

Chapter Seven

Kevin hurriedly drove east on the road out and away from all the malevolence! *That's the Interstate 5 south on-ramp Danny told me to take. He saved our lives up on the Trinity campground loop only to die a day or two later—why? May his soul rest in peace...* The SL 600 shot across the overpass at over 60mph. Kevin yanked the steering wheel to the left, the car hugged the sweeping corner and exited the I-5 north on-ramp at over 100mph!

In less than two hours Kevin had crossed the border into Oregon. He had only applied the brakes once to slow down for a dust cloud from a farmer plowing a field. The dust had been like a brown fog cloud all across the interstate and some of it stuck onto the SL600. When Kevin accelerated to over 100mph most of the brown dirt blew off the hood but the smaller particulates dusted the windshield with fine brown power. Kevin glanced around the dash for a windshield fluid knob and didn't locate it. *I'll pull off at the next town get fuel, get the windshield cleaned. I still need to have money wired to the restaurant for the damage to the houseboat.*

"You want it filled up?" asked the attendant.

"Yes... Fill it up with premium," answered Kevin in a despondent voice.

"Sir, you'll have to pop the gas lid."

"Oh sorry." Kevin looked around for a lever or knob to release the gas lid.

"Try next to the seat," the attendant yelled. The lid sprung open.

Kevin felt the slight vibration as the attendant inserted the nozzle into the gas tank.

"You want me to clean the windshield?"

"Yeah go ahead," Kevin yelled out the side window.

"You got a nice car. Probably best if I use some air to blow that sand off these spots first." The attendant was pointing at some spots just under and over one wiper blade.

From inside the car Kevin instantly noticed that the oily spot formed a thumb, palm and finger prints. The lesser dust had stuck to someone's skin oil. Kevin got out of the car and stopped the attendants who had just pulled the air hose off a reel. "Don't bother to clean the window."

"Okay sir, no problem. I don't want to scratch the windshield on an expensive car like this anyhow. "

Kevin went to the front passenger side of the SL600 and put his thumb and finger just over the oily spots, careful not touch the glass. *These can't be Danny's prints. They're way too big. But the waitress said he was the one that left a note on the windshield; she said the alarm went off twice... Maybe someone took the note that he left for me?*

The gas nozzle clicked off. The attendant hung the hose back on the pump. "Anything else sir," he asked while pulling the nozzle from the gas tank.

"No, that's it. I just needed gas," Kevin leaned in thru the passenger side; he opened the glove box and retrieved a Trask fuel card. Kevin handed the gas card to the attendant.

"Sir we don't take credit cards. It says right there, cash only." The attendant pointed toward a sign above the pump.

Kevin dug in his pocket and handed the attendant cash. He focused back on the fingers and thumb print embedded in brown dust on the windshield.

"Here's your change sir!" The attendant startled Kevin from behind.

Kevin straightens up from his bent over the hood position. "Do you have a piece of tape I can have?"

"I got some duct tape," replied the attendant with Kevin's change in his fist.

"Do you have any wide clear packing tape?" Kevin asked.

"Maybe, let me go check." But, here's you change first." The attendant unclenched his fist and extended his hand toward Kevin.

"Keep the change. I might need some more help." Kevin turned back and mimicked his thumb and finger just above windshield. *These are too big and wide apart to be from a child...*

The attendant returned with a tape gun used to seal boxes. "Will this work?"

"Yeah that might work. I only need a small amount, I'll bring the tape gun back inside when I'm done."

"Yeah, not a problem," replied the attendant, then hurrying to a car that just pulled up to a different gas pump.

Kevin pulled the wiper blade out and off the windshield careful not to disturb the dust. He put about an eight inch piece of tape on the glass so to cover both prints and then peeled off the tape. *Wow that worked just like the crime shows on TV... Now all I need is a clean white piece of paper to stick the tape to.*

"What happened you get a scratch or crack in your windshield?" asked a scruffy

looking man from behind the counter when Kevin came through the door. "I watched carefully; Jeff didn't touch your windshield."

"No, I'm just doing a little detective work." Kevin laid the tape gun on the counter.

"Do you have a piece of clean white blank paper I can stick this hunk of tape to?"

"I might in my office, but I can't leave the cash register unattended. Wait until Jeff gets done with that customer," replied the station owner while pointing toward the gas pumps.

