



# MOTO MOUTH MOSHE

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## Texas or Bust!

In August of 2022, my family decided to relocate from New Jersey to San Antonio, Texas for many reasons, primarily free charter schools for our daughters – schools with a laser focus on academics, which is considerably different than what they were receiving at their former school. By the time early November arrived, I had already packed up everything we owned and shipped it to the new house in the Lone Star state. Everything, that is, except for my trusty 2015 BMW R 1200 RT.

After so many years of loathing the state, leaving New Jersey on a plane would have been anticlimactic. I wanted to really experience the escape, in the way that only a motorcycle can provide!

Exodus day finally arrived on November 3. I was perched on the RT outside my old house in New Jersey, impatiently waiting for the realtor’s text that closing had successfully concluded. Many of history’s most storied poets have attempted to describe the absolute zenith of human pleasure —delectable cuisine, great sex, psychedelic drugs, the curviest roads aboard a BMW, the annual end of Christmas music season, etc.— but none of those admittedly lofty sensations compared to what I was feeling at the prospect of riding out of NJ for the very last time. My meso-corticolimbic circuit was exploding with the omnipotent force of a million

simultaneous supernovas!

The text finally arrived well after lunchtime, and I immediately kicked into first gear to begin the straight shot down the interstate from northern Jersey to Roanoke, Virginia. Arriving there after sunset, I rolled into a BP gas station and spied an old-school Harley Sportster that was unusually modified. The turn signals were held on with duct tape, the ignition switch was chicken-wired to the handlebars, and the right side of the bike was plastered in enough leaking oil to make the Exxon Valdez blush. A comically oversized enduro-style rear tire and a cavernous set of luggage tied down to the plastic-covered seat completed the bizarre picture of... an off-road long-distance Sportster?

I have a soft spot for these old XLs because my first motorcycle was a 1998 1200 Custom, so I stared at it in disbelief for quite a while before its owner approached. Jeff was an imposing figure, dressed in what appeared to be an insulated snowmobile suit, leather work boots, welding gloves, and a half-helmet over a baseball cap. We started exchanging Harley war stories. Turns out he’s retired military, and now spends his time exploring far and wide on two wheels. He has been riding for decades, built a few valuable Triumph choppers in his youth, and now settled on this 26-year-old Sportster as his latest work in progress. What a character!

The plan for the next day was to rip from Roanoke to Nashville, Tennessee,

where I was meeting up for dinner with an old friend whom I hadn’t seen since high school. Kris had also broken out of New Jersey years ago and offered words of encouragement as my family was considering our move. We reunited at a bustling Mexican restaurant and discussed life as teens in “the armpit of America,” the radical (and welcome) culture shift moving from the north to the south, and the various challenges of life we were facing down. The tacos kept arriving as the conversation flowed easily, and I wondered what causes us to so casually lose touch with old friends. We vowed to stay in touch.

Saturday started miserably, because a wicked storm system was covering my entire planned southward path from Nashville to New Orleans. So, I abandoned the New Orleans idea, and pushed through the thinnest part of the system directly west to Memphis, before turning southwest to Alexandria, Louisiana. This initially consisted of slogging through the powerful gale on an endless two-laner, hopelessly congested with semi-trucks the entire way. I was about to give up after what seemed like eternity, but the weather eventually cleared, and I pressed on. I only stopped once, to devour some peanuts and Gatorade for lunch on the gas station curb near Canton, Louisiana. No time for fancy grub when there were still miles to cover! The landscape began to change as I passed through Mississippi. Hills appeared, and

gentle sweepers replaced the drab, gray interstate. A welcome change! From there, the Greenville Bridge led me over the mighty Mississippi River and into Louisiana proper, where my route was once again absolutely straight, absolutely flat, and absolutely lifeless. Fine with me. I’d fought enough traffic for one day.

On the final day of the trip, I rolled over the Texas state line before breakfast, and finally departed from the interstate for the first time since leaving NJ. Texas was one of seven states I’d never ridden in before, and I was eager to experience its characteristic beauty. Savoring the pristine wilderness of Sam Houston National Forest at well under the posted speed limit, I continued wafting westward towards Guadalupe River State Park. After thousands of highway miles it was heaven for this desert-lover! Breathtaking waterfront views, the unmistakable scent of the pecan trees, the sights and sounds of exotic birds, and the sudden realization that I was riding in 70+ degrees during November. Exactly what I needed to recharge before the final sprint home.

And a sprint it was, especially since Texas has 80+ MPH speed limits! I hadn’t seen my wife and daughters in two months. They had a head start to San Antonio, so the girls could enroll in school on time. The desire to be reunited with them now eclipsed every other thought. My R 1200 RT was a San Marino Blue blur as I raced through the city towards our new home. In just a smidge over three days, we had traversed 2,214 miles of mostly unappetizing interstate, but it wasn’t about “the journey” this time. The usual cliché was inverted. This ride was about the destination, as I crossed over each state line, anticipation building, until finally I was hugging my family in our new driveway—in Texas! For the first time in my adult life, it finally felt like home.



Above left: Leaving New Jersey behind for Texas... or bust!

Top right: You really meet the most interesting people while you travel by bike.

Above: Texas at last! But still a ways from San Antonio.

Left: Finally, home and the best welcome home reception you could ask for