

SIDfest New Orleans

June, 1989

As remembered by Rick Washburne

Aaahhh, New Orleans. Now, I'm not exactly agoraphobic (which is a fear of Argyle sweaters and/or Angola, Indiana) but I don't much like parties, cities, crowds...I'm a hermit at heart, don't care much for bars or other loud venues, and I'd rather stick a fork in my knee than be involved in most any type of confrontation. But with some reluctance, I did agree to go with the group to check out Bourbon Street.

How come the most famous Bourbon Street isn't in Kentucky??? I'm not the same person I was then...I really like bourbon. I have a barrel of Maker's Mark with my name on it, literally. It'll be properly aged in 2017. Call me then. And don't get me started about Woodford Reserve. Not a fan.

Wow, I think that was a tangent that John D. MacDonald would have been proud of. Have I mentioned how sweet the AR-1's make my Garrard sound? I DARE you to get that reference! 500 S&H Green Stamps if you do. And another 250 for that one...

While we were checking in at the Weak's Inn (that may not have been the exact name), I was a bit slow on the take. The Manager welcomed me and immediately pointed at the front doors through which we entered. "Son, you see those doors? Whenever you exit this hotel, leave through those doors. And when you do, look at me, when you do, never, NEVER turn left. Out THOSE doors, turn RIGHT. EVERY time. Got it?"

In spite of the subtlety, I picked up on his inference. Every time out the door, I didn't even look to the left.

The group headed to Bourbon Street and I'm just glad it wasn't during Mardi Gras. I'm not especially claustrophobic (fear of Santa [get it?]) but I think that would turn me. One of the many street confidence men (that might not be fair...I have respect for some confidence men) approached the fellow at the front of our pack (gaggle? pride? carton?) and announced his plan.

"I'll bet you five dollars I can tell you where you got your shoes!"

I hid my face. It wasn't completely to try to hide, as if my right upper appendage has chameleon-like qualities; it was mostly because I knew my friend was about to lose \$5). And my friend was way too confident that he'd win this round.

"You're on!"

"Okay, well, you got your shoes on Bourbon Street! Pay up!"

I started to walk away as I was nowhere near my comfort zone. My friends thought this charming, but I was completely uncomfortable. Oh, and I was pretty-much broke. I felt like a kid at an auction, scared to death I might raise my hand to my mouth to cover a cough and

unwittingly bid on Cloisonné vase or something... But walking away didn't help, as I found myself approaching a sidewalk clapboard advertisement for "Female Impersonators." Now, instead of uncomfortable, I was just flat-out confused. Why would you want to...? Oh, never mind.

We ducked into a club that had local music that wasn't too loud and food that wasn't too unpronounceable, and I had a very good Po Boy and enjoyed watching the fat guy play the washboard. Hey, I play bass guitar, so it was natural that I would watch a combo and root for the underdog...

Having no interest in continuing the disturbing confrontations on the street, I actually went to the movie theater between Bourbon Street and the hotel, as the first Batman movie (I mean, the 1989 one) was just out and I wanted to see it. The auditorium was packed, and about thirty minutes into the flick, a fist-fight broke out among four or five guys sitting a few rows in front of me. I never wanted to leave an entire geographical region so badly in my entire life!