"Okay, is there a phone that I can use to make a collect call? I've been trying from my car, but haven't had any luck."

"Those new fangled car phones don't work around here. There's the payphone," answered the owner and pointed to the back corner. The owner handed an advertisement brochure from a stack on the counter. "Can you use this? They're blank on the back.

"Thanks." Kevin opened the three fold brochure, flipped it over and carefully stuck the piece of tape on the blank white back

"Hey that's cool you got someone's fingerprints," offered the station owner as he put the tape gun under the counter.

"Yeah, it's something I saw them do on one of the crime shows on television." Kevin replied as he headed for the payphone.

The operator asked Condi if she would take a collect call from a Kevin Trask.

"Yes," Condi's reply came thru the payphone handset.

"Condi, this is Kevin. I need five thousand dollar sent to..." Kevin pulled a napkin from his pocket so to read off the address. "Send the money to the **Big Dipper Café** at Shasta Lake."

"Is that the same place I sent the money for the houseboat rental?" Condi asked

"Should be. But make it attention Edna at the restaurant," Kevin replied.

Just then Jeff stuck his head in thru the heavy swinging glass door and shouted at Kevin. "Mr. could I get you to move your car. A big tanker needs to pull in."

"Condi, I'll call you from the car phone. Please overnight the money." Kevin slapped the handset into the chrome, claw looking hanger and dashed out. He tossed the three sided brochure on the passenger seat and got back on Interstate 5 and headed north. *I hope Frank got the Stargazer turned back in. I hope Tina hitched a ride back with them. I wonder what was on that note. The finger print might be...*

Kevin's mind was running full speed and so was the V12 under the hood; he didn't even notice the State Police car catching up behind him. The red and blue flashing lights snapped Kevin back to reality. He glanced at the speedometer, *Oh crap, I'm almost doing 100mph!* The brakes felt soft; it took almost a quarter mile for Kevin to pull over.

The officer bent over and thru the open window demanded with heavy authority. "License and registration! No quick movement and do you have any weapons."

"No weapons sir," replied Kevin while slowly handing his driver's license over. "I'm not sure about the registration." Kevin leaned over and opened the glove box.

"Don't get out of your car!" The State Patrol officer took the driver license and walked back to the patrol car.

Kevin kept searching. *I don't know where the registration is. I don't need this. I'll call Condi.* Kevin looked at the bag phone; the green signal status bars were at zero. He tried to call anyway, but there was nothing. He tried a second time...

The officer returned to the passenger side of SL600 and handed Kevin his driver's license back. "At the speed you were traveling, you would go right under one of these slow moving semi trailer and get decapitated."

"You're right officer," Kevin replied in a nervous voice. "I've only had the car a few weeks. I'm not used to this kind of high performance."

"The car is still registered to **Hung Meng Imports**. You only have fifteen days to title a new car." The officer tore off a dark orange ticket from a pad and handed it to Kevin. "Slow it down!" The officer walked back to his car, got in, turned off the lights and merged back onto I-5 north.

Kevin opened the glove box and tossed the ticket inside. *I didn't need that. This car is going to get me into trouble. When I get the title changed into my name, I'm going to trade it in on an SUV. I better set the cruise control...*

For more than an hour the V12 hummed at 74 mph. There was a moderate amount of evening rush hour traffic by Medford, Oregon but nothing like traffic in Los Angeles. With Medford in the rearview mirror, Kevin bumped the cruise control up to 80 mph; the 6 speakers sound automatically got louder. Suddenly an alarm or sensor went off! Kevin switched off the cruise control with his thumb and then reached over to manually turn down the stereo system. As the car decelerated, he scanned the dash. On the passenger side of the center console the green signal indicator on the cell phone display had all the bars illuminated.

Kevin put the handset up to his ear. "Kevin I've been trying to call all afternoon. Your Father wants to talk to you before he goes home."

"Sorry Condi but this phone only works around big cities." Kevin somewhat yelled into the handset.

"What big city are you in?" Condi asked.

"I'm just about to Myrtle Creek, Oregon." Kevin answered.

"Here's Mr. Trask. Godspeed" Condi transferred the line to Mr. Trask's office.

"Kevin what's going on? I got a call from the police this morning about a young boy having our private phone number and some cash on him. Then you placed a call to our law offices. What the hell's going on?"

