goings-on, and maybe watching radar units too, so I held the Four to a careful, legal 65 mph.

After awhile the pike came to an end. I handed the booth attendant a crumpled-up punch card. He gave me a dirty look and tried to straighten out the card. His displeasure was surprising; the card had been neither punched, stapled, spindled nor mutilated.

The New Jersey Turnpike was as busy as ever, but I didn't care: they had let me on it, which meant that the crosswinds weren't too bad that day.

From Elizabeth to Newark (Newark looking like Manhattan after The Bomb) I breathed those industrial fumes so generously donated by local industry.

Up ahead, a thunderstorm was busy dumping rain on Manhattan and it looked as if I were going to get soaked at the last minute. But I fooled it; I took the Lincoln Tunnel and stayed dry. Crosstown traffic wasn't too bad for once, and soon I had the Four safely garaged.

Back at the office again, I didn't need my daily trip notes to write this story, because the memory of that ride echoes sharp and clear in my mind. It is one of two unforgettable rides. The



other one took place in 1964 on back-country roads in Georgia, when I broke most of the motor-vehicle laws as I put break-in miles on my first-ever production roadracer and discovered what it was like to ride a bike that would really handle. Maybe someday I'll luck into a third unforgettable ride.

The 4200 miles that I put on the Honda Four was my first experience aboard a street bike that is everything a street bike should be—what I'd call easy riding.

