

# Naked Curiosity: Easy Rider

It wasn't easy but it had to be done.

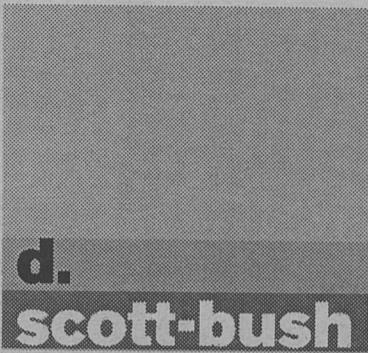
I had all sorts of reasons for not telling my mother I bought a motorcycle. She's been under a lot of stress, during the past several months, so I didn't want to nudge her into maternal hysteria. I figured that, if I waited 'til a day when things were going well and she was relaxed, the news might receive a more muted response.

Who was I kidding? I knew she wouldn't be pleased — that was guaranteed. I expected a bit of a lecture. What I got was, essentially, the third act of a Greek tragedy.

I explained that I had taken a motorcycle training class with both intensive classroom and on-the-bike instruction. I've always been a safe driver and, now, I was going to be a safe rider, too. She wasn't convinced.

After a brief pause, during which she took a deep breath and gathered her strength, she unleashed a diatribe unlike any I've witnessed in our entire mother-son relationship. I was glad to be getting the fiery onslaught by phone, 2500 miles away, and not in person.

She cried. She shouted and screamed. It was a high-tide



**d.**  
**scott-bush**

you want to lose an arm?" she shrieked.

My mother was merciless. She hauled out the tale of a neighbor's unfortunate amputation that resulted from a bike accident on a stretch of open road. But she didn't just recall the story for me. She made it a threat: If you ride a motorcycle, you will lose an arm.

She must have thought it would be a lone-limbed slam-dunk because she rested her case on that note. She seemed to think that it would be enough to compel me to give in and give up any thoughts of riding my new bike.

That was out of the question, and I was beginning to think that I'd been out of my mind to tell her about it, in the first place. What would it have hurt to keep her in the dark?

What she didn't know wouldn't hurt her, right? Spoken like a true

**People will tell us  
whatever they think  
we want to hear,  
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to get us in bed.**

and she was bound to spot one of those, at some point.

Truth be told, my motivation for not wanting to tell her was more about delaying the inevitable ugly fallout than anything else.

My friend Stephen has always had a gift for rationalizing his actions. There was nothing he couldn't whip up a seemingly plausible reason for doing or not doing, telling or not telling. Several years ago, he justified not telling his lover that he'd slept with two co-workers on a business trip because he didn't want to ruin his lover's "monogamy fantasy."

A few months later, his lover got wind of just how much of a fantasy his allegedly monogamous relationship was and sent Stephen packing.

Always one to land on his feet (by getting on his back), Stephen had another boyfriend in less than a week. Bliss was brief and Stephen was single, again, almost as quickly as he'd been coupled.

This time, he decided to sow his wild oats unencumbered by a relationship. He played the field like a pro. He was also playing with fire. Between the break up with his ex-lover and momentary mating with the rebound boyfriend, Stephen discovered that he was HIV-positive.

Discovery hasn't led to disclosure.

Stephen is ready with a rationalization for not telling his sex partners about his HIV status. "They should assume everyone they sleep with is positive," he argues. "I shouldn't have to tell them."

He's right and he's wrong. People will tell us what they think we want to hear, especially if the goal is getting us in bed. Acknowledging that one is HIV-positive doesn't fast-track a trick. Being safe with everyone, regardless of what their online profiles say or what they promise in person, is the best solution.

And we need to be honest with our sex partners. It isn't always easy. But it has to be done. ▼

*D. Scott-Bush's work appears throughout the country. E-mail may be directed to [NakedCuriosity@aol.com](mailto:NakedCuriosity@aol.com).*

dressed in clean dungarees and a yellow blouse driving a late model Subaru to infiltrate the pastoral countryside. ▼

*Crow Cohen is a lesbian feminist who lives in Burlington.*

coward.

She'd have discovered the truth eventually. There would be a slip of the tongue — more likely from my partner than me. And, sooner or later, she'd see a photo of me on the bike. Martin had already taken dozens of shots

know what "penile" means," Lara said. Years later when the Civil Union law was passed in 2000, "Take Back Vermont" signs were plastered all over these sweet little villages. It took a few years for Vermonters to strike back, but at that time no one suspected an ordinary looking adult woman

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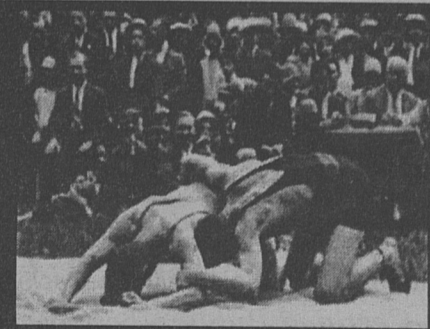
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## Appleseed

cont'd from previous page

any use to her standing there doubled over. In a few minutes Lara walked out without newspapers. "You mean he took them?" I shouted in disbelief.

"Maybe he doesn't