"Dad, I gave one of our private business cards to the dock boy at Shasta Lake a couple of days ago and they found it on him."

"Found it on him! What does that mean?"

"The young boy—his name was Danny." Kevin took a deep breath. "They found him dead."

"Dead! What's going on? Are we going to be in another big law suit? Is that why you're having Condi send money up there?"

"Dad it has nothing to do with us. The little boy died from fiber glass fumes. The money is for damage to the houseboat I rented."

"What happened; was he working in an unventilated shop or something?"

"No, the police say he was sniffing the resin fumes."

"Sniffing the resin fumes... So this kid was a dooper and he had one of our business card on him?" Mr. Trask paused for the longest time, then in a firm demanding tone asked, "Kevin you're not doing drugs...Are you?"

Kevin took the phone away from his head. *Crap, my own father doesn't trust me. He knows how I feel about dope, especially after Richard's son got shot buying Weed. I promised myself the day of the funeral I'd never get that monkey on my back...*

Kevin put the phone back up to his ear. "Dad, I don't do drugs. That's one of the reasons I left Shasta Lake early. I just have a lot on my mind. Tina and I are having some problems and ..."

"Kevin, I don't care about any problems you're having with that girlfriend of yours. We got bigger problems in the manufacturing plant. Remember you told me you'd be back next week. And don't..."

"Dad I have to go! I shouldn't drive and talk on this car phone at the same time. Things are too confusing." Kevin hit the 'End' button then tossed the handset onto

the passenger seat.

Kevin didn't even get another mile down the road before the car phone went off again. "Kevin your Father wants to know where you are going and a number on a landline that you can be reached at."

"Hold on Condi, I need to pull over," Kevin put on the right blinker; it took almost a quarter mile to bring the SL600 to a complete stop.

Kevin picked up the three fold brochure from the passenger seat. The words: **GET AWAY FROM IT ALL. COME FISH THE WILD CLACKAMAS RIVER OF OREGON** penetrated into Kevin's tired eyes. "Condi, I'm going to go fish the Clackamas River."

"Where's that at?" Condi asked.

Kevin opened the brochure and did a quick scan for directions. "The guide shop is in Zigzag Oregon."

"I need a phone number for your Father," requested Condi in a firm tone.

To schedule a guided fishing trip call: 504-665-FISH was the very last line in the advertisement. Kevin read the **504-685** numbers and then the **F-I-S-H** letters off to Condi.

"Got it Kevin!" Condi replied. While jotting down the four letters Condi's memory was jarred. "Kevin I almost forgot. Hold on for a minute I wrote something down that was on the Trask private voice mail yesterday. I thought it was a radio station or a prank call, but they did mention your name."

"Okay what was it?" Kevin replied then yawned and noticed how bloodshot his eyes were in the rearview mirror.

"Here it is. The message is, "KCHM affirmative. Break check and I think the person said jerk or zerk." Condi paused, still confused by what she had jotted down I know there is a radio station with those call letters, **Kicking Country High Mountain** and they do prank calls all the time.

Kevin scribbled the information on the back of the brochure next to the taped on fingerprint. "Okay, thanks Condi. I need to get some coffee and something to eat. It has been a long day."

"Godspeed," Condi said to Kevin for the second time that afternoon.

Kevin tossed the handset and brochure onto the passenger seat and put on the left blinker and speedily merged back into traffic. Totally exhausted, Kevin forgot to set the cruise control; the V12 slowly pushed the SL600 over 90 mph. Kevin yawned, looked at his bloodshot eyes again then put on the right blinker. *I'll get something to eat in Myrtle Creek...*

Pulling off Interstate 5 and then crossing the Umpqua River Kevin slowly drove down Main Street; he chuckled to himself after reading the sign **WELCOME TO MYRTLE CREEK. POPULATION 3325**. *They got cell phone service in this tiny Podunk town...*

Kevin stopped at a dingy cafe that had a 4WD truck, three motorcycles and a beat up white Buick all parked out front in the small gravel parking lot. Kevin parked between the Buick and Pickup truck and grabbed the brochure. Getting out of the SL600, he noticed two child car seats in the back of the white Buick, a Confederate flag and gun rack hung on display in the rear window of the 4WD pickup and all three motorcycles looked to be Harley Davidson.

A cluster of cow bells hanging on the back of the door jingled thru the thick air as he pushed open the heavy wood door. The rustic interior and huge round saw blade with the menu painted on it behind the long counter boasted that this was a place for the outdoor type. The chairs were made out of old whiskey barrels and the tables were made from thick wood planking. The faint smell of bacon and coffee lingered in the stale air; from a doorway at the far left corner of the cafe a man in grease stained white apron hanging low around his oversized waist appeared, "What do you need, Sonny?"

"Hopefully some directions, Sir," Kevin replied, while flashing the fishing brochure from way across the room.

"Don't be calling me Sir!" The weighty bald cook bellowed out. There was instant animosity the moment the cook looked Kevin up and down. Wealth and privilege is something that can't be hidden. Blond styled hair, the dark tan, perfect white teeth all things Kevin took for granted were all things this cook resented.

"I would also like to get something to eat... If you're open?"

"We're open if you don't mind eating in the bar," replied the cook and then pointing toward a doorway in the back wall. "My waitress goes home after the lunch crowd leaves." The burly man walked over to the cash register, opened it and started taking the money out.

"Sure, I can eat in the bar," Kevin unenthusiastically replied. Kevin walked toward a doorway with an orange neon sign that glowed **BAR** over it. The narrow hallway had knotty pine wood on both walls; there were two doors next to each other. **Buck's** was on one door and **Doe's** on the other. There was a strong scent of urine as Kevin passed by. The hallway opened up into a smoke filled dimly lit room. Two men were playing pool and there was one woman at the bar lighting up a cigarette. Kevin got an uneasy feeling and halted!

"We got a great meat loaf sandwich," said the cook while pushing Kevin out of the hallway into the bar.

"Oh, on second thought maybe just a cup of coffee to go and some directions." Kevin held up the fishing brochure again.

The cook now bartender walked behind the bar and reached for the coffee pot; he held it up eye level. "I'd better make a fresh pot. I think this has been brewing since last night."

"That's okay," said Kevin while nervously moving to the bar. "How about some directions. I can pay you."

"Pay me for directions," laughed the cook

"Where you headed pretty boy?" asked the woman two barstools away.

"Zigzag, Oregon. I want to check out this fishing spot on the Clackamas River."

The woman leaned over and snatched the brochure right out of Kevin's hand; she unfolded it then laid it out on the bar. "Hey Joe, haven't you been logging up by the Clackamas River?" She yelled out across the room.

Joe was just leaning across the pool table to take a shot. "Yeah, cut some big yellow bellies up that way a few years ago."

"You cut Ponderosa up that way? I thought Mount Hood had nothing but Doug Fir on it." The other pool player chimed in to the conversation.

"Wasn't cutting on Mount Hood. Got a contract with the Indians southeast of Mt. Hood. I was falling trees on the Warm Spring's Reservation." Joe said as he shot a pool ball into the corner pocket.

"Cutting those soft belly pines! That must have been some easy money"

"Sure was. Bid the job on stumpage. Only had to sharpen my chain twice a day."

"You two going to bullshit all day or inform cute boy where Zigzag is?" The woman shouted from her perch at the bar.

"There was more silence as Joe concentrated before shooting another ball into the side pocket. Determinedly he walked around the table bent over and said, "Eight ball in the corner." There was a loud *smack*, and then the black eight ball was gone down into the corner pocket. Joe threw the cue onto the table and headed toward the bar.

"You know how to fish?" Joe asked while examining the brochure.

"I've caught some trophy sized Marlin off the coast of Mexico. Fished off Florida and Hawaii..." Kevin stopped; *these guys don't want to hear about my chartered fishing trips all over the world.*

"Trophy sized Marlin huh... You bait you own hook cute boy?" asked the other pool player as he limped up to the bar. The black tee shirt with the gold Harley emblem seemed a plausible explanation for the bum leg.

"No," Kevin replied; now feeling pinned in by the two rough biker type.

"The Clackamas huh? I think you might be too late for the spring Steelhead run." Joe said still examining the brochure. "The town you're looking for is on the Mount Hood Highway. Zigzag, is about ten miles before Mount Hood summit. Joe flipped the sheet over looking for additional information."

"Thanks," Kevin said and reached out for the brochure.

Joe examined the tape stuck onto the back. "What are you FBI or something? Looks like you have somebody's fingerprints here!"

Kevin snatched at the heavy paper between Joe's fingers. "It's a long story."

Joe clamped onto the thick paper, not letting Kevin pull it away. "You in a big hurry?" Joe asked. "We got plenty of time to listen to your long story."

"I'm not in any hurry." Kevin paused. "I'm just headed north for a few days. Trying to clear my head and figure some things out. "

"Well, why don't you play me a game of pool first? That should help clear your head," Joe pointed toward the pool table. "Since you're not in a big hurry and all."

A freshly lit cigarette in the ashtray on the bar mixed with the existing stale air. Kevin coughed; he was having a hard time breathing the thick air in the bar. Joe had the build of a linebacker with cuts all over the back of his hands and knuckles. *I bet those cuts are from bar room fighting, Kevin scanned the room for an exit...*

"Go ahead, play Joe for a beer while I brew fresh coffee," said the cook, now bartender from behind the bar.

"That's okay. Preppy guy's probably don't shoot pool," Joe said while shoving the brochure back at Kevin.

"Sure, I'll play you a game," Kevin replied; rarely would he ever turned down a challenge. Kevin walked directly to the pool table and pulled the ball rack from under the table. "Let's play for fifty bucks and a beer." Kevin's grandfather had taught him how to shoot pool and that the best way to start a game was with an intimidating bluff.

Joe watched Kevin skillfully rack the balls and was already nervous. "I don't have fifty dollars. I'll play you for ten and a beer."

"That's cool... I assume we'll be playing stars and stripes and call the eight ball

pocket." Kevin stated with confidence. "Should we lag for the break?"

"No you go ahead," Joe said as he chalked the cue stick trying to stay calm.

Kevin broke open the rack and two solid balls fell. "Looks like I'm the small ones," Kevin said as he walked to the far side of the pool table, took aim and cut the five-ball into the side pocket. Kevin missed the next shot but left the cue ball so that Joe couldn't make a shot. The game changed sides only twice before Kevin called the eight ball in the side pocket to win the game.

"You're a pretty good shot," said Joe pulling a five and three ones from the front pocket of his Levi's. "Hey Randy, you got two bucks?" Joe asked his friend.

"Sure," Randy replied as pulled the wallet from his back pocket. The wallet had a chrome chain hooked to it; he unzipped it and handed Joe two dollars.

Joe handed the two dollars to Kevin. "Where'd you learn to shoot pool?"

"My Grandfather took a snooker table in on trade for a trailer many years ago. When I'd go down to the shop on the weekends, I'd play on it; if there wasn't metal to weld."

"Snooker huh... That's harder then pool isn't it?" Joe asked.

"Kind of," relied Kevin. "The pockets are a little smaller. What you really learn is not to leave a shot for your opponent.

"No, kidding. You didn't leave me any shot." Joe motioned at the green felt top on the pool table.

"You want to a play again?" It's been years since I played, I kind of missed it." Kevin asked, while applying chalk to his cue.

"Sure, but it'll have to be for nothing. You cleaned me out," Joe replied. "What, I really should say is the Spotted Owl has cleaned me out." Joe pointed at a fake stuffed Owl with a noose around its neck hanging from a wood beam over the bar.

"What's that all about?" Kevin asked. "I think there was a protest going on by Lake Shasta about those birds and logging."

"It's a long story—probably like your fingerprint story." Joe answered as he started pushing the pool balls to the end of the table.

"How about if I buy everyone a beer?" Kevin asked.

"Yeah sure," Joe replied halfhearted.

"Hey bartender sir, could we get a couple of beers," Kevin hollered back over his shoulder from the pool table.

"His name is Lard-ass," offered Joe as he started to rack the pool balls.

"Hey, lard..." Kevin paused. "Mr. Bartender, I'll take one of those meatloaf sandwiches you told me were on special." Kevin shouted from the far side of the pool table.

"His name is Lard-ass," Randy chimed in.

Everyone laughed except the lone woman in the bar. She loved her Dad and didn't think the nickname funny. She had the tri-fold brochure opened up and face down on the bar. On the only blank section left she jotted down the words:

"LET GO & LET GOD"

As children bring their broken toys,

with tears for us to mend,

I brought my broken dreams to God,

because he is my friend.

But then instead of leaving Him

in peace to work alone,

I hung around and tried to help,

with ways that were my own.

At last, I snatched them back again

and cried, "How can you be so slow?"

"My child" He said, "What could I do?

You never did let go."

She refolded the brochure, took a sip of her diet pop, walked behind the counter and hugged the burley cook. "I need to pick up some milk before I go get the twins."

The burley cook hugged her back. "Love you honey. Let your Mom know that I might be late tonight."

Kevin won the next three games; washed the meatloaf sandwich down with cold beer and learned about the Spotted Owl. He bought two more rounds for Randy and Joe. The beer and the sharing of life's trials and tribulations went on for hours.

Randy joined playing pool and the game of Stars and Stripes turned to Cut-Throat. Drinking beer turned to taking shots of whiskey. The sixth game Joe sank one ball on the break, and then knocked down three in a row.

"Good shooting," Kevin said as he walked around the table, carefully examining the remaining pool balls on the table. Kevin set his whiskey down. "I'll bet I can run the one thru five," Kevin said with an alcohol induced confidence.

"I'm broke but maybe Randy will take you up on the bet?" Joe nodded at Randy.

Randy had been leaning against the wall sipping at his drink while watching every shot without saying one word. He limped over to the pool table and looked over the lay of the balls. "I'll take you up on the bet. If you are saying you can run the one thru five."

"That's the bet," replied Kevin in an annoying cocky tone.

Randy was closely looking at the thirteen ball that was blocking all the low numbered balls. "You can't use the thirteen ball to make your shot."

"I won't. The bet is that I can run the number one through number five ball. I'll finish off our game of Cut-Throat and you won't even get a chance to shoot."

"I'll take that bet. I bet twenty bucks you can't do it." Randy moved back to his position against the wall.

Kevin took a long deep breath; he chalked the pool stick walked up to the table and drew almost straight down on the cue ball. The cue ball jumped over the thirteen ball headed toward the corner and tapped in the five. *Smack* then *Clunk*, was the sound heard four more times as Kevin picked off the remaining low balls.

"Shit." Randy mumbled while reaching for his wallet.

"Nice shot," Joe slurred out then downed the last bit of whiskey in his glass.

Randy threw two tens on the green felt, "There's your money!"

"That bet was for another meatloaf sandwich, one for the road," Kevin said as he staggered toward the bar. "I need to get some food in me before I head north." Kevin pulled out his wallet so to settle up the tab and then headed for the bathroom. He weaved down the small hallway and pushed open the spring loaded door. "Wow..."

That whiskey did me in. I need to be sure to set the cruise control at 55mph. I don't need to be pulled over for speeding again... The bathroom door snapped shut and foul air from seldom flushed urinals seeped out into the connecting hallway as Kevin exited the bathroom.

"Hey wait a minute!" Joe said from the back end of the hallway.

A ... okay." Kevin put his hand against the door jam and his head slumped.

"You might not want to hit the road without this," Joe said holding up a brown leather wallet.

"A...Thanks Joe." Kevin lifted his head and warily took the wallet.

"Cute-boy, you'll need this to find that guide shop." Randy had just limped up to the end of the hallway and held up the brochure. "Did you get the brakes checked yet?" he asked while zipping up his heavy black leather jacket.

"What?" Kevin struggled to put some sort of order to everything that happened since the crack of dawn on this day. *Danny... The ride in the back of a police car with Nichol. The speeding ticket and now this bar room drinking.*

"Check the brake zerk." Randy replied. "You wrote it down on the back next to the fingerprint here. I see Teresa wrote you a poem on the back too..."

Joe put his hand on Kevin's shoulder twisted him ninety--degrees and pushed him out into the darkened restaurant. Kevin fell forward and caught himself on one of the tables. "Steady Cute-boy," Randy said as he exited the hallway.

Randy limped across the room and held open the door. Joe had a good grip on Kevin's arm and they helped each other outside into the cool darkness. The three of them stood in the gravel parking lot holding each other up acting stupid and laughing like three high school boys at a Kegger. The amber halogen parking lot light hummed while a herd of moths bombarded it. The cold clear night air had somewhat of a sobering feel—yet wouldn't the drunkenness.

The burley cook flipped the sign around to **CLOSED**, came out the door and with his back to the alcohol induced trio locked the door. When he turned he gave the three a lengthy, solid look, then walked to the back of the pickup truck and let the tailgate down. "You two knuckle-heads are riding back here! Kevin can ride up front, over to the motel."